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FY24 SCSS Workshop Analytical Synthesis: Putin's 5th Term, Regime Threat Potential, and Policy Implications

By Graeme P. Herd

Introduction

Recent studies highlight alternative Russian future scenarios, notably: Clingendael's "After Putin, the deluge?" (September 2023); The Atlantic Council's "Five Scenarios for Russia's Future" (February 2024); Konrad Adenauer's Stiftung's "Russia Beyond 2023: Scenario Landscape" (March 2024); and most recently, Stephen Kotkin's "The Five Futures of Russia: And How America Can Prepare for Whatever Comes Next" (April 2024). Certain scenario types are apparent: 1) Russia as a victorious retrenched imperialist power (Russia's preferred and official vision of the future), suggesting perpetual Putin leadership, regime, and political system continuity; 2) Russia reformed and reconciles with the West, suggesting a post-Putin regime and political system change, with Russia as France – a polar oppose of the present ("Neither Putin nor Putinism"); 3) Russia as a weaker dependent vassal or proxy of China, suggesting Putinism still exists, with perhaps a "paramount Putin" in the shadows; 4) Russia as a neo-Stalinist, isolated, North Korea-like "hermit kingdom," once again experiencing full-scale *gulags* and "forced modernization;" and 5) Russia descending into civil war, anarchy, and chaos after either steady decline or suddenly ("loose nukes and warlords").

These studies make assumptions regarding the importance of and relationship between structure and agency in Russia. Our own contention: "lessons learned" from Russian history creates a shared understanding of national interest. This, in turn, translates in Russia into an imperial political and strategic culture which shapes its broad foreign and security policy goals. State control of key institutions (not least, the education system, media, and the Russian Orthodox Church) enables any regime to create and disseminate narratives that justify its own foreign and security policy choices. Within the broader regime, any given leadership (Putin and his "inner circle") will be guided by their own philosophical and instrumental beliefs in calculating risk, determining courses of action, and selecting the means to achieve these ends.

Session 1: Putin's Evolving 5th/1st Term Regime: Elites and Ideology?

Putin's regime gradually evolves from being authoritarian to more totalitarian, more repressive and anti-western in nature. First, the elite appears ideologically unified at least in public (behind the scenes there are still important differences), but tactically divided, as the detention of Deputy

Defense Minister Timur Ivanov ("Shoigu's wallet") on April 23, 2024 evidences. Second, Putin uses social transfers strategically to buy the loyalty of key social strata/groups in society, and war spending also creates financial winners in Russian regions actively involved in the war (higher salaries, benefits, etc.) Third, selective and calibrated repression targets those that are neither true believers or whose loyalty can be at least rented.

From the 1990s to 2012, elections meaningfully structured political cycles and policies, but thereafter, regime dynamics uncoupled from presidential terms. Putin's presidential inauguration in 2012 was a focal event, marking as it did a shift from legal rational to historical-charismatic legitimation of his political authority, which translated into annexation of Crimea in 2014 and subversion in Donbas. In 2020 Putin eliminated presidential term limits to lengthen the time horizon of his personalized authoritarian regime and the full-scale multi-axis attack of Ukraine in February 2022 set its parameters. Putin will not be looking for a successor simply because the next term ends in 2030. 2030 will only be meaningful for regime dynamics if something disruptive happens, such as Putin's natural death or physical/mental incapacity, a series of mutinies, a *coup d'etat*, or massive elite defections to an alternative emerging power center.

Does Russia have an elite, or do we see the emergence of neo-Stalinist *nomenklatura* lacking autonomy, dependent on Putin, with influence over others but not policy, where decision-making is Putin's preserve, and with no common vision of the future? Revealingly, 50% of respondents at the 2023 St. Petersburg Economic Forum could not answer the question: "In your opinion, is the current economic policy of the Government of Russia consistent with the concept of Russia's sovereign development or not?" Putin is certainly the chief arbiter of patronal networks, and the networks themselves function to demonstrate loyalty and to comply with Putin's top-down decisions. Factionalism, however, is within bounds beneficial in terms of regime survival as it highlights the necessity of Putin's arbitration and reinforces the notion that Putin is the sovereign decision-maker, the *vozhd*, the strong-man leader. That Navalny and Prigozhin were non-systemic potential alternative centers of decision-making power explains why they were murdered. Putin's main task will remain to prevent alternative centers capable of coordinating collective action, at any cost.

In December 2022, Putin called for economic, financial, technological, and "cadre sovereignty." A new elite, demonstrating loyalty by deeds not just words, should emerge and the full-scale war ("Time of Heroes" leadership program) provided the opportunity for upward mobility. However, by 2024 the impact of the reform of the federal cadre reserve initiated in 2012 remains doubtful. The presidential cadre reserve has proved more susceptible of patronage lobbing than any sense of meritocracy. Putin's elite is conservative and hermetically resistant to renewal. So far, neither military service nor stints in "occupation administrations" in Ukraine have led to significant upward mobility of veterans or public servants. On the other hand, Putin is set to move forward with gradual generational change within the elite to ensure regime reproduction beyond his rule. But this is a challenging process fraught with risks, and the elite is subject to at least six sources of factionalism, namely: 1) age-cohort differentiation; 2) presidential versus prime ministerial hierarchy in the dual executive, with the latter more meritocratic than the former; 3) federal center-periphery/regions (mounting deficiencies of the power vertical); 4) dynastic vs other forms of patron-client relations (competing mechanisms for the creation of a post-Putin elite); 5) challenges to counter-balancing bureaucratic agencies and clans due to regime personalization

and its fraught feedback mechanisms; 6) private vs state ownership (increasing pressure on private property via forced de-privatization or nationalization campaigns while at the same time private business ensures flexibility to circumvent sanctions).

Ideology in Russia has a number of functions. It can "future-proof Putinism," by providing Putin with a legacy that will not be instantly dismantled by his successor. In addition, it shapes Russian foreign policy choices and on the "home front" produces a new generation of patriotic, conservative youth. Putin stated in 2019: "Liberalism is obsolete." Liberalism is rejected across the board: as a universalist philosophy, as a liberal-democratic political system, as a set of values based on individual rights, and as a geopolitical project (the 'liberal international order,' the 'rules-based order'). This rejection is rooted in a combination of Russian and European radical conservative ideas and values, including neo-Slavophile ideas, Russian Orthodox thought, European counter-revolutionary ideals, and the German 'conservative revolution' of 1920s/1930s. This idea slowly moved from marginal position in the 1990s to mainstream orthodoxy today, encouraged both by internal activism and by international environment.

Ideological production in Russia is led by the political leadership, security officials, and political technologists, and is supported by philosophers and activists. Putin is both the disseminator of ideas and the consensus-shaper, with inputs from senior security officials, including Patrushev, Naryshkin, Bastrykin, and Medvedev. The presidential administration has a near monopoly on institutionalised ideological production, with First Deputy Head Sergei Kiriyenko in the lead, overseeing everything from new Soviet-style youth movements to ensuring that music, film, and theatre aligns with the new wartime ultra-patriotism. Radical conservative philosophers (e.g. Dugin, Prokhanov, Malofeev, Mikhalkov, and Narochnitskaya) and activists, form the support cast, with the former providing the intellectual frameworks and genealogies, the latter representing Russian nationalist networks, with links to the Russian Orthodox Church. A more free-wheeling backdrop of extreme, militarized content is available online in the military/PMC media space on Telegram and other social media sites.

The rejection of liberalism and Russification of cultural production is advanced through the education system, as well as cultural and social spheres. Russia's old cultural elite is being purged, while patriotic projects promoted, and in the social sphere the regime attempts to consolidate society in opposition to minorities through anti-LGBT campaigns and other repressive measures. In schools, this drive is evidenced by the emergence of youth organizations such as the "Movement of the First ("Движение первых") and new courses ("Fundamentals of Security and Defence of the Motherland" from September 2024). In higher education, the new compulsory course "Fundamentals of Russian Statehood," introduced in September 2023, is notable. Russia uses ideological allies abroad and has launched new international platforms to promote its message – in February 2024 alone Moscow hosted the 'Forum on Multipolarity,' 'International Movement of Russophiles,' and 'The Forum of Campaigners against Modern Practices of Neo-Colonialism.' On March 27-28, 2024, 'The World Russian People's Council' announced that Russia is engaged in "a Holy War," in which Russia and its people carry out the moral mission of the "Restrainer" (Katechon), "defending the world from the attacks of globalism and [preventing] the victory of the West, which has fallen into satanism." Mystical, apocalyptical, and even nuclear motivations coincide with the rational.

The core tenets advanced are that: 1) Russia is a Great Power with a sphere of influence because it is a 'civilization-state' distinct from the West; 2) IR is about civilizational politics and Russia's is best understood as the 'Russian World,' which has no borders (Putin is an imperial nationalist not an ethno-nationalist); and 3) Russia champions a counter-hegemonic project, one that constrains Western expansionism and seeks to break U.S. hegemony and the unipolar system. In its worldview, Russia is partially aligned internationally with China, some forces in Global South (against the West as a colonial project), and radical conservatives/nationalists in China, Europe, South Asia, and the United States.

Russian decision-making in Putin's 5th term will be shaped and influenced by ideas and ideology, but the implications of exactly how are unclear. Current ideological production has more and less radical trajectories, from a militarised and semi-totalitarian 'Z-nation' fascist-style regime to neo-Soviet/late-Soviet style ideological stagnation that retains some technocratic pragmatism. The current trend is more towards revisionist, even revolutionary foreign policy based on anti-Westernism and anti-liberalism: Russia is now, "for the first time since the Bolshevik Revolution" a "revolutionary power" (Trenin 2024). The public reaction to this new ideological content is uncertain, but if the ideological campaign is successful, elements of Putinism may outlive Putin, ensuring that confrontation with the West will remain a long-term challenge. Russia's ideology overlaps with and so has traction in parts of Global South, among radical national conservatives in Europe and United States.

Session 2: "Russian Future Conventional Military and Hybrid Threat Potential?"

Russian decision-makers do not see the lessons of its war in Ukraine, particularly the failures in 2022, as the West does. For Russia, failures were not primarily attributed to poor intelligence, logistics, or leadership, but as a failure to generate critical mass at the outset. From a Russian perspective, while precision strikes can weaken an adversary's capabilities, artillery and attrition will overwhelm the same over the long term but requires patience. High casualty rates are acceptable, particularly if an adversary is itself casualty-adverse (unwilling), or lacks the population to sustain them (unable).

In terms of reconstitution, Russia's military will remain a land-based power. Defense Minister Shoigu outlined some initial reconstitution steps at the Defense Ministry Collegium 22 December 2023. Shoigu announced the military would increase from 1.1 million to 1.5 million, with contract soldier numbers rising from 405,000 to 695,000, and conscription age rising from 18 to 21 (making it more politically palatable to send soldiers into combat). There is discussion that the length of conscription service would be increased from 1 to 2 years, which would generate an increase of 300,000 men and allow for a single training cycle that combines conscripts with contracted. Russia has the potential for adopting one of two models for manning: the higher number of contract soldiers is preferred but a two-year conscription term is an option if not enough contract soldiers are recruited.

In terms of force structure, Russia is moving from brigades to divisions, with a number of new and enlarged units in the two new Leningrad and Moscow Military Districts, created in response to Finnish and Swedish NATO membership. Russia has had over 4000 confirmed officer deaths (most likely the real figure is double) and this is significant: the Russia military lack an NCO

cadre; it will take some time to recruit and train the new officer corps. In terms of armaments, ammunition production has increased but production of more technologically advanced weaponry is likely to slow due to sanctions. Russia has had success producing UAVs at high volume, but is still reliant on imports for machine tools and micro-electronics from/through friendly countries. For many categories of equipment, Russia relies on refurbishing Soviet legacy equipment (e.g. tanks, APVs) and this cannot be renewed once expended.

Russia's navy, air, and nuclear forces remain largely unaffected by the war, with the exception of the Black Sea Fleet. If budgetary constraints are imposed, these services will lose out to ground forces, where degradation is the highest. The Russian navy is now detached from unified strategic commands with orders being centralized in Moscow and this is likely to impact Russia's ability to carry out joint operations. Capability gaps between Russia and NATO are set to increase as 'Russia adapts backwards,' but even if the effectiveness and reliability of older Russian weapons systems increases, the Russian military still has the capabilities to hurt at this time.

In terms of the sustainability of Russian forces, a number of factors come into play. First, Russian leadership resolve to fight will remain a constant, but at what point is a notional threshold number below which a rational leadership would not deploy remaining tank and APV reserves (10-20% of remaining stocks)? Second, at what point and under what conditions might Russia's partners, in particular China, be willing to see Russia fail and how much support would they give in order to avoid this? Might North Korea allow 40,000 arms manufacturing workers - highly skilled no less - to move to Russia to help with Russian labor supply shortfalls and production? Substitution leads to degradation but not necessarily breakdown. Third, what is Russia's own capacity to ramp up production and mobilize more troops, compared to Ukraine's ability to match, or balance Russian quantity with Ukrainian quality? And, lastly, what is Russia's ability to deter the west from supporting Ukraine through damaging sub-conventional or hybrid operations?

Over the last two-years Russia has suffered the loss of a significant amount of vital intelligence and information operations assets in the West. Russian classic influence networks (including a generation of carefully cultivated VIP and business-related assets) have weakened considerably and diplomatic expulsions (Hungary excepted) have left Russia diplomatically isolated. For example, nearly 30 heads of states or governments had originally accepted the invitation to the May 9, 2020 "Victory Day" parade in Moscow, which was eventually postponed due to COVID. In 2024, by contrast, only 9 attended: the five Central-Asian former Soviet republics, Belarus, Cuba, Laos, and Guinea-Bissau.

But, from a Russian costs/benefits calculus perspective, diplomatically it now has little, if anything, to lose from using greater levels of violence and escalating hybrid operations. Rather the opposite, Russia has everything to gain: economic-industrial disparities determine that Russia cannot win in Ukraine if the West remains united and committed. It follows, Western resolve needs to be broken. In addition, Russia needs revenge against European states for their support of Ukraine: the greater Russian losses, the more radicalized and violent its response. To deter the Western support and break Western will and resolve to supply military aid to Ukraine, Russia can employ massive well-coordinated information operations (e.g. Taurus "information

deterrence" intercepts) and actively sabotage the product and delivery of the supplies themselves on European soil.

The GRU's core original task was precisely to undertake kinetic sabotage behind the enemy front line, including assassinating civilian and military leaderships. It is easier to monitor, and then attack, arms production and centralized day-time routing across open Europe than it is to ambush the decentralized nighttime deliveries in wartime Ukraine itself. The GRU has conducted Czech railway cyber-attacks targeting delivery routes and arms depots (Czech Republic, UK), and it gradually escalates the attacks to test the limits. Russia moves from disruption to destruction. It can utilize unused aggressive potential, including the kinetic and information operations that can attack to inflame and weaponize migrant/minority tensions with far-right groups ahead of, for example, European Parliamentary elections. Russia experiences limited costs on its actions. Such operations can be understood not as a "second front" but a "secondary front" in support of the "primary front," Russia's imperial full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Session 3: "Russia's Triune Foreign Policy – Belarus and Ukraine?"

Unlike President Putin, President Lukashenka lacks money (he practices "totalitarianism for the poor") and therefore he is reduced to repression and narratives. In 2020, Belarus' opposition conceivably comprised at least half of the population. No less than 10% took part in protest actions. That internal opposition is now extinguished by repression, while the external opposition is demoralized. Lukashenka also uses narratives to compel and encourage loyalty. A core part of his narrative is to suggest that only his leadership prevents Belarus from entering the war ("he fears Russia but hates the West"), appealing to the clear anti-war consensus prevalent in the country, including amongst its military. Lukashenka does not have centrality, but acts as if he does. Belarus is no longer a mediator (even though the June 2023 "Wagner" mediation did produce a "golden fish"). It is unclear if Russian nuclear weapons are deployed to Belarus, and attempts to weaponize migrants no longer provide leverage to coerce the West to engage. China did not invite Belarus to its 2023 Belt and Road Initiative conference, and its BRICS+ membership was declined. The SCO might be more susceptible to future Belarus membership and the BRINK (Belarus, Russia, Iran, and North Korea) links are growing.

Belarus has a clear utility for Russia. First, while Central Asian states are "balancing," Lukashenka's rhetoric and actions put the "we" image into Russian foreign policy, providing the illusion of less isolation. Second, Russia can operate freely on Belarusian territory and through its airspace, in a manner unregulated by treaty. Russia controls Belarus through Lukashenka, negating the need for annexation of Belarus as a compensation for losing the war in Ukraine. Belarus is too small and too friendly (unlike Moldova) to constitute compensation, with potential Russian justifying narratives lacking: Belarus as "Nazi" when 25% of its population died between 1941-45? "Russo-phobic" when largely Russian-speaking? Moreover, passive resistance among the population would be a real risk for Russia and the takeover would be costly. Third, a majority western approach is to assume that Belarus is simply an extension of Russia, rather than that Belarus is not Russia.

Were the West to increase sanctions against Belarus (and freeze its Central Bank assets?), given Belarus' status as an "aggressor state," then Putin would be forced to divert resources away from waging war on Ukraine towards subsidizing Belarus. Opposition media could clearly explain to

Belarusians why the sanctions are increased. At the same time, the West could look to re-engage with a post-Lukashenka leadership in Minsk, by clearly stating now, in the late-Lukashenka era, the preconditions for engagement. These would include the release of political prisoners within a tight demonstrable timeline (i.e. 2 weeks), political liberalization, and economic reform, all in line with classic EU neighborhood policy. The objective of such 'positive conditionality' would be to encourage a reasonable post-Lukashenka government to come to power. In the Putin narrative, war equates with "Victory Day" parades; in Belarus, war represents suffering. Unlike Russia, the population of Belarus is free from imperialist/great power sentiment and knows Europe far better.

In Ukraine, leadership narratives are clear and centered on making Russia pay (justice and accountability) and lose the war. Core narratives include: 'Russia's War against Ukraine is a Genocide' (#Arm_Ukraine; #Bring the war to Russia; #No Territorial Concessions; #Mobilization); 'Ukraine is a Shield of Europe / Western Democracies' (#EU_negotiations_Fast_Track; #Security_Guarantees from Allies); 'The impossibility of conducting negotiations with the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin' ('The President's Decree,'30 August 2022); 'No elections during martial law according to the Constitution;' 'Zelensky's Peace Formula' (November, 2022, G20-Summit); 'Crimea Platform' (2021)/ 'Law on Indigenous people in Ukraine' (March 31, 2023); 'The Decree on the territories of the Russian Federation historically inhabited by Ukrainians' (January 22, 2024); and 'The First Peace Summit for Ukraine' (June 15-16, 2024).

However, nuance is also apparent. When polled, there is a very strong societal belief that Ukraine will win the war (as of February 2024 it stood at 88%), but only half that number (45%) defined "victory" in terms of the official goal of restoring Ukraine's 1991 statehood. This might suggest that the sense of Ukraine as a nation is perhaps higher than that of a Ukraine as a fixed state: Ukrainian students in occupied territories attend lessons in Ukrainian language via Zoom, including ones on democracy and reconstruction, but people who have left the country can be labelled as traitors. Tensions in the future will need to be managed, as 65% of Ukrainian refugees declare they will return, and may compete with IDPs for access to the labor market, housing, and health. Some may be Russian sympathizers, though Ukrainian passport holders. In addition, a desire for accountability and justice is driven by an understanding that the failure to hold Stalin accountable for famine and repressions in Ukraine emboldened Russia/Putin to resort to full-scale invasion and terror in 2022. Comparisons with Hamas October 7, 2023 attacks on Israel also resonate, not least the need in Ukraine for "Iron Dome," societal resilience, and a model of total mobilization. Ukraine needs to explore volunteering options.

From a Ukrainian perspective, the Russian neo-Soviet narrative will only grow stronger and will continue to do so for the duration of Putin's life/presidency, while the U.S. 2024 presidential elections and potential policy changes are much more consequential. Both underscore the need to mobilize and continue a socio-cultural strategic reorientation away from Russia. Ukraine now celebrates Christmas according to the Western calendar, separating further from the Russian Orthodox Church and its "Holy War" against Ukraine and the West. Russia's continued threat potential generates a human-centric approach to veterans, reservists, and 'human capital' as mobilization increases, as well as the need for an indigenous armaments production and for enhanced STRATCOM that connects with Ukrainian society. Ukraine cannot afford to

underestimate Russia's military capabilities: the fact that such capabilities are inferior to the West's is irrelevant if quantity swamps quality. For Ukraine, the July NATO summit and the Security Package being negotiated is critical, as it represents insurance if U.S. leadership and policy changes. But expectations are likely higher than reality.

Session 4: "Putin's 5th Term Regime Threat Potential and Policy Considerations?"

- Putin's 5th term is understood as a continuity of hostility against the West by an "emboldened and angry" Russia, with the expectations that relations will deteriorate further as Russia's threat potential evolves and worsens. Putin speaks more confidently and regularly about the war and Russia's economic and mobilization potential is far from exhausted. This term will likely witness the greater use of repression, money, and ideology to bolster his regime, all of which have policy implications. Repression can trend towards greater isolation, with Putin extinguishing a key post-Soviet freedom for ordinary Russians: open borders. The regime could also cut Russia off from global information space, imposing a sovereign Ru.Net.
- The military-security implication of Russia's enduring full-scale war against Ukraine has been to generate unprecedented levels of NATO cohesion, political unity, enlargement to two capable members, and the provision of materiel support to Ukraine. But NATO may "backslide" if the threat recedes. NATO must reinvigorate its defense industrial base, recognizing that it is a European force generation and U.S. strategic deterrence competition with Russia. NATO needs to develop sustainment, prepositioned munition stocks, and rethink its defense plans given its extended border with Russia which creates a single North Atlantic-Arctic-Nordic-Baltic operationally and strategically unified space. Unlike Russia with its fixed in place forces, NATO has operational and strategic flexibility and through dynamic force employment that can rapidly create dilemmas for Russia. How do we fully understand U.S. National Security Strategy "integrated deterrence?" How does Putin's regime do so in the late 2020s?
- The political-strategic and geo-economic implications of 5th term threat potential is also profound. Given Putin uses money to buy loyalty, maintain minimal standards, and ensure the elite are broadly happy, the escalation of sanctions would create corrosive damage (Gazprom is de facto insolvent) to the Russian economy and Putin's ability to fund the regime. Geo-economic pressure can more closely accompany western security policy. In principle, the balance of resources is currently in NATO's favor: 12: 1 on PPP terms, 20-25:1 using less favorable indices, far exceeding 3:1 in the Cold War. Nevertheless, while the West can win the "battle of resources," Russia will prevail if it wins the "battle of resolve" by demonstrating the strategic patience to commit the resources to wage war and using hybrid ops to break western will.
- What is at stake if the United States, Germany, friends, and allies fail? What might be the components of a "theory of failure?" Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and Taiwan, as well as current BRINK adversaries, are able to measure in time and quantity of capabilities the resolve of the West to support partners, uphold values, offer security assurances and commitments, and draw appropriate lessons. Linkages and ties between Ukraine, the war in the Middle East and an unstable North Korea are evident. The BRINK consortium will become more closely aligned, particularly their military capabilities and technologies,

increasing risks of escalation and decreasing global and regional stability at a time when the West suffers huge reputational costs.

- In analyzing and understanding risks of failure we reduce uncertainty and highlight the necessary trade-offs inherent in a successful strategy, which must, above all, prevent the worst outcome. With regards, for example, to BRINK links, are there opportunities to exploit the dilemmas inherent within this grouping? China is one of the most important variables for the progression of this war. How should the West convey its preferences for Chinese behavior? What role might India play?
- Putin's assertion that "liberalism is dead" demands democracies renew, actively and confidently, the case for liberal democracy, making a more principled and self-interested case for its continued utility. A first step avoids drawing red lines between "the West vs the rest" (Russia's narrative) and allowing strategic ambiguity to become a synonym for "self-deterrence." A second step is to demonstrate in deeds that democracies have resilience, strength, can defend their values, and can demonstrate resolve and efficiency in war. In democracies, the state serves the people. Such a message is reaffirming and has global appeal. Ultimately, though, one truism is universal: nothing succeeds like success.

GCMC, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, May 10, 2024

Context:

Thirty experts met at a GCMC-sponsored Workshop in Berlin on May 7, 2024 to form a better understanding of Putin's regime threat potential and policy implications. This report synthesizes the presentations of Yuliya Bidenko, Fabian Burkhardt, Dmitry Gorenburg, Nigel Gould-Davies, Frank Hagemann, Nataliia Haluhan, Graeme Herd, David Lewis, Arkady Moshes, John Neal, and András Rácz and subsequent participant discussions.

About the Author

Dr. Graeme P. Herd is a Professor of Transnational Security Studies in the Research and Policy Analysis Department at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies. His latest books include *Understanding Russia's Strategic Behavior: Imperial Strategic Culture and Putin's Operational Code* (London and New York, Routledge, 2022) and *Russia's Global Reach: A Security and Statecraft Assessment*, ed. Graeme P. Herd (Garmisch-Partenkirchen: George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, 2021).

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