United States Pressure/Containment of Russia

An NFHS 2021-22 Topic Proposal

Clint and Jennifer Adams

University Interscholastic League/

Big Spring High School

Texas

The Authors would like to offer special thanks to the following people for insightful comments, providing direction when we hit a wall, links to research, and proofreading.

Dr. Rich Edwards - Waco, Texas

David Gardiner - Corpus Christi, Texas

Melissa Locke Witt- Hereford, Texas

Seth Trevino- Odessa, Texas

Will Harper - Grapevine, Texas

Mikael Morelion- Austin, Texas

Table of Contents

Introduction- Topic Justification

The United States and Russian bilateral relationship is among the most significant relationships globally, with implications reaching beyond both states. The U. S. and Russia share interests in a diverse set of areas, including regional security in Europe and Eurasia, nuclear security and nonproliferation, and managing the upheaval in the greater Middle East, along with managing terrorism and violent extremism. Russia is also an essential player in U.S. efforts to combat climate change or explore outer space, outside the hard security realm. (www.csis.org) At the same time, the United States is critical to Russia as both foil and partner in its efforts to establish itself on the global stage (nsarchive.gwu.edu)

While there may be some controversy between the Chief Executive of the United States and his intelligence agencies, it is hard to argue that Russia has again become an existential threat to the western world. U.S. - Russia relations today are the worst that they have been since 1985. (Brookings) From election meddling in 2016 to what appears to be continued meddling in 2020, Russia is a troubling domestic issue the likes of which the U.S. has not seen since the 1950s.

Russia is propping itself up as a significant world power that is again in direct opposition to the United States. War in Ukraine and annexation of Crimea, along with support for Syria's Bashar al-Assad and his draconian civil conflict to one side, and Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro to the other, have only increased tensions between the two superpowers. President Trump's attempts to improve ties with Russia have happened against the Legislative branch's advice. The U.S. Congress has pursued increasingly stringent policies toward Russia, imposing numerous sanctions and expelling diplomats from the U.S. At the best of times, U.S.- Russia ties are a mix of cooperation and competition, but today they are mainly adversarial.

Timeliness

The last time we debated Russia was 1998-1999. That year the topic was Resolved: That the United States should substantially change its foreign policy toward Russia. The world has changed dramatically in the last two decades and so has the relationship between Russia and the rest of the world, especially between Russia and the United States. The constant debate on the involvement of Russia in elections worldwide as well as Russian actions in places like Syria, Turkey, and Ukraine do not look to end without outside action. Additionally, concepts such as cooperation on space and the environment need to be discussed, so a Russian policy topic is as timely today as it was in 1998.

Range

A foreign policy topic dealing with Russia meets the criteria of the NFHS for several reasons:

1. This topic would provide educational ground to students in various areas: foreign policy/relations, hegemony, hard and soft power, as well as the history of conflict between the world's greatest super-powers. The challenge is to find an acceptable balance between cooperation and competition and to compartmentalize the relationship in a more effective way than at present.

2. A Russian topic has a range of skill levels available to debaters. Students could get involved in economic debates, simple foreign policy debates, and the more complex Kritik debates. A foreign policy topic dealing with Russia is accessible to novices since the primary action is easy to explain, but the topic has a lot of depth that more experienced debaters can sink their teeth into. Under President Vladimir Putin, Russia has become a centralized, authoritarian state and has returned as a global player, competing with the United States for influence. Although it is weaker than the U.S. both economically and militarily, it has the ability to intervene around the globe and to thwart U.S. interests. Washington and Moscow have fundamentally different ideas about what a productive relationship would look like.

3. There is a large base of literature on the subject of U.S./Russian relations that is both readily available but also ranges from commercial sources to in-depth scholarly articles. Additionally, with breaking news daily, the topic has the potential to grow and change throughout the season.

4. Should the National Federation desire to test an alternate actor resolution, U.S. - Russia containment through NATO or the UN would provide rich ground for this debate.

Justification of Alternate Actor

While the United States Federal Government is the body politic that has enabled Policy debate for decades, an alternate actor would allow for new debates that would push students to research. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) offers military options for containment and opens the door for cases that are traditionally extra-topical in US-centric resolutions. Russia, as one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council, has perceived credibility and international posturing and, therefore, increased ability to interfere in global matters.

"Russia challenges the security and stability of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and many of its member states. Russia's conventional capabilities pose a serious threat, and it has historically succeeded to one extent or another in sowing disorder, weakening democratic institutions, and undermining NATO cohesion. However, it also has a long track record of strategic shortfalls and even some ineptitude. NATO will benefit from exploring opportunities to deter, prevent, and counter Russian hostile behavior in the so-called gray zone short of war, where daily adversarial competition occurs, as the behavior that Russia exhibits in the gray zone will no doubt extend to high-order war." (RAND, 2020)

The Russian annexation of Crimea and conflict in Eastern Ukraine, have prompted Western policy analysts to question if Russia's actions represent a new, more covert approach to warfare.

Understanding Russia's perspective on international relations is imperative to supporting potential targets of future Russian action. Additionally, understanding Russian covert/overt aggression will require updating NATO's defensive protocols that are predicated on response to clear military violations of sovereignty. If Russian actions are not clear military violations of sovereignty, how does NATO move forward in terms of Russian Containment?

Along with NATO involvement between the United States and the Russian Federation, a United Nations resolution would also provide new ground. The authors feel that NATO would be the preferable actor, as the UN forces a majority of the debates to center around economic sanctions and would be overly limiting.

AFFIRMATIVE GROUND

Affirmatives will have a plethora of avenues to address pressuring Russia. The federal government could enact policies that punish Russia for interference in matters not vital to its sovereignty. Affirmatives can expand already existing policies that deal with pressuring Russia; this would give the debaters a wealth of existing data to be able to pull from. Another avenue affirmatives could use to pressure Russia would be to examine the effects of hard and soft power. Soft power was effective in ending the cold war, would the same be effective in the present? Affirmatives could also implement regulations that would allow greater latitude to combat the growing Russian threat in other countries like Syria. Depending on the topic, other areas such as cooperation in matters of space exploration, renewable energy, and environmental policies can be possible affirmative positions.

When it comes to the containment of Russia, there are some ways the affirmative can do this. Affirmatives can change the way Russia is treated in things like global negotiations. Additionally, affirmatives can also implement embargoes and trade deals aimed at limiting Russia's ability to expand its influence. Affirmatives can also make agreements with Russia to contain the threat they pose to the West. Depending on what the final wording of the topic is affirmatives may be able to change the way certain governmental agencies react to the Russian threat.

Depending on the mechanism they choose, affirmatives have a number of advantage areas they can claim. Reforming trade with Russia would be good for the economy while

simultaneously strengthening our hegemony. Additionally, affirmatives can claim that they are eroding certain anti-west movements by showing the west as a reasonable actor. Certain plans could possibly increase pro-western sentiment by increasing soft power with a positive impact on decreasing the threat of a hot war. Other affirmatives can decrease the amount of corruption by pressuring Russia away from interfering in democratic elections. This would have the goal of spreading democracy throughout the world if affirmative acts as a check on the seemingly unrestrained power Russia has now.

Major Issues: these cards are meant to illuminate only a few of the potential arguments on this topic.

Russian subversion is a threat

1. **Russia uses multiple tactics to spread their influence globally**

ANDREW RADIN, ALYSSA DEMUS, KRYSTYNA MARCINEK, Feb. 2020, Pg. 1, 2 The Rand Corporation, Understanding Russian Subversion Patterns, Threats, and Responses, https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE331.html?utm_campaign=&utm_content=1582037111&utm_medium=rand_social&utm_source=twitter

Russia likely finds subversion—which we define as efforts intended to influence the domestic politics of other countries—attractive because it could help achieve multiple Russian foreign policy interests at relatively low cost. The threat of Russian subversion to different countries varies based on the intensity of Russia's interests and the resources available to undertake subversion. In western Europe and the United States, Russian subversive tools appear to be limited to information, cyber, and political ones. In neighboring former communist countries, Russia uses a wider range of military and economic tools. To better deter Russian subversion, we suggest concentrating defensive efforts on the most vulnerable regions and institutions and ensuring that punishments in response to subversion are clearly linked to specific Russian actions. We also propose focusing on addressing covert or denied Russian activities, both because they are particularly harmful and because targeting overt Russian activities could

delegitimize Western outreach to populations that are on the fence about their support for Western institutions.

2. **Russian Activities seek to undermine countries' politics and institutions in undesirable ways**

ANDREW RADIN, ALYSSA DEMUS, KRYSTYNA MARCINEK, Feb. 2020, Pg. 1, 2 The Rand Corporation, Understanding Russian Subversion Patterns, Threats, and Responses, https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE331.html?utm_campaign=&utm_content=1582037111&utm_medium=rand_social&utm_source=twitter

By subversion, we mean activities intended to influence a target country's domestic politics. We believe this term offers a useful and concrete way to understand the threat of Russian activities. Other works use such terms as hybrid warfare, active measures, hostile measures, the gray zone, political warfare, or sharp power (Cardenal et al., 2017; Cohen and Radin, 2019; Robinson et al., 2018). There is substantial debate about these terms—for example, critics have argued that hybrid warfare does not accurately characterize Russian thinking on this issue.1 Nevertheless, all these terms refer to the same basic problem: A wide range of somewhat coordinated Russian activities seeks to influence and undermine countries' politics and institutions in undesirable ways, including Russian support of separatism in Ukraine; computer network operations; backing pro-Russian nongovernmental organizations; and publicly acknowledged information campaigns executed by RT, Sputnik, or other attributed media. Russian subversion often exploits political or social divides within Western societies. Russian subversion activities may also leverage concepts and tools that were established to protect democratic societies (e.g., freedom of speech and freedom of assembly) to undermine these institutions. To be sure, there are differences in the intensity, threat, and legitimacy of particular Russian subversive activities. In general, overt and attributed activities, such as diplomacy or public messages, may be seen as relatively more legitimate, especially since there are parallel efforts by Western countries and institutions. Russia also engages in covert activities, in which Russia seeks to hide its role, and denied activities, in which Russia takes less effort to hide its role but does not publicly acknowledge its actions, as in the case of Russia's support for separatism in eastern Ukraine. We see denied and covert subversive activities as especially threatening. For example, people may be more receptive to a tweet from someone who seems to be a normal citizen rather than from RT or the official account of the Russian foreign ministry. The Kremlin's financial and human resources give it a unique ability to mimic and influence legitimate social groups in ways that are often not discovered until

long after they are perpetrated if they are recognized at all. Clear attribution of denied or covert activities to Russia can limit the effectiveness of these actions.

3. **Russian Ideological Subversion a long-range plan**

Toplansky, E. F. (2020, June 20). The Soviet Plan for 'Ideological Subversion' Describes Our Current Turmoil. Retrieved July 04, 2020, from https://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2020/06/the_soviet_plan_for_ideological_subversion_precisely_describes_our_current_turmoil.html

The interview features Yuri Bezmenov, a former KGB spy and state media propagandist who defected to Canada in 1970. Bezmenov cogently explains how "ideological subversion" is an essential method used by communists to undermine and destabilize Western countries. His explanation crystallizes so much of what has happened in America in the last 40 years.

Sharp power has clear implications for policy

Is Russia Sabotaging Democracy in the West?, Nikolas K.Gvosdev, Professor of National Security Affairs at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, RI, Received 10 May 2019, Available online 1 June 2019, Orbis, Volume 63, Issue 3, 2019, Pages 321-333

While the signs of Russian usage of "sharp power" are clear, the Kremlin's motivations in either permitting these interventions or actively soliciting them are less so. Is Russian President Vladimir Putin and his government engaged in a wholescale effort to undermine liberal democracy, or were efforts concentrated on governments pursuing policies that Russia finds inimical to its interests that just happen to be democracies? In short, is it ideological dislike and fear of liberal democracy that is the primary driver for Russian action, or is "sharp power" meant to achieve concrete geopolitical aims that Russian "hard" and "soft" power has failed to secure? In other words, is the motivation for Russian action primarily ideological or geopolitical? Does the Kremlin seek to undermine democracies because of an ideological dislike of that form of government, or has Moscow taken action against governments that happen to be democracies because they consider these governments to have adopted and executed policies that clash with Russian interests?

Far more than an academic question, this issue has clear implications for policy. If the former explanation is the predominant motivation, then the competition between Russia and the West becomes almost existential in nature. If the deterioration in U.S.-Russia relations is

fundamentally a clash between systems, rather than primarily a struggle for interests, then, beyond short-term tactical cooperation, there can be no stable foundation for improving relations between Russia and the United States—and no real reason to seek such improvement, certainly as long as Vladimir Putin remains in office. Moreover, to the extent that Putin's beliefs and worldview are widely held across the entire Russian political elite, amelioration might not even occur when he leaves the Kremlin, raising the possibility of sustained clashes between Russia and the West. [7]

Russian Attacks on Elections

1. **Russia attempts to shape the world through election meddling**

Is Russia Sabotaging Democracy in the West?, Nikolas K.Gvosdev, Professor of National Security Affairs at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, RI, Received 10 May 2019, Available online 1 June 2019, *Orbis*, Volume 63, Issue 3, 2019, Pages 321-333

Considerable evidence exists demonstrating that entities affiliated with and acting at the direction of the Russian Federation have sought to influence the direction and outcome of a series of major elections in Western democracies. These incidents include notably the referendum over whether the United Kingdom should exit the European Union and episodes during the 2016 and 2017 U.S. and French presidential elections. [1] As Tom Nichols, a professor of national security affairs at the U.S. Naval War College, has noted, these attacks on the political institutions and integrity of the electoral processes span the entire Western alliance. [2] This strategy of intervention into the political processes and the tools needed to accomplish this end are described by the National Endowment for Democracy under the moniker of "sharp power. .. in the sense that they pierce, penetrate, or perforate the information environments in the targeted countries." [3] In contrast to public diplomacy (the above-board efforts by every country to try and persuade the elites and publics of other countries of the rightness of their policies or the advantages of positive relations), "sharp power" is characterized by "a degree of stealth" as well as by an emphasis on manipulation; it is an attempt to interfere with the political choices of other countries. [4]

2.Theisen, L. (2020, May 05). FBI warns of secret Russian interference in 2020 elections. Retrieved July 04, 2020, from https://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/ny-fbi-warns-of-secret-russian-interference-in-2020-elections-20200505-pq74nusotbg2tdqiyypclwozqa-story.html

The Department of Homeland Security and the FBI have warned states that Russia could try to interfere in the upcoming 2020 elections by secretly advising campaigns and candidates, an Associated Press report said on Monday.
In a memo sent on Feb. 3, U.S. officials outlined eight potential tactics that Russia could use in the coming months, including what they call the "high" threat of a repeat of 2016 when Russian military hackers leaked emails stolen from the Clinton campaign.
Covert advice, they say, is a "moderate" threat, but it's notable because it's a relatively uncommon topic of discussion compared to actions like vote hacking, financial support and fake social media personas. The memo says that while this tactic hasn't happened before in the U.S., the strategy has been employed in Africa by political operatives associated with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The government agencies involved have not issued comment on the leaks.
Russia has denied interfering with U.S. elections, but U.S. officials believe that the Kremlin supported Trump in 2016 and took steps to assist his victory. Trump has held that his campaign never conspired with Russia to get to the White House, but this memo shows that his administration is clearly concerned about the ongoing threat they pose to American elections.

Russian Federation Expansion

Vladamir Putin's desire to return the Russian Federation to Superpower status once held by the USSR has caused tension, as the Federation looks to expand and annex neighboring countries. Concerning Ukraine, "its designs on the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine were motivated in part by Putin's claim that Russians and Ukrainians are "one people."

Recall that the Ukraine crisis erupted when Yanukovych promised to sign a trade agreement with the EU, only to walk back his pledge under pressure from Moscow; his reversal prompted widespread protests and eventually, Russia's land grabs in Crimea and the Donbas. (Foreign Affairs)

Crimea was the next step in Expansion efforts. Leonid Bershidsky, writing in Bloomberg explains:

The popular enthusiasm for the "Crimea Is Ours" cause and the near-absence of economic, political, or military cost to the annexation lulled Putin into a sense of invincibility familiar to any gambler on a remarkable roll.

The annexation was a crime; what followed was, from a realpolitik point of view, an error of judgment. Putin, egged on by military and intelligence analysts who believed Ukraine was divided into politically incompatible Russian-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking areas, decided to try splitting off eastern Ukraine. He did it both as revenge for the 2014 "Revolution of Dignity," which he considered a U.S.-inspired coup, and as an additional buffer against the new Ukrainian government's ambition to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The US refuses to recognize the annexation as legitimate:

> The United States announced a formal policy reaffirming its rejection of Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula, with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo blasting Moscow for seeking "to undermine a bedrock international principle shared by democratic states."

Pompeo's announcement July 25, released an hour before his scheduled testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, followed recent conflicting remarks by President Donald Trump and administration officials about whether Washington was moving to reverse a policy in place since Russia's seizure of the Black Sea peninsula in 2014.

"The United States reaffirms as policy its refusal to recognize the Kremlin's claims of sovereignty over territory seized by force in contravention of international law," said Pompeo's statement, titled the Crimea Declaration.

"In concert with allies, partners, and the international community, the United States rejects Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea and pledges to maintain this policy until Ukraine's territorial integrity is restored," it added. (RadioFreeEuroupe)

Even though the US refuses to legitimize the annexation, Russia seems unfazed by the rebuke. Current indicators seem to point to Putin's focus on Belarus as his next target of acquisition.

Belarus could be next. Unfortunately for Belarus, Russia has indicated that it wants to pick up the pace of integration. The war in Ukraine and the resulting standoff with NATO have made Belarus all the more important to Russia geopolitically. By stationing troops in Belarus, Russia could place additional military pressure on Ukraine and make it harder for NATO to defend its eastern flank. Conversely, if Belarus were to pivot westward, Moscow would lose a potential military staging ground and risk seeing Western political and economic influence extend over a population that many Russians regard as part of their own nation. (Foreign Policy)

The US / NATO have vested interests in limiting Russian annexation, and this should be considered an a priori issue in containing Russia.

US- Russia Nuclear Relations

Cawood, Hunter. “What to Expect in 2020 for Russia–US Relations.” *Modern Diplomacy*, Modern Diplomacy, 4 Jan. 2020, moderndiplomacy.eu/2019/12/30/what-to-expect-in-2020-for-russia-us-relations/#:~:text=Russia%20and%20the%20United%20States%20have%20had%20another,that%20closely%20resembles%20the%20past%20couple%20of%20years.

Perhaps the BIGGEST and most crucial forecast for 2020 is the expectation that Russia and the United States will begin negotiations towards extending the New START Treaty — the only remaining nuclear arms reduction pact between the two countries — that is set to expire in 2021. Up until this point, Russia and US relations as it relates to nuclear arms control have been on a downward spiral. More accurately, the United States pulled out of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty just this past August, a move that was harshly criticized for potentially destabilizing global security. The INF is likely a relic of the past, but when it comes to the New START treaty, there are legitimate reasons to be optimistic that diplomacy and dialogue will prevail in this upcoming year.

These meetings are ongoing, however, China has refused to participate in the 2020 meetings. It is possible that China would visit talks post US election if a new Commander-in-Chief is present, However, the likelihood that a START treaty will be reached and ratified anytime soon is not likely.

New Europe Reports:

The United States and Russia have agreed on a time and place for nuclear arms negotiations in June and invited China. Deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov will meet in Vienna on June 22 with US envoy Marshall Billingslea to start negotiations on the New Start treaty, which expires in February.

New Start is the only remaining agreement constraining the US and Russian nuclear arsenals. It imposes limits on the number of US and Russian long-range nuclear warheads and launchers. Russia has earlier offered to extend the treaty, but US President Donald Trump is pushing for a wider arms deal with both Russia and China.

However, China’s foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said China had “no intention of participating” in the talks and accused the US of trying to “deflect responsibilities to others”.

Russian Bounties on US Troops?

A new development in US Russia relations is emerging.

Newsweek reports on June 29, 2020: "Multiple media outlets have now reported that Russian intelligence officers offered bounties to the Taliban in Afghanistan to kill American and other NATO members' service personnel. As first captured in *The New York Times* on Friday with follow-on reporting from *The Washington Post*, CNN and other outlets, these stories suggest that Russian's military intelligence service—known as the GRU—was actively supporting these "bounties" and that subsequent intelligence, including cash payments and debriefings from captured Taliban fighters, provided the basis for the U.S. analysis.

While the press is focused on what President Donald Trump knew and when did he know it—and the domestic political ramifications—lost in the discussion is how this appears part of a larger Russian "active measures" effort to wage a strategic campaign using disinformation, propaganda and unconventional warfare against the United States. Whether through interference in the 2016 elections, propaganda efforts capitalizing on COVID-19, and the George Floyd-related protests, and now this Taliban-bounty program, the GRU has been a key instrument for President Vladimir Putin's anti-U.S. agenda.

The recent media reports indicate that the National Security Council (NSC) was apprised of the intelligence regarding the Taliban bounty program, which led to a series of high-level interagency meetings and discussions with U.K. counterparts, whose military personnel may also have been targeted. Despite these reports, there is little detail about what policy options may have been considered for President's Trump approval or analysis of the policy options that should have been considered. In the absence of any concrete information that has been revealed regarding these deliberations, here are several options that could be evaluated through the NSC process, going forward, if the White House is indeed serious on pushing back on Russia's multi-pronged campaign to weaken and destabilize the United States."

The emergence of information regarding US troop bounties further illustrates the desperate need for US intervention/attention to US-Russia relations.

Cooperation

Another direction this topic can take is to highlight the idea of increased cooperation between the United States and Russia. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States has treated the Russian Federation in a vacillating fashion between a full-fledged partner and a political opponent. For the United States, managing Russian ambitions requires pursuing a balance-of-power approach to minimize the risk of escalation. There are some areas in which the two countries have committed to continuing relations: Space Exploration, Climate Change mitigation, Nonproliferation, Biomedical Research, and Public Health.

The American Security Project offers the following analysis areas:

"Nonproliferation

Since the end of the Cold War, the US, Russia, and the majority of the global community have worked together to prevent the development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Historically, the US and Russia have been able to use their mutual interest in the reduction of nuclear stockpiles and the prevention of the emergence of new nuclear states to kickstart cooperation in other areas. While tensions between Russia and the US have grown over nuclear issues related to the INF, NATO development of missile shield capabilities, and the expansion of nuclear capabilities on both sides, their mutual interest in restricting the size and number of WMD stockpiles worldwide remain.

Space Exploration/Scientific Research

Following the Cold War's conclusion, the United States and Russia have worked together extensively on mutually beneficial research through efforts like the International Space Station (ISS) and the ITER project. This cooperation was damaged after the freezing of relations between the two countries in 2014, but the reasons for cooperation in this area remain. Both countries stand to gain from pursuing research in fields ranging from space to nuclear fusion to chemistry, and the economics of staffing and supplying these projects still justify working together to minimize costs.

Arctic Management

The US and Russia have been able to work together since the end of the Cold War to pursue environmental research in the Arctic, and have mutual interest in cooperating with one another in maritime search-and-rescue operations. If global temperatures continue to rise, northern shipping routes through previously inaccessible Arctic waters will become more common and the incentives to cooperate more powerful. Joint search-and-rescue exercise could facilitate the exchange of best practices between the two countries by combining Russia's Arctic expertise with the US Navy and Coast Guard's wealth of operational experience.

Biomedical Research and Public Health

During, and following the conclusion of, the Cold War, the US and Russia have pursued joint research opportunities in the biomedical field. Biomedical research is essential to the improvement of public health and the development of new technologies to deal with new health risks like drug-resistant bacteria and HIV/Aids that threaten the populations of both countries. The US and Russia are currently running joint research initiatives into cancer and HIV/AIDS. Outside of research, the US and Russia both have interests in establishing interoperability capacity to deal with global health crises and to facilitate the exchange of best practices for public health practices and policies." (Keaney)

Human Rights

Human Rights abuses in Russia read like a laundry list of atrocities aimed toward anyone opposing the ruling party. That remains as true today as it was decades ago before the fall of the Soviet empire. Human Rights Watch in World Report 2020, "In November, the Supreme Court ruled to shut down Movement for Human Rights, one of the country's oldest human rights groups."

This action was in response to growing civil unrest and protests.

> "With few exceptions, authorities responded to rising civic activism with bans, repressive laws, and showcase prosecutions. Record numbers of people protested the groundless exclusion of opposition candidates from a local election in Moscow, and authorities responded with an overwhelming show of force, detentions, and rushed criminal prosecutions."
>
> Human Rights Watch

Efforts to silence the minority voice include prison sentences based on little or false evidence, intimidation by violence, and attempts to silence the spread of open information. Election protests, environmental defenders, campaigns discrediting NGO's, curtailing internet freedom of expression, and gender/sexual orientation violence are all segments of society that have felt the wrath of Putin's Iron Fist.

The Arts have been creatively stifled in modern Russia. A major example could be seen when Film and stage director Kirill Serebrennikov was convicted of fraud, in what many believe is an attempt to muzzle the voice of the arts in Russia.

The most draconian measures to silence human rights abuses have come in the form of measures used to silence journalists. A Russian investigative journalist, Ivan Godunov, has been

arrested in the **capital Moscow** and charged with trying to illegally sell drugs. **Svetlana Prokopyeva** was charged with publicly justifying terrorism over a column she wrote about an attack that targeted Russian security services in northern Russia in 2018. Russia's intelligence services have "stepped-up' their war on free media, carrying out a series of operations designed to intimidate journalists in the wake of Vladimir Putin's controversial referendum victory for constitutional changes that could leave Putin in power until 2036.

"In an unprecedented case for post-Soviet Russia, prominent defence reporter Ivan Safronov was seized outside his home on Tuesday morning by secret service agents and arrested on suspicion of treason." The Union Journal.com

War on journalists will allow further human rights abuses to expand as no watch group is able to red flag what is happening behind Russia's closed doors.

Affirmative teams looking to address changes in US - Russia relations will have fertile ground with human right's abuses.

Negative

For the authors, who both grew up at the waning end of the Cold War, Russia was always seen as the enemy and thus it's actions seemed hard to defend. However, there are defenses of Russia that range from the straight-up defense of the status quo to the more theoretical arguments.

As in the past, there is significant evidence showing that a new Cold War with Russia is on the horizon. Any action by either the United States, Nato, or the UN could push the world to the precipice again. Actions against Russia could end up in nuclear annihilation.

"A Russian strategy of annihilation would require the use of nuclear weapons against its adversaries since it lacks the conventional means to destroy the U.S. and other core NATO nuclear powers. Should the threat to Russia, its people, or its interests become too great, it is conceivable that President Putin, as the Soviet leaders before him, would consider the use of nuclear weapons to annihilate the threat. While the (literal) nuclear option is not ideally suited to achieve Putin's objectives, it would potentially allow him to protect Russia and its interests – if only in a Pyrrhic victory. Given the extensive stockpile of U.S. nuclear weapons and the nuclear capabilities of the U.K. and France, annihilation is feasible but probably not acceptable under any but the most extreme circumstances. Instead, Putin will continue to use his nuclear capability as a strategic deterrent and umbrella of protection under which he can execute limited wars against his non-NATO neighbors while pursuing other strategies against the Alliance. This is the hallmark of the ongoing Cold War." (Rauen, Warroom.com)

In response to election meddling, the negatives support President Trump when he says that there was no meddling by Russia in the Elections.

"Trump has suggested that he believes Putin's denials that he was involved in any election interference. Trump said this after his first face-to-face meeting with Putin in July 2017. Trump struck a similar tone in November after meeting Putin again, saying: "Every time he sees me, he says, 'I didn't do that.' And I believe, I really believe, that when he tells me that, he means it." Standing next to Putin at the Helsinki summit, Trump again ignored the report's findings and said Putin was "very strong and powerful" in his denial of any meddling." (Cohen, CNN)

There is evidence that suggests the US has meddled in Russian elections as well.

"What many Russians, but few Americans, know is that 20 years before Russia tried to swing an American presidential election, America tried to swing a presidential election in Russia. The year was 1996. Boris Yeltsin was seeking a second term, and Bill Clinton desperately wanted to help. "I want this guy to win so bad," he told Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, "it hurts." (Beinart, The Atlantic)

In his article, Caroll points out a clear argument in Russia's defense;

"There is a constant fear in Europe that Russia will invade Europe, and place Europe under the domination of Moscow. Yet, if one reads the history of political relations between Russia and Europe for the last 200 years, it is Russia that has had to fear Europe and with good reason. Beginning with the Napoleonic invasion of Russia in 1812 to the Nazi invasion of 1941, Russia has had to fight for her polity and her life many times. The most serious invasion of these four invasions of Russia took place during the summer campaign in Southern Russia of 1942, lasting to the spring of 1943, which culminated in the Battle of Stalingrad. So, unless there has been some serious change in the dynamics between Russia and the West, Europe, with a population of 508 million and a GDP of $18.8 trillion, has nothing to really fear conventionally from a Russia that has a population of 144.5 million people and a GDP of $1.578 trillion." (International Policy Digest)

Negatives could also articulate that unilateral action against Russia does nothing and rather we need to act in a multilateral fashion.

As far as NATO and Russia are concerned, with the referendum that can allow Putin to remain in power until 2036, Vladimir Putin can play the long game and wear the NATO member states out.

"The sole good strategic option for Russia is the strategy of exhaustion, one that employs a variety of tools to sap the will of an adversary while avoiding decisive, direct military engagements. Unsurprisingly, that is precisely the strategy that Putin has pursued. Russia offsets its military limitations through cyber, information, economic, and political tools to influence other countries. It is important to highlight that many of the resources available to Putin, excluding nuclear weapons, can be used without clear attribution – this is a key factor when thinking about potential employment, particularly given NATO's Article 5. Putin's authority and his longevity as a leader are key to the formulation and execution of this integrated approach.

Putin has meticulously challenged and weakened NATO in ways that do not trigger the Article 5 response or international outrage. Exhaustion provides Putin with an approach that is feasible given Russia's resources, relatively acceptable in terms of its ways, and potentially suitable for accomplishing its objective over time." (Rauen)

Negatives will also have access to some generic arguments that will be available to them on a topic such as this. Negatives can read CPs to test the mechanism of the aff; foreign actor CPs and Cooperation CPs are strong arguments against Russia. Negatives can also articulate hegemony and capitalism is bad and that these would be two of the major impacts of American action against Russia.

Negatives also have some disadvantages at their disposal as well. There will definitely be some good ground for links to Politics DAs because different plans will require concessions from different political parties thus triggering the links. Negatives can also link to China DAs; one could argue that pressuring or containing Russia would drag China into a fight that would lead to world war. China is arguably surpassing Russian and the United States in status, and there is no argument that they are in the top three world superpowers. Negative teams can also read funding DAs; as the Cold War taught us, a war without firing any weapons is costly, the brunt of the funding, for a lot of affirmatives, will have to be traded off with other governmental organizations.

Additionally, Literature supports the ineffective nature of sanctions, calling for a different approach in dealing with Russia.

"For all the brave talk on Capitol Hill about "crushing" new sanctions against Russia, you'd think that someone might have done their homework about what actually makes the Russian economy tick, let alone whether any of the ideas circulating among U.S. policy experts are likely to change the Kremlin's calculus.

The dirty secret is that the Russian economy has become well-insulated against sanctions. Thanks to Russia's orthodox version of monetary policy, approved by the International Monetary Fund, and the recent rise in oil prices, Moscow's foreign currency reserves have recovered since their post-2014 dip and are now at an all-time high of almost half a trillion dollars. (That's equivalent to one-third of Russia's GDP and can cover 17 months of imports.)" (Movchan)

There are many "standard" arguments that negatives would be able to have granting fertile link ground on this topic. Theory arguments such as:

Topicality and extra topicality

Justification

Potential Disadvantages

1. US-Iran relations - The thesis is that currently Russia and Iran work together. If the United States alienates Russia, our already strained relations with Iran get worse. Russia could potentially sell arms to Iran increasing destabilization in the region. Furthermore, a conflict between the United States and Iran could advance Russia's power and reputation in the region in light of Moscow's expanding influence in Syria.

2. **Russia-Iran Relations** - The thesis is: Russian cooperates with the US causing Iran to perceive the action as Russian abandonment. With the current external pressure on Iran only mounting, Moscow remains the sole ally that Tehran can count on for arms supplies and military partnership. Although such cooperation is facing hurdles under UN Security Council Resolution 2231, the two are making efforts to bypass the existing limitations. If the United States and Russia can agree on a new START treaty, Iran could take retaliatory actions, further destabilizing the region.

3. **EU-Russian relations** - The thesis is: the United States influences the European Union to sanction Russia. Russia retaliates through expansionism and hostility, harming newer European Union members among the former Soviet Satellite countries, as well as the stability of European Union overall.

Kritik debate areas:

Imperialism - US or Russia. The narrative is, when countries expand negative backlash is often the result. Depending on the topic, the United States is projecting Hegemony onto the Russian Federation; or Russia is projecting Hegemony onto Crimea and/or Ukraine and/or Middle Eastern countries along with actual land grabs.

Capitalism- Russia The narrative surrounds the perceived failed transition to capitalism and a robust economy in the Russian Federation following the fall of the Soviet Empire.

Capitalism US- capitalism is evil. It dehumanizes people, because it does not think of them as complex, individual persons but rather as "consumers" to be manipulated into making purchases or working for minimal rewards.

Militarism- The narrative is colonization and imperialism have been an end result of militarism for centuries. Militarism and is currently a key element in new colonialism and the contemporary streamlining of the corporate economy as a global system. Militarism deploys and exploits intersecting inequalities based on gender, race or ethnicity, class and nation. Military engagement from an affirmative plan would trigger a militarism kritik.

Neoliberalism- An affirmative act of expanding relations with Russia could be classified as an attempt to maintain or extend international order. Anything from economic ties to military intervention can be classified as an attempt to maintain order. The attempt to extend order by a government entity triggers the neoliberalism response since neo-liberals argue in favor of transferring power of controlling the economy from the public sector to the private sector.

Cyber security- The concept of the "virtual" from philosopher Jean Baudrillard opens up concern from the dangers of mingling and confusing the virtual world with the real world. A kritik entailing the fear of technology could be run against affirmatives looking to harness the benefits of regulating/sharing technology security with/from Russia.

Definitions

Containment - The action or policy of preventing the expansion of a hostile country or influence.

Oxford Dictionary. (2019, June 6). Containment. Retrieved July 14, 2020, from https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/containment

Containment- The action of keeping something harmful under control or within limits.

Oxford Dictionary. (2019, June 6). Containment. Retrieved July 14, 2020, from https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/containment

Containment- The policy, process, or result of preventing the expansion of a hostile power or ideology

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Containment. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved July 14, 2020, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/containment

Cooperation- The process of working together to the same end.

Oxford Dictionary. (2019, June 6). Cooperation. Retrieved July 14, 2020, from https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/cooperation

Cooperation - (Oxford) assistance, especially by ready compliance with requests.

Oxford Dictionary. (2019, June 6). Cooperation. Retrieved July 14, 2020, from https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/cooperation

Diplomacy- (Merriam-Webster)the art and practice of conducting negotiations between nations

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Diplomacy. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved July 14, 2020, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diplomacy

NATO: The North Atlantic treaty of 1949 led to the formation of this military alliance between the 26 member countries with the intention of combating the spread of communism. It now makes a provision for defense against sources of threat from external and internal organizations.

What is NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO)? definition of NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO) (Black's Law Dictionary). The Law Dictionary. (2013, March 2). https://thelawdictionary.org/north-atlantic-treaty-organization-nato/.

NATO - POLITICAL - NATO promotes democratic values and enables members to consult and cooperate on defence and security-related issues to solve problems, build trust and, in the long run, prevent conflict.

NATO / OTAN. What is NATO? Retrieved July, 14, 2020, from https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html.

NATO - Military. NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military power to undertake crisis-management operations. These are carried out under the collective defence clause of NATO's founding treaty - Article 5 of the Washington Treaty or under a United Nations mandate, alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organisations.

NATO / OTAN. What is NATO? Retrieved July, 14, 2020, from https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html.

Pressure- the use of persuasion, influence, or intimidation to make someone do something.

Oxford Dictionary. (2019, June 6). Pressure. Retrieved July 14, 2020, from https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/pressure

Pressure- the constraint of circumstance : the weight of social or economic imposition

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Pressure. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved July 14, 2020, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pressure

Pressure- Power used to overcome resistance

pressure. (n.d.) *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition*. (2011). Retrieved July 14 2020 from https://www.thefreedictionary.com/pressure

Sanction - A coercive measure intended to ensure compliance or conformity

sanction. (n.d.) *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition*. (2011). Retrieved July 14 2020 from https://www.thefreedictionary.com/sanction

Sanction- International relations: Punitive or restrictive measures taken, usually by several countries in concert, to pressure a country to change its certain policies.

sanction. *BusinessDictionary.com.* Retrieved July 14, 2020, from BusinessDictionary.com website: http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/sanction.html

Sanction - Economic sanctions ban trading with the offending country

sanction. *BusinessDictionary.com*. Retrieved July 14, 2020, from BusinessDictionary.com website: http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/sanction.html

Sanction - Diplomatic sanctions result in withdrawal of relations and representations.

sanction. *BusinessDictionary.com*. Retrieved July 14, 2020, from BusinessDictionary.com website: http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/sanction.html

Potential Resolutions

1. The USFG should substantially increase diplomatic engagement with the Russian Federation in one or more of the following areas: military engagement, cybersecurity, and/or space development.

2. The USFG should substantially increase diplomatic engagement with the Russian Federation in one or more of the following areas: Nuclear Arms, Climate Change, and/or Military Engagement aimed at stabilization in the Middle East.

3. Resolved: That the United States federal government should substantially increase its pressure to end worldwide Russian election meddling.

4. Resolved: That the United States should substantially change its foreign policy toward Russia. (This was the topic in 1998-1999. MUCH has changed in the 20 years that this topic was debated.)

5. Resolved: The United States and Russia should increase cooperation in one or more of the following areas: space exploration, climate change mitigation, nonproliferation, biomedical research, and public health.

Consideration of a Foreign Actor:

- Resolved: NATO should increase military aid and/or economic pressure to contain Russian Federation presence in Crimea and/or Ukraine.
- Resolved NATO ought to develop a comprehensive plan for the Russian Federation
- Resolved: NATO should de-escalate conflict with Russia
- Resolved: The United Nations should broaden sanctions to contain the Russian Federation

Bibliography

Ali, J., & Kirshner, J. (2020, June 29). Responding to Russian Bounties on U.S. Troops in Afghanistan. *Newsweek*. https://www.newsweek.com/responding-russian-bounties-us-troops-afghanistan-opinion-1514163.

Beinart, P. (2018, September 4). *The U.S. Needs to Face Up to Its Long History of Election Meddling*. https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/07/the-us-has-a-long-history-of-election-meddling/565538/.

Bershidsky, L. (2019, March 16). *Russia's Annexation of Crimea 5 Years Ago Has Cost Putin Dearly*. Bloomberg.com. https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-03-16/russia-s-annexation-of-crimea-5-years-ago-has-cost-putin-dearly.

Blanton, T., & Savranskaya, S. (Eds.). (2019, December 5). *Nuclear Weapons and Ukraine*. https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/nunn-lugar-russia-programs/2019-12-05/nuclear-weapons-ukraine.

Carroll, R. E. (2019, September 19). *Russia and the West: How the West Won the Cold War but Lost the Peace*. https://intpolicydigest.org/2019/09/01/russia-and-the-west-how-the-west-won-the-cold-war-but-lost-the-peace/.

Cawood, H. (2020, January 4). *What to Expect in 2020 for Russia–US Relations*. Modern Diplomacy. https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2019/12/30/what-to-expect-in-2020-for-russia-us-relations/.

Cohen, M. (2018, July 19). *Trump versus US intelligence on Russian election interference*. https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/18/politics/trump-versus-us-intelligence-on-russian-election-interference/index.html.

Connable, B., Young, S., Pezard, S., Radin, A., Cohen, R. S., Migcheva, K., & Sladdon, J. (2020). Russia's Hostile Measures - Combating Russian Gray Zone Aggression against NATO in the Contact, Blunt, and Surge Layers of Competition. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2500/RR2539/RAND_RR2539.pdf.

Gvosdev, N. K. (2019, June 1). *Is Russia Sabotaging Democracy in the West?* https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0030438719300675.

Keaney, J. *US-Russia Cooperation*. https://www.americansecurityproject.org/us-russia-relationship/us-russia-cooperation/.

Mankoff, J. (2020, April 16). *Will Belarus Be the Next Ukraine?* https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/belarus/2020-02-05/will-belarus-be-next-ukraine.

Movchan, A. (2018, October 2). *New Sanctions Won't Hurt Russia*. https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/09/26/new-sanctions-wont-hurt-russia-putin-oligarchs-rusal-deripaska/.

Najarian, M. (2018, July 26). *U.S. Issues 'Crimea Declaration' Rejecting Russia's Annexation*. https://www.rferl.org/a/u-s-issues-crimea-declaration-reaffirming-rejection-of-russia-s-annexation/29390681.html.

Oliker, O. (2015, December 3). *U.S.-Russian Relations*. https://www.csis.org/programs/russia-and-eurasia-program/archives/us-russian-relations.

Pavlovska, E. (2020, June 11). *China refuses to join US-Russia arms control talks*. https://www.neweurope.eu/article/china-refuses-to-join-us-russia-arms-control-talks/.

Radin, A., Demus, A., & Marcinek, K. (2020, February 18). *How to Understand and Respond to Russian Subversion*. https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE331.html?utm_campaign=.

Rauen, B. (2017, October 31). *THE NEW COLD WAR: HOW RUSSIA IS WINNING*. https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/new-cold-war-russia/.

Theisen, L. (2020, May 5). *FBI warns of secret Russian interference in 2020 elections*. https://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/ny-fbi-warns-of-secret-russian-interference-in-2020-elections-20200505-pq74nusotbg2tdqiyypclwozqa-story.html.

Toplansky, E. F. (2020, June 22). *The Soviet Plan for 'Ideological Subversion' Describes Our Current Turmoil*. https://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2020/06/the_soviet_plan_for_ideological_subversion_precisely_describes_our_current_turmoil.html.

University Press, O. (2019). *Containment: Definition of Containment by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com also meaning of Containment*. Lexico Dictionaries | English. https://www.lexico.com/definition/containment.