CENTRE FOR MILITARY STUDIES
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Revanchism – Russians – Justice

Foreign Policy Perceptions in Russia

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Denne rapport er en del af Center for Militære Studiers forskningsbaserede myndighedsbetjening for Forsvarsministeriet. Formålet med rapporten er at give danske iagttagere og politikere en bredere forståelse af, hvordan Ruslands indbyggere og i særdeleshed Ruslands elite forholder sig til Vesten, herunder til Danmark, og hvordan de vil forholde sig til Vesten i fremtiden. Dette baseres på en analyse af udenrigspolitiske opfattelser i Rusland 2014 med særligt fokus på opfattelser af Danmarks nærområder, Østersøområdet og Arktis.

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This report is a part of Centre for Military Studies' policy research service for the Ministry of Defence. The purpose of the report is to provide Danish politicians and the Danish public with a wider understanding of how Russians and, in particular how the Russian elite, perceive the West, including Denmark, and how they will relate themselves to the West in the future. The report is an analysis of foreign policy perceptions in Russia with a particular focus on Russian perceptions of Denmark's 'near abroad', the Baltic Sea Region and Arctic.

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English Abstract

This report provides a current analysis of foreign policy perceptions in Russia, and in particular within Russia's elite. The report describes the foreign policy perceptions held by Russia's elite using three concepts: Revanchism, Russians and Justice. Russia's elite is revanchist in relation to the West, which is seen as hypocritical and inimical to Russia's interests. It seeks to create a Russia which is centred on Russians and values the state above all. Russia's elite seeks to create a world order, which they consider just and in which Russia has a central position. With these three aims, Russia's elite perceives the past, present and future in a manner that is fundamentally different from the dominant perceptions in the West. On this background, there is a risk that relations between Russia and the West will suffer from mutual incomprehension in the years to come.

Denmark must quickly determine how to engage with Russia. In the short term, Denmark might cooperate with Russia in some areas, such as the relaxation of visa requirements, improving transport in the Arctic and, to a certain extent, economic issues. This could gradually enable Denmark and Russia to rebuild up a certain level of mutual trust. However, the report argues that such trust might be limited by a lack of acceptance and understanding of political perceptions in the West by Russia's elite. Therefore, the report argues that it might be advantageous for Denmark to seek such acceptance and understanding before attempting to engage in significant cooperation on other issues.

The report consists of three parts. The first part analyses how Russia's elite views the world as a whole, the West, Russia and the position of Russia in the world. The second and third parts analyse how Russia's elite views two areas near Denmark: the Baltic region and the Arctic. Based on these analyses, the report provides recommendations for Danish policy towards Russia in the coming years.

Dansk resumé

Denne rapport analyserer udenrigspolitiske opfattelser i Rusland og i særdeleshed blandt Ruslands elite anno 2014. Rapporten hævder, at Ruslands elites udenrigspolitiske opfattelser kan sammenfattes i tre fokuspunkter: Revanche, Russere og Retfærdighed. Ruslands elite ønsker revanche mod Vesten, der ses som en hyklerisk undertrykker af Ruslands interesser. Ruslands elite ønsker et Rusland, der er samlet omkring russere og sætter staten over alt andet. Ruslands elite ønsker en for dem retfærdig verdensorden, hvor Rusland har en afgørende betydning. Disse tre ønsker betyder, at Ruslands elite har en opfattelse af fortiden, nutiden og fremtiden, som på afgørende vis adskiller sig fra dominerende opfattelser i Vesten. I de kommende år risikerer Ruslands forhold til Vesten at lide under manglende forståelse parterne imellem.

Danmark skal hurtigt gøre sig klart, hvordan man vil forholde sig til Rusland. På kort sigt kan Danmark samarbejde med Rusland om visse emner såsom lempelse af visumregler og forbedring af transportforholdene i Arktis og til dels om økonomiske spørgsmål. Dermed har Danmark og Rusland måske en mulighed for gradvist at genopbygge en vis gensidig tillid. Men denne rapport hævder, at en sådan tillid kan være begrænset af Ruslands elites manglende accept af, og manglende forståelse af, Vestens politiske opfattelser. Rapporten foreslår derfor, at Danmark forbereder sig på, at Ruslands elites forståelse og accept af disse opfattelser kan være en forudsætning for, at et holdbart samarbejde om andre emner kan finde sted.

Rapporten består af tre dele. Første del analyserer Ruslands elites syn på verden som helhed, på Vesten samt på Rusland og på Ruslands plads i verden. Anden og tredje del analyserer Ruslands elites syn på to af Danmarks nærområder, henholdsvis Østersøregionen og Arktis. På baggrund af disse analyser giver rapporten anbefalinger til, hvordan Danmark kan forholde sig til Rusland i de kommende år.

Recommendations

- Denmark faces a strategic choice; it can choose to cooperate with Russia, particularly in the regions close to Denmark, as often as possible, or it can limit cooperation with Russia until political behaviour by Russia corresponds to the Danish and Western perceptions of a legitimate world order. In the short run, the former choice allows Denmark to solve practical problems in the Baltic region and the Arctic. In the medium term, the latter choice might minimise the risk of Russia becoming permanently opposed to the Western community of values.
- Denmark should remain prepared to secure the sovereignty of the Baltic States in relation to Russia by political, diplomatic and, if necessary, military means.
- Denmark and NATO should work to provide Finland and Sweden with as close an association with NATO as the two countries wish to have.
- Denmark and the EU should continue to promote energy diversification for all of the states in the Baltic region.
- Denmark should consider the consequences of the crisis in relation to Ukraine for the security status of the Arctic. Here, Denmark and NATO should consider whether they have the sufficient capacity to oppose potential military aggression by Russia in the Arctic.
- Denmark and the EU should consider resuming visa negotiations with Russia, particularly in order to reduce the isolation of the economy and inhabitants of Kaliningrad in the Baltic region.
- Despite the Ilulissat Declaration from 2008, Denmark should consider whether a position jointly held by all of the EU member states and Greenland could provide the basis for economic cooperation with Russia in the Arctic.
- Denmark might consider offering Russia legal recognition of Russian sovereignty over the Northern Sea Route in return for a legally binding guarantee that Russia will not discriminate against foreign ships on the route.
- Denmark should prepare for the possibility of lasting disagreement with Russia concerning the rights to parts of the Arctic underground.

Contents

1. Introduction[1]

Europe is in a crisis. Today, this crisis is more urgent than at any time since the Cold War and in some respects since the Second World War. In 2014, the crisis has focused on Ukraine, but its roots go deeper than the conflict of the last half year in the post-Soviet country.

The Ukraine conflict stems partly from circumstances that are particular to the country. However, it also stems from the relationship between Russia and the West; a relationship marked by tension during the last decade or even further back. Some observers see the reasons for this in set conditions. Some therefore think that Russia will always oppose Europe and the USA given its military and energy resources.[2] Others believe that its extensive borders, being difficult to defend, make Russia feel vulnerable, thus provoking a reaction.[3] Then there are those who argue that Russia's conflict with other parts of the world stems from incompatible political systems; as long as Russia is not a democracy, the country will tend to pursue an aggressive foreign policy.[4]

These explanations all have some impact when we attempt to understand the foreign policy of Russia and Russia's actions in Ukraine and elsewhere. Yet it is telling that the current crisis surprised many in Russia as well as in the EU and USA, despite the notion that crisis is a continuous part of Russia's relations with the West. Recent years have yielded warnings that Russia, and Ukraine in particular, could become the centre of tensions in Europe.[5] Russia and Ukraine have repeatedly clashed during the last decade, particularly concerning natural gas. Nevertheless, at the beginning of 2014, few if any international observers predicted that demonstrations against then-Ukrainian President Viktor Ianukovych would lead to street fighting, a new regime, Russia's annexation of the Crimean peninsula and civil war in eastern Ukraine, all of which to date have cost the lives of thousands of Ukrainians, Russians and people of other nationalities.[6]

Numerous factors have contributed to the crisis in Ukraine and to the crisis between Russia and the West. Understanding all of these factors is important, not only in order to solve the current crisis in Ukraine but also so that the West, including Denmark, can relate to Russia in the longer term and to its position in Europe and the rest of the world. Analysts must consider the durable factors mentioned above as well as factors specifically relating to the conflict in Ukraine, analyses of which have begun appearing in Denmark and abroad.[7] They must also consider Russia-specific factors and how people in Russia perceive their country and its position on the international scene.

This report has the latter aim in mind and analyses foreign policy perceptions in Russia as of 2014. The report does so both in general terms and with a particular focus on areas close to Denmark, the Baltic region and the Arctic. It seeks to provide observers and politicians in Denmark and elsewhere with a more thorough understanding of how the inhabitants of Russia, and particularly Russia's elite,[8] today and tomorrow will relate to the West and thus to Denmark.

2. The Argument

Foreign policy perceptions in Russia currently centre on three focal points, which together provide an extensive – if at times contradictory – image of Russia and the world. The three focal points, which are detailed further below, are **Revanchism**, **Russians** and **Justice**. "**Revanchism"** covers the dissatisfaction of Russia's elite with the contemporary international order. Russia's elite believes that Russia has been the target of Western threats, attacks and deceit for at least a decade and, in many regards, since the Soviet collapse. Thus, Russia has been forced to defend itself, to be reactive and revanchist in order to limit the damage caused by the West. What is included as part of this "West" is not always clear, yet at minimum in the minds of Russia's elite, this term includes the USA and other NATO member states as well as, increasingly, the member states of the EU. As such, Russia's elite views Denmark as firmly placed within the West, against which Russia must defend itself and seek to retaliate.

Whereas Revanchism refers to the international standing of Russia, "**Russians"** refers to how Russia's elite views their own country, which must engage the rest of the world. Russia's elite is convinced that Russia has to unite around "the Russians". It is possible to understand this category in exclusive terms; that is, you can only be "Russian" if you were born Russian. This attitude is popular with parts of the political opposition in Russia. Yet in order to understand the attitudes of Russia's elite, it has become more helpful to view "Russians" as an inclusive category, which anybody can join as long as they place the aims and rights of the community (i.e., the Russian state) above the aims and rights of the individual. The discourse of a "Russian" Russia idealises a Russia, which demands the unquestioned loyalty of the inhabitants to the state, which is corporatist, which is chauvinistic abroad – where it aims for glory for Russia – and which considers a degree of geographical expansion in relation to the neighbouring states. Such an idealised Russia has obviously authoritarian traits and, to some degree, is comparable to fascist regimes such as Francisco Franco's Spain.[9]

If Revanchism refers to the desire of Russia's elite to change the international order – and if "Russians" refers to the fact that this status quo should be changed in favour of a Russia that prioritises the aims and rights of the state and group over those of the individual – then "**Justice"** refers to the view of Russia's elite on how and to which end the world should be changed. The national rulers are to lead Russia towards a glorious future in which it assumes its rightful position as a great power in a multipolar international order. And in a just world, Russia shall regain its sphere of interest in the post-Soviet near abroad – including areas where the country borders Denmark and the countries neighbouring Denmark. Russia's leaders occasionally indicate that this future has been reached, yet such success remains temporary and partial, lasting only until accusations of Western attacks and the suppression of Russia reappear in the foreign policy debate. Such setbacks do not imply that Russia's elite is prepared to abandon its goal of a just international order – on the contrary – but the road to this goal has changed of late. For a number of decades, Russia's elite, and the Soviet elite previously, viewed order as an intrinsic value in the international system. This explains the unconditional support offered by the Soviet Union to the confirmation of post-war European borders in the 1975 Helsinki Accords. During the last decade, this view on international relations has gradually shifted in Russia. And with the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine, Russia's elite has conclusively indicated that they no longer necessarily seek a just world through respect for state sovereignty and international law. Instead, Russia's elite is prepared to use various forms of power – be they political, military, economic or cultural power[10] – to advance the ideal of justice for Russia.

2.1 Implications for Danish foreign policy

Based on a range of Russian and non-Russian sources, the report will detail how these three focal points within Russia's elite are today expressed in relation to the West in general and specifically in relation to the Baltic region and the Arctic. The report argues that foreign policy perceptions in Russia imply that: **(1)** Denmark must be prepared for persistent disagreements and tensions in its relationship with Russia. The current crisis in Ukraine is hardly a unique case; rather, it has been provoked by longstanding frustrations in Russia with the West, including Denmark, and with the current order of the international system; **(2)** Denmark must be prepared for the fact that Russia's elite will actively seek to increase Russian influence in both the Baltic and Arctic regions, where this influence will be sought through economic, yet perhaps also political, cultural and even military means; and **(3)** Russia's elite will carry out such policies based on the idea of an increasingly authoritarian or even fascist

Russian state, which focuses on the subordination of the individual by the state and increasingly places Russia in opposition to the Western community of values,[11] thereby undermining mutual understanding and trust between the parties.

2.2 National interests and sources

The above-mentioned frameworks of understanding in Russia are all connected to conceptions of the national interest. This report assumes that national interests in Russia and elsewhere cannot be calculated only according to parameters, which are valid for all states and can be summed up by the term "rational thinking".

If foreign policy perceptions in Russia were subjected to such a "rational" analysis, this might imply (as previously mentioned) that such perceptions were influenced by the wide borders of the country, which leave Russia vulnerable to invasion; by the increasing military and economic strength of Russia, which enables the country to increase its international influence; or perhaps by the somewhat undemocratic governance of Russia, which cultivates an aggressive foreign policy. As such, factors such as geography, state power and forms of governance always influence foreign policy thinking to some extent. Actors cannot ignore the circumstances in which they find themselves, and all actors are indeed rational thinkers – basing their actions on the assumption that if "X does Y this will result in Z".

However, such analysis might limit understandings of foreign policy thinking in Russia. Notably, the assumption that Russia is guided by a defined, "rational" national interest risks unnecessarily simplifying the multitude of foreign policy perceptions in Russia.[12] For instance, if the report assumed from the outset that everyone in Russia is primarily concerned with Russia's military security, the report would be less able to include those who are concerned with Russian identity; and vice versa. For the report to comprise the broadest possible range of foreign policy perceptions in Russia, it is therefore necessary to understand national interests as flexible and ambiguous.[13]

Such an approach implies that the report must meet foreign policy thinking in Russia on the terms of the latter, so to speak, based on statements and sources from Russia. The purpose of this report is not to demonstrate the extent to which foreign policy perceptions in Russia fit various hypotheses. Rather, the purpose is to gather these perceptions in a kind of story, which shows what Russia – past and future – is as understood by those who see themselves as part of Russia. The report thus offers an understanding of main tendencies in the debate in

Russia. These tendencies are often ambiguous yet create a prism through which it is possible to view perceptions in Russia of specific areas, such as the Baltic and Arctic regions.

To the extent possible, these perceptions will be identified and grouped with the help of primary sources; that is, verbal and written texts produced by members of Russia's elite and by Russia's society in general. The report thus uses the inductive method. Slightly simplified, this means that the report begins by consulting an extensive amount of primary sources concerning the topic in question. These sources are then gathered in a draft story. Subsequently, a wider selection of sources is consulted, the story is modified according to this wider selection, and the process is repeated until the report is capable of analysis, which presents a story summarising foreign policy thinking in Russia.[14]

The sources in this report are ascribed analytical importance according to four criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning.[15] Authenticity is judged according to the origin of the source in question. Official documents, state-owned media as well as nationwide media with a prominent national and international profile are normally assumed to present authentic sources, whereas the report has sought to find further support for sources appearing in less prominent media. In general, primary sources used in this report can be considered to be credible. Primary sources are credible as long as they accurately describe their authors' thoughts on international affairs. For instance, Russian sources demonstrating a fear of NATO are credible as long as this fear is real for the authors of the sources, irrespective of any intentions that NATO might have. Representativeness is sought by consulting a wide range of sources. Particular emphasis is placed on sources originating with those actors who have significant political influence in Russia; this "elite" centres on Vladimir Putin and includes Russia's government ministers and prominent parliamentarians, the military and the world of business.[16] Finally, the meaning of a source is determined by using secondary sources to create the context and by using primary sources in the original language whenever possible.

2.3 Structure

The report consists of this introduction, three chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter creates a story, or prism, through which the following two chapters should be viewed. It deals with foreign policy attitudes amongst Russia's elite towards the West in general, and the NATO and EU member states in particular. The three parts of this chapter focus on those three tendencies, which the report identifies in foreign policy thinking in Russia: Revanch-

ism, Russians and Justice. The following two chapters deal with perceptions of Russia's elite of regions close to Denmark, including the Baltic region and the Arctic. These chapters are divided into thematic sections based on those themes, which Russia's elite now see as especially important. Finally, the conclusion presents recommendations for how Denmark may address the Russia presented in the report.

3. The Story of Russia

Today, Russia's elite views the world, the West and Russia itself through a story, or narrative, which can be understood in terms of three concepts: Revanchism, Russians and Justice.

3.1 Revanchism

Russia's elite is opposed to the international order that has developed in the decades following the Cold War. People in Russia have long felt mistreated by the West. During the presidency of Boris El'tsin this was particularly noticeable in connection with the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999; an intervention, which ignored consistent protests by Russia and provoked fear in Russia of Western military activity.[17] During the early years of Putin's presidency, some rapprochement between Russia and the West accompanied the War on Terror, yet beginning no later than 2004 Russia's elite again became convinced that the West wanted forcibly to mould the world, and Russia, in its image. For the Putin regime, the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine thus served as an example of how the West was prepared to exploit the inhabitants of the post-Soviet states as "lab rats" to further Western notions of democracy. Later, Putin stressed that he viewed the removal of Viktor Ianukovych in 2014 as similar Western abuse of Ukraine.[18]

It must be stressed that Putin did not simply want to protect the Ukrainian neighbour against inappropriate Western interference. In 2004 as in 2014, Putin's dissatisfaction with Western interference in Ukrainian politics was based in particular on the constant fear to which he and Russia's elite subscribed that such interference might spread to Russia. In December 2011, when Russia experienced widespread demonstrations against electoral fraud during the recently conducted parliamentary elections, Putin was therefore convinced that the demonstrators had been paid by the USA. Putin and his allies were probably not worried in earnest that the USA might topple Russia's regime through such means,[19] yet they could not be satisfied with an international order in which the USA so clearly could keep Russia on the defensive.[20]

Putin views the damaging influence of the USA as ever-present in the international system. Thus, the leader of Russia has not been surprised that the USA, with NATO in tow, has sought to replace international law with arms under both George Bush and Barack Obama. Gone are the days when Russia could obtain compromises with the USA and other international great powers in the UN Security Council or in other international fora. Today, the West is more interested in interfering through political and military means in Eastern Europe and the Middle East to ensure that the international system is reshaped according to Western wishes.[21]

Even worse, today the West invokes principles, which according to Putin are not invoked for Russia or its allies. Kosovo was allowed to exercise its right to self-determination, but that has not been the case for South Ossetia, Abkhazia or Crimea. The USA and NATO have appropriated the right to involve themselves in domestic affairs in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and other states far from the borders of the West, yet Russia cannot even be allowed to take action when its immediate interests are threatened in neighbouring Ukraine.[22] Today, Putin is convinced that such an international order is unfair and must be changed.

Putin's resistance to the international behaviour of the West is widely shared within Russia's elite. Together with the Western criticism of Ianukovych and Russia, the crisis in Ukraine has provoked anger within government ministries in Russia. Sergei Lavrov, Foreign Minister of Russia, already accused the West in February 2014 of attempting to create a sphere of influence in Ukraine based on the premise that "you are either with us or against us".[23] According to Russia's elite, the EU attempt to force Ukraine into an agreement on cooperation is based on a similar premise. Russia's elite views this attempt as directly contributing to the current crisis.

Today, there are not likely any serious concerns in Russia that the West is preparing for military intervention in Ukraine. Yet given its position of international dominance, the West has been able to use economic sanctions to damage Russia, which has caused considerably anger in Russia. When the crisis was in its early stages – at a time when relatively few, mostly peripheral individuals in Russia and Ukraine were subjected to sanctions – Russia's elite generally dismissed the sanctions as unimportant or as a minor irritation. As the sanctions began to target individuals with more influence in Russia, however, criticism increased. Valentina Matvienko, chair of the upper chamber in Russia's state parliament, complained in March 2014 that the sanctions constituted political blackmail to an extent not even experienced dur-

ing the Cold War.[24] The next month, Sergei Riabkov, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister, drew a similar comparison with the Cold War.[25] Similarly, as banks and other companies have been subjected to sanctions, they, too, have claimed that the attack on them represents a threat to global finance.[26] What the West views as the response to an emergency in Europe, Russia's elite views as part of a long-term plan to keep Russia subjugated.

In June 2014, following months of sanctions and protests by Russia, Russia's Prime Minister Dmitrii Medvedev finally chose to submit a complaint over the sanctions to the WTO. Medvedev's hopes for the complaint were limited, however, as he was convinced that the USA had both "doctrinal and practical" authority in the WTO.[27] It is this very lack of trust in international organisations that is currently commonplace amongst Russia's elite. They might want to see the Western international hegemony replaced by institutional pluralism, but this is of little use if they view institutions from the UN downwards as being under Western control. Russia has repeatedly condemned UN reports on the state of human rights in Ukraine as one-sided, Western propaganda.[28] When the Council of Europe suspended the voting rights of Russia, the head of Russia's delegation to the Council, Aleksei Pushkov, presented accusations of political extremism and, again, of a new cold war.[29] In recent years, domestic opposition has even appeared in relation to international organisations and agreements to which Russia has voluntary acceded. This is not just the case in relation to agreements concerning Russia's political or military security. For instance, Russia signed the European Social Charter in 2009, and three years later the Russian Orthodox Church opposed Medvedev's suggested bill based on provisions in the Charter. This dispute centred on provisions on child abuse, a topic regarding which the Church readily accepted legislation, but the provisions had to conform to Russian tradition; or so said the Orthodox Church,[30] the argument of which concerning the prioritisation of Russian tradition convinced Putin to reconsider the bill.[31]

When a bill concerning child abuse could be challenged due to a Russian wish to avoid Western influence, it is easy to understand how sanctions and other Western initiatives directed against Russia could be viewed in Moscow as a long-term plan to preserve Western international dominance. Even analysts from Russia such as Dmitrii Trenin – who in the past consistently advocated the gradual integration of Russia into the Western international order[32] – now argues that the Cold War has returned and that Western partnership with Russia has dissolved.[33] In this context, it again becomes important to stress that this clash has not been caused by the crisis in Ukraine – a crisis, which simply catalysed existing frustrations in Russia. Already in 2009, when the new Obama administration tried to repair relations with the

Russia of Medvedev and Putin, researchers in Russia warned that mutual understanding would only be achieved if the two states could agree on how to organise the international system in a manner, which offered more space to Russia.[34] This has rarely been a priority for the USA or for the West in general, meaning that how Russia's elite perceives the West could only worsen. Russia's elite has grown increasingly incensed with that which they perceive to be a world that has become unjust and unstable following the Cold War; a world in which many of the so-called winners of the Cold War claim the right to always be right.[35] A clear example of this, for the elite as well as for ordinary citizens in Russia, is the continuous expansion of NATO despite protests in Russia. Thus, opinion polls in Russia revealed in 2011 that 36% of the respondents still viewed NATO as an enemy of Russia, while 29% viewed the USA as an enemy.[36]

Yet Revanchism does not simply stem from anger; it also stems from despair. At the same time that Russia's elite has repeatedly witnessed how the West took the initiative in Russia's near abroad and in Russia itself, the ability of Russia to respond has been limited. As previously mentioned, Russia's elite has probably not feared the West forcing political changes in the country. In the medium term, however, the future of Russia looks ominous. The country was severely hit by the global financial crisis in 2008, not just due to economic developments but also because the population of Russia found it increasingly difficult to trust its leaders. Between 2008 and 2011, 1.25 million people left Russia, most of whom travelled to the West. A clear majority were middle-class businesspeople, and at least 145,000 planned to settle abroad permanently.[37] Likewise, Russia lost half a million entrepreneurs in 2010; most of whom were lost to emigration.[38] The real emigration figures are quite possibly even higher.

Russia could probably reverse this tendency to emigrate if the country was able to offer a promising, dynamic economy to those who stay. Yet Russia remains predominantly dependent on its energy exports despite Putin's repeated exhortations to diversify the economy. The clear majority of income from Russian exports stems from oil sales, the price of which has fallen to around US$80 per barrel.[39] Furthermore, it remains possible that the price could drop even further (during the crisis in 2008 the price fell to $40/barrel), especially when the USA at some point becomes an even more significant energy producer and exporter.[40] Moreover, even when the price of oil was around $100 and before the crisis in Ukraine and subsequent Western sanctions, Russia only expected economic growth of 1.8% in the coming decade – hardly promising prospects.[41] As regards natural gas, production in the largest Russian fields has dropped significantly since the mid-1990s. State-owned Gazprom apparently faces

permanent production declines. The company is expected to produce 344 BCM (billion cubic metres) of natural gas in 2020 compared to 550 BCM produced a decade previously. The fact that production of natural gas in Russia might for a while continue to increase overall due to private energy companies such as NOVATEK and LUKOIL will not necessarily be sufficient for Russia's elite to ensure the welfare of the state and its citizens.[42]

The Ukraine crisis and subsequent Western sanctions emerged in this context. For Russia, the economic impact has been swift and noticeable. During the first three months of 2014, $64 billion left Russia, as compared to $63 billion in all of 2013. Investment by companies from Russia inside Russia itself fell by 7% in January and 3.5% in February year-on-year. Between January and March 2014, households demonstrated their lack of trust in the rouble by acquiring $19.6 billion worth of foreign currency, an accumulation not seen since Q4 in 2008. Similarly, banks had not had reserves of foreign currency amounting to $35 billion since the crisis in 2008, yet that figure was reached again in 2014. Russia's Deputy Minister of the Economy Andrei Klepach predicts 0.5% growth for 2014, or 1.1% with the aid of a fiscal stimulus. Russia's Ministry of Economic Affairs expects that $100 billion will leave Russia in 2014; a figure the World Bank expects to be $150 billion.[43] In this light, one readily understands how Russia's elite might feel under attack by the West in a situation where the latter – or so thinks Russia's elite – should perhaps instead have been ready to cooperate with, understand and support Russia.

3.2 Russians

If Russia cannot receive assistance from the West, if Russia is attacked and suppressed by the West, then Russia's elite must gather a Russia that is prepared for the challenge. Already early in the first Putin presidency, scholars noticed the tendency of Russia's elite to follow Aleksandr Gorchakov, foreign minister of the Russian Empire following the Crimean War and advocate of the idea that Russia should rebuild its international strength through domestic consolidation and the building of a strong state.[44] And as Putin prepared to reclaim the presidency in 2012, he again highlighted Gorchakov. In one of a number of articles, which early that year presented Putin's electoral programme in Russia's media, Gorchakov's slogans were used to explain how Russia should now seek to consolidate and prepare for future challenges after its position had been weakened in previous decades.[45]

Putin wants to consolidate a "Russia of the Russians". In this context, it is important not to misunderstand what "Russians" implies for Putin and Russia's elite. In this context, "Rus-

sians" is not simply to be understood as an exclusive, ethnic category, to which a person can only belong by birth. Putin has repeatedly praised multinational Russia, and there is no reason to doubt his and the government's use for such a Russia. During the last decade, Russia's elite has included prominent politicians who were not Russian by birth, including longstanding prominent state ideologist Vladislav Surkov (reportedly born Aslanbek Dudaev[46] in Chechnya) or the Tatar Rashid Nurgaliev, who was Russia's Minister of the Interior for 10 years.

This does not imply that Putin has ignored ethnic Russians. In his electoral programme from 2012, Putin views this people and its culture as the focus around which all peoples and ideas in the country should gather. According to Putin, new history books ought to demonstrate that ethnic Russians made medieval Rus' into the Russian Empire; that ethnic Russians carried the most important traditions of the country into the Soviet Union; and that ethnic Russians must now again ensure the coherence and strength of Russia in the new Western world. This is achieved through Russian language and culture or by offering financial support and attention to non-Russian peoples or regions, as demonstrated to some degree by the 2014 Winter Olympics in the Northern Caucasus.[47]

So far, so conciliatory. Within the borders of the Russian Federation, Putin's vision of a Russia led by ethnic Russians has generally been able to continue unchallenged. Yet this vision is also part of his foreign policy, and Russia's elite has expressed its concern for the wellbeing of ethnic and non-ethnic Russians abroad. Following the wavering and subsequent toppling of the Ianukovych regime in Ukraine, media in Russia have repeatedly argued that nationalists and neo-Nazis from Western Ukraine, who hate everything Russian, saturate political opposition to Ianukovych in Ukraine.[48] The occupation and annexation of Crimea by Russia has been explicitly motivated as a defence of Russians living on the peninsula against Ukrainian hatred. And as already mentioned, "Russian" is a category in this context that other peoples can join; anybody in Ukraine or elsewhere who wants to do so can ask to be protected by Russia as a Russian "compatriot". Yet this very openness places a sinister sheen on Putin's support for "Russians" abroad, for if anyone is entitled to be Russian, Putin can ignore or even fight those choosing not to take part in his project. And it was partly with the intent to combat such saboteurs that Putin sought and gained parliamentary approval to defend his compatriots in Ukraine and anywhere else where such may be found.[49]

Support for compatriots living outside the borders of the Russian Federation is a topic to which the government of Russia has often returned. Dmitrii Peskov, Putin's spokesperson, has confirmed Putin's pledge that, in the future, Russia will protect its citizens and anyone else who speaks Russian.[50] Such a promise places Putin's longstanding plans to spread Russian language and culture abroad in an ominous light. These plans are by no means always promoted by force. Russkii Mir, the organisation established by Russia in 2007 to promote Russian culture abroad, has benefitted from a highly energetic leadership and generous budget. The name of the organisation can be translated as *the (ethnic) Russian world* or *the (ethnic) Russian peace*, and it is easy to see the organisation as the means for a *pax russicum* – multinational understanding led by ethnic Russians – at least in the post-Soviet region. However, it is notable that the name and purpose of Russkii Mir openly mix exclusive (ethnic) and inclusive (linguistic and cultural) understandings of what makes individuals Russian.[51] In 2014, Putin has propagated a similar mix. In March, he stated that Crimea belongs to Russia; that by annexing Crimea, Russia is simply reclaiming the peninsula for the ethnic Russian world to which it historically belongs – and, incidentally, that south-eastern Ukraine also historically belongs in this state, which is defined as ethnic Russian (*russkii*) and not multi-ethnic (*rossiiskii*).[52]

To some extent, Putin is likely simply displaying his confusion over concepts, which in Russia have not always been clearly defined. Yet the President is aware that among the ethnic Russians – particularly within the political opposition in Russia – are many supporters of exclusive Russian nationalism or even Russian-based racism. Russian opposition politician Aleksei Naval'nyi , who has at times been very popular in the West, has occasionally addressed peoples from the Caucasus with borderline-racist words and deeds.[53] Naval'nyi's slogan, "Stop feeding the Caucasus", received the support of 59% of the respondents to opinion polls taken in Russia at the beginning of 2012 and 65% at the end of the same year.[54] Additionally, prominent intellectuals and media figures have created organisations in recent years, which claim to combat threats to Russia as well as to ethnic Russians; one of these organisations uses the name Florian Geyer in commemoration of an SS division from Nazi Germany.[55]

Racist and racially discriminating movements can therefore be said to enjoy some success in contemporary Russia. Still, it must again be stressed that Putin and his supporters are not actively attempting to strengthen racism, the violent presence of which overall might also be falling in Russia.[56] Russia's state media have used Naval'nyi's statements concerning non-

Russian peoples to present him to the West as a racist. And the manner in which Naval'nyi speaks in favour of turning Russia into a unitary state instead of the country's current mix of ethnically and non-ethnically determined regions[57] fits perfectly with the government plans for a centrally controlled, albeit multinational Russia. In recent years, Naval'nyi himself has toned down many of his ethnically focused comments as opposed to his battle against corruption – a very popular topic among all peoples in Russia.

Putin has no need to distance himself from the peoples of the Northern Caucasus, as Russia's regions in this area are currently controlled by regimes that support Russia's central leadership. This was seen in the 2011 parliamentary elections of Russia, where 99.5% of the population of Chechnia apparently voted in favour of the governing party in an election, which in this republic enjoyed the participation of, as it were, 99.5% of the population.[58] Yet if the elites in today's Russia have little to gain from racism, gains are much more plentiful by dividing the population into groups of "Them" and "Us". Thus, Russia's elite has had some success under Putin and Medvedev constructing a national feeling amongst the citizens of Russia which is patriotic, views the Russian state and governance by this state as its highest value, and in some subcultures is militant, if not blatantly racist.[59]

If the glorification of Russia and Russia's elite merely aimed to keep the regime in power, it would hardly be necessary to mention it here. As mentioned earlier, however, Russian patriotism has fascist tendencies that view the state and its Russianness as totems to be protected from attack or doubt. And it is precisely this patriotic defence of Russia that has produced tensions relating to the West, as the West has protested human rights abuses in Russia. Tensions are partly caused by the Western inability to understand that attacks on individuals' human rights by Russia's elite have often been part of a symbolically laden defence of the idea of a Russian Russia. Members of the punk-group Pussy Riot, for instance, were not convicted of insulting Putin; instead, they were convicted of blasphemy in a trial, which was almost certainly urged on by the Russian Orthodox Church, one of the most important ideological pillars of the state.[60] Sergei Magnitskii, auditor of the Hermitage Capital Management investment company, was almost certainly murdered because he accused highly placed civil servants in Russia of theft. Yet the subsequent, posthumous trial and conviction of Magnitskii was a ritual – a punishment of the memory of someone who had challenged members of the elite, thereby challenging Russia.[61]

Attacks on existing and potential "traitors against Russia" have increased in number and become increasingly systematic in recent years. Beginning in 2012, NGOs operating in Russia have been forced to register with the state if they receive funding from "foreign agents" and conduct "political activity"; expressions and regulations, which bring back memories of the Soviet Union.[62] And there was a revival of Russian Imperial thought when Cossacks, supporters for centuries of Russian central power, were appointed to help police maintain order at the Sochi Winter Olympics – and to whip members of Pussy Riot (exorcise "evil spirits" on behalf of the regime, so to speak), when the latter attempted a performance in the town.[63] Similarly, it is possible to understand the prohibition in Russia of "propaganda in favour of homosexuality" as an attempt to protect the historical traditions of Russia against alien, inappropriate influence, or even as a kind of vaccination of the Russian populace.[64]

As might have been expected, the crisis in Ukraine has witnessed more people gather around the patriotic totem that is Russia. The annexation of Crimea is broadly supported by the population of Russia, a clear majority of whom view the inhabitants of Crimea as part of the ethnic Russian community. Western opposition to the annexation has not affected this attitude significantly. Many of those members of Russia's elite, who have been hit by sanctions, even view the sanctions as a badge of honour and a sign that they have done their duty to Russia, as claimed by Vladimir Iakunin, Putin's friend of old and head of Russia's railways.[65] Such an attitude is probably also politically expedient in Russia, as Putin himself has stated that all patriotic Russians ought to keep their money inside Russia – an idea with which ministers and oligarchs sensibly agree – while Medvedev recently published a decree that state employees should only drive Russian cars; an automobile produced in Russia is planned to be ready for sale in late 2014.[66]

There might not be anything particularly sinister in this slightly blunt attempt by the government of Russia to support domestic industry and domestic industry tycoons. Yet support for Russia and the Russians is only one aspect of patriotism. Trouble awaits those who criticise Russia and the Russian state – in Ukraine and elsewhere. Media in Russia threatened to report to the police those challenging Russia's involvement in Ukraine. The state university MGIMO (known for producing diplomats for Russia) sacked Professor Andrei Zubov in March 2014. MGIMO openly admitted that the move was motivated by Zubov's comparison of Russia's annexation of Crimea with the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany. MGIMO stated that Zubov's statements had caused anger and worked against the foreign policy of Russia.[67] Today, Russia's elite seeks to prevent the spread of such "subversive" tendencies in

the country. Putin has ordered state institutions to create educational history books, which describe the development of Russia – naturally under the ethnic Russian banner – without contradictions and ambiguities.[68] A similar purpose in May 2014 motivated the law by which Russia prohibited "the memory of events in the Second World War".[69]

Why does all this matter for foreign policy thinking in Russia? It matters a great deal, for if Russia's elite increasingly acts in a manner that can be seen as authoritarian or even fascist, the relationship between their Russia and a Western world supporting liberal values will suffer in the years to come from a lack of mutual understanding and, therefore, of mutual trust. Of more immediate concern is the fact that official ideology in Russia will influence Russia's international behaviour. If the state ideology of Russia is marked by unquestioned loyalty to the state, by corporatism, by patriotism including elements of chauvinism, by the search for statist glory, and perhaps by expansion in surrounding regions, we are faced with a Russia, which in Ukraine, in the Baltic region, in the Arctic and elsewhere values mercantilism above private initiative, uni- or perhaps bilateralism above international institutions, and the gathering of self-appointed "Russians" above coexistence between peoples. Such aims are far from always designed to reconcile Russia and the West.

3.3 Justice

Certainly, Russia's elite does not wish to reconcile with the West as long as it believes Russia is being treated as a second-class country. Yet not only is Russia's elite dissatisfied with Western dominance, it also plans for how Russia can make the world more just – just for Russia, anyway. Previously, Russia's elite has officially tried to create such justice through the advocacy and promotion of international law and international norms. To some extent, this remains the case – although a more sinister tendency to seek justice through power has become visible among Russia's elite. This is a relatively new tendency. Previously, and corresponding to the increasing Western military involvement in the Middle East, actors in Moscow have sought to present Russia as pragmatic and tolerant – for instance by acting as a broker in Syria. And whereas the West advocated an internationally liberated capitalism, which collapsed in a global financial crisis, Putin was able to present Russia in 2011 as one of the guarantors of the international world of finance against Western "parasites".[70]

Previously, presenting Russia as a reliable, reasonable state aligned well to the general aim of Russia's elite concerning a multipolar world. Russia's elite has highlighted multipolarity as a foreign policy aim ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The foreign policy concepts of

Russia have consistently presented multipolarity as a major aim;[71] in foreign relations, this notably appeared in the Russian–Chinese Joint Declaration on a Multipolar World from 1997, which Putin confirmed in 2005.[72] Since then, the increasing international influence of China has possibly pushed the world somewhat closer to multipolarity,[73] yet such a world will obviously only be just in the eyes of Russia's elite should Russia be one of the poles.

To obtain such a status, Russia's elite has partly sought to construct international institutions, which, it is hoped, will transform international relations to the advantage of Russia. Notably, Russia has sought to benefit from the progress of China. Regionally, this has been seen through the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation), a military organisation including Russia, China and four post-Soviet Central Asian states. Nevertheless, of greater international importance is probably Putin's intention, mentioned above, to create a new financial order. This aim has been widely discussed in BRICS – the organisation created in 2010 by Russia together with Brazil, India, China and South Africa – the other members of which also seek to challenge Western dominance.[74] And in the summer of 2014, the BRICS countries agreed to establish a development bank, with initial capital of $100bn, to support infrastructure projects in developing countries, as well as a reserve fund, also containing $100bn, to assist countries with short-term liquidity problems.[75] This scheme constitutes the hitherto most obvious challenge by Russia to the international financial order, which the West has dominated for decades in the guise of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and similar institutions.[76]

Further time is required to evaluate the success of the BRICS initiative. Yet it is noteworthy that Russia has now agreed to a long-term, substantial international project with several regional great powers. This possibly also offers hope that Russia's elite would continue to seek justice for Russia through international cooperation in its European near abroad if not for the fact that plans in Russia for multilateral institutions in Europe – the region Russia's elite particularly wants to influence – have been poorly received. Medvedev's 2009 idea for a European Security Treaty offers an example. Following the war against Georgia in 2008, Russia's elite wanted to prevent further NATO expansion and secure the position of Russia in the European security system (from which they also hoped to eject the Americans). Medvedev's treaty contained legally binding rules and procedures for decision-making and could have turned into a workable institution.[77] Probably, Russia's elite ought not to have been surprised just a year after the Georgian war that the West proved unwilling to amend NATO and other continental security structures for the benefit of Russia, yet Russia's elite found it difficult to

accept the blunt Western rejection and has since refrained from serious attempts to introduce multilateral military security initiatives in Europe.

Certainly, Russia's elite has had other plans for European cooperation. Russia's elite often presents energy cooperation with the EU as an example of how great powers ought to cooperate. Nevertheless, elites in Russia and the EU have struggled to establish the mutual trust necessary to provide reliable cooperation. Russia's elite prefers contracts valid for many years; agreements that would guarantee the status of Russia as the EU energy provider and transporter for decades. Conversely, the EU has increasingly sought energy diversification, especially after Russo–Ukrainian disputes in 2006 and 2009 withheld deliveries from Russia. The current Ukraine crisis has exacerbated this lack of trust. Statements made by energy companies in Russia generally continue to emphasise the lasting, stable future of energy deliveries by Russia to the EU, yet Putin has repeatedly mentioned how Russia might export more of its natural gas to Asia and that several European countries would be unable to manage without energy from Russia.[78] Under current conditions Putin has a point, but the entire purpose of energy cooperation from the perspective of Russia's elite was ultimately to use energy as another means for Russia to demonstrate its reliability, thereby earning international great power status. In such a context, there is no point in turning away from Europe, although Putin and Russia's oligarchs such as Gennadii Timchenko are correct when claiming that the East Asian energy market has significant potential.[79] In this connection, Russia recently signed a long-term, substantial energy agreement with China, yet published details of the agreement indicate that China has clearly benefitted most.[80] Even worse, Russia's elite never wished to see the country as an Asian great power. Thus, Russia's elite must be worried that the role as deliverer of oil and natural gas to China is a cul-de-sac for the attempt to secure a just position for Russia as a global great power.

Of course, Russia does not have to be a great power belonging to either Europe or Asia. The country might be a Eurasian great power straddling both areas – an idea, which has held support in Russia for centuries.[81] As a means of obtaining justice for Russia, Putin has some sympathy for Eurasianism and has consequently placed significant emphasis on multilateral economic cooperation in the post-Soviet region. The most recent example of this is the Eurasian Economic Union, which Putin already described in 2011 as a future pole in a multipolar world. This union would enrich its members[82] and assist their European integration. Or so said Putin, who has never really explained how such European integration would take place.[83] The fact that Putin was forced to invoke the temptation of European integration also indicates

how, even in its near abroad, Russia struggles to compete with Europe. Subsequently, demonstrations and the 2013-14 regime change in Ukraine – following attempts by Russia's elite to bring Ukraine closer to the Eurasian Economic Union (and further from the EU) – have probably dealt a fatal blow to the idea of cooperation between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union. The development of the latter has almost come to a standstill.[84] In March 2014, Putin's spokesperson Dmitrii Peskov did claim that the absorption of Crimea into Russia demonstrated how Russia, as the historical motherland, would attract neighbouring countries with promises of security and wealth;[85] but this hypothesis has not been helped by the civil war in Ukraine and subsequent economic difficulties in Russia.

As Russia's elite has thus struggled to further their international status through military and economic institutions, attention in Moscow has sometimes turned to culture and sports. This report has already mentioned Putin's use of the organisation Russkii Mir to further the cultural and linguistic profile of Russia abroad, and Russia's elite sought to enhance the profile of the country through sport by hosting the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. The attraction of the Olympics to Russia's elite probably also involved economic interests, yet these people genuinely believed that a successful Winter Olympics might significantly enhance the international profile of Russia.[86] In 2011, Putin optimistically claimed that Russia had been chosen to host the event because international society now appreciated a strong, independent Russia, which was ready to show its mettle.[87]

In many ways, the Winter Olympics were a success for Russia. In general, Russia and its inhabitants were excellent, efficient hosts, whose athletes even secured a respectable number of medals. Yet success in sport does not offer lasting international prestige, and the benefits of the Olympics were overshadowed by repeated controversy. Before the games ever began came the issue of homosexual rights;[88] a debate, which Putin might quickly have stifled if not for the previously mentioned fact that discrimination of homosexuals is closely entwined in the Russian, conservative-patriotic construction of statehood. Next came the aforementioned thugs dressed as Cossacks, who beat up young women in front of the international media. Finally, of course, the crisis in Ukraine engulfed the Olympics with such unfortunate timing that Putin already claimed at the beginning of the Olympics that the West had sought to undermine the Olympics from the outset.[89]

For Russia's elite, the controversies surrounding the Winter Olympics once again demonstrated how their country would find it difficult to become an international great power

through institutional means of cooperation. Since then, Russia's elite apparently sought to discover whether more forcible methods, or even threats, could make the country internationally important. In February 2014, Russia dispatched a ship from its intelligence services to Cuba, and Russia's Minister of Defence Sergei Shoigu plans for Russia's increased presence in Central and South America, the near abroad of the USA.[90] Russia's naval presence near the USA did not provoke significant Western reaction. Thus, it was possibly an attempt to grab the attention of the West, which during a live broadcast and to a background image of a mushroom cloud in March 2014 led Dmitrii Kiselev – a Russian television host recently appointed as head of the state-governed news agency Rossiia Segodnia – to remind Americans that Russia is the only country in the world capable of turning the USA into radioactive ashes.[91] While Kiselev is not a member of government, it is difficult to imagine that his initiative did not at least have tacit state support.

Even if there is no reason to assume that Russia is preparing for nuclear war, the country can still forcibly advance its interests at the regional level. The civil war in eastern Ukraine offers the clearest example of this.[92] Already in March 2014, politicians in Russia, such as Leonid Slutskii from the State Duma, stressed that the just protection of Russians in Crimea and elsewhere in Ukraine is more important than the contents of some version of international law.[93] And the annexation of Crimea – the first military conquest of European territory since the Second World War – is the clearest example of how the Russia elite focuses on justice rather than law and order.[94]

Russia's elite seeks to compare the annexation of Crimea to Western activities elsewhere. If it is not Putin talking about how NATO intervened in Kosovo, it is Minister of Foreign Affairs Lavrov stating that Crimea is more important for Russia than the Falklands are for the United Kingdom.[95] Thus, it is only if Russia defends Crimea against foreign powers. That such a "foreign power", in the form of Ukraine, has had sovereign rights to Crimea since 1992 – and that Russia has repeatedly and officially confirmed its support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine[96] – does not affect Lavrov's argument since laws and treaties are irrelevant here, as opposed to the historical right of Russia to Crimea and to the exertion of influence elsewhere in the neighbouring countries.

Today, Russia's elite is partly able to acquire such influence by force. As already highlighted, the economy in Russia suffers from a range of difficulties, which will probably persist following the crisis in Ukraine. Still, Putin's time in power has strengthened Russia in some

areas. In 2000, when Putin was elected president for the first time, Russia's state debt constituted 51% of its GDP; in 2014, it constituted 3%. Today, Russia has a National Wealth Fund, intended for long-term development, as well as a Reserve Fund, which, even after the global financial crisis hit Russia in 2008, still contained $85bn in August 2013. Additionally, in 2012 Russia for the first time witnessed a population increase – not by much, yet a welcome change following 20 years of constantly declining population figures.[97]

Using such resources, Russia's elite can regain some of the historical rights sought by Lavrov and others. According to the World Bank, Russia was the eighth largest economy in the world in June 2014, and the fourth largest in Europe following Germany, France and the United Kingdom.[98] Such an economy must control a correspondingly significant military force and, in 2012, in preparation for his election as president, Putin promised all sorts of weapons and other equipment for Russia's military during the coming decade. From 2008 until 2012, Russia under Medvedev increased its annual military budget from $50bn to $91 – Putin plans for a budget of $128bn in 2020, which Russia calculates as constituting 3.2–3.7% of the GDP at that time. Certainly, military spending in Russia will remain significantly below US military expenditures (totalling $683bn in 2012) and probably also Chinese military spending ($166bn in 2012).[99] Yet considering that the European NATO member states overall have reduced military expenditures in recent years,[100] the military build-up in Russia should not be underestimated.

With that in mind, what exactly does Russia's elite want to do with its plethora of armaments? That is, apart from ensuring the historical right of Russia in Ukraine and other neighbouring states. Since Russia's initiatives for new international organisations have waned, Russia's elite is unclear on how to strengthen Russia beyond the post-Soviet region. Should Russia's elite wish to strengthen the international position of their country by force, they could of course find support in the tradition in Russia for great power warfare. People in Russia continue to view victory in the Second World War as the most important event of the twentieth century; an opinion shared by 70% of the respondents in opinion polls conducted in 1998 and by 90% in 2011.[101] History books defending Stalin's policies before and during the war regularly appear.[102] Yet Russia's elite do not wish for or expect a great power war; thus, such memories are of still less use in practice. Similarly, Russia has one of the largest stockpiles of nuclear weapons in the world, yet the number of military scenarios in which nuclear weapons are practically useful is very limited. Thus, if Russia's elite is to follow the messianic tradition, which has been central to the country for centuries[103] and made Putin's then-

strategist Surkov pronounce his boss a saviour in 2013,[104] Russia requires a more flexible system of power to acquire influence abroad by force. Domestically, in its search for justice, the elite can make use of ideologues such as Aleksandr Dugin, who has become prominent in Russia[105] by presenting Russia as spearheading a global, conservative mission.[106] Yet Dugin's opinions will never become popular in the West, where Russia's elite is instead prepared to gain influence through strength. How such a policy is carried out in practice in the Baltic region and in the Arctic will be shown in the following chapters.

4. Russia and the Baltic region[107]

This report has described three focal points, which significantly influence current foreign policy thinking in Russia. This chapter analyses how Russia's elite perceives the Baltic region as viewed through the prism created by the focal points of Revanchism, Russians and Justice. The chapter is divided into four topics currently of special importance for Russia's activity in the Baltic region. The choice in this report of the topics of NATO, of military activity and Kaliningrad, of economic issues, and of Russian minorities in the Baltic States is motivated by extensive consultation of primary sources from Russia.

4.1 NATO

From the outset of Putin's presidency, Russia's elite has been concerned about the military pressure of NATO in the Baltic region, as highlighted for instance in the naval doctrine of 2001.[108] States joining NATO had to expect that Russia's elite would view them as opponents; a development demonstrated in the case of Poland, following the entry of this country into NATO, by the reintroduction of a Russian national day in 2005 celebrating the victory of Russia over Poland (and the West) in the 17th century.[109] Russia has been able to achieve limited cooperation with NATO, as in the Northern Distribution Network, which has conveyed Western provisions from Latvia through Russia to troops in Afghanistan.[110] Yet mutual interests in Afghanistan do not alter the fact that Russia's elite continues to view NATO and its members as the most important external threat to Russia.[111] Consequently, in 2013, Russia used the Zapad-13 military exercise to fight Baltic "terrorists" (i.e., members of NATO), while in the Baltics and Poland NATO responded by conducting one of the largest exercises it had held for years.[112] In addition, Russia has conducted exercises directed against non-aligned Sweden, from the airspace of which NATO has had to deter intrusive fighters from Russia.[113] Russia has long sought to prevent the entry of Sweden (and Finland) into NATO,

which according to Russia's elite already has too many troops and too much equipment stationed near Russia.[114] In light of the crisis in Ukraine, however, Sweden and Finland are currently contemplating NATO membership, while Russia has had to recall its highest-ranking military representative in NATO for consultations following the latter's suspension of cooperation with Russia.[115]

In the Baltic region, tensions between Russia and NATO have thus increased significantly. Such a development was avoidable. As mentioned above, when Putin returned to the presidency in 2012, he was willing to continue cooperation with NATO on Afghanistan, even though he considered the organisation a Cold War remnant.[116] Yet Putin wants guarantees that NATO will refrain from further expansion in Russia's neighbourhood. Without such guarantees, Putin is prepared to resist the growth of NATO through military build-up in Russia.[117] In this context, Putin has stated that the annexation of Crimea is partly motivated by the wish to keep NATO troops out of Sevastopol',[118] near which NATO has conducted military exercises for years. More generally, Putin worries that NATO could have taken over Ukraine and placed its weapons along the borders of Russia[119] – a worry that might also be relevant in relation to the Baltic region. Improvement in the relationship is possible. Putin has shown his dissatisfaction with former NATO General Secretary Anders Rasmussen, whom Putin accused of secretly recording private conversations. In contrast, the President was quick to welcome current NATO General Secretary Jens Stoltenberg.[120]

Yet even a Stoltenberg-run NATO will not gain approval from Russia's elite to increase its permanent presence in Central and Eastern Europe. Before the civil war in eastern Ukraine broke out in earnest, Lavrov stated his expectations that the NATO activities in Eastern Europe would continue to be in accordance with the existing agreements with Russia.[121] In particular, Lavrov views the permanent presence of NATO forces in Eastern Europe as incompatible with the 1997 Russo–NATO basic agreement.[122] Furthermore, Lavrov has accused NATO of exploiting the Ukraine crisis to attract new members, which the organisation can then protect against an imaginary threat from Russia. Of course, such an accusation is particularly dangerous if Russia's elite takes advantage of NATO's "lack of compliance" with international agreements to allow Russia to break agreements as it sees fit. Lavrov is also ready to accuse the Baltic States, Poland and other East European countries of demanding NATO resources, thereby dragging NATO into an unwanted confrontation with Russia.[123] In a similar vein, Minister of Defence Shoigu has warned that an increase in NATO exercises

and troops in the Baltic region might increase concerns in Russia regarding NATO intentions; concern, which might damage relations between the parties in Ukraine and elsewhere.[124]

Valerii Gerasimov, Chief of Russia's General Staff, likewise believes that the escalation of NATO activity in the Baltic region before and during the crisis in Ukraine will cause more insecurity in Europe as a whole in the years to come.[125] Gerasimov has warned that his forces will counter steps taken by NATO.[126] The precise intentions of Russia's military remain somewhat uncertain; more significant is the fact that the military and political elite in Russia view NATO activity in Eastern Europe as a breach of existing agreements. As indicated by Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov, Russia might in return fail to uphold its commitments towards NATO – in the Baltic region or elsewhere.[127] Politicians and civil servants in Russia now speak openly of a new Cold War. Thus, Aleksandr Lukashevich, spokesperson for Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has interpreted NATO's suspension of its cooperation with Russia in this vein.[128] In March 2014, following the failure of Aleksandr Grushko, Russia's envoy to NATO, to convince NATO that Russia had legitimate intentions in Ukraine, NATO was similarly criticised in Russia for a Cold War mind-set and for employing double standards.[129] Yet unlike during the Cold War, NATO now includes the Baltics, Poland and – as noted by Russia's Deputy Minister of Defence Anatolii Antonov – a united Germany, which is no longer prepared to cooperate with Russia due to Western pressure following the crisis in Ukraine.[130] Increasingly, therefore, Russia's elite perceives Russia as being forced on the defensive by an enlarged – and thereby empowered – NATO.

For years, Russia's elite has characterised and criticised the Baltics for their enthusiastic support for NATO. Within Russia, Germany remains partly associated with the Second World War, while public opinion in Russia considers Poland to be one of the most hostile countries towards Russia.[131] While this is not necessarily due to NATO, Trenin the analyst points out that the damage may have been done, particularly since the expansion of NATO into the Baltics demonstrated to Russia's elite that the country could not become part of an overarching European security structure.[132] If Russia is kept at bay – and if NATO is judged to be breaking agreements, which according to Russia's elite should have kept NATO completely away from the post-Communist region[133] – Russia's elite will have little reason in the future to cooperate with NATO. To ensure the position of Russia in the Baltic region, some analysts in Russia have suggested closer military cooperation with Finland.[134] Yet following recent debates in Finland and Sweden concerning NATO membership as a guarantee against potential

Russian aggression, the isolation and frustration of Russia in the Baltic region appears increasingly likely.

4.2 Military activity and Kaliningrad

As long as Russia is unable to prevent NATO from expanding its infrastructure, presence and membership in the Baltic region, Russia itself must increase its military activities in the area. In this context, the Kaliningrad region situated between Poland and Lithuania is of some importance.[135] Kaliningrad often hosts military exercises, which in 2009 included a fictitious attack on Poland with tactical nuclear missiles following the amendment of Russia's nuclear doctrine to permit this.[136] The territory of Kaliningrad and troops hosted there were also used for the previously mentioned exercise Zapad-13, in which Russia and Belarus pretended to battle Baltic "terrorists". In 2014, Russia suspended an agreement with Lithuania, which allowed the latter to inspect Russia's troops in Kaliningrad. This provoked substantial Lithuanian criticism,[137] particularly when military vessels from Russia, while participating in exercises, ordered civilian Lithuanian vessels to leave waters belonging to the exclusive economic zone of Lithuania and subsequently had to be chased off by a Lithuanian military vessel.[138]

In the course of 2014, Russia has often used military exercises to intimidate its neighbours. In June, Russia's troops thus conducted exercises in Kaliningrad using combat-ready S-399 ground-to-air missiles with a 200 km range.[139] With such a range, the missiles cover a large part of the airspace in neighbouring countries, which is also often subject to intrusions by airplanes from Russia. This was for instance the case during the military exercises in the summer of 2014, which Russia's elite viewed as a direct response to the Saber Strike 2014 and BALTOPS 2014 NATO exercises.[140] Prior to this, in March 2014, more than 40 Sukhoi- and MiG fighter jets from Russia flew across the regions of Leningrad and Karelia, along the borders with the Baltics and Finland.[141] Russia's increased military activity in this region is not simply due to the crisis in Ukraine, as it is part of a tendency going back many years. Thus, the Lithuanian government has pointed out that whereas NATO fighter jets only had to intercept fighter jets from Russia once in 2004, such incidents occurred 40 times in 2013.[142]

As elsewhere, a particularly difficult dispute has been caused in the Baltic region by the deployment of components for the US missile defence – a military initiative, which Russia's elite has viewed for years as a major threat to international security.[143] Russia's elite is worried that the US missile defence might render the deterrence value of Russia's nuclear arms ineffective, thus shifting the global military-strategic balance – Russia seeks legal guarantees

against such a development,[144] yet the USA is unprepared to provide such guarantees. Under Obama, the USA has tried to accommodate Russia in relation to the missile defence, such as in the Baltic region, where Bush placed part of the missile defence in Poland. In the beginning of Obama's first presidential term, the USA thus reduced Polish participation in the missile defence. This step worried Poland, yet for a time Russia's elite was appeased.[145]

It did not take long for Russia's elite to realise, however, that Poland would retain an important role in the US missile defence, parts of which might be operational in Poland as early as 2018.[146] In 2011, Medvedev was sufficiently worried to threaten the cancellation of the new START agreement on nuclear arms, the cancellation of cooperation with NATO in relation to Afghanistan, and the deployment of nuclear missiles in Kaliningrad.[147] Previously, Putin had also questioned START; in the context of an American missile defence, Putin and Medvedev viewed this agreement as having no use for Russia.[148] Today, Putin continues to argue that the missile defence constitutes a military threat directed against Russia – a charge also presented by Dmitrii Rogozin, the former envoy of Russia to NATO.[149] Yet as Putin has hinted at in 2014, an even more significant problem for Russia is possibly the fact that the missile defence counteracts decades of disarmament initiatives and presents Russia with a possible arms race in which Russia's elite is not interested.[150]

The problem is that Russia's elite no longer believes the American assurances that the missile defence is not directed against Russia. Prior to the re-election of Obama as president in 2012, Putin stated that this dispute was not caused by Obama, as it was instead dependent on the incompatible strategic interests of these countries.[151] Since then, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Riabkov and others have publicly dismissed additional American reductions of the missile defence in Europe, in contrast to increased Alaskan installations to defend against North Korea.[152] Previously, Riabkov did highlight that the relationship between Russia and the USA contained many aspects other than the missile defence,[153] yet following the crisis in Ukraine, the scaled-down missile defence in Poland today remains viewed by Russia's elite as part of the US plan for global suppression of the world and of Russia.[154] Due to lack of trust in relation to Western intentions, Russia's elite itself is prepared to employ Russia's military forces from the Baltic region on global military missions; for example, vessels from the Baltic Sea Fleet travelled to the Black Sea in March 2014 in connection with the Crimean crisis.[155]

In addition to functioning as a base for nuclear missiles and the navy, Kaliningrad also has non-military importance for Russia's elite, which has doubts about the long-term relationship between Kaliningrad and Russia. In recent years, the exclave has witnessed some of the most widespread demonstrations against Putin seen outside Moscow.[156] These protests are partly due to economic conditions. Although living standards in Kaliningrad have increased during Putin's tenure, Russia's elite seeks to minimise risks by planning further infrastructure developments in Kaliningrad to boost the local economy.[157] Russia's elite is worried that Kaliningrad might cooperate directly with Lithuania and Poland without deferring to Moscow, yet isolating the exclave from its surroundings is damaging to Kaliningrad and Russia alike, which is why Russia wants to secure easier access for the inhabitants of Kaliningrad to short-term EU visas.[158] As such, it is a promising idea; it will enable the people of Kaliningrad to increase trade with neighbouring countries, which will benefit the regional economy as a whole. Unfortunately, visa negotiations with the EU already hit the buffers in 2013,[159] since which time they have become yet another source of discord between Russia and the West, Russia's elite in particular being quick to accuse the EU of slowing down negotiations.[160] Indeed, one of the first retaliatory acts conducted by the EU following Russia's invasion of Crimea in March 2014 was to suspend the visa negotiations – a step which Lukashevich and other officials in Russia might have been justified in seeing as unconstructive and unfounded.[161]

4.3 Economic issues

Irrespective of this, Russia's elite has often perceived the Baltic region as an area in which cooperation and trade with the EU can take place. Russia's elite is particularly interested in energy exports.[162] The EU imports approximately 80% of the natural gas that it uses, a third of which comes from Gazprom. Recognising this, and in order to reduce dependency on Soviet pipelines in Belarus and Ukraine, Gazprom constructed Nord Stream in 2011, a pipeline directly connecting Russia and Germany under the sea.[163] Russia's economy benefits from the income generated by the sale of natural gas and oil on the global market, yet energy reserves are also viewed in Russia as a means by which the country might gain respect and influence abroad.[164] This is well illustrated in the Baltic region. The Baltic States and Finland, for instance, have limited options in dealing with Russia, since they import all of their natural gas and a considerable amount of their oil from their eastern neighbour.[165]

Germany is not quite as dependent on energy from Russia, since no more than 40% of the natural gas and 35% of the oil used in Germany come from Russia. Furthermore, German

companies have invested $22bn in Russia, where Germans own parts or all of more than 6,000 companies.[166] The fact that Germany is economically entwined in Russia is particularly important for Russia's elite – since Germany is a crucial economic force in the Baltic region and since Medvedev and Putin view German economic success as an example to follow.[167] Thus, whereas Germany in historical and perhaps military terms might cause concern in Russia, Russia's elite idolises the German economy. Such admiration is replicated in the population of Russia, who prioritise healthy economic relations with Germany.[168] Through Nord Stream, Germany also offers Russia a reliable connection to EU pipelines, and Moscow has planned for natural gas from the Shtokman field in the Barents Sea – a field capable of covering European demand for seven years – to be transported through Nord Stream.[169]

In recent years, however, political tension has threatened economic cooperation. In 2012, bilateral trade between Russia and Germany was worth €52bn. Yet the significance of this trade did not prevent the government of Russia from including German political organisations in its criticism of NGOs operating in Moscow.[170] Not that Russia's elite was interested in such disagreements influencing economic cooperation between the countries. Thus, in April 2014, Gazprom Vice President Aleksandr Medvedev stressed that natural gas is tradable goods, not a weapon.[171] For years, the German elite held a similar view. And Russia's elite might have been able to keep energy issues and other economic questions separate from the political crisis absorbing Russia and the West following developments in Ukraine during 2014 if not for the fact that politicians in Russia –Putin in particular – themselves used energy as a weapon. Thus, Putin threatened in April that Gazprom would only supply natural gas for Ukraine in return for advance Ukrainian payments; should Ukraine fail to agree to this, Ukraine – and the West – had to expect possible disruptions in natural gas deliveries.[172] Certainly, Putin did not refer here to Nord Stream, yet even if Nord Stream operated as normal deliveries under the Baltic Sea would alone be insufficient for Germany and for the rest of Europe, making Germany and the EU as a whole view Putin's threat as serious. Putin was very quick to change his tone and guarantee all deliveries to Europe,[173] but the damage had been done.

Subsequently, since the West adjudged to Russia part of the blame for the downing of a civilian passenger airplane in eastern Ukraine in July 2014,[174] Germany and other EU member states have been more prepared to introduce wide-ranging economic sanctions against Russia. There has been a telling reaction from Russia's elite. Instead of calling for economic cooperation despite the political differences, Russia instead swiftly introduced sanctions against fruit

and vegetable imports from Poland. By doing so, Russia's elite bars Poland from its most significant market for the export of such goods and has subsequently spread the sanctions to the EU as a whole. Officially, the ban was introduced for reasons of hygiene, but the international community remains unconvinced.[175] In 2013, Russia suspended the import of milk from Lithuania,[176] pork suffered a similar fate in January 2014, and Latvian pork has been banned since May 2014.[177] On every occasion, Russia's elite has based their actions on hygiene standards and appear to have a tendency to use the criterion of "purity" to keep the "unclean" abroad at bay in correspondence with the idea of a "Russian Russia".[178]

For Poland and for the Baltic States in particular, lack of market access in Russia has serious implications. Of their total exports, Estonia sends 11% to Russia, Latvia sends 16% and Lithuania sends 20%.[179] In Latvia and Lithuania in particular, agricultural goods, food and drink are far and away the largest part of these exports.[180] Thus, there can be little doubt that the government of Russia sought to damage neighbouring economies through the introduction of these bans. This demonstrates how, for Russia's elite, political issues are currently more important than economic issues in the Baltic region. However, Russia's elite risks that nearby countries look elsewhere for economic partners and sources of energy. Russia's neighbours increasingly seek to acquire energy from third parties – a possibility, which will become more feasible when Lithuania and Poland in 2015, and Estonia and Finland later in the decade, begin hosting LNG terminals, capable of receiving liquid natural gas transported there via ship.[181] Moreover, Poland plans to develop a shale gas industry on its territory (assuming EU consent). Gazprom has severely criticised shale gas extraction as environmentally harmful and dangerous. Similarly, Putin has complained that Poland is apparently ignoring environmental concerns.[182] As has often been the case, however, the environmental concerns of Russia's elite appear significantly influenced by concerns for Russia's economy and the international influence of the country. As long as Russia is only able to offer the Baltic region natural gas with political conditions, Russia's elite cannot expect their neighbouring countries to be accommodating under circumstances, which are currently tense. In April 2013, Putin and Gazprom CEO Aleksei Miller did prove their confidence to Poland when suggesting that Russia could build a new natural gas pipeline through Poland to Slovakia, thereby avoiding Ukraine. At the time, Poland and Russia signed a memorandum of understanding,[183] yet the plan failed to develop further. In the near future, Poland probably has little interest in furthering this scheme. Russia's elite hopes that energy resources from Russia will remain indispen-

sable to the outside world. Should these hopes be thwarted, Russia's elite might well feel even more isolated in relation to other countries in the Baltic region.

4.4 Russian minorities in the Baltics

Since 1992, Russia's elite has emphasised the protection of Russians abroad and particularly in the Baltics, where they believe the Russian minority continues to suffer discrimination. Similarly, defending the Russian-language population remains an official priority for Russia in the Baltic region.[184] That the government of Russia should create a legal framework for such protection is predictable. Even while Medvedev was still president, Russia passed legislation making it easier to protect its citizens abroad through military force.[185] Yet the Ukraine crisis has made a difference, as the government of Russia in 2014 has significantly increased its possibilities of assisting Russians outside Russia. In April 2014, Putin facilitated the acquisition of Russian citizenship for Russian-speakers, who would thereby be protected by the above-mentioned law instituted under Medvedev.[186] Admittedly, Putin's legal amendment was particularly directed towards the inhabitants of Crimea, the annexation of which Russia had completed using another law, presented to parliament by Sergei Mironov, head of the political party Spravedlivaia Rossiia (A Just Russia).[187] Yet the swift introduction of these two laws in connection with the annexation of Crimea indicated that, in the future, Russia's elite – to themselves and to the population of Russia at large – might theoretically justify the defence of the "unassailable rights" of Russians in the Baltics without too much concern about international law and the sovereignty of the Baltic States.

In 2014, Russia's elite has thus far been too preoccupied by Ukraine to seriously advocate the cause of Russians in the Baltics. In February, Russia even signed a long-awaited border treaty with Estonia, intended to secure through law Estonian control over Narva and other Russian-dominated cities and towns.[188] Yet the fact that such a treaty in itself does not secure the borders of Estonia has become apparent following the annexation of Crimea. Attitudes in Russia to the crisis in Ukraine are also relevant for the Baltics for other reasons. In March, Putin – and Russia's media in turn – claimed that protesters in Kyiv had received training in Lithuania and Poland.[189] Clearly, during the current crisis, Putin views the Baltic governments as allies of the West and he obviously hints at the Baltics in his demands that other countries respect the legal rights of Russians, ensuring that they are treated in a way commensurate with historical justice, and that their right to self-determination is upheld.[190] Putin stated this in relation to Crimea, yet for him these provisions are equally valid in relation to the Baltics. In this context, the Baltic States might be concerned by Putin's vague definition of Russians,

since if – as already noted – Russia can absorb anyone who wants to be part of that category, Putin might claim that he is prepared to defend anyone speaking Russian.[191] A similar lack of need for an internationally recognised definition, such as citizenship, is also found in Putin's July promise that Russia seeks to defend all Russians abroad. Again, Putin's understanding of "Russians" is nebulous. At first, Putin promises that he will defend ethnic Russians (*russkie*) – that is, a group based on individuals' familiar ties – yet immediately afterwards, he promises that he will defend all compatriots (*sootechestvenniki*) – that is, everyone viewing themselves as Russian. Should Putin wish to do so, he is thus able to define an ever-increasing group of Russians, whom he can "protect" in the Baltics.[192]

At some point, such protection might include military means. In March 2014, Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs followed Putin in highlighting that Russia was responsible for its "compatriots'" living in Ukraine and would do whatever necessary to protect them.[193] This promise obtained a rather ominous meaning when Lavrov stated the next month that Russia was prepared to defend the rights of Russians abroad in the same way as had been done in 2008 in South Ossetia – that is, through arms.[194] Obviously, it must be remembered that Lavrov spoke in the context of Crimea and Ukraine, not the Baltics. And the fact that the Baltic States are NATO members makes it unlikely that Russia's elite would seriously consider military intervention.

Nevertheless, Russia's elite might still threaten the Baltic States through non-military means. In 2007, Estonia witnessed an extensive cyber-attack following Russian demonstrations in Tallinn directed against the transfer of a Soviet monument from the centre of town. The West suspected that Russia had initiated the attack. In March 2009, MP and political commentator in Russia Sergei Markov then stated to American cyber-warfare experts that one of his assistants was responsible for the attack on Estonia in 2007.[195] The following week, Konstantin Goloskokov – prominent member of Kremlinite youth organisation Nashi – confirmed that he and his associates had carried out the attack.[196] Subsequently, some analysts have assumed that this information was intended to mislead and to hide the fact that Russia's domestic and external intelligence services and/or the military had been involved.[197] Estonia has also suffered from espionage by Russia,[198] and, in September 2014, apparently witnessed the abduction by Russia of a member of the Estonian security service from Estonian territory.[199]

Russia's elite has recently also made public use of media- and information campaigns. In March 2014, Lithuania suspended the broadcasting licence of NTV Mir for three months, a

Gazprom-owned television station. NTV Mir had produced a programme on the fighting in January 1991 between Lithuanian protesters and Soviet troops. The press council considered the programme misleading – an accusation previously used in October 2013 to suspend Pervyi Baltiiskii Kanal, a Russian-language television channel.[200] While it is possible to view the steps taken by Lithuania as an attack on free speech, the fear remains in Vilnius and the other Baltic capitals that the Russians in the Baltics, like the Russians in Ukraine, will believe claims by Russia's elite that the Baltics left the Soviet Union illegitimately and that Russia is their real homeland. The claim that the Baltic States have forced Russians to distance themselves from Russia is supported by persistent accusations by Russia's elite that Russians in the Baltics suffer discrimination. Ominously, Russia's elite has recently drawn similarities between discrimination against Russians in Ukraine and in Estonia; one diplomat from Russia did so in the UN Human Rights Council in March 2014.[201] So far, Russia's elite has primarily stuck to such rhetorical initiatives in relation to the Baltic States, although in March 2014 Russia's ambassador to Latvia offered Russian passports and pensions to Russians in Latvia, "who were not properly cared for by Latvia".[202] Plans by Russia's elite to offer citizenship to Russians from the Baltics might prove unsuccessful. New legislation in Russia states that citizens must declare cases of dual citizenship[203] – hardly reassuring for anyone holding a foreign passport – and young Russians in the Baltics are possibly more interested in remaining in the Baltic with its gradually improving economy than ending up in Russia, the economic future of which is somewhat less certain.

Nevertheless, Russia's elite will probably continue to advocate the cause of Russians in the Baltics. To some degree, this is so that Russia's elite might gain concessions on other issues from the Baltic States, partly since the defence of Russians abroad fits Russia's elite's image of a Russian-centred Russia and partly since defending Russians in the Baltics is popular amongst Russians in Russia. The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (Liberal'no-Demokraticheskaia Partiia Rossii, subsequently renamed Politicheskaia Partiia LDPR) – the leader of which, Vladimir Zhirinovskii has spoken publicly of re-joining the district of Narva in Estonia (as well as the countries of Finland and Poland) to Russia – gained more than 11% of votes in the 2011 parliamentary elections.[204] And when the polling organisation Levada Centre asked inhabitants of Russia in May 2012 to name the five countries most hostile towards Russia, 26% picked Latvia, 25% Lithuania and 23% Estonia. In comparison, 15% picked Ukraine.[205]

5. Russia and the Arctic[206]

In the previous chapter, the report analysed perceptions in Russia of the Baltic region in order to summarise recent developments concerning four topics, which Russia's elite currently finds especially important. The chapter sought to demonstrate how Russia's elite feels that the West has forced it on the defensive in the Baltic region in political, military, economic and cultural terms and that initiatives taken by Russia's elite in this region stem from the wish to somehow force through an international order, which is just for Russia and Russians. In a similar fashion, the chapter below surveys perceptions in Russia of the Arctic. Again, the report highlights four topics, which, using primary sources, it has identified as particularly prominent in the debate in Russia: military issues, transport and communications, border delimitation and identity, and economic issues.

5.1 Military issues

At least since the 1950s, the Arctic has been an area of the greatest military significance for the Soviet Union and subsequently for Russia. The Arctic is home to industry and infrastructure connected to Russia's nuclear missile defence. The Kola Peninsula houses intercontinental missiles, missile defence systems, early warning stations against nuclear attack and the like.[207] In addition, Russia's Northern Fleet is based at Severomorsk near Murmansk. This fleet contains two-thirds of all of the nuclear weapons in Russia's fleet as a whole as well as most of the nuclear submarines and icebreakers. However, the Northern Fleet has been reduced from 180 nuclear submarines in 1986 to 42 in 2010, and both ships and submarines have suffered problems with maintenance in recent years (as in the case of the submarine Kursk, which was lost in 2000).[208] For years, Putin's Russia has been aware of the deficiencies of the Northern Fleet, and the national security concept from 2009 specifically mentions the Arctic zone as one of the areas in Russia where the development of military, transport and energy infrastructure is particularly required.[209]

Following from this, as previously noted, the Northern Fleet received substantial funds in 2012 when Putin developed his multi-year military budget. Within the Northern Fleet, funds from this budget go especially to the new Borei-class submarines and to the highly advanced submarine-based Bulava nuclear missile system.[210] Furthermore, Russia is in the process of building coastal vessels and frigates for use in swift interventions against local threats, since such vessels are missing in this fleet (as well as in Russia's other fleets), compromising the ability of Russia to protect its Arctic territories. Finally, apart from its submarines and ships,

the Northern Fleet also contains approximately 200 fighter jets and 50 helicopters.[211] Additionally, Russia has modified the combination of troops stationed in the Arctic in recent years. Thus, Russia declared in 2009 that it planned to establish a new Arctic coast guard, which would patrol the waters along the Northern Sea Route (more on this route below) for the first time since the early 1990s.[212] Russia's elite is not necessarily concerned about attacks by foreign states in the Arctic. While it is true that Russia's current Arctic doctrine from 2008 emphasises the risk of territorial and resource-based disputes in the Arctic, there is little discussion of the risk of such disputes possibly involving a military dimension.[213] The fact that Russia's elite nevertheless seeks to strengthen their national military forces in the Arctic partly reflects how Russia's elite has traditionally viewed the Arctic as the hinterland from which Russia's submarines can deter the world or demonstrate Russia's influence in the Atlantic together with Russia's ships. The latter aim is particularly important if Russia as a future great power is to demonstrate its power on the oceans of the world. And it is precisely the ability to reach the Atlantic that is emphasised as one of the main aims for the Northern Fleet in Russia's naval doctrine of 2001.[214] This would also explain why Lavrov has insisted for years that NATO has no business in the Arctic apart from defending the territories of its member states.[215]

Russia has accepted NATO presence in the Arctic on a few occasions when conducting military exercises with the Arctic NATO member states among others, such as when the Northern Fleet took part in the POMOR exercise together with Norwegian troops in 2013.[216] Yet far more frequently, Russia's military has threatened the territorial waters and airspace of other Arctic states in recent years, not unlike developments in the Baltic region. American and Canadian air forces have increasingly encountered military airplanes from Russia near their airspace.[217] Within Norwegian airspace, such incidents have grown noticeably more frequent in recent years. In 2012, Norway encountered military airplanes from Russia 41 times, identifying 71 airplanes from Russia; in 2011, the corresponding figures were 34 and 48, respectively; and in 2010, 36 and 37, respectively.[218] Partly due to this development, Norwegian Minister of Defence Ine Søreide advised NATO in 2014 to keep an eye on Russia in the Arctic.[219]

Yet although Russia's military forces are currently expanding their activities in the Arctic, it is premature to conclude that Russia's elite is preparing to go on the military offensive in the region. In April 2014, Putin stated that Russia had to be increasingly aware of the danger of attacks against Russia coming from the Arctic.[220] Still, Putin does not appear to have had any specific threat in mind. Other politicians in Russia, in keeping with the national security con-

cept, consistently stress that NATO must be kept away from the Arctic, yet within the elite, there are today only a few military analysts who view the Arctic as a region through which Russia can project military force abroad.[221] For those commentators in Russia, who promote arguments of a more or less fascist nature that Russia should seek glory abroad, the Arctic is of some concern – a few even view the region as the centre of a future Third World War with the West[222] – yet there is no sign today that Russia's elite supports such thoughts.

5.2 Transport and communications

Numerous Arctic shipping routes have been identified that can potentially ease global transport. The North East Passage, which is particularly relevant for this report, runs along the north coast of Russia between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.[223] Within the North East Passage, Russia argues that The Northern Sea Route (Sevmorput') is covered exclusively by Russian legislation.[224] The route is situated between the straits at Novaia Zemlia and the Bering Strait; its length is 5,600 km along the traditionally used shipping lanes or 4,300–4,800 km along alternative lanes.[225]

The Northern Sea Route might bring significant gains to the transport industries in Russia and the rest of the world. For instance, it could potentially cut the Hamburg–Yokohama shipping route from 18,350 to 7,250 km (and from 22–15 days) and the Rotterdam–Shanghai route from 22,000 to 14,000 km.[226] Despite global warming, however, most researchers believe that the navigability of this route will only improve gradually; conditions will not allow regular shipping for another 20 or so years.[227] Significant yearly deviations of the ice sheet will complicate attempts by shipping companies to schedule operations. The polar night will remain a problem, including increasing amounts of rain and fog, more storms and higher waves, as well as increased coastal erosion due to the thawing of the permafrost.[228] And even if such problems are overcome, the route still faces competitors such as The Trans-Siberian Railway, which with a length of up to around 10,000 km is able to transport goods across Russia or to Mongolia, North Korea and China in a week. Coming generations will therefore continue to make frequent use of this railway in order to transport goods from Europe and European Russia to the Russian Far East and East Asia.

Having said this, Russia's elite remains highly interested in retaining control over the Northern Sea Route, not just in relation to civilian traffic but also and perhaps especially in relation to military vessels, which might otherwise reach the sparsely populated northern Russian territories.[229] Russia's elite also sees long-term economic opportunities in the Arctic when the

melting ice allows Russia to gradually ease transport conditions in the Arctic and acquire the continental shelf (more on this below).[230] On this background, Russia's elite wants to retain sovereignty over the Northern Sea Route. Other countries may use the transport corridor, but only to the extent that the interests of Russia retain priority.[231] Russia therefore established a collection of laws in 2012 intended to regulate international shipping along the route. These laws have not been accepted by all international actors; the USA openly rejects the assumptions in the legislation regarding Russia's sovereignty over the route, and international shipping organisations warn that the Russian legislation might make it possible for the government of Russia to discriminate against foreign vessels with respect to required equipment, tariffs for the use of icebreakers and so forth.[232]

Despite such problems, however, these laws indicate that Russia's elite at least partially seeks internationally recognised regulations for use of the route, which is also the subject of other international agreements. Since 2011, the Arctic has had an airborne search and rescue system, led by Russia and the USA, which is based on the first binding agreement reached within the Arctic Council.[233] In 2012, Russia and Norway signed an agreement on the obligatory use of a system for the reporting of ships in the Barents Sea,[234] and Arctic and non-Arctic states have debated a set of rules for polar shipping in 2014. The joint set of rules, which the International Maritime Organization is scheduled to vote on in November 2014, concerns the safety of vessels and environmental questions, considerably reduces insurance expenses, and may in the long-term increase traffic in the Arctic.[235]

In September 2010, Putin declared to the Arctic Council that the Arctic must be a zone for peace and cooperation in which states should jointly ensure economic, security, scientific and educational progress while retaining the cultural heritage of the North.[236] Considering the above-mentioned developments, at least within transport and communications it is possible to imagine Russia accepting a leading role in the Arctic. Russia's elite plans to create a unified communications network, Polarnet, for the Arctic in 2015. The network will connect Great Britain and Russia before splitting into three parts going, respectively, to the USA, Japan and China.[237] And if Russia's elite would be ready to share data freely from GLONASS (Russia's version of GPS), the country controls a satellite-based system, which appears to cover the Arctic better than GPS and which might potentially be developed further to the advantage of local travellers.[238]

This means that, as of today, the Northern Sea Route is probably the best way for Russia to peacefully and with the agreement of the international community change the conditions in the Arctic in a manner viewed by Russia's elite as just. Yet this will only happen if Russia and the outside world can agree on whether the Northern Sea Route lies in Russia's territorial waters or international waters; a dispute which might worsen due to global warming. According to UN conventions, states situated along ice-covered straits might subject foreign vessels to "special demands" based on security and environmental considerations. This currently enables Russia to impose unilaterally a range of conditions and tariffs on foreign vessels using the Northern Sea Route irrespective of the above-mentioned collection of Russian laws governing Arctic navigation. When the ice sheet melts, vessels from Russia and abroad might find it easier to use the Sea Route. At the same time, however, international vessels will be better able to ignore demands presented by Russia.[239] In this manner, the vanishing Arctic ice sheet might ease as well as complicate plans for future shipping along the northern coast of Russia.

5.3 Border delimitation and identity

Due to Russia's geography, the Arctic constitutes a larger part of Russia's territory than of the territory of the other Arctic states. About half of all dry land in Russia is situated north of the 60th parallel; that is, north of Oslo, the southern tip of Greenland, the middle of Canada and southern Alaska. The territory of Russia covers half of the Arctic coastline and 40% of all dry land north of the polar circle (it contains two-thirds of the Arctic population in the five Arctic states – approximately two out of three million people).[240] And given its extensive coastline, it is unsurprising that Russia in its national security concept views the Arctic as a region, which constitutes a special challenge in relation to its border security.[241]

All of these factors significantly influence the intent of Russia's elite to secure as much Arctic territory as possible for Russia. In 2013, Russia accepted that six countries without territory in the Arctic (India, Italy, Japan, China, Singapore and South Korea) received observer status in the Arctic Council.[242] Nevertheless, in accordance with the Ilulissat Declaration of 2008, Russia, together with Canada, Denmark, Norway and the USA, ensured that third parties are excluded from decisions regarding future division of the Arctic. The Declaration underlines that the participating states do not seek a unique international treaty covering the region (as is the case with the South Pole), but wish to refer to their ordinary sovereign jurisdiction in dealing with the Arctic.[243]

So far, so good. Yet how should Russia's territorial demands be addressed in relation to the other Arctic states? To begin with, Russia's territorial demands are covered by UN provisions. In 1982, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) defined how all coastal states are entitled to territorial waters, to an adjacent zone, and to an exclusive economic zone – in total reaching more than 200 nautical miles from the coast.[244] States might also be granted rights to the exclusive use of subsoil resources even further away from their coast as long as they can prove that a continental shelf connected to their territory reaches beyond their exclusive economic zone. Member states measure any continental shelf they control and subsequently submit their request for UNCLOS to recognise the measurements. The problem is that UNCLOS is unable to provide recognitions that are to the detriment of other states, just as UNCLOS is unable to resolve international border disputes.[245] In other words, UNCLOS is only able to recognise state requests; it cannot evaluate competing requests.

The germ for future disputes between Russia and other Arctic states might be found in these provisions. Currently, Russia seeks UN recognition that the Lomonosov as well as the Alpha-Mendeleev ridges are connected to the Siberian continental shelf.[246] Assuming such recognition is granted, Russia will be able to lay claim to the underground of the central Arctic Ocean as well as parts of the underground of the Barents Sea, the Bering Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk.[247] However, it so happens that Denmark and Canada also claim the Lomonosov ridge,[248] and when competing demands exist, according to UNCLOS, ownership may only be established in the case of agreement between the three countries.[249] Following the Ukraine crisis, it is doubtful whether these countries will be able to reach such agreement. Similarly, Russia's elite might be unwilling to accept if other states refuse Russia's demands for these ridges, not least given the many billions of roubles that Russia's elite has already spent to retrieve geological materials supporting the requests by Russia. Overall, such refusal might lead Russia's elite to further doubt the value of international law in deciding territorial queries in the Arctic following from attitudes in Russia towards international law and territorial sovereignty as previously described in relation to Crimea.[250]

Optimistic observers may find previous examples of how Russia's elite is capable of solving this and other border questions through bi- or multilateral negotiations with the other Arctic states. In 2010, after 40 years of negotiations, Russia and Norway agreed on border delimitation in the Barents Sea.[251] In order to obtain an agreement, the government of Russia accepted an almost equal division of the sea.[252] Previously, Russia's elite had insisted on the provisions of a 1926 Soviet decree, which divided the Arctic into state sectors and de facto gave a

number of Arctic islands and lands to the Soviet Union, which by 1926 had not officially become part of other states, yet which other Arctic states subsequently subjected to claims.[253] Russia's agreement with Norway therefore implies that Russia's elite is now in principle prepared to lose territory in order to ensure cooperation and well-ordered relations; at least prepared to lose territory in certain areas, anyway. In the Barents Sea, Russia's elite continues to insist on joint Russo–Norwegian ownership of Svalbard, around which they also refuse recognition of the waters, which Norway has unilaterally claimed since 2003.[254]

Thus, signs remain that Russia's elite finds it difficult to relinquish Arctic territory, meaning that negotiations with other Arctic states over these regions might easily fail. Within Russia, the political elite has refrained thus far from aggressive statements in relation to these negotiations. Yet another attitude may be seen among lower-ranking politicians and civil servants. Artur Chilingarov – polar researcher, member of the ruling party United Russia (Edinaia Rossiia), and a consistent Putin supporter – has long claimed that the Russian state must fight for its right to the Arctic.[255] Similarly, Genrikh Voitolovskii – member of Russia's governmental scientific commission for maritime affairs – has asked that Russia withdraw its request to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and that Russia refrain from limiting its territorial demands in any way as long as the USA does not limit its demands and while there are otherwise-unsolved border issues between the Arctic states. Voitolovskii also worries that an international agreement establishing a zone jointly owned by the Arctic states might take territory away from Russia.[256] Arguably, Voitolovskii has an unspoken assumption that such developments might harm Russian identity and its historical mission – such an assumption is openly present in Dugin, who, as previously mentioned, is one of the most prominent (and controversial) commentators in Russia. He views the continental shelves, and the Arctic as such, as belonging to Russia by right of history.[257] Such statements may easily be dismissed as outliers, yet as Dugin's slogans concerning the general international rebirth of Russia have gained ground in recent years among civil servants and politicians in Russia, the outside world should keep track of whether Dugin and his allies influence Russia's elite in the question of Arctic border delimitation.

5.4 Economic issues

The Arctic is the treasure chest of Russia. Approximately 20% of Russia's GDP and Russia's exports originate in the area north of the polar circle. In Arctic or sub-Arctic regions may be found 95% of Russia's natural gas, 75% of its oil, 96% of its platinum, 90% of its nickel and cobalt and 60% of its copper.[258] Within the Arctic, Russia controls the second largest con-

firmed reserves of rare earth metals in the world and the largest possible reserves.[259] Historically, the Arctic has not been a major source of fishery in the world. Between 1975 and 2006, the Arctic consistently covered 4%, or 3.5 million tonnes, yearly of fish captured throughout the world.[260] However, this proportion may easily increase with better equipment and practices; cod from the Barents Sea and pollock from the Russian Far East already constitute approximately 25% of the whitefish caught around the world.[261]

Given such stakes, it is unsurprising that the Arctic is a significant element in the plans of Russia's elite for the development of the country. Russia's energy strategy of 2009 defines the Barents Sea, the Kara Sea and the Iamal Peninsula as strategically important for the future of the country,[262] and the 2009 national security concept states that the acquisition of Arctic energy resources is vitally important for Russia's national security.[263] Thus, it was no surprise when Russia officially declared its readiness to use its navy to protect Russia's energy resources.[264] In the western part of the Arctic, Russia has carried out military exercises aimed at protecting oil and natural gas installations.[265] In the Arctic, Gazprom cooperates closely with Russia's navy in order both to use military equipment and infrastructure and to pool naval knowledge of Arctic waters.[266] More generally, since 2008, Russia has officially designated 40 industrial sectors – including all of the significant industries in the Arctic – as "strategic sectors", meaning that foreign investors are prohibited from purchasing more than a certain proportion of the companies active in these sectors (the precise percentage varies between sectors).[267] Similarly, foreign investors in the energy sector are only allowed to buy parts of operating companies, not of the energy reserves as such.[268]

The latter provisions assist takeovers in Russia of shares held by foreign investors in energy companies, for instance, on grounds often relating to alleged breaches of Russia's environmental law.[269] Already during Putin's first presidential term, Russia's elite succeeded in significantly increasing the state ownership of Russia's energy companies.[270] However, the fact that the Russian state increasingly controls energy extraction does not necessarily imply that the state coffers will gain easy access to the output from considerable Arctic resources; a point, which foreign investors would also do well to remember. Areas with permafrost account for 3% of extraction of natural gas in Russia and 75% of extraction of oil. Yet the energy-extraction and transportation infrastructure was primarily developed during the 1970s and is unfit for global warming. For instance, the pipelines currently in use may become unstable as the permafrost melts, just as access roads leading to the areas of extraction may erode.[271] Other problems appear at sea: In the Prirazlomnoe field, Sevmorneftegaz has had to construct

a drilling rig capable of functioning in –50°C and resisting collisions with icebergs in waters that are covered by ice most of the year.[272] In addition to icebergs, rogue waves also threaten drilling rigs in the Prirazlomnoe and Shtokman fields, while drilling rigs in the Shtokman field must be secured at a depth of 300 metres. Moreover, the Shtokman field is too far from shore for search and rescue helicopters to reach, which necessitates extensive logistical resources at sea.[273]

Russia is currently only able to address such challenges in part and with the assistance of Western specialists, which in the immediate future will be prevented from working for companies from Russia due to increasingly extensive Western sanctions. The West claims that these sanctions are resulting from the crisis in Ukraine and Russia's behaviour there, yet for years Putin's Russia has expected that the West would sabotage Russia's access to Arctic riches or even steal such wealth from Russia in order to prevent a Russian revival. Thus, in March 2009, the head of the FSB (the Russia's domestic security service), Nikolai Patrushev, claimed that other Arctic states coordinate their attempts to prevent Russia's access to resources in the continental shelf. Patrushev believed this threatened Russia's national security and that Russia had to take countermeasures.[274] The following year, Medvedev complained about an alleged Western attempt to prevent Russia's exploration and extraction of mineral resources in the Arctic – an attempt viewed Medvedev as politicised, in conflict with international law, and unjust, considering the geography and history of Russia.[275] Still, in 2014 Russia's elite has readily politicised Arctic resources. In April, Putin stated that continued Western sanctions might lead to retaliation by Russia against Western companies working in the most important industries in Russia, including the energy sector.[276] Similarly, Sergei Donskoi, Russia's Minister for Energy Resources, warned that any foreign companies cancelling contracts with Russia would pay dearly. Donskoi reminded such companies that Russia is now home to one of the most promising energy sectors in the world and that any companies leaving Russia might lose a large part of their future share.[277] In this way, the economic development of the Arctic risks becoming the centre of another long-term dispute between Russia and the West.

6. Conclusion

This report provides a survey of foreign policy perceptions in Russia as of 2014, with particular emphasis on their relation to the Baltic and Arctic regions. The report demonstrates how

the clear majority of tendencies in how Russia's elite perceives the world and Russia's position in it existed before the current crisis in Ukraine and that they cannot thereby be expected to disappear following a solution to this crisis. The report argues that foreign policy thinking in Russia is based on three focal points: Revanchism, Russians and Justice.

The report also aims to inspire Danish politicians as they seek to determine Danish policy towards Russia in the years to come. In the following, the report details its recommendations for Danish policy on Russia with respect to the Baltic and Arctic regions.

The Baltic region

Denmark should work multilaterally within NATO and bilaterally with Finland and Sweden to clarify the relationship between these two countries and NATO as quickly as possible. Uncertainty surrounding this relationship may create additional tension between Russia and NATO. As part of NATO, Denmark should continue to offer military security guarantees and equipment to Poland and the Baltic States. Although a military threat by Russia towards NATO member states remains unlikely, an increase in Danish military integration with Poland and the Baltic States will generally stress the vital importance of these countries and the Baltic region for NATO. The more Russia's elite views the Baltic States and Poland as central participants in NATO decision-making, the greater the possibility that Russia's elite will accept that these countries are firmly anchored in NATO, which again will benefit the long-term stability and security of the region.

The deployment of parts of the missile defence in Poland may result in Russia feeling forced to take part in a regional arms race. Denmark should be aware of the powerful signals sent by the placing of missile defence systems near the borders of Russia and the regional implications possibly resulting from countering the global threat of the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Denmark might influence the regional importance of the missile defence through diplomatic means within NATO as well as bilaterally – including in relation to Russia.

Particularly with Kaliningrad – and regional economic development – in mind, Denmark should seek to convince the EU to resume negotiations as soon as possible concerning simplified visa regulations for citizens of Russia seeking access to the EU. Opportunities for increased trade with Kaliningrad should also be considered as soon as this becomes compatible with the current sanctions between the West and Russia.

Denmark should continue to accept the economic integration of Russia in the Baltic region. In particular, Russia should receive confirmation that energy cooperation may and should continue. Nevertheless, it must be made clear to Russia (with the assistance of the EU and, regionally, Germany) that Denmark and the EU insist on energy diversification as part of their long-term agenda – just as attempts by Russia's elite to disrupt energy transfers or use other economic means to harm states in this region shall remain unacceptable and liable to cause lasting economic isolation of Russia. With respect to trade, Denmark should also be prepared to act swiftly and consistently – and possibly within the WTO – in support of other EU member states, the products of which are excluded from the market of Russia.

Together with the Baltic States, Denmark should publicly seek to ensure that Russians in the Baltics are protected against discrimination. Working together with the Baltic governments, Denmark should actively seek to minimise the number of stateless people in the Baltics and include and embed Russians living in the Baltics in the political process. Within the EU, Denmark should be prepared to counter any claim from Russia that Russians suffer discrimination in the Baltics with a demand for supporting evidence. Denmark should always be prepared clearly and vocally to show solidarity with the Baltic States in their attempts to secure their sovereign rights against threats emanating from Russia.

The Arctic

Within NATO, Denmark should consider whether there are sufficient capabilities in the Arctic to counter any unauthorised flights or other forms of military aggression by Russia. Denmark might have particular interest in considering this in cooperation with Canada, Norway and the USA. At the same time, when dealing with Russia, Denmark and NATO should stress that they have no wish to militarise the Arctic and how they seek to solve problems in this region through political means.

Jointly with other Arctic states, Denmark should actively consider recognising Russia's territorial demands for and leadership in relation to the Northern Sea Route. At the same time, Denmark and other Arctic states should insist that tariffs on this route are equal for all, just as all vessels – from Russia as well as from other countries – are treated equally. Denmark should keep in mind that the route might currently offer possibilities for political cooperation with Russia, whereas significant economic advantages are more of a long-term prospect.

Denmark should be prepared for the fact that the issue of border delimitation in the Arctic will ultimately be solved through multilateral negotiations. From the outset, Denmark should have a clear idea of which of its demands for the Arctic underground are indisputable. Together with the other Western Arctic states, Denmark should work as quickly as possible to recognise demands by Russia for those parts of the underground, not sought by the West. Denmark should be prepared for the fact that Russia might not recognise or accept parts of Danish territorial demands in the short and medium term.

When current sanctions between Russia and the West are scaled down, Denmark might consider economic cooperation with Russia in the Arctic, although it might take some years before such cooperation yields economic results. Denmark might consider basing its cooperation with Russia on a stance supported by other EU member states. While it is obviously possible for Danish companies to conduct business in Russia without engaging with the Danish state, Denmark should make it clear to such companies that their activities in Russia might suffer sudden disruptions and that there is a risk of economic losses in connection with nationalisation or other initiatives by Russia's elite. As far as possible, Denmark should be prepared to counteract such initiatives with the help of the EU and the WTO.

In the coming years, Denmark and the West more generally must be prepared for a Russia seeking both to distance itself and getting closer to the West. The greatest challenge for Russia will be developing a state ideology capable of keeping Russia together and integrating Russia further in peaceful, European modes of cooperation. Even in the light of the Ukraine crisis, it is reasonable to assume that Russia's elite – including Putin – would prefer that Russia cooperate with NATO and the EU on military-strategic issues and long-term economic cooperation with the West. Russia's elite has never developed a coherent plan to accomplish this, yet they have conducted several genuine attempts to do so – including suggestions made by Medvedev and Lavrov for a new European security structure in 2008-09. It remains possible that the Arctic, in particular, will form the basis for cooperation between the West and Russia.

As part of such cooperation, Denmark and the West more generally will possibly have to deal with a Russia displaying increasingly fascist characteristics. Such a Russian state does not necessarily have an aggressive foreign policy. In addition, it is able to keep Russia together and stable, led by a highly centralised public administration, which is prepared to accept any-

one demonstrating loyalty to Russia. Clearly, should the West seek to cooperate with such a Russia, Western attempts at assisting democracy in Russia will be less effective. Whether such a price is worth paying for the West remains a question that Denmark and other states must decide for themselves. However, the author of this report would warn in the strongest terms possible against accepting a Russia, which attacks citizens holding minority views. This recommendation is based on ethical considerations concerning the intrinsic value of democracy as well as the fact that Western acceptance of an increasingly fascist Russia might inadvertently increase the distance between Russia and the West.

Ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the West has called on innumerable occasions for increased democracy in Russia. At times, Russia's elite, including Putin, have partly sought to adhere to this wish from the West. However, the protection of minority attitudes and free speech – fundamental aspects of Western understandings of democracy – have not been demanded of Russia in a systematic fashion. Putin (and probably also Medvedev) was elected by a majority of Russia's citizens, but the policies of Russia's elite in relation to Pussy Riot and Crimea are also supported by a majority of Russia's population. In these and other instances, the minority in Russia is prevented from being heard. The West may accept that this is how Russia is governed. Yet such an accept takes away the possibility for Russia to be part of the West, where minority rights are the basis of political forms of governance. The West, Denmark included, must decide whether our policy should aim to make Russia "one of us". If this is the case, the West should continue to demand tolerance and transparency in Russia's domestic and foreign policy. In return, the West and Denmark might at some point witness a Russia that can be part of creating a complete and peaceful Europe for the 21st century. If there is no intention of making Russia part of the West, governance in Russia may be ignored, just as Russia may be allowed to increase its military and economic capabilities in its role as a post-Soviet regional great power. If this is the case, the West might witness a Russia in which the elite might gradually become accustomed to being isolated, with which the West might cooperate on isolated issues, and which may be contained behind reinforced borders, while "our world" ends in the Baltics. This is a strategic choice. It is also Denmark's choice – and it is a choice to be made now.

7. Notes

[1] The author would like to thank Mikkel Rasmussen, Jørgen Staun and particularly Kristian Kristensen for their assistance and very helpful advice, which has improved this report in a number of ways. As always, the author alone is responsible for any mistakes or lacunae in the report.

[2] J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2001; also J. Mearsheimer, "Getting Ukraine Wrong", *The New York Times*, 13.3.2014.

[3] G. Hosking, *Russia and the Russians: A History (2nd ed.)*, London: Penguin, 2011, introduction.

[4] M. Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics", *The American Political Science Review*, 80 (4), 1986, 1151-69; also R. Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008.

[5] See for instance T. Ambrosio, *Authoritarian Backlash: Russian Resistance to Democratization in the Former Soviet Union*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009; also R. Nilsson, "The Black Sea Fleet and Its Being Based in Ukraine, 2008-2010: Three Interpretations", *Europe-Asia Studies*, 65 (6), 2013, 1154-70.

[6] See for instance O. Lutsevych, "EU Can help Ukraine After Yanukovych's crackdown", *Chatham House*, 20.1.2014; also H. Brun, "Dialog in spe i Ukraine?" *Kristeligt Dagblad*, 29.1.2014.

[7] See for instance M. Rasmussen, L. Struwe, R. Hoffmann, F. Pradhan-Blach, J. Kidmose, H. Breitenbauch, K. Kristensen and A.-S. Dahl, *Ukrainekrisen og forandringen af dansk forsvars- og sikkerhedspolitik*, Copenhagen: Centre for Military Studies, 2014; also G. Rose, ed., *Crisis in Ukraine*, Washington, DC: Council on Foreign Relations, 2014; also A. Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis: What It Means for the West*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014.

[8] In this report, the term "Russia's elite" refers to individuals who directly or indirectly influence decision-making in and the actions of the Russian state. Thus, the elite includes members of the government, parliamentarians, military leaders and prominent businesspeople.

[9] To avoid misunderstandings, it must be made clear from the outset that when the report describes a Russia with some "fascist characteristics", this is exactly what is meant. In Russia and elsewhere, "fascist" is often synonymous with national-socialist, yet Nazism was a particular form of fascism characterised, for instance, by a racially determined division of society and a desire for global military domination. These traits are not particularly relevant for the attitudes held by the contemporary elite in Russia. For the difference between fascism and Nazism, see also A. Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction (5th ed.)*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 214-22.

[10] For a theoretical discussion of the distinction between these categories, see also B. Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era (2nd ed.)*, Harlow: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991.

[11] A community of values, which, following a very broad understanding of social liberalism, highlights individual rights, the protection of minorities, capitalism and respect for territorial sovereignty. Obviously, a range of examples may be produced as evidence that many Western states do not always act according to such values. For more than a decade, "anti-terror laws" have thus provided the USA, UK, Denmark and many other countries with the opportunity to limit and undermine civilian rights; in a number of Western states, immigrants and other minorities increasingly experience discrimination; the USA and EU both continue to face problems with monopolies (often connected to states); and it was after all Western states, which invaded and bombed

Iraq, Afghanistan, Serbia, etc. Nevertheless, continuous Western debate and criticism of these events demonstrates how Western society as such retains the ideal of liberalism, broadly understood. Conversely, however, and as described in this report, signs exist that such debate is increasingly marginalised in speech and even in thought in contemporary Russia.

[12] For further discussion of this problem, see also A. Wolfers, "'National Security' as an Ambiguous Symbol", *Political Science Quarterly*, 67 (4), 1952, 481-502; of course, a degree of theoretical abstraction is required, as discussed in S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, London: Free Press, 2002, 13-18.

[13] A detailed survey of the debates on national interests is also available in S. Burchill, *The National Interest in International Relations Theory*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

[14] For this method, see T. Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities & Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002, 1-38; also F. Ciută, "Narratives of Security: Strategy and Identity in the European Context" in R. Mole, ed., *Discursive Constructions of Identity in European Politics*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 190-207.

[15] See also T. May, *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process (4th ed.)*, Maidenhead: Open University, 2011, 191-218.

[16] For the many influences on Russian foreign policy, see R. Donaldson, J. Nogee and V. Nadkarni, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests (5th ed.)*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2014, 122-54; also A. Ledeneva, *Can Russia Modernise? 'Sistema,' Power Networks and Informal Governance*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

[17] See also J. Headley, *Russia and the Balkans: Foreign Policy From Yeltsin to Putin*, London: C. Hurst & Co., 2008.

[18] "Vladimir Putin otvetil na voprosy zhurnalistov o situatsii na Ukraine", *Kremlin.ru*, 4.3.2014.

[19] However, for an argument that such fear was present to some extent in the Russian regime, see also: P. Duncan, "Russia, the West and the 2007-2008 Electoral Cycle: Did the Kremlin Really Fear a 'Coloured Revolution'?" *Europe-Asia Studies*, 65 (1), 2013, 1-25.

[20] "Delo ne v SShA, a v rossiiskom narode", *Kommersant*, 15.12.2011

[21] "Vladimir Putin: My ne khotim razdela Ukrainy, nam to ne nuzhno", *Rossiia Segodnia*, 18.3.2014.

[22] "Vladimir Putin: Uveren, na Ukraine poimut, chto postupit' inache Rossiia v Krymu ne mogla", *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, 17.4.2014.

[23] "Lavrov obvinil ES v sozdanii 'sfery vliianiia' v Ukraine", *BBC.co.uk*, 14.2.2014.

[24] "Matvienko: Sanktsii SShA – eto politicheskii shantazh", *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, 17.3.2014.

[25] "Riabkov priznaet ser'eznost' ekonomicheskikh sanktsii SShA", *Gazeta.ru*, 29.4.2014.

[26] T. Shadrina, "Sanktsii ne otraziatsia na rabote Sberbanka i VTB", *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, 1.8.2014.

[27] "Medvedev: Rossiia osporit sanktsii SSha v VTO", *Itar-Tass.com*, 20.6.2014.

[28] "MID RF: Doklad upravleniia po pravam cheloveka OON po Ukraine nosit odnobokii, politizirovannyi kharakter", *Rossiia Segodnia*, 15.4.2014.

[29] "Rossiia gotova vyiti iz Soveta Evropy", *Ntv.ru*, 10.4.2014.

[30] "Nuzhen zakon o garantiiakh prav roditelei na vospitanie sobstvennykh detei", *Vrns.ru*, 27.9.2012; K. Stoeckl, *The Russian Orthodox Church and Human Rights*, London: Routledge, 2014, 99.

[31] "Putin: Pri vnedrenii iuvenal'noi iustitsii nuzhno uchest' mnenie obshchestva", *Ria.ru*, 9.2.2013; "Putin o tvorcheskom podkhode, novom dykhanii i edinom standarte", *Ria.ru*, 29.3.2013.

[32] D. Trenin, *Post-Imperium: A Eurasian Story*, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011.

[33] D. Trenin, "Welcome to Cold War II: This Is What It Will Look Like", *Foreignpolicy.com*, 4.3.2014.

[34] S. Karaganov, D. Suslov and T. Bordachev, "Perenastroika, a ne perezagruzka: interesy Rossii v otnosheniiakh s SShA", *Svop.ru*, June 2009, 14.

[35] T. Bordachev, "Power, Morality and Justice: International Politics in the 21st century", *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2, 2014.

[36] "Obshchestvennoe mnenie – 2011", *Levada.ru*, 2011.

[37] "Okolo 145 tysiach rossiian pokinuli stranu za poslednie tri goda", *Ria.ru*, 20.9.2011.

[38] R. Sakwa, *Putin Redux: Power and Contradiction in Contemporary Russia*, New York: Routledge, 2014, 47.

[39] "Energy and Oil Prices", *Bloomberg.com*, 24.11.2014.

[40] See also T. Landstreet, "Here Comes Cheaper Oil: Why Prices Are Set to Fall", *Forbes.com*, 20.8.2014.

[41] R. Blackwill and M. O'Sullivan, "America's Energy Edge: The Geopolitical Consequences of the Shale Revolution", *Foreign Affairs*, 93 (3), 2014.

[42] A. Åslund, "Gazprom: Challenged Giant in Need of Reform" in A. Åslund, S. Guriev and A. Kuchins, eds. *Russia After the Global Economic Crisis*, Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2010, 153.

[43] J. Bush, "Surge in Russian Capital Outflows Adds to Economic Woes", *Reuters.uk*, 9.4.2014.

[44] See F. Splidsboel-Hansen, "Past and Future Meet: Aleksandr Gorchakov and Russian Foreign Policy", *Europe-Asia Studies*, 54 (3), 2002, 377-96.

[45] V. Putin, "Rossiia sosredotachivaetsia: vyzovy, na kotorye my dolzhny otvetit'", *Izvestiia*, 16.1.2012.

[46] I. Matsarskii, S. Galiandin and M. Abulkhatin, "Otets Vladislava Surkova ne sovetuet synu ukhodit' v oppozitsiiu", *Izvestiia*, 1.7.2013.

[47] V. Putin, "Rossiia: natsional'nyi vopros", *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 23.1.2012.

[48] This was not a novel accusation. In 2004, a number of Russian reactions to the Orange Revolution also highlighted the fear of a "fascist" Ukraine, and the author of this report repeatedly heard accusations against allegedly racist Western Ukrainians from Russian politicians and civil servants, whom he interviewed in 2007.

[49] "Sovet Federatsii razreshil Putinu vvesti voiska na Ukrainu", *Lenta.ru*, 1.3.2014.

[50] K. Latukhina, "Sila i sredstva: press-sekretar' prezidenta dal interv'iu BBC", *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, 20.3.2014.

[51] "O Fonde", *Russkiymir.ru*, no date.

[52] "Obrashchenie Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii", *Kremlin.ru*, 18.3.2014.

[53] See especially Naval'nyi's video (named *THE PEOPLE in favour of the legalisation of arms*), which recommends the shooting of terrorists (or "vermin") from the Caucasus. The video is only available in a Russian-language version. However, the viewer still gains an impression of a performance, which is a mixture of school plays and something more appropriate for fascist regimes from the first part of the twentieth century. See "NAROD za legalizatsiiu oruzhiia", *YouTube.com*, 19.9.2007 (www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVNJiO10SWw).

[54] "Obshchestvennoe mnenie – 2012", *Levada.ru*, 2012, 178 (table 18:12).

[55] A. Umland, "New Extreme Right-Wing Intellectual Circles in Russia: The Anti-Orange Committee, the Izborsk Club and the Florian Geyer Club", *Russian Analytical Digest*, 135, 5.8.2013, 2-5; see also "Kontseptual'nyi klub 'Florian Geier'", *Floriangeyer.ru*, no date.

[56] See for instance data on murders of people from ethnic minorities in Russia, gathered by the research institute SOVA. The figures show that the frequency of such murders has fallen considerably since 2008. Based on "Baza dannykh: akty nasiliia", *Sova-center.ru*, no date. Note as well that although Russia officially registered an increase in crimes "of an extremist nature" between 2010 and 2013, this was probably due to a definition of "extremist", which goes beyond SOVA's focus on racism and includes "extremist" actions, which might be seen as legitimate political activity in the West. See "Zaregistrirovano prestuplenii ekstremistskoi napravlennosti", *Crimestat.ru*, no date.

[57] "Aleksei Naval'nyi: Byt' luchshim oppozitsionnym politikom v Rossii – eto ochen' prosto", *Gq.ru*, June 2013.

[58] "Itogi vyborov v Gosdumu po regionam Rossii", *Ria.ru*, 6.12.2011.

[59] See, for example, Y. Steinholt, I. Gololobov and H. Pilkington, "St Petersburg: Big City – Small Scenes" in I. Gololobov, H. Pilkington and Y. Steinholt, *Punk in Russia: Cultural Mutation From the 'Useless' to the 'Moronic',* New York: Routledge, 2014, 58.

[60] M. Gessen, *Words Will Break Cement: The Passion of Pussy Riot*, London: Granta, 2014.

[61] "Sud obvinil Magnitskogo posmertno", *Interfax.ru*, 11.7.2013; see also C. Milmo, "Sergei Magnitsky – The Final Insult: Russia Continues to 'Desecrate the Memory' of the Whistleblower Lawyer", *The Independent*, 13.1.2014.

[62] "O deiatel'nosti nekommercheskikh organizatsii", *Unro.minjust.ru*, 13.8.2014; also "Putin podpisal zakon ob NKO, vypolniaiushchikh funktsii inostrannogo agenta", *Ria.ru*, 21.7.2012.

[63] "Sotni kazakov pribyli v Sochi dlia okhrany poriadka vo vremia Olimpiady", *Ria.ru*, 9.1.2014; "Pussy Riot Attacked by Whip-Wielding Cossacks in Sochi", *Channel 4 News*, 19.2.2014 (www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNB3N6DWVTs). Nevertheless, Russian authorities ensured that Cossacks in Sochi kept a low profile following the assault on Pussy Riot, see A. Koshkina, "Kazakov vygnali iz Sochi", *Gazeta.ru*, 20.2.2014.

[64] Russia has officially prohibited "homosexual propaganda directed against children", with the explanation that homosexuality is incompatible with Russian traditions; see also "Putin podpisal zakon o zaprete gei-propagandy sredi detei", *Ria.ru*, 30.6.2013. Yet the idea that "homosexuality is a disease" enjoys widespread support in Russia. An opinion poll from 2013 showed that 34% view homosexuality as a disease, while yet another 40% view homosexuality as the result of a poor upbringing or abuse. See "Strakh drugogo: problema gomofobii v Rossii", *Levada.ru*, 12.3.2013. The connection between homosexuality and disease has long been made by fascist (and other strongly centralised) regimes, perhaps due to a universal fear of "that which is un-clean", as demonstrated in M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, London: Routledge, 2002.

[65] "Iakunin: Vkliuchennye v sanktsionnyi spisok SShA liudi zashchishchaiut interesy Rossii", *Vz.ru*, 21.3.2014.

[66] S. Smirnov, "Medvedev zapretil goszakupki importnykh avtomobilei", *Vedomosti*, 14.7.2014.

[67] "O Zubove A.B." *Mgimo.ru*, 24.3.2014; også E. Antonova, "Professora uvolili za vzgliady", *Gazeta.ru*, 24.3.2014.

[68] N. Galimova, "Putin nauchil istorikov liubit' Rodinu", *Gazeta.ru*, 16.1.2014; a Western warning against this policy can also be found in L. Aron, "The Kremlin's Propaganda Campaign and Russia's Regression", *The American*, 24.10.2013.

[69] "Podpisan zakon, napravlennyi na protivodeistvie popytkam posiagatel'stv na istoricheskuiu pamiat' v otnoshenii sobytii Vtoroi mirovoi voiny", *Kremlin.ru*, 5.5.2014.

[70] "Putin nazval SShA parazitami euronews mir", *YouTube*, 2.8.2011 (www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-pPulySsBw); V. Putin, "Rossiia sosredotachivaetsia – vyzovy na kotorye my dolzhny otvetit'", *Izvestiia*, 16.1.2012; see also A. Stent, *The Limits of Partnership: U.S.–Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014, 184.

[71] See for instance "Kontseptsiia vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii", *Mid.ru*, 18.2.2013, II, 5.

[72] "Sovmestnaia deklaratsiia Rossiiskoi Federatsii i Kitaiskoi Narodnoi Respubliki o mezhdunarodnom poriadke v XXI veke", *Kremlin.ru*, 1.6.2005.

[73] For one among many examples, see H. Kissinger, *On China*, London: Penguin, 2012.

[74] "Second Summit: Joint Statement", *Brics6.itamaraty.gov.br*, 16.4.2010.

[75] "Sixth Summit: Joint Statement", *Brics6.itamaraty.gov.br*, 15.7.2014, sections 12-13.

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[77] "Proekt Dogovora o evropeiskoi bezopasnosti", *Kremlin.ru*, 29.11.2009.

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[97] Sakwa, *Putin Redux,* 6-7.

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