

# A Contemporary “Long Telegram”: Explaining Russian Behavior

A Monograph

by

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## **Abstract**

A Contemporary “Long Telegram,”: Explaining Russian Behavior by MAJ Amy L. Nash, 45 pages.

Using the structure of the “Long Telegram” by George Kennan published in 1946, this monograph organizes unclassified and open source information into a contemporary understanding of Russian behavior. The analysis of the sources of Russian behavior provides a better understanding of the threat posed by a contemporary Russia. This monograph does not argue current policy or recommend new policy. The analysis here draws on current events and publications that meet the spirit of the original telegram.

## Contents

Acknowledgements .....	v
Acronyms .....	vi
Introduction .....	1
George F. Kennan.....	4
Methodology .....	7
The “Long Telegram” .....	7
Part 1: Basic Features of Post War Soviet Outlook.....	8
Part 2: The Background of this Outlook.....	12
Part 3: Projection of Soviet Outlook in Practical Policy on Official Level.....	13
Part 4: Its Projection on an Unofficial Level.....	14
Part 5: Practical Deductions from the Standpoint of US Policy.....	16
A Contemporary “Long Telegram” .....	17
Part 1: Basic Features of Post Cold War Russian Outlook.....	222
Part 2: Background of this Outlook.....	30
Part 3: Its Projection in Practical Policy on Official Level .....	34
Part 4: Its Projection on Unofficial Level.....	35
Part 5: Practical Deductions from Standpoint of US Policy.....	36
Conclusion.....	38
Bibliography .....	41

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## **Acronyms**

IMF	International Monetary Fund
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
RT	Russia Today
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

## Introduction

Let me tell you something – there is no need to fear Russia. The world has changed so drastically that people with some common sense cannot even imagine such a large-scale military conflict today. We have other things to think about, I assure you.

—Vladimir Putin, quoted in *Il Corriere della Sera*

General Raymond Odierno, the former Army chief of staff, said in his outgoing speech on 13 August 2015, “Russia poses the most dangerous threat facing the United States, thanks largely in part to its sophisticated operations in Ukraine.”<sup>1</sup> The assessment of Russia is consistent across the military community. In September 2015, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Supreme Allied Commander and Commander of United States European Command, General Philip Breedlove stated, “I think our nation made decisions over the last two decades that were congruent with our approach to Russia. Now we see that, possibly, we did not have the partner we thought we had, and we have to readjust. And the IC (Intelligence Community) is doing that, and I’m thankful for that.”<sup>2</sup> The heaviness of these statements bears down on the United States, Americans, the military, and their collective future tremendously. Almost twenty-seven years after the existential threat of the Soviet Union disappeared, the United States, once again, finds itself identifying Russia as its number one enemy.

In 1946, American diplomat George Kennan sent a long telegram from his office in Moscow to the US State Department explaining, in his mind, the nature of the threat posed by the Soviet Union and the sources of its behavior. The perceived irrationality and inability to control the Soviet Union fostered an atmosphere of fear and distrust. What later became known as the

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<sup>1</sup> Aaron Mehta, “Gen. Breedlove: Intelligence Community Changing How It Handles Russia,” *Defense News*, 30 October 2015, accessed 28 December 2015, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/budget/2015/10/30/intel-community-russia-breedlove/74867614/>, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



“Long Telegram” became the centerpiece of the strategy that would describe US foreign policy during the Cold War. An updated “Long Telegram” regarding the threat posed by Russia, and sources of Russian behavior in 2016, will shed useful light on the nature of that behavior, be it aggressive, passive, or complacent, posed to the United States by the Russian Federation.

The similarities between 1946 and 2016 in the context of US-Russian relations, must not be overlooked with the focus on US actions or lack of actions. The United States and its allies were actively engaged in World War II, for six years focused on both Germany and Japan. In September of 1945, the defeat of Germany and Japan created a false sense of security. This complacency allowed the United States, with the United Kingdom, to overlook the Soviet Union as a potential legitimate adversary.

In the opening of the “Long Telegram” Kennan stated, “and so important to the analysis of our international environment that I cannot compress answers into a single brief message without yielding to what I feel would be a dangerous degree of over-simplification.”<sup>3</sup> A number of critical events led to the initiation of the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States and ultimately the adoption of the policy of containment. These events will be addressed and incorporated in this monograph to provide perspective to the “Long Telegram”. The relationship of Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union at the end of the World War II did not evolve into a trifecta of democracy that was internationally expected. Instead, the exact opposite unfolded. The realization that the Soviet Union was not only anti-United States but could be legitimately focusing their efforts on a five-year plan to expand communism and extinguish capitalism was becoming a certainty that the international community could only

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<sup>3</sup> George F. Kennan, Telegram, George Kennan to George Marshall, [“Long Telegram”], 22 February 1946, Harry S. Truman Administration File, Elsey Papers, Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, accessed 29 July 2015, [https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/6-6.pdf](https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/6-6.pdf). Hereafter referred to as Kennan, “Long Telegram.”

acknowledge as a legitimate possibility. Seventy years to the present and the United States again finds itself at the end of two wars with the declaration that the Russian Federation is now the number one threat. As in 1946, and now in 2016, identifying the sources of Russian behavior and not just the behavior, are supreme in understanding the international situation and a way forward.

In the “Long Telegram”, Kennan genuinely intended to understand the root of the differences, which makes it arguably more relevant today than it was in 1946. The telegram encapsulated the perspective of the Soviet Union, which provided explanation to a sometimes-unexplainable situation and behavior. An escalation of sorts with modern day Russia today is a realistic possibility, as it was seventy years ago, and understanding the sources of Russian behavior is a necessity to make sense of the current political and international situation the United States is mired in with the Russian Federation. Instead of conducting a country study by the Central Intelligence Agency or carrying out a threat assessment by the State Department, the purpose of this monograph is to examine the “Long Telegram” in the current time period using the methodology of Kennan’s “Long Telegram” as a baseline and most importantly to understand the value. Understanding the behavior of the Russian Federation from this perspective is invaluable, and a contemporary “Long Telegram” will provide a consolidated, unclassified, and relevant perspective of the political and military situation the United States is currently engaged in with the Russian Federation. The “Long Telegram” is a significant document in Soviet-US States history. The man instrumental in the creation of the “Long Telegram” was then Deputy Chief of Mission in the Embassy in Moscow, George F. Kennan.

## George F. Kennan

George F. Kennan was born on 16 February 1904 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Florence and Kossuth Kent Kennan. His life was punctuated by a number of unusual circumstances so inheriting a name after his grandfather's cousin, a person he briefly met and never truly knew, is not the surprise. His namesake, born the exact day fifty-nine years earlier, was regarded as an expert on Soviet affairs in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century with a book published in 1891, titled *Siberia and the Exile System*. With that said, one could say it was George F. Kennan's destiny to be a Sovietologist. Whether or not that is the cause of George F. Kennan's interest and association, the similarities cannot be overlooked.<sup>4</sup>

It surprised no one that Kennan pursued a career in the Foreign Service, which upon graduation from Princeton University in 1921, is exactly what he did. He held multiple positions in numerous countries, in various consulates and with a number of different ambassadors. In 1933, he was a part of history in establishing the first embassy in the Soviet Union. In Kennan's professional life concerning politics and diplomacy, he often found himself at odds and in disagreement with both the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. US cooperation with the Soviet Union was the source of the rift that Kennan had with both administrations. Ironically, it was not a threat assessment or political assessment requested from the State Department that elevated Mr. Kennan politically in 1946 and internationally in 1947 with the publication of a version of the "Long Telegram" in the journal *Foreign Affairs* called the "X" article. The Treasury Department requested the "*Sources of Soviet Conduct*" because the then Soviet Union, to the bewilderment of the United States, declined participation and association with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. This, at the bare minimum, startled the international community. Why would the Soviet Union deliberately choose not to participate?

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<sup>4</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life* (New York: Penguin Group, 2012), 12.

What were their intentions? What would be the benefit of not participating? Did it outweigh the benefits of participating? These questions led to the request for what became the “Long Telegram”.

Kennan lived in the Soviet Union and Europe off and on from 1933 until 1953. This provided Kennan a perspective of Soviet behavior that was paramount in his analysis of current and future US-Soviet relations. He had placement and access as the deputy chief of mission in the embassy in Moscow and was undeniably the right person for the assessment that the Treasury Department was requesting. Kennan’s recommended US policy in the form of containment to prevent confrontation with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). Ultimately, a withdrawal from Europe would decrease the Soviet Union’s perceived reality that NATO and the West were geographically constricting the Soviet Union. Upon publication the “Long Telegram” took a life of its own, eventually evolving into the US Cold War containment policy, seen explicitly in the Marshall Plan and *National Security Council Report 68*.

It is of importance to acknowledge that Kennan did not address Stalin directly in the “Long Telegram”, and with the contemporary “Long Telegram”, Putin will not be directly addressed either. Kennan referenced the government, the people, and the ideology of communism, and the contemporary telegram will do the same. While certainly Kennan used the words of Stalin, they were not included to reflect him as an individual, but specifically as the leader of the USSR. The reason for this approach is that the initial question by the United States Treasury Department to Kennan, the minister-counselor to the US ambassador in the Soviet Union at the time, was to produce a report on why the Soviet Union was not complying with the IMF or World Bank. The Treasury Department request was not intended to be a personality assessment of the Soviet leader.

With that said, it is necessary to address the speech given by Stalin just days after the placement of the request, if for anything, the timing. This speech was delivered to an assembly of

voters in Moscow on 9 February 1946, approximately six days after the request from the Treasury Department was telegraphed. Although the 1946 speech was not as scathing as the 1929 American Delegation of Workers speech, what it did was reinforce that the Soviet Union had no ideas of deviating from communism. According to Stalin, communism is what made the Soviet Union a victor out of World War II and communism will continue to make the Soviet Union victorious.

I have no doubt that if we give our scientists proper assistance they will be able in the very near future not only to overtake but even outstrip the achievements of science beyond the borders of our country. It is said that victors are not judged, that they must not be criticized, that they must not be inquired into. This is not true. Victors may and should be judged, they may and should be criticized and inquired into. This is beneficial not only for the cause, but also for the victors; there will be less swelled-headedness, and there will be more modesty. I regard the election campaign as a court of the voters sitting in judgment over the Communist Party as the ruling party. The result of the election will be the voters' verdict. The Communist Party of our country would not be worth much if it feared criticism and investigation. The Communist Party is ready to receive the verdict of the voters.<sup>5</sup>

Once Stalin delivered the election speech, the West and its allies began to panic.

Although Stalin was not ignorant that the speech and its contents would go worldwide, his intended audience was the Soviet people and the parties running against him in the election. Like any election rally, he provided facts in the context where they would benefit him and his political party, the Communist party. Stalin told a story of how the Soviet Union came out of World War I, unsuccessful, beaten and broken and with the power of the Communist Party, the Soviet Union was victorious in World War II. The narrative of the Communist party rightfully acknowledged the Soviet people and their contribution but emphasized that without Communism, the Soviet Union's success would have been unattainable. Communism put the Soviet Union in a position that it could not have been in otherwise with a different party: a leader in the world.

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<sup>5</sup> Josef V. Stalin, "Speech Delivered by J.V. Stalin at a Meeting of the Voters of the Stalin Electoral District, Moscow, February 9, 1946," From Marx to Mao, accessed 28 November 2015, <http://www.marx2mao.com/Stalin/SS46.html>, 41-42.

So herein lies the predicament. Was this just a campaign speech to ensure the success of Stalin in an upcoming election? Or was it much more? Was it a warning that the Soviet Union is about spreading communism and world domination or is a reminder of the defeat that the Soviet Union would have incurred without Communism? Unfortunately, the timing was paramount and it certainly did not help decrease the fervor that already existed concerning Communism. Either way, it was the narrative Kennan chose to tell and this monograph represents the narrative the contemporary telegram will tell.

### Methodology

The research will use the outline provided in Kennan's "Long Telegram" to build a contemporary understanding of Russian behavior. This methodology allows for consistency with the hypothesis and limits deviation from the intent of the actual "Long Telegram". The first step is to create a framework from the "Long Telegram" by extracting themes from events and activities of the time period that Kennan used to explain Soviet behavior. Using this framework, the second step is to articulate what a contemporary "Long Telegram," if written today, might say. The framework, coupled with present-day data, should provide a current, and relevant, contemporary "Long Telegram". All data used in this section will be unclassified and derived from open-source materials. The intent is not to provide a comparison as to how the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation has changed over seventy years; or to singularly focus on Putin. Just as Kennan did, the intent is to identify the source of current Russian behavior.

### **The "Long Telegram"**

I apologize in advance for this burdening of telegraphic channel; but questions involved are of such urgent importance, particularly in view of recent events, that our answers to them, if they deserve attention at all, seem to me to deserve it at once.

—George Kennan, "Long Telegram"

The “Long Telegram” consists of five parts created by Kennan to answer the seemingly simple question, what are the sources of Soviet behavior? Those parts are still relevant and applicable, and will be the baseline subjects to tackle this contemporary “Long Telegram”. Kennan chose the five parts, or subjects, to answer the question fully; the State Department did not dictate the questions to him. Kennan’s concern was that, if he condensed the response, he would be doing a grand injustice by oversimplifying an issue that he feared was more than the Soviet Union’s refusal to participate in the IMF. To Kennan, it was much bigger than anyone suspected. Although reparations from World War II and revanchism certainly contributed to the deteriorating relationship between the Soviet Union and the West, the two factors were not solely responsible for the behavior of the Soviet Union. Ultimately, the five questions formulated by Kennan were: what are the Soviets thinking; why and how did it affect official policy; how did it affect unofficially; and finally, what does it mean to the United States and her policy?

The five parts Kennan created to answer the one question posed by the State Department were as follows:

1. Basic features of post-war Soviet outlook
2. Background of this outlook
3. Its projection in practical policy on official level
4. Its projection on unofficial level
5. Practical deductions from standpoint of US policy<sup>6</sup>

#### Part 1: Basic Features of Post War Soviet Outlook

This section strives to capture the information campaign the Soviet Union perpetuated. Kennan emphasized that this outlook was pushed by the propaganda arm, and was not the true reflection of the Soviet population. Kennan’s narration of the Soviet’s post-war outlook painted a

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<sup>6</sup> Kennan, “Long Telegram,” 1.

picture of two competing ideologies that simply could not coexist. In this section, Kennan used a quote from Stalin's 1927 speech to the Delegation of American Workers. Although this speech took place nineteen years before the 1946 Stalin election speech, it provided a necessary tie between the pre-World War II Soviet Union to the post-World War II Soviet Union. This is significant to the narrative Kennan was intent on articulating and imparting on the international community. Stalin's remarks that Kennan chose to highlight were as follows:

In the course of further development of international revolution there will emerge two centers of world significance; a socialist center, drawing to itself the countries which tend toward socialism, and a capitalist center, drawing to itself the countries that incline toward capitalism. Battle between these two centers for command of world economy will decide fate of capitalism and of communism in the entire world.<sup>7</sup>

The election speech Stalin presented in 1946 reinforced that communism was here to stay and that perhaps the 1927 Soviet Union was not any different than the 1946 Soviet Union. A very troublesome realization for the United States which is perhaps the reason for opening the "Long Telegram" with the 1927 American Delegation speech. This, coupled with Stalin's recent actions concerning Iran, Poland, and non-participation in the IMF, fed into the true reality Kennan believed had been neglected for too long; that the Soviet Union was not content with coexistence. That if the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's words were the same as before, then the expectation that the same sentiment existed as well. The Communist Party painted a picture of a country on the brink of extinction that brought itself back, and to keep itself there, it only had itself. The Soviet Union could not depend on other countries to be successful and or to survive. Stalin certainly referenced capitalism, but the remarks were directed at his constituents and the other political parties vying for power internally, not necessarily the international community. Stalin delivered this speech in the context of an internal political campaign. The speech discussed what was best for the Soviet Union and why the Soviet Union needed communism to continue to

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<sup>7</sup> Kennan, "Long Telegram," 2.



be successful. The Soviet Union understood loss, manipulation, and hard work. Coming out of World War II, it also saw that the world was more unstable and less peaceful than anticipated. Stalin reinforced his narrative as to why capitalism will always have issues and why it will always cause issues internationally, but did not say that the two could not coexist. Regardless, that was the narrative that was sold, bought, and proliferated in the international community.

Stalin's 1946 speech, touches on the capitalist system and its volatility. In a matter-of-fact fashion Stalin states that the capitalist system was not only responsible for World War I, but World War II as well.<sup>8</sup> In addition, he drives home the point that the Soviet system was successful and not only did they not need capitalism and the West, they did not want it. Stalin said, "Now the point is that the Soviet socialist system has proved to be more viable and stable than the non-Soviet socialist system, that the Soviet system is a better form of organization of society than any non-Soviet social system."<sup>9</sup> The importance of this speech was that it was not just about a political party, or a political leader, or an election agenda or a country and its long term plan of rebuilding. These words signified that this was the same Soviet Union from 1927 and that was a worrisome prospect and this would explain the perceived perplexing and non-participatory actions of 1946. This was not a new Soviet Union and even though six months before, General Dwight D. Eisenhower stated after visiting Moscow, "Nothing guides Russian policy so much as a desire for friendship with the United States."<sup>10</sup> Shortly after World War II, the Soviet Union recognized that being treated as an equal with both Great Britain and the United States was not in the calculus of the West and although it took the three collectively and more to defeat Germany the friendship prediction was not a narrative the Soviet Union genuinely believed

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<sup>8</sup> Stalin, 23

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>10</sup> Howard Jones, *Crucible of Power: A History of American Foreign Relations from 1897*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 230.

as a truth. The political reality that the Soviet Union operated in understood the sincerity of the friendship or partnership sought by the West did not match their actions. Nuclear capabilities as one of the examples of this hollow friendship and partnership. On July 24, 1945 President Truman in conversation told Stalin that the United States had “a new weapon of unusual destructive force.”<sup>11</sup> Truman withheld the fact that the new weapon was nuclear capable. The omission of the nuclear capability and the capability itself, highlighted the uneasy reality of the post World War II world. The recognition that the Soviet Union was deliberately not informed reinforced the narrative that democracy and capitalism did not equal equality or stability. This perceived reality contributed to the perspective adopted by the Soviet Union that capitalism and ultimately the West would not be content until socialism was non-existent and now the United States had the means.<sup>11</sup> The path for success for the Soviet Union was to “remain militarily powerful, ideologically monolithic and faithful to its present brilliant leadership.”<sup>12</sup>

Finally, in the second section of part one, Kennan addressed what this means from the “standpoint of Soviet policy?”<sup>13</sup> Four points rounded out this section. The rhetoric was an us against them perspective reinforcing that a “permanent peaceful coexistence” was not a goal with the Soviet Union.<sup>14</sup> A capitalist society could not be harmonious by design and the internal conflicts would inevitably evolve to external wars therefore directly or indirectly affecting the Soviet Union and if a conflict or war were initiated, the USSR would be victorious. However, measures to prevent such conflict should be avoided otherwise the progress of socialism would be

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<sup>11</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: 1945 Year of Decisions* (New York, NY: Smithmark Publishers, 1995), 416.

<sup>12</sup> Kennan, “Long Telegram,” 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

set back.<sup>15</sup> In summation, every opportunity available must be vigorously executed to exploit weakness and fractures in capitalist countries, revolutions are encouraged, insurrections are supported and all with the end state of weakening capitalism in international society. This is the Soviet Union outlook in 1946.

## Part 2: The Background of this Outlook

The next part centered on the simultaneous advancement of the USSR and stunting of capitalist governments, reinforcing the point that the USSR did not see a future with non-socialist governments and the decline of capitalist governments and exploitation of perceived deficiencies should be paramount at all times. With the additional assessment that the Russian people were not collectively anti-United States, and in reality it was the opposite, they simply did not have access to a truthful reality. The Russian people genuinely seemed West-friendly but ultimately by design of the Soviet Union government the population and even people working in the government were deliberately fed anti-West information and propaganda to continue the paranoia towards the United States. “It should not be thought from above that Soviet Party line is necessarily disingenuous and insincere on part of all those who put it forward. Many of them are too ignorant of the outside world and mentally too dependent to question self-hypnotism, and who have no difficulty making themselves believe what they find it comforting and convenient to believe.”<sup>16</sup>

Ultimately, it would not benefit the internal policy of the Soviet Union if the Soviet population were pro-West or even neutral. Stalin and the communist regime had their own agenda, and that agenda continued to foster propaganda that the Soviet Union was successful because of the Soviet Union and ultimately no one else. In addition, how could the Communist Party convince the Soviets to continue to work for the greater good of the Soviet Union, even

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<sup>15</sup> Kennan, “Long Telegram,” 2.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 7.

harder than before, if there was not a larger enemy than the one the Soviet Union faced in World War II? The narrative would not be valid and/or convincing if the United States and the West were not a threat.

In the breakdown of the background of the outlook, Kennan emphasized that insecurity was the driving factor for the behavior in the Soviet Union. He did not believe this is what the Soviet people believed; it was simply what the propaganda from the Communist Party expected to believe. “At the bottom of the Kremlin’s neurotic view of world affairs is traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity. For Russian rulers have invariably sensed their rule was relatively archaic, unable to stand comparison or contact with political systems of Western countries.”<sup>17</sup> The Soviet Union had to conceal the benefits and advantages of any government that competed with the Soviet Union, not just capitalist governments; otherwise, control over the populace could be jeopardized. Another key point of this section is the validity of the information that Stalin received. Internally it benefited the government agencies to tell Stalin what he wanted to hear, regardless if it was reality.

### Part 3: Projection of Soviet Outlook in Practical Policy on Official Level

Kennan broke this question into sections of “Official plane represented by actions undertaken officially in name of Soviet Government and the subterranean plane of actions undertaken by agencies for which the Soviet Government does not admit responsibility.”<sup>18</sup> This question covered domestic policy to include Soviet military and political strength, foreign policy to include Soviet interaction with countries other than the Soviet Union and allies of the Soviet Union. Of significance the “intensive military-industrialization; maximum development of armed

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<sup>17</sup> Kennan, “Long Telegram,” 5.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 8.

forces”<sup>19</sup> and “friendly Persian Government might be asked to grant Russia a port on the Persian Gulf.”<sup>20</sup> This behavior at publication of this telegram was worrisome because Kennan believed that everything the Soviets were doing aimed to further their agenda and simultaneously degrading the United States and the West but deliberately hiding these intentions. It is one thing to deal with an enemy that outwardly identifies what their intent is but with the Soviet Union it was believed that there was always an ulterior motive with the demise of capitalism and the United States in the end state.

#### Part 4: Its Projection on an Unofficial Level

This section articulates the strength and depth of the unofficial Communist organizations. Kennan laid out the belief that every aspect of every society will be penetrated with the intent of propagating the Communist mindset and regime. Those areas of society specifically would be organizations as simple and unbecoming as labor, youth and women’s organizations, and churches. It is important to keep in mind that this assessment of the Soviet Union is through the point of view of Kennan. It would be difficult to believe that the political and social climate of the United States in 1945 and 1946 did not influence Kennan. The United States, although at the end of World War II was definitely successful and was in a position of power internationally, domestically had its own set of issues, specifically with combating the genuinely perceived threat of Communism within its borders. On 5 September 1945, Soviet cipher clerk, Igor Gouzenko, defected to the Canadian Embassy in Ottawa bringing with him clandestine documents that exposed the Soviet spy ring and its intentions in Ottawa. “No other Soviet cipher clerk had defected in the way Gouzenko did, and the information he brought with him set off a web of

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<sup>19</sup> Kennan, “Long Telegram,” 8.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 8.

investigations in Canada and beyond.”<sup>21</sup> Espionage by the hands of the Communists was inevitable and determined to spread in the United States and Igor Gouzenko was proof enough. A policy to contain Communism needed to be immediately and violently adopted otherwise the spread would be inevitable.

This point is very important and relevant for this time period and the perspective Kennan had as he approached the subject of Soviet behavior. That Communists would exploit every opportunity to insert Communism while simultaneously weakening western governments and societies was so in the realm of the possible, future policies were dictated by that fear. The intent would be to “undermine general political and strategic potential of major western powers efforts will be made in such countries to disrupt national self-confidence, to hamstring measures of national defense, to increase social and industrial unrest, to stimulate all forms of disunity.”<sup>22</sup>

The expectation that the Soviet Union with Communism was deliberately and clandestinely inserting themselves in every organization available from local groups, to national associations to international organizations to simply further the Communist agenda and more importantly expand their control was frightening and truly believed. “As a rule, they are used to penetrate, and to influence or dominate, other organizations less likely to be suspected of being tools of the Soviet Government, with a view of accomplishing their purposes through (apparent omission) organizations, rather than by direct action as a separate political party.”<sup>23</sup>

This part of the “Long Telegram” is relevant to the era because of the anti-Communist climate rampant in the United States at the time period. Kennan did not create the climate or even

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<sup>21</sup> Janet Davison, “Russian spies in Canada: New lessons from the Gouzenko defection,” *CBC News*, 18 October 2015, accessed 24 March 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/russian-spies-intelligence-canada-gouzenko-1.3269032>.

<sup>22</sup> Kennan, “Long Telegram,” 13.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

perpetuate it but the “Long Telegram” simplistically articulated that if the United States was not cautious and deliberate then the creep of Communism would come upon American society. This was clearly a mindset, relevant and believable in 1946. It preyed on the US fears of the Soviet Union and the instability and distrust following World War II. This part of the “Long Telegram” defined the nature of Communism the United States was facing on all levels.

#### Part 5: Practical Deductions from the Standpoint of US Policy

Kennan’s deductions were that the Soviet Union’s intent was to destroy the United States. With the emphasis that it would not be just a military operation but an overall campaign against everything that America stood for.

In summary, we have here a political force committed fanatically to the belief that with the United States there can be no permanent *modus vivendi*, that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be disrupted, our traditional way of life be destroyed, the international authority of our state be broken, if Soviet power is to be secure.<sup>24</sup>

—George Kennan, “Long Telegram”

By definition if following this narrative, conflict was inevitable, co-existence was out of the question, and containment was necessary. Kennan continued reinforcing these points by saying educating the American people on the truth of what was really transpiring in the Soviet Union would help subdue the “anti-sovietism” in the United States.<sup>25</sup> Finally, Kennan said:

We must formulate and put forward for other nations a much more positive and constructive picture of the sort of world we would like to see than we have put forward in the past. It is not enough to urge people. They are seeking guidance rather than responsibilities. We should be better than Russians to give them this. And unless we do, Russians certainly will.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Kennan, “The Long Telegram,” 14.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 17.

The United States could not sit by and expect other countries to emulate democracy and freedoms they needed the United States to assist them, and essentially, it was a duty of the United States, a responsibility and if they did not step up and fill the leadership role in the world then Russia would and that would be detrimental to the longevity of the United States.

### **A Contemporary “Long Telegram”**

In the last seventy years since the publication of the original “Long Telegram” the Russian Federation has withstood a remarkable amount of change, internally and externally in the international community. The fascinating piece is that now the United States finds itself in a similarly deteriorating, strained relationship as before. The world stage is arguably no more or no less complicated than seventy years ago. Definitively though, in the year 2016, the United States is at opposing ends of the spectrum with the Russian Federation in no less than three critical events: NATO expansion, annexation of Crimea and operations in Ukraine, and the political and military support of the Assad Regime in Syria.

As with the original “Long Telegram,” it is necessary to set the stage for the contemporary telegram. The best place to start is halfway through the decade before the reunification of Germany in October 1990. After narrowly winning the post of general secretary in March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev inherited three significant issues in the Soviet Union. A “stagnant economy, a war in Afghanistan and an oligarchical leadership resistant to change.”<sup>27</sup> The struggle within the party and the resistance to political reform hampered Gorbachav’s initiatives of Glasnost, openness, and Perestroika, restructuring. Certainly the international community was witness to the power struggle within the Soviet Union, but as a whole, to include the United States, all looked at the subsequent reunification of Germany as a step into the future

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<sup>27</sup> Isaac J. Tarasulo, *Gorbachev and Glasnost: Viewpoints from the Soviet Press* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1989), 237.



with what would be the Russian Federation; a partnership in the making. This appeared to be the reality but within a decade, it would all change. The narrative the current Russian administration is purporting is that the world, and definitely the United States, failed to understand that the disintegration of the USSR would have a tremendous negative impact on the Russian society.

We are legitimately proud of the achievements of the multinational Soviet socialist culture. By drawing on the wealth of national forms and characteristics, it is developing into a unique phenomenon in world culture. However, the healthy interest in all that is valuable in each national culture must by no means degenerate into attempts to isolate oneself.<sup>28</sup>

Gorbachev's intent was to make the USSR better domestically and part of that process was to build partnerships with the international community. Gorbachev recognized that a positive relationship was much more cost effective and beneficial than an antagonistic one that both countries inflicted on each other for so long:

The uncreative nature of the decisions resulted in an exceptionally costly foreign policy. Defense expenditures in the United States grew from \$122 billion in 1979 to \$284 billion in 1985. To maintain military parity, we tried to keep up with the United States in this colossal unproductive spending, which totaled over \$1 trillion during the five-year period.<sup>29</sup>

Mikhail Gorbachev, the eighth and last leader of the Soviet Union, recognized from the onset of his tenure that the Soviet Union had a myriad of especially economics problems, and he was determined to bring the Soviet Union out of an economic recession. The reforms he identified were to counter the economic downward spiral in which the Soviet Union was now mired and focused on both the domestic policy and foreign policy. Gorbachev recognized it was paramount if the Soviet Union were to reverse the economic decline, prosper and be competitive on the world stage the reforms would have to be innovative. "It would be naive to think that the

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<sup>28</sup> *Mikhail Gorbachev: Selected Speeches and Articles*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1987), 405.

<sup>29</sup> Tarasulo, 235.

problems plaguing mankind today can be solved with means and methods which were applied or seemed to work in the past.”<sup>30</sup> Both programs of *Glasnost* (Openness) and *Perestroika* (Restructuring) spearheaded by Mr. Gorbachev focused on those reforms.

On 26 December 1991, the Soviet Union was formally dissolved by Declaration number 120-H. It stipulated that the Soviet Union or the USSR no longer existed, was not recognized by international law, and was replaced by the Commonwealth of the Independent States.<sup>31</sup> The Commonwealth of the Independent States consisted of eleven former republics: the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Republic of Ukraine, and finally, the Russian Federation.

The dissolution of the USSR may not be as tragic as President Putin now portrays it with his famous quote: “Above all, we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century. As for the Russian nation, it became a genuine drama. Tens of millions of our co-citizens and co-patriots found themselves outside Russian territory. Moreover, the epidemic of disintegration infected Russia itself.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Michael Parks, “A Break From 70 Years of Doctrine: Gorbachev Policy Reversal Dismisses Class Struggle,” *Los Angeles Times*, 9 December 1988, accessed 8 January 2016, [http://articles.latimes.com/1988-12-09/news/mn-1338\\_1\\_class-struggle/2](http://articles.latimes.com/1988-12-09/news/mn-1338_1_class-struggle/2).

<sup>31</sup> Roland Rich, “Recognition of States: The Collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union,” paper presented at Symposium: Recent Developments in the Practice of State Recognition, *European Journal of International Law* 4 (1993): 44-45, accessed 19 February 2016, <http://www.ejil.org/pdfs/4/1/1207.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> President of Russia, “Annual Address to the Russian Assembly of the Russian Federation,” 25 April 2005, accessed 27 November 2015, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22931>.

The breakup of the USSR had multiple secondary and tertiary effects that the international community did not recognize or simply did not anticipate but in Russian society it was accepted. Gorbachev's perceived inability to reform the economy as quickly as expected led to his downfall and the rise of Boris Yeltsin.<sup>33</sup> On 10 July 1991, Boris Yeltsin became the first democratically elected President of the Russian Federation. President Yeltsin, too, had reforms but unlike his predecessor, his reforms sought to transition the Russian Federation from a socialist economy into a capitalist economy under the full umbrella of capitalism. From the start, the Russian Federation government was resistant and coupled with the wars in Chechnya and President Yeltsin's failing health the populace and government began losing their faith. When President Yeltsin made the decision to dissolve the USSR, it was made with Ukraine, Belarus, and Estonia. Historically, these countries have had a significant tie to the Russian Federation. Riddled with corruption, economic depression and health issues President Yeltsin left the presidency on a low note but not before he made his final, perhaps most lasting decision of all; naming his successor, Vladimir Putin.

Putin and the modern day Russian Federation continue the narrative that the Soviet Union was maintaining a balance and sense of security for all the Soviet Republics and when the Soviet Union dissolved the security dissolved with it. Therein lies the greatest geopolitical tragedy of the twentieth century. The reforms made the Soviet Union economically stronger and stronger as the USSR not just as the Russian Federation. However, with the dissolution of the USSR it was inevitably made weaker economically, smaller geographically, and divided Russians from their homeland, which ultimately made the overall security situation more unstable.

A definitive portion of Russian history that is proving to be a catalyst for current events is the security situation the Russian Federation inherited through the 1990s and carried over through

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<sup>33</sup> Tarasulo, 274-275.

the turn of the century. The Russian Federation was well into their second war with the Chechen province that proved to be a brutal war against terror with the Russian Federation using techniques condemned by the international community. Continuous criticism as to how the Russian Federation was dealing with the conflict caused strain internationally with the discussion of economic sanctions on the imminent horizon. The Russian Federation was putting themselves in a position of choosing isolation. At the Human Rights Commission on 24 March 2000, Secretary Madeline Albright emphasized in her speech:

We cannot ignore the fact that thousands of Chechen civilians have died and more than 200,000 have been driven from their homes. The War in Chechnya has greatly damaged Russia's international standing and is isolating Russia from the international community. Russia's work to repair that damage, both at home and abroad, or its choice to risk further isolating itself, is the most immediate momentous challenge that Russia faces.<sup>34</sup>

To add fuel to the fire, both China and Iraq took sides with the Russian Federation with President Boris Yeltsin in remarks to reporters in China on 9 December 1999 reminding President Bill Clinton that the Russian Federation possessed nuclear weapons. "It seems Mr. Clinton has forgotten Russia is a great power that possesses a nuclear arsenal. We are not afraid at all of Clinton's anti-Russian position. I want to tell President Clinton that he alone cannot dictate how the world should live, work and play it is us who will dictate."<sup>35</sup>

Then on 11 September 2001, the attacks on the World Trade Centers in New York, and the Pentagon occurred and the perspective of how to deal with terrorism changed. The United States then found itself aligned with the Russian Federation on a topic that barely a year and before divided the international community. But that too did not last long. The invasion of Iraq in

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<sup>34</sup> US Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, "U.S. Response to Decision of UNCHR to Pass Resolution on Chechnya," Press Statement, US Department of State, 26 April 2000, accessed 27 February 2016, <http://1997-2001.state.gov/www/briefings/statements/2000/ps000426.html>.

<sup>35</sup> *BBC News*, "'Don't interfere' Yeltsin warns Clinton," 9 December 1999, accessed 27 February 2016, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/556532.stm>.

March 2003, once again divided the international community and set the seeds of dissent specifically between the Russian Federation and the United States.<sup>36</sup>

#### Part 1: Basic Features of Post Cold War Russian Outlook

Thought the Soviet Union was anti-American? Try today's Russia. After a year in which furious rhetoric has been pumped across Russian airwaves, anger toward the United States is at its worst since opinion polls began tracking it. From ordinary street vendors all the way up to the Kremlin, a wave of anti-U.S. bile has swept the country, surpassing any time since the Stalin era, observers say.<sup>37</sup>

As stated before, the original telegram provides a baseline for format and themes but will not be followed by paragraph and line. The intent is an assessment of the Russian outlook acknowledging the current author of this monograph is at a sincere deficit for access, information and experience, and by no means believes she is on par with Mr. Kennan. With that said, the first part of the contemporary telegram will include the anti-NATO expansion theme and ideology which are the driving factors for the current outlook.

The Russian Federation and the people in it perceive that NATO and the United States continue to impinge on the Russian Federation and her borders violating previous agreements of not enlarging NATO. Compounded by the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact it is a reminder that the Russian Federation is vulnerable. Continuing the Western expansionist mentality forces the Russian Federation to retaliate.

And we have the right to ask: against whom is this NATO expansion intended? And what happened to the assurances our Western partners made after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact?...I would like to quote the speech of the NATO Secretary Mr. Woerner in Brussels on 17 May 1990. He said at the time that: 'the fact that we are ready not to place

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<sup>36</sup> Vladimir Volkov, "Russia: Putin condemns Iraq war as an 'error'," World Socialist Website, 29 March 2003, accessed 21 February 2016, <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2003/03/russ-m29.html>.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Snyder, "Virulently Anti-American: 81 Percent of Russians Now View the United States Negatively." *Infowars*, 10 March 2015, accessed 1 February 2016, <http://www.infowars.com/virulently-anti-american-81-percent-of-russians-now-view-the-united-states-negatively/>.

a NATO army outside of German territory gives the Soviet Union a firm security guarantee.’ Where are these guarantees?<sup>38</sup>

The NATO expansion narrative that the Russian Federation is countering is necessary to restore Russia as a great power. In Putin’s infamous statement, and for all intents and purposes his sincere belief, the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc was the greatest tragedy of the twentieth century. He went on to explain that it was not the breakup of the empire or the loss of states, it was the fact that overnight twenty-five million Russians were no longer in Russia. The dissolution of the USSR separated the Russian people from the Soviet Union, and their families and, most important of all, created instability which ultimately affected the Russian Federation. In an interview ahead of the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II, Putin emphasized the Chechen war was a result of this dissolution. “The epidemic of collapse has spilled over to Russia itself.”<sup>39</sup> This was not an issue fully ironed out before the breakup, most likely not even acknowledged. It caused an amazing amount of stress and heartache on the Russians both in and out of the Federation. Representing the Russian Federation, Putin is clearly saying, and has been for the last ten years, that he wants NATO and the United States to respect Russia and former agreements.

Putin said in a wide-ranging interview with the German newspaper *Bild*:

After the Berlin Wall fell, there were talks that NATO would not expand to the East. As far as I remember, the then Secretary General of NATO, national of the Federal Republic Manfred Woerner said that. By the way, some German politicians of that time gave warnings and proposed their solutions, for example, Egon Bahr. You know, before meeting with German journalists I, naturally, thought that we would anyway come to the issue you have touched upon now, so I took archived records of talks of that period (1990) between Soviet leaders and some German politicians, including Mr Bahr. They have never been published.

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<sup>38</sup> President of Russia, “Annual Address to the Russian Assembly of the Russian Federation.”

<sup>39</sup> Associated Press, “Putin: Soviet collapse a ‘genuine tragedy’,” *NBC News*, 25 April 2005, accessed 14 November 2016, [http://www.nbcnews.com/id/7632057/ns/world\\_news/t/putin-soviet-collapse-genuine-tragedy/#.Vv2go\\_\\_2aUk](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/7632057/ns/world_news/t/putin-soviet-collapse-genuine-tragedy/#.Vv2go__2aUk).

Question: Are these interviews?

Vladimir Putin: No, these are working discussions between German politicians Genscher, Kohl, Bahr and Soviet leadership (Mr Gorbachev, Mr Falin, who, I think, headed the International Division of the Central Committee of the Communist Party). They have never been made public. You and your readers will be the first to learn about this talk of 1990. Look what Mr Bahr said: “If while uniting Germany we do not take decisive steps to overcome the division of Europe into hostile blocs, the developments can take such an unfavourable turn that the USSR will be doomed to international isolation.” That was said on June 26, 1990.<sup>40</sup>

In an interview with an Italian newspaper ahead of Putin’s visit to Italy in April 2015, he said, “We are not expanding anywhere; it is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization infrastructure, including military infrastructure that is moving towards our borders.”<sup>41</sup> The NATO existence is inflammatory by design. The first mandate is against the then Soviet Union and Communism, so in 2016 it is an inconsistent message to the Russian Federation with the continued existence and perceived necessity. The NATO was formed and signed on 4 April 1949 with three mandates as the foundation. The first is to deter Soviet expansionism, the second to deter the rise of militant nationalism, and the third is to provide the foundation of collective security that would encourage democratization and political integration into Europe.<sup>42</sup>

Putin continues to emphasize that Russia has virtually no military bases abroad. At this time, the Russian Federation has military locations in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Syria, Vietnam, and the Georgian and Moldovan breakaways of South Ossetia,

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<sup>40</sup> *Johnson’s Russia List*, “TRANSCRIPT: Putin Interview to German newspaper bild [Part 1],” 11 January 2016, accessed 7 February 2016, <http://russialist.org/transcript-putin-interview-to-german-newspaper-bild-part-1/>.

<sup>41</sup> *Corriere della Sera*, “Vladimir Putin, interview to the Italian newspaper Il Corriere della Sera,” 6 June 2015, accessed 4 February 2016, [http://www.corriere.it/english/15\\_giugno\\_07/vladimir-putin-interview-to-the-italian-newspaper-corriere-sera-44c5a66c-0d12-11e5-8612-1eda5b996824.shtml](http://www.corriere.it/english/15_giugno_07/vladimir-putin-interview-to-the-italian-newspaper-corriere-sera-44c5a66c-0d12-11e5-8612-1eda5b996824.shtml)

<sup>42</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “A short history of NATO,” 16 March 1994, accessed 20 December 2016, <http://www.nato.int/history/nato-history.html>.

Abkhazia, and Transnistria.<sup>43</sup> The Russian Federation has willingly and without contest disarmed and disbanded their foreign holdings while the United States was not only maintaining their bases abroad but expanding. “We have dismantled our bases in various regions of the world, to include Cuba, Vietnam, and so on. This means that our policy in this respect is not global, offensive or aggressive.”<sup>44</sup>

As a far Georgia, Crimea, and Ukraine, these are not considered violent overthrows of an unwilling, victimized, traumatized foreign population. The narrative that has been so eloquently crafted and executed with precision is that these are reunification events, reunification of willing people, reuniting Russians with Russians.

In people’s hearts and minds, Crimea has always been an inseparable part of Russia. This firm conviction is based on truth and justice and was passed from generation to generation, over time, through uncertain circumstances, despite all the dramatic changes our country went through during the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>45</sup>

This was not considered a malicious political move by Putin as portrayed by the international community and the United States. The backlash from both has ironically legitimized the actions in the eyes of the Russians.

The Western sanctions originally imposed in response to the annexation of Crimea seemed to confirm the narrative that Putin put forward: now (and especially with the new rounds of sanctions later in the year) the West was *really* seeking to do harm to Russia, to punish it so that it would suffer more. What seemed especially outrageous to the Russian people was that the sanctions were imposed as a penalty for what they saw as Russia’s/Putin’s most glorious achievement. The common propaganda line – that the

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<sup>43</sup> *Sputnik International*, “Russian Military Bases Abroad: How Many and Where?” 19 December 2015, accessed 21 December 2015, <http://sputniknews.com/military/20151219/1032030941/russian-bases-abroad.html>.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> President of Russia, “Address by President of the Russian Federation,” 18 March 2014, accessed 29 February 2016, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>.



West is determined to prevent Russia from standing strong and proud – was thereby fully and graphically substantiated.<sup>46</sup>

The second theme necessary to establish the current outlook is an us verse them mentality and the Russian Federation and more importantly the Russian people are continuously held to different standards than the rest of the international community. The Russian Federation consistently uses the events of Kosovo and the 2003 Iraq invasion as criteria to reinforce their legitimacy with Georgia, Crimea and Ukraine while simultaneously highlighting the hypocrisy of the United States. Specifically, the disparity United Nations International Court rulings are using when they deem necessary. The United States continues to operate unilaterally in the international community with no limits and or repercussions from the world for their actions. The United Nations, an organization born out of the dictatorship of World War II, is no longer an effective institution today:

I do not like to resort to quotes, but in this case, I cannot help it. Here is another quote from another official document: the Written Statement of the United States of America of April 17, 2009, submitted to the same United Nations International Court in connection with the hearings on Kosovo. Again, I quote: “Declarations of independence may, and often do, violate domestic legislation. However, this does not make them violation of International Law.” End of quote. They wrote this, disseminated it all over the world, had everyone agree and now they are outraged? Over what? The actions of the Crimean people completely fit in with these instructions, as it were. For some reason, things that Kosovo Albanians (and we have full respect for them) were permitted to do Russians, Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars in Crimea are not allowed. Again, one wonders why.<sup>47</sup>

In 2003, Russia, Germany, and France via the Security Council stated unequivocally that they would not support military force for the invasion of Iraq. Although Saddam Hussein had blatantly defied United Nations inspectors, a terrorist threat he was not and military force was

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<sup>46</sup> Maria Lipman, “How Russia has come to loathe the West,” European Council on Foreign Relations, February 2015, accessed 11 January 2016, [http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_how\\_russia\\_has\\_come\\_to\\_loathe\\_the\\_west311346](http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_how_russia_has_come_to_loathe_the_west311346).

<sup>47</sup> President of Russia, “Address by President of the Russian Federation.”

absolutely and unequivocally unnecessary at that time.<sup>48</sup> The United States disregarded the recommendations of Russia, Germany, and France and continued on with their own self-serving policy. As a result, Iraq was unable to pay Russia the nine million dollar debt it had accrued for the Iraq-Iran War.<sup>49</sup> The frustration continued when the international community did not allow countries who did not support the invasion to participate in the rebuilding effort.<sup>50</sup>

Fast forward eleven years later. During a speech in the Russian city of Sochi, President Putin emphasized that the current situation in Iraq and the Middle East is a result of the United States and their indiscriminate use of force.<sup>51</sup> While Moscow absolutely does not see Washington as a threat directly, US foreign policy has unequivocally created chaos, human suffering, and provided voids for violent terrorist organizations to fill, which disrupts the world order, and indirectly threatens the Russian Federation. Citing the wars in Iraq, Libya, and Syria, he went on to accuse the United States and its allies of “fighting against the results of its own policy. They

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<sup>48</sup> Vladimir Volkov, “Russia: Putin condemns Iraq war as an ‘error’,” World Socialist Website, 29 March 2003, accessed 21 February 2016, <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2003/03/russ-m29.html>. Volkov.

<sup>49</sup> Carrie Satterlee, “Facts on Who Benefits from Keeping Saddam Hussein in Power,” WebMemo #217 on Middle East, The Heritage Foundation, 28 February 2003, accessed 31 March 2016, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2003/02/facts-on-who-benefits-from-keeping-saddam-hussein-in-power>.

<sup>50</sup> New Europe Brussels Team, “Russia slashes USD 9 bln from Iraq debt - new Europe,” *New Europe*, 4 December 2004, accessed 11 December 2016, <https://neurope.eu/article/russia-slashes-usd-9-bln-iraq-debt/>; Michael Wines, “Three War Critics Want UN Effort to Rebuild,” *The New York Times*, 12 April 2003, accessed 4 January 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/12/international/worldspecial/12RUSS.html>.

<sup>51</sup> Kashmira Gander, “Putin: The US is to blame for almost all the world’s major conflicts,” *Independent*, 24 October 2014, accessed 28 November 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-accuses-us-of-causing-global-instability-9816775.html>.

are throwing their might to remove the risks they have created themselves, and they are paying an increasing price,” Putin told political experts at the Black Sea resort.<sup>52</sup>

In 2008, the Georgian crisis provided a victory, although costly, for the Russian Federation and for all intents and purposes it was as a result of significantly more numbers of Russian forces to the Georgian forces, opposed to being technically and tactically superior. This did not go unnoticed, and although military reforms have been on the agenda since Putin’s first term, little movement has been made towards concrete reforms.

“The Russian Federation’s National Security Strategy” released in May 2009 and then again in December 2015 laid out the way ahead for the Russian Federation as a whole. The United States again has made the top of the list as the biggest threat to the Russian Federation followed by NATO expansion. A determining factor in the Russian Federation’s relations with NATO is still the unacceptability of the alliance’s increased military activity and the approach of its military infrastructure towards Russia’s borders, the building of a missile defense system, and attempts to endow the bloc with global functions executed in violation of the provisions of international law.<sup>53</sup> Article 106 specifically states the acceptable terms for a relationship with NATO.<sup>54</sup> Putin states, “United States military spending is higher than that of all countries in the

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<sup>52</sup> Tom Porter, “Putin Accuses US of Fomenting ‘Chaos’ and Damaging Global Security,” *International Business Times*, 25 October 2014, accessed 14 December 2016, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/putin-accuses-us-fomenting-chaos-damaging-global-security-1471761>.

<sup>53</sup> Russian Federation President, “Russian National Security Strategy,” Russian Federation President Edict 683, 31 December 2015, accessed 2 February 2016. <http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasPublicaciones/Internacional/2016/Russian-National-Security-Strategy-31Dec2015.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

world taken together, The aggregate military spending of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries is 10 times, note – 10 times higher than that of the Russian Federation.”<sup>55</sup>

The Russian Federation will continue to counter the expansion policy of the NATO and her allies. To reinforce this policy of the Russian Federation Putin said, “everything we do is just a response to the threats emerging against us.”<sup>56</sup> Expansion of NATO will continue to exacerbate relationships with the Russian Federation. There is a universal consensus that Putin intends on returning Russia to her greatness and one of the driving factors in this policy is to return the Russian people where they rightfully belong, to the homeland. Therefore, countries with Russian populations, minority or majority, former Soviet and satellite states particularly on the border will continue to fuel the conflict on expansion and NATO. In addition, they will continue to present options for Russia. Belarus, Estonia, Georgia and Kazakhstan, which all have ethnic Russian populations varying from one percent to twenty-five percent, so if indeed the intent of the Russian Federation is to bring Russians back there are certainly other former Soviet states that would be contenders for Russian expansion.

In 2008, Putin told George W. Bush, “Ukraine is not even a state. What is Ukraine? Part of its territories is Eastern Europe, but the greater part is a gift from us.”<sup>57</sup> Therefore, if this is the logic behind the execution of expansion for the Russian Federation, there is certain cause for concern with former satellite states. The redline has been drawn but to date not enforced.

The second theme is that the Russian Federation will continue to reinforce the point that the United States is only concerned with her self-interest and will continue to serve those interests

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<sup>55</sup> *Corriere della Sera*, “Vladimir Putin, interview.”

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Ben Shapiro, “Putin’s Big Plan to Break the West,” *The Daily Wire*, 1 October 2015, accessed 29 November 2015, <http://www.dailywire.com/news/225/putins-big-plan-break-west-ben-shapiro>.

until put in check by the international community. Finally, the acknowledgement that reforms are overdue and necessary throughout the Russian Federation to be competitive and prosper as the Russian Federation. The overall formation of the force to include officer reform, adding the non-commissioned officer corps, pay increase, medical and overall upgrade of the technology, and armament of the conventional force are necessary to be competitive on the world stage again.

## Part 2: Background of this Outlook

The purpose of the background of the outlook is to explain the Russian perspective. The difference of what they think and why they think a way. The first part was the projected outlook by propaganda. This section allows for explanation and justification of the outlook. It is not questioning the validity of the outlook; it is simply explaining it.

The 1946 Russian population and the 2016 Russian population have eerily similar propaganda stories. The Communist propaganda overtly integrated and imbedded in every organization in the Soviet Union. Founded on the Lenin-Marxist ideology, genuinely misinforming the population was the agenda with the end state of building up the Communist regime and delegitimizing any organization, person or entity that could counter the Soviet narrative. In 2016, seventy years later, this is happening again. In 1946, the Soviet Union and its people were constantly reminded with the narrative of the terrible things that awaited them outside Russia. Today the Russian people are being shown the Russian government's version of the outside world and are making their own decision about the West, specifically the United States. That assessment thus far is that the international community, explicitly the United States, are hypocrites, inconsistent with their own policy and deliberately deceptive to manipulate the results. In addition, currently Russia is simply not safe against American and NATO encroachment. The Russian Federation carefully crafts this narrative and to ensure its dissemination. The reason the message is the only message is because the Russian Federation administration has taken extreme measures to actively deny the use of the internet by anyone or

any organization that wishes to offer opposing opinions or threaten the current administration's control. A zero tolerance dissent is the current climate on the internet.

In December 2011, massive protests concerning the results of the parliamentary elections erupted. Up to this point, the government essentially had ignored the internet. The anti-government demonstrations proved the fact that the internet was no longer a secondary medium only for entertainment. It proved to be a valuable tool to mass the people.<sup>58</sup> The internal measures to limit criticism of the Kremlin is unprecedented. From Federal Law Number 89417-6 also known as the "Blacklist Bill" with the intent of blocking child pornography but any site with offending content falls into this category<sup>59</sup> to the Blogger Law signed that requires all posts that exceed 3,000 page views to register with the government. The laws continued to limit and restrict free speech in the internet medium with even the law against retweets in June 2014 with the penalty of five years imprisonment for disseminating or re-disseminating what is considered extremist material by the government.<sup>60</sup>

In 2015, Putin's propaganda machine is powerful and a force to recognize. *Russia Today* (RT) is a perfect example of the propaganda machine at work. RT is a twenty-four hour all English news channel that broadcasts Russian rhetoric that suits their foreign and domestic agenda. RT uses this forum for any opportunity to exploit the West. The US Secretary of State, John Kerry, dubbed RT as Russia's "Propaganda Bullhorn" in a speech dated 25 April 2014

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<sup>58</sup> Natalie Duffy, "Internet freedom in Vladimir Putin's Russia: The noose tightens," American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC, January 2015, accessed 27 November 2015, <https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Internet-freedom-in-Putins-Russia>.

<sup>59</sup> President of Russia, "Amendments to the law on protecting children from information harmful to their health and development," 31 July 2012, accessed 28 November 2015, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/4246>.

<sup>60</sup> Duffy, 1-10.

regarding the eastern Ukraine crisis.<sup>61</sup> The context was the separatist movement that was being funded by Russia, and the narrative that Russia was evoking. The recent banter between David Kramer with *The Washington Post*, and RT's Margarita Simonyan, is proof that the United States is woefully unprepared for organizations such as RT, literally and figuratively. RT essentially takes US errors and highlights them. This is not new. This latest round of jabs arose from the Yukos Oil scandal and shareholders money and the international community. Mr. Kramer states, "Russian government owed a combined \$52 billion in damages to shareholders of the since-dissolved Yukos."<sup>62</sup> One avenue of collecting the damages Mr. Kramer recommended was to "freeze the assets of Putin's state-funded RT cable network, not because of the odious things it spews but in compliance with two court rulings against the Russian government involving the multibillion-dollar Yukos oil company."<sup>63</sup> RT pounced on this error and turned it around effectively to highlight the American way of contradictions. The RT editor condescendingly explains why Kramer is incorrect and reinforces the narrative that the United States uses laws when it suits them not for the overall good:

Kramer then suggests that the US government seize RT's assets in the US as compensation for Yukos, a former Russian oil company. Given that RT's property is not Russian state property, this would be highly illegal, as RT, while publicly-funded, is not state-owned. But why bother with facts or legality? When silencing RT and punishing Russia are at stake, anything goes. Ironically, calls to restrict RT often come from the same quarters that exalt the virtues of diversity and democracy. Now, they wish to silence a rare voice that dissents from their favored delineation.<sup>64</sup>

On 11 November 2015 Ron Torensen posted in the *Observer*:

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<sup>61</sup> *RT*, "On the Washington Post and Fear of RT," 3 November 2015, accessed 28 November 2015, <https://www.rt.com/op-edge/3320636-washington-post-rt-fear/>.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *RT*, "On the Washington Post and Fear of RT."

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

The Russian propaganda arm – a proxy of Putin’s government – is lecturing America in English about First Amendment rights. Mr. Kramer seeks to silence a critic by using prejudice and ignorance to create animus. He did not bother checking his sights before he started shooting off his mouth. Facts matter in a war of words – particularly against a brilliant Russian opponent.”<sup>65</sup>

The last theme to shaping the outlook is Russian ideology. In a December 2014 article in *The New York Times*, Peter Pomorantsev articulates the reality of the Russian people, not the one the propaganda disseminates:

When members of this generation came to power, they created a society that was a feast of simulations, with fake elections, a fake free press, a fake free market and fake justice. They are led by religious Russian patriots who curse the decadent West while keeping their children and money in London and informed by television producers who make Putin-worshipping shows during the day, and listen to energetically anti-Putin radio shows the moment they get into their cars after work.<sup>66</sup>

This is a significant point. It highlights the fact that the leader of the Russian Federation is not the issue for the Russian Federation. Although the people do not necessarily believe in the government or its actions, the population will continue to be an enabler.

Insecurity is still a driving factor in current Russian policy and is the foundation of Russian ideology. Although the article is dated, published in 2010, it states an eerily still relevant point:

That Russian leaders fear for the survival and territorial integrity of their country must sound odd to most Westerners, fed a steady diet of warnings about Russian neo-imperialism, particularly after the 2008 war against Georgia and Moscow’s subsequent recognition of two breakaway regions, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as independent states. This fear also sits uneasily with Russian leaders’ claims that Russia is ‘rising from its knees’ and regaining its rightful role as a great power on the world stage after the deep socio-economic crisis and national humiliation of the 1990s.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ronn Torossian, “Russia and Putin Are Winning the Public Relations War,” *Observer*, 11 November 2015, accessed 28 November 2015, <http://observer.com/2015/11/russia-and-putin-are-winning-the-public-relations-war/>.

<sup>66</sup> Peter Pomerantsev, “Russia’s Ideology: There Is No Truth,” *The New York Times*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas Graham, “The Sources of Russia’s Insecurity,” *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 52, no. 1 (1 February 2010): 55, accessed 28 November 2015,



In Putin's annual speech over ten years ago he made it clear how he felt about collapse of the Soviet Union, it "was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century."<sup>68</sup> This is where it benefits the United States to look at Russia from the Russian people's perspective. What if the 2016 population believed they were better off before the collapse of the Soviet Union? It is unfathomable for most Americans to believe that narrative but that is what Putin believes and actively perpetuates, so it is a narrative that should be seriously entertained.

In 2016, ironically, the spread of Communism has been replaced with the spread of fanatical Islam. Not to the degree that Kennan suggested Communism would, but the biggest ideology villain on the world stage definitely is not Communism now. So why, with Communism gone, is Russia the number one enemy of the United States? If the Russian Federation wants restoration of Soviet borders, geographical expansionism is now the issue, not ideology expansionism.

### Part 3: Its Projection in Practical Policy on Official Level

On the official plane one must look for the following; an internal policy devoted to increasing the strength and prestige of the Russian Federation. These include: intensive reformation of the military both personnel and equipment and great displays to impress the international community. Wherever the opportunity arises actions will be taken to bolster the Russian position internationally (e.g. Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Iran, and Syria) and finally bring former Soviet States and satellite states back into the fold with the Russian Federation (e.g. Crimea, Georgia, and Ukraine). "Dividing challenges into 'ours' and 'theirs' is a road to nowhere. Despite all our differences with the Americans, regardless of all the spokes thrown in our wheel

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<http://www.iiss.org/en/publications/survival/sections/2010-e7df/survival--global-politics-and-strategy-february-march-2010-3e82/52-1-08-graham-dd11>.

<sup>68</sup> Associated Press, "Putin: Soviet collapse a 'genuine tragedy'."

with respect to Ukraine and other issues, we are saying and will be saying, ‘Let’s work together’.”<sup>69</sup>

In 1946, the United States and the Soviet Union both had the belief that Communism could not co-exist with capitalism. In 2016, the narrative is very different. The Russian Federation outwardly projects that the end state is for the international community to respect the Russian Federation.<sup>70</sup> In the article titled “World Order After Ukraine,” the authors claim that it is important for Russia to be a part of the decisions being made, informed and treated like an equal, and not as a second class country.<sup>71</sup> The United States as the decision maker without outside input is a concept that is no longer viable or tolerated by Russia. The Ukraine issue isolated the Russian Federation from the international community but their status changed considerably with the Syrian conflict and their participation with the United States.

#### Part 4: Its Projection on Unofficial Level

The following exchange between Putin and an interviewer serves as an example of basic Russian policies on the unofficial, or subterranean plane, i.e. on the plane for which the Russian Federation government accepts no responsibility. “**Paolo Valentino:** Then why are members of the opposition so rarely interviewed by the main Russian TV channels? **Vladimir Putin:** I think if they have something interesting to say, they will be interviewed more often.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova told national television channel Rossiya. *Sputnik International*, “‘Let’s Work Together’: Russia Still Views US as Partner,” 19 October 2015, accessed 9 January 2016, <http://sputniknews.com/politics/20151019/1028730133/russia-us-cooperation.html>.

<sup>70</sup> Carol J. Williams, “Putin accuses U.S. of isolating Russia, treating it as ‘vassal’ state,” *Los Angeles Times*, 16 April 2015, accessed 31 January 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-russia-putin-20150416-story.html>.

<sup>71</sup> Nadezhda K. Arbatova and Alexander A. Dynkin, “World Order After Ukraine,” *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 58, no. 1 (2016): 71-90.

<sup>72</sup> *Corriere della Sera*. “Vladimir Putin Interview.

This section directly addresses the intent of the Russian Federation to infiltrate all organizations with the objective of expanding the purpose of the Russian Federation. This section does not translate directly from the original 1946 document but the purpose is still germane to the current operations. The Russian Federation is not necessarily spreading Communism anymore. What they are doing is spreading the agenda of the United Russia Party internally, which at this time is fully absorbed into the parliament and pro-Putin and crushing any discontent. At this time there are at least four organizations actively involved in the undermining of political opposition. The Nashi-A democratic youth organization with ties to the current government in the Russian Federation. The purpose is empower and educate the youth of Russia with an anti-fascist agenda. Others include the National Bolshevik Party, the United Civil Front in Moscow and finally the Other Russia.

#### Part 5: Practical Deductions from Standpoint of US Policy

I cannot help asking those who have caused this situation: Do you realize now what you have done? But I am afraid no one is going to answer that...Indeed policies based on self-conceit and belief in one's exceptionality and impunity have never been abandoned.

—President Vladimir Putin, “Statement to the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly”

In summary, the Russian Federation today is the most controlled it has been in decades. The dismantling of freedom of speech, freedom of opposition, and freedom of the internet, are a few measures that have systematically limited opposition and tightened control. The breakdown internally is a result of domestic policies focused on the control of dissidence and have clearly preoccupied the Russian Federation for the last seventeen years with the take down of oligarchs, the media, and then the internet by the current administration.

September 11, 2001 changed the relationship between the United States and the Russian Federation. Loosely aligned, both intertwined with a sincere terror and insurgent enemy focus and reluctantly reliant on one another, the new millennium presented new possibilities. The terrorism

issue seemed to genuinely bridge the two countries that needed a catalyst of sorts to mend their bumpy past. This was short-lived as well. The Iraq War divided the international community and once again the Russian Federation was on one side and the United States on the other. Now, after fifteen years of the Global War on Terror, Russia is adamant that the world problems are as a result of poor decisions the United States unilaterally ventured. There are definitive points in time coupled with US action that the Russian Federation continues to use to reinforce their narrative of a dishonest and self-serving United States. This narrative is punctuated with instigation of the Iraq War, followed by the debt forgiveness, the hypocrisy of Kosovo versus Ukraine, and finally the current situation in Iraq, Libya and Syria.

Organizations such as the United Security Council, G20, Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, League of Eurasian Economic Union, Collective Security Treaty Organization have continuously been utilized over the years to actively engage the Russian Federation. Creating policy and executing said policies with organizations such as NATO that were necessitated out of conditions of World War II is counterproductive and breeds contempt. Will the Russian Federation ever be brought back into the fold? It comes down to supply and demand. Does the Russian Federation need the United States and NATO? Do the Russian people believe that although the current Russian Federation administration is corrupt and riddled with deficiencies they are still better off not being aligned with the United States? Yes.

Containment is a word that in light of the Russian Federation's continued antagonistic actions in the last eight years, starting with Estonia and ending with Ukraine, has been entertained. Containment served the US well in its approach to the Soviet Union because it benefited the Soviet Union in the sense that it was Stalin's true belief that the capitalist democracies would be their own demise and it was simply a matter of time for the Soviet Union to gain back territory lost and status. The disparity as to who had nuclear capability and more

importantly, who used them, was significant in the success of the containment policy as well. Within five years of the birth of the containment policy, the nuclear playing field was leveled. In 2016, the Russian Federation is not only uninterested in being contained but also outspoken about reclaiming areas they believe are rightfully and historically the Russian Federations. Of significance, the Russian Federation 2016 population and government, both appear to be lacking the patience that the 1946 Soviet Union had.

The current Russian Federation has made minimal effort to participate and align with the United States, her partners, allies or NATO. The Russian Federation participates when it benefits them. The historical timeline, from an analyst perspective, gives zero reason to believe that all aggressive and antagonistic behavior will stop. In actuality, the projection is that they will only continue if not deterred. The Russian Federation would have to change significantly their narrative to justify changing their current behavior. Accurate events in history coupled with the inaccurate view in Russia have created a situation where the United States is once again in a conversation where the policy of containment is being discussed as the solution to the situation with the Russian Federation. The 2016 Russian Federation does not believe that capitalist powers are going to implode on one another, therefore containment and use of that word in the context of the Russian Federation is archaic and absolutely oversimplifies the situation and overlooks the behavior piece that Kennan felt was so important to understand.

### **Conclusion**

This research is significant because the “Long Telegram” was the baseline document for the United States and their interaction with the Soviet Union for almost fifty years and guided future foreign policy. This was possible because George Kennan was one of the authorities of all things Soviet Union. He had access and placement and with this document, stressed that oversimplification of the relationship with the Soviet Union and their behavior could lead to detrimental consequences. Recognizing that this author does not have any of the above

mentioned, the purpose of this monograph cannot be to recommend policy or policy change. The purpose is to create a contemporary “Long Telegram” that is relevant, updated and thought provoking.

Like Kennan did, this monograph sought to answer this fundamental question: what are the sources of Russian behavior? The story written, the picture painted is a country that does not operate within the confines of international law and in reality is more comfortable operating in the confines of the Russian Federation and her laws. Historically, the Russian Federation has been on the outside looking in, and it appears as if it gives the country and its leaders opportunities that would not inherently be available if they operated like the international community as a whole. To the bewilderment of the international community, these actions seem baffling, but this is not a country that inadvertently finds itself in bad graces. It is a country that deliberately, and with great calculation identifies the space best for the Russian Federation and works tirelessly to get there at the expense of its standing in the international community. Just as Stalin’s Soviet Union declined involvement with the International Monetary Fund, the Russian Federation continues to operate in a world where their interests often are not consistent with the international community as a whole.

One could arguably say that for a finite amount of time, during Gorbachev’s administration a genuine partnership was a possibility. However, that time period should be looked at as the anomaly in Russian history, not the behavior before and after that period. The narrative the international community longs for is not a realistic Russian narrative at this time. Russia is antagonistic to both NATO and her partners, self-serving, riddled with human rights issues and in addition with widespread corruption and a population that although does not outwardly and wholeheartedly agree with all the actions of the international community believes that apathy to their government is less detrimental than the activities of the United States government.

Finally, what does the current Russian behavior mean? The narrative the Russian population embrace, is that in the last few decades the time period they were closest to the United States brought about the most social injustice and disruption, regardless if there is any validity to that narrative. The international community's problems with terrorism have been exacerbated by the United States and her expansionist mentality, not the Russian Federations. The sources of Russian behavior are manipulated by a highly proficient and active internal propaganda machine, that couples historical facts and events, with absolute control from within. The current Russian behavior will support and justify the Russian Federation expansionist mindset, the policies that enact it and the leadership that executes the policies.

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