SUBVERSIVE DIPLOMATIC SURPRISE:

THE INEVITABLE UNEXPECTED

BY

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APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis meets master's-level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

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DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University.

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ABSTRACT

The character of war is changing. As the US prepares for future threats, it must recognize how the rise of Gray Zone tactics is blending the line between peace and war, competition and conflict. Future engagements may not rise to conventional force-on-force warfare but live in the realm of ambiguous actions below the level of declared war. Given that assumption, it must be recognized that the US will not be able to prepare for or recognize all possible threats and surprises. Therefore, this paper sets out to investigate how to respond to instances of subversive diplomatic surprise (SDS), defined as the use of deception and non-attribution as tools of diplomacy to achieve military supremacy over an adversary. It set out to look at how SDS has been employed in the past, and how it could be used in the future. Specifically, this paper looked at how to control the consequences of SDS by identifying the political conditions under which an aggressor is most likely to attempt to use it to undermine an opponent.

To investigate the political conditions under which SDS might be pursued, this paper analyzed case studies using a structured focused comparison. It posed six questions against three cases studies: the 1973 October War, the 1998 Indian Nuclear test, and the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea.

The goal of this paper was to find potential causal logic or patterns of behavior that would allow intelligence officials to better focus their limited resources against adversaries determined to use surprise as a tool for pursuing both military and diplomatic goals, and who are best postured to do so. Analysis found the leading political factors contributing to use of SDS are: a desire for greater prestige or power; acceptance of the risk that tactical losses may still be able to yield strategic gains; the capability and plans to hide intentions or actions from the international community; a strong, focused leader with the ability to limit dissemination of information and the will to take action; and a small team of trusted advisors who can follow the strategic message and help execute and stay within the original scope of the plan.

CONTENTS

Chapter Page

Disclaimer ii

About the Author iii

Acknowledgements iv

Abstract v

1 - Introduction 1

2 - Methodology and Case Study Selection 9

3 - Case Study 1: 1973 October War 15

4 - Case Study 2: 1998 India Nuclear Test 29

5 - Case Study 3: 2014 Russian Annexation of Crimea 44

6 - Implications and Conclusion 64

Appendix A – Indian Prime Ministers and their Nuclear Stance 75

Appendix B – Maps of Ukraine and Novorossiya 77

Appendix C – Glossary of Acronyms 78

Bibliography 79

Illustrations

Figure 1: Gray Zone Spectrum of Threats and Surprise 8

Figure 2: Consolidated List of Comparative Questions 14

Figure 3: Egyptians Crossing over the Suez Canal 24

Figure 4: Map of Modern Day Ukraine and Crimea 77

Figure 5: Map of Novorossiya, circa 1897 77

Chapter 1

Introduction

The enemy must not know where I intend to give battle. For if he does not know where I intend to give battle he must prepare in a great many places.
- Sun Tzu

If we always knew the enemy's intentions beforehand, we should always, even with inferior forces, be superior to him.
- Frederick the Great

Surprise is a constant in all aspects of life. It occurs in personal lives, economic markets, technology, literature, commercial industry, and warfare. Humans, though, are creatures of habit who prefer the consistency and predictability of stable systems. Therefore, we often make it a goal to eliminate sources of surprise, and to inoculate ourselves from them. When scaled to the national level, such inoculation often results in a military response focused on early warning and forecasting of change. Mass proliferation of satellites and surveillance systems has lulled the US into a false sense of security that adverse enemy actions are detectable through our exquisite indications and warning (I&W) network. The US military has invested billions of dollars on methods to gain and maintain information superiority. Yet as cases such as the terrorist attacks on 9/11 demonstrate, surprise still occurs.

Multiple studies have focused on how to eliminate surprise. Authors such as Colin Gray have looked at how transformations in bureaucratic institutions can minimize the effect of surprise and build resiliency.[1] Additionally, Ephraim Kam focused on how it is ultimately the systemic misperceptions and biases by individual analysts that are

[1] Colin S. Gray, *Transformation and Strategic Surprise* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2005), 368.

compounded as assessments which travel up an organization to small groups, the broader intelligence community, the Department of Defense (DoD), and decision makers that ultimately result in the failure of nations to anticipate surprise.[2] These arguments, as well as those of Cynthia Garbo, Richard Betts, and Michael Handel, fall under what is sometimes called the "victim's school," which are based on the victim's perspective of how to better prepare for and defend against surprise. Most of these studies focus on either technological solutions to indications and warning, or cognitive or organizational tools to reduce bias and errors in judgment.

In contrast, there are very few researchers who fall into the "surpriser's school," focused on the conditions under which aggressors decide attempting surprise is the most beneficial desired course of action.[3] Part of the reason for any lack of academic discussion on incentives for surprise is that it is almost always assumed be beneficial to a weaker power, and unimportant at the strategic level if the attacking member is of equal or greater strength than the intended victim.[4] The primary exception to this rule is the work of Barton Whaley, who based his theory of stratagem on Liddell Hart's concept of alternative objectives. The limitation of Whaley's work, however, is he focused on how to use deception to promote alternate expectations of the victim to yield surprise, as opposed to focusing on the political conditions that might cause an aggressor to choose surprise over a traditional military approach.[5] Additionally, many authors from the victim's school assume if the risk of a surprise attack is deemed too costly, then any rational

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[2] Ephraim Kam, *Surprise Attack: The Victim's Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 213.
[3] Alex Roberto Hybel, *The Logic of Surprise in International Conflict* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1986), 3-9.
[4] Richard K. Betts, *Surprise Attack: Lessons for Defense Planning* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1982), 5-7.
[5] Barton Whaley, *Strategem: Deception and Surprise in War* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for International Studies, 1969), 127.

actor would choose another path.[6] Given how these authors do not account for the difference between internal and external audiences though, this paper suggests that decisions to act with surprise may sometimes be used despite a high risk of retaliation.

The underlying assumption of this paper is that one cannot completely mitigate strategic surprise through the introduction of exquisite technology or personnel actions. Minimizing strategic surprise is a valid goal, but the military must recognize methods for dealing with instances where I&W fails. For surprise itself is not as important as the "*impact* of a surprise that invalidates premises of defense planning, preventing effective application of the victim's capabilities and plans."[7] Therefore, this thesis will look at how to control the consequences of strategic surprise by identifying the political conditions under which an aggressor is most likely to attempt to use surprise to undermine an opponent. The goal of this thesis is to find potential causal logic or patterns of behavior that would allow intelligence officials to better focus their limited resources against adversaries determined to use surprise as a tool of both military and diplomatic goals, and who are best postured to do so.

Definitions

Though typically viewed as a negative by states, surprise can be both positive or negative and result from random events or intended or unintended actions by an adversary. In addition, it can be self-inflicted due to uncoordinated individual actions within a bureaucracy.[8] In the military realm, a surprise is often an opportunity. The desire to take the

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[6] Klaus E. Knorr and Patrick M. Morgan, *Strategic Military Surprise: Incentives and Opportunities* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1983), 173-77.
[7] Betts, *Surprise Attack*, 10.
[8] Chester A. Crocker, "Reflections on Strategic Surprise," ed. Patrick M. Cronin in *The Impenetrable Fog of War: Reflections on Modern Warfare and Strategic Surprise*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008), 177.

enemy by surprise is a constant preoccupation by military strategists, with examples dating back to the Trojan Horse. The desire is understandable; when successfully employed, surprise attacks can achieve quick, low-cost, and potentially decisive victories. Carl von Clausewitz wrote that surprise was often critical to tactical success, where secrecy and speed not only helped gain numerical or territorial superiority but also caused a psychological effect by demoralizing the victim. He clearly recognized both the strengths and weaknesses of surprise, for example, focusing on the idea that surprise could serve as a force multiplier while also cautioning against commanders that act without due planning, or with "faulty measures," under which an attacker would face sharp reverses.[9] Additionally, he recognized the decisive advantages in being ready first and hence taking the offensive quickly to make up for other deficiencies such as being a smaller power, while warning how the victim could respond by exploiting the advantages of defense.[10] Eastern philosopher Sun Tzu was even more adamant, going so far as to declare deception and surprise two key principles of war. Sun Tzu believed a leader with better intelligence would be able to anticipate their adversary's actions and hence surprise them by outthinking them both politically and militarily.[11] In their respective time periods, however, surprise most often focused on tactical victories because there were logistical limitations to moving large forces and controlling strategic narrative when communication could take months at a time.[12]

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[9] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 198-200.

[10] Clausewitz often focuses on the benefit of the defense, arguing that it is the stronger position due to the range of resources available to the defender. Once an engagement has begun, he also argues that tactical surprise is more easily accomplished by the defender. *Ibid.*, 361-3, 371-2, 470, 602.

[11] Sun Tzu, *The Illustrated Art of War: The Definitive English Translation*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 78.

[12] Clausewitz and Sun Tzu evaluate surprise from very different frames of reference. For Clausewitz, surprise is a result of secrecy and speed to attain tactical victories,

The modern era has brought about new methods and technologies that have changed the character of warfare. The Industrial Revolution brought about mass-produced weapons with improved range, rate of fire, and accuracy, as well as commercial transportation inconceivable in the Napoleonic age. While industrialized transportation enabled large-scale logistics and troop movements, it also facilitated concurrent developments in observation and reconnaissance techniques which limit surprise. The idea of global transparency, where "ubiquitous surveillance will subject the vast majority of states' action to observation," has led to the belief that states will be unable to hide their activities.[13] Yet such ubiquitous surveillance has also led to other changes in the character of warfare, because state and non-state actors are simply seeking less observable means by which to organize their activity. New structural and organizational changes may include the use of cyber-attacks, smaller cell activity versus large group collaborations, or implementation of camouflage, concealment, and deception (CC&D) techniques; all of which can be considered tactics of surprise. Ultimately though, surprise can only occur under such conditions when an adversary has the intention, capability, and opportunity to attack without detection.

How then to approach strategic surprise? Strategic surprise is a broad term for the military, "one in which force is used in an unexpected way at an unexpected time against an unexpected target, with a view to

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gaining advantageous positioning or access to resources. Based on his assumption that there will be restrictions to foreknowledge and flexibility during an engagement, Clausewitz assumes that surprise based on deception is generally impractical and overly complex, leading to friction that will cause plans to fail. Clausewitz's assumptions are based on his view that the primary path to victory is via mass and concentration (Book III, chapter 9). However, Sun Tzu views surprise as a longer-term plan, where his underlying assumption is that knowledge of the adversary allows you to find and exploit their weaknesses. Sun Tzu sees surprise as a tool of a leader, and that the better-informed general will be able to find methods to surprise or overtake their opponent (Chapter 1). Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought,* 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2001), 173-76.

[13] Sean P. Larkin, "The Age of Transparency," *Foreign Affairs* (May-June 2016).

trying to achieve what more conventional methods of warfare cannot."[14] Strategic implies that the achieved goal is not merely a tactical advantage, but a change in the power or territorial holdings of a nation-state within the international system. Therefore, strategic surprise only occurs at the national security decision making level of analysis, where recognized state actors constitute one or both participants. Strategic surprise does not preclude indicators existing before the activity occurs. Instead, surprise acts along a continuum, much like the Air Force's anti-terrorism/force-protection (AT/FP) threat levels. A threat is determined to exist only when the factors of opportunity, capability, and intent are present. Implementation of additional AT/FP measures occur only when intelligence indicating a direct threat of targeting becomes available.[15] Warning signals may exist up to a point, but can hide amidst the noise of other activities, and ambiguous military maneuvers or creative diplomacy can confuse analysis of intent or capability.

The existing literature has primarily focused on dividing the category of activity into its primary aim – either diplomatic or military gains. For example, Michael Handel defines diplomatic surprise as the use of secrecy and shock to cause "a shift in policy that could otherwise take decades to accomplish – if at all."[16] Military surprise is often defined by the characteristics of suffering a major military disadvantage in conventional warfare via an adversary's surprise initiation or extension of war, or by introduction of a new mode of warfare.[17] This paper argues

[14] Though Clausewitz's definition of surprise is intended for the tactical level, he defines it similarly as a means to gain superiority via secrecy and speed. Clausewitz, *On War,* 198; John Lewis Gaddis, "On Strategic Surprise," *Hoover Digest,* no. 2 (2002).
[15] Air Force Instruction (AFI) 10-245*, Antiterrorism (AT)*, 25 June 2015, 66-77.
[16] Michael I. Handel, *The Diplomacy of Surprise: Hitler, Nixon, Sadat* (Cambridge, MA: Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1981), 3.
[17] Military surprise is also sometimes subcategorized as strategic attack. Klaus Knorr, *On Strategic Surprise* (Los Angeles, CA: Center for International and Strategic Affairs, University of California, 1982), 2.

that an intersection of these definitions exists, a category of action called subversive diplomatic surprise.

Subversive diplomatic surprise (SDS) is the use of deception and non-attribution as tools of diplomacy to achieve military supremacy over an adversary. Much like the US Special Operations Command's (USSOCOM) Gray Zone concept, SDS can cover a wide range of activities crossing the diplomatic, information, military, and economic (DIME) spectrum. As defined by USSOCOM, the Gray Zone includes "competitive interactions among and within state and non-state actors that fall between the traditional war and peace duality. They are characterized by ambiguity about the nature of the conflict, opacity of the parties involved, or uncertainty about the relevant policy and legal frameworks."[18] The Gray Zone concept therefore defines a range of behaviors and activities that can be employed by a nation state employing SDS to achieve a larger strategic objective (see Figure 1). The scope of Gray Zone activity use is what distinguishes SDS from Gray Zone conflicts. While states may employ Gray Zone behaviors to simply create long-term asymmetric advantages, the intent of SDS is to achieve a radical change in the international system. States using SDS intend to alter territorial control or power relations without triggering an international response by using ambiguous means to hide the aggressor's actual objective, presenting the world with a *fait accompli*.

As alluded to earlier, attempting surprise is not without risks. Edward Luttwak highlighted how the attempt to achieve surprise has associated costs and reaches a point of diminishing returns. Given the paradoxical nature of strategy, he explains it is possible to be self-defeating while attempting to surprise the adversary. For example, "if almost the entire force available is used to mislead, leaving only a

[18] CAPT Philip Kapusta, *White Paper: the Gray Zone* (United States Special Operations Command, 9 September 2015), 6.

fraction of it for the real fight, the enemy should certainly be surprised, but the venture will most likely be easily defeated even by an enemy completely unprepared."[19] Additionally, by attempting to achieve surprise at one level of war (strategic, operational, tactical) it is possible to open oneself up to vulnerabilities at other levels. Finally, if the surprise fails, the aggressor may face international condemnation for duplicity, incite the desire for revenge by the intended victim, or evoke strong political/economic repercussions from allies and neutral, non-involved states.[20]

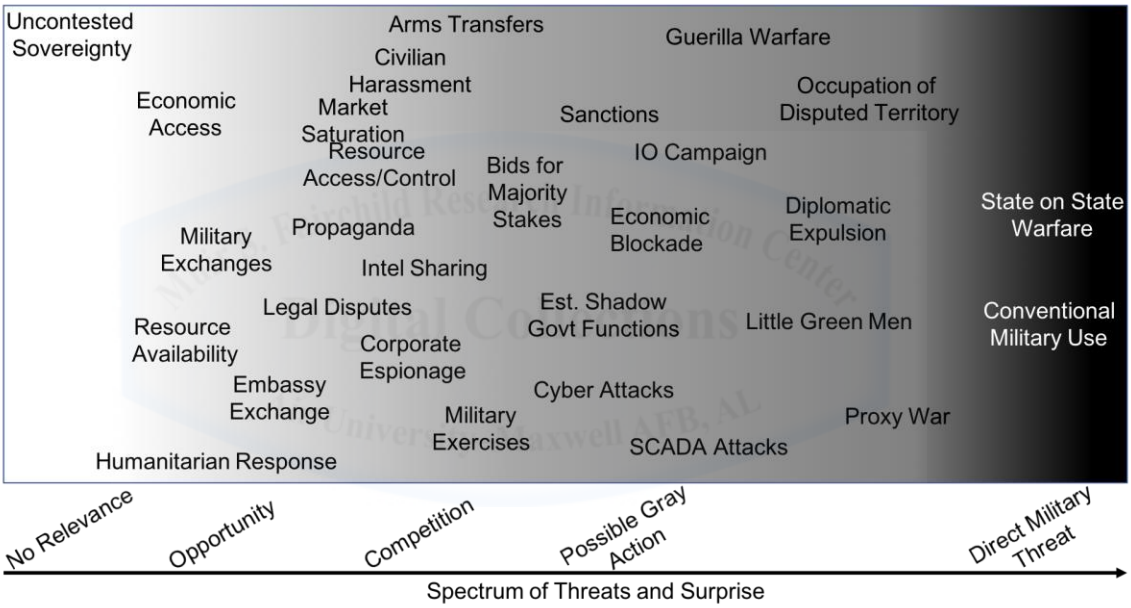

Figure 1: Gray Zone Spectrum of Threats and Surprise

Source: Author's original work

[19] Edward Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 7.

[20] Two classic examples exist: first, the US entry into the Pacific Theater after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in World War II; second is Sadat's decision to conduct the October War after Egypt's embarrassing defeat in the Six-Day War. Handel, *The Diplomacy of Surprise*, 21.

Chapter 2

Methodology and Case Study Selection

Methodology

The methodology for this paper is a structured focused comparison. Despite the small number of case studies, this method allows the researcher to ask questions of each case study to make systematic comparisons. The desired outcome of a comparative approach is the "development of 'contingent generalizations' – statements regarding conditions, or sets of conditions, under which certain outcomes are likely to occur."[1] By focusing on a small set of variables and asking tailored questions it allows for subsequent evaluation of which variables are most important in causing the desired effect.[2] Of course, because of the small number of cases analyzed, the results are neither universal nor comprehensive. Additionally, there is the inherent bias of looking at the issue predominantly through the lens of the aggressor state. Compensating for those flaws however, is the idea that structured focused comparison can provide nuanced examination of individual case histories to discover the underlying relationships between the variables.[3]

When applied to SDS, the first question to address is the purpose of the action; leading to the first question:

> *Question 1: What objective(s) was/were the aggressors seeking to accomplish?*

Based on the response to question 1, the next question becomes:

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[1] Stephen R. Rock, *Appeasement in International Politics* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 16.
[2] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 67.
[3] Rock, *Appeasement in International Politics,* 17.

Question 2: What were the perceived risks/rewards of subversive action vice direct military action?

Knowing the predicted cost/benefit analysis, one must then consider how the aggressor used subversive actions to hide their political or military intentions:

Question 3: How were subversive actions employed to accomplish the goal?

Part of the discussion of subversive action is if it was enabled by a new technology, either one just developed or suddenly available to the agent. The next step is to therefore ask:

Question 4: What (if any) role did new or emergent technology play in enabling subversive diplomatic surprise?

The questions above have focused on the actions or means used by an aggressor, but they have not yet touched on the psychological reasons for their action. Limited data is available on actual decision-making processes, but to gain insight into the aggressor state's decisions, the analyst can at least determine both the organizational structure of the aggressing state and how its leadership controls information:

Question 5: What is the organizational structure of the aggressor state, and how is information controlled and disseminated?

Finally, it is necessary to categorize the international reaction, and determine if the activity was "worth it," leading to the last question:

Question 6: What was the international community's actual reaction, and did the results justify the effort to the aggressor?

Case Selection

Analysts must be selective when choosing cases for structured, focused comparison. The cases must be alike enough to highlight

possible causal variables while still disparate enough to determine the role of conflating variables. As this paper focuses on the post-World War II era, there are a limited number of relevant cases.[4] Surprise attacks by various terrorist groups are common, with most people immediately thinking of events like September 11, 2001 or the 1996 Khobar Tower bombing. None of those attacks however, have resulted in lasting political or territorial changes within the international system. Therefore, the three cases selected here to highlight the use of SDS are Egypt's use of deception and collusion prior to attacking Israel during the October War, India's secret development of a nuclear weapon, and Russia's annexation of Crimea. Though there were indicators and warnings of all these events, this paper argues they are Black Swans – events that were predictable to certain observers, but still came as a general surprise to decision makers and the public.[5] Indeed, they could fall under Hugh White's explanation of strategic surprise as a policy failure, where despite evidence of an imminent threat "policymakers did not recognize the need to act – and to devise effective responses to the risks that were identified – before the risks became an unambiguous certainty."[6]

The three cases selected allow for a variety of variable interactions, while still highlighting both successful and unsuccessful examples of

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[4] Pearl Harbor and 9/11 are the quintessential examples often cited regarding strategic surprise. Roberta Wohlstetter's analysis of that case, while excellent, falls outside the parameters of this study's focus but is recommended reading for any intelligence analyst. The 9/11 attack also falls outside the case study criteria, but many of the recommendations by the 9/11 Commission Report have helped improve strategic warning. Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford, CA,: Stanford University Press, 1962); Thomas H. Kean and Lee Hamilton, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United* States (Washington, DC: National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004).

[5] Author Nassim Nicholas Taleb recently popularized the idea of "Black Swans," describing them as events that are rare, have extreme impact, but seem retrospectively predictable. Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2010), xxii.

[6] Hugh White, "Intelligence, Policy, and the Failure to Forecast Risk," ed. Patrick M. Cronin in *The Impenetrable Fog of War: Reflections on Modern Warfare and Strategic Surprise*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008), 158.

subversive diplomatic surprise. There is a noted imbalance within the sources available for the three case studies, however. As the October War has had over 40 years for analysis, far more primary accounts and in-depth analyses have been published, allowing for a comparison of both aggressor and victim perspectives. The two more recent examples of India, and particularly Russia, do not have as much operational detail available at the unclassified level. Additionally, the target of SDS is not always clear. Though Egypt was explicitly targeting Israel in the 1973 October War, the target of surprise is more ambiguous in the later examples. Though Pakistan and Ukraine may have been the most immediate victims of the respective Indian and Russian SDS campaigns, this paper focuses on the US' reaction. The US, the global hegemon during those periods, represents the most sophisticated international actor and hence the most likely to have been able to detect subversive actions. Therefore, the fact that American leaders were surprised by the actions indicates a failure to appreciate the context of why SDS was chosen at that time.

The October War deals with the Arab Coalition's decision to launch an attack during the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, attempting to reclaim via military force territory occupied by Israel since the conclusion of the 1967 Six-Day War. The case study demonstrates the impact of Arab and Israeli overconfidence and preparedness, as well as the political implications of retribution and risk/reward between actors in a protracted conflict. Additionally, the evaluation of the October War highlights how success or failure depends on the perspective of the domestic or international audience. The territory claimed by Israel in the earlier Six-Day War largely reverted to the previous 1956 boundaries, but it was due to political maneuvering after the conclusion of military activity, not military domination.

The selection of India as the second case study is due to its successful testing of a nuclear weapon in defiance of international

expectations. Since India had demonstrated the technical and material knowhow to maintain a "nuclear option" since 1974, this case explores the changing conditions that made testing in 1997 a sudden political imperative. It also serves as an effective vehicle to test the impact of individuals and organizational structural on enabling SDS. Finally, it serves as another mitigated success story of strategic surprise. Though India was able to emerge onto the world stage as a declared nuclear power, it inadvertently sped up Pakistan's development of the same weapon.

Finally, the last case study will focus on Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. The Crimea case serves as a good example of utilizing Gray Zone strategies to expand territorial control via methods of non-attribution and deception. Though ultimately successful in annexing Crimea, the case also shows how SDS strategies can risk international backlash. Russia's actions created a hostile international environment which has subsequently hindered its further expansion and influence in the near-abroad.

Analysis of all three structured, focused comparison cases will shed light on dominant considerations that influenced the aggressor's decision to act despite any real or perceived associated risks. The major variables revealed to be in common may then serve as a guide for the US and other nations to determine future actors of concern who may attempt to use SDS strategies.

Before going into the case studies directly, a consolidated list of the questions posed against the three cases is captured in Figure 2.

1	What objective(s) was/were the aggressors seeking to accomplish?
2	What were the perceived risks/rewards of subversive action vice direct military action?
3	How were subversive actions employed to accomplish the goal?
4	What (if any) role did new or emergent technology play in enabling subversive diplomatic surprise?
5	What is the organizational structure of the aggressor state, and how is information controlled and disseminated?
6	What was the international community's actual reaction, and did the results justify the effort to the aggressor?

Figure 2: Consolidated List of Comparative Questions

Source: Author's Original Work

Chapter 3

Case Study 1: 1973 October War

The 1973 October War was simply one campaign in the larger regional hostilities ongoing since the 1947 formation of the modern Israeli state. Considered the fifth war fought between the Arabs and Israelis between 1947-1973, the October War was a short, inconclusive battle initiated by the Egyptians that lasted from 6-26 October 1973 before being stopped by US and USSR intervention.[1] It was ostensibly prompted due to ongoing hostilities over the legacy of Israel and Palestine as nation states but was more about the balance of power in the Near-Middle East. The Arabs felt a "deep sense of injustice…born of the belief that the attempt to provide European Jewry with a state was achieved at the expense of the Palestinian Arabs."[2] After the embarrassing rout of Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian forces in the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel controlled the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights.[3] The territorial loss threatened Arab honor, an idea encapsulated by Egyptian President Nasser's vow, "what was taken by force will be returned by force!"[4] Arab leaders thus sought

[1] The period of 1947-1973 could be considered as multiple campaigns in one long war versus separate wars. However, as studied by Dupuy and other scholars, the five recognized wars are: the first Arab-Israeli War (or the War of Independence), 1947-1949; the Sinai-Suez War, October – November 1956; the Six-Day War, June 1967; the War of Attrition, 1967-1970; and the October War, October 1973. Trevor N. Dupuy, *Elusive Victory: The Arab-Israeli Wars, 1947-1974* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).
[2] The October War is sometimes also referenced as the Ramadan War by Arab scholars or the Yom Kippur War by Israeli and Western scholars due to the overlap of the two holy holidays that year. Mohamed Heikal, *The Road to Ramadan* (London: Williiam Collins Sons & Co, Ltd., 1975); Chaim Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars: War and Peace in the Middle East from the 1948 War of Independence to the Present* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2005); John Andreas Olsen, *Strategic Air Power in Desert Storm* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003), 153.
[3] John Andreas Olsen, *A History of Air Warfare* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2010), 133.
[4] Daniel Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy for the Yom Kippur War: An Analysis* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009), 1.

a solution that would coerce Israel to return to the original 1967 borders without requiring the Arab nations to sign a peace treaty.[5]

There were five primary problems Egyptian leaders faced at the strategic level leading up to the October War: loss of territory, loss of prestige, tarnished honor, closure of the Suez Canal, and increased vulnerability to Israeli attack.[6] Prior to the Six-Day War, Gamal Nasser set himself up as the leader, and Egypt as the beacon, of a pan-Arab movement. Egypt's subsequent dismal performance caused major setbacks to both its national and military pride and reputation. In retribution, President Nassar declared a War of Attrition in March 1969 with the strategic aim of inflicting continuous casualties against the Israelis. The war taught the Egyptians much about Israeli tactics, and even more about Egyptian personnel's capabilities; they ended the War of Attrition in 1970 confident in their skills, if not their equipment.[7] The 1967-1975 closure of the Suez Canal exposed economic weaknesses in Egypt, and deep penetration attacks by the Israeli Air Force (IAF) during the War of Attrition caused civilian discontent, both of which led to domestic pressures on Egyptian leadership. Egyptian President Anwar el Sadat inherited these problems after the death of President Nasser in September 1970. Initially seen as a weak, stop-gap leader, he proved himself to be both cunning and inventive. While outwardly serving as the first Arab leader to discuss peace talks with Israel, Sadat simultaneously set up a deception plan to ready the military for war.[8]

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[5] Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 365.
[6] Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy,* 72.
[7] The War of Attrition caused heavy losses on both sides. Over 500 Israeli soldiers were killed with 2,000 wounded, and there were an additional 827 civilian casualties. On the Egyptian side, over 400 soldiers were killed with 1,100 wounded, and an unknown number of civilians became casualties, with estimates ranging from 5,000 – 15,000. Dupuy, *Elusive Victory*, 369; Lon O. Nordeen and David Nicolle, *Phoenix over the Nile: A History of Egyptian Air Power, 1932-1994* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 234, 257.
[8] Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 223.

The results of the Six-Day War and subsequent War of Attrition had solidified the assessment of Israeli Defense Force (IDF) superiority, and lulled Israelis into a false sense of security. Israeli's preemptive airstrikes had destroyed almost 80% of Egypt's military equipment in the 1967 Battle of the Sinai alone.[9] Additionally, deep penetration attacks by the Israeli Air Force and tit-for-tat exchanges between Egyptian and Israeli commando raids throughout the War of Attrition had continued to wear down Egypt's military rebuilding attempts, so in 1970, both Egypt and Jordan begrudgingly accepted the US-led "Rogers Plan" for a negotiated cease fire.[10] Israeli intelligence estimated it would take several years to fully reconstitute the Egyptian Air Force. Though correct, Israel's military assessment, combined with the ethnocentrism of the senior leadership, led to the mistaken assumption that the threat of attack was low until at least 1975.[11] When the Egyptian and Syrian forces simultaneously attacked on 6 October 1973, it caught the Israelis and the world by surprise.[12]

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[9] Ibid., 165.

[10] The early 1969 commando raids tended to focus on economic and civilian objectives. However, beginning in July 1969, Israel began retaliating by directing raids against military objectives to learn more about the new Soviet equipment being provided to Egypt. For example, on July 19 Israeli commandos raided Island, capturing radar equipment. Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, *The Israeli-Egyptian War of Attrition, 1969-1970: A Case-Study of Limited Local War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 99-101. Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 219.

[11] There was a mistaken belief amongst Israeli military leaders that Arabs could not fight; thus, underestimating their adversary became their principle error. On 10 August 1973, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan addressed the Israeli Staff College and stated: "The balance of forces is so much in our favor…that it neutralizes the Arab considerations and motives for the immediate renewal of hostilities." Dupuy, *Elusive Victory*, 406, 434; Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 227; Kenneth M. Pollack, *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

[12] The Arabs achieved complete strategic and near-complete tactical surprise during their 6 October 1973 attack. Strategic surprise was via planning and deception by the Arab Coalition combined with Israeli self-delusion over Arab intentions. Tactical surprise was predominantly accomplished by timing and techniques. Dupuy, *Elusive Victory*, 595.

1. What objective(s) was/were the aggressors seeking to accomplish?

Egypt's main objective was to break the international deadlock in place since the 1970 ceasefire had gone into effect. The "no war – no peace" stalemate was threatening President Sadat's regime, and the Egyptian legacy in the region.[13] If Egypt, along with coalition partners, could force the return of territory conquered by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War, then they would achieve both territorial and economic gains and reclaim Arab prestige. Therefore, the objectives laid out to the Egyptian war minister on 5 October 1973 were threefold: "End the stalemate on the front and break the cease-fire; cause the enemy maximum losses; [and] liberate the occupied lands in stages according to the army's capability and the development of events."[14]

2. What were the perceived risks/rewards of subversive action vice direct military action?

With the lessons of the 1967 loss firmly in mind, Arab leaders had spent the intervening years of the War of Attrition rebuilding and restructuring their military, upgrading their equipment and tactics, and improving their command and control. One author concludes, the Egyptian military "prepared for a war that would return the army's honor that had been shattered in June 1967. They internalized the lessons from their battlefield debacle, found solutions for the problems the IDF had set for them, and steeled their army for the coming campaigns."[15] Arab reconstitution efforts were not fast enough to enable force-on-force victory though. The Egyptians had been rearming with the aid of their sponsor state, the Soviet Union (USSR), but the Soviets were more concerned with restoring Egypt's defensive capabilities than offensive

[13] Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy*, 57.
[14] Ibid., 61.
[15] Ibid., 21.

ones. The Soviets repeatedly denied Egypt's requests for offensive weapons such as long-range, surface-to-surface missiles and long-range attack planes, and the Soviet advisors in place focused on defensive techniques. The constant friction between the two nations resulted in the eventual removal of all Soviet advisors from Egypt in 1972.[16] Their removal left the Egyptians with a bit of a conundrum. Though having the basic supplies for defense, its military leaders knew they would not defeat the Israelis in a conventional fight. Additionally, the territory lost in 1967 benefitted Israel, giving it defense-in-depth, increasing its natural geographic barrier via the Suez Canal, guaranteeing a buffer state, and quadrupling the electronic warning period from four- to sixteen-minutes.[17] There was a pervasive feeling amongst Egyptian military leaders that this was Egypt's last chance; if they did not act soon then the détente resulting from the "Roger's Plan" would set the conditions for the Middle East problem going forward.[18]

Egypt recognized that it could overcome most of the operational weaknesses highlighted in the Six-Day War and War of Attrition through training, technology, and mass, but two operational weaknesses remained that threated the strategic objectives. First, it was necessary to gain and hold a beachhead along the Suez Canal to bring in enough forces to push back the IDF to the opposite bank, and second, there was a fear that an IDF counteroffensive would decimate Egyptian forces gathering on the West Bank while preparing for the crossing.[19]

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[16] Between 1970-1972 the Egyptian Air Force upgraded its air bases, fortified its runways, and added hardened aircraft shelters. Most importantly, it added SA-2 and SA-3 surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft artillery batteries around all its airfields, augmented by quick-inflating barrage balloons. Nordeen and Nicolle, *Phoenix over the Nile*, 259. Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy,* 69-71.
[17] Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 195.
[18] Heikal, *The Road to Ramadan*, 205-06.
[19] Yigal Sheffy, "Overcoming Strategic Weakness: The Egyptian Deception and the Yom Kippur War," *Intelligence & National Security* 21, no. 5 (2006): 813.

Despite the risk to conventional forces, Sadat needed to demonstrate his strength to Egypt's domestic audience. A surprise attack that did not result in the successful return of territory risked international condemnation, loss of sponsorship and aid from both the US and USSR, and further loss of prestige. The choice to do nothing risked the loss of power for Sadat, and "as far as the Arabs were concerned, the mere fact of initiating the attack was in itself a major move forward and constituted an important political change."[20]

Sadat ultimately felt that the political risks to doing nothing outweighed the international costs of reprisal. Experience from the Six-Day War had also demonstrated to all combatants in the region how strategic surprise could change the calculus for military success.[21] Therefore, instead of following previous plans made under Nasser of a progressive, cumulative effort by a large coalition, Sadat chose a novel approach of an "all-out war of limited objectives," that required a decisive resumption of fighting with Syria's cooperation to engage Israel on multiple fronts.[22] Choosing a preemptive attack compensated for Egypt's geographic and military weaknesses by using speed and mobility to quickly claim territory and cause maximum damage to the Israelis.[23] Egypt's approach, however, required deception to work, for the IDF could still crush Egypt and Syria's combined forces if Israel responded to the military build-up before the Arab Coalition implemented their attack.[24]

3. How were subversive actions employed to accomplish the goal?

On 6 October 1973, around 1400 local time, Egyptian and Syrian forces launched a coordinated attack against Israel along the Suez Canal

[20] Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 315.
[21] Knorr and Morgan, *Strategic Military Surprise*, 136.
[22] Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy*, 60.
[23] Knorr and Morgan, *Strategic Military Surprise*, 112.
[24] Sheffy, "Overcoming Strategic Weakness," 811.

and Golan Heights.[25] The date was carefully selected to maximize surprise. Not only was it Yom Kippur, Judaism's holiest day, but it was also during Ramadan, a Muslim holy month. Egypt hoped that the timing would deceive Israeli analysts, October's climate was favorable to naval operations, Israel's readiness would be lower due to holiday leave, and closed roads for the holiday meant slower mobilization response. Additionally, the pending November Israeli elections had many of the Israeli leaders focused on domestic concerns as opposed to regional issues.[26] An Arab misinformation campaign had been in effect for months. Egypt capitalized on collected Israeli reports that discussed the lack of preparedness of the Egyptian Army and concerns over Soviet supplies and maintenance, playing them up even more in political statements and military communiques.[27]

The Arab Coalition employed both military and diplomatic surprise in the lead up to the attack. A routine exercise, "Tahrir 41," justified the movement of Egyptian troops to the west bank of the Suez, and previous exercises had desensitized the IDF to the presence of troops along the Canal without anything happening.[28] Demonstrating superb operational security, 95% of the Egyptian officers involved were also unaware of the true nature of the attack until the morning of 6 October.[29] Additionally, Egyptian Foreign Minister Zayat spent the end of September in the US discussing conditions for peace talks, and, on 4 October, 20,000 Egyptian troops were demobilized, all to maintain the deception and hide preparations for attack.[30] Once the actual attack began, the Arabs used

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[25] "President Nixon and the Role of Intelligence in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War," Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum (Yorba Linda, CA: Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, 2013), 34.
[26] Knorr and Morgan, *Strategic Military Surprise*, 137.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Tahrir translates into "Liberation." Michael I. Handel, Richard K. Betts, and Thomas G. Mahnken, *Paradoxes of Strategic Intelligence: Essays in Honor of Michael I. Handel* (London; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003), 168.
[29] Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 229.
[30] Knorr and Morgan, *Strategic Military Surprise*, 137.

limited CC&D to hide their activities as they crossed the Suez Canal. The Egyptians placed several decoys of false bridgeheads and antiaircraft weapons along the eastern bank, and diesel-fuel smoke generators created a thick smoke screen to minimize the chances of IAF targeting the crossing forces.[31]

The efforts at deception were not always effective in misleading the Israeli analysts, but they added to the noise making it more difficult to interpret actual warning signals.[32] For example, on 29 September 1973, Palestinian terrorists hijacked a train with Russian Jews, and Israeli leaders were scrambling to coordinate their international response. Syria later claimed responsibility for the hijacking, suggesting it was part of the larger deception effort.[33] The distraction of the IDF leadership also meant that they ignored reports consistent with preparations for an actual attack versus an exercise. One can blame some of these oversights on attack fatigue, mirror imaging, cognitive bias, past experience, or the fault of individuals to pass on information to decision makers, but some of the oversights were based on ethnocentric beliefs that the Arabs would not fight.[34] By 1 October 1973 the Israelis had enough information to start responding, but with all the Egyptian posturing appearing defensive they were cautious; it took until 0300 local time on 6 October for Israeli intelligence to finally declare that an attack was imminent and that it would likely begin around 1800 that evening.[35]

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[31] Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy*, 96.
[32] Signal and noise in this case refer to the sheer amount of data analysts are expected to analyze and sort through. Signals are indicators of actual impending attacks, whereas noise is spurious data that just serves to clutter the field. Handel, Betts, and Mahnken, *Paradoxes of Strategic Intelligence*, 172.
[33] Betts, *Surprise Attack*, 74.
[34] References to the impact of cognitive biases, including ethnocentrism, on decision makers can be found in multiple references. Explicit mentions can be found in: Handel, Betts, and Mahnken, *Paradoxes of Strategic Intelligence*, 167; Hybel, *The Logic of Surprise*, 84; Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 236-39; Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy*, 96; Sheffy, "Overcoming Strategic Weakness," 822-823.
[35] Hybel, *The Logic of Surprise*, 98.

4. What (if any) role did new or emergent technology play in enabling subversive diplomatic surprise?

Operationally, the IDF was surprised by both the effectiveness and sheer number of Arab weapons, specifically the capabilities of the Soviet antiaircraft missiles, antitank missiles, and bridging equipment.[36] The use of mobile antiaircraft missiles such as the SAM-6 and SAM-7, and the ZS4-23-4 antiaircraft guns drastically limited the performance capabilities of the IAF, and Soviet SAGGER/SWATTER antitank missiles used in combination with RP 6-7s and bazookas limited ground force employment.[37] It was the Egyptian creation and use of novel bridging techniques, however, that caused the largest tactical surprise. The Israelis had designed the Bar Lev Line to contain attacks across the Suez Canal, delaying advances for an estimated twelve hours so the IDF could bring in reinforcements. Egyptian engineers developed a new technique that could breach the step sand embankments, cutting the time for their advance in half.[38] Between 1400 and 1915 local time on 6 October, the Egyptians had been able to bridge the canal in two locations, and by the next day they had moved 400-500 tanks across.[39]

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[36] Betts, *Surprise Attack*, 71.
[37] Several accounts discuss the idea of Egypt's secret weapon, the Al Kahir missile. The much-heralded weapon was an indigenously engineered, 2.5-ton short range ballistic missile; however, it was too inaccurate and clumsy for use. The Al Kahir and its smaller companion, the Al Zafir, both underwent testing but were deployed during the war with disappointing results and subsequently scrapped. Lt General Saad El Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez* (San Francisco: American Mideast Research, 1980), 78-80; Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 307; Knorr and Morgan, *Strategic Military Surprise*, 138.
[38] The technique included using high pressure water hoses to blast away the steep sand embankments, then use pontoon bridges to cross. Hybel, *The Logic of Surprise*, 78; Glenn E. Perry, *The History of Egypt* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 90.
[39] "President Nixon and the Role of Intelligence," 34.

Figure 3: Egyptians Crossing over the Suez Canal

Source: Gammal Hammad, Military Battles on the Egyptian Front, photograph, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Egyptianbridge.jpg#/media/File:Egyptianbridge.jpg

More importantly though, the IDF strategically hampered itself by self-inflicted surprise. They had planned all their acquisitions and training scenarios on the results of the Six-Day War, envisioning that all future wars would be unlimited. They mirror-imaged their ideas for force employment, so the Arabs using antiaircraft and antitank weapons to create a static defense for limited gains was unexpected. It severely hindered the IAF and IDF's conventional tactics and ability to attain air superiority.[40] Additionally, Egyptian restraint in not targeting populated areas limited Israeli options for response.[41] Not wanting to risk escalating the war or bringing down international wrath for possible war crimes, Israel struggled to quickly adjust to a limited war strategy.

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[40] Betts, *Surprise Attack*, 71.

[41] SCUDs were not used for most of the Egyptian campaign, and even then, only targeted an Israeli bridgehead along the Suez Canal. Egypt's Tu-16 medium bombers were also limited, launching AS-5 Kelts from a stand-off range, but targeting mostly radar sites and supply bases versus population centers. Dupuy, *Elusive Victory*, 556.

Ultimately, that made the human element more important than any technological development or weapon. Neither side had radically new weapons, but the Arab's unexpected weapons proliferation and proficiency surprised the Israelis.[42]

5. What is the organizational structure of the aggressor state, and how is information controlled and disseminated?

Egypt's President Sadat aspired to become a regional power broker. His leadership was heavily opposed, but he consolidated his power via the 15 May 1971 "Correction" where he arrested 90 top anti-Sadat leaders, including the Interior Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs, for allegedly planning a coup. The arrests wiped out much of the legacy of Nasser's autocratic intelligence state, but also allowed Sadat to institute Egypt's first "permanent" constitution with broad powers given to the President.[43] When elected, he had published his agreement for collective rule, "but he regularly demonstrated a tendency suddenly to announce surprising decisions without consulting anyone."[44] Additionally, despite his public statements supporting liberalization, Egypt in 1973 was still a single-party system where opposition members were routinely jailed or harassed.[45] The system was bolstered by the military, and Sadat effectively led Egypt with a select group of advisors whom he trusted personally and who tended to have similar beliefs.[46] They included War Minister Ahmad Ismail Ali, whom Sadat appointed in October 1972. Ali replaced Muhammad Sadaq, who had argued with

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[42] Heikal, *The Road to Ramadan*, 257.
[43] Jason Brownlee, "Peace before Freedom: Diplomacy and Repression in Sadat's Egypt," *Political Science Quarterly* 126, no. 4 (2011): 648-9.
[44] Perry, *The History of Egypt*, 89-90.
[45] Marie-Christine Aulas, "Sadat's Egypt: A Balance Sheet," *MERIP Reports*, no. 107 (1982): 18.
[46] Philip Adams, "Sadat's Egypt," *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin* 3, no. 2 (1976): 73.

Sadat for an unlimited war to retake the Sinai.[47] Ali's role as War Minister was critical because he agreed with the limited plan and helped put it in place.

President Sadat knew that Egypt could not resist Israel alone, so he had made several attempts to bind together the Arab states. In April 1971 he helped found the Federation of Arab Republics with Egypt, Libya, and Syria, though it soon dissolved.[48] He persisted in his diplomatic initiative, and Egypt and Syria established the Arab Coalition via secret meetings held on 1 April and 12 June of 1973. Presidents Sadat and Assad were reluctant to increase Israel's sense of vulnerability, so their relationship was a closely guarded secret. In public, the chiefs of staff from both states highlighted how the nations had been unable to resolve long-standing military and political problems that obstructed joint action.[49]

While Egypt's command and control had improved since the failure of the Six-Day War, its officer training and culture still led to overoptimistic reports. Army officers were loath to state that they were losing, so reports received by the Egyptian High Command tended to embellish Egyptian victories while downplaying the scope and scale of opposing forces.[50] Additionally, coordination between Egypt and Syria remained poor. Other than coordinating the time at which operations would start on 6 October 1973, the two nations were essentially engaged in separate battles. Therefore, when Syria's army began to fail, while Egypt's was still gaining ground, President Sadat did not have the capability to send reinforcements or the will to agree to a cease fire.[51] As summarized by former Israeli President Chaim Herzog, the Arab coalition was unable to take advantage of their numerical superiority because they

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[47] Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy*, 60-61.
[48] Perry, *The History of Egypt*, 90.
[49] Hybel, *The Logic of Surprise*, 78.
[50] Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 275.
[51] Ibid., 298.

were "plagued by the political mistrust between the Arab states and the internal bickering and lack of trust that characterized the inter-Arab relationship."[52]

6. What was the international community's actual reaction, and did the results justify the effort to the aggressor?

Though ultimately ending in a military defeat for Egypt and Syria, the 1973 October War was a strategic success, particularly for Egypt.[53] President Sadat was able to display Egyptian resolve by having challenged Israel, and that changed his reputation both domestically and internationally. Egypt had successfully achieved a return to the 1967 borders without an official peace treaty signed between Israel and any Arab nation.[54] Politically, Sadat could claim that they had changed the situation from one of "no peace, no war" to "no victor, no vanquished."[55] Additionally, by drawing in the superpowers, the US and USSR, Egypt was able to bolster its economic prosperity via substantial aid packages such as the $250 million in aid from the US.[56]

Israel had mistakenly believed that Egypt would not act without explicit backing from the USSR, and the removal of advisors in 1972 implied weakened support.[57] Sadat had cleverly been working with the US, and the Israelis thought that meant Egypt would not initiate action. They began to realize their mistake on 5 October 1973, when analysts noticed an evacuation removed the remaining Soviet advisors' families from Egypt and Syria; the Soviets cleared recognized that war was

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[52] Ibid., 365.
[53] Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir wrote in her memoirs that "the war was a near disaster, a nightmare that I myself experienced and which will always be with me." Additionally, the near loss was the first instance of Israeli weaknesses, shattering the perception of Israel's "invincible soldiers." Quoted in Edgar O'Ballance, *No Victor, No Vanquished: The Yom Kippur War* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1978), 330.
[54] It should be noted that Syria did not emerge victorious from the 1973 October War. Instead, they lost even more territory from the Golan Heights. Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 365.
[55] O'Ballance, *No Victor, No Vanquished*, 330.
[56] Brownlee, "Peace before Freedom: Diplomacy and Repression in Sadat's Egypt," 648.
[57] Betts, *Surprise Attack*, 69.

imminent and were not going to stop the Arab Coalition.[58] Even if the Israelis had been prepared to respond to these earlier signals, they likely would not have. After the Six-Day War, Israeli leaders were afraid of gaining an international reputation as aggressors and hostile occupiers. That explains their partial alert and change to readiness posture on 5-6 October; they naively thought a show of force would force the Arabs to cancel any plans, having lost the full element of surprise.[59] Additionally, Israel's only ally at the time, the US, had warned them about taking future preemptive strikes; Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had threatened to pull support if they did so. The US was invested in the policy of détente with the USSR, to lower the risk of accidental superpower escalation, and was also worried that oil production and prices may be used as a weapon.[60] The US was right to be worried, as the October War marked the first modern war where air-to-air, air-to-ground, sea-to-ground, and ground-to-ground missiles were all used, as was the use of oil as an economic weapon.[61]

Egypt did not become a regional leader, as working on the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty of April 1979 branded President Sadat as a traitor in the minds of many Arabs. The Arab League expelled them that same year, with even their old ally, Syria, voting against Egypt.[62] Despite President Sadat's eventual assassination, however, the ruling parties of Egypt and Israel have held to the terms of the Camp David Accords, bringing a lasting, if grudging, peace to the region.[63]

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[58] Hybel, *The Logic of Surprise*, 98; Sheffy, "Overcoming Strategic Weakness," 824.
[59] Knorr and Morgan, *Strategic Military Surprise*, 140.
[60] Hybel, *The Logic of Surprise*, 80.
[61] Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, 366; "President Nixon and the Role of Intelligence," 47.
[62] Brownlee, "Peace before Freedom," 642-3.
[63] Ibid., 660.

Chapter 4

Case Study 2: 1998 India Nuclear Test

On 11 May 1998 at 1545 local time, Indian scientists detonated the first of five nuclear weapons tests they would conduct at the Pokhran range; an event known as Pokhran II. Prime Minister (PM) Atal Bihari Vajpayee released official press statements declaring that India was now a nuclear power. He went on to state that the three tests on 11 May consisted of "a fission device, a low yield device and a thermonuclear device," and that on 13 May two more sub-kiloton nuclear tests were carried out.[1] In a private letter to President William Clinton, PM Vajpayee justified the action by referencing "an overt nuclear weapon state…which has committed armed aggression against India in 1962 [China]."[2]

India's nuclear weapons test came as a surprise to the international community despite its long history of nuclear development. In 1974, at the same test range, Indian scientists had conducted a "Peaceful Nuclear Explosive" (PNE) test known as Pokhran I.[3] Additionally, the US had foiled Indian plans to carry out another test in 1995 when US reconnaissance satellites revealed the preparations. The test exposure led to a public debate, with Indian citizens mixed about their desire to further nuclear experimentation.[4] It was therefore the

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[1] Atal Bihari Vajpayee, "India Conducts Nuclear Tests," Indian Embassy Archives, https://www.indianembassy.org/archives_details.php?nid=225.
[2] Atal Bihari Vajpayee, "Nuclear Anxiety; Indian's Letter to Clinton on the Nuclear Testing," *The New York Times*, 13 May 1998, https://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/13/world/nuclear-anxiety-indian-s-letter-to-clinton-on-the-nuclear-testing.html.
[3] George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 178.
[4] PM Narasimha Rao had prepared for testing to reinforce the preservation of India's nuclear option. However, after the US revelation of India's plan, and the subsequent domestic and external pressure, he eventually cancelled the test. Ibid., 368.

timing of the test, rather than the capability, which made this a SDS event.

India's relationship with nuclear energy and development began prior to its founding as a sovereign state. Though several authors would argue about the duration and length of the various nuclear development periods, there are several critical developments that shaped Indian decisions.[5] The first was the establishment of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) in 1948, designed to develop peaceful nuclear energy.[6] The second was the advancement of Chinese nuclear prowess, demonstrated by their 16 October 1964 nuclear test and 9 May 1966 Chinese thermonuclear test, particularly given the tension between the two nations after the October 1962 Sino-India border war.[7] The third was the 18 May 1974 Pokhran I test, followed by the cooling of relations with former allies such as Canada, France, and the US. The fourth major event occurred in 1994, when Pakistani scientist A. Q. Khan stated in an interview that Pakistan could produce weapons grade uranium. He declared they had a nuclear bomb as of 1987 amid the heightened tensions caused by the "Brasstacks" military exercises.[8]

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[5] George Perkovich argues for four major periods based on China's nuclear fission test in 1964, the 1974 Indian PNE, Pakistan's push for nuclear weapons beginning in the 1980s, then the 1995-6 NPT renewal and CTBT negotiations. In contrast, Sumit Ganguly argues for five, dismissing Pakistan's threat but adding in the earlier nuclear energy phase from 1948-1964 and the 1991 collapse of the USSR. Ashok Kapur notes four periods but defines them more by ruling elites than external events, focusing on early history of 1930-1947; the Nehru-Bhabha years, 1947-1964; the Shastri-Gandhi years, 1964-1974; then the tumult of the changing administrations between 1974-1998. Other interpretations also exist, but at the most basic almost all highlight China's nuclear test in 1964, the Indian Pokhran I test in 1974, and then the Pokhran II tests as their primary divisions. Ibid; Sumit Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II: The Prospects and Sources of New Delhi's Nuclear Weapons Program," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (1999); Ashok Kapur, *Pokhran and Beyond: India's Nuclear Behaviour* (Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[6] Bhumitra Chakma, "Toward Pokhran II: Explaining India's Nuclearisation Process," *Modern Asian Studies* 39, no. 1 (2005): 191.

[7] Ibid., 194-96, 207.

[8] Indian army chief of staff, General K. Sundarji was an avid nuclear weapons proponent and, with the support of Minister of State for Defense Arun Singh, had continued to imply that India was pursuing nuclear options despite the private rejection of those plan by PM Rajiv Gandhi. Sundarji therefore set the stage for unexpected

Finally, 1995-1996 marked the international debates on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) renewal and introduction of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). These two legislative pieces were critical in establishing nuclear norms in the international system, and Indian leaders were concerned that they would leave non-nuclear states politically weakened.[9]

Ultimately, it appears that India conducted the Pokhran II tests when they did based on the rise of regional security threats, combined with the imminent deadline of the NPT renewal and CTBT ratification. Indian leaders were concerned about the increasingly sophisticated military capabilities of both China and Pakistan, particularly due to the US's vacillating support between Pakistan and India that had helped equalize their conventional air forces.[10] Knowledge of external threats, however, did not mean that the Indian senior leaders' decision was well thought out, or supported a coherent national strategy based on specific objectives.

1. What objective(s) was/were the aggressors seeking to accomplish?

Scott Sagan argues there are three reasons a state would seek out nuclear weapons: security, "to increase national security against foreign

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nuclear tensions when he ordered Exercise Brasstacks from December 1986 – March 1987 to demonstrate India's conventional military capability. With no communication, the Pakistanis also happened to be conducting their own exercise across the border, and when each side discovered the presence of enemy troops close by it caused a security dilemma where each thought the other was preparing to attack. De-escalation was achieved but highlighted the issues of transparency and communication between the two sides. A.Q. Khan took advantage of the crisis to state "we shall use the bomb if our existence is threatened," but his message was not received until after the crisis, preventing further escalation. Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, 277-82; Chakma, "Toward Pokhran II," 223-25.

[9] Amrita Narlikar, "Peculiar Chauvinism or Strategic Calculation? Explaining the Negotiating Strategy of a Rising India," *International Affairs* 82, no. 1 (2006): 67-68.

[10] During the 1980s Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, President Carter offered Pakistan a $300M economic aid package as a reward for fighting perceived USSR expansion efforts in Southwest Asia. This was followed by a $3.2B economic and military assistance package under President Reagan that included 40x F-16s, a platform the US had refused to sell to India. Chakma, "Toward Pokhran II," 219-21.

threats, especially nuclear threats;" domestic politics, where "nuclear weapons [are] political tools used to advance parochial domestic and bureaucratic interests;" and norms, "under which nuclear weapons decision are made because weapons acquisition, or restraint in weapons development, provides an important normative symbol of a states modernity and identity."[11] Which of these three objectives was India hoping to attain through its nuclear weapons test?

PM Vajpayee implied in his letter to President Clinton that India conducted the test for security reasons, but analysts often argue it was only the declared reason. Given the strength and power of nuclear weapons, security seems like a legitimate objective. But the Chinese threat had been in place since the 1960s, so it does not explain why earlier Indian governments were not similarly threatened. Additionally, though A.Q. Khan had made statements indicating a nuclear capability, there was no clear demonstration or verifiable test results that Pakistan had a nuclear weapon.[12] The closest action in terms of timing that may have acted as a security trigger was the 6 April 1998 Pakistani test of the Ghauri Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM).[13] The successful

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[11] Domestic politics can also be viewed as prestige politics. Additionally, Bhumitra Chakma adds in a fourth reason, technological imperatives. That will be discussed in section four regarding the role of technology in enabling SDS. Scott D. Sagan, "The Causes of Nuclear Weapons Proliferation," *Annual Review of Political Science* 17, no. March (2011): 55.

[12] China and North Korea had been providing nuclear development aid to Pakistan via covert and overt means throughout the 1980s. This led to the October 1990 move by the US to cut off military assistance to Pakistan and invoked the Pressler amendment to Foreign Assistance Act because it could not certify that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear weapon. This decision was reversed in Fall 1995 when the "Brown Amendment" was passed to overturn Pressler; this led to renewal of up to $368M in military aid to Pakistan. The US hoped to use the Brown Amendment benefits to leverage Pakistani support for the CTBT and to pressure it to abandon its nuclear aspirations. Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II."

[13] The Ghauri IRBM was based on the North Korean Nodong-I missile; the plans were attained in exchange for providing details on uranium enrichment methods. For more information on Pakistan's nuclear and missile development, see Ashur Kapur's *Pakistan's Nuclear Development* or Samina Ahmed, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Program: Turning Points and Nuclear Choices," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999). David C. Wright, "An Analysis of the Pakistani Ghauri Missile Test of April 6,

test surprised Indian senior leaders, indicating that their indigenous missile capability was not as dramatically superior to Pakistan's as they had thought. At the time India had no missile that could reciprocally range all of Pakistan; it had been four-years since the Agni Medium Range Ballistic Missile (MRBM) tests and the Agni II was not ready for testing or deployment.[14] The Ghauri IRBM test was not an indication that the weapon system was fully operationally capable though, so it is a compelling but insufficient answer to the security threat.

Security may not have proved the ultimate objective, but neither was capitulating to domestic politics. The 1980s-1990s had been a chaotic period for India, beginning with the 1984 assassination of PM Indira Gandhi. Her son, Rajiv Gandhi, was also assassinated while he was campaigning for reelection in 1991, and the nation was plagued by economic issues and weak coalition governments.[15] If the various parties believed that a display of strength via nuclear testing would have helped them they likely would have attempted it; for example, the Congress Party would have gone through with the 1995 test despite international pressure. Instead, though PM Vajpayee did have long-term success as PM, his party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), actually lost elections in multiple states only months after the tests occurred.[16] Finally, BJP leaders had been quite clear in their campaigns that they intended to change the nuclear posture. Conducting the tests would not necessarily win over more supporters. Indeed, PM Vajpayee's first government in 1996 lasted only two weeks, indicating the weakness of its public

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1998," *Science & Global Security* 7, no. 2 (1998); Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II."

[14] Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, 409-11.

[15] Kapur, *Pokhran and Beyond*, 180; Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II."

[16] An alternate domestic argument for the testing is BJP's reputation as a chauvinistic, Hindu-nationalist movement. That argument holds that BJP leaders wanted to project an image of a strong, virile power. That argument, particularly when taken as a singular leading cause, however, ignores the larger strategic context and timing of what was going on with China, Pakistan, and the UN. Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II;" Chakma, "Toward Pokhran II," 233.

support based on their nuclear stance alone (see Appendix A for a listing of the PM terms). The far larger issues for the voting public remained corruption, communalism, and unemployment.[17]

Norms are also problematic within the Indian political experience. On one hand, the acquisition of nuclear weapons represents a symbol of great power status and served the self-interests of the individuals involved. On the other hand, restraining the Indian elites was their desire to represent a higher morality, an unwillingness to spend the money required to build a nuclear arsenal, and significant international pressure from the US and other allies.[18] Pride and other cultural factors were also at play. China and India were diplomatic and military rivals fighting over territory, culture, and regional influence.[19] They are the two most populous nations in the world and are based on thousand-year-old dynasties that shaped their leaders' expectations of regional primacy and exceptionalism. Additionally, with the recent experience of colonialism behind them, Indian leaders wanted to maintain freedom of action while being able to serve the political needs of their people and develop their potential to become an economic power.[20]

The evolving foreign policy vision of Indian leaders can be broadly divided into three camps. Beginning with PM Nehru and the independence movement was the rise of "Nonalignment Firsters," who prioritized strategic autonomy and saw the role of India as a bridge for multilateral institutions like the United Nations. For them, the ultimate

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[17] Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, 367.
[18] Ibid., 8.
[19] It is a point of honor that both nations expect certain treatment on the world stage, which is why China's elevation to both nuclear power and P-5 status (a member of the five permanent parties on the UNSC) sat so poorly with Indian senior leaders. Technically though, China was assuming its traditional post-World War II position of regional power broke, a position never given to India. Kapur, *Pokhran and Beyond*, 180-83.
[20] Teresita C. Schaffer and Howard B. Schaffer, *India at the Global High Table: The Quest for Regional Primacy and Strategic Autonomy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2016), 463.

objective was a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), where they could promote the ideals of ending colonialism and seeking world peace.[21] The end of the Cold War and the loss of Soviet protection led to the rise of "Broad Power Realists" who focused on India's role as a global power. They often equated achieving global power status with achieving recognized nuclear status but were also driven by strong economic growth.[22] The rise of the BJP and the 1998 testing led in the latest foreign policy view, that of the "Hard Power Hawks." The Hawks focused on power through military strength. Instead of calling upon the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, like the Nonalignment Firsters, they invoked Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the "iron man" who unified the 500-plus princely states into the modern nation of India.[23]

Ultimately, India's objectives in conducting the nuclear test were unclear, or at least in how they related to India's national security strategy. Elements of security and norms were large causal factors, but there is no conclusive evidence of PM Vajpayee's action policy matching his declaratory policy.[24]

2. What were the perceived risks/rewards of subversive action vice direct military action?

Based on India's perceived moral exceptionalism and desire for non-alignment, India leaders initially desired a solution where they could serve as a voice of moderation on the world stage without having to produce nuclear weapons themselves. As far back as 1964, AEC director Homi Bhabha has stated that if "any State is to be asked to renounce a

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[21] The three foreign policy visions are categorizations made by Teresita and Howard Schaffer, career US diplomats that specialized in Southwest Asia. Ibid., 105-09.
[22] Ibid., 111-15.
[23] Ibid., 116-19.
[24] Used here, declaratory policy is the public face of strategy such as speeches or pronouncements, versus the action policy that highlights true intentions and actual actions taken. Edward Kaplan, *To Kill Nations: American Strategy in the Air-Atomic Age and the Rise of Mutually Assured Destruction* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2015).

possible dependence on nuclear weapons to redress the balance of power against a larger and more powerful State not having nuclear weapons, such as China, its security must be guaranteed by both the major nuclear powers."[25] Bhabha's statement alluded to the later justification for development of an Indian nuclear weapon. However, in August 1971, PM Indira Gandhi signed a 20-year treaty of "peace, friendship, and cooperation" with the USSR. India interpreted Article 9 of that treaty as a Soviet security guarantee, which India relied upon until the collapse of the USSR in 1991.[26] Having lost its nuclear guarantee, India's senior leaders called for global agreements to eliminate, not just reduce, nuclear weapons, and it was only when this failed that they contemplated shifting their nuclear program from a peaceful scientific program to an explicit militarized weapons program. Without an explicit security guarantee from the US, India did not trust the US position upholding international norms and treaties. Indian leaders were therefore afraid of falling behind.

By maintaining a "nuclear option" but never making explicit its nuclear goals, India pre-1998 had successfully managed to maintain a nuclear deterrent without having the associated political and economic costs of a declared nuclear program. It allowed the Indian leadership to "[retain] the moral high ground on disarmament while providing enough military potential to give adversaries pause."[27] With the verbiage contained in the NPT and CTBT, however, India risked both political and technological sanctions in the future. Indian leaders saw the NPT as creating a two-tier political system of nuclear haves and have-nots. The rules of the NPT created oversight rules for non-nuclear states but did not force the same regulations on the permanent five members of the UN

[25] Homi J. Bhabha, "The Implications of a Wider Dispersal of Military Power for World Security and the Problem of Safeguards," in *Proceedings of the Twelfth Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs* (Udaipur, India, 1964), 75.
[26] Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II."
[27] Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, 189.

Security Council.[28] Additionally, "the Treaty validated the legality of five nuclear weapons states and it legitimized their right to bear nuclear arms; conversely, it delegitimized the sovereign right of others to use all military measures for self-defense."[29] While the CTBT did not politically discriminate in the same way, the permanent ban on nuclear weapons testing meant that current nuclear states had the technological advantage of non-laboratory testing to ensure effectiveness, whereas it would freeze the scientific progress in India when the CTBT entered into effect at the projected date of 30 September 1999.[30]

Testing nuclear weapons before the NPT and CTBT were signed and entered into effect, therefore, seemed to resolve India's dilemma by showcasing that they were a nuclear power that would abide by the rules of the treaties, but only after they were recognized by the international community as a political power. Given the international pressure against testing, India determined that the best solution would be to present themselves as a nuclear great power and present the world with a *fait accompli.*

3. How were subversive actions employed to accomplish the goal?

Honest confusion about intention of various Indian governments, particularly in the turmoil of the 1990s, led to SDS. BJP leaders were very open regarding their intentions during the campaign, but most in the international community thought it was bravado and posturing for their domestic audience. India's long history of nuclear peace declarations based on the principles of Mahatma Gandhi had clouded the

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[28] In 1998 the five permanent party members of the UNSC were China, France, USSR, UK, and US. The ten non-permanent members were Bahrain, Brazil, Costa Rica, Gabon, Gambia, Japan, Kenya, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden. "Membership of Principal United Nations Organs in 1998 General Assembly," news release, 1998, https://www.un.org/press/en/1998/19980105.ORG1261.html; Kapur, *Pokhran and Beyond*, 187, 205.
[29] Kapur, *Pokhran and Beyond*, 187.
[30] Chakma, "Toward Pokhran II," 233; Kapur, *Pokhran and Beyond*, 187-89.

international communities' interpretation of India's intent (see Appendix A for a description of each PM's nuclear stance). Additionally, once in office, BJP leaders sent mixed signals. Backtracking from their campaign promises, the Defense Minister George Fernandes declared on 20 March 1998 that "I don't think that we need to test [nuclear weapons] at this point of time. We did a good job in Pokhran in 1974… The world knows India has the capacity and the capability. We don't need to perform for others."[31] Fernandes' statement was likely true from his viewpoint, but more likely is that as the Defense Minister, he was not privy to the decision making and intentions of PM Vajpayee in consultation with the AEC chairman, Dr. Rajagopala Chidambaram, and DRDO leader, Dr. Abdul Kalam.[32]

Use of deception and concealment of intent was also key to India's strategic messaging. On 30 April and 1 May 1998, India's Foreign Secretary traveled to Washington to discuss President Clinton's pending trip to India. No hints of upcoming nuclear tests were apparent in his responses to direct questions on India's nuclear policy. The BJP's foreign affairs leader also helped evade, insinuating that nuclear testing would have to be approved by the soon to be named National Security Council, not prior to its formation as actually occurred. Lastly, DRDO scientists further confused the trail, announcing to the press that a full missile system based on the Agni's missile technology demonstration was set to begin. Most international observers therefore assumed that an Agni launch would be the response to the recent Pakistani Ghauri IRBM, as opposed to a nuclear weapons test.[33]

At the Pokhran range itself, the team setting up the test employed camouflage and deception to hide its true activities. Not only were the scientists wearing military fatigues, but they had learned the lessons of

[31] Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, 408.
[32] Ibid., 409.
[33] Ibid., 414-15.

1995 and only worked between the passes of overhead imaging satellites. Additionally, scientists announced that the influx of scientists and workers to the nearby Bhabha Atomic Research Center (BARC) was due to "preparations to protect the public against the effects of a nuclear attack on India," a heightened fear after the Ghauri launch.[34]

4. What (if any) role did new or emergent technology play in enabling subversive diplomatic surprise?

Upon achieving independence, PM Nehru established the AEC with scientist Homi Bhabha as its lead. Bhabha was passionate about the promise of nuclear energy, particularly due to the limited fossil fuel and hydroelectric resources domestically available. He convinced the government in 1967 to form the Uranium Corporation of India Ltd. under the AEC's control. India charged the Corporation with exploring and exploiting the indigenous uranium deposits found throughout the country, and immediately began working the mill and mine at Jaduguda.[35]

By introducing India's nuclear technology as a peaceful energy program, PM Nehru and Bhabha successfully brought in international partners to develop the relevant technology. Prior to the discovery of India's uranium resources, Bhabha had worked with the international community to develop nuclear reactors, with production of plutonium as the goal. Apsara, India's first nuclear research reactor, went critical in 1956, processing enriched uranium provided by the UK. Then in 1955, Canada offered to build India a 40-megawatt research reactor known as the Canadian-Indian Reactor, US (CIRUS).[36] Extending that relationship,

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[34] Ibid., 2, 413.
[35] J.L. Bhasin, "Mining and Milling of Uranium Ore: Indian Scenario," in *Impact of New Regulations on Uranium Exploration, Mining, Milling and Management of Its Waste* (Vienna: IAEA-Techdoc, 1997), 189.
[36] Nuclear reactors use natural uranium fuel, and when combined with heavy water produces plutonium as a waste by-product of the energy production. That plutonium is

in April 1964 India and Canada agreed on the development of the heavy-water-moderated power reactor known as CANDU (Canadian deuterium-uranium).[37] India then worked with a US firm to build a plant to extract plutonium from the spent fuel, based on the plutonium-uranium extraction (PUREX) technique. The plant was built at Trombay and named Phoenix. Paired with the uranium produced by CIRUS, the Phoenix plant was able to extract weapons-grade plutonium by 1964.[38] Bhabha, using his new position as Secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy, worked with the international partners and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to institute safeguards, but none were so restrictive as to handcuff India.[39]

After Pokhran I, international restrictions on nuclear technology exports made India's nuclear program essentially indigenous. Canadian leaders were extremely distressed that the CIRUS reactor was the source of plutonium and hence severed ties and aid to Indian scientists. There was a wider range of responses by other international actors.[40] Pakistani leaders were obviously livid, but Chinese ones had a surprisingly muted response. In the US, continued support to India varied by President. For example, under President Jimmy Carter, the adoption of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act in 1978 eliminated almost all monetary and military aid to India.[41] Based on waning international support, India's nuclear program evolved in fits and starts from 1974-1998, depending on the resources and attention dedicated to it by the leading coalition. The scientists remained stalwart in their pursuit of nuclear development, but the funding was not always available.[42]

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weapons-grade and was not well-regulated, hence its use in subsequent development of India's nuclear program. Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, 27.

[37] Ibid., 63.

[38] Ibid., 28.

[39] Ibid., 29.

[40] Ibid., 187-91.

[41] Chakma, "Toward Pokhran II," 219.

[42] Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II."

Development in the related field of munitions delivery also enabled India's technological surprise. In 1983 APJ Abdul Kalam was shifted from civilian space research to the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO), leading to the development of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP).[43] The IGMDP focused on conventional overmatch against Pakistan and China, hence the development of a new indigenous anti-tank missile (Nag), two new surface-to-air missiles (Akash and Trishul), a medium-range surface-to-surface missile (Prithvi), and the Agni MRBM.[44] With these weapons developed, the major challenge for nuclear employment became designing a compatible nuclear warhead.

5. What is the organizational structure of the aggressor state, and how is information controlled and disseminated?

Until 1998, the Indian government's organizational structure was an ad hoc one heavily dependent on the personalities and proclivities of a tightly knit core closest to the Prime Minister. From PM Nehru until PM Vajpayee, the tradition of decision making was "highly personalized, small-circle deliberations between prime ministers, their closest political advisers, and the scientists."[45]

India's organizational decision-making process was a legacy of its founders as, prior to independence, politically conscious, nationalist Indian scientists established relationships with politicians, particularly Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru became the first Indian PM after independence and rewarded many of those scientists by placing them in powerful government positions.[46] Some of the personnel decisions also reflected the legacy of the Hindu caste system of ritual hierarchy, which placed

[43] Ibid., 164.
[44] Chakma, "Toward Pokhran II," 223.
[45] Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, 331.
[46] Kapur, *Pokhran and Beyond*, 21.

Brahmin citizens in the strategic elite, particularly political and scientific positions, whereas non-Brahmins dominated the military and working class.[47]

The military was disconnected from, and often uninformed of, the nuclear strategy. In fact, the military played no role whatsoever in the decisions to test in either 1974 or 1998. Military leaders had been purposefully isolated from the national security decision making by the founders of independent India. Separation of civilian and military leaders was to eliminate the threat of coups and resist military demands on the budget.[48] The four pillars that constituted India's unofficial nuclear checks and balances were therefore comprised of the political leadership, the ministerial bureaucracy, the scientific community, and last (and least) the military.[49] Before 1998 and the rise of BJP hard-power hawks, India's elite tended to include more academics than military leaders.[50]

6. What was the international community's actual reaction, and did the results justify the effort to the aggressor?

The BJP had set out seven political and nuclear objectives prior to Pokhran II:

> To win recognition of India as a major power; to catch up to China in terms of status and strategic deterrence; to reassert technological and strategic superiority over Pakistan; to bolster the expertise, morale, and recruitment of BARC and the DRDO; to strengthen national defense at low cost while maintaining civilian control over nuclear policy; to maintain

[47] Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, 8.
[48] Ibid., 10.
[49] Ibid., 330.
[50] For more information on how the 1998 nuclear test changed the power dynamic in India, see Ayesha Ray, "Effects of Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons on Civilian-Military Relations in India," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (Summer 2009). More details can also be found in Kapur's *Pokhran and Beyond* and Perkovich's *India's Nuclear Bomb.*

moral standing as an advocate of nuclear disarmament; and to boost the BJP government's internal position.[51]

Immediately following the 1998 nuclear tests it appeared that Pokhran II had hurt, or at least did not contribute explicitly to any of, the outlined objectives except for improving the BARC and DRDO. If India's objective was truly to improve its security, then SDS failed. Within the month, Pakistan reciprocated by detonating five nuclear devices under the Ras Koh mountain range on 28 May 1998, matching its earlier rhetoric with reality.[52] Increasing tensions between India, Pakistan, and China, as well as the 1999 Kargil War over Kashmir demonstrated that nuclear parity neither lessened the chance of conventional wars, nor reduced the cost of national defense.[53] Via UN Resolution 1172, the international community condemned both the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests as opposed to showing increased respect.[54] Finally, by pursuing weapons, India had lost its proclaimed moral authority.[55]

In the ensuing decades since the Pokhran II test, however, India has been gaining recognition as a major regional and international player. Despite never signing the NPT or CTBT, Indian leaders have abided by the rules of both treaties and the nation is now widely respected as a de facto nuclear power.[56] Conventionally, India has greatly outstripped Pakistan's military and continues to strive towards parity with the Chinese. Additionally, India's population growth

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[51] Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, 439.
[52] Ibid., 433.
[53] A disputed result of nuclear parity between India and Pakistan is the restraint demonstrated during conflicts since 1998. For example, the 1999 Kargil Wars and several disputes over Kashmir have shown both sides willing to engage, but violence has never escalated beyond skirmishes to full state-on-state warfare. Nuclear weapons build-up however, has not resulted in a commiserate reduction in conventional forces. Kapur, *Pokhran and Beyond*, xi.
[54] India and Pakistan leaders interpreted the UN Resolution as a dismissal of their new military capabilities, but attainment of nuclear status did enhance their prestige, particularly from lower-level actors in the international system. Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, 495.
[55] Ibid., 433.
[56] Ibid., 489.

continues to help boost economic development and its large market has helped it gain importance as a regional trading partner, which has in turn helped renormalize its international relationships. The question of whether Pokhran II was an SDS success therefore lies in how one defines the time horizon for achieving India's political objectives.[57]

[57] How a strategist defines the timeline is an important discussion. Clausewitz stated that "in strategy there is no such thing as victory…the greater the strategic success, the greater the likelihood of a victorious engagement. The rest of strategic success lies in the exploitation of a victory won." He further explains that victory should lead to further objectives. Everett Dolman took this idea further, stating that strategy, "in its simplest form, is *a plan for attaining continuing advantage,"* or a plan to attain a better peace. Under these long spectrums, Pokhran II would not be seen as a culminating event, but as a continuing point for future negotiations. Clausewitz, *On War*, 363, 509; Everett Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2005), 6, 8.

Chapter 5

Case Study 3: 2014 Russian Annexation of Crimea

On 18 March 2014, President Vladimir Putin of Russia signed a bill that absorbed both the Republic of Crimea and the federal city of Sevastopol into the Russian Federation.[1] The sudden annexation, occurring only weeks after the breakout of pro-Russian demonstrations in Crimea, and two days after a sudden referendum for independence, shocked the world.[2] Addressing the Duma in Moscow, President Putin proudly declared that Russia had helped "to create the conditions so that the residents of Crimea for the first time in history were able to peacefully express their free will regarding their own future," and had liberated them from years of political and economic subjugation under Ukraine without a single casualty.[3] In contrast, many in the West saw Russia's annexation as a blatant violation of Ukraine's rights under Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, which prohibits the "use of force against territorial integrity or political independence of any state."[4]

The absorption of Crimea was an SDS event. Western powers, specifically the US, saw it as an opportunistic move by President Putin to take advantage of Ukraine's political confusion in the wake of Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovych's removal from power and subsequent

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[1] Rajan Menon and Eugene B. Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine: The Unwinding of the Post-Cold War Order* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015), xi.
[2] Pro-Russian demonstrations began in Crimea on 23 February 2014. On 27 February, 60 unidentified, uniformed men with Kalashnikovs took over the Crimean *Verhovna Rada* (parliament) and demanded that the members call a referendum on secession. The referendum was originally scheduled for 25 March but was moved up to the 16th. The reported results claimed that 96.7% voted for reunification with Russia, with an 83.1% voter turnout rate. Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis: What It Means for the West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 110-14.
[3] Vladimir Putin, "Address by President of the Russian Federation," (Kremlin, 2018).
[4] Erika Leonaitė and Dainius Žalimas, "The Annexation of Crimea and Attempts to Justify It in the Context of International Law," *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review* 14, no. 1 (2016): 14.

defection to Russia on 22 February 2014.[5] Protests, originally known by the twitter handle #euromaidan, began 21 November 2013 when President Yanukovych, a pro-Russian politician, stepped back from Ukraine's Association Agreement (AA) and the establishment of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) with the European Union (EU).[6] The protesters saw Yanukovych pulling back from the EU as an effort to bring Ukraine closer to Russian-led Eurasian Customs Union (CU), part of Putin's efforts to build a new Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). The withdrawal from AA and DCFTA followed secret talks between Putin and Yanukovych on 9 November 2013, and by 17 December of that year Russia had announced a massive aid package, including a $15B loan to the Yanukovych regime and reduction in the cost of Russian gas supplies by almost a third.[7] The protesters saw the shift towards CU as going against the general mandate of the people, essentially a corrupt act as it would increase Yanukovych and his family's personal interests. Tweets by journalist Mustafa Naim drew attention to the increasing crowds protesting "For a European Ukraine," and the protests continued to escalate in proportion to government attempts to repress them.[8]

By the end of February 2014, the Ukrainian Parliament had nominated Arseniy Yatsenyuk as Prime Minister and Olexander Turchynov as interim President. Russia called the new leadership

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[5] Konstantin Pleshakov, *The Crimean Nexus: Putin's War and the Clash of Civilizations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 57-58.

[6] #euromaidan is distinguished from Maidan, though both names are affiliated with protests in Kiev's Independence Square bearing that name. The original Maidan protests are a reference to the earlier 2004 Orange Revolution, when Viktor Yanukovych's November 2004 presidential election results were annulled by Ukraine's Supreme Court after widespread reports of vote-rigging and corruption. A re-election was called in December 2004, and opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko was elected. For more information on the 2004 Orange Revolution, see Andrew Wilson *Ukraine's Orange Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), or Adrian Karantnycky, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution," *Foreign Affairs* 84, No. 2 (Mar-Apr 2005). Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 66.

[7] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 77.

[8] Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 69; Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 76-79.

illegitimate, and on 1 March authorized the use of force in Ukraine to protect ethnic Russians' interests.[9] After the quick annexation of Crimea later that month, Russia continued to support pro-Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine, and, by 7 April 2014, referendums on independence were called in the cities of Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv (also referred to as the Donbas region).[10] A truce was signed in Minsk between Ukraine and pro-Russian rebels in September 2014, but without an organized political and military response by either Ukraine or the United Nations there was no military challenge to reestablish *status quo ante*.[11] Four years later, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine lists Crimea and Sevastopol as "temporarily occupied territories as a result of military aggression of the Russian Federation," and Eastern Ukraine's Donbas region remains the site of anti-terrorist operations to "contain the territorial integrity of Ukraine."[12]

1. What objective(s) was/were the aggressors seeking to accomplish?

President Putin was addressing both domestic and diplomatic concerns with the annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol. Domestically, he had been in power as President or Prime Minister of Russia since 1999, but in 2013 hit a low-point in his approval ratings of 44%.[13] The

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[9] "Ukraine Crisis: Timeline," *BBC World News*, 13 November 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26248275.

[10] This paper is focused primarily on the annexation of Crimea. For more information on the Donbas occupation which continues to this day, see Rosefielde's *The Kremlin Strikes Back*; Army Special Operations Command's "'Little Green Men': a primer on modern Russian unconventional warfare, Ukraine 2014-2016; or the BBC's coverage of current events (http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38837730). Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 86; Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 118-19.

[11] Steven Rosefielde, *The Kremlin Strikes Back: Russia and the West after Crimea's Annexation* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 47.

[12] "Information Sheet: Regions of Ukraine," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, http://mfa.gov.ua/en/about-ukraine/info/regions.

[13] Economic and sociopolitical conditions had deteriorated in Russian between 2009-2012, leading to demonstrations and protests by the urban middle class. Protesters were demanding expanded freedoms and reduction in the power and influence of corrupt oligarchs. Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 185; Assessing Revolutionary and Insurgent Strategies (ARIS), "'Little Green Men': A Primer on Modern Russian Unconventional

February 2014 Winter Olympics hosted in Sochi, Russia, served as Putin's stage to announce the reemergence of Russia as a world power but had also cost an estimated $51 billion and been internally criticized as wasteful.[14] The Ukrainian crisis offered an opportunity to rekindle national pride, sidetrack criticisms of Putin's economic reforms, and solidify his political base.[15] Diplomatically, the annexation served to reclaim historic territory and solidify permanent access to the Black Sea, while also pushing back against perceived western encroachment into areas of traditional Russian interest.

Former US National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski famously stated that "without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be an empire, but with Ukraine suborned and then subordinated, Russia automatically becomes an empire."[16] The idea of Ukraine, specifically Crimea and Sevastopol, as being central to Russia's identity has historic connotations that Westerners often misunderstand. As highlighted in President Putin's 18 March annexation speech, "Kiev is the mother of Russian cities. Ancient Rus is our common source and we cannot live without each other."[17]

Warfare, Ukraine 2013-2014," (United States Army Special Operations Command, 2016), 37.

[14] Owen Gibson, "Sochi Games Held up as a Symbol of Olympic Extravagance and Waste," *The Guardian,* 5 February 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2014/feb/05/sochi-games-olympic-extravagance-cost-winter-russia.

[15] Marvin L. Kalb, *Imperial Gamble: Putin, Ukraine, and the New Cold War* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2015), 149.

[16] Yuri Teper, "Official Russian Identity Discourse in Light of the Annexation of Crimea: National or Imperial?" *Post - Soviet Affairs* 32, no. 4 (2016): 379.

[17] Crimea and the Ukraine have a long and complicated history intertwined with Russia. The territory of modern Ukraine was originally a series of towns that became the Kievan Rus' empire (sometimes referred to as the "first Russia"), based around the prized city of Kiev along the Dnieper River. The Slavs fought and ruled over the land for more than 300 years, and the Kieven line of Slavs that follow Orthodoxy are the source of modern day Cossacks, the largest ethnic group in the region. Yet after the Mongol invasion in 1441, the Crimean Khanate took control. They are the source of the Crimean Tatars, an ethnic Turkish group that is now a minority in the region. In 1783, Crimea was reclaimed as the Taurida Oblast when Catherine the Great conquered the territory from the Ottoman Empire. It then became the site of the first conflict where Europe united to check Russian expansion as part of the 1853 Crimean War. For more detailed histories of the Ukrainian people, reference Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), or Paul Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine: The Land and*

Crimea specifically is sometimes referenced as the heartland of Russian nationhood because it is where the Kieven Prince Vladimir the Great adopted Christianity in 988 AD.[18] Additionally, many Russians do not believe that Crimea should ever have been part of Ukraine. Putin in that same 18 March speech continued, "In people's hearts and minds, Crimea has always been an inseparable part of Russia." He went on to emphasize the ethnic majority of Russians in Crimea and implied that the 1954 transfer to Ukraine was based on the whim of Nikita Khrushchev in violation of Soviet constitutional norms.[19] Putin was trying to claim that Russia's expansion into Ukraine was correcting a former injustice, not a territorial land grab.

The shared history of the old territory of Novorossiya became a theme in many of Putin's statements as the fighting escalated through summer 2014 over not only Crimea but the Donbas region (see Appendix B for maps of historic claims and territories).[20] Reunification of Novorossiya aligned closely with Putin's "Russian Idea," an idea first proposed in his 1999 programmatic declaration, "Russia on the Verge of

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its Peoples (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010). Kalb, *Imperial Gamble*, 30-32, 44-45; Richard Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 12; Pleshakov, *The Crimean Nexus*, 83; Putin, "Address by President of the Russian Federation."

[18] Kalb, *Imperial Gamble*, 48.

[19] An apocryphal Russia story is that Khrushchev gave Crimea to Ukraine as a gift in 1954 while drunk. The legality of the act is often disputed, as technically a referendum should have been held in both Russia and Ukraine prior to the transfer and pending approval by the Supreme Council of the Russian Republic. Given the autocratic authority of Khrushchev however, after his announcement that it would be transferred as gift for the 300th anniversary of the "reunification" of Russia and Ukraine, 13 of 27 members of the Council quickly collected and unanimously voted for the transfer. Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 99; Kalb, *Imperial Gamble*, 94; Pleshakov, *The Crimean Nexus*, 91; Putin, "Address by President of the Russian Federation;" Teper, "Official Russian Identity," 378.

[20] During the rule of Catherine the Great, Russia claimed much of south Ukraine and the Crimea, and the territory East of the Dnieper River as Novorossiya (or "new Russia"). For a more detailed look at Ukraine's shifting boundaries through the centuries, see Ishaan Tharoor and Gene Thorp, "Maps: How Ukraine became Ukraine" *The Washington Post*, 9 March 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/03/09/maps-how-ukraine-became-ukraine/?utm_term=.a705b4d71a23.

the Millennium." The text developed the concept of the "Russian Idea" via consensus, specifically promoted via the three pillars of: great power status (*derzhavnost*), the aggrandizement of internal state power (*gosudarstvennichestvo*), and patriotism.[21] The 2014 Olympics emphasized Russia's *gosudarstvennichestvo*, but reclaiming Crimea and Sevastopol demonstrated the principle of *derzhavnost*, with Russia as the key player in Eurasian integration. Assembly of the Eurasian CU and EEU stood as a bulwark against Western encroachment and liberalism.[22] Additionally, it gave Russia permanent control over Sevastopol, which is Russia's sole warm water port and home of the Black Sea Fleet (BSF).[23] Furthermore, the historic legacy of Crimea is closely tied to Russian patriotism, both in romantic depictions via the writings of authors Leo Tolstoy and Anton Chekov and in the military heroism of the defense of Sevastopol during the 1854-1856 Crimean War and World War II.[24]

Putin framed Russian actions as a response to Western aggression. Putin and former Russian President Medvedev had warned NATO and the EU about encroachment after the Ukrainian and Georgian leaders were promised future NATO membership in 2008. Additionally, the EU's Eastern Partnership program with Ukraine was a commercial threat to Russian economic interests.[25] If the newly reinstated Orange Movement

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[21] Marcel Van Herpen, *Putin's Wars: The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism*, Second ed. (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 110-11.
[22] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 73-95.
[23] The Black Sea is a critical node in the trade route between China and the Balkans. It serves as a major transit point for natural gas tankers and the trans-Black Sea Pipeline. Additionally, the BSF provides more than just a Russian military presence in Crimea. Owning almost 70 square miles, only 12 of which are in Sevastopol, it is the largest employer in the region. Noting the importance of the port, Russia was concerned that the newly elected Ukrainian leadership would reverse former President Yankovych's decision to extend the Russian naval base land lease at Sevastopol to 2042. Several of the new Ukrainian leaders had already made statements calling for a reevaluation of the basing rights as early as 2017. Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine*, 102; Pleshakov, *The Crimean Nexus*, 6; Kalb, *Imperial Gamble*, 149; ARIS, "Little Green Men," 39.
[24] Teper, "Official Russian Identity," 378; Kalb, *Imperial Gamble*, 120.
[25] AA would have reduced Ukraine's dependence on Russia, while also allowing EU goods into the Russian market via the pre-existing free trade agreement between Kiev and Moscow. The EU's Third Energy Package would have increased competition on

leaders had successfully petitioned to cancel the Russian BSF's lease in Sevastopol, they could have offered up basing rights to NATO, and Russia was unwilling to risk the chance of US forces stationed in the Black Sea.[26] Finally, Moscow leadership saw the various "color revolutions" as a devious plan by the US to destabilize Russia's near abroad and diminish its regional power. Backing this conspiracy theory, Russia intercepted, then released, tapped phone calls between US Assistant Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland, and the US ambassador to the Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt, to embarrass the US and give "proof" of US interference. Though not conclusive, the transcript of the call did embarrass US leaders and strained US-EU relations due to the explicit language used to critique EU actions.[27]

2. What were the perceived risks/rewards of subversive action vice direct military action?

President Putin saw the benefits of subversive action far outweighing the risks of intervention. Russia retained economic leverage over Ukraine and its European allies thanks to their reliance on Russian natural gas, and the US was unlikely to respond militarily as it was already distracted by its engagements in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.[28] NATO was also unlikely to intervene due to Ukraine's retraction from President Yushchenko's 2008 intention to join NATO and shift to the

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energy distribution and it also bars nations from using single-source suppliers whose companies own the associated distribution networks (like pipelines). Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 116-17; Can Kasapoglu, *Russia's Renewed Military Thinking: Non-Linear Warfare and Reflexive Control* (Rome: NATO Defense College, Research Division, 2015), 2.

[26] Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine*, 4, 39, 102; Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 71.

[27] Jonathan Marcus, "Ukraine Crisis: Transcript of Leaked Nuland-Pyatt Call," *BBC*, 7 February 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26079957; John Burke and Svetlana Panina-Burke, "The Reunification of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol with the Russian Federation," *Russian Law Journal* 5, no. 3 (2017): 43-44.

[28] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 61-65.

declared non-alignment policy passed by his successor, President Yanukovych, in 2010.[29]

The lack of international response to Russia's war with Georgia in 2008 further emboldened President Putin.[30] Instead of taking a tough stance, US President Obama had telegraphed weakness via his "Pivot to the Pacific" and adoption of a Russian "reset" policy. Putin saw the reset as synonymous with forgiveness, implying that Obama would not act against Russia for any of its perceived aggressive activities in the Ukraine, Syria, or near-abroad. His thought was reinforced by the US decision to abandon the ballistic missile defense project in Poland, an announcement made on 17 September 2009.[31]

With NATO and the US thus distracted by other international affairs, Putin felt free to act in Ukraine, employing the old Soviet theory of reflexive control and deception (*maskirovka*). Reflexive control theory is defined as "a means of conveying to a partner or an opponent specifically prepared information to incline him to voluntarily make the predetermined decision desired by the initiator of the action."[32] Russia has employed a reflexive control strategy in several other recent engagements such as Chechnya, Georgia, and Estonia. Considered more of a military art than science, it employs a mix of deception and disinformation to confuse the perception of the adversary, specifically enabling "deep penetration" into enemy territory and control of

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[29] Ibid., 66.
[30] For more details on the Russia-Georgia conflict over South Ossetia see Roy Allison, "Russia Resurgent? Moscow's campaign to 'Coerce Georgia to Peace,'" *International Affairs* 84, no. 6 (2008), or Steven Herzog, "Revisiting the Estonian Cyber Attacks: Digital threats and multinational responses," *Journal of Strategic Security* 4, no. 2 (2011). For US specific information, see Jim Nichol, *Russia-Georgia Conflict in South Ossetia: Context and Implications for US Interests* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2008); ARIS, "Little Green Men."
[31] The date of the announcement of Poland's ballistic missile defense project cancellation was further indication of the US's strategic inattention: the anniversary of the 1939 Soviet invasion of Poland. Van Herpen, *Putin's Wars*, 252-3.
[32] Timothy Thomas, "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17, no. 2 (2004): 237.

individuals and assets there.[33] In Ukraine though, Russian plans involved a three-step process: mobilization of Russophiles on the Crimean Peninsula, neutralization of the political power of Crimean Tatars, and shaping of world opinion to gauge sympathy or reaction.[34]

3. How were subversive actions employed to accomplish the goal?

Non-attribution, misinformation, and deception were the critical elements employed by Russia to enable SDS in Crimea. Applying tools from across the Gray Zone spectrum, Russia employed occupation of disputed territory, military exercises, "little green men," resource control access, lawfare, cyber-attacks, economic pressure, information operations campaign, and propaganda. The script for Russia's activity should not have been surprising, but the international community had ignored the earlier warning signs. In addition to Putin's 1999 *Russian Idea,* an article outlining Russian military strategy was released in 2013 by General Valery Gerasimov, the chief of the general staff of the Russian Federation. In it, Gerasimov wrote about the blurring lines between war and peace, where "the focus of applied methods of conflict has altered in the direction of the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other non-military measures - applied in coordination with the protest potential of the population."[35]

Most of the troops required for the Crimean annexation were already in place by late January, but more arrived after President Putin

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[33] Kasapoglu, *Russia's Renewed Military Thinking*, 2.
[34] Pleshakov, *The Crimean Nexus*, 117.
[35] General Gerasimov further argued that "a perfectly thriving state can, in a matter of months and even days, be transformed into an arena of fierce armed conflict, become a victim of foreign intervention, and sink into a web of chaos, humanitarian catastrophe, and civil war." Original text was published in the Russian "Military-Industrial Kurier" on 27 February 2013. After the annexation of Crimea, the text was translated and published in several forums. Kasapoglu, *Russia's Renewed Military Thinking*, 3; Robert Coalson, "Top Russian General Lays Bare Putin's Plan for Ukraine," *The Huffington Post*, 2 September 2014, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-coalson/valery-gerasimov-putin-ukraine_b_5748480.html; ARIS, "Little Green Men."

announced snap exercises along the Ukrainian border 26 February-7 March 2014.[36] Immediately thereafter "little green men" or, as Putin labeled them, "polite soldiers" began to appear along the streets.[37] By 28 February these unmarked forces had seized the Interior Ministry's arms stores, blockaded the isthmus connecting Crimea to Ukraine, and seized control of the Sevastopol and Simferopol airports.[38] President Putin initially repeatedly refuted that these "little green men" were Russian troops, but six weeks later acknowledged the presence of special operators, known as s*petsnaz,* in the region.[39] As further proof of involvement and to flout its actions, the Russian military later awarded a "Liberation of Crimea" medal to all participants, listing the dates of conflict as 20 February – 18 March 2014.[40]

Economically, Russia had long been trying to coerce and direct Ukrainian actions via economic incentives and pressure. Not only had President Putin initiated the fall of President Yanukovych via his push away from AA and DCFTA, but during the crisis phase in early March 2014, Russian natural gas supplier Gazprom announced it would suspend service of natural gas unless Ukraine immediately settled its previous debt.[41] Threats against resource supply mirrored similar actions Russia had taken against other former Soviet states during crisis periods since the fall of the USSR. The intertwined economics of Russia and its former satellite states gave President Putin and Russia a

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[36] Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 110; Kasapoglu, *Russia's Renewed Military Thinking*, 10.
[37] The BSF had between 30-35,000 troops already, so their presence in Crimea did not necessitate them crossing the Crimean or Ukrainian borders. Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 111, 29; Pleshakov, *The Crimean Nexus*, 63.
[38] Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 110-11.
[39] Kalb, *Imperial Gamble*, 161.
[40] Kasapoglu, *Russia's Renewed Military Thinking*, 3; ARIS, "Little Green Men," 56.
[41] Gazprom is a natural gas business that is technically private but majority owned by the Government of Russia. Gazprom supplies approximately a third of Europe's natural gas and is often used as a tool for Gray Zone actions to pressure foreign states to cooperate with Russia. ARIS, "Little Green Men," 37; James Kanter, "Europe Seeks Alternatives to Russian Gas Imports," *New York Times*, 16 February 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/17/business/energy-environment/european-union-seeks-to-reduce-reliance-on-russian-gas.html.

disproportionate ability to influence (or bribe) their respective decision makers.[42]

After gaining territorial control, Russia sought to solidify its acquisition using a combination of lawfare and information warfare. Russian-backed proxy organizations, such as the Russia Unity party, set up the independence referendum held on 16 March 2014. Not surprisingly, post-referendum Russia Unity politicians filled all major government positions of power, despite having only earned 4% of the vote in the previous 2010 parliamentary elections.[43] Additionally, after taking control of Crimean government offices the "little green men" began issuing Russian passports.[44] Following the principles of *maskirovka,* Russia provided legal justifications arguing that the 1954 decision to transfer Crimea to Ukraine had been done by political fiat and did not respect the rights or self-interests of its predominantly ethnic Russian population.[45] Russian lawyers further argued that after the fall of the USSR, Ukraine employed a "coerced annexation" strategy against the Republic of Crimea by violating its preference to become an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.[46]

The larger effort of the Russian *maskirovka* campaign involved information warfare. Russian media and politicians publicized stories, both real and fictional, to highlight the so-called threat to Russian-speaking Crimeans. Therefore, they argued, Russia was helping its ethnic compatriots to protect themselves from violence by "creat[ing] the

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[42] ARIS, "Little Green Men," 9-13, 39.
[43] The referendum did not meet Ukrainian constitutional requirements, nor international standards for free and open elections as armed troops were openly roaming the streets. Additionally, per Article 72 of the Ukrainian constitution, only the *Verkhovna Rada* (Parliament) and the President can call a referendum, and only after a prerequisite petition signed by three-million voters (with 100,000 from each province) has occurred. Even then, territorial separation had to be approved by the majority of voters in at least two-thirds of the provinces. Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, x.
[44] Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis,* 10.
[45] Burke and Panina-Burke, "The Reunification of Crimea," 29; Leonaitė and Žalimas, "The Annexation of Crimea," 45.
[46] Burke and Panina-Burke, "The Reunification of Crimea," 32, 65.

conditions for Crimeans to realize self-determination."[47] The "Korsun pogrom" was one such incident that became a rallying cry, where Russian pundits claimed a bus of Russian-speaking residents were ambushed and killed after anti-EuroMaidan protests.[48] Social media sites picked up "news" stories highlighting Ukrainian atrocities, including falsified reports that Ukrainian soldiers had crucified a Russian toddler.[49] In addition to the disinformation campaign, Russian *spetsnaz* disrupted cable communication between Crimea and Kyiv, cyber hackers conducted dedicated denial of service attacks against Ukrainian government and media outlets, and social media was used to mobilize separatists and confuse the international perception of events.[50]

4. What (if any) role did new or emergent technology play in enabling subversive diplomatic surprise?

Technology did not play a large role in enabling Russia's SDS in Ukraine. The information warfare tactics were often enabled by technology via the internet and social media, but it was more focused on distraction and disinformation. During the initial November 2014 protests, Russia used its formidable cyber forces to try and bolster Yanukovych's regime by suppressing the #euromaidan news feeds. Two of the most popular social media platforms in the Ukraine are hosted on Russian servers, so Russian cybersecurity experts blocked pro-

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[47] Leonaitė and Žalimas, "The Annexation of Crimea," 46.
[48] Confusion remains as to whether the Korsun pogrom (massacre) occurred or was created for propaganda purposes. No third party-independent verification has ever found evidence or been able to confirm the video footage. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has also disputed all reports of systemic harassment or discrimination against Russian-Speakers in Crimea. Burke and Panina-Burke, "The Reunification of Crimea," 48; Olena Goncharova, "Debunking the Kremlin Myth About the Korsun Pogrom," *Kyiv Post*, 18 March 2015, https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/war-against-ukraine/debunking-the-kremlin-myth-about-the-korsun-pogrom-video-383832.html.
[49] Marcel Van Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine: Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 4-5.
[50] Pleshakov, *The Crimean Nexus*, 120; Michael Kofman et al., *Lessons from Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Coperation., 2017).

EuroMaidan pages and groups while also collecting information on those that "liked" or posted on those pages.[51] In a remarkable example of technology enabling the kill chain, key opposition players identified via social media could then be targeted. For instance, social media tracking led to activists Yuriy Verbytsky and Ihor Lutsenko being abducted and beaten; Verbytsky later died in just one example of the prolific human rights violations that included kidnapping, torture, and murder.[52] Additionally, by controlling social media, Russia was able to set up sites for recruiting or to raise financial contributions to "Fund Novorossiya."[53] The organizational control enabled Russian *spetsnaz* to identify pro-Russian separatists, and subsequently route them funding and weapons.

The military technology used in the annexation was largely inconsequential. Crimea saw the first employment of Russia's new *Spetsnaz* Special Operations Command, formed in March 2013 under General Gerasimov.[54] For the Crimean campaign he prioritized speed, agility, and communications over firepower in the initial push to isolate Ukrainian troops on the peninsula. General Gerasimov's prioritization meant the most advanced weaponry used were BTR-80/82 Armored Personnel Carriers, troop trucks, and Tiger light-utility vehicles.[55] Though more advanced weaponry was later brought to play in the Donbas region, Crimea was a textbook example of Russian reflexive control: "without a shot being fired, the morale of the Ukrainian military

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[51] Russian websites *VKontakte* and *Odnoklassniki* are often equated as Russian Facebook. Both have approximately five-million Ukrainian users, making it their second-largest market and amongst the most popular social media sites in Ukraine. Kofman et al., *Lessons from Russia's Operations*, 50.
[52] ARIS, "Little Green Men," 54.
[53] Kofman et al., *Lessons from Russia's Operations*, 51.
[54] For more details about the reorganization of the *Spetsnaz* Special Operations Command or the affiliated Vozdushno-Desantnye Voyska (VDV) air-assault brigades and how they were used in the Donbas region, see Kasapoglu's "Russia's Renewed Military Thinking." Tor Bukkvoll, "Russian Special Operations Forces in Crimea and Donbas," *Parameters* 46, no. 2 (2016): 15.
[55] Kofman et al., *Lessons from Russia's Operations*, 25; Kasapoglu, *Russia's Renewed Military Thinking*, 6-7.

was broken and all of their 190 bases had surrendered. Instead of relying on a mass deployment of tanks and artillery, the Crimean campaign deployed less than 10,000 assault troops…against 16,000 Ukrainian military personnel."[56] Therefore, speed and maneuver were the key to Russia's success in the Ukraine, not technology.

5. What is the organizational structure of the aggressor state, and how is information controlled and disseminated?

In 2012 President Putin was reelected to his third Presidential term. He built up his kleptocracy by supporting an ultra-nationalistic foreign policy and garnering the support of rich oligarchs and the Russian Orthodox church.[57] Putin has also surrounded himself with a large number of *siloviki*, Russian leaders with intelligence or military service backgrounds similar to his own.[58] Many of those surrounding Putin are neoconservatives who champion the return of Russia as a strongman on the world stage; they approve of Putin's *Russian Idea*, which again seeks out great power status (*derzhavnost*), the aggrandizement of internal state power (*gosudarstvennichestvo*), and patriotism.[59] First and foremost, however, they are nationalists who believe reunification of ethnic Russians and Slavs is the only way to counterbalance America's unipolar dominance.[60] They are personally loyal to President Putin, at least outwardly showing a united front; if not, they are quickly replaced.

President Putin has solidified his autocracy by tightening Presidential control over both the government and civilian spheres. In 2013 he championed new legislation barring government officials from

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[56] Janis Berzins, "Russia's New Generation Warfare in Ukraine," (National Defense Academy of Latvia, 2014), 5; Thomas, "Russia's Reflexive Control," 241-45.
[57] Kalb, *Imperial Gamble*, xii; Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 88.
[58] ARIS, "Little Green Men," 33.
[59] Van Herpen, *Putin's Wars*, 110-11; ARIS, "Little Green Men," 33.
[60] ARIS, "Little Green Men," 35.

owning foreign bank accounts and property, as well as limiting their travel. Then, in October 2014, he proposed a law limiting foreign ownership of news and media corporations within Russia to 20% and set up robust measures to monitor citizens via increased "internet security."[61] Both of these measures help control possible opposition groups, or those who attempt to flee. Additionally, military reforms in 2012-2013 resulted in a highly centralized political-military relationship. Chief of Staff General Gerasimov was subordinated to President Putin as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and the General Staff was given expanded "control over local authorities outside the Ministry of Defense in order to execute territorial defense."[62] All of these measures have enabled Putin to place his protégés in positions of power, which makes for quick and efficient decision making. Finally, with Putin at the helm, Russia has the advantage of presenting a consolidated Strategic Messaging Campaign that backs a singular message.[63]

6. What was the international community's actual reaction, and did the results justify the effort to the aggressor?

One of the most concise summaries of Russia's consequences after annexing Crimea was made by scholars Rajan Menon and Eugene Rumer:

> Russia is paying a heavy price for its victory in Crimea and for what gains it may have achieved by keeping Ukraine in its orbit. Indeed, those gains may very well prove illusory, while the toll on Russia - political, economic, military, and reputational - is bound to be heavy and lasting.[64]

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[61] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 89-90.
[62] Kasapoglu, *Russia's Renewed Military Thinking*, 10.
[63] Unified strategic messaging is not always as consistent at the lower levels of employment. For example, countering Putin's claims that the "little green men" were not Russian troops, several soldiers were caught posting selfies of themselves and their units in Eastern Ukraine. Kofman et al., *Lessons from Russia's Operations*, 14; Bukkvoll, "Russian Special Operations Forces in Crimea and Donbas," 17.
[64] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 106.

With the Sochi Olympics, Putin had been trying to establish Russia's international image as a resurgent, yet politically restrained actor. The aggression in Crimea contradicted that image, instead forwarding the counternarrative of a belligerent, uncompromising Russia. On 24 March 2014 it was expelled from the G8 group of industrialized nations, widely considered to be comprised of the world's most influential and richest world leaders.[65] The UN General Assembly Resolution on the territorial integrity of Ukraine from 27 March 2014 (no. 68/262) also widely condemned Russia's actions, though many in the international community saw it as a weak condemnation with very little political consequence.[66] Russia claimed it was cooperating with the international community and supporting peace efforts, yet the international community was concerned over Russia's continued interference in the Donbas region after Crimea's annexation.[67]

Militarily and economically the Crimean annexation has had significant consequences for Russia. France cancelled the sale of two Mistral helicopter carriers to Russia, and US and NATO sanctions have forced Russia to reduce its reliance on foreign weapons imports and invest in domestic development.[68] Overall, the resulting sanctions were wide-reaching, including:

> export restrictions on technologies and services regulated under the US Munitions List, blocking property of 14 defense

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[65] Russia has responded by cozying up to the G20 and trying to build up the economic influence of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), but with economic turmoil it has not successfully been able to leverage those institutions for cohesive gains. ARIS, "Little Green Men," 58; Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 94.

[66] In addition to limited sanctions, the vote itself was telling. 111 nations voted for condemnation to 54 against, but 58 nations abstained and 24 were absent. Interestingly, the former Soviet Satellites of Belarus and Armenia voted against, showing their loyalty to Putin. Leonaitė and Žalimas, "The Annexation of Crimea," 26; Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 161.

[67] The Minsk II summit held on 11 February 2015 was intended to revive the Minsk Protocol ceasefire that had broken earlier that month. Leaders of Ukraine, Russia, France, and Germany agreed upon a package of measures to stop (or at least alleviate) fighting in the Donbas region of Eastern Ukraine. Rosefielde, *Kremlin Strikes Back*, 92-95.

[68] Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 117; Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 91.

> companies and individuals in Putin's inner circle; the limiting of certain financing to 6 of Russia's largest banks and four energy companies, prohibiting the provision, exportation, or re-exportation of goods, services, or technology in support of exploration or production for deep-water, Arctic offshore, or shale projects.[69]

The economic sanctions were particularly harsh after the 17 July 2014 shootdown of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 that killed 283 passengers and 15 crew. The crash was largely believed to be caused by a surface-to-air missile fired by Russian-supplied separatists operating in the Donbas region.[70] Russia denied any involvement but obstructed the investigations, which increased the ire of European nations, particularly the Netherlands, which had the largest number of citizens aboard.[71]

In Russia's near abroad, the Crimean annexation may have diminished the Kremlin's influence in the long-term. Many former Soviet satellite states fear that Crimea was a litmus test for further expansion.[72] Though most will continue to cooperate with Russia, joining in the CU and EEU for economic stability, many are starting to hedge against further Russian intervention.[73] Lithuania and Ukraine itself are also now adamantly opposed to Russian action. Lithuania used Crimea as an excuse to further align with the EU, affirming its duty to non-recognition of the territorial changes. Additionally, whereas polls in Ukraine had shown at least 50% of the population having "warm" attitudes towards Russia in September 2013, after Crimea over 73% were opposed to Russian cooperation.[74] Ironically, claiming Crimea has given Ukraine economic negotiating power with Russia. Previously, Ukraine was subsidizing 52% of the Crimean budget and was providing 80% of its

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[69] Rosefielde, *Kremlin Strikes Back*, 63.
[70] ARIS, "Little Green Men," 60.
[71] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 126.
[72] Teper, "Official Russian Identity," 379.
[73] Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 99-100.
[74] Leonaitė and Žalimas, "The Annexation of Crimea," 21; Menon and Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine*, 84.

electricity and 85% of its water. Many of its citizens also crossed the land route to Ukraine for employment, meaning Russia is now stuck with offsetting these subsidies and cannot as easily threaten Ukraine's natural gas supply.[75]

Domestically, Russia's actions in Crimea solidified the Russo-nationalism movement as well as personal support for President Putin. Putin's 2013 low-point approval rating of 44% climbed to 86% by May of 2014, with accompanying calls for "Putin forever."[76] Russia also succeeded in achieving its military objectives in Crimea. By taking control of Sevastopol they guaranteed continuous access to a warm-water port, ensured Russia and Turkey are the only major naval powers with access to the Black Sea, and extended their economic exclusion zones and areas of claim for future oil drilling. Additionally, with the addition of fighters to Belbek Air Base and the movement of Iskander missiles to Sevastopol, Russia can now range Southern Ukraine and parts of Eastern Europe with military assets.[77] The contrast between the success of operations in Crimea versus the stalemate in Donbas also demonstrated how effective reflexive control can be but also its limitations. Crimea was geographically primed for SDS and covert actions, but those tactics are less effective in regions like Donbas where borders are fluid and conventional troops are required.[78] Though Crimea was a tactical success that achieved long-term military objectives, it did not achieve the overarching political strategic objectives nor set a precedent for how Russia can successfully compete in the future. Tellingly, Putin appears to have recognized the costs of Russian aggression, and from his 18 March 2014 to his 4 December 2014

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[75] Pleshakov, *The Crimean Nexus*, 144.
[76] Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 185.
[77] Pleshakov, *The Crimean Nexus*, 136; Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 117.
[78] Bukkvoll, "Russian Special Operations Forces in Crimea and Donbas," 19-20; Kofman et al., *Lessons from Russia's Operations*, xiii.

speeches all discussion of further ethnic solidarity and consolidation of Novorossiya disappeared.[79]

[79] Teper, "Official Russian Identity," 390; Kalb, *Imperial Gamble*, 205.

Chapter 6

Implications and Conclusion

Case Comparisons

This paper set out to identify potential political conditions under which an aggressor would use subversive diplomatic surprise. When utilizing the structured focused comparison questions the analyze the case studies, several questions proved more informative than others in isolating potential causal logic or patterns of behavior. Additionally, several themes that were not explicitly addressed as part of the questions emerged after the structured comparison. Going through each question reveals where interesting points of commonality and difference lie.

1. What objective(s) was/were the aggressors seeking to accomplish?

For the first question, there was no set objective that carried across all three cases, though elements of international prestige and security were present in all. In 1973 Egypt, President Sadat was simultaneously dealing with the "no war – no peace" stalemate over lost territory as well as domestic pressure to reclaim Arab prestige. Egypt felt that Israel had an asymmetric military advantage, and by acting when they did, they were trying to force a change in the balance of power. In India, PM Vajpayee was feeling pressured to sign the NPT and CTBT but was concerned that doing so would forever limit India's ability to demonstrate a nuclear weapons capability. Given the fears of growing Chinese influence in the region, paired with China's material and financial contributions to neighboring Pakistan, Indian leaders wanted to exhibit the ability to weaponize their nuclear program as a display of power and strength. Finally, President Putin in Russia sought recognition on the world stage via *derzhavnost* and *gosudarstvennichestvo* through his actions in Crimea. By both claiming

that they were correcting a historic wrong in absorbing Crimea, as well as using a misinformation campaign designed to highlight NATO and Western encroachment, Russia was simultaneously reclaiming key territory while testing the resolve of other world powers.

2. What were the perceived risks/rewards of subversive action vice direct military action?

There was no common theme that unified the three case studies regarding perceived risk versus rewards of SDS. Egypt chose to pursue SDS instead of direct military action because senior leaders recognized that the Egyptian military was at an asymmetric disadvantage compared to the Israeli military. Decades of Soviet sponsorship had resulted in most of Egypt's systems being defensive instead of offensive. Additionally, after losing control of the Suez Canal's west bank during the Six-Day War, the Israelis had the advantage of geography. Therefore, a preemptive attack that used surprise, speed, and mobility was the only way the Egyptians stood a chance of scoring a quick victory.

In contrast, India chose SDS versus direct military action because it was trying to demonstrate a weapons capability for political ends without involving its military leadership. The decision to test lay at the feet of the Prime Minister and Atomic Energy Commission and was done at the time and place of their choosing to ensure a demonstrated nuclear weapons capability prior to the NPT and CTBT entering into effect. They were not trying to score a military victory, so the test was done as a show of strength versus a strike against a specific adversary.

Finally, Russia chose to engage with SDS because it allowed them a quick victory with minimal bloodshed. They were taking advantage of the political turmoil in Ukraine, as well as the distraction of NATO in other regions of the world to make their move. With troops prepositioned in Crimea already due to the Black Sea Fleet, and additional s*petsnaz* easily infiltrating due to the snap exercise, Russian decision makers

recognized that they could reclaim disputed territory via *fait accompli* before anyone had the chance to respond.

3. How were subversive actions employed to accomplish the goal?

As predicted, the subversive actions employed ran the full gamut of the Gray Zone spectrum up to and including conventional warfare. Strategic messaging was the most important factor across all three instances however, causing confusion and sowing doubt over the aggressors' intentions. Whereas it was purposeful in the Crimea case, the Egyptian and Indian examples of conflicting strategic messaging campaigns were more based on poor communication between various branches of government, or tight dissemination control of information, than planning. Egypt was also very effective at maintaining operational security, so members did not understand the course of action until the day of the attack. Similarly, India's PM worked directly with the scientists to discuss their plans, bypassing the military leadership entirely.

Strategic messaging combined with a purposeful information operations campaign made Russia's SDS efforts the most immediately impactful. Despite long-term costs of the operation, it did succeed in annexing Crimea with no bloodshed in a matter of weeks. Russia did so by effectively pairing its infiltration campaign with diplomatic and economic pressure, social media propaganda and targeting, and cyber-attacks.

Using routine exercises to hide large troop movements near the border was another effective tactic used by both Egypt and Russia. Egypt needed to conceal its preparations to quickly breach the Suez if they were to achieve initial military gains. They did not need to conceal that military troops were massing, simply why they were there. Russia was slightly different. Though preparing for a larger incursion into Crimea if necessary, initial troops crossing over into the disputed

territory were camouflaged to hide their Russian military association. Then, since they were able to use the "little green men" and BSF forces effectively, additional regular troops were not required. India's case also used CC&D for non-attribution, but in a far more traditional way, camouflaging its activities by hiding them under the guise of regular military exercises.

4. What (if any) role did new or emergent technology play in enabling subversive diplomatic surprise?

Unexpectedly, technology did not play a pivotal role in enabling SDS in any of the cases. It was often an enabling factor, but never decisive. During the 1973 October War, Egypt was concerned about Israeli spotters revealing their movements, but otherwise was focused on tactical-level tactics, techniques, and procedures such as faster bridging methods to achieve success. Similarly, in Crimea, Russia did not use any new technology, they simply exploited current means, such as news and social media, to spread disinformation and divert attention away from what was happening.

In contrast, for India's nuclear test the technology was key, but not new. The 1974 Pokhran I test had demonstrated that India had the ability to cause a fission reaction via an implosion device. Therefore, the ability to transfer from a peaceful energy program to a weaponized one was a matter of testing versus a matter of technological breakthroughs. The world was aware of India's technological capabilities but did not believe they would go through with a test. The one technological development that did impact the testing was the associated munitions delivery platforms of the Prithvi and Agni. Though not part of the testing directly, the weapon delivery systems demonstrated that India had a power projection capability in addition to a simple bomb.

5. What is the organizational structure of the aggressor state, and how is information controlled and disseminated?

The organizational structure of the aggressor state in all three cases was a small, tight-knit group. Egypt and Russia both could be classified as authoritarian, but India is clearly a democracy. Nonetheless, all three political leaders' decision-making processes were initiated by themselves with the advice of a select few, though the composition of advisors varied greatly based on the personality of each leader.

For PM Sadat, he relied upon his military, and, as an aspiring regional power broker, he also reached out to other Arab leaders, particularly Syria's Hafez al-Assad. In contrast, Indian PM Vajpayee was backed heavily by other members of the BJP, the AEC chairman Dr. Rajagopala Chidambaram, and DRDO leader, Dr. Abdul Kalam. No one outside them and the workers required on the Pokhran site were aware that the testing was about to take place. Unlike Sadat, who was hoping to get international involvement, PM Vajpayee was aware that any indication of India's intentions would bring down pressure to refrain from testing just like in 1995. Therefore, secrecy was prized at the utmost. Similarly, Russia wanted to act before anyone in the international community realized what was occurring. Even after the "little green men" appeared, Russia benefitted from ambiguity, and hence it continued to deny its involvement. President Putin was firmly in control of the strategic messaging and planning for the operation, and worked heavily in coordination with his protégés, General Valery Gerasimov and Lieutenant General Vladimir Shamanov, to ensure the execution went off smoothly.

6. What was the international community's actual reaction, and did the results justify the effort to the aggressor?

Of the three cases, SDS was successful in one case, questionable in the second, and a possible failure in the third. The impact of SDS is difficult to evaluate immediately after implementation, as hindsight and eclipsing events can sometimes soften the long-term impact. As of now though, the October War is the only case that clearly achieved its strategic objectives. By launching a limited war, Egyptian leaders were betting on international involvement. Therefore, despite losing the tactical battle, they used the conflict to leverage the Soviet and US superpowers to pressure Israel into returning the territory from the Six-Day War. Additionally, though Sadat did not achieve his dreams of becoming a regional power broker, he did attain a stable and long-lasting peace with Israel, as well as funding from the US and Soviets to alleviate Egypt's economic concerns.

India is a mixed case of whether SDS was warranted in the end. In the short term, India suffered an international backlash that lost them international credibility, Pakistan tested its own nuclear weapons in response resulting in a greater security risk, and the five tests of Pokhran II did not demonstrate nuclear parity with China in the short term. However, with the importance of India's geographic location in a post-9/11 world, India has become a vital ally for the US and NATO. Its nuclear transgressions have been largely forgiven, and its economic prosperity and regional influence is on the rise. However, if terrorism had not become such a large issue for the US, it is possible that India would still be languishing as a nuclear pariah.[1]

Finally, in a reverse of the Egyptian case, Russia successfully achieved its goal of reintegration of Crimea, but has disenfranchised

[1] An alternate counterfactual is the idea that India would have been forgiven regardless, as the US and NATO require India to serve as a proxy against a rising China.

other former Soviet satellites. If Russia had stopped at Crimea alone, it may have achieved its objectives, as the "little green men" allowed for ambiguity. However, Russia overreached by then trying to incite separatists in the Donbas region. The element of surprise was lost, Russian soldiers were captured and exposed, and the international community had distinct evidence of Russia's hegemonic ambitions. Putin successfully attained his tactical aim of securing a warm water port, but the more important aim of rebuilding a buffer zone in Russia's near abroad has suffered, and the rising wave of nationalism he hoped would appear to re-solidify Novorossiya failed to form. Economically, Russia has lost considerable power on the world stage, and with China and the US both still on the rise, Russian nationalism will not be able to overcome the industrial production and wage gap that the international sanctions have caused. Putin now suffers a fate of projecting and claiming the trappings of a great power, but without the military and economic might to project actual reach past regional boundaries.

Final Thoughts

It is often said that surprise can only be achieved if there is the will, capability, and opportunity to act. As evidenced from these case studies, nations can and routinely do develop the means to conduct SDS, and the opportunity may be organic or created. A leader with the will to take risks and go after the state's objectives, however, is required to attempt it.

After comparing and contrasting the three case studies, the political conditions necessary for an aggressor to choose SDS appear to be: a desire for greater prestige or power; acceptance of the risk that tactical losses may still be able to yield strategic gains; the capability and plans to hide intentions or actions from the international community; a strong, focused leader with the ability to limit dissemination of information and the will to take action; and a small team of trusted

advisors who can help execute the plan, follow the strategic message, and stay within the original scope of the plan. Interestingly, the elements of opportunistic timing and the victim's agency are also often alluded to within the cases, but never explicitly discussed.

In the cases where SDS worked, it was because the decision makers that chose to act understood their victim. It is not the traditional view of benevolent empathy or knowing your enemy though. Instead, it is a malignant empathy whereby a strategist can anticipate a victim's responses and use that to coerce its actions. President Sadat had studied the Israelis over the years and recognized they were expecting total war. By drawing them into a conflict with limited objectives, Egypt undermined Israeli military planning and elicited support from the Arab region and greater international community, sympathizers who intellectually understood Sadat's desire to retake the Suez. It reframed the issue from one of religion to national interests; and, because Egypt was asymmetrically disadvantaged, SDS was the only viable alternative left. Feeling as though options were limited made SDS a more palatable choice for a leader that otherwise would have lost his authority to rule.

The agency of the victims in the Indian and Russian case studies was different. For the 1998 Nuclear Test, the "victim" was not so much Pakistan but the international community. India was so focused on demonstrating a nuclear capability before the NPT and CTBT went into effect that they largely discounted the destabilizing effect it would have on Pakistan. Perhaps because it was politicians and scientists making the decisions, they did not think through the security dilemma and potential arms race they were creating. In Russia, a similar mentality followed. Putin was focused on reconsolidation of Novorossiya and assumed all Russian-speaking people would want to rejoin. He did not acknowledge the history of violence many of those same peoples suffered at the hands of the USSR, and the distinct cultural variances that many of them had come to adopt. Therefore, he did not recognize the agency of

the Russian-speaking opposition, who were more concerned with stabile governance than grand reunification.

Much of the focus of this study comes down to the mindset of the decision makers, and in particular, the information available to them and the risks they are willing to take. Are they facing significant domestic pressure and want to be seen as "doing something," or are they willing to take risks because their ego convinces them they have more power than they do? Are they opportunistic, only acting because the moment is ripe and others are distracted, or are they thoughtful enough to craft a moment of opportunity for themselves?

Victims often want to analyze cases and say they could have predicted and responded better if only… If only they had better indications and warnings; if only they had red-teamed a scenario; if only they had better analysis of the opponent's center of gravity; or if only they had a better psychological profile of the leaders themselves. After the Twin Tower attack, the 9/11 Commission recommended multiple changes to the intelligence field to make these types of changes. The intelligence community reorganized to institute a new Director of National Intelligence tasked with: improving cross-flow of information, increasing the effectiveness of initial analysis training; changing the culture to encourage dissent and break group-think; improve technical means of I&W, among others. All these measures are valid and they have helped eliminate some attacks, but none will eliminate the chance of surprise entirely.

The US also tends to be bound culturally by a form of technological determinism and a belief that technological superiority will guarantee victory. Yet the lessons of these case studies, particularly the Israelis in the October War, as well as the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq,

show that technology does not guarantee quick, decisive victory.[2] Instead, clever adversaries, employing luck, deception, and creative maneuvering with Gray Zone tactics, may be able to challenge technological superiority at a much lower cost.

Author Colin Gray suggested the only real answer to SDS is resilience. Organizational and individual mental resilience to making bad predictions or bouncing back from a crisis. Largely, Gray is correct. But more needs to be done to implement how resilience is taught and what it means in a national security context. In the book *Superforecasting*, the authors use examples of individuals considered among the best in the world at predicting crises.[3] They are not only tested and tracked, but feedback is given when they are wrong. Many of the improvements made to the intelligence field are lacking that last critical step – feedback. Being resilient means adjusting to the new situation, but then learning from mistakes so as not to repeat them. The US and other victims are very good at defensively responding to SDS situations. But what they all lack is the creative imagination, authority, and capability to respond in kind.

Ultimately SDS is about increasing power via territory, resources, or influence. To best respond to SDS, the US must first understand how to conduct it, so it can anticipate possible outcomes of its own actions, and the opportunities those actions may create – either organically or through manufactured responses. US analysts must develop malicious empathy to understand possible adversary motivations and areas where an adversary may compete against or challenge traditional US advantages. Therefore, if the US and other victims really want to learn how to react to SDS, they must start planning to engage with it

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[2] George W. Gawrych, *The 1973 Arab-Israeli War: The Albatross of Decisive Victory*, vol. 21, Leavenworth Papers (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1996), 82.
[3] Philip E. Tetlock, *Superforecasting : The Art and Science of Prediction* (New York : Crown Publishers, 2015).

offensively. In the US, legal authorities for Gray Zone activities must be granted to key organizations, with leadership falling to the National Security Council (NSC) to conduct whole-of-government planning. To effectively achieve offensive SDS, the DoD needs to learn to work as a supporting function to the State Department, Department of Commerce, and Department of Energy, among others, to attain strategic effects for the betterment of the nation. Therefore, SDS would best be integrated as a functional or regional Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) under the NSC and headed by either an Assistant Secretary of State or a National Security Staff Senior Director.[4] Being positioned under the NSC allows for cross-domain responses, enabling horizontal or vertical diffusion/escalation.

SDS is ultimately a manifestation of the philosophy of Sun Tzu, "the enemy must not know where I intend to give battle. For if he does not know where I intend to give battle he must prepare in a great many places."[5] SDS will never be prevented. But by diversifying the realms of influence the US has across the Gray Zone spectrum, it can respond in a variety of ways. Resiliency in response does not mean we need to know everything about a specific adversary, for it is the unanticipated opponent who will cause the most surprise. The key to SDS therefore, is to establish a wide net of power with central direction of a whole-of-nation response, to determine where and when pressure should be applied.

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[4] As SDS is inherently a tool that requires interagency cooperation, a NSC/PCC would be the ideal location for management and implementation of SDS strategy. Due to the transient nature of NSC staff as political appointees however, a senior State Department official would be the preferred PCC lead agent. Of note, PCCs have been alternatively called Interagency Policy Committees or Interagency Working Groups under previous administrations. The function remains the same even if the NSC designator changes. Alan G. Whitaker et al., "The National Security Policy Process: The National Security Council and Interagency System," (Washington, DC: Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy, 2011), 17; Donald J. Trump, "National Security Presidential Memorandum - 2," ed. Office of the Press Secretary (Washington, DC: The White House, 2017).

[5] Sun Tzu, *The Illustrated Art of War: The Definitive English Translation*, 148.

Appendix A – Indian Prime Ministers and their Nuclear Stance

Prime Minister	Term(s)	Nuclear Stance
Jawaharlal Nehru	15 August 1947 – 27 May 1964	Influenced by peaceful protests of Mahatma Gandhi. He and his Congress Party avidly supported nuclear energy and atomic development, but publicly denounced the evils of nuclear weapons.[1]
Gulzari Lal Nanda	27 May 1964– 9 June 1964 / 11 January 1966 – 24 January 1966	Neither term as PM was long enough to introduce impactful policy changes.
Lal Bahadur Shastri	9 June 1964 – 11 January 1966	Selected by Congress Party leaders due to his mild-manner, Shastri publicly disdained the idea of nuclear weapons and called for global disarmament. However, after the 1964 Chinese nuclear test, he conceded to Bhabha's request to explore the requirements for an underground nuclear explosion.[2]
Indira Gandhi	24 January 1966 – 24 March 1977	Daughter of PM Nehru, she also believed India had a unique moral character to represent in regards to nuclear weapons. Authorized Pokhran I, but insisted it was a PNE. She was the first to articulate a need to retain a "nuclear option."[3]
Moraji Desai	24 March 1977 – 28 July 1979	Worked to renormalize relations with China after Pokhran I. Maintained a policy of nuclear ambiguity, but in public statements said if he had to make the choice "I would rather have my own nuclear weapons than to seek the nuclear umbrella of any outside Power."[4]
Charan Singh	28 July 1979 – 14 January 1980	Too short of a term to introduce impactful changes, but the first PM to express official concern over Pakistan's nuclear program.[5]

[1] George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999): 34.
[2] Ashok Kapur, *Pokhran and Beyond: India's Nuclear Behaviour* (Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001): 120-25; Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, 62-71.
[3] Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*, 178.
[4] Kapur, *Pokhran and Beyond*, 175.
[5] Bhumitra Chakma, "Toward Pokhran II: Explaining India's Nuclearisation Process," *Modern Asian Studies* 39, no. 1 (2005): 220.

Indira Gandhi	14 January 1980 – 31 October 1984	No major policy changes from her first term. Assassinated in 1984.
Rajiv Gandhi	31 October 1984 – 2 December 1989	Son of Indira Gandhi, he became PM after her death. Facing domestic pressures, he did not dedicate many resources to nuclear development but did emphasize missile programs. He also reached an accord with Pakistan to not attack each other's nuclear facilities, though not ratified until 1991.[6]
Vishwanath Pratap Singh	2 December 1989 – 10 November 1990	Too short of a term to introduce impactful changes.
Chandra Shekhar	10 November 1990 – 21 June 1991	Too short of a term to introduce impactful changes.
P.V. Narashimha Rao	21 June 1991 – 16 May 1996	Rao ordered nuclear testing in 1995 but desisted after the preparations were revealed by the US. He remained more focused on economic reforms, though he offered impassioned pleas regarding the NPT extension.[7]
Atal Bihari Vajpayee	16 May 1996 – 1 June 1996	A leading member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a Hindu nationalist party. First tenure only lasted weeks.
H.D. Deve Gowda	1 June 1996 – 21 April 1997	Focused on domestic reforms during a period of political instability.[8]
Inder Kumar Gujral	21 April 1997 – 10 March 1998	Resisted signing the CTBT but hampered from making a strong stance by a weak coalition government.[9]
Atal Bihari Vajpayee	19 March 1998 – 22 May 2004	Reelected in 1998, Vajpayee authorized the Pokhran II tests. In power through 2004, he is also responsible for setting India's policy once a declared nuclear power.

[6] Sumit Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II: The Prospects and Sources of New Delhi's Nuclear Weapons Program," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (1999); Kapur, *Pokhran and Beyond*, 177.
[7] Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II."
[8] Kapur, *Pokhran and Beyond*, 180.
[9] Ibid.

Appendix B – Maps of Ukraine and Novorossiya

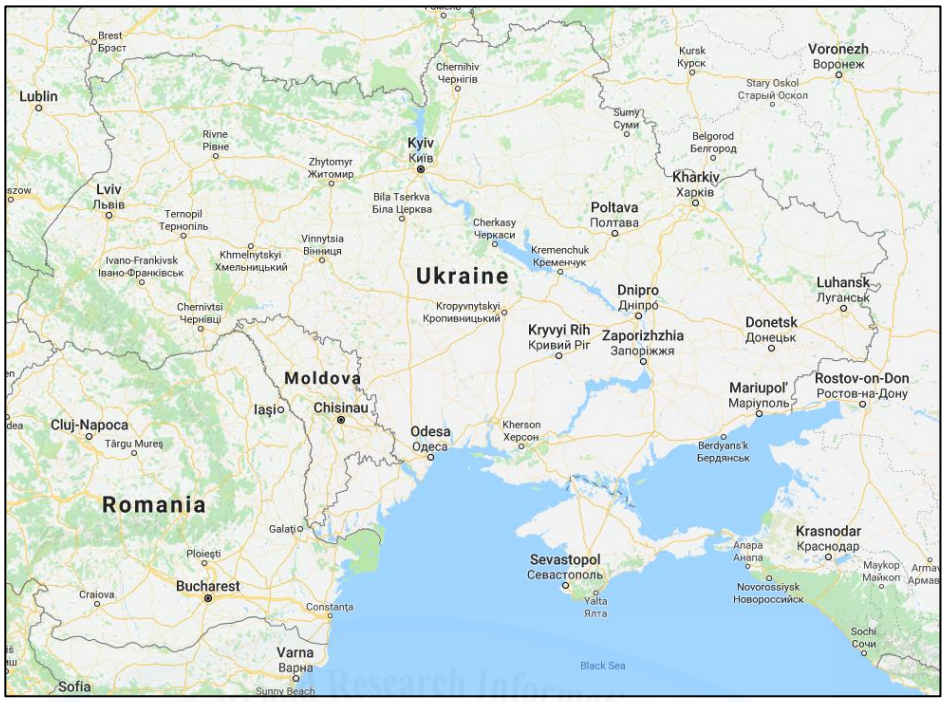

Figure 4: Map of Modern Day Ukraine and Crimea

Source: Google Maps, https://www.google.com/maps/@49.2230711,31.8260694,6.22z

Figure 5: Map of Novorossiya, circa 1897

Source: Creative Commons, image,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:New_Russia_on_territory_of_Ukraine.png

Appendix C – Glossary of Acronyms

AA	Association Agreement
AEC	Atomic Energy Commission
AT/FP	Anti-Terrorism/Force-Protection
BARC	Bhabha Atomic Research Center
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BSF	Black Sea Fleet
CANDU	Canadian Deuterium-Uranium
CC&D	Camouflage, Concealment, and Deception
CIRUS	Canadian-Indian Reactor, US
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
CU	Customs Union
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
DIME	Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic spectrum
DRDO	Defense Research and Development Organization
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
I&W	Indications and Warning
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IAF	Israeli Air Force
IDF	Israeli Defense Force
IGMDP	Integrated Guided Missile Development Program
IRBM	Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile
MRBM	Medium Range Ballistic Missile
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSC	National Security Council
PCC	Policy Coordination Committee
PM	Prime Minister
PNE	Peaceful Nuclear Explosive
PUREX	Plutonium-Uranium Extraction
SDS	Strategic Diplomatic Surprise
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USSOCOM	US Special Operations Command
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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