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U.S.-Russian Crisis Prevention in the XXI c.: challenges and contemporary developments

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To my parents,

for continuing to support me from 5,000 miles away

and Kira,

for two years of support and pretending that my jokes were funny

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Introduction

"For over 40 years the United States led the West in the struggle against communism and the threat it posed to our most precious values. This struggle shaped the lives of all Americans. It forced all nations to live under the specter of nuclear destruction. That confrontation is now over. The nuclear threat, while far from gone, is receding… For our children, we must offer them the guarantee of a peaceful and prosperous future… free from the specter of global conflict." [1]

U.S. President George H.W. Bush, December 25, 1991

"The Russo-American dialogue has gone through many a dramatic moment, but the peoples of Russia and America have never gone to war against each other. Even in the darkest period, our affinity prevailed over our hatred."[2]

Boris Yeltsin Addressing Congress, June 17, 1992.

U.S.-Russian crisis prevention is a multifaceted and complex issue. For many, the concept of U.S.-Russian strategic risk reduction and crisis prevention may recall the historical enmity between the United States and Soviet Union during the Cold War. Increasingly, however, contemporary experts and decision makers in both nations have advocated the contemporary importance of crisis prevention, as well. That the hostility in diplomatic relations between the United States and Soviet Union did not dissolve into open conflict or nuclear war during the 20th century is undoubtedly an historical triumph. To presume, however, that the threat of accidental or unintentional conflict does not continue to exist today is a presumption the leadership of the United States and Russian Federation cannot afford.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, political and military relations between the United States and Russian Federation have indeed changed. The desires of United States President George Bush Sr. and Russian President Boris Yeltsin, as well as many of their contemporaries, to view the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact as the end of the threat of U.S.-Russian conflict ultimately hasn't been reflected in the diplomatic relationship between both nations since, however. As Russia has

[1] "Address on Gorbachev Resignation." Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network (C-SPAN). December 25, 1991. https://www.c-span.org/video/?23549-1/address-gorbachev-resignation
[2] "Boris Yeltsin Address to Congress." Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network (C-SPAN). June 17, 1992. https://www.c-span.org/video/?26640-1/boris-yeltsin-address-congress

sought to restore its global influence and rebuild its strategic capabilities throughout the decades following the Soviet Union's collapse, the United States has grown increasingly uneasy of its old Cold War rival. Following the perceived expansion of Russia's military influence by the United States and contemporary Western experts in the 2010s, both nuclear powers again find themselves in contention over one-another's global military presence.

Today, however, the post-Cold War globe is no longer clearly delineated by spheres of influence, and the shifting foreign policy interests of the United States and Russian Federation have gradually come into conflict. As a result, military personnel of both nations increasingly find themselves rubbing shoulders amidst the crisis-affected regions of Syria, maneuvering across the high seas, and along the NATO-Russian border. The modern, nuclear-armed, and organizationally complex military organs of two of the world's preeminent military powers again frequent the same skies, seas, and mutually-held strategic objectives. In other words, without effective trust- and confidence-building, communication, and established conflict prevention protocols, two of the world's largest militaries could be just a misunderstanding or accident away from an unintentional crisis.

Crisis prevention between the United States and Russian Federation has taken on new dimensions and faces unique challenges as the political relationship between both nations grows more uncertain. Where Cold War-era memorandums and treaties once safeguarded the 20th century against nuclear catastrophe, the political and military relations that bore them have since changed or no longer exist between the United States and Russia in the 21st century. Revisiting the history of U.S.-Soviet crisis prevention efforts to understand the historical mechanisms that prevented conflict and determining if, and how these systems still assist in mutual U.S.-Russian risk reduction today is a critical step in understanding the current state of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention. Based on the analysis of existing crisis prevention protocols, what 21st century risks do experts believe challenge the scope and effectiveness of current U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures?

This thesis seeks to address the following research question: can today's possible military crises be prevented by decades-old Cold War agreements, or are new U.S.-Russian crisis prevention protocols and measures needed to address and reduce 21st century risks? The aim of this graduate research thesis is twofold. First, it will determine, with the help of expert opinion and historical documentation, whether current crisis prevention agreements sufficiently address the contemporary concerns of experts of U.S.-Russian strategic relations and strategic stability. Then, according to an analysis of 21st century strategic risks, what new protocols or additions to existing strategic agreements could be suggested to better reflect contemporary risks to U.S.-

Russian strategic stability? This research will review both current and historical U.S.-Russian crisis prevention protocols, diplomatic agreements, and strategic behavior in the 21st century. The subjects for analysis are the development of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures, whether experts determine that current crisis prevention protocols and agreements continue to effectively address 21st century strategic risks, and possible approaches to improve or modernize U.S.-Russian strategic crisis prevention in the 21st century. To achieve this, several research and analysis steps were formulated:

1. A survey of historical crisis prevention memorandums, treaties, and political agreements between the United States and Soviet Union and determination of the objectives of these agreements and how were they implemented.
2. An analysis of recent expert opinion and commentary regarding contemporary U.S.-Russian strategic relations, strategic crisis stability, and whether existing crisis prevention measures continue to address 21st century risk factors.
3. An analysis of the effectiveness of existing crisis prevention agreements and assessment of the current the scope and limitations of existing agreements to reduce contemporary risks in U.S.-Russian strategic relations.
4. A determination of whether new protocols or updates are needed for existing measures, and if so, based on expert suggestions, to ascertain how future crisis prevention measures could be implemented to reduce 21st century risks to U.S.-Russian strategic stability.

This analysis includes the opinions and commentary of a diversity of experts and decision makers, as well as an examination of historical crisis prevention measures between the United States, Soviet Union, and Russian Federation. It ultimately reveals areas of possible improvement in the approaches and protocols of crisis prevention that exist, or should exist according to expert scholarship, between the United States and Russian Federation. This research and analysis of existing crisis prevention efforts is not intended as criticism of particular decisions made by Russian or American leadership, but rather an investigation into the real measures that prevent future strategic crises between the United States and Russia, and how they may be iterated upon or improved. In almost three decades since the conclusion of the Cold War, U.S.-Russian political and strategic relations have seen fundamental change in many respects. The possibility of an unintentional crisis or escalation to conflict remain real concerns for Russian and American leadership, however. Can Washington and Moscow risk relying upon Cold War-era protocols to sufficiently prevent crises resulting from a political environment and military innovations almost thirty years later?

Research Framework

This research analyzes two chronological phases in the development of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention, historical U.S.-Soviet strategic relations and current U.S.-Russian strategic relations. Current, as well as Cold War-era strategic relations are quantifiable based on historical evidence and documented bilateral U.S.-Russian agreements. The approach of this research to evaluating suggestions for future decision-making in crisis prevention between the United States and Russia is derived from contemporary expert scholarship and discourse. The history of U.S.-Soviet strategic relations and crisis prevention development is useful in understanding the framework of current U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures. Suggestions regarding the future of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention development can then be made based upon a knowledge of existing measures and, according to experts, what 21st century risks to U.S.-Russian strategic stability exist.

Geographically, this research identifies different global areas of interest to U.S.-Russian strategic relations, but the subjects for research are the United States, Russian Federation and the various bilateral strategic agreements between both nations that pertain to crisis prevention. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Warsaw Pact are throughout this research wherever the United States, Soviet Union or Russian Federation are also parties to diplomatic agreements specific to both nations, within their respective alliances. Generally, however, as the strategic relationship between the United States and Russia are the focus of this research and analysis, the scope of the scholarship surveyed is largely limited to expert discourse related to one or both nations.

Terminology

Experts on U.S.-Russian crisis prevention and strategic relations use many familiar terms within the study of international relations, specifically within the study of strategic relations and stability. Because of the relatively niche study of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention within the more generalized field of U.S.-Russian strategic relations, many experts and discourse contributors misleadingly use similar terms with slightly different definitions. The substantial and long-standing history of U.S.-Russian strategic relations, contributed to by various scholars of a diverse range of academic backgrounds, also highlights the necessity of clarifying the terminology of this study. Therefore, he first step in establishing a foundation for this research is to define the

language of the discourse with clear and, as much as possible, universally accepted definitions for key words frequently used by experts.

The terminology of this research, including the terms “crisis,” “crisis prevention,” “crisis stability,” “crisis management,” “crisis escalation,” “de-escalation,” “trust-building” and “confidence-building,” are derived from the wealth of scholarship and discourse from which this research and analysis was framed. Experts’ use of these terms in the discourse reviewed by this research both outlined and informed their definitions as further derived by the author of this work. Establishing relatively precise and concrete definitions of these key terms was a crucial first step in selecting the works most relevant to the overall research question and subsequently conveying the results of the research and analysis in the most accurate way possible.

The discourse surrounding U.S.-Russian crisis prevention does not benefit from an established, well-defined terminology. The language of the discourse is often used liberally, with consequences both for general clarity and the continuity of the historical discourse regarding strategic relations between the United States and Russia. Key terms of the discourse, like “crisis prevention” are often interchanged with similar or related terms, such as “crisis stability,” “crisis management,” “trust-building,” and “confidence-building.” For the purposes of this research, working definitions of these terms are provided to emphasize the differences in meaning and direct attention to the discourse most relevant to the research question.

For example, experts may contribute to the discourse surrounding U.S.-Russian crisis prevention through contributions to the study of strategic trust-building between the United States and Russia, or historical examples of measures enacted to prevent accidents between American and Russian military vessels at sea. As these topics are related directly to U.S.-Russian crisis prevention, as defined by this research, works of this nature are also valid sources of insight or information for the analysis included in this research. The author of this research does not presume to criticize experts or their use of terminology in any individual piece of scholarship. Rather, the goal is to establish clear foundational definitions of research-critical terms to assist in the comprehension of this work, and potentially future scholarship which similarly seeks to delineate the key terminology of the discourse.

Defining “Armed Conflict” and “Crisis”

For the purposes of this research and analysis, two key terms, “armed conflict,” and “crisis,” are among the most important to define. There is some lack of clarity when these terms

are interchanged or remain simply undefined within the contributions of experts and scholars to the discourse surrounding crisis prevention, international crisis, and armed or military conflict. One example of this is in the many publications of the International Crisis Group, demonstrated, in particular, by the organization's "CrisisWatch" global conflict and crisis summary, which is lacking any obvious boundary between what the organization defines as crisis or conflict.[3] The Council on Foreign Relations also similarly maintains its "Global Conflict Tracker" to help users visualize and review summaries of current conflicts and crises, which, though more detailed in many ways than CrisisWatch, similarly lacks any concrete definition for comprehending the difference in use of these two crucial terms.[4]

To understand the separate roles of armed conflict and crisis in international relations, this research defines both terms based upon their specific use within both official discourse and a survey of the relevant scholarship. Firstly, these terms are defined by their theoretical, chronological order, and secondly, by the range of processes each term represents in the discourse of international relations. For example, the European Commission for International Cooperation and Development has developed a complex "security-development nexus," to achieve crisis prevention and conflict stability efforts both within and outside of the European Union.[5] This endeavor has three primary focuses: "…*crisis response*, *conflict prevention and actions addressing global*, *trans-regional and emerging threats*."[6] Therefore, the focus of the European Commission's security-development nexus outlines a short chronology for the emergence of conflict, beginning with advent of crisis. Similarly, a 2015 RAND publication on "Crisis and Conflict Prevention Strategies" also outlines the necessity for "containing" crisis before engaging a strategy to support regions following a conflict.[7]

Senior Fellow at the Center for European Policy Analysis, Janusz Bugajski, in his 2011 presentation for the Annual Security Review Conference of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., however, observes of the nature and range of examples

[3] "CrisisWatch: Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Global Overview." International Crisis Group. December 2019. https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/december-alerts-and-november-trends-2019
[4] "Global Conflict Tracker." Council on Foreign Relations. December 5, 2019. https://www.cfr.org/interactive/global-conflict-tracker?category=us
[5] "Conflict, Crisis and Security-development Nexus." International Cooperation and Development of the European Commission. December 7, 2019. https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/fragility-and-crisis-management/conflict-and-crisis-security-development-nexus_en
[6] Ibid.
[7] Sophie-Charlotte Brune, Anne Kovacs, Anaïs Reding, Maryse Penny. "Crisis and Conflict Prevention Strategies: An International Comparison." RAND Corporation. 2015. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR900/RR959/RAND_RR959.pdf

of crisis and conflict in the study of international relations.[8] Bugajski defines conflict, in its many forms, as representing a state of armed or military conflict.[9] Crisis, on the other hand, is defined by Bugajski as being much broader in scope, and encompassing a range of different processes in international relations, many of which chronologically resulted in the escalation of armed conflicts between, and within states.[10]

Therefore, based upon these examples from a survey of scholarship, expert and diplomatic discourse, this research establishes the following key differences in definition between crisis and armed conflict in international relations. First, the concept of crisis is broader in scope than armed conflict and encompasses natural and political issues and disputes between and within states. Armed conflict, however, is defined specifically by a state of armed or military violence between two or more opposed parties, and often synonymous with war. Second, the experts previously mentioned contend that crisis tends to precede armed conflict. For example, political and military incidents occur both within states and internationally, and they are often inferred or stated by experts to be catalysts for the emergence of crisis situations and eventually, armed conflict or war.

Crisis Prevention, Crisis Stability, Crisis Management, and Crisis Escalation

Within the study of international relations, "crisis," and related, but more specific, topics, such as "crisis prevention," "crisis stability," "crisis management," etc., are frequently occurring terms that encompass a broad range of different concepts within the fields of international relations and strategic studies. Ascertaining the differences between these key terms, based upon the individual processes and mechanisms they represent within the study of international relations, is a necessary first step of this research for two primary reasons. Firstly, understanding these terms allows the research to focus on sources of information and expert discourse most closely related to the subject of study: namely, crisis prevention. Secondly, these terms represent the study of specific developments and processes within the field of international relations. Without a clear understanding of their differences, the use of these terms could complicate or obfuscate, rather than clarify, the conclusions of this research and analysis.

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[8] Janusz Bugajski. "Presentation for the 2011 Annual Security Review Conference, Working Session II: Early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation: lessons learned and way ahead." Center for Strategic and International Studies. July 1, 2011. https://www.osce.org/cio/80530?download=true

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

The use of "crisis" by experts of U.S.-Russian strategic relations is as varied as the term's general application in the discourse is broad. The nature of "crisis" in international relations, however, may be best described by Dr. Anya Loukianova Fink, research associate at the Center for International & Security Studies at the University of Maryland:

A crisis is an intermediate point between peace and war. In a crisis, opponents may use coercive signaling through threats, changes in force postures, and manipulated alert levels, alongside diplomatic efforts to resolve the situation while advancing their interests. However, seemingly routine actions taken by both sides to prepare their respective military forces for a possible war could conflict with the political steps taken to prevent it. Their military establishments' innate desire to exploit surprise and achieve decisive effects early in a conflict could add further preemptive and escalatory pressures.[11]

In the historical case of U.S.-Russian relations, the advent of nuclear weapons in 1945 and twentieth-century state of cold war between both nations greatly emphasized the importance of crisis resolution. From the realization that the Soviet Union possessed nuclear weapons technology in 1949, until the collapse of the USSR in 1991, both nations invested significantly in the development and improvement of their nuclear arsenals. The result of this was a dramatic increase in both nation's destructive power, as well as the shortening of the overall reaction time the leadership of both countries would possess in the event of a nuclear attack from the other. With so little time to react to accidents, misunderstandings, and the perception of aggression from the other party, the prevention of crisis and reduction of strategic risks achieved a new importance in U.S.-Soviet relations.

The new importance of understanding the causes of crises and the processes which occur before and during an emerging crisis that contribute to the escalation or prevention of international conflict was reflected in a new general understanding of "crisis" in terms of strategic relations. Terminology to refer to different stages of international crisis emerged. Crisis prevention, stability, and management received new attention by diplomats, experts and policymakers as the occurrence and varied usage of these terms increased in the discourse surrounding Soviet-American relations. Of all of the new dimensions for dialogue concerning international crisis, crisis prevention emerged at the forefront of a new effort to enact tangible, bilateral measures between the United States and Soviet Union (as well as between NATO and the Warsaw Pact

[11] Anya Loukianova Fink. "Crisis Stability in the Twenty-First Century: Discussion Paper for a Track II Dialogue on U.S.-Russian Crisis Stability." Center for Strategic and International Studies. 2018. https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/180508_Fink_CrisisStability.pdf?vLZ3_YNwaUGjWNGxgoBUb7D6mBKHplp2

nations), to minimize the initial risk of crisis through measures designed to limit military accidents and misunderstandings before they could occur.

Within the study of international relations and strategic security, crisis prevention, crisis stability, crisis management, and crisis escalation are commonly used to define a theoretical sequence of diplomatic processes that may occur between two or more states. In general, this sequence follows the historical pursuit of states to establish communication and engage in overt, mutual trust-building regarding strategic security issues. This research follows the historical efforts of the United States and Soviet Union, and later the Russian Federation, to establish strategic security due to the growing possibility of nuclear conflict in the twentieth century, for example. This process of trust-building sought to culminate in the establishment of tangible measures, agreements, treaties or protocols intended to use the infrastructure of communication and trust built previously to prevent political and military crises (as well as misinterpretations of military behavior and accidents) that would be severe enough in nature to provoke armed conflict.[12]

Those measures, agreements, treaties, and protocols form the basis of crisis prevention. Crisis prevention measures are intended to represent well-defined protocols or codes of conduct for the behavior of state parties, with the purpose of "…reduc[ing] the risk of misinterpretation of actions of the other side."[13] By establishing codes of conduct between states' militaries, in particular, the leaders of both state parties hope to reduce the risk of crisis, or ensure that communication is established between the affected state parties once the threat of crisis becomes apparent. Crisis prevention measures are designed to decrease the risk of accidents and misinterpretations between states' militaries and governing bodies, and to limit the severity of possible reactions by one side or the other in the event of an incident. They also usually ensure that channels for communication and dialogue between national or military leaders are available between states before an international crisis can be realized.

Whereas crisis prevention is attributed to concrete agreements between states, crisis stability refers to a theoretical, abstract metric that represents how likely two states are to become engaged in armed conflict following a single incident or series of crises. This metric is usually gauged by experts who analyze the effectiveness of contemporary trust-building agreements, use or abandonment of existing protocols, treaties, or agreements, or upon the basis of political relations between states following international disputes or controversies in international relations.

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[12] Nikolai Sokov. "De-escalation and crisis management in U.S.-Russian Relations." PIR Center. Accessed November 20, 2019. http://www.pircenter.org/en/articles/2186-2573373

[13] Ibid.

Therefore, within the theoretical sequence of events leading to armed conflict, crisis prevention measures are taken to enforce, or reinforce strategic stability. The existence, maintenance, and adherence by state parties to crisis prevention agreements, protocols, or other measures before the advent of a crisis reinforces positive crisis stability. Therefore, though closely related, crisis prevention and stability represent different concepts in the sequence of trust-building behavior and crisis prevention development between states and are not mutually-dependent processes in the development of strategic relations between states.

Crisis management describes the protocols or methods of government leaders to reduce or prevent crisis escalation. Crisis management often refers to how states do, or do not, communicate and attempt to mediate the escalation of a crisis, or series of crises, before the situation exacerbates the threat of conflict and destabilizes mutual strategic stability. Conversely, crisis escalation refers to the process by which a state of crisis progresses until it results in armed conflict or a similarly severe impact to mutual strategic relations between two or more countries. These processes in international relations theoretically occur after the failure, or lack of, crisis prevention protocols threatens a setback in strategic relations that may culminate in those states relying solely on previous trust-building activities and deterrence (threat of retaliation). Ultimately, crisis escalation represents the failure, or lack of, existing protocols and agreements to prevent accident and crisis, leaving leaders to resort to crisis management activities, and is a later stage in the chronology of events to occur between the realization of a crisis and either a peaceful resolution or realization of armed conflict.

The Role of Trust- and Confidence-Building in Crisis Prevention

The terms “trust-building,” and “confidence-building,” are frequently used throughout the discourse of international strategic stability and U.S.-Russian strategic relations, often in association with both crisis prevention and stability. It is therefore important to establish the roles of trust- and confidence-building in relation to crisis prevention efforts between the United States and Russia. The processes of trust- and confidence-building between states are separate, but not necessarily always independent, processes from the establishment of crisis prevention protocols. Both represent novel diplomatic strategies for the prevention of future crises and conflict between states. In the case of historical U.S.-Soviet and U.S.-Russian relations, trust- and confidence-building protocols were developed alongside crisis prevention measures, and often included as protocols within crisis prevention agreements. The processes of developing mutual trust- and confidence-building between states are often diverse in both approach and scope, and often

abstract or subjective in both methodology and observable results. For example, trust- and confidence-building measures between the United States, Soviet Union, and Russia were often endorsed via military-to-military communication protocols, strategic information-sharing, and verification regimes to ensure mutual armed forces reductions in certain regions and allow inspections of large-scale military maneuvers.

Crisis prevention measures are usually more objective, however. They exist to address specific areas of diplomatic or strategic concern, often of a military nature, which represent possible sources of accidents or misunderstandings which could escalate into a crisis in relations between states. Where the processes of trust- and confidence-building seek to establish positive strategic relations through a complex web of international institutions, communication protocols, or mutual information sharing, crisis prevention measures seek to address concrete technological, strategic, and otherwise military risks or threats to strategic stability between two or more states. Therefore, trust- and confidence-building and crisis prevention are not synonymous, but often part of the same initiatives to reduce the risk of conflict. Throughout this research, trust- and confidence-building measures are included wherever they are also a protocol or element of a larger crisis prevention agreement, or similarly inextricably tied to crisis prevention efforts between the United States, Soviet Union, or Russian Federation.

The Definition of Agreement

For the purposes of this research, the term "agreement" is used to describe an official, documented bilateral or multilateral diplomatic pact which may be either binding or non-binding, and entered into force with the explicit participation of the United States, Soviet Union or Russian Federation. All agreements analyzed in the following chapters should be assumed binding and currently in force, unless otherwise specified by the author. The terms "treaty," and "memorandum" are also used in reference to the official titles of certain agreements, for example, the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty. The term "protocol" is used to distinguish individual elements of an agreement, such as separate military guidelines or diplomatic instructions included within a larger treaty. For example, the Agreement on Prevention of Incidents at Sea contains several separate stipulated methods for ship-to-ship communication and maneuvers for collision avoidance that represent individual protocols within an overall diplomatic agreement between the United States and Soviet Union.

Review of Primary Sources

The primary sources of information most evident in both the research and analysis of this thesis were historical international agreements and treaties. The collection of historical bilateral and multilateral treaties included in this research were provided by multiple sources, including the Federation of American Scientists, United States Department of State, and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The selection of relevant historical agreements regarding U.S.-Russian crisis prevention was made with assistance from Dr. Pavlov and the archival resources available online via the Federation of American Scientists and United States Department of State.[14] The referenced works of experts on U.S.-Russian strategic relations and crisis stability also assisted in the selection of relevant primary documents and other sources.[15]

All agreements and treaties selected are either bilateral U.S.-Soviet or U.S.-Russian agreements or multilateral agreements which include the United States, Soviet Union, or Russian Federation as signed parties. Prominent examples include the Agreement Between the Government of The United States of America and the Government of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas and the Memorandum of Understanding Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Regarding the Establishment of a Direct Communications Link, both of which feature significantly in the analysis of this thesis. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and Treaty on Open Skies are examples of the texts of historical agreements made available through the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Literature Review

Under the direction of Dr. Andrei Yurievich Pavlov, as thesis advisor, and Dr. Anastasia Malygina, I have collected a survey of scholarship related to U.S.-Russian strategic relations and the development of crisis prevention efforts between the United States, Soviet Union, and Russian Federation. The scholarship collected within the framework of this research focused on bilateral treaties, agreements, and memorandums between the United States and Russian Federation, as well as expert discourse and statements by national leaders from the early 1960s to the present day. The focus of this research was upon publicly available sources, such as published government

[14] "Agreements Supported by the NRRC." U.S. Department of State. Last updated January 20, 2009. https://2001-2009.state.gov/t/vci/nrrc/c18419.htm

[15] Simon Saradzhyan. "What Stops US and Russia From Stumbling Into War?" Russia Matters, Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. January 9, 2020. https://www.russiamatters.org/blog/what-stops-us-and-russia-stumbling-war

documents and related commentary by officials and experts assessing the goals and results of historical U.S.-Russian crisis prevention initiatives and the unaddressed strategic risks of the 21st century. The resulting analysis and conclusions drawn by this study were informed by further expert discourse which emphasized current strategic issues and how they could be addressed by future U.S.-Russian crisis prevention efforts.

Expert discourse and commentary on U.S.-Russian crisis prevention is relatively uncommon in comparison with works on other aspects of U.S.-Russian strategic relations, such as strategic stability, crisis stability, and strategic risk reduction. As a result, scholarly and expert works on broader subjects, such as U.S.-Russian strategic relations and strategic stability, were included in the research and analysis, as aspects of these works were also specifically relevant to the topic of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention. A prominent example of this is the inclusion of the results of a track-II dialogue on U.S.-Russian crisis stability by the Center for Strategic & International Studies, which included a range of expert commentary on key U.S.-Russian crisis prevention agreements and their effectiveness in addressing 21st century strategic risks.[16]

The scholarly and expert resources included in this research and analysis were also selected to present a diversity of international scholarship and expert opinion. The Center for Strategic & International Studies, Carnegie Moscow Center, and Arms Control Association are examples of the international range of organizations whose published materials contributed significantly to this thesis. These organizations were not selected solely because of their location or national representation, but also because they are known to publish primarily international relations and securities-based scholarship and research. Publications by the PIR Center and Carnegie Moscow Center were among the few publicly available sources of Russian expert commentary on U.S.-Russian strategic issues relevant to this research.

Experts Dr. Olga Oliker, Dr. Pavel Podvig, Military Professor and Lieutenant Commander Rachael Gosnell, and Anya Loukianova Fink, all of whom participated in a track-II dialogue on U.S.-Russian crisis stability published by the Center for Strategic & International Studies, provided a significant amount of expert insight into U.S.-Russian strategic issues, crisis prevention measures, and the 21st century risks and challenges they face.[17] Dr. Dmitri Trenin and Dr. Alexey Arbatov of the Carnegie Moscow Center also provided much-needed Russian perspective on the multitude of strategic and political issues affecting U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures and nuclear risk reduction. Contributions by other experts and scholars of U.S.-Russian relations and

[16] "U.S.-Russia Crisis Stability: Results from a Track II Dialogue" Center for Strategic & International Studies. 2018. https://www.csis.org/programs/russia-and-eurasia-program/us-russia-crisis-stability-results-track-ii-dialogue
[17] Ibid.

strategic stability were also selected from a plethora of organizations and media outlets which focus on international and political issues, based upon the relevance of these works to this research.

Chapter 1: A Brief Survey of U.S.-Soviet Crisis Prevention Development

Current U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures represent a continuation of the development of strategic crisis prevention between the United States and Soviet Union during the Cold War. All the following agreements between the United States and Soviet Union remain in force, either actively or *de facto.* Though some of the following developments in U.S.-Soviet strategic relations are less relevant to the strategic relationship between the United States and Russian Federation today, each represents an initiative of the American and Soviet governments to address strategic risk factors which existed during the 20th century. Examining the development of U.S.-Soviet crisis prevention highlights the risks and unique strategic environment of the Cold War that 20th century crisis prevention agreements reflect. Later, aspects of 20th century crisis measures will be used to analyze whether the strategic crisis prevention agreements of this period are sufficient to address the different political and military risk factors and environment of 21st century U.S.-Russian strategic relations.

1.1 The Establishment of the Hotline Agreement

The sudden emergence of political will in Washington and Moscow to secure a diplomatic crisis deterrent was precipitated by the tense events of the Cuban Missile Crisis, in October 1962.[18] The difficulty by which Soviet and American leadership analyzed and reacted to one-another's political and military posturing during the Cuban Missile Crisis was compounded by the relatively new strategic threat posed by nuclear weapons. While both superpowers faced-off, politically, over Cuba, endeavoring to avoid a decline from political hostility to open military conflict, one of the issues that most impressed upon the negotiations was the lack of timely and reliable communication between the Soviet and American governments. Following the conclusion of the Cuban Missile Crisis, it became apparent to leaders of both nations that reliance upon abstract theories, such as threat and deterrence were poor substitutes for direct dialogue during an actual international crisis, especially in the nuclear age. Ensuring a line of secure, direct communication between Washington and Moscow would thereafter become a pillar of future of U.S.-Soviet and U.S.-Russian relations.

[18] Daryl Kimball. "Hotline Agreements." Arms Control Association. Last reviewed May 2020. https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Hotlines

On June 20th, 1963 representatives from the United States and Soviet Union met in Geneva to sign the first ever crisis prevention agreement between the two superpowers.[19] In the Memorandum of Understanding Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Regarding the Establishment of a Direct Communications Link, also referred to as the Hotline Agreement, both nations agreed to establish "…a direct communications link between the two Governments."[20] The expressed purpose of the Direct Communications Link, or DCL, was to ensure that leaders of both nations would be capable of direct, secure, and reliable communication "For use in time of emergency…"[21] Such was the desire of both American and Soviet leadership to prevent the circumstances which led to the escalation of the Cuban Missile Crisis, both agreed to construct one of the then-largest and most secure physical communication systems in world. Although part of the communications network utilized previously constructed undersea cables between Washington and London, the new undersea and overland Washington-Moscow communication system represented a significant political and technological feat in 1963.[22] The process of constructing and securing this vast, complex communications bridge also represented a significant expense, which both nations shared.[23]

The Memorandum also required the sharing of technology and expertise between both parties.[24] Merely a year prior to the signing of the Memorandum, the Soviet Union and United States had seemingly never been closer to war, but were now agreed to an unprecedented level of material cooperation and "technical negotiations" since the conclusion of the Second World War.[25] The ultimate result of this joint Soviet-American project was the first iteration of the Washington-Moscow hotline, which resembled a part-radio, part-telegraph system.[26] Rather than the popularly depicted "red phone," as in Stanley Kubrick's contemporary comedy film, *Dr. Strangelove,* verbal communication between the U.S. president and First Secretary of the Communist Party was impossible.[27] The first Direct Communications Link was only capable of transmitting teletyped

[19] Memorandum of Understanding Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Regarding the Establishment of a Direct Communications Link. June 20, 1963. Available from the Federation of American Scientists. https://fas.org/nuke/control/hotline/text/hotline1.htm
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] "DCL: The Direct Communications Link." Cryptolog. National Security Agency. Issued December 1983. https://www.nsa.gov/Portals/70/documents/news-features/declassified-documents/cryptologs/cryptolog_85.pdf
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Tom Clavin. "There Never Was Such a Thing as a Red Phone in the White House." Smithsonian Magazine. June 18, 2013. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/there-never-was-such-a-thing-as-a-red-phone-in-the-white-house-1129598/

messages, which would be received in Russian language by translators in Washington, and in English by their colleagues in Moscow.[28]

The scope and complexity of the original Washington-Moscow Direct Communications Link ultimately led to concerns regarding its security and reliability. The system had suffered numerous accidents and setbacks, including damage by fire, deep sea trawling in the Baltic Sea, and once being uncovered by a Finnish farmer.[29] In each occurrence, the operators switched to using direct radio communication, but this method was also less than ideal.[30] In 1971, as part of the follow-up to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), both the United States and Soviet Union reaffirmed their support for maintaining direct communication by enacting an annex to the original Memorandum, seeking "improvement and modernization of the Direct Communications Link." [31]

The new Direct Communications Link was launched in 1978, at the initiative of both the United States and Soviet Union, "Noting the positive experience gained in the process of operating the existing Direct Communications Link…"[32] Both nations took advantage of new communications technologies, resulting in a dual U.S.-Soviet satellite radio communications system far more secure than the previous iteration.[33] Similar to the first Memorandum, the or annex also required nearly equal contribution by both the U.S. and Soviet Union, technologically as well as fiscally.[34]

Finally, in 1987, a new emergency communications system, the Nuclear Risk Reduction Center (NRRC), was established specifically to transmit secure, high-speed communications between centers in the United States and Russia in support of mutual nuclear risk reduction.[35] The NRRC would iterate upon the technology behind the DCL system with additional transmission links, dedicated satellites, and new cables in order to improve the system's security and ease of operation.[36] Since the introduction of the NRRC system in 1987, the American, Soviet and later

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[28] "DCL: The Direct Communications Link." Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Agreement Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Measures to Improve the U.S.A.-USSR Direct Communications Link. September 30, 1971. Available from the Federation of American Scientists. https://fas.org/nuke/control/hotline/text/hotmoder.htm
[32] Ibid.
[33] "DCL: The Direct Communications Link." Ibid.
[34] Agreement Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Measures to Improve the U.S.A.-USSR Direct Communications Link. Ibid.
[35] Daryl Kimball, Hotline Agreements. Ibid.
[36] Agreement Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to Expand the U.S.-USSR Direct Communications Link. July 17, 1984. Available from the Federation of American Scientists. https://fas.org/nuke/control/hotline/text/hotexpa.htm

Russian governments continued to cooperate and constantly upgrade the technological capabilities and security of the NRRC and DCL systems throughout the following decades, keeping pace with innovations in communications technology.[37]

Though neither the original Memorandum, nor its subsequent annexes include the terms "crisis" or "prevention," the goal of the United States and Soviet Union was clearly to establish a means for immediate communication between their respective heads of state upon the emergence of an international "emergency."[38] As a diverse tool for confidence-building, crisis prevention, and potentially, crisis management, the Hotline Agreement of 1963 represents the first major strategic agreement between the United States and Soviet Union enacted with the specific goal of diminishing the risk of future crises. The Memorandum ensured that, in the event of a future political or military crisis concerning the nuclear-armed superpowers, a pre-existing technological platform for immediate and secure dialogue existed to decrease the risk of crisis escalation via misunderstanding or aggressive military posturing, as had occurred in 1962. The DCL also potentially safeguarded long-established diplomatic trust between the United States and Soviet Union from sudden, unintentional military accidents.

The history of U.S-Soviet and later U.S.-Russian cooperation in the construction of the DCL and subsequent NRRC systems, as well as both nation's continued commitment to regular technological updates, demonstrates the sincerity of both sides in the effort to establish and maintain the first real platform for U.S.-Russian crisis prevention. Crisis prevention measures can resemble many forms, but the Direct Communication Line represents one of the earliest and most critical: reliable communication for the prevention and de-escalation of crises and misunderstandings. Though the diplomatic relationship between the United States and Russia has changed much in the years since the fall of the Soviet Union, the hotline agreement has remained a mainstay of U.S.-Russian relations. As Robert Gates, former defense secretary and director of the C.I.A. stated, the Washington-Moscow hotline would continue to be necessary, "…as long as these two sides have submarines roaming the oceans and missiles pointed at each other.'"[39]

1.2 U.S.-Soviet Incidents at Sea Agreement (INCSEA)

[37] Daryl Kimball, Hotline Agreements. Ibid.
[38] Memorandum of Understanding Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Regarding the Establishment of a Direct Communications Link. Ibid.
[39] Daryl Kimball, Hotline Agreements. Ibid.

Following the commitment of the United States and Soviet Union to the Direct Communications Link in 1963, both nations experienced an historical period of more general cooperation and decreasing diplomatic tension, known as détente. Between the late 1960s and 1979, Soviet and American leadership would accomplish a succession of bilateral agreements on nuclear arms control, strategic risk reduction, and several new crisis prevention measures. Perhaps galvanized by the perceived success of the Washington-Moscow hotline, or concerned due to an increase in the frequency of military accidents and "close-call" incidents between U.S. and Soviet warships, both governments sought to establish a number of new international protocols regarding the prevention of military crises.

One of the most significant early bilateral crisis prevention agreements of this period was the 1972 U.S.-Soviet Incidents at Sea Agreement. A number of military mishaps, including alleged "threatening movements" by naval vessels and military aircraft had occurred throughout the 1960s, even after the initiation of the Washington-Moscow hotline.[40] One of the most severe, in May 1967, saw an American destroyer collide twice with Soviet ships while participating in joint U.S.-Japanese naval exercises, resulting in significant damage to the American vessel.[41] Concerned leadership in Moscow and Washington D.C. met twice between 1971 and 1972 to draft a new bilateral agreement to specifically address military and naval behavior and protocols at sea. On May 25, 1972, after nearly four years of negotiations, high-ranking naval representatives of both nations met in Moscow to sign the Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas, also known as the U.S.-Soviet Incidents at Sea Agreement, or INCSEA.[42]

INCSEA outlined a regimen of new protocols and measures to be taken by both Soviet and American naval vessels while at sea, with the stated goal of preventing future naval accidents. Among its provisions was the prohibition against the targeting of actual ships of either party during training and testing, as well as new protocols for maintaining ship-to-ship distancing and clear signaling of military maneuvers to opposing vessels to avoid collision or scrambling of one-another's naval formations.[43] Though perhaps such precautions would seem obvious today,

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[40] Agreement Between the Government of The United States of America and the Government of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas. May 25, 1972. Available from the U.S. Department of State Archive. https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/isn/4791.htm

[41] Mark Stout and B.J. Armstrong. "12 Other Clashes and Close Calls with the Russians." Texas National Security Review. November 25, 2015. https://warontherocks.com/2015/11/12-other-clashes-and-close-calls-with-the-russians/ https://warontherocks.com/2015/11/12-other-clashes-and-close-calls-with-the-russians/

[42] Rachael Gosnell, LCDR. "It's Time to Update INCSEA." U.S. Naval Institute Blog. September 23, 2016. https://blog.usni.org/posts/2016/09/23/its-time-to-update-incsea

[43] Ibid.

INCSEA sought to fundamentally change the professional behavior of the naval, military, and aeronautical leadership of both nations at sea, whose prior casual, or even aggressive, attitude towards close contact with vessels and aircraft of the other party had precipitated much of the then-tense maritime relations.

The 1972 U.S.-Soviet Incidents at Sea Agreement was one of a number of new initiatives introduced by Soviet and American diplomatic efforts to prevent future crises. Nevertheless, it was a significant Cold War success. Then-Secretary of the U.S. Navy, John Lehman stated in 1983 that because of the new INCSEA protocols, U.S.-Soviet sea accidents were "…way down from what it was in the 1960s and early 1970s."[44] According to the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, INCSEA also served *"to enhance mutual knowledge and understanding of military activities; to reduce the possibility of conflict by accident, miscalculation, or the failure of communication; and to increase stability in times of both calm and crisis.*"[45] The U.S.-Soviet Incidents at Sea Agreement represents an important historical step in the early period of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention efforts. The contemporary importance of INCSEA and its continuing relevance to U.S.-Russian strategic relations and risk factors will feature prominently in the following chapters of this research and analysis.

1.3 Accidents Measures and the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War

Since the initiation of the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) in 1969, the commitment of the United States and Soviet Union towards more comprehensive crisis prevention measures had been primarily focused on the eminent possibility of nuclear war.[46] Based upon diplomatic initiatives at the time, political will in Moscow and Washington seemed to favor the possibility of communication or dialogue between the superpowers in the event of an accidental or unintentionally-escalated crisis. Enabling communication between the United States and Soviet Union had been accomplished previously by the establishment of the Washington-Moscow hotline, but neither superpower was under any obligation to utilize the new communications network in the event of an emergency. The obvious, but complicated, next step in U.S.-Russian crisis prevention diplomacy would be the bilateral agreement of both nations to support a specific

[44] Agreement Between the Government of The United States of America and the Government of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas. Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Agreement Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Nuclear War. June 22, 1973. Available from the U.S. Department of State. https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/isn/5186.htm

set of protocols which necessitated the use of the Direct Communications Line in the event of a nuclear threat to peace.

The 1973 Agreement Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Nuclear War represented a controversial attempt by U.S. President Richard Nixon and Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev to formally agree to measures aimed at preventing nuclear war. Citing both superpower's "obligations under the Charter of the United Nations regarding the maintenance of peace," the accord emphasized that the governments of both nations, "agree that they will act in such a manner… as to avoid military confrontations, and as to exclude the outbreak of nuclear war…"[47] To achieve this, the agreement contained three primary conditions to which the leadership of both nations consented. First, the United States and Soviet Union formally renounced the use of threat or overt "force" against one-another or their respective allies."[48] The leadership of both nation also assented "to consult with each other," in order to de-escalate the risk of emerging crises, and refrain from using the threat of military force against unaligned "third countries."[49]

Though this agreement seemingly obligated the United States and Soviet Union to "enter into urgent consultations with each other," upon the realization of the risk of nuclear war, the accord itself does not specify the methods by which to judge when such a risk has occurred.[50] It appears that judgement as to whether an event could represent a risk to U.S.-Soviet strategic relations or mutual nuclear risk reduction, or posed a threat of accidental conflict was left to the interpretation of the leadership of both nations at the time. This excluded only the specifically-stated risk of accidental or intentional nuclear launches, for testing purposes. In other words, the agreement anticipated that the leadership of both nations would clearly recognize an emerging threat to their mutual strategic stability and choose to contact the opposing party with enough time to preempt any possible counteraction due to misunderstanding.

The 1973 Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War was largely intended as a follow-up to another similar U.S.-Soviet accord signed just two years prior. The 1971 Agreement on Measures to Reduce the Risk of Outbreak of Nuclear War also sought to reduce nuclear risk, but ultimately represented little more than a promise by both nations to ensure against the accidental

[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

launch of nuclear weapons.[51] The Agreement on Measures also stipulated that, "The Parties undertake to notify each other immediately in the event of an accidental, unauthorized or any other unexplained incident… which could create a risk of outbreak of nuclear war."[52] Clearly, however, leadership in Washington and Moscow were not convinced that the vague language and promises of mutual contact in the event of nebulous risk was sufficient, and the 1971 agreement was followed with more comprehensive agreement in 1973. The Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War also asserted that both parties agreed that to refrain from the use of nuclear weapons was a key component in avoiding nuclear war, as was the necessity of immediate contact in the event of a clear and present risk to U.S.-Soviet strategic stability.[53]

The 1971 Agreement on Measures remains historically important as a first attempt by both the United States and Soviet Union to reduce some of the risk of nuclear war, especially in regards to safeguarding ballistic nuclear missiles and communicating in the event of a nuclear weapon-related accident. The 1973 Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War, however, offered the assurances of both parties that nuclear risk reduction and the prevention of war were mutually-held interests. It also specifically obligated the leadership of the United States and Soviet Union to consult one-another via the established hotline in the event of a clear risk to mutual strategic stability and nuclear risk reduction. Both agreements represent clear diplomatic steps in the reduction of nuclear risk and prevention of strategic accidents which utilize the existing platform for communication established in 1963. The 1973 Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War, in particular, remains a critical nuclear risk reduction and strategic crisis prevention agreement, today.

1.4 The 1975 Helsinki Final Act, Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and Stockholm Conference of 1986

The onset of the Cold War saw many European nations fall beneath the nuclear shadow of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and as participants and bystanders to the political and military strategies of the United States and Soviet Union. That a conflict between the superpowers would affect both Eastern and Western Europe, regions still recovering from the devastation of the previous war, appeared likely. In response, calls for the establishment of a pan-European

[51] Agreement on Measures to Reduce the Risk of Outbreak of Nuclear War. September 30, 1971. Available from the United Nations Treaty Series. https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20807/volume-807-I-11509-English.pdf

[52] Ibid.

[53] Agreement Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Nuclear War. Ibid.

conference on security had already been raised by Soviet officials in the 1950s, and again by several Warsaw Pact member states throughout the 1960s.[54] The United States and some of its Western allies viewed these initiatives with suspicion, however, cautious of allowing the U.S.S.R. a legal platform from which it could legitimize its occupation of Eastern Europe following the events of the Second World War.[55]

Nevertheless, in 1969 the neutral government of Finland proposed a memorandum offering to seat the conference talks in Helsinki.[56] Beginning in 1972, 35 European countries, including the United States and Canada, met in Helsinki to decide the framework for an international securities conference which would not conclude until almost three years later.[57] Though primarily focused on security and cooperation between European countries, the diplomatic discussions in Helsinki led to a number of new commitments by the United States and Soviet Union aimed at preventing crisis related to the sizeable land, air, and missile forces of both superpowers located in Europe at the time. The "Helsinki accords," or "Helsinki process," encompassed numerous diplomatic conferences and dialogues between the United States, the Soviet Union, and their European allies, and while not politically-binding, represented a significant development in regards to Soviet and American crisis prevention and military behavior in Europe.

Within the Helsinki Final Act, signed by both the United States, Soviet Union, and many European partners in 1975, came the foundations for the establishment of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).[58] The CSCE included many pan-European initiatives, but the first section, "Questions Relating to Security in Europe," would be the most relevant in terms of U.S.-Soviet strategic relations.[59] The "first basket" of the CSCE Final Act set clear definitions for newly-implemented strategic security measures, including mandating effective crisis management, confidence and security-building measures (CSBMs).[60] These measures included the prior communication of military maneuvers and training exercises between the United States, Soviet Union, and their allies in the hope of preventing misunderstandings.[61] The CSCE also supported tighter border control regimes and mutual assistance assurances

[54] "The Helsinki Process and the OSCE." Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: U.S. Helsinki Commission. Accessed March 22, 2020. https://www.csce.gov/about-csce/helsinki-process-and-osce
[55] "Helsinki Final Act, 1975." Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute, United States Department of State. Accessed March 22, 2020. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/helsinki
[56] The Helsinki Process and the OSCE. Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Helsinki Final Act, 1975. Ibid.
[59] Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe Final Act. August 1, 1975. Available from the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. https://www.osce.org/helsinki-final-act?download=true
[60] "The Security Dimension." Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: U.S. Helsinki Commission. Accessed March 22, 2020. https://www.csce.gov/about-csce/helsinki-process-and-osce/security-dimension
[61] Ibid.

regarding the reporting of "unusual" military behavior and the safeguarding and disposal of small arms.[62]

Representatives of states participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe also accomplished further trust- and confidence-building measures between the United States and Soviet Union (as well as NATO and the Warsaw Pact), during the Stockholm Conference of 1986.[63] The Document of the Stockholm Conference provided detailed protocols and measures to be taken by all parties, including, "Refraining from the threat or use of force," "Prior notification of Certain Military Activities," and protocols for mutual verification and observation by all parties to ensure cooperation and communication.[64] As yet another initiative by the CSCE to reinforce crisis and accident management in Europe, the Stockholm Conference obligated the United States and Soviet Union to engage in even greater information sharing and measures to ensure mutual communication to reduce the risk of military crises in Europe.

Though both superpowers had previously assented to guidelines regarding military behavior at sea and assurances of mutual communication in the event of accidents or potential international crises, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe initiated several innovative steps forward in the development of trust- and confidence-building measures between the United States and Soviet Union. Notedly, the CSCE defined and detailed the procedures militaries of both nations must take before initiating any large-scale land-force maneuver which may be perceived at sudden or threatening, on the European continent. The CSCE also went into detail regarding future U.S.-Soviet cooperation and possible risks to strategic stability in Europe, such as "unusual military maneuvers," which had not been covered by previous bilateral agreement between the two superpowers. Most importantly, however, the CSCE sought to actively engage the United States and Soviet Union on behalf of European countries, regarding their prior commitments to maintain a mutual dialogue regarding issues of security and disarmament, which since the onset of the Cold War continued to represent major concerns for the future of U.S.-Soviet crisis prevention.

1.5 U.S-Soviet Crisis Prevention Initiatives, 1988-1989

[62] Ibid.
[63] Document of the Stockholm Conference, 1986. September 19, 1986. Available from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. https://www.osce.org/fsc/41238
[64] Ibid.

The era of détente in U.S.-Soviet diplomatic relations was precipitated by crisis and concluded in political controversy and disagreement. The 1979 Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan saw an abrupt end to the flurry of cooperation between the superpowers that had defined the late 1960s and early 1970s. It would not be until the late 1980s that the United States and U.S.S.R. would reestablish their previous cooperation, reexamine past crisis prevention efforts, and agree to new measures. By this time, however, the dissolution of the Soviet Socialist Republics and Warsaw Pact loomed over the coming decade, and the end of the Cold War between the United States and Soviet Union was within sight. The crisis prevention efforts of this time are still significant, however, and have retained their relevance well after the ideological confrontation of the two superpowers waned. The following agreements are examples of late Cold War-era agreements between the United States and Soviet Union with the greatest impact on U.S.-Soviet crisis prevention.

One of the most significant achievements of the late Cold War era was the 1988 U.S.-Soviet Ballistic Missile Launch Notification Agreement. Previous U.S.-Soviet agreements had similarly sought to reduce the risk of accidental nuclear war, including the 1972 Incidents at Sea Agreement and the 1971 Agreement on Measures to Reduce the Risk of Outbreak of Nuclear War, both of which defined some obligation of mutual communication in the case of an accidental, or non-threatening missile launch.[65] The Agreement on Notifications of Launches of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles and Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles, or "Ballistic Missile Launch Notification Agreement" (BML), however, was far more comprehensive. According the treaty, both nations were responsible for the use of Nuclear Risk Reduction Center to provide one-another with no less than 24-hours of forewarning before the launch or testing of any intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) or submarine launched ballistic missile (SLBM).[66] With each notification, the responsible party must also have provided the date, time, location of the launch site, and intended "area of impact" of the missile.[67]

The Ballistic Missile Launch Notification Agreement is remarkable in that it is the first agreement which legally obligates both the United States and Soviet Union to utilize the Nuclear Risk Reduction Center to inform one-another in the event of any ballistic missile launch. Where previous accords provided merely promises of cooperative communication in the event of missile

[65] Agreement Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Notifications of Launches of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles and Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles. May 31, 1988. Available from the U.S. Department of State. Online. https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/avc/trty/187150.htm
[66] Agreement Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Notifications of Launches of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles and Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles. May 31, 1988. Available from the Federation of American Scientists. https://fas.org/nuke/control/launch/text/balist1.htm
[67] Ibid.

testing or accidental launches, the BML Agreement represents a more concrete measure to reduce the risk of accidental nuclear conflict. Though perhaps a late development of U.S.-Soviet strategic relations, the BML Agreement continues to govern the testing and safeguarding of the ballistic missile forces of the United States and the Russian Federation.

The following year, representatives of the United States and Soviet Union met again to draft the Agreement on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities (DMA).[68] Mirroring many of the informal obligations made by American and Soviet delegates during the 1975 Helsinki Accords, the Dangerous Military Activities Agreement was a bilateral treaty which detailed the obligations of both nations regarding military behavior and protocols, "when operating in proximity to personnel and equipment of the armed forces of the other Party during peacetime."[69] The agreement specifically addressed circumstances in which U.S. and Soviet forces operated in close relation to one-another, when the potential for operational accidents was higher. In many respects, the Dangerous Military Activities Agreement was based on previous accords on military behavior, such as the sea-based INCSEA or prior obligations made by both superpowers to the CSCE, but also introduced several new concepts to U.S.-Soviet crisis prevention.

The first new aspect of crisis prevention introduced by the Dangerous Military Activities Agreement was that of "force majeure."[70] Though the U.S. and Soviet Union had previously assented to mutual communication in the event of a military "accident," the concept of force majeure proposed a certain latitude for error or accidents which may occur across national borders, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, where a significant amount of NATO and Warsaw Pact personnel and equipment was stationed in close proximity.[71] These high-intensity areas of military activity by both alliances were classified by the agreement as "Special Caution Areas," where unforeseen accidents and potential border violations were more likely to occur.[72] Because of the special designation of high-risk areas, military accidents which occurred within these territories were to receive a special level of consideration and dialogue before any offensive retaliation by the offended party could be taken. The agreement also introduced the recognition, and subsequent prohibition, of "laser" weapons and deliberate "interference with command and control networks."[73] Previous U.S.-Soviet crisis prevention agreements had considered accidental missile

[68] Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and United States of America Agreement on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities (With Annexes and Agreed Statements). Signed at Moscow on 12 June 1989. June 12, 1989. Available from United Nations Publications. https://read.un-ilibrary.org/international-law-and-justice/treaty-series-1566_b94fe578-en-fr#page1
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.

launches and aggression at sea, but the Dangerous Military Activities Agreement was the first bilateral agreement to also acknowledge and address the strategic risks of technological subterfuge and intentional interference with military infrastructure that may escalate into crisis.

1989 also saw the enactment of the U.S.-Soviet Agreement on Reciprocal Advance Notification of Major Strategic Exercises.[74] Though short in length, the Advance Notification Agreement reinforced both superpower's commitment to the technological security of the Direct Communication Line and the continued use of the newly-established Nuclear Risk Reduction Center to achieve strategic crisis prevention.[75] The new agreement largely reiterated both government's obligations to the non-binding concessions they made during the Final Helsinki Act and obligations made via the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. According to the new bilateral terms, the United States and Soviet Union would utilize the new NRRC systems to notify one-another no less than fourteen days prior to any major military exercise, "which includes the participation of heavy bomber aircraft."[76] The significance of heavy bombers being their capacity as delivery mechanisms for nuclear weapons. Much like the Ballistic Missile Launch Notification Agreement guaranteed mutual forewarning of ballistic missile launches, the Reciprocal Advance Notification Agreement sought to reduce the risk of accidental misinterpretation of non-threatening strategic bomber maneuvers and large military maneuvers.

1.6 The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe

The 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), though not intended to specifically address U.S.-Soviet crisis prevention measures originally, nevertheless became a significant development of mutual trust- and confidence-building in U.S.-Soviet, and later U.S.-Russian crisis prevention. Negotiations between the United States, Soviet Union, their respective allies, and the unaligned nations of Europe regarding the limiting or reducing of the armed forces build-up in Europe had been ongoing for decades.[77] The recent establishment of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, however, provided a diplomatic framework to host the multinational dialogue on security in Europe, and in 1989 negotiations of the terms of the CFE commenced. Owing to a recent state of relative détente between the United States and Soviet

[74] Agreement Between The Government of The United States of America and The Government of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Reciprocal Advance Notification of Major Strategic Exercises. September 23, 1989. Available from the Federation of American Scientists. https://fas.org/nuke/control/start1/text/relatagre.htm
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] "Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)." Nuclear Threat Initiative. Last updated January 25, 2019. https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/treaty-conventional-armed-forces-europe-cfe/

Union and newfound cooperation between Eastern and Western Europe due to the establishment of the CSCE, negotiations on the reduction of NATO and Warsaw Pact armed forces in Europe successfully concluded in 1990.[78]

The goal of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe was the prevention of a sudden attack or invasion across Europe by Warsaw Pact forces via the removal of the Soviet Union's significant superiority in numbers of personnel and equipment.[79] By equalizing NATO and the Warsaw Pact's military strength in Europe, diplomats hoped to minimize the strategic appeal of a sudden blitzkrieg-like assault across the East-West border.[80] To achieve this, the treaty obligated the United States, Soviet Union, and their respective allies not only to reduce the overall presence of their armed forces in Europe, but also to concede to mutual inspections to ensure compliance with the terms of the treaty and its specific troop and equipment limits.[81] By decreasing the amount of NATO and Warsaw Pact military forces in an area of close proximity, the CFE Treaty did potentially contribute to U.S.-Soviet crisis prevention efforts. More importantly, however, the establishment of mutual inspections and verification protocols continued to cultivate U.S.-Soviet trust- and confidence-building.

The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe was one of the last agreements to include the United States and Soviet Union, as just less than a year later the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics would no longer exist. The significance of the treaty is evident, however, in that it was amended in 1992 by the supplementary Tashkent Agreement to divide responsibility of the former Soviet Republics amongst their independent successor states in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.[82] Among the new signatories of the original CFE treaty was the young Russian Federation, the key successor state to the Soviet Union, which maintained the largest military force of any of the post-Soviet republics and continued to maintain its predecessor's nuclear arsenal. The future roll of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe would continue to have significant implications for the development and maintenance of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention in Europe until Russia's suspension from the CFE in 2007.[83]

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[78] Daryl Kimball and Kingston Reif. "The Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty and the Adapted CFE Treaty at a Glance." Arms Control Association. August 2017. https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheet/cfe
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. November 19, 1990. Available from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.
[82] Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). Ibid.
[83] Wade Boese. "Russia Suspends CFE Treaty Implementation." Arms Control Association. January 25, 2008. https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008-01/russia-suspends-cfe-treaty-implementation

1.7 The Development of U.S.-Soviet Crisis Prevention Measures

The development of U.S.-Soviet crisis prevention measures, from mutual trust- and confidence-building efforts to the enactment of agreements governing mutual communication, nuclear risk reduction, and reduced risk of military accidents are historically connected to the paradigm of Cold War relations and the risk of nuclear conflict. U.S.-Russian strategic relations benefited from the framework of previous 20th century crisis prevention measures, but as the following chapter will demonstrate, current relations between the United States and Russian Federation do not exactly mirror Cold War politics. New risk factors resulting from deteriorating U.S.-Russian political relations and 21st century technological and strategic realities will challenge the scope and effectiveness of 20th century crisis prevention measures. Though U.S.-Soviet crisis prevention measures sought to address the pressing strategic risks of the 20th century, such as the risk of nuclear conflict, the attitudes of Russian and American leaders in the 21st century have changed much, as has their perception of risks to mutual strategic stability.

Chapter 2: Challenges in U.S-Russian Crisis Prevention Measures

The collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 may have concluded the ideological struggle of the Cold War, but not the risk of military or nuclear crisis. As Russia began a period of substantial political transition, instability and regime change across the former Soviet Republics and Warsaw Pact nations cast much uncertainty upon the future of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention. Primary among American concerns were the more than three-thousand nuclear weapons that remained stockpiled across the former Soviet Republics of Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, all now independent nations.[84] Dialogue concerning the legal status of previous U.S.-Soviet treaties and agreements on disarmament and crisis prevention was established immediately between the United States and transitioning Soviet Union. Rather than forming a totally new strategic relationship with an emerging independent Russia, future developments in U.S.-Russian relations would benefit from the existing diplomatic and strategic infrastructure both nations had established throughout the Cold War.

The second chapter of this research summarizes the strategic relationship between the United States and Russian Federation following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and development of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures to the present. This chapter also surveys the strategic and political consequences of Russia's changing foreign policy and military doctrine and provides an analysis of the effectiveness of current crisis prevention measures to address recent developments and new strategic risks to U.S.-Russian strategic stability. The collapse of the Soviet Union occurred when ongoing debate over new U.S.-Soviet crisis prevention measures were actively taking place, some of which were only enacted later between the United States and Russian Federation. Outlining the process by which Russia assumed the strategic responsibilities of the Soviet Union within the context of evolving U.S.-Russian strategic relations is essential in conveying current strategic risk factors challenging U.S.-Russian crisis prevention infrastructure.

Since the dissolution of the Cold War ideological paradigm Russia's foreign policy and strategic interests have evolved, introducing new challenges to U.S.-Russian political and strategic relations. Demonstrating how Russia's new foreign policy strategies and use of "hard power" abroad have strained U.S.-Russian relations and introduced new strategic risk factors is a necessary step in the analysis of the continued effectiveness of existing crisis prevention measures. Though

[84] Graham Allison. "What Happened to the Soviet Superpower's Nuclear Arsenal?, Clues for the Nuclear Security Summit." Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government. 2012. https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/files/publication/3%2014%2012%20Final%20What%20Happened%20to%20Soviet%20Arsenals.pdf

perceptions of Russian foreign policy and military activities as risks to U.S-Russian strategic stability are obviously subject to Western bias, recent developments in Russian military technology and strategy are frequent subjects of the expert discourse. This chapter concludes with an analysis of some of the key agreements that constitute current U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures, and how effectively they continue to address the new strategic risks and challenges of 21st century U.S.-Russian strategic relations.

2.1 Development of U.S.-Russian Crisis Prevention

Even as the Warsaw Pact was dissolving and newly independent nations emerged from what was once the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, both superpowers were busy ensuring the legacy of U.S.-Soviet crisis prevention efforts and laying the foundations for the development of future U.S.-Russian crisis prevention in the post-Cold War era. The newly-formed Russian Federation facilitated this process when it agreed to accept its status as political successor to the Soviet Union, and inherited its predecessor's prior strategic agreements, treaties, and obligations to the United States and its NATO allies.[85] Following the establishment of diplomacy with its new neighbor states, Russia's new leadership also negotiated the requisition and direct legal ownership of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, including all nuclear materials previously stockpiled in the former Soviet republics and the sizeable air, sea, and land-based transportation and delivery systems.[86]

Though the collapse of the Soviet Union clearly portended future change and new developments in the strategic relationship between the United States and Russia, several Cold War-era challenges persisted. The continued presence of Russian and American armed forces in Europe still presented the potential risk of an accidental international crisis. Addressing the status of the recently enacted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, signed just one year prior to the demise of the Warsaw Pact, was one of the first new bilateral objectives of U.S.-Russian strategic relations. As a preliminary test of the U.S. and Russia's new diplomatic relationship, the negotiations were a relative success. In 1992, the original treaty was amended to account for the breakup of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, and updated the limits on military personnel and equipment to account for Russia's new borders and the presence of its remaining armed forces in Europe.[87]

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[85] Serhii Plokhy "The Soviet Union is Still Collapsing." Foreign Policy. December 22, 2016. https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/12/22/the-unlearned-lessons-from-the-collapse-of-the-soviet-union/
[86] Graham Allison. Ibid.
[87] Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). Ibid.

Following the amendments to the CFE Treaty, U.S.-Russian strategic and diplomatic relations would be advanced by numerous bilateral and international initiatives for disarmament and peace, but crisis prevention measures would not be revisited again until the end of that decade. In the meantime, several formative historical developments in U.S.-Russian relations would take place that would foreshadow future trends in U.S.-Russian diplomatic and strategic relations. The first half of the 1990s saw much progress in U.S.-Russian strategic and political relations, including the 1992 Washington Summit, which would culminate in the singing of the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II), a year later.[88] In 1994, United States President William Clinton released a joint statement on U.S.-Russian strategic stability and the two nations' recent nuclear security initiatives. President Clinton emphasized that "…major progress has been achieved with regard to strengthening global strategic stability and nuclear security," due to the recent disarmament efforts by both countries.[89] The president's statements reflected an overall positive strategic relationship between the United States' and Russia, citing both nations' interest in "partnership and reciprocity," and the efforts of both himself and Russian President Boris Yeltsin toward bilateral and multilateral cooperation, transparency, and communication on issues of nuclear, biological, and chemical security.[90]

The honeymoon period of U.S.-Russian relations would expire, however, throughout the second half of the 1990s. The difficult economic issues faced by the fledgling Russian administration during its transition to a market economy and the nation's brutal experiences during the first and second Chechen Wars began to encourage political change in Moscow and foment a shift in the country's attitude towards the United States.[91] The recent expansion of NATO to include several neighboring countries, once Soviet allies, also did nothing to improve the negative turn in U.S.-Russian relations.[92] Then-United States Deputy Secretary of State, William Burns recalled his concern following his first tour of Russia in 1996, that Russian leadership was beginning to believe "that the West is taking advantage of Russia's weakness."[93] When Burns would return as United States Ambassador to Russia in 2005, he found the country's diplomatic attitude towards the U.S. much changed under the new leadership of President Vladimir Putin.

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[88] "United States Relations with Russia: After the Cold War." Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State. Last updated January 20, 2009. https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/pubs/fs/85962.htm

[89] William J. Clinton. "Joint Statement on Strategic Stability and Nuclear Security. The American Presidency Project." September 29, 1994. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/joint-statement-strategic-stability-and-nuclear-security

[90] Ibid.

[91] William J. Burns. "How the U.S.-Russian Relationship Went Bad." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. March 8, 2019. https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/03/08/how-u.s.-russian-relationship-went-bad-pub-78543

[92] "NATO Enlargement." North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Accessed April 12, 2020. https://www.nato.int/summit2009/topics_en/05-enlargement.html

[93] William J. Burns. Ibid.

"You can't have everything your way anymore. We can have effective relations, but not just on your terms," he recalled President Putin asserting during their first meeting.[94]

Andrei Kortunov, now Director General of the Russian International Affairs Council, also expressed his doubts, in 1997, that the veneer of "well established partnership and genuine cooperation," espoused by both nation's leaders truly represented the new "paradigm" of U.S.-Russian relations.[95] The half-decade of vague commitments to cooperation, Kortunov surmised, was not only politically unproductive, but dangerous. The new Russian political environment no longer needed to focus on its foreign policy towards America, he argued, and as neither country shared sufficient interests or large "lobbies" representing the other, rather than continuing to pursue nebulous diplomacy both nations might instead focus on a more effective aspect of their relations: crisis avoidance.[96] The avoidance of a future political or military crisis, Kortunov writes, depended on the leadership of both countries' continued "…belief in the value of conflict avoidance as a method of managing long-term bilateral relations."[97]

Whether Kortunov's observations of U.S.-Russian relations were accurate, both nations would again demonstrate their experience in brokering strategic agreements at the turn of the new century. The Vienna Document of 1999 was the culmination of diplomatic efforts which had been ongoing for more than three decades.[98] The process began with the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, which had obligated the United States and Soviet Union to engage in mutual confidence-building measures, and concede to significant levels of cooperation and transparency regarding the armed forces of both superpowers in Europe. Since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which was also founded as a result of the Helsinki process, had sought to enforce the 1975 concessions as a politically-binding agreement between the signatories, namely the United States, Soviet Union, and later Russian Federation.[99] Though the Vienna Document of 1999 had not been the first, following similar documents in 1990, 1992, and 1994, it was, to-date, one of the most comprehensive trust- and confidence-building measures enacted between the two countries.[100]

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[94] William J. Burns. Ibid.
[95] Andrei Kortunov. "Russian-American Relations in the Post-Cold War Environment." Moscow Public Science Foundation. October 1997. https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/media/csis/pubs/pm_0016.pdf
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Jeff Abramson. "Vienna Document 1999." Arms Control Association. August 2010. https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/ViennaDoc99
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.

The Vienna Document of 1999 was a milestone in the development of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention and trust- and confidence-building measures. In addition to their commitments under the Helsinki Final Act, signatories are required to regularly exchange information regarding the size of their armed forces in Europe and the technical specifications and capabilities of military equipment deployed "within the zone of application for CSBMs [confidence- and security-building measures]."[101] The United States and Russian Federation were also responsible for alerting the other to accidental or unusual military movements, as well as the development and deployment of all new "major weapon and equipment systems," including the exact number of active weapon systems within the geographic area covered by the agreement.[102] Though the Vienna Document supports crisis prevention and trust- and confidence-building measures limited to geographic regions within Europe, it remains an important contribution to overall U.S.-Russian strategic relations and crisis prevention efforts. The OSCE's mandating of information sharing between American and Russian armed forces in Europe, as well as mutual inspections of military activities and active communication prior to major land maneuvers all contribute significantly to trust- and confidence-building efforts in Europe.[103] The OSCE's Conflict Prevention Centre continues to report on the Vienna Document's "overall implementation level," at the OSCE's Annual Implementation Assessment Meetings.[104] The Vienna Document continued to be updated and reviewed throughout the 2000s, and in 2010 was amended so that every five years a newer version, called "Vienna Document Plus," could implement new decisions and updates to the existing protocols.[105]

The legacy of the Helsinki Final Act and interaction between the OSCE, Russia, and the United States would prove a potent impetus for the introduction of new trust- and confidence-building measures throughout the early 2000s, and play a key role in the enactment of the 2002 Treaty on Open Skies.[106] The Open Skies Treaty, though a multilateral agreement and ostensibly a trust- and confidence-building measure, also represented a significant development in U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures.[107] According to Open Skies, signatories concede to allow other state parties a set quota of unarmed flights by "observation aircraft," over any area of their

[101] Vienna Document 1999. November 16, 1999. Available from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. https://www.osce.org/fsc/41276
[102] Ibid.
[103] Jeff Abramson. Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.
[106] "Treaty on Open Skies." Nuclear Threat Initiative. April 15, 2020. https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/treaty-on-open-skies/
[107] Daryl Kimball. "The Open Skies Treaty at a Glance." Arms Control Association. May 2020. https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/openskies

national territories.[108] Though satellites are also capable of retrieving similar information regarding foreign states' military behavior within their respective national borders, Open Skies encourages cooperation in organizing "overflights," and confidence-building regarding state parties' strategic intentions and military actions.[109] One example of Open Skies' successful implementation was the aerial survey by the United States over contested Ukrainian territory in December 2018.[110] The implementation of Open Skies has also been the subject of controversy in U.S.-Russian relations, however. In 2018, Russia alleged that the United States had refused two requests for aerial surveillance, without explanation.[111] The United States has also previously accused Russia of limiting regional surveillance of Kaliningrad, and threatened to similarly limit Russian access to skies over sensitive military installations in Alaska and Hawaii.[112]

Agreements, treaties, and accords ultimately represent just one aspect of U.S.-Russian strategic relations. As will demonstrated in the next subchapter, diplomatic agreements do not always safeguard the strategic relationship between two countries from the influence of worsening political relations. From 2010-2020, the political relationship between the United States and Russian Federation would deteriorate due to domestic political developments in both countries, as well as friction resulting from conflicting foreign policy objectives and military actions abroad. Since the beginning of the new millennium, bilateral crisis prevention measures as an aspect of both nation's strategic relations has largely relied on agreements and treaties established decades earlier, most during the Cold War. As the strategic relationship between the United States and Russian Federation continued to evolve throughout the 2010s, both nations have increasingly been faced with new strategic risks resulting from military innovations and changes in the global strategic environment and mutual strategic stability, while continuing to rely upon a 20th century framework for crisis prevention.

2.2 New Challenges to U.S.-Russian Strategic Relations in the 21st Century

As the new millennium dawned, Western observers still hoped that Russia, despite its confusing and sometimes contradictory foreign policy, might still pursue further incorporation into the "Western community."[113] U.S.-Russian relations expert Thomas Graham Jr. wrote in 2000

[108] Treaty on Open Skies. March 24, 1992. Available from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. https://www.osce.org/library/14127
[109] Daryl Kimball. "The Open Skies Treaty at a Glance." Ibid.
[110] Treaty on Open Skies. Nuclear Threat Initiative. Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Mandelbaum, Michael. The New Russian Foreign Policy. Council on Foreign Relations Press. July 1998. New York. 19.

that "time is running short for Russia."[114] The country's economic decline and supposed fall from great-power status echoed numerous systemic issues the nation then faced, making it increasingly unlikely that Russia might compensate for the "growing asymmetries in power between Russia and the United States."[115] Regardless of Western perspectives of Russia in early 2000, the election of new Russian President Vladimir Putin in 1999 would result in the development of an entirely new approach to Russian foreign policy, with dual objectives of addressing Russia's domestic issues as well as maintaining the nation's status as a world power and influencer of global affairs.[116] Graham believed that President Putin, unlike his predecessor, would seek to challenge American and Western global strategic might, in pursuit of a "multipolar" world, not altogether dissimilar to the U.S-Soviet rivalry during the Cold War.[117] According to the Russian Military Doctrine endorsed by President Putin in 2000, however, Russia sought to respond to, among other threats, the "destabilizing" of the "military-political situation," through "attempts to weaken (ignore) the existing mechanism for safeguarding international security."[118]

The new national military doctrine approved by President Putin also outlined the threat Russian leadership perceived as originating from the "buildup" of foreign armed forces near its borders, an implication that Russian leadership was growing more uncomfortable with the expansion of NATO in Eastern Europe.[119] The new doctrine also specifically cited the exterior threat of "ignoring" or "infringing" on Russia's efforts to become "one influential center in a multipolar world."[120] From the outset, President Putin made clear the intention of his administration to refocus Russia's foreign policy and strategic interests, and develop new approaches to address military threats. Rather than risking further strategic concessions, a process Russian leadership now perceived as typical of the past decade of U.S.-Russian relations, President Putin desired to reinforce Russia's strategic importance and global political influence.[121] To do so would require a significant shift in Russia's foreign policy strategy and the redevelopment of the Russian military power to attempt to reach strategic parity with the United States.

The 2008 Russo-Georgian conflict presented Russia's political and military leadership with an opportunity to ascertain, and subsequently innovate upon, the ability of the Russian Armed

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[114] Thomas Graham Jr. "Russia's Foreign Policy." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. March 1, 2000. https://carnegieendowment.org/2000/03/01/russia-s-foreign-policy-pub-529
[115] Ibid.
[116] "Russia's Military Doctrine." Arms Control Association. April 2000. https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2000-05/russias-military-doctrine
[117] Thomas Graham Jr. Ibid.
[118] "Russia's Military Doctrine." Ibid.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Thomas Graham Jr. Ibid.

Forces to achieve or defend foreign policy objectives using military, or "hard" power.[122] It also represented an important practical experience whereby Russia's military leadership could judge the general strengths and weaknesses of the nation's armed forces.[123] Over the next few years, following its experiences during the Georgian conflict, the Russian Armed Forces would receive an overhaul of equipment and new technological capabilities that would prepare Russian military leadership for the country's future strategically-oriented foreign policy goals.[124] Currently, Russia maintains between the sixth and third largest national defense budget, with significantly more investment in development and research than many of its Western counterparts.[125] A 2017 task force report by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace determined that "…in terms of equipment, experience, attitude, confidence, and more, the Russian military is a radically different force from the one that began the process of transformation in 2008."[126] Though still marred by some institutional and organizational difficulties, the Russian military had been significantly restructured and better equipped to face the perceived strategic threats of the 21st century.[127]

Coinciding with Russia's efforts to modernize its armed forces was the expansion of Russian military influence abroad. In 2008, Russian military activities were not considered uncommon within the territories of its neighboring allies and other post-Soviet states, like Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan.[128] However, a summary of Russian power projection by the Center for Strategic & International Studies found that since 2015, Russian "hard power," or military influence, had "begun to go further away from these traditional areas of operation."[129] A prominent example given, was that Russia has maintained a significant military presence in Syria since 2015.[130] More recently, according the summary report, Russian aircraft and naval vessels have also supposedly been used to project Russian influence as far afield as Venezuela, the South Atlantic, and Indian Ocean while participating in dual exercises with Chinese forces.[131] "For many in the West, Russia's return to the world stage over the past few years has come as a surprise, and not an especially pleasant one," writes expert and director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, Dr.

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[122] Keir Giles. "Assessing Russia's Reorganized and Rearmed Military." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. May 3, 2017. https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/05/03/assessing-russia-s-reorganized-and-rearmed-military-pub-69853
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Michael Kofman. "Russian Defense Spending is Much Larger, and More Sustainable Than it Seems." DefenseNews. May 3, 2019. https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2019/05/03/russian-defense-spending-is-much-larger-and-more-sustainable-than-it-seems/
[126] Keir Giles. Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] William Heerdt. "Russian Hard Power Projection: A Brief Synopsis." Center for Strategic & International Studies. March 25, 2020. https://www.csis.org/blogs/post-soviet-post/russian-hard-power-projection-brief-synopsis
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.

Dmitri Trenin.[132] Dr. Trenin contends that Russian military successes in Syria, new security partnerships, and increased influence in countries such as Turkey, Iran, and Venezuela have emboldened Russian leadership in support of the new foreign policy strategy.[133] "Russia is back and here to stay. Others had better accept it and learn to deal with it…" Trenin concludes, suggesting that despite Western opposition, Russia's new foreign policy strategy will continue to influence U.S.-Russian strategic relations for the foreseeable future.[134]

The CSIS summary on Russian hard power projection emphasizes, however, that despite the recent overhaul of Russian military structure and equipment, the armed forces of Russia do not currently possess the same technological and logistical capabilities as the United States and its NATO allies, but compensates for this through economic coercion, intelligence gathering, and support for private military groups.[135] Expert Kathleen Hicks similarly identifies Russia's current diversified strategy for developing global hard power and dubs it an exploitation of the diplomatic "gray zone."[136] According to Hicks, Russia's strategy of utilizing disinformation, cyberwarfare, political and economic coercion, and mercenary or "proxy forces" abroad, such as in Syria, seeks to achieve foreign policy objectives through hard power tactics while "side-stepping military escalation with the United States…"[137] Dr. Dmitri Trenin, however, considers the diversification of Russian hard power and foreign policy strategy an attempt by Russian leadership "to reassert its role as a great power with a global reach."[138] Regardless of the intentions observers and experts attribute to Russian foreign policy, however, it is clear that Russian leadership has developed new strategies to compensate for the current asymmetry in Russian and American military capabilities. Both expert commentaries from the CSIS also concur that currently, "Moscow maintains a significant capacity to project hard military power."[139]

Regardless of Moscow's intentions, the reactions of American leadership and many Western observers to Russian hard power development, military innovation, and strategic

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[132] Dmitri Trenin. "Russia's Comeback Isn't Stopping With Syria." Carnegie Moscow Center. November 12, 2019. https://carnegie.ru/2019/11/12/russia-s-comeback-isn-t-stopping-with-syria-pub-80322
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] William Heerdt. Ibid.
[136] Kathleen Hicks. "Russia in the Gray Zone." Center for Strategic & International Studies. July 25, 2019. https://www.csis.org/analysis/russia-gray-zone
[137] Ibid.
[138] Dmitri Trenin. "Avoiding U.S.-Russia Military Escalation During the Hybrid War." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. January 2018. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Trenin_Hybrid_War_web.pdfhttps://carnegieendowment.org/files/Trenin_Hybrid_War_web.pdf
[139] William Heerdt. Ibid.

diversification, suggest that these developments have been the source of recent strain U.S.-Russian political and strategic relations. The U.S. Department of State categorically stated, in June 2019:

> *"Russia has demonstrated its willingness to undermine norms within the existing international system beyond traditional military campaigns to encompass a suite of "hybrid" tools that are used to gain influence. Russia's campaign aims to undermine core institutions of the West, such as NATO and the EU, and to weaken faith in the democratic and free-market system. The United States has sought to deter further Russian aggression through the projection of strength and unity with U.S. allies, and by building resilience and reducing vulnerability among allies facing Russian pressure and coercion."*[140]

The U.S. Department of State also directly references Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and "ongoing Russian aggression in Georgia and Ukraine," as further explanation for the current tension in mutual political and strategic relations.[141] Some experts also contend that Russia's recent military involvement in Ukraine and the Syrian civil war, as well as the perceived failures of some aspects of the nuclear nonproliferation regime, have contributed significantly to declining levels of trust and strategic stability between the two countries.[142]

Dr. Dmitri Trenin maintains, however, that "…what Russia wants from the United States is to resume dialogue based on mutual interests, and without preconditions."[143] Rather than to antagonize the United States, Dr. Trenin asserts that Russian leadership instead wishes to engage in a renewed dialogue as an equal strategic partner.[144] The disclosing of new, advanced strategic weaponry in 2018, for example, was an attempt by Russian leadership to impress upon the United States the need for new negotiations, Trenin believes.[145] Regarding both U.S.-Russian strategic and political relations, Trenin concludes that, "Russia's efforts to engage the United States in coalitions… are doomed to fail. Washington never joins others. The United States can be relied upon, however, to reach out to Russia out of its own self-interest."[146]

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[140] "U.S. Relations with Russia." U.S. Department of State. June 25, 2019. https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-russia/

[141] Ibid.

[142] Jeffrey Mankoff and Andrey Kortunov. "Addressing Unresolved Challenges in U.S.-Russia Relations." Center for Strategic & International Studies. March 13, 2020. https://www.csis.org/analysis/addressing-unresolved-challenges-us-russia-relations

[143] Dmitri Trenin. "Russia–U.S.: No Reset, Just Guardrails." Carnegie Moscow Center. April 29, 2020. https://carnegie.ru/commentary/81680

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Dmitri Trenin. "What Does Russia Want From the United States?" Carnegie Moscow Center. April 15, 2020. https://carnegie.ru/commentary/81562

Despite promising developments in earlier U.S.-Russian political and strategic relations, strategic trust and diplomatic relations between both countries have been in decline since 2008 and, even more dramatically, 2014. Russian foreign policy and national security strategy has changed to address new perceived military threats, via a diversified strategy to strengthen Russia's global military influence and development of military innovation to achieve strategic parity with the United States and NATO. The future development of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures, and the two countries' strategic relationship in general, has become tenuous in the wake of numerous political disagreements and the increasing military involvement of Russian personnel and equipment, both government-sanctioned and privately organized, in foreign conflicts. Notably, recent conflicts in Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria are among the United States' primary strategic and political contentions with Russia.

As decades of mutual trust-building stalls, the two nations' deteriorating bilateral relations also contribute to the growing risk of crisis, according to some experts.[147] U.S.-Soviet crisis prevention measures emerged in response to Cold War-era risks, at a time when mutual trust-building was an important objective of both the United States and Soviet Union's foreign policies, and the borders of their ideological conflict were clearly delineated. Bilateral U.S.-Russian strategic relations today suffer not only from declining mutual trust, but also face new challenges posed by Russia's endeavor to achieve strategic parity with the United States and the negative perceptions of Russia's new and diverse hard power tactics by Western observers.

2.3 Current Challenges to U.S.-Russian Emergency Communication Measures

The establishment of the Washington-Moscow hotline represented one of the first major strategic accomplishments of U.S.-Soviet diplomacy on crisis and risk prevention. Intended to address the risks of misinterpretation, accident, crisis escalation, and nuclear risk reduction between Russian and American leadership, the continuation of a permanent and secure emergency hotline remains a recognizable aspect of U.S.-Russian strategic relations today. Limited data regarding the use of the hotline and later Nuclear Risk Reduction Center systems, however, lends some doubt as to the current effectiveness of U.S.-Russian strategic communication. Though the DCL's use during several historical strategic and political crises has been confirmed, the continued frequency of its use and interest of Russian and American leadership to engage one-another via the hotline or NRRC systems following the conclusion of the Cold War is uncertain. According to one 2015 report on NATO-Russian communication, a former spokesman for the Russian

[147] Jeffrey Mankoff and Andrey Kortunov. Ibid.

Defense Ministry admitted, “Not just communications, but other mechanisms that used to exist are simply not working anymore," implying that use of the hotline and NRRC systems had become another victim of worsening U.S.-Russian political relations.[148]

In 1963, American and Soviet leadership were still very aware of how close the previous year’s political tension and risk of accident, miscalculation, or misinterpretation had brought both nations to conflict and possible nuclear war. Awareness of this resulted in the political will which drove both Moscow and Washington to seek a permanent platform for faster and more reliable bilateral communication. Details of the day-to-day operation and use of the Direct Communications Line, and later NRRC systems, has not been publicly released, but it is known that the hotline was in use during several subsequent global crises, including the Six Day War in 1967, the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, and the 1973 Arab-Israeli War.[149] There are more recent examples of the explicit use of both hotlines in the course of U.S.-Russian diplomatic or strategic dialogues, but sufficient information has not yet been released to determine whether the use of the hotline systems has remained consistent since 1963. There is also no publicly available data from which to ascertain if the hotline systems received as much use following 1991 as it did prior to the end of the Cold War.

Another report in 2015 cited Pentagon sources who stated that all use of both hotline systems had ceased following Russia’s military intervention in Ukraine in 2014, even during Russia’s subsequent military involvement in the Syrian Crisis.[150] The report also claimed that “other Pentagon and State Department officials and experts,” had independently confirmed that a sudden halt to communication over the hotline systems had resulted from the diplomatic disagreement between American and Russian leadership over Russia’s actions in Eastern Ukraine and annexation of the Crimean peninsula.[151] Though it is not clear whether use of the hotlines had already been in decline prior to 2014, the abandonment, at least temporarily, of that bilateral crisis prevention measure did occur amidst two unfolding global crises and supposed increased risk of tensions in U.S.-Russian political and strategic relations. According to comments by retired Air Force General and former chief of Strategic Air Command, Gen. Gene Habiger, due to the perceived failure of diplomatic communication, U.S. military officials instead pursued military-to-military communication, particularly to avoid accidents or misunderstandings between U.S. and

[148] Anna Mulrine and Fred Weir. “NATO and Russia aren’t talking to each other. Cold war lessons forgotten?” The Christian Science Monitor. June 9, 2015. https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2015/0609/NATO-and-Russia-aren-t-talking-to-each-other.-Cold-war-lessons-forgotten
[149] Daryl Kimball, Hotline Agreements. Ibid.
[150] Bryan Bender. “The Hotline to Moscow Goes Cold.” Politico. October 2, 2015. https://www.politico.com/story/2015/10/white-house-moscow-hotline-214398
[151] Ibid.

Russian forces in Syria.[152] In place of a diplomatic crisis hotline, like the DCL or NRRC, retired Army General George Joulwan asserted that a totally new system of military-to-military communication had become necessary, as "This [the situation in Syria] can escalate if someone shoots another one's plane down or if you are bombing the wrong place or the wrong airfield…"[153]

Though the original 1963 memorandum regarding the establishment of the Direct Communications Line only enforced the creation of a bilateral communications platform, and not its use, subsequent U.S.-Soviet and U.S.-Russian bilateral and multilateral agreements have specifically necessitated the use of the DCL and NRRC systems, particularly in the case of an accidental missile launch or sudden large-scale military maneuver.[154] A fundamental flaw exists, however, in the effectiveness of the DLC and NRRC systems to reduce or prevent crises in U.S.-Russian relations. Excluding Washington and Moscow's commitments to communicating ballistic missile launches, without mutual political will to maintain communication and a dialogue on strategic issues between the respective governments of Russia and the United States, there is little to necessitate or enforce the continued use of the hotlines as a tool for confidence-building or crisis prevention. Though there are examples of established communication during historical global crises, largely during the Cold War, the doubts expressed regarding U.S.-Russian communication following 2014 are emphasized by the supposed disuse of these systems throughout several global crises since 2014, such as the Ukrainian and Syrian crises, which have directly involved Russian and American armed forces and strategic interests. If the existence of the DCL and NRRC have, as some experts suggest, not contributed to crisis prevention and trust and confidence-building during these crises, then obviously the effectiveness of these hotlines extends only so far as the political will of Russian and American leadership to utilize them.

2.4 Challenges to U.S.-Russian Military Accident Prevention Measures

The Cold War political environment provided American and Soviet leadership with a plethora of potential military risks, accidents, and crises. Diplomats and leaders of both nations would, throughout decades of negotiations, seek to address the two most likely sources of military crisis between Soviet and American armed forces: military accidents and the risk of unintentional or misinterpreted ballistic missile launches. Both aspects of accident prevention measures were addressed throughout numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements between the United States

[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid.
[154] "Agreements Supported by the NRRC." U.S. Department of State. Last updated January 20, 2009. https://2001-2009.state.gov/t/vci/nrrc/c18419.htm

and Soviet Union. Some experts, however, continue to debate the effectiveness of Cold War-era crisis prevention agreements as new developments in U.S.-Russian strategic relations and military innovations increasingly introduce new and unexpected challenges in the twenty-first century. The following is an analysis of some of the most significant challenges to current U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures related to military accidents.

One of the most significant efforts made by the Cold War powers to address the risk of military accidents was the 1989 U.S.-Soviet Agreement on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities.[155] Though its signing was hailed as a "momentous occasion" by Soviet Chief of General Staff, Marshal Mikhail Moiseyev, its effectiveness and relevance in regard to current risks in U.S.-Russian strategic relations is uncertain.[156] DMA sought to minimize the risk of direct military confrontation by addressing the greater likelihood of unintentional maneuvers or accidents occurring between U.S. and Soviet forces operating within close proximity.[157] The agreement allowed the establishment of "Special Caution Areas" where the chances of such an accident were higher, and therefore both parties agreed to greater leniency in response.[158] Within the Cold War strategic context, the creation of these "Special Caution Areas" was likely intended along the then-border between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in Europe, an unmistakable political division along agreed-upon national borders, and around Berlin. Today, however, the United States and Russian Federation find themselves in an altogether different strategic environment, and Russia's developing global military presence has introduced Russian forces into regions far from Russia's borders and into greater contact with American and NATO forces abroad. The most significant example of this is in Syria, where American and Russian forces have been forced to establish new forms of military-to-military communication to address the additional risks of confusion and accident in a region without clear borders, and under the stress of ongoing armed conflict.[159]

Though perhaps the Agreement on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities still maintains some relevance regarding Russia's borders with Eastern European NATO member states, the most evident risks regarding U.S.-Russian military accidents today are related more to

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[155] Simon Saradzhyan. "What Stops US and Russia From Stumbling Into War?" Russia Matters, Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. January 9, 2020. https://www.russiamatters.org/blog/what-stops-us-and-russia-stumbling-war

[156] Rachael Gosnell. "Preventing Dangerous Military Incidents in Peacetime." Center for Strategic & International Studies. 2018. https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/180508_Gosnell_PreventingDangerousIncidents.pdf?TMGjVuXke2lrvWKgsLV8VOjCYWLUF8Vf

[157] Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and United States of America Agreement on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities (With Annexes and Agreed Statements). Ibid.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Jim Garamone. "Top U.S., Russian Military Leaders Meet to Improve Mutual Communication." U.S. Department of Defense News. December 18, 2019. https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2043133/top-us-russian-military-leaders-meet-to-improve-mutual-communication/

the two nations' foreign military involvements than they are to accidental border crossings. Syria, especially, represents a new development in Russian strategic interests and foreign military involvement since the country's independence in 1991.[160] The risks of miscalculation and accident have also been especially evident in the Syrian conflict, where already numerous military accidents have occurred between American and Russian forces.[161] The most egregious of these may have been in February of 2018, when private Russian military contractors, along with Syrian forces, assaulted a position held by American military personnel.[162] Though the members of Russia's paramilitary Wagner group were not deemed to have been acting on the official orders of Russian leadership, this event brought to light a very new development in U.S.-Russian military accident risks: that of unsanctioned or unsupported mercenary activities.[163]

According to Michael Phillips, staff reporter at the Wall Street Journal, despite the intense rivalry of the U.S.-Soviet relations throughout the Cold War and recent tensions, the last time American and Russian forces were engaged in an intentional firefight was in 1919.[164] Perhaps a testament to U.S.-Soviet diplomacy and the past effectiveness of bilateral and multilateral agreements, like DMA and Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and trust- and confidence-building measures, historical instances of U.S.-Russian armed conflict is rare. New risks emerging from contemporary developments in Russian strategic interests and U.S.-Russian strategic and political relations, however, lie outside the comprehensiveness of Cold War-era accident prevention measures. The introduction of private military companies and the intervention of Russian and American forces in the same foreign conflicts, with separate military agendas, may require more up-to-date protocols for accident prevention than existing crisis prevention measures currently provide.

Russia's recent interventions in Eastern Europe and the Middle East are also not the full extent of Moscow's diversified strategy for the use of hard power. The increased global presence of Russian air and naval power has also been a recent concern of experts and leaders, especially in

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[160] Julia Gurganus and Eugene Rumer. "Russia's Global Ambitions in Perspective." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. February 20, 2019. https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/02/20/russia-s-global-ambitions-in-perspective-pub-78067

[161] Andrew Weiss and Nicole NG. "Collision Avoidance: The Lessons of U.S. and Russian Operations in Syria." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. March 20, 2019. https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/03/20/collision-avoidance-lessons-of-u.s.-and-russian-operations-in-syria-pub-78571

[162] Andrew Linder. "Russian Private Military Companies in Syria and Beyond." Center for Strategic & International Studies. October 18, 2018. https://www.csis.org/npfp/russian-private-military-companies-syria-and-beyond

[163] Neil Hauer. "The Rise and Fall of a Russian Mercenary Army." Foreign Policy. October 6, 2019. https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/10/06/rise-fall-russian-private-army-wagner-syrian-civil-war/

[164] Michael Phillips. "The One Time American Troops Fought Russians Was at the End of World War I—and They Lost." The Wall Street Journal. November 9, 2018. https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-one-time-american-troops-fought-russians-was-at-the-end-of-world-war-iand-they-lost-1541772001

light of what appears to be a growing trend of maritime and aeronautical incidents between Russian and American naval forces.[165] Though these accidents, or possibly provocations, do not occur often their frequency has increased in recent years, resulting, according to some experts, from Russia's more aggressive military behavior and foreign policy.[166] Since 1972, the U.S.-Soviet Incidents at Sea Agreement, or INCSEA, has presided over all maritime and aeronautical interactions between American and Russian forces at sea.[167] Its protocols on ship-to-ship safety distancing and prohibitions against interfering or conducting training maneuvers against the naval formations of the other party was widely regarded as a success due to a marked drop in maritime incidents between Soviet and American forces.[168] The recent increase in U.S.-Russian maritime accidents, however, has prompted some experts to debate whether the protocols of INCSEA continue to effectively prevent military incidents at sea.

Military Professor and Lieutenant Commander Rachael Gosnell, in her evaluation of the recent increase in frequency of maritime and aeronautical incidents between Russian and American forces, likened this trend to "a potential time bomb."[169] "Continued testing of the established norms and boundaries while operating at heightened tensions may invariably lead to mistakes or perhaps an unintended escalation," she asserts.[170] Not alone in her concerns, Gosnell, joined by other experts at the Center for Strategic & International Studies in 2018, engaged in a track II dialogue on strategic stability and prevention of military incidents between the United States and Russia. Though she concluded in her submitted discussion paper that INCSEA was largely successful at the time of its introduction, Gosnell also points out that the political will in Moscow and Washington to draft and sign the agreement had been the result of a then-genuine desire for political and strategic de-escalation of hostilities.[171] Though a significant diplomatic achievement of Cold War relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, current U.S.-Russian strategic relations do not mirror the same political attitudes.[172]

Another participant of this track II dialogue, Dr. Olga Oliker likewise suggests that INCSEA was originally very successful, but that new developments in U.S.-Russian relations and the trend of recent maritime incidents imply that the original agreement may not account for

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[165] Elizabeth McLaughlin and Luis Martinez. "A Look at the US Military's Close Calls with Russia in the Air and at Sea." ABC News. April 9, 2020. https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/us-militarys-close-calls-russia-air-sea/story?id=63558131

[166] Ibid.

[167] Rachael Gosnell. Preventing Dangerous Military Incidents in Peacetime. Ibid.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Rachael Gosnell. "It's Time to Update INCSEA." U.S. Naval Institute. September 23, 2016. https://blog.usni.org/posts/2016/09/23/its-time-to-update-incsea

[170] Ibid.

[171] Ibid.

[172] Ibid.

current strategic realities.[173] Gosnell and Oliker highlight two contemporary challenges to INCSEA: the differences in naval and air technology between 1972 and now, and the foreign policy interest of Russia to pursue more aggressive military behavior at sea. Though INCSEA has been updated in the years since its enactment, Gosnell fears that the introduction of new maritime and aerospace technologies test the limits of the agreement's protocols. Both experts also concur that one of the primary challenges to INCSEA today remains Russia's disinterest, at a policy-making level, in acknowledging and addressing the possibility that its recent shift towards more aggressive military posturing undercuts the fundamental philosophy of the agreement and Russia's obligation to cooperate with the U.S. regarding the prevention of maritime accidents.

The air, sea, and land-based forces of the United States and Russia have been, since the Cold War, one of the primary focal points of both nations' efforts to reinforce mutual strategic stability and introduce risk reduction, trust- and confidence-building, and crisis prevention measures. Though the Cold War period resulted in numerous bilateral, and even multilateral, agreements aimed at supporting mutual confidence-building and risk reduction related to military accidents, the strategic and political relationship between Russia and the United States has since evolved, and now faces new challenges. Chief among the issues of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention today is the changing nature of Russia's foreign policy approach to hard power, and the diversification of its military strategy. As Russia develops and utilizes new technologies and methods of projecting hard power abroad, the United States struggles to address the strategic and political consequences of growing Russian military influence. The result of this has been the straining of mutual political relations and challenging of existing crisis prevention measures to address new 21st century strategic risks to military accident risk reduction.

2.5 Challenges to U.S.-Russian Nuclear Risk Reduction and Nuclear Crisis Avoidance

The buildup of NATO and Warsaw Pact military forces along the iron curtain and developments of the ongoing global ideological conflict where not the only strategic risks of the twentieth century. Growing stockpiles of American and Soviet nuclear weapons introduced a new dimension to U.S.-Soviet strategic relations and risk reduction efforts. Arguably, since 1963 and the establishment of the emergency hotline between Washington and Moscow, the threat of nuclear conflict and accident has been one of the most significant contributing factors encouraging the

[173] Olga Oliker. "U.S.-Russia Strategic Dialogue on Crisis Stability (2017–2018) Final Report." Center for Strategic & International Relations. 2018. https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/180523_Oliker_USRussiaStrategicDialogue_final.pdf?C7odY7ZPhHvtPdLUMjCNrNormWcCtkT5

development of U.S.-Soviet and later U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures.[174] Throughout the Cold War period, Soviet and American leadership enacted several bilateral agreements designed to minimize the risk of nuclear war by accident or the misunderstanding of either party. According to expert Dr. Alexey Arbatov, however, "…the danger of nuclear war is today much greater than it was in the late 1980s."[175]

According to the 1971 Agreement on Measures and 1973 Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War, the United States and Soviet Union pledged not to resort to nuclear war during a state of crisis in mutual relations, but rather to initiate bilateral communication.[176] In 1988, both nations again agreed to notify one another prior to test launches of ballistic missiles, exchange logistical information related to all such launches, and rapidly alert the other party in response to an accidental launch.[177] Other later bilateral and multilateral agreements also sought to cultivate trust- and confidence-building measures between the United States, Soviet Union, and Russian Federation by requiring both parties to declare their total number of launch systems, share information on new ballistic missile technologies, and eventually, implement mutual verification measures, as well as limit and decommission agreed amounts of nuclear weapons altogether.

The Cold War is over, and consequently the threat of nuclear war in U.S.-Russian relations no longer receives the same emphasis that it once did, according to expert Dr. Anya Loukianova Fink of CNA and the University of Maryland.[178] "As the Cold War ended, and the prospect of a nuclear crisis between Washington and Moscow receded," she contends, "intellectual efforts to buttress 'crisis stability' largely fell by the wayside."[179] According to Dr. Fink, "Crisis prevention is another approach to reducing the risk of nuclear war," suggesting that, in her view, one of the ultimate aims of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention may not just be the prevention of armed conflict in general, but reducing the risk of nuclear war, in particular.[180] Dr. Fink also conveyed her concern that due to the recent deterioration in political relations and prominence of recent U.S.-Russian military incidents, that "There is also a significant danger that the U.S.-Russian consensus

[174] Anya Loukianova Fink. "Crisis Stability in the Twenty-First Century." Center for Strategic & International Studies. 2018. https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/180508_Fink_CrisisStability.pdf?vLZ3_YNwaUGjWNGxgoBUb7D6mBKHplp2
[175] Alexey Arbatov. "Nuclear Deterrence: A Guarantee or Threat to Strategic Stability?" Carnegie Moscow Center. March 22, 2019. https://carnegie.ru/2019/03/22/nuclear-deterrence-guarantee-or-threat-to-strategic-stability-pub-78663
[176] Simon Saradzhyan. Ibid.
[177] Agreement Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Notifications of Launches of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles and Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles. Ibid.
[178] Anya Loukianova Fink. Ibid.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid.

on reducing the risk of nuclear war could collapse in its entirety."[181] Dr. Alexey Arbatov, head of the Center for International Security at the Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations also believes that the risks of nuclear crisis have "faded from public consciousness," and consequently, from U.S.-Russian strategic dialogue.[182] Arbatov also asserts that differences in American and Russian doctrine on the use of nuclear weapons and recent "tense relations" between the two countries necessitates a renewed dialogue on nuclear risk reduction, or "Otherwise, it may lead to dangerous collisions in crisis situations…"[183] Undeniably, nuclear crisis prevention was a cornerstone of U.S.-Soviet strategic relations during the Cold War, but experts like Dr. Fink and Dr. Arbatov agree that U.S.-Russian relations today may neglect the contemporary importance of nuclear risk reduction.

Expert on Russia's nuclear forces, Dr. Pavel Podvig also asserts that recent developments in U.S.-Russian political and strategic relations have had an overall negative effect upon the prospects of continued nuclear risk reduction between Russia and the United States.[184] According to Dr. Podvig, "The current status of U.S.-Russian relations presents a serious challenge for managing the risks associated with the introduction of new military capabilities, emergence of new threats, and new sources of instability."[185] Citing the recent withdrawal of the United States from the Intermediate Range Nuclear Force Treaty (INF) after accusing Russia of noncompliance, and uncertainty regarding the extension of the New START Treaty, Dr. Podvig correlates the recent deterioration in other areas of U.S.-Russian strategic relations with the increase in threat to U.S.-Russian nuclear risk reduction.[186] In the current state of political tension between the United States and Russia, the ability of both nations to establish and sustain an effective dialogue on nuclear risk reduction and address new emerging threats to nuclear crisis prevention are limited by the reluctance of both states to engage in strategic communication at the political level at all, according to Dr. Podvig.

As part of his analysis of the current challenges to U.S.-Russian nuclear risk reduction, Podvig also emphasized the growing importance of technological advancements in weapon delivery systems and "the potential interference with the command-and-control process that may

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[181] Ibid.
[182] Alexey Arbatov. "The Hidden Side of the U.S.-Russian Strategic Confrontation." Carnegie Moscow Center. September 1, 2016. https://carnegie.ru/2016/09/01/hidden-side-of-u.s.-russian-strategic-confrontation-pub-64887
[183] Ibid.
[184] Pavel Podvig. "Stability and Nuclear Risks in U.S.-Russian Relations." Center for Strategic & International Studies. 2018. https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/180508_Podvig_StabilityNuclearRisks.pdf?uv1K55FxiKghVlD0dCCQHb1Cj5ZhnHnz
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.

be a result of a cyberattack…"[187] Expert, and former CIA analyst, George Beebe of the Center for the National Interest also asserts that U.S.-Russian nuclear crisis prevention is also subject to increasing technological risk.[188] Offensive cyber technology, according to Beebe, threatens all computer-based infrastructure and military equipment, a risk he hypothesizes could also induce a nuclear accident or crisis if nuclear command controls are the target of a cyberattack.[189] An inherently offensive military technology, Beebe believes that computer-based sabotage and information gathering is a new form of strategic risk in U.S.-Russian relations, the full danger of which neither nation may yet fully appreciate.[190] Commenting on contemporary nuclear deterrence and strategic stability, Dr. Alexey Arbatov also insists that "Cyber warfare against each other's strategic command-and-control information systems is also destabilizing and should be subject to prohibitions and confidence-building measures."[191] The crisis prevention initiatives of the Cold War could not have accounted for the future risks of subterfuge in the digital age, but as cyber warfare represents an recognized strategic risk, Beebe concludes, future U.S.-Russian strategic relations must account for the growing risks associated with cyber- and computer-based warfare.

2.6 Challenges to Current U.S-Russian Crisis Prevention Measures in the 21st Century

From the outset, strategic relations between the United States and Russian Federation have benefited from the inherited experience of the Cold War, and the diplomatic foundation of numerous 20th century agreements and protocols for mutual crisis prevention and strategic stability between both nuclear-armed nations. Since 2008, however, Russian leadership has sought to reorganize and modernize its armed forces, as well as diversify Russia's hard power toolset to address perceived military threats and secure Russia's global influence.[192] Regardless of political rhetoric and negative perceptions of Russia's military actions by Western observers and experts, the fact remains that the international strategic environment has changed. Communication between Moscow and Washington, as well as mutual nuclear risk reduction efforts have been significantly affected by deteriorating U.S.-Russian political and strategic relations.[193] Even more

[187] Ibid.
[188] George Beebe. "We're More at Risk of Nuclear War with Russia Than We Think." Politico Magazine. October 7, 2019. https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/10/07/were-more-at-risk-of-nuclear-war-with-russia-than-we-think-229436
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Alexey Arbatov. "Nuclear Deterrence: A Guarantee or Threat to Strategic Stability?" Ibid.
[192] Dmitri Trenin. "Avoiding U.S.-Russia Military Escalation During the Hybrid War." Ibid.
[193] Anya Loukianova Fink. Ibid.

worrying is the apparent increase in frequency of military incidents in the air, on land, and at sea, as Russian and American foreign policy goals come into conflict and the armed forces of both nations interact in ways that existing protocols did not anticipate.[194] In the decades following the conclusion of the Cold War, the risk of nuclear war has also lost its imminence in the strategic consciousness of both nations, despite both Russia and the United States maintaining sizeable nuclear forces.[195]

U.S.-Soviet crisis prevention agreements, which form the majority of current U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures, were developed to address the strategic risks of the Cold War. The analysis of current U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures, and their continued effectiveness to address the strategic risks of the 21st century has revealed several risks to U.S.-Russian strategic stability that existing measures were not designed to address. Based upon the expert discourse and commentary provided in this chapter, current U.S.-Russian crisis prevention does provide a useful framework of strategic concepts and protocols, but like the conclusions of the 2017-2018 track II dialogue on U.S.-Russian strategic stability, emerging strategic and technological risks and poor political relations between the United States and Russian Federation have cast doubt on the continued reliability of current crisis prevention measures in the 21st century.[196]

[194] Rachael Gosnell. "It's Time to Update INCSEA." Ibid.
[195] Anya Loukianova Fink. Ibid.
[196] Olga Oliker. Ibid.

Chapter 3: Addressing 21st Century Challenges to U.S.-Russian Crisis Prevention

The challenge of 21st century U.S.-Russian strategic risk reduction and crisis prevention will be the development of new or modified measures to address 21st century strategic risks to U.S.-Russian strategic stability. Overcoming the challenges of the current political climate and strained relations between Russian and American leadership will also present a significant challenge to future dialogue on U.S.-Russian strategic stability, especially regarding U.S.-Russian emergency communication and nuclear risk reduction. With the challenges to current U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures now highlighted, it is possible to hypothesize the methods by which experts and leaders might begin to propose new dialogues and introduce new measures on U.S.-Russian crisis prevention to better accommodate twenty-first century risks to U.S.-Russian strategic stability.

This research was conducted through the collection and analysis of a broad selection of expert and historical sources that illustrate both the current state of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures and the strategic challenges both countries face in the 21st century. In the first chapter, historical documentation briefly outlined the timeline of U.S.-Soviet crisis prevention development as well as the risk factors and strategic realities of the Cold War they were designed to address. With the aid of expert commentary and contemporary discourse on U.S.-Russian strategic relations, the second chapter demonstrated that U.S.-Russian strategic relations today are not analogous to U.S.-Soviet relations during the 20th century, and as a result new risks threaten U.S.-Russian strategic relations and challenge the scope and effectiveness of existing crisis prevention measures. This final chapter will utilize the analysis of the previous chapter, on the continued effectiveness of existing crisis prevention measures, to conclude with suggestions regarding how experts and leaders may attempt to improve or adapt current crisis prevention measures to better address 21st century crisis risks and contemporary challenges to U.S.-Russian strategic relations.

3.1 Adapting U.S.-Russian Emergency Communication Measures

Since the 1960s, the Direct Communications Line and later Nuclear Risk Reduction Center systems have served as the primary means of emergency bilateral communication between Washington and Moscow. Historically, both systems were used by Soviet and American leaders for political communication, as well as in response to several historical international crises.[197]

[197] Daryl Kimball, "Hotline Agreements." Ibid.

Though the original memorandum did not obligate either party to utilize the system directly, subsequent diplomatic efforts resulted in several agreements whereby the Soviet Union and United States pledged to use the systems to establish a dialogue in the event of an accidental ballistic missile launch, sudden large-scale military maneuver, or whenever it was judged that mutual strategic stability was at risk.[198] However, these diplomatic agreements were the products of the unique political and strategic relationship of the United States and Soviet Union during the Cold War. In the previous chapter, expert commentary and the analysis of the continued effectiveness of the hotline systems and present U.S.-Russian diplomatic communication measures cast doubt on whether the DCL and NRRC systems remain as critical in the consciousness of Russian and American leaders today.[199]

It was more than half a century ago that the United States and Soviet Union, via a bilateral memorandum, established a technological platform for secure bilateral communication.[200] At the time, both superpowers feared a recurrence of the high levels of strategic risk and possibility of nuclear war which had arisen during the Cuban Missile Crisis.[201] Current strategic and political relations between the United States and Russian Federation, however, are far removed from the relationship of the U.S. and Soviet Union during the Cold War. Whereas both nations recognized the clear strategic risk of nuclear war in the twentieth century, experts today, like Dr. Anya Loukianova Fink, fear that neither American nor Russian leadership continue to consider the threat of a nuclear crisis as earnestly.[202] With the possible exception of an accidental ballistic missile launch, the definition of which is made clear by the Agreement on Notifications of Launches of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, the texts of other agreements which continue to obligate Russian and American leadership to utilize one or both systems for communication are vague on the determination of "risk," and open to interpretation. The Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War, for example, states vaguely that, "If at any time relations between the Parties or between either Party and other countries appear to involve the risk of a nuclear conflict… [they] shall immediately enter into urgent consultations with each other…"[203] Without more data regarding the decision-making process behind the use of both systems, which currently remains undisclosed by either government, it is ultimately impossible to determine whether Russian or

[198] Agreement Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Nuclear War. Ibid.
[199] Anya Loukianova Fink. Ibid.
[200] Memorandum of Understanding Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Regarding the Establishment of a Direct Communications Link. Ibid.
[201] Daryl Kimball, "Hotline Agreements." Ibid.
[202] Anya Loukianova Fink. Ibid.
[203] Agreement Between The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Nuclear War. Ibid.

American leaders today would choose to communicate with the other party via the hotline systems in response to any perceived political issue or strategic risk. Allegedly, according to some experts and sources from the Pentagon and State Department, Russian and American leadership have already demonstrated their disinterest in reopening the use of the hotline systems, even during recent military actions and international incidents which resulted in strategic and political consequences for relations between both countries.[204]

For these emergency communications systems to retain their relevance in contemporary U.S.-Russian strategic relations, Russian and American leadership must be either willing or obligated to utilize them for their intended purpose. The strategic hotline systems between the United States and Russia currently depend upon the interest of national leaders in both nations to perceive risks to their mutual strategic stability and to cultivate the political will for strategic communication and crisis prevention at the government level. Without the ability to determine whether Russian and American leaders will utilize either system in the event of a new strategic crisis or risk to strategic stability, and doubt among experts as to the interest of both nations in engaging the another in strategic communication at all, the solution may be to consider other methods or approaches to bilateral U.S.-Russian strategic and emergency communication.[205] Specifically, a method or approach which ensures engagement by leaders in both nations in mutual communication while bypassing the current hotline system's seeming reliance on prerequisite stability in political relations between both parties. If the success of U.S.-Russian strategic communication is over-reliant upon the status of current political relations, then perhaps both parties to the Direct Communications Line should renew their obligations to its use, regardless of current political relations.

Experts, as well as political and military leaders should continue to encourage the governments of the United States and Russian Federation to engage in a renewed strategic dialogue regarding the use of the Direct Communications Line and affirm their commitment to the use of the Nuclear Risk Reduction Systems to support U.S.-Russian nuclear risk reduction. However, It is also the recommendation of this thesis, based on the previous chapter's analysis of current U.S.-Russian emergency communication measures, that more strict protocols be adopted to ensure Russian and American leaders continue to utilize the existing systems for strategic consultation, crisis prevention, and mutual trust- and confidence-building. Other bilateral crisis prevention agreements, such as INCSEA, require that representatives of both parties meet annually to discuss

[204] Bryan Bender. Ibid.
[205] Olga Oliker. Ibid.

the agreement's implementation.[206] Experts and leaders could consider and endorse a similar measure, whereby Russian and American leadership would be obligated to enter into a dialogue on strategic risk reduction and mutual communication on a regular basis, to discuss the implementation of the hotline systems and mutual strategic risk reduction efforts.

3.2 U.S.-Russian Accident Prevention Measures for 21st Century Risks

Numerous agreements and measures established between the United States, Soviet Union, and Russian Federation throughout the 20th and 21st centuries sought to prevent and reduce the risk of military accidents, through a variety of approaches. The 1972 Incidents at Sea Agreement sought new protocols to curb aggression between Soviet and American naval vessels and aircraft.[207] In 1989, both superpowers enacted the Agreement on Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities, which introduced the concepts of force majeure and Special Caution Areas.[208] The analysis of current U.S.-Russian military accident prevention measures and their continued effectiveness revealed that some experts, such as Rachael Gosnell, believe that INCSEA and DMA may need to be updated in order to better address 21st century strategic risks.[209]

The Incidents at Sea Agreement is one of the oldest U.S.-Russian military accident prevention agreements still in force. The previous chapter cited Rachael Gosnell's description of the recent increasing trend in maritime incidents between Russian and American naval vessels and aircraft and the risk this posed to U.S.-Russian strategic stability.[210] Gosnell asserted that new developments in Russian foreign policy and military strategy were to blame for this increase in risky behavior, but that it may also be prudent for Russian and American leaders to consider an "update" to the almost 50-year-old agreement.[211] Dr. Ian Anthony, Director of the European Security Programme at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), concurs with Gosnell.[212] Anthony notes that, although INCSEA has inspired "…roughly a dozen risk reduction agreements of different kinds," its ageing protocols could likewise benefit from the example of newer, more comprehensive, accident prevention measures.[213] According to Dr. Anthony, while

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[206] Rachael Gosnell. "Preventing Dangerous Military Incidents in Peacetime." Ibid.
[207] Agreement Between the Government of The United States of America and the Government of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas. Ibid.
[208] Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and United States of America Agreement on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities (With Annexes and Agreed Statements). Ibid.
[209] Rachael Gosnell. "Preventing Dangerous Military Incidents in Peacetime." Ibid.
[210] Rachael Gosnell. "It's Time to Update INCSEA." Ibid.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ian Anthony. "Reducing the Risk of Naval Incidents." Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. June 12, 2019. Online. https://www.sipri.org/commentary/essay/2019/reducing-risk-naval-incidents
[213] Ibid.

INCSEA does address "deliberate" aggressiveness or ramming at sea, new on-board technologies and computer systems for navigation, security, and communication could, in close proximity, interfere with the systems of another vessel, introducing new "inadvertent" risks between Russian and American ships of war.[214]

Though recent incidents at sea suggest that INCSEA's protocols continue to be relevant, the original agreement was not straightforward regarding the exact methods by which Russian and American vessels should avoid one-another at sea, nor how different vessels should communicate when the risk of collision or interference in the maneuvers of the other party appeared. Instead, INCSEA relied on previous international regulatory concepts, such as the "Rules of the Road," and merely insisted that both parties continue to adhere to these existing standards.[215] Regarding both the ambiguity of INCSEA's ship-to-ship avoidance and communication protocols, and the rise of new 21st century technological risk factors, both Rachael Gosnell and Ian Anthony consider a more recent multilateral, but noncommittal, agreement, the 2014 Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea and the modern maritime accident prevention measures it encompasses.[216] Compared to INCSEA, the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES), contains very specific protocols regarding communication methods and approaches to convoy movement and maritime maneuvers.[217] Though the United States and Russia have already joined the CUES agreement, it is not enforced.[218] INCSEA, however, is a binding bilateral agreement.

INCSEA remains an important bilateral accident prevention agreement between the United States and Russian Federation, but a recent increase in maritime incidents and accusations of aggressive military behavior at sea suggests that the ageing agreement faces new challenges in the 21st century. Looking to more recent diplomatic agreements concerning maritime accident prevention, such as the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea, and accounting for new technological risk factors and ship-to-ship communication methods may be the "update" that experts, like LCDR Rachael Gosnell and Dr. Ian Anthony believe INCSEA requires. "It is time that we take the principles and ideals behind the original INCSEA agreement and start anew," Gosnell writes, and by extending the scope of the original agreement to accommodate current technologies and naval behaviors as well as modernizing current protocols using examples from

[214] Ibid.
[215] Agreement Between the Government of The United States of America and the Government of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas. Ibid.
[216] Rachael Gosnell. "It's Time to Update INCSEA." Ibid.
[217] "Document: Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea." U.S. Naval Institute. August 22, 2016. https://news.usni.org/2014/06/17/document-conduct-unplanned-encounters-sea
[218] Ibid.

the more recent CUES agreement, the crisis prevention measures of INCSEA might better address the maritime military risks of the 21st century.[219]

The 1989 Agreement on Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities, in many respects, attempted to translate the success of the earlier INCSEA into a similar agreement which would minimize the risk of U.S.-Soviet military accidents on land.[220] As the previous chapter concluded, however, U.S.-Russian strategic relations and the risks of U.S.-Russian military incidents have evolved much in the decades since DMA was introduced. For DMA to maintain its relevance in 21st century U.S.-Russian strategic relations, it must be adapted to account for new emergent risk factors between the military forces of both nations, and a more complex strategic environment no longer simplified by the bipolar strategic paradigm of the Cold War. Russia's recent military involvement in foreign conflicts alongside American and NATO forces has placed both militaries in closer contact since the early 2010s, and as has resulted in an increasing number of military incidents and controversies, and subsequently the emergence of new risk factors regarding U.S.-Russian strategic stability in the 21st century.[221]

Though DMA's Cold War-era concept of Special Caution Areas may still be a feasible accident deterrent along the relatively stable NATO-Russian border, the military interventions of Russia and the United States in Syria has led to close-proximity military operations by both armed forces in an area of shifting and chaotic frontlines far from the borders of either country.[222] More complicated still, Russian and American forces in Syria do not share entirely the same goals and strategic objectives, and initiatives for cooperation between the two militaries has recently been frustrated by monetary limitations imposed by the United States Congress, in 2019.[223] One of the key elements of DMA was the establishment of Special Caution Areas, which represented mutually recognized areas of greater military activity in close proximity between the armed forces of both parties, and the special condition of these areas, whereby "force majeure," and other accidents were taken into higher consideration.[224] Though originally, Special Caution Areas were intended to exist along the NATO-Warsaw Pact border, a similar concept might be substituted between Russian and American forces in Syria, by mutual recognition of areas of command and operations controlled by the other party. To an extent, U.S.-Russian military-to-military

[219] Rachael Gosnell. "It's Time to Update INCSEA." Ibid.
[220] Rachael Gosnell. "Preventing Dangerous Military Incidents in Peacetime." Ibid.
[221] William Heerdt. Ibid.
[222] Weiss, Andrew and Nicole NG. Ibid.
[223] H.R.5515 - John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019. 115th Congress. 2017-2018. https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/5515/text
[224] Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and United States of America Agreement on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities (With Annexes and Agreed Statements). Ibid.

communication and coordination in Syria has already demonstrated this possibility.[225] According to experts Andrew Weiss and Nicole Ng, "The war in Syria demonstrated that limited forms of U.S.-Russian cooperation, particularly to minimize the risk of inadvertent escalation or accidents, were possible since they required relatively little trust or political capital."[226] Through active military-to-military communication and the application of DMA concepts, like Special Caution Areas and force majeure to U.S.-Russian military interactions beyond NATO-Russian borders, the Agreement on Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities may continue to inform 21st century U.S.-Russian strategic relations.

Beginning in February 2017, military representatives from the United States and Russia began a series of formal conferences to discuss the improvement of bilateral communication "limited to the military sphere."[227] These conferences marked the first official initiative regarding mutual strategic communication between both countries since the sudden strain in political relations in 2014.[228] During the most recent of these conferences, in December 2019, Russian and American military leaders continued to discuss the strategic risks of close-proximity operations between American and Russian forces in Syria, where the probability of an unintentional military-to-military conflict was considered greatest.[229] Participating representatives also debated the consequences of recent Russian naval and aircraft maneuvers in proximity to their American counterparts, which U.S. military leadership regarded as "unsafe."[230] The initiation of military-to-military communication between Russian and American forces in Syria is a promising development in current U.S.-Russian accident and crisis prevention. According to Dr. Oliker, despite several incidents to-date, U.S. and Russian military communication and cooperation in Syria had "…presented an example of adequate management."[231] Earlier in their involvement in the Syrian crisis, Russian and American forces also reportedly established a dedicated "deconfliction hotline."[232] Though little is known regarding the specific protocols and organization of U.S.-Russian military communication in Syria, its example of frontline accident prevention and crisis de-escalation supports the concept of military-to-military communication as a viable alternative, or secondary, military accident and crisis prevention measure.

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[225] Andrew Weiss. Nicole NG. Ibid.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Jim Garamone. "Top U.S., Russian Military Leaders Meet to Improve Mutual Communication." U.S. Department of Defense News. December 18, 2019. https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2043133/top-us-russian-military-leaders-meet-to-improve-mutual-communication/
[228] Ibid.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Olga Oliker. Ibid.
[232] Andrew Weiss. Nicole NG. Ibid.

The methods for accident and crisis prevention regarding the risks posed by third-party military actors, such as Russian private military companies (PMC's), in conflicts like Syria, are less clear, however. According to expert Andrew Linder, "The current Russian use of PMCs not only poses a threat to a norms-based international order, but also a very real physical threat to Americans, as seen in the February 2018 incident."[233] As Russian PMC's are not always officially supported by the Russian government, they fall into what expert Kathleen Hicks calls, "the gray zone."[234] While not representing the official policies or goals of the Russian government, the 2018 live-fire incident between the Wagner group and American forces in Syria demonstrates the risk of mistaken identity and impact that private groups can nonetheless have on regional strategic stability and accident prevention. Without a clear precedent in existing U.S.-Russian strategic agreements, experts must encourage national leaders to consider a new diplomatic dialogue concerning the limitations of accident prevention measures regarding the activities of private military companies. Whether Russian and American leadership opts for greater restrictions on the activities of PMC's or choose to accept greater responsibility for their regulation, it is clear that third-party agents cannot continue to risk disturbing U.S.-Russian strategic relations without the same responsibility for accident prevention shared by leaders of the armed forces of both countries.

Based on the conclusions of the previous chapter, current U.S.-Russian military accident prevention measures must accommodate two new 21st century strategic risks: the risks of increased contact between American and Russian forces operating abroad and the risks of misidentification and false association of unsanctioned mercenary groups. The results of the analysis of the continued effectiveness of current U.S.-Russian military accident prevention measures lends to the following conclusions. INCSEA contributes important accident prevention measures for U.S.-Russian interactions at sea, but in light of recent incidents, experts and leaders must look to newer maritime safety agreements, such as the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea, to improve and extend the scope of available protocols for ship-to-ship communication and accident avoidance at sea. Likewise, the Agreement on Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities and the concept of Special Caution Areas may provide a method of designating areas of military control by Russian and American forces engaged in close-proximity operations, encouraging communication and reducing the risk of accidents. Recent developments in U.S.-Russian military-to-military communication suggest that modern protocols to support strategic communication between vessels at sea and forces on land, via an updated INCSEA or DMA agreement, may also reduce the risk of military accidents. The emergence of private military

[233] Andrew Linder. Ibid.
[234] Kathleen Hicks. Ibid.

companies presents a unique risk to U.S.-Russian strategic stability previously unaddressed by existing measures and protocols. Just as maritime and frontline military incidents threaten mutual U.S.-Russian strategic stability, so now does the threat of misidentified private mercenary groups. Experts and leaders must consider this new risk to U.S.-Russian crisis prevention and endorse some form of protocol or measure to either increase national responsibility for private military companies or hold such groups similarly accountable to the measures and protocols which govern interactions between recognized Russian and American armed forces.

3.3 Preventing Future U.S.-Russian Nuclear Crises

The analysis of current U.S.-Russian nuclear risk reduction and crisis prevention measures revealed that some experts are concerned that, since the Cold War, Russian and American leadership have gradually regarded nuclear crisis avoidance with less interest.[235] Dr. Pavel Podvig also alleged that recent tensions in U.S.-Russian relations, and the withdrawal of the United States from the Intermediate Range Nuclear Force Treaty in 2019, suggested that both governments had ceased to consider the threat of nuclear weapons as sincerely as they had during the Cold War.[236] Several experts, including Dr. Podvig, Dr. Fink, Dr. Oliker and George Beebe, also raised the concern of new technologies and growing risk of "cyber" or computer-based interference in aspects of Russian and American strategic nuclear weapons systems and security infrastructure.[237]

Despite recent political tensions in U.S.-Russian relations and the apparent refusal of either government to engage the other in a dialogue on current strategic relations, the fundamental nature of nuclear risk remains a major concern for both nations, regardless of the political agendas of Russian and American leadership. Just as the leadership of the U.S. and Soviet Union engaged in a cooperative effort to prevent future nuclear crises following the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, the risks to nuclear crisis prevention between both countries in the 21st century are risks they mutually share. Therefore, the cooperation of both countries in establishing a dialogue on current strategic risks and nuclear risk reduction would be, inherently, mutually-beneficial. The conclusions on the effectiveness of current U.S.-Russian nuclear risk reduction and accident prevention measures of the previous chapter suggest that both Washington and Moscow need to establish a new strategic dialogue regarding nuclear risk reduction. Given the recent strain in U.S.-Russian political and strategic relations, the way to engage both governments in a renewed

[235] Anya Loukianova Fink. Ibid.
[236] Pavel Podvig. Ibid.
[237] Anya Loukianova Fink. Ibid.

dialogue on 21st century strategic risks to nuclear risk reduction may be to emphasize new risks to mutual strategic stability.

The historical framework of 20th century nuclear crisis prevention diplomacy remains mostly relevant today. The 1973 Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War and 1988 Ballistic Missile Launch Notification Agreement, in particular, are still especially relevant crisis prevention measures, so long as Russian and American leadership remain committed to mutual communication in the event of a risk of nuclear crisis, as per the protocols of those agreements. None of the previous agreements on nuclear risk reduction accident prevention, however, account for the risk of cyberattacks or technological interference in the nuclear weapons control systems of either party. Dr. Pavel Podvig also asserts that new Russian nuclear technologies pose a risk to future nuclear risk reduction, as "Few of these are covered by the existing arms control agreements, which will present another serious challenge for the effort to bring stability to the U.S.-Russian relationship."[238]

Therefore, the first step in reestablishing U.S.-Russian efforts to support continued mutual nuclear risk reduction in the 21st century should be for experts to present leaders with the reality of the mutually-shared risks of cyber interference and the mutually-beneficial results of addressing those issues in a renewed strategic dialogue. The risks posed by new nuclear technologies and the possibility of technological interference in nuclear weapons control and early-warning systems are not exclusive to either party. The establishment of a dialogue concerning 21st century risk factors to mutual nuclear risk reduction may be a diplomatic method to reestablish a strategic dialogue while avoiding the political controversies of past disagreements, like the perceived failures of the INF Treaty. A new U.S.-Russian strategic dialogue on nuclear crisis prevention would have the ability to address current issues, such as cyber security and inclusion of new nuclear technologies into previous arms control agreements, while simultaneously reengaging the leadership of both the United States and Russian Federation in the effort to address 21st century risks to mutual nuclear crisis prevention.

3.4 21st Century Challenges to U.S.-Russian Crisis Prevention, Conclusions

The final chapter of this thesis provided several original suggestions for experts and leaders regarding the improvement of current U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures and the introduction of new protocols to address contemporary risks to U.S.-Russian strategic stability in

[238] Pavel Podvig. Ibid.

the 21st century. Concerning future U.S.-Russian emergency communication measures, the results of this analysis concur with the opinions of the experts reviewed, that American and Russian leadership must be encouraged to reestablish a dialogue on strategic communication. It is also the independent conclusion of this analysis that experts and leaders should consider the establishment of a new agreement or measure which specifically obligates the leadership of the United States and Russian Federation to meet regularly for a dialogue on the implementation and use of the hotline systems and ongoing risks to U.S.-Russian strategic stability. Regarding current U.S.-Russian military accident prevention measures, the analysis concludes that experts and leaders should consider the implementation of new protocols to support military-to-military communication, and in the case of INCSEA, updated protocols for naval encounters based on newer international maritime safety agreements, like CUES. The introduction of private military companies alongside traditional Russian and American forces abroad must also be addressed, either by greater national responsibility for PMC's or new measures to attribute the leaders of private military groups with the same responsibilities as regular armed forces in regard to military accident prevention. The recent developments in U.S.-Russian nuclear risk reduction efforts analyzed in the previous chapter revealed declining interest in Washington and Moscow regarding the risk of nuclear conflict. The conclusion of this thesis regarding future U.S.-Russian nuclear crisis prevention is that new risks, such as technological interference and cyberattacks must be addressed by experts and leaders. As threats to mutual U.S.-Russian nuclear risk reduction, the need to address these risks may incentivize a new dialogue on nuclear crisis prevention and encourage further discussion on 21st century technological risks to nuclear crisis prevention between Russia and the United States.

Conclusions on U.S.-Russian Crisis Prevention in the 21st Century

The research question that this thesis sought to address was: can today's possible military crises be prevented by decades-old Cold War agreements, or are new U.S.-Russian crisis prevention protocols and measures needed to address and reduce 21st century risks? The aim of the research and analysis was ultimately to address two aspects of the overall research question. First, to determine whether current crisis prevention agreements sufficiently address the contemporary concerns of experts of U.S.-Russian strategic relations and strategic stability. Then, according to an analysis of 21st century strategic risks, what additional protocols or new strategic agreements could be suggested to better reflect contemporary risks to U.S.-Russian strategic stability?

The analysis of current U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures revealed that the ageing infrastructure of mostly 20th century bilateral and multilateral agreements were increasingly unable to effectively address new challenges and risks to U.S.-Russian strategic stability in the 21st century. As most current U.S.-Russian crisis prevention agreements were products of Cold War diplomacy between the United States and Soviet Union, their protocols and measures on mutual crisis prevention reflect the strategic risks of the 20th century. The environment for current U.S.-Russian strategic relations no longer reflects the clear East-West ideological and strategic delineations of the Cold War, however, nor do Russian and American leaders perceive the risk of nuclear war as seriously. In the decades since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and particularly since 2000, the Russian Federation has also sought to reform its armed forces, invest in new military technologies, and diversify its hard power capabilities and strategy. Though the analysis showed that Western and Russian experts viewed the reasons behind Russia's increased global military presence differently, the significance of these developments upon current U.S.-Russian strategic relations was maintained throughout the discourse reviewed. New military technologies, Russian strategic innovations, and the increased frequency of encounters between Russian and American armed forces in close-proximity beyond traditional NATO-Russian borders all introduce new strategic risk factors that previous crisis prevention agreements were not originally designed to address.

Considering future U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures, the final chapter of this thesis offered original suggestions for methods by which experts and leaders today could seek the improvement of current protocols, or the introduction of new crisis prevention measures to better address the strategic risks of the 21st century. Like the analysis of chapter two, suggestions for the improvement of current crisis prevention measures addressed U.S.-Russian emergency communication measures, military accident prevention, and nuclear accident prevention as

separate aspects of overall U.S.-Russian crisis prevention. These suggestions aimed at addressing current risks and challenges to aspects of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures and agreements while accounting for recent developments in strategic relations between the two countries.

Current U.S.-Russian emergency communication measures, specifically the Direct Communications Line and Nuclear Risk Reduction Center systems, are over-reliant upon preexisting political relations between the United States and Russia. Despite recent military incidents, Russian and American leadership have demonstrated little interest in utilizing these systems to establish a mutual dialogue on strategic issues. The protocols of agreements which obligate the use of the hotline systems are also often vague, referring only to the ability of either party to recognize a present strategic "risk." Experts and leaders should continue to endorse renewed strategic communication between the United States and Russian Federation. Experts should also promote a new agreement or measure which obligates Russian and American leaders to meet regularly for a dialogue on the implementation and use of the hotline systems and ongoing risks to U.S.-Russian strategic stability.

The analysis of the effectiveness of current military accident prevention measures revealed that many of the ageing protocols of key accident prevention agreements were not designed to effectively address 21st century risks to U.S.-Russian strategic stability. INCSEA and DMA, in particular, featured frequently in the discourse examined by the analysis of the previous chapter. Both agreements were created to address Cold War-era strategic risks. INCSEA, for example, relied on even older regulations for ship-to-ship interactions at sea, like the "Rules of the Road." DMA included protocols intended to prevent military accidents along the NATO-Warsaw Pact border in Cold War-era Europe, which was obviously never a feature of 21st century U.S.-Russian strategic relations. Innovations in military technology and the involvement of private military companies amidst regions of Russian and American strategic interest also present new challenges that 20th century accident prevention measures were not designed to address. Experts and leaders should consider implementing new protocols to support military-to-military communication, and updated protocols for naval encounters based on newer international maritime safety agreements. New measures should also be implemented whereby national governments take greater responsibility for private military groups, or leaders of such groups are made subject to the same accident prevention measures as the traditional armed forces of both countries.

Though still relevant, current nuclear risk reduction and accident prevention measures do not address several new strategic risks of the 21st century. The risk of technological interference and cyberattacks on the infrastructure of nuclear weapons systems, as well as the apparent disinterest of American and Russian leadership in engaging one-another in a renewed dialogue on

mutual nuclear risk reduction and accident prevention, pose serious challenges to future U.S.-Russian crisis prevention. Experts and leaders must address the risks of technological interference and cyberattacks against critical infrastructure related to the security of nuclear weapons systems. As a mutually-shared risk to strategic stability between both the United States and Russian Federation, the establishment of a dialogue specifically to address these new threats may encourage even further communication on current nuclear issues and continuing nuclear risk reduction, by avoiding ongoing disagreements regarding arms control issues.

In conclusion, current U.S.-Russian crisis prevention measures face new strategic risks and challenges in the 21st century that existing strategic agreements were not designed to address. This research surveyed the historical development of crisis prevention measures between the United States, Soviet Union, and Russian Federation, and with the aid of expert discourse and commentary, provided an analysis of current U.S.-Russian strategic relations, as well as the continued effectiveness of existing crisis prevention agreements in addressing new strategic risks in the 21st century. These analyses were then used to inform possible suggestions for the improvement of current crisis prevention measures and introduction of new strategic agreements to better address the current risks to U.S.-Russian strategic stability in the 21st century. Though some strategic agreements, like INCSEA and the Agreement on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities, continue to be relevant in current U.S.-Russian strategic relations, new protocols are needed to update these ageing measures to address new risks in the 21st century. New agreements are also needed to address totally new threats to U.S.-Russian strategic stability, such as private military companies, which bilateral U.S.-Russian relations have never specifically addressed. Ultimately, the research and analysis conducted for the completion of this thesis has surveyed more than a half-century of U.S.-Russian crisis prevention development and analyzed the ability of these measures to address new strategic threats, many of which have emerged within the past decade. As the development of new military and strategic innovations continue, the challenge of U.S.-Russian strategic relations and crisis prevention efforts in the 21st century will be the ability of both nations to communicate and cooperate, in order to address future strategic risks.

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