

IGA-677 / Russian National Security Policy Shopping Session

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What is Russian National Security Policy?

Russian National Security Policy is government decision-making and administrative activity in areas of

- military strategy, capabilities and operations
- diplomacy and foreign relations
- intelligence collection and analysis
- crime and law enforcement
- energy and critical infrastructure
- natural resources
- disaster response
- protection of human rights

by the Russian Federation and its predecessor states



Figure 1: Map of Russia

This moment in Russian and global history



Figure 2: Yevgeniy Prigozhin (1961–2023)

How did Russia get here?

How bad were the “Wild 90s”?

- bad
- worse than US Great Depression
- 50% GDP loss 1989-1993
- poverty rate jumps from <2% to 40-50%
- life expectancy falls 10 yrs for men, 4 yrs for women
- hyperinflation (ruble:USD)
 - .5:1 in 1980s
 - 40:1 in 1991
 - 5000:1 in 1997
 - re-denominated 1/1000
 - 30:1 after 2000
 - now about 100:1
- economic inequality



Figure 3: Boris Yeltsin

Economic trajectory since collapse of USSR

Economic recovery in 2000s

- eightfold rise in GDP
- significant rise in wages, pensions
- poverty, unemployment down
- foreign investment, trade up (until 2014...)
- inflation down
- consumer spending up
- emergence of a middle class

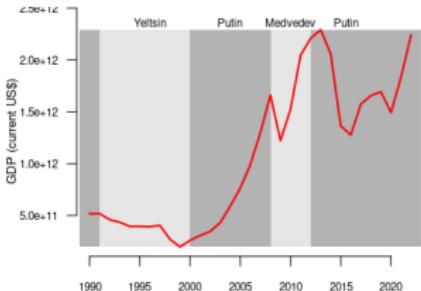


Figure 4: Russia's GDP

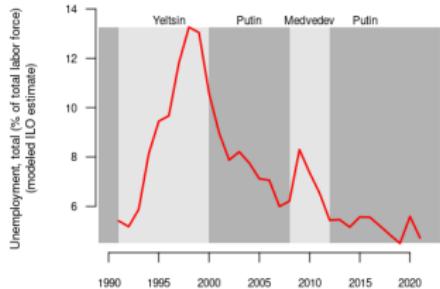


Figure 5: Unemployment

A more connected Russia

- more cell phones than people
- vast majority of Russians have internet access
- Russians traveling more abroad (until 2014...)

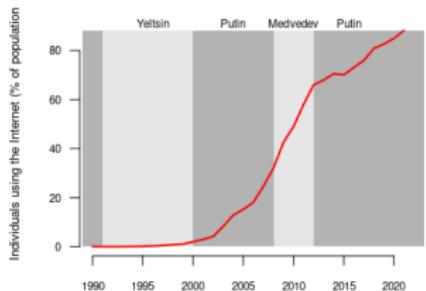


Figure 6: Internet Usage

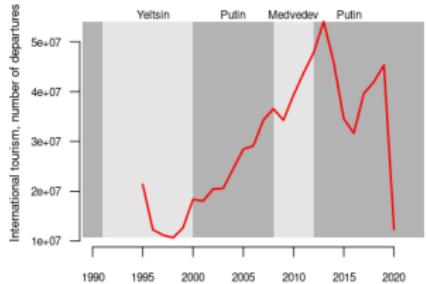


Figure 7: Tourism Departures

Demographic trends since collapse of USSR

Demographic recovery in 2000s

- fertility up
- mortality down
- life expectancy up
- Russian population growing again (until recently...)
- trade-off: female participation in labor force going down

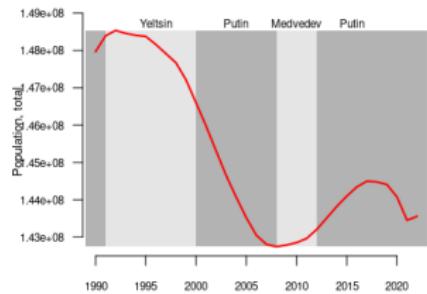


Figure 8: Population

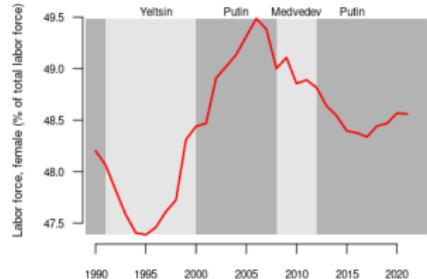


Figure 9: Women Labor Force

Oil and gas

How important are commodity prices?

- very
- but Russia becoming less dependent on resource rents
- and has a cushion against oil price shocks

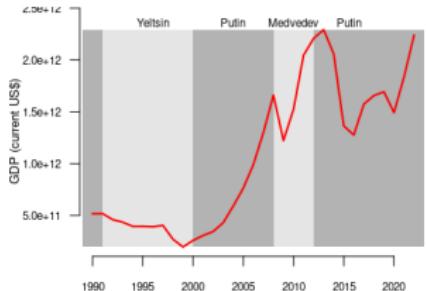


Figure 10: Russia's GDP

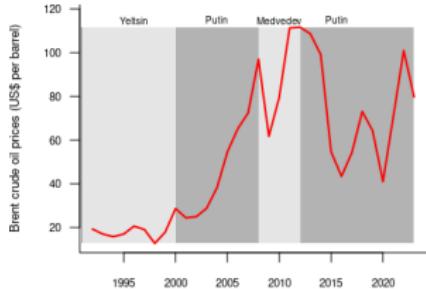


Figure 11: Crude Oil Prices

Foreign and security policy

Military modernization

- reduction in troop numbers in 1990s
- rise in military spending in 2000s
- major reforms started in 2008
- shift away from Soviet-era mass mobilization model
- more activist foreign policy in “near abroad” and beyond
- but comprehensive military reforms never completed
- mismatch between objectives and capabilities

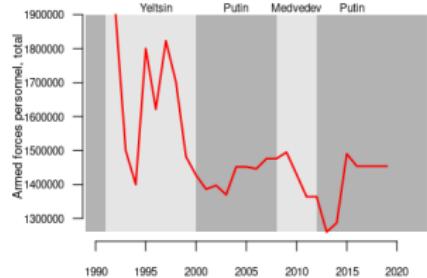


Figure 12: Military Personnel

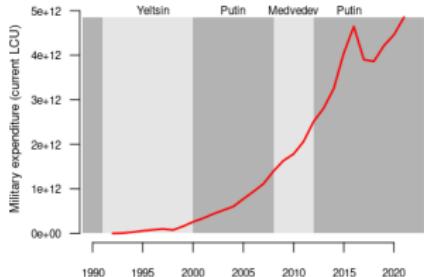


Figure 13: Military Spending

Democracy and civil liberties

Democracy and civil liberties

Putin's first 8 years

- close independent TV media
- raise barriers for elections and parties (5% → 7% barrier in Duma)
- direct appointment of (most) governors and mayors
- remove “against all” option on ballot
- ban “distortion of Soviet role in WWII”



Figure 14: The Democrat

Democracy and civil liberties

From 2012 to 2021

- new restrictions on protests
- restrictions on online media
- criminalize actions that “offend religious feelings”
- criminalize “propaganda of homosexuality to minors”
- ban swearing in the arts
- campaign vs “national traitors”
- domestic violence
decriminalized
- nullification of presidential term limits
- Memorial human rights NGO shut down
- liberal opposition all but extinct



Figure 15: The Czar

Democracy and civil liberties

Since 2022

- last independent media shut down (Rain, Echo of Moscow)
- media required to stick to MoD press releases
- up to 100K ruble fine for publicly “discrediting” Russian army
- 15-year sentence for “knowingly false information” about war
- FB, Twitter, other social media blocked
- new military-patriotic education programs in schools
- culture of denunciation is back



Children in Russia arrested for participation in anti-war protests today
:(

Figure 16: Dangerous People

A new Russia

An emerging state ideology

- rejection of liberal democracy
- militarism
- cult of personality
- cult of victimhood
- “traditional” values
- neo-imperial expansionism
- view of newly independent states (esp. Ukraine) as illegitimate, incapable of self-government
- genocidal rhetoric



Figure 17: Future Soldiers

Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine, 2022-

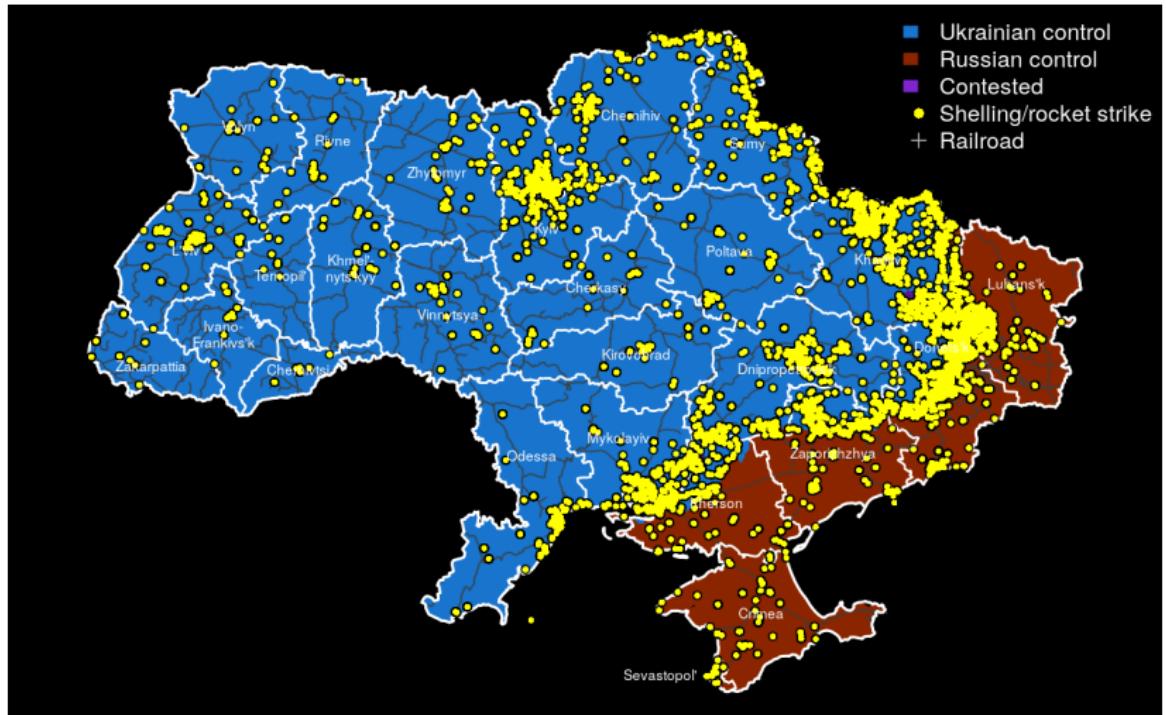


Figure 18: Violence and Territorial Control (as of August 2023)



Figure 19: Bakhmut, Ukraine (May 2023)



Figure 20: PMC Wagner mutiny (June 2023)

Welcome to IGA-677

Why this course? Why now?

Why we are offering this class

- Russia is back at center of U.S. foreign/defense policy
- Russia has started the largest, most destructive war in Europe since WWII
- regional expertise has atrophied since 1990s
- there is a lot we don't know
- time for fundamental rethink?

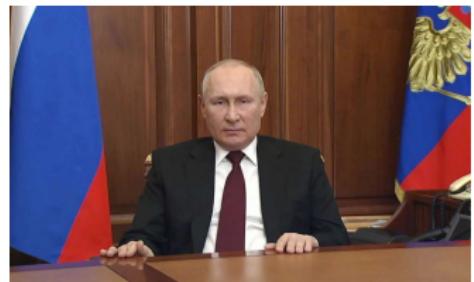


Figure 21: Vladimir Putin

Who is this course for?

Who should take this class

1. those with background in national security, who want to learn more about Russia
2. those with background in Russia, who want to learn more about national security
3. those with no background on Russia or national security, who want a crash course
4. those with background in both, who want a deeper dive



Figure 22: Prospective Student

What are we going to do here?

What are our learning goals?

1. equip you with the *background* needed to follow policy debates on Russia
 - political-economic history of Russia/USSR
 - policy and academic literature on Russia/USSR

2. develop *analytical toolkit* to contribute to these debates
 - how to locate data, primary sources
 - how to do basic program evaluation, military analysis



Figure 23: Bullseye!

What topics will we cover?

1. economic foundations of Russian national security
 - causes and legacy of serfdom
 - collectivization and forced labor
2. internal security
 - (counter-)insurgency
 - security services, repression
3. foreign and defense policy
 - WWII
 - Cold War 1.0
 - post-Soviet defense policy
 - invasion of Ukraine



Figure 24: Serfs



Figure 25: Gulag inmates

How will we learn?

- lectures
- class discussions
- surveys
- group activities
 - class debates
 - crisis simulation
- individual projects
 - policy analysis paper,
or...
 - collect new dataset, or...
 - academic research paper



Figure 26: Do your reading



Figure 27: Be ready to talk

What about grades?

1. attendance/participation (30%)
2. group activities (15% + 15%)
3. final project (40%)

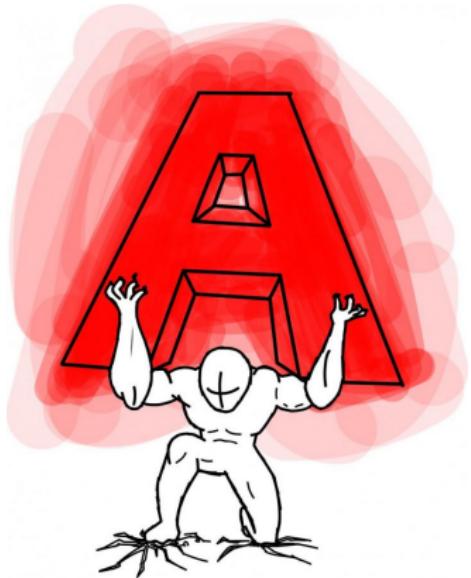


Figure 28: Work hard, get A

END OF FREE PREVIEW

To continue learning, please enroll in IGA-677!

If you're interested...

1. check out syllabus on Canvas or KNet
 - canvas.harvard.edu/courses/125757
2. send me any course-related questions by email
 - yzhukov@hks.harvard.edu
3. sign up for my virtual office hours
 - calendly.com/zhukov-hks
4. come to class on Thursday!
 - Rubinstein G21, 9:00-10:15 AM