

# Russian Security State

## GOVT-5519 / IPOL-3519 / REES-5519

### Lecture 00

Yuri M. Zhukov  
Associate Professor  
Georgetown University

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# What is the **Russian Security State?**

## Russian security state:

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

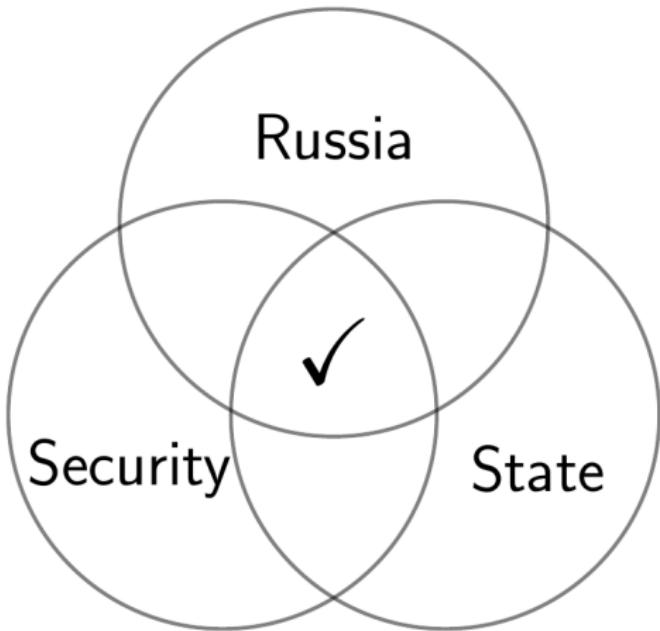


Figure 1: This is us



Figure 2: Map of Russia

# This moment in Russian and global history



Figure 3: Ukraine's Kursk Offensive, August 2024



Figure 4: 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 5: Boris Yeltsin

## Economic trajectory since collapse of USSR

## Economic recovery in 2000s

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

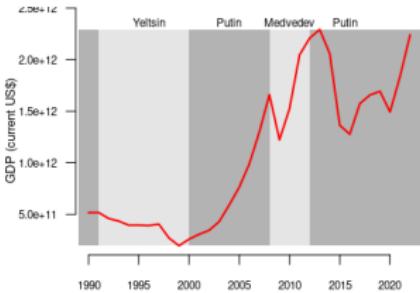


Figure 6: Russia's GDP

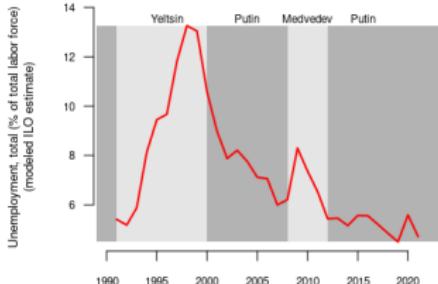


Figure 7: Unemployment

## A more connected Russia

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

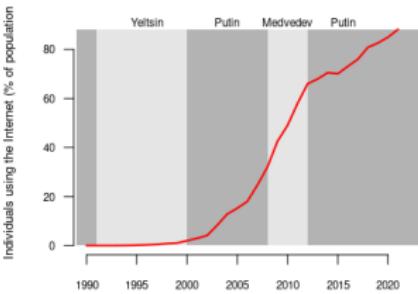


Figure 8: Internet Usage

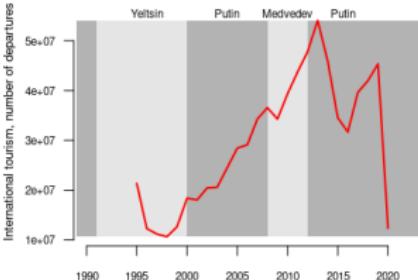


Figure 9: Tourism Departures

## Demographic trends since collapse of USSR

## Demographic rollercoaster

- population decline in 1990s
- population started growing again in 2000s
  - fertility up
  - mortality down
  - life expectancy up
- trade-off: female participation in labor force went down
- population now falling again

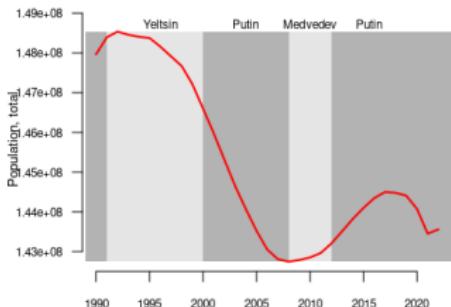


Figure 10: Population

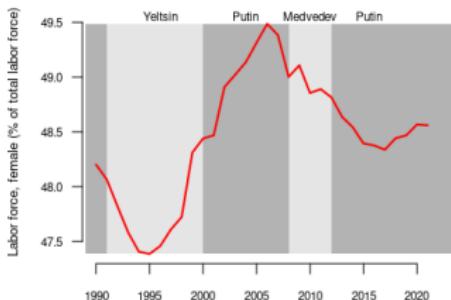


Figure 11: Women Labor Force

## Oil and gas

## How important are commodity prices? (oil, natural gas)

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

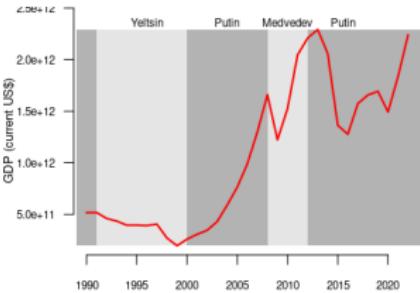


Figure 12: Russia's GDP

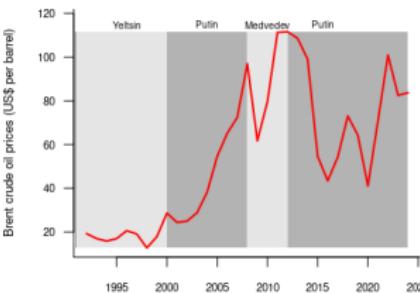


Figure 13: Crude Oil Prices

## Foreign and security policy

## Military modernization

- huge reduction in troop numbers after Soviet collapse  
(interrupted by Chechnya Wars of 1994-1995, 1999-2009)
- rise in military spending in 2000s
- major reforms started in 2008  
(shift away from Soviet-style mass mobilization model)
- but reforms never completed
- now mismatch between military capabilities, political objectives

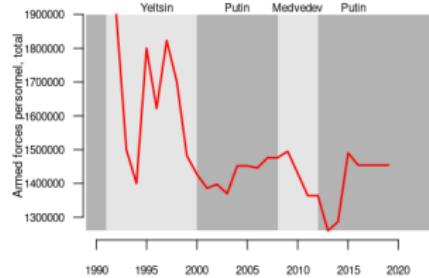


Figure 14: Military Personnel

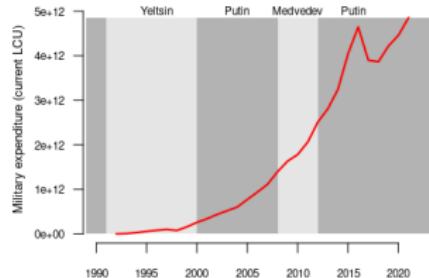


Figure 15: Military Spending

## Democracy and civil liberties

## Democracy and civil liberties

### Putin's first 8 years

- close independent TV media
- raise barriers in elections  
(5% → 7% threshold in Duma)
- direct appointment of (most) governors and mayors
- remove “against all” option on election ballots
- ban “distortion of Soviet role in World War II”



Figure 16: 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
- presidential term limits nullified
- human rights NGOs shut down
- VPNs banned
- repression of liberal opposition



Figure 17: The Czar

## Democracy and civil liberties

Since 2022

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



Figure 18: Dangerous People

## A new Russia

## An emerging state ideology

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



Figure 19: Future Soldiers

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

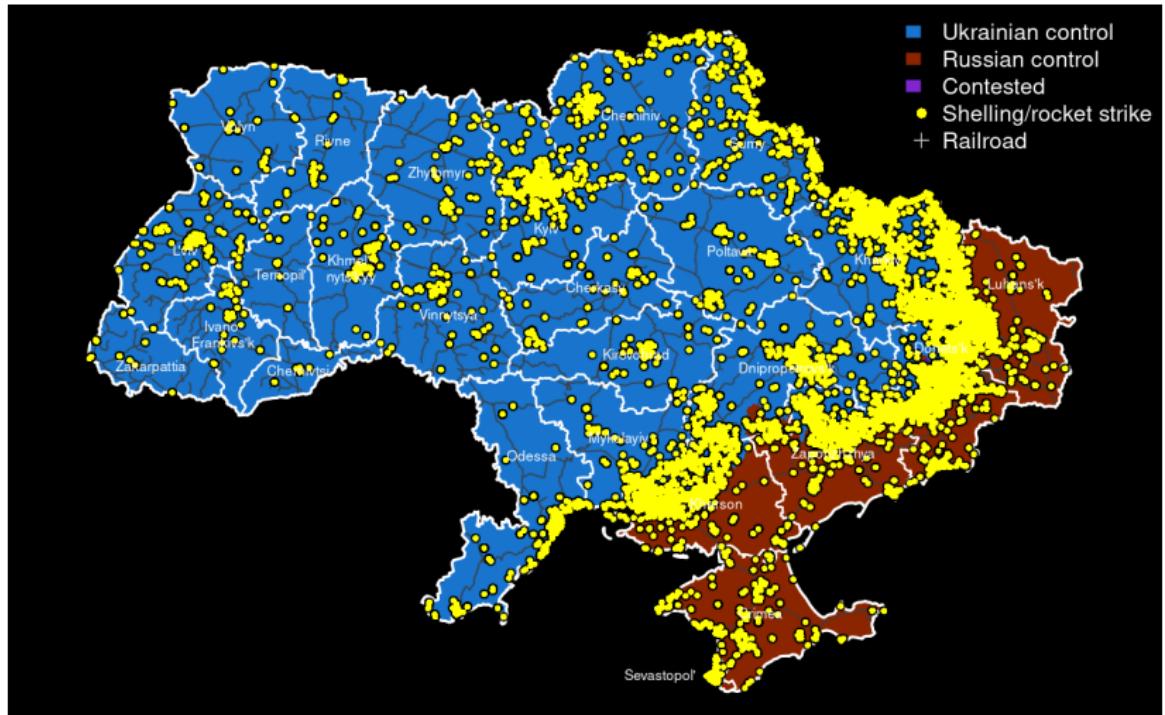


Figure 20: Violence and Territorial Control (as of August 28, 2024)



Figure 21: Bakhmut, Ukraine (May 2023)



Figure 22: PMC Wagner mutiny (June 2023)



Figure 23: Ukraine's Kursk Offensive (August 2024)

# Welcome to the Russian Security State!

# 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?

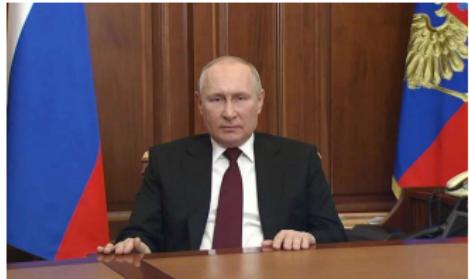


Figure 24: Vladimir Putin

# 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 25: Prospective Student

## Who am I?

**Yuri M. Zhukov**

Associate Professor  
School of Foreign Service  
Department of Government  
Georgetown University



Figure 26: Professor's self-image

## Tell us about yourself!

- please fill out this introductory survey (even if you're just shopping)
- [tinyurl.com/gu-rss-01](http://tinyurl.com/gu-rss-01)



Figure 27: Survey QR Code

# 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 28: 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 29: Serfs



Figure 30: 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 31: Do your reading



Figure 32: Be ready to talk

## What about grades?

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

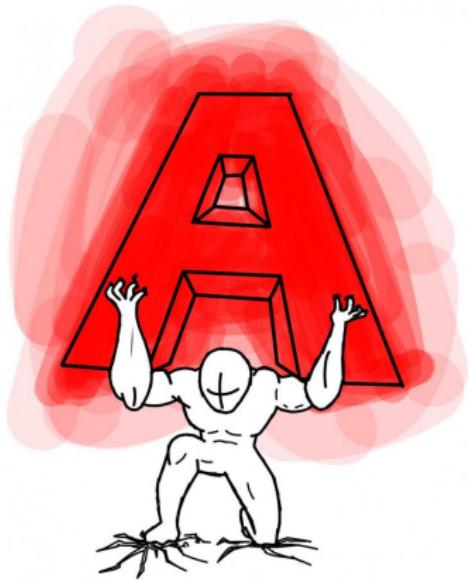


Figure 33: Work hard, get A

# END OF FREE PREVIEW

To continue learning, come back in 1 week!

## More info

1. check out syllabus on Canvas
  - GOVT 5519:  
[georgetown.instructure.com/courses/194592](http://georgetown.instructure.com/courses/194592)
  - IPOL 3519:  
[georgetown.instructure.com/courses/195303](http://georgetown.instructure.com/courses/195303)
  - REES 5519:  
[georgetown.instructure.com/courses/199382](http://georgetown.instructure.com/courses/199382)
2. send me any course-related questions by email
  - [ymz2@georgetown.edu](mailto:ymz2@georgetown.edu)
3. sign up for my virtual office hours
  - [calendly.com/ymz2-georgetown](https://calendly.com/ymz2-georgetown)
4. location and time
  - Walsh 498, TuTh 14:00-15:15