



Jeffrey Bristol April 21, 2021

The National Security Strategy (NSS) dictates America’s transition to “Great Power Competition.” While the 2017 NSS fails to define the term and uses it only once, the tone of the document is rife with its essential idea: The United States is no longer the hegemon and must operate in a global milieu of rising nations whose interests only sometimes align with the United States’ own. Within this context, the NSS dedicates itself to “preserv(ing) peace through strength.”[1] In no environment since the Cold War has the adage *si vis pacem, para bellum*--if one wants peace, (prepare) for war--rung louder or truer. Perhaps nothing is more essential in this effort than asking the question “What is hybrid war?” and then answering the follow-on: “what should we do about it?”

WHAT IS HYBRID WAR?

The Russian General Valery Gerasimov articulated the best-known articulation of hybrid war in his article “The Value of Science Is in the Foresight.”[2] According to Gerasimov, hybrid war combines military activities with the “protest potential of the population.”[3] Local politics provide *entrée* to the Russian military. Information operations shape the environment initially. Once organized protest solidifies, military operators infiltrate covertly. Conventional forces then invade, finalizing the conquest. This cycle, presented by Gerasimov as the result of new technologies and political realities, is hybrid war. Despite this 2016 article’s claims to innovation, the Russian use of hybrid war is much older. In fact, Russia’s Cold War strategy was hybrid war *avant la lettre*. [4]

*... THE SOVIET UNION USED THE COVER OF
PEACEKEEPING, ENSURING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT
AND CIVIL STABILITY AS COVER TO INSERT MILITARY
FORCES TO PRESERVE ITS CONTROL OVER RESTIVE
POPULATIONS.*

that such revolutions were entirely the product of local political activity and involved no U.S. or NATO intervention.[11] Despite the lack of actual NATO involvement, Russian officials have construed lessons learned from what they imagine NATO's role to have been.

Morocco's operations in the Western Sahara show even minor powers using hybrid war. After being fought to a standstill with the POLISARIO in 1991, the Moroccan king drafted a policy encouraging Moroccan immigration into the territories to dilute the native population, derailing a UN-organized independence referendum. The plan succeeded wildly. The referendum was delayed indefinitely. Meanwhile, Morocco governed the territory under military occupation.[12] Thirty years later, Moroccan hybrid warfare seems to have succeeded with American recognition of the annexation.[13]

Hybrid war, despite the hype, is old wine in new bottles.[14] While new media and cyberspace, which supposedly makes hybrid war different from previous forms of war, does change the conflict environment, the heralds' prophecies of heralds foretelling great change in warfare, like most eschatological predictions, are hyperbole at best. Despite changing circumstances, war remains a human phenomenon and human nature never changes. This is why Thucydides and Sun Tzu remain relevant despite their ignorance of contemporary domains of warfare. Nations now, as then, wage war for "fear, honor and interest." [15] Viewed in this lens, hybrid war is really conventional warfare modified to suit the peculiar milieu of our time.

HYBRID WAR IS THEREFORE HYBRID BECAUSE ITS TACTICS ARE JANUS-FACED, SHOWING CONVENTIONAL AGGRESSION TO ONE FOE AND CANNY ASYMMETRY TO ANOTHER.

The primary characteristic of this milieu is the dominance of the U.S. and her allies, especially the NATO alliance. Without their stabilizing effect, actors like Russia and China would engage not in limited warfare with asymmetric aspects--e.g. hybrid war/"Grey Zone" operations--, but in conventional war. Hybrid war is a placeholder for broader conflicts, conflicts which will re-emerge when the system weakens enough that revanchist powers can use fitter strategies to counter expansionist ends.

AMERICAN HEGEMONY, DECLINE AND HYBRID WAR

Given the international system, countries like Russia face a variety of actors with both greater and lesser power than itself, putting her in an asymmetrical world. This difference is important because many consider hybrid war asymmetrical.[16] While partially true, asymmetry isn't universal, but relative and so the label obscures as much as it reveals. The same force may be asymmetrical against one party and symmetrical against another, necessitating strategic dynamism. Russia benefits from this differential, engaging the global stage asymmetrically where she's weak and symmetrically locally where she's strong. She uses arms when attacking targets in her "Near Abroad" that are easily susceptible to Russian pressure but hard for her enemies to defend, places like the Crimea and South Ossetia, while simultaneously refusing to directly engage enemies in the NATO alliance where open Russian aggression is certain to end in military defeat. For these latter targets, Russia engages in information and cyber operations like propaganda, hacking and political interference. This difference explains why countries outside the NATO block like the Ukraine and Georgia are subject to direct military attack while those within it, like Poland and the Baltic states, are subject only to indirect measures. Hybrid war is therefore hybrid because its tactics are Janus-faced, showing conventional aggression to one foe and canny asymmetry to another.



CJCS Meets with Turkish and Russian Counterparts (Petty Officer 2nd Class Dominique Pineiro)

The current international system necessitates hybrid versatility. While one of Russia's main goals is expansionism, an absolute prohibition against changing national borders through aggression forms one of the primary mandates of the postwar order. Decolonizing powers originated this mandate to prevent the very kinds of territorial aggression currently sought by

Russia from affecting relations between decolonizing states.[17] After decolonization's completion, the U.S. and USSR supported this prohibition in order to avoid turning the Cold War hot through the competition of proxy states. After the Soviet Union's collapse, Russia's personal interest in maintaining the peace ended with its imperium of Communism, but America and her allies continued to preserve the rule, in order to ensure the *Pax Americana* and encourage the survival of the global commons.

*WHILE ANTI-EXPANSIONIST NORMS REMAIN VALID, RUSSIA
CANNOT OPENLY INVADE TERRITORY WITHOUT RISKING
UNWINNABLE WARS.*

With the beginning of the War on Terror, American international control slipped from hegemony to dominance. While a general policy of border protection remains ensconced in international custom, many countries, including newly resurgent Russia and China, find it in their own interest to challenge it. As a result, the international system stands at crossroads. On one side, powers supporting the status-quo hold the balance of military and diplomatic power, desiring frozen borders. On the other assemble the revanchists. The international system is sufficiently imbalanced that revanchism has a window, but the system remains powerful enough to stop direct aggression. The tension created manifests most clearly Europe and sets the framework for what we call hybrid war.

NATO opposes Russian expansionism, but the bloc is disunited. While the treaty's formal commitments remain fixed, different countries regard Russia differently. France is friendlier to her than Germany, cleaving the central EU axis.[18] This tension leaves countries like the Ukraine in a suspended state with NATO, neither in nor out of the bloc, rendering all weak. Making things more complicated, many countries' national policies vary from popular sentiment. While Germany remains committed to NATO, its people do not feel so devoted.[19] Sweden remains outside the bloc yet conducts military exercises with members.[20] These fractures open geo-political chinks in the alliance's armor for Russia to exploit.

*CONFLICT EXISTS AT MANY LEVELS WITH MANY
VARIATIONS AND POSSIBLE USES, RUNNING THE GAMUT
FROM INFORMATION OPERATIONS TO ECONOMIC
PRESSURE TO OPEN WARFARE.*

Hybrid war's dual-level strategy infiltrates this gap. While anti-expansionist norms remain valid, Russia cannot openly invade territory without risking unwinnable wars. Russia knows if it operates surreptitiously, it can create environments where invasion transmutes into "peacekeeping,"[21] making de facto expansion palatable in an environment with many conflict-adverse opponents. Russia affects its exploitation of this gap by altering strategies throughout the course of conflict, shifting from asymmetrical to symmetrical strategies as needed.

While Russia relies on asymmetric strategies during initial operational phases, she engages in symmetric action for the Enabling Civil Authority, Stabilizing and Domination phases. During these two periods, Russia inserts military personnel under increasingly open guises, escalating, as in the Crimea, from "little green men," to whole units "on leave," to uniformed troops. When the cycle ends, Russia actually controls the territory it invaded even if it lacks international recognition. This de facto government exists in both South Ossetia and the Crimea. Given that no major powers are willing to risk conflict to oust Russia, possessing actual control over territory matters more than international recognition for Russia's purposes, possession, it seems, is nine-tenths of the law in both power and property. Challenging this possession where it is made and preventing it elsewhere is the major challenge the Russian strategy poses to the NATO bloc.

WHAT TO DO?

Peace never reigns when great powers compete. Conflict exists perpetually. The Phases of Joint Operations recognizes this truth by describing times of peace as "shaping phase(s)" where military operations obtain at all times.[22] Ubiquity of conflict does not mean ubiquity of violence, however. Conflict exists at many levels with many variations and possible uses, running the gamut from information operations to economic pressure to open warfare. Russia understands this well. She uses a range of operations from quiet, non-attributable cyber

operations to outright military invasion depending on which tool is appropriate to achieve her ends. Hybrid war, therefore, is a formal strategy with discrete parts. So long as the US and her allies understand this, they can defeat it.

Understanding Russia's intention variation of strategy allows us to interpret her thoughts and intentions based on her actions. If Russia engages in open military operations, she feels strong. If she engages in purely information warfare, she feels weak. Given that Russia feels the need to mix her strategies between the covert and the overt, one infers that she does not feel generally confident of her strength beyond certain confined areas. In other words, the fact that Russia relies on hybrid warfare is a sign of her weakness, not of her strength.

AS RUSSIA SUCCEEDS USING ITS HYBRID WAR STRATEGIES, SHE WILL GAIN CONSEQUENT CONFIDENCE, LEADING TO HYBRID WAR'S OBSOLESCENCE AND THE RE-EMERGENCE OF CONVENTIONAL WAR.

One must remember, however, that success begets success. This poses hybrid war's greatest risk. If its successes succeed too well, the extant conventions against aggressive territorial expansion, the very conventions which help hold the NATO alliance together, will lose force through subversion. As Russia succeeds using its hybrid war strategies, she will gain consequent confidence, leading to hybrid war's obsolescence and the re-emergence of conventional war. Russia will then target a wider range of states with direct military power. If nations continue to ignore NATO treaty obligations and do not form a solid front, popular reticence within NATO countries will make even diplomatic objections to revanchism, let alone armed contest, impossible.



NATO Defense Ministers, 2020 (Tech. Sgt. Cody Ramirez)

As it stands, France already looks the other way when Russia engages in expansionist action. Britain, America's staunchest ally is now disengaged from the EU and could support American efforts only with difficulty. In a world with a fractured NATO, Russian armies could operate freely, able to attack the Baltic states and to skirmish on the borders of Finland and Poland (potentially using Belarussian proxies against the latter). Such a state of affairs, which Russia can achieve incrementally via hybrid war, would collapse the postwar order at relatively little cost to Russia.

The U.S. and NATO must answer hybrid war's challenge with measures as serious as the stakes. This means not only having the right strategy, but also the right personnel and bureaucratic structures in place to counter the Russian threat. A proper mentality is equally important. While never precipitating armed conflict, NATO must never appear unwilling to finish a war once started. It must even be willing to finish wars that Russia only half starts, knowing that Russia fears NATO and has more to lose in a war than NATO itself does. This determination means NATO forces must be willing to train troops to fight Russian invaders whether in uniform or out. Training is especially essential when a country is being invaded, not just before or after. A failure to engage in either preemptive training or training support post-invasion was NATO's greatest failure in the Ukraine crisis. While the U.S. especially is heavily engaged in preemptive military training, such as in the Baltics, it has shied away from training missions in countries engaged in active conflict with Russia.[23]

WHEN DIRECTLY ATTACKED, AS HAPPENS REGULARLY, RETALIATION IN KIND MAY BE NECESSARY, ESPECIALLY WHEN MINIMAL CIVILIAN IMPACT IS POSSIBLE.

The international component of hybrid war relies on both military and diplomatic action. Countermeasures must include both. Russia uses media like RT and Facebook as well as direct cyber-attacks.[24] While NATO mustn't respond to every cyber-attack in kind it can make use of

excellent media operations, like Voice of America, developed in the Cold War.[25] NATO must update these for the current media landscape and deploy them as countermeasures to combat the Information Operations portion of Russian hybrid campaigns.

NATO should publish information about Russian cyber-attacks widely and provide, free of charge or request, antidotes to Russian malware. NATO countries do this, but such measures should be explicated as responses to Russian aggression, declaring her activities as criminal. When directly attacked, as happens regularly, retaliation in kind may be necessary, especially when minimal civilian impact is possible. Publishing the details of Russia's attacks makes deniability more difficult, thereby forcing Russia either to desist or suffer the consequences of its actions, making the covert aspect of hybrid war overt.

Diplomacy is a key ingredient in defeating hybrid war just as soft power is a key element in hybrid war's success. Firm, heavily engaged diplomacy will help to solidify the NATO alliance as well as bring new countries into the American-led alliance. An expansion of NATO's reach is a reduction of Russia's. Realizing the opportunities of such diplomacy is difficult, however. In the U.S. particularly, diplomacy and military forces often oppose one another in practice. This results from a cabinet structure separating the two departments and pitting them against each other as budgetary adversaries. Diplomats and military officers should operate in tandem, attending each other's schools, gaining credentials in each department. Diplomats should serve in the Reserves; military officers as diplomatic staff other than as attachés. State should include them in diplomatic missions, not merely for military expertise, but as active diplomats in exchange programs. This will increase their interoperability and allow each to leverage the talents of the other, creating hybrid defense to hybrid aggression.

*RUSSIA FEARS NOTHING MORE THAN A THREAT TO ITS
NUCLEAR ARSENAL. AEGIS ASHORE OPENS THE
POSSIBILITY OF NEUTRALIZING A RUSSIAN NUCLEAR
STRIKE.*

The recent U.S.-facilitated rapprochement in the Middle East shows informal cross-over and America's successes in uniting Israel with its erstwhile enemies shows how she might build alliances to confront Russian aggression, but such ad hoc integration happens too often at the State Department's expense.[26] Far from collaborative and supportive, such uncoordinated action hampers America's influence by undermining diplomats, creating duplicative chains of authority and teaching other countries that diplomats mightn't have the final diplomatic word. This confusion undermines unity of effort and sunders hybrid action into discrete, uncooperative parts.

NATO must learn aggressive diplomacy. Aggressive diplomacy involves using allies in co-operation to pressure, isolate and diminish threats while simultaneously increasing one's own strength. Establishing Aegis Ashore in Poland exemplifies aggressive diplomacy.[27] Russia fears nothing more than a threat to its nuclear arsenal. Aegis Ashore opens the possibility of neutralizing a Russian nuclear strike. It also provides Poland a position of strength vis-a-vis a potentially hostile neighbor. Linking the establishment of Aegis in Poland with Russian aggression will send a clear message both to Russia that her actions have consequences as well as communicating to Poland and America's other allies about our enduring commitment to mutual defense. Moreover NATO must not take this action secretly. The alliance must communicate to Russia that its installation is a consequence of hybrid operations. The establishment shouldn't be transactional, but irrevocable. Otherwise, allies become bargaining chips, a utilitarian mindset whose exploitation Russia understands too well. The Aegis system should inform Russia that when she aggresses, she suffers irreversible consequences.

Far from deterring discussion, as commonly believed, consequences are the only way to bend Russian calculus towards cooperation. Without them, Russia learns she can gain her desires unilaterally through aggression, which is faster and surer than diplomatic discourse. NATO has thus far taught the easy lesson. Now, the allies must force Russia to the table to end hybrid war.

*ONLY THE FIG-LEAF OF DENIABILITY, THE LACK OF
AMERICAN CASUALTIES AND THE DECIMATION OF RUSSIAN
FORCES PREVENTED THE ASSAULT FROM CONSIDERATION
AS HOSTILITIES.*

NATO expansion remains the ultimate deterrent to Russian expansionism precisely because Russia knows it cannot win a war with the alliance. Embracing Ukraine or Georgia sends signals Russia can't ignore, shaking Russia as deeply as her invasion of the Crimea shook Eastern Europe. This step is difficult and may forestall diplomatic discussion, but if Russia takes further action against a country in its ambit, admitting one or more of these countries may be necessary to communicate the limits against her behavior. The present immunity of the Baltic states, all NATO members, from Russia's hardest manipulations proves membership's value.

Non-military means of dissuasion also exist. Diplomats should negotiate favorable trading agreements with countries bordering Russia since economic interdependence is a gateway to Russian intervention and ultimate invasion. NATO should endeavor to sell the countries in Russia's "near-abroad" subsidized petroleum products, build pipelines from Scandinavia to the Baltics, in direct response to Russia's going the other way, i.e. Nord Stream, and reform regional infrastructure to eliminate dependence on Russia, permanently reducing her sphere of influence and making hybrid operations more difficult.[28]

These actions will disturb Russia. She has indicated previously that she considers them nearly a declaration of war. One wonders, however, what hybrid war actions in the Crimea, Syria or Georgia constitute other than acts of war? In Syria, Russians have already engaged U.S. troops directly.[29] Only the fig-leaf of deniability, the lack of American casualties and the decimation of Russian forces prevented the assault from consideration as hostilities. Imagine what would have happened if Russian troops had been, not victorious, but just more successful? If the U.S. had suffered casualties? War would have been likely.

Displaying strength, something NATO has yet to do, is in NATO's and not Russia's interest. With Russia slowly eroding NATO's strength, Russia can only stand to gain from delayed action and NATO can only lose. Strength wins nothing if not used. By remaining passive and engaging only in sanctioning activity that Russia easily evades, NATO accomplishes little but making revanchism successful and its own defeat inevitable.

Jeffrey Bristol is an officer in the U.S. Navy Reserve and a veteran of the U.S. Army. He holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology, works as an independent scholar and practices law in Tampa, Florida.

The views expressed are the author's alone and do not reflect those of the U.S. Navy, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

Have an idea for your own article? Follow the logo below, and you too can contribute to The Bridge:



Enjoy what you just read? Please help spread the word to new readers by sharing it on social media.

Header Image: Anti-terrorist Operation in Eastern Ukraine, 2016 (Ministry of Defense, Ukraine).

NOTES:

- [1] White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America, December 2017* (Washington D.C.: The White House, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>), 25-27.
- [2] Gerasimov, Valery. "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight," Coalson, Robert (trans.) *Military Review*: January-February (2016): 23.
- [3] Gerasimov, 24.
- [4] Kuzio, Taras; D'Anieri, Paul. "The Soviet Origins of Russian Hybrid War," *E-International Relations*: June 17, 2018, accessed February 3, 2021, <https://www.e-ir.info/2018/06/17/the-soviet-origins-of-russian-hybrid-warfare/>.
- [5] See Kramer, Mark. "The Soviet Union and the 1956 Crises in Hungary and Poland: Reassessments and New Findings," *Journal of Contemporary History* 33(2): 163. See Valenta, Jiri. *Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia, 1968: Anatomy of a Decision*. (Annapolis: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).
- [6] See Yordanov, Radoslav. *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa during the Cold War: Between Ideology and Pragmatism*. (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2016)
- [7] Britannica, s.v. The Communist International, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Soviet-Union/The-Communist-International>.
- [8] Joint Publications, *JP 3-0 Joint Operations*, Incorporating Change 1 22 Oct 2018. Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, 2018, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_0ch1.pdf, V-13.
- [9] JOC, *Irregular Warfare*, Version 1.0. Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, 2007, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/concepts/joc_iw_v1.pdf?ver=2017-12-28-162020-260. 23-24
- [10] See Cleveland, Charles T. & Egel, Daniel. *The American Way of Irregular War: An Analytical Memoir* (Santa Monica, Ca: Rand Corporation, 2020), https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PEA300/PEA301-1/RAND_PEA301-1.pdf.
- [11] Fridman, Ofer. "On the 'Gerasimov Doctrine': Why the West Fails to beat Russia to the Punch," *Prism* 8(2): 100, https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/prism/prism_8-2/PRISM_8-2_Fridman.pdf?ver=2019-09-17-231059-263.
- [12] International Crisis Group. "Western Sahara: Out of the Impasse," *Middle East/North Africa Report* 66, 11 June 2007, accessed on February 3, 2021, <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/66-western-sahara-out-of-the-impasse.pdf>.
- [13] Fakir, Intissar. "What's Next for the Western Sahara Conflict?" *Lawfare*, December 18, 2020, accessed on February 3, 2021, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/whats-next-western-sahara-conflict>.
- [14] See Kaldor, Mary. *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).; Tait, Scott. "Hybrid warfare: the new face of global competition," *Financial Times*: October 14, 2019, accessed February 3, 2021, <https://www.ft.com/content/ffe7771e-e5bb-11e9-9743-db5a370481bc>.

- [15] Thucydides, translated by R.B. Strassler (ed). *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to The Peloponnesian War* (New York: Touchstone, 1998), 15.
- [16] See e.g. Fleming, T. Casey, Qualkenbush, Erik L. & Chapa, Anthony M. “Top Threat to Business, National Security and the American Dream: Detailing the New Global Competitive Model Based on Cyber and Asymmetrical Hybrid Warfare.” *The Small Wars Journal*, February 5, 2018. Accessed April 2, 2021, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/new-global-competitive-model-based-cyber-and-asymmetrical-hybrid-warfare>. Schroefl, Josef & Kaufman, Stuart J. “Hybrid Actors, Tactical Variety: Rethinking Asymmetric and Hybrid War,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 37(10): 862.
- [17] Herbst, Jeffrey. “The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa,” *International Organization* 43(4): 673.
- [18] Heng, Cui. “France and Russia Benefit from Special Relationship.” *Global Times*, July 9, 2020, accessed on February 3, 2021, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1194080.shtml>.
- [19] Mutzel, Daniel. “Majority of Germans wouldn’t support defending NATO allies in Russia conflict,” *Euractiv*, May 24, 2017, accessed on February 3, 2021, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/majority-of-germans-wouldnt-support-defending-nato-allies-in-russia-conflict/>.
- [20] Vandiver, John. “SEALs, Green Berets join large defense drill in Sweden.” *Stars & Stripes*, November 13, 2020, accessed on February 3, 2021, <https://www.stripes.com/news/europe/seals-green-berets-join-large-defense-drill-in-sweden-1.651974>.
- [21] Gerasimov, 27.
- [22] JP 3-0 Joint Operations, V-8.
- [23] See e.g. Vandiver, John. “New US special operations site activated in heart of the Baltics,” *Stars & Stripes*. December 3, 2020, Accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.stripes.com/news/europe/new-us-special-operations-site-activated-in-heart-of-the-baltics-1.654032>. Burton, Janice, ed. “Resistance in the Baltics,” *Special Warfare* 32(3), https://www.soc.mil/SWCS/SWmag/archive/SW3203/32-3_JUL-SEP_2019_web.pdf.
- [24] Helmus, Todd C. et al. *Russian Social Media Influence: Understanding Russian Propaganda in Eastern Europe* (Santa Monica, Ca.: RAND Corporation, 2018), https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2200/RR2237/RAND_RR2237.pdf, 19-26.
- [25] See Cowan, Geoffrey. “Why the Voice of America Remains a Vital Force in the World,” *Center on Public Diplomacy Perspectives* (Center for Public Diplomacy, 2017, <https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/sites/uscpublicdiplomacy.org/files/Why%20the%20Voice%20of%20America%20Remains%20a%20Vital%20Force.pdf>).
- [26] Nissenbaum, Dion. “A Secret U.S. Rescue in Yemen Played a Role in Mideast Peace Deal.” *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 19, 2020, accessed Feb. 7, 2021, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-secret-u-s-rescue-in-yemen-played-a-role-in-mideast-peace-deal-11603099801>.
- [27] Judson, Jed. “Poland’s Aegis Ashore delayed to 2022 with new way forward coming soon,” *Defense News*, Feb. 18, 2020, accessed on Feb. 7, 2021, <https://www.defensenews.com/smr/federal-budget/2020/02/18/polands-aegis-ashore-delayed-to-2022-with-new-way-forward-coming-soon/>.
- [28] Nord Stream Gas Pipeline, <https://www.gazprom.com/projects/nord-stream/>. Accessed Feb 7, 2021.
- [29] Gibbons-Neff, Thomas. “How a 4-Hour Battle Between Russian Mercenaries and U.S. Commands Unfolded in Syria,” *The New York Times*, May 24, 2018, accessed Feb. 7, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/24/world/middleeast/american-commandos-russian-mercenaries-syria.html>.