



Russian Nuclear Strategy after the Cold War

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2 Nuclear strategy variation in Russia

Russian declaratory nuclear strategy

1993: Yeltsin's strategy deterrence oriented

2000: Putin expands role of nuclear weapons

2010: Medvedev restricts NW use

2014: Putin emphasizes conv deterrence

3 What explains Russian nuclear strategy change?

- 1) Changes in military preferences on how to fight wars
 - Nuclear vs conventional
 - Doctrinal vs capability
- 2) Military dominates strategy formulation
 - Intellectually
 - Institutionally
- 3) Civil-military power distribution affects coherence

4 So what?

Other nuclear weapons states pay attention and adjust strategy

Declaratory strategy, capabilities and plans

- dearth of information in Russian case
- possibility Russian model is different

Military monopolization limits Putin's power



5 Methodology and sources

Balance of power model

SIPRI Yearbook
Nuclear Notebooks
Military Balance

Civil military relations model

military journal articles
civilian journal articles
Laws, decrees, regulations
News reporting, protagonist
accounts, archival materials

6 Findings

1993

- Mixed balancing
- Yeltsin consciously divided and ruled security and defense policy
- Military politicized and divided

2000

- Significant doctrinal balancing
- Putin personally oversaw revision of Russian nuclear strategy in RFSC
- Still: no evidence of civilian input

2010

- Conventional balancing
- Significant increase in civilian control
- Military preference shift toward larger conventional focus

7 Conclusions and implications

Military dominance over nuclear strategy
has few analogues in West

- Instrumental to understand Russian strategy content and trajectory
- Militarization of Russian foreign and security policy
- Implications for how to deter and/or engage Russia