



Nuclear Intimidation

A long story of Russian success in deterrence



Two-way Deterrence

Russia and the West both know how to successfully deter. The difference is, Russia does it and the West doesn't.

Research Paper
Russia and Eurasia Programme
March 2023

Russian nuclear intimidation

How Russia uses nuclear threats to shape Western responses to aggression

Keir Giles

CHATHAM HOUSE

March 2023

Research Paper
Russia and Eurasia Programme
September 2021

What deters Russia

Enduring principles for responding to Moscow

Keir Giles

September 2021

Report
Russia and Eurasia Programme | June 2023

How to end Russia's war on Ukraine

Safeguarding Europe's future, and the dangers of a false peace

Timothy Ash, Annette Bohr, Kateryna Busol, Keir Giles, John Lough, Orysia Lutsevych, James Nixey, James Sherr, Simon Smith and Kataryna Wolczuk

July 2023



Indicators of Russian success

Huge return on investment for influence campaigns



March 2023

- **Success for Russia.** Long-term campaign of image transferral changes terms of debate on escalation.
- **Default assumption** that miscalculation => uncontrollable escalation => nuclear exchanges.
- **Get out of jail free card** for Russia to escape consequences for its actions – and keep the war (mostly) in Ukraine.
- **Escalation dominance** replaced with escalation avoidance, because “Putin never de-escalates”.



Changing how we think

Inculcation through repetition of ideas that favour Russia





Fostering fear of escalation

Long-term persistent campaign earns Russia impunity





Fostering fear of escalation

Long-term persistent campaign earns Russia impunity

"There is a very high risk of unintended war, as a result of miscalculation in cyberspace, air and water. There is the risk of escalation of an unintended war to a nuclear level."

Dmitry Suslov, speaking at Transatlantic Forum on Russia, Rome, 7 October 2019.

 РИЯ НОВОСТИ

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The United States warned of nuclear strikes in the event of a war between Russia and Ukraine

19Fortyfive author Davis warns of nuclear disaster in case of war between Russia and Ukraine



 RadioFreeEurope
RadioLiberty

RUSSIA

Top British Commander Warns Of Soaring Risk Of Russia-West War

November 13, 2021 13:47 GMT
UPDATED November 13, 2021 17:15 GMT
By **RFE/RL**





Fostering fear of escalation

Long-term persistent campaign earns Russia impunity

"There is a very high risk of unintended war, as a result of miscalculation in cyberspace, air and water. There is the risk of escalation of an unintended war to a nuclear level."


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Don't risk triggering new world war by responding to Russian Black Sea aggression, RAF pilots told

RAF Typhoon jets deployed to Romania, where they are helping to police Nato airspace on border with Ukraine

By Jack Hardy IN BUCHAREST
7 April 2022 · 9:00pm



Fostering fear of escalation

Long-term persistent campaign earns Russia impunity



Russia-1 TV, 29 April 2022



Mythologising Russia's response to challenge

Playing on unwillingness to think critically

☰

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The Atlantic

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Vladimir Putin and the Parable of the 'Cornered Rat'

We may be getting the moral of the Russian leader's childhood story all wrong.

By Uri Friedman



Illustration by The Atlantic; Source: Getty.

ARGUMENT

An expert's point of view on a current event.

Why Putin Will Never Agree to De-escalate

Regardless of Ukraine's counteroffensive, Russia is bracing for a long war.

By **Maxim Samorukov**, a fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center.

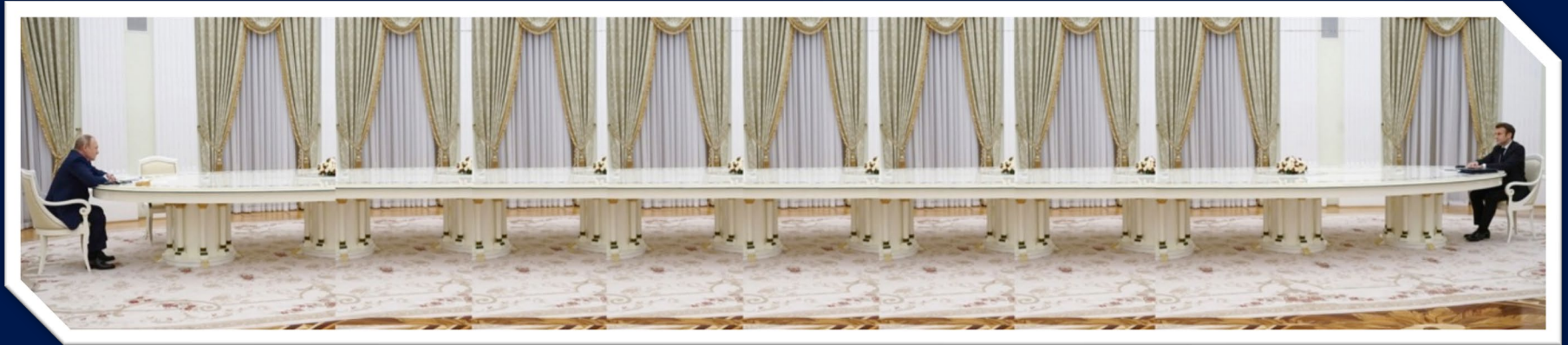
All this leaves Russia with only the option of de-escalation toward a stalemate, other than nuclear escalation (P7). But experience tells us that **Vladimir Putin never de-escalates**. Also, Ukraine's interest is to resist slipping into a low-intensity stalemate: dependent as it is on its allies' active and material support and its people's resilience in the face of incredible suffering, it cannot afford to return to a frozen conflict. With a weakened Russia seeking to slow things down, Ukraine will want to press its advantage, which leaves us with nuclear escalation.

The Kremlin statement appeared to stress that President Putin ordered his troops to stop fighting not because he was de-escalating - **Putin never de-escalates** - but because he had listened to an appeal from the head of the Russian Orthodox Church.



Messaging over Ukraine, 2021-22

“Now look here, Vladimir old chap...”



We have highly detailed intelligence, and know exactly what you are planning to do.

But we're definitely not going to get in your way.



February 2022: Green light for Putin

Once deterrence was ruled out, war was inevitable.



POLITICS

Pentagon orders departure of U.S. troops in Ukraine as Russia crisis escalates

PUBLISHED SAT, FEB 12 2022-9:49 AM EST UPDATED MON, FEB 14 2022-3:10 PM EST

AP

Russia-Ukraine war Trending News NFL Draft COVID-19 Met Gala

US ramps up Ukraine warning, says Russia may invade any day

By MATTHEW LEE, AAMER MADHANI and VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV February 12, 2022

UKRAINE CRISIS

Britain to pull troops out of Ukraine

Russia could invade in days, warn Americans

Larisa Brown, Moscow | Catherine Philp, Diplomatic Correspondent | Steven Swinford | Henry Zeffman

Saturday February 12 2022, 10.30am, The Times

Canadian troops retreat from Ukraine amid threat of Russian invasion

NATHAN VANDERKLIPPE > INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT

LVIV, UKRAINE

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 13, 2022



2022-23: Brakes on aid to Ukraine

Direct confirmation for Russia that threats work.

Olaf Scholz won't release the Leopards - here's why

After breaking away from decades of cosy relations with Russia, Germany is reluctant to unilaterally escalate for the sake of Ukraine.

By Joe Barnes, BRUSSELS CORRESPONDENT

20 January 2023 • 10:25am

'DIRECT CONFLICT' Joe Biden warns of 'World War Three' after personally halting plans to send MiG fighter jets from Poland to Ukraine

[Claudia Aoraha](#)

Published: 22:58, 11 Mar 2022 | Updated: 12:31, 12 Mar 2022

Ukraine war should not escalate into Russia-NATO war, German Chancellor says

Olaf Scholz urges caution amid growing demands for Germany to send battle tanks to Ukraine

Ayhan Simsek | 18.01.2023

Why Biden and the White House keep talking about World War III



Analysis by [Aaron Blake](#)

Staff writer

March 17, 2022 at 4:57 p.m. EDT



War termination advocacy

Reaching a crescendo whenever Ukraine holds the advantage

The West's Weapons

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U.S. milit
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By Samuel Cha
analyst at the P

FINANCIAL TIMES myFT

Opinion War
Western
without
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be a hot war
SAMUEL CHARAP

The Wisdom of U.S.

Restraint

As in the C
Wish Mos
By Samuel Cha
September 12,

Don't Rule Out Diplomacy in Ukraine

Bide
and
By Sar
October

An Unwinnable War

Washington Needs an Endgame in Ukraine

By Samuel Charap
July/August 2023

Published on June 5, 2023



Turning up the dial

These people get very upset if you ignore them



June 2023

РОССИЯ
В ГЛОБАЛЬНОЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ

26.09.2022

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ДМИТРИЙ ТРЕНИН
Профессор-исследователь факультета мировой экономики и мировой политики Национального исследовательского университета «Высшая школа экономики», ведущий научный сотрудник Национального исследовательского института мировой экономики и международных отношений им. Е.М. Примакова РАН.

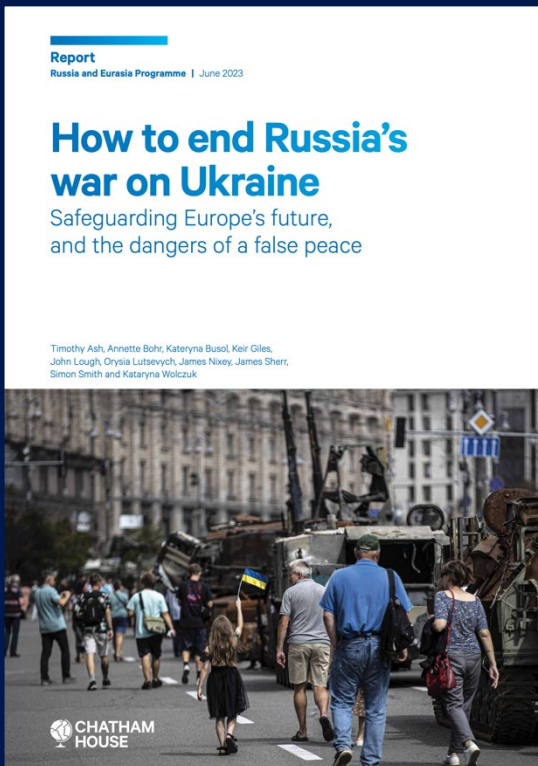
ФЁДОР ЛУКЬЯНОВ
Главный редактор журнала «Россия в глобальной политике» с момента его основания в 2002 году. Председатель Президиума Совета по внешней и оборонной политике России с 2012 года. Директор по научной работе Международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай». Профессор-исследователь Национального исследовательского университета «Высшая школа экономики».

September 2022



Outcomes

Risk assessment or decision paralysis?



July 2023

- **Chatham House Russia-watchers conclude:** risk of “significant escalation” by Russia is minimal... but increases with each failure to respond to Russian actions.
- **Defeat in Ukraine** can be absorbed by Russia’s leadership without catastrophic upheaval.
- **Overt nuclear use** by Russia brings no benefits even on the Kremlin’s warped scale of success and failure.



More where that came from

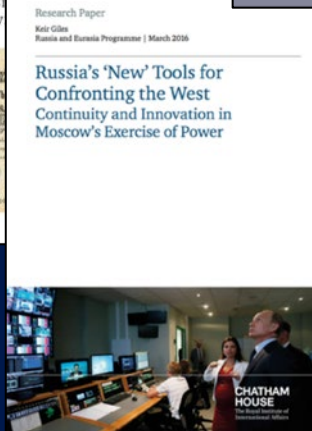
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2015



2019



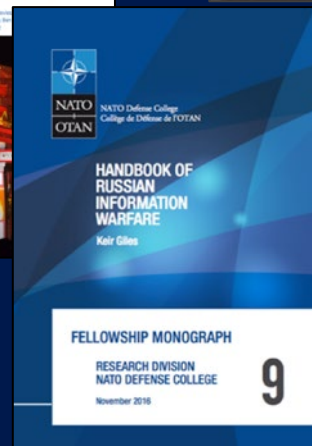
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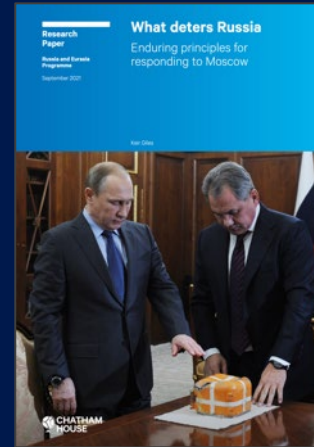
2017



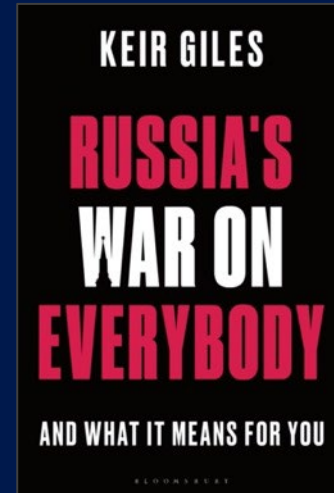
2021



2016



2021





November 2022




Thank you.

 @KeirGiles, @CSRC_UK

 +44 7891 335 982

 keir.giles@conflictstudies.org.uk

 Northamptonshire, UK