

Defence Committee

Oral evidence: Russia: implications for UK defence and security, HC 763

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Members present: Dr Julian Lewis (Chair), Richard Benyon, Douglas Chapman, Mr James Gray, Mrs Madeleine Moon, Jim Shannon, Ruth Smeeth, Mr John Spellar and Bob Stewart

Questions 32–106

Witnesses: **Dr Bobo Lo**, Independent Analyst, **Mr Peter Pomerantsev**, Senior Fellow, Legatum Institute, and **Dr Igor Sutyagin**, Senior Research Fellow, the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), gave evidence.

Q32 Chair: Welcome everybody to this session on our study into Russia and the implications for UK defence and security. We have two panels today. I would like the three members of the first panel to identify themselves and their role for the purposes of the record.

Dr Lo: My name is Bobo Lo. I am an independent analyst and an associate fellow with both Chatham House and the French Institute of International Relations. I have written a number of books on Russian foreign policy. A few years ago I wrote “Axis of Convenience” on the Russia-China relationship, and most recently—last year—I wrote a book called “Russia and the New World Disorder”. I am very happy and honoured to answer all your questions, but the areas where I can perhaps be of most use to you are Russian strategic culture and the motivations behind Russia’s military interventions in Syria and Ukraine, and I can maybe offer some recommendations for UK policy makers.

Mr Pomerantsev: My name is Peter Pomerantsev. I am a senior fellow at the Legatum Institute, which is a public policy and educational think-tank in London. I run a project about propaganda across the world. I lived in Russia for a long time and wrote a book about Russian propaganda called “Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible”. The main thing that I can focus on is the idea of information war, which might actually be a bit of an erroneous term—weaponised information, hybrid war and how Russia tries to use information and propaganda to advance its interests and subvert the generic West.

Dr Sutyagin: I am Dr Igor Sutyagin, senior research fellow at the Royal United Services Institute. My responsibility is Russian studies, mainly political and military issues of Russian policy. I recently finished a RUSI study on the new emerging and modernised conventional and slightly unconventional capabilities of the Russian armed forces.

Chair: Thank you very much indeed. This session is scheduled to last for 45 minutes, so there may be occasions where, according to the nature of the questions asked, not every member of the panel feels it necessary to comment on every question. We won't mind that at all; it will enable us to drill down further in other respects. May I ask Madeleine Moon to start off?

Q33 Mrs Moon: It would be helpful if we could start with a clear picture of the extent and key components of Russia's military capabilities.

Dr Sutyagin: Maybe I could start by providing some cumulative numbers from the RUSI study that I mentioned, which is about the Russian variant of very high readiness troops to deploy in areas of conflict or in preparation for conflict areas. That is very impressive, because within 24 to 48 hours—probably closer to 48 hours—Russian armed forces would be able to deploy between 11,000 and 13,000 light infantry and reconnaissance troops. Those would consist of approximately 12 battalion tactical groups of everyone—airmen, soldiers, marines—and 14 to 18 battalions of special reconnaissance units, or Spetsnaz. Those might be augmented within the next 24 to 48 hours by approximately 24 battalion tactical groups of manoeuvring units—motorised rifle units—and up to five tank battalion tactical groups, giving together up to 28,000 to 30,000 troops with 120 to 150 artillery pieces and up to 150 main battle tanks.

Those are the forces that Russia can deploy within four days. That is approximately the time when the NATO VJTF will be ready to deploy parts of its 5,000 elements. That is six to 10 times more than NATO will be ready to do. In approximately 48 hours, Russia can raise but not deploy up to 45,000 to 47,000 troops altogether, including those that I mentioned, which will have up to 500 to 600 artillery pieces and between 250 and 400 main battle tanks. Russia can deploy up to 60,000 combat troops within approximately two to three weeks, and sustain this for approximately six to 12 months. That is the scope of the forces which NATO would have to deal with in the case of any emergency.

Q34 Mrs Moon: You talked about personnel. What about key equipment?

Dr Sutyagin: Key equipment is a very interesting issue. Part of it is to some extent on par with western equipment, and part of it will probably be a bit better. If Russia succeeds in breaking through the sanctions regime and arming its new equipment with western electronics, it will have platforms that might outperform the existing western equipment. There is the additional issue of integral capabilities that are non-existent in western troops. These are kept deep in the rear, and they are very instrumental to success. These are elements of the Russian offset strategy, to be honest, and I can go into more detail on that later.

Q35 Mrs Moon: Could you say briefly what you mean by that?

Dr Sutyagin: That is, first of all, electronic warfare elements that are integral for Russian troops. For instance, just one vehicle that is standard in Russian brigades can prevent a hit by any radio proximity fuse shell or bomb, and pave the way, for instance, for any shell area from the Palace of Westminster to Trafalgar Square, or between the Thames and St. James's Park. Not a single shell would hit that area if one vehicle was deployed and activated. The standard equipment for any Russian brigade is three such vehicles and nine other vehicles. That is not sitting somewhere with white colours, like a magician in the

deep rear areas. These vehicles are present on the battlefield and the commanders know how to use them.

Q36 Mrs Moon: And nuclear capability?

Dr Sutyagin: Nuclear capabilities are slightly different. The Russian might be a bit less flexible, because of the practice of keeping the warheads themselves quite separate from the means of delivery. The over-concentration of the control of nuclear weapons means that now the establishment in the Russian armed forces, the so-called twelfth main directorate of the Russian Ministry of Defence, take full responsibility for this, but they are custodians and they store weapons. To be honest, they do not properly train how to deliver them in time in the case of an emergency. That was not the case back in the Soviet time, when they had these exercises at least twice a week. Now they do it twice a year.

Q37 Mrs Moon: After that bit of evidence they will probably change their practices. What are the major constraining factors on the expansion of military capability in Russia?

Dr Sutyagin: Probably the main constraining factor is the technological inferiority of Russian industry. For instance, in the area of military electronics and optics, 91% of this equipment is currently inputted in Russia. There are ways to get around the sanctions. For instance, tank gun sights on modern Russian tanks are formally Belarussian, but they are based on French sensors. The French are not restricted from selling something to Belarus because it is not under sanctions. While that is critical, another problem—which is a very serious one—is the lack of modern machine tools in Russian industry, but Russia also tries to get around this problem. For instance, just two weeks ago the Russian Minister of industry visited the leading producers of robots in Japan and tried to negotiate the sale of industrial robots for the Kazan facility, where it is planned to resume production of a new strategic bomber, the Tu-160M2. That is how they try to get around this, but the technological inferiority of Russian industry is probably the most serious restriction. That is why they cannot even spend the money that is so wildly allocated to them by the Russian Government.

Q38 Mrs Moon: What about the recruitment of key personnel?

Dr Sutyagin: Recruitment is a very serious problem because of the current conscripts. The Russian armed forces are still partially professionals who are full time, and also partially conscripted forces. Conscripts serve for just one year. They are now free of all household duties; they do not waste time on that, but one year is still not enough to train people to operate this sort of equipment. That is a limitation, keeping in mind the demographic hole into which Russia is falling now.

The problem with full-time professionals is also very serious, because the Russian Government is now stepping back from the policy that provided it with these impressive forces. For instance, the establishment of these four new divisions is actually reducing the combat capabilities and combat readiness of Russian forces, instead of increasing them, because the same amount of people is spread in a thin layer on a much larger amount of ground.

Q39 Bob Stewart: This is a comment, really. If you ask the military estimate question of “So what?” after what you said, the two answers that seem to flow out are as follows. First, it

would be in the Russians' interest, if they wanted to take military action, to act with huge surprise. Secondly, NATO would probably be caught with its pants down because it could not react in time. Is that fair?

Dr Sutyagin: Yes, that is fair but there are some fine details. The Russian saying—it is probably not only Russian—is that evil is always hidden in details. The problem is that first of all, the NATO very high readiness forces are not enough to cope with that. Secondly, the mobility of NATO forces—

Q40 Bob Stewart: But they wouldn't be there, would they?

Dr Sutyagin: Well, even if they were there, they would be outnumbered 6:1, which is very serious. Secondly, the forces, even if deployed, have some structural deficiencies. Russia kept the Soviet practice of integral air defence forces and electronic warfare forces, and are now deploying and expanding what you still consider combat support—special operations. They consider that diversions is one of the major forms of combat. So these are combat forces, and they are expanding them. It seems that the western side might be unprepared to deal with this environment. It is necessary to fix that.

Q41 Mr Gray: It is a pretty frightening arsenal, isn't it? A \$700 billion procurement programme from 2011 onwards is pretty massive and pretty frightening. Why have they done it? What are Russia's objectives, militarily?

Dr Sutyagin: The goal is to restore the fair place at the high table of world politics. While it is not correct fundamentally, it is the feeling—it is subjective—that Russia was treated badly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. We Russians cannot compete on equal terms; we need to find some asymmetry, and that asymmetry is military, first of all. Secondly—this is the slide I tried to produce for you—there is von Schlieffen. The problem is that Russia is fundamentally and inevitably weaker than the West. The correlation of GDP, for instance, even before this crisis, was 20:1 at best, or maybe even worse, so it is necessary to find another element of offset, which here is just violence. That is where the military is very useful too.

It is necessary to keep in mind that von Clausewitz is read very carefully and in full in Russia. They remember a phrase that is very often quoted—"War is a continuation of policy by other means". The end of that phrase is that war is the legitimate tool of policy. That is their view, and they understand that that is the tool that allows them to—

Q42 Mr Gray: That is pretty much what Putin said in his national security strategy in 2015, isn't it? He basically said that he is under threat and it is perfectly reasonable to rearm and to have aggression against Ukraine and Syria as part of the defence of a Greater Russia. Is that a view the other panellists would also take?

Dr Lo: It is really important to look at the broader context at this point. Putin and many in the Russian political elite take a very Hobbesian view of the world: the world is a harsh place, the strong prosper, the weak get crushed. In this ultra-competitive world, geopolitical influence and military might are the primary virtues; great powers run the show, and smaller nations do as they are told—they are objects, rather than independent players.

The Russians also take the view that the era of American global leadership and of liberal universalism, the European project and all that sort of stuff is yesterday. The world is changing and we are moving. People talk, in a sense, about a concert of great powers; but when Russians talk about a polarcentric of international relations, or a multipolar world, they really mean a tripolar world. This tripolar world is the United States, China and of course Russia. The problem, however, from the Kremlin's perspective, is that the US and its allies are not yet ready to accept the reality of this world as Putin conceives it, which means that Russia must fight for its interests by whatever means available. That means exploiting, as Igor said, its comparative advantages. It cannot do it, it cannot compete economically, and it cannot compete in terms of norms and values, but where it can compete and even do better is in the military sphere.

Q43 Mr Gray: All right, so if you accept that that sort of general geopolitical outlook is the case, which is pretty much reflected in the 2015 security strategy document, it might I suppose explain Crimea—certainly—eastern Ukraine, and Syria, although that is slightly more complex, but what about elsewhere? I was looking at Dr Sutyagin's charts. All Russian military force is focused northwards, particularly in Kaliningrad—gigantic concentration in Kaliningrad—but also right up into the Arctic; I was interested to see Wrangel island marked off in one of your charts, because I thought it was demilitarised, but apparently not. What comes next? Given the geopolitical ambitions that you have described, but given the deployment of the troops at the moment, are we right in imagining that the next steps will come northwards, rather than south or east?

Dr Lo: It depends what you call north. If you mean the high north, I do not think that is the next step. I think that will be a theatre of geopolitical confrontation in future, but we are not there yet. What I see, though, is a kind of reversion to basics. For all the emphasis on the high profile of Syria and the Middle East, Ukraine is of far greater geopolitical, security, psychological and, for Putin, personal importance than anything going on in the Middle East, which means that whether or not he can reach an accommodation with the West over Syria, he will turn his attention back to Ukraine. We have to expect that as the next major theatre. The relative stability that we have today in Ukraine is extremely fragile. I believe that Putin is waiting for the Ukrainians to mess up some more, for the Europeans to lose interest and for the Americans to get distracted. Basically, he is waiting for the thing to fall into his hands. Now, if it does not happen, he will encourage it by resuming some of those so-called hybrid operations that we have already seen.

Q44 Mr Gray: By it falling into his hands, you mean the whole Ukraine?

Dr Lo: The Government of President Poroshenko is in such trouble that they are making virtually no progress on political, social and economic reforms. What Putin is hoping that, essentially, the Government in Kiev becomes so discredited that Ukrainian society swings back to Russia and the Europeans say, "Oh come on, let's do a deal with the Russians, because the Ukrainians are so hopeless", while the Americans do their own thing—they have so many other problems.

Q45 Mr Gray: Mr Pomerantsev, do you agree that Ukraine is the place to watch next?

Mr Pomerantsev: The Russians' main element, like the Spanish inquisition, is surprise. That is what it is all about. They are not just interested in military escalation; they want narrative escalation dominance. They seem to be very keen on always upsetting what we

think they are going to do, because—exactly—it is their asymmetric approach. They have to win these information narrative games. They will probably do what we least expect.

I think we have to be ready for everything. I think the Arctic will happen, simply because I can see what wonderful propaganda stories it gives Putin inside the country. It will be the new space race. There are submarines already going down deep into the Arctic sea, planting Russian flags. There is a whole myth you can build around it. Patriarch Kirill just went to the Arctic to bless some penguins. So I would be careful about the Arctic; but we have to be ready for everything.

Q46 Mr Gray: Just to correct you, very briefly, for the record, the person that planted the Russian flag on the north pole was a friend of mine, who is a Swedish chemist who lives in Switzerland. It was nothing whatever to do with geopolitics.

Mr Pomerantsev: No, this is on the bottom—underneath the water.

Mr Gray: Yes, the one on the bottom was two Russian mini-subbs that went down there, and Dr Frederik Paulsen was the man that did it. He is a Swedish pharmaceutical magnate.

Dr Lo: Can I just throw in one more scenario for you, for your consideration? Currently President Nazarbayev in Kazakhstan and President Karimov in Uzbekistan are in their mid to late 70s. Eventually they will leave the scene, one way or the other. That need not necessarily invite a Russian military intervention, but it could if a new leadership in Kazakhstan, for example, makes a mess of the transition; if that new leadership perhaps were to look more towards the West—because we think about the large Russian minority in Ukraine, but that so-called large Russian minority is only 17% of Ukraine's total population. The Russian minority in Kazakhstan—almost entirely in northern Kazakhstan—is 23% of the total population. So watch out for central Asia.

Q47 Chair: Is it the case that basically President Putin did not need any excuse to do what he did in the Crimea and eastern Ukraine, or is there some case to be made that attempts by the EU economically to tie the whole of the Ukraine into the western EU sphere actually brought this about, perhaps, earlier than would otherwise have happened? Or would it have happened anyway?

Dr Lo: It is a combination of factors. I believe that the EU did rather sleepwalk into this whole Ukrainian imbroglio. Part of the problem with the EU's eastern partnership programme was that it indicated a level of interest that seemed threatening to Moscow but at the same time did not invest enough resources to make a real go of the partnership with these neighbouring countries of Russia. So they rather sort of fell into a crisis. However, to blame the EU for what happened is wrong, because although they bear, obviously, some responsibility, I would say at least 80% of the responsibility is with Putin—and that is being generous.

What Putin would have preferred is that Yanukovich could have ridden out the Maidan revolution and Ukraine would have continued to be a pretty dysfunctional, corrupt but more or less stable country, that was closer to Russia than it was to Europe; but once he went he had to react and be seen to react, so as soon as Yanukovich was toppled the Crimean intervention was inevitable. Until then, actually, Putin had shown no particular interest in Crimea becoming part of Russia, but he had to be seen to react.

Q48 Chair: The reason I ask this question is what do you think the Russian reaction would be to the continuing narrative about Ukraine one day joining NATO?

Dr Lo: In my opinion, it is a hypothetical question, because there is zero chance of Ukraine joining NATO any time in the next decade. Beyond that, who knows, but I think it is really unlikely. But if we take the hypothetical that Ukraine did somehow join NATO, as Montenegro is about to join, the Russians would intervene militarily. There is no question in my mind. Ultimately they don't want conquest; they want control. So they would probably push on in south-eastern Ukraine to the Dnieper River and essentially create, at the very least, a segregated Ukraine: east and west Ukraine. That, I imagine, would frankly be an inevitable result of Ukraine joining NATO.

Q49 Chair: Before I come to Ruth Smeeth, I would just like to say that we do not want to get deep into Russia's policy in the Middle East, but could any of you who have a strong view on the subject give a brief account of what you think Russia's objectives are with its policy in Syria? Please keep it brief.

Dr Sutyagin: I will try to keep it brief. First of all, it is probably necessary to understand that what Russia is doing in Syria is in defence of Russian interests, not in defence of any regime, however allied to Russia. So the Russian interest there is first of all to break down the sequence of regime change. That is why any attempts to establish no-fly zones for whatever purposes must be broken down, because it is too straightforward a parallel to what happened to Gaddafi.

Secondly, it is necessary to preserve the Russian place d'armes in the Middle East. That is why it is necessary to keep the regime that will secure for Russia the presence there, preferably, of not only a naval but an air—not land, but air—component, because the Russian naval squadron will need training, and without air support that does not mean too much.

Thirdly, it is very good to make others act and pay for preserving and securing Russian interests there, because Russia is weak. That is why it is very skilful to use the interests of the West to fight Daesh, and why there is a lack of ability and readiness to send troops to fight Daesh. That is why what is happening now is changing fundamentally the current situation, which is characterised by three warring sides: Daesh; Assad more or less fighting Daesh; and moderates fighting both Assad and Daesh. It is necessary to deprive the West of the choice of whom to ally with—Assad or the moderates. That is why the goal is to help Assad to destroy moderates and become the only possible ally of the West. In this way, the West will defend Russian interests—allying with Assad and securing the Russian interests.

Q50 Chair: I see. Dr Lo, do you agree that with?

Dr Lo: I agree with very much of that. But, just very quickly, the No. 1 objective is to preserve and extend Russian influence not just in Syria but across the Middle East. No. 2 is to embarrass the West and show the limitations of US power. This is not just a personal thing by Putin towards Obama; it is also to showcase Russia as a global player taking the leading role on the most high-profile international issue today.

The third issue is to emphasise the desirability of Russia as a partner to the West and the undesirability of having Russia as an enemy. The fourth point is to expand Russia's strategic options, because what Putin did in Crimea and south-eastern Ukraine has constricted Russia's strategic options—put it in the cold—and made it too dependent on China. By embracing the Syrian intervention, you expand your choices and develop more strategic flexibility.

There is also a personal dimension here, which is to renew the narrative of a dynamic, enterprising Putin running rings around western leaders. This is in contrast to the narrative of a Russian stalemate in Ukraine. The thing about Daesh and Islamist extremism is that, yes, it is a sort of motive, but really it is much more of a legitimising pretext than an actual motive.

Mr Pomerantsev: I agree with all the points, but, to widen out the scope—this really gets back to the idea of Russia's military doctrine—there are two or three key points that sometimes we struggle to understand because they are so different from our idea of war and defence. The first is the idea of information/psychological war. That essentially means that the key battles of the 21st century are fought in what Russian military theorists refer to as the information/psychological sphere—the psychosphere. It is about much more than just embarrassing the US. If the idea of the US as the global superpower can be undermined, that opens Russia's options. Coming back to the Baltics, for example, they do not need to invade the Baltics. They do not need to discredit NATO by putting troops in; they just have to undermine the idea of NATO, through any variety of cyber, information or hybrid operations. They need to subvert the idea of article 5, not actually take territory.

The other main point of their defence doctrine is that it is very holistic. They really do see, like the Wizard of Oz, different tools and different geographical areas that they can use holistically in combinations. They can use their energy, their business, their spies and their military very dynamically. We cannot do that because of the obvious divisions of our various societies.

In Syria, a massive side-effect is the fact that these refugees are streaming into Europe, which helps undermine European unity. That, in turn, helps to undermine sanctions over Ukraine. That is really their great advantage. They are weaker in so many senses but their great advantage is that they can bring together all those tools in one package. We don't really know how to deal with that.

Q51 Chair: Do you think that part of their policy in Syria is actively to encourage the mass migration into Europe?

Mr Pomerantsev: I was not there at the conversation when they had it but, now that it is happening, they are definitely taking advantage of it. We can see their propaganda taking advantage of it. There appear to be reports from Syria of them targeting population areas that would increase it. Isn't the idea of a good strategy that it achieves lots of things? To have one objective? No. The better the strategy, the more things you have achieved. What they are definitely doing at the same time is sending refugees through Norway, through Kirkenes. Was it a No. 1 priority? Is that important? They are doing it.

Dr Lo: I see this as a side-effect, but it is useful, too. It is a carrot and stick approach. The carrot approach is saying, "We can work together to create some kind of settlement in

Syria and the wider Middle East. We need to combat Daesh.” The stick is, “If you don’t give us the respect we are due, we can make life uncomfortable for you.” It is not so much a conscious strategy—strategy is a big word—but it is a rather useful side-effect that they can exploit.

Dr Sutyagin: They not only exploited that effect; they also prepared that effect. Because of the way in which forces were deployed in Syria, part of it was absolutely useless in fighting either moderates or Daesh, but it was perfectly suited for fighting a no-fly zone, which was intended to solve the refugee crisis. So they prepared that and kept that in mind.

Q52 Chair: You believe that western proposals for a no-fly zone really worried them.

Dr Sutyagin: Somehow it ignited this deployment, or at least shaped it partially.

Q53 Chair: Because, of course, it had been a no-fly zone that the West proposed in Libya, had it not?

Dr Sutyagin: Yes. It was a very straightforward parallel. You probably should keep in mind that actual preparation and deployment started just two weeks after the Turks and Americans announced that they had nearly reached a deal on a no-fly zone.

Chair: Thank you. Ruth, you have waited very patiently.

Q54 Ruth Smeeth: We have touched on the impact of sanctions towards Russia. How far do you think economic factors and the need for co-operation have impacted on Russia’s military objectives thus far?

Dr Sutyagin: The problem is that Russia is hugely dependent on the West. Russia enjoyed the integration into world economics. The Russian economic model was very lazy. They decided not to produce if it was possible to buy. That is why they hugely depend on the continuation of good relations with the West. What happened was probably the greatest strategic surprise for the Kremlin. They surely did not expect that sanctions such as those would be introduced and imposed. That is why they are so actively looking at ways to get out of sanctions; to get them lifted. That is important, not only for co-operation, but for the continued existence of this political model.

Dr Lo: There is no doubt that the extent and duration of sanctions have come as a great surprise to the Kremlin. I think they have massively underestimated the extent of European unity. Sometimes it feels like an oxymoron for us here, but I think the Russians have been actually quite surprised by that.

You asked about the role of economic factors in Russian military strategy. In a way, the conventional wisdom is that if you labour under economic constraints, you will modify your military and geopolitical ambitions. I would argue that with Russia it works in the opposite way: if you have so few strategic choices—if your other options of projecting influence and power are so limited—then what have you got left? You play to your comparative advantage. The fact that there are sanctions actually makes Russian foreign and security policy more assertive, more aggressive, because that is where they feel they can actually make a difference.

Q55 Douglas Chapman: A lot of what you have said this morning has been about the propaganda and the background narrative to how Russia views itself in the wider world, and that certainly underlines its whole strategy. Turning to the UK and NATO, have we invested sufficiently—have we invested enough—in actually dealing with the multidimensional warfare that you described earlier; and if a gap exists, how do we start to fill that void?

Dr Sutyagin: It is very difficult for me to advise on investment—I am a Russian citizen—but I do see some gaps which I think it is necessary to fill, somehow. These gaps are, first of all, the division which you still have, both in the UK and in NATO, between different capabilities—the degree of integration which you have between manoeuvring forces and what you call combat support forces, but which are actually combat elements: electronic warfare, air defence, psychological operations and countering special operations. I think the gap is too wide and it is necessary to fill it. I am an air defence officer also—forgive me for that—but I do think that it is vitally important to return air defence at least partially to the manoeuvring units, because under the current model, they will arrive too late to defend troops. That is very important.

Secondly, it is necessary to wake up to the reality that electronic warfare specialists are not magicians. They must be on the battlefield. That is vitally important now. Thirdly, there are psychological operations. Currently, 77th Brigade—I do not criticise them; what they are doing is probably great—but it is necessary not to forget that traditional psychological operations are getting higher importance, and high attention, in the Russian conventional forces. So it is necessary to preserve capability—to deter and to counteract on that field.

Fourthly, the decision to separate, to subordinate, the counter-Spetsnaz operations to infantry commanders in NATO is good, in that now the infantry commander does understand that Spetsnaz is his responsibility, but it is important to attach very skilful—so Spetsnaz, SOF, SAS—units and advisers to these military commanders, because, to be honest, infantrymen just do not know how to act against Spetsnaz.

So those are four gaps. I think it is vitally important to close them.

Mr Pomerantsev: Yes, I would, again, open up these borders between defence, security and everything else. The whole point of Russia's vision of the world is this Hobbesian view that they can use anything—media, business, etc.—as part of an aggressive foreign policy. So that means really investing in what used to be thought of as maybe not very important, such as journalism. I think it now has to be seen as a security threat. Investigating corruption, investigating various attempts at infiltration and subversion—somebody has to do that. The media cannot do that, because it is skint. Thank God we are rebooting the BBC Russian World Service, but really that is a tiny, tiny step, which is part of a much bigger re-understanding of the role of investigative journalism.

I was in east Ukraine a lot recently, and there is something amazing happening out there: all these information activists who already took it on themselves to create the Maidan are now also creating a very chaotic information space, which helps to feed the civil war that Russia is looking for. We have to start training and educating information activists across the world to take forward strategic communications from the bottom up, not just from the military. What we need is almost a total rethinking of how we invest for these new types of conflict.

Dr Lo: In recent years, there has been a shocking neglect of two areas in particular: defence in this country and Russia. Defence spending and defence capabilities have been allowed to run down very seriously. This country used to have remarkable Russia expertise, and not just in quality; they had loads of Russian experts right across the board. A year ago, I was in Japan, and there they have at any one time about 200 Russia specialists in their Foreign Ministry. In the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, they are lucky if they have 10.

The one positive note is that we have recognised there is a problem in both. The strategic defence and security review, I think, has stopped the rot, and there is a realisation that we need to build up our Russia expertise, but of course building up our capabilities in both areas isn't going to happen overnight. We are at the beginning of a pretty long road, so the key is not just to have a bit of extra defence spending or more Russia expertise; the key is to consider this as a long-term strategic project of capacity building.

Q56 Douglas Chapman: One or two of you mentioned the relationship with the EU. If we exit the EU, what do you think might be going through President Putin's mind from a military point of view?

Dr Lo: Very quickly on that, there are obviously loads of arguments about whether Britain should stay in or leave the EU, but for Putin, it would be an absolute godsend if—

Q57 Richard Benyon: Sorry, can you repeat that?

Dr Lo: For Putin, it would be an absolute godsend if Brexit happened. He would be overjoyed, because he would see Britain—

Ruth Smeeth: That is on the record.

Jim Shannon: Are you trying to change our mind, Richard?

Q58 Chair: Order. We have a range of views on this Committee. Fortunately, it is not the purpose of this inquiry to decide which way to vote in the referendum.

Dr Lo: I am not discussing the merits of Brexit, but I am discussing what Putin would think of Brexit. He would be absolutely overjoyed, because he would see—

Q59 Mr Gray: How would you know that? You are imagining that that must be the case, but how do you know that?

Dr Lo: Putin for a long time has made a distinction between good Europeans and bad Europeans. Good Europeans are, if you like, the traditional continental European powers like Germany and France. Bad Europeans are Anglo-Saxons like the Brits. The way Putin sees Britain is, in a sense, a forward defence post for American influence in Europe. If Britain were out of Europe, that would weaken Europe. It would mean there would be more of a conception of Europe that is closer to what Putin has often written about and talked about, and it would also mean that Britain would be isolated. Again, you can argue either way, but—

Mr Gray: Following the logic of your argument—

Chair: Very briefly, James. We are behind schedule. I am going to keep this session going until at least half past 12, and we will add the time on to the later session. Much as I would like to engage in this topic, I am just going to give you one last crack at it, James.

Q60 Mr Gray: Following the logic of your argument, if what you say about Putin's thinking is indeed correct—we don't know how you know that—the fact that Europe becomes more “good” Europe, as you describe it, and nasty Britain is removed from it, is presumably not something that Putin would be particularly concerned about, is it? He would be pleased about it; he would like that fact.

Dr Lo: That is my point.

Q61 Mr Gray: It would be a stronger Europe.

Dr Lo: No, it wouldn't be a stronger Europe; it would be a more amenable Europe, which is a very different thing.

Mr Gray: That is all rather speculative.

Dr Sutyagin: It would be a Europe that would be easier to control or intimidate. That is why it is very good for the Kremlin.

Dr Lo: Exactly, because it would be a Europe full of countries that would basically say, “We must show understanding of Russia's legitimate concerns.”

Q62 Chair: Okay. Peter has been silent on this. Do you want to comment briefly?

Mr Pomerantsev: On Europe? No. He clearly wants that. His propaganda is doing that very aggressively. With his propaganda on Britain, he is pushing Brexit very aggressively; that is the big giveaway. Even better, because his propaganda was pushing Scottish independence very well, and Brexit will obviously open up the UK to Scotland's possibly leaving. That is something that Putin pushed for very hard. Their propaganda arms are opening—

Richard Benyon: The gift that keeps on giving—*[Laughter.]*

Chair: Order. Control yourselves, colleagues.

Mr Pomerantsev: They are opening a radio station in Edinburgh to promote the cause.

What we have to understand about today's Kremlin is that they don't really have an ideology; they will look for anything out there that suits them and go with it. That is why it is very important for us to separate what they are doing.

Chair: Douglas, I believe you had a point about propaganda and information warfare.

Douglas Chapman: I think the question was asked within the first question.

Q63 Chair: Okay. Peter, is there anything more that you would like to say, before we move on, about countering the role of Russian propaganda and information warfare? Do you think NATO has got its act together at all in that respect?

Mr Pomerantsev: NATO has created a centre of excellence of strategic communications, which is the start of the sort of research that Bobo Lo is talking about. We need much more. It is very hard for NATO to act because it such a choir of many contrasting voices. I think this is somewhere Britain could excel.

We might be entering a phase where each country is really good at one kind of foreign policy. Swedes are doing feminism. Why don't we do information? It is the one thing that we are really good at. I don't know how that works in a budget way, but a certain amount could be set aside for information operations in the broadest and most positive sense of that word.

Q64 Jim Shannon: For the last 14 months, we have been talking about Europe and nothing else—but now we are not going to do that, of course. I would just say this: out of Europe, NATO will still exist and therefore our combined forces will still exist. I will leave that point.

My question relates to cyber and advanced technologies. When we went to Brussels, we found out clearly that we are a wee bit behind the Russians when it comes to cyber and modern technologies. Is that your opinion?

Dr Sutyagin: Probably I would disagree that the British especially are behind. I would not say so. As far as I see it, Russian technologies and policies in cyber are a bit straightforward compared with the western, especially Israeli, technologies. I would not say that the West is behind. Maybe it is asymmetric once again. The Russian approach is very aggressive, but they are just probing. They are trying their capabilities now and it seems that they are rapidly improving them. That would be my view.

Q65 Jim Shannon: Would you say that we are not spending enough resources when it comes to cyber? Is that the issue perhaps?

Dr Lo: Yes, I would say that cyber development has been massively neglected but there are signs that that will be changing. Quickly following up on Igor's point: the world expert on this subject is a Russian called Andrei Soldatov, who wrote a book last year. His view is that Russian cyber technology is not that well developed; in his opinion, it is far inferior both in quality and quantity to the Chinese. I would just leave that out there.

Q66 Jim Shannon: If you take that to its logical conclusion, that Russia is inferior and behind us perhaps in their cyber technology, why was Russia able successfully to shut down the systems in Europe? For example, there was the recent Russian attack that disabled the German Bundestag. I would just like to ask that general question, if I can, because I understand that time is pressing.

Dr Lo: These are fairly open and vulnerable systems. These are not Tempest-rated and do not have that many safeguards, to put it mildly. That is why you can—and they do—hack into systems like that, because they actually invite it. I don't see that as a demonstration of fantastic Russian technology; I see it more as a demonstration of Western vulnerability and carelessness.

Q67 Jim Shannon: It shows our weakness.

Dr Lo: Exactly.

Q68 Jim Shannon: Showing our weakness shows that we have to improve.

Dr Lo: It is partly attitudinal as well. We are just sloppy. We live in much more open societies, therefore we are much less careful; we are slacker. We just don't try very hard. It is not necessarily the fact that we don't have the technology; it's that we don't necessarily want to apply it.

Mr Pomerantsev: It is very important that Russia's approach to information warfare and cyber-warfare is slightly different to ours. They split it into information-technical—cyber-attacks and DDOS attacks—and information-psychological, which is using cyber to subvert other societies. A very famous and maybe rather silly example is when they tried to start a panic in the US by pretending on Twitter that ISIS had hit some sort of nuclear power plant. They do this all the time. They think about cyber-operations from that point of view.

The other fact to think about is that they combine it with other actions. In Estonia, of course, we saw the newspapers, the Parliament and the banking systems being taken out through cyber, with a massive propaganda attack saying that the Estonians are fascists and are abusing local Russians, plus local rioting. Again and again, it is their ability to combine all these different tools that gives them comparative advantage, rather than any moment of technical brilliance.

Dr Sutyagin: A full spectrum approach is a very important method for the Russian Government, and this full spectrum asymmetrical approach provides Russia with one very interesting advantage. According to Russian law, all western companies operating on Russian territory must open their basic codes to Russian security services, which means, for instance, that Google gmail codes, coding and encryption that are closed for the British Government are open for the Russian Government. That means that, somehow, they know more about your emails and communications than you do. That provides them with a straightforward but very interesting asymmetrical advantage.

Q69 Jim Shannon: An attack on a NATO country would be an attack on its planes, its ships and its country. Is it not time that NATO and the UK looked upon a cyber-attack on any NATO country as an attack of that capability and that level? Do you feel that?

Dr Sutyagin: When I say that Russian capabilities are inferior, I mean their offensive capabilities—their native capabilities. But the integration of that with their defence and the lack of your defence makes them comparatively strong against you. You do not need urgently to improve your offensive cyber-capabilities, but it seems to me that you need to think about your defence.

Q70 Chair: May I ask you for a point of clarification? Are you saying that if there had been an Islamist terrorist atrocity in Moscow such as the one in America, where they are having to take technology companies to court to unlock a phone, the same companies would agree to that in Russia? Is it that Russian companies agree to making the technology open as far as the Russian authorities are concerned, or are you saying that western companies have agreed to that in Russia?

Dr Sutyagin: The answer is that it is unclear for me how Apple manages to sell their devices in Russia without disclosing these codes. I know from my experience and my

knowledge that Google, Windows and Microsoft are obliged to open their basic encryption codes to the Russian security services, which they are not obliged to do in western states. So they know the encryption codes of email communications, for instance, and they ban every western operator from operating on Russian soil without disclosing that.

Q71 Mrs Moon: One of the suggestions made is that the Russians are planting propaganda in relation to TTIP. Do you have any awareness of that? Is that something you think they are trying to influence at all?

Dr Lo: Russians have been doing this kind of thing with various western initiatives over the years. You mentioned TTIP—another case is shale gas development in the United States. So for example in that case what the Russians did was they said that on the one hand shale gas development wouldn't take off. It was just economically unsustainable; it would collapse and it was no threat. On the other hand, you then had Putin saying it was a disgusting way of producing energy—so Putin the environmentalist. Therefore you had this contrast between “We don't care; it doesn't hurt anyway” and then giving money to protest groups in the west.

It comes back to Peter's point, here; it is a multidimensional, holistic approach. You use various methods. There is no single way. Always, anything that gets the job done or contributes to meeting your objectives is fine. There is no such thing as morality. The highest morality is your national interest, as you perceive it.

Q72 Mr Spellar: We have talked about the various tools of multidimensional warfare; with those, what do you think Russia sees as the key weaknesses of NATO, and especially the UK? What, therefore, are the implications within that for article 5? Although Ukraine is not a NATO member, the implications are clear for NATO members. Following on from that, how can we counter that more effectively?

Dr Sutyagin: It seems to me that the key weakness is a sort of dual layer: lack of political will to act on the level of national Governments and lack of streamlined procedure to act on the international level, as the united organisations—NATO or the EU. That is the key element and that is the very skilfully used weakness of the west.

I would like to attract your attention to the fact that article 5 is defined in a much weaker way than the corresponding article of the west European treaty, because the Western European Union obligation was: in case of invasion, send troops. Article 5 of the NATO treaty said: contribution. Sending Christmas cards would be a contribution as well. That is the weakness that is perceived, and might be used—and is being used—by the Kremlin, in its way, to divide the west. The famous Spanish statement, “More east means less south; that is why we oppose deployment on the east” is an example of that.

Mr Pomerantsev: In terms of the larger psychological information games, the Russians seem very good at picking out each country's weak spots; so in Germany they play on anti-Americanism, guilt towards Russia from the second world war, and use that very effectively; in Britain there are things we talk about—Britain leaving Europe, and fear of Britain falling apart—but really they largely think it is about money. They can see our system and they see we are addicted to being a global financial hub, which is wonderful in so many ways but also leaves us open.

So the recent response to the Litvinenko trial, where there was, I think, a very strong case to be made for sanctions against Russian companies involved in the murder—we kind of avoided that, because that is our big weak spot, and they have kind of worked that out.

Dr Lo: I agree with Igor and Peter on this, but I see the weakness as being less about the UK than about NATO. I think the UK is one of the more robust members of NATO.

The problem is that—and this is the issue that the Russians have identified, particularly with the EU as well—there are 28 NATO members. Only five of those NATO members have met the 2% GDP threshold for defence spending. I have lost count of the number of conferences I go to where I hear various NATO country Defence Ministers talk about burden sharing. Burden sharing has become like world peace—it is one of those lovely motherhood things that everyone appreciates; but it never gets done. This is what the Russians see. They basically see many Europeans as all mouth and no trousers.

Q73 Chair: But don't they see—and isn't this the foundation stone of NATO, as opposed to what happened before two world wars where America was forced to come in at a later stage—surely the trousers as opposed to the mouth is the fact that America is part of this organisation, so there can be little doubt about American involvement in the case of aggression?

Dr Lo: But there was, until recently, quite a bit of doubt. It is only relatively recently that senior Obama Administration figures have started openly to describe Russia as the No. 1 threat to American interests. I remember when Mitt Romney said in the 2012 elections that Russia was the No. 1 geopolitical threat. He was laughed at by the Administration and by Obama himself. Now, Obama's own Defence Secretary identifies Russia as the No. 1 threat, so that is how quickly it has moved—maybe some would say not quickly enough.

The Russians see NATO as America in Europe. They do not really see it as any kind of transatlantic alliance. It is America, plus a small coalition of the willing, including the United Kingdom, but Spain, Portugal, Greece, Hungary—no.

Q74 Chair: Which only goes to show that a military alliance in Europe without America really wouldn't have very much going for it, would it?

Dr Lo: The Russians would laugh at it.

Q75 Chair: Exactly. Are there any more comments before we come to Richard for the final question?

Mr Pomerantsev: You asked what the Americans would do in case of Russian aggression. Obama has said, "If the Russians put tanks into Lithuania, we will eventually respond." I come back to the point that the whole point of their military doctrine is how you destabilise other countries without necessarily putting troops in. Crimea was actually an exception. It had symbolic value—again, psychological value—but actually, the whole idea is how you destroy another country without ever touching it: "It wasn't me." You are quite right: do we need to think about article 5? They are looking for a linguistic way around article 5. How can we get past the "in case of military attack"? Maybe add cyber and other forms of attack as well.

Q76 Richard Benyon: Leading on from that—on article 5, if he pushes the envelope—we know that they have exercised. There was the recent Zapad exercise, and they made some extraordinary assumptions: first, that France and Germany would sit out an article 5 conflict, rightly or wrongly; and secondly, the use of battlefield nuclear weapons was extensively planned for. I am really keen to try and understand what specific aspects of NATO are viewed as a threat by Russia and why. Are we back in the cold war scenario, where they are deeply suspicious of an aggressive West, or is this purely now a different concept, rather than the line that you were talking about earlier?

Dr Sutyagin: It is difficult to discuss all the elements of the NATO threat, but surely it is not considered very seriously by politicians. Politicians in Moscow understand that the last thing NATO wants to do is go to war with Russia and that it will try to avoid that at any cost. That is why it is not perceived as a threat on a political level.

On a military level, with military psychology, capabilities, not intentions, matter, so that is why they take NATO seriously, but they are still more or less ruled by politicians. But there are some elements of NATO capabilities that worry the Russian military and politicians as well, and one of them is being discussed now: the deployment of Raptors—F-22 fighters—in Poland. Raptors are the planes that were designed in the cold war to cut through integrated air defences—to suppress these defences and clear the way for more conventional strike forces. That is why the deployment of these forces near the isolated Kaliningrad area, which is covered by a very dense air defence umbrella, is the message that might be read as saying, “Look, that is our next asymmetric step. We can deprive you of your advantage of a deep air defence in Kaliningrad and you cannot do anything about that”—like we cannot do anything about the invasion of the Baltic states. That is one of the deployments—one of the minor elements—that worry them a lot.

Dr Lo: I don’t want to idealise the cold war—far from it—but there are two areas where things are actually worse than they were during the cold war. The first is that we have fewer checks and balances, and the second is that we have far less predictability. A kind of routine existed during the cold war that doesn’t exist today. There are too many free-floating elements.

NATO is not regarded by the Russians as a serious military threat; it is regarded by them as a serious normative, ideological threat. It is not that the West is going to conquer Russia, or try to conquer Russia, with weapons; it is that it will try to conquer Russia with ideas and money. That is the main concern that the Kremlin would have. The Kremlin would also think that it is not NATO per se, but that it is ultimately about the United States.

A quick word on tactical nukes. Putin has so-called loose talk about tactical nukes, not because he intends to go down that path but because he knows that nothing is better able to weaken the resolve of the flabbier members of NATO than talking about battlefield nukes. You don’t want it actually to happen, but you really want to spook the natives.

Mr Pomerantsev: Looking at the way that NATO is used in Russian propaganda, it is really the enemy that they are desperate to fight. It is like a thug in the street going, “Oi—you looking at me, NATO?” In that sense, they are desperate for a battle with NATO.

Richard Benyon: “You spilled my pint.”

Mr Pomerantsev: Exactly. Most of this has very little to do with NATO as we know it and as we are discussing. This is an imaginary enemy that they first want to conjure up—“накликать беду” is a wonderful Russian phrase—and then defeat them, because NATO is not going to do anything. It is a perfect duel. It is the great narrative of Russia fighting against imaginary enemies, which is how it is used in the information space.

More seriously, Russia seems to have an obsession with being encircled, which is kind of weird. If you are the biggest country in the world, with open borders everywhere and seas, the idea that you can be encircled is slightly bizarre. Austria is encircled; Russia certainly isn't, but they do talk about it a lot. Whether they believe it or not is unimportant, because, even if it is a fiction, it becomes policy because budgets get put under it. If they are encircled, they have this deep belief from the Stalingrad and Leningrad sieges that they have to break out of encirclement. If they are encircled by NATO and the EU, which they also think is part of America—everything is America—they have to break up these alliances in order to have their hands free. They don't like the idea of all these alliances around them. Deeply psychologically, they don't like it. For propaganda purposes, they don't like. But also, very practically, they don't like the EU's third energy package. They don't like various multilateral arrangements that get in the way of their business and their idea of power. For all those reasons, whether they see NATO as a genuine threat almost doesn't matter; they really want a fight, and they will have one. They want it on their own terms, too.

Chair: Thank you all very much indeed. As you can see, we have gone over time because it was so lively and so interesting. We have a wealth of information from which to draw for our eventual report. I now ask the panels to change over.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Dr Victor Madeira**, Senior Fellow, the Institute for Statecraft, and **Dr Andrew Monaghan**, Senior Research Fellow of the Russia and Eurasia Programme, Chatham House, gave evidence.

Q77 Chair: I thank both our panellists for waiting patiently. We will protect as much of your time as we can. I aim to finish at about quarter past 1. Please introduce yourselves and say a word about your qualifications.

Dr Madeira: Thank you. I am Dr Victor Madeira. I am a senior fellow with the Institute for Statecraft in London, and until recently I was a visiting research fellow with the Changing Character of War Programme at the University of Oxford. I have done, on and off, 15 years of work looking at Russian security and intelligence, specifically their use of subversion and active measures and how they have used that in a multitude of environments throughout history.

Dr Monaghan: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for the invitation to come and speak; it is an honour. My name is Andrew Monaghan. I am the senior research fellow in the Russia and Eurasia Programme at Chatham House. I am also a visiting fellow at the Changing Character of War Programme based at Pembroke College, Oxford. My

background includes time spent at the UK Defence Academy and, subsequently, leading the Russia-related research for the NATO Defence College in Rome.

Chair: Thank you. To start, Jim Shannon.

Q78 Jim Shannon: I have a couple of quick questions. The first is about the Russian perception of the United Kingdom. Where do the weaknesses lie in terms of military capability? I would make two points on that. Number one is the ability of the United Kingdom and NATO to respond to conventional warfare, in particular tank warfare. The second is to do with chemical and biological warfare. I understand that Russia has put great emphasis in their training of soldiers and troops on biological and chemical warfare, whereas we have not. Indeed, I understand that the USA and the UK forces do not even do that training per year, never mind over a period of time. First, in terms of military capability, where are we?

Dr Madeira: On the military side, I would defer to Dr Sutyagin, because that is not my main area of research. In terms of perceptions of weakness, certainly as far as the UK is concerned, some of the speakers on the previous panel alluded to that. From Moscow's point of view, the main thing is the willingness to fight, I would say.

This is something that I will touch on later on, but we are dealing with a leadership that comes from a particular generation and background, and therefore has a particular outlook. I cannot stress enough the importance of understanding the notion of mindset, not just the Russian mindset but, in many ways even more importantly, our own mindset. By that, I mean collectively in the West and, in this case, the UK.

We are dealing with a state that is not conventional in any way, shape or form. We are dealing with a state that is run by the security and intelligence services. With that, on top of the traditional Russian mindset, you have an overlay of the Russian security and intelligence services. Their world view—that has been touched on beforehand—is very particular. The FSB, which President Putin headed before he became Prime Minister and then later President, is a counter-intelligence service, with again, a very particular mindset and world view.

To go back to your question, they will see the UK in terms of weaknesses: our willingness to fight, first and foremost; and in terms of perceptions of threat, which is reflected in the late 2015 National Security Strategy. The very first threat that they list is the activities of foreign special services. That is the Russian term for Western security and intelligence services. Certainly, the political willingness to fight in the broadest sense is their main assessment.

Secondly—it was again touched on earlier—is our addiction to money in the broadest sense. We are successful strong economies in the West, and they know that our standards of living depend on maintaining that flow of money through our financial and economic systems. Again, that is something they very much look to exploit and have done so since early Soviet times.

Dr Monaghan: I am not qualified to speak on the chemical and weapons front, I must admit, but the conventional point is a very important one because we have focused almost exclusively on hybrid warfare or multi-dimensional warfare, which is warfare and doesn't

need the adjective in front of it. It seems to me that one of the things that Russian thinkers may have observed over the last 15 years is our preoccupation with light vehicles and light intensity combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. There are certainly shortfalls when comparing that with events in Ukraine and thinking of, for instance, the battles at Ilovaisk, Debaltsevo and Donbass airport and conventional power being deployed in Syria—the actual war-fighting ability.

There are certain gaps opening up in terms of our perceptions of what warfare is and what it means. It would strike me also that in the UK, but also more broadly in NATO member states, there is a casualty aversion both for our own side, but also for infliction. So the idea of warfare actually leading to deaths is something that we have broadly tried to avoid for much of the recent era. Clearly, what is happening in Syria at the moment demonstrates that warfare cannot be conducted in that way.

An addendum to that is that Russian military thinkers and officials—senior generals—have spoken about the US global strike idea: the ability to knock an opponent out anywhere on the planet almost immediately. We talk about the UK capability, which is one question, but if we also talk about NATO and the US, one of the things the Russians are planning to have to deal with is this global strike question.

Much of the Russian discussion about NATO, UK allies and the US is the sense of war by humanitarian intervention. Warfare is not really caused by tanks and conventional weapons being the opening salvo. It is a question of collapsing a regime from within and then intervening. One of the primary concerns that I think is worth reflecting on in Moscow is that of colour revolution and war by regime change.

Q79 Jim Shannon: To get a slightly different tangent, the Litvinenko inquiry had an impact on the Russian perception of how long it takes the British to reply and respond. The great worry I had, and probably others in this Committee had, was that it took far too long to respond. What is your feeling about how Russia sees the inquiry and how long it took to get us where we are? Perhaps as a follow on from that, how do we remedy the weaknesses that Russia perhaps sees in how long it took us to respond or in the response and what it meant?

Dr Monaghan: There are two immediate answers to that. The main problem in the most recent response is that a substantial report was written off with one word: the use of “probably”. It was a substantive report but that word “probably” was used as a means of flashing it. That is one way of trying to address that.

The second is that it is of course worth bearing in mind that the response to Litvinenko took place immediately. There were immediate responses to the murder on British streets of Alexander Litvinenko. However, they have subsequently stalled in terms of getting the Russians to extradite someone from Russia in contravention of the Russian constitution, so there were limits to what could be done.

Dr Madeira: If I may pick up on Andrew’s point, something that came up some years ago was an interesting legal point. I have to stress that I have no legal background whatever, but the notion in Russia’s statements was to the effect that, according to its constitution, it could not extradite its own citizens, as Andrew rightly said. But there are precedents for the extradition of dual nationals: Russian nationals holding another nationality. Again, this is something that Dr Lo mentioned earlier. Andrei Soldatov wrote a book some years ago

detailing that to a great extent. For observers of Russian affairs like me, it was always a bit perplexing that the UK or the international community did not press that point. Certainly, people with a legal background did not press that point further. Perhaps they did in private, but certainly there was nothing that I saw in public.

In terms of Litvinenko, weaknesses in responding, the timeline and so on, as, again, Andrew rightly says, there were immediate responses. Perhaps the main weakness that I saw from the British side was the reluctance, or at least the apparent reluctance, to take a stronger line in terms of presenting the case, presenting the evidence, and pursuing certain individuals who were alleged to have been involved in the assassination, before they were elected to office—in particular, Mr Lugovoy, who became a Duma deputy and therefore had immunity from any prosecution. That would have been the most obvious one to me.

Dr Monaghan: Is it worth adding, just as a footnote, that UK-Russia relations have not recovered from this? While there has been an economic relationship and while there have been perhaps some flawed responses, my understanding is that quite a lot of partnership measures and co-operative measures were cut off instantly and, indeed, have not been resuscitated in any substantive form. This happened a decade ago. The UK-Russia political relationship has suffered significantly since then. It is difficult to say that this has been pursued to its fullest extent on the one hand, but at the same time the ramifications are clear. The UK has adopted a certain position and, despite certain attempts to revive the relationship at different times, it suffers the Litvinenko iceberg every time you try to resuscitate your relationship.

Mrs Moon: Perhaps the Defence Select Committee's visit to Russia will put things back into—

Dr Monaghan: Well, indeed. I wish you luck with that.

Q80 Mrs Moon: Thank you. We have been told that Russia views its nuclear capability as an integrated, viable and usable method of warfare, particularly for de-escalation. There's the threat: "We'll use it"; therefore, we'll back off. What is your view?

Dr Madeira: Well, it's doctrinal. It is very much how they see it. As you rightly say, it is a way of de-escalating. Again, I have to stress that I don't have the military expertise that perhaps Dr Sutyagin has. Russia's strength conventionally was superior to NATO's throughout the cold war and remains so to this day, in every sense: manpower, equipment numbers and so on. But of course, technologically, they are inferior in some key respects. Doctrinally, how they use nuclear weapons is designed to de-escalate the conventional conflict, but also to create a buffer. They will be able then to control, reassert or gain control over that area and push back the opponent. That is very different from how the West or NATO fights. Again, I have to stress that from a military point of view, I am not fully familiar with NATO doctrine, but my understanding is that it is very different. Conventional strikes are first, and nuclear weapons tend to be seen more as a last resort.

Again, this goes back to themes that emerged earlier in the day. Fundamentally, what we are talking about is two very different ways of thinking, both about themselves as a nation and about the world today. How the Russians see themselves and see their place in the world is very different from how we in the West see ourselves and our place in the world. There are fundamental—I use the term "ideological" with a lower case i—ideological

differences. Andrew and I and other colleagues have had this conversation over a number of years. Are we in a new cold war? Is there genuinely a new ideological conflict? My personal view is that there is an ideological conflict, but not in the traditional way we would have understood it, certainly during cold war days. It is no longer about capitalism versus communism; it is forms of economic management, if you want to put it that way.

What we now have fundamentally is a clash of values and beliefs in the 21st century. Our colleagues mentioned earlier that anything that gets the job done is what will be used—absolutely right, but what we have fundamentally is Russia portraying itself as the last remaining bastion of true Christian, conservative, family, faith-based values. The narrative they are putting out is that we in the West—collectively in the EU and North America as well—are in decline, are weak and are divided, and that multiculturalism is one of our greatest problems and weaknesses and so on. It is that unity of messaging that the Russian Government—the Russian state—is able to marshal that is so effective overseas and so pernicious, because it does penetrate the public mind.

That is fundamentally how they are playing the game, and it is nothing new. What we have called hybrid warfare—in particular, after the invasion of Crimea and eastern Ukraine—has been adapted, but in many ways it is very much what the Bolsheviks were doing right after the revolution, certainly throughout the 1920s and well into the 1930s. It is what they call “active measures”. We know what these methods are, by and large. We identified them during the cold war. We have the tools to deal with them: counter-intelligence, counter-subversion—

Q81 Chair: Counter-propaganda.

Dr Madeira: Counter-propaganda—but with the end of the cold war, a lot of that fell by the wayside. We had, of course, to focus on our own economies and our recovery. Unlike the Russians, who even in times of crisis maintain their long-term view—it is a long-term game—for us, the tyranny of the immediate trumps the necessity of the long term. That is one of the biggest challenges we face: to maintain our focus on the long term.

Dr Monaghan: I would agree with much of that. I would just like to add three points that are interrelated. The nuclear point is very important and prominent in what is going on, but it is just one part of warfare, and it is warfare that stretches from a nuclear exchange at the strategic level to having to deal with civil disobedience through regime change at the other. Those, I think, are connected in Russian thinking.

Secondly, the nuclear discussion is very much part of the strategic deterrent debate in Moscow. At the heart of that is the question of the United States’ withdrawal from the ABM treaty in 2002-03. It is therefore also rolled up with the question of the ballistic missile defence project that the United States is running, and also in NATO. So it is part of a longer-term question of how Russia and the US and Russia and NATO—and therefore, to a degree, Russia and the UK—disagree on international events.

Within that, there is an aspect of thinking that is made explicit by the Russian leadership: concern about an international arms race. If the emphasis is often on arms here, I think now it should be on an arms race and the acquisition of materials. Mr Putin and numerous others have said that major international players are spending considerable amounts of money on modernising their armed forces. For the Russians, that means they have to do

the same—a major reinvestment in their armed forces, which was touched upon earlier. It also means prioritising the strategic deterrent. Although we often hear—we rightly heard in the last panel about information war and the capacity to do that, but actually, what is No. 1 is modernising the strategic deterrent in Russia. It is a very important part of what is going on in Russian thinking, planning and procurement.

Q82 Mrs Moon: For the nuclear deterrent?

Dr Monaghan: For the nuclear deterrent, and also for the ability to cope with an evolving situation in which capabilities evolve and in which precision weapons have, in many ways, the same impact as weapons of mass destruction. Negotiations can remove weapons of mass destruction from the field, and therefore Russia's ability to retain a strategic deterrent is undermined. It is bound up with a number of those aspects of how international affairs are seen on the one hand, but also with the question of deterrence from Russia.

Dr Madeira: If I can just add a brief thought to Andrew's comment, I will quote very briefly from the latest Russian national security strategy. Andrew is absolutely right, in that the primacy of the strategic nuclear arsenal is unquestioned, but what is important to keep in mind as well is, as we have heard earlier, the overall package—this full-spectrum approach to ensuring strategic deterrence. This is one of the things when you look at Russia; Russians will generally tell you what they intend to do. How and when they do it—that's the tough bit to get right.

In the latest strategy, they say, "The strategic national defence goals are to be achieved within the framework of implementing military policy through strategic deterrence and the prevention of armed conflicts." Nothing too unusual there. It goes on to say, "Inter-related political-military, military-technical, diplomatic, economic, informational and other measures are being developed and implemented, in order to ensure strategic deterrence and the prevention of armed conflicts. These measures are intended to prevent the use of armed force against Russia and to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity."

In other words, absolutely—the primacy of the nuclear arsenal—but they are stating very clearly that they are quite prepared to resort to a full spectrum of activities, up to and including the psychological realm: information operations. If that can ensure that no conflict takes place, they will always go for it. The nuclear arsenal is always a last resort—the big stick—but they are quite keen to develop, and we are seeing them develop, all sorts of other capabilities that, if they can, they will resort to first, to ensure armed conflict doesn't break out.

Q83 Chair: I will have to ask people to be a bit more succinct—

Dr Madeira: Of course.

Chair: Because even with the extra time, we will not get through everything otherwise.

Just on that point, though, you said about the nuclear option only being the last resort, but surely it is traditionally the Russian approach—I am not talking about the use of strategic nuclear weapons, but about the introduction of theatre and tactical nuclear weapons at a much earlier stage than western countries do.

Dr Madeira: Absolutely. I was referring specifically to the strategic nuclear arsenal. That will always be the last resort.

Chair: Okay.

Q84 Mrs Moon: Are you happy that NATO and the UK have got the right mechanisms and approaches to deal with Russia? And if not, what should we be doing? What's missing?

Dr Madeira: Andrew?

Dr Monaghan: No, you.

Dr Madeira: Okay.

Dr Monaghan: Just passing the buck a little bit.

Mrs Moon: I am thinking in particular in relation to the nuclear capabilities.

Dr Madeira: I would have to defer to colleagues on that, because that's not my area of expertise, I'm afraid.

Dr Monaghan: One point I would make is that NATO's official position is that it cannot specifically work on conceptually deterring Russia, or thinking about a Russian-specific and explicitly Russian role in this, because it's not NATO's official position that Russia is a threat.

Q85 Mrs Moon: So that needs to change?

Dr Monaghan: Well, that would be up to NATO to discuss, it seems to me. If the member states are convinced of the fact that NATO poses a serious threat to the alliance and member states—

Chair: Russia.

Dr Monaghan: If they are convinced Russia poses a threat to the member states and the alliance, they will have to phrase their terminology explicitly and clearly. If they can't come to that agreement, it's an alliance. That's the block.

Q86 Mrs Moon: And the UK?

Dr Monaghan: Well, member states—sorry?

Q87 Mrs Moon: Where is the UK's weakness?

Dr Monaghan: The UK's weakness, I think, is more broadly in terms of dealing with Russia that goes beyond the nuclear aspect, it seems to me. Our two weaknesses are our thinking about Russia and the equipment for dealing with those certain problems that Russia might pose, whether that's in a conventional situation or more broadly in the nuclear situation. But the thinking is perhaps the most serious problem. We touched earlier on the question of too few people in the UK understanding Russia. Even if there is an increase in resources, the right questions have to be asked for those understanding Russia to come forward.

It seems to me that in many ways we are behind the Russian curve on this, in two ways. A gentleman asked about what might happen in the Arctic. It's already done; there is a strategic command established there. That is on the one hand. Secondly, actually we need to look a little bit beyond the immediate questions as they relate to us in terms of how Russia functions. Russia is not really thinking about hybrid warfare; Russia is thinking about mobilising the state. The primary concerns in Russia are actually domestic, not about us.

Actually, it is worth pointing out that often we end up talking about the Russian state or the Russians. Well, who? Which ones? Let's be more specific. Russia often doesn't work very well; it is quite difficult to create power. This is why a certain sense of mobilisation is visible in Russian politics. By that, I mean emergency measures to prepare the state in case of international conflict, in case of a threat to Russia. These are the kinds of questions we will need to be thinking about in terms of how we go about establishing a relationship with Russia in terms of the capacities we need to look at.

We are often looking at, fixed at, February 2014 and Crimea, for understandable reasons, but Russia has gone a very long way since then and our horizon now needs to be 2018, 2019, 2020—not February 2014.

Q88 Mrs Moon: Just very quickly, could you comment on how Russia would have viewed the BBC film about the British sitting in a war room and deciding whether to engage in nuclear deterrence? Would they have seen that as an official British line, or would they have just seen it as a piece of television drama?

Dr Monaghan: Well, actually, I happened to be in Moscow shortly after that programme was aired, and it wasn't viewed terribly favourably.

Q89 Mrs Moon: In what way?

Dr Monaghan: In a number of ways. They didn't think it was particularly realistic. They thought it was hyperbole. There were all sorts of insults thrown at it, actually; a fairly full array of insults, some of which I couldn't say in such a public environment, because it would have to be struck from the record for rudery—a very negative impression.

Q90 Richard Benyon: Back in the days of the cold war, the cold war got hotter and colder at various points. This just feels like it's getting hotter. Are we being too simplistic about this? Are we just trying to drag NATO to rearm, effectively, to increase its defence spending and its posture to deal with this resurgent threat, and not doing enough to de-escalate—to actually discuss and try and talk and think beyond Putin, perhaps, and think beyond the regime and all its faults, to think there is a country here, which we have got to find an accommodation with? That might require the West being big and creating demilitarised zones, if you like, and those sorts of things. Are we missing a trick? Or is that a sign of weakness, as far as Russia would be concerned?

Dr Madeira: A personal view: talking—always a good thing; jaw-jawing, and all that, being better than war-war. But we have got to understand how the Russians see the world at the moment.

Actually, if I could go back, we hear a lot coming out of Moscow: "The West is doing ABC. Therefore, we must respond. We feel encircled. We have to act in our own self-

defence.” No one in the public, generally, stops to ask themselves, given how little interest NATO seemed to have in Russia as a threat—not until after Crimea and Ukraine; it wasn’t until then that NATO really started taking the Russian issue seriously again, belatedly in my view: very few people seem to stop and think, and say to themselves, “Well, hang on, if the West is doing something, given that they didn’t have an interest in Russia before, surely they are only doing that because something has happened—Russia has done something.”

For me, it is always difficult to accept the Russian line unquestioningly, because they didn’t seem to have any concerns going into various territories from the end of the cold war. Grozny, admittedly, was an internal issue, but still there were enormous amounts of civilian casualties in central Asia and other places. So when you have a series of interventions like that—a series of quite brutal interventions—high numbers of civilian casualties and the West repeatedly says nothing of much consequence, does nothing of much consequence, that inaction sends a message to Russia. That message has been, since the end of the cold war and with Chechnya wars one and two and then the Caucasus area, Georgia and Estonia: “You can do pretty much what you want. The West will say lots of nice things about the importance of human rights but not do much about it.” That is the message that is ultimately being sent not just to the Russians, but to those small countries. Dr Lo rightly mentioned them earlier. It is might makes right. The message is that Russia is the largest country in the world, and these small countries just have to toe the line, but try telling that to the Estonians, the Chechens, the Ingush, the Lithuanians or lots of other people. I am all for dialogue, but I am afraid that given what we are seeing at the moment and the mindset that we see, constant concessions will signal weakness to the current Russian leadership.

Dr Monaghan: I think that there is a certain way that we need to start thinking about Russia that will hopefully begin to overcome the sense of surprise. It seems to me that deterrence and dialogue are viewed as the core binary approach at the moment, but we are constantly being surprised by Russia because we are not really looking or paying attention. I remember David Miliband in 2008 calling the war against Georgia “a rude awakening”, and then in 2014 we heard the exact same terminology being used again. How many times do we need to be rudely awoken before this comes to our attention?

We therefore need to begin to think in terms of the signals we are sending to Russia and the signals they are sending to us. I am not sure that that is the skill we have got at the moment. For instance, the SDSR published last year talked about the UK as the No. 1 soft power in the world and a number of other signals that we were sending, and that would translate to Russia as the No. 1 “colour revolution” power and that will make dialogue quite difficult.

Equally, when the United Kingdom says that we want to invest in, support, develop and encourage the current international architecture, the Russians have made it very explicit that they disagree with that architecture. Do we know that we are getting into a disagreement with them on these terms? Do we understand that when we claim that there are common interests, they are not shared interests in terms of how the problem is defined, how it is dealt with practically and what the end solution might be? Until we have clarity on those questions, it will be difficult to do either dialogue or deterrence.

My final point is that it is now presented as dialogue or deterrence. I remember during the cold war—if we must talk about the cold war; I think that is mistaken as we are in the 21st century—we did dialogue and deterrence, and they were done simultaneously. That was the core of NATO’s approach. Until we have a clear idea of with whom we are trying to establish a dialogue and what we want to achieve with them, dialogue will always be limited, but so is deterrence in that sense.

Q91 Richard Benyon: If the Chair will indulge me going slightly off-piste, I want to bring it back to intelligence. Do you see key differences between Russia and ourselves in the approaches to intelligence collation and usage? Do you think we have a significant and effective counter-intelligence network and mechanisms in respect of Russia? If not, what steps do you think we should be taking?

Dr Madeira: On the first issue of the collection, collation and dissemination of intelligence, our system—I keep saying “our”; obviously I am referring to the UK system—because it is much smaller, in many ways it is more effective. Small in this case certainly is beautiful. The Russian system—it is not unique to Russia by any means—still prizes the human over the technical. That is not to say that they are not very skilled technically, because they certainly are.

The gentleman earlier asked a question about the cyber capability. What I would add to what my colleague said earlier is that the clear advantage that Russia has compared with most western countries is that they still retain the core Soviet strength in the STEM subjects: science, technology, engineering and mathematics. They are producing an inordinate number of skilful engineers, technicians and mathematicians, and that feeds into the cyber-realm.

From a collection and dissemination point of view, it is quite an unwieldy system and it is a system with a long history and tradition of bitter and very bloody rivalry. I stress again that President Putin comes from the FSB, which is part of the KGB, which of course is a successor to the early Cheka. The Cheka and the predecessor of Russian military intelligence—the GRU these days, but the Fourth Directorate earlier on—were the bitterest of enemies. I will put that in perspective because sometimes it is difficult to imagine.

Chair: We are going to have to move on a bit.

Dr Madeira: Of course. So, there is a divide there that clearly causes problems. We most certainly do note the second issue in terms of the counter-intelligence. Counter-intelligence functions across NATO were decimated after the cold war and certainly after 2001, understandably, because of the terrorism threat. It is important to keep in mind that, short of terrorist groups acquiring weapons of mass destruction, they will not pose any sort of strategic threat to the West, which includes to the UK. Because Russia, China and other countries like that do very much take a long view, their entire approach revolves around the use of counter-intelligence. Counter-intelligence is critical to the use of deception. This is very much how these countries operate.

Strategic counter-intelligence functions are, in other words, not just having a counter-intelligence function within the agencies or even within Government. Because it is a full spectrum approach that Russia, China and other countries take, it is important to have a

strategic counter-intelligence approach for the whole society, educating the public about potential threats.

Q92 Chair: I really must stop you at that point or we will not cover the ground. Andrew, is there anything you particularly want to say at this point?

Dr Monaghan: No, that is Victor's question, not mine.

Chair: Very good. I will bring in Ruth Smeeth.

Q93 Ruth Smeeth: Very briefly, what could the Government be doing better in terms of our general posture towards Russia? Would a more aggressive posture be more effective?

Dr Monaghan: Actually, it would be good to see in the public domain that the Government were thinking about where they wanted to be with Russia in five years' time or four years' time. I choose four years' time because that will be the end of the parliamentary term; but at the moment it is, as I mentioned earlier, reactive, reactive, reactive. This means that we are constantly surprised because it is the question of, "Where next?" Actually, I am not saying that we have to adopt an aggressive or a deterrent or a dialogue point. First, we need to work out where we want to be. Secondly, we need to begin to resource that. They are the key questions.

Finally, we have tended to work on the basis that the Russians, at the end of the cold war, were going to become a liberal, democratic state and return to the western family of nations. So far, hopes on that front have probably been frustrated, if we could put it that way. That has been, nevertheless, the thrust of how our leadership has wanted to see Russia and where it is going. Perhaps a reappraisal would be worth conducting before we start to say, "Here are more resources. Here is a more aggressive approach." We have responded to Russia by suddenly remembering it exists in February 2014, and that is a mistake.

Dr Madeira: If I may, very briefly, I would add two points to what Andrew said. First, clearly articulate our values and beliefs. What do we stand for? The reverse of the coin is, how far are we prepared to go to stand by and defend those beliefs and values? Send a clearer message. Once that line has been drawn—I do not mean that in a confrontational way—and people know where we stand, it is much easier for them to calibrate and say, "If we push that far, we know they are going to react."

The second point is that, yes, resources are key. But, even more importantly, it is about getting the right people with the right skills doing the right jobs. There is no point in having an accountant mending shoes. Resource is great, but make sure that we are getting the right people with the right skills doing the right jobs.

Q94 Mr Gray: On this question of posture, in the run-up to Warsaw, do I detect almost a split in NATO between those who say that Putin reacts well to an aggressive posture and therefore let's position troops forward in Poland and elsewhere, and those who say that Putin would view that as being aggressive and we would be much better to be almost pacifist or take a dovelike posture? Is there a split? If so, which is right?

Dr Madeira: I would go back to my previous statement. If we articulate clearly to the Russians that NATO has been a defensive alliance from the outset—to the best of my

knowledge, NATO still has a no-first-strike policy and that should be in neon lights. And it has been throughout history.

Q95 Mr Gray: Sorry, but messaging does not really have anything to do with it. What we are talking about is: do we want a NATO division in Poland? If we have a division deployed in Poland with equipment, does Putin view that as aggressive and therefore worth retaliating to, or as a clear message of intent, which will keep him in his box? Never mind messaging. Of course we have got to get that right, but it is a question of what we can do. If the Baltics say, “Send a NATO division to be permanently based here,” would that be a good or bad thing from the point of view of Putin’s psychology?

Dr Madeira: What Russia has tried to inject into international consciousness is that they should have a veto over what happens within NATO and EU countries. That is, personally, a red line. The moment we allow Russia to dictate what NATO decides to do within its own member states, what is the point of having NATO? Having said that, of course, I fully take your point on board. There is no desire to carry out any action that will antagonise Russia unnecessarily, but we are not talking about the same thing. Russia’s view very much at the moment is that anything that NATO does to ramp up its capabilities to respond to what Russia has done in Crimea and Ukraine is therefore a bad thing. I do not think that is necessarily the case.

Q96 Mr Gray: So an iron fist and a velvet glove with proper messaging attached to it.

Dr Madeira: Yes.

Dr Monaghan: Can I just say, can we please be careful when we start talking about Russia responding well to aggression? Nobody responds well to aggression. The Russians, in my interpretation, are actually in the midst of preparation for war—мобилизационной подготовки. That is a concern about war being foisted upon them. There are a number of disagreements, but Warsaw I think needs to be seen in that light.

Any preparation of any discussion about an aggressive position towards Russia will incur a vivid response from the Russians—probably big exercising. They are worried. It was mentioned earlier how absurd it is that they might consider themselves to be surrounded, but publicly available maps, pointed by the Russian general staff, demonstrate where US and NATO forces are all around Russia. We can disagree with that because we are sitting in Portcullis House. But if you then put up an exercise before Warsaw called Operation Anaconda, that does not look terribly good in terms of delivering message. You then stamp on all of the chronic tensions between NATO and Russia: NATO enlargement; missile defence; Readiness Action Plan; Armed Forces in Poland; and so on, perhaps including further enhanced measures for partnership for other non-NATO member states. So please do not be surprised when the Russians respond to this by saying, “We don’t like it.”

It is also an election year. There is already publicly visible and stated concern by the Russian leadership about western intervention to create a colour revolution at the time of the parliamentary elections in September. All of those things are coming together. I am not saying that NATO should not do certain things—absolutely, we should get our ship into order—but when we talk about being aggressive to Russia, calibrate it very carefully.

Q97 Mr Gray: Let me bring you back to calibration and messaging, if I may. First of all, I will ask you a question that you probably cannot answer, but it is interesting. In this context, what do you think that Russia makes, or would make, of this inquiry and its tone? I am sure that they are watching it on television at this moment, taking notes.

Dr Madeira: There is a gentleman here from the Russian embassy—[Hon. Members: “He’s gone.”]

Chair: James, we have recently lost the representative of the Russian embassy, whose presence in the audience is very welcome today, as it was at a previous hearing.

Q98 Mr Gray: Indeed so. The question is, what do you think that they think about the fact that we are examining these things, asking these questions and saying these things? What influence does even this little Committee have on that messaging relationship with Russia?

Dr Monaghan: You will find out when you go to Moscow. I would take a hard hat and be prepared for a robust discussion.

Q99 Chair: But isn’t the use of that word “robust” rather better than the use of the word “progressive”? Nobody on the NATO side wishes to take an aggressive stance towards Russia, but what many people wish to do on the NATO side—as has always been the case—is to take a robust stance, and that is something that traditionally and historically Russia has respected. Is that not the case, Dr Madeira?

Dr Madeira: Yes, absolutely. With the Russian mindset—I mean the popular mindset—you have to keep in mind a number of things. I will not go into the details, because I am very much aware that I have overrun in some of my answers, but geography, history and climate are key factors. All of those things shape the Russian mindset. They are a proud people and, as with anyone, they would expect to be respected, but, failing that, being feared will do as well. We see this throughout history. I would very much agree with Andrew and with your statement, Chair, that robust does not mean aggressive.

Q100 Mr Gray: Finally on this little section of messaging, robustness and all that, Russian propaganda clearly plays—always has done—a very significant role in their military operations. It is all part and parcel—perhaps all nations do that to some degree. Should we be doing more in terms of counter-propaganda?

Dr Madeira: Counter-propaganda?

Mr Gray: Yes.

Dr Madeira: Absolutely. The resources that we in the West have collectively thrown at the problem, even since Crimea and Ukraine, are minuscule compared with what Russia does officially and unofficially to the tune of—depending on whose figures you look at—annual budgets of anywhere from \$600 million to over \$1 billion. The Russians spend that just on the RTs, Sputniks and other outlets like this. But as Peter said earlier, we need to understand how the Russians go about doing this. Certainly, during the cold war, particular groups were targeted because it was felt that they could advance Soviet interests, but these days anything that is of use or of value will be used. The BBC World Service and BBC Monitoring are hugely helpful—

Q101 Chair: May I just interject at this moment, because it will save me asking what was going to be the last question after James? Do you consider that there is still a corpus of expertise on Russia in the United Kingdom? Do you think that it could be better used? If so, how? I have in mind, for example, various specialist organisations on Russia, such as within the military even, that were dismantled at the end of the cold war. After that, I will come back to you, James, for the final question, if you have anything further.

Mr Gray: I'm done.

Chair: You are done, okay. Thank you, James. In that case, we will leave it on this point.

Dr Madeira: We heard earlier that the capabilities lie far, far behind what we used to have—we in the West generally and certainly in the UK. It is a long-term process, as we have said before. Resources are not enough—it is not enough just to have resources to get more experts coming in. I would therefore say two things: make the best possible use of the Russia expertise that remains from cold war days, because there are a lot of people who for a number of reasons were let go, and there are plenty of them still around; and the UK Government ought to consider something similar to what the American Government have put in place, such as the Boren fellowships. Those are national security fellowships, as they call them, for anyone from undergraduates to post-doctoral students. They are paid tuition and stipends to go into area studies for critical areas and critical languages—including Russian, Mandarin, Japanese and so on—and they then agree to serve in government in whatever capacity, whether that is the State Department, the security and intelligence community or other parts of the American Government. I think that would be possibly one good way of remedying the gap in the shorter term.

Q102 Chair: Andrew, would you like to comment on the last few points, with special reference to how Britain could use its expertise in matters concerning Russia to help formulate perhaps a stronger and more robust but certainly not aggressive defence policy towards Russia?

Dr Monaghan: Thank you, Chair. You were quite right to point out that the word is “robust”. My response was to the words used on the occasion.

Chair: Indeed.

Dr Monaghan: I am not quite sure that counter-propaganda is quite the correct approach. First, we could do with winning the arguments from time to time about democracy, the enlargement of NATO and so on within our own country. If we are worried about Russian assistance for political groupings and so on, how about winning the actual argument, rather than trying to counter that and prevent it?

Secondly, we could try to learn to remember what was done and when in the relationship with the Russians, so that we know some of the back story. It seems to me that if you go there, you may well end up being posed questions—“What about this? What about that?”—that will not have been on your radar. It often happens with our civil servants as well, particularly in NATO.

Q103 Mrs Moon: Perhaps you can give us a list of the things that we need to look at.

Dr Monaghan: If I could submit that subsequently, I will discuss with your colleagues about how that might happen.

Chair: Please do.

Dr Monaghan: It seems to me, as has been mentioned, that we need to relearn with whom we are dealing. We have not thought about the Russians for 25 years or so. Suddenly, we have woken up with Crimea, which was another rude awakening.

That leads me to the final point, which is about the corpus of expertise. It is much reduced in certain circumstances and certain roles, but it does exist. It could be better used, that is true, but the substantive problem is that the expertise often briefs people on what is going to happen, but it hits a glass ceiling, because there is a great deal of mirror imaging going on. We say, “Well, the Russians are like us, because they want to be democratic and they want to be an international partner working with us,” regardless of the fact that the Russians have said, “Well, we actually do not agree with you.” We say, “They do not really mean that.”

There is a lot of mirror imaging going on, saying, “The Russians would not do that in Crimea because we would not do it.” I know that that was going on in briefings in NATO. People were talking—it is public knowledge—about it with the Russo-Georgian war. It is also public knowledge that it happened in the energy disputes between Gazprom and Naftogaz of Ukraine in 2006 and 2009, yet people are constantly surprised, and that is because of this glass ceiling. Yes, the expertise can be better used, but it can only be better used if the right questions are posed of it on the one hand, or on the other the information goes up above that to shape the questions.

Now, the final part—Chair, you are tailoring it towards—

Q104 Chair: It is about how to tailor it, so that it can have a more direct input to the formulation of a more effective British defence policy towards Russia, bearing in mind, for example, the fact that the one big difference between the cold war and the position we find ourselves in now is that whatever else the Russian Government and regime does that we do not like, they are not at least any longer subservient to a totalitarian ideology, with allies who were seduced by that in target countries all around the world.

Dr Monaghan: Well, the first and obvious point is to have discussions like this. The response to your question is: how will the Russians see it? It demonstrates that the Russians are a question of import and interest for the UK Parliament. That is an important step and one to be supported, so thank you for inviting me to speak.

Q105 Mr Gray: The Russians would welcome that and be pleased with that.

Dr Monaghan: So long as there is a degree of robust intellectual approach to the questions that are being discussed, yes, why not?

Q106 Chair: We are endeavouring to get some input from them, and it was a slight disappointment that the Russian ambassador turned down our invitation to come and give evidence directly.

Dr Monaghan: And I hope very much that you will receive something of a welcome when you go to Russia. I think it is exactly the right sort of thing to be trying to do. Also, you have taken a range of evidence from all sorts of different people to try to create a serious set of questions and answers, and that is important. It is not just, “The Russians are not being very nice.” That would not go down very well at all, in my view.

The second point is that one of the problems with creating a network of expertise is people moving on within the system. There is a very quick turnover. Therefore, networks are not created between Government institutions on the one hand and the excellent expertise on the outside on the other. People turnover and do not hand on their contacts, and then when something happens, it is, “Who do I call? I do not know.” That is the second point that I would emphasise—trying to build some institutional memory and network that goes beyond the current system.

Chair: Thank you very much indeed. It has been a long session, but effectively it has been two sessions in one. We greatly value the contributions that both of you have made, as we do those of the earlier panel.