

## Written evidence submitted by Dr Andrew Foxall (INR0058)

### About the Author

Dr Andrew Foxall has been Director of the Russia and Eurasia Studies Centre at the Henry Jackson Society since 2013, and in 2017 became Director of Research. Previously, Andrew held academic positions at the University of Oxford and Queen's University Belfast.

Andrew's research initially focused on foreign policy, political, and security trends in Russia and the former Soviet Union, but he now also focuses on disinformation, propaganda, sharp power, and broader threats to governance in the West. He is the author of *Ethnic Relations in Post-Soviet Russia* (Routledge, 2014 and 2017) and has written for publications including *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *The Telegraph*, *The Times*, *Foreign Affairs*, *TIME*, *Foreign Policy*, *Spectator* and *New Statesman*.

Andrew holds a DPhil from the University of Oxford.

### About the Henry Jackson Society

The Henry Jackson Society is a think-tank and policy-shaping force that fights for the principles and alliances which keep societies free, working across borders and party lines to combat extremism, advance democracy and real human rights, and make a stand in an increasingly uncertain world.

### Evidence

1. The Government's 'Integrated Review of foreign policy, defence, security and development', announced in February 2020, is to be welcomed. It represents a long-overdue recognition that the international system, and the UK's place within it, has undergone significant change since the ending of the Cold War. In undertaking such a review, particular attention should be paid to Russia.
2. **Russia has been traditionally viewed through a military prism, and Russia does pose a military threat to the UK.** Russia frequently probes the UK's air- and sea-space, while the UK has deployed troops to the Baltic States and Poland as part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) to deter Russian aggression. Russia has one of the world's largest stockpiles of nuclear weapons, and has invested heavily in its military over the last decade or so, primarily in an effort to modernise it. The main military threat Russia poses, however, is to our allies, in eastern and southern Europe.
3. **The threat that Russia poses to the UK is not primarily military.** Instead, the threat from Russia comes from its full spectrum approach to foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> The Kremlin

---

<sup>1</sup> Bob Seely, "A Definition of Contemporary Russian Conflict: How Does the Kremlin Wage War?", *Henry Jackson Society*, June 2018, available at: <http://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/A-Definition-of-Contemporary-Russian-Conflict-new-branding.pdf>

rogue state wages 'political warfare' (or 'non-linear warfare') against the West. This is a toxic cocktail of propaganda, influence-peddling, disinformation, cyber-attacks, subversion, economic pressure, assassinations, military saber-rattling, and everything else short of actually military conflict.<sup>2</sup>

4. Russia's current military and political elites believe their country is at war with the West. Their understanding of the post-Cold War world is diametrically opposed to that of the West. These elites, including President Putin, see periods of 'peace' not as opportunities to prosper and relax, but instead as opportunities to prepare for the next (inevitable) conflict. For at least a decade, the Kremlin has believed that Russia is engaged in a zero-sum conflict with the West and that it faces a serious, even existential, threat. This 'wartime mind-set' was evident before 2014, but has been prominent since.
5. **No such thing as the 'Gerasimov Doctrine' exists<sup>3</sup>, but Russia's activities are by and large coordinated** in the sense that there is a broad vision in the Kremlin to undermine the West and there is a recognition of the importance of using military and non-military means to do so. The latter of these is outlined in the 2014 iteration of the Military Doctrine<sup>4</sup>, the 2015 version of the National Security Strategy<sup>5</sup>, the 2016 iteration of the Foreign Policy Concept<sup>6</sup>, and other documents.
6. Russia's approach is also fragmented and opportunistic – and often contradictory.<sup>7</sup> This is clear to see in the case of disinformation. There does exist a single, disciplined "disinformation army" in the form of state-owned and state-backed media, including the propaganda channel RT. But there also exists a collection of enthusiasts and mercenaries who generate content that reflects both their own views and their assumptions about what the Kremlin would like to see. The Kremlin picks and chooses which lines fit its needs at any given time and then amplifies them accordingly.
7. In Russia, the UK faces a nuclear-powered state with significant resources that acts, more often than not, like a terrorist outfit. That Russia believes it is at war with the West and conducts activities that fall short of outright war raises a set of questions about the strategy needed to response to them.

---

<sup>2</sup> Bob Seely and Andrew Foxall, 'Russia is waging a new kind of conflict', *The Times*, 4 June 2018, available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/russia-is-waging-new-kind-of-conflict-txww6ntkr>

<sup>3</sup> Mark Galeotti, 'The Gerasimov Doctrine', *Berlin Policy Journal*, 28 April 2020, available at: <https://berlinpolicyjournal.com/the-gerasimov-doctrine/>

<sup>4</sup> Russian Federation, 'Voennaya Doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii [The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation]', 25 December 2014, available at: <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/security/military/document129/>

<sup>5</sup> Russian Federation, 'O Strategii Natsional'noi Bezopastnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii [The National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation]', 31 December 2015, available at: <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/ru/18iXkR8XLAtxeilX7JK3XXy6Y0AsHD5v.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Russian Federation, 'Kontseptsiya vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii [The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation]', 30 November 2016, available at: [http://www.mid.ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2542248](http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2542248)

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Foxall, 'Coronavirus conspiracies are a gift to Russia's disinformation machine', *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 March 2020, available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/03/19/coronavirus-conspiracies-gift-russias-online-disinformation/>

8. Our efforts to confront Russia thus far have been ill-coordinated, or at best too fragmented. Our police force enforces the law and catches criminals. Our security services keep track of terrorists, would-be terrorists, and other states' spooks. Our financial regulators regulate dirty money and keep track of suspicious transactions. Our cybersecurity experts protect computers, data, and servers. The creation of the Joint States Threats Assessment Team (JSTAT) in 2017 is a step in the right direction, but Russia's attempted assassination of Sergei Skripal in 2018 and its attendant behaviour shows the shortcomings of the UK's current approach. Russia uses multiple tactics, many of which fall between the cracks or cut across the silos.
9. Improving our resilience through better co-ordination is necessary, but it is not enough. We need deterrence too.
10. Our defence spending is low by historical standards, and it needs to be increased. It also needs to be spent differently. Trident deters nuclear attack, and it is important that the UK maintains independent nuclear capability. (It also compounds the impact of the UK's participation in NATO's EFP in the Baltics States.) But trident does not deter anything else. In the future, we will likely need larger numbers of better-equipped and nimbler troops; greater specialisation, including in cyber operations; and the ability to move both troops and equipment at speed across vast distances.
11. With its commitment to spending at least 0.7% of GNI on Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), the UK will spend around £14 billion annually. Looked at in a different way, this is roughly a quarter of what Russia spends on defence. This is not to argue that the UK should 'Putinise' its spending, but it is to say that this money could be spent in ways that better support the UK's foreign policy aims, such as the promotion of democracy and the rule of law. Currently, ODA is largely directed at low-income countries (those with a GNI per capita, in 2016, of \$1,005 or less), but much could be achieved if more were directed to lower-middle income countries (those with a 2016 GNI per capita between \$1,005 and \$3,995), such as Moldova or Ukraine, or upper-middle income countries (with a 2016 GNI of \$3,956 to \$12,235), such as Belarus.<sup>8</sup>
12. As the UK withdraws from the European Union, some of the money 'saved' should be spent on eastern and central Europe. True, we already do this through NATO. But the main threat to these countries comes not from Russia's tanks but from Russia's influence operations. NATO is not and never will be the right organisation to deal with such a threat. The EU has done a commendable job in bolstering European energy security, but the UK could do more, for example, to shine a light on the often murky financial flows that Russia uses to create political and economic influence. Practically, this might involve the UK creating initiatives to increase capacity and capability in both government and civil society for journalists, open-source investigations, and the judiciary.

---

<sup>8</sup> 'DAC List of ODA Recipients: Effective for reporting on aid in 2018 and 2019', available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2018-and-2019-flows.pdf>

13. We need to think about why Russia's behaviour is successful. Its propaganda efforts work because they find already fertile ground. Its economic subversion works because our bankers and accountants have for decades acted as accomplices for foreign kleptocrats who want to steal, hide, and launder colossal sums of money. Its lawfare works because our judicial authorities have been slow to challenge direct assertions made on behalf of a sovereign state, or to subject such assertions to the sort of scrutiny they demand.<sup>9</sup> Getting the UK's house in order will go some way to providing a prophylactic against Russia's behaviour.
14. **Russia's 'political warfare' is not unique**, and its activities are not new, although the technology that enables them is.<sup>10</sup> Instead, it reflects how inter-state conflict is changing in a modern age characterised by deep interconnectivity of economic, information, political, cultural, and social space – and by the increasingly prohibitive cost of military conflict. The Covid-19 pandemic has made clear the extent to which China combines assertive 'Wolf Warrior' diplomacy with economic pressuring and undermining the rules-based international system. North Korea carries out assassinations and military sabre-rattling, while Iran's stance towards the Middle East mixes approaches at regional stabilisation.
15. In short, those states that wish the UK – and the West – harm have expanded their concepts of war beyond the narrow boundaries within which our traditional approach can be brought to bear. They have adapted, and we need to adapt too.

**May 2020**

---

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Foxall and Ben Emmerson, 'Russia poses a critical threat to Britain. We must act fast to stop it getting worse after Brexit', *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 January 2020, available at:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/01/24/russia-poses-critical-threat-britain-must-act-fast-stop-getting/>

<sup>10</sup> Keir Giles, 'Russia's 'New' Tools for Confronting the West: Continuity and Innovation in Moscow's Exercise of Power', Chatham House (2016), available at:

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/2016-03-russia-new-tools-giles.pdf>