

ПРИВЕТ! GREETINGS! ДОБРО ПОЖАЛОВАТЬ! WELCOME!

TO: Russia Roundtable Participants
FM: COL John F. Concannon III, USA Ret.
SUBJ: Advance Materials and Information

1. Russia: Ally or Antagonist?

If Russia is a new topic that interests you, the variety of short readings will help you engage in the discussion with your fellow cadets. If you already have some prior knowledge and study regarding Russia, you likely have some views on the question posed above. I look forward to that input as well. Whatever you think that answer is now, during your upcoming military service you will need to work out whether that is even the right question, review your understanding, acquire new and additional knowledge, and assess Russia (or another country or region) from a military professional perspective applicable in your future duties. In this regard our roundtable will be a good exercise. The following varied readings challenge each other.

Despite huge energy resources and a considerable accumulation of foreign capital, the Russian Federation suffered significantly in the current global financial crisis. The STRATFOR Goodrich and Zeihan report, "The Financial Crisis and the Six Pillars of Russian Strength," offers a challenging assessment of the current financial situation (Reading 1, Read 5 PP). They view Geography, Politics, the Social System, Natural Resources, Military, and Intelligence, as providing more powerful tools for political might, domestic stability, and projecting power abroad.

In testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Andrei Illarionov offers a sharp view on the pillars of politics, the social system, and intelligence. (Reading 2, Scan 8 PP) As regards the military pillar, Roger McDermott's "Russia's Armed Forces: The Power of Illusion" provides his current view on military power. (Reading 3, Scan 20 PP).

In marked contrast to the Goodrich and Zeihan assessment, former UK Ambassador to Russia, Sir Andrew Wood, contends that "Russia is in ill-piloted drift towards the shoals," in a paper "Ten Russian Propositions" presented recently at Chatham House. (Reading 4, Read 5 PP). Janusz Bugajski's "Russia's Pragmatic Reimperialization" argues that Russia is seeking to restore regional dominance, undermine US global influence, divide NATO, neutralize the European Union (EU), limit further NATO and EU enlargement, and re-establish zones of 'privileged interest' in the former Soviet bloc.' Bugajski contends that despite these expansive ambitions the Russian Federation is – potentially a failing state. (Reading 5, Read 16 PP).

2. Roundtable Readings

Bugajski, Janusz, "Russia's Pragmatic Reimperialization," Caucasian Review of International Affairs, Winter 2010. (16 PP) (READ)

Goodrich, Lauren, and Zeihan, Peter, "The Financial Crisis and the Six Pillars of Russian Strength," STRATFOR, March 3, 2009, (5 PP) (READ)

Illarionov, Andrei, Testimony before the House Committee of Foreign Affairs at the Hearing "From Competition to Collaboration: Strengthening the US-Russia Relationship," February 25, 2009. (8 PP) (SCAN.)

McDermott, Roger, "Russia's Armed Forces: The Power of Illusion," IFRI, March 2009, (20 PP) (SCAN).

Wood, Andrew, "Ten Russian Propositions," Russia and Eurasia Programme Paper, Chatham House, 22 February 2010. (5 PP) (READ)

Other Resources:

EurasiaNet Weekly Update <http://www.eurasianet.org> and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty provide daily reports of developments in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Russia, the Caucasus and Central Asia: <http://www.rferl.org/> (SURF).

National Defense University Library, Military Education Research Library Network (MERLN) <http://merln.ndu.edu/>, Military Policy Awareness links (MiPALs), Russia, <http://merln.ndu.edu/index.cfm?secID=112&pageID=3&type=section> (SURF).

U.S. Department of State, Background Note: Russia, April 2009. 8 PP (SURF). <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3183.htm>

- 3. Please prepare a one-minute oral biography about yourself, college, your major, ROTC/travel experience, goals, and interests. You may use a 3 x 5 key-word card. Practice and conform to the time limit. We will use the bios as a quick, introductory icebreaker.**

- 4. State Department's Country profile of the Russian Federation was mentioned in the Roundtable Readings above. You can find country profiles of the other New Independent States of the former Soviet Union at this website. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/index.htm>. These states are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.**

5. I am looking forward to meeting you and working together in this roundtable. There is a lot going on: the global financial crisis, the "re-start" of US-Russia relations, the follow-on treaty to START, proliferation issues, Afghanistan/Russia/US/NATO/EU, the Russian military modernization, and Russia/Ukraine/Georgia. We know that you also have a lot going on: exams, papers, preparations for graduation in your final semester. Hang in there! Truly the best is yet to be!

ДО СКОРОЙ ВСТРЕЧИ! SEE YOU SOON!