



RUSSIA REFORM MONITOR

The American Foreign Policy Council's Review of
Russian Government Actions and U.S. Policy

Russia Reform Monitor No. 2270

November 9, 2018 **Ilan I. Berman, Margot van Loon**

Related Categories: Russia

THE PENTAGON'S POST-INF WORLD

The Department of Defense has delivered a key assessment to Capitol Hill on the implications of the end of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty for U.S. missile capabilities. Originally, the briefing and classified report, due to Congress five months ago, were intended to provide options on how the United States should respond to Russian violations of the INF Treaty. Now, however, the assessment has gained new relevance in the wake of President Trump's announced intention to withdraw from the Cold War-era arms control pact. The primary options proposed in the study are said to include modifying the ranges of current short-range or tactical weapons systems, forward-basing ground-launched cruise missiles, and/or developing ground-launched intermediate-range ballistic missiles. Russian President Vladimir Putin has promised to "mirror" any U.S. missile deployments of this range in Europe, but NATO appears disinclined to agree to host such systems. (*Breaking Defense*, October 24, 2018)

RUSSIA TURNS ITS BACK ON EUROPE?

Russian opposition politician Vladimir Kara-Murza has warned that Moscow is on track to withdraw from the Council of Europe by June 2019. Russia has not paid its contributions to the body's budget since 2017, and several laws passed by the Duma in the last few years have allowed the Kremlin to ignore or contravene any decisions made by the Council that it doesn't like. According to Kara-Murza, "Ruxit" would make a powerful symbolical statement by formalizing Putin's decision to "repudiate the principles of modern Europe." (*Washington Post*, October 30, 2018)

RUSSIA'S INTERCONNECTED CONFLICTS

The government of Russian President Vladimir Putin is currently involved in two distinct military conflicts. The first is in Ukraine, where Russia has provided material and operational assistance to separatist forces in the Donbass region. The second is in Syria, where Russian soldiers and contract forces are deployed in defense of the regime. But these battlefields are not so separate after all; Ukrainian human rights watchdog groups have reportedly amassed evidence that "some young men" from the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia annexed in 2014 after a stage-managed referendum, "have been sent to Syria as part of Russia's military intervention on the side of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad." This evidence has now been submitted to the International Criminal Court by the Crimean Human Rights Group, the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union and Ukraine's Prosecutor for the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Investigation of the charges, however, may take years, observers say. (Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, October 31, 2018)

ANARCHO-TERROR IN ARKHANGELSK

Russia's Investigative Committee has launched a formal inquiry into the circumstances of a rare terrorist attack in the country's northernmost reaches. On October 31st, a seventeen-year-old identified by the Russian media as Mikhail Zhlobitsky detonated a homemade bomb in the lobby of the Federal Security Service's office in Arkhangelsk, killing himself and another victim. While Zhlobitsky reportedly maintained anarchist sympathies, the motive for the attack remains unclear, and local authorities have chosen to increase security around public buildings while the investigation takes place. (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, October 31, 2018)

RUSSIA'S INTELLIGENCE PENETRATION OF THE UK

The recent poisoning of ex-spy Sergei Skripal has focused renewed attention on the extent of Russia's intelligence activities in the United Kingdom. That footprint is extensive, and includes an active presence by all three of Russia's main intelligence services (the FSB, GRU and SVR) on British soil, a leading British think tank has charged. Operatives from these services are known to engage in a broad range of activities, ranging from intelligence gathering on high-value targets to the monitoring of defectors and political opponents to the targeted assassination of select figures, according to the study, entitled *Putin Sees And Hears It All: How Russian Intelligence Agencies Menace The UK*.

In response, the study urges, the British government must adopt a more resolute strategy to counter Russian spying - including by cooperating more closely with Western allies to address the threat. "Russia's intelligence operations are part of a full spectrum approach to foreign policy," it notes. "Accordingly, the West's response to Russia's actions cannot be silo-ed or divided along nation-state boundaries. Much tactical knowledge and expertise about Russia's intelligence and security agencies is already shared through the Eu and NATO, and through bilateral and other channels. But more should be done. Enhanced capacity-sharing and counterintelligence activities are essential if any Western action against Russia is going to be meaningful." (Henry Jackson Society, November 2018)