



**Deepening Understanding of Russia's Security Sector:
Dynamics of Formal and Informal Structures
in the Putin Era**

**GENEVA
GRADUATE
INSTITUTE**

INSTITUT DE HAUTES
ÉTUDES INTERNATIONALES
ET DU DÉVELOPPEMENT

GRADUATE INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL AND
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Applied Research Project

7 July 2023

Project: ARP_1_05 (DCAF)

Research Team:

Ellie Winslow

Idriss El Alaoui Talibi

Mathias Le Bailly

Mergim Bajrami

Partner:

Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)

Academic Supervisor: Dr. Vassily Klimentov

Tutor: Victor Santos Mariottini De Oliveira

Cover Photo: *Putin orders Russian military to increase its forces as Ukraine war passes the six-month mark, August 25, 2022. (Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)*

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/putin-orders-increase-russian-armed-forces-ukraine-war-r-cna44774>

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
List of Abbreviations	4
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	6
Methodology and Research Design	7
<i>Challenges and Research Limitations</i>	8
Russia’s Formal Security Sector – Systems of Structure from Before 24 February	9
<i>Russian Security Council</i>	10
<i>Ministry of Defense</i>	12
<i>Russian Intelligence Agencies</i>	13
<i>Conclusions From Literature Review on Formal Security Sector</i>	16
Status of the Current Russian Security Sector Including Formal and Informal Actors	16
<i>The Inner Circle 2022-2023, Russia’s New Foreign Policy Concept</i>	17
<i>The Relationship Between the Wagner Group and the Ministry of Defense</i>	19
<i>The Rise to Power of Yevgeny Prigozhin</i>	21
<i>The Genesis of Wagner</i>	22
<i>The Ministry of Defense’s Own Private Army, Redut</i>	23
<i>Wagner’s Rebellion of June 2023</i>	24
<i>Other Informal Actors in Russia’s Security Sector: Oligarchs and Banks</i>	25
Analysis of Security Structure and its Implications for Russian Strategy and War Future 27	
<i>The Russian Security Structure and Military Operations are Dysfunctional</i>	28
<i>Intentional Strategy of Divide and Rule</i>	29
<i>Dysfunctional Security Sector, but Use of Divide and Rule to Save Putin</i>	30
Conclusion	31
Bibliography	33
Appendix	48

Acknowledgements

The authors of this report would like to thank all of the people that provided their guidance and support throughout the completion of this research project. We wish to extend our gratitude to Dr. Grazvydas Jasutis from the Geneva Centre of Security Sector Governance for his unique wisdom on the subject and for his constructive, positive, and encouraging feedback. We would also like to thank our academic team at the Geneva Graduate Institute, in particular, Dr. Vassily Klimentov (Academic Supervisor) and Victor Santos Mariottini De Oliveira (Tutor) for their support and advice, which helped make this research project a success and an invaluable learning experience.

List of Abbreviations

DCAF	Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance
FSB	Federal Security Service
FSO	Federal Protective Service
FSVNG RF	Federal Service of the National Guard Troops of the Russian Federation
GU / GRU	Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation
GUSP	Main Directorate of Special Programs of the President of the Russian Federation
ISW	Institute for the Study of War (USA)
KGB	Committee for State Security (USSR)
MoD	Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation
PMC	Private military company
SB	Russian Security Council
SVR	Foreign Intelligence Service

Executive Summary

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, it has become clear that the decision-making process of President Vladimir Putin, who sits at the center of Russia's security sector, is concentrated within a small circle of actors from both formal and informal institutions inside Russia. Putin has long relied on individuals employed through Kremlin security institutions like the Security Council, Ministry of Defense, and intelligence agencies to carry out his strategic plans for the country. However, in the first 18 months of the war in Ukraine, Putin has relied on various private and informal entities like the Wagner Group, FSB, and other oligarchs to finance and provide military support for the war. While Putin may have intended for a divide and rule strategy within the Russian security apparatus, the recent act of rebellion by the Wagner Group and leader Yevgeny Prigozhin illuminated the fragility of Putin's leadership, military strength, and reliability of his allies.

This paper conducts a comprehensive review of primary and secondary sources to examine Russia's formal and informal security structures, focusing on Putin's inner circle and their interconnections. The research was completed in order to understand Putin's decision-making process and understand which actors hold the most influence on these decisions. In the security and defense sector, research points to Shoigu, Bortnikov, Patrushev, and Zolotov as close contacts to Putin. In the capitalists and resources category, Sechin, Kovalchuk, Timchenko, and Rotenberg, with access to energy and financial resources, are also in Putin's inner circle. In recent months, tensions and competition between entities like the Ministry of Defense and Wagner have created internal turmoil, raising questions about Putin's leadership strength. While it was previously speculated that power division was intentional for productivity, it appears that troop deployments and use of resources from different sectors reflect dysfunction within Putin's security sector. It is important to note that the ongoing nature of these events means that data on Russia's security structure may be incomplete or elusive, and this report aims to provide the most thorough analysis possible.

Introduction

On 24 February 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a full-scale invasion on Ukraine with the aim of changing the political regime in the capital city of Kyiv and occupying Ukraine. As the Russian army began building up military power along the Ukraine border earlier in 2022, many wondered who would be in the room if and when Putin decided to trigger a military invasion. Since Russia's first invasion of Ukraine in 2014, Russia has claimed control of various Ukrainian territories. Crimea and parts of Luhansk Oblast and Donetsk Oblast have been occupied by Russia since 2014. Parts of Zaporizhzhia Oblast and Kherson Oblast have been Russian-occupied since 2022. Despite the early and significant impacts made by Russian forces in spring 2022, Ukrainian forces were able to maintain control of Kyiv and launch their own counterattacks. As of May 8, 2023, the UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) estimated that there have been more than 23,606 civilian casualties in Ukraine since the start of the war. Unofficial estimates made by the United States indicate that within a year of Russia's initial invasion of Ukraine, "Russia had sustained 189,500 to 223,000 casualties, including up to 43,000 killed in action" (Kanno-Youngs 2023). Furthermore, after the mass killings in Bucha and on the year anniversary of the start of Russia's invasion, President Zelensky of Ukraine has said there will be no negotiations with Putin until the Kremlin ceases bombings on Ukrainian cities (Vinograd and Surman 2023). As the war continues, the militaries and economies of both Russia and Ukraine have been damaged, and Russia has suffered under compounding international sanctions. After nearly 18 months of conflict in Russia and Ukraine, world leaders, academics, and the greater public question who holds power in Russia and what it will take to reach a peace agreement.

This paper will look specifically at the security sector in Russia in an effort to pinpoint who is in Putin's inner circle when decisions regarding the war are being made. The context for this research focuses on the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 to the beginning of July 2023; however, the analysis of the key actors in Russia date back to Putin's KGB connections and Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014. In looking at Russia's security sector, there are both formal and informal security structures and actors at play in Russia, which have influence over security policy and Putin's decision-making processes. In the Kremlin, there are various formal agencies and roles which are dictated by the Constitution. These formal

entities, which include the Security Council (SB), the Ministry of Defense (MoD), and various intelligence agencies, have connections to Putin for various financial, logistical, and personal reasons. The strength of these formal bodies and the actors employed within them will be discussed in the first section of the paper. The informal organizations and actors in Russia's security sector, including the Wagner Group, the Federal Security Service (FSB), and Russian oligarchs, have changed the balance of power in the Russian security apparatus particularly since February 2022. The second section, which focuses on the influence of these informal actors on the war in Ukraine, draws specifically on the clashes of power between the Ministry of Defense and the Wagner Group, in addition to other dynamics between these formal and informal entities in the security sector. There are various private companies and individuals that have helped strengthen Russia's military on the frontlines of the war, but recent events have highlighted the fragmentation of the security sector and Putin's leadership as a result. The analysis section at the end of the paper will discuss the implications of these changing security dynamics and how the actors closest to Putin dictate the structure of Putin's security sector. Our research and analysis center around who holds the most power in Russia and whether Russia's security system is dysfunctional or instead an intentional strategy of divide and rule. As the war is ongoing, there is the possibility of major changes to the security sector following the completion of this research. Our aim is to look broadly at the Russian security landscape in order to better understand Putin's decision-making processes and how security entities will influence the future of Russo-Ukrainian war.

Methodology and Research Design

The research completed through this project aims to discover the new actors and dynamics of the Russian security sector since the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. By uncovering the formal and informal decision-making pathways and the security personnel that activated the war, this research aims to better understand President Putin's close allies and how to interpret his war tactics for the future. The research for this project was completed through an in-depth, desk-based literature review of both primary and secondary sources. The sources used for this research project focused on the topics of Russian security history, Putin's leadership, formal security structures, informal security structures, and expert

analysis on the continually unfolding war in Ukraine. For the literature review on formal and informal security structures, the research team employed documents, journals, and articles written by academics and journalists in and outside of Russia. Public statements, official Kremlin documents, and legal decrees, were referenced in order to understand the official structures and messaging employed by the Russian government. Other sources for research on the formal security sector included Security Council meeting notes, and messages on Twitter and Telegram by officials and insiders close to the issue. Some of the important keywords which guided our in-depth literature review include, “Russian security”, “security sector governance”, “private military companies”, “Putin allies”, “divide and rule”, among others. The context and publication dates for the literature used for this research focuses largely on information from late 2021 to July 2023. However, journals and articles written before 2022 have been cited in order to understand the historical context of Russia’s security structure and how it informs and relates to the present-day security landscape. Russia and the present conflict in Ukraine cannot be fully understood without analyzing recent history and in particular, President Putin’s connections that link back to his days in St. Petersburg or in the KGB.

Challenges and Research Limitations

It is important to note that there are a number of challenges and research limitations, which must be addressed before expanding upon the research findings. First, information on Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the leadership structure within Russia’s security landscape are elusive. This is not a new phenomenon for the Russian government, as state-run media has historically been fabricated to reflect certain ideals held by the Kremlin. Therefore, the research aims to provide an objective look into Russia’s security sector with the caveat that some of the information presented by sources inside or representing the Russian government is representing a specific bias. Second, much of the reporting happening today on the Russian chain of command and the security sector is based on speculation and limited evidence. Uncovering the full details of President Putin’s inner circle could take many years. Therefore, we have conducted our research across a wide variety of sources including state-sponsored and outsider academia and journalism in order to achieve a holistic understanding of the Russian security landscape. Third, the war between Russia and Ukraine, including the potential for internal conflict within Russia is live and ever-changing. The researching findings for this project are based on the information

known before 7 July and reflect the security dynamics up to that point. While dynamics of the security sector may change in the months following the completion of this research, the analysis done by this research aims to shed light on trends in the Russian security landscape under Putin and how actors identified in the research can alter the future of the war.

Russia's Formal Security Sector – Systems of Structure from Before 24 February

This section assesses the formal security structure within Russia, which includes, but is not limited to individuals employed by the Security Council, the Ministry of Defense, and various intelligence agencies. This paper defines the security sector as including “both actors that use force and those responsible for controlling how force is used through management and oversight” (DCAF 2015). In addition, formal actors in the security sector are defined as state security providers, which can include armed forces, police, defense services, and other intelligence and secret services. The goal of this literature review is to understand which individuals in the formal security sector within Russia are in close contact with President Putin when he makes major security decisions. Understanding which actors are involved will allow us to better understand Putin’s priorities, loyalties, and decision-making processes. This section is divided into three segments, which will cover the Russian Security Council, the Russian Ministry of Defense, and various formal Russian intelligence agencies.

Before discussing the dynamics of Russia’s formal security web, it is important to examine the priorities and strategies of President Vladimir Putin, who stands as the supreme leader and final decision-maker for the Russian Federation. Putin’s significance as Russia’s leader is described by Chairman Vyacheslav Volodin of the State Duma as, “There is Putin – There is Russia. There is no Putin – There is no Russia” (Taylor and Taylor 2018). President Putin is in his fourth term as Russia’s commander in chief and he has formed a complex security landscape within Russia that has come to his aid, particularly as he has made consequential decisions regarding the invasion of Ukraine. Since 1999, Putin has placed priority on building a strong state and this value stems from his roots in the KGB. He preaches the ideals of “order” and “unity” in his addresses to the nation, but centers this in unification against Western powers, and America in particular. Putin is calculated and conservative in his decisions, considering how they will foster Russian state strength both at the domestic and international levels. The people

that Putin chooses to keep close to him, especially in the decision-making process, share similar values and backgrounds.

Russian Security Council

Several high-ranking officials within the Russian Security Council are at the heart of the Kremlin's decision-making processes (Bacon 2019). Set out by the Russian Constitution, the Russian Security Council is a 31-year-old state apparatus in charge of the formulation and execution of security-related policies by the Russian Federation, which touch upon several policy areas such as the armed forces, socio-political and economic situations, information security, as well as international security cooperation (Galeotti 2019).

The Russian Security Council (SB) is an autonomous body within the Russian Administration accountable to the President. Composed of high-ranking officials, it serves as a constitutional advisory body, responsible for advising the President on matters pertaining to Russia's vital interests (Security Council · Structure · President of Russia, Kremlin n.d). Its main role is to ensure the President's ability to defend human rights, civil rights, as well as Russia's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity. In addition to providing advice, the Security Council analyzes potential threats to national security, sets the direction for foreign and military policy, and evaluates the effectiveness of executive organs in safeguarding national security (Bacon 2019; Galeotti 2019). The Council operates through permanent and non-permanent members, as well as inter-agency bodies and committees that can be functional or regional, and either permanent or temporary.

At the top of the Russian Security Council, there is the Chairman of the Council and the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, the Deputy Chairman, Dmitry Medvedev, and the Secretary, Nikolai Patrushev. The latter is described as one of Putin's advisors, and, "the closest thing there is in the Russian system to a national security adviser" (Belton 2022; Galeotti 2023). After being Secretary at the SB for more than ten years, Patrushev has become one of the most important personalities within the Russian political sphere and the SB secretariat has also become "one of the most powerful institutions in Putin's state." In addition to exerting his power over the Security Council through his authority and thinking, Patrushev has been able to exert his influence over President Putin by controlling the information that reaches his desk, as well as

through framing and presenting the several policy dilemmas to the President (Galeotti 2023). Patrushev's productive and close relationship with Putin has allowed him to gain the president's trust and confidence, which has been evidenced by his several official visits to China and India since the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine.

The Security Council represents a crossroads of some of the highest-ranked men and women of the Russian administration, military agencies, and intelligence services. These include Sergei Shoigu, of the Minister of Defense; Alexander Bortnikov, the Director of the FSB; Sergey Naryshkin, the Director of the Foreign Intelligence Services; Viktor Zolotov, the Director of the National Guard of Russia; and Valery Gerasimov the Chief of the General Staff. These men, among all the other permanent and non-permanent members of the SB, have been known to be a part of the inner circle of President Putin at different points in his presidency. In other terms, these people are also referred to as "The Siloviki" (BBC News 2023).

The term "Siloviki" designates "a group of high-ranked politicians in the top state institutions of the Russian Federation who used to be members of the military or of the security services and worked closely with Vladimir Putin in the early years of his career." The common background and past working experience that the Siloviki share with President Putin further emphasizes the idea of trust and loyalty within Putin's inner circle. Such values are a key component of their training, a specific type of training that distinguishes them from the rest of the civilians (Illarionov 2009). When Vladimir Putin assumed his position as President of the Federation of Russia, he quickly surrounded himself with Siloviki such as Nikolai Patrushev (Bateman 2014). Others have come and gone through the years, and today's ruling elite hold key positions in, not only the government, but key business and media organizations as well.

In today's Russia, the Siloviki operates in the absence of oversight and accountability, which allows them to expand their networks and their reach across all areas of Russian society. As evidence, in the beginning, the Siloviki regime focused on destroying several centers of independent political, civil, and economic life within Russia, which later extended outward to neighboring states. The literature on the SB indicates that actors in this formal security institution have ties to Putin's past, which is why Putin has increased his trust in them and brought them closer to his decision-making process. Later sections of the paper will compare the leverage of Siloviki actors in the formal security sector to other informal actors close to Putin.

Russian Ministry of Defense

The Russian armies are governed by a central organ: the Ministry of Defense (MoD), itself governed by three main functions, namely the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, the Minister of Defense, and the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces. The three branches are fulfilled by Vladimir Putin's inner circle, including Sergei Shoigu and Valery Gerasimov, who are known to be key decision-makers alongside Putin. The MoD has been involved in virtually every conflict in which Russia was militarily implicated, including in Georgia, Syria, and Ukraine. The structure of the MoD has remained mostly unchanged since 2010 and 2012 when Shoigu and Gerasimov were respectively nominated. The most central figure of Russia's defense sector is President Putin, who is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and is the one who decides the trajectory of the Ministry. He delegates the operations to the MoD, who heads a collegium composed of the General Staff of the Armed Forces (who, besides its Chief, is formed of ten other Deputy Ministers of Defense), the Commanders-in-Chief of the main military services, and arms (Ministry of Defence · Leadership, n.d.). The MoD employs 25 departments in total which are devoted to the development of every aspect of the defense system. These departments include the Press Secretary, Legal Department, Department of Military-Economic-Analysis, Department of Psychological Work, among others (Russian Ministry of Defense · Structure · Structure of the Russian Ministry of Defense, n.d.).

The policy of the MoD and Russia's modern-day strategy of defense primarily depend on Putin, Shoigu, and Gerasimov. Putin and Shoigu became close allies as early as 1999, and share a common ideology surrounding Russia's Soviet heritage. At that time, the MoD's policies aligned with the ideals crystallized in the North Caucasus and Chechnya conflicts (Karasik 2000). Putin's goal in subjugating Chechnya was not to revive the Soviet Union but to remove obstacles to Russian hegemony and rally citizens around a strong nationalist identity (Omelicheva 2009; Sinai 2015). The MoD pursued a dual approach, targeting "Islamic terrorism" in Chechnya and Dagestan while reshaping national identity (Kolsto and Blakkisrud 2016).

During the annexation of Crimea, the MoD, led by Valery Gerasimov, oversaw the Russian army's operations, including the war in Donbas (Interfax-Ukraine 2022). Gerasimov succeeded Sergey Surovikin to oversee the military campaign in Ukraine (AP News Wire 2021).

This move consolidated the leadership of the Russian operations under the Chief of the General Staff, potentially signaling increased control over the conduct of the war by MoD (Jones 2023).

Shoigu is certainly part of Putin's inner circle. He succeeded Serdyukov and took a hand in his reforms (Klein and Pester 2014). Like Gerasimov, he was involved in the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Apart from the army, Shoigu was accused by the Ukrainian government of having formed paramilitaries to fight in the Donetsk region (Nelson 2014). At the same time, Shoigu reasserted the ideology communicated by the Kremlin for years, including the desire to see Ukraine as a part of Russia.

Russian Intelligence Agencies

Intelligence agencies are other actors in the formal Russian security sector that play a crucial role in the decision-making process, particularly as it concerns the war in Ukraine. These different organizations assist decision-makers and the military by collecting, analyzing and providing intelligence. In Russia, their work takes place throughout the process of a military campaign and they also take on the role of suppressing political dissent (Abdalla et al. 2022).

The Russian intelligence agencies are primarily centered on the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), and the Main Intelligence Directorate (GU), which is better known by its former name, the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, GRU (Riehle 2022). Other agencies that provide important information include the Federal Protective Service (FSO) and the The Main Directorate of Special Programs of the President of the Russian Federation (GUSP).

Officially, the function of the FSB is to ensure the internal security of Russia and its citizens (Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation n.d). It is responsible for counter-terrorism, counter-intelligence, and investigating organized crime; however, FSB is also “responsible for compiling data on the near abroad of Russia,” which explains why this agency is involved in operations in Ukraine (Reynolds and Watling 2022). Furthermore, FSB is composed of a number of Services/Directorates, each of which includes a number of departments. This agency has about 350,000 staff members, of which about 200,000 are part of the Border Guard Service (The structure of the FSB n.d.). The Director of the FSB is Alexander Vasilyevich Bortnikov. Appointed by Medvedev in 2008, he is a Silovik. He began his career in the KGB in

1975 and during those years spent in St. Petersburg, he met Putin (Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation n.d.). The SVR, or the Foreign Intelligence Service, is responsible for gathering intelligence abroad, analyzing it, and providing it to decision-makers such as the President, the Government or the Federal Assembly (Federal Law On Foreign Intelligence n.d.). The director of the SVR is Sergei Narychkin. He is a former KGB officer and was appointed by Putin to head the agency in 2016. The structure of the SVR is divided into three functions: operational, analytical, and functional divisions. The agency is also organized into different directorates headed by deputy directors (Federal Law On Foreign Intelligence n.d.). Officially, the FSB and SVR are supervised by the Security Council, but in reality they answer directly to Putin (Dylan and al. 2022).

The GU (formerly GRU) is the military intelligence agency and is also often known by the title of Main Intelligence Directorate. Its role is similar to that of the SVR, but with more focus on the military. Its director is Igor Olegovich Kostyukov, who was appointed by Putin in 2018. The agency is estimated to have around 12,000 employees. Unlike the FSB and SVR, the GU officially answers only to the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister of Defense (The structure of the GRU n.d.). This agency has taken on more and more importance than the FSB as it was appointed by Putin to be responsible for intelligence operations in Ukraine. The first deputy chief, Lieutenant-General Vladimir Alekseev, took on this responsibility (Galeotti 2022). Alekseyev is a former Spetsnaz special forces officer. He is a leading GU officer with field experience in Syria and Donbas, and is known to be a brutal man. He is thought to be part of Putin's close connections and was decorated by him in 2017 (Averre 2022).

The Federal Security Service (FSO) is an agency which has a mission to develop state policy, monitor and enforce state security, and protect high-ranking officials, including the President. It is also responsible for communications security and legal regulation. The agency is authorized to provide military and civilian services. The head of the FSO is the Army General Dmitry Viktorovich Kochnev since 2016 via a presidential decree. The agency's staff is estimated at around 50,000 employees (Federal Protection Service of the Russian Federation n.d.)

As for the Main Directorate of Special Programs of the President of the Russian Federation (GUSP), its mission is to oversee the training and mobilization of the Russian Federation (Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 651 2017). It also has the power to submit draft legislation in its field. GUSP draws up Russia's defense plans and plans for

training and mobilization (Main Directorate of Special Programs of the President of the Russian Federation n.d.). Since 2015, the GUSP director has been Alexander Leonidovich Linets. He was appointed to the post by Vladimir Putin via a presidential decree. Linets served in the FSB as Deputy head of the 20th department (TACC 2023).

According to journalists Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan, FSB has undergone three major changes since the invasion of Ukraine, despite the fact that the outwardly appearing structure has remained the same. First, almost all FSB departments have been directed toward the war effort and the repression of dissidents, while only two were dedicated to Ukraine before the invasion. The second change is what the authors called “the militarisation of FSB activities.” With the start of the invasion, all FSB personnel have the ability to be sent to the annexed territories for three-month operations. This allows the FSB to have personnel who gain field experience by working in the filtration camps. These camps are a new tool for the FSB and allow the agency to obtain more information and possibly recruit collaborators. This militarisation of personnel could eventually lead to a cultural change in the way the FSB works. The third transformation identified is the expansion of the FSB's mandate by President Putin (Leoni and al. 2023).

With regards to the SVR and GRU, the outbreak of the Russian invasion has resulted in the expulsion of hundreds of Russian agents from various European capitals. This further implies the increasing isolation of the Russian intelligence agencies from the rest of the world. Other journalists and academics have highlighted the authoritarian management of these agencies and their dysfunction. The first characteristic of these agencies is that they all have overlapping responsibilities (Dylan and al. 2022). This is not a mistake. The fact that the FSB, SVR, and GRU/GU are all present in Ukraine creates competition between agencies which is supposed to drive innovation and aggressiveness. However, this also creates infighting and limits cooperation between the services. The second characteristic is the warrior mentality of the agencies, probably linked to the field experience identified by Soldatov and Borogan, which pushes the agents to perform risky and aggressive operations. This mentality also impacts the analysis of the information that agencies collect. The third characteristic of these organizations is corruption, the use of positions for personal enrichment, and links to organized crime, which give the agencies an additional tool for their operations. Finally, each of these organizations constantly seek Putin's approval (Soldatov and Borogan 2022) .

The literature on Russia's intelligence agencies points to how the internal structures of these organizations and their leaders work to appeal to Putin's mission. Through their fieldwork and competitive atmospheres, the intelligence agencies work to keep Russia competitive to both Putin and the international system.

Conclusions From Literature Review on Formal Security Sector

Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has raised many questions about the inner workings of Russia's formal security sector. Despite the mounting economic tolls and military weakness experienced by the Russian Federation, Putin's war on Ukraine has continued for over a year, causing concern and confusion about who exactly is in Putin's inner circle of security advisors. Evidently, Russia's formal security sector under President Putin is multifaceted and complex with a range of key actors reporting directly to Putin. As of the completion of this research, there are some actors from the formal sector including Patrushev, Bortnikov, and Shoigu, in particular, who appear to have close ties to Putin. However, the following section will discuss how the formal institutions in Russia's security sector have been supplemented and at times replaced by private militaries and their leaders. The Security Council, Ministry of Defense, and intelligence agencies have remained consistent in their support of Putin's war efforts through providing detailed briefs and intelligence, as is outlined in the Russian constitution. However, the trajectory of the war has led Putin to expand his inner circle to include actors outside the formal security sector in order to seek victory in Ukraine.

Status of the Current Russian Security Sector Including Formal and Informal Actors

This section will focus more on the informal actors inside Russia's security sector. The Russian security sector is characterized by a unique power structure that differs from traditional institutions seen in Western democratic. In Russia, power is not solely concentrated within formal positions, as the actual extent of influence goes beyond official roles. The decision-making process, which revolves around Putin, is centralized within a small circle of actors, which has become even tighter since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. As a consequence of the war, the significance of the "security and defense" actors has grown,

overshadowing the influence of the “capitalist” and “diplomatic actors.” This dynamic will be discussed in this section, in addition to the strained relations between the Ministry of Defense and private military company, Wagner Group, led by Yevgeny Prigozhin. The genesis of Wagner and Prigozhin’s rise will be discussed in this section. In addition, there are various other private military companies, individuals, and organizations like Redut, Russian oligarchs, and banks that have some involvement in Putin’s decision-making, but stand farther at the periphery. It is important to note that the information presented in this paper is based on research and analysis conducted up until 7 July 2023. While efforts have been made to provide accurate and up-to-date information, the dynamic nature of the subject matter may lead to changes or developments beyond the scope of the study, particularly as it concerns Prigozhin.

The Inner Circle 2022-2023, Russia’s New Foreign Policy Concept

Unlike Western democracies, power in Russia is not concentrated in traditional institutions (Stanovaya 2018). The formal positions of players in government and politics do not reflect the actual extent of their influence (Matthews 2022). The decision-making process is centralized within a small circle of actors, which has become even smaller since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 (Roth and Sauer 2022). As a result of the war, the importance of “security and defense” actors has increased, to the detriment of “capitalist” and “diplomatic” actors (Matthews 2022). The war has limited the influence of capitalist actors, since isolated by international sanctions, they can no longer be a “tool for implementing the expansion of foreign policy” (Minchenko Consulting 2019). It is worth noting, however, that the leaders of the major energy, defense and finance companies have retained and solidified their position. Gas, oil, military industry and finance are tools for implementing Putin’s foreign policy. Included in the “capitalist” bloc are personalities like Igor Sechin, director of the PJSC Rosneft Oil and Gas Company (Jolly 2022); Sergey Chemezov, CEO of the largest defense company ROSTEC (rupep.org); Yuri Kovalchuk, CEO of Rossiya Bank and multiple Russian Media owner (The Database “PUTIN’S LIST” 2023); Gennady Timchenko, owner of the investment company Volga Group, and the Rotenberg brothers. The “security and defense” bloc is largely made up of members of the formal security sector. These include Sergei Shoigu, Nikolai Patrushev,

Alexander Bortnikov, Sergei Naryshkin, and Viktor Zolotov, who have all been tied to Putin's time in the KGB and early presidency (Roth 2022; Roth and Sauer 2022; Matthews 2022).

Sergei Naryshkin, like Bortnikov, met Putin when he worked for the KGB in Leningrad in the 1980s. He is a former board member of ROSNEFT and was appointed Director of the SVR in 2016 by Putin (TACC 2022). Before that, he was Chairman of the State Duma and Head of Kremlin administration. Like Bortnikov, he is close to the President in terms of the valuable information he gathers, but there is little evidence that he exerts much influence on decisions.

Viktor Zolotov began his career with the KGB in border troops, and later met Putin in the 1990s. He is responsible for the President's close security, in which he has great confidence, and for managing Putin's "Praetorian Guard" (Kirby 2022 ; The Database "PUTIN'S LIST" 2023). Zolotov has headed the Rosgvardiya National Guard since 2016. During the Wagner mutiny, Zolotov emerged as one of the regime's main defenders. He was publicly thanked by Putin for his role during the mutiny, and the national guard he controls will soon be re-equipped with heavy weapons, tanks and artillery (Shuster 2023).

There are various common characteristics across the men who have the power to influence Putin's decisions. They were all born in the 50s and 60s, and generally met Putin either during their studies or at the start of their careers. Most of them are originally from St. Petersburg. These are the old Soviet guard, the majority having worked directly for the KGB/FSB at some point in their careers, sometimes even heading the FSB. Some of them belong to the cooperative Ozero dacha, which groups together the dachas of members close to the Russian President (Burrows 2017). More recently, a Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation was created in 2014, bringing together influential figures including Patrushev, Bortnikov, Naryshkin, Chemezov, and Shoigu (rupep.org n.d.).

There is no direct opposition between members of the inner circle regarding the war, none of them representing a pacifist faction, however, a more "pragmatic" bloc is emerging in opposition to the "hawkist" blocs. In particular, the capitalist bloc is considered to have a "pragmatic" stance in order to limit the harmful effects on the economy (Stanovaya 2022). According to Tatyana Stanovaya, the Russian elite close to Putin can be divided into two categories: technocrats and siloviki. The technocrats, unlike the Siloviki, have no ability to influence important security decisions. They are called upon for their technical skills and are responsible for ensuring the survival of the Russian economy during the war. Technocrats enable

Putin to effectively manage regions/areas without having to dilute political power, which remains concentrated in a restricted group (Stanovaya 2022).

Although there's little chance of these technocrats taking part in major decisions, it is conceivable that, thanks to their expertise and the key areas they manage, technocrats such as the head of Russia's Central Bank, Elvira Nabiullina, and SberBank CEO Herman Gref, might still have a some influence. Money being the sinews of all war, they inform and warn Putin of the economic consequences of his decisions, and can eventually serve as limiters of the damage to the economy engendered by his actions (Seddon, Ivanova and Campbell 2022). Putin can also count on the Presidential Executive Office of Russia. This body supports the President in terms of advice, information and execution of decisions (Galeotti 2022).

In short, since the invasion of Ukraine, two blocs have gravitated around Putin and his decisions. A “capitalist bloc” comprising ROSNEFT, ROSTEC, Rossiya Bank, Volga Group and the Rotenberg brothers. The "security and defense" bloc include the Ministry of Defense and the FSB/SVR/FSO intelligence agencies, as well as Patrushev. These blocs are depicted in the Map of the Formal and Informal Russian Security Sector found in the Appendix.

The Relationship Between The Wagner Group and The Ministry of Defense

Since the beginning of the war, dating back to 2014, the Wagner Group and its co-founder Yevgeny Prigozhin have been critical actors close to Putin. The Wagner Group, which was once clandestine, is today fighting on the front lines of Russia’s military forces. However, in addition to its military prowess, Prigozhin, the private military company’s leader, has been making headlines since the war broke out and the Wagner forces joined the Russian military to combat. The association of the two parties has produced and is still creating tension in the Russian ranks, which is not necessarily helping the leadership of the Kremlin. A few months into 2023, tensions between the Wagner troops and the MoD significantly rose, indicating a decline in their relationship. Under the eyes of Vladimir Putin, the two main men of this war, Prigozhin and Shoigu have entered into a serious crisis where both of them have been exchanging accusations, fueling an internal war within Russia’s rank, and creating divisions among Russia’s security sector.

In the Russian security sector, the formal institutions do not inherently have more power than some informal security organizations that have critical wealth and connections for Putin. In addition, the formal and informal organizations supporting the war effort do not work collaboratively nor necessarily support each other. Despite providing military personnel and equipment for the war, Prigozhin has taken stances against the Russian MoD and voiced radical opinions going against the interests of the Kremlin and President Putin through the media and his Telegram channel (Stratfor 2023). Exactly one year after the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the relationship between Sergei Shoigu and Yevgeny Prigozhin began to worsen (Center for Countering Disinformation 2023.) Through a photo exposing several losses of the Russian military, Prigozhin directly targeted the Russian military leadership of Shoigu and Gerasimov for their failure in providing the Wagnerites with the needed shells and ammunition for combat (Center for Countering Disinformation 2023.) These accusations were rapidly denied by the MoD, stating that there were no problems between the two parties, and accused the Russian mercenary of wanting to cause trouble and splits within the Russian troops (Center for Countering Disinformation, 2023.) This chaotic relationship is further fueled by the indecisive regime of President Putin. This laissez-faire strategy has not only created tension among the Russian troops and such clear divisions between forces on the same side have further undermined Russia's outwardly strong and firm position during the war. Nonetheless, this internal chaos has not stopped Russia from making considerable advancements on the battlefield.

According to the media outlet Meduza, two Kremlin sources revealed that Prigozhin's attempts to blackmail the MoD are viewed as serious threats by the Russian leadership arguing that instead of acting in favor of the Kremlin's interests, such behavior from Wagner's leader is alienating him, and upsetting the top leadership (Institute for the Study of War, "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 11, 2023.) Despite the mercenaries' success on the field, especially after capturing Bakhmut and claiming responsibility for the operation, which has been acclaimed by President Putin (Institute for the Study of War, "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 20, 2023). However, rumors from inside the Kremlin, relayed by the Russian outlet Meduza, as well as military bloggers, or "milibloggers" stated that "propaganda workers received a Kremlin memo to the effect that, if Prigozhin goes on lambasting the Russian leadership and talking about its military failures (again), the media should begin framing him as a traitor" (Meduza 2023). Moreover, according to reports from the ISW, the Russian military

command is now including Chechen Republic Head Kadyrov's forces in efforts to discredit and undermine Prigozhin and his forces as they withdrew from the frontlines. (Institute for the Study of War, "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, June 1"; "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 27" 2023).

However, Prigozhin's continued rhetoric and his ability to voice his adverse opinions towards the Kremlin's leadership with total impunity, or almost with "immunity" calls into question his reach within the Russians' ranks and his importance for Putin's regime. Moreover, his motives have been questioned as former Russian officer and ardent nationalist, Igor Girkin, accused him of planning a coup against the current Russian leadership (Institute for the Study of War, "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 27," 2023). This situation raised the concerns of some select Russian siloviki, to whom Prigozhin's political ambitions must cease (Institute for the Study of War, "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 17," 2023). However, their attempts to intimidate him appear to be unsuccessful (Institute for the Study of War, "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 17," 2023.)

The tense relationship between the MoD and the Wagner Group brings to light questions about the nature of Putin's leadership and his strategy during the Ukraine War. Putin has chosen to delve into military resources outside of the Russian formal institutions, which initially seemed to bolster Russia's position in the war. After months of tension and a mobilization of Prigozhin's army toward Moscow in late June, it is important to consider what this says about Putin's decision-making processes and how he sees Russia's positioning against Ukraine. Will Putin's willingness to use multiple sources of power against Ukraine create internal turmoil that poses a threat greater than Ukraine? The analysis section will discuss the potential of Putin's different strategies for the war considering how he balances his security sector and the unfolding war.

The Rise to Power of Yevgeny Prigozhin

Prigozhin's career, not unlike many others in Putin's inner circle, is an oddity (Purysova 2023). Like Putin, he was born in St. Petersburg. He espoused the career of a criminal, being only 18 years old when he received a suspended sentence for theft. A decade later he was sentenced again, this time going behind bars for about ten years. He became a hot dog seller, but quickly got into the gambling business. Later, he launched a business in catering, of which the

most famous are the “Concord Catering” and the “New Island.” His restaurants are certainly one of the main reasons for his rise to power since it allowed him to become familiar with officials and oligarchs, sometimes leaders of the world (he met with J. Chirac and G.W. Bush during a meeting with Putin in one of his restaurants). As a result of this growing influence, he obtained a contract of billions of rubles to supply food to the army, an entry point to the Minister of Defense. Apart from food distribution, Prigozhin’s empire became in charge of logistics. We can date the rivalry between Prigozhin and Shoigu due to the bad service and quality of supplied food (Van Brugen 2023).

Another of his influences in politics are the “troll factories.” Prigozhin’s empire was used to influence public opinion on the Internet, especially to change public opinions in Ukraine and in the United States (Sauer 2022). According to Tatiana Stanovaya, the idea behind the troll factory “was born out of Prigozhin wanting to find a weakness in the government and be able to offer a service to Putin that official institutions wouldn’t be able to provide effectively.” (Purysova 2023) The significance is twofold. First, it can be argued that he succeeded in getting close to Putin with this strategy in mind, and second, Prigozhin’s empire became an essential tool in the hybrid warfare. His greatest involvement in the war, though, is the PMC Wagner.

The Genesis of Wagner

The idea to use mercenary armies or PMCs, can be dated in the early 2010s. The idea was espoused by the former Head of the General Staff Nikolai Makarov (Borshchevskaya 2019). Under his influence, Putin accepted the plan and both asked Prigozhin to oversee the formation of such an army. He was chosen not only because of his ties with Putin, but because the use of PMCs is constitutionally impossible in Russia. As a successful businessman, it was believed that Prigozhin could use a PMC without apparent links with the State. The first important involvement of Wagner in an actual war was in Syria, where they clashed with US forces (Gibbons-Neff 2018). Wagner is also a business involved in oil and mining, especially in Africa, where their influence extends, among others, in Mali, Central African Republic or Sudan (Malkova and Baev 2019).

Before February 2022, the ties between Wagner and the Russian State were blurry. The original idea behind the existence of Wagner was to keep it in a legal “gray zone.” It became

more explicit in March 2022 when Prigozhin recalled veterans from Syria and Africa to fight in Ukraine after the unsuccessful first month of the conflict. Since then, Wagner's presence in the war has ignited the rivalry between Shoigu and Prigozhin. This rivalry is arguably one of the reasons the war is so harsh for Russia. Even though Wagner allegedly conquered Bakhmut and was congratulated by Putin, it experienced many hardships since their arrival in Ukraine: at this hour they lost between 20,000 (according to Prigozhin) and 30,000 (according to US intelligence), relied for some months on the recruiting of convicts, and lost their "prestige" as efficient military forces.

The real questions concern Wagner's legitimization by the Russian state. Prigozhin uses mass media to proclaim his links with Putin. Originally, Wagner was not legitimized in the eyes of the Russian State. Tatiana Stanovaya said: "the fact that PMC Wagner is mentioned in the media does not mean that it has been legitimized at a state level. The legal status of the company stays the same, and all the bills seeking to change that fact have been overturned" (Purysova 2023). As for now, it is still unclear if this process will evolve, if Wagner will, as a PMC, stay in Ukraine or continue its business in Africa, though it is possible that Wagner will be disbanded or members will be sent to Belarus with Prigozhin, following his "march of justice" on 23 and 24 June (Syed and Gordon 2023). Meanwhile, the MoD has also been active and willing to use a PMC of its own. Not only was it the idea of the MoD to use PMCs in the first place, but a PMC, called Redut, under the auspices of the Ministry, was even on the battlefield in Ukraine from the beginning.

The Ministry of Defence's Own Private Army, Redut

In December 2023, the mercenary known as "Apricot" was in a café where the PMC Redut was being recruited. The recruiters said to him: "before the New Year we stop by [in Donbas]". He signed his contract in Luhansk in January when the regular army and other PMCs were preparing for an imminent war. After several weeks, Apricot and his colleagues had already experienced the harsh realities of combat, wondering why the men of Wagner were not fighting with them. Their absence was due to the rivalry between Prigozhin and the MoD, hence the fact that Redut, backed by the Ministry, was sent beforehand (Yapparova 2022).

Redut was born to secure Russia's interests in Syria (Krutov and Dobrynin 2023).

Originally, they were working for Gazprom but moved closer to the MoD under the aegis of the oligarch Gennady Timchenko who handed it to Putin and the MoD. Timchenko is a close friend of Putin from before Putin's presidency, and owner of Stroytransgaz. Redut was present during the first months of the Ukrainian conflict instead of Wagner (The Odessa Journal 2022). Far less numerous than Wagner, they are nonetheless one of the tools of the MoD, and more particularly Shoigu and Gerasimov, in the power struggles that are currently taking place in Russia (Stanovaya 2023). It is this rivalry that is the main source of one of the most surprising events of the war: the Wagner's mutiny.

Wagner's Rebellion of June 2023

On Friday, June 23, Prigozhin announced on Telegram that the MoD targeted Wagner camps in deadly strikes. Prigozhin seemed to no longer align with Putin's vision for the war. Not only the feud between him and the MoD lasted for months already; he now felt insulted by the request for Wagner's troops on 10 June to sign contracts to integrate into the MoD (Sonne 2023). After his announcement of the mutiny, the Kremlin immediately blocked all the strategic buildings and Wagnerites had already taken control of Rostov-on-Don without a single shot ("Don't Interfere with Wagner" 2023).

The subsequent events seemed to have been, for Prigozhin and Putin, a race against the clock. The Wagnerites were divided into two columns, both advancing toward Moscow. In parallel, seeing the fast advance of Wagner towards Moscow, Putin's regime repeated the public calls to stop the mutiny. Thirteen pilots died in combat, roads were blocked or destroyed, and troops and military barrages were installed in case the Wagnerites would arrive in the vicinity of Moscow. No one knows if the Kremlin was inhabited when Wagner stopped 200 km from the Russian capital. It is reported that earlier in the day, Vaino and Patrushev had attempted to negotiate with Prigozhin (Pertsev 2023). The decisive call came from President Lukashenko of Belarus, though it is unclear what he said, nor to what extent Putin stood in Lukashenko's shadow. Some have reported that Russian intelligence agencies found and threatened Wagner leaders' families, which could explain the abrupt stop made by Wagner (The Moscow Times 2023). Prigozhin withdrew his troops shortly after Lukashenko's intervention, allegedly to avoid Russian bloodshed (King 2023).

Never had the frailty of the Russian regime been more exposed than on this day. Putin alleged weakening became the center of the international community's attention, and the event might further worsen relations between Russia and the rest of the world (Bryant 2023). It is still too early to know how the event will change the war. However, it is clear that Wagner's rebellion already represents the most dangerous political threat ever faced by Vladimir Putin.

Other Informal Actors in Russia's Security Sector: Oligarchs and Banks

Russian oligarchs, banks, and ethnic militias have played influential roles in Russian history and continue to shape the ongoing Ukraine conflict. Emerging in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union, oligarchs took advantage of privatization opportunities (Duzor and Graphics 2022). Well-connected insiders purchased privatization waivers and reinvested in lucrative companies. The oligarchs gained significant business empires in media, oil, and other profitable sectors. They supported Yeltsin's re-election in 1996 and aided in choosing his successor, Putin (Ball, Lewis, and Leslie 2022). When Putin assumed office, loyal oligarchs retained their wealth and government ties. Putin also brought in his own circle of close associates, the "siloviki," from his KGB background. Dissenting oligarchs have faced imprisonment or even death. Accumulating vast wealth through privatization, oligarchs now exert economic and political influence, shaping policies and decision-making in Russia, while maintaining control over various sectors of the economy.

In the context of the Ukraine conflict, oligarchs have been known to fund political parties, influence media narratives, and exert pressure on policy decisions. Their interests can intersect with geopolitical motivations and some oligarchs have been involved in supporting separatist movements and pro-Russian forces in Ukraine. The Russian oligarchs that have had the most connection, power, and leverage as it relates to Putin have varied through the years that Putin has been in office. Roman Abramovich, who is former Governor of Chukotka and former owner of Chelsea Football Club, is one of the most well-recognized Russian oligarchs, but his recent connection with Putin has been undetermined. Abramovich "owns stakes in Russian steel giant Evraz and nickel producer Norilsk Nickel" and he sold a 73% share in Russian oil firm Sibneft to Gazprom (state-owned gas company) in 2005 ("Roman Abramovich & Family" 2023). In connection with Abramovich, is Vladimir Potanin, who is the owner of a third of Norilsk

Nickel (“Vladimir Potanin” 2023). Potanin was the deputy prime minister under Yeltsin, and some sources believe he still has ties to Putin (Quenelle 2022). Moreover, Alisher Usmanov is another prominent oligarch who has been said to be “one of Vladimir Putin’s favorite oligarchs” (Burke 2022). Usmanov holds a stake in iron ore and gas companies (Gazprom) in Russia (“Alisher Usmanov” 2023). A new set of sanctions was imposed on financial linkages to Usmanov in April by the United States because the Biden administration believes he maintains close support for Putin and has avoided previous sanctions (Cox and Macias 2023). Furthermore, there are a few other names that have possibly been connected to Putin since the start of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2014. Alexander Abramov was previously the chairman of steel company Evraz, but resigned after sanctions were imposed on other wealthy Russians in March 2022 (“Alexander Abramov” 2023). Abramov was sanctioned in November 2022 by the UK, which were compounded upon sanctions from New Zealand. Other oligarchs that are likely to be on the distant periphery of or ousted from Putin’s inner circle, include Lenoid Mikhelson, Viktor Vakselberg, Oleg Deripaska, Makhail Prokhorav, who have all been sanctioned in connection to the Kremlin since 2022.

Upon analysis of the sources discussing these individuals and the dates they most discussed in connection to Putin, it is unlikely that many of these oligarchs hold significant weight as it concerns decisions related to the war in Ukraine. While many of the individuals mentioned have previously had ties to Putin, most have seen their assets frozen and/or sanctioned by Western governments due to their connections to Putin. This can cause these men to quietly pull back on their support for the war, or form their own private militaries to protect from future effects of the war. The landscape of the war in Ukraine has shifted as such that these men are not likely in the room when Putin’s decisions regarding the war are being made.

Since the start of the war in Ukraine, there has been an increase in the formation of ulterior private militaries in Russia. Given the diminishing strength of the Russian state military, Putin has looked to support from private armies created by companies and individuals. These allow Putin to maintain access to military and intelligence power, interconnected with natural resource companies (Doxsee 2022). Gazprom, one of the largest Russian oil companies, has set up a private army. Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin made clear that “private security organizations” may create military groups in order to protect their resources and facilities (Law 2023). However, Gazprom takes orders from Putin and members of Gazprom’s army have been

seen on the front lines of the war, as confirmed by Prigozhin (DW News 2023). In addition, other wealthy Russians have been forming their own private armies. Some worry about their own financial and physical security as Russia is facing major economic, social, and military defeats. Individuals like Andrey Bokarev and Konstantin Malofeev have formed their own militaries (Meduza 2023).

Russian banks have played a role in facilitating financial transactions, investments, and international trade. They have also been influential in supporting the oligarchic system. Russian banks, both state-run and private, have been implicated in money laundering, illicit financial flows, and the evasion of international sanctions. In the context of the Ukraine war, Russian banks have been involved in financing various activities, influencing the support of separatist groups in eastern Ukraine (Conant 2021). These banks have been accused of funneling funds to these groups, providing them with necessary resources to sustain their operations. Moreover, Russian banks have facilitated the movement of assets and funds for both state-sponsored and non-state actors involved in the conflict. In response, the EU has placed sanctions on the financing of the Russian government and Central Bank “as well as banning all those transactions related to the management of the Central Bank’s reserves and assets” (“Sanctions Adopted Following Russia’s Military Aggression against Ukraine” 2023).

Analysis of Security Structure and its Implications for Russian Strategy and War Future

The war’s duration has caught many observers off guard, especially as the 18-month marker approaches. The Russian military amassed troops along Ukraine’s border from December 2021, leading to expectations of a short conflict. With Russia’s highly ranked military power globally and doubts about Ukraine’s ability to defend against a large-scale invasion, the odds seemed stacked against Ukraine. However, the course of events has been influenced by multiple factors, including international support for Ukraine, antiquated Russian military machinery, proxy warfare, and sudden shifts in power. Despite rapid shifts in power on both sides, neither a ceasefire nor victory has been achieved. Our in-depth literature review on Russia’s security sector has allowed us to understand the different dynamics that can dictate Putin’s decisions and the trajectory of the war. As a result, we have devised three possible theories about what Russia’s security sector says about its functionality and what this may mean for the future of the war.

These perspectives are first, that the Russian security sector, and thus the military, are dysfunctional. This perspective is supported by various sources, including the Center for Strategic and International Studies (Jones 2022). A second perspective is that the outwardly seeming dysfunction of the Russian security structure is truly a strategy of divide and rule (Dylan, Gioe, and Grossfeld 2022). Third, there is a mix of these two options, in which given the dysfunction of the security sector, Putin must use divide and rule to stay alive. This section will discuss each of these potential scenarios considering the current Russian security landscape.

1. The Russian Security Structure and Military Operations are Dysfunctional

Given that the Russian army is ranked as the second best in the world, according to 2023 Global Firepower Rankings, it is easy to assume that such an army is not beatable by any modest one. But such rankings do not consider how the budget allowed to the said army is used, nor how the best budget in the world can make an army win, if corruption and poor distribution of resources are not taken into account. It seems that the army in Russia lacks such equipment. Not long after the beginning of the invasion, it was reported that vehicles were immobilized due to a lack of fuel (Davydenko et al. 2022). As the war went on, the Russian troops on the front lines were increasingly less experienced and badly equipped. Russia relied on conscripted men and inexperienced volunteers: the elite troops, such as the Spetsnaz, had been sent the first day, often never to return (Farberov 2023). It is hard to know if looting, brutal violence towards civilians or rapings are an explicit strategy of the Russian commandment. Some observers note that it could be a sign of the lack of discipline due to weak officers that cannot handle their troops (Galeotti 2022). This tactic of fear was also voluntarily done by Russia in its former wars (for instance Chechnya) to instill terror in civilians and prevent resistance. More realistically, it is probable that it is a blending of both, and that the undisciplined and violent soldiers are not punished by the Kremlin because they concur with this macabre strategy, when they are informed at all. For the chain of command seems disorganized indeed. Many generals and commanders were replaced several times in a relatively short period of time during the war, which meant frequent shifts in strategy for soldiers to follow. Gerasimov, the actual Commander of the Forces in the “Special Military Operation” replaced Surovikin in January 2023, who himself had the function only since November 2022 (The Kyiv Independent 2022). In addition, generals have died on a

scale unseen since World War II, which may be a symptom that the chain of command in Russia is incredibly weak, forcing those generals to get into the field to make up for this structural weakness (Jackson 2022). It may be possible that the army is too amateurish to advance without high-ranking generals leading it personally. Even commandment is not centralized: neither Shoigu nor Gerasimov (and, potentially, not Putin either) can control the conflict when there is such chaos on the field. They are not able to everything, especially since so many different actors have that many divergent interests. Such a disorganized chain of command could mean that the very structure of the Russian defense sector is ineffective and did not evolve much since the times of the Afghan war of 1979-89.

2. Intentional Strategy of Divide and Rule

The way Russian elites are managed by the President explains some of the events that have taken place since the February 2022 invasion. Putin has set up a management system based on competition between the elites in a patronage system (Rogov 2022). In order to maintain their position, individuals close to the President are constantly seeking to please him and attract his favor (Khvostunova 2022). This configuration can be found in almost every field. The intelligence services, for example, find themselves with overlapping mandates, and the armed branches of these agencies are now fighting in Ukraine (Huw et al. 2022). The same applies to the competition between Wagner, the Chechen ethnic groups and the MoD (Institute for the Study of War 2023). These examples illustrate Putin's managerial strategy. The President places different actors on similar tasks, the aim of which is to generate competition between them, for the one who will be the most successful and please the Tsar the most. It also served to limit the emergence of challengers to the regime, in theory. For example, in this configuration, Shoigu could not take all the military credit and become important enough to contradict Putin, because he was competing with Wagner, who was congratulated by Putin on the capture of Bakhmut. However, this strategy also has its limits, as the latest Wagner-related events have shown. The balance Putin was trying to maintain in order to limit the emergence of challengers has slipped from his grasp. The competition between the MoD and Wagner ended with Prigozhin mutinying against the regime (Meduza 2023). Although this strategy has borne fruit until recently, the regime's undermining by Wagner is likely to change management methods. Moreover,

competition between the various actors limits their cooperation and produces limited success on the ground.

3. Dysfunctional Security Sector, but Use of Divide and Rule to Save Putin

In considering the second perspective, that Putin uses a strategy of divide and rule, it is of value to consider why a leader would operate with a disorganized army for his private interests and at the same time believe that it would have no consequences on the ongoing conflict. Therefore, there is a third perspective, which sees that the Russian security sector remains efficient, but Putin failed to assess the risks, and once the war failed to go as planned, he had no choice but to divide and rule to secure his place. Lulled on one side by the relative simplicity with which Russia managed its conflicts in Georgia in 2008 and Crimea in 2014, and on the other by the difficulties encountered by Western armies in their own theaters of operation, Putin waited a few years to reinforce and train his armies. This time, he was devoted to hiring PMCs, Redut for the MoD, but also Wagner, which he tested in Syria and Africa to see if they could manage their missions. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, he was confident in the fact that the war since 2014 would come to an end, especially since NATO and the West had not prevented the annexation of Crimea (Saul 2022). In addition, he despised Zelensky, a former comedian that he did not see as a serious threat. Putin understood that the issue of the conflict could not be a simple withdrawal of his troops, and that the fight was gradually shifting from Ukraine to inside the Kremlin. Realizing the stalemate of the war and the instability inside the Russian system itself, his thoughts could have been to maintain a precarious balance between several persons close to him, so that none of them may envisage a coup nor think to become popular enough to gain any political significance, a risk eventually illustrated by Prigozhin, who became influential on Russian's public opinion (Kolesnikov 2023). If that was calculated, it became exceptionally precarious over the time. If this was Putin's strategy, it worked in a sense: ostracized in Belarus, deemed a traitor by the Russian elites, Prigozhin seems, for now, out of the game. Shoigu and Gerasimov, who failed to stop the Wagner mutiny, even losing some pilots in the process may also no longer find themselves in Putin's good graces. But most importantly, if this divide and rule strategy to protect himself was, in fact, Putin's goal, it ended up weakening him. Indeed, it has been stated that U.S. and Ukrainian intelligence agencies knew that something was up

shortly after 10 July, when the MoD ordered Wagner troops to sign contracts (Nakashima and Harris 2023). Therefore, while Putin's war against Ukraine has long confused academics and journalists, it is possible that the dysfunctionality may be a result of Putin's efforts to save himself in the downturning war.

Conclusion

The future of the war and the actors that will ultimately claim victory remain uncertain. Prigozhin's questioning of the Kremlin's motives and military decisions highlighted the fragility of Putin's leadership going forward in the war in Ukraine and his legacy as Russia's President. As the Wagner leader pointed his forces toward Moscow on June 24th, proclaiming "the evil borne by the country's military leadership must be stopped," it was clear to Russian allies and enemies that Putin's strength could be in jeopardy (Gamio et al. 2023). Furthermore, mediation by a foreign leader to halt the mutiny calls attention to Putin's lack of control over his security forces and his weakness in preventing internal conflict. The ISW underscored how "any and all security figures, state owned enterprises, and other key figures in the Russian government that private military forces separate from the central state can achieve impressive results" ("Latest Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, June 24" 2023). Beyond the threat of retaliation by private military companies, which Putin has little control over, the Kremlin has relied on Wagner forces on the frontlines in Ukraine. Personnel that participated in the rebellion are being expelled to Belarus with Prigozhin, and it remains unclear whether the Russia military will still employ Wagner troops that did not engage in the rebellion. Ultimately, this act of defiance, which was initiated by someone thought to be a close confidant of Putin's, highlights the distrust that many, including members of the security sector, feel in Russia's ability to win the war in Ukraine. This further perpetuates concerns by the public about the Kremlin's priorities of Russian global superiority, given the significant financial and military depreciation since the start of the war.

Evidently, Putin's use of both formal and informal security systems in Russia to achieve strategic goals has driven complexity and division inside Russia. With Prigozhin exiled in Belarus, after being understood as one of Putin's closest confidants, the future of Russia's military strength and Putin's close allies hangs in the balance. This research has pointed to some of the individuals who may be in the conversation when Putin is making critical decisions about the war. In the security and defense sectors, Shoigu, Bortnikov, Patrushev, and Zolotov likely

remain closest to Putin as of the completion of this report. Other actors in the capitalism and resources category that maintain close relations with Putin include Sechin, Chemezov, Kovalchuk, Timenchenko, and Rotenberg, according to this research. These individuals, as well as those farther outside of Putin's circle by our calculations can be seen in the Map of the Formal and Informal Russian Security Sector in the Appendix. As the events of the war between Russia and Ukraine change daily, there remains the possibility that Putin could bring in old allies from the periphery in order to make advancements in the war. While there are various perspectives that can be taken to try to understand Putin's strategy, it is most likely that any strategy he may have had to divide and rule to create efficient competition has backfired and deepened dysfunctionality in the security sector.

Bibliography

Introduction and Methodology:

DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance. *Security Sector Reform*. SSR

Backgrounder Series. Geneva: DCAF, 2015.

https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF_BG_2_Security%20Sector%20Reform_1.pdf

Herspring, Dale Roy, and Dale R. Herspring. *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*.

2nd ed. Lanham [etc: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.

Kanno-Youngs, Zolan. 2023. "U.S. Says 100,000 Russian Casualties in Ukraine in Past 5 Months." *The New York Times*, May 1, 2023, sec. World.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/01/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-casualties-losses.html>.

Taylor, Brian D. *State Building in Putin's Russia: Policing and Coercion after Communism*. New

York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511974144>.

Taylor, Brian D., and Brian D. Taylor. *The Code of Putinism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Vinograd, Cassandra, and Matt Surman. 2023. "Here's What to Know on the First Anniversary of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine." *The New York Times*, February 24, 2023, sec. World.

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/02/24/world/russia-ukraine-zelensky-news>.

Russian Security Council:

Bacon, Edwin. "The Security Council and Security Decision-Making." In *Routledge Handbook of Russian Security*. Routledge, 2019.

Bateman, Aaron. "The Political Influence of the Russian Security Services." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 27, no. 3 (July 3, 2014): 380–403.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2014.932626>.

Belton, Catherine. "The Man Who Has Putin's Ear — and May Want His Job." *Washington Post*, July 15, 2022.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/13/nikolai-patrushev-russia-security-council-putin/>.

“Статья 13. Совет Безопасности \ КонсультантПлюс.” Accessed March 30, 2023.

http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_108546/1e75c54a69d0c1a0b6b304ca2c5d51e4c7eaf3f7/.

Derleth, J. William. “The Evolution of the Russian Polity: The Case of the Security Council on JSTOR,” 1996. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45301956>.

Galeotti, Mark. “Nikolai Patrushev, the Man Dripping Poison into Putin’s Ear.” *The Spectator*, March 28, 2023.

<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/nikolai-patrushev-the-man-dripping-poison-into-putins-ear/>.

Galeotti, Mark. “Russia’s Security Council: Where Policy, Personality, and Process Meet | George C. Marshall European Center For Security Studies,” 2019.

<https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/security-insights/russias-security-council-were-policy-personality-and-process-meet-0>.

Illarionov, Andrei. “The Siloviki in Charge.” *Journal of Democracy* 20 (April 1, 2009): 69–72.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.0.0066>.

President of Russia. “Security Council · Structure · President of Russia.”

<http://en.kremlin.ru/structure/security-council>.

“Siloviki – Russiapedia Of Russian Origin.” <https://russiapedaia.rt.com/of-russian-origin/siloviki/>.

“Ukraine Conflict: Who’s in Putin’s Inner Circle and Running the War? - BBC News.” Accessed March 30, 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60573261>.

Russian Ministry of Defense:

AP News Wire. “Russia warns Kyiv against use of force in rebel regions.” *Independent*, December 9, 2021.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/russia-valery-gerasimov-moscow-kyiv-vladimir-putin-b1972895.html>

- Bartles, Charles K. "Defense Reforms of Russian Defense Minister Anatolii Serdyukov." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 24, no. 1 (February 2011): 55-80.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2011.549038>
- Götz, Elias and Merlen, Camille-Renaud. "Russia and the question of world order." *European Politics and Society* 20, no. 2 (November 2018): 133-153.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2018.1545181>
- Interfax-Ukraine News Agency. "Russian Army General Staff Chief Gerasimov, ten Russian military servicemen suspected of involvement in Ilovaisk tragedy – SBU." *Kyiv Post*, August 5, 2015.
<https://archive.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/russian-army-general-staff-chief-gerasimov-ten-russian-military-servicemen-suspected-of-involvement-in-ilovaisk-tragedy-sbu-395041.html>
- Jones, Gareth. "Russia appoints top soldier Gerasimov to oversee Ukraine campaign." *Reuters*, January 12, 2023.
<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-appoints-gerasimov-top-commander-ukraine-2023-01-11/>
- Karasik, Theodore. "Putin and Shoigu: Reversing Russia's Decline." *Demokratizatsiya* (March 22, 2000): 178-185.
- Khrebet, Alexander. "Russia's key attack force, Wagner group, embroiled in conflict with regular army." *The Kyiv Independent*, March 1, 2023.
<https://kyivindependent.com/wagner-groups-conflict-with-russian-defense-ministry-worsens/>
- Klein, Margarete and Pester, Kristian. "Russia's Armed Forces on Modernisation Course." *SWP Comments* 9 (January 2014): 1-7.
- Kolstø, Pål and Blakkisrud, Helge. *The New Russian Nationalism: Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000-2015*. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2016.
- Nelson, Shellie. "Ukraine calls businessman and Russian defense minister 'accomplices of terrorists'." *WQAD News* 8, July 22, 2014.
<https://www.wqad.com/article/news/local/drone/8-in-the-air/ukraine-calls-businessman-and-russian-defense-minister-accomplices-of-terrorists/526-acb6eaf8-8db0-4fd2-b516-6d72e5f0fc0f>

- Omelicheva, Mariya Y. "Russia's Counterterrorism Policy: Variations on an Imperial Theme." *Perspectives in Terrorism*, no. 1 (April 2009): 3-10. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26298394>
- Sinai, Joshia. "The Terrorist Threats Against Russia and its Counterterrorism Response Measures." *Connections* 14, no. 4 (Fall 2015): 95-102. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26326421>
- The Moscow Times, "Wagner Head Accuses Russia's Defense Ministry of Treason." February 21, 2023. <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/02/21/wagner-head-accuses-russias-defense-ministry-of-treason-a80295>
- TASS Russian News Agency. "Russia doesn't consider Ukraine as threat, says defense minister." August 29, 2021. <https://tass.com/world/1331447>

Russian Intelligence Agencies:

- Abdalla, Neveen Shaaban, Philip Davies, Kristian Gustafson, Dan Lomas, and Steven Wagner. « Intelligence and the War in Ukraine: Part 2 ». War on the Rocks, 19 May 2022. <https://warontherocks.com/2022/05/intelligence-and-the-war-in-ukraine-part-2/>.
- « Agentura.ru - The structure of the GRU », s. d. <https://agentura.ru/dossier/russia/gru/structure/>.
- « Agentura.ru - The structure of the FSB », s. d. <https://agentura.ru/dossier/russia/fsb/structure/>.
- Averre, David. « Putin cuts FSB from lead intelligence role in Ukraine for man "who orchestrated Salisbury poisoning" | Daily Mail Online », 10 May 2022. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10801811/Putin-cuts-FSB-lead-intelligence-role-Ukraine-man-orchestrated-Salisbury-poisoning.html>.
- « Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 651 dated December 31, 2017 · Official publication of legal acts ». <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001201712310038?index=1&rangeSize=1>.
- Dylan, Huw, David V. Gioe, and Elena Grossfeld. « The Autocrat's Intelligence Paradox: Vladimir Putin's (Mis)Management of Russian Strategic Assessment in the Ukraine War ». *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 29 December 2022, 13691481221146112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13691481221146113>.

- « Federal Law “On Foreign Intelligence” », s. d. http://svr.gov.ru/svr_today/doc02.htm.
- « Federal Protection Service of the Russian Federation », s. d. <http://fso.gov.ru/>.
- « Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation », s. d. <http://www.fsb.ru/fsb/npd.htm>.
- Galeotti, Mark. « The Real Reason for Putin’s Intelligence Shake-Up ». *The Spectator*, 11 May 2022. <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-real-reason-for-putin-s-intelligence-shake-up/>.
- « Goals and objectives of the Service », s. d. http://svr.gov.ru/svr_today/celi.htm.
- Leoni, Zeno, Maeve Ryan, and Gesine Weber. « War in Ukraine: One Year On ». CENTRE FOR GRAND STRATEGY, February 2023.
- « Main Directorate of Special Programs of the President of the Russian Federation », s. d. <http://gusp.gov.ru/>.
- Reynolds, Nick, and Jack Watling. « Ukraine Through Russia’s Eyes ». Royal United Services Institute, 25 February 2022. <https://www.rusi.org><https://www.rusi.org>.
- Riehle, Kevin P. « Russian intelligence: a case-based study of Russian services and missions past and present ». Bethesda, MD: National Intelligence Press, 2022.
- Soldatov, Andrei, and Irina Borogan. « The Shadow War: Putin Strips Spies of Ukraine Role ». Center for European Policy Analysis, 9 May 2022. <https://cepa.org/article/the-shadow-war-putin-strips-spies-of-ukraine-role/>.
- TACC. « Linets, Alexander Leonidovich », 2023. <https://tass.ru/encyclopedia/person/linec-aleksandr-leonidovich>.

Findings: Wagner Group and MoD

- Africa News/AFP. “Africa facing Chinese and Russian influence”. Africa News, March 15, 2023. <https://www.africanews.com/2023/03/15/africa-facing-chinese-and-russian-influence/>
- Borshchevstaya, Anna. “Russian Private Military Companies: Continuity and Evolution of the Model”. Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2019. <https://www.fpri.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/rfp4-borshchevskaya-final.pdf>
- Bryant, Miranda. “Wagner mutiny: how the world reacted”. *The Guardian*, June 24, 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jun/24/wagner-mutiny-how-the-world-reacted>

- Gibbons-Neff, Thomas. “How a 4-Hour Battle Between Russian Mercenaries and U.S. Commandos Unfolded in Syria”. The New York Times, May 24, 2018.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/24/world/middleeast/american-commandos-russian-mercenaries-syria.html>
- “How the Confrontation between Shoigu and Prigozhin Affects the Course of the War against Ukraine | Center for Countering Disinformation,” April 12, 2023.
<https://cpd.gov.ua/en/articles-en/how-the-confrontation-between-shoigu-and-prigozhin-affects-the-course-of-the-war-against-ukraine/>.
- Institute for the Study of War. “Institute for the Study of War.”
<https://www.understandingwar.org/who-we-are>.
- King, Michael. “First comments from Prigozhin since rebellion: He stopped march to avoid Russian bloodshed”. CBS News, June 26, 2023.
<https://www.cbsnews.com/atlanta/news/first-comments-from-prigozhin-since-rebellion-he-stopped-march-to-avoid-russian-bloodshed/>
- Krutov, Mark. “Who’s Who Among Russia’s Mercenary Companies”.
 RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, May 23, 2023.
<https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-other-mercenary-companies-ukraine/32424520.html>
- Malkova, Irina, Baev, Anton and Yakoreva Anastasia. “A Private Army for the President: the story of Evgueny Prigozhin’s Most Sensitive Commission”. The Bell, January 29, 2019.
<https://thebell.io/41889-2>
- Meduza. “Don’t interfere with Wagner.” Meduza, June 26, 2023.
<https://meduza.io/en/feature/2023/06/27/don-t-interfere-with-wagner>
- Meduza. “Is Prigozhin a Loose Cannon? The Reported Capture of Bakhmut Has Magnified the Wagner Group Leader’s Influence in the Kremlin, but Competitors May Cut Him down to Size.” Accessed June 16, 2023.
<https://meduza.io/en/feature/2023/05/25/is-prigozhin-a-loose-cannon>.
- Meduza. “‘Security Forces Will Put a Stop to It’ Meduza’s Sources Say the Kremlin Is Losing Patience with Evgeny Prigozhin’s Outbursts.” Accessed June 16, 2023.
<https://meduza.io/en/feature/2023/05/10/security-forces-will-put-a-stop-to-it>.
- Meduza. “Putin’s Tactic of Inaction Could Backfire at Home Russia’s Restless Political Class Could Soon Run out of Patience with the President’s Passive Approach.” Accessed June

18, 2023.

<https://meduza.io/en/feature/2023/05/24/putin-s-tactic-of-inaction-could-backfire-at-home>.

Meduza. "About Meduza." Accessed June 16, 2023. <https://meduza.io/en/pages/about>.

"Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 15, 2023 | Institute for the Study of War."

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-15-2023>.

Osechkin, Vladimir. "Vladimir Osechkin about PMC Wagner and PMC Redut". The Odessa Journal, October 28, 2022.

<https://odessa-journal.com/vladimir-osechkin-about-pmc-wagner-and-pmc-redut/>

Pertsev, Andrey. "Putin was nowhere to be found". Meduza, June 25, 2023.

<https://meduza.io/en/feature/2023/06/25/putin-was-nowhere-to-be-found>

Purysova, Ira. "Governor of the grey zone: a portrait of PMC Wagner's chief Yevgeny Prigozhin". Novaya Gazeta Europe, April 7, 2023.

<https://novayagazeta.eu/articles/2023/04/07/governor-of-the-grey-zone-en>

"Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 11, 2023 | Institute for the Study of War."

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-11-2023>.

"Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 20, 2023 | Institute for the Study of War."

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-20-2023>;

"Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 21, 2023 | Institute for the Study of War."

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-21-2023>.

"Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, June 1, 2023 | Institute for the Study of War."

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-1-2023>:

"Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 27, 2023 | Institute for the Study of War."

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-27-2023>.

“Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 17, 2023 | Institute for the Study of War.”

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-17-2023>.

“Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 27, 2023 | Institute for the Study of War.”

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-27-2023>.

Sauer, Piotr. “Putin ally Yevgeny Prigozhin admits interfering in US elections”. The Guardian, November 7, 2022.

<https://www.newsweek.com/putins-chef-wagner-group-yevgeny-prigozhin-sued-rotten-food-1776138>

Sonne, Paul. “Wagner Founder Rebuffs Order Over Fighter Contracts With Russian Military”. The New York Times, June 11, 2023.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/11/world/europe/wagner-russia-defense-ministry-contract.html>

Stanovaya, Tatiana. “Man vs. Myth: Is Russia’s Prigozhin a Threat or Asset to Putin?”. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 13, 2023.

<https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89008>

Stratfor. “What the Escalating Wagner Feud Means for Russia’s War in Ukraine -- And Beyond.” Accessed June 16, 2023.

<https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/article/what-escalating-wagner-feud-means-russias-war-ukraine-and-beyond>.

Stratfor, Worldview. “Russia: Wagner Boss Escalates Feud With Military, Claims Withdrawal From Bakhmut in Ukraine | RANE.” Stratfor. Accessed June 18, 2023.

<https://worldview.stratfor.com/situation-report/situation-report/russia-wagner-boss-escalates-feud-military-claims-withdrawal-bakhmut-ukraine>.

Sussex, Matthew. “Putin under Pressure: The Military Melodrama between the Wagner Group and Russia’s Armed Forces.” The Conversation, May 16, 2023.

<http://theconversation.com/putin-under-pressure-the-military-melodrama-between-the-wagner-group-and-russias-armed-forces-205475>.

Syed Armani and Gordon Anna. “Russia’s Notorious Wagner Group Is Being Disbanded. Here’s What That Means for Ukraine”. TIME Magazine, June 27, 2023.

<https://time.com/6290536/russia-wagner-group-disbanded-ukraine/>

The Moscow Times. “Threats to Wagner Leaders’ Families Preceded Mutiny Stand-Down”. The Moscow Times, June 26, 2023.

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/06/26/russian-spy-chief-alleges-un-ukraine-plot-to-loot-famed-kyiv-monastery-a81640>

Van Brugen, Isabel. “‘Putin’s Chef’ Sued 560 Times for Supplying Russian Army With Rotten Food”. Newsweek, January 24, 2023.

<https://www.newsweek.com/putins-chef-wagner-group-yevgeny-prigozhin-sued-rotten-food-1776138>

Yapparova, Liliya. “Roughly speaking, we started a war”. Meduza, July 13, 2022.

<https://meduza.io/feature/2022/07/13/grubo-govorya-my-nachali-voynu>

Findings: Inner Circle 2022-2023

Burrows, Emma. « Vladimir Putin’s Inner Circle: Who’s Who, and How Are They Connected? » CNN, 28 march 2017.

<https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/28/europe/vladimir-putins-inner-circle/index.html>.

Database of Free Russia Forum. « The database “PUTIN'S LIST” », 2023.

<https://www.spisok-putina.org/>.

Galeotti, Mark, «The Presidential Administration: The Command and Control Nexus of Putin’s Russia », George C. Marshall European Center For Security Studies, February 2022.

<https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/security-insights/presidential-administration-command-and-control-nexus-putins-russia-0>

Jolly, Jasper. « Igor Sechin: The Epitome of Power in Putin’s Russia ». *The Guardian*, 5 march 2022, sect. Business.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/mar/04/igor-sechin-the-epitome-of-power-in-putin-russia-rosneft-economy>.

Kirby, Paul. « Ukraine Conflict: Who’s in Putin’s Inner Circle and Running the War? » *BBC*

News, 3 march 2022, sect. Europe. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60573261>.

- Matthews, Owen. *Overreach: The Inside Story of Putin and Russia's War Against Ukraine*. Mudlark, 2022.
- Roth, Andrew. « Putin's Security Men: The Elite Group Who 'Fuel His Anxieties' ». *The Guardian*, 4 February 2022, sect. World news.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/04/putin-security-elite-siloviki-russia>.
- Roth, Andrew, et Pjotr Sauer. « Who Has Putin's Ear? Inside the President's Inner Circle ». *The Observer*, 2 April 2022, sect. World news.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/02/who-has-putins-ear-inside-the-presidents-inner-circle>.
- rupep.org. « PEP: Bortnikov Aleksandr Vasil'yevich », s. d. <https://rupep.org/en/person/6736>.
- rupep.org. « PEP: Chemezov Sergey Viktorovich, JSC Rosoboronexport (Federal Service for Defense Export), Board Member », s. d. <https://rupep.org/en/person/3764>.
- rupep.org. « PEP: Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation », s. d.
<https://rupep.org/en/company/6718>.
- rupep.org. « PEP: PUBLIC DATABASE OF DOMESTIC POLITICALLY EXPOSED PERSONS OF RUSSIA AND BELARUS », s. d. <https://rupep.org/en/>.
- rupep.org. « PEP: Timchenko Gennadiy Nikolaevich, Public Joint-Stock Company NOVATEK, Board Member », s. d. <https://rupep.org/en/person/3527>.
- « Security Council of the Russian Federation », s. d.
<http://scrf.gov.ru/security/docs/document133/>.
- Seddon, Max, Polina Ivanova, et Chris Campbell. « How Putin's technocrats saved the economy to fight a war they opposed ». *Financial Times*, 16 December 2022, sect. The Big Read.
<https://www.ft.com/content/fe5fe0ed-e5d4-474e-bb5a-10c9657285d2>.
- Sherwin, Emily. « Who Belongs to Putin's Inner Circle? » *dw.com*, 3 Novembre 2022.
<https://www.dw.com/en/putins-inner-circle-who-has-the-russian-presidents-ear-on-the-war-in-ukraine/a-61102576>.
- Shuster, Simon. « One Russian General Stands To Gain From Wagner's Mutiny ». *Time*, 27 June 2023. <https://time.com/6290766/zolotov-putin-prigozhin-russia-wagner/>.
- Stanovaya, Tatiana. « 3 Things the World Should Know About Putin ». *Foreign Policy* (blog), 27 January 2022. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/27/putin-russia-ukraine-crisis-invasion/>.

- Stanovaya, Tatiana. « Divided in the Face of Defeat: The Schism Forming in the Russian Elite ». Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 13 December 2022.
<https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/88630>.
- Stanovaya, Tatiana. « Rotating the Elite: The Kremlin’s New Personnel Policy ». Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2018.
<https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/01/30/rotating-elite-kremlin-s-new-personnel-policy-pub-75379>.
- TASS. « Rostec strikes deals with Defense Ministry to the tune of \$2.2 bln at Army forum », s. d.
<https://tass.com/economy/1496753>.
- TASS. « Naryshkin, Sergei Evgenievich ».
<https://tass.ru/encyclopedia/person/naryshkin-sergey-evgenevich>.
- The database “PUTIN’S LIST”. « Kovalchuk Yuri », 2023.
<https://www.spisok-putina.org/en/personas/kovalchuk-5/>.
- The database “PUTIN’S LIST”. « Patrushev Nikolai », 2023.
<https://www.spisok-putina.org/en/personas/patrushev-2/>.
- The database “PUTIN’S LIST”. « Sechin Igor », 2023.
<https://www.spisok-putina.org/en/personas/sechin-2/>.
- The database “PUTIN’S LIST”. « The Database “PUTIN’S LIST” », 2023.
<https://www.spisok-putina.org/en/>.

Findings: Oligarchs and Banks

- Ball, Anneke, Noah Lewis, and Robert Leslie. “The Rise and Fall of Russian Oligarchs.” Business Insider, June 2, 2022.
<https://www.businessinsider.com/sanctioned-russian-oligarchs-wealth-estimate-putin-2022-6>.
- Burke, Patrick. 2022. “Oligarch Usmanov Stands aside as FIE President in Wake of EU Sanctions.” Inside the Games. March 1, 2022.
<https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1119924/usmanov-stands-aside-fie-president>.
- Conant, Eve. “See Why the Separatist Conflict in Eastern Ukraine Is Heating Up.” Culture, April 20, 2021.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/see-why-conflict-eastern-ukraine-heating-up>.

Cox, Chelsey, and Amanda Macias. 2023. "U.S. Imposes Fresh Sanctions on Financial Network Linked to Russian Oligarch Alisher Usmanov." CNBC. April 12, 2023.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2023/04/12/russia-ukraine-war-us-imposes-sanctions-related-to-oligarch-alisher-usmanov.html>.

Doxsee, Catrina. "Putin's Proxies: Examining Russia's Use of Private Military Companies," September 15, 2022.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/putins-proxies-examining-russias-use-private-military-companies>.

Duzor, Megan, and V. O. A. Graphics, dirs. 2022. *How Did Russia's Oligarchs Rise to*

Power?<https://www.voanews.com/a/how-did-russia-s-oligarchs-rise-to-power-/6652504.html>.

European Commission. "Sanctions Adopted Following Russia's Military Aggression against Ukraine," February 25, 2023.

https://finance.ec.europa.eu/eu-and-world/sanctions-restrictive-measures/sanctions-adopted-following-russias-military-aggression-against-ukraine_en.

Forbes. "Alexander Abramov," June 5, 2023.

<https://www.forbes.com/profile/alexander-abramov/>.

Forbes. "Alisher Usmanov," June 5, 2023. <https://www.forbes.com/profile/alisher-usmanov/>.

Forbes. "Roman Abramovich & Family," June 4, 2023.

<https://www.forbes.com/profile/roman-abramovich/>.

Forbes. "Vladimir Potanin," June 5, 2023. <https://www.forbes.com/profile/vladimir-potanin/>.

How Did Russia's Oligarchs Rise to Power?, 2022.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/how-did-russia-s-oligarchs-rise-to-power-/6652504.html>.

Law, Tara. "The Mystery of Gazprom's New 'Private Military Company.'" Time, February 11, 2023. <https://time.com/6254708/gazprom-private-military-wagner-group-russia/>.

Meduza. 2023. "It's Not Just Wagner At Least Three Gazprom-Linked Private Military Companies Now Have Fighters in Ukraine." Meduza. May 16, 2023.

<https://meduza.io/en/feature/2023/05/16/it-s-not-just-wagner>.

Quenelle, Benjamin. “Vladimir Potanin, How The Mega-Rich Russian Oligarch Defies Western Sanctions - Worldcrunch.” World Crunch, September 11, 2022.

<https://worldcrunch.com/world-affairs/potanin>.

Tognini, Giacomo. “Why Western Sanctions Failed To Truly Impact The Wealth Of Russia’s Billionaire Oligarchs.” Forbes. Accessed May 30, 2023.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/giacomotognini/2023/04/13/why-western-sanctions-failed-to-truly-impact-the-wealth-of-russias-billionaire-oligarchs/>.

Vinograd, Cassandra, and Matt Surman. “Here’s What to Know on the First Anniversary of Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine.” *The New York Times*, February 24, 2023, sec. World.

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/02/24/world/russia-ukraine-zelensky-news>.

Why Are Russian Oligarchs Forming Private Armies? | DW Business, 2023.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KsS3KLvqMyM>.

Analysis and Speculation:

Camut, Nicolas. “Wagner’s feud with Russian army escalates amid reports of not-so-friendly fire”. Politico, June 5, 2023.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/russia-soldiers-friendly-fire-wagner-group-yevgeny-prigozhin-bakhmut-ukraine-war/>

Denys, Davydenko, Khvostova, Margaryta, Kryvosheiev, Dmytro and Lymar, Olga. “Lessons for the West: Russia’s military failures in Ukraine”. European Council on Foreign Relations, August 11, 2022.

<https://ecfr.eu/article/lessons-for-the-west-russias-military-failures-in-ukraine/>

Dylan, Huw, David V. Gioe, and Elena Grossfeld. “The Autocrat’s Intelligence Paradox: Vladimir Putin’s (Mis)Management of Russian Strategic Assessment in the Ukraine War.”

The British Journal of Politics and International Relations, December 29, 2022, 13691481221146112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13691481221146113>.

Farberov, Snejana. “Russia’s special forces suffered 95% casualty rate in Ukraine, leaked docs show”. New York Post, April 14, 2023.

<https://nypost.com/2023/04/14/russias-spetsnaz-decimated-in-ukraine-leaked-pentagon-docs/>

- Galeotti, Mark. “Echoes of Afghanistan in Russian Soldiers’ Poor Discipline in Ukraine”. The Moscow Times, April 1, 2022.
<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/04/01/echoes-of-afghanistan-in-russian-soldiers-poor-discipline-in-ukraine-a77176>
- Global Firepower. “2023 Military Strength Ranking”. GFP Annual Ranking, 2023.
<https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.php>
- “Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, June 1, 2023 | Institute for the Study of War.”
<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-1-2023>;
- Jackson, Jonathan. “Ukraine war: why are so many Russian generals being killed?”. The Conversation, March 22, 2022.
<https://theconversation.com/ukraine-war-why-are-so-many-russian-generals-being-killed-179517>
- Khvostunova, Olga. « Why Russian Elites Are Standing By Putin - Foreign Policy Research Institute », 22 July 2022.
<https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/07/why-russian-elites-are-hanging-together-for-now/>.
- Kolesnikov, Andrei. “Is There a Future in Politics for Russia’s Wagner Boss, Yevgeny Prigozhin?” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 14, 2023.
<https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89962>
- Meduza. “Yevgeny Prigozhin’s Coup Russia’s Armed Forces Scramble at Home to Confront an Armed Insurrection by the Nation’s Most Outspoken Mercenary Figure.” Accessed July 4, 2023. <https://meduza.io/en/live/2023/06/23/yevgeny-prigozhin-s-coup>.
- Mitrokhin, Nikolay. “Where Are Russia’s Nationalists in the War Against Ukraine?” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 7, 2023.
<https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89211>
- Nakashima, Ellen and Harris Shane. “U.S. spies learned in mid-June Prigozhin was planning armed action in Russia.” The Washington Post, June 24, 2023.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/06/24/us-intelligence-prigozhin-putin/>
- Neuman, Scott. “Referendum In Russia Passes, Allowing Putin To Remain President Until 2036”. NPR, July 1, 2020.

<https://www.npr.org/2020/07/01/886440694/referendum-in-russia-passes-allowing-putin-to-remain-president-until-2036>

Reuters. “Kremlin Denies Conflict between Wagner and Defence Ministry.” *Reuters*, January 16, 2023, sec. Europe.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/kremlin-denies-conflict-between-wagner-defence-ministry-2023-01-16/>.

Rogov, Kirill. « Why Russia’s Elites Went to War | Wilson Center ». The Russia File, 13 April 2022. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/why-russias-elites-went-war>.

“Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 21, 2023 | Institute for the Study of War.” Accessed June 16, 2023.

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-21-2023>.

Saul, Derek. “Putin’s Long Tables Explained: Why He Puts Some Leaders, Including Germany’s Scholz, At An Extreme Distance”. *Forbes*, February 15, 2022.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/dereksaul/2022/02/15/putins-long-tables-explained-why-he-puts-some-leaders-including-germanys-scholz-at-an-extreme-distance/?sh=611762b470fb>

Stanovaya, Tatiana. “Man vs. Myth: Is Russia’s Prigozhin a Threat or Asset to Putin?” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89008>.

The Kyiv Independent. “Conflict Intelligence Team: General Dvornikov Dismissed from leading Russian troops in Ukraine”. The Kyiv Independent news desk, June 3, 2022.

<https://kyivindependent.com/conflict-intelligence-team-general-dvornikov-dismissed-from-leading-russian-troops-in-ukraine/>.

Conclusion:

Gamio, Lazaro, Marco Hernandez, Josh Holder, Anatoly Kurmanaev, and Christine Zhang. 2023. “How a Rebellion in Russia Unfolded Over 36 Hours.” *The New York Times*, June 25, 2023, sec. World.

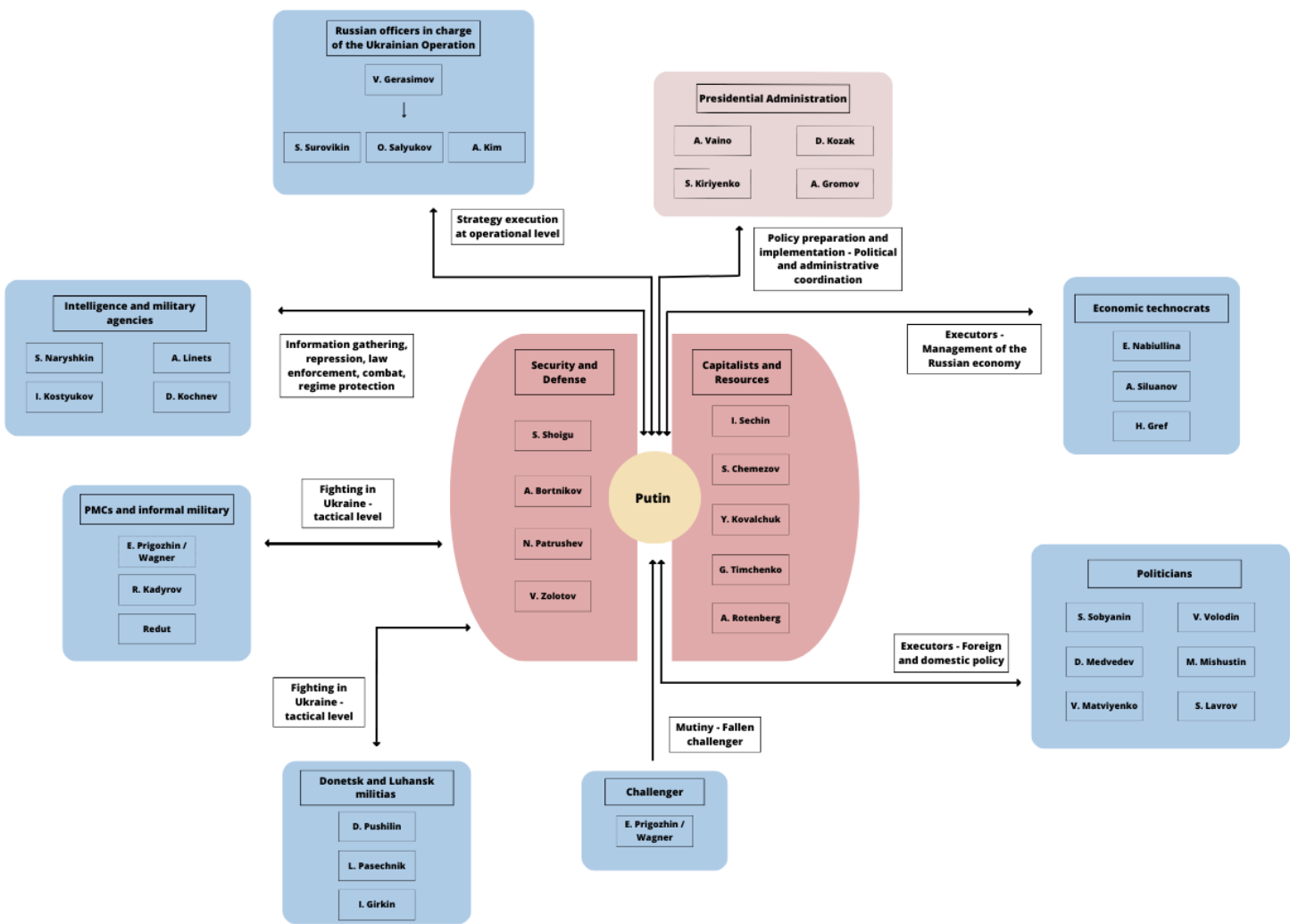
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/06/24/world/europe/prigozhin-putin-russia.html>.

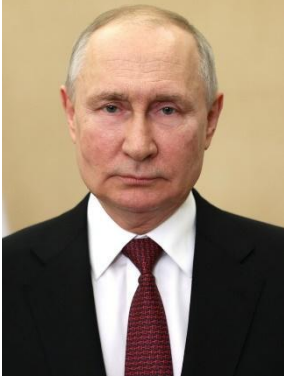



“Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, June 24, 2023 | Institute for the Study of War.” 2023. June 24, 2023.




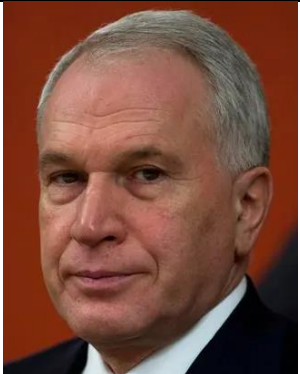
<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-24-2023>.

Appendix

Map of the Formal and Informal Russian Security Sector



<p align="center">Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin</p>  <p align="center">http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/71452/photos</p>	<p>Born: 7 October 1952</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - President of the Russian Federation
Security and Defense	
<p align="center">Sergei Kuzhugetovich Shoigu</p>  <p align="center">https://eng.mil.ru/images/%D0%A8%D0%BE%D0%B9%D0%B3%D1%83-2021-170.jpg</p>	<p>Born: 21 May 1955 in Chadan, Tuvan Autonomous Oblast</p> <p>Current position :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation - Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Defense of the CIS
<p align="center">Alexander Vasilyevich Bortnikov</p>  <p align="center">http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62096/photos</p>	<p>Born: 15 November 1951 in Molotov, Russian SFSR</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB) since 2008
<p align="center">Nikolai Platonovitch Patrushev</p>  <p align="center">http://duma.gov.ru/multimedia/photo/44777/</p>	<p>Born: 11 July 1951 in Leningrad (Saint Petersburg)</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation

<p>Viktor Vasilyevich Zolotov</p>  <p>http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63302/photos</p>	<p>Born: 24 January 1954 in Sasovo</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of the National Guard of the Russian Federation (FSO – Rosgvardiya)
<p>Capitalists and Resources</p>	
<p>Igor Ivanovich Sechin</p>  <p>http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63346/photos</p>	<p>Born: 7 September 1960</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief Executive Officer of PJSC Rosneft Oil Company
<p>Sergey Viktorovich Chemezov</p>  <p>http://www.council.gov.ru/events/multimedia/photo/72743/</p>	<p>Born: 20 August 1952 in Cheremkovo, Irkutsk Oblast</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEO of Rostec Corporation (State Corporation for Assistance to Development, Production and Export of Advanced Technology Industrial Product Rostec)
<p>Yuri Valentinovich Kovalchuk</p>  <p>https://www.forbes.com/profile/yuri-kovalchuk/</p>	<p>Born: 25 July 1951 in Leningrad (Saint Petersburg)</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chairman and largest shareholder of Rossiya Bank

<p>Gennady Nikolayevich Timchenko</p>  <p>http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56757/photos</p>	<p>Born: 9 November 1952</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Founder and owner of Volga Group, Holds a significant stake in natural gas company Novatek
<p>Arkady Romanovich Rotenberg</p>  <p>http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63020/photos</p>	<p>Born: 15 December 1951</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Co-owner of Stroygazmontazh (S.G.M. group)

Presidential Administration

Anton Eduardovich Vaino



<http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60829/photos>

Born: 17 February 1972

Current position:

- Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office of the Russian Federation since 2016

Alexey Alexeyevich Gromov



<http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63200/photos/63722>

Born: 1960 in Zagorsk

Current position:

- First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office since 2012

Sergey Vladilenovich Kiriyenko



<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63176/photos/63681>

Born: 26 July 1962

Current Position:

- First Deputy Chief of Staff of Presidential Executive Office of the Russian Federation

Dmitry Nikolayevich Kozak



<http://static.government.ru/media/photos/orig/W3GA78Q5BQLJARph45cr0ii8CYI93HwA.png>

Born: 7 November 1958 in Bandurove, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic



Current position:

- Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office since 2020

Officers in charge of the Ukrainian Operation	
<p style="text-align: center;">Valery Vasilyevich Gerasimov</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">http://structure.mil.ru/download/images/upload/2017/Gerasimov-HR.jpg</p>	<p>Born: 8 September 1955 in Kazan, Tatar ASSR</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces and First Deputy Minister of Defence since 2012, First Deputy Minister of Defence
<p style="text-align: center;">Sergey Vladimirovich Surovikin</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">https://structure.mil.ru/management/info.htm?id=11854308@SD_Employee</p>	<p>Born: 11 October 1966 in Novosibirsk</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deputy Commander of the Russian Joint Group of Forces, Commander of the Russian Aerospace Forces
<p style="text-align: center;">Oleg Leonidovich Salyukov</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">http://structure.mil.ru/management/info.htm?id=10336066@SD_Employee</p>	<p>Born: 21 May 1955 in Saratov</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deputy Commander of the Russian Joint Group of Forces, Commanders-in-chief of the Russian Ground Forces
<p style="text-align: center;">Alexei Rostislavovich Kim</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">http://structure.mil.ru/management/info.htm?id=375926@SD_Employee</p>	<p>Born: 21 September 1958</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deputy Commander of the Russian Joint Group of Forces, Russian Ground Forces Colonel General

Intelligence and military agencies	
<p>Sergei Evgenyevich Naryshkin</p>  <p>http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67825/photos</p>	<p>Born: 27 October 1954 in Leningrad</p> <p>Current Position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation (SVR)
<p>Igor Olegovich Kostyukov</p>  <p>https://structure.mil.ru/management/info.htm?id=12212129@SD_Employee</p>	<p>Born: 21 February 1961</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (GU/GRU)
<p>Alexander Leonidovich Linets</p>  <p>https://sanctions.nazk.gov.ua/en/sanction-person/1175/</p>	<p>Born: 11 January 1963 in Starominskaya</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of the Main Directorate of Special Programs of the President of the Russian Federation (GUSP) since 2015
<p>Dmitry Viktorovich Kochnev</p>  <p>http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/68685/videos</p>	<p>Born: 1 March 1964 in Moscow</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of the Federal Protective Service (FSO) since 2016, Army General

PMCs and informal military

Yevgeny Viktorovich Prigozhin	Born: 1 June 1961 in Leningrad
 https://sanctions.nazk.gov.ua/en/sanction-person/602/	Current position: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Leader of Wagner Group
Ramzan Akhmadovich Kadyrov	Born: 5 October 1976 in Tsentaroy
 http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/70667/photos	Current position: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- President of the Chechen Republic of Chechnya

Donetsk and Luhansk militias

Denis Vladimirovich Pushilin



<http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67829/photos>

Born: 9 May 1981

Current position: Head of the Donetsk People's Republic

Leonid Ivanovich Pasechnik



<http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67829/photos>

Born: 15 March 1970

Current position: Head of the Luhansk People's Republic

Igor Vsevolodovich Girkin (Igor Ivanovich Strelkov)






<https://alchetron.com/Igor-Strelkov-%28officer%29>

Born: 17 December 1970

Current position:

- Leader of the Angry Patriots club
- Previously Minister of Defence of the Donetsk People's Republic

Economic technocrats	
<p>Elvira Sakhpizadovna Nabiullina</p>  <p>http://www.council.gov.ru/events/multimedia/photo/60785/</p>	<p>Born: 29 October 1963 in Ufa</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governor the Central Bank of the Russian Federation since 2013
<p>Anton Germanovich Siluanov</p>  <p>http://www.kremlin.ru/catalog/persons/282/events/61643/photos</p>	<p>Born: 12 April 1963</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minister of Finance of the Russian Federation since 2011
<p>Herman Oskarovich Gref</p>  <p>http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67002/photos</p>	<p>Born: 8 February 1964</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chairman and CEO of PJSC Sberbank since 2007

Politicians	
<p style="text-align: center;">Sergey Semyonovich Sobyanin</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">https://www.mos.ru/static/images/pic/departament_person/person_first.jpg</p>	<p>Born: 21 June 1958 in Nyaksimvol</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mayor of Moscow since 2010
<p style="text-align: center;">Dmitry Anatolyevich Medvedev</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">https://web.archive.org/web/20191120195450/http://services.government.ru/press/photos/</p>	<p>Born: 14 September 1965 in Leningrad</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation - First Deputy Chairman of the Military Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation
<p style="text-align: center;">Vcheslavya Viktorovich Volodin</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">http://duma.gov.ru/duma/persons/99100829/</p>	<p>Born: 4 February 1964 in Alexeyevka</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation since 2016
<p style="text-align: center;">Mikhail Vladimirovich Mishustin</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">http://government.ru/news/44982/</p>	<p>Born: 3 March 1966 in Lobnya</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prime Minister - Chairman of the government of the Russian Federation since 2020

<p style="text-align: center;">Valentina Ivanovna Matviyenko</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">https://penzanews.ru/politics/147396-2021</p>	<p>Born: 7 April 1949 in Tyutina</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chairman of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation since 2011
<p style="text-align: center;">Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69858/photos/69484</p>	<p>Born: 21 March 1950 in Moscow</p> <p>Current position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation since 2004