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**The Russian Worldview and Ukrainian Security**

**JCSP 47**

**Exercise Solo Flight**

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## THE RUSSIAN WORLDVIEW AND UKRAINIAN SECURITY

On 24 February 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Over 175,000 troops had been amassed over the preceding year and they engaged in a multipronged attack, striking north from Crimea, west into the Donbas, and south toward Kyiv and Kharkiv. Despite nearly three months of warnings from United States intelligence, the assault shocked the world as war had returned to Europe.<sup>1</sup> On 21 February and in the dawn hours of the day of the invasion, President Vladimir Putin made live addresses outlining Russia's justifications for the war. The antecedents for Putin's rationale had been evolving throughout his two decades in power, building on broader themes developed by other Russian thinkers. Putin utilised the threat of NATO aggression as a primary cause for his invasion, however, Ukraine was also targeted for much more historically rooted reasons. This paper will aim to understand the world view of Putin and his coterie, how it applies to Ukraine, and demonstrate that Ukraine's security will never be guaranteed as long as Russian leaders hold to these beliefs.

Putin's two speeches in late February outlined in some detail the pretexts for Russia's 'special military operation' into Ukraine. They focussed on the imminent threat that NATO posed to Russia's security and delineated the consistent encroachment of NATO forces to Russia's borders, through the enlargement of the alliance to include the post-Soviet states of eastern Europe. In the 21 February speech, he declared that Ukraine

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<sup>1</sup> Shane Harris and Paul Sonne, "Russia planning massive military offensive against Ukraine involving 175,000 troops, U.S. intelligence warns," *The Washington Post*, 3 December 2021, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/russia-ukraine-invasion/2021/12/03/98a3760e-546b-11ec-8769-2f4ecdf7a2ad\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/russia-ukraine-invasion/2021/12/03/98a3760e-546b-11ec-8769-2f4ecdf7a2ad_story.html); United States Congress, *Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: Military and Intelligence Issues and Aspects* (Washington: Congressional Research Service, March 7, 2022): 1, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN11872>.

was already facilitating NATO forces, being trained by them, had integrated into the NATO command and control system, and stated that Russian intelligence determined that Ukraine had already agreed to join NATO.<sup>2</sup> With this NATO support, it was alleged that Ukraine was imminently planning a blitzkrieg attack against the Donbas, prompting Russia to recognise the independence of Donetsk and Luhansk. On 24 February, Putin elaborated on 30 years of NATO deceptions, stated that the actions by the United States and NATO constituted a direct threat to Russia's existence as a state, that Russia would not make the same mistake as in 1941 and await an attack by an aggressor, and invoked Article 51 of the UN Charter to protect the people of the Donbas from a Ukrainian genocide.<sup>3</sup>

In a narrow light, it would seem possible for Ukraine to come to a negotiated settlement with Russia by forswearing NATO membership, formally ceding Crimea, and by establishing autonomy or independence for the Donbas region. However, other aspects of Putin's speeches belie the notion that Ukraine would be able to gain true security, free from future threats from Russia, by acquiescing to Putin's current demands.<sup>4</sup> Putin emphasised that Ukraine was not simply a neighbouring country, but that it was, "an inalienable part of our own history... people bound by blood, by family ties," and that, "Since time immemorial, the people living in the south-west of what has

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<sup>2</sup> Vladimir Putin (speech), "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," Russian Federation, Moscow, 21 February 2022, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/statements/67828>.

<sup>3</sup> Vladimir Putin (speech), "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," Russian Federation, Moscow, 24 February 2022. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/statements/67843>; United States Congress, *The Law of War and the Russian Invasion of Ukraine* (Washington: Congressional Research Service, March 16, 2022): 2, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/LSB/LSB10710>; James A. Green, Christian Henderson and Tom Ruys, "Russia's attack on Ukraine and the jus ad bellum," *Journal on the Use of Force and International Law* 9, no. 1 (2022): 4, 11, 14, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20531702.2022.2056803>.

<sup>4</sup> K. A. Pakhaliuk, "The Historical Past as the Foundation of the Russian Polity: Vladimir Putin's 2012–2018 Speeches," *Russian Social Science Review* 62, nos. 4–6 (2021): 290, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10611428.2021.2002038>.

historically been Russian land have called themselves Russians and Orthodox Christians.”<sup>5</sup> On 24 February, Putin stressed that the current conflict could be resolved once outside interference had ceased and that Russia and Ukraine could overcome these problems and, “strengthen us from within as a single whole, despite the existence of state borders. I believe in this, our common future.”<sup>6</sup>

Putin is not alone in his thinking and the context for Russia’s interactions with Ukraine have been developed over many years by Russian intellectuals and power holders. Putin has not ascribed, at least publicly, to a defined intellectual school of thought or doctrine, but does draw on common themes from Russian Orthodoxy and Eurasianism theories to describe Russia’s place in the world. Under both these schools of thought, a key tenet is that Russia is not simply a nation-state, rather it is a unique civilisation with its own historical mission.<sup>7</sup>

Russia has been portrayed as the last bastion of the Christian world, the Third Rome, whose mantle was passed from ancient Rome to Byzantium and then to Moscow after the fall of Constantinople. This was first famously espoused by the monk Filofei to Tsar Vasily III in 1511 and was adopted by later Russian thinkers to develop a messianic role for Russia in the world.<sup>8</sup> Putin stressed this aspect of spirituality on 21 February as

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<sup>5</sup> Putin, “Address by the President of the Russian Federation,” 21 February 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Putin, “Address by the President of the Russian Federation,” 24 February 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Andrei Tsygankov, “Crafting the State-Civilization: Vladimir Putin’s Turn to Distinct Values,” *Problems of Post-Communism* 63, no. 3 (2016): 146,

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10758216.2015.1113884?journalCode=mppc20>; Charles J. Halperin, “Rus’, Russia and National Identity,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 48, no.3 (2006): 161, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00085006.2006.11092406>.

<sup>8</sup> Dmitrii Sidorov, “Post-Imperial Third Romes: Resurrections of a Russian Orthodox Geopolitical Metaphor,” *Geopolitics* 11, no. 2 (2006): 322-323, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14650040600598585?journalCode=fgeo20>; Marcin Skladanowski, “The Myth of Russian Exceptionalism: Russia as a Civilization and Its Uniqueness in Aleksandr G. Dugin’s Thought,” *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 20, no. 4 (2019): 426, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21567689.2019.1697870?journalCode=ftmp21>.

well as in earlier remarks, establishing Orthodoxy as a crucial aspect of the evolution of the unique Russian country-civilisation.<sup>9</sup> This provided the ‘sacral infrastructure’ for Russia to act as the protector of all Orthodox lands, with a specific focus on the historical Russian lands.<sup>10</sup> This messianic thinking, focussing both on the recovery of lost lands in the near abroad as well as a more global mission to protect the faith has been espoused for centuries in Russia.<sup>11</sup> This mindset held even throughout the atheist Soviet period of Russian history, with the Communist Third International replacing the Third Rome and a new global mission to spread and protect the Marxist-Leninist gospel.<sup>12</sup> In the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia flirted with western-orientated ideas under President Boris Yeltsin, however by the time Putin had become president in 2000, Orthodox thinking was being re-adopted by Russian intellectuals, the elite and the state, and again made a centrepiece of the Russian identity.<sup>13</sup>

The impact of this line of thinking on Ukraine is its connection to the historical adoption of Orthodoxy by the Eastern Slavs. In 988, Prince Vladimir of the Kyivan Rus’ converted to Orthodoxy, bringing the eastern Slavs with him. The Eastern Slav cultural group includes Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, and ancient Kyivan Rus’ spanned an area that included parts of all three states’ present territory. Building upon this, the concept of Holy Rus’ was developed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, where the Tsarist empire was charged with

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<sup>9</sup> Putin, “Address by the President of the Russian Federation,” 21 February 2022; Pakhaliuk, 296, 302.

<sup>10</sup> Sidorov, 328, 330.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 328.

<sup>12</sup> Natalia Naydenova, “Holy Rus: (Re)construction of Russia’s Civilizational Identity,” *Slavonica* 21, nos. 1-2 (2016): 40, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13617427.2017.1319120>; Skladanowski, 427; Sidorov, 323.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Rywkin, “Russia: Mythology in the Service of Realpolitik,” *American Foreign Policy Interests* 36, no. 3 (2014): 197, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10803920.2014.925345?journalCode=uafp20>; Tsygankov, 147.

gathering and protecting the heterogenous Russian lands, thinking that has been echoed since 2009 by Russian Orthodox Patriarchs to include Ukraine and Belarus.<sup>14</sup> Two days after Russia annexed Crimea in March 2014, Putin noted that Crimea was where Prince Vladimir was baptised and that this seminal moment was the overall basis of the culture that united the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus and that Ukraine and Russia were one people that could not live without each other.<sup>15</sup> Putin has also argued that it was the Princes of Moscow that began the process of reunifying the Russian lands after the disintegration of Kyivan Rus' and stated that it was an Orthodox union that saw the Ukrainian Hetman Khmelnytsky sign the Treaty of Pereyaslav in 1654 with Tsar Alexei, subordinating and reuniting Ukraine within the Russian Empire.<sup>16</sup>

Ukraine has attempted to redefine this Orthodox narrative and gain spiritual sovereignty to match its political sovereignty. Ukraine disputes the direct transference of Kyivan Rus' heritage to Muscovy, arguing that it was preserved in Galicia-Volhynia and thus retained with the Ukrainian people.<sup>17</sup> The Treaty of Pereyaslav is not viewed as a natural Orthodox reunion, but as an independent Ukraine seeking protection from Polish expansion.<sup>18</sup> The importance of this spiritual narrative was seen in 2018, with Ukraine

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<sup>14</sup> Mikhail Suslov, "Geographical Metanarratives in Russia and the European East: Contemporary Pan-Slavism," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 53, no. 5 (2012): 575,

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2747/1539-7216.53.5.575>; Taras Kuzio, "National Identities and Virtual Foreign Policies among the Eastern Slavs," *Nationalities Papers* 31, no. 4 (2003): 443,

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0090599032000152906>; Naydenova, 39, 41-42.

<sup>15</sup> Vladimir Putin (speech), "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," Russian Federation, Moscow, 18 March 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>.

<sup>16</sup> Vladimir Putin, "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians," *Official Internet Resources of the President of Russia*, 12 July 2021, <http://www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>.

<sup>17</sup> Paul D'Anieri, "Nationalism and international politics: Identity and sovereignty in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 3, no. 2 (1997): 8, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13537119708428500>; Taras Kuzio, "Nation building, history writing and competition over the legacy of kyiv rus in Ukraine," *Nationalities Papers* 33, no. 1 (2005): 31, 43, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00905990500053960?tab=permissions&scroll=top>.

<sup>18</sup> Kuzio, "Nation building, history writing...", 32-33.

sparkling Russian outrage by successfully petitioning the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople to grant the Orthodox Church of Ukraine autocephaly, making it independent from the Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>19</sup> Putin cited this particular Ukrainian provocation in his 21 February speech as a cynical schism and further proof of the need for Russia to intervene in Ukraine.<sup>20</sup>

Putin's thought displays a consistent pattern where Ukraine and Russia are united through their common Orthodox past and where differentiating Ukraine as a sovereign state is a modern misconception.<sup>21</sup> This theme is present in many of his speeches and was a prominent aspect of the two speeches that set the stage for Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This Russian perception of a unified Eastern Slavic Orthodox civilisation has developed over centuries and is a critically central precept of Russian political and foreign policy theory. As long as Russia holds to a messianic Orthodox worldview, Ukraine's sovereignty will be threatened; to be able to defend an East Slavic Orthodoxy centred around Kyiv and Holy Rus', Russia must first hold and control it.

Orthodoxy is only one strand of Russian supra-national thinking and the theory of Eurasianism also plays an important role in Putin and the Russian elite's worldview. Eurasianism is a more modern concept that has been popular with many of Russia's decision makers, whose most influential proponent is Alexander Dugin.<sup>22</sup> This thought continues the focus on a unique civilisation, though not simply an Orthodox one.<sup>23</sup> It too

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<sup>19</sup> Putin, "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians"; United States Congress, *Russia's Use of Force Against the Ukrainian Navy* (Washington: Congressional Research Service, December 3, 2018): 3, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN11004>.

<sup>20</sup> Putin, "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," 21 February 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Kuzio, "National Identities and Virtual Foreign Policies..." 443.

<sup>22</sup> Marlene Laruelle, "Russia as a "Divided Nation," from Compatriots to Crimea: A Contribution to the Discussion on Nationalism and Foreign Policy," *Problems of Post-Communism* 62, no. 2 (2015): 90, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10758216.2015.1010902>.

<sup>23</sup> Skladanowski, 429-430, 435.



looks to Russia's past, however with an added focus on the imperial expansion eastward across Asia. While it endorses the primacy of the Rus' lineage, it also invokes the Asian heritage of the Mongol Golden Horde, the Alans, and the Turks that had been subsumed within the Russian Empire.<sup>24</sup> This lens is more flexible than a focus on Orthodoxy and more easily incorporates the periods of the Rus', Muscovy, the Russian Empire, and the USSR, finding a common thread throughout. Eurasianism is not an exclusively ethnocentric theory, focussing more on a shared concept of ideas.<sup>25</sup> Instead, Putin has argued that ethnic Russians form the indispensable core of the Russian civilisation, but that their civilisation is also inclusive of other peoples, further positing that a purely ethnic state would be contrary to their 1,000-year history.<sup>26</sup> In a 2013 speech, Putin stated that the Russian civilisation, "took shape over centuries, evolved over many generations of representatives of various nationalities and various religions."<sup>27</sup>

This broader concept of Russian civilisation has also been labelled the *Russkiy Mir* (Russian World), that stretches well beyond the Russian Federation's current borders. Putin articulated in 2006 that, "*Russkiy Mir* can and must unite everyone, who cherishes the Russian word and the Russian culture, wherever they live – in Russia or abroad."<sup>28</sup> Even the Russian Orthodox Church has commented approvingly, noting that the Russian civilisation was unique, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious, based on the heritage of Prince Vladimir and the Byzantine Empire.<sup>29</sup> Since the collapse of the USSR, the term 'compatriot' has been used in Russian political discourse to describe Russians living

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 427, 431, 437.

<sup>25</sup> Tsygankov, 148;

<sup>26</sup> Tsygankov, 148, 151; Rywkin, 196.

<sup>27</sup> Sidorov, 299.

<sup>28</sup> Naydenova, 42.

<sup>29</sup> Naydenova, 42; Halperin, 161; Sidorov, 335.

outside the Federation's borders, with this at first meaning those of Russian ethnicity, but broadening under Eurasianist influence over the last two decades to include all those who once lived in the former USSR.<sup>30</sup> In 2010, Putin had the Russian Federation's constitution amended to ensure that those compatriots living abroad, through self-identification, would be considered Russian.<sup>31</sup>

Holders of the tenets of Eurasianism thus see the Russian Federation as a rump state. Dugin has argued that a civilisation continues to exist even if its peoples are divided among other states, that current state borders do not reflect the cultural or spiritual Russian civilisation, and that Russia has a unique mission to gather these lands and act as one of the world's geopolitical poles.<sup>32</sup> In 2016, Putin addressed the All-Russian Historical Assembly, offering that, "Russian history is the basis of our national worldview, of our culture in the broadest sense of the word. This, of course, is the source for understanding our identity and our civilizational mission."<sup>33</sup> The supra-national concept of a Eurasian Russian civilisation does not respect the sovereignty of the states that became independent after the collapse of the Soviet Union and, to achieve the 'civilizational mission' of which Putin speaks, this outcome must be reversed.<sup>34</sup>

This view is specifically troubling for Ukraine. Eurasianism focusses on the Russian civilizational core and Eurasianists consider Ukraine to be part of that Russian nucleus. For Russia, Kyiv is the Russian ancestral home and the root of their

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<sup>30</sup> Laruelle, 88, 95; Arthur H. Miller, Thomas F. Klobucar, William M. Reisinger and Vicki L. Hesli, "Social Identities in Russia, Ukraine, and Lithuania," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 14, no. 3 (1998): 271, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1060586X.1998.10641454>.

<sup>31</sup> Erika Harris, "What is the Role of Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Russia-Ukraine Crisis?" *Europe-Asia Studies* 72, no. 4 (2020): 603, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09668136.2019.1708865>.

<sup>32</sup> Skladanowski, 433-435, 443.

<sup>33</sup> Pakhaliuk, 296.

<sup>34</sup> Suslov, 580; Erika Harris, 600, 602.

civilisation's common language and culture, and if it were to lose this Rus' heritage, it would lose its historical foundation.<sup>35</sup> In 2019, Putin declared that, "Russians and Ukrainians are one people... one nation," with many Russians taking it for granted that Ukraine has always been a province of greater Russia.<sup>36</sup> The Ukrainian people are often not viewed as separate from the Russian people and that the Ukrainian language is not completely distinct from Russian.<sup>37</sup> Putin, in a 2021 article, stated that Russia and Ukraine were one people, bound by the Old Russian language, that their written language is identical, and that the current spoken Ukrainian language was a dialect that both Russians and Ukrainians have used. He went on to note that civilisations often see cycles of central rule interspersed with periods of fragmentation; for the Rus' they were divided under the Mongols and the Lithuanians, followed by Muscovy throwing off the foreign yoke and successfully gathering the Russian lands.<sup>38</sup> Eurasianism uses this theme to construct a civilizational continuity from the Rus', Muscovy, the Russian Empire, the USSR to the present-day Russian Federation. By appropriating these legacies, it denies Ukraine a cultural independence as well as a political independence.<sup>39</sup>

Though the USSR is part of the Eurasianist continuum, Putin has used decisions made during the Soviet period to both explain the existence of Ukraine's current borders and to delegitimise its sovereignty. In his 21 February speech, Putin argued that Lenin and the early Bolsheviks created arbitrary socialist republic boundaries, that were sops to local nationalists, but where in actuality the Soviet state was highly centralised.<sup>40</sup> He

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<sup>35</sup> Putin, "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," 18 March 2014; D'Anieri, 8, 10.

<sup>36</sup> United States Congress, *Russia: Foreign Policy and U.S. Relations* (Washington: Congressional Research Service, April 15, 2021): 15, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46761>; Laruelle, 88.

<sup>37</sup> Kuzio, "National Identities and Virtual Foreign Policies..." 434-435.

<sup>38</sup> Putin, "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians."

<sup>39</sup> Skladanowski, 433.

<sup>40</sup> Putin, "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," 21 February 2022.

argued that these decisions were made as it was incomprehensible to the Soviets that the USSR would ever fall apart or that these republic borders would one day delineate separate, sovereign states.<sup>41</sup> During the negotiations on the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was formed by the newly minted republics, with the Russian Federation as the largest and central state. The CIS has been viewed by Russia as its minimum external borders and the organisation was seen as an avenue towards reunification.<sup>42</sup> However, in 2014, Putin stated that though it had been envisioned that the CIS would become a new common statehood, that this did not occur, further aggrieving Russia.<sup>43</sup>

Ukrainian nationalists and sovereigntists have had to develop a new Ukrainian narrative since 1991, especially as even traditional western viewpoints had always considered their nation as being part of Russia.<sup>44</sup> To counter commonly held beliefs, influenced by Eurasianism, the Ukrainian state has brought attention to episodes of its history where it has demonstrated a sovereign spirit. This includes arguing that the Kyivan Rus' period is strictly of Ukrainian heritage, a focus on Cossack rebellions against both Polish and Russian overlords, brief independence after the First World War, political arrangements within the USSR, and resistance movements during the Second World War.<sup>45</sup> A more concrete step was taken in 2018, when Ukraine withdrew from the CIS to

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<sup>41</sup> Putin, "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians"; Putin, "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," 18 March 2014.

<sup>42</sup> Kuzio, "National Identities and Virtual Foreign Policies..." 438, 439, 445; Miller, 271.

<sup>43</sup> Putin, "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," 18 March 2014.

<sup>44</sup> Alexander J. Motyl, "Can Ukraine Have a History?" *Problems of Post-Communism* 57, no. 3 (2010): 57, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2753/PPC1075-8216570305>; Kuzio, "Nation building, history writing..." 30.

<sup>45</sup> Motyl, 58; D'Anieri, 8.

create diplomatic distance between itself and Russia and to accentuate its sovereignty in the face of Russia's Eurasianist foreign policy.

These efforts have not had a discernable impact on Russia's approach with its neighbour. Putin has portrayed Ukrainian nationalists as neo-Nazis, following in the footsteps of the Ukrainian rebels in the Second World War who collaborated with Nazi Germany.<sup>46</sup> Under Eurasianist thought, these Ukrainian neo-Nazis have betrayed the Ukrainian people and are attempting to lead them away from their destiny within the Russian civilisation. Putin espouses Eurasianist principles that harken back to the glory of the USSR and the historical legacy of the supra-national Eurasian civilisation that stretches back to the Rus'. For Russia to achieve its civilisational mission as a global pole balanced against the Atlantist West, it requires its former territories, of which Ukraine is the most important.

Russia's war aims as described by Putin in his 21 and 24 February speeches were limited in that they did not call for the complete annexation of Ukraine. They instead focussed on contemporary security demands: ensuring the US and NATO did not establish a foothold in Ukraine; the de-Nazification of the Ukrainian elite; Ukrainian demilitarisation; and protection of the people of the Donbas. These could theoretically be met and still leave an independent and sovereign Ukraine. However, even complete capitulation to these current demands would still leave Ukraine with an existential security threat from Russia. The Russian elite, with Putin at the forefront, have consistently held to the ideas generated from the Russian Orthodox and Eurasianism

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<sup>46</sup> Vladimir Putin (speech), "Victory Parade on Red Square," Russian Federation, Moscow, 9 May 2021, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/statements/65544>; Putin, "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," 24 February 2022; Pakhaliuk, 290; Erika Harris, 607.

schools of thought. The general Russian public has also been broadly sympathetic to these theories.<sup>47</sup>

The concept of a civilisation-state that encompasses the territories of the former Russian Empire and the USSR has been firmly ingrained in Russia, a viewpoint that can only see Ukraine as an integral component of the Russian civilisation. With Russian Orthodoxy, Russia has a messianic mission to hold and protect the East Slavic Orthodox territories. With Eurasianism, the Russian civilisation is charged with defending its unique socio-political worldview and as having a historical mission to form one of the geopolitical poles. Though not entirely compatible, both these theories coexist within the Russian body politic and mean that Russia will continue to be deeply motivated to recoup its former territories. Russian theorists have posited that Russia views events over a much longer time horizon than the West and they remain confident that what once was, is destined to be again.<sup>48</sup> Unless Russia experiences an epochal shift in how it views itself in the world, Ukraine will continually find its sovereignty challenged and its very existence as an independent state imperilled.

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<sup>47</sup> Kuzio, "National Identities and Virtual Foreign Policies..." 433.

<sup>48</sup> Skladanowski, 438, 441.

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