



Russia's Hostile Measures in Europe

Understanding the Threat

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This report examines current Russian hostile measures in Europe and forecasts how Russia might threaten Europe using these measures over the next few years. This report observes that Russia has the most strategic interest in influencing western Europe, but it has the most leverage over countries of eastern Europe, and offers a range of recommendations for the U.S. government and for the U.S. Army on countering hostile measures.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are hostile measures?
- How might Russia threaten Europe using these measures over the next few years?
- What are the range and limits of Russian tools of influence, European countries' abilities to resist or respond, and these states' vulnerabilities to hostile measures?
- How can the U.S. government and the U.S. Army counter hostile measures?



KEY FINDINGS

Hostile measures are measures short of war

- The term *hostile measures* encompasses a wide range of political, economic, diplomatic, intelligence, and military activities that could be perceived as harmful or hostile.

Different regions of Europe pose different problems in terms of Russian threats and approaches

- The Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are often cited as being among the members of the EU and NATO that are most vulnerable to Russian influence. Possible motivations for Russian activities in the region include undermining and addressing the potential threat from the EU and NATO. There are distinctions between Russian foreign policy interests in the Baltics and those in the

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other former Soviet states, however. For example, Russian analysts and some U.S. analysts of Russia note lower Russian interests and objectives for influence in the Baltics. Therefore, although Russia's intentions to use hostile measures in the Baltics remain real, the measures available and willingness to commit significant resources appear to be greater for other former Soviet republics, including Ukraine, Belarus, and the Central Asian states.

- Southeastern Europe is a significant target of Russian influence, especially countries where a majority of the population speaks a Slavic language. Russian interest in Southeastern Europe is likely to arise in part from concern about growing NATO military capabilities, including ballistic missile defense capabilities in Romania; the goal of undermining EU and NATO enlargement in the Western Balkans and Moldova; a view that Russia should have influence over the region; and, perhaps most fundamentally, a desire to maintain Russian economic ties in the region.
- Turning to the rest of Europe, major U.S. allies in Western Europe present the largest strategic prize to Russia outside of the United States. Western Europe is home to Europe's largest economies, most-powerful militaries, and key U.S. military bases. Still, this region seems comparatively less vulnerable to Russian influence, although Russia might attempt to use a variety of hostile measures against it.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- In deploying forces to Europe to counter Russian aggression, the U.S. Army should also prepare to defend against and counter Russian hostile measures. The Joint Force and the Army must also consider how Russia might respond aggressively to any forward-deployed forces.
- The U.S. Army should develop counterintelligence, public affairs, civil affairs, and other key enablers to better counter Russian hostile measures.
- Responding to Russian hostile measures places a new premium on political awareness, as well as on crisis management. U.S. military personnel need to be aware of Russian hostile measures—particularly when deployed in countries with frozen conflicts or where there is a large pro-Russian population—to help avoid accidentally sparking a crisis.
- Whatever the U.S. response, preparation for involvement in a wide range of conflicts can help reduce the risk of mismanagement, miscalculation, and escalation.

