

Dartmouth Model United Nations

# Russian Ministry of Defense

April 7 – 9, 2017





# DARTMOUTH MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE

## *Twelfth Annual Conference • April 7 - 9, 2017*

Dartmouth College • Rockefeller Center • Hanover, NH 03755

E-mail: [dartmun@dartmouth.edu](mailto:dartmun@dartmouth.edu) • [DartmouthMUN.com](http://DartmouthMUN.com)

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**William Tremml**  
*Secretary-General*

January 11, 2017

**Emily Choate**  
*Director-General*

**Bill Kosmidis**  
*Chief of Staff*

**Jessica Campinile**  
*Chargé d'Affaires*

**Clayton Jacques**  
*Undersecretary-General of  
General Assemblies*

**Makisa Bronson**  
*Undersecretary-General of  
Special Committees*

**Scott Okuno**  
*Undersecretary-General of  
Current Crisis Committees*

**Lauren Bishop**  
*Undersecretary-General of  
Historical Crisis Committees*

**Zainab Molani**  
*Director of  
Public Relations*

**Michelle Wang**  
*Director of  
Technology*

**Eva Wang**  
*Director of  
Finances*

Dear Delegates:

On behalf of the entire Dartmouth Model United Nations staff, I would like to welcome and thank you for registering for the twelfth annual Dartmouth Model United Nations conference this April 2017. We have been working relentlessly since the end of last year's conference to provide a better and more worthwhile Model U.N. experience for this winter's delegates. We are optimistic about this winter's conference and Dartmouth Model U.N.'s future.

DartMUN is a unique conference. We pair world-class delegations and dais staff members in smaller, more-interactive environments to facilitate an enriching experience for delegates of all skill levels. We believe DartMUN's active, small committees ensure delegates feel comfortable immersing themselves in a competitive but supportive environment that encourages trial by error and participation.

Furthermore, DartMUN's well-trained staff is excited to work with your delegates this winter in committee to equip the next generation of college students with the skills to tackle complex global problems.

With this said, Model United Nations is only meaningful when delegates are thoroughly prepared. To aid in your research preparation, your committee staff has spent hours researching, writing, and editing this Background Guide. The Background Guide serves as an introduction to your respective committee and an overview of the topics that you will be debating over the course of the conference.

The Background Guide is intended to be a starting point for your research and is not, in itself, an adequate exposure to the complexities of your committee's topics. To be prepared, each delegate should do further research and focus on processing information through the lens of their respective country or position. If you are having trouble digesting all the information, the Background Guide contains relevant discussion questions that break down the topics. Also, as questions or ideas arise, do not be shy in contacting your committee staff via e-mail. Committee staff are knowledgeable and can help you better understand a particular topic or how your country fits into a larger international debate. More often than not, discussing the problem with another person can open up more paradigms and viewpoints that may guide you throughout the brainstorming process.

As in years past, all delegates are expected to write a brief position paper before the conference to synthesize all of their preparatory research and analysis. Please see the position paper guidelines on the conference website for specific information about content, format, etc. Committee staff will collect position papers at the beginning of the first committee session on Friday evening, so be sure to bring a hard copy because delegates who do not submit position papers will not be eligible for awards.



Sincerely,

William Tremml  
*Secretary-General*  
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Dear Delegates:

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Welcome to the ninth installment of DartMUN and this year's Historical Crisis! DartMUN IX is proving to be the largest and the most exciting in DartMUN's history. With that said, I am confident that the Historical Crisis Committees' simulation of World War II will be the most rewarding experience in the entire conference. I assure you that as the crisis unfolds, you will be challenged to critically analyze, and make difficult decisions while immersing yourself in one of the most challenging and brutal geopolitical conflicts in our world's history. As a result, you will be forced to analyze historical events and perhaps even change your understanding of them when viewed through different perspectives. At the same time, you will have a great deal of fun, make new friends, and learn in an environment that cannot be replicated in a traditional classroom.

Over the course of the weekend, I will have the privilege of working alongside you as the Director of the Russian Military Cabinet. To offer a little insight on my background, I am from Winnetka, Illinois and am currently a freshman at Dartmouth intending to major in Engineering modified with Economics and minor in Quantitative Social Sciences. Outside of the conference, I am a skiing instructor at the Dartmouth Skiway, debate on the Dartmouth Parliamentary Debate team, and am involved with the Women in Business club. While this is my first DartMUN conference, I was very involved in Model UN in high school. As co-president of my high school's MUN team, I attended 9 conferences, and am very excited this year to be chairing a crisis committee!

Working alongside me is Hanna Bliska. Hanna is originally from Long Island, New York and is a freshman at Dartmouth majoring in Environmental Studies and Geography. In the past, she was an active member of her high school's MUN team, and traveled to MUN conferences such as NHSMUN and WAMUNC each year. Hanna is excited to serve on her first DartMUN Committee and looks forward to a great conference!

In order to aid in your preparation and make the simulation as meaningful as possible, Hanna and I have put together the following background information on the Russian Ministry of Defense. This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the committee and an overview of the topics that you will be debating over the course of the conference. The Background Guide is intended to be a starting point for your research and is not, in itself, an adequate exposure to the complexities of our topic. To be prepared, each delegate should do further research and focus on processing information through the lens of and developing expertise concerning your specific position. If you are having trouble digesting all the information, the Background Guide contains relevant discussion questions that break down the topics. Also, as questions or ideas arise, do not hesitate in reaching out to Hanna ([Hanna.M.Bliska.20@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Hanna.M.Bliska.20@dartmouth.edu)) or myself ([Bethany.F.David.20@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Bethany.F.David.20@dartmouth.edu)). More often than not, discussing the problem with another person can be more helpful than random Google searches.

Once again, welcome to DartMUN IX. I am excited for the chance to relive this historical moment in our world's history, engage with you, and most importantly, learn from you over the course of the weekend. I look forward to meeting you in the spring and hope that you are as excited as I am about DartMUN IX!

Sincerely,

Bethany David and Hanna Bliska



*DartMUN is a student run, non-profit,  
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the Dickey Center for International  
Understanding.*



## Russian Ministry of Defense

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### History of the Topic:

#### *How it Started:*

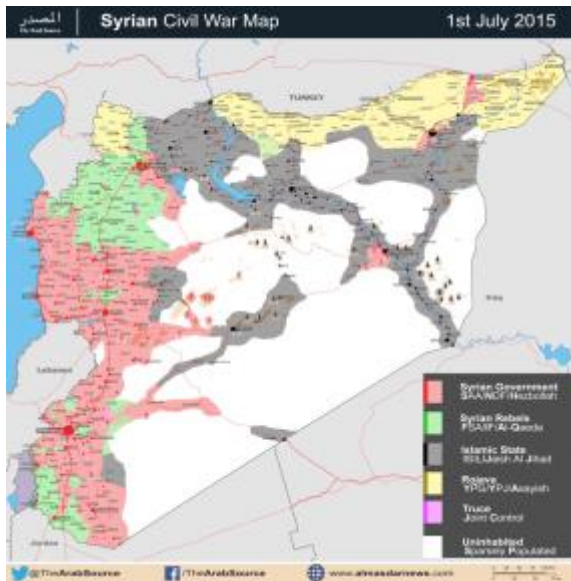
The Syrian Civil War is a conflict that has been ongoing since 2011. The Syria Arab Republic has been ruled by the Assad family since 1971, and Bashar al-Assad is the current President.

The conflict began on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011 when 15 school children were arrested, tortured, and some even killed for painting anti-government graffiti on a wall in the city of Deraa. Initial peaceful protests sprung up aiming for release of the children and greater freedom for Syrian citizens. With Amnesty International claiming the Syria government is guilty of crimes against

reason to protest.<sup>1</sup> Prohibiting homosexual relations, denying religions other than Islam, arresting journalists and blocking leaving the country without an exit visa, the Assad regime's treatment of the school children was a catalyst to long built up tension. The Assad regime is Alawite, a relatively loose branch of Islam, therefore protests are not religiously founded like many occurring in Middle Eastern countries during the Arab Spring. Yet in April 2011, the Syrian Army fired on the peaceful demonstrators, killing mourners at one of the children's funerals. This resulted in a widespread rebellion, starting a conflict that would result in over 250,000-400,000 deaths.<sup>2</sup> By July 2012, the International Red Cross deemed the level of violence in Syria to be a state of civil war.<sup>3</sup>

#### *The Free Syrian Army:*

The Free Syrian Army (FSA) formed by July 2011, and united as many as 1000 groups that opposed the Assad regime to fight to make President Assad resign from power.<sup>4</sup> These 100,000 fighters were initially made up of militias that combined local area tribal groups, political parties that disagree with Assad, those living in exile,



humanity based on “witness accounts of deaths in custody, torture, and arbitrary detention”, citizens have

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<sup>1</sup>Young, Peter. "Russia Committing War Crimes by Deliberately Bombing Civilians and Aid Workers, Says Amnesty International." *The Independent*. Independent Digital News and Media, 21 Feb. 2016. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.

<sup>2</sup> 1. Barnard, Anne. "Death Toll From War in Syria Now 470,000, Group Finds." *New York Times*. New York Times, 11 Feb. 2016. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.

<sup>3</sup> "What's Happening in Syria? - CBBC Newsround." BBC News. BBC, 14 Dec. 2016. Web. 18 Jan. 2017.

<sup>4</sup> "What's Happening in Syria? - CBBC Newsround." BBC News. BBC, 14 Dec. 2016. Web. 18 Jan. 2017.



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military deserters, and frustrated citizens. On the side of President Assad are middle class Syrians, urbanized Sunni Muslims, and Alawites, siding with the regime for protection from the lower-class rebels. Soon after starting to fight, Jihadist terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIL intervened, joining the side of the FSA. Lacking fighters and weapons, the FSA had no choice but to fight relatively on the same side. While both categories of fighters oppose the Assad regime, the FSA and terrorist groups are not fighting with the same motives. Differing from the FSA, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has been using the chaos stemming from the Syrian Civil War to gain large amounts of eastern Syrian land for its own Islamist agenda, creating a separate conflict that threatens the Western world.

## *Response from the West:*

When the civil war started, the United States began supplying “moderate rebels” of the FSA with non-lethal aid such as food and trucks, yet progressed to provide intelligence, money, and training to rebel commanders. This backing of “moderate” FSA troops escalated in 2013 with a \$1 billion expenditure on a CIA program to train rebels, which combined with the United Kingdom in March 2015 when they announced they would also be providing training for FSA moderate forces to attack and defend civilians from ISIL.<sup>5</sup> Alarmed by the major gains of land and power by ISIL in Syria, the United States and other Western countries such as the United Kingdom and France formed a coalition against ISIL.

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<sup>5</sup> "UN Report Says Chemical Weapons Were Used in Syria - CBBC Newsround." *BBC News*. BBC, 16 Sept. 2013. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.

In September 2014, the United States began airstrikes of ISIL targets within Syria along with Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.<sup>2</sup> The United Kingdom soon joined these airstrikes in December 2015, and sent jets to bomb ISIL targets within hours of voting to do so in Parliament.<sup>6</sup>

## *Chemical Weapons:*

United Nations inspectors have found “clear and convincing evidence” that chemical weapons were used in Syria in September 2013, a clear violation of the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention that bans the usage of such weapons against humans.<sup>7</sup> Not specifically targeting one side, the report details that chemical weapons have been used “against civilians, including children, on a relatively large scale” by an unknown side, with evidence of the nerve gas sarin being used in a civilian attack that killed hundreds.<sup>4</sup> This led to an agreement between the United States and Russia that was pitched to the United Nations indicating that Syria will destroy its chemical weapons by mid-2014. President Assad noted that “Syria is placing its chemical weapons under international control because of Russia” and that “the US threats did not influence the decision”.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "What's Happening in Syria? - CBBC Newsround." BBC News. BBC, 14 Dec. 2016. Web. 18 Jan. 2017.

<sup>7</sup> "UN Report Says Chemical Weapons Were Used in Syria - CBBC Newsround." *BBC News*. BBC, 16 Sept. 2013. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.

<sup>8</sup> "Syria Will Hand over Chemical Weapons - CBBC Newsround." BBC News. BBC, 12 Sept. 2013. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.



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## *Refugees:*

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 4.8 million individuals have fled to Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq, 6.6 million are internally displaced within Syria, and about one million have requested asylum to Europe.<sup>9</sup> Millions of people inside and outside Syria need aid, yet due to airstrikes, many organizations have deemed the delivery of humanitarian aid too dangerous. Some European countries like Germany are welcoming in refugees, while other nations such as the Gulf States are not allowing in any. The Russian Federation is not welcoming Syrian refugees on a mass scale, granting a total of two refugees asylum in all of 2015.<sup>7</sup> As of April 2016, only 7000 total Syrian citizens live in Russia.<sup>10</sup>

## **Russian Intervention in Syria:**

The Russian Federation backs the Assad regime in the Syrian Civil War. In 2015, Vladimir Putin stated the Russian goal in Syria is “stabilizing the legitimate power in Syria and creating the conditions for political compromise.”<sup>9</sup> This prioritized helping the Syrian government retake territory from anti-government groups backed by the US and terrorists. While the United States and allies have been supporting ‘moderate forces’, meaning FSA rebels who are not part terrorists, the Russian military does not distinguish between ‘moderate forces’ of the FSA and terrorist groups. “In

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<sup>9</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). "UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response." *UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response*. UNHCR, 2 Dec. 2016. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Chulkovskaya, Yekaterina. "Why Syrian Refugees Don't Go to Russia." *Al-Monitor*. Al-Monitor, 25 Dec. 2016. Web. 16 Jan. 2017

the West, they talk about ‘moderate opposition,’ but we so far haven’t seen any in Syria,” noted General Andrey Kartapolov, commander of the Russian operation in Syria.<sup>11</sup> This lack of discrimination “allows Russia to target all groups it needs to fight in order to achieve the main goal—strengthen Syrian army positions and help them restore control over major cities” Fyodor Lukyanov, head of the Moscow-based Council on Foreign and Defense Policy that advises the Russian government found.<sup>12</sup>

Initially, the Russian Federation merely supplied the Syrian Army with weapons to counter terrorist threats in the region. In July 2015, President Assad formally requested Russian assistance with air strikes, and in August, a treaty was signed between nations outlining Russian terms of use of Syrian airports and diplomatic relations. Russian airstrikes started in September 2015 with a coalition of Russia, Syria, Iran, and Iraq. By February 2016, Russian airstrikes were averaging 60 per day, while air strikes led by the US-coalition averaged merely seven per day.<sup>13</sup> However, only ten percent of Russian airstrikes in Syria have been on ISIL targets, with a majority of their airstrikes against all military groups opposing the Syrian

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<sup>11</sup> Arkhipov, Ilya, Stepan Kravchenko, and Henry Meyer. "Putin Officials Said to Admit Real Syria Goal Is Far Broader." *Bloomberg.com*. Bloomberg, 19 Oct. 2015. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.

<sup>12</sup> Arkhipov, Ilya, Stepan Kravchenko, and Henry Meyer. "Putin Officials Said to Admit Real Syria Goal Is Far Broader." *Bloomberg.com*. Bloomberg, 19 Oct. 2015. Web. 2 Dec. 2016

<sup>13</sup> . Axe, David. "Russia Is Launching Twice as Many Airstrikes as the U.S. in Syria." *The Daily Beast*. The Daily Beast Company, 23 Feb. 2016. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.



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government.<sup>14</sup> This lack of separation between Jihadists and the FSA causes concern from Western nations. “Our fear has always been that Russia is only there to prop up Assad and that that will only attract more jihadists, more chaos, [and] more refugees” notes US Secretary of State John Kerry in regards to Russian intervention.<sup>15</sup>

Even before the beginning of airstrikes in September 2015 there is evidence of Russian ground troops aiding the Syrian Army through the use of private contractors. Although given unofficial status, Russian contracted ground troops coordinated with Russian military operations and were given benefits at home that mirrored those given to official Russian ground troops.

### *War Crimes:*

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights has found that from September 2015, when Russian airstrikes began, and September 2016, Russian air strikes have killed at least 3600 civilians, killing more civilians than ISIL fighters or FSA rebels.<sup>16</sup> Amnesty International has documented deliberate Russian bombings of

civilians and aid workers.<sup>17</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has concluded that either the Syrian regime or Russian warplanes deliberately attacked a hospital in Maarat al-Numan, described by the United Nations as “blatant violations of international law”.<sup>18</sup> Human Rights Watch found Russian or Syrian forces responsible for “indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas”, actions that are banned under the UN resolution 2139 passed February 2014.<sup>19</sup> While the Russian Federation denies these war crimes, these numerous accusations have sparked international outrage. Moscow has denied all reports of civilian casualties.

### *Aleppo:*

The Syrian city of Aleppo has been a major battleground over the course of the Syrian Conflict. While initially peaceful in 2011, in 2012 rebel forces invaded Aleppo, dividing the city into eastern and western halves: the east controlled by the FSA and the west held by the Assad regime. In mid-2016, Russian air strikes trapped rebel forces inside the city, blocking off all routes for escaping civilians and humanitarian aid to enter or leave the city. It is estimated that 275,000 people are trapped within the city, and 2 million people

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<sup>14</sup> “'More than 90%' of Russian Airstrikes in Syria Have Not Targeted Isis, US Says.” *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 07 Oct. 2015. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.

<sup>15</sup> . Arkhipov, Ilya, Stepan Kravchenko, and Henry Meyer. “Putin Officials Said to Admit Real Syria Goal Is Far Broader.” *Bloomberg.com*. Bloomberg, 19 Oct. 2015. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Smith-Spark, Laura. “Activists Count Civilian Toll of Russian Airstrikes in Syria.” *CNN*. Cable News Network, 30 Sept. 2016. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.

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<sup>17</sup> Young, Peter. “Russia Committing War Crimes by Deliberately Bombing Civilians and Aid Workers, Says Amnesty International.” *The Independent*. Independent Digital News and Media, 21 Feb. 2016. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.

<sup>18</sup> McHugh, Jess. “Who Bombed Doctors Without Borders Hospital In Syria? MSF Slams 'Deliberate' Airstrike.” *International Business Times*. IBT Media, 15 Feb. 2016. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.

<sup>19</sup> “Russia/Syria: Extensive Recent Use of Cluster Munitions.” *Human Rights Watch*. Human Rights Watch, 20 Dec. 2015. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.



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do not have water in or around Aleppo.<sup>20</sup> The United Nations High Commission on Refugees finds that humanitarian access to those trapped inside has been cut off since early July 2016, therefore, high death tolls are to be expected.<sup>21</sup> A brief ceasefire was established by the US coalition and the Russian/Syrian coalition in September 2016 to give civilians an opportunity to flee, however due to the large amount of small opposition groups, it was too difficult to maintain. After a few days, Russian forces were accused of hitting a United Nations convey of aid lorries sent into Aleppo with an air strike, resulting in the stoppage of all United Nations aid sent to Syria. The Syrian army has been accused of dropping chlorine from government helicopters into Aleppo suburbs, yet the Russian Federation and Syria both deny these accusations.

With the help of Russian airstrikes starting in September 2015, Assad's regime was able to gain momentum he desperately needed by surrounding the city. US Lt. Gen. Vincent R. Stewert, Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, declared to the US Senate: "The Russian reinforcement has changed the calculus completely", and that Assad is "in a much stronger negotiating position than he was just 6 months ago" echoing the notion that Russian military intervention changed the tide of the civil war.<sup>18</sup> Professor Fawaz A. Gerges of the London School of Economics furthers, "Putin's decision to intervene in Syria...stopped the

bleeding of the Syrian army and allowed it to shift from defense to offence".<sup>22</sup>

## **Solutions:**

With forces in Crimea as well, the Russian Federation must consider the risks of intervention in the Syrian Conflict. Neighboring nations such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Qatar support groups fighting Assad's forces including radical Islamists, and these nations will sharply increase their military supplies in response to Russian intervention in Syria according to Russian officials. Actions in committee should consider the detriments to the militarization of these nations, and how such an occurrence might affect Russian presence in the Crimea region. Professor Joseph Nye of Harvard speculates that "Russia may try to link cooperation in the Syrian crisis to relief from sanctions that Europe imposed after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014".<sup>23</sup> In deciding how to proceed, solutions should act with the stated goals of the Russian Federation in mind, while recognizing international laws and how these goals may conflict with the international laws. In planning how to act, consider how decisions might be viewed from an international standpoint, and how the United Nations might respond to such an action. Is your proposed plan considered a war crime? Is an

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<sup>22</sup> Gerges, Fawaz A. "Syria War: Tide Turns Assad's Way amid Ceasefire Push." *BBC News*. BBC, 13 Feb. 2016. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.

<sup>23</sup> . Jr, Joseph S. Nye. "The Russian Connection Between Syria and Ukraine." *The National Interest*. Center for National Interest, 17 Feb. 2016. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.

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<sup>20</sup> Al-Khateeb, Firas. "Fears Grow for Aleppo Residents amid Latest Violence." *UNHCR*. UNHCR, 9 Aug. 2016. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Khateeb, Firas. "Fears Grow for Aleppo Residents amid Latest Violence." *UNHCR*. UNHCR, 9 Aug. 2016. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.





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alleged war crime really a deterrent to the Russian Ministry of Defense?

Accusations have been made against the Russian Foreign Ministry such as by Maria Tsvetkova of Reuters that Russian law enforcement agencies have been helping Russian radicals and militants leave Russia to join terrorist groups such as ISIL in Syria.<sup>24</sup> This implies that Russian intervention in Syria is not to defeat terrorist groups, as intervention would be contributing to their growth by purging Russia of radicals. As a committee, it is imperative that solutions discuss what the primary goals of Russian intervention in Syria are, and how this intervention affects the Russian Federation back home.

In the status quo, there are hundreds of thousands of civilians trapped inside of Aleppo without access to humanitarian aid. Is it the job of the Russian Ministry of Defense to help these individuals? When given the opportunity to flee the city in September 2016 during a brief ceasefire, many chose to not leave due to the fear of airstrikes on the route out and the lack of unity of the rebel forces. How should the Russian Federation proceed on the topic of humanitarian aid? Do these civilians matter? For those civilians who have escaped the city and are now refugees, does Russia have an obligation to help them? How might the presence of refugees in European countries affect Russian relations?

Since September of 2015 Russia has been using airstrikes to attack terrorists, whether ISIL or FSA forces. Should this indiscriminate bombing continue? Is

there a more effective strategy in quelling the expansion of ISIL? Is there a strategic advantage to bombing civilians and hospitals, therefore committing war crimes?

Keeping in mind that all members of committee will be members of the Russian Ministry of Defense, the military cabinet of the Russian Federation, certain strategies may be implemented that violate United Nations treaties if necessary. As a reminder, it is imperative to act for the greater good of the Russian Federation and not the western world in seeking solutions.

## Delegate Positions

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**Sergey Shoygu:** Sergey Shoygu was born in 1955 near Siberia's Altai Mountains. He graduated from Krasnoyarsk Technical Institute and became a construction engineer. Following the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, Shoygu became chief of the Rescue Corps and then Minister of Civil Defense and Disaster Management. He became popular as someone involved in actual rescues as opposed to someone who delivers soundbites. With this popularity, he built a power base of former military and intelligence officers seeking to take advantage of his favorability with the ordinary Russian citizen. Shoygu developed a close bond with President Putin later in his career as well.

Sergey Shoygu is President Putin's Defense Minister and considered by some to be the real force behind Russian military aggression. His style is decisive, and he is one of the hardliners of Putin's inner circle. He is not boisterous or flowery with his word-choice – nor does he remain undecided for long. Shoygu loves to

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<sup>24</sup> . Tsvetkova, Maria. "How Russia Allowed Homegrown Radicals to Go and Fight in Syria." Reuters. Thomson Reuters, 13 May 2016. Web. 2 Dec. 2016.



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demonstrate the strength of the Russian military, and does so with unwavering conviction. He is a traditionalist, and is notoriously nostalgic for the Soviet era when the nation was a 'great power' and financially secure. He also believes that more emphasis should be placed on military training in Russian schools.

He has told Putin in their meetings that the President has 'no choice' but to support President Assad. Shoygu has instigated a huge expansion of Russia's armed forces budget and strongly prefers Russian military action over diplomacy. From when he took office in 2012 to only three years later in 2015, Russia's military spending increased significantly. When Turkey shot down a Russian warplane in late 2015, Shoygu orchestrated the response of deploying S-400 missiles to the Russian air base in Latakia on the Syrian coast. And when Russia tried to claim that the decision to bomb Syria was made at the last minute and executed within hours of the Russian parliament approving the use of force, the reality was that Shoygu had been planning the military operation for several months.

**Dmitry Yazov:** Dmitry Yazov was born in Siberia in 1924, and grew up as a peasant. Yazov joined the Red Army in 1941 at the age of 17, failing to complete high school. He fought on the Volkhov and Leningrad fronts and was wounded in action twice with wounds to the leg and head. After playing notable roles in military operations in the Far East and Cuba, Yazov was appointed Defense Minister in 1987.

Dmitry Yazov was the last Marshal of the Soviet Union, the highest military rank in the country, to be appointed before its collapse in 1991. With this

title, he is an automatic adviser to the Defense Minister, Sergey Shoygu. Yazov is outspoken in support for an aggressive military and unwavering patriotism among the Russian population. As much of Yazov's career was spent serving the USSR, he still is very much attached to Soviet values, lacking outward emotions and maintaining forceful opinions based on his logic. He is Conservative in respect to most other members of the military cabinet and was vocal in his dissent towards increased freedom of the press towards the end of the Soviet Union. Yazov believes in a small, self-contained leadership that prefers military action over any other alternative.

Yazov's opinions on Syria generally fall in line with those of Minister Shoygu, although he is more likely to try to sway others to agree with his opinions. Yazov has expressed unfaltering support for Assad and believes that Russian warplanes should be an active presence in the Syrian conflict. Yazov and Shoygu are not only close allies with very similar opinions, but they arguably represent the greatest prestige in the cabinet and feel that their opinions on Syria should define the actions taken.

**Anastasiya Serdyukov:** Anastasiya Serdkuyov was Minister of Defense from 2007-2012 and is a current member of the Russian Military Cabinet largely due to her organizational and budgetary expertise. Serdyukov does not concern herself much with the daily administration of troops and strategic planning, as she likes to leave that to other members of the Cabinet. Instead, she deals with the feasibility of an operation based on capabilities and finances. Serdyukov will be the first to throw out a plan due to its logistical



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feasibility and will seek detailed explanations regarding how a plan will work at every proposed stage. She is very much of the ‘nuts and bolts’ mindset – if one member of the Cabinet is making sweeping claims or employing colorful rhetoric, she will seek to find the substance behind the words.

Anastasiya Serdyukov was born in 1962 in a small town on Russia’s western border. She graduated from Leningrad Institute of Soviet Trade in 1984 with a degree in economics, and from 1984-1985 she served in the Soviet Army. Following the election of Vladimir Putin as president in 2000, Serdyukov served as deputy chief of the Saint Petersburg Directorate of the Tax Ministry of Russia and later served as the head of this ministry from 2004 to 2007. In 2007, she was appointed by Putin as Defense Minister, with the primary task of fighting corruption and inefficiency in the Russian armed forces.

Because Serdyukov lacks the military experience, she has less faith in raw military strength than other members of the Cabinet. Regarding Syria, she is largely concerned with what the end-goal of military intervention will look like. If Russia was to ramp up military operations in support of Assad, what would the numbers look like? How much infantry and aircraft would be necessary to do the job well? Will the financial costs of such an operation be worth it? These doubts lead Serdyukov to be one of the more skeptical members of the Military Cabinet.

**Valery Gerasimov:** Valery Gerasimov is the Chief of Staff of the Russian Federation’s military, and is renowned for developing the ‘Gerasimov Doctrine’ over the past few years. The Doctrine states that the

rules of war have changed, that there is a “blurring of the lines between war and peace,” and that “nonmilitary means of achieving military and strategic goals has grown and, in many cases, exceeded the power of weapons in their effectiveness.” As such, Gerasimov’s preferred approach to issues combines the use of Special Forces with information warfare. This mixed approach utilizes public opinion, propaganda, and strategic offerings of intelligence and military technology. Gerasimov also strongly advocates for a larger role of technology in military operations, and is rumored to have been involved in many of the recent cyber-attacks that the international community has attributed to Russia.

Valery Gerasimov was born in Kazan in 1955, where he remained until he graduated from the Kazan Suvorov Military School in 1973. After an extensive career of commanding the Leningrad, Moscow, and Central Military Districts, Gerasimov was appointed Chief of General Staff in November 2012.

Gerasimov’s opinions on how to deal with Syria are largely shaped by his doctrine. He believes in military intervention but is only willing to deliver full support if such intervention is accompanied by non-military strategies. Ideally, his approach would entail a massive propaganda campaign ensuring domestic as well as international support for Russian intervention in Syria. There would also be fewer boots on the ground and more resources directed to cyber-warfare. This approach is more sophisticated than that envisioned by most other members of the Military Cabinet, and Gerasimov has no hesitation in attempting to convince others of the superiority of his approach.



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**Nadya Pankov:** Nadya Pankov is a Deputy Minister of Defense and one of the less aggressive members of the Russian Military Cabinet. After making a name for herself in the realm of military education reform, she rose to become one of the most steady and level-headed individuals in the Cabinet. Pankov's signature ideology details the importance of cultural understanding in military affairs. She seeks to establish a humanity in the Russian soldier that amounts to more than an extension of a gun. Pankov believes that if military force becomes necessary, much of the battle is on the cultural front, as respecting the culture of the country in conflict ultimately mitigates potential for escalation and extremists among the invaded population. If military action lacks such sensitivity, she is confident that the operation will either fail or be doomed to instability.

Nadya Pankov was born in 1954 in a Northwestern Russian village. In 1980 she graduated from the Higher School of the State Security Committee, leading to several years of serving in the KGB. After she completed a full-time postgraduate study and master's thesis, Pankov was engaged in teaching and research, making her one of the more academically inclined members of the Cabinet. She was appointed Deputy Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation in 2005.

Pankov has been adamant that any military intervention in Syria must be accompanied by efforts to engage with Syrian culture and to win the trust of the Syrian people. If Russia's only role is that of the deliverer of bombs, she argues, then their forces will be met with only greater resistance. She believes that Russia must engage with the Syrian population and win

their trust, and in doing so, will harness greater support for their efforts and the Assad regime. Pankov's weapon of choice is understanding – one of the few on the Military Cabinet who hold this belief.

**Dmitry Bulgakov:** Dmitry Bulgakov is a Deputy Minister of Defense and General of the Russian Army. Bulgakov is, in some senses, the most 'robotic' of those in the Military Cabinet. He is obsessed with the fine details of logistics and totally separates his emotions from any military considerations. He is concerned with the practical aspects of military operations and is dedicated to ensuring that military action runs smoothly and on-time. His colleagues critique that he lacks creativity, but Bulgakov shrugs off such criticisms. Creativity and innovation in military proposals could not mean less to him. He is solely concerned with getting the job presented to him done efficiently and effectively.

Dmitry Bulgakov was born in 1954 in the Kursk Region of Russia. He graduated from the Vol'sk Higher Military School of Logistics in 1976, and the Military Academy of Logistics and Transport in 1984. Having served as the Deputy Commander of Separate Signal Communications Regiment on Logistics, Deputy Brigade's Commander on Logistics, Deputy Division's Commander on Logistics, and Deputy Chief of Logistics of the Trans-Baikal Military District, Bulgakov's career has been built on logistics.

Bulgakov is not inclined one way or the other on the issue of Syria. If inspiration strikes, perhaps he will come up with a new idea that can change the conversation. But historically, he has not been the one to first present the eventual course of action. Rather, he



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has been a layer of verification. When proposals are eventually tossed around on how to deal with Syria, Bulgakov will be there to question or attest to the validity of proposals and how smoothly they are likely to go.

**Anatoly Antanov:** Anatoly Antanov is a Minister of Defense and a staunch advocate of maintaining a peaceful Syria. Antanov seeks to ensure that the peace process gains sufficient pace so that the Syrian people can return to normal life and that once peace is attained, no one will be able to undermine it. He is also one of the more internationally-inclined members of the Russian Military Cabinet, as he is quick to point out the potential consequences from reckless behavior on the international stage. Following the previous military actions of Russia in Syria, Antanov can certainly recognize the effectiveness of military action. However, he believes that the role of the military should be limited when possible and that the best course of action moving forward does not lie in military strength but in the fragile politics of peace deals and political compromise. Antanov is also an outspoken critic of Turkey, who he believes directly benefits from the ongoing war in Syria.

Anatoly Antanov was born in 1955 in Omsk. He graduated from Moscow State Institute of International Relations in 1983. Antanov worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 30 years, and in 2004, he became the Director of the Department for Security and Disarmament within the same ministry. In 2011 he was promoted to Deputy Minister of Defense, becoming one of the most diplomatically-inclined members of the Ministry of Defense and the Russian

Military Cabinet. Antanov's background in international relations brings a trusted perspective on international affairs when considering Russian involvement in Syria.

**Andrey Kartapolov:** Andrey Kartapolov is the Chief of the Main Operations Directorate of the General Staff, and is directing Russian military operations in Syria. Kartapolov is extremely committed to going down in history as the successful commander of the Syrian campaign. Vain and stubborn, he puts his faith in military strength because he sees no other means of resolving the situation in Syria other than completely decimating the opposition. He does not take dissent kindly and can have a notorious temper in Cabinet discussions. He will not hold his opinions back and is often excessively boisterous. Kartapolov is also known to appeal to emotions with rhetoric and can often get carried away with the passion of the moment. It is all too obvious from when he speaks that everyone knows that his career depends on Russia's success in Syria, and if he opposes a proposal, it is very likely that it will not get passed.

Kartapolov was born in 1963 in Weimar, Germany. He was educated at Frunze Military Academy and the Military Academy of the General Staff. His discipline and commanding presence allowed him to rise up the ranks as he led a platoon, company, battalion, regiment, divisions, and eventually, an army. In 2014, he was appointed Chief of the Main Operations Directorate of the General Staff – a position figuratively called 'the brain of the army'. Kartapolov is arguably one of the most active members of the Russian military as far as duties go – timely preparation, re-deployment of armies, training, firing,



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maritime campaigns, and aircraft flights all fall under Kartapolov's domain.

**Fedosya Lukyanov:** Fedosya Lukyanov is the head of the Moscow-based Council on Foreign and Defense Policy that reports to the Russian government.

Lukyanov was pulled into the Russian Military Cabinet due to her extensive career outside of the government. She has spent decades as a pro-state journalist, adhering to the old adage 'the pen is stronger than the sword'. Lukyanov has never served in the Russian military, and while she values the strength of Russia's military, she largely advocates for propaganda efforts through the Ministry of Defense. Lukyanov is unquestionably a proponent of war, but a war fought with speeches and manipulation as opposed to guns and artillery. Although she is relatively young compared to other members of the Cabinet, she possesses an exceptional nostalgia for the glory of the Soviet Union, and believes that a strong, manipulative state is the answer to revive Russia as a leading world-power.

Lukyanov was born in Moscow in 1969 and studied philosophy at the University of Saint Petersburg. She wrote for the University newspaper up until her senior year, during which she was threatened with expulsion for her articles denouncing the University for fueling 'opposition to the Bolshevik dream'. Two years after graduating, Lukyanov was recruited onto the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy for her rhetorical skills. She rose to prominence with her talents of swaying public opinion through her articles and was appointed head of the Council in 2008.

Lukyanov has written that the main goal of intervention is to give the Assad regime control at all

costs. She believes in silencing dissent and eliminating all opposition in Syria. An authoritarian state such as this would make, in Lukyanov's view, Syria a crucial asset to Russian foreign policy. She maintains that a strong relationship with the Assad regime would encourage similar measures in Russia, which she regards as beneficial for the country.

**Tatiana Shevtsova:** Tatiana Shevtsova is a Deputy Minister of Defense and Order of Honor recipient. Syria presents a unique case for Shevtsova, given her investment in Syrian oil stock. Shevtsova rose to prominence on the political stage using the foundation of her immense wealth, which was acquired through a series of savvy business deals immediately following her college graduation. Most of her assets are linked to Syrian oil – a sector which has taken significant financial blows following the outbreak of civil war and the unsettling presence of the Islamic State. Such misfortune has led to her becoming incredibly invested in a course of action that would minimize destruction in Syria. In her view, the more Syrian economic infrastructure that is preserved, the better. She is still unsure what would be less damaging – completing a fragile peace deal that may only slightly improve investment, or swift, direct, and powerful military action that would guarantee greater investor confidence, yet at the potentially high cost of battle. Discussions with the rest of the Military Cabinet are bound to push her over to one side or another.

Shevtsova was born in 1969 in Kozelsk. She graduated from Leningrad Institute of Finance and Economics with distinction in 1991 and immediately entered the business world. Following her profitable



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investments in Syrian oil, Shevtsova entered the Federal Tax Service of the Russian Federation with the covert goal of influencing tax policy to her benefit. The Ministry of Defense recognized her financial prowess as an asset to be exploited, and in 2010 she was appointed as a Deputy Minister of Defense. In 2013, Forbes listed her as one of the richest politicians in the entire Russian government.

**Yuliya Borisov:** Yuliya Borisov is a Deputy Minister of Defense and National Chess Champion of Russia. Borisov has never served in the Russian military and lacks any formal military education. However, she is regarded as the most naturally brilliant member of the Military Cabinet, and despite her lack of formal military education, she is incredibly skilled in the field of strategic military operation. Having received rigorous coaching in chess from the age of three, Borisov has the most sophisticated mind for backwards deduction in all of Russia. Her ability to contemplate the consequences of an action several steps ahead is unparalleled and is an unquestionable asset to the Cabinet. Yuliya holds no firm opinions on Syria, and her main role in discussions is to describe the consequences of actions several steps later. How will Russian military intervention in Syria affect the conflict in Ukraine? What will such actions mean for Russian military spending over the next decade? It is through these far-reaching implications that she displays her true worth.

Borisov was born in 1956 in Vyshny Volochyok. She studied mathematics at Moscow State University, where she also earned her master's degree in mathematics in 1985. She worked as the deputy of the Federal Agency on Industry until she was promoted to

Minister of Industry and Trade in July 2008. After she displayed exceptional ability to predict the consequences of market actions in this role, President Putin believed that Borisov would better serve Russia in the Ministry of Defense. She was promoted to Deputy Minister of Defense in 2012 and is the chief strategist for Russian security policy for the Middle East region. She continues to play at least two chess games each day to 'keep her mind fresh'.

**Alexandra Sadovenko:** Alexandra Sadovenko is a Deputy Minister of Defense and recipient of the Medal of Suvorov, a military medal awarded to ground troops for courage in combat. Sadovenko won the medal for her service in the Second Chechen War, during which her regiment was ambushed by extremists. Despite being outnumbered four to one, Sadovenko expertly commanded her soldiers to a victory by supplementing leadership with superb marksmanship. Her exceptional military achievement rang out through Russia, thus turning her from soldier to celebrity overnight. President Putin, eager to use her as an icon for the military, quickly promoted her to Deputy Minister – a post she still holds in the Military Cabinet today.

Sadovenko is generally viewed as the hot-head in regards to Syria. Her experiences on the ground have convinced her that a superior Russian Military can solve any problem by shooting its way to the answer. If it were up to her, Syria would be carpet-bombed tomorrow. She has no reservations in murdering thousands of innocent Syrians if it means Russian success. There have been numerous attempts, even by some hardliners in the Cabinet, to have her seat replaced. However, Putin has not budged on the matter,



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as he views her as a necessary component of strong morale in Syria. She pushes the whole Cabinet closer to full-scale military action and makes sure everyone in the room knows of her military accomplishments when she speaks on issues. Sadovenko's solution of choice when confronted with dissent is to intimidate her opposition – a tactic that holds true in Cabinet discussions on Syria.