



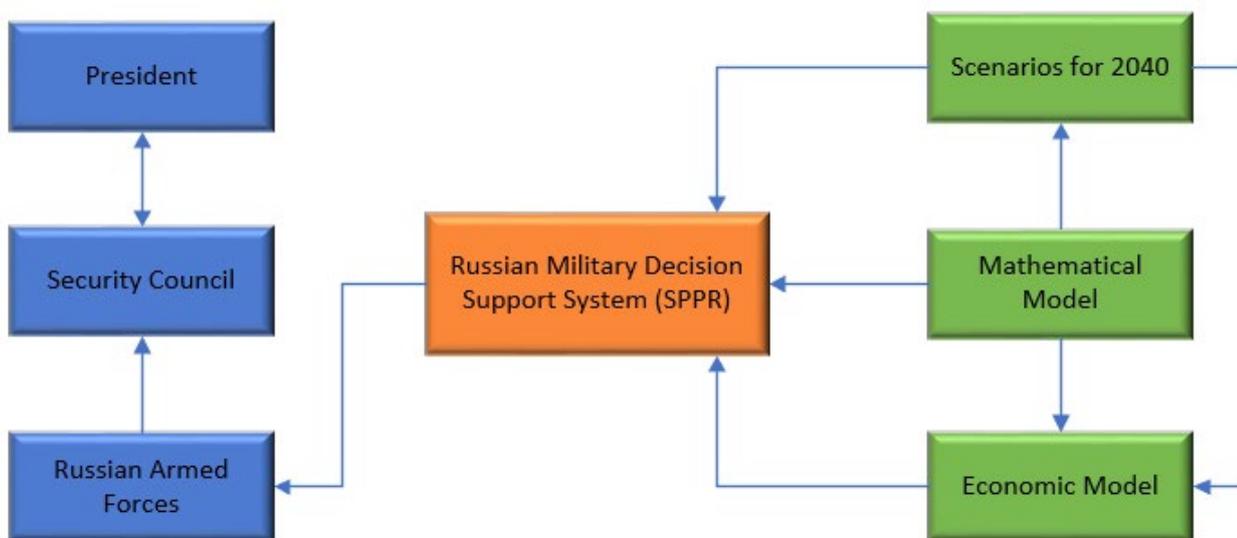
## Russia's Vision for the Future: A Strategic Framework in Three Key Elements

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**This review delves into Russia's strategic and military-strategic planning, focusing on its unique foresight framework. While previous studies have addressed isolated aspects, such as Russian scenarios and threat anticipation<sup>1</sup>, the broader concept remains underexplored. This article introduces a comprehensive model that underpins Russia's capacity to navigate rapidly evolving international and military-political dynamics. Designed to advance its military organisation and achieve strategic objectives, this framework aligns with Russia's national interests and long-term ambitions.**

Russia conducts its strategic and military-strategic planning through a comprehensive concept developed by the 46th Central Scientific Research Institute under the Ministry of Defence<sup>2</sup>. This

framework integrates future studies with military-strategic planning, creating a unified approach that supports Russia's long-term strategic objectives. At its core, the concept<sup>3</sup> integrates foresight: scenario-based analysis, mathematical modelling, and economic forecasting (shown in green in the figure 1). The results of these elements are synthesized within decision-support system, creating a comprehensive approach to understand and plan for the future. These methodologies enable the evaluation of Russia's security environment, the anticipation of threat scenarios, and the development of countermeasures for both peacetime and wartime operations. By merging analytical precision with strategic foresight, this concept forms the backbone of Russia's defence planning and geopolitical positioning.



**Figure 1.** Overview of Russia's Strategic and Military-Strategic Planning Concept.

When comparing Russia's strategic and military-strategic planning concept to six of its most critical high-level strategic documents<sup>4</sup>, it becomes evident that the framework operationalises the goals outlined in key policies, such as the Military Doctrine<sup>5</sup> and the National Security Strategy<sup>6</sup>. This integration bridges the gap

between abstract strategic objectives and actionable measures, ensuring that Russia's military and security priorities are effectively translated into practical planning and execution. By doing so, the concept solidifies its role as a cornerstone of Russia's defence and security architecture.

<sup>1</sup> See e. g. REACH Clint (2022), Russian Military Forecasting Translation Volume: 1999–2018, RAND, available at [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA198-5.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA198-5.html).

<sup>2</sup> Rus. 46 ЦНИИ МО РФ.

<sup>3</sup> БУРЕНКО В. М. et al. (2018), Концепция обоснования перспективного облика силовых компонентов военной организации Российской Федерации, «Издательство Граница», Москва, available at <http://eurasian-defence.ru/node/49113>.

<sup>4</sup> Law on Strategic Planning, National Security Strategy of Russia, Defence Law of the Russian Federation, Foreign Policy Concept of the

Russian Federation, Nuclear Doctrine of the Russian Federation, Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation.

<sup>5</sup> Совет Безопасности Российской Федерации (2014), Военная доктрина Российской Федерации, available at <http://scrf.gov.ru/security/military/document129/>.

<sup>6</sup> Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 02.07.2021 (2021), О Стратегии национальной безопасности Российской Федерации, available at <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/47046>.



### Scenarios Leading to 2040

A central element of the concept is scenario research, which employs strategic foresight methodologies to analyse potential future developments. These scenarios consider military, economic, and political dimensions, along with their interdependencies and cumulative impacts on various trajectories. By integrating these factors, Russia aims to create comprehensive and adaptive strategies to address complex challenges and opportunities anticipated by 2040.

The primary advantage of scenarios lies in their ability to provide a comprehensive understanding of the long-term evolution of the international and military-political operating environment. By developing multiple comprehensive scenarios, Russia can identify rapid shifts and impacts caused by emerging military-political actors—changes that would likely remain undetected by other research methods. This strategic foresight enhances Russia's capacity to anticipate and adapt to dynamic global challenges.<sup>7</sup>

Scenarios influence Russia's military planning across short-, medium-, and long-term time horizons<sup>8</sup>. In the **short term**, they shape the operational training plans of unit headquarters and the combat training of troops. Over the **medium term**, scenarios guide the planning of new equipment acquisitions, structural reforms within the armed forces and command systems, as well as the composition and number of troop groupings in strategic directions. In the **long term**, the focus shifts to developing Russia's armed forces to meet the demands of future warfare, incorporating new structures and innovative operational concepts.<sup>9</sup>

There are six different scenarios projected to the year 2040:

- **Harsh Globalization:** A scenario dominated by prolonged American primacy, where global interdependence is reinforced under a unipolar system.
- **Moderate Globalization:** A hierarchical polycentric world order characterized by balanced global cooperation and competition.
- **Bipolarity 2.0:** The emergence of a renewed bipolar world order, led by two dominant power blocs.
- **The Rise of China:** A future where China becomes the central global actor, reshaping the international system.
- **Regionalization:** A shift toward deglobalization, where regional blocs gain prominence, reducing global interdependence.
- **Chaos:** A fragmented and unpredictable world marked by systemic instability and the breakdown of global norms.

The scenario “Harsh Globalization” is the most unfavourable for Russia. In this scenario, the confrontation between Russia and the

West, or between China and the United States, intensifies. As a result, Euro-Atlantic cooperation strengthens, and a significant portion of Indo-Pacific nations align themselves with the United States. Military-political cooperation between the West and the United States deepens, and their military-technological development accelerates relative to other nations. Russia's influence diminishes steadily, and by 2040, it is reduced to a regional power. If realized, the scenario poses an existential threat to both Russia and China.<sup>10</sup>

The scenario “Bipolarity 2.0” is the most advantageous for Russia. It anticipates a decline in the influence of Western nations and a strengthening of BRICS countries. In this scenario, China emerges as a strong partner for Russia, enabling a more balanced global power structure favourable to Russian strategic interests.<sup>11</sup>

The two scenarios, “Harsh Globalization” and “Bipolarity 2.0”, represent the two extremes of the strategic spectrum in Russia's scenario work. The remaining three scenarios fall between these extremes in terms of driving forces and transformative factors. According to Russian researchers, the scenario “Chaos” contains so many uncertainties that its detailed examination was deemed impractical. However, it serves as an underlying consideration in the development of all other scenarios.<sup>12</sup>

Russia is actively striving to prevent the realization of the scenario “Harsh Globalization” by 2040. While it currently seeks to strengthen its military power through mobilization and wartime economy, the scenario involves so many uncertainties that it remains unclear, whether Russia can exert sufficient influence on these developments by 2040. Russia's primary objective is to steer toward the scenario “Bipolarity 2.0” while simultaneously making every effort to prevent the realization of the scenario “Harsh Globalization”.

<sup>7</sup> БУРЕНОК В. М. et al. (2018), Концепция обоснования перспективного облика силовых компонентов военной организации Российской Федерации, «Издательство Граница», Москва, р. 334–335.

<sup>8</sup> The short term (*краткосрочный период*) refers to a period of 1–3 years, while the medium term (*среднесрочный период*) spans 3–6 years. The long term (*долгосрочный период*) encompasses periods exceeding six years, with planning horizons often extending to 10–20 years or more. These time frames provide a structured approach to aligning military planning with Russia's strategic and operational goals.

<sup>9</sup> БУРЕНОК В. М. et al. (2018), Концепция обоснования перспективного облика силовых компонентов военной организации Российской Федерации, «Издательство Граница», Москва, р. 334.

<sup>10</sup> БУРЕНОК В. М. et al. (2018), Концепция обоснования перспективного облика силовых компонентов военной организации Российской Федерации, «Издательство Граница», Москва, pp. 341–342.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 352.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 360–361.

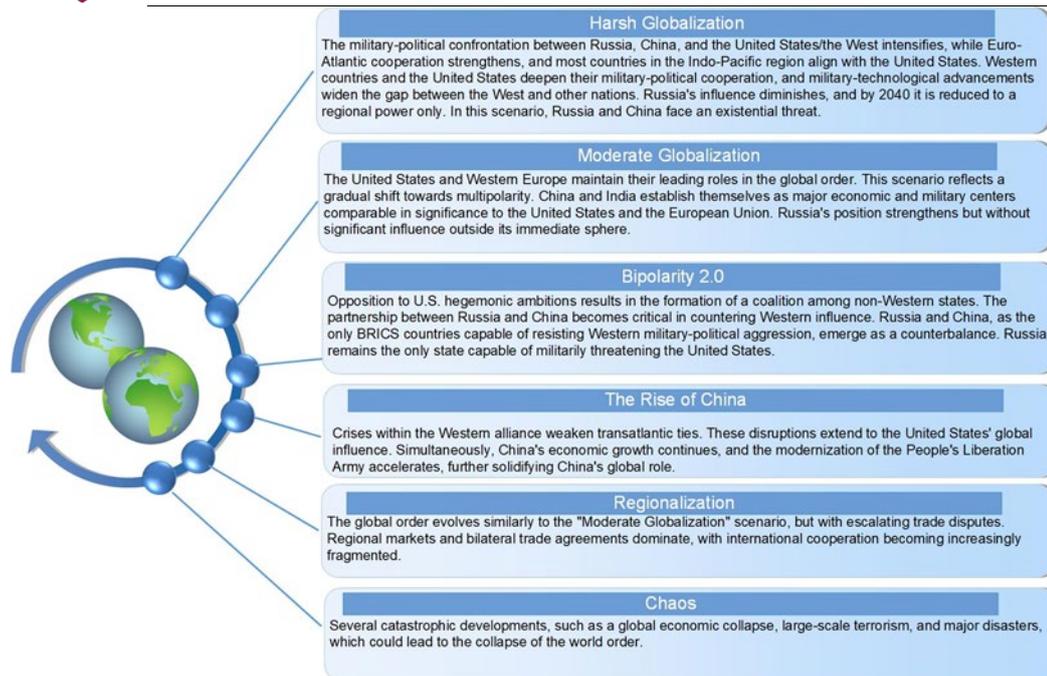


Figure 2. Scenarios used as a basis for Russia's strategic planning. Modified from the original<sup>13</sup>.

## Mathematical Model

The mathematical model serves as a comprehensive and systematic approach to managing threats identified by Russia and supporting its strategic planning. It combines linearly progressing formulas with mathematical analyses, expert assessments, and their application to various scenarios. This integration enables Russia to enhance its foresight and decision-making in complex and dynamic environments.

The evaluations and impacts generated through the formulas are simulated within scenarios and development trajectories. In this way, Russia is able to swiftly anticipate changes in the military-political situation. The model's results directly support Russia's decision-making processes. Overall, the model can be described as a dynamic tool that enhances the readiness of Russia's armed forces and strategic decision-making to respond to complex and rapidly evolving geopolitical situations.

At the heart of all modelling lies the assessment of the impact of Russia's strategic deterrence, the maintenance and optimisation of deterrence, and the assessment of the level of deterrence damage that can be inflicted on an adversary. From a foresight perspective, it is striking that the model is also suitable for assessing the military potential, conflict potential, and cohesion of hypothetical alliances. This versatility underscores the model's utility in both current and future strategic scenarios.

The mathematical model calculates the influence of various actors and adversaries on changes in the military-political situation and

assesses potential threats against Russia by analysing the following key components:

- Military-Political Situation
- Military Potential
- Correlation of Military Potential
- Conflict Potential
- Threat and Risk Levels from Military Potentials
- Tension and Hostility in the Military-Political Situation
- Military Dangers and Threats
- Military Security
- Military Alliances
- Success of Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Impact of Strategic Deterrence
- Deterrence Damage<sup>14</sup>
- Use of Conventional Force
- Requirement for Military Potential
- Network Power of Actors<sup>15</sup>.

The analysis relies on an extensive database and precisely defined indicators that can be updated to reflect changing circumstances. Detailed lists of indicators have been developed for both military

<sup>13</sup> БУРЕНКО В. М. et al. (2018), Концепция обоснования перспективного облика силовых компонентов военной организации Российской Федерации, «Издательство Граница», Москва, с. 337.

<sup>14</sup> Deterrence damage refers to the minimum level of damage sufficient to effectively limit an adversary's military and political actions. To determine this threshold, an analysis is conducted on the adversary's military potential, including their weapon systems, economic resources, and political objectives. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the measures necessary to achieve strategic deterrence. БУРЕНКО В. М. et al. (2018), pp. 210–214.

<sup>15</sup> Network power refers to the level of power or influence a state (or an alliance of states) can achieve either directly or indirectly through available resources. Indirectly utilised resources include those controlled by the state itself, another state, or other actors, which can be leveraged for strategic advantage. This influence can be assessed through potential synergistic effects and four key dimensions: political, military, economic, and informational. Network power is a critical factor in evaluating the power of various actors across different scenarios, providing a nuanced understanding of their strategic capabilities and leverage.



and non-military factors. These lists are of significant research value in themselves, as they provide insight into the directions of Russia's active operations and areas of strategic monitoring. This dynamic approach ensures adaptability and relevance in addressing evolving geopolitical and military challenges.

### Economic Model

The economic model evaluates the sufficiency of Russia's military capabilities and economic resources while optimising their allocation according to military-political priorities. By combining the analysis of macroeconomic and demographic processes, the model enables long-term forecasting and short-term responsiveness to emerging challenges.

The primary goal of resource provision is to develop and sustain the military capacity of the armed forces to meet the state's defence and security needs. The resources for Russia's armed forces, including their operational components, are determined through a resource-economic assessment method as part of the national budget and state capability evaluation process. Key focus areas in resource assessment include personnel requirements, equipment procurement, infrastructure, mobilisation efforts, and international operations.

The resource-economic assessment method incorporates scenarios reflecting the military-political situation. In addition to military-political scenarios, resource sufficiency is evaluated through socio-economic development projections and analyses of macroeconomic and demographic processes. This holistic approach ensures that resources align with Russia's strategic objectives across varying contexts and timeframes.

Resources are defined after determining the tasks, the structure of the military organisation, and the composition of the armed forces and other military groupings. The designated composition of the armed forces and military groupings must ensure the required level of military security and address future objectives. They must also align with anticipated threats and challenges to military security faced by Russia and its allies.

According to the economic model, the most probable scenarios are "Harsh Globalization", "Moderate Globalization", and "Bipolarity 2.0". Among these scenarios, "Harsh Globalization" poses the greatest challenge to Russia from both macroeconomic and negative military-political foresight perspectives. Conversely, "Bipolarity 2.0" is the most favorable scenario, enabling the development of Russia's national economy and wartime economy.<sup>16</sup>

The primary objective of resource and economic assessment is to evaluate the national economy's ability to address current defence issues under various scenario conditions. This ensures that economic and military planning is robust, adaptive, and aligned with Russia's strategic goals.

The most significant challenge for Russia's anticipated socioeconomic development is the population decline, which directly affects mobilisation resources, the workforce potential of the defence-industrial complex, and overall personnel availability.

When assessing the economy's ability to meet the needs of the military organisation, none of the scenarios provide a solution for developing the armed forces without causing budgetary imbalances. In determining combat potential, the first step is to plan operational forces and allocate the necessary resources for their formation and maintenance. Supplementing general-purpose forces with strategic deterrence forces represents the most economically optimal

composition. This approach allows Russia's armed forces to achieve their objectives in any military-political scenario.

### Russia's Decision-Making Framework

The three key elements of strategic and military-strategic planning presented above support Russia's decision-making processes. Results derived from research methodologies are stored in the Decision Support System (SPPR), which is a critical tool for strategic planning. This system, managed by the General Staff of the Armed Forces, is also utilised by the Ministry of Defence, the Security Council, and the President of Russia.

The system includes dedicated modules that calculate military power, military-political potential, and indicators providing foresight into the emergence of conflicts for both Russia and other actors. A more detailed analysis of economic potential and strategic resources further supports Russia's decision-making by defining the state of national security and its requirements for the coming years. This comprehensive approach ensures an informed basis for addressing future challenges.

### Conclusions

If Russia were to fully automate its foresight processes and utilise artificial intelligence, even minor changes in the global, regional, or local military-political situation could be detected quickly, allowing for immediate responses. Finland and NATO should closely monitor the development of Russia's strategic foresight and planning capabilities, with a particular focus on advancements in assessment methodologies, automation of mathematical modeling, simulation, and technological solutions.

Russia may regard its concepts and scenario analyses as so reliable that it overestimates their accuracy. This could lead to an inability to recognize its weaknesses, where an emphasis on its own superiority distorts its ability to objectively assess its position and operational environment.

Russia's strategic culture is a key factor in its military-strategic thinking and operations. It emphasizes the connection between geopolitical objectives and military readiness. Future studies and scenario analysis support Russia's efforts to maintain strategic deterrence and adapt to international changes.

It is essential for the West to monitor and analyse the development of Russia's strategic culture and foresight methods. A deep understanding of Russia's practices and objectives is crucial for maintaining strategic balance and strengthening both national and allied defence capabilities to address future challenges.

### Additional Information

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<sup>16</sup> БУРЕНОК В. М. et al. (2018), Концепция обоснования перспективного облика силовых компонентов военной организации Российской Федерации, «Издательство Граница», Москва, pp. 427–428.