RUSSIAN PERCEPTIONS OF NON-NUCLEAR DETERRENCE

HARRISON MENKE
MENKE007@LIVE.MISSOURISTATE.EDU
Introduction

- Research Question: What are Russian Perceptions of Non-Nuclear Deterrence?
- Russian Assumptions
- Current Confines of Non-Nuclear Deterrence
Doctrine

- Military Doctrine (2010, 2014)
- Russia Understands Nuclear Weapons Cannot be a Panacea
- Kokoshin and Pre-Nuclear Deterrence
- “Strategic Gesture”
Roles, Targets, and Intentions

- Early Stage: Targets Depth and C2
- As Escalation Continues: Targets Shift to Civilian Politico-Economic Infrastructure
- Non-Nuclear De-Escalation?
Kremlin Approval: Capabilities

New Strike Platforms

Improved Missiles

Leadership Views

“...Russia has the will to use them [Russia’s non-nuclear deterrent] if it satisfies the national interests of our state and our people.” —V.V. Putin
Naval Launch Point Coverage

Yellow Rings: 1,300 km
Red Rings: 3,000 km

*Maps from 7 Fee Beneath the Keel, “The RF Navy vs Your ‘Critically Important Facilities,” March 29, 2015.
The Syrian Testing Ground

Russian Cruise Missile Launches

*Map partly from The Aviationist, “This Infographic Provides All the Details About the Russian Strategic Bomber Fleet Operations Over Syria,” Nov. 21, 2015.
Implications

• A New Coercive Toolkit
• Weakens Traditional Conventional-Nuclear Firebreaks
  – Strategic Effects without Crossing the Nuclear Threshold
• Likely to Encourage Escalation and Crisis Instability
Complex Response

• “Shaping the Environment Before Crisis and Conflict”
  – Diplomatic/Messaging
  – Denial
  – Capabilities