

## **MARITIME DOCTRINE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION 2022: AN ANALYSIS**

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On Sunday, 31 July 2022, by Presidential Decree 512, Russia's President Vladimir Putin approved the 2022 Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation, which replaces the 2015 maritime doctrine. Released on the occasion of the Russia's 326<sup>th</sup> Navy Day celebrations (traditionally held annually on the last Sunday of July) in St Petersburg, the new maritime doctrine is available on the official internet portal of legal information of the Russian Federation<sup>1</sup>. The doctrine looks at implementation of what is constantly referred to as the 'National Maritime Policy'.

The first maritime doctrine was released in 2001 and replaced in 2015. Incidentally, while the 2015 maritime doctrine was released after Russia invaded and subsequently annexed the Crimean Peninsula, the 2022 doctrine has been released against the backdrop of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. Hence, it is obvious that both the conflicts would have influenced the drafting of the doctrines. This aspect is clearly evident by the manner in which the existent strategic environments have been reflected, and thus influenced the implementation of the 'National Maritime Policy' covered in the 2015 and the 2022 doctrines. Prior to analysing the 2022 doctrine the 2015 document requires a revisit, and the following paragraphs highlight the main aspects of the 2015 doctrine.<sup>2</sup>

### **Revisiting Russia's Maritime Doctrine 2015**

The 2015 doctrine, approved by President Putin on 17 June 2015 and released on Navy Day, 26 July 2015, laid down Russia's national maritime policy goals, its principles, and objectives. Apart

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<sup>1</sup> Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2022, available at <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202207310001>, official translation available at <http://actual.pravo.gov.ru/text.html#pnum=0001202207310001>

<sup>2</sup> Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2015, translated by the Russia Maritime Studies Institute, US Naval War College, available at [https://dnngwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/Maritime%20Doctrine%20TransENGrus\\_FINAL.pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=fqZgUUVRVrKmsFNMOj%2FNARNawUoRdhvPFj7%2FpAkM%3D](https://dnngwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/Maritime%20Doctrine%20TransENGrus_FINAL.pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=fqZgUUVRVrKmsFNMOj%2FNARNawUoRdhvPFj7%2FpAkM%3D)

from economic objectives like exploitation of ocean resources such as fishing, minerals and energy, the doctrine also elaborated on maritime transport, marine scientific research, and offshore activities like laying of pipelines, construction of offshore infrastructure. More importantly, the document identified “*the Atlantic, Arctic, Pacific, Caspian, Indian Ocean and Antarctic areas as the main regional priority areas of the National Maritime Policy*”<sup>3</sup>. In the Atlantic, Russia recognised as ‘*unacceptable*’, the manner in which NATO was advancing “*...its military infrastructure to Russia’s borders and the attempt to globalize the efforts*”.<sup>4</sup> This aspect subsequently formed one of the central reasons for Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2021. As a counter to such advancements, the doctrine called for development of military capabilities of the Baltic and the Black Sea Fleets and envisaged a “*sufficient naval presence*” in the Atlantic and Mediterranean, with presence in the latter on a “*permanent basis*”.<sup>5</sup> The existing Russian base at Tartus (Syria) and the agreement signed with Sudan in end-2020 to base four ships, including nuclear powered ships at Port Sudan, could perhaps be viewed as efforts towards operationalising this part of the 2015 doctrine.<sup>6</sup>

Russia’s priorities in the Arctic were established on four cornerstones: First, free access of the Russian fleet to the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans; Secondly, the abundance of natural resources in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the Continental Shelf (CS) of the Russian Federation; Thirdly, the growing importance of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) for sustainable development and security of the Russian Federation; and fourthly, the decisive role of the Northern Fleet in the defence of the country from the sea and ocean.<sup>7</sup> The fourth aspect was further highlighted by two related areas, namely, the need to reduce the threat levels, and the capability-development of the Northern Fleet.<sup>8</sup> Further, the Arctic has continued to receive priority attention in Russia’s strategic thought, as enunciated in the more recent “*Strategy for Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and Provision of National Security for the Period up to 2035*”, approved by Presidential Decree 645 on 26 October 2020<sup>9</sup>, which replaced Russia’s Arctic strategy of 2013. The 2020 strategy aimed to implement the “*Bases of State Policy*” and determine “*measures to achieve the main tasks of development... and ensuring national security as well as the stages and expected results of the implementation of these measures*”.<sup>10</sup> It is clear that Russia’s focus in the Arctic is on delimitation of maritime areas in the Arctic Ocean (including the Arctic Shelf), statutory recognition of the external borders of the continental shelf of the Russian Federation in the Arctic Ocean, and unconditional compliance with the interests of the Russian Federation in

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<sup>3</sup> Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2015, para 50

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, para 52

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, paras 54(a) and 58 (b)

<sup>6</sup> See Yuras Kamanau, *Russia plans to invest \$500 million in its only navy base outside the former Soviet Union — here's what it's like there*, Associated Press, 18 December 2019, available at <https://www.businessinsider.com/base-in-syria-helps-russia-expand-presence-in-mediterranean-2019-9?IR=T>, and Vladimir Isachenkov, *Russia to Establish Navy Base in Sudan for at least 25 Years*, Associated Press, 09 December 2020, available at <https://apnews.com/article/international-news-sudan-moscow-africa-russia-0e1932a384bba427e13e590a4ac7a1f8>

<sup>7</sup> Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2015, para 59

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, para 60 (a) and (b)

<sup>9</sup> Strategy for Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and Provision of National Security for the Period up to 2035, text available at <http://www.iecca.ru/en/legislation/strategies/item/1037-strategy-for-the-development-of-the-arctic-zone-of-the-russian-federation-and-ensuring-national-security-for-the-period-up-to-2035#:~:text=This%20strategy%20is%20a%20strategic%20planning%20document%20in,expected%20results%20of%20the%20implementation%20of%20these%20measures.>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

the process of delimitation of the maritime areas and the seabed of the Arctic Ocean. These aspects have been reiterated in the 2022 doctrine, and underline Russia's standing in Arctic affairs as the only non-NATO member or partner of NATO (Finland and Sweden partner NATO through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council), in the Arctic Council.

While the relevance of the Pacific Ocean was adequately emphasised, the doctrine recognised the limitations of access to, and thus isolation of, Russia's Far East, which has a large repository of resources, especially in the EEZ and CS. The doctrine additionally focused upon developing relations with China, while "*expanding positive cooperation with other states in the region*".<sup>11</sup> The doctrine also stressed the "*implementation of the long-term objectives in the Sea of Japan, Sea of Okhotsk, Bering Sea, the north-western Pacific, and the eastern part of the Arctic within the water areas of the Northern Sea Route*".<sup>12</sup> One of the long-term objectives was to "*conclude international agreements on limitation of naval activities in the designated areas and zones*". It is possible that this approach was antagonistic, as no apparent headway was made with target nations, and hence this aspect finds no mention in the 2022 doctrine.

In the Indian Ocean, the doctrine posited the "*development of friendly relations with India*" as the most important goal of the National Maritime Policy.<sup>13</sup> No other nation was mentioned, which highlighted the strength of India-Russia relations. While the doctrine looked at transforming the region into "*a zone of peace, stability and goodwill*", naval presence was curtailed as "*periodically or as necessary*", with the aim to provide "*security for maritime activities, including combating piracy*", which essentially relates to a focus on non-traditional threats.<sup>14</sup> This approach could have been due to the lack of bases or access to warm water ports, which issues have been addressed in the 2022 doctrine.

### **Russia's Maritime Doctrine 2022**

While the 2015 doctrine stated generic and broad-based maritime policy principles and objectives, the 2022 doctrine is more specific and highlights a more nationalist approach seeking to position Russia as a powerful maritime nation with permanent global presence. This has been clearly enunciated in the first strategic objective as "*Development of the Russian Federation as a great maritime power and the strengthening of its position among the leading maritime powers of the world*".<sup>15</sup> Major pointers from the 2022 doctrine that are included amongst the strategic objectives of the national maritime policy, and which merit attention may be summarised as follows:

- Ensuring the national security of the Russian Federation and its sustained economic development.
- Building capabilities to protect the national interests of the Russian Federation in the world's oceans.

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<sup>11</sup> Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2015, para 63

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, para 64

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, para 68

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, para 69(b)

<sup>15</sup> Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2022, para 27(1)

- Ensuring guaranteed access to all ocean resources, in accordance with the principles and norms of international law and ensuring conservation of marine natural ecosystems and rational use of their resources.
- Increasing the competitiveness of the Russian maritime transport complex and the NSR in the maritime transportation market.

The doctrine identifies fourteen national interests<sup>16</sup>, as against seven in the 2015 doctrine. The indicated national interests have combined the main tenets of the 2015 doctrine's national interests and the national maritime policy objectives. These interests are spread over three zones identified by the doctrine as '*vital*', '*important*', and '*others*'.<sup>17</sup> Vital areas have been defined as those areas that impact the national interests and development of Russia, the loss of control over which would jeopardise national security and threaten the very existence of the Russian Federation.<sup>18</sup> Important areas have been defined as those areas that impact Russian interests related mainly to economic development and the material wellbeing of the population, as well as aspects related strategic and regional security of the state.<sup>19</sup> Table 1 indicates the maritime areas classified under these three categories<sup>20</sup>:

Classification	Areas
Vital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Waters and Territorial Sea, including the seabed and subsoil, and airspace above</li> <li>• EEZ and CS including the CS outside the EEZ in the Arctic Basin within the boundaries defined in the recommendations of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in accordance with Article 76 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea</li> <li>• The Arctic basin adjacent to the coast of the Russian Federation, including the waters of the NSR</li> <li>• The waters of the Sea of Okhotsk and the Russian sector of the Caspian Sea</li> </ul>
Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The water areas of oceans and seas adjacent to the coast of the Russian Federation, including the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea</li> <li>• The eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea</li> <li>• Straits connected to the Black and Baltics Seas, and the Kuril Island Straits</li> <li>• Areas of passage of world sea-transport communications, including those running along the Asian and African coasts</li> </ul>
Others	Areas not indicated as vital or important

**Table 1: Vital, Important and Other Maritime Areas**  
**Source: Maritime Doctrine of the Federation of Russia 2022**

Two pertinent interests related to the Arctic that merit attention are as follows:

- Development of the Arctic zone as a strategic resource base and its rational use, including full-scale development of the continental shelf of the Russian Federation beyond its EEZ, after securing its external border in accordance with article 76 of UNCLOS.
- Development of the NSR as a national transport corridor.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, paras 9 (1) to 9 (14)

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, para 12

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, para 13

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, para 15

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, paras 14 (1) to 14 (4), and 15 (1) to 15 (4)

The upgradation of the Northern Fleet to a military district on 01 January 2021 also “*reflects the increased prominence given to the Arctic and the Northern Sea Route in Russia’s strategic plans*”.<sup>21</sup> These interests indicate the seriousness with which Russia will establish its presence in the Arctic, the majority of which falls within its maritime zones, and will control shipping in the NSR.

While the doctrine clearly indicates the US and NATO as Russia’s main antagonists, it also identifies several areas that impact Russia’s maritime prowess. These include:

- Inadequate strength of Russia’s merchant fleet, which has resulted in undue dependence upon foreign-flag vessels and offshore pipeline systems.
- Inadequate capacity and capability in the field of marine scientific research.
- Imposition of restrictions by nations on Russia’s shipbuilding, military-industrial complex, and oil and gas companies, including those related to the transfer of modern technologies, equipment supplies, which need long-term financing.
- Insufficient international legal understanding on the delimitation of maritime spaces in the Arctic.
- Restrictions imposed by international conventions, specifically the Montreux Convention of 1936. This is the closest that the doctrine has come to the Russia-Ukraine war, without even referring to it even once.
- Insufficient bases, which restrict Russian presence in the global maritime domain.

The doctrine, while carrying forward the four areas of maritime activity reflected in the 2015 doctrine, namely, maritime transport, development and conservation of ocean resources, marine scientific research, and naval activities, added development of offshore pipelines to the list. This addition possibly stems from the ongoing embargo by the West on Russian gas and oil, and looks at reducing dependence upon oil flows through foreign pipelines, and is aimed at strengthening Russia’s control on flow of its own oil and gas including that from the continental shelf.

The 2022 doctrine retains the number of regions, in which Russia plans to implement its doctrine, at six, namely: Arctic, Pacific, Atlantic (Baltic, Azov-Black Sea and Mediterranean basins), Caspian, Indian Ocean, and Antarctica.

In the 2015 doctrine, the Arctic was at second place after the Atlantic, which has been positioned at third place in the 2022 doctrine. Though the present sequencing may be in no specific order, it may also point to the priority of focus, as the Arctic has found detailed mention as indicated earlier. It is evident that Russia recognises the Arctic not only as an area for global economic competition but as an area of military competition as well. The 21 focus areas enunciated for the Arctic region<sup>22</sup> indicate a more positive and perhaps even aggressive approach as they:

- Posit Russia in the lead position in many areas of common regional interest.

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<sup>21</sup> See Chapter 5, *Russia and Eurasia*, The Military Balance 2022, International Institute of Strategic Studies, London, p 166

<sup>22</sup> Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2022, para 50 (1) to 50 (21)

- Espouse nuances of control, especially regarding foreign presence and shipping (particularly naval activities).
- Lay emphasis on protection of Russian sovereignty, especially resources.
- Indicate a growing focus on developing the requisite capacity and capability.

Placement of the Pacific at second place is, perhaps, indicative of the Russian approach to the ‘Indo-Pacific’, enunciated in 2012 by the Russian president as the ‘pivot to Asia’, which was aimed at promoting modernisation of the economy.<sup>23</sup> The term ‘pivot to Asia’ is, perhaps, reflective of the belief that “Russia, like China, still strongly opposes the idea of the Indo-Pacific”.<sup>24</sup> However, Russia will engage nations with which it has long standing strategic relations, like India. Hence, the 2022 doctrine retains the term ‘Asia-Pacific’, and focuses on “overcoming the economic and infrastructural isolation of the Far East from the industrialized regions of the Russian Federation, establishing sustainable sea (river), air and rail links with cities and towns in Siberia and the European part of the Russian Federation, including the development of the Northern Sea Route.”<sup>25</sup> This focus apparently seeks to strengthen the ‘pivot to Asia’ strategy, which was termed as a failure,<sup>26</sup> especially due to “Russia’s lack of a comprehensive approach to overcoming the social and economic hardships faced by its least developed regions, namely Siberia and the country’s Far East”.<sup>27</sup> One priority aspect, highlighting the intended development of the Far East, is the development of a shipbuilding complex that would construct a range of vessels, from large tonnage ships like aircraft carriers to ships that can operate in the Arctic.<sup>28</sup>

The doctrine, in its approach to the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), specifically names partnerships and cooperation with India, Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, while the 2015 doctrine had named only India. The mention of these nations along with Syria, which was mentioned in the Atlantic section as a means to ensure “naval presence of the Russian Federation in the Mediterranean Sea on the basis of the logistics centre of the Navy on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic”<sup>29</sup>, could be an indicator of Russia seeking access to warm water ports, as it had done during the Cold War. This could enable an enhanced presence as well as address a number of challenges to Russia’s aspiration to be a leading global maritime power.

Although the doctrine does not name China or US allies (specifically, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom), Russia has engaged cooperatively with China and shown assertive behaviour against these three US allies. Some examples are as follows:

<sup>23</sup> For more details see, Neil Melvin, *Russia and the Indo-Pacific Security Concept, Emerging Insights*, (Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, 2021), available at [https://static.rusi.org/277\\_russia\\_ip.pdf](https://static.rusi.org/277_russia_ip.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Captain Sarabjeet Singh Parmar, *The US Indo-Pacific Strategy 2022: An Analysis*, National Maritime Foundation, 03 May 2022, available at <https://maritimeindia.org/the-us-indo-pacific-strategy-2022-an-analysis/>

<sup>25</sup> Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2022, para 52 (1)

<sup>26</sup> See Sergey Sukhankin, *Russia’s Pivot to Asia (China) After 2014: The Wrong Turn?*, 08 June 2021, available at <https://jamestown.org/program/russias-pivot-to-asia-china-after-2014-the-wrong-turn/>

<sup>27</sup> Dan Southerland, *Russia’s ‘Pivot to Asia’ Fails to Gain Much Traction Beyond Arms Sales to Myanmar, Vietnam*, 10 May 2021, available at <https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/russia/2021/russia-210510-rfa01.htm#:~:text=A%20commentary%20by%20Dan%20Southerland%202021-05-10%20--%20Russia,to%20Asia%2C%22%20is%20already%20encountering%20difficulties%20and%20criticism.>

<sup>28</sup> Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2022, para 52 (3)

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, para 56 (4)

- In June 2021, a Russian aircraft reportedly fired warning shots at HMS *Defender*, a British warship that was transiting the territorial sea of Crimea, and also dropped bombs in the vicinity of the ship.<sup>30</sup>
- In June 2021, there was a large-scale deployment of the Pacific Fleet, including mock sorties by long-range bombers, in the vicinity of Hawaii.<sup>31</sup>
- In June 2022, even as Russia was engaged in an armed conflict with Ukraine, its Pacific Fleet deployed in strength in the Pacific Ocean, with around 40 ships and 20 aircraft.<sup>32</sup>
- In June 2022, PLA and Russian warships circled Japan as independent surface action groups, while following the same route.<sup>33</sup>
- During the fourth QUAD Summit held on 24 May 2022 in Tokyo, Russian and Chinese bombers flew near Japan, although no airspace violation occurred.<sup>34</sup>
- In July and December 2019, and November 2021, Russian and Chinese aircraft violated the airspace of South Korea. These incidences were viewed as joint military drill and dubbed by China as annual cooperation plans between China and Russia, not aimed at any third party.<sup>35</sup>

The separate mention of the Caspian as a region, perhaps, speaks to the ‘centrality’ of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to Russia’s regional strategic approach. In this context, Russia’s National Security Strategy 2021 highlights the growth of instability and conflict as being instigated by some countries, stating that these “.....are aimed at instigating disintegration processes in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in order to destroy Russia's ties with its traditional allies”.<sup>36</sup> This is an important aspect for India as the North South Transit Corridor starting from Chabahar passes through the same region.

Naval activity, which would be the actions of the Russian Navy, has been identified as the “activity of the state to prevent aggression against the Russian Federation, to realize and protect its national interests in the World Ocean”.<sup>37</sup> While the doctrine states that “The modern Russian Federation cannot exist without a strong fleet”<sup>38</sup>, the details of the actual functional role and areas of activity of the fleet have been perfunctorily covered.

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<sup>30</sup> Dan Sabbagh and Andrew Roth, *Britain Acknowledges Surprise at Speed of Russian Reaction to Warship*, The Guardian, 24 June 2021, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jun/24/british-warships-might-enter-crimean-waters-again-says-minister>

<sup>31</sup> William Cole, *Russian Naval Exercise ends as Spy Ship Remains in Hawaii Area*, Star Advertiser, 21 June 2021, available at <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2021/06/21/breaking-news/navy-conducts-drills-near-hawaii-as-russian-spy-ship-cruises-north-of-oahu/>

<sup>32</sup> Reuters, *Russian Pacific Fleet Begins Week-long Exercises with more than 40 Vessels -Russian Agencies*, 03 June 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/russian-pacific-fleet-begins-week-long-exercises-with-more-than-40-vessels-2022-06-03/>

<sup>33</sup> Dzirhan Mahadzir, *Chinese, Russian Warships Continue to Circle Japan, Defense Minister Says*, USNI News, 24 June 2022, available at <https://news.usni.org/2022/06/24/chinese-russian-warships-continue-to-circle-japan-defense-minister-says>

<sup>34</sup> Kozuke Takahashi, *China, Russia Fly 6 Bombers Near Japan Amid Quad Summit*, The Diplomat, 25 May 2022, available at <https://thediplomat.com/2022/05/china-russia-fly-6-bombers-near-japan-amid-quad-summit/>

<sup>35</sup> Reuters, *South Korea scrambles jets as Chinese, Russian aircraft enter Air Defence Zone*, 22 December 2020, available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southkorea-china-russia-idUSKBN28W139>, and Reuters, *S.Korea Scrambles fighter jets as China, Russia aircraft enter Air Defense Zone*, available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/skorea-scrambles-fighter-jets-china-russia-aircraft-enter-air-defense-zone-2021-11-19/>

<sup>36</sup> Strategy of National Security of the Russian Federation dated 02 July 2021, para 17, p 5, available at <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202107030001?index=0&rangeSize=11>, official text available at <http://actual.pravo.gov.ru/text.html#pnum=0001202107030001>

<sup>37</sup> Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2022, para 46

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, para 104

The current doctrine like the 2015 edition, lays stress on shipbuilding, which is recognised as an important activity towards implementation of the ‘*National Maritime Policy*’. The doctrine identifies 16 priority areas for the development of Russia’s shipbuilding industry.<sup>39</sup> The priority areas cover the construction of a variety of vessels, from warships to vessels that form part of Russia’s trade and economic activity, as well as the vast gamut of support and ancillary industries. This is an important aspect without which the doctrine will remain mainly ‘*aspirational*’.

## Conclusion

The 2022 doctrine is the third in series since the first doctrine was released in 2001. When the dots are connected, the doctrine like the earlier versions appears to be more ‘*aspirational*’. Though the national interests are indicated as spanning the global maritime domain, and even as Moscow seeks to promote its interests based on “*universally recognized principles and norms of international law*” while taking into consideration the interests of other nations<sup>40</sup>, the document remains limited to multiple “*challenges and threats*” largely related to the activities of the US and its allies. This also, perhaps, why Indo-Pacific nations like Australia, Japan, and South Korea have been omitted, as naming them would only magnify the challenges and threats.

The priorities and long-term goals in each of Russia’s areas of maritime interest have been enunciated with a fair degree of granularity and are more focussed than was the case in the 2015 doctrine. The current doctrine is quite clear that the Arctic will continue to be a high priority area insofar as Russia’s maritime interests are concerned, with emphasis being retained on the Mediterranean, Black, and Baltic Seas. The focus on the Pacific region will remain diluted due to the imperative of paying close attention on NATO and the US. However, the intent to strengthen and develop its ‘*Far East*’ and extend connectivity to Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands is, perhaps, indicative of Russia’s attempt to rejuvenate its ‘*pivot to Asia*’. While this aspect could aim to cover the ‘*eastern*’ part of the Pacific extending into the central Indo-Pacific region up to the Strait of Malacca, the engagement of India, Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia would cover the ‘*western*’ part of Asia and provide Russia with access to the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf. This access would enable a foothold in the IOR, and presence in the Persian Gulf thereby adding to the challenge for the US and its allies, while also linking up with the Mediterranean region, the underbelly of Europe. This presence could also aid the envisaged global maritime related economic investments and interests of Russia. It could also be viewed as the Russian attempt to counter what the doctrine points out as efforts by the US and its allies to limit Russia’s access to ocean resources and vitally important sea transportation lanes, and the US desire to achieve overwhelming supremacy of its Navy.<sup>41</sup> The doctrine clearly states that all measures would be taken, including use of hard power, to protect Russia’s national interests in its ‘*vital*’ and ‘*important*’ maritime areas, while the Federation will use non-violent methods in ‘*other*’ maritime areas.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, paras 66(1) to 66 (16)

<sup>40</sup> Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2022, para 8

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, paras 21 (1), 22 (2), and 22 (5)

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, para 103



As per the doctrine, Russia sees its existence and development as a great continental and maritime power in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century on the basis of several enabling factors that include possessing the largest territory in the world; the length of its maritime borders, its huge reserves and the diversity of its marine energy, mineral and biological resources; and the quality and quantity of its population.<sup>43</sup> While the Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2022 may appear to be moderately worded for the most part, hard line strategic communications are certainly mentioned, albeit fleetingly and within a profusion of harmless sounding sentences. As always, the devil lies in the detail, and in this case, also in the execution.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid, para 104