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Liberty Crossing Analysis

# Strategic Intelligence and Foreign Affairs Initiative Weekly Newsletter

Liberty University

Helms School of Government Students



# Table of Contents

*Weekly Newsletter.....1*

.....1

*Vladimir Putin .....3*

    BLUF .....3

    Analysis.....3

    Sources .....4

*China’s Soft Power Through the Olympics.....4*

    Conclusions .....4

    Sources .....5

*Threat of DPRK Nuclear Programs .....5*

    Analysis.....5

    Sources .....6

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## Vladimir Putin

### BLUF

Vladimir Putin (69 years old) was born into humble beginnings and from a young age wanted to work in the intelligence field. He is a very intelligent individual who has been well educated and possesses great street smarts. In 2015 he was rated the world's most popular politician. He is an Ex-KGB Intelligence Officer and the current President of the Russian Federation. He's been Russia's President for close to Twenty years in all and has held many powerful positions within modern-day Russia and the USSR. Putin has allowed Russia to become a regional hegemon and increased its political, military, and economic influence globally. Putin has emphasized that it is crucial to have an intricate intelligence community to be able to collect on his enemies. Putin remains one of the most feared and ruthless rulers in history, as political opponents often disappear in what appears to be assassinations.

### Analysis

#### Beliefs

- Putin believes that he is Russia's great Patriot and that he is a nationalistic leader. He believes that he comes across as someone who is a competent, straight-talking, tough individual, who acts decisively to strengthen Russia. He believes he is constantly at a disadvantage because the West has tampered with his country. Putin plays a weaker hand really well and believes he is a great strategist. He is under the impression that Russia is not a corrupt state and that it never was. He believes that he is contributing to rebuilding Russia as a great power with a global reach.

#### Chronology

- Oct 7, 1952: Vladimir V. Putin is born in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg)
- 1975: Putin graduates from the law department of Leningrad State University; Joins the KGB's Foreign Intelligence Service
- 1983: Putin marries Lyudmila, a specialist in foreign languages
- 1985-90: Putin is assigned to work for the KGB in East Germany
- 1990: Putin becomes assistant for international affairs at Leningrad State University. He also serves as an advisor to the chairman of the Leningrad City Council
- 1991-94: Putin serves as chairman of the foreign relations committee of the St. Petersburg mayor's office
- Aug. 20, 1991: Putin resigns from the KGB
- 1994-96: Putin serves as first deputy chairman of the St. Petersburg city government and chairman of the committee for external relations

- August 1996: Putin is transferred to Moscow to work as President Boris Yeltsin's first deputy manager
- March 1997: Putin becomes Yeltsin's deputy chief of staff in charge of the Main Control Department
- May 1998: Putin is named presidential first deputy of chief of staff in charge of Russian regions
- July 1998-August 1999: Putin serves as director of the Federal Security Service, a successor agency to the KGB
- August 1999: Putin is appointed prime minister
- Dec. 31, 1999: Yeltsin abruptly resigns, naming Putin acting president pending elections
- May 7, 2000: Putin is elected president of Russia
- May 2012: Vladimir Putin became the fourth president; he was re-elected in March 2018 for a 7-yr-term

#### End Goals

- Putin's end goals are to:
  - Restore Russia as a global power
  - Work economic miracles
  - Make Russians proud of their heritage
  - Make himself one of history's greatest leaders
  - Put Russia first
  - Create a strong military
  - Be the dominator of the world in the cyber realms
  - Undermine the West so that Russia and its ideologies can prevail as the global hegemon

#### Sources

1. [Vladimir Putin](#)
2. [ProQuest](#)
3. [Taylor and Francis Online](#)
4. [ProQuest](#)
5. [Taylor and Francis Online](#)

## China's Soft Power Through the Olympics

#### Conclusions

- China is demanding that the US end their diplomatic boycott of the Olympics as well as end their aid to Taiwan. They also protest calls for the State Department to withdraw from their embassies in China. This shows that China is becoming forceful in their soft power.
- The FBI has warned of a general cyber threat caused by an app that the Chinese are requiring for the athletes to use. They are also recommending that they bring a burner phone instead of their real one in case of data theft, and such. The 2020 Games were the target of over 450 million cyberattacks. A University of Toronto study says

that the app that China is using has the potential to be hacked as well as raising censorship concerns.

- Hosting the 2008 Olympics has boosted China's credibility and reputation. China has moved away from its history of hard power to soft power to gain a better foothold on the global stage. China used this opportunity to show the Western world that it is developed. They used this to leverage relations with other nations.
- China successfully pulled off an Olympic Games but couldn't leave any lasting effects on Chinese approval ratings in the West. Typically, hosting the Games will influence how legitimate other nations' view them. China will continue to use soft power to sway international opinion in their favor.
- Xi Jinping has made it clear that China will use soft power to enhance their image. They have devoted \$10 billion per year to external propaganda to achieve that goal. They are trying to introduce a "good" communist China to the world. They are also using major international events like the Olympics to push their soft power.

## Sources

1. [NPR](#)
2. [NPR](#)
3. [Brookings](#)
4. [Taylor and Francis Online](#)
5. [JStor](#)

## Threat of DPRK Nuclear Programs

### Analysis

#### Facts

- Nuclear Facts
  - It takes around 1kg of plutonium for a nuclear bomb
  - The U.S. has *thermonuclear* bombs, fission triggers fusion
  - DPRK has not yet created a Hydrogen bomb
  - DPRK claimed to have successfully tested one, but seismic testing disagrees per IC
- DPRK Nuclear Weapons
  - Around 25 – 50 nuclear weapons
  - 6 tests conducted since 2017
  - Range of 13,000 km (8,000 miles)
  - 36.5 kg (averaged) plutonium
- U.S. Nuclear Weapons
  - 3,750 nuclear weapons
  - 2,000 to be dismantled
  - ~175 bombs (averaged) to be distributed to allied nations
  - 53,800 kg of weapons-grade plutonium
  - Range of 14,000 km (8,700 miles)

#### Multiple Hypothesis Generation

- Problem: North Korea is developing nuclear-payload ICBMs
- Current Hypothesis: North Korea nuclear proliferation will be

used against American cities

- Alternative Hypotheses:
  1. North Korea wants nuclear arms as a deterrent
  2. North Korean proliferation is pushed by China
  3. North Korea nuclear capability is grossly overstated
  4. North Korea is using advancement scientific progression to coerce reunification
  5. DPRK is using proliferation to force S.K. reunification
  6. DPRK is acting as a satellite state for PRC
  7. DPRK is funded and motivated by Russian interest
- Grouping:
  - Group 1: Satellite State
    - 2, 6, 7
  - Group 2: Korean Reunification
    - 4, 5
  - Group 3: Unrelated
    - 1, 3
- Problem Restated: North Korea has continued development of nuclear arms. They are alleged to have successfully deployed a thermonuclear weapon. The Hwasong-15 is estimated to travel up to 13,000 km. North Korean ICBMs with a nuclear payload can attack United States cities.
- Hypotheses Ranked:
  1. North Korea wants nuclear arms as a deterrent
  2. DPRK is acting as a satellite state for PRC
  3. North Korean proliferation is pushed by China
  4. DPRK is funded and motivated by Russian interest
  5. North Korea nuclear capability is grossly overstated
  6. DPRK is using proliferation to force S.K. reunification
  7. North Korea is using advancement scientific progression to coerce reunification

## Sources

1. [CSIS](#)
2. [BBC](#)
3. [NY Times](#)
4. [VOA News](#)
5. [Foreign Affairs](#)
6. [PBS](#)

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*“The question shouldn’t be what we ought to do, but what we can do” – Rory Stewart*

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