

## SPOT REPORT

### Russia's National Security Strategy for 2016 : No Backing Down

#### WHAT WE KNOW :

On December 31, 2015, Mr. Vladimir Putin approved a new national security strategy for his country. The timing may be part of a new pattern: about a year ago, Russia's new military doctrine came out--on December 25, 2014. It presents a Russia focused on increasing its influence and prestige and cementing its national unity; a Russia that believes that it is accomplishing its aims, but which simultaneously feels threatened by the United States and its allies. There is also no question that Russia is concerned about its economy, which Moscow knows is in trouble. In short, this is the strategy document of an ambitious Russia that sees constraints on its ambitions as threats to be overcome.



Mr. Putin shows no sign of backing off despite building concerns over implications of economic sanctions. File Photo.

#### WHAT WE THINK :

What makes this new strategy relevant for Turkey is the tone it bears on NATO expansion, a policy that may spark instability in the Balkans and the Caucasus. **Mr. Putin is using NATO expansion as a leverage to impose his aggressive agenda in Ukraine, Syria and East Europe as well.** Not surprisingly, thus, The NATO's advance towards Russia's borders is a threat to Russian national security, according to the updated strategy.

NATO's decision to invite Montenegro to become a full member of NATO in 2016 gains importance in this respect. Not to forget that, NATO is fuelling the sense of encirclement for Russia by also embracing Georgia's efforts to become a member of North Atlantic Alliance. In accordance with Open Door Policy, NATO categorizes non-member states aspiring to be a member of the alliance under the auspices of "Membership Action Plan", the MAP. There are currently 3 partner nations in the MAP, Montenegro, Bosnia Herzegovina and Georgia. **Now that Montenegro will most likely to become a full-fledged member of the Alliance, in upcoming Warsaw NATO Summit in June 2016, Russia will highly likely respond to this manoeuvre by increasing its pressure over South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Caucasus.**

#### IMPLICATIONS :

**Inline with publicly declared strategy, Russia almost certainly will take counter-actions on NATO's expansions, which will eventually destabilize Turkey's trading partners in Balkans and mostly in Caucasus.** The most effected states will likely be countries surrounding Serbia in the Balkans and Georgia in the Caucasus, including South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The geopolitics of Montenegro is quite significant given the fact that it is the gateway to the Adriatic Sea for Serbia. Losing Montenegro in Balkans will make Serbia, a strong ally of Russia, an island surrounded by "Expansionist NATO and the west". It is plausible that Mr. Putin will not miss the opportunity to exploit this situation. We reckon that Russia may attempt to increase its hybrid-warfare tactics in Eastern Europe, Balkans and Caucasus, where there is considerable amount of Russian minorities to agitate with powerful Russian propaganda machine, a move that will generate more de-stabilization and social unrest in regions surrounding Turkey.

#### RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES (SUBSCRIBERS ONLY)

Contact us for tailored risk analysis and recommendations

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