Dr. Ibrahimov’s introduction

(CRELMO PM)

Thank you Sir!

Good Afternoon everybody, and thank you for joining us today!

My name is Mahir Ibrahimov. I am the Program Manager for Culture and Language Management Office (CRELMO).

Violence and bloodshed continues in Ukraine. To help

make sense of the current situation, our distinguished panel will discuss how Russia's intervention in Ukraine has changed the military and diplomatic dynamic of the region and its potential impact on regional and global security.

Just to set the stage for this fascinating and very timely discussion, First, I would like to provide some information from current Russian security documents. These documents will help us to understand and define: what is “Russian New Generation Warfare” in Ukraine and elsewhere? … and is it really “new” or a continuation of the old Soviet/Russian military strategy?

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed Russia's new military doctrine on December 26, 2014 and The National Security Strategy on December 31, 2015.

The main highlights of the documents include:

 \*A more aggressive stance toward NATO’s expansion into former Soviet satellites and Warsaw Pact countries.

\* Setting up a joint missile defense systems by Russia and its allied countries in response to efforts by NATO to extend air and anti-missile defense coverage over Europe.

\* Boosting military presence in the Arctic as “the region which has always been a sphere of "special interest" to Russia.”

\* Strengthening cooperation with India and China and other BRICS countries, which stands for Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

\* The documents identify the situation in and around Ukraine as a potential threat on the Russian borders.

\* Russia’s nuclear capabilities remain an important tool to deter global and regional military conflicts.

 There have always been discussions about the principles of territorial integrity and self- determination. Where is the fine line? I believe two main conflicting lessons can be learned from Russia’s policies in the region:

 1. Violation of principles of territorial integrity and

 2. Self-determination.

 Russia's annexation of Crimea is a different approach compared to what was applied and leveraged in Eastern Ukraine. The justification of the Crimea approach was based on the so called "aspiration of its people to rejoin the rest of Russia and to restore the historical justice which was violated by the former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushev in 1954."

According to Russia and the pro-Russia Crimea leaders it fulfilled the principle of self-determination of the Crimean people based on the results of the referendum.

So what about the Crimean Tatars with their recognized leader Mustafa Dzhemilev, former Chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, who opposed and continue opposing the annexation? What about other so called "hot spots" and annexations which were supported by Russia in early 90s and later, such as Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia-Georgia-Ossetia and other conflicts? With the annexation of Crimea, Russia has once again violated the territorial integrity and a sovereignty of a country based on the world order agreed upon by the international community after the World War II and post-Soviet/Post Warsaw pact era documents such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) negotiated Budapest Memorandum. (Chris will discuss it in more details later).

The Baltic republics which are presently NATO members, fall under article 4 and 5 of the NATO constitution which provides a protection mechanism by NATO in case of aggression against them.

Russia would likely apply the same tactics towards that region similar to its approaches in Luhansk and Donetsk regions of Donbass, and now in Moldova and elsewhere, rather than openly attacking those countries to cause a NATO response.

There are significant ethnic Russian or Russian speaking communities in those countries and Russia has a historical expertize and relevant socio-cultural aptitude at leveraging them to ignite tension at certain times to meet their geopolitical objectives.

The main lesson is that Russia will continue to apply a combination of approaches, as mentioned, as well as applying socio-economic pressures which we witnessed in Ukraine and elsewhere, but it will unlikely involve open military action, as in Georgia in 2008, unless there are similar circumstances. They will likely use well-trained Spetznaz, OMON and other irregular forces……and leverage the ethnic and religious potential of the local populations through an active Information Campaign using a combination of conventional and unconventional forces to achieve their political objective. The Chief of the Russian General Staff Gen. Valery Gerasimov’s views, published in an article in 2013, which is often referred to as “Gerasimov doctrine” is based on the main aspects of the highlighted above in the 2014 Russian Military Doctrine and 2015 National Security Strategy and was influenced to a greater extent by the perceived threat of NATO expansion eastward and regional conflicts in the “traditional Russian spheres of interest.”

 The rise and expansion of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Russia’s active political and military involvement in Syria, and the largest refugee crisis since World War II contribute to the challenges in the region and present a profound threat to the national security interests of the U.S and the West.

The panel members’ observations and expertise will provide valuable insight to help better understand and contextualize the current and emerging realities of this critical region.

Also these insights and observations on how the U.S. is perceived in Ukraine and the former USSR deserve attention, because they are scholars and practitioners who combine insight and practical knowledge as well as a rich academic expertise (we have two panel members who are originally from the region). This combination brings a better understanding of the local culture and the regional and ethnic conflicts that have shaped it. It tells us a lot about a corner of the world where death is preferable to dishonor and honor is defined in a quite different way than in Western society.

 **Dr. Mariya Y. Omelicheva,** who is originally from the region, is Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Kansas. She holds PhD in Political Science from Purdue University and JD in International Law from Moscow National Law Academy. She has published extensively in a variety of peer-reviewed outlets.

Mariya will provide an overview of “Russia’s new generation warfare”: how it has been conceived of in the West and from the standpoint of the Russian policy makers. It will highlight, in particular, the importance of the informational/ideological aspects of the “new generation warfare.”

**Dr. Vitaly Chernetsky** was born in Odessa, Ukraine. He began his university education at Moscow State University, and received his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Pennsylvania. He is currently an Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Director of the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at the University of Kansas.

Vitaly in his remarks will focus on Ukraine's attempts (not always successful) to formulate a coherent cultural policy (both domestically and internationally) and struggle for the hearts and minds of the population in the context of ongoing pressures from Russia of "weaponizing" cultural identity. He will focus both on the efforts of the new generation of activists and cultural managers and the activities of state institutions.

**Dr. Christopher Marsh,** Professor of National Security and Strategic Studies at the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS), US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth.
His current research focuses on global special operations forces (SOF), including their mission sets and capabilities. Additionally, he continues to research Russian foreign and defense policy, particularly military cooperation between Russia and China, and religion and war.

Chris will tackle both the US perspective on the Ukraine crisis and US strategic thinking behind our policy toward Ukraine (early 1990s to present) and the issue of NATO expansion.

**Chaplain George,** is a World Religions instructor at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He holds master's degrees in divinity and Religious Studies from the University of Kansas. George has served during multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan and has done research on religious aspects of the Ukraine conflict.

Today he will discuss how the presence of Ukrainian church leaders at the EuroMaidan Protests sheds light upon the direction and identity of the churches since Ukraine’s independence and the annexation of Crimea.

Without further ado I would like to yield the floor to our panel

**Thank you**