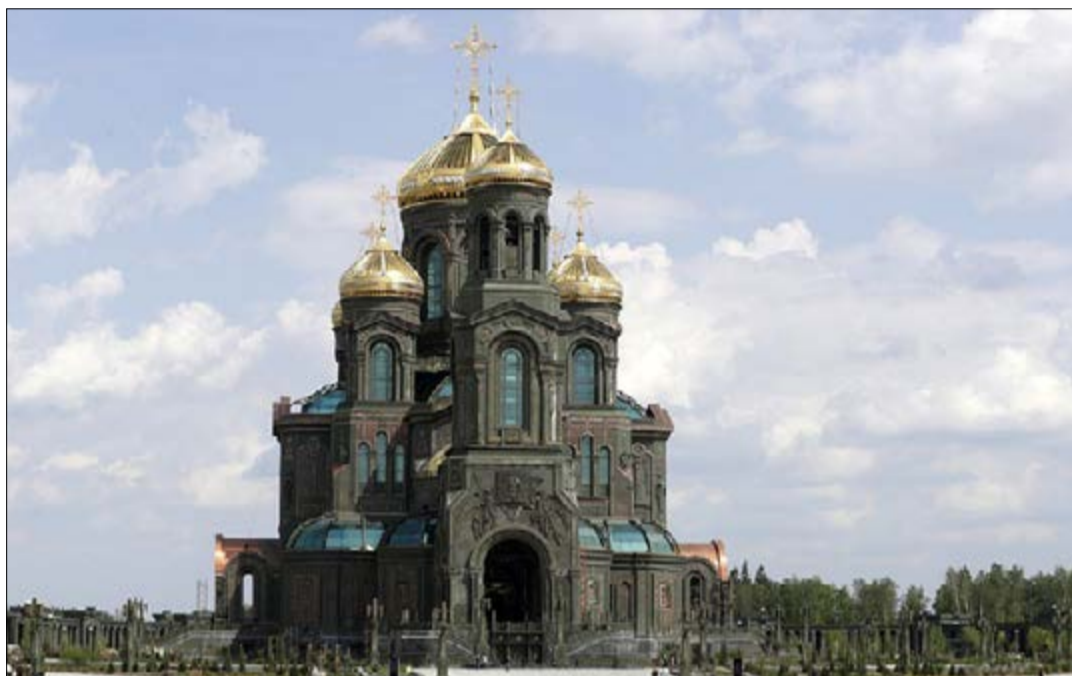




Bond Between Russian Religion and Military

OE Watch Commentary: As the first passage from *Izvestia* discusses, on 14 June, Patriarch Kirill consecrated the Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ – which is to be the main church of the Russian armed forces – after its construction was recently completed in Patriot Park near Moscow. Built to honor the 75th anniversary of World War II, this location was chosen because it was there that Soviet forces held the German army at bay. The building itself is full of symbolism plucked from the Great Patriotic War; the belfry is 75 meters tall, and the diameter of the central dome is 19.45 meters. The dark green walls of the cathedral are covered in extravagant and detailed painted scenes from the war. While this is perhaps one of the more imposing tethers between the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and the state, it is part of a longer progression of Putin using the public reverence for the Church and the military to solidify and consolidate his power.



Russian Armed Forces Cathedral, July 2020.

Source: Kremlin.ru, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63543>, CC BY 4.0 Intl

The idea of declaring an official cathedral of the armed forces might seem like a strange entanglement of state and religious institutions, but there is a long history of the ROC, going back deep into the Imperial era, being essentially wielded as an arm of the state. This was certainly less true in the Soviet period – and the irony that this cathedral honors the military achievements of an atheistic regime is not lost – Orthodoxy and the Russian state have been wrapped up in each other for over a thousand years. Especially since Peter the Great, the state has exerted an exceptional amount of influence over the Church.

Since taking power in 2000, Putin has consistently placed himself in close association with the ROC, calling upon it to justify his authority and the expansion of Russian power abroad. In 2014, amid the Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, Putin gave an address to the Duma wherein he pointed to a shared history with this part of Ukraine, pointing to the baptism of Prince Vladimir in the Crimean city of Kherson in 988 CE. As highlighted in the second passage, Putin said, “His spiritual feat... of adopting Orthodoxy predetermined the overall basis of the culture... that unite the peoples of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.” Putin has taken every opportunity to use Russian Orthodoxy to strengthen his control on Russia and the surrounding region.

Now, in a decision which further cements the relationship between the Russian state, church, and military, Patriarch Kirill will be the head priest in charge of the official cathedral of the Russian armed forces. As the passages point out, Patriarch Kirill praised Russia’s return to promoting Orthodoxy, state officials including Defense Minister Shoigu and President Putin, as well as the Russian military, “which especially feel the need for divine protection.” This enormous cathedral, and the institutional, cultural, and political ties which lie beneath it, is intended to stabilize and strengthen the power not only of the Orthodox Church and the Russian military, but also the authority of Putin himself. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rodger)**

“The Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ, having the status of the main temple of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, will become a symbol of the turn of Russia and its Armed Forces from unbelief to faith after decades of state atheism...”



Patriarch Kirill.

Source: Serge Serebro, Vitebsk Popular News / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Patriarch_Kirill_I_of_Moscow_03.jpg



Continued: Bond Between Russian Religion and Military

Source: “Патриарх Кирилл сам станет настоятелем храма Вооруженных сил России (Patriarch Kirill Himself Will Become the Rector of the Temple of the Armed Forces of Russia),” *Izvestia*, 14 June 2020. <https://iz.ru/1023399/2020-06-14/patriarkh-kirill-sam-stanet-nastoiatelem-khrama-vooruzhennykh-sil-rossii>

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill on Sunday, June 14, announced that he himself would become head of the Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ - the temple of the Armed Forces of Russia.

“It’s wonderful that after decades of timelessness imposed on our country by ridiculous atheism, people turned to faith. The armed forces, which especially feel the need for divine protection, and many, many people,” he added during the consecration the temple.

Source: “Address by President of the Russian Federation,” *Kremlin.ru*, 18 March 2014. <http://en.special.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>

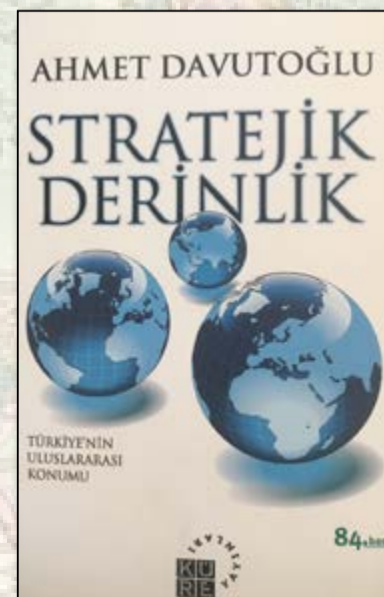
Everything in Crimea speaks of our shared history and pride. This is the location of ancient Khersones, where Prince Vladimir was baptised. His spiritual feat of adopting Orthodoxy predetermined the overall basis of the culture, civilisation and human values that unite the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The graves of Russian soldiers whose bravery brought Crimea into the Russian empire are also in Crimea.

Source: “Патриарх Кирилл назвал главный храм Вооруженных сил символом поворота России к вере (Patriarch Kirill Called the Main Temple of the Armed Forces a Symbol of Russia’s Turn Toward Faith),” *TASS*, 14 June 2020. <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/8719179>

The patriarch expressed special gratitude for the construction of the cathedral to its initiator, Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation Sergey Shoigu, as well as Russian President Vladimir Putin, all the Armed Forces, builders and the artists who designed the church. He presented the Minister of Defense with the icon of the Mother of God of Kaplunov, before which, according to legend, Peter the Great prayed before the Battle of Poltava to serve in the newly consecrated cathedral. He also personally handed over the icon of the Holy Trinity to the church.

Book Review: A Look Back and Forward at Turkey’s “Strategic Depth” Foreign Policy Doctrine Karen Kaya February 2020

“Strategic Depth (Stratejik Derinlik)” is a Turkish book published in 2001. This was a time when international relations theorists were describing new frameworks of world order and security modalities following the end of the Cold War and bi-polar world. Works such as Francis Fukuyama’s “End of History” and Samuel Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” were icons of this intellectual period. It was in this context of a changing international system that Turkish International Relations Professor Ahmet Davutoğlu (who later served as Foreign Minister between 2009-2014 and Prime Minister between 2014-2016) attempted to define Turkey’s position in his book “Strategic Depth.” From around 2002 to 2012, the foreign policy that Davutoğlu outlined in his book was considered the doctrine and roadmap for Turkish foreign policy.



<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/309386>