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thus, a narrative of deterrence that emphasizes the projection of military force against state-on-state threats is problematic for the more traditional hybrid threats. instead, a strategy that seeks to counter hybrid nonkinetic operations needs to address the realities of asymmetric warfare, such as the inability to detect and decapitate threats through aerial strikes and the use of unmanned aerial vehicles to conduct lethal or nonlethal surveillance. moreover, the two new hybrid options the russians have been working on, nuclear cruise missile and hypersonic cruise missile systems, are not necessarily new. the russian defense ministry has been researching nuclear-powered cruise missiles since the 1970s, and, in recent years, has been trying to develop a long-range nuclear cruise missile. the other new weapon is a hypersonic missile—a kind of suborbital ramjet that travels at mach 5 (5 times the speed of sound). like the newest cruise missile, these weapons could yield limited retaliation in the face of large-scale nonkinetic attacks. hence, both the conventional military component and the nonmilitary component of the russian hybrid nonkinetic threat require strategic reassessment from the perspective of signaling. in addition to these commitments by the alliance to implement the strategic concept of forward presence in central and eastern europe, nato has long claimed that it would consider a nuclear use of its nuclear weapons in the event of a large attack on europe. this policy is codified in the tactical nuclear weapons article 6 of natos nuclear posture review, which reads, in part:53

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european allies are clear and resolute that they will not use nuclear weapons without clear and unambiguous and credible commitments from russia that nuclear arms will not be used against them. if the future strategic environment worsens and russia deploys and uses nuclear arms against europe, natos decision to use nuclear arms would depend on the assessed capability of the adversary, the credibility of its promise not to use nuclear arms, the time available to make the decision, the postures and intentions of the united states, the significance of the attack to the alliance, and the impact that a use of nuclear arms might have on regional strategic stability and international peace and security. the use of nuclear weapons would be considered only as a last resort and only if all other options had been exhausted. when nuclear weapons would be used would be a matter of european (nato) decision. natos revised force posture in europe requires that the united states maintain a credible ability to deploy a nuclear force to the region and maintain the option of using a full-scale nuclear response. this will contribute to natos deterrent strength by reducing the credibility of russia as a nuclear power and will enhance natos ability to respond flexibly to threats in the region by maintaining capabilities for a larger response. at the same time, the article 6 commitment to manage a potential nuclear-use contingency and to avoid nuclear escalation reduces the likelihood that a crisis would escalate to the nuclear use of nuclear weapons. 5ec8ef588b