

"The Choreographed Accord"

Hypothetical Forecast

Treadstone 71



The *Choreographed Accord* explores a strategic game between Trump and Putin, where public conflicts disguise private coordination. Through symbolic concessions and carefully crafted narratives, the two leaders reshape global politics, bypass traditional alliances, and elevate their roles as visionaries. We explore the hypothesis that Trump and Putin are engaged in a pre-defined political and strategic game, using public interactions like Truth Social posts as carefully orchestrated moves. If the premise holds, these actions are deliberate tactics designed to achieve specific outcomes while enhancing the image and power of both leaders. Below is the Treadstone 71 assessment:

Strategic Foresight Scenarios Supporting the Pre-Defined Game Hypothesis

Public Antagonism as a Mask for Private Cooperation

- Premise
 - Trump's aggressive posts on Truth Social create an illusion of tough diplomacy, concealing prearranged agreements with Putin.
- Tactics
 - Public threats of sanctions and tariffs are intentionally vague to ensure they cannot be acted upon without considerable pushback. Behind the scenes, the two leaders coordinate on policy concessions that benefit their domestic and international agendas. For Trump, this reinforces his image as a dealmaker. For Putin, it provides a pretext to de-escalate without appearing weak.

• Outcomes

Trump's Gains	Putin's Gains
Domestic approval as a tough yet pragmatic leader.	Avoidance of crippling sanctions through orchestrated compliance.
Positioning as a peacemaker in the Ukraine conflict.	Opportunity to reframe the Ukraine conflict domestically as resolved through Russian strength.

- Risks
 - Exposure of the coordination through leaks or intelligence intercepts causes domestic and international fallout.

Likely Concessions

Ukraine Conflict and Regional Influence

Superficial Settlement in Ukraine- Putin offers limited troop withdrawals from non-critical regions or agrees to temporary ceasefires. These actions do not undermine Russia's de facto control over

key territories, such as Crimea or parts of Donbas, but they provide Trump with an opportunity to claim he "ended the war."

Humanitarian Access- Putin agrees to nominal measures, such as allowing humanitarian corridors or food aid delivery in contested regions, enabling Trump to frame this as a moral and logistical victory for U.S. diplomacy.

Symbolic Peace Agreements- The leaders announce high-profile peace talks or agreements with vague language, emphasizing cooperation without enforcing significant accountability.

Sanctions and Trade

Relaxation of Sanctions- Trump promises to lift or delay certain sanctions targeting Russia's energy, banking, or technology sectors. In exchange, Putin agree to symbolic measures, such as halting specific trade activities (e.g., energy exports to Europe) that align with U.S. priorities.

Energy and Resource Agreements- The U.S. and Russia coordinate new energy deals, framing them as cooperative efforts to stabilize global markets. This bolsters Trump's image as a pragmatic leader, reducing energy costs while giving Putin economic relief.

Domestic Agendas

Election Interference Guarantees- While not publicized, one concession involves tacit agreements on non-interference in domestic elections. Both leaders privately agree to limit activities that threaten each other's domestic stability.

Public Messaging Alignment- Putin tempers Russian rhetoric about U.S. domestic affairs, particularly around divisive social or political issues. Trump, in return, reduces his rhetoric about Russian threats, subtly normalizing relations.

Arms Control and Strategic Stability

Renewed Arms Control Discussions- Both leaders announce a return to arms control negotiations, potentially reviving treaties like New START. Even if largely symbolic, this allows Trump to portray himself as advancing global security while allowing Putin to regain a seat at the global negotiating table.

Narrative Engineering to Redefine Roles

- Premise
 - The two leaders capitalize on historical revisionism and nationalistic sentiment to rewrite their roles in the global order.
- Tactics

- Trump's invocation of World War II and his admiration for the Russian people signal a broader effort to normalize U.S.-Russia relations. Putin reciprocates by moderating his rhetoric toward the United States, presenting himself as cooperative. The goal is to reshape public perception, portraying leaders as visionaries transcending traditional geopolitics.
- Outcomes
 - Trump and Putin emerged as coarchitects of a new global narrative where their leadership is indispensable, sidelining traditional multilateral institutions like NATO or the UN.
- Risks
 - Alienation of allies and erosion of trust in U.S. commitments backfire, leaving the countries diplomatically isolated.

Likely Narrative

The global narrative emerging from a Trump-Putin alignment emphasizes a reimagined framework for international relations, sidelining traditional institutions like NATO or the UN while promoting the leaders as indispensable visionaries. This narrative likely take the following shape:

U.S.-Russia Cooperation as a Force for Global Stability-

Historic Framing- Trump's invocation of World War II and his emphasis on Russia's sacrifices create a foundation for portraying U.S.-Russia cooperation as historically inevitable and beneficial, echoing the theme of "great powers working together to save the world."

Bilateral Leadership- The leaders cast themselves as problem-solvers bypassing bureaucratic multilateral institutions, arguing that direct negotiations between powerful nations yield faster and more effective results.

Challenging the Existing Order

Rejection of Multilateralism- Trump and Putin challenge the relevance of NATO, the EU, and the UN, portraying these institutions as outdated, ineffective, or controlled by special interests. The narrative pushes for a "new global deal" based on bilateral agreements and transactional diplomacy.

Pragmatic Realignment- Both leaders argue for a pragmatic shift in global politics, emphasizing national sovereignty over collective security arrangements. The realignment fits Trump's "America First" rhetoric and Putin's vision of a multipolar world.

Strengthened Nationalism and Sovereignty

Visionary Leadership- Both leaders present themselves as uniquely capable of steering their nations toward prosperity while upholding their distinct cultural and historical identities. Nationalistic rhetoric frames their leadership as essential to preserving sovereignty in an era of global chaos.

Normalization of U.S.-Russia Relations- Public messaging emphasizes the need to move beyond Cold War-era animosities, portraying U.S.-Russia relations as a model for de-escalation and cooperation.

Economic and Energy Cooperation

Stabilizing Global Markets- Trump and Putin position themselves as protectors of global energy and trade stability, emphasizing agreements that purportedly benefit global economies. Joint efforts to address energy crises is a keystone of the new narrative.

Distraction from Domestic Issues

The narrative also function as a tool to shift domestic focus from internal controversies to international "wins." Trump's deal-making persona and Putin's strongman image are reinforced through choreographed displays of unity.

3. Economic Pressure as Theater

- Premise
 - Trump's threats of economic sanctions are part of a scripted performance designed to achieve specific geopolitical goals while maintaining plausible deniability.
- Tactics
 - Putin agrees to superficial concessions, such as limited troop withdrawals or symbolic peace gestures, in exchange for leniency on economic sanctions. Trump frames these as hard-won victories, bolstering his reputation.

- Outcomes

U.S. Benefits	Russian Benefits
Appearance of restored U.S. leadership in resolving conflicts.	Preservation of strategic gains in Ukraine under the guise of concessions.
Strengthened domestic support for Trump as a problem-solver.	Respite from economic and political pressures.

- Risks
 - Observers in Europe or Asia may see through the facade, prompting efforts to counterbalance the U.S.-Russia rapprochement.

Superficial Concessions

Superficial concessions focus on low-cost, high-visibility actions that allow both leaders to claim diplomatic success while minimizing risks to their strategic interests. Likely superficial concessions include:

Military Actions

Limited Troop Withdrawals- Putin withdraws Russian troops from areas of low strategic value while retaining significant control over key regions like Crimea or eastern Ukraine.

De-escalation Announcements- Russia declares a reduction in military operations in Ukraine, even if such actions are temporary or limited in scope.

Symbolic Peace Gestures

Participation in Negotiations- Putin agrees to attend high-profile peace summits or commit to talks mediated by a third party. These summits likely yield agreements with little enforcement or accountability.

Humanitarian Efforts- Russia allows limited humanitarian aid or prisoner exchanges, which are framed as meaningful concessions without impacting Russia's strategic goals.

Economic Adjustments

Temporary Export Restrictions- Putin agrees to limit certain exports (e.g., energy supplies) to align with U.S. demands, framing these as cooperative measures while securing backdoor deals for future relief.

Token Compliance with Sanctions- Russia shuts down or restricts the activities of a few state-linked entities under sanction to signal symbolic compliance while avoiding broader economic impact.

Controlled Escalation to Shift Focus

- Premise
 - Trump and Putin engage in public sparring to distract from domestic issues and consolidate power.
- Tactics
 - Trump's posts on Truth Social escalate tensions, diverting attention from controversies at home. Putin's measured responses signal strength without provoking actual conflict. They use the spectacle to rally nationalist support.
- Outcomes
 - Domestic audiences become consumed by the narrative of high-stakes diplomacy, sidelining criticism of internal governance or scandals.
- Risks
 - Escalation beyond control risks real military or economic consequences, undermining the intended strategy.

Narrative Concessions

Moderation of Anti-U.S. Rhetoric- Putin reduces inflammatory rhetoric toward the U.S. in public forums, allowing Trump to portray the de-escalation as a personal achievement.

Public Endorsement of Dialogue- Russia issues statements praising Trump's diplomacy, further bolstering his image as a dealmaker.

Energy and Trade Deals

Minor Trade Agreements- Putin offers minor trade concessions, such as agreements on agricultural imports or energy exports, which Trump frames as economic victories for the U.S.

Analytical Framework and Supporting Insights

Historical Precedents

- The relationship between state actors engaging in overt hostility while covertly coordinating is well-documented. For example, Cold War diplomacy frequently involved public posturing paired with backchannel negotiations. Trump and Putin's interactions fit this mold, with public antagonism potentially masking private alignment.

Narrative Control via Social Media

Trump's reliance on Truth Social to announce policy and engage in diplomacy mirrors techniques used by autocratic leaders to bypass traditional media scrutiny. His approach allows for unfiltered messaging, reinforcing specific narratives while sidelining dissent while driving membership and forcing the news to come to Truth Social.

Implications for U.S.-Russia Relations

- If the pre-defined game hypothesis is correct, U.S.-Russian relations will shift toward a transactional model, with public conflicts serving as smokescreens for strategic cooperation.
- Long-term implications include weakened alliances, particularly with European partners, as trust in U.S. commitments erodes.

The mind map below visually organizes the scenarios, premises, tactics, outcomes, and risks as branches emanating from the core hypothesis illustrating connections.

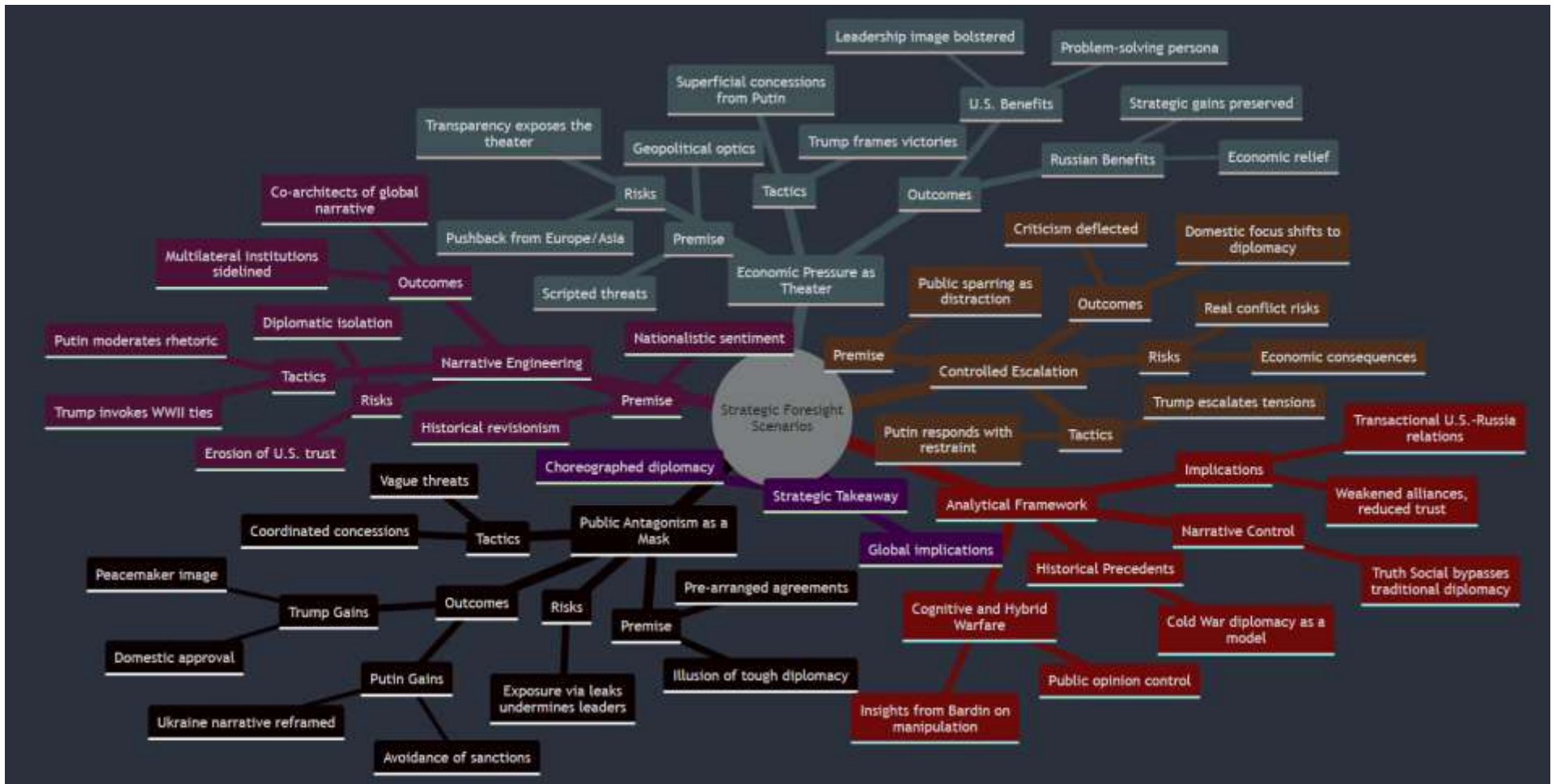


Figure 1 Scenarios Mind Map

The interplay between Trump's provocative Truth Social posts and Putin's measured responses suggests a choreographed strategy designed to serve mutual interests. These interactions, framed as public diplomacy, represents a calculated move in a broader geopolitical great-game. Strategic foresight scenarios underscore the importance of understanding these dynamics, as the implications extend beyond bilateral relations to the global balance of power. Understanding this pre-defined game requires vigilance, as its success hinges on controlling narratives and managing public perception—a hallmark of hybrid and cognitive warfare tactics.

Cone of Plausibility

The Cone of Plausibility is a structured analytic technique used to assess various scenarios based on their likelihood, grounding each in current evidence and trends. It enables analysts to evaluate which scenario is most plausible while considering alternative futures. Below is a detailed Cone of Plausibility for the hypothesis of a pre-defined game between Trump and Putin, where Truth Social posts serve as strategic communication tactics

Cone of Plausibility Strategic Foresight Analysis

Most Likely Scenario Public Antagonism as a Mask for Private Cooperation

Likelihood - High

- Why it is Plausible.

Public posturing aligns closely with historical precedents in U.S.-Russia relations, where public conflicts often mask private alignment. Trump's rhetorical threats—vague, hyperbolic, and lacking specifics—are consistent with a performative strategy meant to give the appearance of toughness. This scenario reflects Trump's historical approach to deal-making, where bluster and threats pave the way for negotiations framed as "wins." Similarly, Putin benefits by projecting resistance while secretly seeking relief from sanctions and international pressure.

- Current Evidence
 - Trump's Truth Social post avoids actionable details on taxes or sanctions, suggesting symbolic, not substantive, antagonism.
 - They have demonstrated pragmatism when their strategic interests align, as seen during their prior summits (e.g., Helsinki 2018).

- Putin's regime faces economic strain due to prolonged conflict in Ukraine, increasing incentives to engage in covert negotiations.
- Implications
A superficial settlement in Ukraine is likely framed as a victory for Trump's diplomacy and a compromise for Putin, enhancing leaders' domestic and international standing.

Likely Scenario Narrative Engineering to Redefine Roles

Likelihood - Medium-High

- Why it is Plausible.

Trump and Putin share a common interest in revising global power narratives, positioning themselves as leaders capable of transcending traditional conflicts. Trump's references to historical ties between the U.S. and Russia—such as World War II cooperation—mirror efforts to build a new narrative. The WWII comment resonates with nationalistic bases in both countries, portraying their leaders as indispensable and visionary.

- Current Evidence
 - Trump's repeated praise for Russia's sacrifices in WWII and his disavowal of the "Russia hoax" highlight a narrative reframing effort.
 - Putin has historically used symbolic gestures (e.g., WWII commemorations) to bolster his domestic image and position Russia as a resilient superpower.
 - They have shown mastery in manipulating media to shape perceptions, often sidestepping conventional diplomatic channels.

- Implications

The scenario redefines U.S.-Russia relations, potentially bypassing multilateral institutions like NATO and creating an informal détente that disorients Western allies.

Moderate Scenario Economic Pressure as Theater

Likelihood - Medium

- Why it is Plausible.

Trump's threats of taxes, tariffs, and sanctions appear more like political theater than genuine policy intentions. The ambiguity around specific measures reflects a strategy to pressure Putin into symbolic concessions without risking an actual economic

fallout. Putin, in turn, agrees to minor adjustments that ease tensions without compromising strategic interests.

- Current Evidence
 - Trump's statements lacked concrete targets for economic action, signaling a potential focus on optics over substance.
 - Putin has historically responded to sanctions with calibrated retaliatory measures, ensuring his regime's survival while avoiding escalation.
 - Reports of planned calls between Trump and Putin reinforce the idea of a coordinated backchannel to manage the fallout of public posturing.

- Implications

Trump and Putin extract domestic benefits from the theater, but long-term credibility issues emerge as Western allies scrutinize the lack of tangible results.

Less Likely Scenario Controlled Escalation to Shift Focus

Likelihood – Medium-Low

- Why it is Plausible.

Public sparring is a distraction from domestic controversies, with Trump and Putin benefitting from the heightened tension. Trump's social media provocations and Putin's calibrated responses create a spectacle that shifts attention from internal challenges.

- Current Evidence
 - Trump's presidency has frequently employed media controversies to dominate news cycles and divert attention from political challenges (e.g., investigations of legislative setbacks).
 - Putin has similarly used foreign policy crises to consolidate power at home, particularly during periods of economic difficulty or political dissent.
 - However, the risk of escalation beyond control makes this scenario less plausible than others, as neither leader wants to provoke real conflict inadvertently.
- Implications

This scenario reinforces nationalistic fervor and distracts domestic audiences but

leads to unintended consequences, including strained alliances or miscalculated military actions.

Least Likely Scenario Unplanned Conflict Escalation

Likelihood - Low

- Why it is Plausible
Though unlikely, miscommunication or overreaction spiral into unintended conflict. Trump's unpredictable rhetoric, combined with Putin's need to maintain a strongman image, creates conditions for accidental escalation.
- Current Evidence
 - Trump's impulsive social media strategy introduces risks of misinterpretation, particularly among international actors less familiar with his style.
 - Putin's control over Russian decision-making minimizes the likelihood of uncoordinated escalation, though domestic pressure forces more aggressive responses.
- Implications
A miscalculated escalation has disastrous consequences, including broader military conflict or economic destabilization, damaging leaders' credibility.

The table below provides another view of the Cone of Plausibility.



Scenario	Likelihood	Why It's Plausible	Current Evidence	Implications
1. Public Antagonism as a Mask	High	Public posturing masks private alignment; vague threats match Trump's style of negotiation. Putin benefits by seeking relief from sanctions without appearing weak.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trump's posts lack actionable details. - Prior pragmatism during Helsinki 2018. - Putin faces economic strain from the prolonged Ukraine war. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Likely Ukraine settlement framed as Trump's diplomatic success. - Putin secures narrative control and sanctions relief.
2. Narrative Engineering	Medium-High	Both leaders want to reshape global power narratives, appealing to nationalist bases and reframing their leadership roles as indispensable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trump praises WWII ties and dismisses the "Russia hoax." - Putin uses symbolic gestures to bolster his domestic image. - Media manipulation expertise demonstrated by both leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - U.S.-Russia relations bypass institutions like NATO. - Allies disoriented by informal détente, weakening collective security.
3. Economic Pressure as Theater	Medium	Threats serve as political theater rather than actionable policy, pressuring symbolic concessions from Putin while maintaining plausible deniability for Trump.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trump's vague statements prioritize optics. - Putin's calibrated responses avoid escalation. - Coordinated calls signal a backchannel approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short-term domestic gains for both leaders. - Potential erosion of credibility if allies detect lack of tangible results.
4. Controlled Escalation	Medium-Low	Public sparring distracts from domestic controversies. Media spectacle benefits both leaders by rallying nationalist support, but risks unintended consequences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trump's controversies dominate news cycles. - Putin leverages foreign crises to consolidate power. - Risk of escalation limits plausibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attention shifts to diplomacy, deflecting domestic criticism. - Potential for miscalculated actions causing unintended conflict or strained alliances.
5. Unplanned Conflict Escalation	Low	Miscommunication or overreaction risks unintended conflict due to Trump's unpredictable rhetoric and Putin's need to maintain a strongman image.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trump's impulsive social media style creates risks. - Putin's control limits escalation likelihood. - Domestic pressures in Russia heighten risks of aggressive responses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Escalation could cause disastrous fallout (military or economic). - Credibility of both leaders suffers, with major international destabilization.

Figure 2 Cone of Plausibility

The most likely scenario involves public antagonism masking private cooperation driven by shared strategic interests and historical precedent. This scenario minimizes risks for Trump and Putin while delivering mutual benefits, fitting their past behavior and known tactics. The analysis underscores the importance of monitoring public rhetoric and behind-the-scenes developments, as the gap between perception and reality often shapes geopolitical outcomes.

The Choreographed Accord between Trump and Putin is a calculated, pre-defined strategy targeting mutual domestic and international goals. Public antagonism masks private cooperation, with superficial concessions—like symbolic troop withdrawals and moderated rhetoric—allowing both leaders to claim victories. Together, they rewrite the global narrative, sidelining multilateral institutions like NATO and positioning themselves as indispensable visionaries of a pragmatic, sovereignty-focused world order. While the moves appear bold, they are carefully designed to maximize optics while minimizing substantive change, reinforcing their leadership images at home and abroad.

