

**CHARLES UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
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**Master's Thesis**

**Wagner Group and Opportunism in Russian Foreign  
Policy: Case Studies of the Central African Republic  
(CAR), Libya, and Mozambique**

**Abstract**

This research paper concerns Russian foreign policy and the tools it uses to accomplish its objectives. More specifically, the research is focused on the secretive private military company (PMC) Wagner Group. Wagner Group has been deployed around the globe to further the interests of Russia and is a key tool in Russia's opportunistic foreign policy. This paper seeks to answer the research question: **At what point does the risk for Russia become too high to maintain the deployment of Wagner Group in a foreign country?** Answering this research question will help academics and policymakers further understand the use of Wagner Group by the Russian government. Wagner Group is meant to be low risk to Russia. Previous research is sparse and often covers many deployments of Wagner Group. In contrast, this paper focuses on three case studies that allow for a more in-depth approach – Wagner Group in the Central African Republic (CAR), Libya, and Mozambique. Using qualitative analysis this paper discerned that in its use of Wagner Group, Russia will maintain its deployment of Wagner Group if the potential or realized gains outweigh the potential and realized risks to Russia, and that in the opposite case, where the risks outweigh the gains, Russia will pull Wagner Group back. These findings are significant because they illustrate how the Wagner Group fits into Russia's opportunistic

approach to foreign policy. Russia inserts Wagner Group when opportunities arise; when it becomes too risky for Russia, then it will cut its losses and take what it has gained. This means that policymakers looking to counter Wagner Group must ensure its further deployment is too risky for Russia to maintain.

### **Keywords**

Russia, Africa, Private Military Company, Wagner Group, Libya, Mozambique, Central African Republic.

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