

3 THINGS TO WATCH IN 2021: RUSSIA

1 Russia and the Biden Administration

Biden will seek strategic stability with Russia, provide significant aid to Ukraine, Georgia, the Baltic States and other neighbors in ongoing conflicts with Russia, and voice rhetorical support for the beleaguered Russian opposition. January may bring reduced Congressional pressure to impose new sanctions, but the State and Treasury Departments will update and maintain existing sanctions designations.



Biden's Approach to FSU States

Biden might attempt summit diplomacy in the Russia-Ukraine conflict if the White House maintains a hard line on security aid to Ukraine and beefs up NATO forward presence in Eastern Europe. Biden will have to contend with international action on sanctions against Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashen; the recent Armenia and Azerbaijan war over Nagorno-Karabakh and concerns over Russian and Turkish involvement; Ukraine's constitutional crisis; and Ukrainian President Zelenskiy's declining polls.

2



3 Strategic Alignment Between Russia & China

The Biden administration will confront Moscow and Beijing "from a position of strength", abandoning Trump's willingness to engage in personal diplomacy with authoritarian leaders in favor of renewing an emphasis on democracy promotion. These developments will deepen already serious U.S.-China tensions over trade, security and global governance, and might spur Putin to enter into a full-blown military alliance with China.