

FMSO's Military DIME (M-DIME) Research Project

Tracking Russian and Chinese military influence in states around the world

Instruments of Russian Military Influence in Uganda

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OVERVIEW OF FMSO'S M-DIME RESEARCH PROJECT

The Military DIME (M-DIME) Research Project is a dynamic effort from researchers at the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO). Its goal is to provide Army leaders with a clear, comparative understanding of how China and Russia employ instruments of national power to obtain military influence around the world. The M-DIME framework is derived from the "DIME" concept, which classes instruments of national power into four types: Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic. Based on this concept, the M-DIME framework gives more narrow attention to the instruments that China and Russia employ to gain military influence in third-party countries.

The M-DIME framework's purpose is to track and analyze the military influence of "Benefactor" countries (i.e. China and Russia) in select "Recipient" countries in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia. Benefactor countries are assumed to engage in activities that result in them having increased military influence in Recipient countries to gain leverage over global rivals, competitors, and adversaries; for China and Russia, this means the United States. Within this framework, "military influence" is defined as the ability of a Benefactor country to shape or alter the attitudes, behaviors, and capabilities of actors within—and entities associated with—the armed forces of Recipient countries.

The M-DIME framework identifies 12 distinct instruments of national power employed by Benefactor countries to gain military influence in Recipient countries, three for each of the DIME categories. They are as follows:

DIPLOMATIC INSTRUMENTS

- D1 Defense-Related Diplomacy
- D2 International Military Education and Training
- D3 Soft Power Activities

INFORMATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

- I1 Cultural and Media Outreach, Collaboration, and Alignment
- I2 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Support
- I3 Cooperation in Military Intelligence and Communications

MILITARY INSTRUMENTS

- M1 Formal Bilateral Military Engagements
- M2 Shared Informal/Multilateral Military Engagements
- M3 Defense/Security Pacts and Agreements

ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS

- E1 Arms Transfers
- E2 Technology-Sharing and Joint Production Agreements
- E3 Trade and Cooperation in Strategic Commodities/Sectors

M-DIME analysis is based on qualitative assessments of Benefactor influence in Recipient countries along each of the 12 M-DIME instruments of influence. These assessments are made for the Benefactor's **Current Influence** (assessed as Very High, High, Medium, Low, Very Low, or Unobserved) and **Projected Influence** (assessed as Increasing, Steady, Decreasing, or Unknown). Current assessments are made based on activities from 2012 to the present, while future assessments are three-year forecasts.

The bulk of activities considered in the M-DIME Research Project involve members of the armed forces or defense sector personnel in both Benefactor and Recipient countries. Such activities include formal and informal military-to-military diplomacy, security cooperation engagements, and arms transfers. However, the M-DIME Research Project also tracks and analyzes Chinese and Russian activities that employ non-military instruments of influence but ultimately bear on the decisionmaking and capabilities of the Recipient country's armed forces. Such activities include Chinese and Russian collaboration with Benefactor states in media, communications technology, and strategic sectors.

The M-DIME Research Project's findings are derived from open-source research. Each M-DIME product is produced with the collaboration of analysts from across FMSO, frequently with the assistance of non-Department of Defense subject matter experts coming from academia, think tanks, and the private sector. Given its basis in open-source research, the M-DIME Research Project has an inherent limitation. It cannot track Chinese and Russian military influence activities that are deliberately kept secret. Consequently, assessments of Chinese and Russian influence based on instruments for which secrecy is important or where information would typically be classified by the Benefactor or Recipient countries—for instance, military-technology sharing or intelligence collaboration—are acknowledged to be made with low confidence. Assessments of

Projected Influence, unless otherwise stated, are also made with low confidence given pervasive information gaps and the potential for bilateral dynamics to quickly shift. In certain cases, assessments are not made where open-source data is considered inconclusive

In sum, the M-DIME Research Project is a tool for U.S. Army and U.S. Government personnel to better understand the instruments of national power employed by China and Russia to gain global military influence and the impact these activities have on U.S. national security interests. Over time, FMSO will expand the body of research and assessments based on this framework, increasing its comparative value across Benefactor and Recipient countries.

KEY ASSESSMENTS














DIPLOMATIC / INFORMATION			MILITARY / ECONOMIC			
	D1	Defense-Related Diplomacy		M1	Formal Bilateral Military Engagements	
	D2	International Military Education and Training			M2	Shared Informal/Multilateral Military Engagements
	D3	Soft Power Activities			M3	Defense/Security Pacts and Agreements
	I1	Cultural/Media Outreach, Collaboration, Alignment			E1	Arms Transfers
	I2	Information/Communications Technology Support			E2	Technology-Sharing, Joint Production Agreements
	I3	Cooperation in Military Intelligence/Communications			E3	Trade/Cooperation in Strategic Commodities/Sectors
<div><div>CURRENT DEGREE OF INFLUENCE</div><div><div>Very High</div><div>High</div><div>Medium</div><div>Low</div><div>Very Low</div><div>None/ Unobserved</div></div></div> <div><div>PROJECTED FUTURE DEGREE OF INFLUENCE</div><div><div>Increasing</div><div>Steady</div><div>Decreasing</div></div></div>						

Figure 1. M-DIME Overview

Russia's current M-DIME influence in Uganda is assessed as Low. Some of the most important instruments contributing to Russia's current military influence in Uganda include:



Cultural and Media Outreach, Collaboration, and Alignment (I1). Russia has frequently engaged with Ugandan state media and government agencies to shape their coverage of Russia, including the invasion of Ukraine. In certain instances, Russia has directly linked the provision of military equipment to Uganda to favorable media coverage.



Arms Transfers (E1). Russia is Uganda's largest arms supplier, accounting for half of the economic value of arms imports in recent years and supplying nearly all combat aircraft.



Defense-Related Diplomacy (D1). Russia and Uganda have engaged in high-level defense-related diplomacy in recent years, with meetings occurring more frequently following the invasion of Ukraine. Uganda has consistently abstained from United Nations resolutions condemning the invasion, and senior Ugandan officials have made public comments professing their support for Russia.

Russia's projected M-DIME influence in Uganda is assessed as Increasing. Some of the most dynamic instruments informing Russia's projected military influence in Uganda include:



Formal Bilateral Military Engagements (M1). Russia has established a hub in Uganda to maintain and upgrade Russian-built military aircraft. While Russia and Uganda do not currently engage in bilateral military exercises, the hub's establishment may pave the way for training and collaboration.



Defense/Security Pacts and Agreements (M3). In April 2024, Russia and Uganda signed a bilateral security and defense cooperation agreement, the first security-focused agreement between the two countries since 2003. While there is limited open-source information on the agreement specifics, the signing of the agreement indicates the potential for further cooperation between the two countries.



Trade and Cooperation in Strategic Commodities/Sectors (E3). Since 2016, Uganda has sought Russia as a partner in the development of a civilian nuclear energy program. While there have been a series of false starts, in July 2023 Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni announced during a joint event with Russian President Vladimir Putin that Russia would be constructing a nuclear power plant in Uganda.

INTRODUCTION TO RUSSIA-UGANDA RELATIONS

Russia and Uganda's strong bilateral military relations, supported by the provision of arms material and diplomatic engagements, dates to Uganda's founding in 1962. After Uganda gained independence on 9 October,¹ the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with Uganda.² The politically tumultuous initial years of independence saw the seizure of power by General Idi Amin on 25 January 1971.³ The Soviet Union initially opposed the coup but eventually supported Amin.⁴ Amin first requested Soviet military support in 1972⁵ following a failed attack against Uganda by Ugandan exiles in Tanzania who were supported by Tanzania.⁶ In 1973, a leading Soviet official, Major General Rossikin, visited Uganda, and resultantly the Soviet Union provided arms and training for Ugandan military personnel.⁷ By 1975, the Soviet Union had provided Uganda military equipment valued at more than \$500 million.⁸ Following the Entebbe Raid by Israel to release hostages from a hijacked civilian passenger plane, the Soviet Union provided more aircraft and increased the number of military advisers.⁹ In 1978, Uganda invaded Tanzania, leading to the collapse of the Amin regime in 1979,¹⁰ and condemnation by the Soviet Union, which

refused to provide additional assistance.¹¹ During the Ugandan Bush War from 1980-1986, the USSR provided support for the National Resistance Army, which overthrew the Ugandan government of Milton Obote.¹² Following the National Resistance Army victory, Yoweri Museveni assumed the Presidency of Uganda, which he continues to occupy.

There is no open-source evidence of further Soviet or Russian military relations with Uganda until 2003, when Russia and Uganda signed a Military and Technical Cooperation Agreement.¹³ In September 2012, Uganda purchased Russian combat aircraft.¹⁴ Uganda has also regularly purchased helicopters¹⁵ and developed the requisite maintenance facilities.¹⁶ In May 2023, the Russian and Ugandan governments formally agreed to make Uganda a regional hub to develop Russian military equipment and technology.¹⁷ General Kainerugaba, the Defense Staff Chief and son of President Museveni, has indicated strong support for Russia,¹⁸ as has Defense Minister Vincent Ssempijja.¹⁹

The United States invests over \$1 billion annually in Uganda.²⁰ Starting in 1962, the United States began to provide development assistance to Uganda through

U.S. Agency for International Development, specifically for agricultural and educational development.²¹ The United States and Uganda severed diplomatic relations in 1973 when General Amin took power but reestablished them following the collapse of his government in 1979.²² The United States is invested in security cooperation with Uganda, as evidenced by collaboration between the AFRICOM-supported Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa and the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia.²³ As part of this joint effort, AFRICOM has transferred several shipments of materiel to Uganda

since 2013.²⁴ The United States trained over 500 Uganda People’s Defense Forces²⁵ (UPDF) soldiers through the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership in 2016.²⁶ The U.S. military and the State Department see Uganda as a competent and reliable partner for promoting regional stability and assisting with multilateral peacekeeping missions.²⁷ Russia’s engagement in Uganda is part of its drive for greater influence across the African continent.²⁸ Russia’s influence in Uganda has led to greater democratic backsliding and makes Uganda a less reliable security partner for the United States.²⁹

UGANDA AT A GLANCE	
Capital	Kampala ³⁰
Population	49,283,041 (2024 Estimate) ³¹
GDP per Capita	\$2,300 (Real, 2022 Estimate) ³²
Head of Government	President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni ³³
Head of State	President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni ³⁴
Minister of Defense	Minister Vincent Ssempijja ³⁵
Chief of General Staff	General Muhoozi Kainerugaba ³⁶
Military Expenditure (total)	\$976.7 million (2023 Estimate) ³⁷
Military Expenditure (% of GDP)	1.98% (2023 Estimate) ³⁸
Armed Service Branches	The Ugandan People’s Defense Forces consist of the Land Forces, Air Force, Special Forces Command, and Reserve Force ³⁹
Active Armed Forces Personnel	45,000 Active, 35,000 Reserve (2021 Estimate) ⁴⁰

Figure 2. Uganda at a Glance.

D - Diplomatic Instruments

Russia's use of diplomatic instruments to gain military influence in Uganda is significant, with an increase in meaningful bilateral interactions following the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. There have been frequent high-level military bilateral meetings between Russia and Uganda, as Uganda has supported Russia's positions at the United Nations. Russia has also provided military education and technical training programs for Ugandan forces in addition to other soft power activities.



D1: Defense-Related Diplomacy

Current Influence: Low

Projected Influence: Increasing

- ***Russia and Uganda have engaged in high-level defense-related diplomacy since 2012.⁴¹ Bilateral diplomacy has occurred at higher rates since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.⁴²***
 - » In December 2012, Russian President Putin and Ugandan President Museveni discussed initiatives at a bilateral meeting in Moscow, including increased military-technical cooperation.⁴³
 - » In August 2023, Russian Deputy Defense Minister Fomin discussed military-technical cooperation with Minister Ssempijja during the International Technical and Military Forum in Moscow.⁴⁴ Minister Ssempijja reflected, “we value the sincere and mutually beneficial relations with Russia and stay open for long-term cooperation between the Russian and Ugandan defense ministries.”⁴⁵
 - » In October 2023, following a meeting with the Russian Ambassador to Uganda, Ugandan Minister of Defense Ssempijja emphasized how sanctions on Russia complicate the UPDF's ability to acquire new and update existing military equipment.⁴⁶
- ***Uganda has frequently supported Russian positions during United Nations voting on matters related to the war in Ukraine by abstaining on measures targeting Russia. This voting places it at diplomatic odds with regional powers, such as Kenya.⁴⁷***
 - » In October 2022, Uganda abstained during a UN General Assembly vote condemning Russia for illegal annexations of Ukrainian territory.⁴⁸
 - » In February 2023, Uganda abstained during a UN General Assembly vote calling for an end to hostilities.⁴⁹
- ***With a Ugandan military leadership that is vocally pro-Russian, an increase in the influence of defense-related diplomacy is projected.***



D2: International Military Education and Training Programs

Current Influence: Low

Projected Influence: Steady

- ***Russia has provided bilateral military education and training programs for the UPDF,⁵⁰ building off its tradition of Soviet training.⁵¹***
 - » From May to August 2019, Russian military specialists led training at the Karama Armored Warfare Training School in southwestern Uganda, where Ugandan soldiers are trained on Russian-made T-90 tanks.⁵²

- » In July 2023, Uganda Defense Minister Ssempijja called for Ugandan helicopter pilots to be trained in Russia due to the Russian origin of all Ugandan helicopters.⁵³
- ***There is no open-source information to indicate an impending increase in Russian military education and training programs in conjunction with Uganda; thus Russian military influence via this instrument is expected to remain steady over the next 3 years.***



D3: Soft Power Activities

Current Influence: Low

Projected Influence: Increasing

- ***Personnel from the UPDF have participated in military-diplomatic athletic events in Russia, and Ugandan officials have regularly interacted with the Russian military attaché in Kampala.***
 - » In August 2019, the UPDF participated in the Fifth Jubilee Edition of the International Army Games in Moscow.
 - » In October 2023, the UPDF Air Force hosted military attachés, including from Russia, for an event in Entebbe focused on the history of air operations in Uganda.⁵⁴
 - » In April 2024, the Ugandan Minister of State for Defense for Veterans Affairs, Huda Oleru Abason, hosted the Russian Military and Air Attaché in Kampala, Colonel Nikolay Pavlov, to commemorate Fatherland Day.⁵⁵
- ***Russian military training for Uganda has extended past conventional warfighting to include other areas, such as public health, which Russia has framed as necessary to counter efforts by the United States to use biological weapons in Africa.***
 - » Russia has trained over 500 UPDF personnel in epidemic control since 2022, attempting to exploit tensions with the United States, which had extensive public health programs in Uganda.⁵⁶
 - » Russia has frequently alleged that the United States is developing biological weapons in Ukraine.⁵⁷ In October 2023, Lieutenant General Igor Kirillov, the head of Russia's military forces focused on radiological, chemical, and biological defense, claimed that the United States was moving this research from Ukraine to Uganda.⁵⁸
- ***Russian entities have engaged in training armed Ugandan police and security forces in Uganda.***
 - » In August 2023, M/S Joint Stock Global, a Russian-headquartered private security firm, trained 78 Uganda police officers in intelligence systems for tracking countrywide crime.⁵⁹
 - » In February 2024, Russian Ambassador to Uganda Vladlen Semivolos hosted Juliet Alur, Head of the Foreign Training Unit of the Uganda Police Force, to discuss the prospects for developing educational cooperation between Russian and Ugandan law enforcement agencies.⁶⁰
- ***Uganda will continue to be a frequent participant in Russian-led military events. The increased frequency of engagements and recent statements indicate there may be an increase in Russian military soft power activities to gain military influence over the next 3 years.***

I - Informational Instruments

Russia's use of informational instruments to gain military influence in Uganda has increased since its February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Ugandan state media has frequently supported Russia's positions in international politics, and Russia has actively promoted cross-cultural and educational exchanges between the two countries. Russia and Uganda have signed several bilateral agreements on ICT support, and Russia has provided technical support to the Ugandan space program and has cultivated research agreements between the universities in the two countries. However, beyond a domestic surveillance program in Uganda that was orchestrated and implemented by a Russian private security firm, there is no open-source evidence of cooperation in military intelligence and communications.



I1: Cultural and Media Outreach, Collaboration, and Alignment

Current Influence: High

Projected Influence: Increasing

- ***Since Russia invaded Ukraine, it has incentivized Ugandan government officials to promote pro-Russian viewpoints on Ugandan state media. These pushes from Moscow have come through expedited arms materiel agreements and embedding Russian citizens in Ugandan information agencies.***
 - » Shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Russian Ambassador to Uganda “promised to speed up deliveries of attack helicopters if Uganda began to run Russian government-funded news on Ugandan state television.”⁶¹ Three weeks after the exchange regarding this quid pro quo, three Mil-28 helicopters arrived in Uganda.⁶²
 - » In 2022, Russian citizens from the African Back Office, an organization formerly headed by Wagner Group Founder Yevgeny Prigozhin, embedded within Uganda's Government Citizen Interaction Center—a government communications agency reporting directly to President Museveni—and helped develop a communication strategy to dispel criticism of President Museveni's government.⁶³
- ***These Russian efforts at engendering pro-Russian opinions have succeeded. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Ugandan state media has parroted Russian talking points on the war, including those about objective media coverage.***
 - » The Ugandan Broadcasting Corporation, a state-owned corporation that is the country's most widely watched television station, has portrayed the war as necessary for Ukrainian liberation from Western imperialism⁶⁴ and sanctions against Russia as contributing to African hunger.⁶⁵
 - » In May 2023, the Ugandan Ministry of Information, Communications Technology, and National Guidance published an article claiming that Western media is involved in a concerted effort to skew the perception of the Russian invasion.⁶⁶
- ***Russia has established cultural institutes in Kampala to promote cross-cultural and educational exchanges.***
 - » In May 2023, the Russkiy-Mir Foundation, a Russian government-sponsored organization, established a Russian World Center in Kampala to promote Russian culture and language.⁶⁷
 - » This center builds off earlier programs in Uganda, including those focused on distance

Russian language education⁶⁸ and cultural festivals held with business forums, such as the Russian-Ugandan business forum in Kampala in November 2021.⁶⁹

- ***The Ugandan Chief of Defense Staff has made several recent provocative statements on social media indicating strong support for Russia, though it is unclear how genuine, or sincere such claims are.***
 - » In May 2022, General Kainerugaba, the Chief of the Defense Staff and son of President Museveni, indicated strong support for Russia and posted on social media: “The majority of mankind (that are non-white) support Russia’s stand in Ukraine. Putin is absolutely right!”⁷⁰
 - » In April 2023, General Kainerugaba exclaimed that “Uganda shall send soldiers to defend Moscow if it’s ever threatened by the Imperialists!”⁷¹
- ***Given the continuing media collaboration between Uganda and Russia and the recent establishment of a Russian World Center in Kampala, it is projected that the Russian use of cultural and media outreach to gain military influence will increase over the next 3 years.***



I2: Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Support

Current Influence: Low

Projected Influence: Increasing

- ***Russia aims to provide significant support to Uganda’s nascent space and satellite program,⁷² which has also relied on technical support from the United States.⁷³ While these significant expressions of collaboration interest and intent are strategically important, they have not yielded any satellite launches or publicly known technological innovations.⁷⁴***
 - » In 2014, Uganda and Russia inaugurated an intergovernmental commission focused on trade, economic, scientific, and technical cooperation.⁷⁵ In June 2019, President Museveni pushed for further collaboration on space research through the commission.⁷⁶
 - » In October 2019, Uganda established the Interuniversity Space Research and Monitoring Center with the HSE Tikhonov Moscow Institute of Electronics and Mathematics to support space-related research.⁷⁷ Beginning in 2022, Uganda and Russia signed the first of multiple agreements detailing cooperation between Russian and Ugandan universities on space-related research and committing Russian support to future satellite launches.⁷⁸
 - » In May 2023, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Ugandan Foreign Minister Jeje Odongo signed a bilateral agreement affirming a commitment to space being weapons free.⁷⁹
- ***Russia has engaged with Uganda on information and communications technology development through the signing of several bilateral agreements during the past decade. However, there is no evidence of this leading to any tangible developments.***
 - » In May 2015, Ugandan State Minister for Information Technologies Nyombi and Russian Deputy Minister of Telecommunications Alexy Volin agreed to intensify cooperation in IT, e-government, communications, and information.⁸⁰
 - » In May 2018, Ugandan ICT Minister Frank Tumwebaze and Russian Deputy Minister for Digital Development and Mass Communication Volin signed an agreement to support research and collaboration in areas including parcel transportation, radio telecommunications, and open government data, among other areas.⁸¹

- ***Russian universities have entered agreements focused on ICT research development with Ugandan universities.***
 - » In October 2019, the Russian and Ugandan governments signed a memorandum of cooperation to develop long-term relationships between Russian and Ugandan universities.⁸² The first research relationship from this agreement, between Mbarara University of Science and Technology and Lomonosov Moscow State University, focuses on “hardware and software suites intended for remote monitoring of physiological parameters of the population in remote areas.”⁸³
 - » To facilitate further research agreements and the attendance of Ugandan students at Russian universities in scientific disciplines, Russia began collaborating in July 2023 with Makerere University in Kampala on Russian language education.⁸⁴
- ***Given the signing of new agreements focused on increasing bilateral space and ICT research cooperation between Russia and Uganda and new arrangements between Russian and Ugandan universities, an increase in Russian influence through this dimension is projected.***



I3: Cooperation in Military Intelligence and Communications

Current Influence: Very Low

Projected Influence: Increasing

- ***Russia and Uganda have cooperated on surveillance technologies that have been rolled out in Uganda, which may have military applications.***
 - » In March 2021, the Ugandan government signed a 10-year agreement with a Russian private security company to manufacture tracking devices that will be installed on Ugandan water vessels⁸⁵ and motor vehicles as a measure to increase surveillance of the Ugandan people.⁸⁶
 - » In November 2023, the Ugandan government unveiled the “Intelligent Transport Monitoring System,” which combined the tracking devices with a network of surveillance cameras and cellular phone-based surveillance.⁸⁷ M/S Joint Stock Global, a Russian company that also trains Ugandan security forces, is coordinating the various surveillance technologies and training Ugandan personnel in their operation and implementation.⁸⁸
- ***Given the Kremlin-affiliated M/S Joint Stock Global’s recent introduction of surveillance technology to Uganda, combined with the potential military implications of the Russian-supported Ugandan space program discussed in I2, an increase in cooperation in military intelligence and communications is expected. However, it is difficult to assess this instrument solely through open sources.***

M - Military Instruments

Russia's use of military sphere instruments to gain military influence in Uganda is currently insignificant, with limited interactions. While Russia has established a base in Uganda for the maintenance of Russian military equipment and recently signed a security and cooperation agreement with Uganda in April 2024, there has been no sustained bilateral or multilateral training involving the two countries. The United States remains Uganda's primary partner for bilateral training, and Ugandan participation in multilateral training is limited to exercises with other members of the East African Community.⁸⁹



M1: Formal Bilateral Military Engagements

Current Influence: Low

Projected Influence: Increasing

- ***There is no evidence of joint bilateral military exercises, open ended in country training, or joint campaigns and operations.***
 - » Bilateral military training is limited to short-term engagements.
 - » While the Ugandan relationship with the United States has weakened over the past several years,⁹⁰ bilateral military cooperation remains an area of strength.⁹¹ In 2020 and 2021, Uganda was the African country with the most personnel participating in American military training.⁹² However, if there is a further deterioration in the relationship between the United States and Uganda, Russia may fill the resultant void.
- ***Russia has designated Uganda as a hub to support military aircraft operations for Russian-made equipment.***
 - » In January 2022, Russia announced that Uganda would become a regional hub for the upgrading and maintenance of Russian helicopters, such as the Mi-24 attack helicopter.⁹³ This regional hub will service Russian military-operated aircraft and export Russian and Soviet aircraft operated by East African countries.⁹⁴
 - » The first overhaul of a UPDF Mi-24 helicopter was completed in April 2023, and Ugandan President Museveni attended the recommissioning ceremony.⁹⁵ Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Lavrov also noted the milestone at a press conference in Moscow with Ugandan Cabinet Minister for Foreign Affairs Jeje Odongo.⁹⁶
 - » The maintenance facility is a collaboration between the National Enterprise Corporation, the commercial arm of the UPDF, and Pro-Heli International, a Russian company aligned with the Kremlin, and is located at Nakasongola Air Base in Central Uganda.⁹⁷ In February 2024, the U.S. State Department designated Pro-Heli International as “operating or having operated in the defense and related materiel sector of the Russian Federation economy” in a press release.⁹⁸
- ***With the recent collaboration between a Russian company and the Ugandan military in Uganda to facilitate aircraft maintenance operations, an increase in formal bilateral military engagement is expected.***
 - » In June 2024, Ugandan Major General Bakasumba met with the Russian military attaché in Kampala, Colonel Pavlov, and called for a legal framework to support bilateral training.⁹⁹

- » Colonel Pavlov indicated Russia's willingness to establish new bilateral training programs, demonstrating a Ugandan desire for an increase in bilateral training and Russian support for such an increase.¹⁰⁰



M2: Shared Informal/Multilateral Military Engagements

Current Influence: None/Unobserved

Projected Influence: None/Unknown

- ***There is no evidence of Ugandan participation in multilateral military exercises with Russia.***
- ***There has been limited overlap between Russian and Ugandan peacekeepers during multilateral United Nations peacekeeping operations.***
 - » As of March 2024, 96 percent of Ugandan UN peacekeeping troops and police officers, and all Ugandan peacekeeping troops are deployed as part of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia.¹⁰¹
 - » Russian and Ugandan civilian peacekeepers overlap in the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan.¹⁰² There are no troops from either country and their contributions are limited, making it highly unlikely that Russia would derive any form of military influence over Uganda from this overlap. It should be noted that the Russian Embassy in Uganda serves as the mission representing Russian interests in South Sudan.¹⁰³
- ***There is no evidence to indicate an increase in shared informal or multilateral military engagements between Russia and Uganda. The recently signed bilateral security and cooperation agreement between Uganda and Russia may lead to more multilateral engagement, but more evidence is required to determine whether such a change will occur.***



M3: Defense/Security Pacts and Agreements

Current Influence: Very Low

Projected Influence: Increasing

- ***The Russian and Ugandan governments recently signed a bilateral security and defense cooperation agreement.***
 - » In April 2024, Ugandan Cabinet Minister for Security Muhwezi and Secretary of Russia's Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev, signed an agreement to enhance security cooperation between the two countries.¹⁰⁴
 - » This is the first solely security focused agreement signed between the two parties since the signing of a Military and Technical Cooperation agreement in November 2003.¹⁰⁵ Other agreements signed in the interim have centered on economic and non-technical cooperation.¹⁰⁶
- ***While the impact of the recently signed security cooperation agreement remains to be determined, the very signing of such an agreement suggests there may be further defense and security pacts between Russia and Uganda in the future.***

E - Economic Instruments

Russia's use of economic instruments to gain military influence in Uganda is substantial in certain areas and limited in others. Russia is Uganda's leading weapons supplier and the only contemporary supplier of combat aircraft. In addition, after many years of false starts, the development of a Ugandan civilian nuclear program is proceeding, with Russia as the initiative's key partner. However, there is very limited evidence of technology sharing and joint production of military equipment, and there is no evidence of Uganda as a source of strategic natural resources for Russia. With increased sanctions and supply chain problems related to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it is ultimately unclear whether the Russian economic sphere of influence will increase, as those issues may limit Russian arms transfers and pose a challenge to nuclear cooperation.



E1: Arms Transfers

Current Influence: High

Projected Influence: Steady

- ***While there is no evidence of militarily significant weapons donations from Russia to Uganda, on a relative economic value basis, Russia has been Uganda's largest arms transfer partner from 2012 through 2023 and its sole provider of combat aircraft besides Belarus.***
 - » Russia has been the source of over 48 percent of the economic value of arms transfers received by Uganda.¹⁰⁷ The \$216 million in arms transfers represents 0.3 percent of Russia's arms exports between 2012 and 2023.¹⁰⁸
 - » Most transfers received by Uganda have been used for various missiles and armored personnel carriers.¹⁰⁹ Within aircraft, the only fixed- and rotary-wing combat aircraft not provided by Russia have been from Belarus, Russia's closest European ally,¹¹⁰ and consisted of the transfer of two Mi-24p attack helicopters in 2018 and 2019.¹¹¹
- ***Between 2012 and 2023, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) documented significant arms transfers from Russia to Uganda.***
 - » According to SIPRI, in 2020, Uganda ordered six Mi-28N attack helicopters¹¹² and 150 9M114 Kokon antitank missiles.¹¹³ As of 2022, Uganda has taken possession of three attack helicopters¹¹⁴ and 75 antitank missiles.¹¹⁵
 - » From 2012 to 2023, SIPRI valued Russian arms transfer to Uganda at \$216 million, of which \$168 million is from 2012 and 2013.¹¹⁶ The economic value from 2012 and 2013 reflects the delivery of two SU-30MK multirole fighter aircraft,¹¹⁷ 25 R73 short-range air-to-air missiles,¹¹⁸ 15 Kh-31A1 antiship/antiradar missiles,¹¹⁹ 50 KAB-500/1500 guided bombs,¹²⁰ and 500 Kornet antitank missiles.¹²¹ While out of scope, the economic value of arms transfer in 2011 was \$438 million, consisting of four SU-30MK multirole fighter aircraft¹²² and related projectiles.¹²³
 - » According to the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), Uganda imported from Russia "tanks and armored vehicles" with an economic value of \$59.3 thousand in 2015¹²⁴ and \$12.5 million in 2020.¹²⁵ Uganda has also consistently imported Russian planes, helicopters, spacecraft, and related parts, including \$24.2 million worth in 2015,¹²⁶ \$10.2 million worth in 2017,¹²⁷ and \$11.6 million worth in 2019,¹²⁸ but it is unknown what proportion of these imports may have military applications.

- ***From 2012 through 2023, the United States has been a more limited arms transfer partner for Uganda than Russia.***
 - » According to SIPRI, the United States has made arms transfers to Uganda consisting of transport and utility aircraft,¹²⁹ and armored personnel carriers.¹³⁰ The economic value of the paid for transfers is reported by the SIPRI as \$27 million,¹³¹ with most of the transfers coming as donations.¹³²
 - » All non-aircraft transfers from the United States to Uganda have been designated for usage by the UPDF serving with the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia.¹³³
- ***Russia has been Uganda's most important arms transfer partner, and with the opening of the aircraft maintenance facility for Russian-built aircraft, it may facilitate additional arms transfer opportunities to Uganda. But, due to the global decline in arms exports from Russia since its invasion of Ukraine,¹³⁴ the projected influence is steady.***



E2: Technology-Sharing and Joint Production Agreements

Current Influence: None/Unknown

Projected Influence: None/Unobserved

- ***There is no evidence of collaboration between Russia and Uganda on the production of military equipment.***
 - » The National Enterprise Corporation (NEC) is the commercial arm of the UPDF.¹³⁵ According to the NEC, the only foreign entities involved in the development and production of weapons platforms and systems are located in the United Arab Emirates (the Streit Group)¹³⁶ and China.¹³⁷ The NEC also references the helicopter maintenance facility, but there is no evidence that this facility is involved in the development or production of weapons and equipment.¹³⁸
- ***While political and defense officials in Uganda have recently made statements calling for the development of a domestic weapons industry, they have not indicated their preference for Russian involvement. This contrasts with public statements by Ugandan officials in support of Russian participation in the development of Uganda's civilian space¹³⁹ and nuclear programs.¹⁴⁰***
 - » In May 2020, President Museveni called for scaling up Uganda's domestic defense manufacturing industry but made no mention of potential Russian participation.¹⁴¹
- ***There is no evidence of Russian involvement in Ugandan military equipment production, including technology sharing or joint production agreements, nor are there public statements to indicate a potential change. Therefore, it is unknown whether Russian influence will increase in these areas.***



E3: Trade and Cooperation in Strategic Commodities/Sectors

Current Influence: Low

Projected Influence: Increasing

- ***Russia has provided support during the past 9 years for Uganda's fledgling civilian nuclear energy program.***
 - » In September 2016, Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation officials visited Uganda and announced plans for the construction of a nuclear plant for electricity generation, but the project never came to fruition.¹⁴²
 - » In September 2019, officials from Uganda and Russia signed an agreement to support the development of a civilian nuclear program on the sidelines of the 63rd International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.¹⁴³ The agreement called for Russia to facilitate nuclear infrastructure development specifically for the “production and application of radioisotopes for industrial, healthcare, and agricultural use.”¹⁴⁴
 - » In July 2023, President Museveni announced that Russia would build a nuclear power plant in Uganda.¹⁴⁵
- ***There is no evidence of large-scale joint strategic resource extraction ventures or infrastructure projects.***
 - » In 2015, Uganda awarded Russian company RT Global Resources, a subsidiary of Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec, a contract to construct and operate Uganda's first crude oil refinery.¹⁴⁶ However, the deal fell apart in 2016, amidst disagreements regarding revenue from the project,¹⁴⁷ and the production licenses for Ugandan oil extractions are currently held by British, Chinese, and French firms.¹⁴⁸
 - » In July 2023, President Museveni declared that Uganda had significant unexploited ammonia and phosphate resources and that he would like Russian firms to participate in extraction projects.¹⁴⁹ However, there is no evidence that any Russian firms have begun projects related to the extraction of such resources.
- ***There is no evidence of any trade dependencies in strategic materials between Russia and Uganda. However, according to the OEC,¹⁵⁰ Uganda has a trade deficit with Russia.¹⁵¹***
 - » In 2019¹⁵² and 2021,¹⁵³ the OEC reported minimal trade volume between Russia and Uganda.
 - » In 2019¹⁵⁴ and 2021,¹⁵⁵ the trade imbalance between Uganda and Russia was greater, on a per capita basis, than Uganda's cumulative trade deficit.
 - » In recent years, Uganda's exports to Russia have not been in strategic materials or commodities, with more than half of exports in 2019 consisting of non-strategic commodities¹⁵⁶ and 73.4 percent of exports in 2021, consisting of unroasted coffee.¹⁵⁷
- ***Russia's low level of influence via this instrument is projected to increase, as statements of intent regarding Russian support for Uganda's civilian nuclear program have become increasingly concrete since 2016.***

CONCLUSIONS

Russia's current M-DIME influence in Uganda is assessed as Low. Russia diversifies its influence efforts across the Diplomatic, Informational, and Economic instruments. The two countries have recently engaged in a series of defense-related diplomatic engagements, and Uganda has supported Russian positions at the United Nations (D1). Russia has incentivized Ugandan media to amplify Russian positions and has established cultural institutes in Kampala to boost its popularity among Ugandans (I1). Russia is Uganda's primary arms transfer partner and one of two providers of combat aircraft (E1). Russia's employment of diplomatic influence instruments is relevant to the United States because it poses a challenge to efforts to isolate Russia. Russia's employment of the information influence instruments is relevant because Russia's interference in the Ugandan media environment may sway public opinion toward support for Russia. Lastly, Russia's employment of the economic influence instruments is relevant because while the United States is currently Uganda's primary bilateral training partner, the increased use of Russian-origin military equipment may lead to Uganda training bilaterally with Russia, which may hamper security cooperation between the United States and Uganda. Russian influence activities in Uganda are important to the United States because of the longstanding ties as a regional partner in promoting stability in East Africa and the Horn of Africa, and Russian influence activities may hinder that relationship.

Russia's projected M-DIME influence in Uganda is assessed as Increasing. Military and Economic instruments are projected to be the most dynamic instruments for Russian military influence in Uganda. While current Russian military influence in Uganda is the lowest of the four M-DIME spheres due to the current United States-Uganda military relationship, Russian military influence is projected to increase. The recent establishment of a permanent Russian presence for the maintenance of military aircraft

and public statements by Russian and Ugandan officials supporting bilateral training between the two countries indicate that further alignment may occur (M1). In April 2024, Russia and Uganda signed a security agreement, and while the details of said agreement are unknown, its signing indicates there may be an increase in security cooperation (M3). Uganda's leadership has also signaled an interest in partnering with Russia to develop its civilian nuclear energy program (E3). Russia's projected employment of the diplomatic influence instruments is relevant to the United States because Uganda may formally vote against U.S. proposed measures. Russia's projected employment of the information influence instruments is relevant to the United States because an increase may lead to the displacement of Washington as the Ugandan space program's primary partner. Lastly, the projected increase in Russia's employment of military influence instruments may lead to the United States no longer serving as Uganda's primary bilateral training partner.

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