# The continuity and discontinuity of fundamental military concepts in Russian military thought between 1856 and 2010

Yüksel, E.

# The Continuity and Discontinuity of Fundamental Military Concepts in Russian Military Thought Between 1856 and 2010

By Engin Yüksel

A Dissertation

Submitted to The University of Leiden

The Faculty of Humanities

Institute for History

Supervisors

Prof. dr. Isabelle G.B.M. Duyvesteyn

Prof. dr. André W.M. Gerrits

Dr. Lukas Milevski

24 January 2023

## Foreword

As a former NATO intelligence officer, I anxiously monitored Russia's sudden annexation of Crimea from an underground military bunker in northern Germany during a NATO Command and Control Exercise in early March 2014. Following this, I witnessed how NATO's military headquarters struggled to decipher and comprehend Russia's approach to modern war in Ukraine and along NATO's Eastern borders. Since then, Western scholars have made several attempts to conceptualise the perceived shift in Russian strategic thought with essentially contested concepts such as *Russian hybrid warfare or* the so-called *Gerasimov doctrine.* These experiences inspired me to carry out PhD research on the historical origins of Russia's conceptualization of modern warfare. With this research, I'd like to add to the understanding of the thought and actions of the Russian military. Towards that end, I've examined the historical continuity and strategic relevance and interrelation of five distinctive Russian military concepts between 1856 and 2010. I've written this dissertation from February 2018 to September 2021.

**Acknowledgement**

First and foremost, I cannot express enough thanks to my supervisors, Prof. dr. Isabelle Duyvesteyn and Prof. dr. André Gerrits, for their belief, patience and excellent guidance in the course of this PhD process. Next, my completion of the PhD thesis could not have been accomplished without the extraordinary support of my daily supervisor Dr. Lukas Milevski. Furthermore, I offer my sincere appreciation for the funding provided by the Scholars At Risk Network and the Institute for History, the University of Leiden.

I'm extremely thankful to Samuel Zilincik and Maurizio Recordati for their insightful feedback on my dissertation. A debt of gratitude is also owed to Leiden University subject librarians for their extraordinary support for accessing primary resources.

Finally, to my caring, loving and supportive wife, Halise: my deepest gratitude. Your encouragement when the times got rough are deeply appreciated and duly noted.

## Preface

It is my experience of working on Russian military strategy that has driven this research project. My interest in this area developed while I was an intelligence officer in NATO Joint Force Command Brunssum (The Netherlands) between 2013 and 2016. I worked, closely for several years, on how the Russian military seized control in Crimea, backed separatists in Eastern Ukraine and used various means to harass and deter NATO troops in its Eastern flank. During my tour, I experienced in practice that conceptualising the character of Russia's military operations in Ukraine was a subject of great interest in strategic and policy circles. On the one hand, Russia's Crimean intervention of 2014 did not showcase the peculiarities of 'old' conventional forms of war or 'new' Western military methods displayed in the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq. On the other hand, the Russian military's Crimean campaign attained Moscow's political objectives by keeping the use of force under the threshold of the conventional justifications of war. The recent Russo-Ukrainian war has revealed the Russia's resolve to rely on military force in case of need.

This dissertation aims to unravel some of the mysteries surrounding continuity and discontinuity in Russian military thinking. Western strategic thinkers have made several attempts to explain Russian military thought using concepts which originated in the West, such as *hybrid war*, *political war* or *limited war*. Conceptualizing presupposed novelties in Russian military thinking from a Western perspective has been a key objective in these studies. Instead, this research was designed to investigate the historical roots of Russia's approach to waging modern war. Thus, researching (dis)continuity (as opposed to novelty) in military strategic thinking is a key motivation of this research project. In this framework, the manuscript investigates the rise and evolution of Russian military concepts to determine historical origins of Russia's approaches to waging modern war. In consequence, this study sets out to scrutinize time-tested concepts of late Imperial Russian, Soviet and contemporary Russian military thinking to address the issue of whether these concepts remained intact and strategically relevant over the course of the 20$^{th}$ century. For this purpose, the method of writing a conceptual history has been employed while scrutinizing prevailing Russian military concepts between 1853 and 2010.

The issue of Russian military thinking has received considerable attention especially since the Russian-Ukrainian war has started in February 2022. While the project was

officially brought to a close before its outbreak, a few observations can be made from the perspective of my research. First and foremost, the war has removed some of the mystery surrounding the argument that non-military means and methods had gained a pivotal importance in Russian military thought. On the contrary, the recent war has apparently validated the expectation of decisiveness of military means in Russian strategic thinking. Considering Russia's military interventions in Georgia, Syria and Ukraine, it can thus be concluded that contemporary Russian war theory ascribes the utmost importance to military means and methods.

Since the early 20th century, forecasting war's future character has been a central theme of Russian strategic thinking. In this context, contemporary Russian war theory has acknowledged the rising importance of non-military means and methods. From the perspective of the debates of the early 2000s within the Russian Academy of Military Sciences, non-military power would grow in future importance for the conduct of war. Nevertheless, their decisiveness and capability to be the primary means of war have been extensively questioned by the Russian High Command. According to prevailing view, non-military means have affected war's character but armed struggle has remained to be main typical features of any war.[1] Non-military means are employed to weaken the enemy before military operations. Only then could non-military means be recognised as an instrument of war given that they would be imbued with specific and measurable violence.[2]

The Russo-Ukrainian war has showcased Russian High Command's violent-centric and direct approaches to war. Likewise, the eight years (2014-2022) of Russian covert support to separatists in Eastern Ukraine has recently been transformed into direct military involvement to achieve Moscow's political objectives. Thus, Russia's recent military involvement has refuted the Westerly argument that Russia has prioritised non-military means over military force. Nevertheless, new opinions have been introduced in the recent years to integrate non-military and methods into the doctrine in parallel with the discussions on *Russian hybrid war* (gibridnaya voyna). Therefore, this research offers important insights into understanding how military and non-military means and methods have been conceptualised in Russian thinking about modern warfare and how they are still practiced today. Indeed, recent events fit in a longer pattern rather than indicating a rupture.

[1] M.A. Gareyev, "Certain Typical Features of Future Wars", *Military Thought* 12:2 (March 2003):188.
[2] V.V. Serebryannikov, "On the Notion of War", *Military Thought* 13:4, (October 2004):177.

Secondly, the Russo-Ukrainian war has provided an indication of understanding continuity in Russian strategic thinking. This war has indicated the Russian military's longstanding obsession of *attaining war objectives at the initial phase with a peacetime and combat ready force*. This tendency has also been visible in the Crimean intervention in February-March 2014 where Russian troops swiftly took control of the peninsula in less than a week. Between February 2014 and February 2022, the Russian military's involvement in the Donbas region was indirect, relied heavily on backing and empowering Russian-backed separatists by military and political assistance. During the Russo-Ukrainian war, the Russian military campaign has initially aimed at swiftly enveloping Ukraine forces from the north (Belarus-Kiev axis) and the south (Crimea-Donetsk axis) and consolidating Russian control in the Donbas region (i.e. Kharkiv and Kramatorsk). Demonstrating the linkage with the past, Russian offensive campaign in Ukraine began in February 2022 by standing combat ready forces, without war-time mobilization.[3]

In February and March 2022, however, the Russian military has taken significant losses in the first phase of the war and has been largely exhausted in terms of manpower availability due to strong Ukraine resistance.[4] As a result, Russia has faced major difficulties with sustaining its military effort and experienced difficulty in force generation in the long run, or preserving gains.[5] Subsequently the war has gained a protracted character. This change demonstrates the validity of long-established dichotomy in Russian military thinking between the war of attrition (*izmor*) and annihilation (*sokrushenie*) since the late 19th century. Demonstrating continuity, the strategy of attaining war objectives at the initial phase by surprise has always become the Russian military's first strategic option. In the case of failure, the Russian strategy aims at saving time for a nation-wide mobilisation for a war of attrition.

After an initial period of success, the Russian military has under-performed in the Russo-Ukrainian war to date. This is partly attributed to the Russian military's longstanding tendency to compensate for its shortcomings in technology with increased combat readiness, manpower, surprise and willingness to suffer. Through increased combat readiness, the Russian General Staff has traditionally sought to

[3] Andrew Osborn and Polina Nikolskaya, "Russia's Putin authorises 'special military operation' against Ukraine," Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russias-putin-authorises-military-operations-donbass-domestic-media-2022-02-24/ (accessed 19 June 2022)
[4] Micheal Kofman, Tweets [Russian military operations in Ukraine], 12 May 2022. https://twitter.com/KofmanMichael/status/1524821199590653956 (accessed 26 May 2022)
[5] Micheal Kofman, Tweets [Russian military operations in Ukraine], 25 May 2022. https://twitter.com/KofmanMichael/status/1529475235359207426 (accessed 27 May 2022)

multiply the troops' fighting potential and ensure superiority over the enemy at the beginning of war since late 19th century. This historical continuity has also been visible so far as an important strategic driver of the Russian military campaign in Ukraine. The Russian military's initial superiority in correlation of forces (against Ukrainian forces) enabled it to control additional territory in Kiev, north of Crimea and Donbas. In addition to that, the Russian military's possession of supremacy in artillery systems and ammunition has allowed it to trap some Ukrainian troops in a war of artillery.[6] Consequently, the surprise and readiness factors have won the Russian military about %20 percent of Ukrainian territory at the moment of writing. In response, the Ukraine army has balanced the front with the help of a nation-wide mobilisation, moral superiority, resilience and the deployment of Western military equipment and international support.

Russian offensive campaign in Ukraine has revealed the continuity of past ideas in Russia's new approaches to warfare. It has highlighted Russian General Staff's longstanding inclination to design war strategies based on the military conceptual ideas of the past. Despite a series of political and strategic ruptures over the 20th century, the conceptual frameworks of Russian strategic culture have remained remarkably consistent and feed into the development of new military thinking. Therefore, exploring military conceptual resilience is key to investigate Russia's modern approaches to waging war. This research therefore is designed to generate fresh insights into understanding the conceptual resilience in Russian military thought from a historical standpoint.

The observations of this war can only provide us with a snapshot of how the Russian military carries out war in particular circumstances. This thesis offers a necessary historical approach and context to investigate the roots of Russian military thought. A careful understanding of the conceptual evolution of Russian strategic thinking is needed to map out the Russian military system of thought and its employment in different circumstances in the battlefield.

This research has aimed to achieve this objective through understanding key concepts of Russian strategic culture. The war in Ukraine has indicated that time-tested military

[6] Ryan Evans and Micheal Kofman, "Counter attacks and Can-kicking in the Russo-Ukrainian War," War on the Rocks. https://warontherocks.com/2022/05/counter-attacks-and-can-kicking-in-the-russo-ukrainian-war/ and Karolina Hird, Kateryna Stepanenko, and Mason Clark, "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment: 10 June," ISW, https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-10 (both accessed 26 June 2022)

concepts and principles have secured their functionality and strategic relevance in the Russian military's modern approaches to war. Battle-proven concepts of the 20th century have continued to shape Russian military strategies. In Russian military thinking observing them should lead to a victory, avoiding them would be accompanied by military failure. As a result, time-tested concepts have remained strategically relevant and even assumed increasingly essential functions in strategic debates among Russian military thinkers up until this day.

My observations about the Russo-Ukrainian war demonstrate the contemporary value and relevance of researching conceptual evolution of Russian military thinking. These observations should enable more and better historically informed analyses of Russian military thinking and its application in Russian military practice. Therefore, this research provides an important opportunity to advance the understanding of how fundamental military concepts of Russian strategic culture which shape Russia's strategic thinking.

## Table of Contents

# Chapter-1

# Introduction

## 1.1. The importance of the topic

This study sets out to investigate the rise, evolution, relevance, and genealogy of Russian military concepts between the late 19th and early 21st centuries. Military concepts are crucial to decipher the historical dimensions of contemporary Russian military thought. Therefore, the conceptualization of Russia's approaches to modern war from theoretical and practical observations has been an object of influential academic and policy debate within the field of modern war studies over the last decade. The Russian military campaigns conducted in Ukraine since 2014 have only increased the need to carry out research on Russia's conceptualization of modern war. Thus, the introduction gives a brief overview of the significance of the topic and the controversy surrounding it within the field of Western strategic studies. It will then go on to present a summary of the historical antecedents of Russian military concepts, which are the main focus of the study. Finally, this chapter ends with a short literature review, a research question, and the chosen methodology.

In the first place, Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 has been a matter of great interest. The character of the operations there contrasted with that of the Russian military intervention in Georgia in 2008. Rolling tanks, the firing of artillery, and fighting over key territory, such as occurred in Georgia, were not visible on the battlefield. Instead, the Crimean intervention was characterized by indirectness, non-violence, and surprise. Under the shadow of Russia's special troops in unmarked uniforms, total silence symbolized a victory without a war. The intervention did not showcase the peculiarities of 'old' conventional forms of war or the 'new' Western military methods displayed in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Nevertheless, the Crimean campaign attained Moscow's political objectives by keeping the use of force below the threshold of the conventional justifications of war. On the one hand, there is a growing interest among Western scholars in Russia's reliance on more traditional military means over the past several years, which, unlike in Crimea, has been visible partly in Russia's covert campaign in Donbas (Eastern Ukraine) and fully in Moscow's recent (February 2022)

massive military offensive in Ukraine. As a result, Western thinkers' attention has shifted to concepts of conducting traditional military operations.

Russian thinkers' views on contemporary warfare have drawn considerable attention from Western scholars. For instance, the ideas formulated in 2013 by the Russian Chief of General Staff, Valeriy Gerasimov on the *obscurity between war and peace* have dominated scholarly discussions on Russia's conceptualization of modern war.[1] Deciphering the Russian way of war has been an object of research especially since Russia's Crimean intervention of 2014. Recently, there has been renewed interest in Russian strategic thought, following Russian thinkers' studies on *new generation warfare (voynu novogo pokoleniya)* and *Russian hybrid warfare* (*gibridnaya voyna*).[2] These two concepts have triggered scholarly debate on the presupposed features of Russia's conceptualization of contemporary war. Subsequently, a considerable literature has grown up around the theme of Russian military thought and strategy from a Western standpoint. As a result, most Western studies in the field of Russian strategy have focused on the *Gerasimov doctrine, hybrid war,* or *full-spectrum conflict*. Nevertheless, these studies have failed to systematically specify the concepts of Russian military culture and their impact on military strategy.

Principally, scholars have studied the Russian military's thinking and activities through a Western conceptual lens. For instance, in 2014 Mark Galeotti described the dramatic turn in Russian military thought as the "Gerasimov Doctrine".[3] Under this doctrine, Galeotti associated Russian Chief of General Staff Valeriy Gerasimov's ideas with the Russian military's acts in Ukraine. In this regard, Galeotti argued that the Russian military had devised new non-military means and methods to achieve political objectives. Nevertheless, a careful examination of Gerasimov's ideas has demonstrated that he puts emphasis on how the employment of non-military means of war has grown in modern warfare generally (not Russian in particular) and, in some cases, has exceeded military instruments of power.[4] Thus, contrary to Galeotti's interpretation, Gerasimov presented the Russian Chief of Staff's analyses about the Western way of war trajectory. Later in 2019, Galeotti admitted that his conceptualization had not

[1] Valeriy Gerasimov "The value of science is prediction," *Military-Industrial Courier* 8 (2013): 1–3.
[2] Ofer Fridman, *Russian 'Hybrid Warfare' Resurgence and Politicization* (London: Hurst & Company, 2018), 131 and 141. In the first study, the Russian military's non-military means are intended to soften the enemy before decisive military operations. In the second attempt, Russians ascribed decisive importance to non-military means of power.
[3] Mark Galeotti, "The "Gerasimov Doctrine" and Russian Non-Linear War," *Moscow's Shadows*, https://inmoscowsshadows.wordpress.com/2014/07/06/the-gerasimov-doctrine-and-russian-non-linear-war/
[4] *Ibid.*

reflected actual Russian military practice.[5] Instead, this concept could be a placeholder for Valery Gerasimov's ideas on particular kinds of modern wars in the 21st century (i.e. color revolutions).[6]

Misinterpreting Gerasimov is partly associated with Western short-sightedness regarding Russian military concepts. Instead of understanding and employing Russian military concepts, western scholars have tended to use concepts developed by Western strategic culture. For instance, as stated in his article, Gerasimov's ideas would be characterized by a key Russian military concept, *forecasting,* that would predict the trends in the character of war. Therefore, Gerasimov's forecasts do not necessarily indicate how Russians would implement the war. Instead, these forecasts represent global trends and tendency's in war's character. Forecasting is prominent in the history of modern Russian military thought. Therefore, this concept will be meticulously examined in this study.

Other Western scholars have described the perceived shift in Russian strategic thought by using the term *hybrid warfare*.[7] When Russia annexed Crimea and destabilized Eastern Ukraine in 2014, researchers examined it under the hybrid warfare concept developed by US Major William Nemeth and later Frank Hoffman.[8] In his 2002 thesis, Nemeth argues that hybrid modes of warfare are equally connected with hybrid societies that are governed by modern and traditional social orders.[9] By examining the Chechen wars, Nemeth reveals the risks posed to conventional forces by hybrid actors who rely on unconventional means, guerrilla tactics, and modern equipment.[10] Hoffman's 2007 definition of "hybrid wars" incorporates a range of different modes of warfare, including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence, coercion, and criminal disorder.[11] After 2014, Western scholars and practitioners have tended to put Russian acts in a conceptual framework drawn

[5] Mark Galeotti, "The Mythical 'Gerasimov Doctrine' and the language of threat," *Critical Studies in Security* 7:2 (2019): 157.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] Maria Snegovaya, "Putin's Information Warfare in Ukraine: The Soviet Origins of Russia's Hybrid Warfare," *Institute for the Study of War* Washington (2015); Christopher Chivvis, "Understanding Russian Hybrid Warfare," *Rand* (March 2017); K. Kilinskas, "Hybrid Warfare: An Orientating or Misleading Concept in Analyzing Russia's Military Actions in Ukraine?," *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review* 14 (2015-2016).
[8] Guillaume Lasconjarias and Jeffrey A. Larsen, *NATO's Response to Hybrid Threats* (Rome: NATO Defence College Division, 2015)
[9] William J. Nemeth, *Future war and Chechnya: a case for hybrid warfare* (Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School, 2002), 74.
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] Frank G. Hoffman, *Conflict in 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars* (Arlington, Virginia, USA: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies), 27.

from hybrid warfare. Although the advocates of this tendency cannot agree on what *Russian hybrid warfare* means, they have reached a consensus on the simultaneous employment of a mix of conventional and unconventional means and methods.

Nevertheless, a large number of published studies criticize the tendency to associate the concept of hybrid warfare with contemporary Russian military thought.[12] To begin with, Bettina Renz argues that hybrid warfare inadequately reflects the Russian approach to modern war.[13] According to Renz, the use of indirect approaches and unconventional tactics is not peculiar to Russia.[14] Consequently, Renz concludes that Russia's success in Crimea is not the result of applying the war-winning formula of *hybrid war*.[15] In another significant study, Ofer Fridman warns against associating Russian acts with the hybrid warfare concept. According to Fridman, Russia's employment of disinformation campaigns and cyber-attacks has distracted scholars' attention and prevented them from focusing on the vital role of the Russian military threat in Ukraine.[16] Furthermore, Fridman investigates whether Western and Russian definitions of hybrid warfare are conceptually similar. Fridman concludes that Russia's reconceptualization of hybrid warfare (*gibridnaya voyna*) is not identical to its Western mirror image.[17] Contrary to Western definitions of the term, Russia's *gibridnaya voyna* focuses on how the West has employed non-military means and methods in a subversive manner to overthrow regimes.[18] On the whole, the second major scholarly attempt at deciphering and conceptualizing Russian military thought with a Western concept is equally riddled with problems.

The third instance of contemporary Western conceptual confusion is highlighted in the work of Oscar Jonsson and Robert Seely, where they develop the concept of *Russian full-spectrum conflict*.[19] In a 2015 article, Jonsson and Seely admit that Western attempts to conceptualize and understand the Russian way of war are flawed.[20] To improve this, they argue that the *full-spectrum conflict*

[12] S. Rinelli and I. Duyvesteyn, 'The Missing Link: Civil Military Cooperation and Hybrid Wars.' In *A Civil Military Response to Hybrid Threats*. ed. Eugenio Cusumano and Marian Corbe.17-40 (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
[13] Bettina Renz, "Russia and Hybrid Warfare," *Contemporary Politics* 22, 3 (2016), 283
[14] Ibid. p. 284.
[15] *Ibid*.
[16] Fridman, p.115.
[17] *Ibid*.
[18] Ibid. p. 93.
[19] Oscar Jonsson and Robert Seely. "Russian Full-Spectrum Conflict: An Appraisal After Ukraine," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 28:1 (2015)
[20] *Ibid.*

supposedly describes Russia's approaches to waging modern war in Ukraine with a model that encapsulates a mix of conventional and clandestine forces, economic threats, political influence, information battles, and traditional subversion.[21] Even though Jonsson and Seely's model shows substantial similarities with hybrid warfare, it has been devised using different linguistic forms (*full-spectrum conflict*). According to this model, Russian warfare relies on the simultaneous use of violent and non-violent means "in differing degrees of intensity from peace to war and the space in between."[22]

However, full-spectrum conflict is not a true reflection of Russian military thinking. This concept is not used in the Russian military's lexicon. Instead, Russian military thinkers have used the concept of *new generation warfare*.[23] Russian new generation warfare is based on the notion that non-military means are intended to soften the enemy before decisive military operations.[24] Contrary to full-spectrum conflict's emphasis on non-violent means of war, contemporary Russian war theory ascribes decisive importance to military means and methods. Moreover, the boundary between war and peace is more evident in Russian new generation warfare. Therefore, full-spectrum conflict is ill-suited to explain the Russian military's approach to modern warfare. Consequently, this third Western attempt to decipher the Russian way of war projects preconceived notions of Russian practices without proper investigation.

Scholars have noted the all-pervasive problem with interpreting Russian military thought. Dmitry Adamsky emphasizes Western unfamiliarity with the peculiar concepts of Russian strategic thought.[25] While studying the Russian approach to deterrence theory, Adamsky asserts that Russian concepts deviate substantially from Western conceptualizations.[26] He demonstrates to what extent mirror imaging may cause Western scholars to invent non-existent attributes of the Russian approach to war and disregard its fundamentals.[27] Furthermore, Adamsky draws scholarly attention to how strategic concepts evolve differently in the Russian cultural realm. For instance, he validates the counter-argument that the term *hybrid warfare* has been used in the Russian military lexicon only after 2014, in reference to the Western standoff with

[21] Ibid. p. 5
[22] Ibid. p. 1.
[23] Fridman, p. 131 and 141.
[24] Ibid. p. 131
[25] Dmitry Adamsky, "From Moscow with coercion: Russian deterrence theory and strategic culture," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 41:1-2, (2018), 34.
[26] *Ibid.*
[27] Ibid, p. 51.

Russia.[28] In return, Russia has resorted to distinct methods to cope with the perceived Western hybrid threats. Adamsky argues that Russian *cross-domain deterrence theory*, which correlates nuclear, conventional, and informational deterrence, is well-suited to counter Western hybrid threats.[29] Therefore, a Russian concept, *correlation*, offers a more compelling explanation for Russia's conceptualization of modern warfare. Correlation represents the Russian military's holistic approach (*kompleksnyi sistemnyi podhod*), which seeks to determine a war's outcome by specifying the mixture of conventional, nuclear, and non-military methods.[30] Correlation is also a critical military concept in Russian military thinking. For this reason, it will be examined in this study.

The common thread among these studies is that they have attempted to analyze war based on ethnocentric and flawed theoretical and practical observations on the Russian military. This study argues that an appreciation of the military conceptual history of the late 19th and 20th centuries is necessary to offer a more compelling explanation of contemporary Russian military thought.[31] The ideas of contemporary Russian military thinkers have been formed by historical military concepts which are essential to the functioning and development of Russian military science. Nevertheless, Western scholarly attempts have paid scant attention to Russian military concepts' historical roots, semantic use, and system of thinking.

Unsupported by Russian military concepts, researchers tend to use Western conceptual frameworks while deciphering Russian military thought. As a result, existing accounts fail to resolve the discrepancies between Western and Russian conceptual approaches to war. First, Russian military concepts reflect the ideological, historical, and cultural peculiarities of Russian society. In Russia, the widespread belief that Western ideas fall short of providing meaningful solutions to the problems of Russian military science dates back to the late 19th century.[32] Moreover, this notion has continued to exist up to the present in Russian thinking.[33] Secondly, the Russian military has been sceptical of conceptual developments in Western armies (i.e. hybrid warfare).[34] Likewise, Russian

[28] *Ibid.*
[29] Ibid. p. 33
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] D. Timothy Goering, "Concepts, History and the Game of Giving and Asking for Reasons: A Defense of Conceptual History", *Journal of the Philosophy of History 7* (2013), 429.
[32] A.S. Milovidov and V.G. Kozlov, The Philosophical Heritage of V.I. Lenin and Problems of Contemporary War (Moscow, 1972) translated and reproduced by (Washington: The US Government Printing Office, 1972), 97.
[33] I.S. Danilenko, "From Applied Military Science to a Basic Science of Warfare: Part 1," *Military Thought* 17:4 (October 2008): 92.
[34] M.A. Gareyev, "Issues of Strategic Deterrence in Current Conditions," *Military Thought* 18:2 (April 2009):8.

military thinkers do not accept new Western ideas without suspicion and careful scrutiny. Instead, new Western ideas are *Russianized* through the lenses of existing fundamental military concepts. As Russian General S.A. Tyushkevich argues, "the history of Russian military science reflects the characteristics of the social system, specifics of the political system of our state, as well as the character and direction of its policy."[35]

This research argues that the key characteristics of contemporary Russian military thought cannot be fully understood without a proper understanding of fundamental Russian military concepts. Thus, present research sets out to investigate the rise, evolution, relevance, and genealogy of military concepts from a historical standpoint from the late 19th to the early 21st century.

### 1.2. Historical antecedents of Russian military concepts [36]

Russian military thought has its own rationale and forms, which is reflected in its military concepts. Early attempts to create a unified military doctrine went hand in hand with the codification and institutionalization of military concepts. During the 1870s, intellectual interaction with Prussia and France laid the foundations for early military principles and their attendant concepts. During the Soviet era, ideological perceptions of the world predetermined doctrinal objectives and their underlying military concepts.[37] After the 1990s, time-tested concepts continued to prevail even during the changing socio-political conditions. For the purpose of this research, the term 'fundamental military concepts' refers to military concepts that maintained historically continuous strategic relevance despite the profound socio-historical and strategic changes during the 20th century. Therefore, the present research defends the argument that these concepts have been and continue to be central to realizing and deciphering the Russian approaches to war.

The antecedents of Russian military concepts date back to the late Imperial Russian period. Military thinkers of the late 19th century applied positivism to military matters and Russian military science. For instance, one of the early inventors of military

[35] S.A. Tyushkevich, "Military Science and Russia's Security," *Military Thought* 10:3 (March 2001), 46.
[36] This research has primarily benefited from the English translations of the Russian sources in Western literature. The author has also translated the relevant parts of untranslated Russian sources into English.
[37] Andrei A. Kokoshin*, Soviet Strategic Thought, 1917-1991* (London: The MIT Press, 1998).

concepts, Genrikh Antonovich Leer, entitled his major 1877 work "Positive Strategy"'[38] The influence of positivism can be attributed to the belated 'Military Enlightenment' effect in the Russian military. Carl von Clausewitz's "Enlightenment Tradition of Writing on War" disseminated across various schools of the Russian military later than expected, even though these ideas were accessible to Russian thinkers.[39] Clausewitz was a Prussian general in the late 18th and early 19th century, whose contribution to the theory of war is still valid today.[40]

In the West, the advocates of *Clausewitzian* military theory defended the argument that principles of war cannot be introduced as scientific laws.[41] Clausewitz believed that "it was simply not possible to construct a model for the art of the war that can serve as a scaffolding on which the commander can rely on for support at any time."[42] Therefore, Clausewitzian military theory privileges the talent and judgement of the commander, the uncertainties of war, and moral and psychological factors over military principles. In late Imperial Russia, military thought relied predominantly on Henry Jomini's fixation on fundamental military principles and their attendant concepts. Jomini was a French-Swiss general who advocated the idea that war had universal principles and concepts. Similar to Clausewitz's short experience in the Russian military between 1813 and 1815, Jomini also served in the Russian Army after 1807. Therefore, Jomini's theory of war inspired leading Russian military thinkers of the time such as Genrikh A. Leer and Nikolai P. Mikhnevich. Subsequently, Leer established a culture in Russian strategic thought that sought to explore war-winning principles of war and their adherent concepts based on historical experience in the late 19th and early 20th century.

The positivist approach to war continued to predominate Russian military thinking after 1917. Generally speaking, Soviet military thinkers positioned military science between social science and natural science. Akin to other natural sciences, Soviet military science aimed to discover war's eternal and unconditional principles and concepts.[43] In Soviet thinking, time-tested concepts of war were to be interpreted as rules and regulations

[38] Genrikh Antonovich Leer, *Positive Strategy (Part 1)* (Saint Petersburg, 1877)
[39] Hew Strachan, "Strategy in theory; strategy in practice," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 42 (2) (2019), 181. For instance, Genrikh Antonovich Leer analysed Clausewitz and underscored the significance of his principles such as the extreme exertion [of force], concentration of force at the decisive time and point, and not to lose time. See: Leer, p. 49.
[40] Chiara Libiseller and Lukas Milevski, "War and Peace: Reaffirming the Distinction", *Survival,* 63:1 (2021), 101.
[41] Jan Angstrom and J.J. Widen, Contemporary Military Theory: The Dynamics of War (Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 80.
[42] Ibid. p. 87.
[43] Kerry Lee Hines, *Russian Military Thought: Its Evolution through war and revolution, 1860-1918* (Ann Arbour, UMI 1998), 100.

that could explain a war's outcome.[44] While observing these principles would lead to victory, avoiding them would be accompanied by military failure.[45] Nevertheless, the concepts of Soviet military science bore an unmistakable historical and ideological character.[46] When the material conditions of waging war changed (i.e. weapons, technology), the content of concepts also changed to some degree.[47]

In practice, each war possesses different characteristics and conditions.[48] Hew Strachan emphasizes that generalized concepts and principles do not apply to every war, according to the war theory proposed by Clausewitz.[49] Instead, operational art and judgement are crucial to dealing with the complexities of war. On the contrary, the Soviets believed that observing war-winning concepts and principles would bring success because of the superiority of socialism over capitalism.[50] Subsequently, the Soviets went further to specify the laws of Soviet military science, in a manner similar to that used for the laws of other natural sciences. This suggests that Jomini's teachings on war prevailed in Soviet military thinking in the twentieth century.

In the 1970s, the first law of war in Soviet doctrine was "the unlimited employment of all means of conflicts depends primarily on the correlation of available, strictly military forces of the combatants at the beginning of the war."[51] This law informs two fundamental concepts that have featured prominently in Russian military thinking and have been constants over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: *the initial period of war* (IPW) and *correlation*. While the IPW regulated initial strategic operations, correlation was used to predict a war's outcome. Both concepts endured in Soviet and Russian military thought.

After the 1990s, battle-proven concepts of Russian military thought did not lose their significance, even though socialism's influence on military thought declined. Following a nearly century-long use, these concepts endured as essential elements of Russian strategic culture, and they continue to be vital to decipher how a Russian officer thinks.

---

[44] Jan Angstrom and J.J. Widen, *Contemporary Military Theory: The Dynamics of War* (Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 76.
[45] *Ibid.*
[46] Vasiliy Yefimovic, Savkin, *The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics (a Soviet View).* Translated and Published Under the Auspices of The United States Air Force. Washington: The US Air Force, 1972. Moscow, 1972, p. 5, 62.
[47] *Ibid.*
[48] Strachan, p. 177.
[49] Ibid, p. 178
[50] Danilenko, p. 92.
[51] Savkin, p. 89.

Based on the investigations for this thesis, during the 20th century five specific Russian military concepts have surfaced as possessing demonstrably dominant influence on the evolution of Russian military thinking, privileging continuity over change. These are ***the initial period of war*** *(nacalnıy period voynı),* which regulates the Russian military's opening phase of war; ***combat readiness*** *(boevaya gotovnost),* which is defined as the state and capability necessary to ensure the desired security in peacetime and in times of war*;* ***forecasting*** *(prognozirovat),* which helps the Russian military estimate the character of a future war; ***correlation of forces and methods*** *(sootnesheniye sil i sredstv),* which allows the Russian military to anticipate the outcome of a future war*;* and ***reflexive control*** *(refleksivnoe upravlenie),* which helps the Russian military influence the enemy decision-making.

Not every military concept can be identified as fundamental. As the socio-political context changes, some concepts become obsolete. For instance, the concepts of attrition (*izmor*) and annihilation (*sokrushenie*) were frequently prescribed for building military strategies, particularly in the 20th century. An annihilation strategy required the Russian army to attain a swift victory, whereas the attrition strategy aimed to wear down the enemy forces as time went on.[52] Even though these concepts were influential in Russian military thought between the 1860s and 1990, they have become less meaningful under *the strategy of indirect action* during the contemporary period. The indirect strategy emphasizes asymmetry rather than victory by force (annihilation) or by time (attrition). Therefore, these concepts cannot be said to be either permanent or continuously relevant in Russian military thinking.

### 1.3. Literature Review

This section presents a summary of the current state of the art in the literature. A more detailed analysis follows in chapter two.

The existing western literature on Russian military thought is extensive and focuses mainly on the 20th century. Although there is substantial literature that engages with Russian military concepts, most research has remained narrow in focus while dealing with a snapshot of how a concept is defined and employed within a particular period. Inevitably, these studies narrow down Russian military thought to how military concepts

[52] Menning, B. W., *Bayonets Before the Bullets: The Imperial Russian Army 1861-1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 248.

separately operate under specific socio-historical and strategic conditions. Consequently, existing accounts treat Russian military concepts more or less individually instead of investigating them as integral pieces of the broader Russian military system of thinking. On the other hand, some other studies employ military concepts under particular strategic frameworks without paying attention to their content, context, and evolution. Therefore, hardly any scholars have systematically researched Russian military thought over extended periods of time, instead focusing on particular, historically-limited issues. Consequently, most Western literature on military concepts does not clarify how these concepts change in response to geopolitical and strategic changes. Finally, much uncertainty still exists about how conceptual peculiarity (the specific characteristics of the concepts) influenced military transformation when Russia faced socio-historical and strategic ruptures.

Since the codification and institutionalization of military concepts in Russia date back to the 1970s, the generalizability of much published Russian research on this issue before this date is problematic. Prior to the 1970s, Russian literature on military concepts was restricted to sections of leading Russian military thinkers' books on strategy. These works intended to fulfil the obvious gap between military theory and practice in Russian military thinking. Broadly speaking, most research on military concepts has been carried out by employing a positivist and historical methodology. On the other hand, a growing body of literature has investigated military concepts by taking a future war's changing character as a reference point. These different outlooks have promoted discussions within the Russian General Staff on changing and updating concepts' content or integrating new concepts into Russian military doctrine.

Russian literature on military concepts focuses on the extent to which newly emerging conditions necessitated a complete or content-wise revision of these concepts. The debate revolved around whether the adherence to military theory's ideological and technological basis should be relinquished when a war's character changes. In this regard, the tendency to take the past or the future as a reference point has dominated the conceptual evolution of Russian military thought. Thus, much of the Russian literature pays particular attention to the relevance and significance of time-tested concepts and principles of Russian strategic culture even during socio-political and strategic transformation. Therefore, these studies highlight the continuity of past ideas in Russia's new approaches to warfare. Nevertheless, a relatively small but growing

body of Russian literature is concerned with the concepts of future warfare, inspired by what is perceived to be the Western way of war.

The historiographical overview of the Russian military sources demonstrates that Russian military thinking has evolved since the late 19th century by building upon and making practical use of the ideas of the former periods. Despite a series of socio-political and strategic ruptures, the military conceptual ideas of the past are remarkably consistent and have informed subsequent new military theoretical thinking. By contrast, the historiography of Western resources indicates that the mechanisms that underpin continuity in Russia's conceptualization of warfare, in particular that of the twentieth century, are not fully understood. Thus, Western research to date tends to focus on specific periods demarcated by socio-political and strategic ruptures. Analyzing one specific period affects how the concepts' relevance is understood. Constraining the concepts' meaning and functionality to a particular timeframe influences how the concepts are systematized.

The historiography of the Russian resources also demonstrates that Russian military thinking treats military concepts as a socio-historical phenomenon. Thus, a large body of Russian military literature emphasizes how historical ruptures have affected the content and relevance of military concepts. Nevertheless, the existing Western literature does not adequately investigate whether shifts in Russian military strategies have decreased or increased the relevance of fundamental military concepts. Furthermore, little is known in the Western literature about how Russian military concepts fit together into a whole system of military theory and analysis.

Much uncertainty still exists about Russian military thought. This ambiguity is predominantly driven by the difficulty of accessing Russian resources on military thinking. In 2013, the U.S. decision to eliminate funding for advanced language and cultural programs in Russia and the former Soviet Union created additional barriers for researchers. The "hidden crisis" is considered as an unfortunate development in strategic studies in general and Russian military studies in particular.[53] Before this decision, there was a significant amount of scholarship on Russian studies in and beyond the United States. Thus, this decision has had adverse consequences for the promotion of scientific research about Russian military thought. Nevertheless, this research

[53] Charles King. "The Decline of International Studies: Why Flying Blind Is Dangerous?," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2015), 88.

contributes toward addressing this gap by examining the Russian Journal of *Military Thought* (*Voennaya Mysl),* Russian thinkers' books on strategy, and Western literature on Russian military thinking. Therefore, this study intends to make an innovative contribution to research in this field.

### 1.4. Thesis Statement

This dissertation will demonstrate that there is a significant degree of continuity in Russian military thought over the 20th century due to the resilience of fundamental military concepts. *To be conceptually fundamental* is inextricably linked to historical continuity. The primary objective of this study, then, is to investigate the historical continuity of fundamental military concepts in Russian military thought between 1856 and 2010. In this regard, this dissertation attempts to show that fundamental military concepts ensured continuity rather than change, despite the changing strategic, political, and historical contexts. Ultimately, this research argues that socio-political and strategic ruptures have had a marginal impact on Russian fundamental military concepts. Thus, the present study seeks to provide new insights into 'conceptual continuity' in Russian military thought by using the military history of ideas between the late 19th and early 21st centuries.

Another purpose of this research is to investigate the causes of conceptual resilience in Russian military thinking. The present study defends the argument that conceptual resilience is strongly correlated with concepts' (1) enduring strategic relevance and (2) integration into the system of conceptual thinking. By analyzing these two phenomena, this study seeks to make a significant contribution to research on the roots of historical continuity in Russian military thought.

In this thesis, the view will be presented that strategically essential concepts are prone to continuity in Russian strategic thinking. These concepts do not disappear under war's changing character, although their semantic use is affected. Semantic content is "a cognitive system that gives meaning to sounds".[54] Therefore, it refers to the capacity and capability of concepts to define reality. In other words, the semantic component of language is related to how the meaning of a word generates activity under a given particular socio-historical context.[55] Despite semantic alterations, concepts' strategic

[54] Marcelo Barbieri, "The Semantic Theory of Language," *Biosystems* 190 (April 2020), 1.
[55] *Ibid.*

relevance may remain intact. Therefore, this study sets out to examine the interrelationship between various Russian war strategies and fundamental military concepts. In this framework, this study explores the ways in which these concepts are positioned or repositioned under different military strategies. Therefore, the present study combines strategic history with the history of ideas. Taken together, researching the continuity of a concept over time can be meaningful as long as a concept has practical strategic significance.

Secondly, it will be argued that the continuity of fundamental military concepts hinges on their interaction with each other. As a result, a certain degree of dependency and hierarchy among fundamental military concepts can promote continuity in Russian conceptual thinking. Nevertheless, fundamental military concepts are understood in the West individually rather than as the integral elements of a Russian system of thinking. Therefore, this study examines how these concepts fit together into a whole system of military theory and analysis.

This study's originality claim is based on an exploration of conceptual resilience in Russian military thinking, by examining in depth the history of ideas, enduring relevance, and the system of concepts. More importantly, this dissertation is original since it places Russian thinkers' seminal works at its center to identify how military concepts have emerged and evolved over time. In that regard, the research offers additional insights into the Western literature by researching conceptual resilience and the underlying reasons behind the continuity under varying different socio-historical and strategic contexts. This is an invitation to the Western scholarship to reconsider some of their main arguments regarding Russian military thought, as has been outlined in the introduction.

## 1.5. The methodology

### 1.5.1. Conceptual History

The methodology required for this research is conceptual history developed by Reinhart Koselleck. [56] Koselleck characterized conceptual history as:

[56] Reinhart Koselleck, "Social History and Conceptual History," *International Journal of Politics Culture and Society* 2:3 (1989)

> "a part of historical research that does not understand language as an epiphenomenon of so-called reality [. . .] but rather as a methodologically irreducible guiding authority, without which experiences could not be had, and without which neither the natural nor social sciences could exist. For Conceptual History, language is on the one hand an indicator of encountered "reality" and on the other hand a factor in the process of finding reality."[57]

The key premise of conceptual history is that "language and historical reality cannot be examined separately".[58] Reconstructing the past would mean remodelling language.[59] In this regard, this theory emphasizes the importance of concepts in rendering past experiences intelligible. Therefore, the state of knowledge cannot be limited to empirical observations or epistemological studies. Instead, concepts offer a more compelling explanation to reality if we view them historically.[60] For Koselleck, "the concept is connected to a word, but it is at the same time more than a word […] Concepts are the concentrate of several substantial meanings."[61] Thus, concepts are essential to the functioning and development of social science.[62] Instead of investigating concepts from an epistemological perspective, Koselleck was enthusiastic about revealing the genealogy of concepts from a historic position.[63]

One of the fundamental assumptions of conceptual history is that conceptual transformation is the result of social practice.[64] Thus, only by appreciating the socio-political context can a historian adequately comprehend a concept in a given time. In the same degree, conceptual history aims to counter two prevalent tendencies in historical research: the history of ideas that overlooks socio-political context and the history of events that disregard underlying structures.[65]

Inspired by the scientific redefinition of the world at the turn of the 18th century, Koselleck argues that the transformation of knowledge does not create new words but

---

[57] Reinhart Koselleck, Stichwort: Begriffsgeschichte', in R. Koselleck (ed.), *Begriffsgeschichten: Studien zur Semantik und Pragmatik der politischen und sozialen Sprache* (Frankfurt, 2010), p. 99.
[58] John Gerring, "What makes a concept good? A critical framework for understanding concept formation in social science," *Polity* 31:3 (1999), p. 428.
[59] *Ibid.*
[60] Ibid. p. 429.
[61] Koselleck (2010), p. 85.
[62] Gerring, p. 359.
[63] D. Timothy Goering, "Concepts, History and the Game of Giving and Asking for Reasons: A Defense of Conceptual History," *Journal of the Philosophy of History 7* (2013), 435.
[64] Ibid, p. 430.
[65] Kai Vogelsang, "Conceptual History: A Short Introduction," *Oriens Extremus* 51 (2012), 9.

instead semantically alters existing words.[66] When the context changes, a concept needs to gain new semantic content to explain the new reality. Thus, one of the critical theses of conceptual history is that "language changes more slowly than the chain of events that it helps to set in motion and that it seeks to comprehend."[67] Thus, existing concepts obtain new semantic content to continue interpreting the world. Even though the socio-political context transforms, concepts do not disappear. Instead, their capacity of meaning undergoes a transformation. Times of socio-political transformations tend to be attended by semantic shifts because concepts are used to justify various assertations and give varying accounts of experiences.[68] Therefore, historians need to replace or supplement a concept's previous explanation (instead of replacing the concepts themselves) with a new one under the pressure of a changing socio-political context.[69] Taken together, conceptual history focuses on the history of concepts and considers how socio-political practices change concepts' semantic content.[70]

According to conceptual history, concepts are not ahistorical and static but are instead products of their historical contexts.[71] Koselleck posits that "concepts have different internal temporal structure than events."[72] In this regard, concepts have growth rings similar to trees.[73] Each ring represents the content of a concept that applies to a particular period in history. Tracing the shift between two rings is comprehensible, provided that a researcher takes note of the structural change. Examining these shifts helps historians to validate different claims in history.[74] In doing so, conceptual history seeks to "retrace the history and the semantic shifts of concepts."[75] According to Koselleck, "each concept establishes a particular horizon for potential experience and conceivable theory, and in this way sets a limit."[76] In this regard, conceptual change results from shifts which occur in a structural framework. And so, while a word might remain the same, it can happen that a concept adopts a new functional role.[77] Overall, contextual change is inextricably linked with historical processes. Understanding the

[66] *Ibid*.
[67] Reinhart Koselleck, "Linguistic Change and the History of Events," *The Journal of Modern History* 61:4 (December 1989), 660.
[68] Goering, p. 431.
[69] Koselleck, p. 664.
[70] Goering, p. 434
[71] Ibid. p. 439.
[72] Ibid. p. 433.
[73] *Ibid*.
[74] *Ibid*.
[75] *Ibid*.
[76] Reinhart Koselleck, 'Begriffsgeschichte and Social History', in R. Koselleck, ed., *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York, 2004), p. 86.
[77] Goering, 452.

history of a concept allows a historian to test and validate his hypotheses without resorting to empirical observations.

### 1.5.2. Why is conceptual history adopted for this research?

#### 1.5.2.1. The advantages of conceptual history

Koselleck's methodological prescriptions are well suited for this study. First of all, this methodology allows the discovery of conceptual continuity and change in Russian military thought between the late 19th and early 21st centuries. The benefit of this methodology is that it pays attention to conceptual and semantic evolution by observing a significant number of ruptures in political history and their effects on Russian concepts. For this reason, historical research has been undertaken to trace the evolution of fundamental military concepts over time. Therefore, this methodology can be helpful in identifying changes in military concepts, their semantic use, and their interpretations produced in different strategic contexts.

Another advantage of conceptual history is that its premises form the groundwork to identify which concepts are fundamental and which are not. According to this methodology, fundamental concepts have assumed a more significant role in political and cultural discussions than other concepts.[78] According to Goering, the difference between fundamental concepts and a merely common concept hinges on "the historical record and the judgement of the historian."[79] The historical record is associated with a concept's ability to resist linguistic change throughout different historical periods. Therefore, it is related to *historical continuity*. On the other hand, the judgement of the historian will help determine how relevant and essential the concept is within the broader field of study in a particular period. The present research manifests itself in a concept's *capacity of meaning* to explain and shape existing strategic reality. In addition, a concept's capacity to influence the functionality of other concepts in a networked system of thinking makes this concept more critical than the others. Therefore, being conceptually fundamental is also linked with *enduring relevance* and *fitting in the genealogy of concepts*.

[78] Ibid. p. 434.
[79] Ibid. p. 435.

The premise of conceptual history is also applicable to Russian military thought especially in terms of classifying concepts. The present research demonstrates that some concepts have secured their place in Russian military publications throughout the twentieth century, and have played significant roles in realizing the key assumptions of war strategies. In Russian thinking, the employment of a strategy relies on the achievement of a particular concept's underlying propositions. For instance, the Russian *strategy of annihilation* relied excessively on attaining the suppositions of two concepts. These are *combat readiness* and *the initial period of war.* Ensuring a high state of combat readiness to win the war during its initial period was key to attaining the objectives of the strategy of annihilation.[80] At the same time, some concepts lose strategic relevance and diminish when the strategic context changes. Therefore, the study uses conceptual history in order to gain insights into conceptual continuity and change in Russian strategic thought.

Conceptual history is selected for its emphasis on the interrelation between historical and linguistic change. This methodology suggests that concepts' linguistic reflections feel the pressure of change when social and political structures break up.[81] Political history comprises many ruptures, whereas linguistic history shows continuous and gradual adaptations.[82] Therefore, contextual and linguistic continuities differ from one another. On the one hand, the contextual level refers to political history in which a significant number of ruptures can be observed. On the other hand, gradual and continuous transformations can occur at the linguistic level.[83] According to Koselleck, "the most challenging task is to establish an adequate relationship between all these various forms and levels of rupture."[84] The latest stage of Russian political history is an appropriate example of this. During the last century, Russian history witnessed two main socio-political ruptures: the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Much like the Russian revolution, the political transition from the Soviet Union into the Russian Federation in 1991 happened very suddenly. At the political level, it was a fast process. However, integration and transitioning from Soviet to Russian military thought required more time. Likewise, the present research attempts to show that the evidence for this changeover is inconclusive as the teachings of Soviet military science have endured even during the contemporary period. The concepts that

[80] Georgii Samoilovich Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art* (Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013), 42
[81] Koselleck (1989), p. 308
[82] Koselleck (2006), p. 100.
[83] *Ibid.*
[84] *Ibid.*

originated and evolved during the Soviet period have continued to affect Russian military theory.

This study will start, however, in the mid-nineteenth century to investigate the Russian military's conceptualization of warfare. The context is quite poignant; firstly, Imperial Russia's Crimean failure (1853-1856) unearthed a broad gap in the military theory of fighting a European war on different fronts. Subsequently, the Imperial Russian Army concentrated on exerting superior force at war's beginning to catch the enemy unprepared. The First World War, with its static-trench warfare characteristics, significantly changed Soviet views on operational art. During the interwar period, the focus of the Soviet military was to prepare and conduct front scale strategic offensive operations in-depth.[85] After the Second World War, the Soviet General Staff relied on strategic and theater nuclear weapons; however, it did not rule out the possibility of waging conventional war.[86] The wars of the 1990s and early 2000s (i.e. in Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Afghanistan) shifted the Russian General Staff's view on unleashing modern wars. According to the Russian military thinkers, these wars increased the likelihood of local and regional wars and the use of modern conventional weapon systems.[87] Therefore, this study systematically and chronologically analyzes the studies of prominent Russian military thinkers, such as Genrikh Antonovich Leer, Nicolai Petrovich Mikhnevich, Alexander Svechin, Georgii S. Isserson, Mikhail N. Tukhachevsky, Vasili D. Sokolovsky, Vasiliy Yefimovic Savkin, Gareyev, Makhmud Akhmedovich, and S.A. Bogdanov in order to identify continuity in military conceptual thinking.

These ruptures, namely the Russian revolution of 1917 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, and four wars, namely the Crimean War (1853-1856), the First World War, the Second World War, and modern (Western) wars of the 1990s and 2000s, can be distinguished from each other by their peculiar ideological, political, and strategic consequences. In particular, Imperial Russian, Marxist-Leninist, and contemporary Russian theory on war developed their own concepts or revisited the existing ones. The military thinkers of each period conceptualized warfare to attain the ideological and political objectives of political decision-makers. For instance, the political aim of spreading socialist ideology in the 1920s and 1930s brought an offensive strategy and its associated military concepts to the forefront. Moreover, changing strategic context

[85] V.K. Kopytko, "Evolution of Operational Art," *Military Thought* 17:1 (January 2008):208-209.
[86] *Ibid*
[87] *Ibid*.

from trench to manoeuvre warfare, from nuclear to modern conventional war, influenced the evolution of both military concepts and semantic contents over time. As the strategic context changed, some concepts became relevant, while others lost their significance.

Shifting socio-political and strategic contexts influenced the evolution of military concepts. However, some military concepts have remained linguistically intact. Despite this permanence, the functionality of military concepts has evolved at different speeds in different historical and strategic contexts. Although the meaning of military concepts has not changed, "the capacity of meaning and possibilities of semantic and syntactical use has been in constant transformation."[88] Thus, one of the major benefits of conceptual history is that it helps explore the sequential evolution of military concepts by taking note of their content, relevance, and interrelation.

Another advantage of using conceptual history is that it suffices to explain the Russian military's theory of war. Similar to the premises of conceptual history, Russian war theory described the war as a socio-historical phenomenon. Accordingly, the Soviet's military scientific effort was directed towards finding the "correlation between the content of a war and its historical era."[89] In addition to that, the material basis of war (i.e. weapons, economic order and production) had an influence on developing the concepts of war.[90] For instance, the invention of tanks during the 1920s brought the theory of *deep operations* to the forefront.[91] Finally, Soviet military science took note of the shifts in war's socio-political conditions while examining transformations in Russian military concepts. Soviet thinkers believed that the changing socio-political conditions demanded careful consideration of qualitative changes in military theory.[92] Therefore, conceptual history's key assumptions, i.e., regarding socio-political context and underlying structures, applies to Russian military thought.[93]

Similar to the premises of conceptual history, Russian military thought pays attention to concepts' contextual and semantic change. In Russian military thinking, shifting conditions did not immediately give rise to a complete replacement of military

[88] Koselleck (2006), p. 106.
[89] Milovidov and Kozlov, p. 9.
[90] Savkin, pp. 5-6.
[91] Isserson, p. 49.
[92] Ibid, p. 97.
[93] Vogelsang, p. 9.

concepts.[94] Under new conditions old military concepts could drastically change their contents, and could sometimes disappear.[95] Nevertheless, the preceding course of the historical process retained its influence for a specific time. According to a prominent Soviet thinker, Vasiliy Yefimovic Savkin, "[a]s new conditions develop, there is a preparation, and then completion of a leap in the development of military art, and the transition of quantity into quality."[96] In this regard, old concepts changed their content, whereas the form of expression remained stable. According to Savkin, military principles and concepts showed an unchangeable and eternal tendency in terms of the form of their expression (historical continuity); however, their content (semantic use and functionality) constantly changed under the shifting conditions of war.[97] Savkin's thesis resembles conceptual history's key premise: "while a word might remain the same, it can happen that a concept adopts a new functional role."[98] By drawing on Savkin's statement, this study argues that conceptual history is particularly useful in researching military conceptual change in Russian military thought.

#### 1.5.2.2. The shortcomings of conceptual history

A shortcoming of conceptual history is that its premises do not offer any compelling explanation for the reasons for conceptual resilience. Conceptual resilience occurs when a concept does not change even though socio-historical context transforms. The fundamental assumption of conceptual history is that concepts undergo transformation under the pressure of socio-political changes.[99] This transformation is expected to occur in three ways. Firstly, concepts might be retired from use, while others can be introduced.[100] Secondly, a concept may endure, but it could still lose relevance for explaining the new reality. These are called merely common concepts.[101] Thirdly, a concept could ensure both linguistic continuity and strategic relevance by gaining a new semantic content. Nevertheless, conceptual history has not provided insights into the causes of conceptual resilience. Conceptual history does not offer a model which specifies why some concepts survive and are adapted and others do not.

[94] Savkin, p.5.
[95] *Ibid.*
[96] *Ibid.*
[97] Ibid. p. 6
[98] Goering, p. 452.
[99] Koselleck (1989), p. 308
[100] Goering, p. 432.
[101] Ibid, p. 435.

This research has sought to address this shortcoming by conducting additional analyses on the roots of change and continuity. The first analysis aims to build a causal relationship between concepts' strategic relevance and continuity. It seeks to test the argument that the enduring relevance of concepts manifests itself in the form of the continuity of a strategic idea in Russian military thought over time. The second analysis aims to comprehend to what extent the interrelation among concepts promotes the continuity of a strategic view in Russian military thought. The research tries to discover to what degree varying combinations of concepts lead to the emergence of a system of thinking that fosters conceptual resilience.

### 1.5.3. The application of conceptual history into the study

Using the presuppositions proposed by conceptual history (*historical continuity*, *enduring relevance,* and *being part of the genealogy of concepts*), this study begins by identifying Russian fundamental military concepts. These concepts are the *initial period of war, combat readiness, forecasting, correlation of forces and methods,* and *reflexive control.* These concepts remain strategically relevant and have even assumed increasingly essential functions in strategic debates among Russian military thinkers compared to other concepts. Shifting conditions and the character of war have not cast a veil over them. Therefore, this study argues that these concepts fall into the category of fundamental military concepts due to their historical continuity, enduring relevance, and interrelation.

The second step in this process is specifying the socio-historical periods of investigation. This study aims to investigate the historical and content-wise evolution of fundamental military concepts in four different historical periods. They are the late imperial Russian period (1856-1917), the interwar period (1917-1941), the Cold War period (1945-1990), and the contemporary period (1990-2010). These periods, which are defined by ruptures or other episodes of major historical strategic change, have been determined by conceptual history's key underlying proposition, the history of ideas that regards socio-political context and the history of events that take note of underlying structures.[102] As the context changes, it is expected to monitor conceptual or semantic change in fundamental military concepts.

[102] Goering, 435.

Thirdly, the present research seeks to uncover how military concepts have emerged and evolved in Russian strategic thought by dedicating single chapters to each of the four socio-historical periods. Towards that end, this study aims to trace conceptual and semantic shifts in fundamental military concepts by taking note of the characteristics of each period. The advantage of organizing research in this manner is that it allows for an examination of the interrelation among military concepts during each socio-historical period.

Fourthly, the study discovers concepts' rise, content, and evolution throughout the four periods, based on theoretical observations. At this stage, the research aims to specify when a concept emerged, how it was initially defined and how it underwent transformation. In doing so, the study seeks to reveal the formal definitions of military concepts by drawing on Russian resources such as the *Russian Dictionary of Basic Military Terms* or military thinkers' major books on strategy. Thus, this research pays sufficient attention to the necessity of an agreement on the meaning attached to these concepts. Therefore, the purpose of this inquiry is to comprehend whether the Russian General Staff arrived at a consensus on the primary content of these concepts. Thereby, this research tries to understand whether concepts' definitions went through changes in the course of four different historical periods.

Fifthly, this study seeks to understand the causes of continuity. For this purpose, this part of the study aims to build a causal relationship between concepts' enduring relevance and continuity. This step seeks to understand to what degree strategic relevance promotes conceptual continuity in Russian strategic thinking. In this regard, this work explores the semantic content of concepts in different strategic contexts by relying on the history of ideas over the twentieth century. This investigation aims to increase understanding about whether a concept's strategic relevance has changed over time in shifting socio-political and strategic contexts.

By drawing on the teachings of conceptual history, three categories have been designed while classifying concepts' strategic relevance. These are: essentially contested, merely common or strategically essential. An essentially contested concept "involves endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users", even though there is an inexplicit agreement about the idea attached to this concept.[103] Therefore, these concepts are rife with disagreements in their application to a strategy. Merely common

[103] David Hillel Ruben, "'W.B. Gallie and Essentially Contested Concepts," *Philosophical Papers* 39:2 (2010), 257.

concepts involve a widespread agreement about their content; however, they are strategically irrelevant. Therefore, military strategies do not predominantly rely on the application of these concepts. Finally, strategically essential concepts are crucial to building and implementing strategies. In addition, there is a widespread consensus about their meaning.

Sixthly, this study intends to comprehend to what extent the interrelation among concepts promotes the continuity of a strategic idea in Russian military thought. This step scrutinizes the origins of continuity by building a theoretical framework of the system of concepts. This investigation aims to comprehend to what extent the interrelation among concepts promotes conceptual resilience in Russian strategic thinking. The study reveals the genealogy of concepts in every period. Genealogy refers to the degree to which the concepts have historically formed the basis for a particular system of thinking strategically and also applies to relationships, family ties, and familiarity. Here, the interactions and interdependencies among fundamental military concepts will be outlined. Observing vertical and horizontal relations indicates the concept's increasing capacity and strength to affect other concepts. Deriving historical systems of concepts accedes to the underlying proposition of conceptual history: investigating concept-context relationship. In this regard, a concept is also part of the context for other military concepts.

Consequently, the observation of historical continuity, enduring relevance, and system of thinking indicates a certain degree of continuity in Russia's conceptualization of modern war. By drawing on the findings of the previous sections, this study seeks to examine why and how concepts can be resilient under the impact of socio-political and strategic ruptures in Russian strategic thought.

The primary sources of this research are, but are not limited to, the seminal works of Russian thinkers on strategy, war, and military concepts such as G.A. Leer's *Positive Strategy*, N. P. Mikhnevich's *The Basics of Strategy*, A. Svechin's *Strategy*, G.S. Isserson's *The Evolution of Operational Art,* and V.D. Sokolovsky's *Soviet Military Strategy*. In addition, this research undertakes a systematic analysis of the Russian Journal of Military Thought's (*Voennaya Mysl*) published editions after 1992. Next to that, the study has made use of secondary (Western) resources on Russian military thinking. These resources are largely based on qualitative analyses of Russian military resources. Secondary resources will fill the gap that emerged due to the incapacity to access or translate original Russian resources.

Military Thought is "the military-theoretical journal of the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence."[104] The antecedents of the Journal date back to the 1910s. After the Russian Revolution, the Soviet General Staff issued an order to publish a weekly military scientific journal under the name of 'Trade of War' (*Voennoie delo*).[105] Over the course of decades, the Journal's name changed and turned into *Military Thought*. The journal remained classified until 1989, and, thus, it is nearly impossible to find these editions.[106] It is only after the end of the Cold War that the Journal's post-1992 editions have become accessible to Western scholars and practitioners.[107] The original Russian version of this journal is sold in Moscow. The US based East View Information Services provides translated version of this journal by use of subscription-based pricing model.

Generally speaking, this quarterly journal involves the studies of Russian military personnel on war, strategy, and military science. The Journal aims to develop Russian military science and advise the Russian supreme bodies on war theory and practice problems.[108] In particular, previously published articles of the Russian Journal of Military Thought *(Voennaya Mysl)* between 1990 and 2010 have revealed the evolution of military concepts. Nevertheless, the investigation of the Journal's post-2010 editions cannot be carried out.[109] Therefore, the study is limited to the period between 1853 and 2010. Nevertheless, this restraint does not endanger the aim of the present research. Firstly, the sole purpose of this research is to employ conceptual history as a methodology to investigate whether Russian military concepts have undergone linguistic and semantic (content-wise) transformation.[110] Towards that end, the period between 1856 and 2010 has provided sufficient insights into scrutinizing the conceptual evolution of Russian military thinking. Considering the timeframe incorporating late Imperial Russian, Soviet and contemporary Russian periods, putting post-2010 out of the scope does not hinder researching conceptual evolution of Russian military thinking. Secondly, research findings have brought sufficient insights

[104] "The 90th Anniversary of the Voennaia Mysl Journal," *Military Thought* 17:2, (April 2008): 1.
[105] *Ibid.*
[106] East View Information Serices webpage on Russian Journal of Military Thought, https://www.eastview.com/resources/journals/voennaia-mysl/ (accessed 10 February 2022)
[107] East View Press's webpage on Russian Journal of Military Thought, https://www.eastviewpress.com/resources/journals/military-thought/ (accessed 29 September 2021)
[108] Ibid. p. 2.
[109] This research has gained access to this Journal's archive between 2000 and 2010 in coordination with the Leiden and Utrecht University Libraries. In mid-2019, an official request was made to the Leiden University Library to purchase the Journal's post-2010 editions. Due to the financial limitations, Leiden University could not afford to buy the issues between 2010 and 2020. The study has attempted to get access to the post-2010 editions through other universities; however, it has been noticed that European Universities are not subscribed to Military Thought.
[110] Reinhart Koselleck, "Social History and Conceptual History," *International Journal of Politics Culture and Society* 2:3 (1989)

into understanding Russia's approaches to waging modern war. Especially, chapter-6 focuses on the doctrinal and conceptual makeover of Russian military thought between 1990 and 2010. Taken together, the period between 1853 and 2010 provides a sufficient timeframe to understand the historical evolution and continuity of Russian military conceptual thinking.

The Russian Journal of Military Thought is particularly important, as there are relatively few major resources about Russian military thought after the 1990s compared to previous historical periods. Thereby, a large volume of published studies has revealed the emergence of several contrasting opinions on military concepts. These editions shed light on how military concepts underwent another round of transformation after the 1990s.

The recent editions of the Journal have filled the niche of understanding how the legacy of Imperial Russian and Soviet military thought prevailed in the contemporary period. For the purpose of this study, 340 articles of this Journal have been investigated out of 40 quarterly issues. These articles have been selected based on their relevance to strategy and military concepts. The authors of these articles are medium to high-ranked military personnel, ranging from captain to general, at the Russian Federation Academy of Military Sciences. Out of 340, 43 had content that was directly relevant because they were about or used fundamental military concepts while discussing military doctrine and strategy. The remainder of articles has also been investigated. However, their content is outside of the scope of this research. To that end, this study uses the Russian Journal of Military Thought to investigate how the Russian Chief of General Staff thinks about concepts' historical continuity, enduring relevance and interrelation.

In summary, this study aims to offer some important insights into Russian military thought by investigating the extent to which fundamental military concepts privileged continuity over change, predominantly throughout the twentieth century. Furthermore, this research seeks to make a major contribution to the causes of historical (dis)continuity in Russian approaches to modern warfare. For this purpose, the overall structure of the dissertation takes the form of eight chapters, including the introduction and conclusion. The next chapter seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the literature review. Subsequently, each socio-historical period will be examined in-depth to understand how military concepts emerged and evolved. The findings of each period will be discussed and debated extensively in a chapter dedicated to analysis. Finally,

the research will present research findings within the broader context of Russian and Western military thought in the concluding chapter.

# Chapter-2

## Literature Review

### 2.1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on Russian military thought, in which conceptualizing Russia's approaches to modern war has been a frequent focus. However, Western scholars have tended to rely on their own conceptual frameworks while examining Russia's approaches to modern warfare.[1] Nonetheless, understanding Russian theories of war based on Western interpretations of Russian thinkers' ideas on war has received considerable scholarly attention in Western literature.[2] To that end, this chapter first gives an overview of the Western historiography on Russian military thought and concepts before turning to the Russian historiography.

### 2.2. A Western historiography of Russian military thought

The existing western literature on Russian military thought is extensive, although it focuses mainly on the 20th century. To begin with, a considerable amount of literature has been published on how the late Imperial Russian military struggled to command mass armies to fight European powers and Japan on different fronts.[3] These studies have mostly emphasized the economic, technological, and organizational backwardness of the Tsarist Army. In comparison, only a relatively small body of literature is concerned with the evolution of Russian military thinking.[4] In different studies, Kerry L.

---

[1] Maria Snegovaya, "Putin's Information Warfare in Ukraine: The Soviet Origins of Russia's Hybrid Warfare," *Institute for the Study of War*. Washington (2015); Christopher Chivvis, "Understanding Russian Hybrid Warfare," *Rand* (March 2017); K. Kilinskas, "Hybrid Warfare: an Orientating or Misleading Concept in Analysing Russia's Military Actions in Ukraine?," *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review* 14 (2015-2016).

[2] Ofer, Fridman, *Russian 'Hybrid Warfare' Resurgence and Politicization* (London: Hurst & Company, 2018); Mark Galeotti, "The Mythical 'Gerasimov Doctrine' and the language of threat," *Critical Studies in Security* 7:2 (2019) ; Mark Galeotti, "The "Gerasimov Doctrine" and Russian Non-Linear War." *Moscow's Shadows*, https://inmoscowsshadows.wordpress.com/2014/07/06/the-gerasimov-doctrine-and-russian-non-linear-war/.

[3] William Fuller, "The Imperial Army," In *The Cambridge History of Russia*, ed. Dominic Lieven (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); P. V. Wahlde, Military Thought in Imperial Russia. (Michigan: Indiana University, 1966); F.A. Miller, *Dmitrii Miliutin and the Reform in Russia* (Charlotte: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968).

[4] Kerry Lee Hines, *Russian Military Thought: Its Evolution through War and Revolution, 1860-1918* (Washington: The George Washington University, 1998); B.W. Menning, *Bayonets Before the Bullets: The Imperial Russian army 1861-1914*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992) ; David Alan Rich, *The Tsar's Colonels: Professionalism, Strategy, and Subversion in Late Imperial Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Richard. W Harrison, *The development of Russian-Soviet operational art, 1904-1937, and the Imperial Legacy in Soviet Military Thought* (Kings College: London, 1994).

Hines, Bruce W. Menning, and Richard Harrison examine how the Imperial Russian Chief of Staff filled the broad gap between military theory and practice of waging modern war. These studies concentrate predominantly on how G.A. Leer and N.P Mikhnevich endeavoured to generate a unified military doctrine by designing war-winning principles of war. On the other hand, David A. Rich reveals the impact of Clausewitzian military theory on Russian military thinking.

The academic literature on early Soviet military thought pays particular attention to individual military thinkers such as Mikhail V. Frunze, Georgii S. Isserson, and Mikhail N. Tukhachevsky.[5] These studies reveal the Marxist-Leninist base of new strategic thinking and how it turned into military doctrine with its offensive character under the theory of deep operations. For instance, one study by Walter Darnell Jacobs scrutinized Bolshevik political leader Michael Frunze's ideas on military concepts, based on Marxist thought and his experiences in the Russian Civil War in the 1920s.[6] Likewise, a detailed examination of General G.S. Isserson's theory of deep operations has been carried out by Steve J. Main.[7] Next, Lawrence X. Clifford and Sally W. Stoecker have outlined Tuchkachevsky's approach to implementing the theory of deep operations in the 1930s.[8] Finally, a relatively small body of literature is concerned with the Tsarist Army legacy in the Red Army. In this regard, John Erikson and Jacob W. Kipp have carried out investigations on the ideas of Tsarist Thinkers and how they influenced the evolution of Soviet military thinking.[9]

Much of the Western literature on Soviet military thought during the Cold War emphasizes the Red Army's approach to waging nuclear war.[10] These works focus on Soviet nuclear strategic doctrines and their change over time. With respect to the period

[5] David M. Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art: In Pursuit of Deep Battle (*Kansas: Frank Cass, 2005); Richard W. Harrison, *Architect of Soviet Victory in World War II: The Life and Theories of G.S. Isserson* (London: McFarland & Company, 1952).
[6] Walter Darnell Jacobs, *Frunze: The Soviet Clausewitz 1885-1925* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969).
[7] Steven J. Main. "You Cannot Generate Ideas by Orders: The Continuing Importance of Studying Soviet Military History—G. S. Isserson and Russia's Current Geo-Political Stance," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 29:1 (2016)
[8] Sally W. Stoecker, *Forging Stalin's Army Marshall Tukhachevsky and the Politics of Military Innovation* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1998) and Lawrence X. Clifford, *Tukhachevsky and Blitskrieg* (Boston: UMI, 2004)
[9] John Erikson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History 1918-1941* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962) and Jacob W Kipp "General-Major A.A. Svechin and Modern Warfare: Military History and Military Theory", In *Strategy*, ed Kent. D. Lee (Minnesota, East View Information Services, 1991)
[10] Lawrence D. Freedman and Jeffrey Michaels, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (London, Palgrave Macmillan: 2019); Robin Higham and Frederick W. Kagan, The Military History of the Soviet Union (New York: Palgrave, 2002); Colin S. Gray, "Soviet nuclear strategy and new military thinking" in *Soviet Military Thinking and New Nuclear Strategy*, ed. D. Leebaert and T. Dickinson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Raymond L. Garthoff, How Russia makes war: Soviet Military Doctrine (London: Allen & Unwin, 1954).

after the mid-1970s, William E. Odom discovers the shift in Soviet military thinking from nuclear to combined arms in parallel with the impact of Western technological superiority on conventional weapons.[11] After the 1990s, considerable literature has grown up around the theme of Russian military reform. Nevertheless, research on the subject has been mostly restricted to cognitive and organizational transformation.[12] Other studies have centred on contextual and socio-political change while scrutinizing Russian military transformation.[13]

Such approaches, however, have failed to address the doctrinal and conceptual transformation of Russian military thought. Therefore, to date, Western research has not determined how political and strategic ruptures during the 20th century have influenced the conceptual evolution of Russian military thinking. Western research is limited, providing only historical snapshots of military concepts rather than engaging with the historical roots and evolution of Russian military thought. As a consequence, little is understood about how the military concepts of Russian strategic culture have affected the military doctrinal transformation.

### 2. 3. A Western historiography of Russian military concepts

Despite its general limitations, there is clearly substantial Western literature that engages with Russian military concepts. In this regard, a large body of literature focuses on particular military concepts under a strategic framework. Furthermore, much of the literature pays specific attention to the employment of concepts within certain strategies, whereas these studies do not examine their content and semantic use. The main concepts analyzed so far are the initial period of war, combat readiness, correlation, forecasting, and reflexive control.

[11] William E. Odom, The Collapse of the Soviet Military (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2000).
[12] Anne C. Aldis and Roger N. McDermott, Russian Military Reform: 1992-2002 (Ebsco Publishing: 2003); Micheal Orr, "Reform and the Russian Ground Forces, 1992–2002", in Russian Military Reform: 1992-2002, eds. Anne C. Aldis, Roger N. McDermott, 122-138 (Ebsco Publishing: 2003); Alexei G. Arbatov, "Military Reform: From Crisis to Stagnation" in The Russian Military Power and Policy eds. Steven Miller and Dmitri Trenin, 95-119 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004); Bettina Renz, "Russian Military Reform," *The RUSI Journal* 155:1 (March 2010)
[13] Pavel K. Baev, "The Trajectory of the Russian Military: Downsizing, Degeneration, and Defeat", in *The Russian Military Power and Policy* eds. Steven Miller and Dmitri Trenin, 43-72 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004); Steven E. Miller, "Moscow's Military Power: Russia's Search for Security in an Age of Transition" in *The Russian Military: Power and Policy*, eds. Steven Miller and Dmitri Trenin, 1-42 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), Marcel de Haas "Russia's Military Reforms: Victory after 20 years of Failure?," *Clingendael*:5 (November 2011).

Kerry L. Hines focuses on the rise and evolution of *preparatory operations* and *combat readiness* under Leer's strong advocacy for the war of annihilation. Hines emphasizes that the preparatory operations allowed the Imperial Russian Army to ensure superiority at the beginning of war.[14] In another study, Ofer Fridman reveals how applying Leer's *superiority* at the beginning of war principle varies infinitely depending on the constantly changing environment.[15] Jacob W. Kipp has investigated Alexander Svechin's significant contribution to designing the initial period of war in the 1920s.[16] Svechin was a proponent of the attrition strategy and did not believe that decisive operations would take place during the IPW.[17] David Harrison reveals how Isserson's theory of deep operations incorporated the initial period of war and combat readiness. According to Harrison, the IPW offers combat-ready attack echelons to perform manoeuvres along the flanks of a positional front.[18] Likewise, a detailed examination of General G.S. Isserson's ideas on the IPW and combat readiness has been carried out by Steve J. Main.[19] Finally, a qualitative study by Lennart Samuelson analyzes the economic aspect of Tuckhachevsky's approach to combat readiness and mobilization.[20]

Raymond L. Garthoff's investigations into military concepts neglect conceptual context. His pioneering book examines the place of Stalin's permanently operating factors in Soviet military doctrine. Still, he overlooks older concepts developed by Tsarist officers in the Red Army, such as the IPW and combat readiness. [21] Moreover, this study does not investigate the military concepts inspired by Lenin's dialectic-materialist approach to waging war. Therefore, Soviet thinkers' obsession with Stalinist dogma, especially after the mid-1930s, prevented Garthoff from examining other thinkers on military concepts. In 1963, Garthoff carried out another investigation on military concepts, focusing on the impact of post-Stalin modernisation in Soviet strategic thinking in the mid-1950s.[22] At that time, the Soviet Army's focus shifted to not losing the strategic initiative during the initial period of a nuclear war. As a result, Garthoff points to the rising significance of the initial period of war and combat readiness in winning a nuclear war. However, Garthoff's studies are not connected to each other, especially regarding

[14] Hines, p.106
[15] Ofer Fridman, *Strategiya: The Foundations of the Russian art of Strategy* (London: Hurst&Company, 2021), 54.
[16] Kipp (1991)
[17] Kokoshin, p. 64.
[18] Harrison, p. 67.
[19] Main (2016)
[20] Lennart Samuelson, *Plan's for Stalin's War Machine: Tukhachevskii and Military Economic Planning, 1925-1941* (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 2000).
[21] Garthoff (1954)
[22] Sokolovsky (1963)

military concepts. These studies do not establish conceptual linkages between the interwar and Cold War periods.

During the Cold War, John G. Hines has studied how the Soviet General Staff re-periodized its war design as the *initial* and *subsequent* period of war during the late 1950s by prioritizing the former over the latter.[23] As a result, the IPW became the decisive period of a short nuclear war in the 1960s. Furthermore, Lawrence D. Freedman, Jeffrey Michaels and Steven Zaloga have identified the details of Soviet initial nuclear operations. According to these studies, the IPW of Russian strategic design relied on demonstrating resilience and inflicting a counter-attack in case of an enemy surprise nuclear attack.[24] After the 1990s, Stephen Covington has examined the IPW in his study about the elements of Russian strategic culture.[25] According to Covington, Russian strategic culture is obsessed with winning the initial period of a future war under contemporary war strategies.[26] Likewise, Timothy Thomas scrutinizes Russian military thinkers' ideas on the IPW after the 1990s.[27] Thomas concludes that the Russian General Staff's focus has shifted to winning the initial period of local or regional wars after the 2000s.[28]

The literature also pays attention to two interrelated Russian concepts: forecasting and correlation of forms and methods. Jacob W. Kipp first examined the rise, evolution and content of these concepts in an article in 1992. According to Kipp, the knowledge of societal laws was meant to inspire Soviet thinkers to foresee the trends and qualitative leaps in the character of warfare.[29] In another study, Timothy Thomas examines correlation in the context of how the Soviet military has constructed strategies by correlating political, economic, scientific, military, ideological, and other factors since the 1970s.[30] Thomas reveals that the correlation of forces also holds an important place in contemporary Russian thought, especially in terms of the correlation of direct and

[23] John G. Hines, *Soviet Intentions: Volume II Soviet Post Cold-War Testimonial Evidence* (Mclean VA: BDM Federal, 1995), p. 41.
[24] Steven J. Zaloga, "Soviet/Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces", 1945-2000, in *The Military History of the Soviet Union*, ed. Robin Higham and Frederick W. Kagan (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 208; Lawrence D. Freedman and Jeffrey Michaels, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (London, Palgrave Macmillan: 2019), 185.
[25] Stephen R. Covington, "The Culture of Strategic Thought Behind Russia's Modern Approaches to Warfare," *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs* (2016): 36-38.
[26] *Ibid.*
[27] Timothy Thomas, "Thinking Like a Russian Officer," *The Foreign Military Studies Office* (April 2016).
[28] Ibid. p. 15.
[29] Jacob Kipp, "The other side of the hill: Soviet military foresight and forecasting", in Soviet nuclear strategy and new military thinking, ed. D. Leebaert and T. Dickinson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 251.
[30] Thomas, pp. 8-9.

indirect actions.[31] In another study, Stoecki investigates the role of correlation of forces and combat readiness in the 1970s under the Soviet conventional theory of deep operations.[32] Stoecki analyzes how enhanced combat readiness could change the correlation of forces favouring the Soviet military. Furthermore, he has emphasizes that a high state of combat readiness was crucial for attaining desired superiority over the enemy. [33] However, Stoecki does not analyze thoroughly how these concepts operated under nuclear war strategies.

One final military concept which has drawn western scholars' attention is reflexive control. Timothy Thomas focuses on this concept in a 2004 study within the context of information superiority.[34] According to Thomas, reflexive control helps the Russian military transmit motives and reasons to influence the enemy decisions.[35]

In another study, Timothy Thomas also scrutinizes Russian military thinkers' ideas on the IPW, correlation, and forecasting from the 1970s onwards, developing a conceptual framework of how a Russian officer evaluates a military and geopolitical situation using these concepts.[36] Unfortunately, this approach is unsatisfactory because Thomas does not take account of these concepts' historical origins and evolution before the 1970s, a crucial oversight as most of these concepts emerged between the 1870s and 1930s. In addition to that, Thomas treats these concepts individually and does not investigate the interrelation among them. Therefore, Thomas does not treat military concepts as the integral elements of a broader system of thinking throughout the 20th century.

The histography of Western resources indicates that the mechanisms that underpin continuity in Russia's conceptualisation of warfare primarily over the twentieth century are not fully understood. Hardly any scholar has systematically researched Russian military thought over extended periods of time, instead focusing on particular, historically-limited issues.[37] As a result, existing accounts treat Russian military concepts more or less individually instead of investigating them as integral pieces of the broader Russian military system of thinking. Therefore, such approaches have

[31] *Ibid*.
[32] Fritz Stoecki, "The correlation of forces and success in overcoming anti-tank defences," *The Journal of Soviet Military Studies* 1:2 (1998).
[33] Ibid. p. 260.
[34] Timothy, L. Thomas, "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17 (2004).
[35] Ibid. p. 246.
[36] Thomas (2016)
[37] Thomas (2016); Kokoshin (1998); Thomas (2004).

narrowed down Russian military thought to the snapshots of how military concepts operate separately under specific conditions. Finally, much uncertainty still exists about how conceptual peculiarity influenced military transformation when Russia faced socio-historical and strategic ruptures.

## 2.4. A Russian historiography of Russian military thought and military concepts

There are relatively few Russian studies on the history of their own military thought. Since the codification and institutionalization of military concepts date back to the 1970s, the generalizability of much published Russian research on this issue before this date is problematic. Before the 1970s, Russian literature on military concepts was restricted to sections of leading Russian military thinkers' books on strategy.[38] Thus, these works sought to fulfil the need to generate a unified military doctrine. In doing so, Russian military theorists revised military concepts in order to help bridge the gap between military theory and practice. After the 1970s, the first serious discussions and analyses of Russian military conceptual thinking emerged with the studies of Vasiliy Yefisovich Savkin, who served on the Soviet Frunze Military Academy in the 1970s.

Savkin was the first to demonstrate that Russian military concepts emerged and evolved in compliance with the ideological objectives of political leadership, the economic order of the Soviet Union, and the material means of waging war.[39] Only from his work did the Russians make the connection between the socio-historical context and military conceptual change. Savkin further unravels doctrinal development in the face of qualitative leaps in the development of military art. In his study, these strategic leaps were expected to change the relevance and content of military concepts. Nevertheless, Savkin demonstrates that old military concepts sustain their influence on military thinking even after shifts and revolutions in strategy and strategic context. He therefore concludes that military concepts show both resilience and change as their content is constantly upgraded under new socio-historical and strategic contexts.[40] After Savkin's

[38] Genrikh Antonovich Leer, *The Method of Military Science: Strategy, Tactic and Military History* (St. Petersburg, 1894) and Genrikh Antonovich Leer, *Positive Strategy (Part 1)* (Saint Petersburg, 1877); Nikolai Petrovich Mikhnevich, *The Basics of Strategy* (Osnoviy Strategii) (Saint Petersburg, 1913),24; Andrei A. Kokoshin, *Soviet Strategic Thought 1917-91* (London: MIT Press, 1995), 41-42; Georgii Samoilovich Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art*, (Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013), 44.

[39] Vasiliy Yefimovic, Savkin, *The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics (a Soviet View).* Translated and Published Under the Auspices of The United States Air Force. Washington: The US Air Force, 1972. Moscow, 1972, p. 5-6.

[40] *Ibid.*

study, Russian military thinkers have tended pragmatically to amend their military concepts' in accordance with changing operational and social environments, while still recognizing their general and continued relevance.

In the 1970s, several Russian strategists carried out a variety of investigations on military concepts in conformity with Savkin's work. In 1974, S.P. Ivanov published a book entitled *The Initial Period of War*.[41] In this book, Ivanov presents the historical evolution of the IPW from the late 19th century until the end of the Second World War, examining how the IPW influenced the Russian military's strategic entry operations by taking note of the peculiarities of war conditions, theoretical evolution of broader military thinking, and enemy approaches to carrying out entry operations. However, he does not pay attention to the evolution of the IPW during the nuclear period. Likewise, Yu. V. Chuyev, and Yu. B. Mikhaylov wrote a book on *Forecasting in Military Affairs: A Soviet View* in 1975.[42] In this book, a detailed examination of forecasting's conceptual evolution is conducted to identify trends in the evolution of warfare. Chuyev and Mikhaylov present an overview of how Marxist-Leninists teachings on war in the 1920s specified the evolution of forecasting up until the 1970s.[43] Furthermore, this study puts forecasting in the centre while discovering the linkages between socio-historical patterns and the evolution of Russian military thinking. Due to its comparative thoroughness, this work has been the basis for subsequent research on forecasting.

A decade later, Andrei A. Kokoshin employed Savkin's presuppositions to Soviet military concepts in a seminal work entitled *Soviet Strategic Thought:1917-91*. Kokoshin demonstrates how several military concepts emerged, evolved, and operated under various Soviet military strategies during the entire Soviet period.[44] First and foremost, Kokoshin investigates the theoretical evolution of the initial period of war since the 1920s from a historical perspective. Accordingly, Kokoshin demonstrates how Svechin's conceptualisation of the IPW shifted the Soviet General Staff's focus to attaining superiority at the very beginning of war on the ground and in the air.[45] Afterwards, Kokoshin demonstrates the shift in the IPW's semantic content from the *shaping* into

[41] S.P. Ivanov, *The Initial Period of War*. Translated and published under the auspices of The United States Air Force. (Washington: The U.S. Government Printing Office Moscow 1974).
[42] Yu. V. Chuyev, and Yu. B. Mikhaylov, Forecasting in Military Affairs: A Soviet View (Moscow: Ministry of Defence 1975) published by (Washington: The US Government Printing Office), 24. Translated by the DGIS Multilingual Section Translation Bureau, Ottawa, p. 23.
[43] Ibid, p. 22.
[44] Andrei A. Kokoshin, *Soviet Strategic Thought 1917-91* (London: MIT Press, 1995), 86-87.
[45] Ibid, pp. 122-124.

decisive period of war after the 1950s.[46] Despite his extensive examination of the IPW, Kokoshin surprisingly neglects the historical analysis of other key concepts. Instead, he employs combat readiness and correlation of forces while explaining Soviet war strategies. In this regard, Kokoshin shows how the Soviet theory of deep operations was put in place by creating special combat-ready frontline units in the 1930s.[47] Likewise, Kokoshin points out Soviet leadership's emphasis on nuclear firepower in the 1950s as a means of increasing the Red Army's general combat readiness posture.[48] Next, Kokoshin analyzes the Soviet leadership's option for combined arms formations between the 1970s and 1980s by correlation.[49] Therefore, Kokoshin's study does not provide a full account of the theoretical contents and historical evolution of these concepts, particularly of combat readiness and correlation.

After the 1990s, Savkin's ideas on military conceptual resilience have received criticism as Russian military thinkers discussed whether traditional concepts of war had become obsolete. A growing body of Russian military literature has resulted which focuses on reconceptualizing war based on newly emerging trends in warfare.[50] This body of opinion (the modernists), led by I.N. Vorobyov and V.A. Kiselev, rejects the Russian military's long-standing critical-historical approach, which prioritized time-tested concepts and principles of past wars, in favour of a new theory of warfare based on new technologies and innovation.[51] Unlike the proponents of the historical outlook, these thinkers attach great importance to forecasting future war's new character.[52] On the other hand, the traditionalist school of thought has continued to use time-tested concepts and means of Russian strategic culture while adapting them to the new operational environment. This body of opinion, led by Makhmud A. Gareyev and S.B. Ivanov, seeks to address modern challenges by employing the conceptual schemes of the previous periods.[53] Due to their violent-centric and direct approaches to war, the traditionalists advocate for the continuity of old military concepts.

---

[46] *Ibid.*
[47] Ibid, p. 97.
[48] Ibid. p. 118.
[49] Ibid. pp. 126-139.
[50] S.N. Konopatov, "Traditional Concept of War is Obsolete," *Military Thought* 10:1 (January 2001): 62.
[51] I.N. Vorobyov and V.A. Kiselev, "On the Innovative Development Concept in the Armed Forces", *Military Thought*, 18:3 (July 2009): 52.
[52] I.N. Vorobyov, "Military Futurology", *Military Thought* 17:2 (April 2008): 164.
[53] M.A. Gareyev, "Certain Typical Features of Future Wars," *Military Thought* 12:2 (March 2003):188; S.B. Ivanov, "The Military Command and Control System Today and Ways of Improving It in Light of New Defence Tasks and Changes in the Character of Future Wars," *Military Thought* 13:4 (April 2004): 191 and A.V. Suprayaga, "Wars of the 21st Century," *Military Thought* 11:4, (July 2002).

Much of the contemporary literature on Russian military thought pays particular attention to methodological approaches to studying war. In the context of that, military intellectual discussions have centred on treating war as a military science or operational art. Since the late 19th century, traditional Russian military theory has investigated military conceptual matters under military science instead of operational art due to the influence of positivism on military matters.[54] Positivism manifested itself in the form of identifying laws of war, in a manner similar to that used for the laws of other sciences. Therefore, the vast majority of Russian conceptual studies devoted their attention to institutionalizing military principles of war and their attendant concepts under military science rather than to exploring the overall histories of their individual and collective developments.[55] On the other hand, a relatively small body of Russian military literature after the 1990s is concerned with developing new concepts based on the premises of operational art.[56] For instance, Ye.V. Vasilyev has questioned the positivist notion that observing the principles of war could determine war's outcome. As a result, Vasilyev concludes, "principles of military art are in no fixed order or priority because the importance of one or another principle can be appreciably changed under different conditions."[57] Despite this outlook, the advocates of operational art have still relied on military principles and concepts of war while designing military strategies and defence plans. This is mostly because some principles and concepts of war, as the core elements of Russian strategic culture, have long been considered indispensable for theory and practice.

The examination of Russian literature demonstrates that Russian military thought treats military concepts as a socio-historical phenomenon. Most research on military concepts has been carried out by employing a positivist and historical methodology. On the other hand, a growing body of literature investigates military concepts by taking future war's changing character as a reference point. These different outlooks have promoted discussions within Russian General Staff on changing and updating concepts' content or integrating new concepts into Russian military doctrine.

---

[54] I.N. Vorobyov and V.A. Kiselev. "Military Science at Present Stage," *Military Thought* (English Version) 17:3 (July 2008).; Yu. P. Gladyshev and G.V. Ivanov, "Military Science and Military Systemology," *Military Thought* (English Version) 14:4 (October 2005); Ye.V. Vasilyev, "Principles of Military Art," *Military Thought* (English Version) 14:2 (April 2005):136 and "The main principles of Combat," Editor, *Military Thought* 11:4, (July 2002).

[55] Danilenko, I.S. "From Applied Military Science to a Basic Science of Warfare: Part 1," *Military Thought* (English Version) 17:4 (October 2008 October 2008); Gladyshev, Yu.P. and G.V. Ivanov, "Military Science and Military Systemology," *Military Thought* (English Version) 14:4 (October 2005); Tyushkevich, S.A. "Military Science and Russia's Security," Military Thought (English Version) 10:3 (March 2001).

[56] Ye.V. Vasilyev, "Principles of Military Art," *Military Thought* (English Version) 14:2 (April 2005):136

[57] Ibid. p. 138.

## 2.5. A Synthesis of the literature

Russian military theoretical discussions concentrate on whether newly emerging conditions necessitate a complete or content-wise revision of military conceptual studies, revolving around whether the adherence to military theory's ideological and technological basis should be relinquished when war's character changes. In this regard, taking past or future as a reference point has dominated the conceptual evolution of Russian military thought. Thus, much of the Russian literature pays particular attention to the relevance and significance of time-tested concepts and principles of Russian strategic culture even during socio-political and strategic transformation. Therefore, these studies highlight the continuity of past ideas in Russia's new approaches to warfare. Nevertheless, a relatively small but growing body of Russian literature is concerned with the concepts of future warfare inspired by the Western way of war.

The Western literature has yet to engage with the actual evolution of Russian military thinking, particularly of its core concepts. Most research has remained narrow in focus, while dealing with a snapshot of how a concept is defined and employed in a particular period. Thus, Western research tends to focus on a specific period demarcated by socio-political and strategic ruptures. Furthermore, there is a large volume of published studies that describes the ideas of individual military thinkers. Inevitably, it limits the study's focus to a particular period. Analyzing one specific period affects how the concepts' relevance is understood. Constraining concepts' meaning and functionality to particular timeframe influences how the concepts are systematized. Furthermore, Western literature has not adequately investigated the conceptual evolution of Russian military thought by taking note of the socio-political and strategic ruptures. Most Western literature on military concepts does not clarify how military concepts change in response to geopolitical and strategic changes. Thus, a systematic understanding of how military concepts' semantic content changes under different strategic contexts is still lacking.[58] Finally, previously published studies indicate that military concepts are understood more or less individually in the West.[59] Very little attention is paid to how these concepts fit together into a whole system of Russian military theory.

## 2.6. Conclusion

[58] Kokoshin (1998), Stoecker (2004) and Main (2016).
[59] Kipp (1992); Erikson (1962); Odom (2000) and Thomas (2016).

The overall structure of the study takes the form of eight chapters, including the introduction (chapter 1) and the literature review (chapter 2). Major chapters on fundamental military concepts have been organised chronologically. Thus, the study aims to examine the semantic evolution of military concepts under different socio-historical and strategic contexts. They are the late imperial Russian period, 1856-1917 (chapter 3), the interwar period, 1917-1941 (chapter 4), the Cold War period, 1945-1991 (chapter 5), and the contemporary period, 1990-2010 (chapter 6). These periods have been determined in accordance with conceptual history's underlying propositions. Thus, they are demarcated by two socio-political ruptures, namely the Russian revolution of 1917 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, and four wars: the Crimean War, the First World War, the Second World War, and the modern wars of the 1990s and 2000s. The seventh chapter presents the research findings by carrying out detailed analyses on the causes of conceptual resilience. Finally, chapter 8 discusses the main research findings by making a comparative analysis of Western and Russian military thought.

## Chapter-3

## The Rise and Evolution of Fundamental Military Concepts in the Late Imperial Russian Military Thought: 1856-1917

*This chapter explores the birth and evolution of fundamental military concepts in the Imperial Russian Army between 1856 and 1917. The research scrutinizes the principles of Genrikh Antonovich Leer (1829-1904) and his inheritor Nicolai Petrovich Mikhnevich (1849-1927) by shedding light on the impact of their fundamental military principles and concepts on Russian military thought. This study also investigates whether fundamental principles influenced various Russian strategies. Therefore, the research examines Russian war planning against Prussia, the Ottoman Empire (in the 1870s), and Germany (in the 1910s) as part of the larger historical narrative. Fundamental military principles and their attendant concepts laid the groundwork for the Russian war strategies between the 1860s and 1910s. Overall, the research will identify two concepts: the beginning of war and combat readiness, both of which were key to Russian strategic thought during the late 19$^{th}$ century. Nevertheless, these concepts were de-emphasized by the Russian General Staff under the strategy of attrition prior to the First World War. While Leer ascribes decisive importance to the beginning of war and combat readiness, Mikhnevich pays scant attention these concepts. Thus, Mikhnevich privileges operational art over Leer's war-winning principles and concepts. The chapter concludes that the late Imperial Russian military thought underwent a transformation from winning wars linearly at the beginning of war to adapting itself to the conditions of conflict throughout the war.*

### 3.1. Introduction

After the Cold War, there has been a renewed interest among the Russian Chief of General Staff on the ideas of late Imperial Russian military thinkers. With the dissolution of Soviet Union and decline of socialism's influence on military matters, Russian thinkers began seeking a new philosophy for war shaped by Imperial Russian military heritage.[1] For instance, in a seminal work entitled, *Military Strategy* Sergey Mikhaylev lists the

[1] I.N. Vorobyov and V.A. Kiselev, "The New Strategy of Indirect Approach," *Military Thought* 14:4 (October 2006): 27-36.

definitions of strategy by resorting to the ideas of Imperial Russian thinkers such Alexander Andreyevich Svechin and Nikolai P. Mikhnevich.[2] Nevertheless, Mikhaylev disregards the thoughts of prominent Soviet thinkers such as Vladimir Lenin and Mikhail Frunze. As a group of Russian thinkers stated in 1994, "By rejecting the exclusive role of Marxism as the sole truce teaching that explains the nature and character of war […] we face the need to clarify the [military] scientific basis of [our] worldview, our views of war as a special societal condition."[3]

Even though the concepts and principles of Tsarist military heritage prevail in contemporary thinking it would be erroneous to expect a content-wise similarity, because concepts acquire new semantic contents under different socio-political and strategic contexts. Likewise, the semantic and functional use of military concepts underwent a series of transformations over time as the strategic context changed. For instance, the historical roots of the Russian military's recent "active defence strategy" (*aktivnoy oboronu*) date back to the early 1900s.[4] According to Russian Chief of General Staff Valeriy Gerasimov, this strategy aims to set several measures to pre-emptively neutralize threats to the security of the Russian state.[5] In the early 1900s, the Imperial Russian thinkers defined this concept in a different context. Active defence strategy required the imperial Russian Army to adopt a defensive posture at the beginning of war in order to assemble forces for an effective offense during the following phases.

Even though Russian thinkers have shown an increased interest in the Imperial Russian military heritage, much less is known about how Tsarist military heritage influenced Russia's conceptualisation of modern warfare. A systematic understanding of how military principles and concepts of the late Imperial Russian period evolved over the course of time is still lacking. Therefore, this chapter offers some crucial insights into the birth and evolution of fundamental military concepts in the Imperial Russian Army between 1856 and 1917 by using conceptual history as a methodology. [6]

Late Imperial Russian military thinkers carried out several attempts to create a unified military doctrine. Especially after the Crimean defeat of 1856, the Russian military's

[2] Ofer Fridman, *Strategiya: The Foundations of the Russian art of Strategy* (London: Hurst&Company, 2021), 2.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] Valeriy Gerasimov, "Strategy Speech at the Academy of Military Sciences", *Red Star (Krasnaya Zbezda),* 2019, http://redstar.ru/vektory-razvitiya-voennoj-strategii/
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] Reinhart Koselleck, "Conceptual History, Memory, and Identity: An Interview with Reinhart Koselleck." *Contributions* 2:1 (2006)

overconfidence regarding the outdated war practices began to disappear. As a reaction to that, the generals of the Russian Nicholas General Staff Academy, Genrikh A. Leer and his successor Nikolai P. Mikhnevich, formulated different sets of war-winning principles and concepts by applying a critical-historical methodology. According to Leer, "military critical history embodies ideas, thus assisting their understanding, it helps to avoid unqualified assumptions and systems, rescues the reader from dogmatic conclusions and teaches him to respect the role of the situation, the true potentate of war."[7] Therefore, this methodology sought to conceptualize war by observing and analyzing great commanders' (Alexander, Hannibal, Napoleon..) historical practices in a critical manner.[8] For Leer, "positive science is based on unchangeable laws, which are derived not from the depth of the writer's soul, but from the critical analysis of history in practice."[9] In this regard, Leer and Mikhnevich intended to fill the persistent gap between military theory and practice in Russian military thought using a critical-historical approach. However, the principles of each thinker generated different strategic approaches and principles of war. On the one side, G.A. Leer's principles advocated for a short war of annihilation. On the other side, N.P. Mikhnevich relied on a protracted war of attrition.

### 3.2. The historical conditions of the late Imperial Russian Period

The Imperial Russian Army suffered a humiliating defeat against the allied armies of Britain, France, Sardinia, and the Ottoman Empire during the Crimean war of 1853-1856. As a result, Russia's sovereignty and security were threatened from the south since the Paris agreement (1856) prohibited Russia from basing warships in the Black Sea. Indeed, there were two primary reasons for the military disaster. First of all, the Russian army had overconfidence in the methods that had won a historic victory against the Napoleon Army in 1812. Secondly, the Russian army suffered from the consequences of its economic, military, and technological incapacity to wage a war against the coalition of Western armies.[10] Subsequently, the military failure discredited the serf-based Russian military system. At the same time, the Crimean war unearthed a pressing need to carry out military transformation. [11]

[7] Fridman, p. 59.
[8] Ibid, p. 54.
[9] Ibid. p. 63.
[10] William Fuller, "The Imperial Army," In *The Cambridge History of Russia*, ed. Dominic Lieven (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 553
[11] *Ibid.*

A careful examination of the Crimean war would reveal the deficiencies of Russian military theory. The Russian mobilization plan relied on deploying a "980,000-man regular army with over a million newly mobilised Cossacks, militia and raw recruits." [12] However, in practice, the Imperial Army was most of the time numerically and technologically inferior to the enemy alliance at the Crimean front. At the outset of the war, the Russian military overwhelmed the Ottoman troops at the Black Sea and the Caucasus. Following the enemy alliance's intervention, the Russian army was unable to face the European powers on four different fronts – the Crimea, the Caucasus, the Baltic, and the Balkans. In return, the Russian War Command pinned down hundreds of thousands of troops to Poland, the Baltic frontier, and the Caucasus.[13] Overall, the most decisive engagements took place on the Crimean front, whereas the distracted Russian army could only assign 100.000 troops for the defence of Crimea out of 1.9 million. [14] In other words, the Imperial War Command could not achieve numerical and technological superiority at the Crimean front where the enemy allied troops concentrated most of their efforts.

The Crimean war "revealed a broad gap between military theory and practice" of fighting a European war on different fronts.[15] This gap stemmed from Russian military thinkers' narrow view of waging a war of alliance. Having acknowledged this prerequisite after paying a heavy toll, the Ministry of War Dmitri Miliutin inaugurated a conceptual reform program called the "scientific study of military history and affairs." [16] Following this, professors at the Nicholas Academy were encouraged to develop a unified military doctrine of commanding mass armies. This initiative became more critical when Miliutin attempted to expand the mobilization capacity of the Russian Army after he declared universal military conscription in 1874.[17]

[12] Ibid. p. 540.
[13] Ibid. p. 540.
[14] A.P. Tsygankov, *Russia and the West From Alexander to Putin : Honor in International Relations* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 200-201.
[15] Kerry Lee Hines, *Russian Military Thought: Its Evolution through War and Revolution, 1860-1918* (Washington: The George Washington University, 1998), 87.
[16] P. V. Wahlde, *Military Thought in Imperial Russia.* (Michigan: Indiana University, 1966), 114 and F.A. Miller, *Dmitrii Miliutin and the Reform in Russia* (Charlotte: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), 40
[17] Miller, p. 195.

In the West, the Prussian Army "became the envy of the world" after it won wars against Austria in 1866 and France in 1871.[18] The most likely causes of these victories were the declaration of universal conscription in 1814, the setting up of a Prussian General Staff, and the industrialization that appeared on the battlefield through railways, telegraph, and the needle gun.[19] Furthermore, the merge of mobilization and deployment as the inseparable parts of operational planning made a difference in Western military thought. In this regard, "the time lag between a mobilisation order and completion of deployment shrank from 2-3 months to 2-3 weeks."[20] As a result, the Prussian Army gained a significant advantage by deploying its forces on the battlefield before the enemy.

Prussians, on the other hand, did not seek to build a unified theory of military history.[21] Contrary to Leer's critical-historical method, Schlieffen's form of military theory did not aim to find best historical practices. Rather, he wanted "a general outline as a teaching vehicle for practical military exercises and future war planning."[22] In this regard, the Prussian Army's approach to war rested on the concepts of time and rapid mobilisation.[23] These concepts were crucial for striking a decisive blow at the enemy's centre of gravity. Indeed, the Prussian Army's theoretical basis of war date back to the teachings of Clausewitz. [24] In *On War*, Clausewitz states that "[t]he major battle is, therefore, to be regarded as concentrated war, as the centre of gravity of the entire conflict or campaign."[25] In this context, the Prussians took advantage of the industrialization to operationalize these principles successfully during the German unification wars. Next to that, Prussia's approach to mobilization was admired by the other European powers after the 1870s. Even further, Russia military thinkers closely examined Prussian military thought since "Germany, perhaps, supported by Austria, swiftly became the chief preoccupation of Russia's military leadership" in the 1860s. [26]

[18] D. Walter "A Military Revolution? Prussian Military Reforms before the Wars of German Unification," *Forsvarsstudier* , 2 (2001): 4.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid. p.13.
[21] David Alan Rich, *The Tsar's Colonels: Professionalism, Strategy, and Subversion in Late Imperial Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 55.
[22] Ibid, p. 56.
[23] Walter, p. 13.
[24] Richard. W Harrison, *The development of Russian-Soviet operational art, 1904-1937, and the Imperial Legacy in Soviet Military Thought (*Kings College: London, 1994), 25.
[25] C. V. Clausewitz, *On War.* (M. H. Paret, Ed.) (New Jersey: Princeton,1984), 258.
[26] Fuller, p. 542.

The quest for developing a "Russian art of war" was the fundamental issue in 19th-century Russian strategic thinking.[27] Formulating war-winning principles of war shaped most of the theoretical military activity in the second half of the 19th century. Scientific positivism, the belief in the efficacious power of scientific methods, became the Russian General Staff's main method for military reform.[28] However, there were differing opinions about the methodology among Imperial Russian military thinkers. On the one hand, The Russian Academy School, which received its name from the professors and lecturers of the Russian Nicholas Academy, underscored "the universal nature of military art that had advanced along a single high road."[29] The advocates of this school argued that the Russian military should adopt the fundamental principles of universal military culture. General Genrikh Antonovich Leer (1824-1904) was the leading member of this body of opinion between the 1860s and 1900s. According to Leer, the primary purpose of this school was to develop an "[o]perational art [which] is based on the principles that cannot be violated." [30] Leer further argues that "[w]hile implementation of strategy and tactics indefinitely changes, their principles have always remained unchanged."[31] Although the laws and principles of war were unchanging, their application differed infinitely according to situation.[32] Therefore, Leer aimed to discover eternal and immutable principles of war by examining the best practices of the great commanders. In his book, entitled *The Method of Military Science* (1894*)*, Leer credits Napoleon's military achievements to the proper application of the "principle of concentration of force" as the essential element of manoeuvring forces to the decisive point for the war of annihilation.[33] In the same vein, Leer analyzes Clausewitz and underscores the significance of his principles such as "the extreme exertion [of force]", "concentration of force at the decisive time and point", and "not to lose time". [34]

On the other hand, the Russian national school disagreed with the academic school about borrowing a military theory from the West. The adherents of this school argued that examining the "distinctive Russian art of war" of the 16th and 17th centuries could

[27] Walter, Pintner, "Russian Military Thought: The Western Model and the Shadow of Suvorov," in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* ed. P. Paret. (New Jersey: Princeton, 1986), 354.
[28] Rich, p. 45.
[29] Hines, p. 236.
[30] Genrikh Antonovich Leer, *The Method of Military Science: Strategy, Tactic and Military History* (St. Petersburg, 1894), 46
[31] Fridman, p. 40.
[32] Ibid, p. 33.
[33] Leer, p. 45.
[34] Ibid. p. 49.

help advance Russian military science.[35] This group supported the idea of a unified military doctrine; however, one "that was uniquely Russian".[36] Apart from these, a small but influential group, *the young Turks*, argued that future warfare would be different from the past and the "Russian army's doctrine had to be derived from the application of reason to the study of warfare."[37] Overall, while the academic and national schools used history as a starting point to conceptualize warfare, the young Turks focused mainly on modern warfare.

### 3.3. Conceptualization of warfare between the 1860s and 1890s

#### 3.3.1. General Genrikh Antonovich Leer (1829-1904) and his concepts, *preparatory operations* and *combat readiness*

General G.A. Leer dominated the discussion on military theory and strategy between the 1860s and early 1900s. Leer spent much of his career at the Nicholas Academy as the instructor of military tactics, strategy, and history. Afterwards, Leer became the commandant of the Academy between 1898 and 1904. His books, *Positive Strategy (1877)* and *The methods of Military Science* (1894), had a profound impact on Imperial staff officers. Indeed, Leer relied on the opinions of Swiss strategist Henry Jomini (1779-1869) who served in the Russian Army after 1807. By embracing a positivist methodology with respect to military matters, Jomini stressed the importance of military principles. In this regard, Jomini emphasized that "methods change but principles are unchanging."[38] Jomini further argued that strategy "may indeed be regulated by fixed laws resembling those of the positive sciences."[39] Therefore, Jomini applied positivism to military matters by treating them as military science. Like other sciences, military science sought to discover the eternal and unconditional laws of war.[40] Akin to Jomini, Leer concentrated on formulating a systematic code of laws forming the basis of the art of the conduct of war.[41] In this context, Leer sought to separate past practices from historical conditions and to apply them to Imperial Russian military thought. According to Leer, "what is new in war is nothing more than that (that?) has been frequently

[35] Wahlde, p. 115
[36] Hines, p. 384.
[37] Ibid.
[38] K. Booth, "History or Logic as Approaches to Strategy," *Rusi* 117 (1972): 39.
[39] Jomini, 1838, quoted in T. Waldman, "Clausewitz and the Study of War," *Defence Studies* (2012) 345-374: 348.
[40] Hines, p.91.
[41] Leer, 1877 qouted in Hines, p. 100.

forgotten." [42] On the other hand, Leer stressed the importance of operational art and changing conditions of war. He argues that "[m]ilitary art, like other art, is based on unchanging laws, whose application varies infinitely depending on the constantly changing environment."[43] Therefore, Leer's theory of war encapsulated ideas that combined Jomini's military science and Clausewitz' operational art.

Leer formulated twelve principles of war while examining the practices and works of Napoleon I, Frederick the Great, Henry Lloyd, Henry Jomini, Carl Von Clausewitz, and Carl Von Dekker. [44] Some of Leer's principles served the purpose of unifying the actions of tactical units, and they had less strategic meaning. On the other hand, several principles influenced the formation of the Imperial Russian war strategy. In particular, *the extreme exertion of force at the beginning of war*, *the concentration of forces at the main point, and surprise* influenced the Russian military strategy.[45] These principles affected the course of strategic operations that Leer separated into three main phases. These are the "preparatory, main, and supplementary operations.[46] Overall, these principles functioned under Leer's strategy of choice: unleashing a war of annihilation.

Leer emphasized the significance of the superiority of force because he was an advocate of an offensive strategy. [47] Under this strategy, the Imperial Russian Army "required numerical superiority over the enemy and terrain that allowed manoeuvre." [48] To attain this objective, Leer developed a new principle: *the extreme exertion of force at the beginning of war*. In his book *Positive Strategy*, Leer defines the primary purpose of this principle as "to start every war (campaign and operation) not only with sufficient forces but with extreme exertion of forces."[49] By formulating this principle, Leer urged Russian military planners to prepare mobilization and war plans "without fear of appointing too many forces, with fear of assigning too few of them."[50] However, Russia's mobilization system was too backward to attain timely numerical superiority against major Western armies if the Russian army began mobilization after the declaration of war. Therefore, this principle could only be operationalized through the early deployment of the standing Russian army for a decisive war in a theater of operations.

[42] Wahlde, p. 133.
[43] Fridman, p. 29.
[44] Leer, p. 53-54.
[45] *Ibid.*
[46] Genrikh Antonovich Leer, *Positive Strategy (Part 1)* (Saint Petersburg, 1877), 6
[47] Hines, p. 106.
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] Leer (1894), p. 53.
[50] Ibid. p. 53.

Subsequently, Leer formulated the principle of *surprise* that demanded the timely deployment of forces. In Leer's book, entitled *the Method of Military Science*, the main objective of this principle is to "suddenly (stealthily and quickly) concentrate superior forces on the battlefield before the enemy and put them in an advantageous position." [51] Therefore, Leer sought to increase the peacetime combat readiness level of the Russian army to compensate for its backwardness in mobilization. Consequently, the standing and already mobilized Russian army could ensure superiority at *the beginning of war* against an otherwise numerically stronger but unprepared enemy. In this regard, Leer ascribed decisive importance to the beginning of war in Russian war planning. Nevertheless, military success at the outset of war hinged on the successful implementation of peacetime military activities. Leer addressed this problem by formulating *the preparatory operations* as the first phase of his strategic operations design.

The preparatory operations phase consisted of "a separate group of actions that were carried out in peacetime and without enemy interference", [52] activities that sought to mobilize, deploy, and concentrate troops at the main area of operations. These activities were: "organizing the army, setting up bases, gathering reserves and supplies at bases, making engineering preparation of the army in the theatre of operations…" [53] Furthermore, Leer added new operational tasks to that phase, such as concentrating and deploying the army at the theater of operations.[54] According to Leer, the activities of the preparatory operations phase should be carried out with mathematical precision.[55] Supposedly, the Russian military had to decide on the force required to mass the enemy army before the war began. Nevertheless, Leer took note of probabilistic elements after the beginning of war. According to Leer, [s]ince war is not a matter of strict mathematical calculations, it turns to certain extent into a game or, more correctly, waging war is a type of probability theory."[56] Leer emphasizes that the principles of war should be employed in accordance with the situation and particular conditions of war. [57] Therefore, preparatory operations phase provided favorable or

[51] Ibid. p. 6.
[52] Hines, p.107.
[53] Leer (1877), p.6.
[54] Ibid. p. 6.
[55] Ibid. p. 8.
[56] Fridman, p. 39.
[57] Ibid. p. 72.

unfavorable initial conditions for the main operations.[58] Massing the enemy forces in a decisive point in strict accordance with the situation depended on the unconditional acts of the preparatory operations phase.

In the late 19th century, discussions within Imperial Russian military command revolved around how to mass a technologically and numerically superior enemy. Given Russia's inadequate mobilization system, it was scarcely possible for the Russians to outweigh the enemy forces if they relied on war time mobilization. Likewise, Leer highlighted that it was key to attaining numerical superiority over the enemy at the beginning of war. To address the problem of Russia's bulky mobilisation system, Leer formulated the principle of the *concentration of force at the decisive point.* [59] By this means, Leer urged military planners to concentrate the main body of force on the most important sector and use the auxiliary forces at the less critical fronts.[60] Leer's principle was based on the idea that maintaining numerical superiority at the beginning of war would require the Russian military to deploy a standing army at the most crucial sector. Leer's main objective was to catch the enemy by surprise before it carried out full mobilization. Thus, this principle would be characterized by surprise. In Leer's thinking, these principles should operate under an offensive strategy of annihilation.

### 3.3.2. The Impacts of Leer's ideas on Imperial Military Thought

Leer's ideas dominated the curriculum of the Russian Nicholas Academy between the 1860s and early 1900s. Among other factors, the concentration and extreme exertion of force at the beginning of war influenced the general direction of Russian military strategy. For instance, Major General Nikolayi Nikolayevich Obruchev employed Leer's principles in Russia's war plans. Obruchev was a disciple of Leer while he was the Adjunct Professor of military statistics at the Nicholas Academy in the 1860s.[61] Afterwards, he became the primary assistant of the Russian Ministry of War, D. Miliutin, on military operations.[62] Obruchev was aware of Russian inferiority in mobilization and consequent difficulties in employing Leer's extreme exertion of force during the beginning of a future war. In this regard, General Obruchev prepared a report to Tsar

[58] Leer (1877), p. 6.
[59] Hines, p. 103.
[60] Leer (1877), p. 6.
[61] Rich, p. 46.
[62] Hines, p. 68.

about the mobilization status of the Russian and Western armies in 1863. According to Obruchev's report,

> "[T]he Russian Army require from fifty-four to fifty-eight days for mobilisation and concentration against Germany, while the requisite span for Germany against Russia was twenty to twenty-three days. Similarly, Russia would require sixty-three to seventy days against Austria-Hungary, while Austrians would require only thirty to thirty-three days". [63]

It appeared that the Russian army could not overwhelm either Germany or Austria in war without peacetime early mobilisation. In conformity with Leer's teachings, General Obruchev addressed this concern by mobilizing and concentrating the army during the preparatory operations phase. Subsequently, Obruchev put the principle of concentration of force at the decisive point in place to ensure supremacy over the enemy. In this regard, Obruchev proposed the idea of concentrating the largest part of the active peacetime army in a single and decisive theater of war.[64] Following this, the officers at the Imperial General Staff revised the directives and war plans as per the ideas of Leer and his disciple, Obruchev. Among them were the mobilization plans against Prussia in the 1870s and the war plans of the Turkish campaign in 1877.

During the early 1870s, the Russian military struggled to address the issue of ensuring supremacy over an enemy coalition at the outset of war. Against this backdrop, Major General Obruchev presented to Ministry of War D. Miliutin a special report on "Thoughts on the Defence of Russia" against Prussia or Austria-Hungary, or both, in 1873.[65] This report was the product of the General Obruchev-led Military Education and Mobilization Committee that was charged with making central war planning.[66] The report suggested that the Russian army would be confronted by a coalition of troops who possessed numerical and technological superiority in the event of full mobilization. Therefore, if Russia would begin mobilization after the declaration of war, the combat readiness status of the Russian military did not promise a victory in a coalition war. Alternatively, Obruchev proposed, "the Russians might count on fleeting numerical superiority only if

[63] B.W. Menning, *Bayonets Before the Bullets: The Imperial Russian army 1861-1914.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 20.
[64] Ibid. p. 20.
[65] Menning, p. 19.
[66] W.C. Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600-1914.* (Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan, 1992), 285.

they opted for a timely concentration of the largest part of their active peacetime army in a single theatre of war [German or Austrian]."[67]

It is reasonable to argue that Obruchev's war plan rested on Leer's teachings on war. As the plan aimed to confront one enemy army at a time, it accorded with Leer's principle of *concentration of main forces at the decisive point.* Furthermore, the plan sought to attain numerical superiority by promptly deploying the largest part of the peacetime army. Therefore, Obruchev's war plan was based on the principle of *extreme exertion of force* at the beginning of war. Moreover, mobilizing and concentrating the Russian Army during the preparatory operation phase was vital for employing these principles in times of war. Consistent with Leer's teachings, Imperial Russian war strategy was predicated on the significance of preparatory operations phase and the beginning of war.

The principles of Leer influenced the Russian General Staff's planning for the Turkish war in the 1870s. Indeed, the Ottoman naval superiority at the Black Sea forced the Russian Chief of General Staff to base its operations on "a two-pronged land campaign" along the East and West flanks of the Black Sea.[68] Subsequently, General Obruchev envisaged a lightning offensive campaign aimed directly at the Ottoman Empire's heart, Constantinople on the western flank, while tying down the Turkish forces in the Caucasus theatre on the eastern flank. [69] (See Map-1) This lightning campaign against a weak enemy was carried out in consonance with Leer's principle of extreme exertion of force at the beginning of war. To achieve this objective, the Imperial Army conducted two partial pre-war mobilizations in November 1876 and in April 1877 at the *preparatory operations* phase.[70] Under the strategy of lightning war*,* the Imperial Russian War command predicted that the war would take only several months. However, the war endured 47 weeks because neither of the Russian mobilizations was capable of quickly breaking the Ottoman Empire's entrenched defence lines that were reinforced by Prussian-made field artillery.[71]

[67] Ibid, p. 280-288.
[68] Menning, p. 52.
[69] Ibid, p. 54-55.
[70] Ibid. p. 53
[71] Ibid. p. 54.


Map-1: Russian General Staff War Planning before the Russo-Turkish War (1877) [72]

Obruchev's strategy won Russia a slow victory. It took the troops of the Imperial Russian Army almost one year to approach Constantinople. Generally, the Turkish campaign proved how Leer's principles functioned in wartime against a single enemy. Contrary to expectations, overreliance on preparatory operations did not attain the objectives of the strategy of annihilation. The Russian Army could not gain an easy and quick victory against the Ottoman army even though Russia had launched mobilization one year ahead of the war. This was mostly because Leer's principle of achieving success at the beginning of war focused too much on numerical superiority and time. The war planning did not pay attention to the inadequate railroad and telegraph infrastructure, slow war-time mobilization, and ineffective command and control.[73] Even more importantly, Obruchev did not take note of the Ottoman Empire's war strategy, moral spirit, and technological superiority in artillery support. Generally, the evidence reviewed here suggests that the Russo-Turkish war unfolded the deficiencies of Leer's teachings on war. The critics of Leer attempted to fulfil this gap in the upcoming period.

### 3.4. Conceptualization of warfare between the 1900s and 1917

Leer's principles were subjected to repeated questioning in the 1900s due to his emphasis on preparatory operations and the decisiveness of the beginning of war. Furthermore, Clausewitz's "post-Enlightenment tradition of writing on war"

[72] Menning, p. 54-55
[73] Ibid. p. 84.

disseminated across various schools of the Russian military. [74] While the criticisms came to light after the Russian army's demanding victory at the Turkish front in 1878, they became more widespread after the Manchurian defeat of 1905. Since these wars unfolded the insufficiencies of Leer's principles, the attempts to improve the Imperial military doctrine became more widespread. However, the legacy of Leer continued until he resigned from the command of the Nicholas Academy in 1904. Only then did the dissidents from the Russian national school, academic school, and the young Turks make several attempts to revise and replace Leer's principles.

On the one hand, the Russian national school rejected the Western principles of war, arguing that analyzing the typical Russian art of war of the 16th and 17th centuries could help improve Russian military science.[75] On the other, some voices among the proponents of the academic school ran counter to Leer's emphasis on unconditionality.[76] Even though Leer tried to take note of the distinctness of the circumstances of every situation, he prioritized numerical superiority and time over technology, infrastructure, and moral spirit. Therefore, Leer's attempt to combine eternal fundamental military principles (positivism) with the conditions of war (operational art) did not bring the expected results. Apart from these two groups, the young Turks analyzed methods and means of fighting a modern war instead of conceptualizing war using a critical-historical approach.[77] In this regard, the young Turks re-examined Jomini's positivist approach to war and embraced Clausewitz's post-Enlightenment tradition of war. Indeed, Clausewitz rejected the formulation of purely scientific principles of war since they represented linearity and selectivity.[78] For Clausewitz, war involves the interaction of science through fixed values and operational art, whose object is a creative ability that is not susceptible to law-like formulas.[79] Therefore, post-Leer Russian military thought underwent a transformation by considering operational art, non-linearity, and the conditions of warfare. [80]

General N.P Mikhnevich, Leer's successor at the Nicholas Academy, revised Leer's principles while still adhering to Leer's critical-historical methodology. Therefore, Mikhnevich did not entirely reject the prominence of fundamental military principles in

[74] H. Strachan "Strategy in theory; strategy in practice," *Journal of Strategic Studies ,* 42:2 (2019):181.
[75] Wahlde, p. 115
[76] Nikolai Petrovich Mikhnevich, *The Basics of Strategy (Osnoviy Strategii)* (Saint Petersburg, 1913), 24.
[77] Menning, p. 211-212.
[78] T. Waldman "Clausewitz and the Study of War," *Defence Studies* 12:3 (2012): 348.
[79] Waldman, p. 356.
[80] Menning, pp. 208-214.

Russian strategic thought. Rather, Mikhnevich developed new principles that integrated spiritual, economic, and technological factors into war planning.[81] According to Mikhnevich, "it is wrong to assess only the physical size of the opponent's military, as the moral characteristics of the soldiers and their commanders, the resourcefulness of the high command, training and quality of weaponry-all these should be taken into consideration as well."[82] Furthermore, Mikhnevich opposed the prioritization of material and linear factors on war planning. In this regard, Mikhnevich argued that "victory today depends on economic development and moral superiority, not on numbers and energy."[83] Therefore, Mikhnevich's approach to war privileged qualitative variables of war over Leer's quantitative criteria. Mikhnevich's understanding of superiority was determined not only by the physical size of military forces at the beginning of war but by a combination of moral, technological, intellectual, and technological factors.

The young Turks disapproved of Leer's and Mikhnevich's overreliance on military principles. According to this body of opinion, while military principles were useful in designing war plans, operational art regulated the execution of military operations. For instance, one of the leading proponents of the young Turks, General Staff Officer A.A. Neznamov, advocated for Clausewitz's idea of total war. According to this notion, the Russian military had to take into account "several considerations other than purely military factors including economic, political, moral, and cultural." [84] Overall, the young Turks underscored the importance of understanding the whole complexities of battle instead of limiting them to a number of principles. Since the young Turks relied on operational art, they did not attempt to replace or redefine fundamental war principles.

Mikhnevich inherited Leer's legacy of prioritizing fundamental military principles in Russian military thought. Nevertheless, Mikhnevich defended the view that future wars changed from the brief encounter of troops to the expanded scale and scope of conflict. Thus, the employment of military principles was not qualified to guarantee an early victory since principles regulated only the beginning of war.[85] Therefore, war's general direction would be determined in accordance with the teachings of operational art.

[81] Ibid. p. 385.
[82] Fridman, p. 118.
[83] Mikhnevich, 1911, quoted in Hines, 1998: 389.
[84] Mikhnevich, 1911 quoted in Menning, 1992:213.
[85] Hines, p. 398 and Menning, p. 133.

### 3.4.1. General Nicolai Petrovich Mikhnevich (1849-1927) and his ideas on preparatory operations and combat readiness

General Nikolai P. Mikhnevich was the commandant of the Nicholas Military Academy between 1904-1907. Afterwards, he was appointed as the Imperial Russian Army Chief of the Main Staff between 1911-1917. While Mikhnevich inherited Leer's legacy of military thought, his emphasis on the changing conditions of war put him at odds with Leer. In his book, entitled *the Basics of Strategy*, Mikhnevich analyzes the fundamental principles of war within the context of "the basic conditions of success."[86] Therefore, the conditions of war took precedence over military principles, according to Mikhnevich. Even though Mikhnevich formulated military principles he stressed that "the application of those principles was conditioned by the prevailing social, economic, and technological factors."[87]

According to Mikhnevich, the Russian military should not rely on a war plan prepared in conformity with the principles of war. For Mikhnevich, "such a plan can be drafted only in very general terms, outlining what we want to do and what we can hope to achieve with the means that we have at our disposal…"[88] Therefore, adjusting strategy in compliance with the war's distinct conditions took precedence over employing military principles. Therefore, Mikhnevich stressed the significance of comprehending all the complexities of conflict in a long war of attrition.[89] In the context of that, Mikhnevich predicted an exhausting and weary competition where states employed all their material and moral resources before and during the course of the war. Mikhnevich claimed that the "strategy of attrition and exhaustion" was the most appropriate form of winning the war for the Imperial Russian Army.[90] Since Mikhnevich paid more attention to the military practice than theory, he introduced "the main conditions of war" as military principles.[91] The principles of Mikhnevich became more influential after he was appointed as the commandant of the Nicholas Academy in 1904.

Like Leer, Mikhnevich attempted to redesign fundamental military principles in conformity with the relevance of war's conditions. In this context, Mikhnevich revisited

[86] Mikhnevich, p. 33.
[87] Ibid. p. 32.
[88] Fridman, p. 113.
[89] Mikhnevich, p. 24.
[90] Ibid. p. 17 and Menning, p. 210.
[91] Fridman, p. 130.

Leer's principle of the extreme exertion of force at the beginning of war.[92] For Mikhnevich, the superiority of force was key to developing a war plan. Nevertheless, Mikhnevich called into question whether the numerical superiority at a decisive point could guarantee a victory for the Russian Army at the beginning of a war. [93] Indeed, the idea of winning the wars with Napoleonic climactic battles fell from favor among Russian war planners. In their opinion, the industrialized states and their allies could deploy more forces to make up for the individual failures.[94] Nevertheless, Mikhnevich underscored the significance of the strategic deployment before the beginning of war.[95] For him, strategic deployment through Leer's concentration of force during the preparatory operations phase would "shape [not determine] not only the whole progress of the war, but also its outcome."[96] For instance, the decision to carry out an initial offensive or temporary defensive action hinged on the mobilization processes and concentration of forces during the preparatory operations phase. [97] However, Mikhnevich's understanding of superiority of force differed from Leer's conceptualization.

Mikhnevich added qualitative criteria to the scope of the superiority of force. In contrast to Leer's overreliance on the numerical superiority and time, Mikhnevich's view of this concept was characterized by qualitative and quantitative elements. For instance, Mikhnevich attached importance to "swiftness of action" (time); however, he warned the General Staff not to forget "operational judgement".[98] For Mikhnevich, "speed of action should be distinguished from thoughtless haste."[99] Likewise, in Mikhnevich's theory of war, the superiority of force should involve numerical, technological, moral, and intellectual superiority during a long war of attrition.[100] Furthermore, Mikhnevich prioritized spiritual and moral superiority over material supremacy by paying sufficient attention to the conditions of the Russian military. In this regard, Mikhnevich formulated the principle of *the superiority of spiritual over material.* [101]

[92] Mikhnevich, p. 17, 22, 33.
[93] Harrison, p. 59-61.
[94] Menning, p. 208.
[95] Fridman, p.118.
[96] Fridman, p. 119.
[97] Ibid.p. 114.
[98] Ibid. p. 134.
[99] *Ibid.*
[100] Mikhnevich, p. 24.
[101] *Ibid.*

Mikhnevich emphasized that "the superiority of force is not only determined by numerical but also by the spiritual (moral) superiority over the enemy."[102] According to Mikhnevich, the population's resilience and the combat spirit of the army could promise a "persistent moral superiority" against the enemy, who had advanced firepower and technology.[103] According to Mikhnevich, the Russian population and military had a stronger willpower and energy than more civilised nations. In this regard, Russia's level of endurance would be a strategically and tactically important coefficient in a future war against Western states.[104] Furthermore, Mikhnevich designated the "art of high command" as another non-material factor that influenced his war theory.[105]

Finally, Mikhnevich embraced Leer's idea that "victory depends on the use of force."[106] Nevertheless, Mikhnevich did not believe that concentration of force before the beginning of war could promise a victory for the Russian military. For Mikhnevich, the Russian military could only secure the best chance of success if the commander selected the decisive place and time for concentration.[107] Therefore, Mikhnevich associated this principle with wartime operational judgement instead of peacetime war planning. Mikhnevich concluded that operational art through the use of march and manoeuvre should aim "to concentrate forces at the decisive time and place".[108] According to Mikhnevich the art of high command took precedence over the linear use of force.

### 3.4.2. The Impact of Mikhnevich's ideas on Russian Military Strategy

In the 1900s, Mikhnevich used his fundamental principles to judge whether Russia's conditions were suited to unleash a short war of annihilation or a protracted war of attrition. Mikhnevich concluded that carrying out a protracted war was more suitable for Russia's conditions. Influential members of the young Turks, such as General Staff officer A.A. Neznamov and the lecturer of Nicholas Academy, A.A. Gulevich, also embraced this strategy. For Neznamov, "modern war would no longer be decided by the outcome of single engagements."[109] Akin to Mikhnevich, Neznamov paid serious attention to the influence of economy, politics, morale, and culture in war strategy in

[102] Mikhnevich, p. 22.
[103] Ibid. p. 17.
[104] Fridman, pp.115-116.
[105] Mikhnevich. 24.
[106] *Ibid.*
[107] Fridman, p. 132.
[108] Mikhnevich, p. 24.
[109] Menning, p. 212.

the context of the nation in arms.[110] Therefore, Mikhnevich and his disciples arrived at a consensus about the appropriateness of the attrition strategy. In this regard, the Russian General Staff modified war plans previously designed according to the attainment of numerical superiority at the beginning of war.

General Staff officers Major General M.V Aleksev and Colonel S. Dobrorol'skii reviewed Russian war plans in 1906 in light of Mikhnevich's teachings on war.[111] Having presented the Triple Alliance (Prussia, Austria-Hungary, and Romania) as the more severe threat, Aleksev and Dobrorol'skii concluded that "Russian forces could no longer accomplish their strategic concentration forward in the border regions [at the beginning of war] and must instead complete their assembly within Imperial territory." [112] In contrast to the Russian Chief of General Staff's old operational design that had dealt a decisive blow at the beginning of war, new planning represented a shift in Russian military strategy from offence to defence. According to the new plan, the defensive posture at the beginning of a war permitted the Russian army to assemble forces under secure circumstances. Following this, the new planning facilitated Russian forces' "transfer to the offensive and rapid closure with the enemy upon completion of their concentration" [113] This strategy was entitled "active defence" in 1910. Active defence strategy required the imperial Russian Army to adopt a defensive posture at the beginning of war in order to assemble forces for an effective offense during the following phases.

Under the active defence strategy, the Russian military planned to deploy seven armies in depth against a possible German offensive. However, Russian General Staff altered this strategy in 1912 when Russia's ally, France, urged Russia to unleash an offensive against Germany during the initial phases of the war (between M+15 and M+30*).[114] Following this, the Russian war strategy relied on carrying out offence at the beginning of a war. By this means, the Russian military sought to overrun German forces in its territory. Contrary to Mikhnevich's vision of war, the Russian war plan (Schedule 19-A) "mobilized and deployed the Russian army for *sokrushenie* [a short war of annihilation] but left it with-time-space anomalies that would inexorably lead to *izmor* [a protracted war of attrition]." [115]

[110] Ibid. p. 213.
[111] Ibid. p. 239.
[112] *Ibid.*
[113] Rostunov, quoted in Menning 1992: 239.
[114] Menning, p. 242.
[115] Ibid. p. 248.
* M refers to the day when mobilisation commences.

The Russian General Staff assured its French ally that after M+15 it would have a sufficiently significant superiority of force over the German and Austria-Hungarian armies. However, the Russian offensive operations against Germany commenced without completing the desired mobilization and concentration. Moreover, this plan disregarded the extent to which the rugged terrain in East Prussia could separate Russian armies.[116] Even worse, the advance towards Austria-Hungary after M+15 did not promise a swift victory, since the Russian army did not succeed in outnumbering the Austrian forces. [117] Therefore, when the Russian military could not attain its initial objectives, Mikhnevich's ideas on war influenced the further development of war.

### 3.5. On Balance: Leer's and Mikhnevich's competing ideas revisited

Leer developed a strategic culture in the Russian Army that sought to discover the eternal and unconditional principles of war and their adherent concepts. Thus, observing military principles and concepts would promise a victory, provided that their application took note of the war's conditions. In Leer's strategic design, the preparatory operations phase was more suited to employing the principle of extreme exertion of force at the beginning of war. The sole purpose of this phase was to mobilize and deploy a combat-ready army into the theater of operations. By this means, the Russian army intended to set up favorable conditions to perform the main operations. At the main operations phase, the Russian military utilized the principle of concentration of force at the decisive point to put the strategy of annihilation in practice. However, Leer's vision of military success hinged primarily on the peacetime mobilization and concentration sub phases of preparatory operations. In this regard, Leer's strategic design paid less attention to war-time conditions, operational judgement, and the probabilistic elements of war.

This approach received broad acceptance among military officers when Leer was in charge of the Academy. Nevertheless, Leer's ideas drew more criticism from his successor, General N.P. Mikhnevich and the Young Turks when he retired. According to Mikhnevich, the preparatory operations phase's tasks could be inadequate for dealing with the changing conditions of war.[118] Furthermore, General Staff Officer A.A. Neznamov asserted that the principles of Leer did not attempt to understand all the

[116] Ibid. p. 245.
[117] Ibid. p. 246.
[118] Mikhnevich, p. 33.

complexities of the conflict.[119] Nevertheless, Leer's principles created a strategic culture in the Imperial Army that sought to win strategic objectives linearly at the beginning of war.

It is reasonable to argue that Mikhnevich's *superiority of force* doesn't demand the Russian army to exert excessive force at the beginning of a war. Instead of dealing a direct initial blow against the enemy, Mikhnevich sought to take advantage of the resilience of the Russian Army while creating favorable conditions for manoeuvre.[120] Furthermore, Mikhnevich did not ascribe decisive importance to the surprise. In his book, entitled *The Basics of Strategy*, Mikhnevich suggests that "time is the best ally of our [Russian] armed force and therefore it is not dangerous for us to adapt the strategy of attrition and exhaustion… at the beginning of [war] by avoiding decisive combat with the enemy on the very borders when the superiority of forces might be on his [the enemy] side." [121] Overall, Mikhnevich's superiority of force prioritizes the non-linear elements of warfare (spiritual factors and judgement) over the material aspects (weapons and technology) to attain victory. The results of this investigation show that Mikhnevich deemphasised the decisiveness of the beginning of war in Imperial Russian military thought. Instead, he prioritized resilience and operational judgement to create the proper conditions for decisive victory during the subsequent periods of war.

Leer's and Mikhnevich's diverging views promoted the beginning of a persistent debate on whether the Russian army would adopt the strategy of defence or offence before the First World War. The Imperial Army General Staff eventually decided to build the war planning based on the strategy of a short war of annihilation. However, the Russian army failed to out-concentrate the German and Austrian troops during the initial operations. As a result, the Russian General Staff put the strategy of attrition in place. Therefore, late Imperial Russian military thought gradually evolved from winning wars linearly at the beginning of a war to adapting itself to the conditions of the war throughout the following periods.

Finally, one of the significant findings to emerge from this study is that the late Imperial Russian military thought echoed the broader Western debates regarding the treatment of war as a positivist science or operational art at the turn of the 19th century. On the

[119] Menning, p. 213.
[120] Ibid. p. 33.
[121] Mikhnevich, p. 17.

one hand, Leer prioritized positivism over operational art, treating war with law-like military principles. On the other, Mikhnevich and Neznamov relied on Clausewitz's post-Enlightenment idea of defining war as an interaction between science and operational art, arguing that the complexities of conflict demand a thorough analysis of wartime conditions in tandem with and, if necessary, in place of military principles. Therefore, the attempts to create a Russian art of war during this period mirrored the broader Western discussions on war theory. Yet, taken as a whole, the Imperial Russian military thinking was not highly innovative since the military intellectual debates revolved around accurate assessments of what the Russian military could do in the given circumstances.

### 3.6. Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to investigate the birth and evolution of fundamental military principles in Imperial Russian military thought. Overall, this chapter has identified that Leer and Mikhnevich formulated a different set of military principles to fill the gap between Imperial Russian military theory and practice. The research reveals that these principles laid the groundwork for Russian military strategies between 1856 and 1917. Against that backdrop, Leer's ideas established a strategic culture in the Imperial Army that sought to win strategic objectives at the beginning of a war. Therefore, preparatory operations were vital to mobilizing and deploying the Russian army before the beginning of major operations. Since Leer was an advocate of a short war of annihilation, the military supremacy relied on the mobilization and concentration of the army during the preparatory operation phase. Therefore, Leer’s war theory highlights the significance of preparatory operations and disregards the relevance of operational art during the course of the war.

The second concept that emerged during this period is combat readiness. Leer advocated for a peacetime combat readiness which involved the mobilization and concentration of troops during the preparatory operations phase. By this means, Leer intended to create a standing army to ensure superiority over the enemy at the beginning of war. This concept was vital for achieving the goals of the annihilation strategy. The research has found that military supremacy during the preparatory operations hinged on the peacetime combat readiness of the Imperial Russian Army. Therefore, preparatory operations were inextricably linked with combat readiness. These concepts operated differently under various military strategies.

Leer's principles and concepts were the essential components of the strategy of annihilation. Nevertheless, Leer's war theory was revisited when Mikhnevich advocated for the strategy of attrition in the early 1900s. Mikhnevich aimed to form a strategic culture in the Russian Army that sought to attain qualitative and quantitative superiority over the enemy throughout the war, not during the preparatory operations phase. Therefore, this approach paid scant attention to the decisiveness Leer ascribed to the beginning of a war and to combat readiness. According to Mikhnevich, the beginning of a war would buy more time for the Imperial Russian Army to carry out a decisive manoeuvre at the end.[122] In that regard, meeting the mobilization requirements of a long war of attrition replaced Leer's peacetime combat readiness of winning a short war of annihilation.

In Mikhnevich's war theory, the strategic relevance of the beginning of war and combat readiness changed from essential to merely common under the strategy of attrition, because that strategy did not rely on ensuring superiority over the enemy at the beginning of war. Even though Mikhnevich employed these concepts in his war theory, he deemphasized the strategic relevance of them. Nevertheless, the Imperial Russian General Staff decided to ground its war planning on Leer's concepts in the mid-1910s, albeit with no success. Therefore, the beginning of war and combat readiness remained essential to achieving the Imperial Russian Army war objectives. Leer's and Mikhnevich's ideas were delivered to subsequent generations as part of Imperial Russia's legacy left for the Soviets.

In the next chapter, the study seeks to understand the extent to which Russian war theory developed new concepts or revised the existing ones' semantic content under Soviet military science. In conjunction with this, it seeks to analyze the impact of Soviet military science on Leer's *preparatory operations* and *combat readiness*. By this means, this study aims to look at how these concepts evolved, whether they disappeared or gained a new semantic character. Finally, this study intends to explore the ways in which these two concepts interact with new concepts of Soviet military science.

[122] Mikhnevich, p. 33.

## Chapter-4

## The Rise and Evolution of Soviet Military Concepts During the Interwar Period: 1917-1941

*This chapter aims to explore the rise and evolution of fundamental military concepts in Soviet military thought between 1917 and 1941. The research will examine the ideas of the leaders of the socialist revolution, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin and Mikhail Vasilyevich Frunze, an influential Soviet military strategist Georgii Samoilovich Isserson, the leading Tsarist officers in the Red Army, Alexander Andreyevich Svechin and Mikhail Nikolayevich Tukhachevsky. This study also investigates the interrelationship between fundamental military concepts and various Soviet war strategies. In this regard, the strategy of deep operations and Soviet war planning before the Second World War will be scrutinized as part of the larger historical narrative. Overall, the research will identify that Soviet military science developed forecasting and correlation to predict a war's character and outcome. The prevailing forecasts of the 1920s and early 1930s advocated for unleashing a war of destruction. On the eve of the Second World War, forecasts shifted to waging a war of attrition. Next to that, the continuity of Tsarist military heritage promoted the evolution of the initial period of war (IPW) and combat readiness in Soviet military science. The research concludes that the concept of forecasting determined to a significant degree the functionality of the IPW, combat readiness, and correlation under various Soviet strategies.*

### 4.1. Introduction

The Civil War of 1917 created a socio-political rupture in Russian history. It also affected Soviet military thought. In conformity with the influence of Marxist-Leninist currents, the tendency to replace the *Russianness* of military thought with *Sovietness* came to the fore. This transition was predominantly influenced by various attempts to form a Soviet military science. In this regard, the Soviet General Staff commenced a complete re-examination of military matters. One of the purposes of this process was to redefine or replace the military principles and concepts of Imperial Russian military thought. Although Imperial Russian Army officers in the Red Army ensured the permanence of Tsarist military heritage, these ideas nevertheless came into effect in a different socio-historical context, overshadowed by the ideas of socialist thinkers on warfare. Thus, early Soviet military science merged late Imperial military thought with Bolshevik

leaders' opinions on warfare. In this regard, the concepts of the late Imperial Russian period underwent a transformation in the 1920s and 1930s under the Soviet approaches to waging war.

One of the most well-known former-Tsarist officers of the Red Army, Alexander Andreyevich Svechin, devised *the initial period of war (IPW)* by revising the Imperial Army *preparatory operations*.[1] The IPW, which lasted from the declaration of war to the beginning of significant operations, became one of the most discussed concepts of Soviet war planning.[2] Next to that, Soviet military science made use of Tsarist ideas on *combat readiness*. In the 1930s, military and political discussions revolved around Soviet interpretations of this concept. Apart from these, Soviet military thought generated its own particular concepts in the framework of Lenin's ideas on war. Most importantly, Soviet military science designed *forecasting* and *correlation of forms and methods* to predict a war's character and outcome respectively.

This study has been designed to investigate the evolution of fundamental military concepts in Soviet military thought between 1917 and 1941. This chapter begins by examining the transformation of military thought under different socio-historical and strategic contexts. It will then proceed to offer some important insights into the development of the initial period of war, combat readiness, forecasting, and correlation of forms and methods. Secondly, the functionality of these concepts within the strategy of deep operations and the Soviet war planning before the Second World War are scrutinized as part of the larger historical narrative. Finally, this chapter discovers the interrelation among fundamental military concepts.

## 4.2. The development of Soviet military science

After the Bolsheviks seized power, military thought was predominantly restructured by the military and political leaders of the socialist revolution. In this regard, the ideas and experiences of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin and Mikhail Vasilyevich Frunze played significant roles in the formation of Soviet military thought. Lenin treated war as a socio-historical phenomenon under Marx's dialectic materialist interpretation of history. This

[1] Ronald Sprang, "Russian Operational Art, A New Type of War and Reflexive Control" Small Wars Journal. https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/russian-operational-art-new-type-warfare-and-reflexive-control#_edn2

[2] Alexander A. Svechin, *Strategy* (Moscow: Voennyi Vestnik, 1927) translated and published by (Minnesota: East View Information Services, 1991), pp. 201-203.

phenomenon saw a "correlation between the content of a war and its historical era".[3] In this regard, armed struggle was seen as an instrument of achieving the victory of international working classes against capitalism's ruling elite.[4] Based on this theory, Lenin's analysis of war incorporated political, socio-economic, and sociological interactions among classes, nations, and states.[5] In this regard, Lenin defined the First World War as "an imperialistic-bourgeois war, a war of highly developed capitalism".[6] Furthermore, the Russian Civil war was introduced as the first phase of unleashing a civil war against the imperialist world.[7] Therefore, socialist thinkers emphasized societies' social and economic conditions while delineating the main drivers of war. Furthermore, Soviet thinkers contended that the new socio-political conditions demanded careful consideration of qualitative changes in military theory.[8] Likewise, the utilization of Western military thought was deemed insufficient to "guarantee solutions to the military problems of the socialist state".[9] As a result, the new Soviet elite concluded that there was a need to develop a Soviet approach to waging war.

Like Clausewitz, Lenin defined war as "a continuation of politics of classes and states by other (namely: forcible) means."[10] Lenin also agreed with Clausewitz's trinity, which consisted of violence, probability, and instrumentality.[11] Lenin differed from Clausewitz in that he thought that "all politics is a vast battlefield of class struggle and revolution."[12] Therefore, he established a connection between war and politics by focusing on the struggle among the economic interests of classes instead of states.[13] According to Lenin:

> "War is a continuation of policy by other means. All wars are inseparable from the political systems that engender them. The policy which a given state, a given class within that state, pursued for a long time before the war, is inevitably continued by that same class during the war, the form of action alone being changed."[14]

[3] A.S. Milovidov and V.G. Kozlov, *The Philosophical Heritage of V.I. Lenin and Problems of Contemporary War* (Moscow, 1972) translated and reproduced by (Washington: The US Government Printing Office, 1972), 9.
[4] William E. Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2000), 5.
[5] Ibid. p. 24.
[6] Milovidov and Kozlov, p. 12.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Milovidov and Kozlov, p. 97.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] Ibid. p. 263.
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] Odom, p. 8
[13] Ibid. p. 41.
[14] *Marxism-Leninism On War and Army* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972) Translated by Donald Dodemanis, p. 19.

Thus, a class approach to politics served as a key to revealing warfare's essence and character.[15] Finally, the association of Clausewitz's ideas with bourgeois military theory led to profound divergences in Soviet military thinking, because the ideological objective of the Marxist-Leninist war was to undermine the rule of bourgeois regimes. Therefore, Soviet military thought endeavoured to create its own military concepts based on socialism.

On the one hand, Frunze defended the formation of a "unified military doctrine based on a Marxist base."[16] This endeavour aimed to re-examine the concepts and principles of the Imperial Russian military thought.[17] Subsequently, the Russian Civil War's war-winning military principles would be able to fill the conceptual gap in the newly emerging Soviet military doctrine. Therefore, socialist thinkers tended to introduce the war-winning concepts and principles of the Russian Civil War as the key elements of the *proletarian military doctrine.*[18] On the other hand, a few communist party leaders disagreed with forming a Soviet military science based on socialist ideology. For instance, Leon Trotsky argued that "there is no peculiar proletarian method of warfare." [19] For Trotsky, the Bolshevik Army used the principles and concepts of the Imperial Russian military heritage during the Civil War.[20]

A great majority of socialist thinkers thought that the Red Army should prepare for a future war by observing the war-winning principles of the Russian Civil War instead of relying on the principles of the First World War. For them, the defence of socialism in the interest of the proletariat took precedence over the defence of the motherland.[21] In this regard, the principles of the Civil War helped the Soviet military to command a mixed army which consisted of territorial militia and regular units. The ambition to carry out a *proletarian war* with territorial militia required the Soviet High Command to mobilize the working class of the Soviet Union and the workers of bourgeois states.[22] In this type of war, the Soviet High Command should function as the "General Staff of the Proletariat", which aimed to spread the revolution and provide military assistance

[15] *Ibid.*
[16] Walter Darnell Jacobs, *Frunze: The Soviet Clausewitz 1885-1925* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), 32
[17] *Ibid.*
[18] Ibid. p. 47.
[19] Ibid. p.51.
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] Andrei A. Kokoshin, *Soviet Strategic Thought 1917-91* (London: MIT Press, 1995), 65
[22] Jacobs, p. 44, 111 and 155-56.

to revolutions abroad.[23] Therefore, Soviet thinkers struggled to redesign the Red Army military doctrine to win a proletarian war against the Bourgeois World.

The conceptualization of warfare was influenced by positivism in the early 1920s. During the late Imperial Russian period, the debate revolved around treating war as a *science* through the use of law-like military principles or *operational art* that integrated judgment and non-linearity into war planning. During the late 19th century, Jomini's positivist approach to war dominated Imperial military thought, thanks to the studies of G. A. Leer. In the early 20th century, Leer's approach was subjected to several criticisms, predominantly by a group of Russian officers who called themselves *the Young Turks*. The Young Turks sought to apply judgement and reasoning to the study of warfare by paying sufficient attention to the conditions and peculiarities of war.[24] In this regard, late Imperial Russian military thought gradually evolved from winning wars by law-like principles to the creative utilization of operational art. During the Soviet period, the Soviet High Command attached priority to military science. In this regard, Soviet thinkers defined military science as "a system of knowledge concerning the nature and laws of war."[25] Thus, Soviet military science prioritized the employment of positivist methods over operational art. In Soviet thinking, operational art was "the theory and practice of preparing and conducting military operations."[26] Therefore, operational art was associated with the execution of military operations instead of military planning. Subsequently, the Soviet General Staff attached greater importance to law-like military principles and their attendant concepts when designing military strategies.

In this context, both Lenin and Frunze treated military thought as a *science* by investigating law-like military principles.[27] Nevertheless, Lenin made creative use of the ideas of Tsarist military specialists even though they were affiliated with bourgeois military ideology.[28] In this context, Lenin echoed the military principles of Tsarist General N.P. Mikhnevich, who was the Chief of the Main Staff before the Russian Civil

[23] Ibid. p.20.
[24] Kerry Lee Hines, *Russian Military Thought: Its Evolution through War and Revolution, 1860-1918* (Washington: The George Washington University, 1998), 384.
[25] V. Y. Savkin, *The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics: A Soviet View,* (Moscow, 1972) Translated and published by (Washington: The United States Air Force, 1972), 99-112.
[26] David M. Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art: In Pursuit of Deep Battle* (Kansas: Frank Cass, 2005), 6-8.
[27] S.N. Kozlov and M.V. Smirnov, *Soviet Military Science* (Moscow: Ministry of Defence, 1964), translated and published by (Springfield: Clearinghouse Federal Scientific and Technical Information, 1964), 46 and Frunze, quoted in Jacobs, p. 32.
[28] Milovidov and Kozlov, p. 81 and Kozlov and Smirnov, p. 30.

War. These were: *the superiority at the decisive place and decisive time, surprise, and moral superiority.*[29] According to Lenin,

> "It is imperative to dispose of overwhelmingly superior forces at the decisive moment and decisive place. This law of military science is also the law of political success, particularly in this fierce, boiling class war which is called revolution".[30]

Indeed, the attainment of superiority over the enemy fitted into Lenin's vision of achieving deterrence through military parity.[31] Next to that, it would be indispensable to ensure moral and economic superiority over the enemy during a long war of attrition.[32]

The *sovietisation* of some selected principles of Imperial Russian military heritage represented a practical solution for transformation of Soviet military science. As a result, Tsarist military principles were re-positioned to waging a proletarian war against the bourgeois world. However, this process did not take much longer. After Lenin died in 1924, the principle of *the superiority of force* became marginalized, because the Soviet military failed to achieve both economic and military superiority over its adversary. Furthermore, there were different perceptions concerning the purpose of military supremacy. While some thinkers utilized this principle to ensure deterrence, others saw it as the core principle of carrying out a political offence.

Unlike Lenin, Frunze rejected the principles of the Imperial Russian Army and called for a "thorough re-examination of the concepts of military doctrine."[33] For Frunze, the principles of the Civil War took precedence over the principles of the First World War.[34] Furthermore, he rejected the Imperial Army's emphasis on an initial defensive posture, even though he expected a capitalist invasion of the Soviet Union.[35] After the Russian Civil War, Frunze emphasized that the Red Army could win a future proletarian war by observing the principles of *the supremacy of offence, manoeuvre,* and *action.*[36] Indeed, Frunze's emphasis on *offence* reflected the Soviet political ambition to spread the

[29] Lenin quoted in Kozlov and Smirnov, p.47 and Milovidov and Kozlov, p. 103 and 164.
[30] Kozlov and Smirnov, p. 47.
[31] Milovidov and Kozlov, p. 261.
[32] Kozlov and Smirnov, p. 45.
[33] Jacobs, p. 32.
[34] Kokoshin, p. 65.
[35] John Erikson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History 1918-1941* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962), 133.
[36] Frunze quoted in Jacobs, p. 44, 112, 120 and 154.

socialist revolution abroad.[37] From a military perspective, the principles of *attack* and *offensive*, other things being equal, were deemed more remunerative than defence.[38] Next, the Soviet Army would rely on a "manoeuvre adjunct to the offensive" to overcome its technological inferiority.[39] By observing this principle, the Red Army could withdraw and manoeuvre over considerable distances against an advancing enemy due to the physical character of the Soviet theater of war.[40] Overall, the *principles of proletarian war* gained recognition at the end of the 1920s. For Soviet military thinkers, the proletarian war with its offensive character had been the first phase of a new era of war between two mutually exclusive class contradictions.[41] In this regard, the ideas of Frunze drew on the strategic framework of realizing Soviet political ambitions. This framework determined to a considerable degree the content and functionality of fundamental military concepts.

Frunze's ideas impacted the discussions in the General Staff about whether the Red Army should pursue a strategy of attrition or destruction. In the late 1800s, Genrikh A. Leer had designed *the extreme exertion of force at the beginning of war as* a fundamental principle of winning a short war of annihilation.[42] In the early 1900s, Nicolai P. Mikhnevich advocated for the strategy of attrition.[43] For Mikhnevich, resilience at the beginning of a war would create favorable conditions for effective maneuver.[44] On the one hand, proponents of the annihilation strategy called for a lightning offensive with decisive blows at the beginning of a war. On the other hand, the defenders of the attrition strategy advocated for an initial defensive posture at the beginning of a war to create favorable conditions for maneuver at the end. Following Frunze's ideas on war, the Soviet General Staff leaned towards the first course of action, *the strategy of annihilation*. In this regard, fundamental military concepts underwent a transformation under an offensive strategy.

### 4.3. Fundamental military concepts in Soviet military thought between 1917-1941

[37] Jacobs, p. 111.
[38] *Ibid.*
[39] Ibid. p. 112.
[40] Ibid. p. 44.
[41] Richard W. Harrison, *Architect of Soviet Victory in World War II: The Life and Theories of G.S. Isserson* (London: McFarland & Company, 1952), 41. and Kozlov and Smirnov, p. 385.
[42] Genrikh Antonovich Leer, *The Method of Military Science: Strategy, Tactic and Military History* (St. Petersburg, 1894), 53-54.
[43] Nikolai Petrovich Mikhnevich, *The Basics of Strategy* (Osnoviy Strategii), (Saint Petersburg, 1913), 17, 22, 33.
[44] *Ibid.*

### 4.3.1. The initial period of war (IPW)

After the First World War, Soviet military thinkers were sceptical of basing their war planning on Leer's principle of *the extreme exertion of force at the beginning of war*.[45] For instance, Frunze anticipated a "protracted and stubborn war" against imperialist states.[46] Frunze's thesis rested on the idea that a single blow could not decide wars between class opponents.[47] Akin to the previous war, the future war would be characterized by the mobilization of the entire population for a long war of attrition. In the same vein, Lenin was also a critic of the strategy of annihilation, believing that Soviet strategy should "be transformed from a small-scale and partial offensive into a mass, massive offensive, leading to a final victory".[48] Next to that, Lenin's military theory envisaged an incremental build-up of force. He argued that "it is necessary to win the first success and proceed from success to success without ceasing advances on the enemy." [49] In this context, both Lenin and Frunze objected to the idea of winning wars at *the beginning of war*.

A former Imperial Army officer, Alexander Andreyevich Svechin, revised Leer's strategic design in the mid-1920s. Svechin revisited Leer's idea of gaining victory at the beginning of war with his ideas on *operational art*. Indeed, Svechin designed the term *operational art (operativnoe iskusstvo)* in the 1920s.[50] According to Svechin, operational art referred to a category of military art between strategy and tactics.[51] In his book Strategy, Svechin suggests that,

> "In turn, tactical creativity is governed by operational art. Tactics and administration are the material of operational art, and the success of the development of an operation depends on both the successful solution of individual tactical problems by the forces and the provision of all the material they need to conduct an operation without interruption until the ultimate goal is achieved. On the basis of the goal of an operation, operational art sets forth a whole series of tactical missions and a number of logistical requirements... Operational art also dictates the basic line of conduct of an operation, depending on the material available, the time which may be allotted to the handling of different tactical

[45] Jacobs, p. 104.
[46] Frunze, quoted in Jacobs, p. 105.
[47] *Ibid.*
[48] Lenin, quoted in Milovidov and Kozlov, p.108.
[49] *Ibid.*
[50] Wilson C. Blythe, "A History of Operational Art", *Military Review*, Nov-Dec 2018.
[51] Jacob W Kipp "General-Major A.A. Svechin and Modern Warfare: Military History and Military Theory", In *Strategy*, ed Kent. D. Lee (Minnesota, East View Information Services, 1991)

missions, the forces which may be deployed for battle on a certain front, and finally on the nature of the operation itself." [52]

In this context, Svechin argued that Imperial Russian military thinkers "shifted the centre of gravity of their treaties to the so-called *preparatory operations* and had only very superficially analysed the issue of waging war itself."[53] Thereby, the Imperial Army war plan prepared forces for the beginning of war, without offering a viable strategy for the following phases. This problem stemmed from the Imperial Army's overreliance on a war plan designed by strict law-like military principles. Thus, while war planning fell into the category of *military science*, the execution of military operations was regulated under *operational art*.[54] In the face of this distinction, Svechin gave weight to operational art.[55] For Svechin, "strategy is the art of combining preparations for war and the grouping of operations for achieving the goal set by the war for the armed forces."[56] Therefore, Svechin refused the tendency to get bogged down in the details of preparatory operations.[57] Towards that end, he re-examined Leer's preparatory operations and repositioned them within Soviet war strategy by using his ideas on operational art. [58]

According to Svechin, Soviet thinkers had to avoid separating operations into primary and preparatory.[59] In this context, it would be inconvenient to apply operational terminology to Leer's *preparatory operations,* which predominantly included the mobilization and concentration of the army.[60] Instead, Svechin looked back on this phase as *the pre-mobilization period,* which started before the declaration of war and general mobilization.[61] Following this, he designed *the initial period of war (IPW)* as "a special period of war lasting from the declaration of war to the beginning of major operations."[62] Contrary to Leer's design, the IPW was not characterized by decisive military operations, because Svechin prioritized the strategy of attrition over annihilation. For Svechin, the attrition strategy could achieve "the most decisive

[52] Svechin, pp. 88-89.
[53] Ibid. p. 202.
[54] *Ibid.*
[55] *Ibid.*
[56] Ibid. p. 89.
[57] *Ibid.*
[58] Kokoshin, p. 86-87.
[59] Svechin, p.325.
[60] *Ibid.*
[61]Ibid. p.201-203.
[62] *Ibid.*

ultimate goals."[63] The Imperial Army's overreliance on the beginning period of war could only produce limited objectives.[64] Accordingly, Svechin did not predict that the decisive phase of war should be within the IPW.[65] Instead, the IPW should operate within the "art of military operations that cannot be divided by any clear boundaries."[66] By these means, Svechin wanted to draw the military planner's attention to the more expanded character of future warfare in which IPW functioned as a prologue. On the whole, Svechin abstained from defining the IPW as the decisive phase of Soviet war design.[67] Instead, the IPW had to regulate the opening phase of war. The results of this phase, alongside the operational decisions and judgements of the Soviet High Command, would give shape to the character of the following phases of war. [68]

Even though Svechin was a proponent of the strategy of attrition, his operational design received broad acceptance among the Soviet General Staff. Georgii Samoilovich Isserson and Mikhail Nikolayevich Tukhachevsky embraced Svechin's IPW in their *deep operations* design. This strategy required the Soviet Army to carry out a series of deep and consecutive frontal offensive penetrations against the enemy.[69] According to Marshall Tukhachevsky, who was the Chief of Staff of the Red Army between 1925 and 1928, the preoccupation with winning the beginning phase of the First World War was a mistake, since it overlooked the conditions of the war.[70] Although Tukhachevsky was a strong proponent of the strategy of annihilation, he did not believe the Red Army could win a future war during the IPW. Instead, Tukhachevsky attached decisive importance to *the subsequent period of war*.[71] In his major work entitled *The Evolution of Operation Art*, the Red Army military thinker Isserson degrades the importance Leer ascribed to the IPW. For Isserson, initial operations could ensure a positional advantage over the adversary, but could not promise victory.[72] Should the Red Army succeed in exploiting initial operations forward, then this positional advantage could be translated into strategic success.

[63] Ibid. p. 121.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Kokoshin, p. 87.
[66] Svechin, p. 86 and Kokoshin, p. 87.
[67] Svechin, p. 91.
[68] Ibid. p. 89.
[69] Georgii Samoilovich Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art*, (Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013), 39-49.
[70] Sally W. Stoecker, *Forging Stalin's Army Marshall Tukhachevsky and the Politics of Military Innovation* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 148.
[71] P. Savushkin, 1985 quoted in Stoecker, p. 155.
[72] Isserson, p. 44.

In the late 1920s, the Soviet General Staff reached a *de facto* agreement which stated that the Red Army could only be victorious in a war by achieving superiority over the enemy during the IPW. Thereby, the General Staff did not attach decisive importance to the initial operations. Accordingly, the functionality of the IPW shifted from a 'decisive' into a 'shaping' period. In the new operational design, initial operations were characterized by a "struggle for concentration." [73] On the one hand, winning initial battles could enable the Red Army to unleash deep, paralysing maneuvers forward. On the other side, losing them would mean that the Red Army would reposition to make defensive operations. Therefore, the outcome of this phase determined the further development and character of a war to a significant degree.[74]

In the 1930s, the IPW's relevance increased to some extent, following Isserson and Tukhachevsky's analyses on deep operations. In their eyes, the timing of the Red Army mobilization and concentration should shift from the IPW to the pre-mobilization period.[75] Only then could the Soviet Army launch initial intensive operations during the IPW by involving significant ground and aviation forces.[76] In this scheme, the IPW took a position between the shaping and decisive periods. Thus, the distinction between these two periods would be obliterated.[77] As a result, the duration of the IPW shortened. [78]

In Soviet military science, the Tsarist idea of attaining total victory at the beginning of a war underwent a transformation. Thus, the Soviet General Staff aimed to build its ultimate war strategy in accordance with the result of initial operations. Two factors influenced this transformation. First, the Soviet General Staff acknowledged that the strict application of law-like concepts could only regulate initial operations. Instead, peacetime planning fell short of building a strategy for the entire war. Secondly, Svechin's thoughts on operational art influenced the evolution of the IPW. Soviet planners realized that only a series of operational successes could achieve ultimate strategic goals.[79] Therefore, the evidence suggests that the IPW functioned as the *prologue* of the Soviet Army's major operations in the 1930s. Even more, the outcome

[73] Varmoleev, 1933 quoted in Harrison, p. 130.
[74] *Ibid.*
[75] S.P. Ivanov, *The Initial Period of War* (Moscow:1974) Translated and published by (Washington: The United States Air Force, 1974), 70.
[76] Ivanov, p. 70 and Kokoshin, p.108.
[77] Ivanov, p. 71.
[78] Ibid. p. 70.
[79] Svechin, p. 89.

of this phase determined the subsequent development and character of major operations.

### 4.3.2. Combat readiness

Soviet thinkers continued to study *combat readiness* in the 1920s after Leer's pioneering ideas on this concept. Indeed, Leer's narrow vision of combat readiness had relied on forming a standing, combat-ready army. By this means, the Imperial Russian military sought to ensure superiority at the beginning of a war against an otherwise numerically stronger but unprepared enemy.[80] After the Bolshevik revolution, the idea of waging a class war in the form of nation-in-arms altered the Soviet perception of combat readiness. Leer's combat readiness was unable to address the question of how the Soviet military should prepare for a war of attrition. Therefore, the Soviet military and political elite broadened the semantic content of this concept under the new socio-political context. In a similar vein, the Soviets re-defined combat readiness under the strategy of attrition. Subsequently, new combat readiness was inextricably linked with the militarization of the State organs in peacetime and in times of war. Within the framework of "front and rear in war of the future", Soviet combat readiness was geared towards achieving the perpetual mobilization of industry and the economy in general.[81] This period witnessed several attempts to integrate the New Economic Policy (NEP), the Soviet Industry, the Commissariat of Health, and the Soviet Reserve Officer Training Centre into the war planning. [82]

Having glorified socialism's effective utilization of the defence industry, Lenin argued that "without the most serious economic preparation, it is impossible to conduct a modern war against advanced imperialism."[83] Nevertheless, Soviet war preparation dictated a well-designed balance between maximum effectiveness and maximum force. On the one hand, it was economically unfeasible to put troops in a constant state of combat readiness during peacetime. But, on the other hand, the Soviets aimed to strike a decisive blow against the enemy as quickly and advantageously as possible. This intention was associated with the Soviet's attempt to compensate for its technological and positional inferiority over the enemy.[84] In this regard, Communist Party Congresses

[80] Leer, p. 53.
[81] Frunze, quoted in Jacobs, p. 123-125.
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] Lenin quoted in Milovidov and Kozlov, p. 139.
[84] Milovidov and Kozlov, p. 108-109.

(CPSU) widely discussed the proper combat readiness level of the Soviet military. The discussions revolved around achieving a "short-run" defence growth and peacetime combat readiness versus a "long-run" defence growth and gradual mobilization of the country after the beginning of a war.[85]

Frunze was a strong advocate of peacetime combat readiness and industrial mobilization. Frunze's idea was based on the notion that the mass character of modern war made it more difficult for the Red Army to commence mobilization in times of war. Therefore, Frunze advocated for a perpetual approach to ensuring combat readiness which began in peacetime and continued during the war. Frunze referred to this approach as "perpetual mobilization readiness of industry and of the economy."[86] In addition to this, Frunze intended to guarantee the assistance of Soviet state organs for the Red Army's combat readiness footprint. This idea could have led to the militarization of Soviet State organs.[87] Nevertheless, Frunze's ideas incited a general tension between the military and financial authorities of the Soviet Union.

Frunze's idea of perpetual mobilization readiness was subjected to criticism. For instance, Svechin opposed the idea of pursuing a short-run defence growth policy even though he admitted that *peacetime combat readiness* was an inevitable law for the Red Army. In this context, Svechin suggested that "the overenergetic distortion of the natural form of [peacetime] economic development has quite a negative effect and hinders the overall economic success of the country."[88] Instead, Svechin called for the "permanence of mobilization over the entire course of the war."[89] Svechin's argument rested on the idea that peacetime combat readiness "strived to meet the requirements of war since its nature will be unknown."[90] The idea of attaining peacetime combat readiness overlooked the specific conditions of warfare. In this regard, Svechin's combat readiness should go hand in hand with the shifting necessities of war and the operational judgements of the Soviet High Command.

In the early 1930s, Tukhachevsky and Isserson persuaded Stalin of the necessity of carrying out perpetual combat readiness. For Isserson, it was not realistic to "limit the

[85] Stoecker, p. 36.
[86] Jacobs, p.125.
[87] Ibid. p.119.
[88] Svechin, p. 108.
[89] Svechin, p. 239.
[90] Ibid.

mobilization capacity to the first echelon of a mobilized cadre-based regular army."[91] Instead, Isserson advocated for "sequential permanent mobilization", which included the peacetime mobilization of the second and third line of troops to carry out operations in depth.[92] Likewise, Tukhachevsky was a proponent of the "complete militarization of the national economy" and the "mechanization of the Soviet Army".[93] Tukhachevsky's idea rested on the notion that peacetime economic competition alone would not suffice to win a future war.[94] Furthermore, Tukhachevsky envisaged that a maximum mobilization preparedness in peacetime could split the enemy coalition forces at the beginning of war.[95] Otherwise, the Red Army could not withstand carrying out a protracted war due to the backwardness of the Soviet industry. In this vein, Tukhachevsky proposed the production of a larger number of tanks and aircrafts than the capacity of the Soviet economy in 1930 allowed. Nevertheless, Stalin turned down this proposal and called it *fantastica*.[96] Nevertheless, Tukhachevsky managed to convince Stalin in 1932. In this regard, the Red Army began procuring a massive amount of combat equipment in peacetime in the expectation of winning deep battles. Furthermore, Tukhachevsky aimed to launch deep operations with combat-ready mechanized troops during the IPW.[97] Following this, the Soviet Army's share of capital investment grew more than twice between 1929 and 1933.[98]

Frunze, Tukhachevsky, and Isserson's thoughts on war influenced the General Staff to opt for perpetual combat readiness under the annihilation strategy. This approach had two primary objectives. The first was to break the enemy front during the IPW and to be prepared for the follow-up operations. The Chief of Staff of the Soviet Army in 1937, Boris Shaposhnikov suggested that "the mobilization carried out before the war would enforce the first echelon and prevent failure in the initial operations." [99] The second objective of perpetual mobilization was to maintain operational tempo after the initial operations. The sequential mobilization was crucial for unleashing deep operations.[100]

[91] Issersin, p. 59.
[92] *Ibid.*
[93] Lawrence X. Clifford, *Tukhachevsky and Blitskrieg* (Boston: UMI, 2004), 491, 533 and Kipp, p. 59.
[94] Tukhachevsky quoted in Stoecker, 40.
[95] Lennart Samuelson, *Plan's for Stalin's War Machine: Tukhachevskii and Military Economic Planning, 1925-1941* (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 2000), 22
[96] Steocker, p. 42,
[97] Ibid. p. 44.
[98] Ibid. p. 39.
[99] B. Shaposhnikov quoted in Kokoshin, p. 87.
[100] *Ibid.*

To conclude, the Soviet High Command discussed combat readiness until the early 1930s in relation to the changing character of war. However, in the meantime, Soviet forecasts of a future war influenced the ideas of the Soviet General Staff. Firstly, Soviet thinkers predicted that a major war with the capitalist states was inevitable.[101] Secondly, that the strategy of annihilation, with its offensive character, could promise a victory for the Soviet Union. Thus, these prevailing views emboldened the Soviet General Staff to adopt a perpetual combat readiness. Therefore, the functionality of combat readiness shifted from a peacetime combat readiness necessary to win a short war of annihilation to a perpetual combat readiness which aimed to win the initial battles during the IPW and deep operations afterwards.

### 4.3.3. Forecasting

The concept of *forecasting* emerged in Soviet military thought following the Russian Civil War. The methodological base of forecasting was formed by Lenin's thoughts on the Marxist theory of cognition. This theory posited that the knowledge of the future could also be comprehended.[102] Early Soviet thinkers attempted to examine reality in compliance with the evolutionary patterns of society.[103] In this regard, Lenin argued that "only a knowledge of the objective laws of the evolution of nature and society turns the objective possibility of scientific forecasting into an actual possibility."[104] Regarding military forecasting, the comprehension of society's objective laws did not guarantee success in a war when military personnel had to deal with uncertainties, difficulties, and false information.[105] Since it was not possible to eliminate all of these, the purpose of military forecasting was "to minimize the effect of uncertainties on the results of the decision being taken at the present time."[106] Therefore, the laws of socio-historical evolutions could be used to predict qualitative leaps in military affairs.

The concept of military forecasting comprised the historical analysis of the past wars and the knowledge of the changing character of war. While the historical research fell within the category of the *subjective forecast*, the knowledge on future war became a

[101] Samuelson, p. 10.
[102] Yu. V. Chuyev, and Yu. B. Mikhaylov, *Forecasting in Military Affairs: A Soviet View*, (Moscow: Ministry of Defence 1975) published by (Washington: The US Government Printing Office), 24. Translated by the DGIS Multilingual Section Translation Bureau, Ottawa.
[103] Milovidov and Kozlov, p. 254-255.
[104] Chuyev and Mikhaylov, p. 23.
[105] Milovidov and Kozlov, p. 265 and Chuyev and Mikhaylov, p. 25.
[106] Chuyev and Mikhaylov, p. 6.

subject of the *objective forecast*.[107] On the one hand, subjective forecast alone was not sufficient since inconsistencies may occur in military affairs between the latest methods of waging war and the forms and methods of carrying out current military operations.[108] On the other hand, the laws of armed conflict formed the basis for the objective forecast. These laws made it possible to foresee the course and outcome of military conflicts.[109] In this regard, the most significant law was the objective analysis of each battle and the correct analysis of the enemy.[110] For instance, Lenin argued that "it is impossible to understand anything in our struggle if we do not analyze the concrete situation of each battle."[111] Thus, anticipating the enemy was key to comprehending a war's character.[112] Another law was the impact of technological change on the character of war.[113] This law could help the General Staff explore how a new weapon system could transform the operational environment.

Soviet thinkers made several attempts at forecasting in the 1920s and 1930s in conformity with the analyses of the past conflicts and the objective laws of war. Above all, Lenin predicted that the possible war between the proletarian and capitalist worlds would be a protracted one. Thus, a long war of attrition would marginalize the prominence of initial operations. Nevertheless, each state would be intent on changing military balance in its favor by aiming for superiority in the long run. In this struggle, a shift in the balance of power would encourage capitalist states to resolve conflicts using force.[114] In the 1920s, Lenin anticipated that as long as capitalism "is much stronger than us, it will be able at any time to send its forces against us, to wage a war against us again. It is, therefore, necessary to make ourselves stronger."[115] Therefore, Lenin emphasized the necessity of gaining military superiority (or at least parity) to prevent the West from waging war against the Soviet Union.[116]

Frunze's forecast relied on an analysis of the Russian Civil War. Unlike Lenin, Frunze thought that a future war would be characterized by annihilation and offence. In this regard, Frunze suggested that "the working class will be forced to go over to the

[107] Ibid. p.7.
[108] Ibid. p. 24.
[109] Ibid. p. 23.
[110] Milovidov and Kozlov, p. 266
[111] Chuyev and Mikhaylov, p. 23.
[112] Milovidov and Kozlov, p. 261.
[113] *Ibid.*
[114] *Ibid.*
[115] Lenin, quoted in Milovidov and Kozlov, p. 262.
[116] *Ibid.*

offensive against capital whenever conditions are favorable."[117] While Isserson and Tukhachevsky embraced Frunze's forecast, Svechin disagreed with it. Svechin believed that it was too dangerous and erroneous to devise an offensive strategy against capitalist adversaries only by taking the Russian civil war as an example.[118] Instead, Svechin argued that a large enemy not characterized by noteworthy class conflicts could barely be defeated by a destructive offensive.[119] Alternatively, ensuring military balance could deter the opposing sides from unleashing destructive war against each other.[120] After analyzing the adversaries' political, economic, and military-technological resources, Svechin predicted that a future war would be protracted.[121] In this type of war, the Soviet military should adopt a defensive strategy during the IPW.[122]

Frunze's offensive forecasts held sway over Soviet strategic thinking leading up to Second World War. First of all, this forecast could achieve the primary objective of Soviet political elites, namely spreading communism abroad.[123] Second, from a military perspective, the annihilation strategy with deep and consecutive offensive blows at the beginning of a war was considered more suitable to overcome a technologically and economically superior enemy coalition. In this vein, the Red Army focused on waging an offensive war under the strategy of annihilation.

### 4.3.4. Correlation of forces

The concept of correlation of forces appeared in Soviet military publications in the 1930s. This concept reflected the dialectic-materialist approach to Soviet military science. Generally speaking, the concept of correlation was used to compare the quantitative and qualitative differences of opposing forces.[124] Often, this concept was utilized to compare the favorableness of various war strategies. Therefore, the Soviet thinkers put this concept into practice to predict the war's outcome.

Isserson primarily used this concept to calculate "the relative correlation of offensive and defensive means" in the 1930s. [125] During this time, the character of war underwent

[117] Frunze, quoted in Jacob, p. 43.
[118] Kokoshin, p. 70.
[119] Svechin, p. 122.
[120] *Ibid.*
[121] Kokoshin, p. 71.
[122] Svechin, p. 239.
[123] Kokoshin, p. 147.
[124] Isserson, pp. 49-53
[125] Isserson, p. 49.

a severe transformation when mobility and firepower were integrated as a whole. This notion had an impact on Soviet war strategies. According to Isserson, quantitative superiority in firepower means would make the defensive strategy a more realistic option for the Soviet military.[126] Nevertheless, new technical means, such as a machine gun mounted on a tank, brought a qualitative solution to the problem of Western armies' quantitative firepower superiority.[127] In this regard, the latter possibility makes 'the strategy of offence' a more viable option for the Soviet Military. Therefore, Isserson concluded that "the present tendency favoring the superiority of offensive over defensive means is growing more palpable."[128] By this means, Isserson pointed out that the Soviet military could win a short war of destruction provided that it could achieve qualitative superiority in mobility and firepower (mechanization).

### 4.4. The theory of deep operations and the operationalization of fundamental military concepts

The theory of deep operations was officially legitimized for the first time in Soviet Army Provisional Field Regulations in 1936.[129] The founders of this theory were V. Triandafillov and G.S. Isserson. The commander of the Leningrad Military District, Marshall Tukhachevsky, experimented with this theory between 1928 and 1930 by conducting deep manoeuvres with medium and light tank divisions.[130] Subsequently, this theory was put into practice in all military districts of the Soviet Union between 1932 and 1933.[131] The results of these field exercises showed that tank divisions would not be combined with infantry while carrying out deep offensive operations. Instead, they would operate independently along with the support of the infantry divisions during deep and consecutive strikes.[132] Conceptually, the theory of deep operations relied on relentless pursuit. Thus, an offensive on the main axis could eliminate the enemy forces when persistently followed up by pursuit operations.[133] The purpose of this theory was to "swiftly and powerfully penetrate the enemy's defensive lines or an enemy offensive at a vulnerable point."[134] Next to that, this theory aimed at obliterating the enemy by

[126] *Ibid.*
[127] *Ibid.*
[128] Ibid. p. 53.
[129] Biriuzov 1936, quoted in Stoecker, p. 155 and Svechin, p. 63
[130] William J. Granahan, "The Fall and Rise of Marshall Tukhachevsky," Parameters,7:4 (1978), 63 and Clifford, pp. 446-447.
[131] Clifford, pp. 446-447.
[132] *Ibid.*
[133] The Red Army (RKKA) Provisional Field Regulations, 1936, quoted in Kipp, p. 63.
[134] Clifford, p. 428.

preventing it from grouping its forces. Overall, it is plausible to argue that the originators of this theory sought to avoid the conflict acquiring a protracted character through subsequent deep strikes.[135] The research, so far, has examined the theory of deep operations in general terms. The remaining part of the section will investigate how fundamental military concepts gained new semantic contents under the theory of deep operations.

### 4.4.1. Forecasting

The forecasts of Soviet thinkers laid the basis for the theory of deep operations. Soviet thinkers' class-based analysis promoted the idea that a war with the capitalist states was inevitable.[136] Likewise, Frunze's emphasis on offensive maneuver in the 1920s prevailed in Soviet strategic thought. In this regard, the Russian civil war with its deep offensive blows was considered the beginning of revolutionary class-wars between the proletarian and capitalist worlds.[137] By way of illustration, Lenin said that "we have completed the first period of these wars [civil war], and we have to prepare for the second [a future war]."[138] Isserson also argued that revolutionary civil wars would be characterized by "active crushing blows with decisive aims."[139] Furthermore, Isserson predicted that modern, speedy, and highly efficient technological means would specify the character of future operations.[140] These forecasts indicated that the Red Army should prepare for a future war by adopting an annihilation strategy. In this strategy, deep crushing blows with armoured and mechanized units played vital roles. These forecasts helped Red Army thinkers design the theory of deep operations.

In particular, Isserson's forecasts of a future war influenced the development of the theory of deep operations to a considerable degree. According to Isserson, "the historical character of operations has evolved along two main lines: lateral extension across a front and distribution in-depth." [141] The lateral extension had peaked during the First World War in the form of a long-protracted war along a single line. Nevertheless, additional troop mobilizations increased the operational densities of warring sides. In contrast, the modern front consisted of echeloned fortified zones.

[135] Stoecker, p. 154.
[136] Samuelson, p. 10.
[137] Isserson, p. 40.
[138] *Ibid.*
[139] Ibid. p.41.
[140] *Ibid.*
[141] Isserson, p. 43.

Thus, breaking these sequential lines demanded the implementation of a deep strategy.[142] Therefore, Isserson predicted that "in a future war, the nature of the operation will evolve in accordance with this very feature of depth."[143] Having defined the characteristics of the new epoch in the military art, Frunze concluded that the Soviet Army had to "shift from a linear strategy to a deep strategy."[144] By this means, the focus of Soviet operational planning changed from enveloping linear maneuvers to deep frontal penetrations.[145]

Tukhachevsky's forecasts of a future war closely resembled Isserson's deep operations theory. Tukhachevsky anticipated that a future war would be a coalition war against the states of capitalist encirclement.[146] In response, Tukhachevsky avoided carrying out a war of attrition across a front, stating that the Red Army should instead be prepared to implement the annihilation strategy in depth using combat-ready units.[147] In this context, standing mechanized formations of the Soviet Army could penetrate the static enemy defences and encircle the most significant enemy positions to the rear.[148] If a surprise attack caught the Soviet Union unprepared, Soviet mechanized formations would penetrate the enemy line under a counter-offensive scheme. When the Red Army border defences slowed down the enemy attack, mechanized units would perform encircling maneuvers behind the enemy positions.[149] In this way, Tukhachevsky sought to penetrate the static enemy defences, prevent enemy reinforcements, and force the enemy to surrender.[150] Therefore, the forecasts of Frunze, Isserson, and Tukhachevsky formed the basis for the theory of deep operations.

### 4.4.2. The Initial Period of War (IPW)

The Soviet General Staff revisited the IPW in light of the theory of deep operations. Theoretically, deep operations consisted of three consequential phases: *the initial*, *pursuit,* and *decisive*.[151] Soviet military thinkers agreed that the initial operations would most likely occur during the IPW in the form of meeting battles. During this phase,

[142] Harrison, p. 102.
[143] Isserson, p. 46.
[144] Ibid. p. 48.
[145] Ibid. p. 45 and 55.
[146] Stoecker, p. 149.
[147] The Red Army (RKKA) Archieves in Stoecker, pp.152-153.
[148] Clifford, p. 428.
[149] *Ibid.*
[150] Ibid. p. 429.
[151] P. Savushkin, quoted in Stoecker, p. 155

warring sides would pursue offensive aims by concentrating their forces forward.[152] For this reason, Isserson posited that the IPW was more suitable for the Red Army to carry out "enveloping maneuvers along exterior lines."[153] During the IPW, combat-ready *attack echelons* performed maneuvers along the flanks of a positional front.[154] (See figure-1) An attack echelon entailed mechanized, cavalry, motorised units, short-range combat aviation, and airborne detachments. By this means, Isserson sought to win the meeting battles and breach the front in tactical depth.[155] Subsequently, the Soviet military intended on moving forward with *breakthrough echelons* designed to inflict "a depth-to-depth blow to tear enemy resistance through the entire operational depth."[156] Breakthrough echelons would perform pursuit and decisive operations.

During the IPW, the main objective of the Soviet General Staff was to destroy the enemy's covering forces and disrupt enemy mobilization along the frontier.[157] If successful, these actions would push the enemy backwards. By this means, the Red Army would gain an immense advantage over the enemy in terms of mobilization and concentration.[158] In this regard, the Soviet General Staff's use of the IPW showed similarities with how Svechin had conceptualised this idea. Svechin had argued that the IPW would play an essential role "from the declaration of war to the beginning of major operations."[159] In this regard, the Soviet High Command sought to exploit the tactical breaches of the initial operations by relentlessly deploying the breakthrough echelon forward. Thereby, the outcome of the meeting battles during the IPW determined to a considerable degree the further development and character of major, decisive operations.

The Chief of Staff of the Red Army, Marshall Tukhachevsky, prepared the Soviet Defense Plan in 1927 in conformity with the theory of deep operations. Thus, the initial operations would occur between the 6$^{th}$ and 15$^{th}$ days of Tukhachevsky's war design. In case of an enemy offensive, a combination of light motorized infantry, mechanized and air forces were tasked with preventing the invading force from breaking Soviet defence lines for about six days. Afterwards, the Red Army aimed to carry out a deep

[152] Harrison, p. 67.
[153] Isserson, p. 44.
[154] Harrison, p. 67.
[155] Isserson, p. 66.
[156] *Ibid.*
[157] Yegorov quoted in Harrison, p. 165.
[158] *Ibid.*
[159] Svechin, p.201-203.

penetration offensive up to 200 kilometres forward on the night of the sixth day.[160] At the same time, the Soviet air forces would attack enemy reinforcements located up to 150-200 kilometres behind the frontline.[161] After the meeting battles, breakthrough echelons would exploit the gains of the initial operations. In this regard, these echelons would commence their advances deep into the enemy territory on the *fifteenth* day of war. [162]

The first objective of the General staff was to win the initial operations between the 6th and 15th day of war. Subsequently, Soviet military planning focused on exploiting the tactical breaches of the initial operations. In conclusion, exploiting the successes of the initial operations would help the Red Army translate the tactical achievements into a strategic victory.[163] Following this, the General Staff put more emphasis on the advance of *breakthrough echelons* during the subsequent period of war. Therefore, the IPW determined to a considerable degree the further development and character of deep operations.[164] Thus, even though the IPW lost its decisiveness, it continued to influence Soviet strategy during the interwar period.

### 4.4.3. Combat readiness

The theory of deep operations necessitated perpetual combat readiness, which commenced in peacetime and continued during the war. The objective of peacetime combat readiness was to win the meeting battles during the IPW. In 1926, Marshall Tukhachevsky scrutinized the level of combat readiness necessary to win the initial operations. As a result, Tukhachevsky admitted that the Red Army material stocks were scarcely sufficient for attaining superiority during the initial period of war."[165] Furthermore, Tukhachevsky proposed an additional mobilization effort in the early 1930s to improve the Red Army offensive capability.[166] According to Tukhachevsky, the Red Army needed 8.000 to 10.000 tanks to break the enemy defence in the Western front during the initial operations. Furthermore, the Soviet military had to procure 197.000 tanks, 122.500 aircraft and 350.000 automobiles to win the subsequent operations.[167] As to the manpower, it was anticipated that the Soviet Union would

[160] Ibid. pp. 437-460.
[161] Ibid. p. 437.
[162] Ibid. p.445
[163] Isserson, pp. 65-66.
[164] Varmoleev, 1933, quoted in Harrison, p. 130.
[165] Tukhachevsky, quoted in Clifford, p.543.
[166] Stoecker, pp. 42-43.
[167] Ibid. p. 42-44 and Samuelson, p. 95.

require a six million-man army in 1937 to execute deep operations.[168] As a result, the Soviet Defense Industry accelerated its tank and armament production between 1932 and 1937 to achieve the objectives of perpetual combat readiness. By this means, the Soviet military aimed at gaining an advantage over the enemy forces by waging war with combat-ready armoured and mechanized troops from the beginning.

Deep penetrations with combat-ready troops were intended to prevent the enemy mobilization and annihilate the ill-prepared enemy formations in depth. According to Isserson, special high readiness formations would carry out these tasks. Deep attack echelons would win the meeting battles in the first line and breach the front in tactical depth.[169] (See figure-1) The attack echelons were subordinated to each *front*, responsible for covering 300 to 400 km front-line.[170] These echelons were held in a state of *semi-permanent readiness.* The attack echelons would move forward during the third or fourth day of war and breach the front 200 km in depth. These independent maneuvers sought to defeat forward enemy units or to control key territory. The meeting battles would persist until the front's *breakthrough echelons* advance in the 15th to 16th day of war.[171] (See figure-1) These echelons consisted of motorised units, mechanized formations and long-range combat aviation.[172]

The deployment of deep breakthrough echelons right after the attack echelons required the Soviet Army to finish total mobilization and concentration within two weeks after the beginning of a war. Thus, deeply echeloned forces would maintain the operational tempo of Soviet deep operations.[173] The relentless execution of meeting and breakthrough battles was enabled by ensuring perpetual combat readiness.[174] Therefore, peacetime combat readiness was key to winning the meeting battles during the IPW. Next to that, sequential mobilization was vital for winning subsequent breakthrough operations. Therefore, peacetime combat readiness to win the initial battles and subsequent mobilisation to win the war became the operational objectives of Soviet combat readiness.

[168] Clifford, p. 449.
[169] Harrison p. 131.
[170] *Ibid.*
[171] Ibid. pp. 131-132.
[172] Isserson, pp. 67-68
[173] Ibid. p. 59.
[174] Ibid. p. 59 and 64.

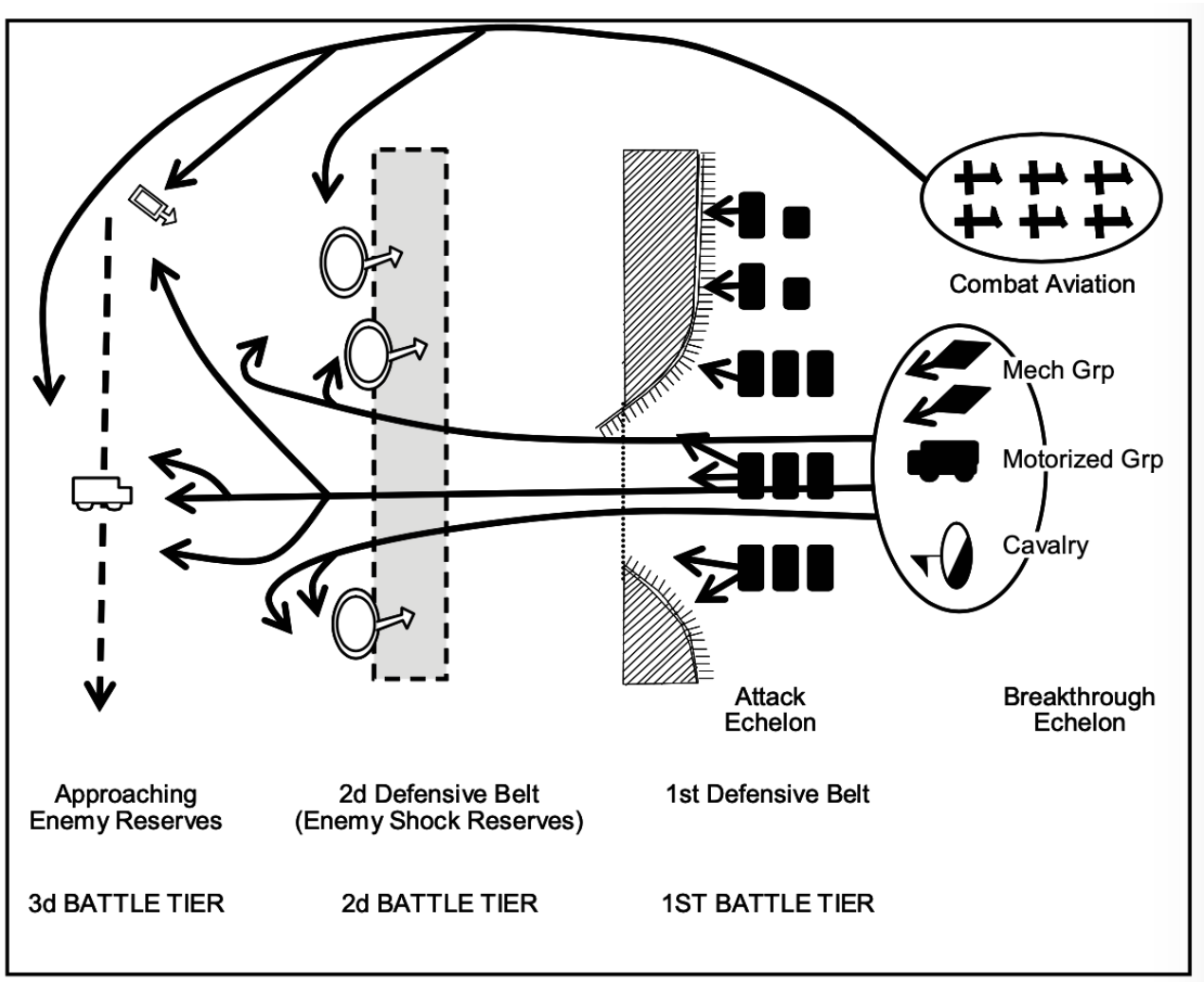


**Figure-1:** The Deep Operation for Penetrating and Crushing a Front (Resource: Isserson, p. 67)

### 4.4.4. The correlation of forces

In accordance with the studies of Isserson, the Soviet military applied correlation to the theory of deep operations. In this regard, the Soviets aimed to estimate the number of troops necessary to carry out initial and subsequent operations. For example, Isserson argued that "[a]ll available forces should be engaged during initial operations in accordance with the correlation of belligerent forces."[175] Availability implied the use of standing forces, which were kept in a constant state of semi-permanent readiness. Therefore, standing forces should be numerically and qualitatively capable of delivering blows to the adversary during the initial operations.

Another purpose of the correlation was to organize the deep echelonment of primary

[175] Isserson. p. 57.

and follow-on forces. According to Isserson, "[a]t the decisive moment of the operation, the object is that additional forces and means arrive in the appropriate groupings to facilitate final attainment of victory."[176] Changing the correlation of forces favouring the Soviet Army hinged on the timely deployment of breakthrough echelons and reserves.[177] This objective required the Soviet military to organize the deep echelonment of additional efforts (breakthrough echelons and reserves). All in all, ensuring superiority (quantitative and qualitative) at the decisive moment of operation was key to achieving war objectives. The correlation of the opposing sides included forces along the linear dimension of a front and in depth.[178]

### 4.5. How fundamental concepts functioned before the Second World War

Between the late 1920s and 1930s, Stalin's purges had an adverse impact on Soviet military thought and its pre-war strategy-making process since they deprived the Soviet military of talented strategists.[179] To begin with, Stalin degraded several Tsarist officers in the Soviet Army.[180] Seven hundred sixty generals were purged, and five hundred and twenty-nine generals were executed or imprisoned between 1937 and 1938.[181] Consequently, almost the entire command staff, including the designers of the deep strategy, were dismissed from the Soviet General Staff. Next, the new Soviet General Staff did not have sufficient intellectual capacity to develop a new war strategy on the eve of the Second World War.[182] Moreover, Imperial Russian strategic culture was gradually lost. After all, fundamental military concepts were exposed to another round of re-examination under Stalin’s forecasts.

Before 1937, war planning assumed that future warfare necessitated a shift from linear to a deep strategy.[183] The new Soviet General Staff rapidly changed its mind after Stalin fully controlled Soviet strategy. First and foremost, Stalin did not consider war as an immediate possibility.[184] The Soviet-German Nonaggression Pact decreased Stalin's expectation about a German offensive between September 1939 and March 1941.[185]

[176] *Ibid.*
[177] Ibid. p. 31.
[178] Ibid. p. 58.
[179] Kokoshin, p. 43
[180] Ibid, p. 41-42.
[181] Ibid, p. 43.
[182] Ibid. p. 42.
[183] Isserson, p. 48.
[184] Erikson, p. 567.
[185] Kokoshin, pp. 98-99.

When the German offensive began, Stalin anticipated that Hitler would seek to invade the Ukraine-Donetsk-Caucasus basin and use the region's economic resources to pursue a war of attrition.[186] Stalin's forecast rested on the notion that the German Army would carry out a limited war to gain some advantages for Germany.[187] In Stalin's opinion, these ambitions could be peacefully settled.[188] Accordingly, Stalin refrained from deploying combat-ready *attack echelons* close to the Soviet border during peacetime so as not to provoke Hitler. For these reasons, Stalin and his General Staff put aside the strategy of deep operations. Following this, Soviet military planners devised a new defence plan by turning a blind eye to the previous forecasts of a future war. Even more importantly, the Germany Army's deep offensive operations did not change the Soviet military planning.[189] Consequently, the Soviet military was caught unprepared when the German Army struck the Soviet Union in June 1941. [190]

The Soviet General Staff altered its strategic disposition in June 1941. In the new plan, the Soviet Army would carry out active defensive operations in depth along the Stalin Line, which stretched from the Karelian Isthmus near Finland to the shores of the Black Sea. The objective of the defensive operations was to repel the enemy attack and secure the deployment of all forces for a counter-offensive.[191] In addition, the Soviets aimed to prevent the enemy advance to the Moscow-Kharkov communication line.[192] In this context, all former combat-ready attack echelons moved behind their front armies' second echelon.[193] Under this scheme, the mission of the first-echelon was to make defensive operations. The second echelon's mechanized divisions would lead a massive counter-offensive to repel the enemy back on its territory.[194] Therefore, the Red Army unleashed initial operations to buy time for mobilization and concentration under the strategy of attrition. Thus, during the IPW, Soviet Army's focus shifted from deep offensive maneuvers to positional defence.

The new strategy paid scant attention to the combat readiness level of the Red Army. As a result, Soviet Army's combat readiness level was lowered, and tank and

[186] Ivanov, p.172.
[187] Kokoshin, p. 109.
[188] *Ibid.*
[189] Kokoshin, pp. 107-110.
[190] Cynthia A Roberts, "Planning for War: The Red Army and Catastrophe of 1941," *Europe-Asia Studies* 47:8 (1995), 1293.
[191] Ivanov, p. 175.
[192] Erikson, p. 576.
[193] Harrison, p. 275.
[194] *Ibid*.

mechanized divisions were disbanded.[195] In 1939, the Chief of General Staff Shaposhnikov estimated that the total mobilisation and concentration of the Soviet Army would require 8-20 days to take the brunt of the enemy attack.[196] Furthermore, the Soviet General Staff disregarded the idea of winning meeting battles during the IPW.[197] Despite the warnings of a German offensive, the first echelon armies were not fully prepared to carry out defensive operations.[198] Thus, the Red Army entered the Second World War without completing its operational deployments on the Western Front.[199] That continued until late 1942. Following this, the Red Army was able to establish a balance in terms of modern equipment.[200] Subsequently, Soviet Army succeeded in slowing down German offence.

### 4.6. Conclusion

The chapter has aimed to investigate the continuity and discontinuity of fundamental military concepts between 1917 and 1941. Contrary to expectations, the Russian Revolution in 1917 did not automatically promise a fundamental change in Soviet military thought. Instead, Tsarist officers in the Red Army ensured the continuity of Imperial Russian military heritage. First and foremost, A.A. Svechin took the lead in designing the *initial period of war* according to his ideas on operational art. Furthermore, G.A. Leer's conceptualization of combat readiness was embraced by many Soviet thinkers. For instance, Isserson and Tukhachevsky used this concept while designing the theory of deep operations. Nevertheless, Socialist leaders' ideas on military matters gained the upper hand. In this regard, the Soviet High Command attempted to generate a unified military doctrine by using the Russian Civil war experience and Marxist-Leninist ideology. Therefore, this chapter examines the emergence of new concepts in Soviet military thought. In this regard, Lenin's ideas on war promoted the emergence of *forecasting* and *correlation of forms and methods* to anticipate the character and outcome of a future war, respectively.

In the late 1920s and 1930s, the forecasts of a future war indicated that the Soviets leaned towards carrying out the strategy of deep operations against Germany.

[195] Harrison, p. 276 and Erikson, p. 567
[196] Erikson, p. 569.
[197] Erikson, p. 567 and Kokoshin, p. 100.
[198] Kokoshin, p. 110.
[199] Ivanov, p. 186.
[200] Ibid. p. 172.

Compared to the Imperial Russian period, the functionality of the IPW shifted from a *decisive* into a *shaping* phase of war. Nevertheless, the initial operations would determine the further development and character of a war. In addition to that, the functionality of *combat readiness* shifted from a peacetime readiness necessary to win a short war of annihilation to a perpetual combat readiness which aimed to win deep operations, both initial and breakthrough. As to correlation, the Red Army employed this concept to estimate the forces necessary to attain superiority over the enemy during the initial and subsequent breakthrough operations. In conformity with this concept, the Soviet political elite ramped up its defence spending in the first half of the 1930s. Correlation analysis indicated that the combination of firepower with maneuver in a tank made the offence strategy a more viable option for the Soviet military.

Between 1937 and 1941, fundamental military concepts underwent a transformation under Stalin's forecast. First and foremost, Stalin's forecast advocated for an attrition strategy. It overlooked the predictions of a deep strategy and the German Army's deep operations in 1939-40. The Soviet Army prepared for a wrong battle, since Stalin expected Germany to carry out a war of attrition. Secondly, the focus of the new Soviet High Command shifted from offence to defence during the IPW. This strategy was intended to buy time for the Red Army for the mobilization and concentration of the main forces. In this new operational scheme, the initial operations were characterized by the defence in depth. The success of the initial operations continued to shape the course and character of follow-up Red Army counter-offensives. In connection with this, the General Staff aimed to mobilize its main troops gradually in parallel with its initial defensive operations. The new mobilization plan diverged from the early combat readiness scheme of deep operations: *attaining peacetime combat readiness to win the initial (meeting battles) and relentless and quick permanence of wartime mobilization to pursue breakthrough operations*. On the eve of the Second World War, the Red Army gradually increased its combat readiness footprint.

The Soviet eagerness to acquire the knowledge of the future based on society's evolutionary patterns made forecasting and correlation the essential concepts of strategic thought. In this regard, forecasting was vital for revealing war's future character. In addition to that, correlation was used to determine the number of forces required to carry out offensive or defensive strategies. Consequently, the Soviet General Staff's forecasts altered the semantic content (functionality) of fundamental military concepts.

The forecasts of a deep strategy generated an operational design where the IPW regulated the prologue of sequential deep strikes. In this design, the achievement of perpetual combat readiness made deep echelons ready for consecutive deep strikes. Therefore, the fate of the initial operations predominantly hinged on the combat readiness posture of the Red Army. Hence, the forecasts of a war of attrition after 1937 created an operational scheme where the IPW commanded initial defensive operations. In this scheme, the Red Army sought to achieve combat readiness gradually while the initial operations continued. In reality, the mobilization of the Red Army predominantly depended on the duration and success of the initial operations. The results of this investigation reveal that the semantic content of the IPW and combat readiness shows differences under the deep operations and Stalin's attrition war strategy. Even though the contents of IPW and combat readiness altered under different strategies, these concepts' enduring relevance did not change. Therefore, this study concludes that IPW and combat readiness are, for the most part, essential to building Soviet war strategies.

This investigation has shown that a combination of Soviet military ideology and Tsarist military heritage promoted the evolution of fundamental military concepts. Imperial Russian thinkers' opinions on the IPW and combat readiness continued to influence Soviet strategic thinking, despite the changing socio-political and strategic context. Compared to the Tsarist period, the IPW's semantic use shifted from a decisive to a shaping phase of war. Next, the semantic capacity of combat readiness turned from peacetime mobilization to perpetual mobilization, which prevailed in peacetime and exponentially increased in times of war. In terms of functionality, *forecasting* determined to a significant degree the semantic content of the *IPW*, *combat readiness, and correlation* in Soviet military thought between 1917 and 1941. A natural progression of this work is to analyse the continuity and discontinuity of these concepts between 1945-1990. In this regard, the next chapter will further investigate the evolution of fundamental military concepts during the Cold War.

## Chapter-5

## The Evolution of Fundamental Military Concepts During the Cold War: 1945-1990

*When the U.S. detonated the World's first atomic bomb over Japan in 1945, the nuclear age began, and the character of war changed. Afterwards, the Soviet Union and the U.S. became engaged in a competition for supremacy in nuclear weapons and the methods of waging a nuclear war. Therefore, this investigation aims to explore the impact of fundamental military concepts on Soviet military thought between 1945 and 1990. The study has found that the Soviet military used forecasting, the initial period of war (IPW), combat readiness, and correlation of forms and methods (COFM) to design new strategies responsive to the changes in military technology. Among others, forecasting was the key to building Soviet strategy for a future war. Despite the emerging discontinuities in military affairs, the IPW remains the 'decisive' period of a short war of annihilation and the 'shaping' period of a war of attrition. Finally, the results of this study support the idea that qualitative superiority takes precedence over quantitative superiority in the Soviet approaches to warfare. The chapter concludes that time-tested concepts of the Soviet military shaped to a considerable extent Soviet strategic thinking between 1945 and 1990.*

### 5.1. Introduction

The use of nuclear weapons by the end of the Second World War did not promote a sudden transformation in the Soviet military.[1] The Red Army did not attempt to replace the war-winning concepts and structures of the foregone war. After the mid-1950s, the Soviet *nuclear euphoria* began. Even during this period, the time-tested concepts of Soviet strategic culture moulded Soviet strategic thinking. Therefore, the central thesis of this chapter is that the fundamental military concepts that emerged in the 1920s and 1930s, were crucial in developing new Soviet Cold War strategies. In this regard, this chapter aims to investigate the continuity and discontinuity of *the IPW, combat readiness*, *forecasting,* and *correlation of forms and methods* in Soviet military thought between 1945 and 1990. To that end, this study has examined Soviet military doctrine,

[1] John G. Hines, *Soviet Intentions*: *Volume II Soviet Post Cold-War Testimonial Evidence* (Mclean VA: BDM Federal, 1995), 54.

the works of Soviet military thinkers, testimonial shreds of evidence, and Western military publications on Soviet strategy.

This chapter provides an overview of the conceptual transformation of Soviet military thought during the Cold War. First and foremost, this study examines the interrelationship between the concept of forecasting and various Soviet military strategies. In this chapter, it is argued that the shifts in Soviet strategies hinged on the Soviet military thinkers' forecasts of a future war. Then, the study investigates the functionality of other fundamental military concepts (the IPW, combat readiness, and correlation of forms and methods) within each *forecasted* period. Finally, the chapter scrutinizes the interactions among fundamental military concepts and how these interactions evolved over time. In the framework of that, the Soviet theory of deep operations, anti-nuclear maneuvers, the pre-emptive strike, retaliatory strike, and limited nuclear strategies have been analyzed as part of the larger historical narrative. The selection of these cases has been made on a holistic basis as they constituted major Soviet Cold War strategies.

Previous studies of Soviet military thought have not adequately dealt with fundamental military concepts during the Cold War period.[2] The prominence of these concepts in Soviet military planning receive only limited attention and little is known about how these concepts gained new semantic contents during the Cold War. Soviet military generated new strategies responsive to the changing character of war between 1945 and 1990. Therefore, one of the central theses of this chapter is that fundamental military concepts remained intact during the Cold War, as Soviet thinkers made no attempt to replace these concepts. However, the semantic and functional use of these concepts underwent a transformation under changing strategic contexts. Therefore, this chapter sets out to investigate the historical and functional continuity of fundamental military concepts by establishing links with the early Soviet and later Imperial Russian military thought.

## 5.2. The general characteristics of Soviet military strategy between 1945 and 1990

[2] Derek Leebaert and Timothy Dickinson, *Soviet Military Thinking* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992) and Robin Higham and Frederick W. Kagan, *The Military History of the Soviet Union* (New York: Palgrave, 2002)

When the U.S. detonated the World's first atomic bomb in August 1945, the nuclear age began. The key characteristics of this age were the devastating impact of thermonuclear bombs, their decisiveness, and the indefensibility of borders.[3] Subsequently, the U.S. concentrated on developing nuclear weapons and a doctrine for their employment.[4] The Soviet Union, on the contrary, initially overlooked nuclear weapon's decisive role in a future war.[5] Instead, the Soviet military continued to prepare for *a war of attrition* in strict conformity with Stalin's *permanently operating factors* (POF). In 1942, Stalin believed that observing the POFs would bring a victory to the Soviet Union.[6] These factors were "the stability of rear, the morale of the army, quantity and quality of divisions, the army's weapons, and the organising ability of the commanding officers."[7] Soviets were highly confident that the military was superior to the other nations in the POFs because of the advantages of socialism over capitalism.[8] By way of illustration, Soviet leadership asserted that the morale of soldiers, the intellectual capacity of Soviet officers, and the system of the Soviet state were superior to those of capitalist nations thanks to the supremacy of the Marxist-Leninist communist ideology.[9]

Having relied too much on Stalin's dogma, Soviet thinkers could not admit that the advent of nuclear weapons might shorten the impacts of years-long attrition to a few days.[10] Since POFs rested on moral and ideological factors, the Soviet High Command overlooked the impacts of technological developments on the changing character of war.[11] Nevertheless, Soviet military thought gradually appreciated the possibility of a short war of annihilation and the employment of nuclear weapons after Stalin's death in 1953. This is evidenced by Marshal Rotmistrov's article in the Journal of *Military Thought (Voennaya Mysl)* "[o]n the role of surprise in contemporary war" in 1955.[12] Rotmistrov designates *surprise* as "one of the decisive conditions for the attainment of success" during the initial period of a thermo-nuclear or conventional war.[13]

[3] Lawrence D. Freedman and Jeffrey Michaels, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (London, Palgrave Macmillan: 2019), vii.
[4] Herbert S. Dinerstein, "The Revolution in Soviet Strategic Thinking", *Foreign Affairs* 36: 2 (January 1958): 241-252.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] Ibid. pp. 242-243.
[8] Ibid. p.242.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] Ibid. p. 243.
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] Quoted in Freedman and Michaels, p. 180.
[13] Dinerstein, pp. 245-246.

Accordingly, Soviet strategy in the mid-1950s assumed that "the Soviet Union must be ready for a nuclear war even though the likelihood of such a war was small."[14]

In the second half of the 1950s, the influence of Marxist-Stalinist teachings on Soviet military science diminished. Subsequently, the focus of Soviet thinkers shifted to deterring "the U.S. from making war because of Soviet strength" in nuclear weapons.[15] In this regard, the Soviet Union took part in a competition for supremacy in nuclear weapons and the methods of waging a nuclear war in the second half of the 1950s. In 1957, the Soviet Union launched the World's first intercontinental ballistic missile (R-7). The destructiveness and broad range of nuclear weapons influenced Soviet military thought afterwards.[16]

The Soviet nuclear strategy relied on "reducing the destructiveness of the enemy nuclear attack" by a sudden blow of its own.[17] The Red Army was confident that the enormous territory of the Soviet Union would provide resilience to unleash a counter nuclear attack. In 1957, the leader of the Soviet Union, Nikita S. Khrushchev, announced that "'[w]e too, of course, will suffer great losses. But look at the vast spaces on our map and look at Germany, France and Britain."[18] In the Soviet General Staff, discussions revolved around whether strategic nuclear forces alone could play a decisive role in a future war.[19] Did Alexander Svechin's operational art, which translated tactical achievements into strategic victories, entirely lose its significance?[20]

This study has categorised Russian military thinkers into two groupings: the modernists and traditionalists. On the one hand, the traditionalists aimed to address modern challenges by employing the strategic and conceptual schemes of the previous periods. The proponents of this view were mainly senior in rank and had a positional advantage over the modernists in the Russian High Command. Traditionalists managed to maintain relative dominance over promotions, professional military education, appointments to the military schools, and military curriculum, all of which resulted in a comparatively dominant body of military opinion among Russian military officers. On the other hand,

[14] Ibid. p. 246.
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] Robin Higham and Frederick W. Kagan, *The Military History of the Soviet Union* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 202-203.
[17] Freedman and Michaels, p. 185.
[18] Khrushchev, 1957 quoted in Freedman and Michaels, p. 185.
[19] Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Strategy at the Crossroads* (Santa Monica: Rand Cooperation, 1964): 12-17.
[20] Alexander A. Svechin, *Strategy* (Moscow: Voennyi Vestnik, 1927) translated and published by (Minnesota: East View Information Services, 1991), 88-89.

the modernists emphasized the influence of technological development on military doctrine.

The modernist body of opinion[21], led by N. Khrushchev, Marshall Vasili D. Sokolovsky and Marshall Rodion Y. Malinovsky, suggested that the advent of nuclear weapons "elevated the importance of strategy" and "diminished the importance of operational art."[22] The members of this group argued that the missile age "cancelled out all previous concepts of the character of war."[23] They hold that radical innovation based on scientific forecasting should take precedence over the generalised experience of past wars. Furthermore, this body of opinion suggested a need to devise new concepts and methods of resorting to nuclear weapons.[24] However, modernists were ill-suited to propose new concepts which could be a substitute for the old ones, because theirs was a minority outlook that was more sympathetic toward Khrushchev than the majority point of view shared by traditionalists.[25] In addition, modernists were less senior in rank.[26] Despite their critical attitude, the modernists could not develop an alternate military theory while building a strategic nuclear war design. The modernists' thinking showed similarities with G.A. Leer's war design (in the 1870s), which aimed to exert an extreme amount of force at the beginning of war. Therefore, the IPW and combat readiness were the essential concepts of modernists' nuclear war strategy. Their strategic war design was also subject to criticism from the Soviet High Command in the late 1960s. The traditionalists argued that no single weapon (i.e. nuclear weapons) or mode of warfare alone could decide the outcome of a war.[27] Afterwards, the modernists gradually lost their influence.

On the other hand, the traditionalists, led by Marshall Andrey A. Grechko, strove to preserve time-tested concepts of Soviet military thought in the early 1970s. Nevertheless, this body of opinion did not entirely deny the powerful impact of nuclear weapons.[28] According to this group, a historical approach to devising a theory of war

[21] This categorisation (modernist/traditionalist) belongs to the author.
[22] David M. Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art: In Pursuit of Deep Battle* (Oxon: Frank Cass, 1991), 179.
[23] Herbert S. Dinerstein, Leon Goure and Thomas Wolfe, "U.S. Editor's Analytical Introduction" In *Soviet Military Strategy* (Santa Monica: Rand Cooperation, 1963), 21.
[24] P. Sidorov, "To Tirelessly Strengthen the Country's Defense Stability", *Communist of the Armed Forces*: 12 (June 1961): 63-65.
[25] Dinerstein, Goure and Wolfe, p.22.
[26] Ibid. pp. 22-23
[27] Freedman and Michaels, p. 188.
[28] Dinerstein, Goure and Wolfe, pp. 21-23.

was more favorable.[29] In this regard, fundamental military concepts should be harmonized with the careful study of past wars. After the 1970s, the traditionalists used the military theory and concepts of the 1920s and 1930s while designing non-nuclear war strategies. Taken as a whole, their historical outlook on building strategic thought ensured the continuity of fundamental military concepts.

The discussion between the *modernists* and *traditionalists* influenced the evolution of Soviet military strategy throughout this period. Despite an initial tendency to discard old military doctrine, the concepts that originated before the Second World War shaped the ideas of the Soviet High Command after 1945. Soviets continued to utilise age-old military concepts while designing new strategies responsive to the changes in military technology. First and foremost, Soviet thinkers put an existing concept, *forecasting*, in practice to foresee the character of a future war. Contrary to a historical-driven outlook, radical innovation laid the foundations for new attempts at forecasting.[30] When the Soviet Union abandoned the objective of an ultimate victory in a nuclear war after the mid-1970s, battle-proven concepts of winning a conventional war were resurrected. Secondly, Soviet strategists continued to discuss new strategies of a future war by strictly adhering to Lenin's dichotomy of war *of annihilation* versus *war of attrition*. The modernists advocated for a war of annihilation by relying on nuclear weapons. For them, attaining the technological capacity of winning a short nuclear war could only deter the U.S. from starting a war.[31] On the other hand, the traditionalists championed the idea that the Soviet military should prepare for a long war of attrition rather than relying on strategic reserves. The selection of any of these strategies allowed concepts to emerge and function because fundamental military concepts gained varying semantic contents under each strategic option (annihilation/attrition).

There seems to be some evidence to indicate that the *traditional school of thought* won the intellectual debate even though the modernist currents prevailed over strategic thinking in the mid-1950s and 1960s. The traditionalists continued to prioritize past experience, inspired by the teachings of Lenin about technological development. Even during this period, G.A. Leer's design of *winning a short war of annihilation at the beginning of war* was put into practice in examining the theory of a quick and decisive nuclear war. As a result, the traditional schemes of waging different wars

[29] *Ibid.*
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] Ibid, p. 23.

(annihilation/attrition) dominated military thought and helped fundamental military concepts to survive.

Soviet military planning after 1945 was based on a strict commitment to taking the offensive from the very initial moments of a war.[32] This offensive character of military strategy prevailed until the early 1980s.[33] An active-offensive strategy resulted from Mikhail Frunze's formulation of military doctrine after the early 1920s.[34] Furthermore, the offensive military strategy was associated with the "offensive foreign policy of Soviet Union."[35] Since then, the works of G.S. Isserson and M. Tukhachevsky contained presuppositions that emphasized the advantages of the offence under the *theory of deep battle*. According to these thinkers, mobility, mechanisation, and firepower increased the offensive capabilities of weapon systems.[36] After the Second World War, Soviet military theory prioritised offence over defence. According to V.D. Sokolovsky, "strategic defence followed by a counteroffensive cannot assure the decisive goals of war."[37] During the nuclear euphoria, anti-missile defence systems were regarded as more technologically and economically demanding options than offensive systems. The US-Soviet treaty on Anti-Ballistic Missiles in 1972 also imposed severe restrictions on the defensive-nuclear strategy. [38] When the U.S. increased the number of warheads in strategic offensive forces in the 1970s, the offence remained a viable option. In the 1970s and 1980s, the theory of *deep battle* and its underlying offensive character were revived. In the early 1980s, the Soviets acknowledged that there would be no winner in a nuclear war.[39] Afterwards, the Soviets adopted a defensive doctrine under the no-first-use policy.[40] Generally, the offensive character of Soviet military thought influenced the evolution of military concepts.

### 5.3. The concept of forecasting and the character of a future war

The introduction of new weapon systems encouraged Soviet military thinkers to base their forecasts on radical innovation. It was thought that there was a greater need for

[32] William E. Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2000), 13.
[33] Andrei. A. Kokoshin, *Soviet Strategic Thought 1917-91* (London: MIT Press, 1995), 146.
[34] Walter Darnell Jacobs, *Frunze: The Soviet Clausewitz 1885-1925* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), 44, 112 and 120.
[35] Kokoshin, p. 146.
[36] Georgii Samoilovich Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art* (Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013), 39-49.
[37] Kokoshin, p. 172.
[38] *Ibid.*
[39] Ibid. 180.
[40] *Ibid.*

scientific forecasting to remove uncertainties of waging a future war.[41] In 1973, General of the Army, V.G. Kulikov pointed out that:

> "Under present-day conditions, the danger of miscalculations and errors in decisions have increased. There is now a need for more profound foresight, more scientific forecasting of the possible course of combat operations, and more accurate calculations of the anticipated results."[42]

Therefore, Soviet thinkers put great effort into reducing the duration of decision making by eliminating uncertainties about the character of strategic nuclear war.

Indeed, Lenin had laid the theoretical foundation of the concept of forecasting in the 1920s. Even though this concept influenced Soviet strategic thinking after the 1920s, systematic conceptualisation took place in the 1970s, because the Soviet military constructed a systematic approach to military thinking only after the mid-1950s.[43] Nevertheless, leading interwar thinkers such as M. Frunze, A. Svechin, G. Isserson, and M. Tukhachevsky had made individual attempts at forecasting to foresee the changing character of war. In 1975, Yu. V. Chuyev, and Yu. B. Mikhaylov systematically analyzed the concept of forecasting in their primary work *Forecasting in Military Affairs: A Soviet View* in 1975. In this book, the authors argued that:

> "The basic task of scientific forecasting is to recognise the trend, the logic of the evolution of the process being forecast, thus, in the end, making it possible to minimise the influence of uncertainty of a future situation on the results of decisions adopted."[44]

Therefore, the primary purpose of scientific forecasting was to provide the Soviet General Staff with accurate and timely information about what might happen in the future and under what conditions.[45] According to an official resource, the *Voroshilov Lectures of the Soviet General Staff Academy*, forecasting was geared towards foreseeing "possible changes in political-military and military situations and determine

[41] Yu. V. Chuyev, and Yu. B. Mikhaylov, *Forecasting in Military Affairs: A Soviet View*, (Moscow: Ministry of Defence 1975) published by (Washington: The US Government Printing Office), 1. Translated by the DGIS Multilingual Section Translation Bureau, Ottawa.
[42] V.G. Kulikov, 1973, quoted in Chuyev and Mikhaylov, p.1
[43] Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 47.
[44] Chuyev and Mikhaylov, p. 2.
[45] Ibid. pp. 2-3.

accordingly the most appropriate course of action for the Armed Forces."[46] In this regard, forecasting the character of future wars was the ultimate objective of Soviet military science during the Cold War.[47]

Forecasting was conducive to anticipating emerging discontinuities in military affairs under the influence of technological development. In this regard, the basis of forecasting was the appreciation of war's objective laws and the dialectical-materialist examination of events occurring in a given concrete historical context.[48] Therefore, the specific laws of dialectic materialism formed the theoretical basis of forecasting.[49] According to dialectic materialism, events in military affairs did not move forward in "direct causal sequence, but by means of a prolonged struggle between the conflicting trends, which finally collided at a critical stage."[50] When thesis and anti-thesis undid each other in the collision course, history leapt to a new level where this dialectic process played itself out.[51] A leap demonstrated the discontinuity of an old military regime and the beginning of a new one. Therefore, the Soviet General Staff aimed to foresee these qualitative leaps by use of military-strategic forecasting.[52] In this regard, the essential tasks of forecasting are:

> "envisioning the direction of military-technological progress and the appearance of qualitatively new types of armaments; determining their impact on the emerging nature of future war; seeking methods to adjust the concept of operations, the structure of the armed forces, and weapons development to the new military regime."[53]

Lenin had designated "the existence of laws in the nature and evolution of society as the objective basis for scientific forecasting".[54] In this regard, societal laws inspired Soviet military thinkers to anticipate discontinuities in the character of war. According to Chuyev and Mikhaylov, these laws laid the basis for military forecasting. In this context, the first law of the dialectic, "the law of unity and struggle of opposites", helped

[46] Ghulam Dastagır Wardak, *The Voroshilov Lectures: Materials from the Soviet General Staff Academy*, *Volume-2* (Washington: The National Defense University Press, 1989), 29.
[47] Adamsky, p. 47.
[48] *The Dictionary of Military Terms (Voennyi entsiklopedicheskii slovar )* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1983), 585.
[49] Jacob Kipp, "The other side of the hill: Soviet military foresight and forecasting", in *Soviet nuclear strategy and new military thinking*, ed. D.Leebaert and T. Dickinson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 251.
[50] Adamsky, p. 47.
[51] *Ibid*.
[52] *Ibid.*
[53] *The Dictionary of Military Terms*, p. 587.
[54] Odom, p. 5 and Chuyev and Mikhaylov, p. 23.

the Soviet military decide between dichotomies such as *the war of annihilation* and *attrition*, or *defence* and *offence*, or *nuclear* and *conventional* war.[55] The second law of the dialectic was "quantitative and qualitative change."[56] This law sought to discover how a series of quantitative changes led to a sudden and qualitative leap or breakthrough (revolution) in military affairs.[57] This law helped Soviet analysts to forecast discontinuities at which "sufficient quantity will bring about qualitative shift."[58] The third law of dialectic was the "negation of the negation". This law revealed that one trend (thesis) could be negated by a counter-trend (anti-thesis) and, in turn lead to a new trend (synthesis). Soviet analysts employed this law to forecast effective counter-strategies to undo the enemy strategy and weapon systems.[59]

Taken as a whole, the concept of forecasting foresaw trends, shifts, and breakthroughs in the character of a future war. Next to that, forecasting aimed to forewarn the Soviet military on the changing character of war. Therefore, this concept was central to the development of new war strategies. In light of this, three subsequent forecasts emerged in the Soviet High Command between 1945 and 1990: *a major and protracted conventional war* between 1945 and the mid-1950s, a *decisive and spontaneous full-scale nuclear war* between the mid-1950s and 1960s and a *protracted conventional war under the constant threat of the use of nuclear weapons* between the 1970s and 1980s.

These forecasts laid the groundwork for the development of various Soviet strategies and defence and arms production plans during the Cold War. Military-strategic forecasting also set the stage for political decisions, since General Staff Officers were tasked with advising Soviet political leadership based on their forecasts. [60] According to Chuyev and Mikhaylov, "a qualitative forecast about the nature of a possible armed conflict can also be made based on a forecast of the political situation."[61] Therefore, military-strategic forecasting analysis helped create the conditions necessary to ensure the functioning of political bodies.

[55] Chuyev and Mikhaylov, p. 68 and Kipp, p. 251.
[56] Chuyev and Mikhaylov, p. 129 and Kipp, p. 252.
[57] Chuyev and Mikhaylov, p. 70 and Kipp, p. 252.
[58] *Ibid*.
[59] Kipp, p. 253.
[60] Ibid. p. 249.
[61] Chuyev and Mikhaylov, p. 9.

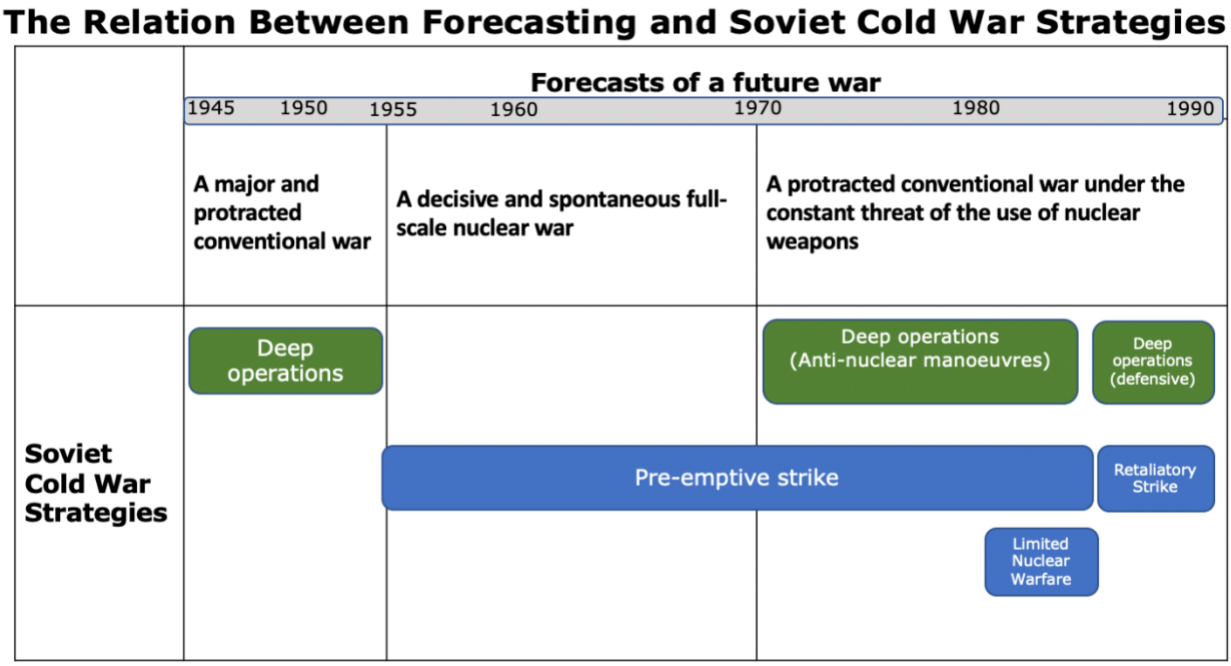


Figure-2 The Relation between forecasting and Soviet Cold War strategies between 1945 and 1990.

Figure two shows an overview of the relations between Soviet forecasts of a future war and Soviet Cold War strategies. Closer inspection of the figure indicates that the forecasts of a major and protracted conventional war between 1945 and 1953 promoted the idea of putting the strategy of deep operations into practice. Deep operations were intended to strike consecutive blows against layered enemy defences by imitating the 1944-1945 offensive scheme. During *nuclear euphoria* (from 1953 to the late 1960s), the Soviet High Command adopted the pre-emptive strike strategy to thwart a possible U.S. surprise nuclear attack.[62] When the forecasts of a future war shifted from *nuclear war* to a *protracted conventional war in a nuclear-scared posture* between the 1970s and 1990, the Soviet High Command began formulating different strategies. As a result, preventing the enemy from waging a nuclear attack by carrying out deep (anti-nuclear) operational manoeuvres gradually became a new Soviet strategy until the mid-1980s. In return, the U.S. designed precision-guided munitions (Pershing) as an effective means of neutralizing Soviet deep strike attacks before they engaged with US/NATO forces. Against this backdrop, the Soviets leant towards the strategy of limited nuclear warfare between 1980 and 1985. This strategy saw nuclear war as a viable option, provided that nuclear strikes were directed against military targets outside of the Soviet (and the U.S.) territory.[63] After 1985, the Soviet Union adopted a "non-offensive

[62] Kokoshin, p. 123.
[63] Andrian A. Danilevich, quoted in Hines, p. 55.

defensive" posture and embraced the strategy of retaliatory strike.[64] This strategy authorized a nuclear strike only when the Soviet territory was attacked. Likewise, the objective of Soviet deep operations was limited to retaking lost Soviet territory instead of occupying NATO countries.[65] While the concept of forecasting was instrumental in the occurrence of these shifts, other concepts (the IPW, combat readiness, and COFM) functioned as the key components of the implementation. Therefore, the findings of this chapter offer additional insights into the Western literature by establishing the links between fundamental military concepts and Soviet Cold War strategies. [66]

### 5.3.1. A major and protracted conventional war between 1945 and the mid-1950s

The idea of a future war performed by mass, mechanized forces held sway over the minds of Soviet thinkers between 1945 and the mid-1950s. Stalin publicly denied the significance of nuclear weapons and their impact on the character of a war.[67] The advent of nuclear weapons initiated by the U.S. challenged Stalin's incontestable premise that socialist countries could attain military superiority simply by being socialist. Instead, the Soviet military relied too much on Stalin's war-winning (at least in the last part of the Second World War) *permanently operating factors*. The acknowledgement of the importance of nuclear weapons would mean that Stalin's dogma was ineffective and futile.[68] For instance, Stalin underestimated the role of surprise in war and turned a deaf ear to Major General Talenskii's insistence on the prominence of this phenomenon in the case of a nuclear war.[69] Therefore, the Soviet military waited in vain until the death of Stalin in 1953 to formulate a nuclear strategy. Accordingly, new Soviet forecasts rested on evaluating past experience instead of technological development. Therefore, the emphasis on past experience promoted the continuity of fundamental military concepts. Stalin's indifference towards nuclear war strategies helped the military theory of the 1930s and 1940s (thesis) to survive.[70] As a result, Soviet military

[64] Freedman and Michaels, p.536.
[65] Ibid. p. 538.
[66] Colin S. Gray, "Soviet nuclear strategy and new military thinking" in *Soviet Military Thinking and New Nuclear Strategy*, ed. D. Leebaert and T. Dickinson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 29-57 and Freedman and Michaels, pp.526-543 and Steven J. Zaloga, "Soviet/Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces", 1945-2000, in *The Military History of the Soviet Union*, ed. Robin Higham and Frederick W. Kagan (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).
[67] Glantz, p. 160.
[68] Freedman and Michaels, p. 179.
[69] Dinerstein, pp.243-245.
[70] Dinerstein, pp. 241-252.

theory made no progress and waited until Stalin's death to come up against an anti-thesis: waging a nuclear war.

In light of *the law of unity and struggle of opposites*, the Soviets discussed whether a future war would be protracted or short-lived. As a result, the Soviet High Command concluded that a future world war would be a protracted coalition war - similar to the Second World War - with each side fielding million-man armies and mobilizing economic capabilities.[71] The anticipation of a major and protracted conventional war encouraged the Soviet military to use time-tested concepts of military thought. For instance, the concepts and principles of 1944-45 Soviet *deep operations* promised to win a victory. Therefore, Soviet Armed Forces prepared for "a series of strategic offensive operations" in one or two strategic directions in the Western front.[72]

### 5.3.2. A decisive and spontaneous full-scale nuclear war between the mid-1950s and 1960s

After the death of Stalin, radical innovation influenced Soviet forecasting analyses. Soviet thinkers suggested that nuclear weapons and modern delivery systems negated (negation of the negation) the time-tested concepts of past wars. For instance, Major General S. Kozlov argued that;

> "As a result, it has been able to give a coherent, scientifically-based concept of the character of modern war, which is, as opposed to what happened in the past, based not so much on the experience of past wars, as on scientific foresight and a forecast of a possible future".[73]

In the meantime, the advent of nuclear missiles stimulated a leap in Soviet military thought. The Soviets acknowledged that nuclear strikes had the power to reduce the impact of years' long attrition to a few days. Indeed, the devastating effect of nuclear strikes during the initial period of war fit into the definition of *the strategy of annihilation* in Soviet traditional thinking. Since the 1870s, this strategy required the Soviet military to strike lightning and decisive blows and attain war objectives at the beginning of a

[71] Ibid. p. 167.
[72] Ibid. p. 168.
[73] S. Kozlov, quoted in Kipp, p. 254.

war.[74] Consequently, the strategy of a short war of annihilation took precedence over the strategy of attrition in Soviet thinking. The forecasts of a decisive and full-scale strategic nuclear war outweighed a protracted conventional war.[75] Nikita Khrushchev's assertations on the decisiveness of nuclear weapons enabled this shift.[76]

In his major book, *Military Strategy*, Marshall V.D. Sokolovsky also forecasts the character of a future nuclear war. According to Sokolovsky, "the enormous destructive powers of new weapons, the unlimited spatial scope of war and the inevitable involvement of the majority of the earth's population in the sphere of destruction" constituted the character of a future nuclear war.[77] This forecast emphasized the significance of attaining a victory in the shortest possible time by employing strategic nuclear weapons.[78] According to Sokolovsky, "mass nuclear-rocket strikes will be of decisive importance for the attainment of goals in a future world war."[79] Consequently, the Soviet military gradually increased its reliance on strategic nuclear weapons at the expense of its ground and air forces between the mid-1950s and late 1960s. During this period, the pre-eminence of a missile and nuclear war increased the importance of strategy and lessened the significance of Soviet operational art. [80]

### 5.3.3. A protracted conventional war under the constant threat of the use of nuclear weapons between the 1970s and 1980s.

The resignation of Khrushchev and the shift in U.S. military doctrine from *massive retaliation* to *flexible response* in the second half of the 1960s profoundly influenced Soviet military thought. In 1968, the Marshall of the Soviet Union, I. Yakubovsky, underlined that NATO was adopting "practical measures to increase the fighting capabilities of its forces to wage a protracted war in Europe without using nuclear weapons".[81] In the early 1970s, the Soviet political and military elite acknowledged the devastating consequences of a full-scale nuclear war.[82] The growth of the nuclear arsenal on both sides brought about a situation where full-scale nuclear exchange could

[74] Genrikh Antonovich Leer, *The Method of Military Science: Strategy, Tactic and Military History* (St. Petersburg, 1894), 53-54.
[75] Glantz. p. 177.
[76] Hines, p. 55.
[77] V.D. Sokolovsky, *Soviet Military Strategy* (Santa Monica: The Rand Cooperation, 1963), 515.
[78] Ibid. p. 431.
[79] Ibid. p. 209.
[80] Glantz, p. 179.
[81] I. Yakubovsky, "50 years of the USSR armed forces*", Military Thought* 2 (1968): 29.
[82] Hines, p. 55.

wipe out almost the entire Soviet Armed Forces.[83] Only then did the Soviet High Command question the usefulness of nuclear weapons. Consequently, the forecasts of a future war saw a gradual transformation from a *major nuclear war* to *a protracted conventional war under the constant threat of the use of nuclear weapons*. This shift raised the profile of conventional forces in future warfare, without reducing the importance of strategic nuclear forces.

The acknowledgement of the destructiveness of nuclear weapons and the achievement of nuclear parity offered the *traditionalists* more ground for influencing Soviet strategy. The nuclear parity increased the Soviet military's deterrence posture and allowed it to use these weapons in a combined arms formation.[84] For instance, one of the leading proponents of this body of opinion, the Soviet Minister of Defence General A.A. Grechko, did not consider nuclear weapons absolute.[85] In the meantime, the Soviets learned that armed protection reduced the major impacts of nuclear weapons.[86] Accordingly, the Soviet High Command's view of nuclear employment shifted towards the first use of tactical nuclear weapons during the initial period of a war.[87] Then, tactical nuclear forces could create large caps in enemy defences. Afterwards, mechanized forces could move rapidly through these breaches and deliver blows to the enemy's rear.[88] By using the scheme of *deep operations of the 1940s,* the Soviets aimed to achieve dispersal and mass at once.[89] Therefore, Soviet planning for deep operations underwent another round of change in the 1970s in response to the soberness of the U.S.on waging a strategic nuclear war.

Therefore, the conditions of the 1970s encouraged Grechko and his disciples to revitalize time-tested concepts and principles of Soviet military thought. As a result, new thinking emerged in the Soviet military on the importance of all armed forces systems (including conventional) to achieve a victory.[90] Accordingly, the forecasts of a future war shifted the Soviet's focus from a short nuclear war to a protracted

[83] *Ibid.*
[84] Odom, p. 67.
[85] Kokoshin, p. 128.
[86] Odom, p. 72.
[87] Ibid, p. 70.
[88] Ibid, p. 73.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Hines, p.55.

conventional war.[91] In the second half of the 1970s, keeping war conventional from beginning to end was considered a real possibility.[92]

According to the traditionalists, the concepts of the 1930s and 1940s would offer viable solutions to the strategic problems of the 1970s. For instance, the Chief of General Staff, M.V. Zakharov, indicated that the theory of deep operations could be an effective method of waging a future conventional war in 1975.[93] Consequently, Soviet thinkers put effort into revisiting the theory of *deep operations* (designed in the 1930s) to "pre-empt, preclude or inhibit enemy resort to nuclear warfare."[94] In return, the U.S. and NATO developed counter-strategies (Air and Land Battle and Follow-on Forces Attack doctrines, respectively) to undo Soviet's deep operations using new smart conventional weapons in the mid-1970s.[95] These doctrines aimed to neutralize Soviet deep strike forces before they engaged with US/NATO forces predominantly using newly-designed precision-guided munitions.[96] It rested on the belief that Soviet follow-on echelons had to be stopped before they reinforced the front.[97] In this regard, the U.S. armed its troops in Europe with precision-guided munitions and modern armoured platforms (M-1 tanks and Bradley Infantry fighting vehicles) in the mid-1970s.[98]

Between the mid-1970s and 1980s. Soviets saw modern conventional weapon systems (i.e. precision-guided munitions) as more threatening than nuclear weapons.[99] In the 1980s, Deputy Soviet Defence Minister V.M. Shabanov revealed that "the qualitative leap in the development of conventional weapons entailed changes in preparations for and the conduct of military operations".[100] After M. Gorbachev came into power in 1985, nuclear stability (instead of superiority) gained utmost importance. In the second half of the 1980s, the Soviet military adopted a defensive doctrine and focused on deterrence, war prevention, and limited nuclear warfare if a war had to be fought.[101] In the 1980s, the Soviet General Staff discussed the possibility of waging a limited nuclear war. However, it was understood that containing a nuclear war would be barely

[91] *Ibid.*
[92] Hines, p. 57.
[93] M.V. Zakharov, 1975, quoted in Glantz, p. 210.
[94] Glantz, p. 208.
[95] Adamsky, p. 25.
[96] *Ibid.*
[97] Odom, p. 75.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Kipp, p. 254.
[100] V.M. Shabanov, quoted in Kokoshin, p. 139.
[101] Hines, p. 57.

possible.[102] In conformity with the second law of forecasting (qualitative and quantitative change), the Soviet military pioneered the idea that the new range of technological innovations in conventional weapons constituted a fundamental rupture in military affairs (from nuclear to conventional).[103]

According to the new forecast, the essential characteristics of a future war between the 1970s and 1980s involved the presence of strategic and tactical nuclear balance on both sides, "the unprecedented emergence of qualitatively new technologies" in conventional weapons and the possibility of conducting "anti-nuclear maneuvers" (deep operations).[104] In this period, the use of conventional weapons retained its importance.[105] In relationship to Soviet forecasting, a shift to a conventional war option should be comprehended as a true "negation of the negation."[106] In Soviet thinking, the U.S. superiority in modern conventional weapons in the mid-1970s should be negated by more destructive conventional weapon systems. On the other hand, the Soviet High Command continued to keep nuclear forces at increased levels of combat readiness.[107] Consequently, the forecasts of a future war gradually shifted from a decisive and instantaneous, full-scale nuclear war to a protracted conventional war in a nuclear-scared posture in the 1970s and 1980s.[108]

## 5.4. The examination of fundamental Soviet military concepts in light of forecasting

### 5.4.1. Fundamental military concepts in a major and protracted conventional war between 1945 and 1953

Until he died in 1953, Stalin presented himself as the mastermind of wartime military victories and the principal military theoretician of the Soviet Army.[109] As a consequence, Stalin's POFs monopolized Soviet military thinking during that period.[110] Since these factors relied too much on the supremacy of the socialist ideology, the Soviet Military paid scant attention to changing semantic and functional use of fundamental military

[102] Kokoshin, pp. 132-134 and Hines, p. 57.
[103] Adamsky, p. 24.
[104] F.Sverdlov and V. Savkin, 1972, quoted in Glantz, p. 208 and Adamsky, p. 27.
[105] V.G. Kulikov, 1979 in Glantz, p. 208.
[106] Kipp, p. 254.
[107] Kokoshin, pp. 139-140
[108] Glantz, p. 215.
[109] Ibid. p. 160.
[110] Raymond L. Garthoff, *How Russia makes war: Soviet Military Doctrine* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1954)

concepts in a nuclear war. For instance, POFs inhibited the Soviet High Command from scrutinizing the impacts of technological change on the initial period of a nuclear war.[111] In addition, Stalin's insistence on the validity of these factors prevented Soviet thinkers from acknowledging the hazards of surprise and the importance of combat readiness.[112]

At the start of the nuclear realm, this period saw a Soviet atomic device production in 1949 and a thermonuclear bomb in 1953.[113] Nevertheless, it was hardly possible to trace the reflections of these innovations on military thought before the death of Stalin in 1953. Instead, military experience gained during the 1944-1945 offensive operations overshadowed Soviet military doctrine. Likewise, Stalin's post-war modernization program aimed to ensure the total mechanization of the Soviet Armed Forces.[114] Taken together, the Soviet military relied on waging a major-protracted conventional war against the enemy.

Between 1945 and 1953, Soviet military planning was predicated on carrying out a series of deep offensive operations. These operations gained a strategic and decisive character in Soviet war planning.[115] Strategic offensive operations sought to "capture vitally important territory and finally smash the enemy resistance and ensure victory." [116] In this context, the Soviet military intended to unleash deep offensive operations from two directions, each having a 400-1200 km width. For this purpose, the Red Army was restructured as follows: the first echelon, the second echelon, and the reserve.[117] The first echelon would advance up to 50 km into the enemy territory to defeat the enemy's forward units or control a territory behind the enemy's tactical depth. Following this, second echelon forces would conduct exploitation operations to destroy the enemy's operational groupings and strategic reserves to a depth of 200 km.[118] Strategic reserves were put into action with some of the second echelon’s forces whose frontal penetration offered more exploitation opportunities.[119]

#### 5.4.1.1. The Initial Period of War

[111] Glantz, p. 161.
[112] Dinerstein, pp. 245-246.
[113] Glantz. p. 162.
[114] *Ibid.*
[115] Ibid. p. 167.
[116] M. Chcrednichenko, 1976, quoted in Glantz, pp. 167-168.
[117] Glantz, p. 168.
[118] M. Chcrednichenko, 1976, quoted in Glantz, pp. 168-170.
[119] *Ibid.*

The initial period of strategic offensive operations showed similarities with how G.S. Isserson and M.N. Tukhachevsky had designed them in the 1930s. The IPW continued to determine the further development and character of a future war.[120] In this regard, the first echelon of the Red Army was tasked with performing initial operations, which would allow the Red Army to penetrate enemy defences. Initial operations sought to pave the way for further decisive breakthrough and envelopment operations.[121] Subsequently, the second echelon of the Soviet Army would carry out decisive operations and annihilate enemy operational and strategic reserves in-depth by exploiting the gains of initial operations.[122] In this regard, the IPW functioned as the 'shaping period' of the Soviet theory of deep operations. Therefore, the functionality of the IPW until the mid-1950s resembled the employment of these concepts in the 1930s.

#### 5.4.1.2. Combat readiness

Soviet strategic offensive operations necessitated the sequential employment of mechanised and tank formations in strict conformity with the 1944-45 operational scheme.[123] This scheme involved "a series of army operations executed either simultaneously or successively".[124] In this regard, the steady strengthening of forward momentum would be the precondition for unleashing deep strategic operations. The Red Army could only achieve this objective by ensuring the *perpetual combat readiness* of deep echelons. Therefore, the Soviet military designed its combat readiness system in conformity with the ideas of Isserson and Tukhachevsky. Both thinkers had advocated for peacetime combat readiness to win initial battles and sequential mobilisation to carry out follow-up breakthrough operations in the 1930s.[125]

### 5.4.2. Fundamental military concepts in a decisive and spontaneous full-scale nuclear war between the mid-1950s and 1960s

In this period, Soviet strategy saw a marked shift from a protracted conventional war to a full-scale strategic nuclear war following the Soviet General Staff's new forecast. The new design primarily rested on the decisiveness of strategic nuclear weapons. In

[120] Georgii Samoilovich Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art* (Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 1936), 66.
[121] Glantz, pp. 169-171.
[122] *Ibid.*
[123] Ibid. p. 173.
[124] Z. Slobbin, 1945, quoted in Glantz, p. 169.
[125] Sally W. Stoecker, *Forging Stalin's Army Marshall Tukhachevsky and the Politics of Military Innovation* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 40 and Isserson, p. 59.

this context, the new Soviet military strategy sought to annihilate the opponent's armed forces, destruct targets in-depth, and disorganise the enemy's political and economic capacity, predominantly through the use of strategic nuclear weapons.[126] Concordantly, Soviet thinkers revised the functionality of the initial period of war and combat readiness in nuclear warfare. Next to that, Soviet thinkers carried out systematic studies on the *correlation of forms and methods in the 1970s,* even though the concept's origins dated back to the 1930s. Before the Second World War, the concept was used to estimate the war's outcome by comparing the quantitative and qualitative distinctions of opposing forces. [127] In the 1970s, the Soviets offered a similar methodological approach to defining this concept. According to the Soviet dictionary of military terms, correlation of forms and methods (COFM) is "the aggregate of indices permitting evaluation of the relatively friendly and hostile troops, by comparative analysis of the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of troop organisation, performance, data on armament and combat material."[128] This concept was predominantly used to determine the war's outcome by focusing on the superiority of one force over the other.

#### 5.4.2.1 The initial period of war

In the late 1950s, the Soviet military concentrated on examining the initial period of a nuclear war.[129] During the nuclear euphoria, the initial operations did not rely on the early deployment of tactical and operational forces. These operations were not limited anymore by the ranges of conventional weapon systems.[130] Instead, the first massed nuclear strikes during the IPW could predetermine a nuclear war's subsequent development and outcome.[131] For instance, Marshall Sokolovsky suggested that the Red Army should "achieve the most decisive results in the shortest time…literally during the very first hours and minutes." [132] Accordingly, the Soviet High Command re-periodized its war design as follows: *the initial period* and *subsequent period of war*.[133] In the new design, a massive nuclear exchange would take place during the IPW. The strategic forces and political-economic centres of the enemy would be the main targets of nuclear

[126] Sokolovsky, p. 305.
[127] Isserson, pp.49-53
[128] Oleksij Ivanovyc Radzievskyj, *Dictionary of Basic Military Terms: A Soviet View* (Moscow: The Ministry of Defence of the Soviet Union, 1965) Published by (Washington: The US Government Printing Office, 1965), 204. Translated by the DGIS Multilingual Section Translation Bureau Secretary of State Department.
[129] Kokoshin, p. 122.
[130] Sokolovsky, pp. 94-95.
[131] Kokoshin, p. 123.
[132] Sokolovsky, p. 308.
[133] Hines, p. 41.

strikes.[134] In the subsequent period of war, the Soviet military would carry out follow-on conventional operations to exploit the gains of nuclear strikes.[135] According to Sokolovsky:

> "The initial period of the modern missile war will obviously be the main and decisive period and will predetermine the development and outcome of the entire war…Since modern weapons permit exceptionally important strategic results to be achieved in the briefest time, both the initial period of the war and the methods of breaking up the opponent's aggressive plans by dealing him in good time a crushing blow will be of decisive significance for the outcome of the entire war." [136]

The Soviet's perception of the enemy strategy increased the relative value of the IPW in the late 1950s and early 1960s.[137] Soviet thinkers assumed that the U.S. was preparing for a surprise nuclear attack against the Soviet Union by taking advantage of its superiority in the long-range strategic bombers.[138] The Soviet Union, on the other hand, prioritized intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) over long-range bombers.[139] The Soviet concerns about a U.S. surprise attack had arisen when U.S. Air Force generals emphasized 'U.S. first strike capability' in the late 1950s. In 1959, the Commander of the American Strategic Air Command, General Thomas Sarsfield Power, stated that "[w]e must never find ourselves in a situation where we cannot begin a war ourselves. We must have the capability to deliver the first strike."[140] In return, Soviet military and political leadership believed that the U.S. strategy of massive retaliation served to hide the general aggressive character of American strategy.[141] Therefore, the U.S. surprise nuclear possibility attested to the "extraordinary increase in the importance of the initial period of the war".[142]

During the Tsarist period, Genrikh A. Leer had developed the principle of *the extreme exertion of force at the beginning of war* to attain a swift victory over the enemy.[143] Nevertheless, this principle was repeatedly subjected to questioning by Leer's successor, Nicolai P. Mikhnevich, and by the young Turks. Mikhnevich thought that the

[134] *Ibid.*
[135] *Ibid.*
[136] Ibid. pp. 308-314.
[137] Sokolovsky, 515.
[138] Sokolovsky, pp. 152-153.
[139] Freedman and Michaels, p. 172.
[140] Sokolovsky, p.153.
[141] Ibid.p. 152.
[142] Sokolovsky, p. 308.
[143] Leer, pp. 53-54

Imperial Russian Army should show resilience at the beginning of war to create conditions for an effective operational maneuver.[144] During the interwar period (1917-1939), Georgii S. Isserson and Mikhail N. Tukhachevsky envisaged that tactical achievements of the IPW could be translated into strategic victory through a series of deep strikes.[145] In this regard, the IPW had functioned as the *prologue* and determined the subsequent development and character of the Soviet Army major operations. After the mid-1950s, the Soviet High Command presumed that the IPW would be the leading and decisive period of war. In addition, it would determine the course and outcome of the entire operation.[146] For instance, Soviet General N.A. Lomov argued that the IPW became a central concept in Soviet Military Doctrine in 1963.[147]

In the 1960s, Soviet strategy sought to "assure the attainment of victory in the shortest possible time." [148] In this context, three basic options came to the forefront for the initial period of a nuclear war. The options included "pre-emption, launch-on-warning [a retaliatory strike is launched upon warning of a U.S. nuclear attack] and launch-on-attack" [a retaliatory strike is launched upon warning that the U.S. nuclear weapons are on their way].[149] Indeed, these options were the by-product of the strategy of annihilation, which put Leer's principle of *the extreme exertion of force at the beginning of war* at its center. The Soviet High Command evaluated the course of action. Firstly, the Soviet Army did not deploy an adequate network of ballistic missile early warning radars in the 1960s to implement the launch-on-warning strategy. Secondly, most Soviet nuclear forces would be eradicated before launching a retaliatory attack due to the US superiority in nuclear weapons.[150] Thus, the launch-on-attack was not a viable option. Accordingly, the Soviet General Staff leaned toward pre-emption, "a surprise attack on enemy's strategic forces" in the mid-1950s and through much of the 1960s.[151]

Actually, the pre-emption strike strategy aimed to thwart a possible U.S. surprise nuclear attack. For instance, General N.A. Lomov suggested that "frustrating a nuclear surprise attack by the enemy and taking the strategic lead at the very beginning of war" became the most important principle of Soviet military thought.[152] Nevertheless, this

[144] Nicolai Petrovich Mikhnevich, *The Basics of Strategy* (Saint Petersburg, 1913), 33.
[145] Isserson, p. 65-66.
[146] Sokolovsky, p. 308.
[147] Kokoshin, p. 123.
[148] Sokolovsky, p. 431.
[149] Zaloga, p. 208.
[150] *Ibid.*
[151] *Ibid.*
[152] N. Lomov, 1963, quoted in Kokoshin, p. 123.

strategy was not without its severe flaws. Soviet nuclear forces did not have a high likelihood of destroying the U.S. nuclear strategic missiles without prompting a devastating counter strike.[153] For this reason, the pre-emptive strike strategy could have catastrophic results for the Red Army, given the shortcomings in the reliability of Soviet strategic forces (in particular the bomber and submarine forces).[154] Nevertheless, 'pre-emption' remained the Soviet Union's official discourse. In reality, Soviet strategy intended on demonstrating resilience against U.S. surprise nuclear attack. Afterwards, Soviet strategy rested on inflicting a counter-attack during the initial period of war.[155] According to Marshall P. Romistrov;

> "The duty of the Soviet Union is not to allow a surprise attack against our country, and, in case of such an attempt, not only repel the attack but to inflict a counterattack or even a pre-emptive attack of terrible destructive power." [156]

#### 5.4.2.2 Combat readiness

The character of a future nuclear war altered the Soviet High Command's vision of the concept of *combat readiness*. Leer proposed forming a standing and combat-ready army during the Tsarist era to compensate for the Imperial Russian Army's backwardness in mobilization.[157] During the interwar period, G.S.Isserson and M. Tukhachevsky advocated for the peacetime mobilization of deep echelons to attain a strategic victory.[158] However, both endeavours (Leer and Isserson/Tukhachevsky) failed to meet all the mobilization requirements of long and protracted wars. In the two World Wars, the Soviet Army carried out mobilization predominantly during the war, rather than before.[159] In the 1960s, Soviet thinkers believed that combat readiness and preparation of armed forces had changed considerably compared to past wars. During the Cold War, "there is little likelihood of general mobilization starting prior to the opening of military operations" because it could not proceed without the enemy taking notice.[160] Accordingly, the old prerequisites of combat readiness became obsolete in a nuclear

[153] Zaloga, p. 208.
[154] *Ibid.*
[155] Freedman and Michaels, p. 185.
[156] Rotmistrov, 1955, quotted in Kokoshin, p. 123.
[157] Genrikh Antonovich Leer, *Positive Strategy - Part 1* (Saint Petersburg, 1877), 6.
[158] Isserson, p. 59 and Stoecker, p. 40.
[159] Sokolovsky, p. 434.
[160] *Ibid.*

war. The screening, mobilizing, concentrating, and deploying of armed forces in the theater of operations in the threatening period or during the IPW were no longer valid.[161]

Therefore, the Soviet High Command sought to keep armed forces in a state of constant combat readiness in peacetime and wartime.[162] According to Sokolovsky, "[t]he possibility that the enemy will attack by surprise and with massive use of nuclear weapons immeasurably increases the need for the Armed Forces to be in constant combat readiness."[163] Even more importantly, the time required to bring troops to combat readiness during a nuclear war diminished from days to minutes, according to the forecasts of the Soviet High Command.[164] Furthermore, Soviet thinkers scrutinized how to ensure a high degree of combat readiness to repel the enemy's first massive nuclear attacks. Therefore, constant combat readiness was one of the essential concepts of the Soviet strategic culture in the late 1950s and 1960s.

In the early 1960s, it was desirable to achieve the main objectives of the IPW without the need for additional mobilization.[165] However, this objective was not within the economic capability of the Soviet Union.[166] Therefore, the Soviet High Command addressed this difficulty by prioritizing the combat readiness levels of troops. In this regard, the Soviets prioritized those forces whose mission it was to repel a nuclear attack.[167] The Red Army kept these troops in a state of constant combat readiness. This applied, first and foremost, to the missile forces, air defence forces, border troops, and "some portions of the other branches of the armed forces."[168] Unlike in past wars, combat-ready parts of the ground forces merged with the main operational forces.[169] Overall, the Soviet military sought to maintain the capability to seize the strategic initiative during the initial period of war.

In the 1960s, the Red Army did not entirely overlook the combat readiness of the 'subsequent period of war' forces, because these forces had important roles to play in achieving final war aims. In Soviet thinking, nuclear strikes could destroy enemy strategic weapons, military potentials, and main formations; however, these

[161] Ibid. pp. 93-94.
[162] Ibid. p. 435.
[163] Ibid. pp. 307-308.
[164] *Ibid.*
[165] Ibid. p.433.
[166] *Ibid.*
[167] Ibid. p. 340, 433.
[168] Ibid. p. 308.
[169] Ibid. p. 433.

achievements would not necessarily bring a victory in the absence of subsequent ground operations.[170] Therefore, these units would bring up prescribed strength during the mobilization period through the territorial build-up of troops.[171] According to war planning, the mobilization would partially occur during the threatening period of war and would continue on a full scale during the active phase of military operations.[172] All in all, attaining constant combat readiness to win the initial period of a war and ensuring mobilization readiness to win the subsequent period of war were key to attaining Soviet strategic goals between the late 1950s and early 1960s.

#### 5.4.2.3. Correlation of forms and methods

Soviet forecasts heightened the need to achieve military superiority during a major nuclear war. This requirement promoted the continuity of one of the most critical concepts of Soviet military thought, the correlation of forms and methods (COFM). Before the Second World War, this concept was used to estimate the war's outcome by comparing the quantitative and qualitative distinctions of opposing forces by use of the parity factor. In his major book, *The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics*, V.Y Savkin suggests that

> "The first law of war is that the course and outcome of war waged with unlimited employment of all means of conflict are determined by the correlation of strictly military forces available to combatants at the beginning of the war, especially in nuclear weapons and means for delivery."[173]

This law arose out of the Soviet eagerness to predetermine the outcome of a future war by maintaining superiority in nuclear weapons and the technique of their employment.[174] In particular, the Soviet strategy focused on maintaining nuclear supremacy over the enemy during the IPW.[175]

V.Y. Savkin argues that the correlation of forces "must be characterized not only by quantitative but also by qualitative indicators."[176] Even though both indicators were

[170] *Ibid.*
[171] Ibid. 435.
[172] Ibid. p. 339.
[173] Vasiliy Yefisovich Savkin, *The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics* (Moscow: The Ministry of Defence of the Soviet Union, 1972) Published by (Washington: United States Air Force, 1972), 65 and 89.
[174] Sokolovsky, p. 335.
[175] Glantz, p. 194.
[176] Savkin. p. 90.

instrumental in calculating correlation, Soviet thinkers emphasized that significant shortcomings in the quality of troops could not be made up for by a simple quantitative increase in numbers. Generally speaking, Savkin defined the quality of armed forces as "the capability to accomplish practically missions of defeating the enemy."[177] The combat readiness level of forces predominantly determined the qualitative characteristics of the military.[178] In Soviet thinking, the achievement of surprise multiplies the correlation in Soviet Union's favour.[179] Gen. Andrian A. Danilevich also mentioned that "[b]ecause of qualitative deficiencies, one side could have a tenfold quantitative advantage and still be behind."[180] According to Savkin, "the superiority in nuclear weapons, their quality and technique for their employment are more important than their numbers."[181]

Even though the Soviet High Command concentrated on waging a major nuclear war, it did not entirely overlook the relative correlation of conventional forces. The Soviet strategy sought to "assure the attainment of victory in the shortest possible time." [182] If need be, it also ensured the capability to wage war over a protracted period in the 1960s.[183] In connection with this, the Soviet High Command anticipated that the Third World War would be a missile and nuclear war in which missiles carrying nuclear warheads would be the main instruments of attaining war objectives. In the mid-1960s, the idea that final victory would be reached by a combination of all branches of the armed forces gradually gained recognition.[184] This strategy entailed "a single strategic offensive along the entire front, with the use of pre-emptive nuclear strikes, followed by decisive, uninterrupted land advance."[185] Furthermore, waging a protracted war with all kinds of weapon systems would be the contingency plan of the Soviet strategy.[186] This contingency required the Soviet Army to achieve superiority in the most maneuverable ground forces.[187] Soviet planners acknowledged that ground forces had to surpass the enemy in firepower to attain a victory. Therefore, the Soviet High Command increased the correlation of ground forces by equipping them with operational

[177] *Ibid.*
[178] Ibid. p. 91.
[179] Glantz, p. 224.
[180] Hines, p. 22.
[181] Sokolovsky, p. 335.
[182] Ibid. 431.
[183] *Ibid.*
[184] Sokolovsky, p. 313.
[185] Andrian A. Danilevich, quoted in Hines, p. 55.
[186] Savkin, pp. 90-91.
[187] Ibid. p. 194 and 314.

and tactical nuclear missiles especially after the mid-1960s. By this means, these weapons would "destroy any target, whatever the depth of the operational zone, regardless of weather, visibility, and enemy countermeasures." [188] Furthermore, missile troops would replace artillery and aviation in bombarding the front.

### 5.4.3. Fundamental military concepts in a protracted conventional war under the constant threat of the use of nuclear weapons in the 1970s and 1980s

The shift in U.S. military doctrine from *massive retaliation* to *flexible response* and the increased efficacy of conventional weapon systems contributed to a change in Soviet forecasts of a future war. In the 1950s and 1960s, Soviet leadership, first and foremost N. Khrushchev, publicly denied Soviet scientists' warning about nuclear winter if any side would launch an atomic or hydrogen bomb attack.[189] Nevertheless, the Red Army acknowledged the dangers of a nuclear war in the 1970s after Leonid Brezhnev came into power. As a result of this, a Soviet nuclear exercise in 1972 indicated that a major nuclear war would annihilate the entire Soviet military and radiate the European side of the Soviet Union.[190] Furthermore, the US/NATO ambition to use high precision weapon systems in response to Soviet deep strikes increased the significance of modern conventional weapons. The Soviet High Command still considered nuclear war a possibility; however, mutual nuclear deterrence raised the possibility that war would remain conventional.[191] Accordingly, Soviet military thinkers anticipated that a future war would be an "active and decisive warfare involving all types of armed forces acting in concert in terms of their mission, time, and place".[192] When the Soviets attained strategic nuclear parity, their focus shifted to using theater nuclear capabilities to support conventional operations. Therefore, Soviet forecasting analysis saw a marked change from *a major nuclear war* to a *protracted conventional war under the constant threat of nuclear weapons* between the 1970s and 1980s.[193]

In the late 1960s, the Soviet High Command still considered a short nuclear war as more likely, although a conventional war, from beginning to end, was not ruled out.[194] The forecast of the early 1970s assumed that the existence of nuclear parity might

[188] Ibid. p. 341.
[189] Freedman and Michaels, p. 183.
[190] Hines, p. 55.
[191] Glantz, p. 215.
[192] Grechko, quoted in Kokoshin, p. 129.
[193] Kokoshin, p. 133.
[194] M. Povaly, 1967, quoted in Kokoshin, p.124.

result in a disinclination to resort to nuclear weapons. In 1974, the Soviet Minister of Defence Andrei Grechko stated that "Soviet military science, despite the enormous power of the nuclear weapon, does not consider it absolute."[195] In the second half of the 1970s, there was a growing tendency toward a future conventional war from beginning to end.[196] Despite the emphasis on combined arms (including nuclear and conventional weapons), the Soviet High Command concluded that a future war would most likely be conventional.[197] Therefore, the operational art retained its importance in the form of deep Soviet "anti-nuclear maneuvers" *(protivoiadernyi manevr)*.[198] These maneuvers aimed to prevent the enemy from resorting to nuclear weapons by using lightning and deep conventional strikes.[199] Consequently, the Soviet High Command re-periodized war design as follows: "a period of non-nuclear options [IPW], the period of limited nuclear actions, the period of nuclear options, and a concluding period" between the mid-1970s and 1980s.[200] In the 1980s, the Soviet High Command forecasted that a victory would only be possible through joint efforts by all forces and means, including limited use of nuclear weapons. In the latter half of the 1980s, Soviet thinkers focused on waging war with more destructive forms of conventional warfare.[201]

#### 5.4.3.1. The Initial Period of War

In the 1970s and 1980s, Soviet thinkers revised the content and functional use of the IPW based on the forecasts of a future war. According to the Voroshilov Lectures of the Soviet General Staff Academy, "seizing the strategic initiative under any circumstances at the outbreak of the war is one of the most important principles of military strategy."[202] In the 1960s, Soviet thinkers believed that initial operations, nuclear or otherwise, would predetermine the course and outcome of a war. However, keeping a future war conventional from beginning to end in the 1970s altered the functionality of IPW. In the 1970s, the Soviet General Staff sought to inhibit the enemy from resorting to a nuclear attack by carrying out paralyzing conventional deep penetrations called "anti-nuclear maneuvers", carried out primarily by armored divisions enabled by theatre

[195] A. Grechko, 1974, quoted in Kokoshin, p. 128.
[196] Hines, p. 57.
[197] V. Zemskov, 1974, quoted in Kokoshin, p. 128.
[198] Glantz, p. 208.
[199] *Ibid.*
[200] Hines, p. 41.
[201] Ibid, p. 139.
[202] Ghulam Dastagır Wardak, *The Voroshilov Lectures: Materials from the Soviet General Staff Academy*, *Volume-1,* (Washington: The National Defence University Press, 1989), 81-82.

level nuclear weapons.[203] These maneuvers, "which grew in length from several hours to 7-8 days", formed the initial operations.[204] In Europe, the Soviets sought to implement these maneuvers in two theaters at once, one in the center and one in the south. Subsequently, the Soviet's first echelon aimed to control a territory up to 600-1200 km deep.[205] Anti-nuclear maneuvers would expand from the Soviet border up through the Rhine River.[206] However, follow-on strategic (nuclear) operations remained uncertain.[207] Therefore, the functionality of the IPW shifted from a decisive period of war to a period when the Soviet military sought to grasp the strategic initiative through anti-nuclear manoeuvres.

In this context, Soviet thinkers re-designed the theory of deep operations in accordance with the research done on the concept of IPW. According to Marshall Kulikov,

> "In a nuclear war, if it is unleashed by aggressive countries, simultaneous nuclear strikes on the enemy and skilful exploitation of the results of those strikes are most important. During combat with only conventional weaponry, the skilful concentration of superior forces and weaponry is required to deliver blows on selected directions and also rapid dispersal of those forces after fulfilment of the combat missions."[208]

Unlike the mid-1940s and early 1950s, the principal precondition for victory was the surprise conduct of penetrative strikes by forces concentrated well forward.[209] In contrast to the previous period, the Soviets attached more importance to initial conventional penetrations. Accordingly, the Soviet High Command changed its war design from the *three-echeloned deep operations of the 1930s* (first, second and reserve) to *single echelon front offensive operations.* Hence, the first echelon had to deliver deep paralysing blows to the enemy without requiring a second echelon or reserve.[210] These operations sought "to attain swift victory against unprepared or partially prepared forces occupying (or trying to occupy) relatively shallow defences and lacking significant operational reserves."[211] These operations aimed to gain strategic initiative during the IPW and pre-empt the enemy from using nuclear weapons. If

[203] Glantz, p. 208 and 215.
[204] Hines, p. 56.
[205] Odom, p.77-78.
[206] Hines, p. 56.
[207] Odom, p. 78.
[208] Kulikov, in Glantz, pp. 215-216.
[209] Ibid. p. 209.
[210] U. Molostov, A. Novikov, 1988, quoted in Glantz, p. 209.
[211] Glantz, pp. 229-230.

conventional deterrence failed, the Soviet High Command considered the possibility of carrying out limited nuclear and un-limited nuclear strikes during the subsequent phases of war.[212]

### 5.4.3.2. Combat readiness

Ensuring nuclear parity and attaining conventional supremacy hinged on the combat readiness of the Soviet military. According to the Soviet military doctrine, "war can break out by a surprise attack without a preceding period of threat, can be initiated after a period of threat or can escalate from a military action of limited scope."[213] Out of these contingencies, ”without a preceding period of threat” was the most dangerous form.[214] Due to this possibility, the Soviet High Command concluded in the 1970s and 1980s that "the Armed Forces must be kept in a high state of combat readiness" in peacetime as well as in wartime.[215] Overall, the scope of combat readiness expanded from selected units tasked with repelling an enemy nuclear attack to the entire Soviet Armed Forces.[216] In this new scheme, the combat-ready nuclear forces could deliver timely initial strikes by surprise.[217] In addition, combat-ready ground forces could repel enemy invasions and carry out deep and decisive blows against unprepared enemy defences in continental theaters of strategic military action (TSMA). [218]

In the 1970s, special attention was paid to the concept of combat readiness in Voroshilov Lectures of the Soviet General Staff Academy. Accordingly, the Soviets defined combat readiness as "a state and capability which ensure the desired security of the nation in peacetime and the achievement of specific aims in the case of war."[219] In addition, combat readiness should comply with the "requirements of a future war and the objectives and missions assigned to the Armed Forces."[220] The organization of units, the use of modern weapons, personnel training, and the swift deployment of units were within the scope of this concept.[221] Therefore, Soviet combat readiness could not

[212] Hines, p. 56.
[213] Wardak (Voroshilov-1), p. 70.
[214] *Ibid.*
[215] Ibid, p. 70 and 240.
[216] Ibid, p. 82.
[217] *Ibid.*
[218] *Ibid.*
[219] Ibid. p.177.
[220] Ibid. p. 178.
[221] *Ibid*.

be limited to early warning systems and the constant rehearsals of troops. It should also consist of the capabilities and competencies of units to carry out assigned duties.[222]

During the 1960s, nuclear forces, the first echelon troops, border troops, and air defence troops were kept in a high-readiness posture. [223] The mission of these forces was to repel a nuclear attack and secure significant economic and strategic centers. During the 1970s and "980s, "high combat readiness was required of the entire armed forces, of all subunits, units, ships, and large units, regardless of the areas of their location."[224] Connected to this, the Red Army put a three-level combat readiness system in place: constant (*postoiannaia*), increased (*vysshaia*), and full (*polnaia*) combat readiness.[225] In a state of constant combat readiness, units conducted prescribed military trainings and exercises.[226] Strategic nuclear forces, air defence forces, and the groupings of ground forces always remained in a state of constant combat readiness at full wartime strength. At increased combat readiness, units were alerted, personnel mobilization was completed, and combat preparations started.[227] At full combat readiness, units would be ready to carry out combat missions.[228] Accordingly, all units of the Soviet Army were kept in a state of constant combat readiness during peacetime. Soviet strategic deployment relied predominantly on transitioning from constant to full-time combat readiness in times of war or the threat of war, without the need for major additional mobilization.[229] In case of a protracted war, mobilization would be central to achieving war objectives.[230]

Taken together, the concept of "combat readiness entered the strategic category" in Soviet strategy.[231] Likewise, Soviet Chief of General Staff M.V. Zakharov asserted that improving *combat readiness* was the priority and foremost task of Soviet military science in the 1970s. [232]

### 5.4.3.3. Correlation of forms and methods

[222] *Ibid.*
[223] *Ibid.*
[224] *Ibid.*
[225] Ibid, p. 196.
[226] *Ibid.*
[227] *Ibid.*
[228] *Ibid.*
[229] Ibid. pp. 205-212.
[230] Glantz, p. 221.
[231] Wardak, (Voroshilov-1), p. 179.
[232] Zakharov M.V, "Leninism and Soviet Military Science." In *Selected Soviet Military Writings: A Soviet View 1970-1975* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1977), 86-92

In the 1970s and 1980s, the "relative correlation of combat, economic, and moral-political capabilities" of the Soviet Union influenced the characteristics of war strategy.[233] In the context of that, correlation enquiries helped the Soviet Army determine the amount and quality of troops necessary to win both a short nuclear war and a protracted future war. Savkin argued that a victory in a short-lived nuclear war could be attained by the "unlimited employment of all means of conflict… at the beginning of the war." [234] On the other hand, victory in a protracted war depended "on the correlation of the combatants' military potentials" in the long run.[235]

In the 1960s, Soviet military science was aimed at increasing correlation over the enemy by prioritizing quality over quantity. In the 1970s, Soviet military strategy still saw "the maintenance of military-technological superiority over the enemy as one condition for the successful conduct of a general nuclear war."[236] However, parity in strategic and theater (tactical) nuclear missiles resulted in the possibility of warfare remaining conventional in the 1970s.[237] Therefore, attaining superiority in conventional forces and means over the enemy also became vital.[238] For Soviet thinkers, technological advances altered the characteristics of conventional war. The growing significance of operational maneuver and the appearance of new high precision weapons were the new means of warfare.[239] Therefore, Soviet strategy in the 1970s was aimed at achieving conventional superiority over the adversary during the initial (non-nuclear) period of war.

Given the West's conventional superiority on modern anti-tank systems (precision-guided munitions), the Soviet breakthrough echelon's ratio of correlation of forces decreased in comparison with the 1944/45 Army operations' breakthrough phase.[240] Accordingly, the ratio of Soviet forces to NATO forces during the breakthrough operations went down from 5:1 (Soviet/NATO) to 3:1.[241] Thus, the Soviets aimed to increase the correlation of the breakthrough echelons by carrying out preventive tactical

[233] Wardak, (Voroshilov-1), p. 234.
[234] Savkin, p. 65 and 89.
[235] Ibid. p. 90.
[236] Wardak (Voroshilov-1), p. 83.
[237] Glantz, pp. 243-244.
[238] Wardak (Voroshilov-1), p. 209.
[239] Glantz, p. 254.
[240] Fritz Stoecki, "The correlation of forces and success in overcoming anti-tank defenses", *The Journal of Soviet Military Studies* 1:2 (1998), 249.
[241] Ibid.

nuclear, artillery and air strikes on enemy defences.[242] Therefore, enhanced *combat readiness* could change the *correlation of forces* in favor of the Soviet military.[243] The Soviet military planning rested on the notion that the Soviet military must be ready to strike first before the enemy defences were established. [244] Furthermore, the Soviets believed that combat against modern anti-tank systems demanded keeping nuclear and conventional fire systems and electronic systems at high levels of combat readiness. [245]

In the nuclear realm, strategic stability was the main objective.[246] From the mid-1970s to 1990, attaining nuclear superiority was no longer on the agenda of the Soviet Union.[247] In the 1980s, the Soviet High Command emphasized the necessity of maintaining a general nuclear balance. After Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, Soviet leadership concluded that there could be no victory in a strategic nuclear war.[248] Some military thinkers went so far as to argue that the achievement of military superiority is useless. Instead, the emphasis was placed on the "defence of the Soviet Union."[249] Furthermore, Soviet Minister of Defence S.L. Sokolov stated in 1986 that "it is impossible to win not only nuclear war but also the arms race."[250] In 1988, the Marshall of the Soviet Union, Dmitry Yazov, emphasized that "the Soviet Union does not strive for the superiority, does not claim more security, but it will not agree to less security and will not permit any other power to gain military superiority over it."[251]

The Soviet High Command acknowledged that "further raising the level of parity [in nuclear weapons] would not increase the security of either side."[252] In this context, the nuclear strategy of the Soviet Union shifted from a *pre-emptive strike* to a *retaliatory strike*.[253] Next to that, nuclear weapons re-tasked with the provision of a nuclear umbrella in case of a full-scale conventional war.[254] Therefore, the Soviet military's correlation strategy relied on achieving conventional supremacy during the initial (non-nuclear) period of war. [255] Meanwhile, strategic and tactical nuclear forces remained at

[242] Ibid, p. 252.
[243] Ibid. p. 260.
[244] *Ibid.*
[245] Kerry Lee Hines, "Competing Concepts of Deep Operations", *The Journal of Soviet Military Studies* 1 (1998), 62.
[246] Hines, p. 57.
[247] Kokoshin, p. 133.
[248] Ibid. p. 140.
[249] Ibid. pp. 127-128.
[250] S.L. Sokolov, quoted in Kokoshin, p. 140.
[251] D.T. Yazov, 1988, quoted in Kokoshin, p. 133.
[252] Kolikov, 1985, quoted in Kokoshin, p. 141.
[253] Hines, p. 57 and Gray, p. 34.
[254] Gray, p. 34.
[255] M.A. Gareyev, quoted in Kokoshin, p. 137.

increased levels of combat readiness. After the mid-1980s, the Deputy Minister of Defense, V.M. Shabanov, publicly announced that the Soviet Military intended to attain a qualitative leap in developing conventional weapons through the use of "strike-reconnaissance" systems and complete mechanisation and military robotics. [256]

Stoecki studied the Soviet attack echelons' decreasing ratio of *correlation of forces* given Western conventional superiority on modern anti-tank systems.[257] Thus, Stoecki analyzed how enhanced *combat readiness* could change the *correlation of forces* in favor of the Soviet military.[258]

## 5. 5. A synthesis of fundamental military concepts between 1945 and 1990

| | **Forecasting *(Prognozirovat)*** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **a major and protracted conventional war between 1945 and the mid-1950s** | **a decisive and spontaneous full-scale nuclear war between the mid-1950s and 1960s** | **a protracted conventional war under the constant threat of the use of nuclear weapons during the 1970s and 1980s.** |
| **Initial Period of *War (nacalnıy period voynı)*** | The initial operations determine the further development and character of deep operations | The IPW is the main and decisive period of a future nuclear war. | The IPW operations help the Soviet military gain strategic initiative and prevent enemy from using nuclear weapons. |
| **Combat Readiness (*Boevaya gotovnost)*** | The attainment of peacetime combat readiness to win initial battles and carry out sequential mobilization to win deep operations | • attaining constant combat readiness to win 'the initial period of a war'<br>• ensuring mobilization readiness to win the 'subsequent period of war' | The Soviet Armed Forces as a whole must be kept in a state of constant combat readiness to win the objectives of the IPW without the need for additional mobilization. |
| **Correlation of Forms and Methods *(sootnesheniye sil i sredstv )*** | - The attainment of superiority in mechanized warfare under the theory of deep operations | • The achievement of qualitative superiority in nuclear forces<br>• The achievement of qualitative superiority in conventional weapons by means of operational and tactical nuclear missiles | The achievement of parity in nuclear forces and superiority in conventional forces (especially precision guided munitions) |

Figure 3: The evolution of Soviet fundamental military concepts between 1945-1990

Figure three shows an overview of the evolution of Soviet fundamental military concepts between 1945-1990. Closer inspection of the figure indicates that the concept of forecasting was key to determining Soviet military strategies during the period of investigation. Accordingly, the forecasts helped the Soviet military identify qualitative leaps and discontinuities in a future war's character. The vertical column of the figure

[256] V.M. Shabanov, quoted in Kokoshin. p. 140.
[257] Fritz Stoecki, "The correlation of forces and success in overcoming anti-tank defenses", *The Journal of Soviet Military Studies* 1:2 (1998), 249.
[258] Ibid. p. 260.

indicates these leaps between 1945 and 1990. These are *a major and protracted conventional war between 1945 and the mid-1950s*, *a decisive and spontaneous full-scale nuclear war between the mid-1950s and 1960s,* and *a protracted conventional war under the constant threat of the use of nuclear weapons during the 1970s and 1980s*. Despite the discontinuities in Soviet strategy, fundamental military concepts remained intact. Nevertheless, the functionality of the IPW, combat readiness, and COFM underwent transformation under the three forecasted periods. Therefore, each horizontal row indicates the changing semantic contents of fundamental military concepts within forecasted periods.

It is apparent from this figure that the semantic content of the IPW saw marginal changes over three periods. While the IPW specified the further development of deep operations between the mid-1940s and mid-1950s, it became the decisive period of nuclear war from the mid-1950s to the 1960s. After the 1970s, the Soviet military intended to gain strategic initiative and prevent the enemy from resorting to nuclear weapons during the IPW. In this regard, the IPW functioned as the 'decisive' period of a nuclear war and the shaping period of conventional war in a nuclear-scared posture.

The semantic content of combat readiness did not see any change. From 1945 to 1990, achieving the objectives of the IPW without the need for further mobilization was the ultimate aim of Soviet combat readiness. Because the IPW of a nuclear war acquired a decisive character after the mid-1950s and 1960s, combat readiness assumed greater importance. After the 1970s, the objective of winning the IPW of both conventional and nuclear war compelled the Soviet High Command to keep the entire armed forces in a state of constant combat readiness. Therefore, the functionality of combat readiness did not change over time. Nevertheless, the content of the IPW determined the content of combat readiness to a considerable degree between 1945 and 1990.

Finally, the content of the correlation underwent a series of changes. During Stalin’s era, the Soviets thought that superiority in mechanized warfare would ensure a victory following the theory of deep operations. Between the mid-1950s and 1960s, the Soviet Military intended to achieve qualitative superiority in terms of nuclear and conventional troops. After the 1970s, the Red Army aimed at strategic stability in nuclear weapons and supremacy in conventional weapons. Thus, it can be argued that qualitative superiority took precedence over quantitative superiority in Soviet thinking during the

Cold War period. Among other things, a high state of combat readiness was one of the core characteristics of qualitative superiority in Soviet military strategies.

## 5. 6. Conclusion

The most prominent finding to emerge from this chapter is that fundamental military concepts secured their continuity and strategic relevance in Soviet strategic thinking during the Cold War. Despite an initial tendency to discard old concepts, these concepts helped the Red Army design new strategies that responded to the changes in military technology. The study has shown that forecasting was essential for building various Soviet military strategies. Soviet forecasts specified military strategy and the functionality of the other concepts, such as the IPW, combat readiness, and correlation. Firstly, the IPW remained one of the most discussed concepts of Soviet strategic thought. Despite the changing character of war, the IPW was utilized as it had been designed to in the Imperial Russian and early Soviet periods. In conformity with the concept's early use, the IPW was regarded as the 'decisive' period of a short (nuclear) war of annihilation and 'shaping' period of a long war of attrition. Secondly, gaining strategic initiative during the IPW put the concept of combat readiness at the centre stage of Soviet strategy. Accordingly, the Soviet combat readiness system constantly sought to achieve the objectives of the IPW without the need for further mobilization. When the IPW acquired a decisive character, the Soviet High Command put almost the entire armed forces in a state of constant combat readiness. Therefore, this investigation shows that the content of the IPW specifies the combat readiness level and scope of the Soviet military. Finally, the results of this study support the idea that qualitative superiority takes precedence over quantitative superiority in Soviet thinking, and, furthermore, that combat readiness constituted the qualitative aspect of correlation inquiries.

Therefore, the research concludes that fundamental military concepts remain essential in Soviet strategic thinking between 1945 and 1990. First and foremost, shifts in military strategy took place in close conformity with the forecasts of a future war. (Figure-1) Secondly, fundamental military concepts prevailed even during the period of *nuclear euphoria*. The Soviet military had recourse to these concepts while designing new strategies that responded to the shifts in military technology. In this regard, the objective *of winning the IPW of a war of annihilation (nuclear war)* molded the Soviet nuclear war strategy between the mid-1950s and late 1960s. When the traditionalists

increased their efficiency in the Soviet High Command in the 1970s, the functionality of these concepts resembled their use in the 1920s and 1930s. For instance, *single echelon front offensive operations* (anti-nuclear maneuvers) of the 1970s were an adjusted version of the original theory of deep operations, dating from the 1930s. When the U.S. gained technological superiority in precision-guided munitions in the 1980s, ensuring a high correlation of combat potentials (instead of active troops) became the essential criterion for winning a long war of attrition.

To conclude, this chapter has shown that fundamental military concepts ensured a considerable level of continuity in Soviet thinking during the Cold War. The principles that originated during the late Imperial Russian and early Soviet periods continued to function as the basis of Soviet military thinking. Despite war's changing character, these concepts remained strategically essential.

## Chapter-6

## The Evolution of Russian Fundamental Military Concepts Between 1990 and 2010

*After the end of the Cold War, the Russian High Command struggled to accommodate itself to the requirements of modern warfare. Against the backdrop of changing political circumstances, the Russian Military underwent a complete organizational transformation. This transformation also necessitated a doctrinal and conceptual makeover of Russian military thought. Therefore, this chapter aims to investigate the continuity and discontinuity of fundamental military concepts in Russian military thought between 1990 and 2010. The research finds that the Russian military put forecasting and the correlation of forms and methods at its center while steering the military transformation. These concepts helped the Russian military to anticipate the character and outcome of future conflicts and to make itself ready for waging modern wars. Seizing the strategic initiative by permanent combat readiness formations during the IPW was essential to military success during this period. The research shows that the traditionalist body of opinion in the Russian High Command Russianized new Western military concepts by looking at them through the prism of fundamental military concepts.[1] The research concludes that fundamental military concepts continued to give form to the military doctrine, organisational structure, and strategy, even though the Russian military went through a complete transformation.*

### 6.1. Introduction

After the Cold War, the Russian military has struggled to adapt itself to the new security environment. In addition, war's changing character demonstrated a pressing need for military reform. In this regard, military transformation is key to understanding the roots of Russia's new conceptualization of warfare after the 1990s. In this regard, considerable literature has grown up around the Russian military reform theme between 1990 and 2010. Nevertheless, research on the subject has been mostly restricted to cognitive and organizational transformation.[2] Other studies have centred on contextual

[1] Traditionalist-modernist classification of the Russian military belongs to the author.

[2] Anne C. Aldis and Roger N. McDermott, *Russian Military Reform: 1992-2002* (Ebsco Publishing: 2003); Micheal Orr, "Reform and the Russian Ground Forces, 1992–2002", in *Russian Military Reform: 1992-2002*, eds. Anne C. Aldis, Roger N. McDermott, 122-138 (Ebsco Publishing: 2003); Alexei G. Arbatov, "Military Reform: From Crisis to

and socio-political change while scrutinizing Russian military transformation.[3] Such approaches, however, have failed to address the doctrinal and conceptual transformation of Russian military thought. Furthermore, previous studies have not dealt with the historical roots of military reform. Russian military transformation cannot be properly understood in seclusion from the historical context. Existing accounts fail to resolve the contradiction between Western and Russian approaches to warfare from a conceptual perspective. Therefore, this chapter traces the development of Russian military thought by centering on fundamental military concepts between 1990 and 2010. By this means, this chapter sets out to investigate the historical continuity, enduring relevance and interrelation of fundamental military concepts in contemporary Russian military thought.

This chapter again uses a conceptual history approach to investigate the evolution of five fundamental military concepts. For the purpose of this research, *fundamentalness* is inextricably linked with historical continuity and strategic relevance. In the previous chapters, the research investigated the rise and evolution of four fundamental military concepts: forecasting, correlation of forms and methods (COFM), the initial period of war (IPW), and combat readiness in Russian military thought between 1856 and 1990. This chapter adds another concept to that investigation: reflexive *control,* which helps the Russian military influence the enemy's decision-making processes. The research data in this chapter has been drawn from three main categories of resources: the accessible publications of the Russian Journal of Military Thought (*Voennaya Mysl)* after the 1990s*,* the scholarly works of Russian thinkers and some relevant Western publications on Russian military thought*.* Among these resources, the Russian Journal of *Military Thought* is a primary resource. Therefore, this chapter includes a detailed analysis of the journal's selected articles (43 articles). The selection was made on the basis of these articles either being about or using the concepts under study.

This chapter has been divided into five sections. Section two gives a brief overview of the socio-historical circumstances of the period between 1990 and 2010. The following sections (three, four, and five) will scrutinize fundamental military concepts at length

Stagnation" in *The Russian Military Power and Policy* eds. Steven Miller and Dmitri Trenin, 95-119 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004); Bettina Renz, "Russian Military Reform," The RUSI Journal 155:1 (March 2010)

[3] Pavel K. Baev, "The Trajectory of the Russian Military: Downsizing, Degeneration, and Defeat", in *The Russian Military Power and Policy* eds. Steven Miller and Dmitri Trenin, 43-72 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 46; Steven E. Miller, "Moscow's Military Power: Russia's Search for Security in an Age of Transition" in *The Russian Military: Power and Policy*, eds. Steven Miller and Dmitri Trenin, 1-42 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), Marcel de Haas "Russia's Military Reforms: Victory after 20 years of Failure?" *Clingendael*:5 (November 2011)

by dealing with three themes: *the character and outcome of a future war*, *the periodization of war* and *the influence of non-military means on Russian military thought*. These themes reflect the broader discussions in the Russian Federation Academy of Military Sciences about war and strategy during the 1990s and 2000s and represent broader strategic debates under which military concepts tend to disappear, survive, or gain a new semantic content. Therefore, they offer important insights into the theoretical context in which concepts are defined and discussed. The Russian General Staff utilized forecasting and correlation to anticipate a war's new character and outcome. The discussions on the initial period of war specified the periodization of war in Russian thinking. Finally, reflexive control symbolized the broader discussion on the prominence of non-military means, especially information means, in Russia's approach to modern war. Drawing upon the findings of the previous parts, the remaining sections of this chapter will synthesise the findings to draw conclusions on the historical continuity and semantic evolution.

## 6.2. The general characteristics of Russian military strategy between 1990 and 2010

After the Cold War, the Russian military struggled to carry out military reform in the absence of clear political guidance. Due to the deplorable economic situation, the military saw a reduction by a factor of three in terms of numerical strength and by a factor of ten in terms of the share of gross domestic product allotted to defence.[4] Despite the ongoing process of military downsizing, complete political supervision could not be achieved. The Kremlin was unable to lead the change since it depended entirely on military power to secure itself against possible coup attempts. Following the withdrawal of troops from the post-Soviet space, the Russian military became embroiled in a protracted war with the Chechen insurgency in the mid-1990s. Afterwards, the Russian political elite prioritized internal security over defence.

Indeed, the Chechen war laid bare the Russian military's doctrinal and material incompetence to cope with the new types of threats in the 1990s.[5] In addition, a new epoch in warfare began in the 1990s when Western militaries resorted to novel methodologies and means in Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The essential characteristics of these wars were the increasing effectiveness of air campaigns and the

[4] Baev, p. 43.
[5] Ibid, p. 58.

use of conventional strategic weapons (stand-off weapons, i.e. precision offensive and defensive conventional weapons) and information technologies in a concerted manner to attain political objectives. In Moscow's way of thinking, all these developments demonstrated a pressing need for military reform. Unassisted by sufficient political guidance, the Russian military struggled to reform itself in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Instead, the political elite frequently "used (and abused) the military for its own purposes."[6] For instance, Boris Yeltsin preserved the Russian State's existing military and defence structures instead of forming a new civilian-controlled military command. Yeltsin sought to earn the Russian High Command's loyalty by maintaining the Russian military's sphere of influence.[7] In doing so, the Russian High Command disregarded criticism and resisted scrutiny.[8]

Many internal and external factors influenced the process of structural military reform. Firstly, the discussions revolved around whether the Russian military should prioritize unconventional security threats. Alternatively, should the Russian military draw more attention to NATO by perceiving the Alliance's eastward enlargement as a more significant threat?[9] While the proponents of the first view argued that contemporary threats in Russia's neighbourhood required the formation of capable conventional forces, the advocates of the second view gave strategic nuclear forces a priority.[10] Secondly, internal discussions concentrated on ordering weapon systems. While the modernist body of opinion preferred conventional strategic weapons and information/electronic warfare assets, the traditionalists gave attention to ground forces and strategic nuclear weapons. Thirdly, other Russian thinkers denounced the military elite's unawareness of the non-military dimensions of strategy. This school of thought condemned the prevailing view of the General Staff, which downgraded the concept of war to armed conflict. Criticism also targeted the Marxist-Leninist base of Russian military science. According to this view, the perception of armed conflict as inevitable until socialism won was preventing military science from developing.[11] In light of the protracted evolution of the Chechen wars, the Russian political and military elite leaned towards the idea that Russia's capabilities for fighting small wars should be enhanced.[12]

[6] Baev, p. 43.
[7] Pavel Baev, *The Russian Army in a Time of Troubles* (London: Sage, 1996)
[8] Arbatov, p. 98.
[9] Baev, p. 54.
[10] Orr, p. 126 and see Pavel, pp. 54-55.
[11] I.S. Danilenko, "From Applied Military Science to a Basic Science of Warfare: Part 1", *Military Thought* 17:4 (October 2008): 92.
[12] Baev, p. 58.

Nevertheless, this strategy did not offer viable solutions to the Russian High Command's growing concern about Western military superiority in terms of conventional weapons. Furthermore, the modernists were uneasy about the underestimation of non-military means of warfare.

Another meaningful discussion took place on the issue of whether Russian military thought had lost its function and relevance. The modernist body of opinion, led by I.N. Vorobyov and V.A. Kiselev, advocated for the emergence of "innovative military science" to develop a new warfare theory.[13] This approach encouraged studying future warfare by continually revising military concepts and leaving behind classical dogmas.[14] According to this body of opinion, an innovative approach could answer questions about the technological aspects of warfare.[15] Even though the proponents of this view did not attempt to replace fundamental military concepts in their works, they tried to upgrade and enrich their definition. On the other side, the traditionalists led by the President of the Russian Federation Academy of Military Sciences, General M.A. Gareyev and Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov put strategic cultural inheritance at the centre of military thought. This body of opinion aimed to address modern challenges by employing strategic and conceptual schemes of the previous periods. Their violent-centric and direct approaches to war promoted the continuity and functioning of fundamental military concepts. The proponents of this view were mainly senior in rank and had a positional advantage over the modernists in the Russian High Command. They also cited the Russian military's technological inferiority as a legitimate excuse while defending their thesis.

Nevertheless, modernist opinions were not undermined in theoretical discussions. According to the modernists, research on military thought did not correctly focus on discovering the nature of warfare in the new era.[16] This era was characterized by a new form of relatively swift air-ground-space operations with large-scale employment of high-precision weapons and technological innovation on computer science, outer space, robotics, and artificial intelligence.[17] The modernists suggested that these developments proved to be beyond the forecasts of Russian strategists who adhered to traditionalist

[13] I.N. Vorobyov and V.A. Kiselev, "On the Innovative Development Concept in the Armed Forces", *Military Thought*, 18:3 (July 2009): 52.
[14] Ibid. p. 53.
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] Vorobyov and Kiselev, p. 53.
[17] *Ibid.*

frameworks.[18] Therefore, the existing modernist literature on military thought emphasized the relevance of US military strategy and doctrine. Consequently, these studies made several attempts to import these ideas into Russian military thought.[19] Nevertheless, these endeavours succumbed to traditional currents. These ideas were *Russianized* through the lenses of existing military concepts and strategies. This tendency promoted the resilience of fundamental military concepts.

## 6.3. Estimating the character and outcome of a future war: Forecasting and correlation of forms and methods (COFM)

### 6.3.1. Forecasting the character of a future war

After the political rupture of 1991, the Russian military faced several uncertainties. Against this backdrop, the concept of forecasting would be the most appropriate military theoretical instrument to identify the regularities and tendencies in modern warfare. During the Cold War period, the Soviet military defined the concept as "the study of the military-political situation, the pattern of future war, the prospects of developing strategy, operational art and tactics, the qualitative and quantitative composition of the means of armed conflict, the prospects for the development of a war economy in the future, and also the forecasting of the enemy's strategic and tactical plans." [20] After the 1990s, the meaning and functionality of the concepts remained intact. For instance, Major General I.N. Vorobyov suggested that:

> "[The] fundamental goal of military science has at all times been to cut a window into the future and to study such an extremely complex phenomenon as warfare and the impact that the latest scientific achievements and future weapon systems can make on the nature of warfare. Without this, it is impossible to develop a coherent military doctrine… Figuratively speaking, a futurological forecast is a leap over an information divide, the identification of the essence of forthcoming military phenomena with obviously incomplete background data."[21]

[18] *Ibid.*
[19] A.V.Raskin and V.S. Pelyak, "On Network Centric Warfare", *Military Thought* 14:2, (April 2005), M.M. Khamzatov, "Network-centric War Conception and Its Impact on the Character of Modern Operations", *Military Thought* 15:4 (September 2006): Vorobyov and Kiselev, (2009).
[20] Yu. V. Chuyev and Yu. B. Mikhaylov, *Forecasting in Military Affairs*, (Moscow 1975 translated into English by the DGIS Multilingual Section, Secretary of State Department, Ottawa Canada, Published under the auspices of the United States Air Force): 12
[21] I.N. Vorobyov, "Military Futurology", *Military Thought* 17:2, (April 2008): 164.

By emphasising the 'leaps over information divides', Vorobyov echoed the dialectic basis of this concept. According to the Soviet dialectic-materialist view, a series of quantitative changes led to a sudden and qualitative leap or breakthrough in military affairs.[22] Therefore, Soviet ideology formed the basis for the semantic content of forecasting after the 1990s. In a similar study, I.N. Vorobyov and VA Kiselev argue that the "forecasting function of innovative military science reveals regularities and tendencies in warfare at the new stage in its development".[23] Military strategic forecasting identifies trends and patterns in the evolution of war. It also explores structural changes in the material-technical base and forms and methods of warfare by employing short (five years), mid-term (five to ten years) and long term (over ten years) projections.[24] In another study, Col. V.I. Lutovinov examines this concept as a theoretical function of military policy. According to Lutovinov, the forecasting function "helps create necessary conditions to ensure successful functioning of the state bodies and highest military authorities."[25] Therefore, forecasting contributes guidance to military-technical, military-economic, and military-strategic studies. By this means, the concept allowed the supreme bodies of the Russian government to work in a synchronized manner.[26] In this context, the concept of forecasting ended up being a recognized branch of military science, and it took a position on the hierarchical ladder.[27]

Russian military thinkers carried out several forecasting studies during this period. For instance, Major General V.K. Kopytko introduced the view that the 1990s and 2000s should be seen as the fifth period of Russian military thought in the development of operational art. [28] This period was characterized by "an increased likelihood of local wars and armed conflicts, the adoption in the armies of the leading world states of long-range precision weapons and weapons based on new physical principles…the grown role of information warfare." [29] In another seminal article entitled *Certain Typical Features of Future Wars,* General M.A. Gareyev argues that "[t]he main task [of the Russian

[22] Chuyev and Mikhaylov, p.70.
[23] Vorobyov and Kiselev (2009), p. 54.
[24] Timothy Thomas, "Thinking Like a Russian Officer", *The Foreign Military Studies Office*, (April 2016):7.
[25] V.I. Lutovinov, "Russia's Military Policy in Mode
rn Conditions", Military Thought, 17:4 (October 2008):42.
[26] *Ibid.*
[27] Vorobyov (2008), p. 162.
[28] V.K. Kopytko, "Evolution of Operational Art", *Military Thought* 17:1 (January 2008):208-209. The first period (from the late 1920s to the early 1940s) witnessed army scale offensive operations; the second period (1941-1953) was represented by deeper echeloning (defense/offence) of forces, increased maneuver and firepower; the third period (1954-1985) was defined as the possibility of a nuclear war; the fourth period (mid-1980s and the late 1990s) was introduced as the rising significance of conventional weapons.
[29] Kopytko, p. 209.

military] is to forecast a nature of future wars, since correct forecasts can help identify which armed forces and which troops will be needed."[30] Generally speaking, Gareyev's work on forecasting examined the broad trends in the evolution of warfare. However, he did not entirely ignore the past experience. In this regard, Gareyev reiterated that the Russian military ought to be ready to fight local wars and armed conflicts, while not entirely ruling out the possibility of waging regional wars.[31]

The most widely known Russian classification of armed conflict is based on "warring states and the scale of hostilities".[32] This classification consists of local wars, armed conflicts, regional wars, and large-scale wars.[33] By definition, armed conflicts are "waged to resolve political, ethnic, religious, territorial, and other kinds of difference through the use of arms."[34] Armed conflicts occur either in the form of internal armed conflict or between two or more countries.[35] Therefore, this category includes the involvement of both state and non-state actors. The second category includes local wars waged between two or more countries to attain limited political objectives.[36] The third category is regional wars. These wars "involve two or more countries (group of countries) within a single region confined by the waters of seas/oceans and aerospace, with the warring sides pursuing critical military and political goals".[37] Finally, a large-scale war is a "war between coalitions of countries or larger world powers".[38]

The Russian perception of the increasing likelihood of large-scale wars became even more severe in 2007. This shift in perception can primarily be attributed to the West's resolve to make a breakthrough in the military-technological field.[39] Secondly, the Russian General Staff thought that the deployment of NATO forces in close proximity to Russia's borders disturbed military balance to Russia's disadvantage.[40] Therefore, General Gareyev and Defence Minister S.B. Ivanov stated that the likelihood of a large-

[30] M.A. Gareyev, "Certain Typical Features of Future Wars", *Military Thought* 12:2 (March 2003):188.
[31] *Ibid.*
[32] V.N. Gorbunov and S.A., Bogdanov, "Armed Confrontation in the 21st Century", *Military Thought* 18:1 (January 2009): 23-24
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] "Mission and Objectives of the Russian Armed Forces", Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, https://eng.mil.ru/en/mission/tasks.htm (accessed 20 April 2021)
[35] Gorbunov and Bogdanov, p. 23.
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] *Ibid.*
[38] *Ibid.*
[39] M. A. Gareyev, "Russia's New Military Doctrine", Military Thought 16:2 (April 2007):5.
[40] *Ibid.*

scale war was not diminishing in 2007. Nevertheless, the Russian military focused attention on waging local wars, armed conflicts, and anti-terrorist operations.[41]

Forecasts of a future war stirred up discussions among Russian thinkers about the means of warfare. Generally speaking, the wars in Yugoslavia and Iraq (the first), for the most part, influenced the modernists' insights on modern warfare. In a related study entitled *Warfare of the Future*, Lieutenant General S.A. Bogdanov asserted that future wars would begin with air-space operations, including precision-guided munitions (PGMs) and information assets. [42] Against the backdrop of this, using these systems in an integrated manner would have a decisive impact on war's general outcome. Nevertheless, Bogdanov admitted that the ultimate military goals could not be attained without ground forces. Indeed, these forces would take essential roles in the subsequent periods of war. Thus, it is conceivable that Bogdanov's forecast prioritised qualitatively (technologically) superior weapon systems over quantitatively superior ground forces. Similarly, Maj. Gen. I.N. Vorobyov delineated patterns in the evolution of warfare with his "[e]lectronic warfare (EW)-strike operations" model.[43] In this scheme, the merging of information with airborne stand-off weapons systems would be the principal means of effective engagement in future warfare.[44] These studies demonstrated that the modernists gave priority to the elevated importance of information/electronic warfare and technological superiority in a future war.

In contrast to the modernists, the traditionalists exhibited a critical attitude towards the obsession with a weapon system, namely PGMs, even though they admitted that technology would influence the character of warfare.[45] Indeed, this attitude bears a resemblance to the ideas of the *traditionalists* in the 1970s. Their argument proceeded on the basis that "no single weapon or mode of warfare alone could decide the outcome of a war."[46] In this context, A.V. Suprayaga argued that the launch of stand-off wars did not decrease the importance of contact wars with ground forces.[47] On that note, contact wars were supposed to be located at the opposite end of stand-off wars, where warring factions resorted to precision offensive and defensive conventional weapons,

[41] *Ibid.*
[42] S.A. Bogdanov, "Warfare of the Future", *Military Thought* 13:1 (January 2004):36.
[43] I.N. Vorobyov, "Characteristics of Combat Actions (Operations) in Future Wars", *Military Thought* 14:2 (April 2005): 65.
[44] *Ibid.*
[45] A.V. Suprayaga, "Wars of the 21st Century", *Military Thought* 11:4, (July 2002)
[46] Lawrence Freedman and J. Michaels, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy,* (London, Palgrave Macmillan: 2019): 188.
[47] Suprayaga (2002)

information weapons, and EW assets and nuclear weapons.[48] In this regard, Suprayaga further argued that "[Western] stand-off wars of the 21st century could become contact wars for any states [i.e. Russia]."[49] Therefore, the traditionalists insisted that ground force deployments would be the primary strategic objective of the Russian military in local wars. Next to that, the traditionalists did not rule out the unending nuclear threat in modern warfare. For instance, Gareyev introduced strategic nuclear weapons as the most reliable instrument in future wars.[50] These studies suggest that the traditionalists put more emphasis on ground forces and nuclear weapons in their forecasting analyses.

The discussions on forecasting also revolved around non-military means of warfare. In this regard, numerous studies reached a consensus that the prominence of non-military means in a future war would be considerably increased. Although the Russian military acknowledged the rising importance and share of non-military means in modern warfare, they questioned their decisiveness. In connection with that, Russian thinkers questioned whether non-military means could be the primary means of war. [51] In an article entitled 'On the notion of War', Air Force Lt. General V.V. Serebryannikov highlights that "revolution in science and technology confers unprecedented violent capabilities on the means that were formerly regarded as non-violent."[52] According to Serebryannikov, only then could non-military means be recognized as an instrument of war provided that they would be imbued with specific and measurable violence.[53] Therefore, *the militarization of non-military means,* such as using the information in precision strike munitions, could offer additional capabilities for the Russian military in future wars.[54] Similarly, Gareyev argued that "[t]he non-military means, especially information means, greatly affect the nature of armed struggle, yet armed forces and violence are the main typical features of any war." [55]

Maj Gen. S.A. Tyushkevich discussed the issue from a different perspective. Non-violent means of policy prevailed over public life in peacetime, with violent means playing a subordinate role. [56] This state of play was reversed during a war. Nevertheless, Tyushkevich prioritized military means by suggesting that "[t]he political goals of states

[48] *Ibid.*
[49] *Ibid.*
[50] Gareyev (2007), p. 10 and Gareyev (2003), p. 188.
[51] Gareyev (2003), p. 187.
[52] V.V. Serebryannikov, "On the Notion of War", *Military Thought* 13:4, (October 2004):177.
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] Ibid. p. 178.
[55] Gareyev (2003), p. 187.
[56] S.A. Tyushkevich, "Shaping Military Ideology", *Military Thought* 13:4 (October 2004): 164

are achieved predominantly by the armed struggle."[57] Similarly, in a seminal article entitled, *Information Weapons and Information Warfare: Realities and Speculations,* Colonel V.I. Orlyansky argues that non-military means, especially information means, would never replace weapons and would never be the main principles or means of armed conflict.[58] However, the informational characteristics of an armed conflict had a significant and sometimes decisive impact on its outcome.[59] This would be the case when weapon systems were provided with up-to-date information. Finally, Col. V.N. Gorbunov and S.A. Bogdanov acknowledged that non-military means such as informational, psychological, and climatic varieties would considerably affect the character of war in the future.[60] Nevertheless, "future wars will be dominated by violence while diplomatic, and economic warfare types of engaging with the opponent will play a decisive role in preventing wars and armed conflicts." [61] Taken together, Russian thinkers emphasized that the informational characteristic of an armed conflict could not change the armed struggle's essence and could not transform it into information warfare.[62]

Eventually, Russian thinkers arrived at a consensus on the increasing likelihood of local wars and armed conflicts. Nevertheless, they did not entirely disregard the possibility of waging regional and large-scale wars. Besides, both the modernists and the traditionalists agreed that non-military means would likely increase their effectiveness; however, they remained incapable of replacing military means in future wars. Hence, forecasting analyses became dissimilar when it came to how the Russian military would wage a future war. Different points of view were associated with Russian thinkers' preference for strategy. On the one hand, the modernists gave more prominence to the conventional strategic weapons and information/EW assets. This school of thought emphasized that the Russian military ought to possess these new technologies in order to unleash an offensive strategy.[63] On the other hand, the traditionalists brought attention to ground forces and strategic nuclear weapons. The prioritization of weapons would seem to indicate that the defence was being privileged over the offence. In light of the Russian military's apparent inferiority in PGMs, ground forces and existing nuclear

[57] Ibid. p. 165.
[58] V.I. Orlyansky, "Information Weapons and Information Warfare: Realities and Speculations", *Military Thought* 17:1. (January 2008): 183.
[59] *Ibid.*
[60] V.N. Gorbunov and S.A., Bogdanov, (2009), p. 23.
[61] *Ibid.*
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] Vorobyov (2005), p. 64.

weapons would be the most reliable instruments of strategic deterrence against external aggression in future warfare.[64] Beyond that, the modernists used the concept of forecasting to access innovative military science.[65] By this means, this concept could promote the emergence of a new theory of warfare inspired by innovation, technological advances, and military-theoretical developments. The extent of modernist influence emanated from forecasting's futurist outlook. This prospect allowed the Russian military to adapt to a new operational environment by devising modern methods and means. Nevertheless, the traditionalists utilized this concept to deal with war's changing character with the existing means and methods.

### 6.3.2. Forecasting the results of a future war: Correlation of forms and methods

Alongside its character, predicting the outcome of a future war continued to take an important place in Russian military thought. In this regard, Russian thinkers put the concept of correlation of forces and methods (COFM) into practice to disambiguate the results of a future war. By definition, correlation of forms and methods is "an objective indicator of the combat power of opposing forces, which makes it possible to determine the degree of superiority of one force over the other or the outcome of a war."[66] While the traditionalists used the 'parity' factor to estimate a war's outcome, the modernists invented new criteria for military success in modern wars.

The concept of correlation of forms and methods emerged in the 1920s. During the Cold War, this concept sought to anticipate war's outcome by using the 'parity' factor. After the 1990s, it continued to occupy an important place in Russian military thought. According to Colonel V.S. Tsygichko, "the appraisal of balance [correlation] of forces in an operation (a combat) serves to forecast the course and outcome of military (combat) operations under prevailing situations and determine the forces and fires needed for an operation (combat)."[67] Tsygichko further emphasized that correlation by parity factor yielded correct results in traditional military operations.[68]

After the 1990's, the Russian military found itself in a highly unfavorable situation, particularly in regard to conventional strategic weapons (precision-guided munitions).

[64] Gareyev (2003), pp. 187-189.
[65] Vorobyov and Kiselev (2009), p. 54.
[66] Russian military encyclopaedia, quoted in Thomas (2016), 8.
[67] V.N. Tsygichko, "Balance of Forces Category in Potential Military Conflicts", *Military Thought* 11:2 (March 2002): 107.
[68] *Ibid.*

Therefore, the end of the Cold war witnessed a "drastic change in the correlation of forces to Russia's disadvantage" in a future war against NATO.[69] In 2007, General M.A. Gareyev admitted that Russia had an "extremely unfavorable correlation of forces in all strategic sectors."[70] Nevertheless, he further emphasized that future wars would be "fought with precision-guided munitions, but with the constant threat of the use of nuclear weapons."[71] Gareyev reiterated this statement another time in 2009 when he outlined the general principles of Russia's strategic deterrence.[72] In these premises, nuclear forces would remain the most reliable deterrence against Western superiority in conventional strategic weapons.[73] In 2009, Gareyev stated that:

> "Given the extremely unfavourable, for Russia, correlation of forces in all theatres of operations, its most important and reliable means of strategic deterrence remains its nuclear potential, whose significance the Americans are trying to lessen and undermine by creating their AMD [Air Missile Defence] system and long-range high-precision conventional arms. Strategic nuclear forces must therefore be continually perfected." [74]

Likewise, Colonel General V.V. Korobushin also stressed the prominence of strategic nuclear weapons. In 2007, Korobushin suggested that the preservation of nuclear deterrence capability would be one of the Russian state's essential strategies and military policies in the next several decades. [75]

In addition to nuclear forces, the Russian military considered increasing its correlation through general-purpose forces. [76] General-purpose forces are air-mobile light infantry ground units. These units would perform combat missions in local wars in Russia's immediate neighbourhood. By this means, the Russian military aimed to increase its deterrence posture against NATO troops' deployments when Poland and the Baltic states became Alliance's new members in 1999 and 2004, respectively.

Therefore, the Russian High Command intended on compensating for its technological inferiority in PGMs by relying predominantly on its nuclear forces and newly formed

[69] Orr, p.124.
[70] *Ibid.*
[71] Gareyev (2007), p. 10.
[72] M.A. Gareyev, "Issues of Strategic Deterrence in Current Conditions", *Military Thought* 18:2 (April 2009)
[73] Gareyev (2007) and Gareyev (2009).
[74] Gareyev (2009), p.7.
[75] V.V. Korobushin, "Strategic Nuclear Weapons in Russia's Military Doctrine", *Military Thought* 16:2, (April 2007): 47.
[76] Gareyev (2007), pp. 9-10.

general-purpose forces. These units constituted the main enablers of Russia's strategic deterrence. According to Colonel A.I. Khryapin and Col. V.A. Afanasyev, the Russian military should put strategic deterrence into practice through using the "threat of retaliation". This approach consisted of "taking actions to dissuade a potential military-political adversary from planning or contemplating a war against the Russian Federation."[77] While the Russian military regarded the availability of battle-worthy general-purpose forces and nuclear forces as the *necessary* precondition of Russia's strategic deterrence, they considered the combat capability of these forces as the *sufficient* precondition.[78] Russian thinkers measured the availability with the parity factor in a quantitative manner. Nevertheless, combat capability, which was defined as a capability geared to "inflict a … level of damage on a potential aggressor", was measured by using qualitative criteria.[79] Therefore, technological and numerical competency and sufficiency laid the groundwork for the concept of correlation.

### 6.3.3. The limits of Russian forecasting

Russian thinkers realized that the most notable successes in forecasting (the outcome of future war) were achieved in those areas that were subject to quantification.[80] Therefore, correlation yielded effective results when applied to the conventional wars, where the quantitative 'parity' factor was put into practice to compare the combat capabilities of opposing sides. However, in unconventional wars, where it was deemed necessary to use qualitative indicators, *correlation via parity* fell short of anticipating outcomes.[81] In Russian thinking, *unconventional wars* consisted of insurgency operations and non-military forms of warfare. Estimating the outcome of these types of wars necessitated a new criterion other than parity. In this regard, Major General V.D. Ryabchuk designed "intellectual potentials".[82] This new criterion was aimed at superiority in areas requiring a mixture of ideology, scientific knowledge, information systems, information means, and information management.[83] Therefore, the superiority in these domains and means promised a victory in unconventional forms of warfare. While Ryabchuk attached decisive importance to attaining information and intellectual

[77] A.L.Khryapin and V.A. Afanasyev, "Conceptual Principles of Strategic Deterrence", *Military Thought* 14:1 (January 2005): 31.
[78] *Ibid.*
[79] *Ibid.*
[80] Vorobyov (2008), p. 162.
[81] *Ibid.*
[82] V.D. Ryabchuk, "Warfare Science and Military Forecasting in the Conditions of Intellectual Informational Confrontation", *Military Thought* 17:2 (April 2008): 143.
[83] Ibid. pp. 143-145.

superiority in future wars, he revealed the Russian's military's deficiency in this field. Therefore, he argued that "not a single calculation technique of relative strengths takes into consideration the interrelationship of the intellectual potentials of the opposing sides."[84]

Major General I.N. Vorobyov and Colonel V.A. Kiselev examined this shortcoming from a strategic perspective. According to these thinkers, the "strategy of indirect approach" took precedence over the "strategy of force" [destruction] in modern wars. [85] Therefore, the strategy of routing the adversary by creating numerical superiority in forces and assets lost its prominence. On the contrary, the indirect approach strategy put the asymmetry at its center by utilizing information warfare, stand-off warfare, and EW-strikes in conjunction with conventional forces in the foreseeable future.[86]

Therefore, forecasting the outcomes of unconventional wars became an issue of grave concern for Russian thinkers. When some Russian thinkers attached decisive importance to *intellectual potential*, this notion became even more critical.[87] The decisiveness was linked to the appearance of new weapon systems in the 1990s, whose effectiveness hinged on the availability of precise information. In this regard, the Russian Federation Academy of Military Science specified "forecasting the character and results of unconventional and non-military forms of warfare' as the areas of special attention" in the mid-2000s. [88]

Consequently, the modernist body of opinion generated new ideas to replace the 'parity' factor of correlation. The development of new factors allowed the Russian military to explore methods to increase its strength against an adversary that resorted to unconventional warfare. One of those was the *civilizing factor.* Russian thinkers introduced this factor as the public opinion about casualties and damage to state infrastructure.[89] The civilizing factor resembled the West's public opinion phenomenon. In the Russian version, this factor "set permissible limits and conditions on the use of force by the [public opinion] developed countries and the types of conflicts that can be acceptable to them."[90] Accordingly, the public opinion endorsed a (Western) preventive

[84] Ibid. p. 144.
[85] I.N. Vorobyov and V.A. Kiselev, "The New Strategy of Indirect Approach", *Military Thought* 15:4 (October 2006): 30.
[86] *Ibid.*
[87] Ryabchuk, p. 146.
[88] Ibid. p.155.
[89] Tsygichko, p. 110.
[90] *Ibid.*

intervention provided that the military had overwhelming military-technical superiority over the enemy who was incapable of inflicting severe retaliatory damage.[91] If a ([Western) country was threatened with aggression, the *civilizing factor* transformed into the *parity* factor.[92] In this regard, the "price" of a military intervention and "the size of unacceptable damage" determined the limits of Western military interventions (stand-off wars). This modelling made it possible to analyze different scenarios of military conflicts.

Another of those factors was the *concentration of capacities*.[93] According to Colonel M.M. Khamzatov, the main feature of the character of modern operations "is not the proportion of space and quantity of armed forces, but the availability of new multiservice mobile formations and units, which realise their capacities at the basis of network-centric methods of reconnaissance, control, and support."[94] Therefore, the *concentration of capacities* was aimed at taking advantage of weapons that used information technologies to gain strategic initiative over the enemy in the first minutes of wars.[95] *Being better informed* was another factor. According to a group of Russian high-ranked military experts, "being better informed, under otherwise identical conditions, is a decisive factor of the actual correlation of forces of the opposing parties taking part in fighting."[96] Therefore, getting accurate and reliable information before the enemy would be a new correlation factor. Only then could the Russian military attain information superiority over the enemy in a future war. [97]

This chapter has found that the correlation between military and non-military actions in modern wars changed the Russian perception of modern warfare.[98] In Moscow's way of thinking, indirect actions (asymmetric methods) and unconventional forms of warfare were effectively utilised by Western Armies in a decisive manner, hand in hand with conventional enablers. According to Air Force Lt. Gen. V.V. Serebryannikov, "[w]ars and armed conflicts (particularly in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Iraq) demonstrate an essential change in correlation between traditional and non-traditional means and forms of struggle, particularly between warfare proper and non-military actions, between

[91] *Ibid.*
[92] *Ibid.*
[93] Khamzatov, p. 26.
[94] *Ibid.*
[95] *Ibid.*
[96] Ye, A. Karpov, N.I. Burenin and N.A. Zyuzin, "Building a Single Information Network: Problems", *Military Thought* 13:4 (October 2004): 184.
[97] *Ibid.*
[98] Gareyev (2003), p. 190.

military and political victory."[99] Likewise, the Russian doctrinal document entitled, *Urgent Tasks in the Development of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation* pointed out that the victorious side won the seven most critical armed conflicts of the last decade without inflicting planned military damage on the target country. [100] It is conceivable that these wars included but were not limited to the Gulf War, the wars in Yugoslavia, and Afghanistan.

The traditionalist body of opinion acknowledged that the correlation of non-military means of achieving political goals changed as they obtained a more target-specific and coordinated character. Nevertheless, this body of opinion did not ascribe decisive importance to non-military forms of warfare. Beyond that, other state bodies were held responsible for addressing non-military threats instead of the Russian military. In this regard, Gareyev advised other state bodies to prevent, localize, and neutralize non-military threats with available means under the framework of "defence doctrine" instead of 'military doctrine'.[101]

Although the modernists put more emphasis on non-military means, the Russian military relied on military power. Consequently, the *parity* factor continued to constitute the basis for estimating the outcome of future armed conflicts. The traditionalist's direct and violent-oriented approaches to warfare became influential in this result.

### 6.4. The periodisation of war: the initial period of war and combat readiness

#### 6.4.1. The Initial Period of War (IPW)

The end of the Cold War diminished the likelihood of a nuclear confrontation between Russia and the US. Nevertheless, the threat of the use of nuclear weapons continued to prevail in Russian military thinking. By this means, the utility of strategic nuclear weapons served to realize *the strategy of deterrence* instead of *the strategy of destruction*.[102] Moreover, the rising likelihood of local wars and armed conflicts shifted the focus of the Russian High Command to conventional weapon systems. Consequently, the conditions required for the Russian military to think that an enemy

[99] Serebryannikov (2004), p. 178.
[100] *Ibid.*
[101] Gareyev (2007), p. 5.
[102] Valery Vasilyevich Gerasimov, "Strategy Speech", *Red Star*, 2019, online: http://redstar.ru/vektory-razvitiya-voennoj-strategii/ (accessed 17 March 2021)

surprise attack was imminent did not exist anymore. Accordingly, the importance that the Soviet High Command ascribed to the IPW would be expected to lessen after the 1990s. However, Russian thinkers continued to put emphasis on the IPW in their works between 1990 and 2010.

The Western approaches to the war in the 1990s predominantly determined the traditionalists' analyses on the IPW. To begin with, A.V. Supryaga suggested that local and regional wars would be characterized by air and air defence operations in a selected and paralyzing manner, especially during the IPW. [103] Supryaga called these "selected engagement wars."[104] Gareyev also thought that "at the initial stage of military actions, aviation and the navy will deliver massive blows to destroy the major economic objects of the enemy and its energy system and thus deprive it of the will to fight." [105] Likewise, the Journal of Military Thought editorial board gives an account of this view in 2002 in an article entitled *Main Principles of Combat*.[106] Accordingly:

> "The operations of the initial period of war are the whetstone that tests the pre-war system of combat readiness, field instructions, command and control systems, the person's moral and combat qualities, etc.…From this, it follows that combat training should start with profound studies of the initial operations that are especially hard to wage, the course of which hard to predict, the situation which is changing quickly together with state of troops and the sides' balance [correlation] of forces."[107]

Considering the critical armed conflicts of the last decade, Russian military thinkers believed Western armies would not deploy land forces during initial operations.[108] Land forces would be brought into action when key military and economic targets were annihilated. By this means, Russian thinkers thought Western militaries sought to decrease the number of land force deployments.[109] Therefore, it was a widely held view that decisive air operations would characterize the IPW of modern wars. In this phase, a special place was accorded to the air and space theater of war, and conventional strategic weapons would be the main instruments of war. [110]

---

[103] Supryaga (2002)
[104] *Ibid.*
[105] Gareyev (2003), p. 189.
[106] "The main principles of Combat", Editor, *Military Thought* 11:4, (July 2002): 19.
[107] Ibid. p. 16.
[108] Gareyev (2003), p. 190.
[109] *Ibid.*
[110] *Ibid.*

The modernist body of opinion also drew sufficient attention to the IPW in their works on future warfare. According to Lieutenant General S.A. Bogdanov, future wars would most likely have *initial* and *final periods,* while the IPW would likely become the primary and decisive period.[111] Indeed, this notion recalls the importance attached to the IPW by G.A. Leer in the 1890s and VD. Sokolovsky in the 1960s. During the late 19th century, the opening phase of war was the decisive and primary period in which the Imperial Russian army aimed to exert an extreme force to attain strategic objectives. The IPW once again proved to be the decisive period of a short war of annihilation in the 1950s and 1960s in anticipation of a surprise nuclear attack. In other times, the functionality of the IPW shifted from a decisive period of war to a period when the Soviet military sought to grasp the strategic initiative.

| | **Military and non-military activities** |
|---|---|
| **The preparatory phase of war** | The use of non-military means to attain political objectives |
| **The Initial period of war** | Stand-off wars by use of PGMs, EW, and information war assets |
| **The Final Period of war** | Ground operations |

**Table-1:** The Periodization of Modern Wars (From a Russian perspective)

Table-1 summarizes the Russian periodization of modern (Western) wars between the 1990s and 2000s. A closer inspection of the table highlights that it comprised the preparatory, (threatening) initial and final periods of war. During the preparatory phase, Western armies resorted to non-military means. Following this, the Initial period of western wars comprised air and space operations, information operations, and high-precision strikes virtually to the entire depth of the country subjected to aggression.[112] During the IPW, the attacker aimed at destructing critical military targets, disrupting the state system, command and control centres, and disabling the main elements of the military-industrial complex predominantly by using airborne PGMs.[113] According to Gorbunov and Bogdanov;

[111] Bogdanov (2004), p. 36.
[112] Gorbunov and Bogdanov (2009), p. 27.
[113] A.B. Tasbulatov and V.I. Orlyanskiy, "The Specifics of Modern Armed Conflicts", *Military Thought* 14:4 (October 2005)

"…the main objectives of future wars will be achieved in the opening phase, and that will become the turning point determining the fate of a war. More specifically, it will be a period when the opponents in the military campaign will put all their efforts into the fighting to attain their military and political objectives."[114]

Subsequently, the land group of forces would join the battle at the final period of war, after the enemy's firepower and critical targets were destroyed entirely. [115]

Overall, these results indicate that both schools of thought (modernist/traditionalist) agreed on the initial period of modern wars. The IPW comprises an "intense struggle for information, EW, and air superiority by using space-based assets."[116] In this context, the side that managed to seize the fire initiative and achieve the element of surprise would ensure superiority at this phase. In a study entitled, *Upgrading the Military*, Col. Gen. V.V. Zherebtsov argues that "it is in the initial stage of a conflict that there are, as a rule, favourable conditions for the destructive forces to take the initiative and subsequently enabling them to effectively oppose measures being taken by official authorities."[117] Indeed, the emphasis on 'a rule of war' would seem to indicate that the importance ascribed to the IPW by Soviet military thinkers in the 1930s remained unchanged. In 1934, G. Isserson had also pointed out that the IPW permitted combat-ready attack echelons to make maneuvers along the flanks of the positional front.[118] Likewise, according to Russian Defence Minister S.B. Ivanov, modern wars required the opposing sides to "seize the initiative at the very outset of the conflict."[119] For Ivanov, the US's military successes in Iraq could be attributed to its ability to exercise prompt and effective command and control of its forces during the initial phase of war. [120]

The modernist body of opinion suggested that technological breakthroughs increased the decisiveness of the initial operations. For example, Lieutenant General V.A. Vinogradov suggested that modern operations took on an annihilation character because they entailed conventional strategic weapons.[121] The surprise and suddenness

[114] Gorbunov and Bogdanov (2009), p. 27.
[115] I*bid*
[116] I.N. Vorobyov, "Characteristics of Combat Action", *Military Thought* 14:2 (April, 2005): 70.
[117] V.V. Zherebetsov, "Upgrading the Military", *Military Thought* 14:1 (January 2005): 159.
[118] Georgii Samoilovich Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art*, (Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013): 39-49.
[119] S.B. Ivanov, "The Military Command and Control System Today and Ways of Improving It in Light of New Defence Tasks and Changes in the Character of Future Wars", *Military Thought* 13:4 (April 2004): 191.
[120] *Ibid.*
[121] V.A. Vinogradov, "Characteristics of Modern Combined-Arms Operations", *Military Thought* 10:1 (January 2001): 25.

of the first strikes primarily determined the course and outcome of the initial operations, and the decisiveness of their objectives determined the nature of war. [122] Col. VI Kulikov also pointed out that the integrated use of precision weapons systems with non-nuclear ammunition, information warfare, and unconventional warfare would "lay the groundwork for rapid achievement of decisive superiority and strategic initiative during the initial stages of war."[123] Therefore, Kulikov argued that the IPW of the selected engagement wars would annihilate the critical targets of enemy state administration, power industry, and strategic military installations with minimum impact on the civilian population. According to Air Force Lieutenant General V.V. Serebryannikov, the delivery of devastating airstrikes by airborne PGMs at the beginning of a war immediately revealed military superiority and primarily determined the entire subsequent course of events.[124] Finally, Major General I.N. Vorobyov and Col V.A. Kiselev thought that the IPW was growing shorter considering the time needed for the mobilization and strategic deployment of forces.[125]

These results suggest that Russian military thinkers opted to use their own periodization model (preparatory/initial/final) while stereotyping what they understood as Western approaches to war. However, this does not necessarily mean that these military and non-military activities demonstrate the Russian way of war. Notably, the research has found that the periodization of Russian wars has remained the same; however, it entailed different military and non-military activities. First and foremost, Russian military thinkers realised that they would experience a military failure if they assumed the strategy of defensive/counter-offensive during the IPW. Because the initial operations, in principle, required the Russian Army to seize the strategic initiative from the first moments of an operation. This notion has predominated Russian military thought since Leer defined *the principle of the extreme exertion of force at the beginning of war* in 1894.[126] Even if the Russian military adopted the strategy of pre-emption, it would still be difficult to win the initial operations against the US/ NATO. The Russian military was technologically inferior in PGMs, information, and EW assets even if it could

[122] *Ibid.*
[123] V.A. Kulikov, "Organization of the State Armament System: Evolution and Development", *Military Thought* 13:4, (September 2004): 176.
[124] Serebryannkov, p. 180.
[125] I.N. Vorobyov and V.A. Kiselev, ""Time" and "Space" as Strategic Category of Contemporary Wars", *Military Thought* 17:3, (July 2009): 41.
[126] Leer Genrikh Antonovich, *The Method of Military Science: Strategy, Tactic and Military History* (St. Petersburg, 1894), 53.

use the advantages of a surprise attack. Therefore, the Russian High Command developed a Russian approach to the periodization of war.

| | **Military and non-military activities** |
|---|---|
| **The preparatory phase of war** | The prevention, localization, and neutralization of non-military threats with diplomatic, economic, information, and other non-military means |
| **The initial period of war** | - The use of permanent readiness general-purpose ground formations in an asymmetrical and indirect manner, when responding to emerging threats in local wars<br><br>- The preparedness to use tactical/operational nuclear weapons if the enemy carried out an offensive with superior conventional forces |
| **The Final Period of war** | -The use of armed forces in a direct manner<br>-The mobilization of armed forces to fight a protracted war |

**Table-2:** The Periodization of the Russian approach to war

Table-2 shows an overview of the periodization of the Russian approach to war between 1990 and 2010. It is apparent from this figure that the Russian military's strategic scheme consisted of preparatory, initial, and final periods. During the preparatory phase of war, the Russian military, in coordination with the other state bodies (within the framework of Gareyev's *defence security* concept), aimed at preventing, localising and neutralizing threats with political, economic, information, and other non-military means. [127] This phase involved several countermeasures against the Western equivalent of the preparatory period of modern wars and aimed to avoid a direct military confrontation with the enemy. Nevertheless, the opposing sides would become embroiled in non-military confrontations using economic, informational, psychological, diplomatic, climatic, technological, scientific, and ideological instruments of power. [128] In Russian thinking, this period would allocate time for the strategic deployment of regrouped troops before the attacker launched its offensive.[129] This notion relates to the old idea

[127] Gareyev (2003), p. 187.
[128] Gorbunov and Bogdanov (2009), p. 27.
[129] *Ibid.*

that mobilization during peacetime helped the Russian military to begin the war with a standing army.[130]

During the initial period of war, the Russian military strategy did not rely on air strikes with precision-guided munitions for two reasons. Firstly, it became obvious that the Russian military was incapable and technologically inferior in PGMs to win the initial operations. Secondly, it was regarded as provocative. In 2009, Gareyev pointed out that:

> "If we were to follow this example [air strikes with PGMs] and fight in a strictly "democratic" fashion, the Russian army should have bombed Tbilisi, Batumi, Kutaisi, Poti, the country's [Georgia] entire infrastructure and thus forced Georgia to capitulate. But this is not a "democratic" but a barbaric method of warfare. And from the point of the interests of strategic deterrence, we could not have acted otherwise, because that could have resulted in a direct confrontation with NATO." [131]

Instead, responding to emerging threats by using permanent readiness general-purpose ground forces constituted the Russian military's initial operations. Since its tanks were outdated and the air force was incapable, Russian thinkers saw the permanent readiness of general-purpose forces as a flexible and agile way of countering and preventing threats and seizing a strategic initiative during the IPW.[132] Nevertheless, the Russian High Command prioritized asymmetric and indirect methods during this phase within the context of the *strategy of indirect action* (SAI).[133] Unlike the annihilation strategy, the strategy of indirect action entailed "military actions through the indirect physical destruction (smashing) of the adversary in a roundabout way."[134] The indirect action strategy was aimed at creating asymmetry by making armed forces more maneuverable and strategically mobile during the initial operations.[135] Vorobyov and Kiselev pointed out that the "principle of dominant maneuver" was the core element of the strategy of indirect action. Therefore, the initial operations would be carried out by general-purpose forces in an asymmetrical fashion in the first place. Thus, carrying

[130] S.P. Ivanov, *The Initial Period of War* (Moscow, 1974), 70. Translated and published under the auspices of The United States Air Force.
[131] Gareyev (2009), p. 8.
[132] Ibid. p. 6.
[133] I.N. Vorobyov and V.A. Kiselev," The New Strategy of the Indirect Approach", *Military Thought* 15:4 (October 2006)
[134] Ibid. p. 27.
[135] Ibid. p. 32.

out air-mobile maneuvers against emerging threats, breaches, or exposed flanks would ensure asymmetry in local wars and armed conflicts.[136]

Nevertheless, general-purpose forces alone remained incapable of addressing the PGM threat during the IPW. Generally speaking, the Russian High Command saw strategic weapons as the most reliable and essential assets to ensure strategic deterrence. [137] As to the PGM threat, tactical and operational nuclear weapons would be brought into action if the enemy attacked using superior conventional strategic forces, because the Russian High Command compensated for its inferiority in conventional strategic systems (PGMs) by the threat of the use of tactical/operational nuclear weapons. In addition, strengthening air-defence posture and performing deception operations against enemy air attacks would prevent the enemy from attaining success at this phase. [138]

Much of the Russian literature emphasized that military confrontation should be avoided during the preparatory phase of wars. If this failed, the Russian military sought to attain political objectives during the initial operations in an asymmetric manner. Nevertheless, a relatively small body of Russian literature is concerned with the final period of war in local wars and armed conflicts. If the Russian military failed to achieve its objectives during the IPW, this would mean that the likelihood of conflict gaining a large-scale character would remain high. Therefore, the possibility of a large-scale regional war would be *the final period of war*. A direct military approach was put into practice after every other asymmetrical and indirect means were exhausted in this phase.[139] At the final period of war, the *mobilization readiness* of armed forces was key to winning political objectives. Therefore, the evidence suggests that the Russian military intended to attain political objectives during *the initial period of a local war*. In addition, Russians prepared for waging a protracted war in *the final period of a large-scale regional war*.

### 6.4.2. Combat readiness

The concept of combat readiness retained its relevance in Russian military thought after the 1990s. During the final phases of the Cold War, high combat readiness was required for the entire Soviet armed forces to win the initial period of both conventional and

[136] Vorobyov (2005), p. 71.
[137] Gareyev (2009), p. 6 and Vorobyov (2005), p. 71.
[138] Vorobyov (2005), p. 71.
[139] Vorobyov (2005), p. 71

nuclear wars.[140] This consideration remained intact after the 1990s. In an editorial article entitled, 'Main Principles of Combat', it was argued that "[t]oday the principle [combat readiness] has acquired even more importance and has become the heart of all measures related to the art of warfare."[141] Therefore, the demands of ensuring combat readiness would be higher than before.[142] Russians defined the principle as "a subunit readiness to join in a battle in an organized way and at a time specified by command and to carry out the tasks successfully."[143] Nevertheless, the content and scope of combat readiness were determined mainly by the forecasts of a future war.[144] Therefore, the Russian military aimed to upgrade its combat readiness system according to the Russian forecasts of a future war.

The Russian High Command's forecasting analysis demonstrated that the likelihood of waging local wars and armed conflicts was higher than fighting large-scale regional wars. In local wars, military studies testified that the operations of the IPW were the most critical ones since they constituted the whetstone that tested the pre-war system of combat readiness.[145] Therefore, the Russian military needed a combat readiness system that could seize the initiative during the IPW. This is exemplified by Gareyev's statement in 2007. He argued that

> "In light aforementioned threats, the priority for the Russian Armed Forces and other troops is the readiness to perform combat missions in local wars, armed conflicts, and anti-terrorist operations…But in circumstances a large-scale regional war could break out: There is no immediate threat of such a war, but it cannot be entirely ruled out so it is necessary at least to ensure the mobilisation readiness of the Armed Forces."[146]

Therefore, ensuring permanent readiness to win the initial period of local wars and attaining mobilization readiness to win large-scale regional wars became the objectives of Russian combat readiness.

In Russian doctrine, preparedness (capability and intention) was one of the two essential criteria (next to explicit evidence of violence) which transformed *military*

[140] Ghulam Dastagır Wardak, *The Voroshilov Lectures: Materials from the Soviet General Staff Academy: Volume-1* (Washington: The National Defense University Press, 1989): 178.
[141] "The Main Principles of Combat", *Military Thought* 11:4 (June 2002): 15.
[142] *Ibid.*
[143] *Ibid.*
[144] *Ibid.*
[145] Ibid. p. 16.
[146] Gareyev (2007), p. 10.

*danger* into a *military threat.*[147] Consequently, "military threat implies the preparedness of one of the policy subjects to inflict damage on the vital interests of another policy subject by using armed violence forces and means for settling contradictions between them and for gaining unilateral advantages."[148] Military threat turns into an armed struggle when one side substantiates its capability of using overt violence.[149] Therefore, combat readiness was located one level ahead of armed struggle, albeit with no change in capabilities. In this regard, Russia perceived any increase in the combat readiness level of NATO troops along its borders as an indicator of war. For instance, General Gareyev argued that the presence of a substantial difference between the US and NATO forces "endanger threats in the most important strategic sectors."[150] In this correlation, Russian thinkers concentrated solely on the US and NATO capabilities rather than their intentions.[151] In return, the Russian military concluded that combat readiness contributed to its deterrence posture. For instance, Colonel V.F Gatsko suggested that:

> "It appears that the repertoire of the politico-military measures, which minimise the potential threats to Russia's military security, must give prominence to the build-up of the Armed Forces and other Federal power structures capable of effective and guaranteed suppression of the entire spectrum of the military dangers and threats, both external and internal."[152]

In this regard, the perception of being under *military threat* emboldened the Russian High Command to put combat readiness at the center of strategic deterrence.[153] Then, combat readiness helped the Russian military ensure strategic deterrence and affect the military-political situation.[154] In an article entitled *Conceptual Principles of Strategic Deterrence*, Colonel A.L. Khryapin and Colonel V.A. Afanasyev argue that strategic deterrence was "based on the capability of RF Armed Forces in peacetime to put the country on a war footing in a timely manner … and to inflict on a possible aggressor damage that would be too great for it and outweigh potential gains."[155] The "necessary precondition" for credible strategic deterrence was the availability of general-purpose

[147] V.F. Gatsko, "On the Concepts of Military Threat and Military Danger and their Correlation in Russia's Military Security System*", Military Thought* 15:2 (April 2006): 11
[148] *Ibid.*
[149] Ibid. p. 13.
[150] Garevey (2009), p. 7.
[151] Ibid. p. 5.
[152] Ibid. p. 15.
[153] Gareyev (2003), p. 189.
[154] *Ibid.*
[155] Col. A.L. Khryapin and Col V.A. Afanasyev, "Conceptual Principles of Strategic Deterrence", Military Thought 14:1 (January 2005): p. 31.

and nuclear forces with efficient command, control, and logistic systems.[156] On the other hand, the "sufficient precondition" for strategic deterrence was the combat capability of these forces to inflict an assumed level of damage on a potential aggressor's military and economic situation.[157] The availability (necessary) and combat capability (sufficient) of these forces also represented quantitative and qualitative characteristics of combat readiness, respectively. This statement resembled the Cold War definition of combat readiness: "a state (availability) and capability which ensure the desired security of the nation in peacetime and the achievement of specific aims in the case of war."[158] Compared to the Soviet era, the essential characteristics of combat readiness remained unchanged between 1990 and 2010.

Preserving a very high degree of readiness for general purpose and nuclear forces formed the essential Russian combat readiness system elements. Combat readiness applied to peacetime, the period of threat preceding the outbreak of war and after the outbreak of war. Since it could apply to peacetime and wartime conditions, Russian thinkers referred to it as *permanent combat readiness*. In this regard, the peacetime activity of the Russian military was "the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces and their subsequent use in various forms in strategic actions."[159] According to Gareyev, strategic actions were "unequivocally oriented towards direct confrontation with a potential enemy."[160] Therefore, the Russian combat readiness system aimed to be ready for a direct military confrontation with the potential adversary. To that end, the availability and high battle efficiency of general-purpose and nuclear forces could be the operational objectives of the Russian combat readiness system.

First of all, the selection of general-purpose forces came out of a decade long military debate about whether to rely on land forces or aerospace forces in a future war. A large and growing body of literature in the early 2000s indicates that the advocates of rapidly deployable land forces (general-purpose forces) prevailed over those who prioritized aerospace forces. This preference was primarily the outcome of traditionalist influence in Russian military thinking and the war in Chechnya. Leading traditionalists such as M.A. Gareyev and Defence Minister S. B. Ivanov continued to use the operational schemes of the previous periods. In the 1970s and 1980s, Soviet strategy intended on

[156] *Ibid.*
[157] *Ibid.*
[158] Wardak, p.177.
[159] Gareyev (2009), p. 5.
[160] *Ibid.*

launching deep and paralysing conventional strikes against deep-echeloned enemy defences under the Soviet nuclear umbrella.[161] Likewise, Russian military planning was geared towards responding to threats by swiftly deploying general-purpose forces. Secondly, after the Russian military bogged down into insurgency warfare in Chechnya, the priority shifted to internal security in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In 2004, Russian Defence minister S.B. Ivanov stated that "our view of future conflicts gradually began to evolve through the prism of the counter-terrorism operations in Chechnya."[162] Consequently, the Russian political and military elite prioritized fighting local wars with capable ground forces over fighting stand-off wars.[163]

Thus, traditionalists drew the Russian High Command's attention to the role of land forces in local wars, armed conflicts, and counter-terrorism operations. In the framework of that, the Commander in Chief of the Russian Ground Forces, Colonel General A.F. Maslov suggested that "in such conflicts [not only in counter-terrorism operations but also in local wars], a decisive role in achieving victory belongs to the Ground Forces" in so far as the Russian military possessed nuclear weapons as a powerful deterrent.[164] Therefore, the Russian High Command entirely disagreed with the modernist idea that the ground forces had outlived their usefulness. General Maslov reacted to this modernist argument by putting forth three counter-arguments. According to Maslov, ground forces, first and foremost, played a decisive role when the operation aimed to take control of territory and repulse the invasion.[165] Secondly, ground forces could counter against enemy stand-off attacks thanks to their possession of long-range guided weapons systems (i.e. SS-26 ISKANDER missiles).[166] Thirdly, Maslov reiterated a long-standing traditionalist argument: "victory in a modern combat operation is only achieved by their [combat systems] joint and well-coordinated efforts, aimed to perform a considerable number of interconnected, complex tasks."[167] This statement echoed the prevailing view of the 1970s: no single weapon system or mode of warfare could decide the outcome of a war. [168] Therefore, the Russian military aimed to deal with a set of internal and external challenges primarily using rapidly deployable

[161] John G. Hines, Soviet Intentions: Volume II Soviet Post-Cold War Testimonial Evidence, (Mclean VA: BDM Federal, 1995): 57 and Gray, pp. 29-57
[162] Ivanov (2004), p. 190.
[163] Baev, p. 47 and 65.
[164] A.F. Maslov, "The Ground Forces: Past and Present*", Military Thought* 15:4 (October 2006): 18
[165] *Ibid.*
[166] *Ibid.*
[167] Ibid. p. 19.
[168] Lawrence Freedman and J. Michaels, *The Evolution of Soviet Strategy* (London, Palgrave Macmillan: 1981): 188.

ground force formations. It is for that reason that the General Staff called them general-purpose forces.

Therefore, Russian military thinkers examined the ways of increasing the combat readiness level of ground forces. To begin with, I.N. Vorobyov and VA Kiselev emphasized the importance of ensuring strategic mobility by general-purpose forces in an article entitled *Military Science at the Present Stage* in 2008. The authors argued that rapid maneuverable forces' ability to respond to a crisis would ensure strategic mobility and create asymmetry in local wars.[169] Therefore, forecasts of a future war required the Russian military to change its initial operations from the defensive/counteroffensive stereotype to asymmetric joint air-ground operations. In this operational scheme, the objective would be the "rapid creation of mobile screen, maneuvering with air-mobile reserves and delivering air and space strikes."[170] By this means, *battle-worthy operational (border) covering troops* and *rapid deployment forces* would be vital to making air-mobile defences against the enemy's in-depth penetrations. This operational scheme could also be applied to offensive operations. However, in the mid-2000s, Russian thinkers admitted that the ground forces were numerically insufficient and qualitatively incapable of performing the duties mentioned earlier.[171] Therefore, the Russian High Command launched a military reform program in the early 2000s to upgrade the combat readiness level of general-purpose forces (and nuclear forces). These upgrades on the Ground Forces predated widely known military reforms initiated by Defence Minister Anatoly Serdyukov.[172] It is conceivable that these military upgrades laid the groundwork for Serdyukov's reforms when the Georgian war in 2008 laid bare the Russian military's inefficiencies on the state of the art technology.

In this regard, the Russian military restructured the Ground Forces to promptly and efficiently respond to military threats with a minimum cost. In connection with this, Russian Ground Forces were reorganized with the introduction of three structural components on the basis of their designation and specific missions.[173] The first component was the *combined formations and units of permanent combat readiness.* These units were capable of performing missions at peacetime strength levels in local

[169] I.N. Vorobyov and V.A. Kiselev, "Military Science at Present Stage", *Military Thought* 17:3 (July 2008).
[170] I.N. Vorobyov, "Characteristics of Combat Actions (Operations) in Future Wars", *Military Thought* 14:2 (April 2005):71.
[171] Ibid, pp. 70-71.
[172] Renz, p. 58.
[173] Maslov, p. 17.

armed conflicts.[174] General-purpose forces entered into that category. The second component comprised *the units of reduced staffing levels, arms, and equipment.* [175] These units were responsible for carrying out limited combat missions at peacetime strength levels. The third component comprised the reserves, who would reinforce the first and second components of forces in a regional war.[176]

Among these, the first component was given a very high priority in combat equipment and manning. Although the level of combat equipment was generally satisfactory, "the share of modern equipment was extremely low (under 20%)."[177] Therefore, the Russian Land Force Command equipped *the units of permanent combat readiness* with new-generation information assets (reconnaissance, communication, and EW), about 4000 multi-purpose vehicles, and precision-guided (smart) weapons in the mid-2000s.[178] Furthermore, a contractual basis manning system was put in place to enhance the operational combat effectiveness of the units of permanent combat readiness. In this context, the Russian Ground Forces staffed 59 military formations and units based on the contractual system of manpower acquisition between 2004 and 2008.[179] According to Commander in Chief of the Land Forces Colonel General A. F. Maslov, these measures aimed:

> "to fulfil the tasks of localising and settling armed conflicts on regional and local levels, effectively (asymmetrically) responding to existing threats and challenges including the terrorist threat, and guaranteeing Russia's military security under any scenario."[180]

The second vital element of the Russian combat readiness system was strategic nuclear weapons. Much of the available traditionalist literature on future war introduced the possession of nuclear forces as a powerful deterrent against large-scale aggression with stand-off systems.[181] Furthermore, strategic nuclear weapons would be the most fundamental and economical means of ensuring national security.[182] According to Colonel-General V.V. Korobushin, missile and nuclear weapons were "not only less expensive, but also require substantially less personnel to maintain them in constant

[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid, p. 20.
[178] Ibid. pp. 21-23.
[179] Ibid. p. 21.
[180] Ibid. p. 18.
[181] Maslov, p. 18 and Gareyev (2009)
[182] Korobushin, p. 47.

combat readiness and rely on a fairly compact but technologically advanced scientific and engineering base."[183] Therefore, the existing strategic nuclear weapons with upgraded alert and command and control systems would constitute a powerful strategic element of Russia's combat readiness system in the long term. In 2006, Russian Defence Minister Colonel-General S.B. Ivanov revealed the importance of nuclear weapons, stating that "[w]e must have such strategic weapons that would guarantee our security now as well as 20 or 40 years from now."[184]

Accordingly, there was no question of downsizing or de-alerting strategic nuclear weapons as long as they were entrusted with the task of inflicting assured damage on the opponent.[185] This strategy could be regarded as the continuation of Russia's defensive nuclear strategy in the 1980s under its no-first-use policy. On behalf of the Russian Academy of Military Science, General Korobushin rejected a proposition on unilateral reduction of strategic nuclear forces in 2007, arguing that any reduction of the 'offensive' Russian strategic nuclear missiles would increase the effectiveness of the US missile defence system, since its (the US's) operational effectiveness was proportional to the number of warheads and antimissile systems.[186] Therefore, Russians believed that any decline in strategic nuclear weapons would increase correlation favouring the US and decrease Russia's combat readiness posture. Therefore, by not downsizing strategic nuclear missile capability, the Russian military preserved its essential nuclear deterrence capability.

In this way the Russian combat readiness system aimed to respond to local and regional armed conflicts (through general-purpose forces) and prevent the enemy from waging a large-scale stand-off war (by Russian strategic nuclear weapons). This model bears a resemblance to the Soviet strategy of the 1970s and 1980s. During that time, the Soviets saw anti-nuclear maneuvers (by armoured divisions) as a way of delivering paralyzing blows to the enemy under its nuclear umbrella.[187] Generally speaking, the Russian military pursued a similar strategy in the 2000s. Nevertheless, general-purpose forces took over the tasks of Soviet armoured units. Next to that, the war objectives were confined to Russia's immediate neighbourhood.

[183] Ibid. p. 47.
[184] *Ibid.*
[185] Ibid. p. 48.
[186] *Ibid.*
[187] U. Molostov, A. Novikov, 1988 quoted in David M. Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art: In Pursuit of Deep Battle*, (Oxon: Frank Cass, 1991): 209.

### 6.5. A new Russian concept: reflexive control within the context of information warfare

Much of the available literature on Russian military thought pays sufficient attention to fundamental military concepts. Nevertheless, fewer studies concentrate on new concepts and ideas, especially about information warfare. One of these concepts is the concept of reflexive control (RC). There are various definitions of this elusive concept. In general, RC is defined as a method of transferring to adversaries specifically prepared information or disinformation in order to nudge them to make predetermined decisions desired by the sender.[188] Indeed, academic research about RC started in the 1970s in response to the US's game theory. Nevertheless, it was not until the early 1990s that Russian thinkers considered reflexive control worthy of military attention. The growing significance of information assets in modern warfare also accelerated this process. Therefore, much of the current literature on reflexive control after the 1990s pays particular attention to information warfare and deception.

In 1995, Colonel S. Leonenko defined the concept as;

> "RC [Reflexive Control] consists of transmitting motives and grounds from the controlling entity to the controlled system that stimulate the desired decision. The goal of RC is to prompt the enemy to make a decision unfavourable to him. Naturally, one must have an idea about how he thinks."[189]

Reflexive control happens when the transmitting actor conveys motives and reasons to influence the adversaries' decisions. Nevertheless, the decision should be made independently by the receiving actor.[190] Major General MD. Ionov clarified this issue in the mid-1990s. Ionov argued that "the objective of reflexive control is to force an enemy into making objective decisions that lead to his defeat by influencing or controlling his decision-making process."[191] In this way, enemy decision-makers would annul their original plan and make disadvantageous decisions.[192] In the framework of this, Ionov specified the reflexive control techniques. These were intimidation, enticement, disinformation, deception, concealment, and other measures to shorten the enemy's

[188] Timothy, L. Thomas, "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military", *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17 (2004): 237
[189] S. Leonenko, "Reflexive control of the enemy", *Army Collection* 8 (1995): 28.
[190] *Ibid.*
[191] Ionov, 1994, quoted in Thomas (2004), p. 243.
[192] *Ibid.*

decision-making time.[193] Furthermore, power pressure, the use of superior force, force demonstrations, provocative maneuvers, ultimatums, and even limited strikes could underpin reflexive control measures.[194] All these would influence the enemy's decision-making and its decision-making time.[195] Nevertheless, being better informed about the status of enemy forces, the nature of its actions and its strategic intentions, above all, played the most crucial part in reflexive control.[196]

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, studies on reflexive control put more emphasis on information warfare. In 1999, Captain F. Chausov highlighted that the conduct of RC was mainly dependent on the intellectual potential of Russian commanders and their awareness of the situation, primarily when global information space determined the conditions of modern wars. [197] Therefore, situational awareness of the information space enabled the Russian military to forecast the enemy's decisions and give them the incentive to change them in Russia's favor. Similarly, Col. A.V. Raskin and V.S. Pelyak discussed RC within the context of *network-centric warfare* in 2005. The authors positioned RC at the first stratum of creating a controlled chaos situation in the enemy's network-centric organization (see figure-4).[198] Stratum one;

> "Stratum one [Figure-4] reflects the procedure of reflexive controlling the enemy which we can describe as personalistic. It consists of selecting from among the adversary's leadership the main persons who make decisions under various situations and transmitting to them certain types of various information to serve the basis for making decisions. The objective of reflexive control is to create favourable conditions for the performance of own combat mission by adversely affecting the opposing side's decision making." [199]

[193] M. D. Ionov, "On Reflexive Control of the Enemy in Combat", *Military Thought* 1 (January 1995): 46-47.
[194] Ibid. p. 48-49.
[195] I*bid.*
[196] Ionov, p. 1995, quoted in Thomas (2004), p. 256.
[197] Thomas (2004), p. 247.
[198] A.V.Raskin and V.S. Pelyak, p. 91.
[199] Ibid. pp.91-92.

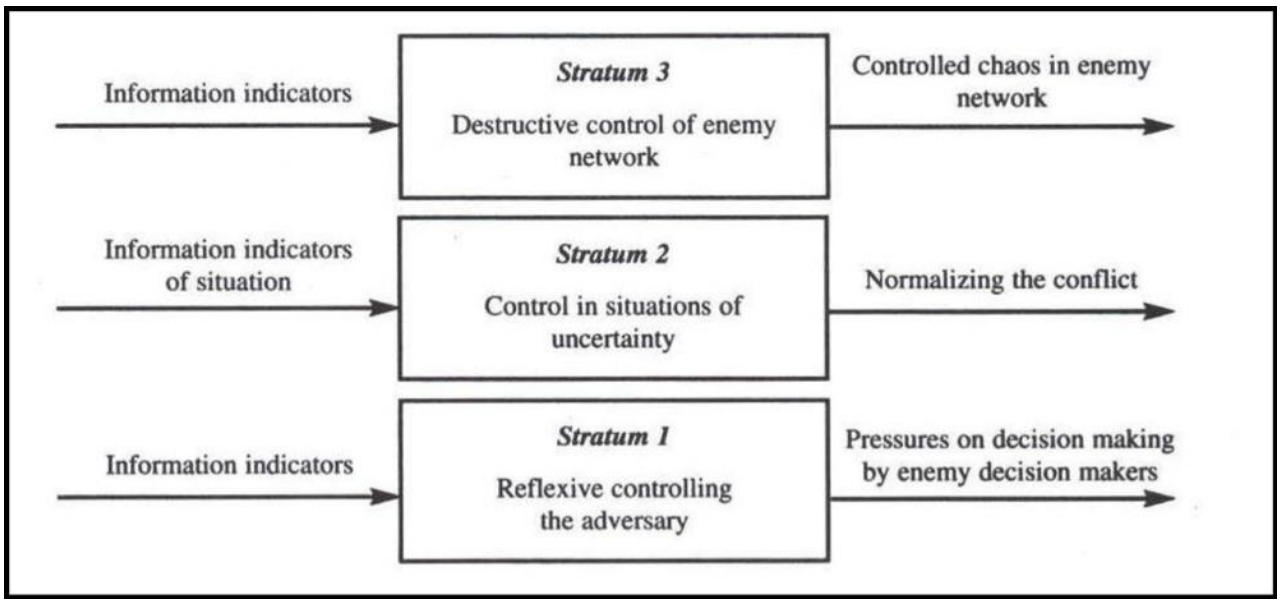


**Figure-4** Stratified Model of Destructive Controlling the Enemy Network-Centric Organisation. (Source: A.V.Raskin and V.S. Pelyak, "On Network Centric Warfare", *Military Thought* 14:2, (April 2005): 91.)

The following of *stratums* had the aim of attaining information superiority through the "*destructive control"* of the enemy's network-centric organisations.[200] RC concentrated on influencing enemy decision-making. On the other hand, information warfare was aimed tat destructing the enemy's entire command and control systems. Likewise, Vorobyov and Kiselev took part in the discussion in 2008 by associating reflexive control with information warfare in an article entitled *Military Science at the Present Stage*. In addition to that, S.A. Komov defined RC as the "intellectual method" of information warfare.[201]

The introduction of RC as an element of information warfare was subjected to criticism by the traditionalist school of thought. This criticism rested on the idea that the system of measures to influence 'human mentality' did not amount to information warfare. According to this view, RC used other types of impacts on the enemy, next to informational. [202] According to Orlyansky;

[200] *Ibid.*
[201] S. A. Komov, "About Methods and Forms of Conducting Information Warfare", *Military Thought* 4 (July–August 1997): 18–22.
[202] V.I. Orlyansky, "Deceiving the Enemy: Some Points of Essence", *Military Thought* 16:3-4 (July 2007): 236.

> "They [RC] are sooner psychological operations where deception might have limited uses and narrow aims such as exaggerating the danger and thus disorganising the enemy manpower."[203]

In light of Orlyansky's definition, RC seeks to exaggerate Russian military power to force the enemy commander to limit its course of actions. In this regard, RC was dissimilar to Russian information operations, which aimed to deceive the enemy in operations to achieve the surprise effect.[204] While RC could apply to all kinds of operations, information operations were deviational and situation-specific. Therefore, it is conceivable that the purpose of the RC is not to conceal a particular Russian operational plan. Instead, RC seeks to increase the Western perception of Russian military posture. The goal was to prevent the enemy from using its armed forces in a strategically reasonable manner.

In 2008, Orlyansky went as far as to call into question the effectiveness of RC. For Orlyansky, RC was an operational concept of conscionable wars, wars of ideologies, which aimed to apply individual and public consciousness manipulation methodologies.[205] While Orlyansky admired RC's theoretical evolution, he contradicted its effectiveness in military practice. According to Orlyansky, "information can render certain influence upon individual persons or targeted populations; however, the effectiveness of this influence is estimated today as rather low."[206] In the long run, the studies on influencing individual and public consciousness would be promising. Nevertheless, Orlyansky argued that "it is probably too early to insist that such methods are really available" in 2008.[207]

The ambiguity began to emerge as more explanations were made regarding RC from different perspectives. Therefore, the outgrowth of military theoretical works on RC might not guarantee an effective operational concept. On the other side, criticism of RC could reflect the traditionalists' broader denunciation of information means and assets in modern warfare. Generally speaking, their argument rested on the idea that information, as a tool, could not be used instead of a weapon in warfare. [208]

---

[203] Ibid. p. 236.
[204] *Ibid.*
[205] Orlyansky (2008), p. 184.
[206] *Ibid*.
[207] Ibid.p. 185.
[208] *Ibid.*

Furthermore, information itself could not be the object or subject of influence unless integrated into a carrier (i.e. weapon system).[209]

### 6.6. Continuity and discontinuity of fundamental military concepts

The results of this investigation have shown that forecasting, correlation of forms and methods, IPW, and combat readiness privileged continuity in Russian military thinking even though war's character underwent a fundamental change in the 1990s. For the most part, this continuity was stimulated by the traditionalist school of thought in the Russian High Command. Even though the modernists introduced new Western military concepts in their works, they did not attempt to replace fundamental military concepts. Nevertheless, modernists' thinking played a crucial role in integrating a concept of the 1970s, reflexive control, into Russian approaches to information warfare. In addition, the modernists endeavoured to upgrade the definition of fundamental military concepts in parallel with the changing operational environment.

The study has found that forecasting's content and strategic relevance remained unchanged. In a manner reminiscent of the Soviet era, the Russian military put the concept of forecasting into practice to predict a future war's character. By using the laws of dialectic materialism, forecasts continued to investigate a qualitative leap in military affairs. In the 1990s and 2000s, this leap was characterized by a breakthrough in conventional strategic weapons and information technologies. This leap was also accentuated by the rising importance of non-military means of warfare. Unlike traditionalists, the modernists attached great importance to forecasting since this concept promoted a new theory of warfare inspired by innovation. On the other side, the traditionalists argued that military means would dominate future wars, whereas non-military means would play decisive roles in preventing wars and armed conflicts. Finally, forecasting determined the semantic content of the other concepts, because forecasts of a future war allowed the Russian military to determine the strategic context in which the other concepts operated.

The study has found that the correlation of forms and methods secured its function of forecasting the war's outcome between 1990 and 2010. Nevertheless, the concept's semantic content tended to undergo a transformation. After the 1990s, the Russian military experienced difficulties while estimating the outcome of unconventional wars.

[209] Ibid. pp. 186-188.

Even though the modernists attempted to develop new indicators to replace the quantitative 'parity' factor, traditionalists paid insufficient attention to these attempts. The traditionalists acknowledged the increasing importance of non-military and unconventional forms of warfare, while continuing to emphasize the decisiveness of military power. Therefore, the *parity* factor remained intact as the basis for estimating the outcome of future armed conflicts. Thus, the semantic content of the concept tended to adapt itself to the requirements of unconventional warfare.

Like much of the Cold War period, the Russian military periodised both the Western and its own war design by using *preparatory*, *initial,* and *final periods*. [210] Among these periods, the emphasis was placed on the initial period of war. As it was in the late 19th century and the 1950s and 1960s, the IPW was considered the principal and decisive phase of war. In Russia's way of thinking, initial Western military operations with stand-off weapons and information/EW assets would determine the course and outcome of modern wars. For Russia, initial operations aimed to seize the strategic initiative by carrying out air-mobile maneuvers enabled by the threat of the use of tactical and operational nuclear weapons. Russian strategy was analogous to the Soviet war strategies of the 1970s and 1980s. At this time, gaining the strategic initiative through the use of paralyzing deep conventional manoeuvres and preventing the enemy from resorting to nuclear weapons laid the groundwork for the Red Army's initial operations.[211] These operations demonstrated contextual similarity between Soviet and Russian approaches to initial operations. Therefore, the semantic content of the IPW remained intact after the 1990s.

Just as in the Soviet period, the long-standing objective of seizing the initiative during the IPW required the Russian military to build a compatible combat readiness system. Therefore, military supremacy during the IPW was inextricably linked with a high state of combat readiness. Accordingly, performing initial operations with *permanent combat readiness* formations in a local war and ensuring *mobilization readiness* to wage a large-scale regional war would become the strategic objectives of the Russian combat readiness system. In the framework of this, permanent combat readiness units comprised strategic nuclear forces and newly-built general-purpose forces. Attaining war objectives with agile conventional troops under the nuclear umbrella indicated a

[210] During the 1970s and 1980s, During the 1970s and 1980s, the Soviet High Command re-periodised the war as a period of non-nuclear options [IPW], the period of limited nuclear actions, the period of nuclear options and concluding period.
[211] Wardak, p. 81-82 and Hines, p. 56.

pattern similar to the Soviet military's deep conventional maneuvers. Nevertheless, the research has found that these maneuvers acquired a mobile and asymmetric character in the 2000s. In addition, these operations were constrained to attain their objectives in local wars and armed conflicts instead of in regional and major wars. Thus, combat readiness remained essential in Russia's strategic thought. The semantic content of the concept remained unaltered. In addition, combat readiness was regarded as the sufficient precondition for ensuring deterrence and military superiority over the enemy. Thereby, this concept is linked to the correlation. Like the Soviet era, combat readiness is associated with the qualitative characteristic of the correlation.

Finally, the research has shown that a new concept, *reflexive control*, was introduced in Russian military publications between 1990 and 2010. The modernists discussed this concept within the context of information warfare. Thus, the modernist efforts played a crucial role in integrating reflexive control into Russian approaches into attaining information superiority over the enemy. On the other hand, the traditionalists insisted that this concept should operate within the confines of psychological operations. Therefore, the Russian High Command did not arrive at a consensus about the meaning and functionality of this elusive concept. While the modernists attached decisive importance to this concept in information operations, the modernists discussed it under war prevention and as a way of reducing the number of an enemy's courses of action. Furthermore, the traditionalists doubted the effectiveness of this concept in general and information itself in particular. Traditionalist criticism rested on the notion that information itself could not replace a weapon system and could only give the expected outcome in a carrier system (i.e. weapon system). Despite the rising importance of non-military means of war, the traditionalists' violent-centric and direct approaches to strategy prevailed in Russian military thinking in the 2000s. As a result, reflexive control remained intact; however, its relevance and functionality were widely discussed. Therefore, the study concludes that reflexive control falls into the category of essentially contested concepts.

## 6.7. Conclusion

The chapter set out to investigate the continuity and discontinuity of Russian fundamental military concepts between 1990 and 2010. The second aim of this chapter was to scrutinize the evolving semantic content of these concepts under various Russian military strategies. The chapter has identified that fundamental military concepts continue to lend substance to Russian military doctrine, organisational structure, and

strategy, even though Russian military thought has undergone a complete organizational transformation. A possible explanation for this is that Russian strategic culture might direct the course of military reform. Another possible explanation for this might be that the traditionalists gained a positional, numerical, generational and rank-wise advantage over the modernists in the Russian High Command. Furthermore, the modernists did not attempt to replace these concepts with Western military concepts, instead endeavoring to upgrade their semantic contents. Therefore, fundamental military concepts privileged continuity over change, provided that the Russian General Staff updated their semantic content. In this regard, the Russian military put forecasting and the COFM at its center while *anticipating the character and results of a future war*. On the other hand, *ensuring permanent combat readiness to achieve the objectives of the IPW* became one of the main principles of the Russian strategy between 1990 and 2010.

The research has also shown that the Russian High Command used fundamental military concepts to outline the U.S./NATO war strategies even though a few modernists have held to Western terminology. By this means, the traditionalists *Russianized* new Western military concepts by looking at them through the prism of fundamental military concepts. Significantly, the traditionalists disagreed on matters that run counter to the main assertations of these concepts. Instead, new ideas were questioned, de-emphasized, ignored or put into a traditionalist framework. As a result, the Russian military designed war strategies within the confines of these concepts. Therefore, understanding Russian military strategies hinges on the proper appreciation of the meaning and functionality of these concepts in military thought.

# Chapter-7

# Analysis

This dissertation, has shown that there is a significant degree of continuity in Russian military thought due to the resilience and enduring relevance of Russian fundamental military concepts between 1856 and 2010. This study has investigated fundamental military concepts in four different socio-historical and strategically distinguished periods. These are the late imperial Russian period (1856-1917), the interwar period (1917-1945), the Cold War period (1945-1990), and the contemporary period (1990-2010). In the course of that, this study sets out to investigate the continuity of Russian fundamental military concepts primarily over the twentieth century by employing conceptual history. Moreover, this study analyzes the evolution of concepts' semantic context over time. The purpose of this investigation has been to understand how concepts' content undergoes a transformation as the socio-political and strategic contexts change over time. In this regard, the research seeks to determine whether concepts' linguistic reflection in a given period could promise a functional continuity in an entirely different context. Finally, this study attempts to answer the question of why some fundamental military concepts privileged continuity over change and why others did not. For this purpose, the research has carried out three different analyses. This chapter presents and discusses the main findings of these investigations.

The research's primary objective was to investigate conceptual resilience in Russian strategic thinking. Therefore, this study traces the rise and evolution of fundamental military concepts by examining the military history of ideas. In this regard, the continuity of fundamental military concepts over time has been scrutinized based on theoretical observations. While doing that, this research pays regard to the concepts' content in every different historical period. Thereby, the present research tries to understand whether the definitions of these concepts go through changes over four different historical periods.

The second analysis seeks to build a causal relationship between concepts' strategic relevance and continuity. The enduring relevance of concepts manifests itself in the form of the continuity of a strategic idea in Russian military thought over time. On the other hand, strategic irrelevance reflects a shift in strategic thinking. Consequently, this

research focuses on strategy in addition to history. Even though this study concentrates on the history of ideas, it also pays attention to the strategic context in accordance with the premises of conceptual history, since the circumstances of war may vary in such a way that it would not be possible to consider every concept as being equally crucial in various strategic contexts. Therefore, this analysis attempts to discover whether fundamental military concepts secure their strategic relevance. By this means, this study tries to unravel whether a concept represents an analogous strategic idea under different socio-political and strategic contexts. Therefore, the present research explores concepts' functional roles in varying contexts by relying on historical observations.

The third analysis investigates the system of concepts. The purpose of this investigation is to comprehend to what extent the interrelation among concepts promotes the continuity of a strategic idea in Russian military thought. The research tries to discover to what degree varying combinations of concepts lead to the emergence of a system of thinking that fosters conceptual resilience. In this way, the study seeks to identify causal linkages between historical continuity and interrelation. Consequently, this research reveals the genealogy of concepts in every period based on the functional and semantic role that concepts play in different strategic contexts.

Finally, the fourth analysis scrutinizes conceptual resilience. By drawing on the findings of the previous three analyses, this analysis seeks to examine why and how concepts can be resilient under the impact of socio-political and strategic ruptures.

### 7. 1. The first analysis: The continuity of fundamental military concepts

The objective of this analysis is to discover whether socio-political and strategic ruptures have an impact on the continuity of fundamental military concepts between 1853 and 2010. In this analysis, the study begins by examining the rise and evolution of fundamental military concepts. Thus, this analysis unearths each concept’s commonly agreed or formal contents in four different historical periods. These four periods could be distinguished from each other by their particular ideological, political, and strategic characteristics. In particular, Imperial Russian, Marxist-Leninist before and after the Second World War and contemporary Russian theory on war developed their own concepts or revisited the existing ones. The military thinkers of each period conceptualized warfare to attain the ideological and political objectives of the ruling elite. For instance, the political objective of spreading socialist ideology in the 1920s

and 1930s brought an offensive strategy and its adherent military concepts to the forefront. Moreover, changing strategic context from trench to manoeuvre war, and from nuclear to modern conventional war, influenced the evolution of military concepts over time. As the strategic context changes, some concepts become relevant, while others lose their significance. According to conceptual history, the linguistic reflections of concepts feel the pressure of change when social and political structures break up.[1] Therefore, socio-political and strategic ruptures are expected to cause a conceptual shift in Russian military thinking. In this regard, this analysis investigates to what extent fundamental military concepts change under external influence and how they respond. Consequently, this research gives an account of how contextual ruptures affect conceptual resilience in Russian military thought.

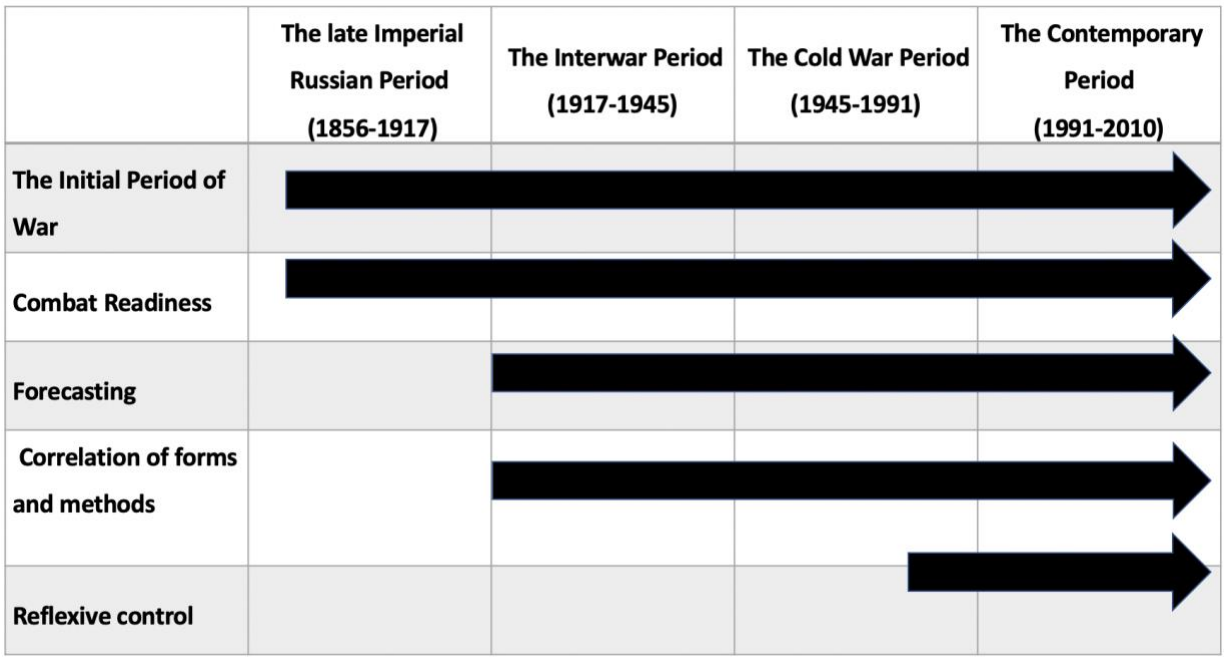


**Figure-5:** The continuity of fundamental military concepts between 1856 and 2010

Figure five shows an overview of the continuity of fundamental military concepts between 1856 and 2010. Closer inspection of the figure indicates a continuity of the initial period of war and combat readiness from the 1870s onward, forecasting and correlation of forms and methods since the 1920s, and reflexive control after the 1970s. Based on conceptual historical analyses, it can be concluded that the fundamental military concepts that emerged during the late Imperial Russian and early Soviet periods remained intact until 2010.

[1] Reinhart Koselleck, "Social History and Conceptual History", *International Journal of Politics Culture and Society* 2:3 (1989), 308

The current study has found that the historical origins of the initial period of war date back to Genrikh A. Leer's preparatory operations concept. Leer defined this concept as a period which "provides (favourable or unfavourable) initial conditions for the main operation."[2] In this regard, Leer thought this phase consisted of activities that sought to mobilize, deploy, and concentrate troops at the main area of operations without any enemy interference. Therefore, this concept allowed the Imperial Russian Army to seize the strategic initiative through an operational maneuver even before the declaration of war. During the early Soviet era, this concept inspired Alexander Svechin to formulate the initial period of war (IPW). The IPW was a preparatory period for major military operations, and it entailed all measures previously categorized as preparatory operations. Therefore, Svechin re-conceptualized an analogous idea with different terminology. According to Svechin, the IPW was "a special period of war lasting from the declaration of war to the beginning of major operations."[3] Svechin did not resort to Leer's terminology because he thought it would be inconvenient to categorize operational acts under the IPW. Unlike Leer, Svechin's vision of the IPW did not include a strategic maneuver before the beginning of major operations,[4] because Svechin defended the idea that concentration before the start of major operations could only produce limited objectives. For Svechin, the strategic maneuver could promise a victory based on the commander's operational judgment during the war, but not at the beginning.[5] Therefore, while the terminology changes, there exists a relative continuity in the awareness of a particular problem or conceptual space.

During the interwar period (1917-1939), Soviet military thinkers arrived at a consensus that major operations would not take place during the IPW. Therefore, the IPW could be characterized by a period that determined the future evolution and character of main operations. During the beginning of the Cold War, the definition of the concept underwent a transformation. In the early 1960s, the IPW of a modern missile war was defined as "the main and decisive period" that predetermined the entire war's development and outcome.[6] After the 1990s, the IPW remained the primary and decisive period of modern wars.[7] According to Russian thinkers, "the main objectives of

[2] Genrikh Antonovich Leer, *Positive Strategy (Part 1),* (Saint Petersburg, 1877), 6
[3] Alexander A. Svechin, *Strategy* (Moscow: Voennyi Vestnik, 1927) translated and published by (Minnesota: East View Information Services, 1991), pp. 201-203.
[4] Svechin, p.121.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] V.D. Sokolovsky, *Soviet Military Strategy* (Santa Monica: The Rand Cooperation, 1963), pp. 308-314.
[7] S.A. Bogdanov, "Warfare of the Future", *Military Thought* 13:1 (January 2004): 36.

future wars will be achieved in the opening phase, and that will become the turning point determining the fate of a war."[8]

This analysis has demonstrated that the IPW secured its position in Russian strategic thinking from the 1870s onwards until the 2010s. Therefore, it is plausible that the concept's meaning did not see profound variations over time, since the core idea behind the IPW was kept unchanged. This concept continued to regulate the opening phase of war and initial strategic operations. Depending on the strategic context, the concept's content was described as either the decisive or shaping period of war. As a result, the IPW could affect either the outcome or the course of war, respectively. Nevertheless, Russian military thinkers assigned different values to this concept depending on their preference for a particular strategy. According to conceptual history, concepts could gain new semantic contents in varying historical and strategic contexts. The relation between concepts' content and strategic context is examined in the second analysis.

The results of the study have shown that the antecedents of combat readiness can be traced back to the late Imperial Russian period. In the late 19th century, the mobilization and concentration of troops during the preparatory operations phase would characterize Leer's understanding of combat readiness. By this means, the Imperial Russian military had sought to ensure superiority at the beginning of war against an otherwise numerically stronger but unprepared enemy.[9] During the early Soviet era, combat readiness was associated with militarizing the Soviet state organs such as the industry, economy, military etc., in peacetime within the framework of front and rear in the future war.[10] During the Cold War, the Soviet military described combat readiness as "a state and capability which ensure the desired security of the nation in peacetime and the achievement of specific aims in the case of war."[11] After the 1990s, the Russian General Staff specified combat readiness as "subunit readiness to join in a battle in an organised way and at a time specified by command and to successfully carry out the tasks."[12] Therefore, the definition of the concept did not see a profound change over time. Nevertheless, the concept's meaning gained an operational character, especially after the beginning of the Cold War. Thereby, some operational criteria (i.e. state, capability,

[8] V.N. Gorbunov and S.A., Bogdanov, "Armed Confrontation in the 21st Century", *Military Thought* 18:1 (January 2009): 27.
[9] Leer, p. 53.
[10] Walter Darnell Jacobs, *Frunze: The Soviet Clausewitz 1885-1925* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), p. 123-125.
[11] Ghulam Dastagır Wardak, *The Voroshilov Lectures: Materials from the Soviet General Staff Academy*, *Volume-1,* (Washington: The National Defence University Press, 1989), 177.
[12] "The main principles of Combat", Editor, *Military Thought* 11:4, (July 2002): 15.

time) were added to the concept's definition to test and verify the combat readiness level of the Russian Armed Forces.

The study has found that the roots of forecasting date back to the early Soviet period. In the 1920s, Lenin associated scientific forecasting with the "knowledge of the objective laws of the evolution of nature and society."[13] Inspired by the Marxist-Leninist theory of cognition, the Soviet military thinkers believed that knowing the laws of the evolution of nature and society could help the Soviet military remove the uncertainties of future war.[14] In this regard, the Soviets employed forecasting to foresee the character of a future war, the enemy strategy, and the war's conditions. During the Cold War, the concept was defined as "the research process, as a result of which we obtain probability data about the future state of the object being forecast."[15] Furthermore, the Soviets described military forecasting as "the study of military-political situation, the pattern of the war in the future, the prospects of developing strategy, operational art, and tactics, the qualitative and quantitative composition of the means of armed conflict (one's own and the enemy's), the prospects for the development of the potential of the war economy on the future, and forecasting of the enemy's strategic and tactical plans."[16] After the Cold War, the concept was defined as "a leap over an information divide, the identification of the essence of forthcoming military phenomena with obviously incomplete background data."[17] Therefore, the concept's content remained mainly unaltered. Broadly speaking, the concept signified the Russian military's endeavor to foresee a future war's character and qualitative leaps in military affairs.

This study has indicated that the correlation of forms and methods appeared in Russian military thinking in the 1920s, together with the studies on forecasting. Nevertheless, systematic conceptualization took place only in the 1970s. In the 1920s, the concept was used to compare different forms of warfare. In that regard, A. Svechin and G. Isserson utilized this concept to investigate whether the technological developments in weapon systems (i.e. tanks, artillery) would promise victory under offensive or defensive strategy in a future war. During the Cold War, the Soviet dictionary of military terms defined the concept as "the aggregate of indices permitting evaluation of the

[13] Yu. V. Chuyev, and Yu. B. Mikhaylov, *Forecasting in Military Affairs: A Soviet View*, (Moscow: Ministry of Defence 1975) published by (Washington: The US Government Printing Office), 23. Translated by the DGIS Multilingual Section Translation Bureau, Ottawa.
[14] Chuyev and Mikhaylov, p. 24.
[15] Ibid. p. 8.
[16] Ibid. p. 14.
[17] I.N. Vorobyov, "Military Futurology", *Military Thought* 17:2, (April 2008): 164.

relatively friendly and hostile troops, by comparative analysis of the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of troop organisation, performance, data on armament, and combat material."[18] Therefore, the concept was used to compare the means and methods of opposing forces to estimate the outcome of a conflict. After the Cold War the concept was introduced as "an objective indicator of the combat power of opposing forces, which makes it possible to determine the degree of superiority of one force over the other or the outcome of a war."[19] Therefore, the concept served to determine supremacy in a future war by relying on selected criteria. The research has found that the concept's definition became more structured and detailed after the 1970s. Since then, the Russian General Staff has designed quantitative and qualitative criteria to anticipate a war's outcome.

Finally, the research has found that Russian thinkers considered reflexive control worthy of military attention after the 1990s, even though academic studies on this concept date back to the 1970s. In this regard, several Russian thinkers attempt to define the concept from various perspectives. For the purpose of this analysis, I'll present some of the more prominent definitions of this concept. According to S. Leonenko, reflexive control "consists of transmitting motives and grounds from the controlling entity to the controlled system that stimulate the desired decision. The goal of RC is to prompt the enemy to make a decision unfavourable to him." [20] According to A.V. Raskin and V.S. Pelyak,

> "It [Reflexive Control] consists of selecting from among the adversary's leadership the main persons who make decisions under various situations and transmitting to them certain types of various information to serve [as] the basis for making decisions."[21]

According to V.I. Orlyansky, "[t]hey [RC] are sooner psychological operations where deception might have limited uses and narrow aims such as exaggerating the danger and thus disorganising the enemy manpower."[22] On the whole, the common thread in

[18] Oleksij Ivanovyc Radzievskyj, *Dictionary of Basic Military Terms: A Soviet View* (Moscow: The Ministry of Defence of the Soviet Union, 1965) Published by (Washington: The US Government Printing Office, 1965), 204. Translated by the DGIS Multilingual Section Translation Bureau Secretary of State Department.
[19] Russian military encyclopaedia, quoted in Thomas (2016), 8.
[20] S. Leonenko, "Reflexive control of the enemy", *Army Collection* 8 (1995): 28.
[21] A.V.Raskin and V.S. Pelyak, "On Network Centric Warfare", *Military Thought* 14:2, (April 2005): 91.
[22] V.I. Orlyansky, "Information Weapons and Information Warfare: Realities and Speculations", *Military Thought* 17:1. (January 2008): 184.

these explanations is that RC aims to influence enemy military decision makers' decisions to the Russian military's advantage. Therefore, there is a tacit agreement on the concept's content. In contrast, discussions revolved around the functional use of the concept. The arguments on the concept's semantic content will be presented in the second analysis.

The results of this investigation have shown that socio-political and strategic ruptures have a marginal impact on the continuity of fundamental military concepts over time. These concepts privileged continuity over change in Russian military thinking even though socio-political context and the character of war underwent a series of profound shifts. The results of this analysis have indicated that the Russian General Staff updated and enriched the content of fundamental military concepts, instead of entirely discarding them. As a result, concepts acquired new semantic contents in order to explain and deal with war's changing character. By this means, the concepts remained capable of laying the theoretical framework for new war strategies, defence, and arms production plans. The roots of conceptual resilience will be examined during the upcoming analyses.

Continuity of military concepts [is] primarily associated with the traditionalists' influence in military thought. Traditionalists managed to maintain relative dominance over promotions, professional military education, appointments to the military schools, and military curriculum, all of which resulted in a comparatively dominant body of military opinion among Russian military officers. In this regard, the traditionalists tended to revitalize military concepts' previous employment even though war's character underwent a change. Consequently, their ideas helped fundamental military concepts survive.

## 7.2. The second analysis: Investigating the causal link between strategic relevance and continuity

This study investigates 'continuity' by analysing whether the concepts' strategic relevance continued over time. Therefore, this research has focused on Russian military strategy in addition to history. Thus, the continuity of fundamental military concepts would be meaningful if they secured the strategic idea ascribed to them over time. Thereby, *fundamentalness* is inextricably linked with the concepts' semantic content. Understanding the continuity of concepts' semantic content and functional use is possible, provided that this research discovers the socio-political and strategic context

during the period under investigation. Therefore, the second analysis of the study examines how concepts' semantic content evolved under various Russian war strategies. The purpose of this investigation is to measure the enduring relevance of fundamental military concepts over different socio-political periods.

For the purpose of this research, I have designed three categories to classify concepts' strategic relevance. These are: essentially contested, merely common, or strategically essential. Essentially contested concepts "involves endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users" even though there is an inexplicit agreement about the idea attached to this concept.[23] Therefore, much disagreement exists regarding the application of these concepts to a strategy. Merely common concepts involve a widespread agreement on their content; however, they are strategically irrelevant. Therefore, military strategies do not predominantly rely on the application of these concepts. Finally, strategically essential concepts are crucial to forming and practising strategies. In addition to that, there is a widespread consensus on their meaning.

| | **The late Imperial Russian Period (1856-1917)** | **The Interwar Period (1917-1945)** | **The Cold War Period (1945-1991)** | **The Contemporary Period (1991-2010)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The Initial Period of War** | Strategically essential (as preparatory operations) | • Merely Common under the attrition strategy (the 1920s)<br>• Strategically essential under annihilation strategy (the 1930s) | Strategically essential | Strategically essential |
| **Combat Readiness** | Strategically essential | Strategically essential | Strategically essential | Strategically essential |
| **Forecasting** | | Strategically essential | Strategically essential | Strategically essential |
| **Correlation of forms and methods** | | Strategically essential | Strategically essential | • Strategically essential under conventional war strategies<br>• Essentially contested under unconventional warfare strategies |
| **Reflexive control** | | | | Essentially contested |

**Figure-6:** Strategic relevance of fundamental military concepts between 1856 and 2010

[23] David Hillel Ruben, "'W.B. Gallie and Essentially Contested Concepts," *Philosophical Papers* 39:2 (2010), 257.

Figure six provides a breakdown of the relevance status of fundamental military concepts between 1856 and 2010. First of all, forecasting prevailed in Russian strategic thought irrespective of changing strategic context. The Russian military utilized this concept from the 1920s onward to predict and deal with the qualitative leaps in military affairs. As seen in the concept's definition, the concept studies "the prospects of developing strategy, operational art, and tactics".[24] Thenceforth, this concept heavily influenced military strategy by foreseeing trends, shifts, and breakthroughs in war's changing character based on the specific laws of dialectic materialism. In that regard, forecasting laid the groundwork for developing various war strategies and defence and arms production plans in Russian military history. The study has shown that forecasting war's changing character helped the Russian General Staff determine military strategies for a future war. Furthermore, forecasting contributed to forming a strategic context in which other military concepts operate. Therefore, a vital link existed between forecasting and military strategy. Consequently, this study has found that forecasting has been a strategically essential concept in Russian military thought since the 1920s.

The Soviets and Russians pursued two primary approaches while establishing linkages between forecasting and war strategy. On the one side, the traditionalists saw existing means and methods as viable options for coping with the forecasted qualitative leaps in military affairs. For instance, the Russian General Staff relied on its nuclear and general-purpose forces while developing counter-strategies against Western supremacy in precision (guided munitions) warfare in the 2000s. On the other hand, the modernists emphasized that adapting to the forecasted operational environment required the Russian military to adopt and use new (primarily Western) means and methods. According to this body of opinion, forecasting allowed the Russian military to access innovative and technology-driven military science. This idea became more critical when the Russian military could not foresee the breakthroughs in unconventional means and methods of warfare after the 1990s. Therefore, forecasting was key to comprehending Western-led military conceptual and technological studies. It is not a coincidence that Gerasimov underscored forecasting in his famous speech in 2013 while stressing developments in modern warfare.[25]

The study has found that the IPW falls into the category of strategically essential concepts. The origins of this concept date back to Leer's pioneering studies on

[24] Chuyev and Mikhaylov, p. 14.
[25] Valeriy Gerasimov "The value of science is prediction" *Military-Industrial Courier* 8 (2013) 1–3.

preparatory operations in the 1870s. During the late 19th century, preparatory operations consisted of a group of strategic actions performed in peacetime, such as concentrating and deploying the army at the theater of operations.[26] In Leer's operation design, the success of the main operations hinged predominantly on the preparatory operations phase's activities, because Leer was the advocate of a short war of annihilation. During the Soviet era, Leer's operational design drew criticism on the grounds that he was preoccupied with preparatory operations. By rejecting Leer's terminology, A. Svechin periodized war into three categories: the pre-mobilization period, the initial period and the subsequent period of war.[27] The IPW was characterized by a period "lasting from declaration of war to the beginning of major operations when general mobilisation is carried out, and armed forces are concentrated and deployed for the first major operations."[28] Since Svechin prioritized the strategy of attrition over annihilation, he did not predict that the decisive phase of war should be the IPW. Nevertheless, the advocates of the deep operations such as G.S. Isserson and M. N. Tukhachevsky in the 1930s ascribed relatively more importance to the IPW than Svechin. According to the proponents of the annihilation strategy, the initial operations determined the further development and character of deep operations.[29] Therefore, the strategic relevance of the IPW gradually increased in the 1930s and 1940s under the theory of deep operations.

Since the Soviets anticipated a surprise nuclear attack in the 1950s and 1960s, the IPW became the 'decisive' period of a short war of annihilation. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Soviet General Staff re-periodized the war. These periods were: the period of non-nuclear options [IPW], the period of limited nuclear actions, the period of nuclear options, and the concluding period. Thus, the functionality of the IPW shifted from a decisive period of war to a period when the Red Army sought to grasp the strategic initiative, like in the 1930s, because the Soviet General Staff's forecasts necessitated a shift in strategy from a major nuclear war to a protracted conventional war under the threat of nuclear weapons. Gaining the strategic initiative by paralyzing deep conventional maneuvers and preventing the enemy from resorting to nuclear weapons had laid the groundwork for the Red Army's initial operations.[30]

[26] Leer, p. 6.
[27] Svechin, p.201-203.
[28] Andrei A. Kokoshin*, Soviet Strategic Thought, 1917-1991* (London: The MIT Press, 1998), p. 68
[29] Georgii Samoilovich Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art*, (Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013), 44.
[30] Wardak, p. 81-82 and Hines, p. 56.

After the Cold War, the Russian military held on to the scheme of *preparatory*, *initial,* and *final periods*. Among these, the Russian General Staff attached decisive importance to the IPW. Firstly, Russian thinkers argued that Western military operations acquired an annihilation character due to the effective use of precision warfare during the IPW.[31] In return, Russian General Staff adopted the strategy of indirect action, which included "military actions through the indirect physical destruction (smashing) of the adversary in a roundabout way." [32] This strategy aimed to create asymmetry by making armed forces more maneuverable and strategically mobile.[33] This strategy relied on air-mobile maneuvers against emerging threats during the IPW in order to seize the strategic initiative. At the same time, nuclear deterrence would thwart the enemy's possible stand-off attacks at this phase. Thus, the IPW remained the decisive phase of the strategy of indirect action. Therefore, the semantic content of the IPW remained intact after the 1990s. In addition to that, the study has identified a contextual similarity between Soviet and Russian approaches to initial operations.

The evidence from this study suggests that the content of IPW showed context-dependent semantic similarities. Under recurring loops, the IPW continued to function as either the decisive period of a war of annihilation or as the shaping period of a war of attrition between the 1870s and 1990. Under the indirect action strategy, the IPW became the decisive phase of war. Therefore, the content of the IPW ranged from a decisive period to a period when the Russian military aimed to grasp the strategic initiative over the 20th century. Despite a short period of marginalization in the 1920s, the IPW became a strategically essential concept of Russian strategic culture. Next to its continuity, this concept secured its strategic relevance even though the strategic context changed over time.

The research has identified that combat readiness remained strategically essential between the 1870s and 2010. This concept appeared in Russian strategic thinking in the 1870s. Due to its backwardness in mobilization and technology, the Imperial Russian General Staff thought that only a standing combat-ready army could ensure superiority against an otherwise numerically stronger but unprepared enemy. According to Leer, the primary objective of combat readiness is to "suddenly (stealthily and quickly) concentrate superior forces on the battlefield before the enemy and put them

[31] V.A. Vinogradov, "Characteristics of Modern Combined-Arms Operations", *Military Thought* 10:1 (January 2001): 25.
[32] I.N. Vorobyov and V.A. Kiselev," The New Strategy of the Indirect Approach", *Military Thought* 15:4 (October 2006):27.
[33] Ibid. p. 32.

in an advantageous position."[34] Therefore, the purpose of combat readiness was to win a short war of annihilation without a need for wartime mobilization. After 1917, the Soviets relied on offensive strategy due to the Soviet political ambition to spread the socialist revolution abroad. Under the deep battle strategy, peacetime combat readiness allowed the Red Army to break the enemy front during the IPW. Subsequently, the Soviets ensured wartime mobilization the readiness to empower the units to unceasingly carry out deep follow-up operations in a long-protracted war. In this regard, the Soviet General Staff sought to ensure perpetual combat readiness, which prevailed in peacetime and exponentially increased in times of war.

During the nuclear euphoria, the anticipation of a Western surprise nuclear attack stimulated the Soviet High Command to introduce combat readiness as the main priority and task of Soviet military science. Thus, attaining constant combat readiness to win the initial (nuclear) operations and ensuring mobilization readiness to win the subsequent (non-nuclear) period of war were crucial for Soviet strategy.[35] The Soviets prioritized constant combat readiness over wartime mobilization due to the anticipation of a surprise nuclear attack in the 1960s. In the 1970s and 1980s, the objective of winning the IPW of both a conventional and a nuclear war compelled the Soviet High Command to keep the entire armed forces in a state of constant combat readiness.[36] After the 1990s, the functionality of combat readiness resembled the concept's use during the later stages of the Cold War. In this regard, performing initial operations with permanent combat readiness formations in a local war and ensuring mobilization readiness to wage a large-scale regional war became the objectives of the Russian combat readiness system. [37]

The common thread through all these historical definitions is that attaining the goals of the IPW without additional mobilization and achieving the objectives of the subsequent periods of war through mobilization readiness determined the content of the Imperial Russian, Soviet, and Russian combat readiness. Despite changing war strategies, the Russian General Staff's initial and subsequent war objectives were mainly founded on a well-designed and robust combat readiness system. Therefore, combat readiness was crucial for attaining Russian war strategies' objectives over different periods. Thus, the concept's strategic relevance remained unaffected between the 1870s and 2010. In

[34] Genrikh Antonovich Leer, *Positive Strategy (Part 1)* (Saint Petersburg, 1877), 6
[35] V.D. Sokolovsky, *Soviet Military Strategy* (Santa Monica: The Rand Cooperation, 1963), 339.
[36] Wardak (Voroshilov-1), p. 178.
[37] M. A. Gareyev, "Russia's New Military Doctrine", Military Thought 16:2 (April 2007):10.

addition to its continuity, the concept remained strategically essential.

The correlation of forms and methods became strategically relevant during the Soviet period. The concept emerged in Soviet military thinking in the 1920s, and it became an effective theoretical instrument of predicting a war's outcome in different strategic contexts. During the interwar period, the correlation was employed to determine the impact of technological development on Soviet war strategies. Among others, Georgi S. Isserson concluded that new technical means, such as a machine gun mounted on a tank, brought a qualitative solution to the problem of Western quantitative firepower superiority.[38] In this regard, the Soviets believed that the qualitative effectiveness of new weapon systems would make 'the strategy of offence' a more viable option for the Soviet military. This concept was used during the nuclear era to estimate the war's outcome by comparing quantitative and qualitative distinctions of opposing forces using the parity factor. In this regard, the Soviets aimed to ensure parity in nuclear weapons to prevent the enemy from launching a surprise attack. After the 1970s, the parity in strategic and theatre (tactical) nuclear missiles resulted in the possibility of war remaining conventional. Subsequently, Soviet General Staff sought to attain supremacy in conventional systems.

During the 1990s, the correlation was primarily used to compare Russia's military-strategic and military-economic potential with that of an adversary by using the parity factor. Nevertheless, the research has found that the Russian military encountered challenges in correlating unconventional means of opposing forces. Thus, the concept's semantic content drew criticism from the modernist cadres of the Russian General Staff. As a result, this body of opinion made several attempts to upgrade and enrich the concept's semantic content with new qualitative criteria in addition to quantitative parity. Even though the traditionalists' view on the concept's semantic use (i.e. quantitative parity factor) prevailed in strategic thought, the debate on the concept's relevance under new unconventional and information means of warfare did not come to an end.

The correlation remained strategically essential under conventional war strategies. However, this concept fell into the category of essentially contested concepts under unconventional war strategies. Subsequently, the modernists endeavored to revitalize

[38] Isserson, p. 49.

the concept's strategic relevance by offering new qualitative criteria for the concept's semantic content, such as being better informed (information superiority) and the civilizing factor (public opinion). These attempts indicate that the Russian military strove to keep this concept instead of discarding it. Thus, the concept continued to occupy a crucial function in Russian military thought even though its semantic content tended to undergo a transformation.

Finally, the research has found that reflexive control could be an essentially contested concept. Academic studies of this concept started in the 1970s. Nevertheless, it was not until the early 1990s that Russian thinkers considered reflexive control worthy of military attention. After the 1990s, the Russian High Command did not reach a consensus on this elusive concept's functional use, even though there is a preliminary agreement on the idea attached to this concept. Compared with the other fundamental military concepts, reflexive control occupied an ambiguous place in Russian military thought between 1990 and 2010, since its functionality remained impalpable.

After the 1990s, information means greatly influenced the character of armed struggle. Thus, modernist thinking played a crucial role in integrating reflexive control into Russian approaches toward attaining information and intellectual superiority over the enemy. Despite the rising importance of non-military means of war, the traditionalists' violent-centric and direct approaches to strategy prevailed in Russian military thinking in the 2000s. Therefore, this body of opinion marginalized the relevance of this concept.

The discussions revolved around whether this concept should be examined within the context of information warfare or psychological operations. On the one hand, the modernists suggested that reflexive control of the enemy constituted the first phase of the destruction of the enemy's information network.[39] On the other hand, the traditionalists disagreed with this approach. According to this body of opinion, this concept should be examined as part of psychological operations, which aimed to increase the Western perception of Russian military posture. Apart from these, some Russian thinkers went as far as to question the military effectiveness of this concept.

The research has shown that reflexive control remained intact; however, the concept's employment varied. Despite the continuity, the strategic relevance of this concept is

[39] A.V.Raskin and V.S. Pelyak, "On Network Centric Warfare", Military Thought 14:2, (April 2005): 91.

relatively weak compared to that of the other concepts. Subsequently, this research has not identified any evidence that makes this concept vital for attaining the objectives of annihilation, attrition, and indirect strategies. Instead, the traditionalists insisted on placing this concept (together with other non-military means) under the pre-war phase to reduce the enemy's courses of action. The research argues that the traditionalists played an essential role in deemphasizing the importance of reflexive control. Nevertheless, reflexive control survived after the 1990s and became even more critical under the new operational environment. Therefore, reflexive control falls into the category of essentially contested concepts, even though the concept privileged continuity over change after the Cold War.

### 7.3. The Third Analysis: Investigating the causal link between the genealogy of concepts and continuity

The second analysis has shown that fundamental military concepts secured their positions in military thinking with the provision that they ensured their strategic relevance. In the third analysis, I seek to investigate another possible reason for the continuity: interrelation among fundamental military concepts. In this thesis, I defend the argument that fundamental military concepts privileged continuity over change on the condition that they were positioned within the genealogy of concepts. Genealogy refers to the degree to which the concepts have historically formed the basis for a particular system of thinking strategically. Genealogy typically connotes lineage rather than a system. Therefore, concepts secure their existence as long as they are tied to each other. The interrelation among these concepts promoted continuity. At the same time, a fundamental military concept would also function as a context for other concepts thanks to the relationship and interdependencies among them. Therefore, a fundamental military concept's functional use in a strategic context is connected with its relation to and dependency on other concepts. For this reason, this study has also examined the genealogy of concepts in four different periods, based on the functional role that concepts play in different strategic contexts. By revealing the level of interconnectivity and interdependencies among fundamental military concepts, I explain why these concepts remained valid over time. Because only in that way can the system of concepts lay the theoretical framework for Russian strategic thinking. In conjunction with this, the third analysis investigates how fundamental military concepts fit together into a whole system of military theory and analysis.

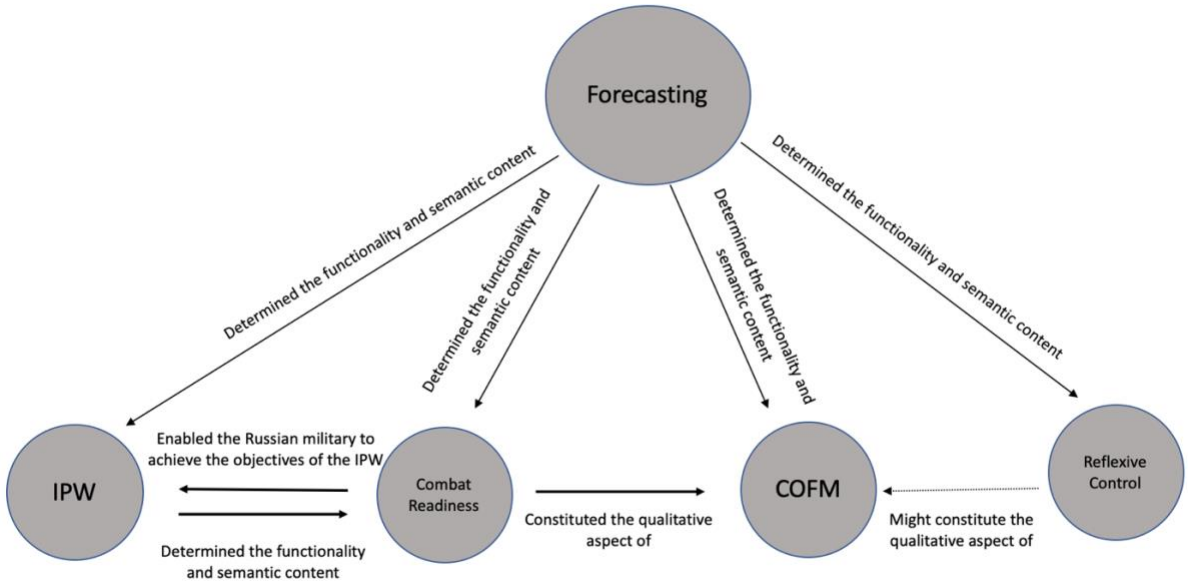


**Figure-7:** The interrelation among fundamental military concepts

Figure seven presents interrelations among fundamental military concepts. The figure illustrates that there is a certain degree of dependency and hierarchy among them. In this regard, forecasting was positioned at the top of the conceptual order of the genealogy of concepts. This concept studied the "prospects of developing strategy and operational art" by foreseeing the qualitative leaps in military affairs.[40] In doing so, forecasting helps the Russian General Staff specify the strategic context. Therefore, the semantic content of other fundamental military concepts differed under the forecasting's suppositions. Thereby, forecasting was instrumental in the occurrence of shifts in Russian strategic thought. Consequently, the Russian General Staff revised fundamental military concepts' semantic content to increase their capacity to explain the new operational environment.

As seen in the figure-3, the research has revealed dependencies between the IPW and combat readiness. These two concepts have been closely connected in Russian military thinking since the 1870s. Under the annihilation strategy, the longstanding objective of attaining superiority during the IPW without mobilization required the Russian military to keep its forces in a high state of combat readiness. Since this strategy ascribed decisive importance to the IPW, combat readiness became very critical. Because combat readiness enabled the Russian military to achieve the IPW's goals. The research has observed this type of relationship during the late 19th century; during the period of

[40] Chuyev and Mikhaylov, p. 14

nuclear euphoria (the late 1950s and 1960s); and in the early 2000s. For instance, when the IPW gained a decisive character during the nuclear euphoria, the Russian General Staff kept its armed forces in a state of constant combat readiness in peacetime and in times of war. The common thread in all these historical examples is that the Russian military increased its combat readiness footprint when the IPW become more critical. Under the attrition strategy, the IPW became the shaping period of war. In that situation, Russian combat readiness sought to ensure both peacetime combat readiness to win the initial operations and mobilization readiness to win the war. The research has found that this relationship was visible during the interwar (1917 and 1939) and the late Cold War periods (the 1970s and 1980s).

The IPW determined the relevance and semantic content of combat readiness, because the scale and content of combat readiness predominantly rested on the importance ascribed to the IPW. In this regard, the IPW has a superior position in Russian military thought in relation to combat readiness. On the other hand, combat readiness enabled the Russian military to achieve the objectives of the IPW. Therefore, combat readiness functioned as an enabler instead of a determinant. Taken together, these two concepts are strongly linked to each other. Moreover, these concepts operate together under various military strategies.

The research has identified a horizontal relationship between the correlation of forms and methods and combat readiness. In Russian thinking, correlation helped the Russian General Staff make quantitative and qualitative queries of the military forces of opposing sides to predict war's outcome. The qualitative aspect of this investigation was associated with combat readiness. Combat readiness fell into that category since the qualitative inquiry introduced 'the combat capability' as an adequate criterion and because the Russians defined combat readiness as 'the combat capability' of armed forces to ensure desired security and deterrence over an adversary.[41] Therefore, the qualitative dimension of correlation hinged in part on the combat readiness level of Russian troops. (The other qualitative aspect of correlation was technological superiority) When the Russian military could not ensure numerical (in the late 19th century) or technological supremacy (after the Cold War) over the enemy, it attempted to compensate for these deficiencies by increasing its combat readiness posture. By this

[41] A.L.Khryapin and V.A. Afanasyev, "Conceptual Principles of Strategic Deterrence", *Military Thought* 14:1 (January 2005): 31.

means, the achievement of surprise multiplies the correlation in the Russian military's favour.[42]

Finally, the research has not discovered any interrelation between reflexive control and the other fundamental military concepts. This concept was predominantly discussed under non-military means and methods of warfare between 1990 and 2010. During this timeframe, the prevailing idea in the Russian General Staff was that non-military means, especially information means, would play important roles in preventing wars and armed conflicts. Therefore, the concept did not interact with the concepts of performing war. Nevertheless, the Russian military's modernists' opinion argued that reflexive control could be vital for carrying out information warfare. In that regard, this concept would likely be more important if it were linked to the correlation, following the modernists' attempts to update the concept's (correlation) content (see figure-3 with a dashed arrow between correlation and reflexive control).

The research has found that the modernists considered quantitative parity ineffective in estimating the outcomes of unconventional forms of war (i.e. information warfare and counter-insurgency). If the modernists attempt to add qualitative criteria (i.e. being better informed) into the correlation's content became successful, the relevance of reflexive control would increase. In this case, reflexive control of the enemy would contribute to attaining information and intellectual superiority over the enemy in times of war. Therefore, the traditionalist's direct and violent-oriented perception of modern warfare could explain the relative seclusion of reflexive control from the genealogy of concepts. Nevertheless, a study in 2018 has already related information superiority to this concept.[43] Thus, the strategic relevance of reflexive control would increase as long as the concept served to attain information superiority over the enemy during the 2010s. This probability depends predominantly on the level of traditionalists school of thought's influence on non-military means of war.

The results of the third analysis have presented a certain degree of interrelation among fundamental military concepts. Thus, these linkages constituted a system of concepts that laid the theoretical framework of Russian military thought, doctrine, and principles. In this regard, this analysis concludes that fundamental military concepts privileged

[42] David M. Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art: In Pursuit of Deep Battle* (Oxon: Frank Cass, 1991), 224.
[43] Timothy L Thomas, *Russian Military Thought: Concepts and Elements* (Mclean: MITRE, 2019), 4-6

continuity over change on the condition that they were positioned within the genealogy of concepts.

### 7.4. The fourth analysis: Examining the conceptual resilience

This analysis seeks to investigate why and how fundamental military concepts can be resilient through changing historical contexts. Drawing on the findings of the preceding analyses, it can be argued that conceptual resilience is closely linked with the historical continuity of Russian strategic culture, the enduring relevance of the concepts and their development into a system of thinking. Towards that end, this query gives additional insights into the causes of conceptual resilience under the pressure of contextual change.

As to the historical aspect (the first analysis), the research has shown that conceptual change did not happen despite the fact that Russian military thought went through four contextual shifts between 1856 and 2010. Fundamental military concepts succeeded in securing their positions in Russia's conceptualization of modern warfare. There are several possible explanations for this result. Firstly, Tsarist officers in the Red Army ensured the continuity of Imperial Russian military heritage in Soviet military science. Consequently, the IPW and combat readiness prevailed in the Soviet's conceptualization of warfare during the interwar and Cold War periods. Secondly, after the 1990s, the Russian Military began seeking a new philosophy of war, shaped by Imperial Russian military heritage. As a result, contemporary Russian military thinkers and practitioners showed an increased interest in the ideas of Imperial Russian military thinkers.[44] In this regard, the ideas of Genrikh A. Leer, Nikolai P. Mikhnevich and Alexander Svechin were revitalized during the 2000s. This tendency could also be considered as an indication instead of an explanation. Nevertheless, the research has concluded that the legacy of the Imperial Russian military thinkers guaranteed the continuity of fundamental military concepts during the Soviet and contemporary Russian periods. Taken together, the historical continuity of Imperial Russian strategic culture was instrumental in promoting conceptual resilience.

The research has also shown that fundamental military concepts of Soviet military heritage remained intact even after the 1990s. Despite the decreasing influence of

[44] Ofer Fridman, *Strategiya: The Foundations of the Russian art of Strategy* (London: Hurst&Company, 2021), 2.

Marxist-Leninist theory on war, forecasting and correlation continued to shape Russian military thinking. The permanence of Soviet military heritage could be explained by the role and influence of the traditionalist school of thought in Russian General Staff. Because this body of opinion gained a positional, numerical, and generational advantage over the modernists in the Russian High Command. Consequently, their ideas helped fundamental military concepts survive. Traditionalists' conservative outlook on military theory promoted the continuity of fundamental military concepts of both the Marxist-Leninist and the Russian Imperial theory of war. In this regard, the traditionalists struggled to revitalize military concepts' previous employment even though war's character underwent a change. In this regard, the Russian General Staff employed fundamental military concepts while designing new strategies that responded to the changes in military technology.

The study has found that fundamental military concepts secured their positions in military thinking, provided that they have remained strategically relevant. The research has concluded that fundamental military concepts have continued to influence the formation of the strategic context in every historical period. Succeeding generations of Russian thinkers and planners considered fundamental military concepts relevant to actual defence and operational planning. In this regard, concepts can be resilient as long as their dispositions and semantic content is able to explain and influence Russian military strategies under different circumstances. In this regard, we can conclude that 'strategically essential concepts' were more prone to continuity. They remained unscathed, provided that their semantic content continued to give form to overall strategic thinking. The research has also demonstrated that 'merely common concepts' proved resilient under specific strategies. Some concepts fell into the merely common concept category when a military strategic decision did not entirely depend on the suppositions of these concepts. Nevertheless, merely common concepts retained their relevance until the Russian General Staff opted for another strategy. Therefore, these concepts were not discarded from military thought. Finally, essentially contested concepts might be considered resilient on the condition that their semantic content underwent a transformation. While the rising debate on concepts' new semantic content makes them 'contested', the outcome of the discussion can push this concept into the category of strategically essential. Taken together, conceptual resilience is closely linked with strategic relevance in Russian military thinking.

The results of the third analysis have demonstrated that interrelation among fundamental military concepts promotes conceptual resilience. Fundamental military concepts continued over time, provided that they were closely connected. By this means, a fundamental military concept would also function as a context for other concepts, as a result of the interrelation among them. Thus, a concept's functional and semantic use in a strategic context depended on its relationship with other concepts. Consequently, fundamental military concepts could be turned into a coherent system of strategic thinking. For instance, the research has identified that the principle of 'ensuring peacetime *combat readiness* to win the *initial period of* a future war' became a longstanding objective of the Russian military primarily during the 20th century.[45] Similarly, the Russian military tended to compensate for its backwardness in correlation (of quantitative and qualitative means) by increasing its *combat readiness* from the late 19th century onward. These examples indicate that the interrelation among fundamental military concepts led to the formation of timeless principles and laws of war. As these principles and laws proved resilient, concepts privileged continuity over change. Therefore, interrelation among fundamental military concepts promotes continuity under varying strategic contexts.

This analysis has demonstrated that the Russian strategic system of thinking was formed by the complex set of relations among fundamental military concepts. Nevertheless, this system of thought did not emerge immediately but throughout generations. Therefore, the formation of the Russian system of thinking was the result of the military history of ideas. In the 1920s, the concepts of Tsarist and Soviet military heritage began merge to form a single system of thinking. Tsarist officers in the Red Army did not entirely reject the Marxist-Leninist teachings on warfare. This is evidenced by G. Isserson's thoughts on correlation and Svechin's forecasts of a future war.[46] The concepts of Marxist-Leninist teaching on war dominated strategic thinking mainly in terms of forecasting the character and outcome of a war. Nevertheless, the IPW and combat readiness preserved their positions under the conceptual order of Soviet strategic thought. Even though the books and teachings of Tsarist officers were banned in the Red Army in the late 1930s, the concepts of Tsarist military heritage were preserved during the Cold War. Therefore, a fusion occurred between the concepts of both schools of thought (Marxist-Leninist and Imperial Russian) in the early Soviet period.

[45] "The main principles of Combat", Editor, *Military Thought* 11:4, (July 2002): 16.
[46] Isserson, pp. 57-58.

After 1945, Soviet thinkers purposefully integrated the Imperial Russian Army's concepts into a system of thinking, since the Red Army commanders practically tested them on the battlefield during the Second World War. Following the successful deep operations of 1944-1945, fundamental military concepts fell into the category of war-winning concepts. As a result, the interrelation among military concepts became more structural. Following this, the institutionalization of the merge of Imperial Russian and Soviet military concepts took place after the 1950s,[47] because the Soviet military succeeded in constructing a systematic approach to military thinking only after the mid-1950s. At that time, the interrelation among fundamental military concepts was solidified in various strategic possibilities. Fundamental military concepts took essential roles in the formation of the laws of war.[48] In nuclear and non-nuclear strategies, fundamental military concepts did not function individually or lose their strategic relevance. After the Cold War, the revitalization of the ideas of Tsarist military thinkers went hand in hand with maintaining the relevance of the concepts of Soviet military heritage due to the traditionalists' influence. To that end, contemporary Russian thinkers revisited the semantic content of the concepts of Soviet strategic thinking (forecasting and correlation) to increase their conceptual resilience.

## 7.5. Conclusion

This chapter presents the main findings of four analyses: (1) investigating the continuity of fundamental military concepts with a focus on concepts' content, (2) examining the evolution of a concept's semantic content by taking note of the strategic context, (3) scrutinizing the genealogy of concepts with a focus on interrelation and (4) exploring the conceptual resilience. The first and second analyses mainly use historical observations to investigate the continuity. The third analysis explains the origins of continuity by building a theoretical framework of the system of concepts. The fourth analysis attempts to discover causes of conceptual resilience. The results of the first analysis showed that fundamental military concepts that arose during the late 19th and early 20th centuries remained unaltered in Russian military thought. The second analysis has indicated that fundamental military concepts tend to become strategically essential by updating their semantic content under changing socio-political and strategic

[47] Jan Angstrom and J.J. Widen, *Contemporary Military Theory: The Dynamics of War* (Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 81-82.
[48] Vasiliy Yefisovich Savkin, *The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics* (Moscow: The Ministry of Defence of the Soviet Union, 1972) Published by (Washington: United States Air Force, 1972), 65 and 89.

contexts. The third analysis has found that fundamental military concepts privileged continuity over change on the condition that they were positioned within the genealogy of concepts. The final analysis has demonstrated that historical continuity of strategic culture, the enduring relevance of the concepts, and their development into a system of thinking fostered conceptual resilience in Russian strategic thinking.

# Chapter-8

# Conclusion

## 8.1. The summary of main findings

This research sets out to investigate the historical origins of Russia's conceptualization of modern warfare. Thereby, the specific objective of the study has been to examine the continuity of fundamental military concepts in Russian military thought between 1856 and 2010. In the framework of that, this study has made use of the military history of ideas to trace the conceptual evolution of fundamental military concepts through different socio-political and strategic contexts. The study has concluded that fundamental military concepts that arose during the late 19th and early 20th centuries remained unaltered in Russia's conceptualization of modern warfare. This finding contradicts one of the core premises of conceptual history: the linguistic reflections of concepts feel the pressure of change when social and political structures break up.[1] Therefore, socio-political and strategic ruptures are expected to cause a conceptual shift in Russian military thinking. To that end, this research has offered additional insights into the Western literature by discovering the roots of conceptual resilience in Russian military thought.

This study has analysed conceptual resilience with three key themes: the history of ideas, strategic relevance, and system of concepts. Firstly, the research has built a causal relationship between concepts' continuity and strategic relevance. Therefore, the results of this investigation have demonstrated that fundamental military concepts tend to become strategically essential by updating their semantic content through changing socio-political and strategic contexts. Likewise, fundamental military concepts showed an unchangeable and eternal tendency in terms of etymological forms; however, their content and semantic use constantly changed under the varying historical contexts. Secondly, fundamental military concepts privileged continuity over change on the condition that they fit together into a whole system of concepts. Thus, the vertical and horizontal linkages among fundamental military concepts constituted a system of thinking that laid the theoretical framework for Russian military doctrine. As a result, the research has demonstrated that a high degree of interrelation among fundamental

[1] Reinhart Koselleck, "Social History and Conceptual History", *International Journal of Politics Culture and Society* 2:3 (1989), 308

military concepts stimulated continuity. The third major finding is that the enduring relevance of concepts and their development into a system of thinking fostered conceptual resilience in Russian strategic thinking.

## 8.2. An analysis of the research findings within the broader context of Russian and Western military thought

Overall, this study has strengthened the idea that the Russian General Staff treated military matters as military science instead of as operational art. This preference could not be isolated from the general Western debate between Henri Jomini and Carl V. Clausewitz on developing a war theory. On the one side, Jomini defined war as a science. Thus, he laid the belief that there were immutable and universal principles that governed war.[2] According to this opinion, fundamental military principles should be interpreted as rules and regulations that could explain a war's outcome.[3] While observing these principles would lead to a victory, avoiding them would be accompanied by military failure.[4] Jomini's theory of war inspired late Imperial Russian military thinkers such as Genrikh Leer and Nikolai Mikhnevich. Among others, Leer established a culture in Russian strategic thought that sought to explore war-winning principles of war and their adherent concepts based on historical experience in the late 1900s and early 20th century.

On the other side, the proponents of Clausewitzian military theory defend the argument that principles of war cannot be introduced as scientific laws. In fact, Clausewitz also identified principles of war based on historical practices. Nevertheless, he emphasized that these principles were aids for personal reflection prior to war's beginning, rather than strict guidelines for how war should be carried out.[5] Clausewitz believed that "it was simply not possible to construct a model for the art of the war that can serve as a scaffolding on which the commander can rely on for support at any time."[6] Therefore, Clausewitzian military theory privileges the talent and judgement of the commander, the uncertainties of war and moral and psychological factors over military principles. This school of thought marginalized the prominence of principles in Western military thought, especially after the Second World War.

[2] Jan Angstrom and J.J. Widen, *Contemporary Military Theory: The Dynamics of War* (Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 80.
[3] Ibid. p. 76.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] Ibid., p. 80.
[6] Ibid. p. 87.

After 1945, principles remained present in Western military doctrines; however, their aptitude for explaining war's outcome was widely questioned by thinkers such as John Keegan and Bernard Brodie.[7] These critics argued that a war could not be narrowed down to a formula. Instead, success should be the outcome of the commander's critical thinking and creative action within the conditionality of the mission.[8] After the Cold War, the number of principles mentioned in Western military publications has been limited. Nevertheless, they have not entirely disappeared from Western military doctrine. This is mainly because the tradition of training a greater number of soldiers and officers since the First World War required systematic codification of the simple principles of war. Nevertheless, their use has been kept in an ideal form. Despite the ongoing debate, it has been widely accepted that principles and concepts of war could of help to the commander in making decisions.[9] To that end, the most prevalent principles of Western military thought are purpose, initiative, flexibility, the concentration of force, economy of force, maneuver, surprise, security, simplicity, unity, morale, and time.[10]

In the Russian military, the positivist approach exerted more influence on military matters. Even though the principles of war gradually lost their influence in the Western militaries after the Second World War, Soviet military began codifying them after the 1940s.[11] Following the order of Stalin, permanently operating factors (POFs) were formally accepted as war-winning principles of war. After the death of Stalin, POF's were replaced by the principles of the art of war.[12] Against this background, the systematic institutionalization and codification of laws and principles of war took place during the Cold War. In the 1970s, for instance, the first law of war of the Soviet military science was that:

> "the course and outcome of war waged with unlimited employment of all means of conflict are determined by the correlation of strictly military forces available to combatants at the beginning of the war, especially in nuclear weapons and means for delivery."[13]

[7] Ibid. p. 90.
[8] John I. Alger, *The Quest For Victory: The History the Principles of War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), 154.
[9] Angstrom and Widen, p. 91.
[10] Ibid. pp. 82-86.
[11] Ibid.p. 82.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] Vasiliy Yefisovich Savkin, *The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics* (Moscow: The Ministry of Defence of the Soviet Union, 1972) Published by (Washington: United States Air Force, 1972), 65.

The Soviet military theory did not present commanders with a toolbox of principles and laws to be employed in wartime. Instead, Soviet military science relied on the strict application of these principles.[14] Even though the Soviet theory of war came to an end after the 1990s, military matters have been analysed within the context of military science and its essential military principles and laws of war.[15]

After the 2000s, the notion that modern Western military theory considerably lags behind its military practice has gained ground in the Russian military. Russian military thinkers have argued that military science has lost its importance in the Western armies primarily due to rapidly changing technology, the use of new weapon systems and military reform processes. The Russian military, on the other hand, has lagged behind in military technological developments (i.e. computer and information technology); however, it has secured the significance attached to military science and its underlying principles in Russian military theory, such as the necessity of a surge in combat readiness during the initial period of war or forecasting the character of a future war. Therefore, the "qualitative improvement of the foundations of military science and intensifications of its methodological approaches and methods of cognizing warfare" has continued to occupy center stage in Russian military thinking.[16] In 2005, Yu.P. Gladyshev and G.V. Ivanov presented Russian military science as an "integral and noncontradictory system of knowledge in ways and means of preventing wars and military conflicts…the laws and regularities of warfare."[17] In this regard, Glayshev and Ivanov have pointed out that the evolution of Russian military science could offer compelling solutions to the deep gap between Russian military theory and practice.[18] Towards that end, the principles and concepts developed by past great thinkers (i.e. Leer, Svechin, Isserson, and Lenin…) have formed the baseline of modern Russian military theory.

Against this backdrop, Russian contemporary military thought has attempted to combine military science with operational art in its new conceptualization of modern warfare. Nevertheless, the Russian General Staff gave weight to the former at the

[14] *Ibid.*
[15] I.N. Vorobyov and V.A. Kiselev. 'Military Science at Present Stage.' *Military Thought* (English Version) 17:3 (July 2008).; Yu. P. Gladyshev and G.V. Ivanov, 'Military Science and Military Systemology', *Military Thought* (English Version) 14:4 (October 2005); Ye.V. Vasilyev, 'Principles of Military Art,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 14:2 (April 2005):136 and "The main principles of Combat", Editor, *Military Thought* 11:4, (July 2002).
[16] Gladyshev and Ivanov, p. 167.
[17] Ibid. p. 165.
[18] Ibid. p. 166.

expense of the latter. As a result, Ye. V. Vasilyev has developed the notion of "the principles of military art", which are crucial to re-designing Russian military science.[19] The principles of military art echoed Leer's thoughts on military art. Leer argued that "[m]ilitary art, like other art, is based on unchanging laws, whose application varies infinitely depending on the constantly changing environment."[20] In that regard, Vasilyev has argued that "principles of military art are in no fixed order or priority, because the importance of one or another principle can be appreciably changed under different conditions."[21] On the other hand, he has admitted to the ways in which Russian military thought relied on military principles and their adherent concepts. Thereby, some principles are introduced as indispensable since they have been used in theory and practice for a long time as the core elements of Russian strategic culture. Vasilyev stressed that "[t]he centuries-old history of military art has many examples where battles and campaigns were won or lost because of the inability of army or navy commanders to follow these principles [of operational art] under prevailing conditions."[22] Therefore, military principles have continued to shape Russian strategic thought even though the Russians have sought to weave operational art into strategic thinking. In that regard, Russian contemporary military theory ascribed significant importance to the principles of war and their adherent concepts.

The research has explored how Russian fundamental military concepts were positioned under Russian principles of operational art. In Russian military doctrine, the aggregates and varying combinations of concepts have become a basis for principles and laws of war. Therefore, while some of the principles of war could show similarities with western counterparts, their content is determined by varying combinations of military concepts. Thus, the content of the principles of war was entirely dependent on the Russian conceptualization of warfare. The presupposition of principles relies on how the Russian military conceptualize them. For instance, the *concentration of force or efforts* is a principle commonly used by Western and Russian militaries.[23] In Western contemporary military thought, the principle of concentration is "the ability to concentrate one's resources in time and space to create local superiority over the opponent."[24] In the Russian military, the contemporary content of this principle is "the ability to select a

[19] Vasilyev, p. 136.
[20] Ofer Fridman, *Strategiya: The Foundations of the Russian art of Strategy* (London: Hurst&Company, 2021), 29.
[21] Ibid. p. 138.
[22] Ibid. p. 136.
[23] Angstrom and Widen, p. 84; Vasilyev, p. 138.
[24] Angstrom and Widen, p.84.

dynamic form (of massing forces and fires) that can overwhelm or 'crush' the enemy with its novelty and element of surprise."[25] Since the forms and methods of employing this principle change under the impact of technological developments, the content of this principle is specified through the use of military concepts. This research has discovered that concentration of force sought to ensure superiority over the enemy primarily during the initial period of war and without a need for mobilization. In this regard, concentration should be attained in a decisive place, through military means determined by forecasting the character of combat operations.[26] Therefore, the IPW, combat readiness, and forecasting shaped the content of the principle of concentration of force.

Another shared principle is surprise.[27] Western understanding of surprise creates outcomes that significantly surpass the value of the effort and material used.[28] According to the Russian military encyclopedia, surprise "is one of the major principles of the art of warfare and boils down to selecting time, methods, and means of struggle and to make it possible to deliver a blow when the enemy is still unprepared to rebuff it."[29] In this regard, this research has demonstrated that increasing combat readiness is a key to compensating for the Russian military's relative shortcomings in correlation (qualitative and quantitative) of forces. By this means, the Russian General Staff has sought to multiply the troops' fighting potential and to ensure superiority over the enemy. Thus, two key fundamental concepts, combat readiness and correlation, determined the operational meaning of the principle of surprise.

Russian military concepts reflect their particular positivistic/scientific approach to military theory. They have thereby resulted in distinct Russian concepts, which often do not have an explicit Western counterpart. Although the West obviously prefers to win its wars quickly, only the Russian military has a dedicated concept of IPW. In relation to this, the Russian preoccupation with winning wars at the opening phase has put combat readiness at the center. On the other hand, Western militaries have tended to ensure technological superiority during the entire war instead of winning the initial battles by combat ready armies. In the Russian military's conceptualization of principles, time, space, and means are more specific due to the influence of positivism on military

[25] "The main principles of Combat", Editor, *Military Thought* 11:4, (July 2002): 27.
[26] Ibid. p. 26.
[27] Angstrom and Widen, p. 85; Vasilyev, p. 139.
[28] Angstrom and Widen, p.85.
[29] "The main principles of Combat", Editor, *Military Thought* 11:4, (July 2002): 22.

matters. Observing military principles and their attendant concepts was said to lead to a victory, while avoiding them would be accompanied by military failure. In Russian military science, fundamental military concepts determine these variables. Towards that end, adhering to the military principles and concepts takes center stage in in Russian military thought, while in the West operational art (in the form of judgement) takes precedence. Therefore, fundamental military concepts are crucial to forming principles of Russian military science. Thus, one of the major findings of this dissertation is that Russian military principles fit within the system structured around the fundamental concepts. In the West, technological development and operational art shape the evolution of military thinking.

The research has concluded that fundamental military concepts contribute to Russian military thought's peculiarity. Despite this finding, the contribution of fundamental military concepts to Russian strategic culture has been neglected in Western scholarship. Various combinations of fundamental military concepts have specified the content of military principles, the laws of war, and doctrine. Towards that end, the changing amalgamations of military concepts reflect how the Russian military seeks to attain the premises of any principle and laws of war under a war's specific circumstances. Therefore, the linking of military concepts to form a system of concepts has addressed the issue of integrating operational judgement into Russian military science, because the combinations of military concepts result from a thorough assessment and judgement of war's changing circumstances.

The conceptual peculiarity could create asymmetry against an enemy who employs similar military principles. For instance, this research has discovered that the Russian version of gaining superiority during the IPW shows different characteristics than the Russian perception of how the West seeks to ensure superiority in modern wars. While Russian perception of initial Western operations consisted of the decisive application of stand-off and information warfare, initial Russian operations sought to respond to emerging threats by permanent readiness general-purpose ground formations, both asymmetrically and indirectly.[30] Understanding conceptual peculiarity can also disambiguate scholarly confusion on hybrid warfare. Even though the concept was wrongfully associated with the Russian military's acts in the mid-2010s, deploying a combination of conventional and irregular components to the battlefield was nothing

[30] M.A. Gareyev, "Issues of Strategic Deterrence in Current Conditions," *Military Thought* 18:2 (April 2009):8.

new for Russian military thinking even before the concept gained popularity. However, the Russians used another concept, the *correlation of forces*. During the Cold War, constructing a strategy against an adversary required the correlation of political, economic, scientific, military, ideological, and other factors.[31] Demonstrating the continuity, the Russian art of orchestrating conventional, nuclear, and non-military forces seeks to produce the most optimal correlation of forces during the contemporary period.[32] However, Russian military planning during the late 2000s demonstrated that non-military means were planned to be used to prevent, localize and neutralize non-military threats during the preparatory operations phase.[33] If that failed, Russian military strategy relied on military power in the following phases. Therefore, the employment of military and non-military forces are sequential in Russian military thinking during the 2000s, whereas they are simultaneous in the Western misperception of Russian hybrid warfare. The distinctive conceptualization of warfare helps the Russian military create asymmetry against Western militaries. on the whole, an understanding of the content of fundamental military concepts can help academics and practitioners comprehend the peculiarity of the Russian conceptualization of modern warfare.

## 8.3. Final Words

Before this study, the importance of fundamental military concepts in Russian strategic thought was purely anecdotal. Moreover, numerous studies have tended to explain Russian military activities using Western concepts.[34] As a result, the Russian thinkers' opinions on warfare have created conceptual confusion among Western military thinkers.[35] Western studies have inappropriately interpreted Russia's conceptualization of modern warfare, since these attempts have not drawn attention to the meaning and relevance attached to these concepts. The most prevalent misconception is that Russian forecasts of a future war have been frequently misunderstood as the Russian approach to waging a future war.[36] While forecasting allows the Russians to comprehend general trends in future warfare, Russia's technological limitations as well as Russian

[31] Thomas, Timothy, 'Thinking Like a Russian Officer', *The Foreign Military Studies Office* (April 2016), 8.
[32] Dmitry Adamsky, "From Moscow with coercion: Russian deterrence theory and strategic culture," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 41:1-2, (2018), 47.
[33] M. A. Gareyev, "Russia's New Military Doctrine", *Military Thought* 16:2 (April 2007):5.
[34] Christopher Chivvis, "Understanding Russian Hybrid Warfare", *Rand* (March 2017) and Mark Galeotti "The Mythical 'Gerasimov Doctrine' and the language of threat" *Critical Studies* in Security (February 2018): 157-161 and Jonsson, Oscar and Seely, Robert "Russian Full-Spectrum Conflict: An Appraisal After Ukraine" *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*. 28-1, (2015): 1-22.
[35] Ofer Fridman. *Russian 'Hybrid Warfare' Resurgence and Politicisation* (London: Hurst & Company, 2018), 113.
[36] *Ibid.*

leadership's mistrust of the effectiveness and justness of Western methods and means have promoted the emergence of distinct Russian strategic options. For instance, the President of the Russian Federation Academy of Military Sciences, General Makhmud Gareyev, proclaimed Western decisive air operations in the war in Yugoslavia and Iraq to be brutal and undemocratic.[37] Instead, responding to emerging threats by using permanent readiness general-purpose ground forces constituted the Russian military's initial operations. Similarly, recent research on reflexive control has paid insufficient attention to the Russian General Staff's internal objections to using this concept.[38]

Therefore, this study has offered some important insights into Russian military thought by demonstrating the extent to which fundamental military concepts privileged continuity over change, predominantly over the course of the 20th century. This is an important conclusion, because today's Russian military doctrines remain secret. Looking at the past might provide us with some clues for understanding the prevailing concepts, their history, and the system of thinking of which they form a part. Furthermore, this research has attempted to make a significant contribution to the understanding of the causes of historical continuity in Russia's conceptualization of modern warfare by using *enduring relevance* and *interrelationship* as effective criteria. They provide us with a key insight exactly into this system of thinking.

The importance and originality of this study are that it explores conceptual resilience in Russian military thinking by examining in depth the history of ideas, the enduring relevance and the system of concepts. In doing so, this study has revealed the underlying reasons for conceptual continuity under the pressure of socio-political and strategic ruptures. Before this study, little was known about how concepts secure their strategic relevance under varying strategic and socio-historical contexts. This is the first study to undertake a longitudinal analysis of fundamental military concepts. Prior to this research, it was difficult to estimate how military concepts emerged, evolved, and become institutionalized in Russian strategic thought. Therefore, this is the most extensive historical study documenting a delayed onset of Russian fundamental military concepts primarily over the course of the 20th century. In that regard, the research has offered additional insights into the Western literature by classifying the concept's enduring relevance under varying military strategies.

[37] Gareyev (2009), p. 8.
[38] Albert Johan Hendrik Bouwmeester, *Krym Nash': An Analysis of Modern Russian Deception Warfare*, PhD Thesis (Utrecht: Utrecht University, 2020), 38-57.

Thus, the study has discovered that the Russian General Staff secured the strategic relevance of fundamental military concepts by renewing their semantic content in new operational environments. Secondly, the present research explores, for the first time, the genealogy of concepts that refers to the degree to which the concepts have historically formed the basis for a particular system of thinking strategically. Thus, it has been understood that the interrelation among Russian fundamental military concepts promoted the continuity of a system of thinking.

The findings of this study provide a new understanding of Russia's conceptualization of modern warfare. This research strengthens the idea that Russian military thought relies on its own specific concepts. In this regard, the study has found that fundamental military concepts gave form to Russian military doctrine, organizational structure and strategy despite the socio-political ruptures and qualitative leaps in warfare between 1856 and 2010. Russian fundamental military concepts privileged continuity over change.

The findings of this research have several practical implications as they effectively inform decision-makers and first-line military practitioners on Russia’s conceptualization of warfare. Firstly, fundamental military concepts provide a better understanding of Russian strategic culture. Therefore, attaining a better comprehension of Russian military strategies hinges predominantly on a genuine appreciation of the meaning and functionality of these concepts. By this means, research findings help practitioners and policymakers correctly decipher the Russian military’s conceptualization of modern war. In this regard, this research contributes to addressing the issue of conceptual confusion on Russian military thought and strategy in the minds of Western academics, practitioners and decision-makers. Another practical implication is that the research findings have revealed an urgent need to avoid using Western concepts while outlining Russian military acts. By this means, the findings of this research could decrease practitioners' dependency on Western military terminology while interpreting and predicting the deeds of the Russian military. Therefore, research finding contributes to preventing decision-makers and practitioners from misinterpreting the Russian military’s acts.

Several questions still remain to be answered. A full discussion of fundamental military concepts between 2010 and 2021 is beyond the scope of this study. More research is needed to determine to what extent fundamental military concepts have evolved in

Russian strategic thought after 2010. Therefore, a natural progression of this work would be to analyze the conceptual continuity, strategic relevance, and the genealogy of fundamental military concepts between 2010 and 2021. Next, further studies need to be carried out to validate whether fundamental military concepts could help to more correctly explain the perceptions of Russian hybrid warfare. Considerably more work will need to be done to investigate how fundamental military concepts operate in Russia's approaches to war in Ukraine and Syria. A further study could also assess the long-term effects of Western military ideas on the content and evolution of fundamental military concepts.

## Bibliography


Adamsky, Dima. *The Culture of Military Innovation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.

Adamsky Dmitry, 'From Moscow with coercion: Russian deterrence theory and strategic culture,' *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 41:1-2 (2018): 33-60.

Afanasyev, A.L. Khryapin and V.A. 'Conceptual Principles of Strategic Deterrence,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 14, no. 1 (January 2005): 30-35.

Alger, John I., *The Quest For Victory: The History the Principles of War.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982.

Angstrom, Jan and J.J. Widen, *Contemporary Military Theory: The Dynamics of War*. Oxon: Routledge, 2015.

Arbatov, Alexei G. "Military Reform: From Crisis to Stagnation." In *The Russian Military Power and Policy*, ed. Steven Miller and Dmitri Trenin, 95-119. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004.

Baev, Pavel K. "The Trajectory of the Russian Military: Downsizing, Degeneration, and Defeat." In *The Russian Military Power and Policy* ed. Steven Miller and Dmitri Trenin, 43-72. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004.

Baev, Pavel, *The Russian Army in a Time of Troubles*. London: Sage, 1996.

Barbieri, Marcelo, 'The Semantic Theory of Language', *Elsevier* 190 (April 2020): 1-4.

Blythe, Wilson J. 'A History of Operational Art,' *Military Review* (Nov-Dec 2018): 37-49.

Bogdanov, S.A. 'Warfare of the Future,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 13: 1 (January 2004 January 2004): 33-38.

Bogdanov, V.N. Gorbunov and S.A. 'Armed Confrontation in the 21st Century,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 18:1 (January 2009): 16-30.

Booth, Ken. 'History or Logic as Approaches to Strategy,' *Rusi Journal* 117: 667 (1972): 34-41.

Bouwmeester, Albert Johan Hendrik, *Krym Nash': An Analysis of Modern Russian Deception Warfare*, PhD Thesis. Utrecht: Utrecht University, 2020.

Chivvis, Christopher, 'Understanding Russian Hybrid Warfare,' *Rand* (March 2017)

Chuyev, Yu.V. and Yu. B. Mikhaylov, *Forecasting in Military Affairs*. Moscow, 1975. Translated into English by the DGIS Multilingual Section Secretary of State Department. Washington: The U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981.

Claus, Telp, *The Evolution of Operational Art, 1740-1813: From Frederick the Great to Napoleon.* London: Frank Cass, 2005.

Clausewitz, C. V., *On War* (M. H. Paret, Ed.) New Jersey: Princeton, 1984.

Clifford, Lawrence X. *Tukhachevsky and Blitskrieg*. Boston: UMI, 2004.

Danilenko, I.S. 'From Applied Military Science to a Basic Science of Warfare: Part 1,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 17:4 (October 2008 October 2008): 84-94.

Dinerstein, Herbert S. 'The Revolution in Soviet Strategy Thinking,' *Foreign Affairs* 36, no. 2 (January 1958): 241-52.

Dinerstein, Herbert S., Leon Goure and Thomas Wolfe. "U.S. Editor's Analytical Introduction," In *Soviet Military Strategy*, 1-81. Santa Monica: Rand Cooperation, 1963.

Editor, 'The 90th Anniversary of the Voennaya Mysl Journal,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 17: 2 (April 2008): 1-14.

Editor, 'The Main Principles of Combat,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 11: 4 (July 2002): 15-38.

Erikson, John, *Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History 1918-1941*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962.

Evans, Ryan and Micheal Kofman, "Counter attacks and Can-kicking in the Russo-Ukrainian War," War on the Rocks. https://warontherocks.com/2022/05/counter-attacks-and-can-kicking-in-the-russo-ukrainian-war/ (accessed 19 June 2022)

Fuller, William C. *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600-1914*. Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan, 1992.

Fuller, W. C. "The Imperial Army." In *The Cambridge History of Russia,* ed. W. Fuller and D. Lieven, 530-553. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Freedman, Lawrence D. and Jeffrey Michaels. *The Evolution of Soviet Strategy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1981.

Freedman, Lawrence D. and Jeffrey Michaels. *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

Fridman, Ofer. *Russian 'Hybrid Warfare' Resurgence and Politicization*. London: Hurst & Company, 2018.

Fridman, Ofer. *Strategiya: The Foundations of the Russian Art of Strategy*. London: Hurst & Company, 2021.

M.V. Frunze, *Selected Works* (Izbrannyye Proisvedeniya), Moscow: Voyeznidat, 1950.

Galeotti, Mark, 'The Mythical 'Gerasimov Doctrine' and the language of threat,' *Critical Studies in Security* 7:2 (2019):157-161

Galeotti, Mark, "The "Gerasimov Doctrine" and Russian Non-Linear War," Moscow's Shadows, https://inmoscowsshadows.wordpress.com/2014/07/06/the-gerasimov-doctrine-and-russian-non-linear-war/ (accessed 21 May 2021)

Gareyev, Makhmud Akhmedovich, 'Issues of Strategic Deterrence in Current Conditions,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 18: 2 (April 2009): 1-9.

Gareyev, Makhmud Akhmedovich, 'Certain Typical Features of Future Wars,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 12: 2 (March 2003): 186-193.

Gareyev, Makhmud Akhmedovich, 'Russia's New Military Doctrine,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 16: 2 (April 2007): 1-14.

Garthoff, Raymond L. *How Russia Makes War: Soviet Military Doctrine*. London Allen & Unwin, 1954.

Gatsko, V.F. 'On the Concepts of Military Threat and Military Danger and Their Correlation in Russia's Military Security System,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 15: 2 (April 2006): 7-16.

Gerasimov, Valeriy, 'Strategy Speech at the Academy of Military Sciences,' *Red Star* (Krasnaya Zbezda), (2019)

Gerasimov Valeriy, 'The value of science is prediction,' *Military-Industrial Courier* 8 (2013)

Gerring, John, 'What makes a concept good? A critical framework for understanding concept formation in social science,' *Polity* 31:3 (1999), 357-393.

Gladyshev, Yu.P. and G.V. Ivanov, 'Military Science and Military Systemology,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 14:4 (October 2005):165-169.

Glantz, David M. *Soviet Military Operational Art: In Pursuit of Deep Battle*. Oxon: Frank Cass, 1991.

Goering D. Timothy, 'Concepts, History and the Game of Giving and Asking for Reasons: A Defense of Conceptual History,' *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 7 (2013): 426–452

Granahan, William J. MC. 'The Fall and Rise of Marshall Tukhachevsky.' *Parameters* 7: 4 (1978): 62-72.

Gray, Colin S. "Soviet Nuclear Strategy and New Military Thinking." In *Soviet Military Thinking and New Nuclear Strategy*, ed. D. Leebaert and T. Dickinson, 29-57. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Gray, Colin S. 'Out of the Wilderness: Prime Time for Strategic Culture,' *Comparative Strategy* 26: 1 (2007): 1-20.

Haas, Marcel De, 'Russia's Military Reforms: Victory after 20 Years of Failure?,' *Clingendael* 5 (November 2011).

Harrison, Richard W. *The Development of Russian-Soviet Operational Art, 1904-1937, and the Imperial Legacy of Soviet Military Thought*. London: King's College, 1994.

Harrison, Richard W. *Architect of Soviet Victory in World War II: The Life and Theories of G.S. Isserson*. London: McFarland & Company, 1952.

Hines, Kerry Lee. *Russian Military Thought: It's Evolution through War and Revolution, 1860-1918.* Washington: The George Washington University Press, 1998.

Hines, Kerry Lee 'Competing Concepts of Deep Operations' *The Journal of Soviet Military Studies* 1. 1988: 54-80.

Hird, Karolina, Kateryna Stepanenko, and Mason Clark, "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment: 10 June," ISW, https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-10 (accessed 26 June 2022)

Hines, John. G., Ellis M. Mishulovich and John F. Shull, *Soviet Intentions 1965-1985: Volume-II Soviet Post-Cold War Testimonial Evidence Vol. 2*, Mclean VA: BDM Federal Inc., 1995.

Hoffman, Frank G., *Conflict in 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*. Arlington, Virginia, USA: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies.

Ionov, M.D. 'On Reflexive Control of the Enemy in Combat,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 1 (January 1995).

Isserson, Georgii Samoilovich. *The Evolution of Operational Art*. Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013, Translated by Bruce W. Menning.

Ivanov, S.B. 'The Military Command and Control System Today and Ways of Improving It in Light of New Defence Tasks and Changes in the Character of Future Wars,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 13: 4 (April 2004): 189-224.

Ivanov, S.P. *The Initial Period of War*. Moscow 1974. Translated and published under the auspices of The United States Air Force. Washington: The U.S. Government Printing Office.

Jacobs, Walter Darnell. *Frunze: The Soviet Clausewitz 1885-1925*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969.

Jonsson, Oscar and, Robert Seely, 'Russian Full-Spectrum Conflict: An Appraisal After Ukraine,' *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 28:1 (2005), 1-22.

Higham, Robin and Frederick W Kagan, *The Military History of the Soviet Union*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.

Hines, Kerry Lee, *Russian Military Thought: Its Evolution through war and revolution, 1860-1918.* Ann Arbour, UMI 1998.

Karankevich, V.N. 'How to Learn to Deceive the Enemy,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 15: 4 (October 2006): 135-52.

Karpov, Ye. A., N.I. Burenin and N.A. Zyuzin. 'Building a Single Information Network: Problems,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 13: 4 (October 2004): 79-85.

Khamzatov, M.M. 'Network-Centric War Conception and Its Impact on the Character of Modern Operations,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 15: 4 (September 2006): 24-29.

Kilinskas K., 'Hybrid Warfare: Orientating or Misleading Concept in Analyzing Russia's Military Actions in Ukraine?,' *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review* 14 (2015-2016): 139-158.

King, Charles, 'The Decline of International Studies: Why Flying Blind Is Dangerous?' *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2015):88-98.

Kipp, Jacob. "The Other Side of the Hill: Soviet Military Foresight and Forecasting." In *Soviet Nuclear Strategy and New Military Thinking*, ed. D. Leebaert and T. Dickinson, 248-70. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Kipp, Jacob W. "General-Major A.A. Svechin and Modern Warfare: Military History and Military Theory." In *Strategy*, ed. Kent D. Lee: 36-64. Minneapolis: East View Information Services, 1991.

Kipp, J. W. "The Tsarist and Soviet Operational Art, 1853-1991." In *The Evolution of Operational Art: From Napoleon to the Present* ed. J.A. Creveld, 64-96. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Kofman, Micheal, Tweets [Russian military operations in Ukraine], 12 May 2022, https://twitter.com/KofmanMichael/status/1524821199590653956 (accessed 26 May 2022)

Kofman, Micheal, Tweets [Russian military operations in Ukraine], 25 May 2022, https://twitter.com/KofmanMichael/status/1529475235359207426 (accessed 27 May 2022)

Kokoshin, Andrei A. *Soviet Strategic Thought 1917-91*. London: MIT Press, 1995.

Komov, S.A. 'About Methods and Forms of Conducting Information Warfare,' *Military Thought* (English Version) (July-August 1997).

Kopytko, V.K. 'Evolution of Operational Art,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 17, no. 1 (January 2008): 204-14.

Korobushin, V.V. 'Strategic Nuclear Weapons in Russia's Military Doctrine,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 16, no. 2 (April 2007): 46-49.

Konopatov, S. N. 'Traditional Concept of War is Obsolete', *Military Thought* (English Version) 10:1 (January 2001): 62-68.

Koselleck, Reinhart, Sebastián, J. and Fuentes, J. 'Conceptual History, Memory, and Identity: An Interview with Reinhart Koselleck,' *Contributions* 2:1 (2006): 99-127.

Koselleck, Reinhart, 'Social History and Conceptual History', *International Journal of Politics Culture and Society* 2:3 (1989): 308-325.

Koselleck, Reinhart, 'Linguistic Change and the History of Events,' *The Journal of Modern History* 61:4 (December 1989): 649-666

Koselleck, Reinhart, "Begriffsgeschichte and Social History," In *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, ed., R. Koselleck. New York, 2004.

Kozlov, S.N. and M.V. Smirnov, *Soviet Military Science*, 1964. Moscow. Translated by Translation Division Foreign Technology Division. Springfield: Clearinghouse Federal Scientific and Technical Information.

Kulikov, V.A. 'Organization of the State Armament System: Evolution and Development,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 13, no. 4 (September 2004): 168-82.

Lasconjarias Guillaume and Jeffrey A. Larsen, *NATO's Response to Hybrid Threats*. Rome: NATO Defence College Division, 2015.

Leer, Genrikh Antonovich. *Positive Strategy (Part 1)*. St. Petersburg, 1877.

Leer, Genrikh Antonovich. *The Method of Military Science: Strategy, Tactic and Military History.* St. Petersburg, 1894.

Leonenko, S. 'Reflexive Control of the Enemy,' Army Collection 8 (1995).

Libiseller, Chiara and Lukas Milevski, 'War and Peace: Reaffirming the Distinction', Survival, 63:1, 2021.

Lobov, Vladimir N., "The Significance of Svechin's Military-Theoretical Legacy Today" In *Strategy*, ed. Kent D. Lee, 27-36. Minnesota: East View Press, 1990.

Lutovinov, V.I. 'Russia's Military Policy in Modern Conditions,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 17: 4 (October 2008): 32-43.

Main, Steven J. 'You Cannot Generate Ideas by Orders: The Continuing Importance of Studying Soviet Military History—G. S. Isserson and Russia's Current Geo-Political Stance,' *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 29:1 (2016):48-72.

*Marxism-Leninism On War and Army*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972. Translated by Donald Dodemanis.

Maslov, A.F. 'The Ground Forces: Past and Present,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 15: 4 (October 2006): 10-26.

Mazarr, Micheal J. "Understanding Deterrence," Rand. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE200/PE295/RAND_PE295.pdf (accessed 14 August 2021)

Menning, Bruce W., *Bayonets Before the Bullets: The Imperial Russian Army 1861-1914*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Milodov, A.S. and V.G. Kozlov. *The Philosophical Heritage of V.I. Lenin and Problems of Contemporary War.* 1972. Moscow. Translated and published under the auspices of The Unites States Air Force. Washington: The US Government Printing Office.

Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, "Mission and Objectives of the Russian Armed Forces." https://eng.mil.ru/en/mission/tasks.htm (accessed 18 July 2021)

Miller, Steven E. and Dmitri Trenin. *The Russian Military: Power and Policy*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004.

Mikhnevich, Nikolai Petrovich. *The Basics of Strategy*. St. Petersburg, 1913.

Miller, F.A. *Dmitrii Miliutin and the Reform in Russia*. Charlotte: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968.

Miller, Steven E. "Moscow's Military Power: Russia's Search for Security in an Age of Transition." In *The Russian Military: Power and Policy*, ed. Steven Miller and Dmitri Trenin, 1-42. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004.

Odom, William E., *The Collapse of the Soviet Military*. Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2000.

Orlyansky, V.I. 'Information Weapons and Information Warfare: Realities and Speculations,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 17: 1 (January 2008): 230-39.

Orlyansky, V.I. 'Deceiving the Enemy: Some Points of Essence,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 16: 3-4 (July 2007): 181-91.

Orr, Michael. "Reform and the Russian Ground Forces, 1992–2002." In *Russian Military Reform, 1992-2002*, ed. Roger N. McDermott Anne C. Aldis, 122-38: Ebsco Publishing, 2003.

Osborn, Andrew and Polina Nikolskaya, "Russia's Putin authorises 'special military operation' against Ukraine," Reuters, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russias-putin-authorises-military-operations-donbass-domestic-media-2022-02-24/ (accessed 19 June 2022)

Raskin, A.V. and V.S. Pelyak. 'On Network Centric Warfare,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 14: 2 (April 2005): 86-92.

Radzievskyj, Oleksij Ivanovyc. *Dictionary of Basic Military Terms: A Soviet View*. The Ministry of Defence of the Soviet Union, 1965. Translated by the DGIS Multilingual Section Translation Bureau Secretary of State Department. Washington: The U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965.

Renz, Bettina. 'Russian Military Reform,' *The Rusi Journal* 155, no. 1 (2010): 56-82.

Renz, Bettina, 'Russia and Hybrid Warfare,' *Contemporary Politics* 22:3, (2016): 283-300.

Rich, David Alan, *The Tsar's Colonels: Professionalism, Strategy, and Subversion in Late Imperial Russia.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.

Rinelli, S. and I. Duyvesteyn, "The Missing Link: Civil Military Cooperation and Hybrid Wars," In *A Civil Military Response to Hybrid Threats*. ed. Eugenio Cusumano and Marian Corbe.17-40, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Roberts, Cynthia A. 'Planning for War: The Red Army and Catastrophe of 1941,' *Europe-Asia Studies* 47: 8 (1995): 1293-1326.

Ruben, David Hillel, 'W.B. Gallie and Essentially Contested Concepts,' *Philosophical Papers* 39:2 (2010), 257-270.

Ryabchuk, V.D. 'Warfare Science and Military Forecasting in the Conditions of Intellectual Informational Confrontation,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 17: 2 (April 2008): 143-58.

Samuelson, Lennart. *Plan's for Stalin's War Machine: Tukhachevskii and Military Economic Planning, 1925-1941*. Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 2000.

Savkin, Vasiliy Yefimovic. *The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics (a Soviet View),* Moscow, 1972. Translated and Published Under the Auspices of The United States Air Force. Washington: The US Air Force, 1972.

Serebryannikov, V.V. 'On the Notion of War,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 13: 4 (October 2004): 177-81.

Sidorov, P. 'To Tirelessly Strengthen the Country's Defense Stability,' *Communist of the Armed Forces* 12 (June 1961).

Sokolovsky, V.D. *Soviet Military Strategy*. Santa Monica: The Rand Cooperation, 1963.

Sokolovsky, Vasilij Danilovic and Raymond L. Garthoff, *Military Strategy: Soviet Doctrine and Concepts.* London: Pall Mall Press, 1963.

Sprang, Roland, 'Russian Operational Art, a New Type of War and Reflexive Control,' *Small Wars Journal*, 2018.

Steinberg, J.W. *The Education and Training of the Russian General Staff: A History of the Imperial Nicholas Military Academy, 1832-1914*. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1990.

Stoecker, Sally W. *Forging Stalin's Army Marshall Tukhachevsky and the Politics of Military Innovation.* Oxford: Westview Press, 1998.

Stoecki, Fritz,'The correlation of forces and success in overcoming anti-tank defences,' *The Journal of Soviet Military Studies* 1:2 (1998):243-261.

Strachan, Hew, 'Strategy in Theory; Strategy in Practice,' *Journal of Strategic Studies* 42:2 (2019): 171-190.

Suprayaga, A.V. 'Wars of the 21st Century,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 11:4 (September 2002): 11-15.

Svechin, Alexander A. *Strategy*, Moscow: Voennyi Vestnik, 1927. Translated by East View Information Services. Minnesota: East View Information Services, 1991.

Tasbulatov, A.B. and V.I. Orlyansky, 'The Spesifics of Modern Armed Conflict,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 14:4 (October 2005): 173-77.

The Dictionary of Military Terms (Voennyi Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar) Moscow: Voeznidat, 1983.

Thomas L., Timothy, 'Thinking Like a Russian Officer,' *The Foreign Military Studies* (April 2016).

Thomas L., Timothy, 'Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military,' *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17:2 (2004): 237-56.

Thomas, Timothy L, *Russian Military Thought: Concepts and Elements*. Mclean: MITRE, 2019.

Tsygankov, Andrei P. R*ussia and the West from Alexander to Putin : Honor in International Relations.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Tsygichko, V.N. 'Balance of Forces in Potential Military Conflicts,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 11:2 (March 2002): 107-17.

Tyushkevich, S.A. 'Shaping Military Ideology,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 13:4 (October 2004): 157-67.

Tyushkevich, S.A. 'Military Science and Russia's Security,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 10:3 (March 2001), 45-54.

Vasilyev, Ye.V. 'Principles of Military Art,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 14:2 (April 2005):136-144.

Vinogradov, V.A. 'Characteristics of Modern Combined-Arms Operations,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 10:1 (January 2001): 25-29.

Vogelsang, Kai, 'Conceptual History: A Short Introduction,' *Oriens Extremus* 51 (2012):9-24

Vorobyov, I.N. 'Characteristics of Combat Actions (Operations) in Future Wars,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 14:2 (April 2005): 63-75.

Vorobyov, I.N. 'Military Futurology,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 17:3 (April 2008): 159-66.

Vorobyov, I.N. and V.A. Kiselev, '"Time" and "Space" as Strategic Category of Contemporary Wars,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 17:3 (July 2008): 38-46.

Vorobyov, I.N. and V.A. Kiselev, 'Military Science at Present Stage,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 17:3 (July 2008): 77-81.

Vorobyov, I.N. and V.A. Kiselev, 'On the Innovative Development Concept in the Armed Forces,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 18:3 (July 2009): 51-57.

Vorobyov, I.N. and V.A. Kiselev, 'The New Strategy of Indirect Approach,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 15:4 (October 2006): 27-36.

Wahlde, Peter Von. *Military Thought in Imperial Russia*. Michigan: Inidiana University Press, 1966.

Wahlde, P. V. 'A Pioneer of Russian Strategic Thought: G. A. Leer, 1829-1904,' *Military Affairs* 35:4 (1971): 148-153.

Waldman, T. 'Clausewitz and the Study of War,' *Defence Studies* 12:3 (2012): 345-74.

Walter, Dierk. 'A Military Revolution? Prussian Military Reforms before the Wars of German Unification,' *Forsvarsstudier* 2 (2001): 1-34.

Wardak, Ghulam Dastagır. *The Voroshilov Lectures: Materials from the Soviet General Staff Academy.* Vol. 1, Washington: The National Defence University Press, 1989.

Wardak, Ghulam Dastagır. The Voroshilov Lectures: Materials from the Soviet General Staff Academy. Vol. 2, Washington: The National Defence University Press, 1989.

Wolfe, Thomas W. Soviet Strategy at the Crossroads. Santa Monica*: Rand Cooperation,* 1964.

Yakubovsky, Ivan I. '50 Years of the Ussr Armed Forces,' *Military Thought* 2 (January 1968).

Zakharov, M.V. "Leninism and Soviet Military Science." In *Selected Soviet Military Writings: A Soviet View 1970-1975*, 86-92. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1977.

Zaloga, Steven J. "Soviet/Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces, 1945-2000." *In The Military History of the Soviet Union*, ed. Robin Higham and Frederick W. Kagan, 199-221. New York: Palgrave, 2002.

Zherebetsov, V.V. 'Upgrading the Military,' *Military Thought* (English Version) 14:1 (January 2005): 158-63.