WAR AND PEACE: RUSSIA'S EFFECTIVE BLURRING OF LINES, OR IS IT?

BY

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A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF

THE SCHOOL OF ADVANCED AIR AND SPACE STUDIES

FOR COMPLETION OF GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

SCHOOL OF ADVANCED AIR AND SPACE STUDIES

AIR UNIVERSITY

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

JUNE 2018

APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis meets master's-level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

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DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Army, or Air University.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

The annexation of Crimea in 2014 alarmed western security analysts. International media outlets reported stories of the "little green men" who waged a new form of warfare. These actions, combined with the emergence of the "Gerasimov Doctrine" led many to believe that Russian leaders had achieved success through "Hybrid Warfare." Few analysts, however, looked at if these new tactics were actually new and if they were effective in achieving Russian national objectives.

This research examines how effective Russian unconventional warfare efforts have been in three contemporary case studies. The case studies examined are the Russian-Estonia conflict in 2007, the August War with Georgia in 2008, and Russia's conflict with Ukraine in 2014. Through analyzing Russian unconventional warfare activities in each of these case studies it is apparent that if Russia is placed in a certain strategic context then they are likely to utilize unconventional warfare in a predictable manner. Highlighting this "blueprint" enables strategic planners to better plan for and mitigate Russian unconventional warfare activities in the Baltic State.

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Illustrations

Introduction

> *The very 'rules of war' have changed. The role of nonmilitary means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness. … All this is supplemented by military means of a concealed character.*
> -General Valery Gerasimov, Russian Chief of the General Staff

In February of 2013, General Valery Gerasimov wrote a short article on modern warfare for a Russian trade paper. This article received little attention when published. Just over a year later, in the wake of the Maidan uprising, analysts world-wide took notice. European security experts touted the article as Russia's modern *Art of War*, elevating it to what media today frequently refer to as the Gerasimov Doctrine.[1] This "doctrine," combined with the annexation of Crimea on March 18, 2014, shocked many security analysts. Hybrid warfare, the label for the type of war Gerasimov depicted, seemingly is the method of prosecuting quick and decisive wars today without appearing to wage war. Security analysts focused significant attention on whether this form of war was new and the degree to which hybrid warfare incorporated both information operations and the cyber domain. The effectiveness of the doctrine's application, however, received little attention. This paper examines if Russia's modern applications of unconventional warfare methods were effective in achieving Russia's stated and perceived national objectives during recent conflicts.

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[1]Molly Mckew. "The Gerasimov Doctrine." *Politico Online*. September/October 2017. Available at https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/09/05/gerasimov-doctrine-russia-foreign-policy-215538. This title and its implications are contentious. While some analysts, such as Mckew, former advisor to both Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili (2009-13) and Moldovan Prime Minister Vlad Filat (2014-15), clearly see a concerted Russian effort to have a centrally controlled and executed Hybrid Warfare Strategy that targets the Baltic States, Michael Kofman and Matt Rojansky of the Kennan Institute denounce the term "hybrid war" for its impreciseness, not being a new form of war, and that recent employment of national elements of power were opportunistic and that replicating scenarios like the Crimean Annexation in the Baltic States would be exceedingly difficult . Rojanksy, Matthew and Kofman, Michael. "A Closer Look at Russia's Hybrid War." *Kennan Cable* No.7 April 15.

There is a plethora of terms used to describe Russia's recent use of multiple elements of national power to achieve its national objectives. Attempting to scope hybrid warfare is difficult for reasons that begin with the core terms of the subject.   The terms hybrid warfare, Non-linear Warfare, and New Generation Warfare, have meanings prone to biased interpretation or narrowly constrict the researcher/reader.[2] The term "hybrid warfare" has grown too broad to add value in scoping an evaluation. Non-linear Warfare infers its practitioners have the flexibility to opportunistically capitalize on regional events. New Generation Warfare implies that the tactics are unprecedented and revolutionary. In addition, each of these terms lacks a doctrinal foundation or linkage. The terms are further hampered by their frequency of use and the fact the phrases often are erroneously interchanged, contributing to impreciseness of language. Several prominent scholars, such as Colin Gray, argue against the labeling or classification of wars that lead to "adjectival warfare."[3] Yet, as Dr. James Kiras points out, "innocuous language can lead to vociferous policy disagreements and confusion amongst allies."[4] Imprecise language isolates interested parties and potentially relevant responses. Therefore, an accurate yet flexible terminology is needed.[5]

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[2] Robert Jervis. "Perception and Misperception in International Politics." *Princeton University Press*, Princeton, New Jersey. 2017.

[3] Colin Gray. Recognizing and Understanding Revolutionary Change in Warfare: The Sovereignty of Context. *Strategic Studies Institute*, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 4.

[4] James Kiras. "Irregular Warfare" in David Jordan, et al. *Understanding Modern Warfare*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

[5] Frank Hoffman introduced the term Hybrid Warfare in 2007 stating that hybrid warfare is "a fusion of war forms that blurs regular and irregular warfare and incorporates a full range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics, and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence, coercion, and criminal disorder." Vladislov Surkov, a political advisor to Vladimir Putin, used the phrase non-linear warfare to describe these actions. Non-linear warfare is "fought when a state employs conventional and irregular military forces in conjunction with psychological, economic, political, and cyber assaults. Confusion and disorder ensue when weaponized information exacerbates the perception of insecurity in the populace as political, social, and cultural identities are pitted against one another." More information can be found at: Hoffman, Frank. "Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars." Potomac Institute for Policy Studies. Accessed May 5, 2018. http://potomacinstitute.org/publications/23-publications/reports/1267-conflict-in-the-21st-century-the-rise-of-hybrid-wars.

Authors of a report on Russian actions taken during the annexation of Crimea chose to use a term from U.S. Special Operations doctrine. They used the term "unconventional warfare" to describe the "wide variety of military, informational, political, diplomatic, economic, financial, cultural, and religious activities observed and analyzed."[6] In U.S. Joint Publication 3-05, Special Operations, unconventional warfare is one of the five assigned core missions of U.S. Special Operations.[7] Use of the term unconventional warfare provides a clear framework and understanding as the term is doctrinally defined.[8] As such, unconventional warfare is the term utilized throughout this thesis to describe Russia's recent approach in its military campaigns in Ukraine and threats to eastern Europe.

Accurately assessing the effectiveness of Russia's recent unconventional warfare efforts is critically important. Doing so prevents a strategist from incorrectly viewing opportunistic advances as "coherent, preconceived doctrine" or strategy.[9] A strategist, however, must also ensure necessary resources are allocated to combat a threat that has been proven effective.[10] As the relationship between Russia and the West continues to fray, it is imperative to understand if the unconventional threats displayed during recent conflicts were effective in achieving Russian national objectives. The results will show whether Russia is likely to incorporate unconventional warfare aspects into future conflicts. This thesis aims to assuage the alarmist reactions of analysts and politicians by showing that Russian efforts are not new, but rather a means to conduct limited wars to achieve objectives without crossing certain thresholds of escalation.

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[6] U. S. Army Special Operations Command. *"Little Green Men": A Primer on Modern Russian Unconventional Warfare, Ukraine 2013–2014*. U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 2016.
[7] Joint Publication 3-05 Special Operations.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Rojanksy Kofman. "A Closer Look at Russia's Hybrid War." *Kennan Cable* No.7 April 15
[10] Ibid.

To assess modern Russian unconventional warfare efforts, the author selected three case studies for evaluation. These case studies are: Russia's conflict with Estonia in 2007; Russia's conflict with Georgia in 2008; and Russia's invasion and Annexation of Crimea in 2014. Estonia, a former Soviet Republic and now a NATO member, challenged Russia's prestige and influence in the former Soviet Union in 2007. Russia responded with a blend of political and mostly non-violent coercive means to cause Estonia to capitulate to Russia's wishes. This case study illustrates Russian focus primarily on non-violent unconventional means to achieve effects within Estonia.

The August 2008 war with Georgia has a different focus for Russian unconventional warfare. Escalating tensions between Russia and Georgia over the latter's aspirations to join NATO, as well as Russian concern of Georgia's energy pipeline to the Caspian Sea, led to a much more violent conflict. This case study offers an examination of Russian unconventional warfare actions undertaken in a supporting role of traditional conventional combat.

The Russian conflict in Ukraine (2013-14) offers yet another variance in the Kremlin's application of unconventional war. Access to the Crimea, home to Sevastopol, the strategically important warm water port that traditionally hosted the Russian Black Sea Fleet, has long been a concern of Russia. A large Russian diaspora, approximately 60% of Crimeans are ethnic Russians which enabled Russia to employ a mix of violent and non-violent efforts under the claim of the right to protect doctrine and providing humanitarian aid to the peninsula's population. This case study offers a middle ground between the strategies employed in Estonia and Georgia.

Russia has used unconventional warfare in many other conflicts such as Lithuania in 1991, the Transnistrian War in 1990, and both Chechen wars. By examining these three case studies, however, the full

range of unconventional warfare, from non-violent actions to violence in support of conventional troop actions, is compared. By limiting the scope of the evaluation to these three case studies a broader picture of how Russia uses unconventional warfare against other nations appears. This picture then allows an assessment of Russia's unconventional warfare efficacy.

There are many different frameworks available to evaluate unconventional warfare techniques. U.S. doctrine breaks down unconventional warfare into seven phases, offering the phase structure as a means of framing the evaluation.[11] This construct, however, favors employed forces over other non-violent capabilities and domains that do not fit neatly into the phases. Additionally, this construct has a linear approach that implies a bias of causation. For example, did Russian unconventional warfare efforts assist, in any aspect, in achieving the state's objectives? If yes, then Russian unconventional warfare is effective. This approach is much too broad for effective analysis and lacks an understanding of the degree to which unconventional warfare contributed towards success using a range of unconventional means.

To capture the full unconventional spectrum, RAND analyst Andrew Radin proposes a framework with three categories. These categories are Nonviolent Subversion, Covert Violent Action, and Conventional Aggression. Nonviolent Subversion "seeks to use propaganda, covert action, and other nonviolent means to undermine or influence the governments." Covert Violent Action translates into a state using or sponsoring violent actions to influence or control sovereign countries "in a nonattributional or deniable manner." Lastly, Conventional Aggression is Russian use of conventional forces "supported and legitimized by a range of propaganda, covert action, and

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[11] The seven phases are preparation, initial contact, infiltration, organization, buildup, employment, and transition. U. S. Army Special Operations Command. *The Unconventional Warfare Pocket Guide* U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 2016. Pg. 10.

other forms of irregular warfare."[12] By using Radin's framework, the evaluation in this thesis covers the full range of unconventional actions Russia undertook, assessing their degree of effectiveness. Russian actions during each of the case studies will be classified into the above three categories and compared against both the stated and perceived Russian national objectives of each conflict to evaluate the effectiveness of each category, and the unconventional warfare actions of Russia as a whole.

This research aims to present the findings on how effective Russian unconventional warfare efforts have been in the case studies compared to Russian stated or implied national objectives in those countries. To do requires understanding Russia's national objectives during the time periods noted above. Understandably, Russia has kept classified much of its desired strategic end states in the three contemporary cases. The author uses public statements made by Russian officials and military officers, military doctrine, published national strategies and interviews to establish the national objectives of the Russian Federation. Additionally, while the findings may lead the reader to implications of further use of unconventional warfare tactics against similar states, this study does not attempt to predict if those tactics may be used against a NATO-allied country, which changes the strategic calculations for Russia.

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[12] Andrew Radin. "Hybrid War in the Baltics Threats and Possible Responses." Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017.

Chapter 1
The Origins of Russian Unconventional Warfare Perception

The Russians have placed the idea of influence at the very center of their operational planning and used all possible levers to achieve this: the skillful internal communications; deception operations; psychological operations and well-constructed external communications.

‑Janis Berzins

The modern Russian way of war, or the Russian strategic culture, is based on mass, fire power, and deception. This strategic culture has been developed over time by the unique characteristics of Russia's geography, societal, and military history. As Figure 1.1 shows, the boundaries of Russia have changed throughout history, with the most recent one occurring with the annexation of Crimea. Even with all the boundary changes, several truths of Russian geography have always held. The first truth is that Russia has always maintained a vast territory within its borders. Strategically, the expanse of Russian territory has been both an asset and a danger to the country's leaders. The enormity of the terrain demands a massive standing army to defend and secure the borders. Where other countries could invest in technological assets, Russia needed to equip and feed the masses of their soldiers that were often focused on internal stability.[1]

The second truth is that large expanses of Russian territory are not hospitable, leaving sections sparsely populated and difficult to traverse. Combined with the harshness of Russian winters, this terrain has protected the heartland of Russia. Throughout history, the large expanse of Russian terrain has appeared inviting to invaders, only for the invading forces to capitulate in the face of rugged terrain, weather,

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[1] The introduction of the ICBM changed this calculus, but the focus on mass shifted from personnel to quantities of missiles. The Soviet Union was able to become the technological powerhouse of the 1960-70s because of the unquestionable mass of their Army following World War II, and the relative lack of a continental threat to the Soviet Union.

exhaustion, starvation, and the conflict with the mobilized Russian population. The forces of Napoleon in 1812 and Nazi Germany in World War II had initial successes, but foundered on the rocks of Russian geography.

This repeated experience by the populace has generated a collective cultural feeling of Russian isolation and victimization.[2] In turn, these feelings influence how Russians view their position in the world. While these feelings shape a collective Russian perspective, they do not directly translate into Russian actions. Although the narrative of victimization has been persistent, Russian strategic actions have evolved and changed in response to Russia's perception of its strength. In summary, Russian strategic culture influences these views but is not deterministic.[3]

Figure 1 Russian Boundaries Before and After the Collapse of the Soviet Union
https://mapcollection.wordpress.com/2012/07/02/the-breakup-of-the-soviet-union/

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[2] Paweł Styrna, "Russia's 'Besieged Kremlin' Mentality: Déjà vu All over Again | SFPPR," accessed May 6, 2018, http://sfppr.org/2015/03/russias-besieged-kremlin-mentality-deja-vu-all-over-again/.

[3] Strategic Culture literature contains a wide academic divide between analysts. Some authors, such as Alastair Johnson, elevate culture to the penultimate decider of war. Others, such as Colin Gray, make the distinction that while culture is a vital component of a national leader's strategic makeup; it is just one component of many. For more information on the Strategic Culture debate see Colin S Gray, *Out of the Wilderness: Prime-Time for Strategic Culture*, Report prepared for U.S. Nuclear Strategy Forum. 21 October 2006. 35. Available online at https://fas.org/irp/agency/dod/dtra/stratcult-out.pdf.

When the Soviets perceived themselves as stronger they relied less on deception and more on firepower. Soviet leaders embraced the concepts of mass and deception against the technologically superior German military in World War II. At the height of the Soviet Union's power, mass and firepower were more prominent approaches than deception. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia perceived itself as conventionally weaker than most of its adversaries and appeared to have shifted to deception strategies. As Russia regains its strength, another evolution of strategy has begun, with a renewed emphasis on combining deception with conventional forces.

Many analysts equate this recent evolution with the "Gerasimov Doctrine."[4] As referenced in the introduction, the term "Gerasimov Doctrine" originated from a reflection paper that the Russian Chief of Staff wrote in 2013. In the article, General Valery Gerasimov detailed his thoughts on how unconventional tactics had been effective in the Arab Spring and the Color Revolutions, as well as how the United States had used political warfare against Russia. He pondered how to effectively combat these tactics with conventional forces. The article did not outline a new Russian plan for unconventional warfare as some analysts suggested.[5] It does, however, provide crucial insight into how a senior Russian leader viewed the effectiveness of unconventional warfare efforts and how those efforts could be combined with new technology and information operations to achieve national objectives. This change in thinking, also evident in Russia's conflicts with Estonia, Georgia, and Ukraine, is the most recent evolution of Russian strategic thought. One

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[4] Mark Galeotti coined the term Gerasimov Doctrine essentially as a marketing ploy for his blog on Russian activities. He has since apologized for creating the phrase as he feels it negatively impacts the analysis of Russian activities. Galeotti feels that Russian leaders are opportunistic and fractious, trying to earn favor from the Kremlin. Implying that Russia has a new doctrine impedes the full understanding of why decisions were made internally. "I'm Sorry for Creating the 'Gerasimov Doctrine.'" *Foreign Policy* (blog). Accessed April 28, 2018. https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/05/im-sorry-for-creating-the-gerasimov-doctrine/.
[5] Molly Mckew. "The Gerasimov Doctrine." *Politico Online*. September/October 2017. Available at https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/09/05/gerasimov-doctrine-russia-foreign-policy-215538.

author captures the essence of this evolution stating, "the subversion (efforts) are not the prelude to war, but the war itself."[6]

To better understand how this evolution occurred requires looking at four major influences on Russia's strategic culture. Russia's recent displays of unconventional warfare in Estonia, Georgia, and Ukraine, are influenced by their leaders' past experiences with the Soviet Partisan Movement, the concept of maskirovka, Reflexive Control Theory, and the Russian outlook on Soft Power.

The Soviet Partisan Movement (1941-1944)

The previously discussed geographic characteristics have meant that Russia has not been able to secure its borders from invading armies. During these attacks the invaders had to fight through pockets of resistance as Russians defended "the motherland." These partisan movements, while often unorganized, disrupted the invading forces, resulting in the Red Army gaining time and space to reconstitute, mobilize, and maneuver. Soviet leaders such as V. I. Lenin, Mikhael Tukhachevsky, and Joseph Stalin recognized the benefit of partisan warfare against a stronger opponent and worked to incorporate partisan elements in support of the Soviet Red Army.[7] Facing the threat of a technologically superior German military, Stalin looked to unconventional warfare. By training and organizing women and men into partisan "units" in the border regions, the Soviets could disrupt German forces with a new "mass." These units could help shape and prepare the environment in support of conventional forces and divert German strength away from the front. The German invasion of Russia in

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[6] Mark Galeotti. "I'm Sorry for Creating the 'Gerasimov Doctrine.'" *Foreign Policy* (blog). Accessed April 28, 2018. https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/05/im-sorry-for-creating-the-gerasimov-doctrine/.

[7] For more information on Soviet leaders' thoughts on partisan warfare see Lenin's 1905 work "*Partisan Skaya voina*" (Partisan War) V I Lenin, "Lenin: Guerrilla Warfare," accessed January 30, 2018, https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1906/gw/index.htm.
or Tukhachecksy's work in 1928: *Armed Insurrection*. "Armed Insurrection - A. Neuberg (1928)," libcom.org, accessed May 6, 2018, http://libcom.org/library/armed-insurrection-neuberg-1928.

1941 would test their effectiveness just eight years after the order was issued.

The effectiveness of the groups in the Soviet partisan movement greatly varied with their ability to coordinate with the Red Army.[8] While many partisan operations were countered swiftly by the German forces, there were several exceptional successes. One such success was the partisan preparation of the battlefield in Operation Bagration in 1944. Immediately prior to this operation, partisan cells conducted over 1,100 coordinated attacks on the rail lines Germany used to support their troops with reinforcements. The attacks damaged over 4,100 sections of rail and greatly contributed to Soviet success in the operation.[9]

While many countries had partisan movements in World War II, what made the Soviet one noteworthy was its scope and scale.[10] Whole German battalions were redeployed from the frontlines to counter the partisan threat.[11] This large-scale partisan movement gave the Soviets another layer of mass against the German forces and threatened their Lines of Communication (LoC). Stalin even recognized the partisan movement as "his second front."[12]

Ultimately, what Russian leaders learned from this experience was that partisan forces enable greater leveraging of mass. They also learned that state-sponsored and organized partisan groups can directly enhance conventional operations, as in Operation Bagration. Many of the partisan groups, however, were impromptu and organized around cadres of Red Army soldiers that escaped being captured by German forces.

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[8] Edgar Howell, *The Soviet Partisan Movement*, vol. N0.20-244 (Department of the Army Pamphlet, 1956).

[9] Leonid Grenkevich, *The Soviet Partisan Movement 1941-1944* (Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass, 1999). 259.

[10] There were other partisan movements that disrupted Axis forces in a similar or even greater manner. The Yugoslovian partisan movements caused Axis leaders to divert several dozen divisions to pacify Tito's unconventional activities.

[11] Ibid, 13.

[12] Pat McTaggart. "Scourge of the Russian Partisans." Accessed January 30, 2018. http://warfarehistorynetwork.com/daily/wwii/scourge-of-the-russian-partisans/.

Regardless of whether the groups were state-sponsored pre-existing groups or improvised, the Soviets found this combination to be an effective blurring of lines between uniformed actors and civilians that could buy the Red Army space, time, and information. A CIA assessment of the Soviet Partisan Movement noted the impact of this form of unconventional warfare in the following way; "The development of Soviet Partisan Warfare during the recent war was quite different and demonstrates both the functions and significance of this form of warfare in a modern conflict."[13] An evolution of these tactics can be seen in Chapters III and IV as South Ossetian and Crimean partisan movements enabled Russian conventional forces.

Maskirovka

The Russian word *maskirovka,* or маскировка, directly translates as masking or camouflage. This simple definition, however, obscures the true meaning of *maskirovka* in a Russian cultural context. The concept of *maskirovka* has evolved to incorporate all elements of deception. Russian utilization of this concept originally mirrored the simple definition. The first Russian school of *maskirovka,* opened in 1904, taught basic camouflaging of personnel and vehicles.[14] At the time, their understanding of the concept matched Russian military capabilities to maneuver, in essence a very tactical application.

By the Second World War the Soviet Union's military strength had grown, and so too had its understanding of how deception could be utilized. *Maskirovka* transitioned from masking to, "the means of securing combat operations and the daily activities of forces; misleading the enemy about the presence and disposition of forces, objectives, combat readiness and plans. Military deception contributes to achieving

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[13] Cental Intelligence Agency. *Soviet Partisan Warfare Since 1941* Accessed at: https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78-01634R000400140001-2.pdf

[14] Timothy L. Thomas. (2004). "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military". *Journal of Slavic Military Studies,* Taylor & Francis. **17** (2): 237–256.

surprise, preserving combat readiness and the survivability of objectives."[15] While Soviet ground strength had grown, their air force was no match for Germany in 1941.[16] Soviet planners looked for an unconventional answer. General Georgy Zhukov used the concept of *maskirovka* to conduct an operational level deception plan to support his attack on Rzhev-Vyazma. In support of the attack, he built four "*maskirovka*" companies consisting of over 800 fake tanks and vehicles. These companies repeatedly acted as if they were offloading the vehicles at the railhead, appearing as a massive bottleneck and vulnerable target. These actions were supported by fake radio traffic that reinforced the visible efforts of the companies. The deception worked, and the Luftwaffe repeatedly conducted air strikes against the fake vehicles, drawing these resources away from the actual assembly area from which Zhukov launched his assault.[17]

Twenty years after Zhukov's experience, and after Soviet victory in WWII, the strategic context for the USSR changed again. The Soviet Union was a superpower by this time, armed with nuclear weapons. Recent deployment of U.S. missiles in NATO countries, however, made Soviet leaders feel disadvantaged in the balance of power. To counter this imbalance they looked to apply *maskirovka* at the strategic level. The Soviets attempted to covertly deploy nuclear-armed missiles in Cuba, complete with Soviet operators concealed as businessmen.[18]

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[15] Prokhorov, Aleksandr Mikhaĭlovich. *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*. Macmillan, 1982.

[16] Ilya Grinberg Von Hardesty, *Red Phoenix Rising The Soviet Air Force in World War II* (University Press of Kansas, 2012).

[18] David Glantz, *Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War* (London ; New York: Frank Cass, 1989). While this operation, named Operation Mars, would fail overall some of its deception operations did cause an ineffective expenditure of German air power.

[18] While the Soviets took actions to conceal their troops who did not blend in with the local populace, a general lack of discipline led to imagery of the Red Army battalion that the soldiers belonged to being placed outside of their barracks and the building of SAM (Surface to Air Missile) sites in standard Russian fashion, further revealing their identity. Incidents like this would be repeated later in Ukraine with Russian soldiers taking "selfies" while their devices had geolocation tabs enabled and posting them on social media. "Russian Military Bans Selfies to Prevent Soldiers Revealing Locations | The Independent." Accessed April 29, 2018. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-military-ban-selfies-facebook-soldiers-reveal-secret-locations-syria-ukraine-a7986506.html.

Deception became a fundamental pillar of Cold War Soviet military operations. The Soviet focus on deception during their conflict with Czechoslovakia in 1968 forecasted the prominent role deception would take in future operations. While the invasion would quickly turn conventional in order to quell the Prague Spring, operations began with several elements of *maskirovka*. In preparation of the invasion, the Soviet Union hosted the SUVMA Warsaw Pact exercise, a plausible excuse to position over 16,000 Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union also "assisted" Czechoslovakian forces in conducting a logistical convoy of fuel and ammunition out of Czechoslovakia and into East Germany. While there was an increased Soviet troop presence, the Soviet Union kept its forces confined on bases so as not to appear aggressive. On the eve of the invasion, two planes landed at the Prague Airport full of civilian-clad, military-aged males. The males passed through customs and proceeded to the Soviet Embassy, whose occupants armed them. The ununiformed group then proceeded to take the Prague Airport, allowing the landing of special operations forces, ammunition, and supplies. Uniformed Soviet troops then cordoned the Czech forces on their bases while armored columns moved across the border in support of the dismounted forces. These initial maneuvers were conducted under complete radio silence, so as not to give away Soviet positions, an increase in activity, or raise suspicion.[19] The concept of *maskirovka* evolved from a tactical to a strategic application and was pivotal in Soviet strategic thinking during these historic examples. Since then, it has become a pillar in Russian planning and decision-making.

Russian leaders learned several lessons from the iterative growth of their deception planning. The first lesson is that deception can buy time to conduct military activities. This time can offset asymmetrical

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[19] Mark Lloyd. *The Art of Military Deception*. Pen and Sword, 2003. pgs. 126-128.

advantages of their opponents. Russian leaders also learned that deception can hinder attribution. The value of attribution to deception is that it creates confusion that buys time and space. This concept has only increased with cyber activities and social media, realms where attribution is already difficult, a theme seen in each of the case studies presented later.

Reflexive Control Theory

Soviet theorists first conceived of Reflexive Control Theory in 1960. V. A. Lefebvre defined the theory as, "a means of conveying to a partner or an opponent specially prepared information to incline him to voluntarily make the predetermined decision desired by the initiator of the action."[20] Soviet leaders quickly took the concept that originated with game theory and applied the idea to strategy. Reflexive Control Theory became a means to increase friction and uncertainty in the mind of an adversary. Recognizing how *maskirovka* could be utilized to assist Reflexive Control aims, Major General A. Ionov wrote extensively on how disinformation campaigns directly increase uncertainty leading to delayed decision-making.[21]

Russian thoughts on Reflexive Control Theory would evolve again after the U.S. victory in Operation Desert Storm. The operation highlighted how computers and sensors could enhance intelligence gathering operations and synchronize attacks. Colonel S. Leonenko recognized that computers could degrade the effects of reflexive control by being able to accelerate both the pace of decision-making as well as the credibility of the information received. He also predicted, however, that these information sensors would become vulnerable to overloading

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[20] Timothy Thomas. "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17, no. 2 (June 2004): 237–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/13518040490450529., pg 237.
[21] Ibid, 246.

the system and also are susceptible to electronic spoofing, making the information systems themselves a prime target of reflexive control.[22]

With the introduction of global media outlets and development of social media platforms, Reflexive Control Theory evolved again. Russian Army Colonel Komov built on Leonenko's work by adding several methods of applying the theory, such as distraction, overload, suggestion, and division. Each of these methods is greatly enhanced through the manipulation of mass media. Recognizing this vital role of the human domain in Reflexive Control operations, Komov proposed changing the name of the theory to "Intellectual Information Warfare."[23]

The Russian targeting of media and communications evident in Chapters III-V of this thesis show the importance of the Reflexive Control Theory to Russian Leaders and the frequency with which they employ it. In fact, Major General N. I. Turko stated that "reflexive control is more important in achieving military objectives than traditional firepower."[24]

Russian Soft Power

In 1990 Dr. Joseph Nye introduced the term soft power, defining it as "the ability (of a state) to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideas, and policies."[25] Some scholars find the concept that the Russian Federation possesses or uses soft power laughable.[26] Nye commented, "that the Russian curtailment of liberties,

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[22] Ibid, 246.

[23] Timothy Thomas, "The Russian Understanding of Information Operations and Information Warfare,", *Information Age Anthology*, III Air University Press (n.d.).

[24] Thomas, 240.

[25] Nye's concept of soft power, diametrically opposed to the coercion-based tools of economy and military that compose hard power, are similar in nature to Robert Gilpen's concept of "prestige". While the center of both concepts revolve around attractiveness to a foreign audience, Prestige draws attractiveness from both hard and soft power concepts, soft power from cultural allure and statesmanship. For Nye's original writing on Soft power see *Bound to Lead*. Robert Gilpen's thoughts on prestige can be found in *War & Change in World Politics*.

[26] "Russian Soft Power Is Just like Western Soft Power, but with a Twist | Russia Direct." Accessed April 29, 2018. http://www.russia-direct.org/opinion/russian-soft-power-just-western-soft-power-twist.

the weakness of the rule of law, and an image of corruption" are the factors preventing Russia from gaining soft power.[27]

As with the concept of *maskirovka* and reflexive control, Russian leaders evolved or redefined a perceived Russian weakness into an unconventional weapon. This time the weapon was created by Vladimir Putin. In 2012, Vladimir Putin defined his understanding of soft power, stating "there is a concept, such as soft power, a complex of instruments and methods to achieve foreign policy objectives without the use of weapons, which include the use of information and other means."[28] Putin's understanding of soft power could not be more different than that of the term's inventor Nye. Putin's definition of soft power is that of a weaponized state tool, or as Marcel Van Herpen argues, "hard power with a velvet glove."[29] Figure 1.2 below compares the two definitions:

Nye's Concept	Putin's Concept
the ability (of a state) to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideas, and policies.	there is a concept, such as soft power, a complex of instruments and methods to achieve foreign policy objectives without the use of weapons, which include the use of information and other means.

Figure 2 Soft Power Definitions
Author's original work

Putin's definition of soft power implies that the arena is "zero-sum" in nature: a state loses power if it is directly gained by another state. This purposeful redefining of soft power explains why Russia would risk international conflict to stop the movement of a war memorial in Estonia and provides a broader contextual picture for Russian unconventional efforts at large in the Baltic States.

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[27] Ibid

[28] Vladimir Putin, Russia and the Changing World, Moskovskie Novosti (Moscow News), 27 February 2012.

[29] Herpen, Marcel H. Van. *Putin's Propaganda Machine: Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 27.

Conclusion

Russian strategic culture has a pattern of shifting to embrace the importance of mass, firepower, or deception, in relation to each other, based on Russia's perception of its strength relative to that of its adversaries. The unconventional warfare methods used to support these shifts also evolve over time. General Gerasimov's writings reflect the latest pattern of thinking from senior Russian officials. These thoughts blend together *maskirovka* and Reflexive Control Theory, supported by historical unconventional warfare lessons learned through the Soviet Partisan Movement. Russia's actions in Estonia, Georgia, and Ukraine show these evolutions in practice, but were they effective in achieving their objectives? The following case studies seek to answer this question.

Chapter 2
Estonia: The Bronze Soldier Incident 2007

*The Russian theory of war allows you to defeat the enemy
without ever having to touch him; Estonia was an early
experiment in that theory.*

-Peter Pomerantsev

If the 2007 conflict with Estonia was an experiment of the new Russian theory of war, it was an abject failure. Russia failed to achieve its strategic objectives and contributed instead to the long-term strengthening of NATO in the Baltic region. The 2007 Estonia conflict varies from the other case studies in this thesis in three ways. The first difference is attribution. Due to the unique makeup of the cyber domain and the lack of international cyber norms, there is a serious challenge in directly attributing cyber actions. Forensic mapping can lead to international networks of infected computers that are unknowingly being utilized for nefarious cyber activities. No direct evidence proves that Russian military hackers were behind the attacks against Estonia. This lack of direct attribution, however, does not prevent the author from drawing inferences based on sizeable supporting, if circumstantial, evidence.

The second way in which this case differs from the others is that the Bronze Soldier incident is the first instance in which the Russian Federation attempted to coerce another state primarily through the cyber domain. The events also constitute the first overt coercive cyber attempt by a state in history.[1] In the other case studies of this thesis, Russian cyber activities served in an enabling role aimed at suppressing communications in support of more conventional military operations.

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[1] Some cyber analysts propose the Stuxnet virus as a coercive cyber attempt; however, the virus' efforts did not become apparent to Iran until after 2007. Additionally, the intent of the virus aimed at the denial of Iranian nuclear capability instead of coercing the Iranian government. Libicki , Martin, *Cyberspace in Peace and War*, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2016) 13-18.

Given that Russia attempted to use cyber tools alone to achieve its objectives, this is the only case study of the three that does not evaluate Radin's third category of Conventional Aggression. As this case study makes clear, Russian leaders likely never intended to commit conventional military forces to the operation.

The final way between this example in unconventional warfare and the others is that Estonia is the only country of the three that is a NATO member. Article V of the NATO Charter states that an attack on one NATO member is an attack on all. This Article carries considerable weight in influencing Russian strategic actions as the consolidated power of NATO allies potentially rivals or exceeds what Russia would be willing to commit in a limited war. In the 2007 conflict, this consideration played a large role in why Russia did not use conventional force options.

Background.

The country of Estonia has known more occupation in modern history than independence. After a brief period of independence from 1918 to 1940, Estonia was occupied by the Soviet Union. Nazi Germany then took the territory from the Soviet Union in 1941. Estonia became a part of the Soviet Union for the second time in a decade in 1944. After the Soviet Union "liberated" Estonian territory from Nazi Germany, many Estonians felt that they had traded one oppressive regime for another, forecasting the tensions of 2007.[2] On September 22, 1944, Soviet forces seized the Estonian capital city of Tallinn. Russia commemorated the event with a war memorial called the Bronze Soldier. The Bronze Soldier consisted of a stone base structure, the bronze memorial, and an eternal flame. The memorial also interred the remains of 14 Red Army soldiers who purportedly died in the battle for Tallinn.[3]

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[2] Brandon Valeriano. *Cyber War versus Cyber Realities: Cyber Conflict in the International System*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015, 143.

[3] Jari Tanner. "Estonia Moves Soviet Statue to Cemetery," *The Washington Post*, April 30, 2007, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/30/AR2007043000478.html.

In August of 1991, Estonian leaders declared the restoration of their country's independence. Shortly afterwards, Estonian representatives extinguished the "eternal flame" of the Bronze Soldier, further exacerbating Estonian-Russian tensions. Over the next several years, ethnic Russians living in Estonia claimed they were being treated as second-class citizens.[4] These claims sparked the 2007 incident.

In 2004, a series of events occurred that further worsened Estonian and Russian relations. Estonia became a member of NATO in March and the European Union in May.[5] Estonia's defense was finally bolstered by NATO's collective defense agreement. Estonia, and several other Baltic States, had sought a collective security arrangement in 1940 before it was incorporated into the Soviet Union. This move by Estonia marked a significant step away from Russian influence. Russia, in turn, lost another buffer state with the West. In response to a wave of anti-Russian feelings, the Russian Federation released information through various media including the widely viewed state-owned network, *Russia Today* (RT). Its information products highlighted the bravery of Soviet soldiers and featured Soviet symbolism, in an effort to remind viewers of the history and power of the USSR.[6]

After Estonia joined both NATO and the European Union, celebrations of Victory Day at the Bronze Soldier every May 9th, commemorating the Soviet defeat of Nazi Germany, grew larger as ethnic Russians appeared to cling to the last overt symbol of former Soviet rule. At the same time, many Estonian citizens became less tolerant of the

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[4] Alistair Scrutton. "Wary of Divided Loyalties, a Baltic State Reaches out to Its Russians," *Reuters*, February 24, 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-baltics-russia/wary-of-divided-loyalties-a-baltic-state-reaches-out-to-its-russians-idUSKBN1630W2.
[5] The Rose Revolution was one of the three color revolutions Russia found disconcerting. There was also the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the lesser known Tulip Revolution of Kyrgyzstan in 2005. For more information on these revolutions and their impact see *The Color Revolutions* by Lincoln A. Mitchell.
[6] "Russia's Involvement in the Tallinn Disturbances." Accessed April 28, 2018. https://www.icds.ee/publications/article/russias-involvement-in-the-tallinn-disturbances/.

Soviet memorial's placement, which occupied prime real estate in Estonia's capital.

The relocation of the Bronze Soldier soon polarized the population in Estonia. On January 10, 2007 the Estonian Parliament passed the War Graves Act. This Act provided the legal basis for the Estonian government to relocate the Bronze Statue, as well as allowing for the identification and return of the remains of the Red Army soldiers interred below it.[7] Shortly following this Act, the Parliament passed the Law of Forbidden Structures on February 15, 2007. The Law authorized the removal of Soviet symbols from Estonian parks.[8] The Estonian Prime Minister, however, thought the Law to be too antagonistic towards Russia and vetoed the proposal.[9]

Tensions between the two countries increased in April of 2007 when Estonia announced an exploratory effort to see if there were interred bodies located under the memorial. On 26 April, the Estonian government erected a large white tent over the structure. This action caused widespread backlash from an ethnic Russian group called the Night Patrol. Made up of young ethnic Russians and even some Russian citizens, the Night Patrol focused on defending the original position of the Bronze Soldier. On the evening of 26 April, members of the Night Patrol incited riots in the streets of Tallin leading to the worst violence in the city since the 1944 Russian occupation.[10] The riots lasted two days. While the riots occurred, a crippling series of cyber-attacks swept over Estonia. The attacks lasted from 26 April to 18 May 2007, only ending when the Estonian government decided to sever digital connections with the outside world. Estonia relocated the statue to a military cemetery on

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[7] Ibid

[8] Ibid

[9] Karsten Brüggemann & Andres Kasekamp (2008) The Politics of History and the "War of Monuments" in Estonia, Nationalities Papers, 36:3, 425-448, DOI: 10.1080/00905990802080646

[10] "Russia's Involvement in the Tallinn Disturbances." Accessed April 28, 2018. https://www.icds.ee/publications/article/russias-involvement-in-the-tallinn-disturbances/.

30 April and began reconstructing the stone framework on 30 May. The Estonian government identified and repatriated all but four of the interred bodies.

Russian National Objectives During the Estonian 2007 Conflict.

Unlike the Georgian War and the conflict in Ukraine, the initial Russian objective in Estonia is clear. Russian leaders wanted to keep the Bronze Soldier memorial in its original location, with the bodies of the Red Army soldiers remaining undisturbed. In response to the Estonian actions to move the memorial, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov announced, "This is blasphemous, and will have serious consequences for our relations with Estonia," and further called the Estonian acts "disgusting."[11] The intent behind the Russian actions, however, remains disputed with several other unstated objectives. There are two schools of thought regarding Russian intentions behind their actions. The first is that Russia used unconventional methods in an attempt to coerce Estonia into not moving the memorial. The second school of thought interprets Russian actions punishing Estonia for embarrassing Russia in the eyes of the international community.[12] This thesis does not side with either school of thought, though the cyber attacks began before the relocation of the memorial.[13] Instead, this thesis evaluates the effectiveness of unconventional warfare methods in achieving their coercive goals in Estonia.

Russian sources have not openly discussed their key objectives; however, it is possible to infer them based on circumstances. The first is that Russian actions had to be limited. Russia could not afford Estonia

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[11] Steven Lee Myers. "Russia Rebukes Estonia for Moving Soviet Statue." *The New York Times*, April 27, 2007, sec. Europe. https://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/27/world/europe/27cnd-estonia.html.

[12] Valeriano, 140.

[13] The failure of Russia to either coerce or punish Estonia effectively raises the question of whether attacks through the cyber domain currently can create enough pain to the populace for either theory to be achieved. For more information on this debate see Libicki's work: Libicki, Martin, *Cyberspace in Peace and War*, (Anapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2016) 262-267.

invoking Article V and facing the combined might of NATO over the moving of a memorial. Also, while not documented, it is reasonable to assume that Russia aimed to test NATO response and resolve as well as embarrass NATO in the wake of the "color revolutions." The pro-Western outcomes of the revolutions led to a lessening of Russian influence the region, resulting in a perceived loss of soft power for the state. Similarly, Russia likely felt threatened by the perceived NATO encroachment when Estonia became a member of the alliance. These outcomes likely led to the Russian desire to test NATO's strength and members' commitment. Given these observations, the inferred objectives used to evaluate the effectiveness of unconventional warfare in this case study are:

1. Use of unconventional warfare efforts to deter Estonia into leaving the Bronze Soldier alone;

2. Use of unconventional warfare efforts to coerce Estonia for relocating the Bronze Soldier;

3. Use of unconventional warfare to achieve objectives while keeping the conflict limited in scope; and

4. Use of unconventional warfare efforts to embarrass NATO.

Non-Violent Subversive Acts During the 2007 Estonian Conflict.

As with future Russian operations in Georgia and the Crimea, the Russian government used non-violent subversive acts extensively to achieve objectives through unconventional means. In Estonia, Russia used three such measures to avoid violence: cyber-attacks, economic pressure, and information operations. Of the three unconventional warfare means, they relied heavily on actions through the cyber domain.

Estonia, a country whose citizens proudly marketed their country as "E-stonia" due to their level of internet connectivity, was particularly vulnerable to attacks through the cyber domain.[14] In 2007, 97 percent of banking in Estonia was done digitally. In addition, each citizen had a

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[14] Martin Libicki. *Cyberspace in Peace and War*, (Anapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2016) 11.

digital ID and avatar that hosted medical and tax records.[15] As Jaan
Priisalu, a former risk manager at a major Estonia bank, stated, "We live
in the future. Online banking, online news, text messages, online
shopping-total digitization has made everything quicker and easier, but it
also creates the possibility that we can be thrown back centuries in a
couple of seconds."[16] In the few seconds that it took Priisalu to answer
his phone on the evening of 26 April 2007, Russia had already reverted
Estonia to the analog era.

Computers with internet protocol addresses originating from
Russia began a Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS) attack against the
Estonian National Defense servers and Prime Minister's office. These
attacks began shortly after representatives from the Estonian
Government erected a tent over the Bronze Soldier on 26 April 2007. A
DDOS attack uses a system of either willing or corrupted computers to
barrage a server with requests for information.[17] This barrage of requests
temporarily overloads the server making information inaccessible and
communication impossible. The DDOS attacks increased over the next
several days, temporarily shutting down the Estonian parliament, most
of Estonia's banking capabilities to include automatic teller machines
(ATM), and both internal and external media platforms. The attacks
increased from simple but massive DDOS to email-bombing, website
defacement, and disinformation.[18] For example, Estonian government
websites were defaced with images of Soviet soldiers.[19] The attacks
increased in quantity and intensity until, on 19 May 2007, Estonia
temporarily severed external internet connections, hampering its ability

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[15] Hannes Grassegger, https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/dec/02/fake-news-botnets-how-russia-weaponised-the-web-cyber-attack-estonia
[16] Ibid
[17] Libicki, 11.
[18] Email bombing consists of flooding a target's inbox with spam or junk emails. The number of the spam emails minimizes the usefulness of the inbox. Website defacement is manipulating images or text on a target's website for derogatory purposes. For more information on basic malignant cyber actions see Libicki's work Chapter 2 Some Basic Principles.
[19] Valeriano, 145.

to govern, but also effectively ending the cyber onslaught. In addition to shutting down Estonia's capacity to govern effectively, the attacks led to a loss of almost a billion dollars of revenue.

Several pieces of evidence suggest Russia was responsible for the attacks. The first piece is the number of IP addresses that linked back to Russia. Several addresses, for example, are limited directly to Russian state institutions. Though Russia used a bot-net that harnessed multiple computers throughout the world to both carry out the attack and to prevent direct attribution, these systems have a considerable cost to run and maintain, indicating government funding for the attacks.[20] The second piece of evidence was a series of instructions left on multiple Russian forums. These instructions informed the users how to conduct attacks, the targets to hit and their priority, and when to hit the targets.[21] Estonian government websites remained the highest priority targets on these lists, indicating a level of central control of the efforts. Lastly, the timing and scope of the operations far surpass organizational and technical capacities of random "patriotic" hackers of the time. The cyber-attacks began mere hours after Estonia erected a tent over the Bronze Soldier. Cyber analysts Brandon Valeriano and Ryan Maness state "there is little doubt that this is the case because the incidents needed the organization of many highly skilled operatives, working in coordination and with a clear motive."[22] From these pieces of evidence, it is reasonable to conclude that Russia supported and directed these series of cyber-attacks to achieve its national objectives.

The cyber-attacks, although centrally controlled and directed, failed to achieve Russian objectives in Estonia. The attacks seemingly

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[20] Bot-nets are a series of computers networked together to apply mass effects on a network. They are commonly used in DDoS attacks to create the volume of requests on a server that the attacks need to be successful. Frequently the owners of computers that participate in Bot-nets are not even aware their systems are being compromised.
[21] Dan Remenyi. *ECIW2008-Proceedings of the 7th European Conference on Information Warfare and Security: ECIW*. Academic Conferences Limited, 2008.
[22] Valeriano, 147.

had no visible bearing on Estonia's willingness to relocate the memorial. The country weathered three days of the attacks while moving the statue to its desired location. As a coercive means, Russia's cyber actions failed to prevent the moving of the memorial, return the memorial to its original location after the memorial was moved, or even elicit an apology from Estonia for moving a symbol "sacred" to Russians.

Russian use of cyber to compel Estonia is difficult to measure. Some estimate the loss of 750 million dollars. This monetary loss, however, largely came about from Estonia's choice to disconnect from outside sources, albeit under duress. Ultimately, the Estonians would receive more in aid and soft power from this incident than was lost over the three weeks. Punishment also did not elicit an apology from the Estonian government. Cyber unconventional warfare methods, therefore failed to compel Estonia.

Employment of cyber assets, however, did assist the Russian Federation in keeping the conflict limited. Under siege, Estonia tried in vain to invoke the collective self-defense clause of Article V. The other NATO members did not agree that these events warranted a response using military forces. While keeping the attack limited, Russia also did not achieve its objectives through their chosen medium, in essence being deterred from employing conventional forces as they would in Georgia and Ukraine by the specter of Article V.

Lastly, while NATO's response to Russian actions proved to be slow and not overly reassuring to potential members, the event allowed the world to witness a long-term NATO response concerning the reinforcement of allies. As a result of the cyber-attacks, Estonia now hosts the Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence in Tallinn. This Center houses the worlds' leading annual cyber conference and has published the Tallinn Manual, an important document in establishing cyber norms that could prevent cyber-attacks in the future or normalize

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responses to those attacks.[23] This response to Russian cyber actions has severely hampered their capability to influence Estonia, or other NATO states, in the future through the cyber domain.

While cyber attacks featured prominently as the main tool to conduct unconventional warfare in this case, the Russian Federation also used several economic tools to achieve their objectives. Starting in May of 2007, after Estonia relocated the memorial to its new location, Russia made several attempts to apply economic pressure to Estonia. Estonia saw a reduction in 60 percent of shipped goods originating from Russia. Russia cut petroleum, coal, and fertilizer exports to Estonia by 50 percent.[24] The Russian Federation can only apply limited pressure through energy manipulation due to other European countries being connected to Estonia's energy pipelines and because Estonia has large deposits of oil shale. In addition to the suspension of goods, Russia also halted operations on its segment of rail that operated within the GoRail international route connecting St. Petersburg to Tallinn.[25]

The economic pressure Russia used against Estonia failed to achieve Russian objectives in the same way as its cyber operations. The financial weapons did not coerce Estonia to move the monument back into place. As seen in the cyber attacks the punishment was ineffective. The economic pressure applied did not threaten to invoke Article V, thus fit within the Russian construct of a limited war. Additionally, Russian economic manipulation is a tactic well understood in Europe, and applying such small pressure against Estonia was never likely to cause embarrassment to Estonia, let alone NATO.

The third nonviolent subversive effort Russia pursued was conducting information operations. The Russian Federation attempted

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[23] "Tallinn Manual Process." CCDCOE, September 16, 2014. https://www.ccdcoe.org/tallinn-manual.

[24] "Russia's Involvement in the Tallinn Disturbances." Accessed April 28, 2018. https://www.icds.ee/publications/article/russias-involvement-in-the-tallinn-disturbances/.

[25] Ibid

to use multiple disinformation campaigns. These operations likely were aimed at garnering support for Russian actions and inciting Estonian youths to riot. Three events are notable. The first is the transmission of misinformation. Russian state-owned media repeatedly broadcasted videos that made the rioters appear as peaceful protestors or covered the violent actions of the Estonian police. Several of its media sites broadcasted false interviews with detainees who claim to have witnessed executions by the Estonian police. Such executions never occurred. The one documented death of a Russian citizen was manipulated as well. Russian media characterized his death as a noble sacrifice by relocating the body from its original location to the location of the monument, some 500 meters away.[26] The second disinformation event occurred with the visit of the Russian Foreign Minister to Estonia. The minister claimed that the Bronze Soldier had sawed into pieces by the Estonians. In actuality, the statue was moved as one piece, but the striations that the Russian Foreign Minister referenced were casting lines from the bronzing process. The last event was a fake radio broadcast of an Estonian apology purportedly from Andrus Ansip, Estonia's Prime Minister. [27] These activities did not achieve any of Russia's objectives. If anything, the exposure of the blatant misinformation on Russian media led to what analyst Valeriano states as the shaming of Russia.[28]

Ultimately, as seen in Table 2.1, the unconventional combination of cyber, economic, and information operations failed to achieve any of Russia's strategic objectives. Its actions ended up vilifying Russia in the eyes of the international community and strengthening NATO over the long term. The aftermath of the conflict clearly benefitted Estonia. Estonia relocated the Bronze Statue to its chosen location and became the driving force for constructing a new set of internationally agreed

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[26] Ibid
[27] Ibid
[28] Valeriano, 147.

upon cyber norms. What it accomplished was to further cement Estonia's position within NATO, not weaken it.

Table 1 Effectiveness of Subversive Non-Violent Acts

Subversive Non-Violent Acts	Directly Achieved	Enabled	No Impact/Negative Impact
Cyber attacks			X
Economic Pressure			X
Information Operations			X

Source: Author's original work

Russian Covert Violent Actions During the 2007 Estonian Conflict

As with other subversive non-violent actions, Russia's covert violent actions are also difficult to directly attribute. Russian involvement can only be substantiated through reports and claims of the Estonia Internal Security or the former Estonian Prime Minister Andrus Ansip. Such reports and claims obviously have a strong anti-Russian bias. These two sources suggest that the Russian FSB assisted in providing direction and supplies to the Tallinn rioters during the two days of rioting. Reports indicate Russian support of two different efforts leading up to the riots.

The Estonian Secret Police documented multiple meetings between the Senior Counselor of the Russian Embassy, Sergei Overtshenko, and Dmitri Linter, the head of the Night Patrol in the weeks leading up to the riots.[29] On 26 April, as tensions heated up, the Estonian government banned the sale of any alcohol to prevent its use in spreading violence or as a flammable liquid. Prime Minister Ansip stated after the conflict that Russian officials, likely from the 2nd Russian Special Purpose Brigade a Spetznaz unit located close to Estonia, were directing the riots and

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[29] "Russia's Involvement in the Tallinn Disturbances." Accessed April 28, 2018. https://www.icds.ee/publications/article/russias-involvement-in-the-tallinn-disturbances/.

passing out vodka to the youth for Molotov cocktails.[30] Five years later an Estonian named Aleksei Dressen, who was in Tallinn during the riots, was revealed by media sources to be an FSB officer. As evidence of the connection, Russia would later trade prisoners to get Dressen back. [31]

Estonian Internal Security also documented an 18 April meeting between Andrei Zarenkov, a political leader in Estonia opposed to relocating the Bronze Soldier and Vadim Vassilyev, the First Secretary of the Russian Embassy.[32] Hours after this meeting Zarenkov released that his political party, the Constitution Party, would be actively trying to persuade Estonian armed services not to follow orders in intervening if anything happened at the Bronze Soldier. Zarenkov also sought volunteers to "agitate." These factors combined present Russia as an active supporter of sowing discontent in Estonia over the relocation of the memorial and filling a directing role during the riots themselves. The riots lasted only two days before Estonia was able to quell them. They actually had the effect of accelerating the relocation efforts of the Estonia government.[33]

Russian covert violent actions, shown in Table 2.2 below, did not achieve or enable the country to achieve any of their four national objectives. Analysts suggest that the decision-making process of the Estonian government regarding relocating the Bronze Soldier accelerated the conflict, the direct opposite of Russia's intent.[34]

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[30] Baltic News Network, http://bnn-news.com/estonian-ex-pm-bronze-night-riots-in-tallinn-coordinated-by-russian-officers-on-site-164450 Spetznaz units are Russia's special operation units. Similar to U.S. special operations, unconventional warfare is also a core mission for Russian Spetznaz units.
[31] Dario Cavegn, "Ansip, Laaneots: Russian Agents Present during Bronze Night Riots.", April 26, 2017. https://news.err.ee/592127/ansip-laaneots-russian-agents-present-during-bronze-night-riots.
[32] "Russia's Involvement in the Tallinn Disturbances." Accessed April 28, 2018. https://www.icds.ee/publications/article/russias-involvement-in-the-tallinn-disturbances/.
[33] Ibid
[34] Ibid

Table 2 Effectiveness of Covert Violent Actions

Covert Violent Actions	Directly Achieved	Enabled	No Impact/Negative Impact
Russian Sponsoring of Night Patrol riots			X
Russian influencing of Constitution Party			X

Author's original work

Conclusion

Unconventional warfare methods failed to achieve any of Russia's national objectives during the 2007 conflict over the Bronze Statue. For the first time in "cyber history," a state's leaders attempted to utilize the cyber domain as the main medium in which to apply pressure and influence another state's decision making. In concert with the cyber domain, Russian leaders tried to apply additional pressure through economic pressure, manipulation of energy supplies, and information operations. Ultimately, these efforts backfired, leaving Russia to deal with the international fallout of the speculations that the Russian Federation directed the cyber-attacks and the embarrassment that a small country like Estonia stood up to Russia.

The failure of unconventional warfare methods in Estonia shaped how Russia would utilize them to achieve national objectives in the future. Subsequent Russian actions suggest that Russian leaders learned several lessons from the Estonian experience. The first is that unconventional warfare through the cyber domain is a powerful tool that can be used to increase the fog and friction of war and interrupt command and control. Russian leaders also learned that while the cyber domain is a powerful medium, operations cannot inflict enough pressure to coerce or punish when they are the main effort. In both the Georgian and Ukrainian wars, cyber operations would fill a supporting, rather than the supported role.

Russian officials also observed the fractious nature and delayed response time of both NATO and the European Union's response to the cyber-attacks. With the relative "newness" of the cyber domain and a lack of established international norms on cyber behavior, the international community was unsure how to respond. This uncertainty and delay potentially provides a time window in which Russia may conduct limited operations without international interference. The operational use of cyber tools to support a lightning fast maneuver into Georgia in 2008 provides evidence that Russia learned this particular lesson well. While the Russian unconventional warfare efforts in Estonia failed, the relative low risk of the operations and lack of conventional violence made this conflict a valuable learning experience for Russia.

Chapter 3

Russian-Georgian War 2008 "The Five-Day War"

A lie told often enough becomes the truth.

-Vladimir Lenin[1]

Russian leaders have expressed strategic concern over Georgia's terrain since the country achieved independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Over the last century, the lands occupied by Georgia acted as a buffer between Russia and the Muslim countries to the south. Russia and NATO still view Georgia as a buffer between the Russian Federation and a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member, Turkey. Other factors contribute to Georgia's geographic importance in Russian eyes. The country possesses vital access to the Black Sea. Its Roki Pass offers one of the few transit points across a series of treacherous mountain ranges, and hosts the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, a major gas pipeline for the area. Georgia (see Figure 3.1 below) also shares its northeastern border with the unstable Russian province of Chechnya. Each of these geographical facts illuminates key Russian considerations for conducting a violent conflict against Georgia in the summer of 2008.

Figure 3 Russo-Georgian War Map
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russo-Georgian_War

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[1] Vladimir Lenin Quotes. BrainyQuote.com, Xplore Inc, 2018.
https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/vladimir_lenin_132031, accessed April 27, 2018.

Background

  The Russo-Georgian War of 2008, often referred to as the Five-Day War, is commonly depicted as occurring from 7 to 12 August 2008.[2] In the days leading up to 7 August, tensions between South Ossetian separatist and Georgian police forces and peacekeepers flared resulting in several casualties on both sides. The Georgians, observing the Russians massing "peace keepers" in Northern and Southern Ossetia, sent armed forces to secure the South Ossetian capital Tskhinvali. The Russian "peacekeeping force," in actuality the Russian 58th Army, advanced towards the city as well, claiming to intervene for humanitarian purposes. Attempting to buy time and negotiating space, Georgian forces fired artillery in front of the Russian advance. Russia took the artillery strike as a declaration of war and responded with a two-front ground campaign, a naval blockade, and a crippling cyber-attack. Five days later the two countries negotiated a cease-fire leaving South Ossetia and Abkhazia firmly in Russian hands.

  The dates of 7-12 August, however, are as misleading and as contentious as the title of the conflict. At a minimum, the Russian downing of a Georgian Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) by a Russian MIG-29 on 20 April 2008 violated the United Nations General Assembly's Resolution 3314, providing the argument the two countries were legally at war four months before the established date.[3] Other authors, such as Marcel Van Herpen, suggest that the Russo-Georgian War began shortly after the election of Vladimir Putin as Prime Minister in 1999. The difference in the dates is not just an exercise in historical pedantry. The date the Russian Federation decided to pursue conflict with Georgia is

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[2] The title of the war itself is still a hotly debated topic as common references such as the South Ossetian War or the Five Day War are inadequate in their descriptors as well as passively supporting the Russian narrative of the events. "The South Ossetian War" ignores the fact that Russia also attacked Georgia through Abkhazia as Figure 3.1 depicts. "The Five Day War" supports the idea that Russia was caught by surprise and reacted in a humanitarian capacity as opposed to planning and instigating the conflict for months, even years in advance

[3] Andrei Illarionov. *The Guns of August*, (New York: Routledge, 2008) 68

critical to understanding the Federation's objectives, narratives, and the unconventional tactics involved in the dispute. To pin down this date, a brief examination of the past frictions between Russia and Georgia is necessary.

As in Estonia, in 1991 Georgia voted to separate itself from the collapsing Soviet Union. The votes from the various areas of Georgia, however, were not unanimous in their support for separation. Soviet leaders treated three regions of Georgia, Adjara, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia, as autonomous areas and mostly left to govern themselves. Part of the benefits of the relative autonomy offered by the Soviet Union was preferential treatment in job hiring, school applications, and representation for ethnic Georgians. Each of the three areas had large populations of non-ethnic Georgian minorities, and these considerations were believed by these minorities to be vital in securing equal treatment compared to ethnic Georgians. The Georgian separation and proposed governmental reform eliminated these provisions in the contested areas.[4]

The announcement of Georgian independence led the leaders of South Ossetia and Abkhazia to immediately petition the Russian Federation for sponsorship and recognition as independent areas outside of Georgian control. Militia groups formed, and Russia quickly sent officers to lead the militias and provide aid to these groups, resembling the Soviet Army's sponsorship of the Soviet partisan movement during the Second World War as discussed in Chapter I. This armed tension eventually escalated into the Abkhaz War. Shortly afterward, militias in South Ossetia also clashed with Georgian forces. Russia, primarily responsible for sustaining and instigating the uprising, asserted itself as the negotiating power between the two combatants. Georgia, forced to capitulate, signed an agreement heavily in Russia's favor.[5] This agreement allowed Russia four bases in Georgia. The agreement

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[4] Cornell, Svante. *The Guns of August 2008*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 28-48.
[5] Ibid, 31.

additionally allowed for Russia to appoint the South Ossetian minister of defense, interior, and security, giving Russia an inordinate amount of control of a Georgian area.[6] Relations between Georgia and Russia remained relatively stable after this agreement primarily due to Russia's focus on the Chechen Wars in the years to follow. This stability, however, would change with Vladimir Putin's rise as Prime Minister in 1999.

Shortly after Putin was elected, Van Herpen suggests that the Russian Federation organized a grand plan against Georgia that progressed with "gradual and purposive escalation."[7] Whether part of an organized grand plan or not, Russian actions moved from covert support of South Ossetia and Abkhazia to active unconventional warfare measures in order to both destabilize Georgia and challenge Georgia's sovereignty. This thesis uses the year 2000 as the starting point of the "Five Day War," due to this shift in Russian intent. Using this timeframe, therefore, challenges many of the stated and perceived Russian national objectives for the conflict with Georgia.

Russian National Objectives During the Russo-Georgian War.

The prevailing view regarding Russia's actions in Georgia is that its aggression was a response to the 2003 Rose Revolution, the 2004 election of Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, and the corresponding turn to the West for aid and NATO membership.[8] If the conflict's beginning was in 2000, however, these aims may have been additional benefits of a plan that had territorial conquest at its heart, as opposed to ideological power struggles. In examining Russian national objectives concerning Georgia, three different sets of objectives arise. There are the territorial objectives that Van Herpen suggests, the stated aims of the country delivered by Putin himself, and a rare disclosure of

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[6] Cornell, *Guns of August* 2008, 35.
[7] Van Herpen, *Putin's Wars*, 206.

national objectives from a Russian officer post-conflict in 2008. These three sets of sources present conflicting reasonings behind the objectives, so an examination of their thoughts is required to distill a comprehensive list of national goals.

Van Herpen states that Russia's objectives in 2000 were essentially the same as in 1991 when Georgia broke away from the Soviet Union. He suggests, "these objectives were to divide Georgia and undermine its viability as an independent and sovereign state."[9] Achieving them would allow Russia to incorporate Abkhazia into the Russian Federation, securing more extensive portions of the Black Sea Coast. These objectives would also allow Russia to incorporate South Ossetia into the Federation which would secure critical mountain passes that lined Russia's southern border. Lastly, the actions would prevent a state which opposed Russia's actions from harboring Chechen rebels.[10]

Vladimir Putin offered the second set of objectives personally to President George W. Bush at the outbreak of conventional fighting on 7 August while the two leaders attended the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Putin presented the argument that became the Russian narrative. Putin stated that the Georgians had conducted an offensive into South Ossetia, including the ethnic cleansing of over 2,000 South Ossetian and Russians.[11] Putin claimed Russia was intervening humanitarianly to

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[9] Van Herpen, *Putin's Wars*, 206.

[10] There is no evidence that Georgia was ever willingly harboring Chechen forces from the Russians. On the Contrary, Georgia allowed Russian planes to be based in Georgia and have Georgian overflight permissions several times throughout Russia's conflict with the Chechen territory. However, there is an instance where Saakashvili denied Russian requests for the use of basing and terrain, an occurrence that enraged Russia. Gordon, Michael R. "Georgia Trying Anxiously to Stay Out of Chechen War." *The New York Times*, November 17, 1999, sec. World. https://www.nytimes.com/1999/11/17/world/georgia-trying-anxiously-to-stay-out-of-chechen-war.html.

[11] Baev, Pavel, "Russian Tandemocracy Stumbles into War," (*Eurasia Daily Monitor* no. 153, August 2008).

prevent genocide.[12] For many reasons shown later in this chapter, this set of objectives hardly appears accurate.

The third set of objectives come from a Russian officer, who disclosed them after the hostilities of the Georgian war concluded. This set of objectives potentially carries the bias that they were disclosed only because Russia achieved the objectives. The Russian official stated five aims of Russia during the Georgian conflict as: "(1) establishing full Russian control over South Ossetia, (2) assisting Abkhazia in gaining control over several Georgian villages to create a more desirable border, while expelling Georgian forces from the Kodori Gorge, (3) permanently stationing troops in Georgia on the buffer zone between Abkhazia and Georgia proper, (4) humiliating the Georgian leadership, and (5) preventing Georgia from ever becoming a NATO member."[13] These five objectives closely align with Van Herpen's perceived aims, while providing more depth and clarity. In this case study, these five national objectives, shown in Table 3.1, will be the objectives used to evaluate whether unconventional warfare effectively contributed towards Russian success in achieving the aims.

As seen in Table 3.1, one final objective was added to the list. The Russian Federation sought to achieve each of the above five objectives while pursuing a limited war. As in the Estonian case, Russia wanted to wage war under the threshold that would involve foreign intervention, particularly from the surrounding NATO and US-backed countries. Unlike Estonia, however, Georgia was not a member of NATO and the months leading up to the conflict saw France and Germany reject both

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[12] Vladislav Inozemtsev, "Putin Aims to Restore the Principle of Sovereignty to World Affairs," The Independent, October 17, 2015, http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/putin-s-aim-is-clear-to-restore-the-principle-of-sovereignty-to-international-affairs-a6698221.html.

[13] Ronald D. Asmus, *A Little War that Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 108.

Georgia and Ukraine's NATO membership applications.[14] This NATO action emboldened Russia even though one of Russia's leading calculations remained that the United States and its allies would remain out of the war. Attempting to achieve these objectives, Russia employed an arsenal of unconventional warfare tools ranging from nonviolent subversive actions to conventional aggression supported by unconventional warfare.

Non-Violent Subversive Acts During the Russo-Georgian War

The opening salvoes of the Georgian War began in the year 2000 when the Russian Federation began targeting the legitimacy of Georgian sovereignty. Eight years of increasing subversive action followed. While Georgian assets felt the strain from dealing with the Russian actions the subversive actions alone failed to achieve Russian national objectives effectively. These subversive actions included Political-immigration warfare, economic warfare, information warfare, and cyber warfare.

Russia began its campaign against Georgia by weaponizing immigration. In 2000, Russia announced a new visa system that applied only to Georgia. Requiring visas to transit through the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), to which both Russia and Georgia belonged, was against the Commonwealth's laws.[15] Russia additionally gave South Ossetia and Abkhazia drastically relaxed visa standards. These actions had two repercussions for Georgia. The first repercussion Georgia faced was a lowering of status in relation to other CIS members who were not being penalized by visa applications. A second, more sinister repercussion is that the Russian actions created different standards for the Georgian regions of South Ossetia/Abkhazia and the rest of Georgia. This variance in standards politically challenged Georgia's authority to

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[14] Welle (www.dw.com), Deutsche. "Merkel Affirms German Stance Against NATO Expansion | DW | 01.12.2008." DW.COM. Accessed April 28, 2018. http://www.dw.com/en/merkel-affirms-german-stance-against-nato-expansion/a-3840175.
[15] Andrei Illarionov. "Another Look at the August War," (Center for Eurasian Policy, Hudson Institute, Washington, September, 2008) 7.

govern the areas. The visa system also had a large impact economically on daily commuters who lived in Georgia and worked in Russia as well as a sizeable Georgian work force that sent money back home from Russia.

In 2002, Russia doubled down on immigration as a form of unconventional warfare by issuing Russian passports to South Ossetians and Abkhazians. This act directly violated international sovereignty laws as Russia cannot issue passports to non-Russian citizens. While Russia claimed humanitarian reasons for the issuance of the documents, the real impact as analyst Ronald Asmus points out, was that "Moscow created a fake diaspora and another level of control."[16] By 2006, over 80% of people living in Abkhazia held Russian passports while in 2008 98% of South Ossetians were also Russian citizens through the issuance of these documents. As Van Herpen notes "some observers dubbed this policy reoccupation through passportization."[17]

The illegal issuance of passports impacted Georgia in several ways. To the international community, Georgia no longer possessed the capability to defend its sovereignty, as a foreign state claimed Georgian citizens as their own. The passports also made traveling into Russia easier for Abkhazians and South Ossetians who now also received the perquisites of being Russian citizens. This gain in benefits and quality of life for the people of South Ossetia and Abkhazia led to an increased identification with Russian culture and way of life over Georgian culture. The most insidious and long-reaching impact of the Russian passport issuance was the creation of a new body of "Russians" living abroad- a new Russian diaspora. These seemingly innocuous actions in 2002 laid the plans for Russia to later claim crimes against their new "citizens" as a just reason to go to war.

Unconventional warfare by passportization unquestionably shaped the Georgian operating environment for future conventional actions by

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[16] Ronald Asmus. *A Little War*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 42.
[17] Van Herpen, pg 208.

providing a legitimate claim of protecting Russian citizens. In this capacity, unconventional warfare assisted future conventional actions in achieving three out of the six national objectives; control of South Ossetia, adjusted borders of Abkhazia, and humiliating Georgian leadership. The actions, however, were ineffective in directly achieving the objectives without being exploited by conventional forces. Georgia's dire plea to NATO, though rejected in 2008, may have even been strengthened by Russia showing such blatant disregard for international norms regarding sovereignty. Even though Russia violated international norms, the immigration warfare did meet the negative objective of not triggering interference from NATO forces.[18]

In addition to issuing visas and passports as a political tool, Russia also stopped accepting Georgian visas to aid in waging economic warfare against Georgia. In 2006, in response to the Georgian arrest of four Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB) spies, Russia responded with overwhelming economic force to coerce Georgia. Russia immediately suspended all Georgian visas. Russia also closed all air corridors, railways, and roads leading towards Georgia.[19] Meanwhile, the Black Sea Fleet conducted exercises in the Black Sea. These actions effectively blockaded Georgia, a move often interpreted as an act of war. Russia also banned both spring water and wine from Georgia, two of Georgia's most significant exports. Georgia found all four spies guilty but turned the officers back over to Russia.[20] Upon the FSB officers' release, the physical isolation of Georgia dissipated.

While Georgia capitulated under Russia's economic pressure, the U.S., to include upwards of 60% of the Georgian defense budget,

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[18] Negative objectives, as defined by Clodfelter, "are objectives that are achievable only by restraining military power." Positive objectives, in contrast, are achievable by applying military or other sources of national power. Mark Clodfelter. *The Limits of Air Power*, pg. 4
[19] Mainville, Michael. "Georgia to Put Russian 'spies' on Trial." *The Guardian*, September 29, 2006, sec. World news. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/sep/29/russia.georgia.
[20] Van Herpen, 209.

subsidized its government heavily. These subsidies allowed the Georgian government to avoid the pressure of regime change. This economic manipulation, however, was seemingly effective in humiliating Georgian leadership in the eyes of the international community and lessening the Georgian appeal to NATO. Weakness in the face of limited economic manipulation does not strengthen Georgia's case for joining NATO. The economic pressure Russia applied did not contribute to achieving any of the three territorial-based national objectives.

Combined with both political and economic pressure, Russian leaders also waged an extensive information campaign against Georgia. This campaign focused on delegitimizing the Georgian government and justifying Russia's claims. At the beginning of August 2008, the Russian newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* published a psychological analysis of Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili.[21] In Ukraine, this report resurfaced appearing to be published by a well-respected military think tank. Analysts who looked more closely realized that the publisher had an additional word in their organization's title. This tactic was a clear attempt to borrow the legitimacy of the think tank to discredit President Saakashvili. The report detailed the instability of the President who was known, according to these documents, to fly into rages and make rash decisions. In addition to attacking Saakashvili's appearance of stability Russia publicly "talked about pursuing a criminal case against Saakashvili for genocide and war crimes in South Ossetia, to turn him into another Slobodan Milosevic."[22] These Russian efforts directly attacked Saakashvili's character and capability to lead. The intended audience for such efforts was the international. The campaign also

[21] Blandy, C.W, and Conflict Studies Research Centre (Great Britain). *Provocation, Deception, Entrapment: The Russo-Georgian Five Day War*. Camberley, Surrey: Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, Conflict Studies Research Centre, 2009. http://www.da.mod.uk/Publications/category/67/provocation-deception-entrapment-the-russo-georgian-five-day-war-1166.

[22] Cohen, Ariel, and Robert E. Hamilton. *The Russian Military and the Georgia War: Lessons and Implications*. Strategic Studies Institute, 2011.pg 4.

challenged the character of the war for those Georgians who had access to the Russian disinformation efforts, appearing as legitimate reports and news. By calling into question the President of the government the information operation (IO) campaign cast doubt on the entirety of the Georgian government from 2004 and onwards.

Misdirection via press releases also played an instrumental role in creating and sustaining a Russian narrative. This narrative was that South Ossetia and Russia were the victims of this conflict and that rash Georgian actions led to genocide and ethnic cleansing. On 20 April 2008, immediately following the Russian destruction of a Georgian UAV in Abkhazia, Moscow Channel One, a Russian news agency, began reporting that Georgian UAV flights indicated an imminent invasion of Abkhazia by Georgia.[23] Moscow Channel One broadcasted round-the-clock coverage, claiming the massing of Georgian troops along the border while showing stock footage of Georgian peacekeeping forces. By July Moscow One changed its reports to cover the "massive build-up of troops" in Georgia across from the South Ossetian border. Russia used these contrived stories to justify, or use as cover in case exposed, massive reinforcement of Russian "peacekeeping" forces in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russians used these stories as an excuse to stage forces for the eventual invasion, just as they had in Czechoslovakia in 1968.[24]

Once the Russians established the narrative, they prepared actions to maintain the initiative in information operations by prepositioning reporters in the South Ossetian capital. On 6 August 2008, two days before hostilities broke out, fifty Russian broadcasters from major Russian networks flew into the South Ossetian capital, Tskhinvali. This

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[23] Daniel Barker. "The Russia-Georgia War of 2008: Information Operations Case Study Analysis." Accessed April 28, 2018. http://www.academia.edu/11903525/The_Russia-Georgia_War_of_2008_Information_Operations_Case_Study_Analysis, 14.

[24] Ibid, 14.

act, combined with a debilitating cyber attack on Georgian news agencies, allowed Russian reporters to be the first to break major news of the war. As the duration of the war was so short, having the preponderance of news sourced from Russian anchors cemented a Russian perspective of activities in the area. The flying in of the reporters, however, gives credence to an argument that Russia planned the invasion of Georgia and knew precisely when and where reporters needed to be placed to provide beneficial coverage.

The combined effects of the information operation against Georgia, however, had mixed results. The creation and protection of the "South Ossetian Victim" narrative directly enabled a conventional Russian response without foreign interference for the five days of the armed conflict. The disinformation of the massed Georgian forces also allowed for the temporary staging of additional Russian troops along the Georgian border, thus temporarily achieving Russia's third objective. These actions, however, are perhaps best interpreted as shaping actions solely for the benefit of a planned conventional invasion.

Supporting this information operations campaign was a crippling cyber campaign. One author concludes, "According to Internet technical experts, it was the first time a known cyberattack had coincided with a shooting war."[25] Russia, however, has adamantly denied waging cyber war against Georgia and even with the event thoroughly investigated, analysts cannot definitively say Russia coordinated and ran the cyber campaign against Georgia.[26] They do note that the investigations show an extremely high level of coordination and scale that organized criminal organizations do not have the capability to conduct. They also point the finger at the Russian government for coordination of the campaign, just not the execution. As in the Estonia case study, Russia used a

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[25] David Hollis. "Cyberwar Case Study: Georgia 2008."*Small Wars Journal.* Pg. 4

[26] John Markoff, "Before the Gunfire, Cyberattacks," *The New York Times*, August 12, 2008, sec. Technology, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/13/technology/13cyber.html.

widespread network of "zombie" computers that allowed decentralization of DDOS attacks. This decentralization allowed Russia to claim that concerned citizens and hackers outside the control of the Russian government committed the cyber activities.[27] This camouflaging of Russian involvement is an excellent example of operational level *maskirovka*. While the cyber practitioners may not have been from the Russian government, the scope and timing of the activities show Russian orchestration.

Cyber attacks on the Georgian government began on 20 July 2008. The attacks consisted of Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks, website defacement, and information extraction. President Saakashvili's government website became the first target of the DDoS attacks, going offline the evening of 20 July. Analysts now believe that this first attack and the sustained DDoS attacks on other government websites that occurred during the later parts of July served as a dress rehearsal for the actual attacks in August.[28] An undertaking of this magnitude requires planning and coordination that far precedes even July. On 5 August, a South Ossetian news agency website briefly went down. When the website came back online, it displayed information from a major Georgian news competitor. Russia quickly claimed that Georgia was trying to cover up civilian deaths caused by Georgian force in recent skirmishes. The Georgian news competitor announced that the company did not hack into its South Ossetian rival's site.[29] By 6 August, over 54 Georgian government websites and all major news outlets suffered from crippling DDoS attacks.[30]

The DDoS attacks increased in intensity as the conflict progressed, eventually shutting down Georgian Banking capacity and the cellphone

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[27] Hollis, 4.
[28] Ibid
[29] Tblisi Civil Georgia, "Civil.Ge | S.Ossetian News Sites Hacked," accessed May 7, 2018, https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=18896.
[30] Hollis, 4.

infrastructure. The cyber-attacks focused both on large infrastructure and local networks to blanket communications along Russian maneuvers.[31] This cyber support at the tactical and operational level, such as the Russian maneuver to Gori, indicates a close tie between the cyber practitioners and military planners. Russia used the cyber domain to effectively cut off Georgia's capability to communicate within government agencies and lost the ability to communicate a Georgian narrative of events to the world.

Russian forces benefited from the cyber actions in several ways. In addition to the DDoS attacks, Russia gleaned information on Georgian military movements inside South Ossetia in order to defeat the outnumbered force more efficiently. Cyber intrusions also enabled degradation of several government sites including an image comparing Saakashvili to Hitler published on the President's main site.[32] Several outside entities such as Google, Estonia, and the United States offered to rehost government websites off of Georgian servers, and eventual Google hosted the Georgian presidential site attempting to allow communications from Saakashvili to the Georgian public.[33]

Cyber, as an unconventional warfare tool, played a significant role in supporting the Russian advance into Georgia. Effectively destroying Georgia's capacity to communicate and exercise military command and control before the outset of conflict, Russia increased the fog and friction of war at all levels. Unsure of the ground situation without communication with his forces, Saakashvili made strategic decisions under increasingly stressful conditions.[34] This calculated increase of

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[31] Ibid

[32] "Cyberattacks during the 2008 South Ossetia War." Accessed May 5, 2018. http://enacademic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki/11596587.

[33] Swaine, John, "Georgia: Russia 'conducting Cyber War' - Telegraph." Accessed May 5, 2018. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/georgia/2539157/Georgia-Russia-conducting-cyber-war.html.

[34] Steavenson, Wendell. "Marching Through Georgia." *The New Yorker*, December 8, 2008. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2008/12/15/marching-through-georgia.

pressure on Saakashvili is an example of Reflexive Control Theory put in practice. At the operational level, the lack of communication allowed the masking of Russian troops from North Ossetia into South Ossetia to include heavy artillery pieces and tanks. This camouflaging of movement through cyber is a reinvention of *maskirovka* at the operational and tactical levels of war.

The Russian use of the cyber domain did contribute to achieving Moscow's national objectives in Georgia. The unconventional use of cyber warfare assisted conventional forces in moving into South Ossetia and Abkhazia largely uncontested. The cyber actions demonstrated that Georgia could not protect its sovereignty in the cyber domain. The cyber-attacks, however, did nothing directly to counter Georgia entering NATO. If anything on this front, Estonia and Georgia developed a closer relationship as Estonia assisted in Georgia's cyber recovery. Of all the subversive nonviolent acts, the cyber campaign drew the most attention from the United States and NATO members. The United States issued a stern warning to stop the cyber-attacks and pursue a ceasefire agreement. Russia, however, denied that the cyber efforts were under their control and even claimed that Russia news agencies were falling to cyber attacks of the same nature further spreading disinformation.[35]

Russian unconventional warfare acts that fell into the subversive nonviolent category directly achieved only one out of the stated five national objectives in the Georgian conflict. The combination of immigration, economic, information, and cyber warfare eroded international confidence in the Georgian government. The ease with which the Russians committed these acts displayed that the Georgian government was incapable of defending itself. Russian subversive acts failed to directly achieve control over South Ossetia, adjusted borders for

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[35] Robert Haddick. "This Week at War: Lessons from Cyberwar I." *Foreign Policy* (blog). Accessed May 5, 2018. https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/01/28/this-week-at-war-lessons-from-cyberwar-i/.

Abkhazia, and the permanent injection of Russian forces along the border. Russian unconventional actions did assist in conventional forces achieving these objectives. However, these actions were purely a shaping action for the invasion.

The long-term achievement of preventing Georgia from joining NATO may have also been jeopardized as with unsettled borders Georgia has emerged as the victim in the eyes of the international community in the months after the war. The subversive actions of Russia came to light, the Russian narrative debunked, camouflaged movement uncovered, and heavy skepticism of Russian denial of using cyber warfare largely discredited any of the gains initially made in delegitimizing the Georgian government.

Table 3 Effectiveness of Subversive Non-Violent Acts

Non-Violent Subversive Action	Directly Achieved	Enabled	No Impact/Negative Impact
Russian Control over South Ossetia		X	
Adjusting Abkhazian Borders		X	
Permanently stationing Troops along Georgian border		X	
Humiliating Georgian leadership	X		
Preventing Georgia from ever becoming a NATO member			X

Source: Author's original work

Russian Covert Violent Actions During the Russo-Georgian War 2008

Less numerous than the myriad subversive actions waged against Georgia between 2000-2008 were Russia's attempts to pursue unconventional warfare through violent covert actions. These covert actions consisted of a Reflexive Control campaign organized by Russian-

led South Ossetian militias, ethnic cleansing carried out by these same militias, and helicopter strikes against key targets.

Shortly after the downing of the Georgian UAV in Abkhazia, South Ossetian militias, funded, equipped, and led by Russian FSB officers, began low-intensity attacks against Georgian police.[36] These attacks appeared to harass and apply pressure to Georgian leadership. The militias escalated from bombing Georgian police officers to conducting mortar attacks on Georgian villages.[37] The intent behind the shelling appeared to be to provoke Saakashvili into sending troops into South Ossetia and making Georgian forces appear as the aggressors. Georgia making the first move against South Ossetia would seemingly prove the Russian narrative and cause for war. As analyst C.W. Blandy asserts, this is a clear example of Russia utilizing Reflexive Control Theory to gain "control of an opponent's decision, which in the end is a formation of a certain behavioral strategy on him through reflexive interaction, is not achieved directly, not by blatant force, but by means of providing him with the grounds by which he is able logically to derive his own decision, but one that is predetermined by the other side."[38] In this case, Russia determined war in South Ossetia was in their best interest, yet needed Georgia to risk the opening move. Georgia's advance into South Ossetia proved the value of these tactics in achieving Russia's decision.

South Ossetian militias also proved useful in gaining control over South Ossetian villages. As the Russian 58th Army progressed south towards the South Ossetian capital, the militias conducted ethnic cleansing, removing any Georgians from the area. Witnesses reported widespread beatings, rapes, destruction of property, and at least sixteen

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[36] "Eyewitness Accounts Confirm Shelling of Georgian Villages." ReliefWeb. Accessed April 28, 2018. https://reliefweb.int/report/georgia/eyewitness-accounts-confirm-shelling-georgian-villages.
[37] Ibid
[38] Blandy, 2.

summary executions by the militias.[39] While Russia denied any involvement with the militias or condoning the militia's activities, Russian peace keeping forces secured the villages in which the atrocities occurred. The Norwegian Helsinki Committee and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe both condemned the acts in 2009 after a year of thorough investigations.[40] As of 2016, ethnic Georgians make up only seven percent of the remaining population of South Ossetia.[41] While the ethnic cleansing actions allowed for tighter control of South Ossetia, the actions were made possible solely through the conventional activities that preceded them. Had the ethnic cleansing activities not been overshadowed by the widespread disinformation operations and cyber targeting of the news agencies, the activities likely would have drawn widespread support for Georgia.

Covert actions, however, were not limited to just militia members. Two incidents show Russian military hardware was used covertly to either pressure Georgia or mask movements along the border. On March 11, 2007, Russian helicopters conducted a strike against Georgian administration buildings in Abkhazia, destroying the buildings.[42] The helicopter attacks persisted throughout the next day, striking pro-Georgian villages. Russia denied that it was involved in the attacks, but later reports showed that Abkhazia did not have the equipment used to conduct the attacks.[43] Russian aircraft were also utilized a year later on 6 August 2008 when two SU-25 aircraft attempted to bomb a Georgian radar site.[44] One of the bombs, however, failed to detonate. The

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[39] Norwegian Helsinki Committee, *Ethnic Cleansing Continues in South Ossetian Conflict Zone in Georgia*.
http://www.nhc.no/no/land_og_regioner/europa/georgia/Ethnic+Cleansing+Continues+in+South+Ossetian+Conflict+Zone+in+Georgia.9UFRHO2d.ips
[40] Ibid
[41] Tamar Svanidze. *(12 August 2016). "South Ossetian Authorities Release Results of 1st Census in 26 Years"*. *Georgia Today*.
[42] Illarionov, 65.
[43] Ibid, 65.
[44] Ibid, 66.

unexploded ordnance supplied direct evidence of Russian involvement. The destruction of the radar system would have allowed greater masking of troop movements for the eventual Russian invasion.

These attacks, while not directly attributable to Russia, had negative ramifications nonetheless. The first was the March 13th vote of the Georgian Parliament to seek NATO membership. This was followed immediately by the United States Senate's vote to sponsor both Georgia and Ukraine's membership.[45] This vote greatly put at risk Russia's fifth national objective, preventing Georgia from ever becoming part of NATO. The 2008 airstrike also delegitimized the Russian claim that they were caught unaware by Georgia's advance and had not preplanned the invasion of Georgia.

As with Russian subversive actions, Russian covert violent actions, shown in Table 3.2, also achieved mixed results. The militias, reminiscent of the World War II partisan movement, proved to be the more effective unconventional tool. The militias' use of covert violent actions to achieve a Reflexive Control Theory aim and "force" Georgia on to the offensive enabled Russia to appear as the peacekeeper and the South Ossetian as the victims. This outlook allowed Russia to respond with conventional forces to secure both South Ossetia and Abkhazia without immediate legal objections from the international community. Over the long-term, however, the militias' actions once again cast doubts on Russia's behavior and the legitimacy of its actions. The ethnic cleansing did immediately contribute towards even more control of South Ossetia, but did more to discredit Russia in the eyes of the international community. The use of air strikes against Georgian forces led to the US endorsement of Georgia joining NATO.

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[45] Ibid, 65.

Table 4 Effectiveness of Covert Violent Actions

Covert Violent Actions	Directly Achieved	Enabled	No Impact/Negative Impact
Militia Reflexive Control Efforts		X	
Militia Ethnic Cleansing			X
Air Strikes on Georgian Infrastructure			X

Source: Author's original work

Russian Conventional Aggression supported by Unconventional Warfare in the Russo-Georgian War

The Russian Federation's conventional response to the 7 August 2008 Georgian advance into South Ossetia consisted of a multi-domain counterattack. The operation ended with one major battle and most Russian actions going uncontested throughout the conflict. The use of conventional force achieved four out of the six Russian national objectives by 14 August 2008. Conventional forces, however, also used elements of *maskirovka* to achieve their objectives.

The 58th Army, the main force responsible for the Russian ground invasion of Georgia, moved into North Ossetia the last week of July 2008. The unit participated in a massive combined exercise called KAVKAZ 2008. The announced focus of the army's exercise was counter-terrorism, yet the actual exercises resembled maneuvers required to conduct an extensive invasion of another country.[46] The exercise included coordinated air strikes and was supported by naval operations in the Black Sea. In a lapse of the concerted disinformation campaign, the Russian soldiers received fliers stating, "know your enemy." The fliers listed the strengths and weaknesses, not of potential terrorist targets, but the Georgian military.[47] The handouts even broke down information on the training levels of each of the five Georgian brigades.

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[46] Asmus, 21.
[47] Cornell and Starr. The Guns of August 2008 Russia's War in Georgia, pg. xii.

When the exercise ended on 6 August, Russian forces did not demobilize. Instead, the 58th Army maneuvered to the North Ossetian side of the Roki Tunnel. This was the one avenue of approach into South Ossetia that could support mechanized forces maneuver through the mountainous terrain. According to Russian analyst Andrey Illarionov, "the buildup culminated with the massing of 80,000 regular troops and paramilitaries close to the Georgian border, at least 60,000 of which participated in the August War."[48] Under cover of the aforementioned communication blackout, Russia infiltrated dismounted soldiers to "reinforce" peacekeeping positions. The KAVKAZ 2008 exercise is the epitome of an operational plan utilizing the principles of *maskirovka.*

Maskirovka was not only used to plan the operation, but also to preposition key personnel. While the 58th Army trained in the mountains of North Ossetia, the force's future commander worked as the South Ossetian Defense Minister. At the start of 2008 General Vasily Lunev, an Army level commander, was relieved of his position and moved to the South Ossetian post.[49] Within hours of the Georgian advance into South Ossetia, General Lunev transitioned from Defense Minister to the commander of the 58th Army. Analysts believe that General Lunev's assignment in South Ossetia was to build situational awareness for the commander before he led the invasion to secure Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[50]

 Accompanying the build-up of ground forces, the Russian Air Force violated Georgian air space in July. In a brazen and overt gesture, the Air Force flew four fighter aircraft into Georgia to deter the country's use of Hermes reconnaissance drones over the South Ossetian air space.

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[48] "Saakashvili Saved Georgia from Coup, Former Putin Aide Says." Accessed April 28, 2018. https://euobserver.com/foreign/26921.
[49] Van Herpen, 220.
[50] Ibid, 220.

Had the reconnaissance craft not been deterred, the craft likely would have captured video of the 58th Army amassing in North Ossetia.[51]

A week after, Georgian forces advanced to secure Tskhinvali. Russia responded with a naval blockade in the Black Sea and a two-pronged attack from the 58th Army. This attack created a contested front in South Ossetia and an uncontested front along the Abkhazian border. Air strikes and artillery barrages supported the ground maneuvers. In the conflict's only significant engagement Russian forces defeated the vastly outnumbered Georgian forces near the outskirts of Tskhinvali. On 14 August, Georgia and Russia signed a cease-fire.[52]

The actions committed by Russian conventional forces, as seen in Table 3.3, directly achieved four out of the six national objectives sought by Russia during the conflict. As the conflict ended, Russian forces guarded the borders of Abkhazia and South Ossetia while the leaders of Georgia appeared to be humiliated by their inability to protect their country. The only objective not achieved by Russia, preventing Georgia from becoming a NATO member, remains to be seen. As with the covert non-violent actions, Russia's conventional aggression caused the state to lose soft power appeal internationally while gaining military prestige.

Table 5 Effectiveness of Conventional Aggression

Conventional Aggression	Directly Achieved	Enabled	No Impact/Negative Impact
KAVKAZ 2008	X		
Air Power Deterrence		X	
Multi-Domain Invasion	X		

Source: Author's original work

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[51] Vladimir Socor. "The Goals Behind Mosocow's Proxy Offensive in South Ossetia." Jamestown. Accessed May 6, 2018. https://jamestown.org/program/the-goals-behind-moscows-proxy-offensive-in-south-ossetia/.

[52] Ronald Asmus. 2010. *A Little War That Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West*. St. Martin's Press.

Conclusion

Russia waged an unconventional war against Georgia for eight years. The unconventional tactics ranged from immigration warfare, economic warfare, creating a Russian diaspora, using that diaspora as a partisan force, to masking conventional troop movements. While these acts destabilized Georgia over a long period of time, Russian unconventional warfare tactics were not effective in directly achieving Russian interests. By 2006 Russian leaders switched efforts from utilizing unconventional warfare tactics to attaining objectives, to enabling a conventional force to fight a limited war. Russia wanted to keep the war limited, because Russian leaders felt they could not win a conventional war against the United States and NATO. Russian leaders used unconventional tactics to shape the political environment and raise the international tolerance of armed conflict. In the latter task, Russian tactics were very effective.

There are limitations in Russia's capacity to replicate some of their more successful actions. Immigration warfare is primarily limited to former states of the Soviet Union that have a Russian diaspora or a population willing to "play" that role. The use of an exercise to mass forces on the border is a threat that Russia can repeat only in the Ukraine.

While there are limits to Russian capabilities, there are also lessons to observe in what Russia could reapply, and in many cases did, in Ukraine. Russian sponsorship of militias, attempting to control the narrative, using Reflexive Control to appear as the victim and the "just actor," and the capabilities of Russian cyber practitioners are all unconventional tactics that are not geographically bound to Russia's borders. These tactics could arise in conflicts around the world in attempts to give Russia advantage, such as in the current dispute in Syria. Russia paid close attention to the lessons it learned in Georgia

and refined its unconventional tactics before applying them five years later in Ukraine.

Chapter 4
Ukraine: 2014 Annexation of Crimea and East Ukraine Conflict
(2014-Present)

If Ukraine were to opt for deeper integration into the European Union, a Georgian scenario could not be excluded, in which the Kremlin could provoke riots in Eastern Ukraine or the Crimea, where many Russian passport holders live. This would offer Russia a pretext for intervening in Ukraine in order "to protect its nationals" and dismember the country.

-Marcel Van Herpen, written   the month before the Russian annexation.

At the November 2013 Vilnius Summit of the European Union, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych announced that he would not sign the European Union's Association Agreement (AA). Hours after the announcement, Ukrainian citizens in the city of Kiev and other major cities of Western Ukraine erupted in protest. The protesters numbered over 100,000 people. The protests evolved into the Euromaidan movement, whose leaders called for closer ties between Ukraine and Europe and a distancing from Russia. The destabilization the demonstrations caused eventually led to Yanukovych's flight from office several months later. The power vacuum this flight created, and years of Russian shaping operations, presented Vladimir Putin with an opportunity to act in support of his country's interests in the region. He capitalized on the opportunity and swiftly utilized a myriad of unconventional warfare methods. These actions resulted in the relatively uncontested annexation of Crimea in 2014, but also the frozen war of Eastern Ukraine and crippling sanctions emplaced upon Russia.

Security analysts and Western leaders alike were surprised at the speed of the Russian operations.[1] As with the Georgian War, however,

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[1] Menon, Rajan, and Eugene B. Rumer. *Conflict in Ukraine: The Unwinding of the Post--Cold War Order*. First Edition. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2015. Pg x.

Russian leaders began to lay the groundwork, through shaping operations, years before Yanukovych fled office. Russia's use of unconventional tactics against Ukraine began in 2004. While the tactics were overwhelmingly successful in Crimea, Russian officials once again overplayed their hand by becoming engaged in Eastern Ukraine.

Background.

To understand why Russia would risk international condemnation for a country that appeared to be imploding requires a brief look at Russo-Ukrainian history and Ukraine's geostrategic placement. Ukraine has a long history with Russia filled with dramatic episodes. In 1654 the Tsar of Russia and the leader of the Ukrainian Hetmanate Cossacks signed a treaty, with the latter essentially swearing fealty to Moscow. This treaty spurred a war between Russia and Poland. Russia forced Poland to capitulate after 13 years of fighting ending with the Eternal Peace Treaty of 1686.[2] The treaty is significant: its signature led the international community to recognize Russian sovereignty over what would become the Ukraine.

With the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1922, Ukrainians were allowed a limited autonomous rule under, Joseph Stalin.[3] Ukraine became an essential part of the Soviet state as its land was the most fertile in the Union and it had access to the Black Sea. After World War II millions of Russians moved into the Crimea as well as the Eastern areas of Ukraine known as the Donbas region. At the same time, Stalin ordered the relocation of many Ukrainians, including the native population, from Crimea to Siberia.[4] In 1954 Nikita Khrushchev

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[2] "Treaty of Eternal Peace | History of Byzantine Empire." Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed April 29, 2018. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Treaty-of-Eternal-Peace.

[3] Many points of conflict between Ukrainians and Russians arise from this period. From 1932-1933 through Stalin's forced food exportation a massive famine ravaged Ukraine now known as the Holodomor. Over four million Ukrainians died from hunger.

[4] Helsinki Watch (Organization : U.S.), ed. *"Punished Peoples" of the Soviet Union: The Continuing Legacy of Stalin's Deportations*. A Helsinki Watch Report. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 1991.

transferred the Crimean region back to Ukrainian autonomous control. Later on, some Russians would claim that the Crimea has belonged to Russia since 1654.

Sensing the collapse of the Soviet Union, the people of Ukraine voted for independence on 1 December 1991. When it separated from the Soviet Union, Ukraine possessed one of the largest militaries in Europe.[5] Two key elements of this military strength were the Black Sea Fleet, located in Sevastopol, Crimea, and Ukraine's nuclear arsenal.

In 1994 the United States helped negotiate the Budapest Memorandum.[6] In this accord, the Ukrainian government agreed to give up its nuclear arsenal in exchange for Russian acknowledgment of both the territory and sovereignty of Ukraine. Three years later, in 1997, Russia and Ukraine signed an agreement splitting the Black Sea Fleet in half. Russia leased the Sevastopol navy base, its only warm water port which allows year-round naval activity.

Russia and Ukraine's long history together and intermingling of the populace, forced or not, has led to Russia claiming a need to protect ethnic Russians and Russian speakers in Ukraine, a situation similar to Georgia. Additionally, the location of Russia's sole warm water port on Ukrainian soil makes the Crimean region strategically important to Russia. The Crimea and Donbas region also have vast natural gas resources making the area economically desirable but also potentially threatening to Russia's energy strength in Europe. Lastly, as the largest former state of the collapsed Soviet Union, Russia has a vested interest in demonstrating the capability to influence the Ukrainian government.

For More information on the Deportation of the Crimean Tartars see Williams, Brian, *The Crimean Tatars: From Soviet Genocide to Putin's Conquest*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

[5] U. S. Army Special Operations Command. *"Little Green Men": A Primer on Modern Russian Unconventional Warfare, Ukraine 2013–2014*. U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 2016.

[6] Pifer, Steven. "The Budapest Memorandum and U.S. Obligations." *Brookings* (blog), November 30, 2001. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2014/12/04/the-budapest-memorandum-and-u-s-obligations/.

These motivations would all come to a head as Russia began undermining Ukrainian sovereignty in 2004.

Russian National Objectives During the Ukrainian Conflict.

Divining Russian objectives in Ukraine presents the same challenges as the Estonian case study. Russian officials have given a stated purpose for intervening in Ukraine. The same officials, however, denied Russian forces being present in Ukraine for over a year. The strategic objectives listed below are the author's perceived Russian objectives, based on prior actions and statements.

There are four perceived and one stated Russian national objectives for its involvement in Ukraine. The primary perceived objective is the long-term subversion of Ukraine's sovereignty. The word "Ukraine" means borderland, and that is exactly what Russia seeks to maintain.[7] Having a weak satellite state amenable to Russian influence is a critical part of Russia's regional strategic plan.[8] Subordinate to this objective is Russia's wish to keep Ukraine out of both the European Union and NATO at worst, or the West's spheres of influence at best. The risk from Ukraine being influenced by NATO is a military concern directly threatening the border land between Russia and other NATO members. Putin has alluded to this threat several times in international speeches.[9] Influence from the European Union also threatens that border. Ukraine's acceptance of the Association Agreement (AA) would have forced Ukraine to adopt economic standards hostile to the Russian controlled Eurasian Economic Union. The acceptance of the AA could also have paved the way to Ukraine's membership in the European

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[7] Stephen Dayspring. *Toward a Theory of Hybrid Warfare: The Russian Conduct of War during Peace*. Calhoun, 2015. https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/47931. 104.

[8] This broader regional strategic plan is often referred to as Russia's Eurasian empire in which a resurgent Russia becomes the regional power surrounded by weak satellite states and a friendly China. A chief proponent of this strategy is Putin's long-term advisor Alexander Dugin. For more thoughts on the Eurasian movement see Dugins works*: Eurasian Mission* and *Last War of the World-Island*.

[9] Rajan Menon and Eugene B. Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine: The Unwinding of the Post--Cold War Order*, First Edition edition (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2015). 71-75.

Union, further eroding Russia's regional influence. Lastly, Russia's sole warm water port in Crimea hosts the Black Sea Fleet which is one of Russia's only ways to project naval power year-round into the Mediterranean and elsewhere. The Fleet's location is a major strategic concern for Russian leaders and they were not satisfied with lease agreements that could be revoked or not renewed.

In contrast to Russia's perceived goals, Putin's stated goal for intervening in Ukraine sounds eerily similar to the humanitarian "just cause" of the Georgian War. Immediately after annexing the Crimea, Putin made the following remarks concerning the Russian leader's intentions: "No. The seizing of Crimea had not been pre-planned or prepared. It was done on the spot, and we had to play it by ear based on the situation and the demands at hand. But it was all performed promptly and professionally; I have to give you that. Our task was not to conduct a full-fledged military operation there, but it was to ensure people's safety and security and a comfortable environment to express their will."[10]

On 14 August 2014, a large Russian convoy full of Russian military vehicles evaded two Red Cross checkpoints between the border of Eastern Ukraine and Russia and drove deep into Ukraine. When EU observers questioned Russian leaders about the clear violation of sovereignty, the latter responded that Russia was providing humanitarian aid to beleaguered Russian speakers in Eastern Ukraine. As the actions detailed in the next section will show, both the claims of Russia protecting rights of its ethnic population to vote and providing humanitarian aid were untrue. With the discarding of this stated objective, the four Russian national objectives in Ukraine that this paper will compare unconventional warfare effectiveness against are:

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[10] Russia, Team of the Official Website of the President of. "Direct Line with Vladimir Putin." President of Russia. Accessed January 30, 2018. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54790.

1. Subversion of Ukrainian Sovereignty;
2. Pull Ukraine away from European Union Influence;
3. Pull Ukraine away from NATO influence; and
4. Secure long-term naval basing rights in Sevastopol

Non-Violent Subversive Acts During the Ukrainian Conflict.

Russian leaders began subversive acts in Ukraine well before the annexation of Crimea. Authors Stephen Blank and Peter Hussey make the argument that Russia began non-violent actions in 2006.[11] Martin Van Herpen stresses the concerted anti-Ukrainian political messaging that emerged out of the Kremlin beginning in 2008.[12] Other evidence suggests that Russian unconventional warfare efforts against Ukraine began in 2004. Russian manipulation and interference with the Ukrainian presidential election started a ten-year campaign of subversive action that consisted of political, economic, information, and cyber aspects of unconventional warfare.

Yanukovych's initial victory in the 2004 presidential election set off the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. An investigation into the rigged election conducted by the Ukrainian Supreme Court found widespread tampering, an assassination attempt on Yanukovych's rival, and funding from Russia.[13] The Ukrainian Supreme Court immediately nullified the election's outcome, resulting in the ousting of Russia's proxy. This failure of relatively overt meddling reflected Russian concerns over the expiration of the Sevastopol navy lease. Ultimately, the popular movement known as the Orange Revolution which these Russian acts caused, lessened Russia's influence over the people and government of Ukraine.

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[11] Huessy, Stephen Blank and Peter. "The Truth about Ukraine." Gatestone Institute. Accessed January 18, 2018. http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/4647/ukraine-russia-war.

[12] Van Herpen, 239.

[13] There are indications that the Russian spent over $300 million to influence the result of the election. Blank, Stephen. "Russia and the Black Sea's Frozen Conflicts in Strategic Perspective." *Mediterranean Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (August 28, 2008): 40.

In 2008 Russian leaders began a focused effort to bring Ukraine back under their influence. As Ukraine and Georgia sought membership NATO, Putin responded by calling the former a "complex state formation" whose sovereignty was on the verge of existence. At the same meeting, Putin followed these statements by telling the US President George W. Bush, "Ukraine is not a real country."[14] Two months later, in August of 2008, Russia began the issuing of passports to "its" citizens in Georgian territory. Simultaneously, Russian government officials began issuing passports to Crimean citizens, further undermining Ukrainian authority.[15] Following these actions, Russian propaganda began targeting the legitimacy not of the Ukrainian government, but of the country itself. Articles titled "Will Ukraine Lose its Sovereignty?" and "No One Needs Monsters: Desovereignization of Ukraine" appeared in major Russian media outlets written by high-ranking Kremlin officials.[16]

Following the articles, the Russian Orthodox Church entered the conversation over the Ukraine. Patriarch Kirill, the head of the church and a former KGB agent, extensively toured Ukraine. Instead of focusing on religious ideology his speeches instead highlighted how the Russian and Ukrainian people were the same population coming from a "common heritage." Reinforcing this imagery, and in a dramatically blunt approach, Kirill's "chief ideologist, Andrey Kuarev, threatened Ukraine with civil war should a single church fully independent of Moscow ever be formed."[17] Similar statements supporting the common heritage of the Ukrainian and Russian populace followed by the Russian President and Foreign Minister.

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[14] "What Precisely Vladimir Putin Said at Bucharest," *Zerkalo Nedeli* (April 25, 2008). http://mw.ua/1000:1600/62750/.

[15] Blomfield, Adrian. "Russia 'Distributing Passports in the Crimea,'" August 17, 2008, sec. World. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/2575421/Russia-distributing-passports-in-the-Crimea.html.

[16] Gleb Pavlovsky, Will Ukraine Lose Its Sovereignty?" Russkiy Zhurnal (March 16, 2009). http://www.rus.ru.

[17] Pavel Korduban. "Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill Visits Ukraine." Jamestown. Accessed April 30, 2018. https://jamestown.org/program/russian-orthodox-patriarch-kirill-visits-ukraine/.

At the same time as Kirill's visit, a Russian biker gang, the Night Wolves, appeared in eastern Ukraine. The Night Wolves enjoyed the backing and support of one of its highest-ranking members: Vladimir Putin. From 2009 until 2014, the Night Wolves held numerous rides throughout the Donbas region. Its members rode through the countryside with the Russian flag waving on their bikes. In 2012, Putin visited Ukraine to speak with Yanukovych. Instead of proceeding directly to speak with the head of the Ukrainian state, he rode with the Night Wolves in the Ukrainian countryside, making Yanukovych wait for hours until his arrival.[18] Making the head of t Ukraine wait sent a powerful message about Putin's real intentions in the region. Alexander Zaldostanov, head of the Night Wolves, on 28 February 2014, made the intentions of his biker gang clear, stating "Wherever we are, wherever the Night Wolves are, that should be considered Russia."[19]

The political aspects of the unconventional war did not directly achieve any of the Russian national objectives. The outright rejection of Ukrainian sovereignty by Putin and President Medvedev directly violated the 1994 Budapest Agreement, in which the Russian Federation agreed to acknowledge and accept Ukraine's sovereignty. This fact, combined with the Russian sponsored 2004 election fraud, made Russia appear to outsiders as an aggressor.[20] There is some evidence, however, that the Russian actions shaped Ukraine in Russia's favor. Just a year after the barrage of propaganda and political statements, the Ukrainian people elected Yanukovych as president in 2010. Given the Russian subversive actions in support of Yanukovych in 2004, this election result can be interpreted as Russian progress in influencing Ukrainian sovereignty.

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[18] Simon Shuster. "Russia Ups the Ante in Crimea by Sending in the 'Night Wolves.'" Time. Accessed April 30, 2018. http://time.com/11680/crimea-russia-putin-night-wolves/.
[19] Ibid.
[20] It should be noted that many of the comments from Russian officials came only after the NATO rejection of Ukraine's membership in 2008.

While Russian officials used overt political pressure to attempt to achieve objectives in Ukraine, they also looked to entice Ukraine through economic benefits. In a direct effort to pull Ukraine away from the European Union AA and towards Russia's Eurasian Economic Union, Russian officials offered Ukraine bulk gas sales discounted by over 60 percent and $15 billion in loans. This offer occurred in November of 2013, just before Yanukovych was expected to sign the European Union AA.[21]

Russia's subversive actions to drive Ukraine away from the European Union succeeded too well. Yanukovych could not turn down the offer, but his acceptance resulted in the rise of Euromaidan and his fall from office. Petro Poroshenko, a pro-European politician, replaced Yanukovych as president and, on 27 June 2014, he signed the European Union AA. The attempt to manipulate Ukraine's policy through economic actions negatively impacted Russia and directly drove Ukraine into the European Union's sphere of influence.

Russia's economic interference set the stage for its most successful unconventional action in the Crimean conflict, and the one best known in the public sphere: the masked infiltration and occupation of the Crimea. Providing a textbook example of operational *maskirovka*, the Russian military infiltrated tens of thousands of soldiers into Crimea between November 2013 and March 2014. While movement of Russian forces prior to February 2014 is speculative, the Ukrainian Special Police reported several major infiltrations beginning in February.

The first infiltration by the Russian 45th Spetsnaz Regiment, specifically trained in unconventional warfare tasks, began in the Crimea at the beginning of February.[22] Igor Girkin, who later played a large role

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[21] Van Herpen, 243.
[22] U. S. Army Special Operations Command. *"Little Green Men": A Primer on Modern Russian Unconventional Warfare, Ukraine 2013–2014*. U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 2016. pg 54.

in creating dissension in the Donbas region, was also spotted in the Crimea at this time. Girkin is a former GRU colonel and a previous commander of the 45th Spetsnaz Regiment. The colonel freely admitted to being in Crimea during the time, though denied his activities had any connection to Russia. Girkin attempted to bribe multiple Ukrainian military officers to join the Russian cause. His efforts, or that of the 45th Regiment, had some success with over 9,000 reported defections, including Admiral Denis Berezovsky and the entire Ukrainian Berkut, or Special Police.[23] After the annexation of Crimea, Girkin rose as the leader of the Donetsk People's Republic in the Donbas region. He claimed that all separatist forces were under his control, though he continued to deny his connection to Russia.[24]

In addition to the infiltration of the 45th Spetsnaz Regiment, the government of Russia hired several paramilitary groups to assist with security of the Sochi Winter Olympics. These same groups were seen in Crimea blocking Ukrainian military units in their bases or intimidating the soldiers, so they would not leave their positions.[25]

One such group was a Serbian paramilitary group, the Chetnik Guard. The Chetnik Guard has documented ties to the Russian government in other conflicts. The group appeared in Crimea in February with the intention of protecting the "Russian people" from Western influence.[26] This group was armed and dressed in camouflage, but with no flags identifying its members' country of origin. The Chetnik Guard established checkpoints throughout Crimea, and controlled movement through the region. Media reports and personal videos show

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[23] Colby Howard and Ruslan Pukhov, "Brother Armed: Military Aspects of the Crisis in Ukraine," Dayspring, M., Stephen. *Toward a Theory of Hybrid Warfare: The Russian Conduct of War during Peace*. Calhoun, 2015. https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/47931.
[24] U. S. Army Special Operations Command. *"Little Green Men": A Primer on Modern Russian Unconventional Warfare, Ukraine 2013–2014*. U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 2016. 45.
[25] Ibid, 46.
[26] Ristic, "Serbian Fighters Help 'Russian Brothers' in Crimea." Accessed April 30, 2018. http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbian-fighters-head-to-crimea.

its members giving public speeches on how the Russian and Ukrainian people were just one populace.[27]

In addition to these more organized efforts, advertisements seeking volunteers to "fight" in Ukraine appeared on Russian social media sites. The Civil Defense of Ukraine group established a page on the main Russian social media site, VKontakte. The page had over 7,000 followers during the crisis. The Civil Defense of Ukraine group sought men between 18-45 who were looking to provide "moral support" for Crimea.[28]

The various groups eventually mobilized to action on 27 February when their members, directed and supported by the FSB and GRU, seized the Crimean Parliament building. The troops, called "the little green men" by media at the time, were camouflaged, well-armed, and purposely sought to avoid a violent confrontation with Ukrainian forces. At the same time, groups all over Crimea prevented mobilization and response of Ukrainian forces by swarming armored vehicles and the gates of bases with their bodies. These coordinated actions, paired with cyber activities to isolate communications, led to Ukrainian forces surrendering across Crimea. In short order, the groups captured the Parliament building, military bases, airstrips, and local media headquarters. By 11 March, the "people" of Crimea announced a referendum proposing the annexation of Crimea by Russia. Igor Girkin later announced in 2015 that the Russian government engineered the referendum. FSB officers, supported by the militias, found Crimean parliament members and forced them to sign the referendum at gunpoint while heavily armored vehicles surrounded the building.[29] Two days later, on 13 March, Putin amended the Russian constitution to allow Crimea's annexation.

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[27] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AW9YYmL29IY
[28] Ibid.
[29] "Ukraine Today: Moscow Agent Strelkov Admits Russian Army behind Crimean Referendum - Jan. 25, 2015." KyivPost, January 25, 2015. https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-today-moscow-agent-strelkov-admits-russian-army-behind-crimean-referendum-378365.html.

The unconventional infiltration and activities by irregular forces directly achieved several of Russia's national objectives. The "seizing" of Crimea greatly undermined Ukraine's sovereignty by illustrating that its leaders could not govern its territory. The action also gave Russia control of the Sevastopol naval base, a major strategic acquisition. In Crimea, the actions by "the little green men" were undeniably successful. The same actions, however, failed to achieve success when Russia attempted to apply them in the Donbas region.

Having achieved success in Crimea, many of the "pro-separatist" groups moved northeast in an attempt to replicate similar results in the Donbas Region. The Donbas Region shares a border with Russia allowing for a greater chance of infiltration. Roadblocks and checkpoints sprung up separating Donbas from Western Ukraine. Igor Girkin rose as the commander of the separatist forces.[30] The self-defense groups and the Night Wolves held large rallies in support of separating from Ukraine. This time, however, Ukraine responded with military force and started a campaign to reclaim the separatist areas. The campaign quickly became violent and degenerated into a stalemate. Ukraine did not have the forces to evict the Russian-backed separatists, while the Russian government "covertly" supported the rebels just enough to maintain rebel positions. The conflict rapidly became a frozen war resulting in the signing of the Minsk Accords. These accords have been brokered, yet are violated daily with skirmishes. On 5 March 2018, Ukraine passed a law naming each of the separatist areas as temporarily occupied by Russia, labeling it as an "aggressor state."[31]

In this operation, the attempted covert infiltration and occupation of the Donbas region erupted into violence, causing serious setbacks to

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[30] U. S. Army Special Operations Command. *"Little Green Men": A Primer on Modern Russian Unconventional Warfare, Ukraine 2013–2014*. U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 2016. 45.
[31] "Ukraine Names Russia as 'aggressor' State." *BBC News*, January 19, 2018, sec. Europe. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-42741778.

Russia. The international community responded with crippling economic sanctions at a time where Russia's economy was already struggling. With Ukrainian forces gaining ground against the separatist forces, the new Ukrainian government gained an opportunity to display legitimacy and capability to stand up against Russia. The Ukrainian government's response also reinforced the European Union's confidence in it. Shortly after sending Ukrainian forces on the offensive, Ukraine signed the European Union AA. Some analysts believe that having a frozen conflict benefits Russia in the long term.[32] The conflicts appear unattractive to both the European and NATO organizations, a lesson that Russia learned in the Georgian War. The Ukrainian government, however, has become staunchly anti-Russian. Poroshenko's administration seeks ever closer ties to the Western world, a situation that does not benefit Russia in the long-term.

A key difference between the two attempted infiltrations in Ukraine was the use of cyber-attacks to support the maneuvers.[33] As in the Georgian War in Chapter III, Russian cyber jamming of communications supported the infiltration. As the self-defense groups and Spetsnaz units began pouring into Crimea, DDOS attacks strangled the Ukrainian government and media sites preventing the quick and accurate reporting of events. Once the groups mobilized, the attacks shifted from overwhelming the internet infrastructure to denying service altogether. FSB and militia units took over the Ukrtelecom facility in Crimea and installed blocking devices to shut down cellular traffic. The agents also

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[32] Menon, Rajan, and Eugene B. Rumer. *Conflict in Ukraine: The Unwinding of the Post--Cold War Order*. First Edition edition. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2015.

[33] Reports show that Russian cyber-attacks against Ukraine began as far back as 2005. Two cyber viruses called Ouroboros and Snake show long-term efforts to sabotage Ukraine. Ouroboros was designed to steal sensitive information. Once infecting one computer the virus could spread rapidly. Snake also was designed to monitor intelligence; however, this virus allowed the controller to take over the infected computers, leaving the owners helpless. While Snake and Ouroboros were found on computers outside of Ukraine 32 out of 56 discovered instances targeted the Ukrainian government. For more information on Snake and Ouroboros see: http://resources.infosecinstitute.com/crimea-russian-cyber-strategy-hit-ukraine/#gref

cut landlines outside of major providers' facilities.[34] These actions shut down Crimea's landline, internet, and mobile services. These attacks crippled all communication inside and out of Crimea. Military commanders struggled to receive guidance from higher authorities while Crimean citizens could not organize a resistance to the Russian forces. With no way to organize, many Ukrainian citizens and military posts simply surrendered.

In the later Donbas conflict, cyber attacks have been limited. Either Russia is not conducting significant cyber actions or Ukraine has had time to prepare to defend against them. Either way, the lack of widespread cyber-attacks allowed Ukraine to respond with a coordinated counter-offensive. Additionally, media organizations around the world were able to capture the events further hampering Russian desires of a repeat of events in Crimea.

Unconventional warfare pursued through the cyber domain played a critical supporting role in achieving success in Crimea. Russian officials, having learned from their experiences in Georgia in 2008, used the cyber attacks in an effective communication jamming campaign. Cyber-attacks alone, as in the Estonian case, would not have directly achieved any of Russia's objectives. Instead, Russia combined cyber actions with an infiltrating force. Russian planners failed to extend this strategy into the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, potentially allowing Ukrainian forces to respond in a coordinated manner.

Ultimately, Russian non-violent subversive action achieved two out of the four Russian objectives. The Sevastopol naval base decisively belongs to Russia. Occupying and then annexing the Crimea also directly undermined Ukraine's sovereignty, as defined by the 1994 Budapest Agreements. The current frozen conflict in the Donbas region does make a NATO membership bid from Ukraine unlikely. NATO

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[34] Ibid.

already turned down a Ukrainian request for membership in 2008. The European Union has reinforced its relationship with the new Ukrainian government, signing the AA in 2014 with the aim of negotiating further economic collaboration. If Russian leaders intended to pull Ukraine away from Europe and Western influence, their non-violent subversive actions negatively impacted achieving that objective. Lastly, the sanctions placed upon Russia have severely hampered the Russian economy. While Russia may have been willing to pay this price for security in Sevastopol, it was a costly decision.

Table 6 Effectiveness of Subversive Non-Violent Acts

Non-Violent Subversive Action	Directly Achieved	Enabled	No Impact/Negative Impact
Subversion of Ukrainian Authority	X		
Pull Ukraine away from EU influence			X
Pull Ukraine away from NATO influence			X
Secure basing in Sevastopol	X		

Author's original work

Russian Covert Violent Actions During the Ukrainian Conflict

Russian covert violent actions negatively impacted Russia's capability to achieve strategic objectives. Russian forces participated in assassination attempts, intimidation, and torture, and tried to use Russian military equipment covertly. The 2004 assassination attempt of Viktor Yushchenko initiated Russia's covert action. Before the 2004 Ukrainian presidential elections, Russian agents slipped a chemical compound called Dioxin into Yushchenko's food.[35] Yushchenko barely

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[35] Dioxin is odorless and tasteless. Dioxin becomes a deadly poison when produced in a highly concentrated form and only if a person is susceptible to it. The sophistication of the laboratory required to produce the lethal concentrations of dioxin combined with the information of Yushenko's vulnerability point to a Russian FSB operation, though it is unproven. Rupar, Terri. "Remember When a Ukrainian Presidential Candidate Fell Mysteriously Ill?" *Washington Post*, March 12, 2014, sec. WorldViews.

survived the attack and remains heavily scarred from the encounter. The widely publicized failure of the assassination attempt, combined with conclusive evidence that Russia rigged the 2004 election, led to the Orange Revolution. This revolution caused a major political shift of Ukraine towards Europe and put Yushchenko in office. This pro-Western shift directly placed Russia's naval base lease in Sevastopol at risk as Yushchenko claimed there would not be a new lease.[36]

The Ukrainian government routinely accused Russian unconventional warfare forces, such as those mentioned in the previous section, of using murder, torture, and intimidation tactics to gain local control. The Ukrainian intelligence services accused Igor Girkin of murdering a journalist and a university student in Crimea.[37] While these actions may allow better control of the populace, they had another effect: preventing Russia from recruiting the populace and failing to put a true Ukrainian face on the uprising.

As problematic as Russia's covert actions have been, they pale in comparison to those created by the use of Russian military equipment. The most serious setback Russia suffered by using covert violent action resulted from the downing of Malaysian Air Flight 17. A Buk surface-to-air missile struck the plane over separatist-controlled terrirtory, killing 283 passengers.[38] The missile system had been "infiltrated" into the separatist territory to counter recent Ukrainian Air Force strikes. Russian officials denied that the missile came from its inventory stating, "The Russian firm that manufactures Buk missiles has insisted the missile was a model no longer used by Russian forces and said its

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https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/03/12/remember-when-an-ukrainian-presidential-candidate-fell-mysteriously-ill/.

[36] Sebastopol, By Tom Parfitt in. "Sebastopol Faces New Naval Battle If Yushchenko Wins," December 19, 2004. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/1479389/Sebastopol-faces-new-naval-battle-if-Yushchenko-wins.html.

[37] U. S. Army Special Operations Command. *"Little Green Men": A Primer on Modern Russian Unconventional Warfare, Ukraine 2013–2014*. U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 2016. 45

[38] "MH17 Plane Crash in Ukraine: What We Know." *BBC News*, September 28, 2016, sec. Europe. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28357880.

investigation showed it had been fired from Ukrainian-controlled territory."[39] Damning evidence came in the form of vehicle tracking that showed that the launcher responsible for the vehicle moved back into Russian territory after the incident.[40] While the event appears to be an accident from the Russia/separatist side, the launcher had been maneuvered covertly into place by Russian forces to nullify Ukraine's air power. This level of technologically sophisticated separatist air defense was not anticipated by Ukrainian leaders. The international community condemned Russia's participation in the event and called for a joint investigation. The Russian Federation blocked the United Nations' attempt to establish a tribunal into the matter.[41] Subsequent reports by the Dutch government prove that the launched missile came from a Russian launcher.[42]

The covert violent action attempts of Russian or Russian-sponsored forces negatively impacted its strategic objectives. While the assassination attempt of Viktor Yushchenko did undermine the Ukrainian sovereignty; the backlash from the international community far outweighed the positive gains. The intimidation and murders by separatist forces further discredited the claim that Russian forces intervened to support a "comfortable environment to express their will." The downing of the Malaysian Air flight highlighted the extent of the use of Russian military hardware, even in the face of Russian denials. This dissonance, between rhetoric and reality, caused tremendous scrutiny of

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[39] Ibid.

[40] The official documents from the Dutch Government and Safety Council can be found at: "Investigation Crash MH17, 17 July 2014." Accessed May 6, 2018. http%3A%2F%2Fonderzoeksraad.nl%2F%2Fen%2Fonderzoek%2F2049%2Finvestigation-crash-mh17-17-july-2014 and Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, "Investigation by the Dutch Safety Board - MH17 Incident - Government.Nl," onderwerp, January 23, 2018, https://www.government.nl/topics/mh17-incident/investigation-by-the-dutch-safety-board.

[41] "MH17 Plane Crash in Ukraine: What We Know," *BBC News*, September 28, 2016, sec. Europe, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28357880.

[42] Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, "Investigation by the Dutch Safety Board - MH17 Incident - Government.Nl," onderwerp, January 23, 2018, https://www.government.nl/topics/mh17-incident/investigation-by-the-dutch-safety-board

Russia's actions in the region making further covert actions more difficult.

Table 7 Effectiveness of Covert Violent Actions

Covert Violent Actions	Directly Achieved	Enabled	No Impact/Negative Impact
Subversion of Ukrainian Authority			X
Pull Ukraine away from EU influence			X
Pull Ukraine away from NATO influence			X
Secure basing in Sevastopol			X

Source: Author's original work

Russian Conventional Actions During the Ukrainian Conflict

Unlike the Georgian War in 2008, Russia's conventional forces did not play the decisive role in securing Crimea. The forces did, however, play a critical role in annexing Crimea and reinforcing the frozen conflict of Eastern Ukraine. Two major actions of the Russian military enabled these outcomes the most: the 26 February 2014 SNAP drill and the 14 August "humanitarian convoy."

On the evening of 26 February, the night before masked men seized Crimea's Parliament building, Vladimir Putin ordered a SNAP drill in Russia's Western Military District along the border of Ukraine. SNAP drills are designed to test the readiness of regional units and strategic assets at a moment's notice with little prior planning.[43] This SNAP drill consisted of over 150,000 troops across three regional armies, 880 battle tanks, 120 attack helicopters, 1,200 amphibious assault vehicles, and the Black Sea Fleet.[44] The exercise also included large numbers of transportation assets and long-range aircraft. The number of troops and

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[43] "Do Russia's War Games Have a Darker Purpose?" PBS NewsHour, September 20, 2017. https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/russias-war-games-darker-purpose. and
 http://cepa.org/EuropesEdge/The-dangerous-tool-of-Russian-military-exercises
[44] Ibid.

equipment involved mirrored previous ZAPAD exercises that are planned four years in advance. Initially, it appeared that Putin was putting on a display of power as the SNAP exercise coincided with the closing ceremony of the Sochi Winter Olympics.[45] Given the timing and the location, the exercise could be witnessed by state leaders from across the globe. It received large amounts of Russian and foreign media coverage, exactly as Russian leaders intended.

While the media and foreign leaders focused on the exercises surrounding Sochi, the Russian military reinforced the Sevastopol naval base with over 20,000 soldiers and Spetsnaz troops. Along with the soldiers came anti-aircraft systems, heavy artillery, and attack helicopters. The soldiers reinforced the base as the self-defense groups took over Crimean infrastructure. Immediately after the annexation the Russian soldiers and heavy weaponry maneuvered to secure key Crimean buildings and positions.[46] These soldiers continued to benefit from cooperation with the self-defense groups. This effective cooperation with the paramilitary units was only possible due to the pre-positioning of units and leadership that the SNAP exercise helped mask.

In addition to the land forces securing the naval base, the Russian Black Sea Fleet also played a major role in the SNAP exercise. Using jamming devices and taking up positions along the coast, the Russian fleet effectively blockaded Ukrainian forces in port before the Ukrainian Navy knew they were in danger. The communication jamming assisted the cyber-attacks in isolating the peninsula and breaking down Crimea's communication and decision-making abilities.

Vladimir Putin and Russian military leaders used the cover of the exercise and the credibility of the Winter Olympics to redeploy large

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[45] Tomasz Kowalik, "The Dangerous Tool of Russian Military Exercises | CEPA," accessed April 2, 2018, http://cepa.org/EuropesEdge/The-dangerous-tool-of-Russian-military-exercises.

[46] U. S. Army Special Operations Command, *"Little Green Men": A Primer on Modern Russian Unconventional Warfare, Ukraine 2013–2014* (U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 2016). 57.

numbers of key personnel and equipment. Russian leaders effectively created a strong strategic reserve in case subversive and covert actions failed, but also directly secured Sevastopol with more troops than the disorganized Ukrainian forces in Crimea could defeat, achieving a vital Russian objective. Russia used the cover of exercises before in Georgia and did so again in September of 2017, hosting ZAPAD in Crimea. Russia again took the opportunity to reinforce the peninsula with Anti-Access Anti-Denial (A2AD) equipment, at a time when Russian backed separatists had broken multiple cease-fire agreements.[47] This repositioning of equipment further strengthened Russia's hold on the region.

The second conventional action that impacted Russian achievement of its strategic objectives occurred on 14 August 2014. On that morning, a military convoy bypassed multiple Red Cross checkpoints along the Ukrainian border. The Russian military convoy consisted of over twenty armored fighting vehicles and multiple transportation trucks. The convoy purposely evaded the Red Cross and headed towards the city of Luhansk.[48] Russia claimed that the convoy was just humanitarian aid aimed at the beleaguered citizens of the city. In reality, Ukrainian forces had blockaded separatist forces in the city, and the convoy appeared to be sent to break the city's siege.[49] Russian actions were again condemned by the international community, with Western officials calling the maneuver a "stealth invasion."[50] The United States responded by leading a NATO-led peacekeeping operation in Western Ukraine the following month.[51] The convoy, designed to break

[47] Tomasz Kowalik, "The Dangerous Tool of Russian Military Exercises | CEPA," accessed April 2, 2018, http://cepa.org/EuropesEdge/The-dangerous-tool-of-Russian-military-exercises.

[48] "Russian Aid Convoy 'Invades Ukraine,'" *BBC News*, August 22, 2014, sec. Europe, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28892525.

[49] Command, U. S. Army Special Operations. *"Little Green Men": A Primer on Modern Russian Unconventional Warfare, Ukraine 2013–2014*. U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 2016. 61.

[50] Ibid

[51] Ibid.

the Luhansk siege and assist Russian separatists, sparked a Western reaction that created closer ties between Ukraine and NATO. This result was a major setback for the Russian Federation strategically.

Overall the use of conventional forces as an occupying force and a strategic reserve was effective for Russia. The masked redeployment of conventional soldiers directly assisted with securing the Sevastopol base and acted as a deterrent threat for Ukrainian forces in the area. Russian conventional actions in Eastern Ukraine, however, negatively impacted Russian success by overtly violating Ukraine's sovereignty. This open challenge of Ukraine's sovereignty was met with a NATO response, a strategic mistake by Russian leaders.

Table 8 Effectiveness of Conventional Aggression

Conventional Aggression	Directly Achieved	Enabled	No Impact/Negative Impact
SNAP Exercise	X		
"Humanitarian Aid"			X

Source: Author's original work

Conclusion

Russian unconventional warfare efforts in Ukraine resulted in significant economic sanctions, condemnation by the United Nations and the Red Cross, a frozen conflict in Eastern Ukraine, the signing of the European Union's AA, and a NATO-led exercise in Ukraine. Each of these results negatively impacted Russia's specific objectives in Ukraine and Russia's regional goals. While Russian forces "peacefully" seized the Crimea in 14 days, the result was possible because Russia had been waging other forms of unconventional warfare for over seven years. The seizing and annexation of Crimea was an opportunistic campaign enabled by years of shaping operations, not an exemplar execution of a new "Gerasimov Doctrine."

The actions in the Donbas campaign do reinforce the potential value of frozen conflicts to Russia. In this case, Russia's actions led to a NATO exercise in response. The conflict, however, allows Russia to influence the contested areas over a longer period of time. This long time horizon potentially allows Russia to reapply unconventional warfare methods to slowly shape decisions in its favor. The downside for Russia is the associated cost both fiscally and in prestige. Russian forces are now in several former Soviet countries at the same time that Russian leaders look to exert pressure on the "far abroad" like Syria. As Russian acts draw stricter sanctions, Russia's capability to employ such a strategy diminishes, but also becomes more appealing.

Chapter 5
Conclusion
But in war more than in any other subject we must begin by looking at the nature of the whole; for here more than elsewhere the part and the whole must always be thought of together

-Carl Von Clausewitz[1]

Individual unconventional warfare lines of effort were not successful for Russia to achieve its strategic objectives. Only when the sum of Russian activities are viewed together does a complete picture of Russia's war effort emerges. While unconventional actions failed to achieve success outright, they greatly enabled exploitation by conventional military forces. In examining these activities in the conflicts of Estonia, Georgia, and Ukraine, four major trends emerge. These trends point to a Russian blueprint or "playbook" for employing unconventional warfare. Understanding these trends, as well as the overall blueprint, allows a strategic planner to identify key decision points where the United States, or its allies, can intervene. The strategic planner can also develop mitigation plans when confronted with Russian activities that appear to match the trends found here.

The four major trends provide the basis for a framework from which the strategic planner can begin developing responses. The first trend prevalent in each of the case studies is that Russia expended considerable effort to isolate the target state's communications. This isolation provided Russia with two benefits. The first was the absence of foreign media in Georgia and Ukraine, and the blocking of media in Estonia, allowing Russia to dominate the narrative to the international community instantly. Russia was the first to release information, including uncontested justifications and intent of actions, and this advantage gave it brief respites of time to gain objectives further while

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[1] Carl Clausewitz. "On the Nature of War." In *On War*, edited by Howard Michael and Paret Peter, by Brodie Bernard and West Rosalie, 75. Princeton University Press, 1984.

other countries attempted to verify the facts. These acts also allowed Russia to seize the initiative in the informational realm. Due to the unique characteristics of information that make time a decisive element, Russian initiative provided it with a significant advantage. The second benefit Russia gained was the isolation of enemy command and control. While not successful in both Estonia and eastern Ukraine, the paralyzing of the Ukrainian military command structure in Crimea prevented any semblance of coordinated or timely resistance.

As distinct of a trend as isolation of communications, is the Russian perception of time. In each of the cases, the conflict was advertised as brief outbursts that sparked a Russian response. The case studies show, however, that Russia had long been preparing the environment in each of the countries before more evident conflict began. This distinction is important as it impacts current Western planning methodologies. A common framework for planning and analyzing operations is the phase construct from U.S. joint doctrine. This doctrine identifies the five phases as Shape, Deter, Dominate, Stabilize, and Enable Civil Authority.[2] Often planners interpret Phase III, Dominate, as the application of conventional armed forces. Russian covert actions frequently seize the initiative and shape the battlefield over long expanses of time. These Russian shaping operations shorten the range of available options and response times of NATO counteractions.

In order to have the time necessary to conduct long-term shaping activities, Russian leaders restrict operations to keep them under the threshold of armed conflict with NATO. In the Estonia case, Russian concerns over triggering Article V prevented an armed escalation to conflict. In both Georgia and Ukraine, Russia made every effort to not utilize conventional forces due to the threat of a NATO response. Only when it appeared that Georgian forces were securing key ground, or the

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[2] For more information on the use of the phase construct in planning see Joint Publication 5-0.

Donbas separatists in Ukraine were about to collapse, did Russia reinforce more overtly with conventional forces. Leaders from Russia also took several steps in the information operations realm to appear as the protector of the Russian people and culture. In all three cases, the initial narrative from Russian media was that Russian forces were intervening in a humanitarian capacity to help its citizens abroad.

The last significant trend observed across the three case studies was the identifiable massing of Russian capabilities to achieve objectives. While the Russian strategic culture embraces deception, it also has a long history of following the principle of massing.[3] From the artillery barrages and infantry formations of World War II to the massing of unconventional warfare assets in Ukraine, it is evident that Russia has not abandoned this principle. Even when attempting to execute operations covertly, Russian intent may be deciphered from the frequency, intensity, and quantity of their efforts. The Russian weight of effort signals their intentions even in the face of extensive information and military deception operations.

In addition to the four observed trends, repetitive unconventional warfare actions employed by Russia over the three case studies suggest a blueprint for how Russia approaches achieving national objectives in former Soviet Bloc countries. The outline of this blueprint has nine steps:

1. Political Warfare: Russian leaders attempt to conduct Political Warfare through issuing a series of comments discrediting and undermining a target's validity as a government and sovereignty as a country. The comments frequently appear in short periods of time throughout multiple layers of government from ambassadors, foreign ministers, religious leaders, all the way to the President and Prime Minister;

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[3] Mass is one of the principles of war. For more information on the central role that massing of assets plays in military operations see U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), *FM 3-0 Operations*. October 2017. (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army). Available online at https://fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-0.pdf.

2. Economic Warfare: Russia uses a series of refusals of services, tariff increases, and suspension of economic deals to manipulate states. As tensions escalate, Russia attempts to increase pressure through energy manipulation, cutting off or limiting natural gas. In some cases, such as Ukraine, the energy manipulation is in the form of enticement, offering energy at drastically reduced prices;

3. Information Warfare: Russia uses of state-sponsored media to spread misinformation, inspire nationalism, or to widen social divides in a target country. In each case study, *Russia Today* and affiliated state media sites attempted to inspire patriotism in the Russian diasporas invoking the memories of Soviet heroes and the once proud Republic. In South Ossetia and the Donbas, the media frequently used false interviews covering phony atrocities against Russian citizens to mobilize its populace;

4. Passportization: In both Georgia and Ukraine, Russia issued passports to their targeted area. By issuing these documents, Russia grows the diaspora and extends "their right" to protect Russian citizens anywhere. The issuance of passports to another state's body of citizens is also a direct challenge to capacity to govern and recognized sovereignty;

5. Military exercises: After shaping the environment and establishing pro-Russian movements and militias in a country, Russia utilizes military exercises to mask the movement of necessary equipment and personnel into the upcoming conflict. The 2014 SNAP exercise and the 2007 Zapad exercise are both examples of this covert tactic applied;

6. Cyber-attacks/communication isolation: Once the masked mobilization from the previous phase is complete Russia utilizes various communication jamming and isolating tactics to prevent an effective response to occupying forces and also to stifle narratives counter to those pushed by Russian forces. The jamming can come in the form of massed cyber-attacks, military jamming equipment, or both in concert;

7. Infiltration: Once the isolation of leadership and communication platforms begin, Russia employs deniable forces into the area to advise and assist separatist forces or seize key terrain outright.

These forces are supported by the troops that moved into the region from the military exercises;

8. Occupation: Claiming atrocities, poor living conditions, or lack of ability to govern, Russia responds with conventional forces to hold key terrain, bolster separatist forces, and directly achieve national goals; and

9. Frozen conflict: In an effort to avoid international intervention in the conflict, Russia cautiously weighs the direct involvement of its military. Russian leaders maintain just enough military presence to keep conflicts ongoing to further destabilize the region. While some conflicts do not lead directly to achieving national objectives, such as the current conflict in the Donbas Region, the seized areas provide a base of operations to continue long-term subversive actions.

While Russian actions in Estonia did not follow the precise sequence of events in the blueprint, the context is slightly different as the country was already a NATO member and Russian objectives were not to annex or occupy parts of it. Even with these contextual considerations, Russian actions in Estonia proceeded through steps 1,2,3, and 6. The Georgian and Ukrainian conflicts, however, followed the Russian unconventional warfare blueprint. If Russian leaders continue to employ unconventional warfare consistently, Western planners have several opportunities to more rapidly identify Russian intent and take preventative measures.

Two steps should become vital identification and intervention points for planners and decision makers, Step 3, Information Warfare and Step 4, Passportization. Identifying massed information operations at Step 3 allows the US and allies to begin strong counter-narrative information operations. Ideally, this step should prompt a decision for Western planners to generate joint-multinational deterrence efforts that signal future cost and risk to Russia. Passportization is a flagrant violation of international norms and a clear indicator of Russian activities to come. The Russian issuance of passports to another country

should spur a staunch and immediate response from the US and its NATO allies.

While many of the prudent U.S. responses to Russian aggression, such as economic sanctions, lay outside the scope of a strategic planner's arsenal, there are several others that military planners can take to deter or mitigate Russian unconventional warfare actions. The first action strategic planners should take is ensuring redundancy in communication plans. Planners should examine current crisis communication plans for military, government, and government-run media infrastructures. In both Georgia and Ukraine, Russian forces were greatly enabled by the temporary disruption of communication. Secondary communication plans should be developed assuming that digital communications have been disrupted by cyber-attacks or military jamming platforms, specifically, having agreements in place for outside governments to host affected government servers and telecommunications. In Estonia, Ukraine, and Georgia it took several days to get another government to host the downed infrastructure, something that could be mitigated through prearranged agreements. The plan should also include operations to secure government-run media or have a relocation plan in case of conflict.

Enforcing robust communications is vital to the second action strategic planners should examine. As seen in Estonia, Georgia, and Ukraine, Russian officials view information operations as military engagements. Planners should adopt this view and treat information as a component of the battlefield where the key terrain is the narrative. In each of the case studies, Russian leaders used control of the narrative, both internal and external, to appear to meet legal or humanitarian justifications for war. Planners should ensure their organizations are tied into the NATO Strategic Communication Center in Riga and mirror the organization's integration concept at lower levels. NATO developed

the Strategic Communication Concept to integrate all the different agencies involved in disseminating a state's narrative.[4] This integration allows the best massing of available information operation assets, an issue that Russia does not have to consider given it is an autocratic state. The focus of this integration should be to allow rapid and consistent responses instead of pushing through multiple layers of bureaucratic authorizations. Building the Center's capacity to allow this type of integration would be optimal, however, the Center is an excellent source of information until higher levels of integration can be reached and utilized.

Planners should also ensure that a program exists to educate both military and citizens of the host country on Russian deception operations and misinformation. The NATO Strategic Communication Center routinely publishes documents detailing Russian information operation efforts and is a useful starting point.[5] Both Latvia and Lithuania have begun similar programs to identify Russian influence operations and counter their narratives before they become pervasive.

At the more tactical level, if a planner views the information environment as a contested one, then information operations efforts should be tracked and responded to in a similar nature as other offensive actions. Information "battle drills" and an information "common operating picture" would allow a commander to make timely decisions to prevent Russian escalation.

If the efforts to seize and command the narrative fail and Russian leaders continue to escalate down their unconventional warfare blueprint, planners should be able to meet the next escalation,

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[4] Reding, Anais, Kristin Weed, and Jeremy J Ghez. "NATO's Strategic Communications Concept and Its Relevance for France," n.d., 63.

[5] The NATO Strategic Communications Center releases documents like *Russia's footprint in the Nordic-Baltic Information Environment* and *Fake-News a Road Map*. These documents aim to identify current information operations, their key messages, and how the messages are being manipulated. These documents and more can be found at: https://www.stratcomcoe.org/

passportization, with military SNAP exercises. In each of the case studies, Russian leaders sought to achieve their objectives through unconventional warfare tactics to prevent a state from invoking NATO's Article V collective action clause. The Russian tactics appeared to limit conflict purposefully. Responding to passportization with a NATO-led SNAP exercise does several things for allied forces. The first is that the exercise, if planned and resourced to respond rapidly, shows that NATO is not a bureaucratic behemoth. The second benefit that responding with a SNAP exercise provides is that it presents Russian leaders with the risk of escalation and the sum of their worst fears, NATO intervention. The third benefit is that it places more NATO members on the frontlines of the potential battlefield. Any casualties taken if conflict breaks out will further encourage the strength of NATO's response. Responding in such a manner would throw off Russian decision-making process as NATO responses in Estonia and US responses in Georgia and Ukraine were slow and relatively non-escalatory. This gap provides an opportunity to seize the narrative once again and prevent Russian escalation.

The SNAP exercise response, however, needs further study for its potential long-term implications. The initial escalation provides short-term benefits but must be followed with activities that secure those benefits for a longer duration. The shock value of the SNAP exercise occurs only for the first use, then rapidly loses effectiveness. Additionally, planners must emphasize supporting this exercise with a carefully crafted narrative so that the response cannot be used for Russian IO purposes. Without a long-term sustainable plan, the exercise could present more issues than it solves.

Finally, planners need to realize that the traditional joint phasing model used in military planning does not adequately cover the Russian

unconventional warfare approach to a limited war.[6] Russian actions seize the initiative before Western planners ever realize that Phase III has even begun, preventing a timely response and forcing planners to be reactive. To address this friction between observed actions and the phasing models the Joint Chiefs of Staff recently released the Joint Concept for Integrated Planning. The document calls for planners to embrace a mindset of the "competition continuum" in state interactions.[7] While the Concept is not robust enough to usurp the utility of the phasing model in current planning efforts, the mindset it suggests, one which views the environment as continually contested, is a step in the right direction. Planners must view the Russian unconventional warfare actions for what they are-an adversarial engagement.

AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The conclusions of this study offer several opportunities for further research that would, in turn, strengthen US and allied responses in the future. The first opportunity for further study is to examine Russian unconventional warfare actions where Russia had to project power abroad, such as the current Syrian conflict. A pattern has emerged with unconventional warfare efforts in the near-abroad, but do Russian leaders attempt to replicate that pattern overseas? If not, how does the pattern change? Answering this question provides potential response options to apply pressure to Russia outside of former Soviet Bloc countries, potentially limiting escalation.

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[6] The inadequacy of the Joint phasing model has recently become a popular focus area. COL Jermiah Monk, in a recent Air War College paper, questioned using a linear planning approach for non-linear operations and called for more research into the model. Strategist Everett Dolman also questions the validity of a phasing model with endstates in his book Pure Strategy, arguing instead that strategy should be about holding a continuous advantage. Monk, Jeremiah R. "End State: The Fallacy of Modern Military Planning." Air War College, Air University Maxwell AFB United States, Air War College, Air University Maxwell AFB United States, April 6, 2017. http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/AD1042004. Dolman, Everett, *Pure Strategy: Power and Policy in the Space and Information Age* (Frank Cass Publishers, June 23, 2005).

[7] Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/concepts/joint_concept_integrated_campaign.pdf?ver=2018-03-28-102833-257

The second opportunity for further study requires examining NATO's strategic communication strategies throughout the 1980's. Both Russian and NATO leaders have learned from their Cold War experiences, but have NATO forces learned the right lessons and are they still applicable to the current information environment? Additionally, many learned lessons have been forgotten in the US's strategic pivot to the Pacific. Workable strategies and studies from earlier conflicts could prevent planners from starting from scratch. Researchers should attempt to interview personnel responsible for designing past NATO Strategic Communication plans and the senior leaders and planners who designed them. Additional steps should be taken to capture the Soviet response to these actions and examining if any neutral states felt strategic pressure from these communication campaigns.

The third research opportunity is to compare the effectiveness of Russian unconventional warfare activities to the U.S.' efforts. This thesis may initially have appeared as biased against Russian unconventional warfare efforts. U.S. Special Operations, however, sometimes employ similar approaches to achieve national objectives. The nine steps of the Russian blueprint this thesis presented, and the seven phases of unconventional warfare used by U.S. special operations, have several similarities. These similarities should be examined and contrasted to identify relative strengths and weaknesses of U.S. unconventional warfare efforts. If patterns and decision points can be identified in Russian actions, it is equally useful to identify those contained in the U.S.' approach. By examining these patterns, the U.S. military can plan to identify or mitigate operations aimed at disrupting U.S. unconventional warfare operations.

The last research opportunity is to develop a useable joint planning model that allows adequate response times for unconventional warfare actions in a limited war construct. The U.S. Special Operations

community uses a seven-phase unconventional warfare model. This model, however, does not tie into the current four-phase conventional planning model well, leading to uncertainty and misunderstanding between conventional and special operations planners. Either planners must be well-versed in both systems to facilitate smooth transitions or a new model is needed, one developed from the joint feedback of the two communities. Developing such a model generates more options for decision makers and mitigates some of the effects of the covert actions.

This research began by aiming to evaluate the effectiveness of modern Russian unconventional warfare actions as applied in three case studies. Through examining the Russian actions in Estonia, Georgia, and Ukraine, it is evident that Russian unconventional warfare efforts were not effective in achieving Russia's strategic objectives alone. These efforts, however, did dramatically shape the target operating environments for further exploitation of conventional forces. Without the use of conventional forces, the Russian efforts either failed or would have failed. This conclusion does not undermine the threat that the Baltic States face from Russian unconventional warfare activity. These states must continuously defend against Russian unconventional warfare efforts in their country daily. The "little green men" may have appeared alien to some; the playbook driving them, however, was anything but. The analysis shows that Russian leaders are opportunistic and are prepared to capitalize on long-term unconventional shaping operations should a window of opportunity arise. At the same time, the Russian roadmap to unconventional warfare activities provides several decision points where intervention is possible. Additionally, much of Russia's shaping success required having a long-shared history with target countries, similar cultural ties, or a sizeable Russian diaspora. It remains unproven whether Russia can export these tactics abroad, potentially making this threat a very localized one.

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