Deep Operations in the 21st Century

A Monograph

by

MAJ Tony E. Nicosia
US Army

School of Advanced Military Studies
US Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, KS

2020

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE ***(DD-MM-YYYY)***	**2. REPORT TYPE**	**3. DATES COVERED** ***(From - To)***
28-06-2019	SAMS Monograph	June 2019-May 2020

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE

Deep Operations in the 21st Century

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)

MAJ Tony E. Nicosia

5d. PROJECT NUMBER

5e. TASK NUMBER

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS)
201 Reynolds Avenue
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2134

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

Command and General Staff College
731 McClellan Avenue
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1350

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)

CGSC

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

Beginning in the interwar period between World War I and World War II the Soviet Union endured massive social, military, and political changes. G.S. Isserson and Mikhail Tukhachevsky innovated Soviet doctrine to encompass all the advances in military technology such as the tank, the airplane, and an improved military-industrial complex. The Soviets focused on Deep Operations Theory built from historical data from the Russo-Japanese War, World War I, and the Bolshevik revolution during the interwar period between World War I and World War II. Moving into the twenty-first century, Russia is taking advantage of the "Gray Zone" of competition in the Baltics and Black Sea regions, extending Russia's sphere of influence, buttressing itself against NATO's sphere. The adoption of protracted and/or sponsored warfare in today's tension filled diplomatic sphere, the doctrine of Deep Operations has gone from three domains; land, sea, and air; to now include cyberspace, and space operations. Still focused on Deep Operations to affect the enemy's warfare architecture, Russia is using its advances in technology, and manipulation of information to bolster and launch attacks and aid in the destabilization of NATO and the United States. The US is not comfortable with definitions of war that do not comply with U.S. norms. Additionally, as success is determined against NATO, other adversaries can benefit. By understanding the logic of Russian military strategy and its operational art Americans can organize themselves in such a way to maintain a competitive advantage.

15. SUBJECT TERMS

Deep Operations Theory, Operation Bagration, Ukraine, Crimea, Donbas, New Generation Warfare, Russia, Soviet Union

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			**17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**	**18. NUMBER OF PAGES**	**19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON**
a. REPORT	**b. ABSTRACT**	**c. THIS PAGE**			MAJ Tony E. Nicosia
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	45	**19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER** ***(include area code)*** 913-758-3302

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

Monograph Approval Page

Name of Candidate: MAJ Tony E. Nicosia

Monograph Title: Deep Operations in the 21st Century

Approved by:

_____, Monograph Director
Alice Butler-Smith, PhD

_____, Seminar Leader
Leroy B. Butler, LtCol

_____, Director, School of Advanced Military Studies
Brian A. Payne, COL

Accepted this 21st day of May 2020 by:

_____, Acting Director, Office of Degree Programs
Prisco R. Hernandez, PhD

Abstract

Deep Operations in the 21st Century, by MAJ Tony E. Nicosia, 45 pages.

Beginning in the interwar period between World War I and World War II the Soviet Union endured massive social, military, and political changes. G.S. Isserson and Mikhail Tukhachevsky innovated Soviet doctrine to encompass all the advances in military technology such as the tank, the airplane, and an improved military-industrial complex. The Soviets focused on Deep Operations Theory built from historical data from the Russo-Japanese War, World War I, and the Bolshevik revolution during the interwar period between World War I and World War II. Moving into the twenty-first century, Russia is taking advantage of the "Gray Zone" of competition in the Baltics and Black Sea regions, extending Russia's sphere of influence, buttressing itself against NATO's sphere. The adoption of protracted and/or sponsored warfare in today's tension filled diplomatic sphere, the doctrine of Deep Operations has gone from three domains; land, sea, and air; to now include cyberspace, and space operations. Still focused on Deep Operations to affect the enemy's warfare architecture, Russia is using its advances in technology, and manipulation of information to bolster and launch attacks and aid in the destabilization of NATO and the United States. The US is not comfortable with definitions of war that do not comply with U.S. norms. Additionally, as success is determined against NATO, other adversaries can benefit. By understanding the logic of Russian military strategy and its operational art Americans can organize themselves in such a way to maintain a competitive advantage.

Contents

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank Dr. Alice Butler-Smith for her direction, discussions, and invisible hand in shaping this work. Her guidance for the syndicate was masterful and empowering. Secondly, I would like to thank my seminar leader, LtCol L. Bryant Butler for his comments, guidance, and discussions about this topic. Finally, to my wife, Crystal, and our two beautiful children, Abram and Lilia, thank you for your patience and understanding as I tackled this endeavor. If it wasn't for you three and the motivation you gave me on a daily basis, I would not be the officer I am today.

Abbreviations

DA	Department of the Army
DoD	Department of Defense
EU	European Union
FM	Field Manual
JP	Joint Publication
LSCO	Large-Scale Combat Operations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDS	National Defense Strategy
NMS	National Military Strategy
NSS	National Security Strategy
OKH	*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
USCYBERCOM	United States Cyber Command
USSPACECOM	United States Space Command
USSR	United Soviet States of Russia
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II

Introduction

> To understand the specific nature of the contemporary operation, one must establish the prerequisites and conditions which have caused its birth and determined its evolution over time. This historical approach also reveals the prerequisites that determine the further evolution of operational forms during armed conflict. In historical context, the phenomenon presently known as an operation vividly reveals the characteristic features that have defined the evolution of its nature.
>
> —G. S. Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art*

The Soviet Union endured massive social, military, and political changes during the end of World War I (WWI) and during the interwar period of 1920-1930. The Great War and the rise of Socialism redefined politics, policy, strategy, and the Russian way of life. Vladamir K. Triandafillov, Mikhail Tukhachevsky, Aleksandr A. Svechin, and G.S. Isserson produced innovative Soviet political-military theory, and operational and tactical doctrine to encompass advances in military technology such as the tank, the airplane, and an improved military-industrial complex. These visionaries evolved the Soviet operational strategy with Deep Operation tenets built from existing military theory, historical data from the most recent conflicts and doctrine used from the Napoleonic era until the present day.[1] The Soviet theorists' view of the transformed technology and its effects on the battlefield birthed the idea and concepts of the operational art and operational level of war.

Isserson wrote from a strategic view that, in WWI, "the operation[s] became uncontrolled" because of doctrinal tactics imposed on superior technology of the day.[2] He supposed that tactical actions along the breadth and depth of the modern battlefield needed synchronization. "Operational art was least of all concerned with settling the question of where and how to destroy the enemy. This question was replaced by the question of when to reach a

---

[1] Georgii Samoilovich Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013), 47-48.

[2] Ibid., 29.

place."[3] Isserson wrote that the "future operation will no longer be broken chains of interrupted battles. It will be a continuous chain of merged combat efforts throughout the entire depths."[4]

At the heart of deep operations is the operational formation. In the 1930s these formations were: an attack echelon, an echelon to develop success or exploitation force, reserves, aviation forces, and air assault forces.[5] Vladmir Triandafillov in his book, *The Nature of the Operations of Modern Armies*, links the operational planner to the strategic context of planning. He writes that the planner's ability to serve a crushing blow "may put an entire state organism out of the game quite rapidly."[6] Towards the beginnings of World War II (WWII), the Soviets created a standing, peace time Army and new organizations of tank and mechanized forces that would create the "offensive punch" to reach the enemy's operational rear area.[7]

The innovations of technology and doctrine throughout the Great War as Isserson wrote, "… fed the process for solving the problem of regaining the superiority of offensive over the defensive means."[8] Because these innovations were at the base, tactical innovations to break through the enemy's front line of trenches, Isserson proposed that "operational art had lost its meaning."[9] These developments and reflections on the Great War allowed for the Soviet military intelligentsia to rework their theory of warfare. Isserson asserted, "Operational art had practically been transformed into a senseless system for hammering nails. But walls do not fall as a result of

---

[3] Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art*, 29.

[4] Ibid., 47-48.

[5] David M. Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art: In Pursuit of Deep Battle* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1991), 79.

[6] V. K. Triandafillov, *The Nature of the Operations of Modern Armies*, ed. Jacob W. Kipp (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, International Specialized Book Service, 1994), 150-151.

[7] Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art*, 86.

[8] Ibid., 34.

[9] Ibid., 35.

hammering nails into them. To bring down a wall, one must undermine its very foundations and flow through the resulting gaps."[10]

"Our operational art," according to Isserson, "are the principles of the offensive."[11] Isserson concludes that the offensive form of warfare or "combat action for annihilation" is how the Red Army will carry out military actions against aggressors.[12] Additionally, the future wars will be fought laterally and in depth and troops will spend more time "in deployed combat formations than on marches."[13] The adaptations of warfare to technology and mass mobilizations caused an evolutionary shift in the operational level of war to include depth. Isserson states, "once armed combat has encompassed a front and spilled into the depths on land and in the air, there will be no place else to go."[14]

The development of the information age conceived a new dimension of the battlefield in which sovereign nations, corporations, and non-state actors could take full advantage. The West named this new dimension the "Gray Zone." The Foreign Policy Research Institute writes that the Gray Zone encompasses "activity that is coercive and aggressive in nature, but that is deliberately designed to remain below the threshold of conventional military conflict and open interstate war."[15] Russia's incursions into South Ossetia, Georgia in 2008 and into the Crimean Peninsula and the Donbas regions of Ukraine in 2014 illustrates Russia's use of the "Gray Zone." Russia's extending of its sphere of influence through competition in the Baltic and Black Sea regions, buttresses itself against North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) sphere. The adoption of protracted and/or sponsored warfare in today's tension filled diplomatic sphere, and the doctrine

---

[10] Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art,* 36.

[11] Ibid., 42

[12] Ibid., 43.

[13] Ibid., 47.

[14] Ibid., 48.

[15] Hal Brands, "Paradoxes of the Gray Zone," *Foreign Policy Research Institute,* February 5, 2016, accessed October 9, 2019, https://www.fpri.org/article/2016/02/paradoxes-gray-zone.

of Deep Operations has gone from three domains; land, sea, and air; to now include cyberspace, and space operations. The use of sponsored groups to destabilize Ukraine, and backing the Assad regime in Syria have given a new Multi-Domain skin with the same old deep operations' base. As Russia looks at the strength of the United States (US) military in the forms of mass, concentration, and technology, Russia can counter those strengths with operations below the threshold of warfare. Still focused on deep operations to affect the enemy's warfare architecture, Russia uses its advances in technology and manipulation of information to launch attacks, and to bolster the destabilization of NATO and the United States.

The West credits General Valery Gerasimov with the New Generation Warfare or "Gerasimov" Doctrine that solidifies the US and its NATO allies. According to an article published by Eugene Rumer, the correct term is Primakov Doctrine which has been leading Russian foreign policy for the past two decades.[16] The Primakov doctrine strives for a multipolar world in counterbalance to the United States by striving for primacy in the region, think previous satellite states, in order to defeat the primacy of NATO.[17] Russian diplomatic and military exploits in Georgia (2008), Crimea and the Donbas (2014), and presently in Syria showcase the combination of soft and hard power Russia can use to create advantageous positions without instigating NATO Article V.

The author's focus is on how Russia came to employ its instruments of national power through Deep Operations Theory from the early 1900s through the present day. Understanding the elements of new technology, existential threats, regional power struggles will improve the chances of forecasting how the system will continue to evolve and what practices must flourish to

---

[16] Eugene Rumer, "The Primakov (Not Gerasimov) Doctrine in Action" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, June 5, 2019, accessed on January 17, 2020, https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/06/05/primakov-not-gerasimov-doctrine-in-action-pub-79254#comments.

[17] Ibid.

combat adversaries. First, the military practitioner must understand the origins of the adversary's theory. Second, they must overlay the theory on to history to make sense of the theory in time and space. Finally, they must look to the current geopolitical situation to calculate where the theory may overlay again on what is to become new history.

This monograph will use a historic lens to look at Operation Bagration, an operational campaign that embodies the use of Deep Operations Theory. Second, this monograph will analyze the Russian incursion into Ukraine and the Donbas as a continuation of Deep operations theory, but with different means to achieve strategic ends. Finally, a synthesis to posit a positive or negative correlation that Deep Operations Theory is still the theory of action that Russia uses to link its Primakov Strategic Doctrine to its new generation warfare tactics. The author selected these case studies based on specific criteria.

First, even though the names of the governments changed from the United Soviet States of Russia (USSR) to the Russian Federation, the lineage of the Kremlin remained intact. Therefore, we can operate on the strong assumption that not much changed in the form of strategic aims by this renaming. Second, these case studies show the use of new and emerging technologies; tanks and long-range strategic bombers in Operation Bagration; and cyber-attacks and non-state actors in the Ukraine incursion. Third, the Kremlin executes Deep Operations Theory to dictate military action, however, the employment of Deep Operations in each case study highlight different means. Operation Bagration concentrates on army sized maneuver elements, while the Ukraine incursion consists of small teams and crescendos to battalion sized operational maneuver groups (OMGs) which are akin to the US combined arms battalions (CABs). Finally, these case studies illuminate the underlying political link to the military objectives. In Operation Bagration, the Soviets aimed to remove German Army Group Center from Minsk, a historical land claim of Russia. Along the same vein, the Ukraine incursion also aimed at returning historically Russian lands back to the Kremlin.

The frameworks of Soviet doctrine of WWII and the Russian doctrine used in Ukraine in 2014 will provide an understanding of the use of Deep Operations in conventional and unconventional contexts respectively. The author will apply the Deep Operations tenets of deception, penetration, encirclement, and destruction of the enemy to evaluate both case studies. Operation Bagration will serve as the baseline for Soviet Deep Operations Theory execution. Following the establishment of Operation Bagration as the conventional use of Deep Operations Theory, the author will apply the Deep Operations Theory tenets to the Ukraine incursion to answer whether the Russia state uses Deep Operations Theory in the twenty-first century. The logic assumed is that if Operation Bagration uses Deep Operations Theory; the Ukraine incursion and Operation Bagration embody the same strategic aims; then Russia's actions during the Ukraine incursion were also influenced by Deep Operations Theory.

The structure of this monograph should aid in this investigation. The section, Evolution of Operational Art will trace the origins of operational art and development of Deep Operations Theory from WWI to present day, organized along the thread of theory, history, and doctrine. This lead section will lay the base of knowledge for evaluation of conventional and unconventional uses of Deep Operations and Deep Battle. The latter case studies will examine specific examples of the adaptations of the character Deep Operations as stated previously. The first case study will detail the Soviet spring offensive of 1944, specifically examining the institutional changes in the Soviet military to take the initiative away from the Germans through the implementation and adaptation of Deep Operations Theory. The second case study of Russian incursion into Crimea and the Donbas will look to prove a link from the twentieth to the twenty-first century in the use of deep operations in the Gray Zone. The use of lessons observed from the Persian Gulf War, this case study highlights Russian use of political history, information operations through unconventional and conventional means to develop a narrative to capitalize on a destabilized sovereign nation. Finally, the synthesis of what this all means for the operational artist by using history and the current environment to investigate what the future may hold with

Russian pursuit of regional hegemonic status to rival NATO in Europe and the US on the international stage.

The Evolution of Operational Art: From Origin to Present Day

The theory of Deep operations and operational art have a historical precedence of success within Russia. This development was not overnight, in fact it took decades to come to fruition. This section will take a chronological approach in examining deep operations and deep battle, from beginnings where theorists built their framework from lessons learned in WWI, tested the theory in WWII, and currently execute an evolutionary form of the theory using modern means.[18]

Alexander Svechin, a prominent general in the Russian Army during WWI and critical to the intellectual revolution of military theory, defined operational art as a critical conceptual link between tactics and strategy. This link, he wrote, "[is the] totality of maneuvers and battles in a given part of the theater of military action directed toward the achievement of the common goal, set as final in the given period of the campaign."[19] Soviet operational art evolved overtime "marked by the creation and evolution of numerous general operational theories: successive operations (1920); deep battle and deep operations (1930s); the artillery offensive (1943); and the air offensive (1943)."[20] The Soviet's built on innovations to changes the nature of warfare they wished to fight. Mass armies, mass mobilization, increased lethality of weapon systems, and

---

[18] MAJ Wassim Merhi, "Through the Lens of Systems Thinking: Operation Bagration and the Insights on Contemporary Operational Art," (monograph, Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2019), 1-35. In my journey to truly understand the systems approach to Soviet/Russian operational art I found myself constantly returning to MAJ Wassim Merhi's monograph written in 2019. His ability to breakdown the systemic attack through the lens of Operation Bagration. Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art*, 20-25; Jacob W. Kipp, "The Tsarist and Soviet Operational Art, 1853-1991," in *The Evolution of Operational Art: From Napoleon to Present*, eds. John Olsen and Martin Creveld (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011), 65-68; Andy Greenberg, *Sandworm: A New Era of Cyberwar and the Hunt for the Kremlin's most Dangerous Hackers* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2019), xii-xiii; Mark Galeotti, *Russian Political War: Moving Beyond the Hybrid* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 2.

[19] Aleksandr A. Svechin, *Strategy*, ed. Kent D. Lee (Minneapolis, MN: East View, 1992), 70.

[20] Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art*, 12.

improved communications proved a deadly mixture for the tactics of the early nineteenth century. The Soviets in the 1920s and 1930s looked to a new level of warfare to answer the question of "how to restore mobility and maneuver to the relatively stagnant battlefield."[21]

The military theorists of the twentieth century began looking at warfare in a different way. Because of the invention of the airplane, tank, machine gun, barbed wire, and dispersed small unit tactics, theorist such as Mikhail Tukhachevsky reframed the Soviet grammar of warfare illuminated by the shrinking battlefield in terms of time and space, but inversely by the growing complexity and depth of the same. These new developments caused a paradigm shift for the Red Army away from wars of annihilation, which were all but an afterthought following WWI. This shift would lead to many Soviet theorists to define a different level of war, on that strings together continuous, coherent, and successive operations which would develop into deep operations theory.[22]

The concept of "depth" came to the forefront of the European militaries that suffered through WWI, but what makes deep operations theory stand out from the rest lays in the Soviet's aim. The Soviets understood that wars of a single, devastating blow are wars of the past. They wished to blend attritional with maneuver warfare across successive fronts to create multiple dilemmas for their enemies. When executed continuously and coherently these operations, in depth and breadth, created operational shock or *udar*.[23] The Soviets no longer strove for a war of annihilation; they now aimed for a war of attrition. They wished to create favorable conditions at the operational level inflicting physical and psychological shock using maneuver to attack their

---

[21] Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art*, 19.

[22] Ibid., 21.

[23] Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997), 11-12.

enemy's resolve, create feelings of dread and helplessness, destroy unit cohesion, and end with the enemy force's surrender.[24]

The center piece of the creativeness that became Soviet operational art was the innovative approach to warfare. The machine-like and cognitive tenets of depth in Soviet theory allowed for a shift from trying to destroy the enemy, to a much more attainable and more disintegrating disruption of the enemy's system.[25] Many theorists adapted these principles from Sun Tzu and Carl Von Clausewitz to create this theory of action using new technology and the lessons learned from WWI.[26] J. F. C. Fuller and Basil H. Liddell Hart, two renowned British WWI veterans and writers on the subject wrote similarly about the theory. Fuller expressed this in using "brain warfare," instead of using pure military strength to defeat an enemy.[27] Liddell-Hart believed that operations executed with the purpose of paralyzing the enemy and advocated an "impression made on the mind of the opposing commander can nullify the whole fighting power his troops possess."[28] British and Soviet theorists were developing a theory of cognitive assault on their enemy which would take shape in the spring of 1944, which was to destroy the command and control elements of the enemy force.

---

[24] Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence*, 15-16.

[25] Ibid., 174.

[26] Sun Tzu viewed the interrelationship between elements of war as counterbalancing forces, "The able commander is able to create differentials and thus opportunities by manipulating his position and the position of the enemy. By developing a full understanding of those factors … and by actively controlling and shaping the situation … weaknesses of the enemy are exposed to one's acquired strength, one is able to ride the force of circumstances to victory." Roger T. Ames, ed. and trans., *Sun Tzu: The Art of Warfare* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1993), 78. Clausewitz wrote, "The fighting forces must be destroyed: that is, they must be put in such a condition that they can no longer carry on the fight." Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 90.

[27] J. F. C. Fuller, *On Future Warfare* (London,UK: Sifton Praed & Co, 1928), 83; J. F. C. Fuller, *The Foundations of Science of War* (London, UK: Hutchinson and Company, 1925), 292, 314.

[28] B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (New York, NY: First Signet Printing, 1974), 212.

The proceeding answer for the Red Army was Deep Operations Theory. A theory of action that delivers a cognitive shock to the enemy in a way that the enemy is not prepared. The Soviets used this technique in Belorussia in 1944 and all evidence points to its use again seven decades later in Ukraine and the Donbas region. The adaptability of this theory for conventional military or in the form of instigated political instability, non-state actor engagements, and political and military deception prior to any Russian combat troops setting foot on ground is key to Russian success.[29]

Shimon Naveh translates *udar* through the lens of systems theory. He writes, "The notion of operational shock delineates in practical terms a consequential state of a fighting system which can no longer accomplish its aims."[30] This is the effect of the operational maneuver process dominating the enemy physically and psychologically.[31] The theme of *udar* seems to overlay extensively on writing about the resurgence of Russia, namely after the Ukraine incursion. The Kremlin sows the seeds of disinformation to create confusion and divisions throughout nations with ethnic Russian populations to feed its primary narrative of protecting its people. It does this to create dependency from these groups through non-state actors, business means, and social

---

[29] Galeotti, *Russian Political War*, 2.

[30] Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence*, 16. Shimon Naveh is a contemporary theorist and historian on Soviet military theory. During the time that he wrote his book, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory*, he was a lecturer in the Department of History at Tel Aviv University and a Senior Fellow of the Cummings Center for Russian and East European Studies. For further reading on systems perspective see Ludwig von Bertalanffy, *General Systems Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications* (New York, NY: Eleventh Printing, 1993); Alan Beyerchen, "Clausewitz, Nonlinearity, and the Unpredictability of War," *International Security* 17, no. 3 (Winter 1992-1993): 59-90; Robert Jervis, *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); and Jeffrey Engstrom, *Systems Confrontation and System Destruction Warfare: How the Chinese People's Liberation Army Seeks to Wage Modern Warfare* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018.)

[31] Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence*, 16.

media bots and trolls.[32] The strategic context of Russia's actions is well established and through this theory of action of deep operations in the twenty-first century will be tested.

The author seeks to maximize the readers understanding of deep operations and the exposition of its use in the twenty-first century. The principle of operational shock linked across operational depth is key to understanding where Russian strategy intends to dominate using innovated technologies of space, cyber, and the information domains. This is the linkage hypothesized to have not changed between the Red Army of 1944 and the deniable operations conducted by non-state and criminal organizations on behalf of the Kremlin in Ukraine.

What this paper will not encompass is anything to do with the explanation of or deep dive into the western version "Hybrid" or "New Generation" warfare. Russian defense expert Russian Pukhov aptly states, "any attempt to define [hybrid warfare] ends with the conclusion that there really is nothing very new in the idea."[33] Russia's primary tools are that of confusion, political instability, non-state actors, criminals, and then after conditions are set and favorable, the Red Army will appear in the name of Slavic people's freedoms or against Western aggression. The author seeks to focus the reader on the techniques used by Russia to create a space of comparative advantage in today's geopolitical landscape, not how this space is named.

Theoretically, the "new generation" warfare stretches back, two to three decades, with the Primakov Doctrine. The Primakov doctrine, named for the former Foreign and Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, posits, "a unipolar world dominated by the United States is unacceptable."[34] Russia should strive for a bipolar world order between it and the United States, Russia should insist on primacy over post-Soviet space and lead integration in the region and oppose NATO

---

[32] Peter Pomerantsev and Michael Weiss, *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money* (New York, NY: Institute of Modern Russia, 2014), 6.

[33] Galeotti, *Russian Political War*, 11.

[34] Rumer, "The Primakov (Not Gerasimov) Doctrine in Action."

expansion. Summing up operations in Ukraine, Rumer writes, "Military power is the necessary enabler of hybrid warfare. Hybrid tools can be an instrument of risk management when hard power is too risky, costly, or impractical, but military power is always in the background."[35]

Russia's strategy since post-WWII seems to have encompassed tenets to create a comparative advantage over its adversaries. So why are Western powers communicating uneasy displeasure with Russian actions? Are western states in cognitive shock from the events that took place in Ukraine in 2014? What should really be the area of concentration for political, military, and economic leaders? These are all subsets of questions linked to the research question of this monograph: in what ways has Deep Operations Theory transformed and manifested in military strategy and operations in Eastern Europe?

The context for this question is based on the enlarging sphere of influence that Russia has carved out of former Soviet satellite states since its operations into South Ossetia, Georgia in 2008. It has a similar rhythm to some of the expansion of the Soviet Union during the lead up to WWII with diplomatic treaties between the USSR and Nazi Germany. Russia continues to push the envelope using the instruments of national power to gain influence below the threshold of war, fully acknowledging that Russia more than likely does not want to go to war with NATO, as it did with Germany in the 1940s.[36]

Isserson, Tkuchevsky, and Svechin laid the groundwork for Deep Operations Theory in a very similar period of change and innovation in the beginning of the twentieth century. The present day exhibits the same adaptive space for military operational artists and strategist to

---

[35] Ibid.

[36] For more on the diplomatic relationships between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany as it pertains to the satellite states of eastern Europe see Stuart D. Goldman, *Nomonhan, 1939* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012); Geoffrey P. Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000); and David Stahel, *The Battle for Moscow* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

reform the nature of warfare. Current Joint and Army doctrines support system approaches to understanding the operational environment, yet they do not look to counter *udar*. While the US Army's capstone document, Field Manual (FM) 3-0: *Operations*, looks to create multiple dilemmas, it is not a clear counter to operational shock.[37] The US Army's shift to Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO), (e.g., Operation Desert Storm), it is possible certain key inputs from an adversary such as Russia could be over looked given today's operational construct. A theorist or strategist would need to understand Russian theory of action based on the technological advances of the time and the adversary they are planning against to create a holistic operational theory.[38]

Operation Bagration: The Test Bed of Deep Operations Theory

The interwar period after WWI served as the workspace for many twentieth-century military theorists to comprehend the events that transpired during the Great War and put them into practical use in follow on conflicts. The key focus for most of the theorists, was to regain mobility and maneuverability on the battlefield in lieu of entrenchment.[39]. The Soviets discovered they lacked maneuverability through the events of WWI. However, through the Bolshevik Revolution, renewed their sense of maneuverability but unlike WWI, could not link their tactical

---

[37] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 5-4.

[38] US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), IV-6; US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 2-01.3, *Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), I-4; US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 2-41. Also see LTG Michael D. Lundy, "Meeting the Challenge of Large-Scale Combat Operations Today and Tomorrow," *Military Review* 98, no. 5 (September-October 2018): 111. Joint and Army doctrine attempt to simplify the planning and orders production processes to facilitate communication between echelons. LSCO present a risk dilemma for the United States in the form of mass casualties. An approach of destroying the enemy's resolve or resistance may be more tenable for a hegemonic state.

[39] Richard W. Harrison, *Architect of Soviet Victory in World War II: The Life and Theories of G. S. Isserson* (Jefferson, MO: McFarland and Company Publishers, 2010), 7.

successes to strategic aims. During this period the Soviets understood a need to link developmental technologies at all levels of war to the political and military decision-making apparatus.[40] With the development of Deep Operations Theory, the Soviets bridged the operational gap between the tactical and strategic. This study of Operation Bagration will overlay the Deep Operations tenets of deception, penetration, encirclement, and destruction of the enemy in a unified campaign to disintegrate the adversary's strategic mission set.

In the summer of 1944, the Red Army had refit and reconstituted its forces to take a large thrust into Belorussia. Joseph Stalin had learned from previous mistakes that the theories developed in the interwar period were in fact vital to the survival of his nation. Operation Bagration will provide the role of the conventional form of Operational Shock, linking to Deep Battle and Deep Operations Theory through a historical context. This case study will serve as a representation to understand the use of Deep Operations Theory in the role of LSCO. The analysis of Operation Bagration and the aspects of *udar* executed by the Red Army will show the LSCO dimensions of Operational Shock to pave the way forward to understanding how Russia uses Deep Operations Theory in the twenty-first century.

A key aspect of understanding the success of Soviet Russia against Nazi Germany lays in the differences between *blitzkrieg* and Deep Operations. Deep Operations Theory and Deep Battle tactics should not be confused with ideas of *blitzkrieg* though the beginnings of both theories developed in the interwar period following WWI. Theorists from the US, United Kingdom (UK), USSR, and Germany all paid heavy attention to both Giulio Douhet and to J. F. C. Fuller and their contributions to air power theory and tank implementation, respectively. Both

---

[40] The Bolshevik Revolution ignited many ideas for Soviet military theorists as they wrestled with their new Political and military futures. "Maneuver and offensive operations had won the Civil War and would win future wars; the Red Army could draw on its moral strength and superior tactics to neutralize the imperialists' technical expertise. Socialism needed a regular army, drawn from the masses." See Condoleezza Rice, "The Making of Soviet Strategy," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 654.

theorists expanded on the ideas of penetrating attacks to disintegrate and to attack the depths of the enemy's support zone. The ways in which the Germans and the Soviets interpreted these theories are striking.[41]

Hitler and his generals used their resources and advanced technologies to present a wide berth of attack. The German tactics of *blitzkrieg* were based on an overwhelming amount of resources, across a broad front to break through using armor and air forces.[42] Deep operations and by design, deep battle, intends to break the enemy's ability to achieve their mission. The difference lies in the cognitive space. Where *blitzkrieg*, only endears the enemy to give up due to loss of frontage and materiel, the Soviet operational approach seeks to distract, disrupt, rupture, and exploit their enemy and bring them to their knees. The Soviet's use of deception on the German Armies of the Eastern Front allowed not only an attack across the breadth of the entire German force, but also set the conditions to penetrate the German line at its weakest and least prepared positions to disintegrate command and control and break the will of the German *Wehrmacht*.[43]

The German *blitzkrieg* lacked the synchronization of multiple efforts to achieve a strategic aim. The German's looked to simply overmatch their enemy with speed and overwhelming force. In its defense, *blitzkrieg* caused the Red Army to retrograde back to Moscow in the fall of 1942 during the German operations of Barbarossa and Typhoon. However, due to long logistical lines, weather, and the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht's* (OKW) inability to synchronize the operations, the German's fell short of their objective at Moscow. These shortcomings allowed for the Red Army to move their industrial base further east into Russia to

---

[41] John Mosier, *The Blitzkrieg Myth* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishing Inc, 2004), 13.

[42] Ibid., 12.

[43] Navah, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence*, 108-109; V. A. Matsulenko, *Camouflage: A Soviet View* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1989), 75; Svechin, *Strategy*, 169; Steven J. Zaloga, *Bagration 1944: The Destruction of Army Group Centre* (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 1997), 10-13.

continue their war making production. The key difference between Deep Operations/Deep Battle and *blitzkrieg* shows in the synchronization of effects and capabilities in what the US Army would call shaping operations, decisive operations, and sustaining operations to reach an operational objective.[44]

The Red Army's execution of the Deep Operations tenets of deception, penetration, encirclement, and destruction of enemy forces, as Glantz wrote, "relied on artful and increasingly concealed concentrations of forces and the use of shock groups."[45] Svechin's writings heavily influenced the *Stavka* during this period of the war by laying the framework of continuous, coherent, and purposeful actions with a unified common aim.[46] As the paradigm shifted from independent operations of annihilating the enemy force to a concert of vertically and horizontally nested synchronized effort, the "tactics take the steps that make up an operational leap."[47]

Isserson and Tukhachevsky built on the base of Svechin with innovating how the Soviet Army attacks its aggressors. They saw the linearity of battlefield as an archaic construct and began to interpret enemy armies as interconnected organisms or systems. With this paradigm established, the development of theories to attack and defeat the adversary's ability to orchestrate actions to reach strategic aims delivered Deep Operations and Deep Battle.[48] These theorists used a framework built on deception, synchronization, and massing of combat power at the center of

---

[44] Stahel, *Battle of Moscow*, 53-56; Earl F. Ziemke, *Stalingrad to Berlin: The German Defeat in the East* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2011), 27-40. Ziemke phenomonally differentiates the tactics of *blitzkrieg* and deep operations in his prose in chapter 1 when it comes to the invasion of Russia by Germany. Chapter 15 covers the operations in Belorussia that epitomize the deep operations commitment that the Red Army made to push Hitler out of the Soviet Union.

[45] David M. Glantz, *The Military Strategy of the Soviet Union: A History* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1992), 138.

[46] Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence*, 9.

[47] Svechin, *Strategy*, 269.

[48] Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence*, xviii.

gravity to deal the most devastating blow to their enemy's force, command and control, and most importantly its will to fight.

Operation Bagration was one of many simultaneous operations planned by the Soviet High Command or *Stavka*, during this summer offensive. By May 1944, the Soviets had retaken much of their territory in the southern portion of the strategic front, encompassing Ukraine and Crimea, with a defensive line established along the Dnepr River. The Soviet front anchored in the north at the Gulf of Finland, after the liberation of Leningrad, and to the south in the Black Sea. With conditions favorable at the Dnepr River, the *Stavka* focused on planning against one strategic purpose, to remove the German Army Group Center from Belorussia and exploit the shortest and direct route to German political centers at Berlin.[49] The *Stavka* planned for five coordinated and dependent operations with Operation Bagration serving as the main effort for the Red Army.[50] Operation Bagration aimed at German Army Group Center, around Minsk, would serve as the fixing attack to allow for follow on southern operations to exploit the flanks, at L'vov-Sandomierz, Lublin-Brest, and Jassey-Kishinev.[51]

The Soviet's use of deception or *maskirovka,* masked the buildup of forces along avenues of advance the German's were not prepared to defend.[52] The Soviet's efforts to ensure the German's perceived what the Soviets wanted them to see set the conditions for the operational shock and deep success. The *Stavka* imposed constraints on the movement of troops and

---

[49] David Glantz and Harold S. Orenstein, *Belorussia 1944: The Soviet General Staff Study* (London, UK: Frank Cass, 2001), 4.

[50] David M. Glantz and Jonathan House, *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 316.

[51] Paul Adair, *Hitler's Greatest Defeat: The Collapse of Army Group Center, June 1944* (London, UK: Arms and Armour Press, 1994), 51-53.

[52] Zaloga, *Bagration 1944*,13.

equipment, firing schedules for field artillery units, and the segregation of troops and the local populace to perpetuate a main attack coming from Ukraine against Army Group South.[53]

The Soviet's deliberate and measured use of unit and supply movements exploited the German military's paradigms. The *Stavka* held the bulk of the six tanks armies and strategic bombers in the Ukrainian sector until mid-May to ensure the Germans maintained vigilance southward. Since the Germans used personnel and logistical asset movements to establish attack points, the Soviets used this reflexive control to create a false reality for the Germans. The German's fixated their units on the movements of Soviet men and supplies while disregarding the covert buildup of forces across from Army Group Center. These deception operations set the conditions for the fundamental surprise of the German Army Groups.[54] Due to the *maskirovka* movements of the Soviet Army, the OKW removed a critical Panzer Corps from Army Group Center, consisting of 15 percent of the Army's maneuver divisions and over 80 percent of the Army's tanks.[55]

The advancement in equipment such as the tank, the armored personnel carrier, and airplane, created the technological leap for armies to exploit gaps with speed, precision, and fire power. The *Stavka* made organizational changes to create tank and mechanized armies augmented with organic artillery and air armies for specific penetration and exploitation mission sets. These armies also had logistical trains to ensure operational reach of the penetration so as not to lose speed and mobility to encircle Germany's forces.[56] Svechin wrote, "The success of warfare

---

[53] Matsulenko, *Camouflage*, 75; Douglas A. Macgregor, *Margin of Victory: Five Battles that Changed the Face of Modern War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 87.

[54] "A fundamental surprise relates to a surprise or shock that creates incompatibility between one's self-perception and the environmental reality." Zvi Lanir, *Fundamental Surprise – The National Intelligence Crisis* (Tel-Aviv: Hakibutz Hameuchad (Hebrew), 1983), 26.

[55] Gerd Niepold, *Battle for White Russia: The Destruction of Army Group Centre, June 1944*, trans. Richard Simpkin (Mclean, VA: Pergoman-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1987), 15.

[56] S. A. Tyushkevich, *The Soviet Armed Forces: A History of Their Organizational Development* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 281, 385.

depends to an equal extent on careful and attentive development of a plan of mobilization, concentration, manpower and logistics and the art of conduction operations."[57] The battlefield was three dimensional in this regard. The activities by the Anglo-American bombers in the western theater of Europe had a drastic effect on the *Luftwaffe,* in attriting its ability to project and drained the amount of fighter aircraft on the eastern front. "[A]ir superiority would be conceded to the Red Air Force even before the summer 1944 campaign began."[58]

The *Stavka* believed its conditions were set to commence the attack on the German defensive front. German Army Group Center defended an 1,100-kilometer front with 4 armies, about one-third of all the German forces.[59] Hitler had ordered a strong point defense of urban areas forward of the main defensive line, *feste platze*.[60] The Army Group Center commanders believed they would receive a local fixing force from the Soviets to allow the larger penetration against Army Group South. The Germans braced themselves as a break water to slow the Soviet tempo and create time and maneuver space for reinforcements.

The Soviets arrayed with fourteen combined-arms armies, one tank army, and four tank corps that numbered over 2 million men. The penetration of the German defense started with a large partisan force behind the German defenses. More than 270,000 men and women placed explosives to disrupt railways and rail cars. The German's ability to resupply, move reserves and even retreat became infeasible. Additionally, Army Group Center tasked almost 15 percent of its forces to fight these partisan guerillas.[61] From 23-28 June, the Soviets attacked the *feste platzes* and achieved multiple penetrations. By the 28th the Soviet Army isolated Army Group Center

---

[57] Svechin, *Strategy,* 169.

[58] Zaloga, *Bagration 1944,* 13.

[59] Walter S. Dunn, *Soviet Blitzkrieg: The Battle for White Russia, 1944* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2000), 32.

[60] Adair, *Hitler's Greatest Defeat*, 67.

[61] Zolga, *Bagration 1944,* 34; Glantz and House, *When Titans Clashed*, 267.

from Army Group North, and Tank and Cavalry Groups advanced to the Berezina River beyond the German's tactical formations encircling Army Group Center.[62] By 4 July, the Soviet Red Army penetrated, encircled and forced the surrender of over 300,000 German troops.[63]

The *Stavka* sent orders to initiate the push past the Berezina River following the completion of the encirclement at Minsk. German Army Group Center, though reinforced at times from Army Groups North and South could not withstand the onslaught of the Red Army. The Soviets accomplished a 400-kilometer breach of the German front which set the conditions for the First Ukrainian Front to push to L'vov-Sandomierz offensive on 13 July and the Lublin-Brest offensive on 18 July. The Red Army would reach Warsaw and the Vistula River by the end of July 1944.[64]

The Field Service Regulation 1937 laid the path of strategic aim through operational shock that was based in the tactical doctrine of Deep Operations. The *PU 36* articulates the achievement of offensive operational shock across the depth of the enemy, such as in Operation Bagration. The *Stavka's* integration of deception operations of troops and materiel, deep penetration of the enemy lines, combined infantry and armor incursions and deep strikes into the enemy's rear with Cavalry, set the conditions and capitalized on the *udar* inflicted on the German armies. Under the operational supervision of Tukhachevsky, this tactical doctrine "demonstrates

---

[62] Glantz and Orenstein, *Belorussia 1944*, 56-100.

[63] Niepold, *Battle for White Russia*, 78-94; Glantz and House, *When Titans Clashed*, 272.

[64] Macgregor, *Margin of Victory*, 96.

the complete structure of the operational strike manoeuvre, conducted in the context of attaining strategic aims, through the infliction of operational shock on the defending system."[65]

Using Shimon Naveh's interpretation of *udar,* Operation Bagration's nested operations showcased "not only … operational shock with neutralization of the rival system's ability to perform its missions, but likewise accentuates the importance of creating an operational centre of gravity by combining mechanical acts with active deception."[66] Operation Bagration exemplifies the use of the tenets of Deep Operations Theory using primarily conventional means. The ability for the Soviets to conceal movements of men and materiel along the front, the *Stavka's* orchestration of efforts created enough flexibility at the operational level to seize the initiative, and exploit the penetrations of the German defense all the way to the Vistula River.[67]

The lessons learned from the technological influx at the end of WWI played greatly into the creation of military theory in the interwar period. The military-industrial complex spurred the introduction of mechanized formations used across the breadth and into the depths of warfare. The Soviets learned from their experiences in their civil war, understood the need of deception to cognitively shock their enemy's will to fight, and disintegrate their command and control. Even though the Soviet military-industrial complex had just reached its peak during the 1944 spring offensive, Stalin and the *Stavka*, looked to find the most advantageous position of penetration against known harden enemy. The Soviets used a very similar reflection technique in the 1990s preceding and following the Persian Gulf War.

---

[65] Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence*, 190. Naveh writes in his endnotes, #111, in regards to *The Field Service Regulation (PU-36),* "*PU-36,* Ch. 5, Art. 112, Ch. 7, Art. 164. The first extract demonstrates the complete synergy among the operational elements, mechanized infantry in the holding echelon, armoured forces in the strike echelons, and the deep operational echelon, composed of aviation and *desant*. The second extract focuses mainly on tactical issues and therefore it tends to be too technical. Nevertheless, it expresses in a miniature form all the essential rules and principles of the Deep Operations Theory." Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence,* 207.

[66] Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence*, 190.

[67] Glantz and House, *When Titans Clashed*, 209.

Deep Operations in the 21st Century: Entering the Gray Zone

Soviet adaptations to operational art took place following the Persian Gulf War. "Soviet operational art had become focused on speed, mass, shock, and firepower of preeminent ground forces, with other services in a supporting role."[68] Just prior to the observing the Gulf War, "the General Staff's view of future war envisions, dynamic, high-tempo, high intensity land-air operations which will extend over vast expanses and include new areas such as space."[69] Additionally, the Soviets concluded that "airpower, electronic warfare, and air defense" were key to future warfare.[70] Soviet generals analyzed the effects of airpower as a disintegrating force against the depth of the enemy. It broke the will of the Iraqi army and of the people of Iraq as the air campaign wore on. "The immediate goal was to disarm, blind, deafen, and decapitate the enemy from the very outset to achieve control of the air."[71]

The theory and doctrine the Soviets wrote prior to the Gulf War envisaged a non-linear combat zone. Their new doctrine built on a theory of multiple engagements, some offensive and some defensive with combat leaders making on the ground tactical decisions. The disparity between the linear and non-linear battlefields can be analogous to the comparison of football and soccer. Both sports are played on a field, both have a ball, but one is restrictive to play calls and rigid lines of separation. The other, soccer, is fluid, where pockets of "team members rapidly coalesce into temporary attack or defensive groups and then disperse again."[72]

---

[68] Edward J. Felker, LTC, USAF, "Oz Revisited: Russian Military Doctrinal Reform in Light of Their Analysis of Desert Storm" (thesis, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, 1994), 28, Air University Press.

[69] Lester Grau, *Soviet Non-Linear Combat: The Challenge of the 90s* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Soviet Army Studies Office, 1990), 1.

[70] Grau, *Soviet Non-Linear Combat*, 30.

[71] K. Kzheb, "Naval Forces in the War Against Iraq: The First Results," *Morskoi Sbornik*, no. 2 (February 1991): 59, quoted in Felker, "Oz Revisited," 30.

[72] Grau, *Soviet Non-Linear Combat,* 2.

The General Staff observed the beginnings of this non-linear, information warfare dominated, battlefield in the Gulf War. Throughout operations in Iraq, "Russian military theorists watched coalition planes bomb…in real time with precision and understood that warfare had entered a new phase."[73] Russia divided their information warfare domain into two fields: information-technical and information-psychological. The technical aspects are computers, sensors, satellites, etc.; the psychological can include propaganda, psychotronic, and non-lethal weapons.[74] The tenets of Deep Operations, deception, penetration, and encirclement, under the umbrella of a coherent operation, influenced Russia's development of information warfare theory and doctrine.

Their institutionalization in continuing to attack the cognitive space shows in a pamphlet entitled *Information Weapons: New Challenges to International Security*, in which information weapons were classified into six forms:

> 1) means for the precision location of equipment that emits rays in the electro-magnetic spectrum and for the destruction of that equipment by conventional fire; 2) means for affecting components of electronic equipment; 3) means for affecting the programming resource control modules; 4) means for affecting the information transfer process; 5) means for propaganda and disinformation; and 6) means for using psychotropic weapons.[75]

In this case study of Russia's interference and incursion into Ukraine, these information weapons will appear. The appearance of the information space on the battlefield gave to the Russians what every Soviet theorist wanted, weapons technology that can not only affect the battlefield but it can also defeat the tyranny of distance to interrupt the day to day activities of adversary's citizens and bend political will. The information domain opened the fourth dimension of warfare for Deep Operations and *udar* at the click of a mouse.

---

[73] Timothy L. Thomas, "Information Warfare in the Second (1999-) Chechen War: Motivator for Military Reform?," in *Russian Military Reform: 1992-2002*, eds. Anne C. Aldis and Roger N. McDermott (London, UK: Frank Cass, 2003), 209.

[74] Thomas, "Information Warfare in the Second (1999-) Chechen War," 210.

[75] Thomas, "Information Warfare in the Second (1999-) Chechen War," 211.

Nearly seven decades after the completion of Operation Bagration, instability and conflict ripped through Ukraine. What started as a path to European Union (EU) acceptance for Ukraine, ended in interior violence and Russian occupation of Crimea, a peninsular region of Ukraine that juts into the Black Sea and the Donbas region that borders Russia's western boundary. Vladimir Putin and the Kremlin used political, economic, information, and military influences to pressure then President Viktor Yanukovych to halt efforts to join the EU. This caused mass riots and backlash from the Ukrainian people, sparking engagements between Ukrainian government security forces, the Ukrainian people, and a new unknown adversary.[76] "Russia sought to create mechanisms that would allow it to negate any further Ukrainian drift towards the West and ensure that it retained veto power over any future negotiations."[77]

Ukraine's history shows us that there has always been a divide in the country both politically and ethnically. During the nineteenth century, a small western enclave of Ukraine fell under the powers of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The remainder was under strict Imperial Russian rule to not speak or elevate the Ukrainian culture.[78] Therefore, Russia's ability to insert itself into Ukrainian politics is not a far stretch of the imagination. Ever since the fall of the USSR, Ukraine has struggled to find its own identity in the vacuum left by the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Russia has preyed on Ukrainian's inability to "coalesce around a Ukraine national sovereignty" and uses the "increasingly divided [populace] between those who support the continuation of the state's political, economic and security ties with Russia, and those who favor

---

[76] Robert W. Kruz, "Ukraine and Moldova: A Qualitative Comparison of Perspectives on Russian Influence," (monograph, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2019), 3, Foreign Military Studies Office.

[77] Andrew S. Bowen, "Coercive Diplomacy and the Donbas: Explaining Russian Strategy in Eastern Ukraine," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, no. 42 (Routledge, 2019): 313.

[78] Kruz, "Ukraine and Moldova," 5.

integrating with NATO, the EU and the West in general."[79] This is best exemplified by the president election in the early 2000s when opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko "launched mass protests over rigged elections that gave Viktor Yanukovych…the presidential victory."[80] During the re-run of the election, Yushchenko came out victorious but it would be a short lived excursion for his administration to connect Ukraine with NATO, the EU and the West. Yanukovych did eventually take power after the 2010 elections which put Ukraine on a path to disunion.

Yanukovych's administration "took many steps to subdue the country's momentum toward Western integration, including his late 2013 decision not to proceed with signing an EU Association Agreement."[81] This sparked protests and Yanukovych's decision to exfiltrate to Russia. "Kiev's immediate establishment of a new, Western-focused interim government prompted Russia to annex Crimea in March, and to engage in pro-Russian, separatist movement in eastern Ukraine's Donbass region in April."[82] This case, like the previous, has conventional Russian forces and partisans, though called separatists contemporaneously, working against Ukrainian armed forces in Crimea and the Dontek Basin or Donbass region. However, what is distinct is the way in which Russia pushes out its influence over its former Soviet subjects.

The culture war comes to the forefront of the conflict in Ukraine and is a line of effort for Russia. When Russia interacts with former Soviet satellite states this type of subversion is a main effort to keep their bear claws still imbedded into the social, cultural, religious, ethnical, and media spheres of influence. These indirect actions echo the doctrine coming out of the Russian

---

[79] Ibid., 6.

[80] Ibid., 5.

[81] Kruz, "Ukraine and Moldova," 5.

[82] Kruz, "Ukraine and Moldova," 6; David Patrikarakos, *War in 140 Characters: How Social Media is Reshaping Conflict in the Twenty-First Century* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2017), 94. The Russian news media fed a distorted tale of ethnic Russian segregation by the new government in Ukraine. Russia's ability to feed this narrative using media to penetrate sovereign borders shows a key adaptation of operational art and deep operations to the twenty-first century.

military schools currently. "The threat is a combination of an indirect and direct approach, a combination of asymmetric and symmetric means, as well as a combination of soft and hard methods."[83] The "common tradition of belief in depth operations where science and technology have an influence on the success of war' rings true throughout this campaign of disinformation, diaspora, and cultural upheaval in Ukraine.[84] The Kremlin's "geopolitical project" aimed at enhancing "grievances, discontent, and disaffection across Ukraine" into leverage to control Ukraine's future and expand Russia's regional control.[85]

The common thread of deception, penetration, encirclement, and destruction of the objective continue as a staple of the Russian operational art in today's technologically advanced world. The Kremlin's ability to control their messaging and influence using other instruments of national power allows for plausible deniability and freedom of action. The Russian way of thinking about the levels of war and how to achieve political and strategic goals no longer requires a declaration of war. According to top Russian generals "…remote non-contact influence on an enemy is becoming the main method of achieving goals, where differences among strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war, as well as differences between offense and defense, are fading away."[86]

The *udar* in Ukraine, just like in Belorussia in 1944, happened under the guise of the events surrounding the removal of Yanukovych and the fallout from clashing between Ukrainian and Russian nationalists. The Russian's consistent placement of forces on the western border of Ukraine became normalized and this status quo served as the spring board for Russia's indirect

---

[83] Peter A. Mattsson, "Russian Military Thinking – A new Generation of Warfare," *Journal on Baltic Security* 1, no. 1 (January 2015): 61.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Gerard Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest Over Ukraine and the Caucasus* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), 239.

[86] Timothy Thomas, "Russia's Military Strategy and Ukraine: Indirect, Asymmetric – and Putin-Led," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 28, no. 3 (2015): 453.

approach to destabilizing the Donbas region. "The use of non-state actors, including organized crime figures, supported and directed by Moscow to give the appearance of a local rebellion" paved narrative for an "incipient insurgency … fostered by a nationalistic Slavic narrative propagated by Russia." This deception allowed for the Russian Army to penetrate and seize Crimea without firing a shot.[87] Russia used special forces, internal opposition forces from the populace, and highly trained regulars, to create "a permanently operating front through the entire territory of the enemy state."[88] This backs up Putin's message of "responses [that] are to be based on intellectual superiority" and over all "… they will be asymmetrical, and less costly."[89] In order to save troops, money, and gain the narrative, Putin used his asymmetric means, just as the United States used its air power, to disarm, blind, deafen, and encircle Ukraine.

Soviet operational art built on concurrent, synchronized operations that mutually support strategic aims, slowly crept into the twenty-first century. "Russia's crawl-walk-run progression of cyber operations—enacted through casual disregard for international norms and standards of conduct—has enabled it to develop its cyber corps through real world cyberspace missions."[90] Russia's multipronged attack on Ukraine sovereignty using special purpose forces and airborne forces, non-state actors, and cyber-attacks against Ukrainian infrastructure produced the factures that would allow further Russian influence to penetrate. The cyber-attacks aimed at the media,

---

[87] Bowen, "Coercive Diplomacy and the Donbas," 313-314.

[88] V. Gerasimov, "The Value of Science Is In Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying Out Combat Operations," *Military Review* 96, no. 1 (January-February, 2016): 25, accessed on May 10, 2020, https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20160228_art008.pdf.

[89] S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, "Asymmetrical Actions to Ensure Russia's Military Security," *Military Thought* 19, no. 3 (2010): 21, quoted in Thomas, "Russia's Military Strategy and Ukraine," 454.

[90] Wesley P. White, "The Cyber Crucible: Eastern Europe, Russia, and the Development of Modern Warfare," in *Perceptions Are Reality: Historical Case Studies of Information Operations in Large-Scale Combat Operations* eds. COL Mark D. Vertuli and LTC Bradley S. Loudon (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army University Press, 2018), 152.

power, financial, transportation, military, political, and energy sectors of Ukraine did not need nor want to destroy the nodes. These attacks in coordination with separatists and the Russian military actions in Crimea were simply a training ground, much like the Spanish Civil War of 1936.[91] The simultaneous cyber and ground force operations launched in Ukraine is akin to the amalgamation of the first infantry and tank assaults of WWI. Russia's ability to link "desired levels of denial, degradation, and destruction" of the cyber-attacks with the military incursion and occupation fulfills their continued penetration at the weakest point of the defense. Which for the EU and NATO, continues to be the political uneasy former satellite states of the former USSR.[92]

Ukraine and Russia's intertwined history set the stage for a conflict of culture and retaliation. Russia's use of its superior military and coercive abilities gave way to a twenty-first-century lens of Deep Operations and Operational Shock. The Russian political-military system used indirect methods of conflict to create advantageous situations for plausible deniability and overall successful achievement of military and political goals. Russia achieved this through sleight of hand using asymmetrical and conventional forces in a narrative of protection of Slavic peoples and under the threshold of war. As we move into the third decade of the twenty-first-century tensions continue to rise between a political entity, the EU, and the ethnic Russian sprawl that cross over many sovereign borders. Through economics, media, and disinformation, Russia seeks to continue their campaign to turn central and eastern European nations away from EU and NATO.[93]

---

[91] Wesley P. White, "The Cyber Crucible," in Vertuli and Loudon, 154-155. For more on the innovations from the Spanish Civil War of 1936 see Mary R. Habeck, *Storm of Steel: The Development of Armor Doctrine in Germany and the Soviet Union, 1919-1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); and Philip MacDougal, *Air Wars 1920-1939 : the Development and Evolution of Fighter Tactics* (Oxford: Fonthill Media, 2016).

[92] Wesley P. White, "The Cyber Crucible," in Vertuli and Loudon, 157-158.

[93] Mitchell A. Orenstein, *The Lands In Between: Russia vs. the West and the New Politics of Hybrid War* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019), 116-125.

The Soviets in the 1990s understood the implications of the technological shifts for the military into the information warfare space. Following the closure of the Persian Gulf War, the Soviets took this information space and created advantageous positions for subverting the United States and NATO's ability to conduct large scale combat operation. The Russians have used their previous satellite states as test beds for the synchronization of cyber, information, and ground combat operations. Russia's use of deniable operations using special forces, non-state actors, and hard to trace cyber attackers produces this gray zone of aggression below the level of war.

Case Study Analysis

These case studies accomplished two tasks. The first was to show the use of Deep Operations Theory by the Soviets as a proof of concept for the use of the theory in WWII. Secondly, these tenets of deception, penetration, and encirclement under the umbrella of a unified operation were overlaid on the Ukraine incursion to test the hypothesis that the Russian Federation continues to use Deep Operations Theory in the twenty-first century. Prior to the analysis, as a recap, the author chose these two case studies due to their joint governmental structure, the role of new technologies in the conflicts and the use or possible use of military action utilizing Deep Operations. Though the military actions executed used different means, the underlying political to military link proves valuable in the analysis.

Operation Bagration and the Ukraine incursion both exhibited the use of deception. Operation Bagration characterized the use of conventional troop, materiel, and logistical movements and posturing to create a false reality for the German *Wehrmacht* along the eastern front. In Ukraine, the use of disinformation and plausible deniability in the form of unidentifiable soldiers and non-state actors, created the *maskirovka* and set conditions for military actions on Crimea and in eastern Ukraine.[94]

[94] Zaloga, *Bagration 1944*,13; Thomas, "Russia's Military Strategy and Ukraine," 453.

The tenet of penetration was also present in both case studies. The Soviet Red Army used both air and ground forces to penetrate through the German *feste platze* built on the previous deception. The Ukrainian crisis illustrates a different type of penetration. The Kremlin uses political agents, criminal organizations, and special forces units to train, finance, and sabotage the legitimate government network of Ukraine. In a more conventional form, the Russia military took advantage of the disintegration of the Ukraine nation with the Russian army seizing the Crimean Peninsula.[95]

Immediately upon the penetration in both case studies, the Red Army and the Russian backed forces consolidated gains. The Red Army encircled Minsk less than a week after the offensive began and captured over 28 divisions of the German Army Group Center.[96] Russia's use of technology in the form of cyber-attacks and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) allowed for a different form of encirclement of Ukrainian military forces and governmental leaders.

The final tenet of a coordinated and interdependency of actions to achieve a strategic aim is explicit in Operation Bagration. The conduct of five separate operations during the initial assault and then the subsequent offensives on 13 and 18 July solidifies the unity of effort in the *Stavka's* planning. In Ukraine, the concert of operations can seem more disjointed. The technology of the information age gives Russia and Russian actors far more autonomy than what history recorded for WWII. Russia's alleged use of small units, the mass media, and separatist elements allowed for divergent operations that converged strategical.[97]

Using the tenets of Deep Operations Theory as the evaluation criteria, Operation Bagration presents a reasonable example of Deep Operations Theory in WWII. The Russian actions during the Ukraine incursion also meet the subjective definitions of the tenets of Deep

---

[95] Adair, *Hitler's Greatest Defeat*, 67; Kruz, "Ukraine and Moldova," 6.

[96] Glantz and House, *When Titans Clashed*, 272; Kruz, "Ukraine and Moldova," 6.

[97] Macgregor, *Margin of Victory*, 96; Kruz, "Ukraine and Moldova," 6.

Operations Theory. Therefore, logically, the findings support the hypothesis of Russian use of Deep Operations Theory in the twenty-first century.

Implications on Operational Art and Framing the Future

The analysis of the case studies allows the reader to understand the translation of Deep Operations Theory from the twentieth century to the twenty-first century. The use of history as a studio for reflection on action internally and externally gave the Russian military and political arms lenses through which to view how to influence competition and conflicts. As a reaction to the information era, Russia began to steer competition towards their strengths like: narrative, information operations, diaspora, and use of non-state actors to combat the large-scale combat institutions of the United States and NATO. Deep operations theory has eclipsed the initial scope that the Soviet theorist's developed between WWI and WWII. The rapid growth of integrated technologies, the role of the armed forces, and the underlying efforts of regional dominance, fuel the fire of new avenues in which to disintegrate diplomatic, informational, military, and economic aspects of any sovereign nation.

Russia's understanding of warfare adapted and changed owing to technological enhancements, in the same way to their Soviet predecessors after WWI. The developments of technology such as the internet, automations in utilities, satellite communications, mass media and ecommerce gave Russia a new indirect approach to destabilize adversaries towards their strategic aims. The Crimean seizure and the follow-on insurgent destabilization of the Donbas region served as a test bed for Russia's strategy of manipulating information to mobilize or disunify the masses.[98]

[98] Daniel Treisman, "Crimea: Anatomy of Decision," in *The New Autocracy: Information, Politics, and Policy in Putin's Russia*, ed. Daniel Treisman (Washington DC: Brooking Institution Press, 2018): 294.

Owing to the international laws following WWII, the pain and suffering against civilian populations due to war has become a center piece in which military technology proliferates and how adversaries conduct warfare, but with new constraints come new innovations. "There is no declaration of war, military operations are followed by 'peace talks' and eventually an 'armistice,' during which, however, the hybrid, low intensity war continues."[99] It is possible to argue Russian interference in Ukraine is just one of many shaping operations to continue to disintegrate and delegitimize the EU and NATO. Russia's use of non-state entities: criminal organizations, hackers, and militias; give Russian officials plausible deniability in destabilization efforts in the region. This is possibly the twenty-first century definition of *maskirovka*.

This begs the question of who is now the target of *udar* and how is it employed? This age of information gives instantaneous updates to locations, actions, and messaging of any actions.[100] The cognitive shock and denervation of an adversary can no longer just link to the military frame but must become further reaching. The political and population's will can suffer from *dezinformatsiya* - disinformation and *refleksivnoe upravlenie* - reflexive control. The ability to affect the perceptions of events to instigate a measured response that plays into Russia's narrative currently sits in their competition level of warfare. Russian amalgamation of disinformation, computer hacking, and technical cyberattacks enable gray zone tactics of sabotage, and limited military incursions.[101]

---

[99] Marcel H. Van Herpen, *Putin's Wars: The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism*, 2nd ed. (London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 270.

[100] Ben Connable, Stephanie Young, Stephanie Pezard, Andrew Radin, Raphael S. Cohen, Katya Migacheva, and James Sladden, *Russia's Hostile Measures: Combating Russian Gray Zone Aggression Against NATO in the Contact, Blunt, and Surge Layers of Competition* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020), 72-73.

[101] Dennis Kux, "Soviet Active Measures and Disinformation: Overview and Assessment," *Parameters* 15, no. 4 (1985): 19-28 cited in Ben Connable et al., *Russia's Hostile Measures*, 27. For a key article that succinctly articulates Reflexive control see Timothy Thomas, "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17, no. 2 (2004): 237-255.

Russia's use of reflexive control seems to echo the Deep Operations from the Soviet Union under the umbrella of the information domain. According to, "the theory involves information warfare means; specifically, the threat of inflicting unacceptable levels of damage against a state or group of states by attacking their information resources."[102] The basis of this theory lies in understanding one's enemy. The Soviets overtly positioned forces to the north and south of Army Group Center, manipulating the German's, using their ideas of *blitzkrieg* and *feste platze*, to influence their reactions to believe Army Group Center was the last place the Soviets would put their main effort. "Reflexive control exploits moral, enemy's inner nature, his ideas, and concepts … referred to as the filter through which passes all data about the external world."[103]

Just as the United States military reaches to its past for lessons and road maps, Russia too looks for guidance from the USSR. Trends that seem to be making the old new again. Russia's initial period of war focuses on "the potential insertion of viruses into an adversary's infrastructure in peace time which can serve as an 'on-call' capability."[104] Mobilization is still a very important aspect of the initial period, however, just like the US, Russia uses snap exercises along the border regions of former USSR to stay ready. Russian means in which it can successfully achieve *udar* in depth is adapting. Through cyberspace, Russian sponsored hackers can create debilitating consequences on economic markets, infrastructure, and utilities, grinding an adversary to a halt prior to any glimmer of kinetic combat actions.[105]

---

[102] Thomas, "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military," 240.

[103] Thomas, "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military," 242-243.

[104] Timothy L. Thomas, *Russian Military Thought: Concepts and Elements* (technical paper, McLean, VA: MITRE Corporation, 2019), 2-2.

[105] Thomas, "Russian Military Thought," 2-3.

During the United States' wars on terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan, Russia began to shorten the technology gap between the two superpowers. Just as the United States gained air supremacy over Iraqi air space in the 90s, Russia seeks to gain information supremacy over its adversaries in the cyber and space domains.[106] The United States aims to address these shortfalls in the information domain. The development of the Multi-Domain Task Forces in the US Army and the continued integration of the joint force with partner nations will help. Field Manual (FM) 3-12, *Cyberspace and Electronic Warfare Operations*, states that "superiority through indirect means (either through cyberspace operations or other electronic warfare) is decidedly advantageous to all commanders at all levels, and that these indirect means will serve as a critical component to future land operations."[107] The use of information and information-related technologies, will have a large "if not decisive role" in the success of operational mission sets for United States' strategic aims in "competition and in conflict."[108]

The United States' shift from a counter-insurgency focus back to a LSCO focus across the military comes with issues. Government funding for personnel, materiel, and training align with national strategic documents of the National Security Strategy (NSS), the National Defense Strategy (NDS) and the National Military Strategy (NMS) to name the main Department of Defense (DOD) documents. The 2018 documents align in unison to combat Russia as the number one threat to NATO allies. This has refocused the US Military efforts in the information realm

---

[106] S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, "The Nature and Content of New-Generation War," *Military Thought* 22, no. 4 (2013): 12, accessed on May 1, 2020, https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Nature-and-Content-of-a-New-Generation-War-Chekinov-Bogdanov/c8874593b1860de12fa40dadcae8e96861de8ebd#paper-header.

[107] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-12, *Cyberspace and Electronics Warfare Operations* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 1-1.

[108] Major General James J. Mingus and Colonel Chris N. Reichart, "Future Large-Scale Combat Operations Implications for Information Operations," in *Perceptions Are Reality: Historical Case Studies of Information Operations in Large-Scale Combat Operations*, eds. COL Mark D. Vertuli and LTC Bradley S. Loudon (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army University Press, 2018), 175.

with the establishment of Cyber Command as a unified combatant command and the Space Force as the newest branch of the DOD.[109] These entities will meddle the tactical-operational-strategic levels in to a coherent, synchronized effort to combat Russian competition. A current hinderance to this effort is that the predominance of the Army information warfare assets sit in the reserve component forces. The problem does not lie in the readiness of these Soldiers or the ability for them to complete their task, but in the time it takes to mobilize these capabilities into a contested theater.

Keeping with a theme of using the past to illuminate the future, US Army Field Manual 100-5: Operations from 1982 established four tenets of operations as initiative, synchronization, agility, and depth. The writers of this doctrine not only used the battlefield as a frame work for depth but also time and resources.[110] The United States should pull in these two ideas together to understand the Russia's use of information warfare and deep operations. Russia understands they would benefit from controlling the information space in lieu of having to use conventional forces to combat NATO influence. They have the forces and materiel to inflict quick damage to force negotiations but the risk to reward ratio tips more favorably if Russia uses its ability to subvert the international system using deniable means. Russia is borrowing techniques they believe the United States and the West innovated. In *Military Thought*, a Russian security journal, Col S.G. Chekinov a doctor of Technical Sciences and LTG S.A. Bogdanov, retired, Doctor of Military Sciences, write "New forms and methods of combat were first used by the US armed forces in the

---

[109] "President Donald J. Trump announced Aug. 18, 2017, his decision to accept Defense Secretary James Mattis' recommendation to elevate USCYBERCOM from a sub-unified command to a Unified Combatant Command responsible for cyberspace operations. The decision to elevate USCYBERCOM was seen as recognition of the growing centrality of cyberspace to U.S. national security and an acknowledgement of the changing nature of warfare." "About Us," USCYBERCOM, accessed March 8, 2020, https://www.cybercom.mil/About/. National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020, Chapter 908, Subtitle D (December 20, 2019). The National Defense Authorization Act for 2020 redesignated Air Force Space Command as the U.S. Space Force and established it as an independent branch of the U.S. Armed Forces on 20 December 2019.

[110] Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence,* 301.

war against Iraq, they gave practical content to the 'global scale, global power' concept."[111] In 2003, the United States again used superior technology to attrite a force far beyond the forward line of troops, "the Coalition forces were striking regularly and selectively at the enemy forces; key targets, vital economic facilities of military significance, and civilian and military control centers, and destroying life support systems anywhere on enemy territory to force the defender to lay down the[ir] arms."[112]

Russia's experience from the interwar period of WWI and from the observations of the Persian Gulf War and from the Iraq Invasion of 2003 have set the stage for the strategies they now execute. "Asymmetric actions … will … extensively level off the enemy's superiority in armed struggle by a combination of political, economic, information, technological, and ecological campaigns in the form of indirect actions nonmilitary measures."[113] The "technological format" will neutralize enemy actions taken "without resorting to weapons."[114] The United States and the West's reliance on network-centric command and control, fires targeting systems, and weaponry tips the hand to the enemy. Russia understands that "American Planners want to use information attack at the outset of a new generation war to disable all elements of the adversary air defense system—control posts, communication centers, radar stations, anti-aircraft missile batteries and the air defense aircraft control system."[115] In a counter move, as is the case with Ukraine, is to "misinform and mislead the enemy's political and military leaders in … carefully coordinated measures carried out through diplomatic channels by

---

[111] Chekinov and Bogdanov, "The Nature and Content of New-Generation War," 13.

[112] Ibid., 15.

[113] Chekinov and Bogdanov, "The Nature and Content of New-Generation War," 16.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Chekinov and Bogdanov, "The Nature and Content of New-Generation War," 17.

government-controlled and private media and top government and military agencies by leaking false data, orders, directives, and instructions."[116]

A planning assumption going forward into the future is that the information domain has established an avenue for which *maskirovka* and *udar* span not just the military domain, but those of the political, economic, scientific, religious, cultural, and humanitarian capabilities of a sovereign nation. Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and violent extremist organizations use this domain to defeat the military might of the United States and its allies. The United States must adapt to counter this strategy of plausible deniability using non-state actors as Russia and China, specifically, push themselves in to the "peer plus" category of competitors. The advent of USCYBERCOM and the US Space Force are steps in the right direction however cumbersome they may be.

Russia, however, is not impervious to organizational inertia and change. Just as the United States is developing new organizations, new equipment, and making the old new again with FM 3-0: *Operations* as its Army capstone document, Russia grapples with balancing the covert operations with its overt messaging. "Russian leaders seek to apply three concepts to hostile-measures operations: *aktivnost* - continuity of effort, *sluchainost* - fortuitous or unexpected opportunity, and *tvorchestvo* - creativity."[117] These terms are generally synonymous with unity of effort and disciplined initiative from US doctrine. Through iteration, the Russian military will adapt and change in reaction to how NATO and the United States change. This gives the United States the ability to earmark certain tendencies, based on historical data, such as the changes from the conflicts in Georgia in 2007 and Ukraine in 2014, to better forecast Russian tactics, techniques, and procedures.

---

[116] Ibid., 18.

[117] Connable et al., *Russia's Hostile Measures*, 28-29.

As a visualization, the United States and Russia seem locked into a digital trench warfare. The physical domain is that of a "no man's land" due to the lack of political and social appetite for a large-scale war. But the cyberattacks can strike deep into the heart of a nation's infrastructure, political system, and bring the competition between states directly to the homes of their citizens without any munition, military vehicle, or declaration of war. The United States must take a lesson from the Russians. We must look to the past, overlay those lessons on the current environment, to reach a desired future state and seek a comparative advantage.

Conclusion

The Russian evolution of operational art, from WWI to present, infused with Deep Operations through new technologies and hard lessons learned from battlefields around the world, created the adaptive space for revolutions of military affairs in Russian political and military institutions. Underlying this narrative is adaptability and seeking to use Russian strengths of information operations and non-state actors to create a comparative advantage against adversaries. The evolution of Deep Operations Theory in the twenty-first century draws its complexity from Russia's understanding of its adversaries and its place in the international system. The operational artist should now recognize the origins of deep operations theory, how this theory overlays itself on historical case studies, and how the current geopolitical environment creates adaptive spaces for evolutions in the implementation of the theory.

Svechin, Tukhachevsky, Isserson, Fuller, Douhet, and Liddell-Hart led the way with their theories behind attacking the rear echelons to disintegrate the operational armies in WWI and through the interwar period. These theorists took the adaptations of the industrial revolution and applied them to the greatest extent to fill the "no man's land" of operational campaign planning to forego the experience of WWI warfare. Their ability to reflect in and on action established the base for the evolutions of operational art by identifying and targeting of command and control nodes to thwart the adversary from completing their mission. These developments drove theories of action such as Deep Operations and *blitzkrieg*. Though both theories looked to attack

throughout the depth of the enemy, Deep Operations deliberately deceived, and took full advantage of the enemy's cognitive state rather than trying to overwhelm using mass resources, respectively. The Soviet's ability to perpetrate shock to the rival system to break their adversary's will and to disintegrate their ability to reach their strategic aim set deep operations apart in WWII.

The Operational Art of Deep Operations and Deep Battle came together in the Spring offensive of 1944. The study of Operation Bagration provides the operational artist with the historic lens to truly see the skill and forethought of deep operations. The use of logistics and fires to orient the Germans on the shaping operations versus the decisive operations aimed at Army Group Center epitomized *maskirovka.* Stalin's abdication of centralized planning and allowing the *Stavka* to campaign plan created an adaptive organization versus Hitler's centrally led *Wehrmacht*. When it comes to the science of warfare, "not only are closed and rigid systems unable to respond to the eruption of novelty and unexpected challenges but attempts to increase their performance exposes them to catastrophic breakdown."[118]

On the heels of the first Persian Gulf War the Soviets overhauled their military to take heed of the new information domain that the United States and its allies exploited against the Iraqi Army. Precision munitions, air power, and strategic strike were all on display for the Soviets to realize they did not want to fight the United States in a LSCO. Due to this discovery, the Russians, after the fall of the Soviet Union, regrouped and refocused on using the information domain to subvert the military might of the United States and NATO. The use of non-state actors, criminal organizations, private oligarchs, and cyber attackers gives Russia deniability in the competitive space against militarily superior adversaries. The Russians use of these competitive

[118] Antoine Bousquet, *The Scientific Way of Warfare: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2009), 201.

means to meet NATO on a battlefield of Russia's choosing and create space to undermine NATOs foundation and exploit those gaps and seams.[119]

The incursion into Ukraine connects the use of Russia's deep operations theory with the fledging technology of the time. The informational, political, and economical ties to eastern Ukraine delivered the asymmetric, "Gray Zone" for Russia to operate with plausible deniability to undermined the security efforts of NATO and the economic efforts of the EU. The Russian high command narrates a never-ending competition that encompasses the instruments of national power, shows a struggle that will push international norms as the United States looks to keep up.

The United States used its lessons during the Cold War to develop doctrine and equipment to combat the Red Army of lore. However, due to two decades of counter-insurgency operations in the Middle-East the United States needs to again, consult the past, with its finger on the pulse of the present to adapt for the future. Deep Operations Theory seems alive and well in the Russian military doctrine. The normalizing of snap deployments to the borders of former satellite states, constant harassment of cyber attackers linked to the Kremlin, and continued pushing of redlines set by the international community shows Russia's unwillingness to play nice. The West will continue to use Joint exercises and non-military means as forms of de-escalation with Russia. However, the Russian view of non-military measures versus military measures of conflict varies greatly from that of the United States and the West. The West views non-military means as a way of avoiding war, Russia, and General Vasyli Gerasimov, on the other hand, "considers these measures as war."[120].

---

[119] "But walls do not fall as a result of hammering nails into them. To bring down a wall, one must undermine its very foundations and flow through the resulting gap." Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art*, 36.

[120] Charles K. Bartles, "Getting Gerasimov Right," *Military Review* 96, no. 1 (January-February 2016): 34, accessed on May 1, 2020. https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20160228_art001.pdf.

Bibliography

Adair, Paul. *Hitler's Greatest Defeat: The Collapse of Army Group Center, June 1944.* London: Arms and Armour Press, 1994.

Ames, Roger T., ed. and trans. *Sun Tzu: The Art of Warfare.* New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1993.

Bartles, Charles K. "Getting Gerasimov Right." *Military Review* 96, no. 1 (January-February 2016): 30-39. Accessed May 1, 2020. https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20160228_art001.pdf.

Bertalanffy, Ludwig von. *General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications.* New York, NY: Eleventh Printing, 1993.

Beyerchen, Alan. "Clausewitz, Nonlinearity, and the Unpredictability of War." *International Security*, no. 3 (1992/93): 59-90.

Bousquet, Antoine. *The Scientific Way of Warfare: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2009.

Bowen, Andrew S. "Coercive Diplomacy and the Donbas: Explaining Russian Strategy in Eastern Ukraine." *The Journal of Strategic Studies* (Routledge) 42, no. 2 (2019): 312-343.

Brands, Hal. "Paradoxes of the Gray Zone." *Foreign Policy Research Institute.* February 5, 2016. Accessed October 9, 2019. https://www.fpri.org/article/2016/02/paradoxes-gray-zone/.

Chekinov, S. G., and S. A. Bogdanov. "Asymmetrical Actions to Ensure Russia's Military Security." *Military Thought* 19, no. 3 (2010): 21.

———. "The Nature and Content of New-Generation War." *Military Thought* 22, no. 4 (2013): 12-24. Accessed on May 1, 2020. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Nature-and-Content-of-a-New-Generation-War-Chekinov-Bogdanov/c8874593b1860de12fa40dadcae8e96861de8ebd#paper-header.

Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War.* Edited and trans. by Michael Howard, & Peter Paret. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976.

Connable, Ben, et al. *Russia's Hostile Measures: Combating Russian Gray Zone Aggression Against NATO in the Contact, Blunt, Sure Layers of Competition.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020.

Dunn, Walter S. *Soviet Blitzkrieg: The Battle for White Russia, 1944.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2000.

Engstrom. *Systems Confrontation and System Destruction Warfare: How the Chinese People's Liberation Army Seeks to Wage Modern Warfare.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018.

Felker, Edward J., LTC, USAF. “Oz Revisted: Russian Military Doctrinal Reform in Light of Their Analysis of Desert Storm.” Thesis, School of Advanced Air Power Studies, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, 1994. Air University Press.

Fuller, J. F. C. *On Future Warfare.* London: Sifton Praed & Co, 1928.

——. *The Foundations of Science of War*. London: Hutchinson and Company, 1925.

Galeotti, Mark. *Russian Political War: Moving Beyond the Hybrid.* New York: Routledge, 2019.

Gerasimov, V. “The Value of Science is in Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying Out Combat Operations.” *Military Review* 96, no. 1 (2016): 23-29. Accessed on May 10, 2020. https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20160228_art008.pdf.

Glantz, David M. *Soviet Military Operational Art: In Pursuit of Deep Battle.* Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1991.

———. *The Military Strategy of the Soviet Union: A History.* Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1992.

Glantz, David M., and Harold S. Orenstein. *Belorussia 1944: The Soviet General Staff Study*. London: Frank Cass, 2001.

Glantz, David M., and Jonathan House. *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler*. Lawrence , KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995.

Goldman, Stuart D. *Nomonhan, 1939.* Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012.

Grau, Lester. *Soviet Non-Linear Combat: The Challenge of the 90s.* Fort Leavenworth, KS: Soviet Army Studies Office, 1990.

Greenberg, Andy. *Sandworm: A New Era of Cyberwar and the Hunt for The Kremlin's Most Dangerous Hackers.* New York, NY: Doubleday, 2019.

Habeck, Mary R. *Storm of Steel: The Development of Armor Doctrine in Germany and the Soviet Union, 1919-1939.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003.

Harrison, Richard W. *Architect of Soviet Victory in World War II: The Life and Theories of G.S. Isserson.* Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010.

Isserson, Georgii Samoilovich. *The Evolution of Operational Art.* Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies institute Press, 2013.

Jervis, Robert. *Systmes Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Kipp, Jason W. “The Tsarist and Soviet Operational Art, 1853-1991.” In *The Evolution of Operational Art: From Napoleon to Present*, edited by John Olsen & Martin Creveld, 64-95. Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 2011.

Kruz, Robert W. *Ukraine and Moldova: A Qualitative Comparison of Perspectives on Russian Influence.* monograph, Fort Leavenworth: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2019.

Kux, Dennis. "Soviet Active Measures and Disinformation: Overview and Assessment." *Parameters,*15, no. 4 (1985): 19-28. Accessed on May 9, 2020. https://www.iwp.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/20131120_KuxSovietActiveMeasuresandDisinformation.pdf.

Kzheb, K. "Naval Forces in the War Against Iraq: The First Results. " *Morskoi Sbornik*, no. 2 (February 1991): 59.

Lanir, Zvi. *Fundamental Surprise - The National Intelligence Crisis.* Tel Aviv: Hakibutz Hameuchad (Hebrew), 1983.

Liddell-Hart, B.H. *Strategy.* New York, NY: First Signet Printing, 1974.

Lundy, Michael D. "Meeting the Challenge of Large-Scale Combat Operations Today and Tomorrow." *Military Review Special Edition* 98, no. 5 (September-October 2018): 111-118.

MacDougal, Philip. *Air Wars 1920-1939: the Development and Evolution of Fighter Tactics.* Oxford: Fonthill Media, 2016.

Macgregor, Douglas A. *Margin of Victory: Five Battles that Changed the Face of Modern War.* Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2016.

Matsulenko, V.A. *Camouflage: A Soviet View.* Washington DC. Government Printing Office, 1989.

Mattsson, Peter A. "Russian Military Thinking -- A New Generation of Warfare." *Journal on Balitc Security* 1, no. 1 (January 2015): 61-70.

Megargee, Geoffrey. *Inside Hitler's High Command.* Lawrence: Unveristy Press of Kansas, 2000.

Merhi, Wassim, MAJ. *Through the Lens of Systems Thinking: Operation Bagration and the Insights on Contemporary Operational Art.* Monograph, Fort Leavenworth: School of Advanced Military Studies, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2019.

Mingus, James J., MG, and COL Chris N. Reichart. "Future Large-Scale Combat Operations Implications for Information Operations." In *Perceptions Are Reality: Historical Case Studies of Information Operations in Large-Scale Combat Operations*, edited by COL Mark D. Vertuli, & LTC Bradley S. Loudon, 175-180. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army University Press, 2018.

Mosier, John. *The Blitzkrieg Myth.* New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishing Inc., 2004.

Naveh, Shimon. *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory.* Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997.

Niepold, Gerd. *Battle for White Russia; The Destruction of Army Group Centre, June 1944.* Translated by Richard Simpkin. McLean, VA: Pergoman-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1987.

Orenstein, Mitchell A. *The Lands In Between: Russia vs. the West and the New Politics of Hybrid War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Patrikarakos, David. *War in 140 Characters: How Social Media is Reshaping Conflicts in the Twenty-First Century*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2017.

Pomerantsev, Peter, and Michael Weiss. *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money*. New York, NY: Institute of Modern Russia, 2014.

Rice, Condolezza. "The Making of Soviet Strategy." In *Age, Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear*, edited by Peter Paret, 648-676. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Rumer, Eugene. "The Primakov (Not Gerasimov) Doctrine in Action." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. June 5, 2019. Accessed January 17, 2020. https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/06/05/primakov-not-gerasimov-doctrine-in-action-pub-79254#comments.

Stahel, David. *The Battle of Moscow*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Svechin, Aleksandr A. *Strategy.* Edited by Kent D. Lee. Minneapolis: East View, 1992.

Thomas, Timothy L. "Information Warfare In the Second (1999-) Chechen War: Motivator for Military Reform?" In *Russian Military Reform: 1992-2002*, by Timothy L. Thomas, edited by Anne C. Aldis and Roger N. McDermott, 209-233. London: Frank Cass, 2003.

Thomas, Timothy. *Russian Military Thought: Concepts and Elements*. technical paper, McLean, VA: MITRE Corporation, 2019.

Thomas, Timothy. "Russia's Military Strategy and Ukraine: Indirect, Asymmetric - and Putin-Led." *Journal of Slovic Military Studies* 28, no. 3 (2015): 445-461.

Thomas, Timothy. "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military." *Journal of Slavic Military* Studies 17, no. 2 (2004): 237-256.

Toal, Gerard. *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Treisman, Daniel. ed. *The New Autocracy: Information, Politics, and Policy in Putin's Russia.* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2018.

Triandafillov, V. K. *The Nature of the Operations of Modern Armies.* Edited by Jacob W. Kipp. Portland, OR: Frank Cass, International Specialized Book Service, 1994.

Tyushkevich, S. A. *The Soviet Armed Forces: A History of Their Organizational Development.* Washington, DC: Governement Printing Office, 1992.

US Department of Defence, Joint Staff,. Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017.

US Department of Defense, Joint Staff. Joint Publication (JP) 2-01.3, *Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014.

US Department of the, Army. Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations.* Washington, DC: Govenment Printing Office, 2017.

———. Field Manual (FM) 3-12, *Cyberspace and Electronics Warfare Operations.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017.

US Government. *The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020.* Law, Washington DC: US Government, 2019.

USCYBERCOM. "About Us." About Us. Accessed on March 8, 2020. https://www.cybercom.mil/About/.

Van Herpen, Marcel H. *Putin's Wars: The Rise of Russia's Imperialism.* 2nd ed. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.

White, Wesley P. "The Cyber Crucible: Eastern Europe, Russia, and the Development of Modern Warfare." In *Perceptions Are Reality: Historical Case Studies of Information Operations in Large-Scale Combat Operations*, edited by COL Mark D. Vertuli, & LTC Bradley S. Loudon, 151-162. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army University Press, 2018.

Zaloga, Steven J. *Bagration 1944: The Destruction of Army Group Centre.* Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 1997.

Ziemke, Earl F. *Stalingrad to Berlin: The German Defeat in the East.* Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2011.