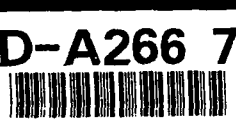

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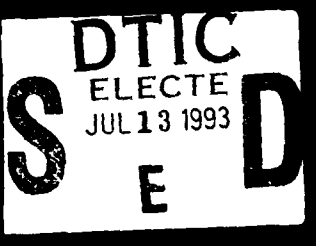
# SSI Special Report

## Afghanistan and Beyond: Reflections on the Future of Warfare

Stephen J. Blank



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The author provides an historical analysis of lessons from the war in Afghanistan so that policymakers and analysts alike will better understand the nature of operations "other than war" in multiethnic states. Many fear these wars will set the paradigm for future wars and will exert pressure on U.S. forces to conduct peacekeeping, peace-enforcement and humanitarian assistance operations in especially dangerous areas. Yugoslavia and Somalia bear out the ubiquity of these wars and the pressures upon the United States to act. Hopefully mechanisms can be devised to forestall and avert future wars, or to bring them to the speediest possible conclusion. Should those mechanisms fail and troops have to be committed, this analysis should enable commanders to have a better grasp of the nature of the war they will fight. Understanding the war and the theater should facilitate a solution more in keeping with U.S. interests and values.

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# AFGHANISTAN AND BEYOND: REFLECTIONS ON THE FUTURE OF WARFARE

Stephen J. Blank



June 28, 1993

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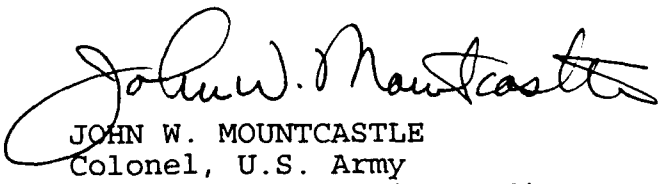
## FOREWORD

This report provides an historical analysis of lessons from one of the most important wars of the 1980s, the war in Afghanistan. After reading this study, you will better understand the nature of operations "other than war" in multiethnic states. Many fear that these wars will set the paradigm for wars in the 1990s and will exert pressure on U.S. forces to conduct peacekeeping, peace-enforcement and humanitarian assistance operations in especially dangerous areas. Yugoslavia and Somalia, each in their own way, bear out the ubiquity of these wars and the pressures on the United States to act.

This report will, of course, contribute to the body of material dealing with the war in Afghanistan. More importantly, it increases understanding of future wars, particularly these types of wars, so that policymakers and analysts alike will better appreciate their military and political aspects. In turn, we may devise mechanisms either to forestall and avert them, or to bring them to the speediest possible conclusion. Alternatively, should those mechanisms fail and troops have to be committed, this and future analyses will enable commanders to have a better grasp of the nature of the war they will fight. In either case, understanding the war and the theater should facilitate a solution more in keeping with U.S. interests and values.



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STEPHEN J. BLANK has been an Associate Professor of Russian/Soviet Affairs at the Strategic Studies Institute since 1989. Prior to this appointment Dr. Blank was Associate Professor for Soviet Studies at the Center for Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education of Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base. Dr. Blank's M.A. and Ph.D. are in Russian history from the University of Chicago. He has published numerous articles on Soviet military and foreign policies, notably in the Third World, and is the author of a forthcoming study of the Soviet Commissariat of Nationalities and editor of books on Soviet foreign policies in Latin American and on the future of the Soviet military.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many military analysts believe or fear that the wars of the 1990s will be akin to the wars in the former Yugoslavia: small-scale but long-lasting and recurrent ethnic wars that also elude easy international resolution. There are consequently well-founded concerns about prospects for deployment of U.S. forces there in a unilateral or U.N. capacity. Some of the lessons of this kind of war were already apparent in the wars of the 1980s. They were known then as low-intensity conflicts and now as operations other than, or short of, war.

This report focuses mainly on lessons from one of the most crucial of these wars, i.e., in Afghanistan as a result of the Soviet invasion in 1979, and attempts to draw lessons that are relevant for current wars, like those in Yugoslavia or the ex-Soviet Union. The purpose is to stimulate analysis and reflection on the strategic and operational, if not also tactical nature of these wars by both analysts and policymakers so that all interested groups can more easily come to terms with a form of warfare that promises to be both deeply destructive and deeply rooted in long-standing political and social antagonisms that cannot be easily or quickly resolved.

Naturally some of the lessons drawn from Afghanistan and other wars may either only apply to Russian and Soviet forces or conversely may apply to war in general. But our primary intention is to make a contribution to the study of future wars particularly of the ethnic and small-scale type that promise to continue in many

parts of the globe lest we devise better ways for averting and then resolving them.

# AFGHANISTAN AND BEYOND: REFLECTIONS ON THE FUTURE OF WARFARE

## The Initial Period of the Afghan War and Low-Intensity Conflict.

The Soviet war in Afghanistan may fairly be seen as the first rock in the avalanche that culminated in the collapse of the USSR. Therefore the analysis of its lessons and those of the subsequent conflicts of the 1990s in Yugoslavia, the Transcaucasus and Moldova are of interest. These lessons suggest new trends in the small-scale but no less terrible wars of the present, even those having nothing to do with the former Soviet Union.

It is only as a result of Afghanistan that Russian generals came to consider the American terms of low-intensity conflict (henceforth LIC) and counterinsurgency. Before 1991 those terms and their implications had no meaning for Soviet commanders and were attacked by Soviet writers.[1] In the Soviet context, Afghanistan was:

- a war in defense of a socialist revolution menaced by a combination of internal counterrevolutionaries and external patrons: Pakistan, the United States, Iran, China, and Saudi Arabia. As such it was a coalition war, particularly after 1980-81.

- It also was, in theater terms, a "local war" in a mountain-desert theater of war (*Teatr' Voiny—TV*). That is, it took place in a single country or region and *TV*. (Some analysts might restrict the dimension of the war to a mountain desert area but Afghanistan and contiguous border areas as well as Pakistan and the USSR experienced military operations, however small scale, a fact

that justifies use of the term, TV). Moreover, the Soviets had extensively prepared this theater and studied it topographically, ethnically, economically, and graphically. They paid considerable attention to the road networks, to the seizure of key economic regions and resources, and to transportation infrastructures. Indeed, just as in Iran in 1941, Soviet strategy aimed to maximize access to these key targets in its strategy. Hence the invasion of Afghanistan had a pronounced combined arms character and stressed simultaneous and gradual insertion of air and ground troops along key axes as in 1941.[2]

- It was also an asymmetric or limited war in the sense that the Soviet Union fought a limited war while its allies and the Mujahedin fought a more or less total war.[3] By limited war we mean that both the scale of operations and forces that Moscow committed were strictly limited. Of course, for the resistance what was at stake was the future of their country--a total war objective. Hence the asymmetry between them.

Bearing these facts in mind, clearly the war in Afghanistan, broadly conceived, had numerous lessons and implications for weapons design, tactics, operational art, force structure, and strategy, if not doctrine (in the Soviet/Russian sense of the term, i.e., the official views of a country on the essence, aims, and character of future war/s and of the means of preparing the country for fighting it). In addition, these lessons apply to the various stages of the war, i.e., the immediate invasion and the subsequent period, once Moscow realized it was involved in a long war. These

lessons and trends that developed in the course of the war also have made themselves felt in current conflicts where operations other than war (formerly operations short of war and before that low-intensity conflicts) are occurring.

The first stage of Soviet participation was 1979-80, the time of the initial invasion. This first operation, the occupation of Kabul and other cities, was a *coup d'etat* as well as a *coup de main*. This operation was to replace a disintegrating and recalcitrant regime with a pliable one and provide a shield and breathing space behind and during which the Afghan army could turn things around. What distinguishes it from a *coup de main* like Panama in December 1989 is that no urgency was present in Panama. The objective there was only to effect a transfer of government, not to stabilize a disintegrating military situation and then proceed to Sovietizing (or Americanizing as in Panama) the state. At the tactical-operational level the invasion was a complete success and validated many elements of Soviet doctrine and strategy for war in general, including the European theater, not just Afghanistan or the Third World.[4] These elements of success were:

- Moscow obtained complete operational surprise vis-a-vis Kabul, Pakistan, and the United States, despite numerous warnings and intelligence analyses suggesting that this was in the offing.[5]

- The operation successfully coordinated airmobile forces, rapidly advancing ground troops and local intelligence assets.

- This operation also successfully implemented *Maskirovka* (cover, concealment, and deception). Western analysts and

governments were completely fooled. This use of *Maskirovka* applies to all levels of a military operation and even a war since Soviet commanders were directed to employ all forms of it at each level: tactical, operational, and strategic.[6]

- The use of satellite communications as the link to Moscow demonstrated their utility for power projection purposes and missions involving force projection. This aspect of the invasion highlights the growing possibility for detailed and even micromanagement of a war by a command thousands of miles away, on a day-to-day basis. In this sense it was a foretaste of what was to come in Operation DESERT STORM and attests to the continually growing influence of all aspects or space and electronic warfare (EW) on war in general.[7]

- Overall, the entire operation validated doctrinal precepts of seizing upon the enemy's $C^3I$ and aerial platforms (missile and air bases) as the main target of strikes and missions to assure their rapid neutralization, if not seizure or destruction. These aspects of the Soviet operation point towards a trend that recently has become more marked in Soviet and Russian thinking, i.e., the upgrading of electronic warfare from a means of supporting combat operations to a means of influencing them, if not ultimately an independent operation.[8]

- This operation also illustrates the importance that the Soviets attached to the initial period of the war. Soviet and now Russian commentators believe that in this phase it is necessary to fulfill those missions and objectives that allow one to influence

decisively the course and/or outcome of the war. In other words, operations in this phase should convert tactical successes into lasting operational and even strategic ones that could even bring the war to a rapid and victorious termination.

The importance of the initial phase can also, from this vantage point, assume an even greater importance as a major question for future wars. First, every war since 1939 has begun with surprise attacks often leading to a situation which confers tremendous operational, if not strategic or even decisive, advantages upon the attacker. Nonetheless, surprises as in 1941 in Russia and Pearl Harbor or in 1973 in the Yom Kippur War did not always lead to victory for the attacker. To be effective, surprise must be followed up to optimize its potentially strategic benefits. This did not happen in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, the invasion only attained a tactical or at best a tactical-operational victory. Moscow failed to convert that success into a lasting strategic victory and instead embroiled itself in an unforeseen protracted war. In light of Afghanistan, it seems that a major lesson is that surprise, to be maximally effective, must employ overwhelming force in the initial phase. Otherwise the likelihood of a protracted war, the last thing a distant invader wants, is enhanced. Operation DESERT STORM, seen from Moscow, did just this and confirmed the rising importance of surprise in warfare.[9] Attaining that level of strategic surprise precludes the very possibility of defense that could otherwise, given the economic potential for long-term war, lead to protracted

attritional war.

Conversely there will be virtually no surprise should the U.N., EC, or the West enter more deeply into the Bosnian quagmire. Here the Serbs have effectively preempted a surprise Western strike and have forced policy planners to reckon with equally unpalatable alternatives of protracted low-intensity conflict in hostile terrain.[10]

Issues of surprise, mobilization processes, and logistics in distant wars have returned to the forefront of military agendas as a result of these considerations and not only in Russia. Those considerations posed major questions for the development of flexible mobilization plans which confer surprise through *Maskirovka*, logistics to support the concentration of assets, and the real time intelligence or information fusion systems to strike accurately at key targets and platforms. Such requirements place tremendous burdens of coordination upon a military, burdens that clearly the Soviet army was incapable of mastering. Therefore, we may well see that military literature in many states besides Russia concentrates on such questions as surprise; countering of surprise; mobilization; deception; logistics for both long and short engagements or wars; and the revolutionary impact of information fusion weapons, what Moscow calls reconnaissance strike systems (RUK), on war in general.

If this is the case, the question of surprise and concentration of forces on the first strike or operation also raises the issue of limited versus unlimited war. In a limited

war, for either one or both protagonists the means of fighting and scale of operations are limited as are the objectives, or at least they should be. In an unlimited war, not only do we approach a condition of total mobilization and largest possible size of operations (right up to nuclear ones), the objectives, too, become unlimited, culminating in a revolutionary transformation of the defeated state and society. If the objectives can and must only be seized or knocked out in the initial phase and also constitute the main nerve centers of the enemy's military and governmental activity, in what sense can one talk about that war as one for limited objectives?

For example, the current war in Bosnia is one in which Serbian attackers have targeted Sarajevo from the outset to deprive Bosnia's government any effective means to govern or mobilize in defense whereas against Croatia they moved only to annex Serbian lands. In Bosnia, ethnic cleansing, as Serbia calls its policy, could only begin where the government was neutralized. Hence Bosnia's perspective has been that this is essentially a total war. If it loses it disappears. But in Croatia, the issue is the limited one of Serbian inhabited lands. Hence that war, to date, has been a limited one.

The same issues apply to the wars in Moldova and the Transcaucasus. In Moldova, Russian forces, supported by the army and government, attacked Moldovan towns in order to secede from Moldova and create their own Russian dominated Trans-Dniestrian state. For Moldova what is at stake is the integrity of the state,

an issue that cannot be compromised. For the local Russians, a defeat, even if disguised as an autonomous status in Moldova, is, until now, equally unacceptable. And since they enjoy much covert and overt support from the government in Moscow, they are continuing to hold out for maximum terms making the conflict an unlimited one regarding the participants' objectives, though not the scale of operations. In Nagorno-Karabakh, on the other hand, a different situation obtains. At issue here is the disputed future of a territory hitherto in the Azerbaidzhani Republic. Although for the local Armenians there this is obviously an unlimited issue, neither Armenia nor Azerbaidzhan is necessarily threatened with total disaster and revolution should either be defeated. While the local Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh have adopted maximalist postures and fighting is fierce, those trying to effect wholesale revisions of territories and sovereignties, i.e., unlimited objectives, have not yet prevailed.

However, the intensification of ethnic hatreds in these wars could easily make them into unlimited wars where "ethnic cleansing" becomes the order of the day and in turn ignites a never-ending chain of hostilities. Protracted war is "ideally" suited for engendering such hatreds over a long time, thereby making them less amenable to either outside intervention or mediation.

Moreover, as one reflects on Afghanistan, the issue of limited aims and limited war in a Soviet context becomes even more acute. Afghanistan's course and outcome illuminated some of the fundamental strategic contradictions that inhered in Soviet

thinking and policy in the world of the 1980s. The inability of the Soviet state to overcome those contradictions imposed cruel penalties--ultimately leading to Soviet disintegration upon that system and its peoples. Afghanistan illustrates the proposition that when Soviet Russia resorted to war it had to win and thereby revolutionize or Sovietize its enemy's territory and state. Failure to achieve either a military victory by destroying enemy forces or to achieve a political revolution in the enemy's state meant that the nature of the Soviet project itself was called into question. Moscow could not afford to choose of its own accord direct involvement in uncertain campaigns. For the USSR there was, indeed, no substitute for victory. Considerations along such lines probably were behind the Brezhnev Doctrine, itself a codification of past practice, and Marshal Grechko's dictum that the Soviet forces marched in only one direction.

Therefore, any war in which Moscow intervened immediately and inevitably became a total one for the protagonists, whether in the Third World or Europe, and regardless of what Moscow originally thought its objectives were. To the other side its national destiny was at stake--hence the resort to total war. The attempt to fight a limited war in Afghanistan whose objective ultimately was a total one for all Afghans could not but land Moscow in an impossible strategic quagmire of its own making. By the same token, foreign intervention in Bosnia that would be a limited war intervention could impale the outside force upon the horns of this dilemma, too. As Arthur Grant of the National War College recently

wrote:

> In low-intensity conflict. . .We have decided to limit our objectives and not dictate the terms of peace. As a result, tactical successes that in total war bring us closer to the end (destruction of forces, occupation of territory) do not necessarily produce the same ends in low-intensity conflict. In fact, destruction of his forces and occupation of his territory in low-intensity conflict may convince the enemy that he is engaged in total war, defeat in any form may become unacceptable to him, so he resists more strongly and refuses to negotiate. Once again, the asymmetry between the two sides meant that for the protagonist fighting a limited war, clear-cut military victories do not necessarily produce the desired result of negotiating a peace that accomplishes his objective.[11]

This happened in Afghanistan where apparently decisive Soviet victories in 1979 and occupation for 10 years achieved nothing strategically, largely because the limited means Moscow employed were not commensurate to the total war considerations that underlay the nature of the war it had started. One can easily imagine that foreign intervention in Bosnia, Moldova, and Transcaucasia might have the same outcome. The failure of the protagonists to achieve an early decisive victory in any of those three post-Soviet wars suggests that whatever their immediate outcome, those conflicts will once again be protracted over several years if not decades. That outcome would be in keeping with decades, if not centuries old ethno-national conflicts between peoples that lie at the root of these wars.

At the same time the tremendous concentration of assets necessary to achieve operational or strategic level victory early militates against considerations of limited war and objectives in

a conventional war. This is because such concentration of forces and strikes at key targets will likely induce enemy counteraction at a similar scale or the highest one available to him. While a short essay cannot answer the thorny issue of limited versus unlimited war or objectives, the Afghan war and these new "small wars" raise it and associated issues in a most intense fashion.

**Soviet Failure and the Lessons of That War.**

Subsequent to the invasion of Afghanistan a second phase began in 1980.[12] Moscow adopted a conventional strategy of seizing the cities, controlling the main roads, and converting them into government strongholds and bases. Soviet forces sought to engage the enemy by means of conventional armored sweeps with extensive artillery preparation. As is well known, these sweeps were quite standardized in preparation and execution, thereby forfeiting surprise, as in countless previous wars of this kind.[13] They also were unsuited to the terrain (given both the question of sustainability of equipment and limited mobility). They demonstrated the poor physical and combat training of many Soviet conscripts.[14] One of the main reasons for this was that Soviet battalion, regiment, and lower level commanders were only schooled in drills relating to armored sweeps which normally had been done by larger size divisions and corps or armies. Thus they knew no other way to proceed, nor where they allowed to, given the strict authority of higher command. Their men were equally unfamiliar with other ways of operating in combat.[15]

However, this strategy was perfectly consonant with

traditional Russian strategy in frontier wars. That is, during the expansion of the Russian and Soviet empires, the regime, after inducing a class war among natives, projected power into fortified areas behind which came armies, settlers, and the state apparatus--so too in Afghanistan. However, here the breakdown occurred because Soviet forces could not match the requirements for mobility, speed, etc. with the means they brought to bear in Afghanistan and would have used in Europe. This suggests that Moscow eventually came to realize that Afghanistan demonstrated its troops' actual incapability to conduct doctrinally required high-speed offensive operations in Europe. For example, consider the issue of mobility of forces as displayed in Afghanistan.

- Armored forces movements were slow, restricted and predictable.
- Soviet commanders and troops, i.e., motorized rifle units, tended to be roadbound, disinclined to dismount, and generally unwilling to move or fight at night.
- The poor physical condition and unsuitability of men and equipment to the terrain reduced both striking power and mobility (if for no other reason than high rates of equipment breakdown).[16]
- Their logistical links to Russia were vulnerable to mines or ambushes and had to be heavily defended, again impeding mobility. Indeed, some commentators view operations there as largely revolving around the objectives of seizing, holding, and denying logistical access and strong points, a fact suggesting the greater salience of such targeting in any future wars.[17]

- Because the war rapidly came to involve extensive mining and fortification on both sides, ground mobility was reduced. Soviet forces had to rely heavily on air mobility for air assaults, close air support, interdiction and logistics.

- In turn, this placed a premium on effective air/land coordination at tactical and higher levels, a task which many commanders and officers were unable to perform. Failure to move or secure easy mobility--a clear operational goal--was linked to, and exposed, the ongoing defects in the Soviets' $C^3I$ system, both tactically and at higher levels.[18]

The numerous and repeated failures of Soviet $C^3I$ after 1980 were directly traceable to the military culture of unusually high levels of authoritarianism and too heavy mechanization (as pointed out in a seminal article by Col. Arjun Ray of the Indian Armed Forces).[19] These aspects of Soviet military culture derogated from commanders' and troops' ability to fight effectively in unpredictable situations and display the tactical and operational requirements called for in a low-intensity conflict. These failures also impeded commanders' abilities to visualize correctly the nature of the war or of the operational-level content of engagements in which they participated. Many features of Soviet operations come together here as contributory causes of poor performance. They included the reliance on standard tactics and drills, the substitution of fire for troops' ground mobility, and the general Soviet contempt for Afghanistan. Amazingly enough, given past Soviet and Russian interest in and study of Afghanistan,

Soviet forces and commanders manifested a surprising and unaccountable unfamiliarity with the theater's climactic, topographical, and logistic requirements.[20] Similarly, the thorough stifling of initiative and demoralization of troops through terror, drugs, smuggling, etc. also signified the failure of the Soviet command structure to respond to the imperatives of small wars and wars in the present period of high technology and mechanization. Such reforms as are underway hammer home these points but the problem was visibly highlighted in Afghanistan and will continue to plague commanders of all forces in the future.

The second phase of the Soviet intervention began in 1980-81 and gradually expanded in scope until 1988, when Soviet forces commenced their evacuation. Innovations in Soviet military performance during 1980-88 appeared first in changes in force structure and military art. In a larger analysis, this phase may be broken down into several stages because it took the Soviets approximately 4-5 years until 1985 to master sufficiently the intricacies of such operations and strategies to the point where they could begin to carry the war to the Mujahedin in brutal and aggressive fashion. That stage of the larger phase became evident in 1985-86, the period of the most brutal and aggressive Soviet operations and use of airpower. In retrospect it appears that Gorbachev gave the military about a year in 1985-86 to do what it could to achieve victory; otherwise he would find a political solution.[21]

Soviet forces became lighter and more airmobile. Moscow

employed more airborne and heliborne forces than had previously been the case. Consequently the aerial arm, both fixed and rotary wing, was called on to provide close air support, interdict and destroy enemy supply positions and logistics (i.e., conduct economic warfare along the lines of a scorched earth strategy), and provide for Soviet troop mobility and logistics. The shift to air and heliborne forces and fire signalled a dawning recognition of the fragmented nature of the "front." Relevant for this analysis, this shift also underscored the fact that Soviet troops fighting in this terrain under such conditions had to fight simultaneous offensive and defensive operations and engagements. This last point signifies that the doctrinal process by which Soviet analysts dialectically linked together defense and offense in a single continuum of military action due to the *revolution in modern war* was, at the same time, appearing in small-scale and tactical engagements in Afghanistan. In this case, practice, if anything, guided theory.

During this time, the Soviet forces, due to the tactical situation they confronted, operated either alone or in tandem with mechanized and/or motorized infantry to obtain greater aerial mobility. They launched several offensives or engaged in operations that signified Soviet application of the principle that air control ultimately conferred ground control. In this period, the vertical envelopment or hammer and anvil operation also became a virtual paradigm that obliged commanders to synchronize simultaneous air and land attacks based on accurate military

intelligence as to target locations, size, and enemy forces' strength. These envelopments functioned in both offensive and defensive operations, e.g., liberation of besieged positions, thereby demonstrating the flexibility of Soviet concepts of both defense and offense. They also represented, however imperfectly, Soviet efforts to synchronize or coordinate joint operations involving land and airmobile forces. These innovations were then incorporated into general tactical and operational doctrine in the 1980s. In this fashion, as noted above, actual trends in warfare influenced theory and doctrine.[22]

Here we encounter the Soviet understanding of defense as not precluding offensive operations. Soviet defensive operations during this period employed echelonned, layered, and mobile defense systems and vast mining and fortifications for their main fortresses and air bases. In many ways such activities seem to have heralded the turn to "defensive strategies" and operational art in areas like layering, echelonment, and extensive mining and fortifications. Current Russian military literature betrays a strong and growing interest in defensive fortifications.[23] Such defense allowed Moscow to obtain secure bases and logistical strong points from which the Soviets could use air power to project both fire and forces as well as secure bases. From these bases, Soviet or Afghan troops could sally forth and give substance to the idea of maneuver by fire as a means of shattering the basis or cohesion of the enemy's defenses.[24]

By these means, the tactical or even operational-level

offensive became indistinguishable from strategic level defense. In effect, Soviet operations aimed to suppress enemy mobility by fire in order to move forward and project power, while Mujahedin operations, especially once they had adequate air defenses, also aimed to neutralize Soviet mobility and maneuver capabilities by their fire system, albeit a primitive one. This period, therefore, might suggest the applicability of the concept of maneuver by fire and the multiform capabilities of fire, air or ground launched, to suppress or interdict mobility on the ground or in the air. Operations during this period also showed the corresponding vitality and validity of fortified defenses like mountain redoubts where enemy air power could be neutralized.

The enhanced role of the helicopter and of airborne and heliborne forces confirmed the multiple roles that the former could perform. Soviet air assault, airmobile (heliborne), and airborne (parachute) troops could thereby perform all the missions formerly associated in the West with cavalry or mounted infantry. Since regular Soviet commanders and troops were incurably road-bound and wary of fighting dismounted, this innovation became necessary. But it also points again to the impact of long-range firepower on modern combat, force structure and the increasingly intense struggle for unimpeded mobility on the expanded modern battlefield. The impact of these platforms also suggests again the validity of controlling the ground by controlling the air.[25]

Other important aspects of airpower for troops or firepower were that airborne and/or heliborne troops alone could serve as the

Operational Maneuver Group or as a defensive force performing an offensive mission. Moreover, suitably armed, these light infantry forces could combine the aspects of flying tanks or artillery and air assault to perform almost any mission, either as mounted or dismounted troops. This innovation in the use of heliborne and airborne forces represented an important Soviet and now Russian tactical adaptation to the exigencies of contemporary warfare. Indeed, it appears that in Russia's new military policy, airmobile troops will be the first to arrive in conflict zones to hold the ring for several days until heavier forces can arrive. They then will conduct either peacekeeping o actual combat operations.[26]

These operational developments in Afghanistan and elsewhere, when combined with the revolutionary advances in computers, electronics, and weapons technology have blurred the former operational distinction between infantry and cavalry. This is particularly true in regard to the increasing resort to airborne and air assault or heliborne troops to give infantry a new "aerial" shot in the arm. Air and heliborne forces' capacity to carry out many missions and arrive rapidly in key sectors adds a new aerial dimension to land warfare. That aerial combination clearly multiplies the land forces' effectiveness when the two are harmoniously combined. Moreover, new advances in computer technology are enabling both fixed and rotary wing systems and tanks to become both mobile and even stealthy platforms that are both information processors and fire platforms. Such technological adaptation now and in the future would move significantly in the

direction of optimizing those systems as reconnaissance fire complexes at the tactical level or reconnaissance strike complexes at the operational and strategic ones, to use Ogarkov's terminology. Those developments go beyond the rudimentary and even primitive examples of Afghanistan, to what we saw in Operation DESERT STORM. As such, air and heliborne forces' multiple utility substantially alters both the role of aerial and tank platforms. For the tank and aerial forces to become optimal fighting forces, the new technology transforms the old role of the tank as merely a fire platform. Instead, tanks must become more mobile and more able to exploit to the fullest the demands of the electronic and computer age. In the U.S. Army, analysts are calling for just this development. Lieutenant General Fredric J. Brown, USA-Ret, urges exploiting the new technologies in just this way. Tank mobility will have to approach something like that of aerial mobility to optimize the various combined arms forces packages that we put together.[27]

Soviet combat experience indicates that these various forms of airmobile forces (air assault, airborne, heliborne) can also perform the missions of deep raids (with or without "special forces"), reconnaissance in force, vertical and/or amphibious encirclement, *coups d'etat* (i.e., independent seizure or neutralization of the enemy C'I), *coups de main* or flanking operations. In other terms, these forces can independently, if need be, carry out operational and/or strategic missions against key targets whether we are discussing a typical conventional war,

or Afghanistan, or the kinds of conflict now embroiling Eastern Europe and the old USSR. Russian authorities have openly embraced this concept of such forces. Russian Defense Minister Grachev stated:

> Rapid deployment forces will play an important role in the overall structure of the Russian armed forces; they are based on airborne troops and marines, which are capable--with the help of modern military-transport aviation aircraft and helicopters and amphibious warfare ships--of operating autonomously in any sector from which an external threat to the country's security may appear.[28]

Deputy Defense Minister Andrei Kokoshin was equally explicit. He called for rapid deployment forces which can be thrown into conflict zones in the CIS at the earliest possible time, "to repulse external aggression, to end conflict on favorable terms acceptable to us."[29] These Russian airmobile rapid deployment forces are usable in all contingencies. Thus, they and their fire capabilities tend to efface the boundaries between types of combat and warfare. This is one reason for the new Russian army's and NATO's projected reliance on rapid reaction forces that are particularly airmobile.[30]

Whether mounted or not, the Russian forces can carry their own "artillery" or strike and fire systems and accomplish operational or even strategic missions. Their presence contributes further to the spatial expansion of the battlefield, the likelihood of economic and/or ecological war as in Afghanistan or Kuwait, the importance of reconnaissance strike systems as instruments of both control and fire, and real time intelligence. These forces' rising

importance also indicates the centrality of gaining mobility of fire or denying it to an enemy.

**Lessons for the Wars of the 1990s.**

As we have noted, the Afghan war was also a coalitional war. On the Soviet side the post-1980 strategy described above had a second side to it, namely, the gradual retraining of the Afghan army to the point where it could be reconstituted as a viable combat force. It is clear that this force could not survive, despite its clear improvement from 1980, without massive infusions of Soviet arms and aid. The comparison with the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) is appropriate in this case. Nonetheless from 1989-91, probably due to just this kind of massive Soviet aid, the Afghan army gave a reasonably good **relative** showing in combat (that is, relative to its past performance and that of the Mujhaedin). Several lessons can be learned from this strategy of "incremental insertion" for ensuing conflicts. First, the **relative** success in constructing this army led to an army capable of sustaining both small and large-scale operations (sieges and the lifting thereof) with Soviet logistic supply and achieved unprecedented, though temporary, unity of command in Afghanistan.[31] Second, this strategy facilitated the orderly withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and prevented the further likelihood of Soviet society and government becoming the center of gravity of the war, as in Vietnam or more recently in our Nicaraguan campaign. The Mujahedin, on the other hand, failed to make this transition to a higher level and only achieved victory through the defection

of pro-government forces, not their own activity. Precisely because they failed to unify their political arm and thus their armies they are now engaged in internecine strife among themselves.

The third, and most immediately relevant lesson appears in the increasing resort by belligerent governments or armies (Serbia, Armenia, Russia in Moldova) to allies and forces who are irregulars, including ex-soldiers or men in civilian clothing "so to speak." The Bosnian Serbs in the hills, the Russian Cossacks, elements of the Russian XIV Army in Moldova, and local Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh are invariably said to be under very tenuous if any control by the central authorities and thus are not amenable to a cessation of the fighting until they get their way. The claim that such forces are not controllable while they are, in fact, either under direct leadership or allies of belligerent states simplifies many of the difficult problems that inhere in any coalition effort in a conventional war. These so-called irregulars have more political, and hence strategic-operational, flexibility and are more difficult to locate and track down. Thus, they can use heavy weapons, as is happening in all the wars listed above, but they deny the utility of advanced weaponry to their opponents. Politically, too, the resort to operations by such forces makes it easier for states wishing to achieve the same aims as these forces but unable openly to conduct aggression to claim that they cannot stop the fighting. Thus, those states can delay international repercussions against them and prolong the fighting until they achieve a satisfactory outcome or until the costs run too high. In

effect the result is a guerrilla or low-intensity coalition war but one using systems that only 15 or 20 years ago were state-of-the-art and hence very lethal.

Still another outcome of Afghanistan and the wars in Lebanon, Yugoslavia, and the former USSR relates to these "irregulars'" involvement. These wars highlight the return of the past phenomenon of warlordism. If the war goes on long enough, particularly in multiethnic or multireligious areas with a history of rivalry and conflict among peoples, there are increasing prospects for warlordism. As time passes and organized political life in the war zone disintegrates, the irregular forces could increasingly elude any political control save that of their commander. The tendency of General Aleksandr' Lebed, commander of the XIV Army in Moldova, unilaterally to decide key political issues illustrates the tendency towards conversion of a general into a warlord. He who can control the supply and provision of armaments becomes effective master of the territory and can then defy the center or outside authority for a long time. In Lebanon this was quite evident as its civil war progressed and it certainly occurred among the Mujahedin who represent, essentially, a congeries of rival tribes and factions.

The turn towards warlordism can only prolong these conflicts as the number of combatants multiplies, central authority fragments, and all parties' primordial attachment to a man or ethno-religious cause intensifies. In past examples like China, civil strife lasted 38 years from 1911-49, in Lebanon from 1975-92,

and in Afghanistan from 1979-92. And the latter two are by no means definitively out of danger. Nor can we ignore the potential for warlordism in Moldova, elsewhere in the new Commonwealth of Independent States, or even in post-Deng China.

Another lesson, in this case, of Soviet strategy, continued by Najibullah, after 1980 pertains to the role of key cities as heavily fortified strongholds. In contrast to the Afghan countryside, the cities did offer the regime a social basis of support inasmuch as the regime came to be seen as the only means towards attaining a modernized Afghanistan. In other conflicts, El Salvador until 1992 and the attempted Philippine coups of 1989-90, cities played key roles as lucrative targets for guerilla attacks and in Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Moldova, and Nagorno-Karabakh, cities have increasingly been the center of terror missile and rocket launchings against civilians. These facts make it imperative for defenders to secure cities against enemy infiltration. Infiltration into the heart of the urban strongholds of any regime undermines both its national and its international support as happened in San Salvador and Manila in 1989 and in Azerbaidzhan in 1991-92, where Armenian occupation of cities has led to a collapse of the government in Baku and raised the specter of an Armenian backed Kurdish separatist movement there.[32]

Such infiltration, moreover, has a profound military aspect as well. Mass enemy infiltration forces opponents to expend military assets on protracted urban or siege fighting that destroys the economic, political, and institutional infrastructures that support

their position. In effect, he who must fight in his key or capital cities has to destroy them to save them with predictable results. Recent episodes, in Beirut, San Salvador, Sarajevo, and Manila, suggest that the battle for urban strongholds may well intensify and perhaps even assume a transnational character in low-intensity conflicts as foreign states seek increasingly to influence or manipulate domestic factions in such conflicts.

Lastly, the dissemination and proliferation of rocket, missile, armored platforms, and heavy weapons generally to both regular and irregular fighters in so called backward areas have also brought about a spatial and social expansion of the battlefield. Increasingly, terror directed against innocent civilians has become a strategic operation in its own right, a phenomenon as true of Iraq's performance in DESERT STORM, a conventional theater war, as in Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Moldova. Just as conventional warfare has eroded the difference between front and rear, so, too, is low-intensity conflict no longer primarily a rural affair. Increasingly, large urban centers have become key "theaters" of those wars.

**Operational and Strategic Lessons for the U.S. Forces.**

Any analysis of the Soviet military experience in Afghanistan and the lessons that were learned and are now being applied must start, not at the tactical level as has virtually all American analyses, but from the operational and strategic level.[33] From that perspective the tactical failures appear in a different light. Moreover, the specific failures of the Brezhnev leadership in 1979

are failures that remain relevant today to analysts and policymakers who do not wish to embark on protracted and unforeseeable contingencies in the Third World or even the Balkans. Indeed, lessons learned from that war are important to our policymakers.

Thus it is incontestable that, in 1979, Soviet leaders fundamentally misjudged the nature of the enemy, the nature of the war, and were poorly acquainted with the terrain and its requirements for combat. The entire Afghan experience also calls into question the adequacy of Soviet intelligence preparation and policy making both before and during the war.[33] It also highlights the importance of both accurate intelligence collection and analysis in warfare. Soviet operations throughout the war in Afghanistan showed a very spotty use of intelligence. Target acquisition and follow-up strikes were rarely successfully coordinated, and offensives were regularly leaked, as were assassination plots. Moreover, even when good intelligence was obtained, commanders did not aggressively follow up. All this casts doubt on the Russian military's capacity to adapt itself to the new requirements of the reconnaissance strike systems proclaimed by Ogarkov *et.al.*, let alone to the new generation of information fusion weapons about to enter into regular military use.[35] These facts also suggest that the efforts begun in 1992 to reform the army's structure to a much more mobile and rapid reaction force, primarily relying on the vertical dimension, will encounter strong resistance.[36] In this sense, tactical rigidity,

overcentralized $C^3I$, poor use of intelligence, and unimaginative tactics and operational art formed a systemically negative synergy. Civilian and military reformers have concentrated their fire precisely against this negative synergy.[37]

Afghanistan also implicated the entire military-political system in an expensive, protracted, and visible failure that began the pressure within the armed forces, Soviet society, and government to de-militarize and transform the entire security policy-making structure and mentality. Most critiques of those systems focus[ed] on Afghanistan and the decision to place SS-20 missiles in Europe in 1977 as the two most emblematic and outstanding instances of bankrupt security policies.

In this sense Afghanistan is comparable to Vietnam in indicating the risks for any government which gets trapped in such a war. Both examples have thus led American policymakers to shy away from any strategy other than a "quick kill."[38] This was particularly the case with former Secretary of Defense Weinberger's test for the recourse to war.[39] In examining Weinberger's criteria for the combat deployment of U.S. forces abroad, two Army War College analysts sharply observed that:

> Frankly, we have not had traditional military forces available to cover our current military commitments. Only the umbrella of massive nuclear deterrence or the threat of massive retaliation has permitted this country to effectively assist in the defense of Europe. . . .This factor, together with our ever increasing number of national commitments or areas of national interest, makes it obvious that this particular test (i.e., of committing forces as needed to gain our objectives) could only be useful for short-term operations like Grenada or raids against third-rate powers like Libya. If it were

> ever applied to a confrontation with a major power such as the Soviet Union or China, we simply could never go to war.[40]

Therefore, those able to control the tempo and nature of combat in such low-intensity conflicts like Yugoslavia's, or for that matter any other conflict, have, for the moment, denied the great powers the option of bringing military power to bear lest they encounter another Vietnam, Northern Ireland, or Afghanistan. This emerges in an analysis of lessons of the war against Iraq. Had we not had uninterrupted leisure to build upon an already formidable logistical base for 6 months before combat, who knows what we would have encountered or done there. Moreover, that war offered no lessons against resolute, competent enemies who possess at least a modicum of strategic aptitude.[41]

The flawed strategy and operational art of the second phase of the Afghan war unravelled in 1986 when the Mujahedin acquired a viable portable or mobile air defense system in the Stinger. This is not to argue that technological solutions were decisive, but rather to highlight the strategic-level lesson that it suffices to negate enemy air control for forces to obtain (relative) freedom of maneuver and bring enemy counterstrikes or offenses to a halt. For example in Bosnia, the inability of U.N. forces to overcome anti-air attacks on relief convoys has led to periodic ruptures of the supply line to besieged Bosnian cities. As long as hostilities continue, if Serbian forces can deny this airlift without even committing their own planes, they can effectively starve Sarajevo into submission. This lesson has reached a canonical state and

forces us to consider likely future options and scenarios if we are to have more than just tactical success in large or small conventional wars.

- The race to devise countermeasures of EW, ECM, and ECCM (Electronic Warfare, Electronic Countermeasures, and Electronic Counter-Countermeasures, respectively) [*Radio-Elektronicheskaia Bor'ba-REB* in Russian] against anti-air missiles and systems will intensify as does the race to devise more and still more effective anti-air ordnance on land, sea, air, submarine, and based in space.

- The growing role of RUK (Reconnaissance Strike Systems as described by Ogarkov) or information fusion systems will put a premium on the capacity to engage in SEAD (Suppression of Enemy Air Defense) operations because, otherwise, mobility will grind to a halt. All of the wars cited above lead to the conclusion that negating enemy air power suffices either to move forward or obstruct the enemy and impart considerable stability to the offense. This is equally true for the low-intensity wars in Eastern Europe and the Transcaucasus. One can imagine what would happen to the Russian forces in Moldova if the Moldovans or their allies could employ air strikes against them without risks. Similarly, air strikes against Serbia might well have deterred Serbian forces earlier but now they have been able to negate aerial relief, not combat capability, to their enemies by their attacks, thus gaining full freedom to move and strike at will, and validating our point.

Moreover, as Russian analysts have written, the proliferation

of means of accomplishing deep strikes and maneuver by fire raises the chances for defense as opposed to offense. But this trend also simultaneously imparts to the "defense" the opportunity to launch "offensive" operations and/or preemptive strikes while remaining strategically on the defensive.[42]

- The presence of a Pakistani, or other, sanctuary, limited both sides' capability to engage in aerial interdiction, leading to a vicious economic war in Afghanistan proper. The effort to deny sanctuary as in Bosnia has led to the expansion of la and small wars (as in Kuwait and Iraq) against economic and civilian targets. States will either go after the rearward sanctuary or destroy the rear of the theater. In either case they will use deep strike weapons that obliterate the classical distinction of front and rear and make civilian installations a key target, thus employing terror on a mass scale as a deliberate strategy. Should the defensive sanctuary remain inviolate, its stability and that of the defender's forces is, all things being equal, strengthened. The same principle holds for the offense. Accordingly, in future war we may expect economic targeting as well as countervalue targeting (conventional as well as nuclear, biological, and chemical [NBC] if things come to that) to assume a larger strategic value. Such targeting has occurred in Yugoslavia, Moldova and the Transcaucasus, and Angola, as well as in the Gulf with the use of CBW and ecological warfare against Kuwaiti oilfields. Thus, an NBC wartime environment cannot be ruled out.

- Future commanders, like the Soviets or the Mujahedin, and

our own Air Force, will probably again be bewitched by *Wunderwaffen* ideas, such as strategic bombing, overwhelming reliance on fire strikes, CBW, high-tech platforms, space, the ultimate weapon or missile, and so on. This is because of the following considerations:

– Since mobility is everything in an age of proliferation of both firestrike systems and the means of supporting them, the race for mobility will very likely correspond to the fact that troop mobility cannot be easily attained to force a rapid strategic or decisive conclusion. This suggests an intense search for means or tactics that would enhance the mobility of strike platforms as well as troop mobility. This is exactly what the allied "Hail Mary" option was about in the Gulf, an attempt to deploy a force with maximum multiplier effects to gain the opportunity for mobile warfare. In Yugoslavia, too, the shelling of airfields and ports has this aim in mind, albeit on a smaller scale. As in World War I, both sides, if sufficiently armed, will (or should) find ways of getting around or striking deeper than the enemy and may obtain only localized tactical results. The extensive capabilities of warring states in an age of proliferation and missiles will likely result in a war of attrition of both fire strike and manpower systems once the front stabilizes, and will be combined with devastating strikes in the rear; or commanders will come under severe pressure to launch preemptive strikes fearing that, as in Iraq, the first strike may be the last. The results could well resemble the Iran-Iraq War, the siege of Beirut, the subsequent

Lebanese civil war or World War I at an even more destructive level.

– The race for mobility will lead to a greater search for means of surprise and of the complex system involved in *Maskirovka* operations to get in the first blow which might be decisive strategically, if not operationally. Put differently, if forces seek mobility as a key operational objective, they will have to resort increasingly to surprise to achieve it. The Yugoslav case exemplifies this point. A recent congressional study by John Collins concluded that:

> The Balkan arena is adverse by comparison. Opportunities to apply U.S. military power swiftly as well as decisively appear to be rare. Former Yugoslavia contains few target concentrations similar to those that centered on Baghdad. There are no clear military centers of gravity--against which to focus U.N./U.S. offensive forces. Fluid movement by large land forces is infeasible anywhere except on the northern plain. Potential opponents specialize in hit-and-run raids, ambushes, sabotage, hostage-taking, and terrorism rather than traditional tactics. . .Protracted operations, in short, seem more likely than swift clean victory for either side regardless of conflict intensity.[43]

This need for mobility and surprise to achieve it, is, in turn, triggering an equal race to find means of denying surprise. That race, in turn, fuels the search for surprise, and so on. Information fusion and reconnaissance systems will be spurred on as will the development of space systems to provide ever more accurate real-time intelligence and ultimately the high ground from which one can strike or interdict enemy operations. This factor may be subsumed under the rubric of the struggle for information.

Moreover, winning this struggle may well make the difference between a *coup de main* as in Panama or a long war.

- Because each side will have the means to deny the offense a quick victory, the war could settle down to a protracted attritional one in which the temptation for "ultimate weapons" will be great, carnage enormous, and morale severely tested. This is true even if the attrition period is severely telescoped relative to World War I or the Iran-Iraq War. These developments will occur because many modern societies, despite their lethal arsenals, cannot long support war without profound and perhaps disintegrative internal strains. Vietnam and the United States, the Intifada and Israel, and Afghanistan and the USSR are all examples of that stress. Indeed, apparently one reason Soviet forces were kept numerically rather low was the authorities' fear of the consequences of a mass mobilization.[44] Those that can deny to the enemy the short war option, therefore have a built-in operational advantage.

As countless experiences tell us, operations short of war (as LIC is now called), including insurgency warfare, represent in many instances a deliberate strategy of trading space for time and, therefore, maximizing the time factor against superior forces. Commanders schooled in dynamic, offensive and fast-moving, mobile operations will find themselves at sea and may regress into a kind of tactical rigidity seen in Afghanistan where the Soviets waged what Mujahedin leader Abdul Haq called "cookbook warfare." This is because those commanders have (in chess players' parlance) been

"taken out of the books" and must fight a war for which they are wholly unprepared. The onset of such attritional warfare with little chance of victory or of accomplishing the initial aims will severely test troop morale, if not undermine it, as has been the case in both the Israeli and U.S. Lebanon campaigns, the Intifada, Afghanistan, and Vietnam.

- All things being equal, the presence of RUK systems will give the defense superiority and constrain, if not inhibit, offensive mobility. Hence the search for a means of "outwitting" or blinding these systems and for mobility of troops or platforms to overcome that defensive superiority. Operationally, there will be little if any distinction between offense and defense, and the battle for the first salvo on land, sea, and air (and space) will become critical. It may well be the only way, as in DESERT STORM, to operationalize and/or realize the mobility upon which successful offensive operations depend.

These "first strike" operations or campaigns will rely on enormous fire strikes, SEAD operations and maneuver by fire to destroy the cohesion of the defense, or on surprise operations targeting its $C^3I$, and means of air and missile strikes. While at first the front will be nonlinear, i.e., broken-backed, fragmented, and interspersed with simultaneous offensive and defensive operations by both armies in a vast theater, it is likely that this situation, if allowed to continue, will result in layered, echelonned, immobile, but highly destructive armed forces.[45]

- Air assault, heliborne, airborne forces, and helicopters

will assume the ability to conduct virtually every kind of operation with either mounted or dismounted troops, a fact which reinforces the centrality of securing, or denying, early on to the enemy, air control and superiority. Even if they cannot hold ground in the face of modern conventional forces for long, their operational and strategic advantage can be commanding. Current U.S. doctrine for joint warfare, for example, advances the notion that the relative importance (in and of itself) of holding any particular ground is declining. Rather, that doctrine emphasizes agility and (wherever possible) **extension** of operations throughout the theater to force the enemy to disperse his forces. As the doctrine statement indicates, the purpose of establishing and then projecting presence on the ground is to contribute to the sustainment of the operation through that extension to the ultimate target upon which the campaign's operational and strategic level efforts are oriented, the enemy's center of gravity.[46] As in World War I and II, on a macro-strategic level, these forces' encirclement mission will symbolize the larger efforts by powers holding exterior lines to blockade and encircle the enemy operating on internal lines.[47]

To summarize, based upon investigation of the war in Afghanistan and selected aspects of current operations short of war, we have suggested, either explicitly or implicitly, the following tentative conclusions about the nature of future small or unconventional wars.

- There will be intense efforts at surprise and *Maskirovka*,

primarily targeted at $C^3I$ air and missile bases in the first strike. Indeed, this may become an independent operation designed to win rapidly and avoid the possibility of attrition.

- At the same time, an enormous battle will take place for superiority in the air or its denial, replete with space-based systems' participation and an enormously complex electronic warfare scenario with ECMs and ECCM systems heavily involved.

- At least to start, the front will be enormous and broken backed. Offensive and defensive lines will be fluid and troops will be simultaneously engaged in both kinds of operation in an interspersed fashion. Belligerents will rely heavily on the various forms of mobile forces: airborne troops and naval infantry, including their various special forces and diversionary-reconnaissance forces, e.g., *Spetsnaz*.[48]

- The ultimate tactical objective will be to obtain scope and freedom to move. At higher levels of combat the ultimate objective might well be to "behead" or disorient the enemy's "central nervous system" to the point where it is unable to issue commands, control troops, and communicate with them. Those goals are attainable through the rapid *coup de main* or the blinding of its reconnaissance and intelligence capability as well, not to speak of strikes against $C^3I$ or neutralization of enemy $C^3I$ or the cohesion of the defense by fire strikes and maneuver by fire.

- Using the new generation of high precision weapons and information fusion systems (VTO and RUK in Soviet parlance), economic and countervalue targeting will be extensive and

enormously destructive.

- Defenses will be fortified, layered, heavily mined, and likely entrenched as well. Moreover, a possible return to siege warfare on a broad front cannot be ruled out.

- There will have to be enormous campaigns of high ideological fervor to motivate troops to be ready to fight long attritional wars which will test the various combatants' systems to the highest possible degree of cohesion. From here it cannot be ascertained whether the economic-political forces making for support of a long war can prevail over the moral-psychological ones that militate against such an outcome. But current and past wars caution against excessive optimism in either direction.

- The future battlefield will see more resort to CBW if not conventional strikes that are almost equivalent in lethality and destructiveness to atomic ones.

- There will be a continuing effort to reform force structures in the direction of mobility and lightness as well as combined arms. The Soviet Combined Arms Rifle Battalion, where each battalion carries its own organic air and anti-air assets as well being airmobile and endowed with destructive accurate fire systems, exemplified this approach. So do the new reforms undertaken by Yeltsin and Defense Minister General Grachev.[49]

- The unprecedented destructiveness of weapons systems will come up against unprecedented levels of technical support for a war, even in supposedly "Third World" states. This makes for an equally unprecedented attrition of manpower and other assets and,

all things being equal, the supremacy of the defense in a long attritional war.

- In low-intensity or even medium or high-intensity conflicts, there may be a revival of urban fighting as in Beirut, Sarajevo, Berlin or Stalingrad. Such combat operations entail substantial difficulties for forces relying heavily on armor or firepower because those assets cannot be easily used or used to their full advantage in such scenarios. Indeed, they may be counterproductive. Moreover, as we observed, attacks on cities or defense of them (depending on the scenario, Beirut or San Salvador, for instance) can be counterproductive to the political strategy of one or both of the belligerents.

- Particularly in low-intensity conflicts, the need for external patronage, supply, and sanctuary of insurgents, or of counterinsurgents, if not both, increasingly becomes the key means by which they are able to organize and equip to fight. Absent such a sanctuary, and given the growing destructiveness and lethality of war and weapons systems, such conflicts may run up against daunting logistical and sustainability issues. But the proliferation of arms producers and suppliers who are currently chasing after buyers could reinvigorate such external "patronage" necessary for wars to continue for a long time.

- It is increasingly clear that many factors are making for a return of those issues--sustainability and logistics--to the center of our attention, especially in a time of rising costs and fiscal constraints. As weapons technologies proliferate and their

destructiveness grows, new ways will have to be found to do more in these areas with less.

- With regard to Europe, the thinning out of forces as a result of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe and the subsequent lowering of force densities and force-to-space ratios will also have significant results. It is expected that smaller forces will nonetheless still dispose of substantial firepower assets there. The concentration of fire by such smaller scale forces suggests a possibility of more closely focused targeting by those forces upon particular key targets which may be urban or significant logistical targets. That activity would further contribute to erasing practical distinctions between front and rear. This has already happened in Sarajevo.

- Finally, Afghanistan and other recent wars raise a host of issues deriving from the race for surprise and for victory in the first round of combat. These considerations and questions revolve around issues of mobilization, logistics throughout the war, and the organization, intelligence, target acquisition and fire at those targets in real time, questions of limited and/or unlimited war, and therefore, as well, issues revolving around targeting and conflict termination.

Frankly, these are sobering perspectives, and the author does not share the euphoria that the cold war is over. Rather, the emerging multipolar world of economic and ethnic wars unconstrained by superpower influences, but with multiple competitiveness for influence and wealth and proliferation of advanced weapons

technologies, leads us to the fear or well-founded suspicion that we are sailing into very dangerous and uncharted waters. The progress of the technology, art, and science of warfare makes those waters more dangerous. As we sail into those uncharted seas we had better see to it that we no longer sail with a corpse in the cargo.

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