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Russian Planning Visions for Large-Scale Warfare: "Planetary, Theater, and Territorial" Considerations

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Executive Summary

Due primarily to geographic and threat variances, Russia's military conducts geostrategic planning differently from the United States. Russia is faced with a set of threats, real and imagined, from several vectors across a huge expanse of territory with a rather small population, factors which the U.S. does not confront. This directly impacts the style of planning for the Russian military, as US and NATO planning models do not directly apply. Those seeking to understand Russia ignore these differences at their own peril.

This paper examines numerous aspects of Russia's planning concepts that indicate how the nation's Defense Ministry has chosen to confront perceived Western and other territorial challenges. U.S. planning is contrasted against Russian planning in some areas. For Russia, primary planning concepts and organizations include the following:

- Theater of war (TV)
- Theater of military operations (TVD)
- Theater strategic operation
- Military districts
- Strategic region
- Strategic direction/axis
- Operational design
- Territorial defense forces.

After analysisng the Russian model, the conclusion reached is that Russia's geostrategic planning for the initial period of war is underway and, if conflict erupts, the nation will be better prepared to gain the initiative than it has been in the past. Historically Russia has been caught unprepared for future conflicts, and President Vladimir Putin and Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces Valery Gerasimov want to bypass that potential fate.

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1 Introduction

Due primarily to geographic and threat variances, Russia's military conducts geostrategic planning differently from the United States (U.S.). Russia is faced with a set of threats, real and imagined, from several vectors across a huge expanse of territory with a rather small population, factors which the U.S. does not confront. This has caused Russian theater planners to consider innovative adaptations of technology to fill capability gaps, including the projected use of robotics to defend its borders.

The U.S., with its four time zones, is surrounded by two oceans, Canada, and Mexico, thus significant direct ground threats to its existence are rare. Russia's military, on the other hand, must consider protecting eleven time zones against several potential ground threats: the 2.6 billion people (India and China) to its immediate south and southeast; a North Korean threat to the east; a jihadist threat to the southwest in Afghanistan and Syria; and a NATO threat from the west that, from the U.S.'s viewpoint, is often overemphasized and more imagined than real. Russia's military also wants to protect perceived Russian national interests in the Arctic region to the north, interests still under review in the United Nations.

Both nations conduct what is known as theater planning to deter threats. The U.S. *Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, contains 13 theater-related topics, the most important for this discussion being theater of war, theater of operations, and theater of strategy. A theater is defined in the joint publication as the geographical area for which a commander of a geographic combatant command has been assigned responsibility.[1] In the U.S., unified combatant commands such as NORTHCOM and the INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND are located on U.S. territory and are the principal overseers of direct threats to the nation. Functional combatant commands, SOCOM, TRANSCOM, CYBERCOM, and STRATCOM, also are located on U.S. territory and confront direct threats to the homeland. CENTCOM and SOUTHCOM are combatant commands located in the U.S. but responsible for areas outside of national territory. EUCOM and AFRICOM combatant commands are located outside of the U.S..

In Russia, the military conducts centralized geostrategic planning at the National Defense Management Center (NDMC) and, in conjunction with the leaders of the military districts, develops preparations for potential future conflicts in numerous theaters along its borders. The nation itself is a theater of military operations (TVD) (a similar, though not precise, comparison to NORTHCOM). Theaters of war, theaters of military operations, and strategic axes drive most planning directives. Over the past few years, the Russian Chief of the General Staff, Valery Gerasimov, has delivered important presentations at the Academy of Military Science that referenced such planning, making it germane to contemporary discussions inside the nation. He has mentioned the development of Russian forces for potential use in TVDs and on strategic axes or directions. It is important not to overlook the importance of these comments. When examined through the lens of Russian military thought, Gerasimov appears to be addressing ways to establish

[1] *Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, as of June 2020, p. 215 at DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, June 2020 (jcs.mil)

superiority for his forces in the initial period of war, should one break out. Other important theorists have stressed how new military-technical developments now threaten Russia's existence and how to plan to confront them. For example, one author in 2002 discussed planetary theaters of war (TV) and stated unequivocally that aerospace is the new and main TV. Russian Aerospace Forces, since 2015, have included the air force, air and missile defense, and space forces. In the U.S., the Air Force and Space Forces are separate. Planetary considerations indicate the development of a new aspect of military art beyond Russia's traditional triangle of strategy, operational art, and tactics. Lately there has been a renewed focus on developing a stronger territorial defense apparatus.

One of the reasons for Gerasimov's focus on TVDs was noted in his 2014 presentation to the Academy of Military Science. As he saw the threat then from the U.S. and NATO:

> The completion of the creation of the global USA Missile Defense System, foreign countries' implementation of the concepts "**geocentric theater of military operations**," "global strike," and "network-centric domain," and the permanent location of combat-ready groupings of the leading countries in key regions of the world provide them with the ability to deliver strikes in the shortest period of time against any point on Earth.[2]

Gerasimov hopes, with Russia's weapons based on new physical principles and the proper planning, to be able to offset Western advances and any potential plans by other nations to penetrate Russian territory. Russia's military aims to create an equally strong deterrent force to do so.

This article will lay out numerous aspects of Russia's planning concepts that indicate how the nation's Defense Ministry has chosen to confront perceived Western and other territorial challenges. U.S. planning is contrasted against Russian planning in some areas. For Russia, primary planning concepts and organizations include the following:

- Theater of war (TV)
- Theater of military operations (TVD)
- Theater strategic operation
- Military districts
- Strategic region
- Strategic direction/axis
- Operational design
- Territorial defense forces.

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[2] Valery Gerasimov, "The Role of The General Staff in The Organization of The Country's Defense In Accordance With The New *Statute On The General Staff*, Approved By The President of The Russian Federation," *Vestnik Akademii voennykh nauk (Journal of the Academy of Military Science), 2014*, p. 15. The author would like to thank Dr. Harold Orenstein for his translation of this article.

The conclusion reached is that Russia's geostrategic planning for the initial period of war is underway and, if conflict erupts, the nation will be better prepared to gain the initiative than it has been in the past. Historically Russia has been caught unprepared for future conflicts, and President Vladimir Putin and Gerasimov want to bypass that potential fate.

The military has focused on two parameters when planning large scale warfare: TVs and TVDs. Each is discussed below along with several subcategories, with territorial defense being the most recent category added to the mix. The focus in this article on large-scale planning does not include a discussion of several planning aspects (forecasting, trends, correlation of forces) that could have easily been included in planning. That is because they were brought up earlier during the discussion of Russian military thought. Also, associations with U.S. units listed below are theoretical only and do not represent a one-on-one equivalency. The idea was to offer an approximate equivalency only.

Finally, of note is that Russia does not utilize the term "domain" to the same extent as does the West, relying more on TVDs and strategic directions than domains. The U.S. term domain is often translated as "space" in Russian (*prostranstvo*). Also, there is one Appendix, and it covers Russian C2 issues in space from a 2015 Russian article.

2 The Theater of War

The theater of war concept is the starting point for this analysis. *U.S. Joint Publication 1-02* defined a theater of war as follows:

> Defined by the President, Secretary of Defense, or the geographic combatant commander as the area of air, land, and water that is, or may become, directly involved in the conduct of major operations and campaigns involving combat. See also area of responsibility; theater of operations. (JP 3-0)[3]

In Russia, a theater of war or "TV" was defined in the Soviet 1983 *Military Encyclopedia* as:

> 1. Term used in several countries, defined as that land area, ocean water area, and airspace above them within the boundaries of which the armed forces of states (coalitions of states) may conduct or are conducting strategic-scale military operations. It does not have rigorously defined boundaries; usually a theater of war encompasses a single continent with adjacent water areas or a single ocean with coastal zone, archipelagoes, and islands; a theater of war may include several theaters of military operations, sectors, or regions.
> 2. In international law—the land territory, water areas of seas, and airspace of belligerent states, as well as the high seas and airspace above them, within the boundaries of which belligerents may conduct or are conducting military operations.[4]

[3] *Joint Publication 1-02,* p. 216.

[4] N. V. Ogarkov, main editor, *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Moscow: Military Publishing House, 1983, p. 732.

Another Russian source, the 2007 *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary* published by Eksmo, was developed by leading scientists and specialists from all regions of the Russian Federation. They defined a TV as follows:

> 1. A concept employed in several countries, understood as a territory of land, an oceanic aquatoria, and the aerospace domain above them, within whose boundaries the armed forces of states (coalitions of states) can conduct strategic military operations. A theater of war does not have strictly defined borders; usually it includes one continent with adjacent aquatorias, or one ocean with islands and the coastal area of continents. A theater of war can be divided into several theaters of military operation.
> 2. In international law, a theater of war is the land territory, maritime aquatorias, and aerospace domain of warring states, as well as the open sea and air domain over them, within whose boundaries the warring sides can or do conduct military operations. It does not include the territory of neutral states or neutralized territory.[5]

The U.S. concept clearly begins with an explanation of who oversees the determination of TVs and naturally does not discuss continents as Russia does since it is only surrounded east and west by oceans. During World War II, the Atlantic and Pacific theaters were discussed along with others, but those designations then went away when the war ended. Control over the TV is most likely directed from "the tank" in the Pentagon by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In Russia, directly under the President is the *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command (in wartime), the Ministry of Defense, the General Staff, and the National Defense Management Center (NDMC) of the RF. Subordinate to the latter are the Center for the Control of Nuclear Forces, the Combat Control Center (multi-departmental force groupings and the large formations, formations, and military units in the Armed Forces of the RF), and the Center for the Command and Control of Everyday Activities.[6] In wartime one of the most important tasks of the NDMC is information support to the *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command about the situation in theaters of military operations, the transmission of *Stavka* instructions to the troops, and control over their execution.[7] Control over the TV is thus likely directed from the NDMC.

In the Russian definition, two sentences are important. First, a TV usually "encompasses a single continent." Two continents of importance for Russian TVs are the European and Asian continents. Russia's Western District is charged with developing the European TV and the Southern, Central, and Eastern Districts appear to share a focus on the Asian TV, which includes the Middle East, Iran, China, North Korea, and other nations of importance. Noted U.S. Soviet/Russian expert David Glantz noted that for the Kremlin a TV encompasses "the entire

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[5] *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Moscow: Eksmo, 2007, pp. 903-904. The author would like to thank Dr. Harold Orenstein for his translation of this article.

[6] V. V. Gerasimov, "The Experience of Strategic Leadership in the Great Patriotic War and the Organization of Uniform Command and Control of the Country's Defense under Contemporary Conditions," *Journal of the Academy of Military Science*, No.2 2015, p. 13. The author would like to thank Dr. Harold Orenstein for his translation of this article.

[7] Ibid.

region consumed by warfare."[8] Second, the phrase "a theater of war may include several theaters of military operations, sectors, or regions" is important for its indication that multiple TVDs are planned for use in TVs in wartime. In each TV, land, sea, and air components are considered as essential elements. Glantz noted as well that several TVDs form a TV.[9]

The Russian TV concept has been around for some time. In the pre-1904 period, for example, military theorist Genrikh Antonovich Leer, who was the chief of the General Staff Academy from 1889 to 1898, noted that a TV is "the entire space in which the war is waged" and that a TV may consist of several TVDs. By 1968 the TV concept had expanded to the entire depth of an opponent's territory. Soviet Marshall V. D. Sokolovsky wrote then that "the scope of warfare is expanding; it encompasses the entire territory of the countries in the opposing coalitions and not just the TVD as in the past."[10] Now nuclear means, an opponent's economy and system of government and military control, and forces and fleets in the TVD are objects of destruction,[11] which implies the general expansion of the TV concept.

However, the TV received its most interesting analysis in 2002 in General-Major (deceased) Vladimir Slipchenko's book *Wars of the Sixth Generation: Future Weapons and Military Art.* He noted the following in a section of the book titled "Theater War and Military Actions:"

> It can, however, be stated quite unequivocally that **aerospace is gradually becoming the main theater of war**. The time has come to correct mistakes in military posture, review priorities in the armed forces structure of many nations and change the correlation of arms and branches of the armed forces, and the procedure for supplying them with arms and materiel, and command and control systems, and for providing and training scientific and military manpower.[12]

His work appears to be the forerunner of much critical research in Russia and in other advanced nations around the world, especially his references to several military-technical advancements that are only now discussed more prominently (weapons based on new physical principles, etc.). He stated:

> In past generation contact wars, the main strike objects and targets were located within the battlefield coordinates in the tactical zone. In future non-contact warfare, they will be in tactical-operational-strategic coordinates, i.e., within the entire depth of the **theater of war**. It will take many precision and unmanned weapons of varying range, weapons based on new physical principles, and their mostly ground-, air-, sea-, and later on also space-based delivery vehicles to strike them. There will not be an avalanche of fire from all types of weapons but rather 'surgically precise non-contact operations' to wipe out numerous very important economic objects using precision weapons systems.[13]

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[8] David M. Glantz, *The Military Strategy of the Soviet Union: A History*, Frank Cass, 1992, p. 39.

[9] Ibid.

[10] V. D. Sokolovsky, *Military Strategy*, Military Publishing House of the Ministry of Defense of the USSR, 1968, p. 340.

[11] Ibid.

[12] V. I. Slipchenko, *Wars of the Sixth Generation: Future Weapons and Military Art*, Moscow: Veche, 2002, p. 122.

[13] Ibid., p. 125.

Again, this book was published in 2002. Slipchenko wrote that entire land and sea masses, aerospace, the state of a countries' strategic strike and defensive forces, and all troop (force) movements will need to be monitored "within **planetary theaters of war (operations**)" since existing reconnaissance-strike systems can attack with non-contact strategic air-space-sea strikes on any country in any region without advance build-up of forces and weapons.[14] **Theaters of war** will most likely use a single navigation system, with critical points linked to a single geodesic network. The operation will include massed precision non-nuclear strategic, operational, and tactical weapon strikes coordinated as to targets, missions, time, and place, to include the action of weapons based on new physical principles and will last a long time (30-90 days).[15]

However, over the years **new theaters of conflict** have evolved in Russian military thought. Only two examples are noted here. As early as 2003, Russian theorist Sergey Modestov was writing about "**theaters of information war**." In an article on the space of future war, Modestov mentioned the vertical component as a space for possible military operations He added that the space of armed combat now includes new sources of threats such as non-state formations. While the latter, which includes proxy wars, indicate that large-scale war is unlikely, this is not the case in Modestov's opinion. New military-technical capabilities have expanded the space of potential military operations and their capabilities to strike critical objects and population centers. Capabilities include not only lasers and electronic warfare strike weapons but also infrasound, electromagnetic pulse, and software and virus weapons.[16] Information space is where information resources and processes occur, such as data collection, transmission, management, and tools (strike assets) that impact an adversary's resources. A goal will be to reduce and disorganize the information space of an opponent and expand ones' own control over it.[17] Modestov then stated that "The need to study the structure of information space and compare and manage its specific characteristics for military security purposes leads us to a new concept—the theater of information warfare."[18] He then referenced Y.V. Dobrolyubov's note that "today's information environment will turn out to be another **theater of military operations**." And these theorists were writing about this 17 years ago, which places the *Joint Doctrine Note 1-19*, which stated that the main arena of competition is no longer armed conflict but information warfare, a bit behind the Russian thought process.

Years later, in 2019, Modestov and two other authors wrote on "**theaters of information confrontation**," which was about the impact of social media as one of those new, non-state threats he had mentioned in 2003 but which had not yet come to maturity. To these authors, social networks and some Internet resources are a basic way for disseminating that extremists publish their material. They implement propaganda and agitation and render information-psychological

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[14] Ibid., p. 132.

[15] Ibid., p. 141.

[16] S. A. Modestov, "The Space of Future War," *Vestnik Akademii voennykh nauk (Journal of the Academy of Military Science),* No. 2 2003, pp. 62-63. The author would like to thank Dr. Harold Orenstein for his translation of this article.

[17] Ibid., pp. 63-64.

[18] Ibid., p. 64.

effects again a population, especially the youth.[19] Clearly the authors use of the term "extremists" is referring to people who oppose the government and not the usual association of extremists with terrorists. First among adversaries, the authors write, is the Russian *Vkontakte*, a social media site in Russian, which in the author's opinion work to oppose law enforcement organs by withholding usernames who repost notes, using closed profile privacy settings, and delaying the presentation to law enforcement officials with information about users. This has caused the social network to be viewed as a basic platform for "extremist" communications [20] Among several conclusions were the following:

- Social means of Internet communication (SSIK) are turning into a real theater of information confrontation.
- Since 2015 "cyber extremists" began shifting to the closed segment of the SSIK with an increase in targeting minors
- Opposition social movements and the mass media are opposing law enforcement work, with much extremist material now on Telegram Messenger, closed profiles, anonymous channels, and other closed segments of the Internet.
- Since 2018 law enforcement organs have increased activities to improve the nation's information and ideological security.[21]

Thus, when reading Russian military opinions about extremist publications, readers need to carefully separate locals who are simply in opposition to government policy (and deemed extremists) from actual terrorists.

2.1 The Theater of Military Operations (TVD)

Following the theater of war, then next concept to explore is the theater of military operations. *U.S. Joint Publication 1-02* defined a theater of operations (leaving out the "military" component) as follows:

> An operational area defined by the geographic combatant commander for the conduct or support of specific military operations. Also called TO. See also theater of war. (JP 3-0)[22]

A Soviet TVD was defined in the 1983 *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary* as:

> Part of the territory of a continent with ocean coastal waters, inland seas, and airspace (continental theater of military operations) or the water area of a single

[19] S. A. Modestov, D. A. Nikitin, and E. A. Rabcheskii, "Social Networks as a Theater of information Confrontation under Conditions of Contemporary 'Hybrid' War," *Vestnik Akademii voennykh nauk (Journal of the Academy of Military Science),* No. 3 2019, p. 20. The author would like to thank Dr. Harold Orenstein for his translation of this article.

[20] Ibid., pp. 22-23.

[21] Ibid., p. 25.

[22] *Joint Publication 1-02*, p. 216.

> ocean, encompassing the islands in that ocean, adjacent seas, landmass coastal strips, and airspace above them (ocean theater [of operations]), within the boundaries of which military operations of a strategic force (ground forces air forces, naval forces) can be organized and conducted. The boundaries and composition of theaters of military operations are determined by the military-political leaders of states (coalitions of states). U.S. and NATO military-political leaders, for example, have divided the territory of Western Europe into three land TVDs: Northern European, Central European, and Southern European sectors. Historically designated oceanic TVD's include each of the four oceans: Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, and Arctic.[23]

The 2007 Russian *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary* published by Eksmo defined a TVD differently than the Ogarkov-edited version above, focusing more on NATO TVDs, a term NATO does not use. A TVD was defined as follows:

> An extensive piece of a continent with seas washing over it, or an ocean (sea) aquatoria with islands and the adjacent coast of continents, as well as the aerospace domain over them, within whose boundaries strategic armed forces groupings are deployed and military operations on a strategic scale may be conducted. With respect to its geographical location, TVDs may be continental, oceanic, and maritime. Each TVD has specific military-political, military, physical-geographical, and ethnographic conditions, as well as operational equipment of the territory, which affects the preparation for and conduct of strategic operations and the war. The borders and make-up of a TVD are determined by the military-political leadership of states (coalitions of states). Thus, based on the geographic features of the territory and tasks assigned to the joint armed forces, the military-political leadership of the US and NATO has divided the entire territory of Western Europe into three land TVDs: NATO's Northwestern European TVD, NATO's Central European TVD, and NATO's South European TVD. In peacetime, groupings of NATO's joint armed forces with a uniform command have been created in each of these theaters, their possible employment has been planned, and systems of command and control, basing, and supplies have been created. Each of the four oceans (Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, and North Artic) are historically developed oceanic TVDs. The aquatorias of internal seas and those adjacent to continents, detached in a military-geographical respect, with islands distributed throughout them, a coastal band of mainland the aerospace domain, can comprise maritime TVDs in several countries. Basically, foreign literature uses the term 'theater of war' as a synonym of the term 'theater of military operations.' The all-round study of TVDs and their assessment are one of the most important tasks for the preparation of the armed forces and the territory to repel aggression and make it possible to conduct military operations in any region, taking into account the specific features of the specific TVD.[24]

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[23] Ogarkov, *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary*, p. 732.

[24] *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Moscow: Eksmo, 2007, p. 903. The author would like to thank Dr. Harold Orenstein for his translation of this article.

Genrikh Antonovich Leer, the late 1800s General Staff Academy chief, as he did with the TV, defined for the first time the theater of military activities in his 1898 edition of *Strategy*. The concept was said to be "the space in which one or two armies operate, having one and the same objective."[25] Ten years earlier he had speculated that a TVD might be occupied by as many as five armies, numbering up to a million men. By 1900, he noted that each TVD would be manned by a single front. Leer's thoughts were deemed to be a seminal event in the development of Russian operational thought as a result.[26] One Russian journal noted that, initially, a TVD described natural conditions and their impact on the course and outcome of a military operation. Dmitriy Alekseyevich Milyutin, a General Staff Academy professor (and then a War Minister of Russia), offered a more complete methodology. He wrote (in 1853) that "in evaluating a TVD it is necessary to take into account political, economic, moral, and other factors in addition to purely geographic factors."[27]

In the 1968 book *Military Strategy*, Sokolovsky discussed changes in a TVD's structure. He stated that the appearance of new means of armed conflict had affected the principles and rules of military strategy as well as basic strategic categories. One of those was the TVD, which the book stated had changed "completely." A TVD was said to be a territory or aquatory where direct military operations take place, the boundaries of which are determined by the aims of armed conflict in the region and the range of weapons.[28] The book then noted the following, which could be applied to TVDs today:

> The modern concept of a TVD may include the entire territory of a belligerent or coalition, whole continents, large bodies of water, and extensive regions of the atmosphere, including space. On this basis, traditional TVDs can be grouped together: western, near eastern, far eastern, etc. Thus, the zone of military operations is no longer limited to the firing range of weapons, since the latter is almost unlimited.[29]

Sokolovsky added that "the preparation of the territory of the country as a TVD" is now necessary. Thus, Russia now considers the nation as a TVD. This is because the whole territory of Russia, not just the border regions, can be covered by an opposing force's nuclear and nonnuclear weaponry.[30] With the development of cyber operations and hypersonic weapons, it seems certain that weapon ranges are indeed unlimited and that this 1968 TVD explanation is applicable even more so today.

Which brings us to the more recent comments of General Staff Chief Gerasimov on TVDs. In 2014 he noted that the Defense Ministry had conducted a theoretical assessment of possible threats and the development of potential "interservice force groupings on strategic axes (theaters

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[25] Richard W. Harrison, The Russian Way of War: Operational Art, 1904-1940, University Press of Kansas, 2001, p. 25.

[26] Ibid., pp. 25-26.

[27] Yuriy Krinitskiy, "Aerospace Theater of Military Operations Is to Be," *Vozdushno-Kosmicheskaya Oborona (Air-Space Defense) Online*, 7 February 2015, at http://www.vko.ru/koncepcii/vozdushno-kosmicheskomu-tvd-byt.

[28] Sokolovsky, p. 22.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., p. 382.

of military operations) were checked."[31] In 2015, he wrote interservice (a term whose use appears to be the same as "joint") force groupings in theaters of military operations (on strategic axes) under a unified command should be created in peacetime. Conducting joint operational training in peacetime will ensure the control and leadership by the commands (military districts, see below) in theaters of military operations (on strategic axes) in wartime.[32] In wartime, one of the most important tasks of the National Defense Control Center is information support to the leadership (*Stavka*) of the Supreme High Command about the situation in theaters of military operations.[33] Of interest is how his presentations have assimilated strategic axes with TVDs by placing the latter in parenthesis immediately behind the term "axes." This may indicate a stronger relationship among the two today than in the past.

In 2017, Gerasimov noted (most likely in reference to operations in Syria) that Russia's growing combat might and the capabilities "to resolve strategic missions on a remote theater of military operations was demonstrated to the world community," adding that the problems of organizing and implementing force regroupings on remote theaters of military operations will require separate research.[34] Finally, in 2018 he stated that there has been a shift "from sequential and concentrated operations to continuous and dispersed operations conducted simultaneously in all spheres of confrontation and in remote theaters of military operations."[35] The requirements for mobile forces have become tougher. Further, the borders of theaters of military operations are substantially expanding. They encompass regions with targets of military and economic potential located at a significant distance from zones where military operations are being directly conducted.[36] This statement appears to reference the Russian concept of a strategic region, described below.

Other Russian analysts have discussed different ways to ensure TVD security. One of those is to use robotics on a huge scale. Russia's eleven time zones are manned with only 145 million people. Therefore, Russia's mobilization potential to cover such a huge expanse is limited. Russia's enormous territory and extended borders indicate that the size of all TVDs include thousands of kilometers. Further, with the expansion of a TVD's borders, new ways are needed to secure them, since potential adversaries exceed Russia significantly in population size and mobilization resources. One of those methods was the extended use of robots. With the resolution of strategic and tactical tasks thus growing more complicated due to new threats, the robotization of borders is necessary. One report noted that Russia must, "first and foremost create robotic

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[31] V. V. Gerasimov, "The Role of the General Staff in the Organization of the Country's Defense in Accordance with the New *Statue on the General Staff*, Approved by the President of the Russian Federation," *Vestnik Akademii voennykh nauk (Journal of the Academy of Military Science),* No. 1 2014, p. 19. The author would like to thank Dr. Harold Orenstein for his translation of this article and the following three Gerasimov speech translations.

[32] V. V. Gerasimov, "The Experience of Strategic Leadership in the Great Patriotic War and the Organization of Uniform Command and Control of the Country's Defense under Contemporary Conditions," *Vestnik Akademii voennykh nauk (Journal of the Academy of Military Science),* No. 2 2015, p. 12.

[33] Ibid., p. 13.

[34] V. V. Gerasimov, "Contemporary Warfare and Current Issues for the Defense of the Country," *Vestnik Akademii voennykh nauk (Journal of the Academy of Military Science),* No. 2 2017, p. 12.

[35] V. V. Gerasimov, "The Influence of the Contemporary Nature of Armed Struggle on the Focus of the Construction and Development of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. Priority Tasks of Military Science in Safeguarding the Country's Defense," *Vestnik Akademii voennykh nauk (Journal of the Academy of Military Science),* No. 2 2018, p. 18.

[36] Ibid.

fortified regions and unmanned defensive belts, cover flanks, conduct reconnaissance, and resolve similar tasks."[37] Naturally some of those robotic elements may be space-based while others may utilize electronic or sensor monitoring devices.

2.1.1 Slipchenko's Aerospace TVD Forecast Comes Full Circle: A Recent Aerospace TVD Argument

In May 2011, General of the Army Makhmut Gareyev stated that the center of gravity and main effort had shifted to aerospace and that it is possible to speak of an aerospace TVD. He also noted that aerospace forces are at the "disposal of the operational-strategic commands (military districts with consideration of their new organization and purpose)."[38]

In 2013, there was an article (reviewed further in the section below on space TVDs) published in the Russian *Air-Space Defense Journal Online* titled "Operational Art: Space as a Theater of Military Operations: On Possible Forms and Methods of Combat Employment of Space Command Forces and Assets." In 2015, Russia's aerospace forces were reorganized. They now include the air force, air and missile defense forces, and space forces.

Also, in 2015, *Air-Space Defense Journal Online* published a very interesting discussion of aerospace TVDs. It noted that an infrastructure has been created on Earth (airfields, cosmodromes, command and control facilities, radars, etc.) and in the air (airborne command and control, communications, navigations facilities, refueling points, jammer aircraft loiter zones, etc.) for adventures in space. More importantly:

> An orbital grouping, which in peacetime performs missions of reconnaissance, navigation, and command and control, is deployed and functioning in space already now and is the product of operational preparation of outer space in the interests of war, although that concept also does not exist in official terminology.[39]

A final alignment of satellites can take hours or minutes, making it too late for the defending side to create a defensive posture able to repel such aggression. Accordingly, the author noted that an Aerospace TVD must be established in advance, it must be considered as independent, and it would include not just space forces but the air force and air and missile forces. Indicators of the establishment of an Aerospace TVD in Russia are numerous, to include the following citations: *The Aerospace Defense Officer's Guide* has a chapter titled "Aerospace Medium as a Theater of Military Operations"; and there are articles regularly published on Aerospace and even Space TVDs.[40]

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[37] P. A. Dul'nev, N. P. Pedenko, S. N. Starovoitov, and S. A. Sychev, "On the Issue of Developing Ground Forces Robots and Assessing the Effectiveness of Their Combat Employment," *Voennaya Mysl' (Military Thought)*, No. 7 2019, pp. 147-156. The author would like to thank Dr. Harold Orenstein for his translation of this article.

[38] Makhmut Gareyev, "Creation of Aerospace Defense Is a Most Important State Task: The Center of Gravity and Main Efforts of Armed Warfare Are Shifting into Aerospace," *Vozdushno-Kosmicheskaya Oborona (Air-Space Defense) Online*, 28 May 2011, at http://www.vko.ru/voennoe-strotelstvo/sozdanie-vko-vashneyshaya-gosudarstvennaya-zadacha.

[39] Krinitskiy.

[40] Ibid.

Dmitriy Rogozin, Director General of Russia's Space Enterprises, indicated in the book *War and Peace in Terms and Definitions* the following:

> TVD's can be continental, ocean, sea, and aerospace. An aerospace TVD is global aerospace within which major military-space and strategic air operations are possible involving military-space and missile-aviation forces of leading world states. This theater is distinguished by special conditions of armed warfare inherent only to it…including for repelling an enemy aerospace attack and for delivering strikes against facilities and armed forces from space.[41]

His military-political dictionary also noted that "the category of a TVD is used both in peacetime as well as in wartime as the base for planning operations, for developing measures to prepare the infrastructure, and for executing specific military-political and military-strategic missions during war."[42] The article ended noting that the preparation of strategic operations in aerospace must be designed to repel a surprise strategic attack from aerospace and be able to inflict destruction on an enemy's military-economic potential by actions of a meeting-engagement type or of retaliation.[43]

In August 2015 Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu further confirmed Slipchenko and Gareyev's focus on aerospace as the main TV. He stated that, in compliance with a presidential decree, a new branch of Russia's Armed Forces, the Aerospace Forces, began duty. He added that "Their creation was prompted by a shift of the 'center of gravity' in combat struggle to the aerospace sphere. Aviation, the air defense and missile defense forces, and the space forces and means of the Armed Forces have now been merged under a unified command."[44] Thus the focus on aerospace as a new center of gravity and TVD appears widespread and enumerated by important members of the defense community.

2.1.2 A Space TVD

As noted above, in 2013 the Russian *Air-Space Defense Journal Online* noted that space is a TVD. The article noted that the forms and methods of the combat employment of troops are the most important categories for military science. They are determined by weapon systems, their organization structure, and by personnel training levels.[45]

Forms of applying Space Command forces and assets include space surveillance and threat estimation; determination of foreign state preparations for attack; monitoring daily armed forces activities; and controlling orbital groupings of various Russian systems. Operational-tactical combined formations are in the form of independent reconnaissance-information operations,

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] *Interfax* (in English), 3 August 2015.

[45] Vasiliy Yakovlevich Dolgov and Yuriy Dmitriyevich Podgornykh, "Operational Art: Space as a Theater of Military Operations: On Possible Forms and Methods of Combat Employment of Space Command Forces and Assets," *Vozdushno-Kosmicheskaya Oborona Online (Air-Space Defense Online*), 10 April 2013.

which is the aggregate of the operations of such units coordinate by objectives, missions, place, and time under a single concept and plan on all strategic aerospace axes.[46]

Methods, the article noted, will be in accordance with the methodology of the Aerospace's Military Academy, which is based on selecting specific structural elements such as: number of spacecrafts performing missions such as detecting ballistic missile launches; forms of spacecraft distribution in orbits; monitoring of potential launch areas; orbital groupings involvement in monitoring launch areas; initial targeted spacecraft purposes; and number of missions executed by orbital groups.[47]

In addition to the focus on forms and methods the article noted two other areas of importance for space TVDs. First was the fact that the combat employment of forces and assets in space must begin long before combat operations on Earth unfold in traditional TVDs. Space forces must reconnoiter potential TVDs and other combat operation areas while also monitoring the actions of various countries in outer space. Second, space systems are in support of Russian Federation strategic operations. They support the development of "a strategic operation to defeat critically important enemy targets (SODCIT)." Space systems include reconnaissance, electronic intelligence, meteorological, navigation, communications, relay, and strike evaluation systems and means.[48]

Three authors writing in 2018 noted that there has been a geostrategic division of earth into Russian Federation military security interests. This division enables operational-strategic planning for force employments, the timely preparation of defensive infrastructure facilities, and the organization and conduct of operational preparation measures, among other issues. They then noted the following:

> The appearance and development of space weapons has resulted in the emergence of the concepts 'strategic aerospace axis,' 'strategic space zone (SSZ),' and '**space theater of military operations**,' which reflect the view of near-earth space as a new sphere of armed struggle.[49]

It was noted that Russia's geostrategic area views near-Earth space as an SSZ. It is here that orbital groupings of space systems deploy, are outfitted, or replenished. Near-Earth space includes three operational space zones (OSZ), 100 kilometers to 2000 kilometers (near OSZ), 2000 kilometers to 20,000 kilometers (mid OSZ), and greater that 20,000 (distant OSZ). The U.S. does not divide near-Earth space into zones. It tends instead to discuss orbits and distances. Joint Publication 3-14, Space Operations, noted the following orbits and distances from Earth: Low Earth Orbit (LEO) up to 1000 miles, Medium Earth Orbit (MEO) 1000 to 22,000 miles, Highly

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] S. P. Nikolaev, V. N. Kuz'min, and O. E. Kaminskii, "The Features of an Assessment of the Strategic Space Zone as an Element of the Geostrategic Area," *Vestnik Akademii voennykh nauk (Journal of the Academy of Military Science),* No. 2 2018, p. 93. The author would like to thank Dr. Harold Orenstein for his translation of this article.

Elliptical Orbits (HEO) 600 miles at perigee and 25,000 miles at apogee, and Geosynchronous Orbit (GEO) 23,000 miles.[50]

The Russian authors then talked about orbits as well instead of zones. They wrote that 48 percent of orbits are geo-stationary (telecommunications and geo-meteorological support), 36 percent are low orbit (visual and detailed surveillance/observation, mapping of land surfaces, adjusting radio-technical resources), 10 percent highly-elliptical (strategic land surfaces monitored by geo-stationary orbits), and 6 percent mid-altitude orbits (global navigation systems).[51] Orbital resources are, as a rule, robotic technical structures whose purpose can involve periodic maneuvers in associate with previously defined tasks or as protective measures from the danger of asteroids or space debris.[52] Tasks can also include reconnaissance or the inspection or destruction of foreign satellites.

The authors stated that space domain's basic feature is its extraterritoriality, which "is not subject to national appropriation" by declaring national sovereignty in it. This makes it possible for detailed reconnaissance and other activities from space, which are "excluded with respect to the airspace over the territories of other states."[53] The strategic importance of an SSZ is that it reflects the military-political, military-economic, strategic, and military-geographic importance of the SSZ for safeguarding the Russian Federation's military security.[54]

A portion of any country's national interests can be found in an SSZ. Interests include a state's ability to increase its military presence in the domain; to determine threats affecting military security; to establish national security goals for operations in the SSZ; to safeguard a state's interests in space, and to use space for military purposes as reflected in space doctrines.[55] Other factors to take into consideration about the SSZ are the time that other nations will need to increase their information potential in space; the time before space is militarized and an arms race occurs or strikes are delivered from space; and the forms and methods of military operations in the SSZ.[56]

Other factors to closely monitor are Russia's rocket-space industry and rocket-space equipment potential and capabilities as well as the development of the same issues in foreign nations.[57] It also remains important to focus on the development of combat space resources (to include those based on new physical principles) and resources for the anti-satellite struggle.[58]

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[50] *Joint Publication 3-14, Space Operations*, 10 April 2018 Incorporating Change 1 26 October 2020, pp. I-11, I-12.

[51] Nikolaev, Kuz'min, Kaminskii, pp. 94-95.

[52] Ibid., p. 97.

[53] Ibid., p. 98.

[54] Ibid., p. 100.

[55] Ibid., p. 99.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid., p. 100.

2.2 Theater Strategic Operations

While it is difficult to find a Soviet or Russian source indicating that the theater-strategic operation existed, exceptions can be found. A definition of the term does not exist in the Russian military encyclopedic dictionaries. However, a few premier U.S. authorities on the Soviet military have discussed the topic and pointed the way to finding sources. In 1988 two premier U.S. Soviet experts, Harriet Fast Scott and her husband William F. Scott, referenced a TSMO (preferring the term theater-strategic military operations, TMSO, instead of theater-strategic military action, TSMA) in the index to their important volume *Soviet Military Doctrine*. No page numbers were listed in the index for a TMSO, just the note to "See Strategic (military) operations." The index did list numerous pages referencing a "Theater of military action/operations (TVD)."

In searching the page references for a "strategic (military) operation" the Scotts referenced the well-known (at the time!) publication of General Staff Chief Nikolay Ogarkov, *Always in Readiness to Defend the Homeland*. He stated that:

> In connection with this one should evidently consider as the principal operation in the war of today not the front but rather a larger-scale form of military operations—the theater strategic operation. During such an operation each front (fleet) can conduct two or more front operations in succession, with brief pauses and even without pauses.[59]

Another premier expert who used TSMA instead of TSMO was David Glantz, who referenced the Voroshilov Lectures of 1990 as his source. These lectures were compiled by an Afghan Armed Forces Colonel, Ghulam Dastagir Wardak, who had attended the Voroshilov General Staff Academy and subsequently developed his notes into working documents. Other than the Ogarkov citation, these notes are probably the closest Soviet source we have on the TSMA topic. Wardak seems to imply that a Theater of Strategic Military Action (TSMA) is just a TVD, nothing more. For example, in Volume I of his notes, in the index for a TVD he states simply "See TSMA" with no further page for a TVD in the volume. In Volume II he notes early that the use of TSMA and TVD is an "either/or" situation.[60]

Glantz noted the following:

> From the early 1970s to the mid-1980s, in response to the perceived U.S. and NATO threats, Soviet military theorists embraced the concept of the theater-strategic operation, which replaced the nuclear-dominant strategy of the 1960s and emphasized conventional aspects of future war. With broadening prospects for large-scale combined-arms operations occurring in future war, with or without the

[59] Nikolay Vasil'yevich Ogarkov, *Always in Readiness to Defend the Homeland*, USSR Ministry of Defense Publishing House, 1982, pp. 34-35.

[60] Graham Hall Turviville, Jr., *The Voroshilov Lectures: Materials from the Soviet General Staff Academy, Volume II: Issues of Soviet Military Strategy*, National Defense University Press, 1990, p. 4. In the index to Volume I of the lectures, under TVD, it states only "see TSMA" with no further explanation.

> use of nuclear weapons, the Soviets sought to develop concepts which could produce strategic victory within continental theaters of military operations.[61]

However, in 2019 a Russian author, writing in the authoritative *Journal of the Academy of Military Science*, stated that strategic operations on a TVD were in use with military districts (see section below). So, the concept remains viable. Also, of potential consideration as another "theater strategic operation" would be Russia's focus on Strategic Operations to Defeat Critically Important Targets, or SODCIT. For purposes of this discussion, since it is target focused, this author has put that discussion under the heading "strategic areas" below, since that topic includes military-industrial, political, and other targets of significance.

2.2.1 Military Districts

Joint Publication 1-02 defines a U.S. combatant command as follows:

> Combatant command (command authority) — Nontransferable command authority, which cannot be delegated, of a combatant commander to perform those functions of command over assigned forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces; assigning tasks; designating objectives; and giving authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations, joint training, and logistics necessary to accomplish the missions assigned to the command. Also called COCOM. See also combatant command; combatant commander; operational control; tactical control. (JP 1)[62]

The Soviet 1983 *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary* defines a military district (shortened version, as it is rather long) as follows:

> Territorial combined-arms large strategic formation, encompassing combined units, units, military educational institutions, and various local military establishments. The practice of dividing a country's territory into military districts is followed in many countries and is for the purpose of ensuring the conduct of measures connected with preparing a country and its armed forces for war and organizing the training of troops and headquarters staffs in a more purposeful manner.[63]

Russia's most likely combatant command equivalent is the military district, as both are based on geographic vectors in the U.S. (or outside it) and Russia. Russia currently has four military districts (west, south, central, and east) and a northern (Arctic) joint strategic command. However, the latter is slated to be designated as a military district on 1 January 2021. Russia does not have military districts (combatant command equivalents) outside of Russia proper, but does have membership with other nations in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan) and other nonmilitary organizations.

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[61] Glantz, p. 170.

[62] *Joint Publication 1-02*, p. 38.

[63] Ogarkov, *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary*, p. 147.

The five military districts are also referred to as "Joint Strategic Commands (*Ob'edinyennoe strategicheskoe komandovanie*)" or "OSKs" and are designed to stop or at least slow threats to the border areas of each. And each, in its own way, represents a TV versus a particular adversary near the district in question; and from where TVDs would be employed if a war breaks out. It is suspected that the OSK/MD functions as a front-level command and as a strategic axis such as Gerasimov underscored (although Gerasimov stressed precision weapons and cruise missile carriers along strategic axis more than units); and that operational-strategic axes would probably be handled by the combined arms or tank armies manning the OSK.

The National Defense Management Center (NDMC) of the RF, mentioned above, has subordinate to it the Center for the Control of Nuclear Forces, the Combat Control Center (multi-departmental force groupings and the large formations, formations, and military units in the Armed Forces of the RF), and the Center for the Command and Control of Everyday Activities. In wartime one of the most important tasks of the NDMC is information support to the *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command about the situation in theaters of military operations, the transmission of *Stavka* instructions to the troops, and control over their execution. While the NDMC thus appears to be in command and control of the theater of war, the military district/OSK appears to be the command-and-control element in charge of TVDs in the district in question. Perhaps the greatest hint that this is the case is the title of a 2018 article by the leader of the Southern District, General-Colonel A. V. Dvornikov: "Forms of the Combat Employment and Organization of the Command and Control of Integrated Armed Forces Groupings on a Theater of Military Operations." This indicates that the NDMC or the military district/joint strategic command could be acting, from a U.S. and terminology perspective, as the "rough" overall JADC2 equivalent for the Russian military. JADC2 means a lot of things, thus the NDMC must be included here.

Gerasimov noted in his 2015 presentation to the Academy of Military Science that "In peacetime the fleets and Air Force and Air Defense formations are subordinate to the commanders of the military districts." This implies that these interservice groupings (joint) are controlled from the districts. In his 2018 presentation at the Academy, he stated the following:

> The possibility of the emergence of armed conflicts simultaneously on various **strategic axes** has predetermined the creation of interservice force groupings in the make-up of military districts to ensure the effective conduct of military operations in times of both peace and war. They are being improved by means of the balanced development of the Armed Forces' services and branches and by an increase in the level of their outfitting with contemporary weapons and military equipment.[64]

Thus, it appears that control over interservice groupings has morphed from peacetime to peacetime and wartime.

There was also an interesting *Military Thought* article describing the command-and-control apparatus of a military district, from which comparisons with JADC2 could be made. The Uniform

[64] V. V. Gerasimov, "The Influence of the Contemporary Nature of Armed Struggle on the Focus of the Construction and Development of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. Priority Tasks of Military Science in Safeguarding the Country's Defense," *Vestnik Akademii voennykh nauk (Journal of the Academy of Military Science),* No. 2 2018, p. 19.

Automated Control System for military districts (region) (MD UACS) was created in 2019. It became important to establish an MD UACS to control district forces that are dispersed over vast distances.[65] The change was made after recognizing that the information superiority was a vital center of struggle and that control links had switched from vertical to network-centric, along with weapons control for strategic, operational, and tactical control levels.[66] Mobile MD UACSs were developed to reduce preparation time of situational data as well as the gathering and downloading of data. This enabled a better concurrence of views of the structure and content of joint work of control bodies at C2 posts for the services and power ministries.[67]

The aim of the MD UACS is to accelerate operational decision-making and operational planning, enhancing troop maneuverability and situation awareness, and maximizing combat capabilities.[68] The system will also integrate reconnaissance assets to apply future strike and support systems of different troop branches more effectively. In summation the MD UACS will:

- Increase stability and continuity of control.
- Improve consistency of application according to a single plan.
- Shorten time for preparing situational data.
- Reduce control processes for all activities.
- Increase the validity and reliability of situational analysis.
- Improve reasoning processes when deciding and planning actions.[69]

Finally, a 2019 article noted that the use of joint operations was now so widespread that the General Staff created military districts as interservice territorial operational-strategic formations, comprising interservice groupings of troops required to repel forecasted military threats to an area of responsibility. The author then stated the following:

> A new form of employing military district troops (forces) was proposed—the strategic operation on a theater of military operations as a joint operation of large formations, formations, and military units of all services, branches, and special forces, conducted under the general leadership of the commander of the operations-strategic grouping of troops (forces) on the theater of military operations.[70]

2.2.2 Strategic Areas and Strategic Axes

The *1983 Military Encyclopedic Dictionary* defined a strategic area (*strategicheskii raion*) as follows:

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[65] V. Ye. Yanov, O. A. Kudrenko, and V. V. Tsarelunga, "The History of Creating a Uniform Automated Control System for a Military District (Region)," *Voennaya Mysl' (Military Thought*), No. 5 2020, pp. 151, 157.

[66] Ibid., p. 152.

[67] Ibid., p. 153.

[68] Ibid., p. 155.

[69] Ibid., pp. 157-158

[70] V. I. Ostankov, "The Nature of Contemporary Military Conflicts and Its Influence on Military Strategy," *Vestnik Akademii voennykh nauk (Journal of the Academy of Military Science),* No. 2. 2019, p. 32. The author would like to thank Dr. Harold Orenstein for his translation of this article.

> Strategic area/region: Individual strategically important parts of a theater of military operations, including military forces, military-industrial, administrative-political, and economic centers and installations located in that area.[71]

The British Army's *The Army Field Manual, Volume II, Part 2: A Treatise on Soviet Operational Art* noted the following about a strategic region:

> Strategic regions are part of a TVD where objectives of fundamental strategic significance are located. These are missile, air, and naval bases; major groupings of field forces; major control centers; nuclear depots; areas in which strategic reserves are formed; logistic bases; and industrial energy producing and administrative-political centers.[72]

The occupation or destruction of these areas can not only change a strategic situation in a TVD but also alter the correlation of forces therein, to include economic, political, and military correlations.[73] Today, with the ability to reach anywhere on the planet in seconds (cyber) or minutes (hypersonic), one wonders if the term strategic region has been supplemented with the Strategic Operations to Defeat Critically Important Targets (SODCIT) concept. The SODCIT concept implies deep reach into an opponent's rear area and threats there to political, economic, military, and information infrastructures and targets of strategic significance. While there is little in the open military literature about this concept, it has apparently been discussed in Russia for several years.

In 2010, for example, a *Red Star* article noted that changes wars would be reflected in the various forms in which the Armed Forces are used. The article's author, Marina Yeliseyeva, wrote that "The **strategic operation to destroy critically important facilities** has been developed."[74] Retired Colonel General Viktor Barynkin added "it has become expedient to combine strategic defensive and offensive operations and strategic operations in the ocean theater of hostilities into a single strategic operation."[75] This appears to border on a planetary and not a strategic operation.

Another important term is the strategic direction or axis (*strategicheskoe napravlenie*). It was defined in 1983 in the following manner:

> Strategic axis: Part of a theater of military operations which encompasses a large area with adjacent water area of seas (oceans) and aerospace. Large forces of the branches of service performing operational-strategic missions, are the boundaries of a strategic sector (theater command [NATO]).[76]

Gerasimov has mentioned **strategic axes** at times in his yearly presentations at the Academy of Military Science. In 2015, for example, he noted that:

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[71] Ogarkov, *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary*, p. 711.

[72] British Army, *The Army Field Manual, Volume II, Part 2: A Treatise on Soviet Operational Art*, Revised 1991, pp. 3-1, 3-2.

[73] Ibid., p. 3-2.

[74] Marina Yeliseyeva, "Lessons for All Time," *Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star) Online*, 27 October 2010.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ogarkov, *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary* p. 711.

> The principal duty of the National Defense Control Center is to monitor, analyze, and forecast the development of the situation on **strategic axes** and in problem regions, provide information support for decisions made by the leadership of the country and the Armed Forces, and coordinate the activities of federal executive authorities with respect to issues of safeguarding the country's defense.[77]

In 2018 he mentioned **strategic axes** at several places in his presentation. He stated that "Each joint strategic command bears the responsibility for the combat readiness of its subordinate forces and for the safeguarding of the Security of the Russian Federation on its **strategic axis"**[78] and that "The possibility of the emergence of armed conflicts simultaneously on various **strategic axes** has predetermined the creation of interservice force groupings in the make-up of military districts to ensure the effective conduct of military operations in times of both peace and war."[79] Gerasimov added that special attention is being focused on the development of precision weapons, with groupings of long-range, air-, sea-, and land-based cruise missile carriers being created on each **strategic axis** to provide deterrence in strategically important regions.[80] Strategic exercises review the readiness of command and control organs to operate as part of interservice groupings on **strategic axes**. However, the enlargement of the spatial scope of military operations implies that formations and military units now must move great distances on **strategic axes**.[81]

2.3 Operational Design (*Zamysel Operatsii*)

Operational design is an important concept for U.S. military planners, and it is taught throughout the military higher education system. It is intended to help the commander and staff visualize the operational environment, and help them solve complex problem sets. The Department of Defense defines operational design as "…the conception and construction of the framework that underpins a campaign or major operation plan and its subsequent execution."[82] For Russia, this concept was defined in the *Soviet Military Encyclopedic Dictionary* as follows:

> A broad outline of forthcoming combat operations. It includes: direction or axis of the main attack and other thrusts (area of concentration of main efforts); sequence and modes of accomplishing the adversary's defeat; procedure of delivery of fire for effect and, in a nuclear war, nuclear weapons as well; force groupings and tactical order of battle (disposition).[83]

Operational design kicks in after a TVD has been determined and forces must now be provided with missions. A follow-on to the description of operational design was the "decision for an operation (*reshenie na operatsiyu*)." It was defined as follows:

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[77] Gerasimov, 2015 presentation, p. 13.

[78] Ibid., p. 15.

[79] Gerasimov, 2018 presentation, p. 19.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid., p. 20.

[82] *Joint Publication 1-02*, p. 195.

[83] Ogarkov, *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary*, p. 264.

> The manner, procedure, modes, and methods of accomplishing an assigned mission as specified by a commander. It includes the concept of operations, missions assigned to the troops (forces), fundamentals of teamwork and coordination, support, and organization of command and control. The operations plan (battle plan) is the basis of command and control of troops (forces). It is made as a result of mission briefings and estimates of the situation. Data and information for decision-making and planning are prepared by the staff, chefs of combat arms, special troops, and services. Battle decision-making and planning are usually done with a map, with refining and detailing done on the terrain at the first opportunity.[84]

This type of planning is most likely done at the military district (TVD) level since strategic level planning would be done for a TV at the NDMC.

2.4 Territorial Defense

While the government determines the mobilization's scope and the rate of involvement of the nation's national resources, it is the job of the General Staff, Sokolovsky noted in 1968, to determine how long it will take to develop a comprehensive mobilization plan and provide information to the military districts for planning purposes.[85] In the past mobilization included only the territories of certain military districts in the vicinity of a probable TVD.[86] That seems to have changed with the fact that Russia is now considered as a TVD. There is more emphasis on the reserve system and the ability to muster elements of specific agencies (National Guard, Federal Security Service, Ministry of Emergency Situations, etc.) for assistance in times of crises.

Of interest is that the journal *Military Thought* has now started publishing articles on Russia's territorial defense and mobilization plans. One appeared in 2018 and one in 2019. Territorial defense (TD) has taken on new meaning, the 2018 article noted, since there are more active steps by subversive forces and illegal armed formations than before. Such threats require a single national system or TD, and as conflict escalates it is important that:

> All state entities and power departments be prepared for promptly building up efforts to carry out the task set to them and resort to response measures both of a warning law-enforcing nature and other power actions by federal executive bodies consistent with the level of the threat.[87]

TD headquarters are tasked with ensuring coordination of joint actions among agencies, formations, and organizations with TD measures; and ensuring coordination of TD measures of introducing and maintaining the martial law regime and of mobilization, civil defense, and

[84] Ibid., p. 636.

[85] Sokolovsky, p. 376.

[86] Ibid., p. 372.

[87] I. L. Kardash, "A New Approach to Organizing Territorial Defense at the Regional Level," *Voennaya Mysl' (Military Thought)*, No. 9 2018, pp. 34-35.

countering terrorism.[88] Territorial troops are tasked with carrying out these measures. TD is a system of measures carried out during the martial law period:

- to guard and defend military, important state and specialized assets, facilities ensuring the life support of the public, the functioning of transport and communications, electric power facilities, extra-hazardous facilities affecting people's life and health and the environment.
- to counter subversion and reconnaissance, formations of foreign states and illegal armed formations, to discover, prevent, curb, minimize and/or eliminate the consequences of their subversive, reconnaissance, and terrorist activity.
- and to create favorable conditions for the functions of the said facilities and employment of the RF Armed Forces, other troops, military formations, and task forces set up for the wartime period.[89]

TD work with National Guard Troops (which are more of a Presidential praetorian guard than a U.S. National Guard equivalent), those of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Federal Security Service, and Emergency situations Ministry. TD troops forestall actions of an adversary by creating conditions to prevent making use of information, technological, tactical, and other advantages.[90]

In 2019, three authors described how the U.S. is using hybrid warfare tactics against Russia. They stated that the U.S. is "provoking internal chaos in the country and destabilizing the work of state agencies of authority. This is the essence of the Trojan Horse strategy, which is in fact a variety of hybrid warfare waged against the Russian Federation."[91] Russian authorities have stated a series of problems to solve. First is maintain stable order in rear areas that measure over considerable distances, an impossible task for just regular troops. Just guarding crucial facilities in the depth of the nation must involve the use of TD. Second, organizing and staffing the TD is difficult. The TD may have to act as a general force reserve if an adversary breaks through into the depth of the country.[92] Third, guerrilla warfare must be organized to fight territories occupied by adversaries. Finally, since fighting may break out all over the state territory at once, forces and assets must prepare and be deployed in advance. There are two potential ways to accomplish this. One is that when planning for mobilization deployments there is a need to create new manning units to increase the strength of a general reserve. It is cheaper to do this than to pay for the restoration of crucial facilities. A second option would be to just increase the size of the National Guard.[93]

Authorities realize the nation already possesses Cossack organizations, which already have a territorial system, private security enterprises, and military patriotic clubs (local war and military conflict veterans, etc.). difficulties here involve creating a mechanism of control of the functions

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[88] Ibid., p. 35.

[89] Ibid., p. 37.

[90] Ibid., p. 38.

[91] V. L. Dorokhov, A. I. Petrushin, and G. A. Nikonorov, 'Tailoring Territorial Defense to Hybrid Warfare," *Voennaya Mysl' (Military Thought*), No. 12 2019, p. 39.

[92] Ibid., p. 42.

[93] Ibid., pp. 43-45.

of the organizations. The authors concluded noting that the ratio between deployed units and those of regular in the TD forces should vary by size in each military district. This is because some districts have more items to guard and defend, and the military-political situation in each district will also play a role. What is important to remember, they add, is that legal, organizational, and economic issues need to be implemented without delay.[94]

TD forces are also focused on upsetting U.S. "Multisphere Battle" plans [Russian reference to multi-domain operations], whose goal was to "neutralize measures conducted by the Russian Armed Forces to thwart the deployment of U.S. and NATO force near the border of the Russian Federation."[95] One of the ways to solve this problem was the creation of wartime military districts and giving them additional function, according to one author. He also noted that President Putin had decided to improve Russia's territorial defense (TD) system. It was stated that their numerical size by 2020 "should reach 900,000 servicemen" and that "TD headquarters are being formed in the subjects of the Russian Federation."[96]

3 Conclusions

This paper examined advancements in Russian geostrategic and homeland security planning, from planetary to territorial capabilities, that were influenced by the changing context of warfare due to military-technical advances in weaponry. The focus did not, as mentioned above, include a discussion of several planning aspects (forecasting, trends, correlation of forces) since they were brought up earlier in a separate paper on Russian military thought.[97] Nor was a specific decision-making methodology advanced, other than a brief mention under operational design (decision for an operation [*reshenie na operatsiyu]*). That discussion is the subject of future analysis. With those omissions noted and why, there were several items of interest about current Russian planning to highlight.

First, **Russia considers itself as a TVD**. It noted how Soviet Marshall Sokolovsky, writing in 1968, had stated that "the preparation of the territory of the country as a TVD" is now necessary since the whole territory of Russia, not just the border regions, can be covered by an opposing force's nuclear and nonnuclear weaponry. Missile launch facilities are areas of concern to be protected in a homeland TVD.

Second, **aerospace is gradually becoming the main theater of war within planetary TVDs.** General-Major Slipchenko, in 2002, noted that entire land and sea masses, aerospace, the state of a countries' strategic strike and defensive forces, and all troop (force) movements will need to be monitored "within **planetary theaters of war (operations**)" since existing reconnaissance-strike systems can attack with non-contact strategic air-space-sea strikes on any country in any region without advance build-up of forces and weapons.

[94] Ibid., pp. 46-47.

[95] Ostankov, p.32.

[96] Ibid.

[97] The paper is available online: https://www.mitre.org/sites/default/files/publications/pr-19-1004-russian-military-thought-concepts-elements.pdf

Third, a new TVD is in town, the **space theater of military operations.** In 2018, three authors noted that space weapons have resulted in the emergence of the concepts "strategic aerospace axis," "strategic space zone (SSZ)," and "**space theater of military operations."** They reflect the view of a new sphere of armed struggle. Clearly Russia's understanding of TVs and TVDs changed dramatically over the years as reflected in these new concepts.

Fourth, and perhaps most important, General Staff **attention is focused on developing precision weapons, with groupings of long-range, air-, sea-, and land-based cruise missile carriers being created on each strategic axis to provide deterrence in strategically important regions.** With this statement Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov has included strategic axes in aerospace, space, and other TVDs. Gerasimov noted, for example, that the potential for conflicts to appear simultaneously on various **strategic axes** has caused military districts to ensure the effective preparation of the district's military operations in times of both peace and war. This ensures ways to establish information and weapons superiority in the initial period of war, should one break out. This appears to be a defensive reaction to an adversary's plans.

Further, Gerasimov stated that there has been a shift from sequential and concentrated operations to continuous and dispersed operations, even in remote TVDs. The borders of TVDs are substantially expanding in his view and now encompass regions with targets of military and economic potential located at a significant distance from zones where military operations are being directly conducted. Space systems are in support of Russian Federation strategic operations that could support a strategic operation designed to destroy critically important infrastructure of an opponent. Space systems include reconnaissance, electronic intelligence, meteorological, navigation, communications, relay, and strike evaluation systems and means. This could signal Russian thinking regarding offensive operations, to include strategic axes that include SODCIT complexes of special concern. Space forces appear to control C2 for both orbiting spacecraft and for associated ground assets.

Regarding space forces, one source noted that approximately 80 percent of Russian civil, military, dual-use, and scientific satellites are controlled by the Main Space Test Center (GIKTs) in Krasnoznamensk, Russia.[98] (The center also provides launch support for rockets and ICBMs.) The GIKTs is manned by approximately 1,000 Aerospace Forces personnel at the headquarters and at other telemetry monitoring facilities located throughout Russia. The GIKTs reportedly executes over 1,000 satellite command and control sessions daily.[99] Mr. Charles Bartles, who writes on numerous Russian capabilities, noted the following:

> In the U.S. system, there are distinctly different command authorities and legal constraints regarding intelligence (Title 50) and military (Title 10) systems, which have no singular command and control authority until it reaches the Secretary of Defense. The Russian system requires substantially less bureaucratic overhead. The Russians make no distinction between military and intelligence systems, and

[98] Dmitriy Boltenkov, "Telescopic War: A Range of 300 Million Kilometers is no Limit," *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* Online, 12 April 2016, <http://vpk-news.ru/articles/30070>, accessed 1 June 2017.

[99] "Intensity of Aerospace Defense Troops Control Sessions Rose in 2013," *Russian Ministry of Defense* Online, 2 January 2014, <http://www.mil.ru>, accessed 1 June 2017. Information provided by Mr. Charles Bartles, "The Future of Russia's Missile Warning System," from a paper sent to this author on 28 December 2020.

> most government systems are controlled by one branch of the Russian military, the Aerospace Forces [reformed in 2015 in include the air force, air and missile defense, and space forces] …[100] The purpose of this reform was to place almost all of air and space under one commander to streamline command and control.[101]

See Appendix One for a diagram of Russia's Aerospace concept and C2.

Fifth, **TD mobilization capabilities have been increased**, which will help ensure the safety of Russia as a TVD from which operations (missile launches, etc.) will occur. President Putin, in conjunction with Defense Minister Shoygu, appear to have made TD improvements in conjunction and coordination with the National Guard, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and other federal agencies. One author stated that the numerical strength of the TD was slated to jump to 900,000 personnel in 2020. The headquarters of these defense forces will apparently work in unison with the military districts in which they are located. As noted earlier, Russia intends to declare the Northern Command to be a military district on 1 January 2021, making the number of districts increase from four to five.

Finally, the National Defense Management Center (NDMC) of the RF, mentioned above, is thought to be the controlling agency for the peacetime preparation and coordination of forces across the nation. In wartime one of the most important tasks of the NDMC is information support to the *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command about the situation in theaters of military operations, the transmission of *Stavka* instructions to the troops, and control over their execution. While the **NDMC thus appears to be the command-and-control element of the TV if conflict erupts, the military district/OSK appears to be the command-and-control element in charge of TVDs** in in the operational-strategic sense for the involved district. It is not known if the Security Council of Russia or the NDMC (if manned by the President, Minister of Defense, and General Staff [Main Operations Department]) would oversee the war's overall conduct.

Thus, Russian geostrategic planning is continuing and, in accordance with Slipchenko and other's foresight nearly 20 years ago, is focused on new TVDs (aerospace and space) that have resulted from advancements in long-range weaponry of hypersonic speeds. Planning is also focused on developing TD forces that will support regular forces in times of attack on the nation, offering a counter guerrilla capability. The geostrategic planning effort appears to have placed the nation on a clear path chosen and developed by the current administration to ensure that Russia will not be unprepared for conflict as it has been in the past.

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[100] "Aerospace Forces Created in the Russian Armed Forces," *Interfax* Online, 3 August 2015, <http://www.interfax.ru/russia/457604>, accessed 1 June 2017. Information provided by Mr. Charles Bartles, "The Future of Russia's Missile Warning System," from a paper sent to this author on 28 December 2020.

[101] Charles Bartles, "The Future of Russia's Missile Warning System," paper sent to this author by Mr. Bartles on 28 December 2020.

Appendix A Russian Aerospace Command And Control

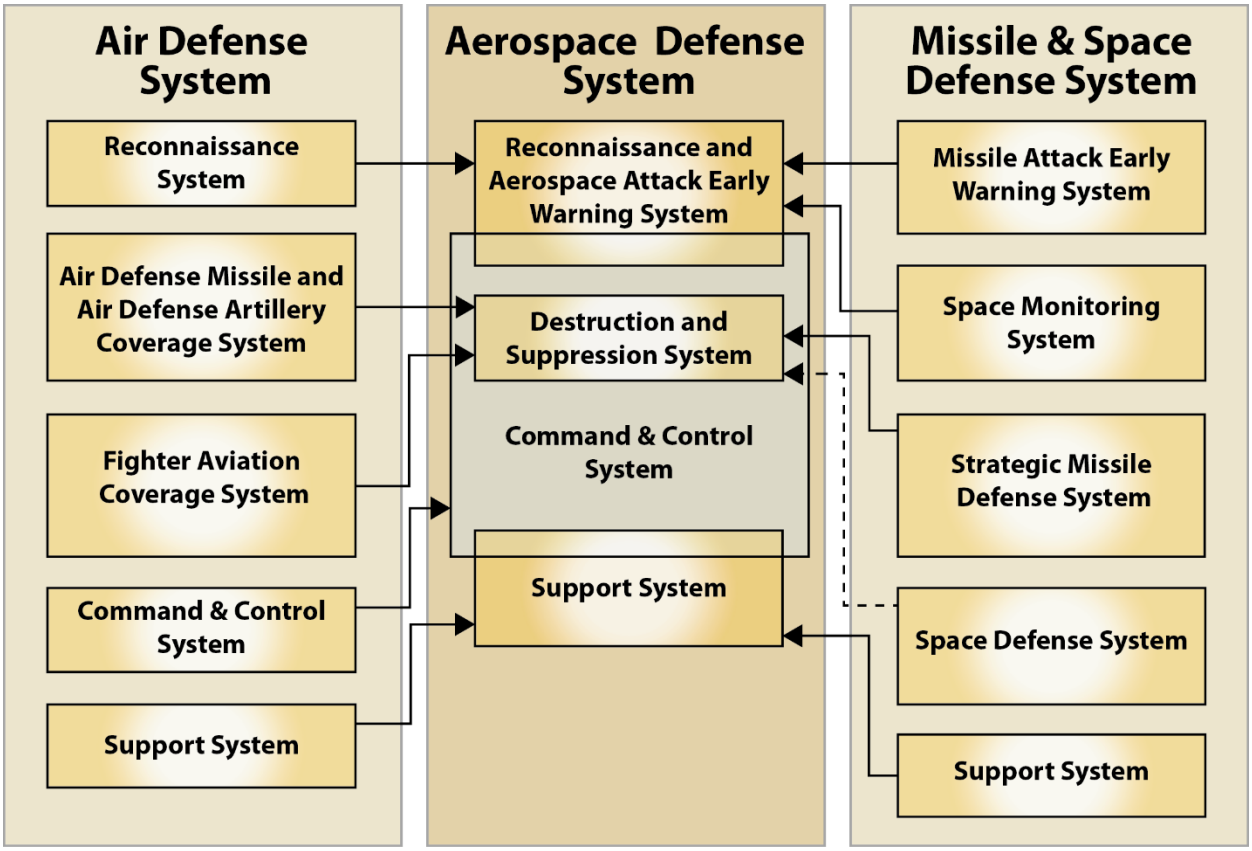

Figure 1. Russian Concept of Command and Control, and Interrelationship of Air, Space, and Missile Defense.

Recreated and translated by Mr. Charles Bartles from:
Major General Vladimir Lyaporov, "Integrated Command and Control Entity Required," *Vozdushno-Kosmicheskaya Oborona* Online, 31 December 2015, <http://www.vko.ru/oboronka/trebuetsya-edinyy-organ-upravleniya>, accessed 1 June 2017.