Small Wars & Insurgencies

ISSN: 0959-2318 (Print) 1743-9558 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fswi20

Hybrid, ambiguous, and non-linear? How new is Russia's 'new way of war'?

Mark Galeotti

To cite this article: Mark Galeotti (2016) Hybrid, ambiguous, and non-linear? How new is Russia's 'new way of war'?, Small Wars & Insurgencies, 27:2, 282-301, DOI: 10.1080/09592318.2015.1129170

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2015.1129170

SMALL WARS & INSURGENCIES, 2016
VOL. 27, NO. 2, 282–301
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2015.1129170

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Hybrid, ambiguous, and non-linear? How new is Russia's 'new way of war'?

Mark Galeotti

Center for Global Affairs, New York University, New York, USA

ABSTRACT
Russia's recent operations in Ukraine, especially the integrated use of militias, gangsters, information operations, intelligence, and special forces, have created a concern in the West about a 'new way of war', sometimes described as 'hybrid'. However, not only are many of the tactics used familiar from Western operations, they also have their roots in Soviet and pre-Soviet Russian practice. They are distinctive in terms of the degree to which they are willing to give primacy to 'non-kinetic' means, the scale of integration of non-state actors, and tight linkage between political and military command structures. However, this is all largely a question of degree rather than true qualitative novelty. Instead, what is new is the contemporary political, military, technological, and social context in which new wars are being fought.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 7 August 2015; Accepted 10 October 2015

KEYWORDS Russia; Ukraine; Crimea, hybrid warfare; asymmetric warfare; Spetsnaz

> Let us imagine two men who came with swords to fight a duel by all the rules of the art of fencing; the fighting went on for quite a long time; suddenly one of the adversaries, feeling himself wounded, realizing that it was not a joking matter, but something that concerned his life, threw down his sword and, picking up the first club he found, started brandishing it . . .
>
> Napoleon sensed that, and from the moment when he stopped in Moscow, in the correct position of a fencer, and instead of his adversary's sword, saw a club raised over him, he never ceased complaining to Kutuzov and the emperor Alexander that the war was being conducted against all the rules (as if there existed some sort of rules for killing people).
>
> Lev Tolstoy, *War and Peace*[1]

Russian operations in Ukraine – both the coup de main which saw the Crimea seized, and then the undeclared incursion into the south-eastern Donbass region – have raised Western concerns about a 'new way of war' supposedly

CONTACT Mark Galeotti mark.galeotti@nyu.edu

being deployed. To media observer Peter Pomerantsev, 'Putin is re-inventing warfare', to Latvian defence scholar Jānis Bērziņš, Russia is exploring 'new-generation warfare', to *IHS Janes*, this was a 'novel approach' to warfare.[2] Along with information warfare, Russia's most recent military engagements in Ukraine and more recently in Syria have in particular seen the increasing use of local actors and proxy forces to pursue its strategic ends.

However, beyond the fact that the two conflicts are rather different,[3] many of the tactics applied in the annexation of Crimea and destabilisation of the Donbass are familiar to other militaries and especially their special forces. Indeed, the use of militias and proxies has been central to Western operations in Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. This trend in the Russian case, though, grows from indigenous military and political traditions at least as much as it does from any doctrinal or political acknowledgement, like Western actors, of the increasingly limited utility of traditional expeditionary warfare with conventional forces.

After all, much that may seem new in the West is not at all that novel when considered within Soviet and even pre-Soviet Russian practice. Russia's current style of war reflects reforms dating back to 2008 and policy discussions going back much further than that. What really has changed is the context in which old methods are being applied. The outcome is a form of 'guerrilla geopolitics', a would-be great power, aware that its ambitions outstrip its military resources, seeks to leverage the methodologies of an insurgent to maximise its capabilities.

The 'new way of war' in Crimea

The Crimean Peninsula has long been of strategic and symbolic importance for Russia. It had been part of Ukraine since 1954, when former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev transferred it from Russian to Ukrainian control. In post-Soviet times, it remained home to Russia's Black Sea Fleet, under the terms of a renewable lease. At a time when church becomes increasingly important as a legitimating instrument for the Kremlin, it is also now venerated as the home of Russian Orthodoxy, where Prince Vladimir the Great of Kiev was baptised as an Orthodox Christian in 988, starting the Christianisation of the peoples of the early medieval Rus'.

Although there is reason to believe that contingency plans had been drawn up long before, with the collapse of the Ukrainian government of Viktor Yanukovych in February 2014, Vladimir Putin was faced with a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge was whether a new, Westward-leaning Ukrainian government would continue to allow Russia basing rights on the peninsula. From the author's conversations with serving and former Russian military and foreign affairs officials in Moscow, it is clear that there was a very real – if almost certainly wrong – belief that Kiev would abrogate the 2010 Kharkiv Pact, which extended basing rights until 2042, and even seek early entry to NATO.[4] Moscow had an opportunity to guarantee its long-term position in the Black Sea.

Furthermore, it could do so at a time when Kiev appeared disunited, its military chain of command both broken and mistrusted. These were ideal circumstances for the Kremlin to strike in such a way as to remind all Russia's neighbours of its continued will and ability to intervene and also to deliver a crowd-pleasing victory at home.

Yanukovych fled Kiev on 21 February 2014. The next day Putin held a meeting of his security chiefs to consider next steps. According to his own contribution to a Russian TV documentary aired in 2015, he closed it saying that 'we must start working on returning Crimea to Russia.' Already, though, there was open talk in Crimea, with its majority ethno-nationally Russian population, of some kind of Russian intervention. The next few days saw a number of pro-Moscow and anti-Kiev protests, which may have been orchestrated by Russian agents. More to the point, Russian forces began quietly to be mobilised. That day, the 45th Independent Special Purpose Regiment of the airborne forces was placed on immediate-readiness alert, along with the 3rd Brigade of the Spetsnaz special forces and two detachments of the 16th Spetsnaz Brigade.[5]

On 27 February, armed men began taking over strategic locations across the region, including the Supreme Council, its local legislature, where a new provisional government under Sergei Aksenov was proclaimed, and an emergency measure to hold a referendum on autonomy was adopted. Over the next week, it became clear that many of the armed men, the so-called 'little green men' (as they were often referred to in the West) or 'polite people' (in Russia), were Russian soldiers, who were then massively and openly reinforced from the mainland. Ukrainian loyalist elements on Crimea, left without clear orders or apparent support, ultimately were forced to surrender or withdraw. On 16 March, a local referendum – conducted with little preparation and no independent monitoring – recorded a 97% vote in support of secession from Ukraine and incorporation into Russia, something formally enacted by Moscow on 18 March, despite international condemnation.

The initial stage of the annexation saw the deployment of three distinct forces. The 'polite people' were Russian special and intervention forces, especially Spetsnaz and troops of the 810th Independent Naval Infantry Brigade, a marine unit attached to the Black Sea Fleet. Although they deployed without insignia – a ruse which led to several days of fevered speculation in Kiev and the West that this might be an operation not sanctioned by Moscow – their latest-model equipment and uniforms were distinctive, as was the professionalism with which they carried out their duties.

They were supported by elements of the local police force, especially the 'Berkut' public order unit. Crimean law enforcement structures not only shared much of the resentment felt by many citizens of the peninsula at what they felt were decades of neglect and maladministration from Kiev, they also appear to have been penetrated by Russian intelligence structures. Beyond this was also a motley assortment of armed 'local self-defence volunteers' playing a largely

auxiliary role. Dressed in a random mix of civilian and army surplus clothing, yet heavily armed, it has emerged that many were essentially local gangsters. After all, not only was (and is) organised crime a powerful force on the peninsula, but it had close connections with its Russian mainland counterparts, and Aksenov himself – in common with many members of the Crimean business and political elite – had reported underworld connections. According to Kiev, and corroborated by many law enforcement sources, in the 1990s he was a lieutenant in the 'Salem' group, going by the gang nickname 'Goblin', and while he had since moved into property and other 'upperworld' business, he retained his connections with that milieu.[6]

The particularly distinctive features of the Crimean operation thus seemed to be the deployment of forces in conditions of extreme secrecy – there has been no suggestion, for example, that Western intelligence agencies had any prior warning from either human or technical sources – combined with a wilful preparedness to lie about their provenance in a successful political campaign to wrong-foot both Ukraine and the West. Furthermore, they were supported not just by local allies but very specifically organised crime elements to provide both military and political muscle.

The 'new way of war' in the Donbass

If the seizure of Crimea was essentially a bloodless coup de main (a single Ukrainian soldier was killed by Russian troops), in which the role of the military was as much as anything else to demonstrate and preserve the transfer of authority from Kiev to Moscow, the conflict in south-eastern Ukraine was a very different one from the start. Crucially, the basic aim appears to have been different. Whereas Russia set out to annex Crimea, there seems to be, and have been, no real appetite to do the same with the grimy, smokestack Donbass region. Instead, the purpose was to put pressure on Kiev to force it to acknowledge Moscow's regional hegemony, something the Russians appear to have assumed was assured within a few months. Thus, if in Crimea the aim was to create a new order, in the Donbass it was as much as anything else to create chaos, even if a controlled, weaponised chaos.

Having essentially engineered a local insurrection by Russophones alarmed at the new regime in Kiev, Moscow set up proxy regimes – the so-called Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (DNR and LNR, respectively). They deployed their own militias, often-ramshackle arrays of local groups of volunteers, mercenaries, criminals, and defectors from the government side. The militias were stiffened, supported, and sometimes supervised by elements from Russia. These forces included genuine volunteers, from nationalists and Cossacks to mercenaries – largely recruited, armed, and brought into the country by Russian government structures – as well as serving military personnel. Some of the latter were ostensibly 'volunteers' fighting there while 'on leave' – although

this is technically in breach of Russian law and military regulations – but over time the Russians increasingly came to rely on direct deployments. Although Moscow continues as of writing to deny it has forces in the Donbass, Western and Ukrainian government sources and journalists have accumulated a wealth of evidence demonstrating that there are not only teams of advisors, trainers, and command personnel present attached to DNR and LNR forces, but also formed regular Russian units, largely comprising battalion tactical groups, drawn from multiple parent brigades.[7]

A much more significant role is currently being played by the intelligence and security agencies in the Donbass conflict, compared with Crimea. The GRU (Main Intelligence Directorate, military intelligence) appears not just to be providing its own Spetsnaz special forces, but also to be a primary agency providing and coordinating auxiliary units. Its operation in the nearby Russian city of Rostov-on-Don has been identified as the main routing station for volunteers heading to and from the war. In addition, it is likely to have been the originating force behind the 'Vostok Battalion', a unit that made a surprise entry into Donetsk in May 2014, briefly seizing the headquarters of the DNR's militias in what was likely to be a show of force to remind the locals of Moscow's position as their patron.[8] Originally made up extensively of Chechens who had previously served in a GRU-sponsored unit, it was quickly 'Ukrainianised' and placed under the command of Aleksandr Khodakovskii, a defector from the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU).

The GRU and the Federal Security Service (FSB) have also been implicated by Kiev and the West in a campaign of low-level terrorism behind the Ukrainian lines. This also extends to cyberattacks, which if past form in Estonia (2007) and Georgia (2008) is anything to go by, would have been the responsibility of autonomous Russian hackers encouraged and facilitated by the FSB.[9] More broadly, Moscow has also reached for a range of political and economic levers to bring pressure to bear on Kiev and also distract, divide, and deter the West from supporting it. There has been a sustained 'information war' campaign, painting Kiev as dominated by neo-Nazis and in Washington's pocket. There has also been selective use of Russia's 'hydrocarbon weapon', limiting gas supplies and seeking to leverage prices, as well as existing debts.

Competing perspectives

Western scholars and practitioners alike have struggled to find some agreed and useful definition for Russia's style of conflict in Ukraine. The most widely used one is 'hybrid war', from the term developed over a decade ago by the US military for blended political–military threats. However, this was essentially seen in the context of kinetic conflicts in which terrorism and even pseudo-criminal operations were used to support more conventional assets. Implicit was that it would generally be a tactic of insurgent states or non-state actors. Now

though, it is being demonstrated that it is not just a 'weapon of the weak' but can be employed by the dominant side in a conflict. This is something which had been raised in Western strategic debates, but had made relatively little headway within actual defence policy and doctrine planning circles.[10]

Hybrid war has become, in part by default, the accepted term for Russia's current approach, but as Jānis Bērziņš has acidly noted, 'the word hybrid is catchy, since it may represent a mix of anything'.[11] In the introduction to the latest edition of the International Institute for Strategic Studies' authoritative *Military Balance*, Russia's hybrid warfare is described as including

> the use of military and non-military tools in an integrated campaign designed to achieve surprise, seize the initiative and gain psychological as well as physical advantages utilising diplomatic means; sophisticated and rapid information, electronic and cyber operations; covert and occasionally overt military and intelligence action; and economic pressure.[12]

This is a good summary, although in many ways what is actually being described is an understanding that the corollary of the Clausewitzian doctrine that war is politics by other means is that politics can also be war by other means. There is already active and sometimes ferocious debate as to whether this is something truly new or not, and whether it is limited to certain specific theatres and contexts, rather than any wider evolution of military art.[13] However, the fundamental point is that the Russians themselves certainly believe not only that this is part of a new way of war, but also that it is one in which the use of direct force may well not be a central element of the conflict – or even not employed at all. As Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov put it in a now-infamous article in 2013,

> The focus of applied methods of conflict has altered in the direction of the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other nonmilitary measures – applied in coordination with the protest potential of the population. All this is supplemented by military means of a concealed character, including carrying out actions of informational conflict and the actions of special-operations forces. The open use of forces – often under the guise of peacekeeping and crisis regulation – is resorted to only at a certain stage, primarily for the achievement of final success in the conflict.[14]

What the Russians appear to be developing is a doctrine which is certainly not hybrid war as understood in the West, but a more complex and politically led form of contestation. Whether we call it 'full-spectrum warfare'[15] (which most closely fits Western nomenclature) or 'non-linear war' (a term deriving from a story written by Vladislav Surkov, Putin's former master political technologist[16]), it reflects Russian perceptions of how the military, political, and economic battlespace has changed. The Kremlin is in the midst of a revanchist backlash against what it sees as a cultural and geopolitical offensive by the West.[17] It is therefore actively taking advantage of whatever opportunities come its way to try and embarrass the West or remind them of the risks in treating Russia as a pariah.

More generally, as war becomes potentially more expensive in both political and economic terms, Moscow is taking advantage of the opportunities to use political and information operations to capitalise on Western reluctance to engage in open hostilities and to undermine any will to resist its encroachments. This is a sometimes carefully judged blending of hard and soft power. In a crucial study in the in-house journal *Voennaya mysl'*, Colonel Sergei Chekhinov, head of the General Staff's Centre for Military Strategic Studies and his colleague Lt. General (retd) Sergei Bogdanov note that

> strategic information warfare plays an important role in disrupting military and government leadership and air and space defense systems, misleading the enemy, forming desirable public opinions, organising anti-government activities, and conducting other measures in order to decrease the will of the opponent to resist.[18]

To this end, Russia's 'new way of war' can be considered simply a recognition of the primary of the political over the kinetic – and that if one side can disrupt the others' will and ability to resist, then the actual strength of their military forces becomes irrelevant.

New initiatives in Moscow

Whatever we call Moscow's current approach to making the most of relatively limited resources – at least compared with the West – while seeking to advance extensive regional ambitions, it appears to be the product of a series of military–political debates and organisational developments that came to fruition following the 2008 Georgian War.[19] After all, there had been serious discussion, especially dating back to the post-Afghanistan conversations of the 1990s, most notably in Makhmut Gareev's 1995 study *Esli zavtra voiny* ('If War Comes Tomorrow') and Savinkin and Domnin's 2007 edited collection *Groznoe oruzhie: Malaia voina, partizanstvo i drugie vidy asimmetrichnogo voevaniya v svete nasledi ya russkikh voennykh myslitelei* ('Terrible Weapons: Small War, Partisan, and Other Types of Asymmetrical Conflict in Light of the Legacy of Russian Military Thinkers'). However, these had largely been sidelined, in part because of a military conservatism hardly unique to the Russians, in part because of very specific crises of morale and resources.

In 2000, the Kremlin approved a National Security Concept document that was the basis for that year's new Military Doctrine. In theory, Russians approach doctrine as the foundation for everything from organisation and training to procurement and research, and the document did place a far greater emphasis than in the past on joint military–security agency cooperation, internal wars, and irregular conflicts. However, the real focus was on the war in Chechnya, and a combination of military conservatism and a lack of a clear vision of other future conflicts hampered any serious rethinking of how Russia would fight external wars other than putative and increasingly unlikely mass, defensive operations.

In 2003, a Defence White Paper titled *The Priority Tasks of the Development of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation* again genuflected towards the importance of unconventional operations, but still little really emerged from the internal debates that ensued. There was certainly a constituency within the military that saw the need for fundamental reforms, including both a switch to a more flexible brigade-based structure (rather than the more ponderous divisional one inherited from the Soviets) and a greater focus on intervention and political–military operations.[20]

However, real progress would only follow as a result of the 2008 Georgian War. Russian forces operated alongside local militias and auxiliaries, in a politically choreographed operation designed to provide a degree of deniability and legitimacy by provoking the Georgians into the first overt act of aggression.[21] Even beforehand, Moscow had launched the process to redraft the doctrine, but the practical experience of the war proved a crucial agent for change. The Russians won, but that was hardly in doubt given the massive disproportion between the two sides and the relatively limited objectives, 'liberating' the already-rebellious regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. However, there was a sufficient litany of blunders and embarrassments, from friendly fire to communications breakdowns, that Defence Minister Anatoly Serdyukov and his Chief of the General Staff Nikolai Makarov could at last push through sweeping reforms. Not only was the transition to a brigade structure – first mooted, after all, back in Soviet times – finally carried through, but this also unblocked the way to deeper doctrinal debates within the military.

Serdyukov, whose necessary but brutal reform programme won him the loathing of most of the officer corps, would not survive long politically; a scandal saw him sacked in 2012, with Makarov following him. However, their successors Sergei Shoigu and General Valery Gerasimov respectively, show no signs of wanting to step back from the process. Indeed, Gerasimov, as noted above, has in many ways become the spokesman for a school of military thought that affirms that 'The role of non-military means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness.'[22]

As a result, in recent years the Russians have developed and honed 'scalable' intervention capabilities that span the military and intelligence realms and which can be used most effectively in conjunction with political and economic instruments. The GRU had suffered years in the doldrums, and the initial after-action assessments of its performance in the Georgian War – where its Spetsnaz were regarded as having done their jobs well, but its wider intelligence gathering and assessment was considered poor – contributed to a growing call for it to be demoted to a mere directorate of the General Staff, rather than a main directorate. This would have been a serious blow, not least in that it would have deprived the GRU of its all-important right to brief the president directly. Indeed in 2011, after a round of further cuts in the agency's central staff,[23] the

Spetsnaz were technically removed from the GRU and subordinated to regular territorial military commands,[24] although it is hard to see whether or not this actually happened in practice. In classic Russian style, it is likely that the GRU employed creative foot-dragging to delay the process, while lobbying for a reversal in policy. That same year the GRU's ailing and underwhelming director Colonel General Aleksandr Shlyakhturov was replaced by Major General Igor Sergun, a much more active and politically adroit chief, who set about 'selling' the GRU to the political and military leadership as the ideal instrument for the new kinds of war being envisaged.[25]

He appears to have been successful. In part because of the need to secure the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics – and in part using this as an excuse – the Spetsnaz were expanded, gaining the 346th Brigade and the 25th Regiment and, perhaps more importantly, bringing all existing brigades to full establishment strength. The 17,000 or so Spetsnaz are undoubtedly an elite force by Russian standards, but they are not special forces in the Western sense.[26] Some 20–30% are conscripts serving one-year terms, and they are trained for larger-scale operations. Really, they are intervention forces best compared with the US 75th Rangers, the French Foreign Legion, or the UK's 16th Air Assault Regiment. Appreciating the need for truly 'special' special forces, able to mount small, complex, and deniable operations, in 2012 the General Staff formed a new Special Operations Command (KSO) on the basis of an existing training centre, comprising the elite 346th Brigade (although it is closer to a regiment in actual size) at Prokhladniy, the Senezh command and training facility at Solnechnogorsk, and integral air assets: a helicopter squadron at Torzhok and a transport aircraft squadron, perhaps at Tver-Migalovo.[27]

Meanwhile, the GRU's reputation as a more swashbuckling and risk-taking organisation than its civilian espionage counterpart, the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), also proved an unexpected asset.[28] Already more likely and willing to operate in turbulent parts of the world and out of diplomatic cover, the GRU appears to have emerged as the lead agency for dealing with organised crime, insurgents, and other violent non-state actors.

Not that the GRU was the only agency in question. Just as the military and military intelligence were developing their capacities in smaller-scale, political–military operations, so too other capacities were being developed. The FSB, while technically the lead domestic security agency, has a pedigree of empire building. In 2006, it was legally authorised to conduct assassinations abroad of terrorists and other direct threats to the Russian state, although leaked documents suggest it had already been tasked with such operations in 2003.[29] Like the GRU, it has been linked with foreign organised crime groups and has also been accused of political 'active measures', from spreading misleading information through third-party dupes and agents, to seeking to corrupt and suborn Western politicians. Since absorbing much of the former Federal Government

Communications and Information Agency (FAPSI) in 2003, it is also Russia's primary cybersecurity but also cyberespionage agency.[30]

However, the distinctive aspect of Russian full-spectrum capabilities is the extent to which other government-controlled and influenced agencies are integrated. In some cases, these are freelancers, such as the 'patriotic hackers' encouraged and mobilised to attack Estonian government systems in 2007, Georgian ones in 2008, and currently, albeit to a lower level, Ukrainian ones. At other times, what the author has heard described by Russian security officials as 'warriors of the political battleground' include the state-controlled media, not least the RT multilingual TV foreign news service.[31]

Essence of the 'new way of war'

So what are the components of this 'new way of war'? Absent some clear and credible statement of Russian thinking on the matter – and Gerasimov's article, as well as some other, more extensive studies in the military press, do not represent that, yet – this is essentially a matter of conjecture. It is tempting to say that it is all rather familiar, from the use of propaganda and non-state violent actors in support of military operations, to the focus on political outcomes. Sometimes, to be sure, Russia's approach looks closer to what would, in Western terms, be considered more characteristic of counterinsurgency operations, rather than state–state warfare, but even then that is hardly an absolute. One could note Allied operations in the Second World War, from the Special Operations Executive 'setting Europe ablaze', and cooperation with non-state actors from partisans to the Mafia, to the use of propaganda and subversion.

So is talk of a 'new way of war' simply alarmist hyperbole? To an extent, but not entirely: the distinctiveness appears not so much in essence, but in degree. States always tend to assert the primacy of the political, even while in practice they often get bogged down in the cruder metrics of war – casualty ratios, how far the front line is moved, how many raids have been launched – or emotional red lines and matters of honour. So if one does focus on those areas where the Russians appear to be distinctive in degree, these are:

1. The willingness to give primacy to non-kinetic operations, especially information warfare

The traditional assumption has been that subversion, deception, and the like are all 'force multipliers' to the combat arms, not forces in their own right. At present, though, Russia is clearly seeing the kinetic and the non-kinetic as interchangeable and mutually supporting. For example, at the moment it is seeking to degrade the unity and will of NATO, an essentially political campaign. In this campaign, it is the combat arms which are providing a force multiplier to the propaganda. For example, the Russians are running long-range bomber patrols

along European NATO airspace. For reasons of habit and a presumed need to show resolution – even though no one believes that these aircraft would launch strikes if not escorted away – this forces NATO to scramble their interceptors in response. This is expensive, puts pressure on training and service routines, and begins to open fault lines within the alliance as some countries begin to question the cost of maintaining the multinational Baltic Air Policing force.

2. The density and institutionalised nature of connections with, and use of, non-state actors, even those with no clear affinity to Russia

In a crisis, most states will sup with any devils they find useful, however disagreeable the experience, whether the Northern Alliance in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan or the 'moderate rebels' in Syria today. However, this tends to be as limited, temporary, and arm's length a process as possible. Russia appears to have a different perspective and especially through its intelligence agencies actively cultivates longer-term relationships with a wide range of non-state actors – both violent and criminal and not – who may be considered useful, whether or not there is any obvious ethnic, ideological, or similar affinity. Cultivating ethnic Russian minorities, especially through *Rossotrudnichestvo*, the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation, is only the tip of the iceberg. A number of Western intelligence and security agencies, for example, have attested to the extent to which their Russian counterparts cooperate with organised crime, and this was especially evident in Ukraine. Meanwhile, a slew of non-state political groups in the West, from Texan separatists to Estonian opponents of gay marriage have received moral and often practical support from Russia. Some of these relationships have been developed for years, and it is clear that there are individuals within the Russian security apparatus – such as the presumed GRU officer and now jailed arms dealer Viktor Bout – whose very mission is to straddle the realms of the official and the criminal.[32]

3. The extent to which a single command structure coheres and coordinates political and military operations

This does not always happen in practice – indeed, as will be discussed later, this is one of the weaknesses evident in the Donbass – but the goal is clearly to have a single, strong institutional *vozhd* – 'boss' – able to control the range of operations and also the range of agencies involved in such full-spectrum activities. During the Soviet war in Afghanistan, for example, while the ambassador and KGB rezident were technically not subordinated to the 40th Army command, in practice this was the focus for all decision-making. By contrast, even with the formation of Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan (CFC-A) in 2003 to lead coalition operations, individual national contingents had their own reporting

chains, and the embassy, USAID, CIA, and other organisations were separate and in effect autonomous: much effort had to go into brokering consensus, and this was by no means always possible.[33] As one Russian General Staff officer told the author, 'in modern war, the issue is not just the speed of decision-making, it is about the necessity for a single decision-making point that controls all operational assets, military and non-military.'[34]

Historical precedents

Even so, the truth of the matter is that much of this is not only not that exceptional in the context of warfighting, it is certainly not that new in Russian practice, which has long embraced what is now called 'full-spectrum warfare'. Looking back to the tsarist conquest of the North Caucasus in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for example, the Cossacks may have ended up as government forces, but they began as autonomous allies, non-state mercenaries. The Russians – like most imperial powers – engaged in alliances with local tribes and warlords. However, what was striking was the extent to which, from the appointment of Prince Mikhail Vorontsov as Viceroy of the Caucasus in 1844 (a position he held until 1854), there was a single political–military command; in Henze's words, 'All civil and military responsibilities were combined in this new post, and Vorontsov was subordinate only to the tsar himself.'[35]

This concentration of power, and this unity of effect, was even more evident during the latter and more successful phase of the brutal pacification of the *basmachestvo* national rebellions in Central Asia during the Russian Civil War. In the immediate aftermath of the fall of the tsarist empire and the Bolshevik seizure of power, Turksovnarkom or the Council of People's Commissars of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Republic mounted a crude campaign of repression. Turksovnarkom was essentially dominated by a self-interested urban, proletarian, and Russian colonial minority and neither sought to understand the wider local population, nor to address them in any terms they could comprehend. Unsurprisingly, this campaign was not especially effective and often degenerated into massacres such as the pillaging of Kokand in 1918. The outcome was a growing revolt, which induced Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin to create a new Commission on Turkestan Affairs, Turkkommissiya, in October 1919. It immediately set about consolidating its political power in Central Asia, incorporating, taming, or eliminating local Muslim communist structures. Nonetheless, by early 1920 it had largely completed this task and was able to implement a rather more sophisticated strategy that combined co-option of local elites and communities with tougher operations against those which continued to resist.

Punitive cavalry raids, which had done little more than identify the Bolsheviks with looters, stopped, and military commander Mikhail Frunze's elite Turkestan Front armies increasingly recruited local soldiers. Some units were up to 40%

local, in stark contrast to the Turksovnarkom years, which had shunned them. There was a Bashkir Brigade in the 4th Army, and a Moslem Cavalry Brigade and Tatar Rifle Brigade in the 1st.[36] Early Bolshevik special forces, the Units of Special Designation (ChON) were deployed, including as 'pseudo-gangs', pretending to be rebels either to spring ambushes or mount provocations and false flag operations to tarnish their enemies' reputations.[37] Behind these shifts in tactics was a fundamental awareness that this was primarily a political mission. Conciliatory national and religious policies were combined with considerable efforts to incorporate not just local recruits into the Red Army, but also a variety of semi-autonomous non-state actors. Some were 'Red Sticks', militias of ideological sympathisers, such as the 'Young Bukharans'. Others were co-opted bandits and local strongmen, or turned rebels who preferred life on the winning side to death or prison. Ibrahim Bek, one of the most indomitable of the *basmachi* leaders, was reportedly hunted by a force of Lokai, 60 cavalrymen in all, on the assumption that it took a local to hunt a local.[38]

Crucially, the Turkkommissiya retained a powerful central role in coordinating both political policy and the operational detail of both military and intelligence operations. The Tashkent Soviet (council), which had been a bastion of the previous, failed policies, was purged on charges of 'leftist deviation'.[39] This allowed the Bolshevik authorities not only to be more flexible, but to develop political and military structures which operated in harmony. The final end to large-scale *basmachestvo* in Tajikistan, for example, came following a switch to smaller-scale operations. Bolshevik forces would take and hold individual villages which had hitherto sheltered mobile rebels – including Bek, who was forced to find sanctuary in Afghanistan – while pilgrimages to the graves of Enver Pasha and other Turkic leaders were banned. These had been a crucial means whereby new *basmachi* were recruited and mobilised, and although there would still be sporadic risings, these would largely be small-scale affairs.[40]

In 1929, the Bolsheviks staged an abortive invasion of Afghanistan in the midst of a rebellion, but they withdrew within two months.[41] Fifty years later, though, the outcome was rather different. The Soviet war in Afghanistan (1979–88) assumed the characteristics of a counterinsurgency, even if begun by an invasion and coup de main. The Soviets not only deployed their own Limited Contingent of Forces in Afghanistan (OKSVA) and the troops of their local puppet regime, but over time made increasing use of tribal militias and also alliances and short-term understandings with tribal warlords and strongmen who were often involved in drug trafficking or other nefarious activities. The Urban Self-Defense Units, for example, were recruited from Afghan Communist Party loyalists and others with an ideological commitment to the new order. Conversely, the *Jebhe-yi Melli-yi Paderwatan* (National Front for the Fatherland) was an ethnic Uzbek movement motivated as much as anything else by concerns about the predominantly Pathan rebels and the political and religious changes they wanted to impose. Likewise, tribal militias from the upland Hazara peoples

fought largely for their own community leaders, motivated by payment or the promise of autonomy.[42]

There was a strong information warfare component in Afghanistan and in the outside world – and, indeed, at home, with no formal admission to the Soviet public that their boys were at war until Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost'* or 'openness' initiative. The Soviet KGB intelligence and security agency, and its Afghan counterpart the KhAD (later renamed WAD), played an important role in not just gathering intelligence and countering rebel activities, but in staging provocations, fomenting rivalries within the rebel movement, and trying to limit the scale of foreign assistance. They also had powerful executive arms: the GRU's *Spetsnaz*, the KGB's own *Spetsnaz* such as *Kaskad* (the unit tasked with eliminating Afghan President Amin during the 1979 invasion), and KhAD/WAD's 'pseudo-gangs', which masqueraded as rebel units to gather intelligence or stage false flag operations.[43]

Crucially, the 40th Army command in Kabul became a powerful political as well as military institution. Although the Afghan leadership had a degree of autonomy and figures such as the Soviet ambassador to Kabul and the KGB *rezident* – station chief – had voices of their own, ultimately the 40th Army managed intelligence, political, and combined military operations across the full spectrum of activity. Its main weakness, one acknowledged later by many participants, was that it had only sporadic control over the Afghan government, especially at the local and operational level.[44]

Finally, Russia's two Chechen wars – which in a mirror image of Afghanistan were strictly speaking counterinsurgencies, but in practice often resembled invasions – also showed many of these characteristics. Indeed, the first war (1994–96) began with an unsuccessful offensive by a proxy militia, the failure of which forced Moscow to deploy its own regular forces. However, in general the first war saw the Russians ignore many of their own lessons and dicta, and the Russian defeat in all but name to a considerable extent reflects this.

In the first war, a crude and brutal counterinsurgency campaign featured minimal use of local proxies and militias. Having botched their first use of Chechen proxies, they largely sidelined or ignored them. One, Beslan Gantemirov, was appointed mayor of the Chechen capital, Grozny, only to be arrested a year later on embezzlement charges. This reflects the general political and military incoherence of the operation. Different field commanders often operated according to their own timetables; regular army and the Interior Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) failed to coordinate. The Federal Counter-Intelligence Service (FSK), forerunner of the FSB, having organised the botched initial incursion – and bypassing the regular military command to co-opt army personnel in support of the Chechen militia – then continued to run operations entirely separately from the Joint Group of Forces (OGV) intelligence department. Meanwhile, no serious effort was made to address the information and political dimensions of the campaign, with journalists granted relatively unfettered access to

report on the casualties and calamities of the Russian operations and Chechen government sources and their sympathisers able to dominate the global discussion of the war.

It was a disaster, compounded by the skill and determination demonstrated by the rebels. However, it was also a bitter learning experience, and the second war (1999–2009) saw the Russians very much return to type. Military forces were again drawn from a variety of services, but tightly coordinated by the OGV command, which crucially also had unprecedented authority over the FSB's activities in-theatre. Whereas in the first war, special forces were largely and wastefully pressed into service as light infantry, this time they were deployed in traditional reconnaissance, interdiction, and strike roles. More to the point, they were supplemented and in due course replaced by Chechen militias, often heavily recruited from former guerrillas. While one family, the Kadyrovs, would emerge as the dominant dynasty in loyalist Chechnya, there were other warlords who emerged in the war, not least the Yamadayevs and the seemingly irrepressible Gantemirov, as well as separate ex-rebel units such as the GRU's Zapad (West) Battalion.[45]

Meanwhile, Moscow took extensive and draconian measures to try and exclude independent journalists and win the information war both at home and abroad. A suspicious series of terrorist attacks in Russia created a narrative of response to a murderous domestic threat, while the increasing role of Islamic extremists in Chechnya allowed the Kremlin to portray the invasion as a war on al-Qaeda.[46]

For a final example, the 2008 war with Georgia again demonstrated a high level of coordination between political and military, state and non-state. Proxy South Ossetian militias were encouraged to carry out attacks on Georgian forces in order to provoke Tbilisi into making the first overt move. This allowed the Russians – who had built up their forces close to the border in anticipation – to present themselves at least to an extent as the peacemakers coming to protect civilians and prevent government aggression. In both South Ossetia and Abkhazia, they worked closely with local separatist forces while an extensive campaign of cyberattacks brought down government systems and hacked their websites. The attacks appear not to have been carried out by Russian state agencies but instead to have been the work of both so-called 'patriotic hackers' and also, probably, Russian cybercriminals, non-state actors inspired, facilitated, and directed by the FSB.[47]

Not such a 'new way of war'?

So this 'way of war' is not actually totally new to the world, and especially not to the Russians. From the tsars through the Bolsheviks, they have been accustomed to a style of warfare that embraces much more eagerly the irregular and the criminal, the spook and the provocateur, the activist and the fellow-traveller.

Sometimes, this has been out of choice or convenience, but often it has been a response to a time-honoured challenge, of seeking to play as powerful an imperial role as possible with only limited resources. For all the mythology of the mighty Russian war machine, it has often been over-stretched, over-committed, and out-matched. In those circumstances, a willingness to look for innovative force multipliers became a necessity: dropping the sword and picking up the club, in Tolstoy's apposite metaphor.

This commitment to expediency over 'tastes or rules' is evident in today's eager incorporation of many of the tactics of counterinsurgency – or even insurgency – in conventional state-to-state warfare. An especially broad sense of quite what constitutes 'war' – and the Kremlin seems to agree with senior banker Andrei Kostin that 'sanctions, in other words, are economic war against Russia'[48] – also leads to a broad sense of what might be warfighting assets. From organised crime groups to political lobbyists, tame journalists to hackers, a whole range of parastate proxies can be activated and deployed in the pursuit of a political victory, one in which kinetic measures may play a major, minor, or even no role at all.

Consider, for example, the Russian Night Wolves motorcycle gang. Having been formed in the 1990s as a countercultural movement, it has since become increasingly nationalist and has been effectively co-opted by the state. It represents the acceptable face of biker machismo at home and has even been used to repress genuinely outlaw gangs. Beyond that, it has been used as a source of volunteers to fight in the Donbass, a legitimating tool in Crimea, and a potential instrument in Europe. In May 2015, high-profile efforts to stage a rally to Berlin to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of Allied victory in Europe proved something of a flop, but Central European governments remain concerned about the threat of their being used as deniable proxy instruments to try and force a border or provoke a violent response that Moscow could use to justify actions of its own. The Estonian police, for example, have openly labelled the Night Wolves a security threat.[49] It is hardly surprising they should do so, not least as the Soviets used the same kind of mix of forces as in Crimea – troops without insignia, local proxies, and the threat of a full invasion – in a failed but not forgotten invasion of Estonia in 1924.[50]

The answer thus is that what is new is not so much the way of war as the world in which it is being fought, the political, military, technological, and social context. Economies are globalised; the media operate to a voracious 24/7 news cycle with fewer constraints than ever. Western electorates are uncomfortable with the prospect of casualties and disinclined to encourage their governments to spend heavily on geopolitical adventures. All this provides ample opportunities for a revisionist state like Russia, in which a culture of 'total war' still informs doctrinal thinking and a small oligarchy essentially controls national military, political but also economic and informational resources. It raises the question of how far such 'hybrid war' really demands a 'hybrid defence' that embraces social

cohesion, resistance to opaque foreign-origin funding for domestic political parties, and other such issues traditionally not considered in the same context as kinetic security.[51] It also ought to be considered in context: a weak Russia may be looking to use such methods to leverage its own strengths, and above all Western weaknesses, but this is by no means a 'magic bullet'. As of this writing, Moscow is bogged down in the Donbass, politically isolated, economically sanctioned, and with few options to improve its lot. Alarmist rhetoric aside, the 'new way of war' may well prove to be more of a threat to Russia than to the West.

Notes

1. Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, 1032–3.
2. Pomerantsev, 'How Putin is Reinventing Warfare'; Bērziņš, 'Russia's New Generation Warfare in Ukraine'; *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 31 March 2014.
3. Galeotti, '"Hybrid War" and "Little Green Men"'.
4. Mearsheimer, 'Why the Ukraine Crisis'.
5. Howard and Pukhov, *Brothers Armed*.
6. *Delovoi Peterburg*, 10 July 2015.
7. McDermott, 'Moscow Resurrects Battalion'.
8. Bigg, 'Vostok Battalion'.
9. Evron, 'Battling Botnets'; Giles, 'Information Troops'.
10. Breen and Geltzer, 'Asymmetric Strategies'.
11. Bērziņš, 'Russian New Generation Warfare', 43.
12. IISS, *Military Balance*, 5.
13. See, for example, Hoffman, 'On not-so-new-warfare'; Rácz, *Russia's Hybrid War*, 19–24.
14. Gerasimov, 'Tsennost', 1.
15. Johnsson and Seely, 'Russian Full-Spectrum Conflict'.
16. Pomerantsev, 'How Putin is Reinventing Warfare'.
17. See, for example, Galeotti and Bowen, 'Putin's Empire of the Mind'; Trenin, 'Russia's Breakout'.
18. Chekinov and Bogdanov, 'Vliyanie nepriamykh deistvi', 3.
19. Der Haas, 'Russia's Military Doctrine'.
20. For an excellent treatment of the post-2003 evolution, see Rácz, *Russia's Hybrid War*, 36–40.
21. IIFFMCG, 'Independent International'.
22. Gerasimov, 'Tsennost', 1.
23. *Izvestiya*, 27 September 2011.
24. *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 16 July 2012.
25. *Fontanka*, 27 November 2011.
26. Galeotti, *Spetsnaz*.
27. *Izvestiya*, 27 November 2012; Trenin, 'Russia's New Tip'.
28. Galeotti, 'Putin's Secret Weapon'.
29. *Daily Telegraph*, 2 October 2011.
30. Walther, 'Russia's Failed Transformation'.
31. Pomerantsev and Weiss, *The Menace of Unreality*.
32. Bout's complex career is best explored in Potter, *Outlaws, Inc.*
33. Mansager, 'Interagency Lessons'.
34. Conversation, February 2014.

35. Henze, 'Fire and Sword', 19.
36. Broxup, 'The Basmachi', 68–9.
37. Kogan, 'The Basmachi'.
38. Marshall, 'Turkfront', 17.
39. Broxup, 'The Basmachi', 68.
40. Ritter, 'The Final Phase', 486.
41. Ibid., 489.
42. Marshall, 'Managing Withdrawal', 72.
43. Chikishev, *Spetsnaz v Afganistane*.
44. Marshall, 'Managing Withdrawal', 71–2.
45. Šmíd and Mareš, 'Kadyrovtsy'.
46. Pain, 'The Second Chechen War'; Herd, 'The "Counter-Terrorist Operation"'.
47. Smith, 'Russian Cyber Capabilities'.
48. *CNBC*, 30 January 2015.
49. *Eesti Päevaleht*, 27 June 2013.
50. Maigre, 'Nothing New'.
51. Galeotti, 'Time to Think'.

References

Bartles, Charles, and Roger N. McDermott. "Russia's Military Operation in Crimea: Road-Testing Rapid Reaction Capabilities." *Problems of Post-Communism* 61, no. 6 (2014): 46–63.

Bērziņš, Jānis. *Russia's New Generation Warfare in Ukraine: Implications for Latvian Defense Policy*, National Defence Academy of Latvia Center for Security and Strategic Research Policy Paper no, 2, 2014.

Bērziņš, Jānis. "Russian New Generation Warfare Is Not Hybrid Warfare." In *The War in Ukraine: Lessons for Europe*, edited by Artis Pabriks and Andis Kudors, 40–51. Riga: University of Latvia Press, 2015.

Bigg, Claire. 'Vostok Battalion, A Powerful New Player in Eastern Ukraine'. *RFE/RL*, 30 May 2014. http://www.rferl.org/content/vostok-battalion-a-powerful-new-player-in-eastern-ukraine/25404785.html.

Breen, Michael, and Joshua Geltzer. "Asymmetric Strategies as Strategies of the Strong." *Parameters* 41, no. 1 (2011): 41–55.

Broxup, Maria. "The Basmachi." *Central Asian Survey* 2, no. 1 (1983): 57–81.

Chekinov, Sergei, and Sergei Bogdanov. "Vliyanie nepriamykh deistvii na kharakter sovremennoi voiny." *Voennaya mysl,* no. 6 (2011): 3–4.

Chikishev, Aleksei. *Spetsnaz v Afganistane*. Moscow: Olma-Press, 2015.

Der Haas, Marcel. 'Russia's Military Doctrine Development 2000–2010'. In *Russia's Military Politics and Russia's 2010 Defense Doctrine*, edited by Stephen Blank, 1–61, 2011. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010.

Evron, Gadi. "Battling Botnets and Online Mobs: Estonia's Defense Efforts During the Internet War." *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 9, no. 1 (2008): 121–126.

Evsikov, Egor. "Soviet Intelligence in Afghanistan: the only efficient tool of the Politburo." *Baltic Security & Defence Review* 11 (2009): 41–57.

Galeotti, Mark. '"Hybrid War" and "Little Green Men": How It Works, and How It Doesn't'. In *Ukraine and Russia: People, Politics, Propaganda and Perspectives*, edited by Agnieszka Pikulicka-Wilczewska and Richard Sakwa, 156–164. Bristol: e-IR Press, 2015.

Galeotti, Mark. 'Putin's Secret Weapon'. *Foreign Policy* (online), 7 July 2014. Accessed 7 July 2014. http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/07/07/putins-secret-weapon/.

Galeotti, Mark. *Spetsnaz – Russia's Special Forces*. Oxford: Osprey, 2015.
Galeotti, Mark. 'Time to Think About "Hybrid Defense"'. *War On The Rocks*. Accessed 30 July 2015. http://warontherocks.com/2015/07/time-to-think-about-hybrid-defense/.
Galeotti, Mark, and Andrew Bowen. "Putin's Empire of the Mind." *Foreign Policy* 21 (April 2014): 16–19.
Gareev, Makhmut. *Esli zavtra voina*. Moscow: Vladar, 1995.
Gerasimov, Valery. "Tsennost' nauki v predvidenii." *Voenno-promyshlennyi kur'er* 27 (February 2013): 1–2.
Giles, Keir. 'Information Troops: A Russian Cyber Command?' 3rd International Conference on Cyber Conflict (ICCC), 2011.
Henze, Paul. "Fire and Sword in the Caucasus: The 19th Century Resistance of the North Caucasian Mountaineers." *Central Asian Survey* 2, no. 1 (1983): 5–44.
Herd, Graeme. "The "Counter-Terrorist Operation" in Chechnya: "Information Warfare" Aspects." *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 13, no. 4 (2000): 57–83.
Hoffman, Frank. 'On Not-So-New Warfare: Political Warfare vs Hybrid Threats'. *War on the Rocks*, 28 July 2014. Accessed 28 July 2014. http://warontherocks.com/2014/07/on-not-so-new-warfare-political-warfare-vs-hybrid-threats/.
Howard, Colby, and Ruslan Pukhov (eds.), *Brothers Armed: Military Aspects of the Crisis in Ukraine*. Minneapolis, MN: East View Press, 2014.
IIFFMCG. *Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia* ('Tagliavini Report'). Brussels: European Union, 2009.
IISS. *Military Balance 2015*. London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2015.
Johnsson, Oscar, and Robert Seely. "Russian Full-Spectrum Conflict: An Appraisal After Ukraine." *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 28, no. 1 (2015): 1–22.
Kogan, Boris. 'The Basmachi: Factors Behind the Rise and Fall of an Islamic Insurgency in Central Asia'. *Small Wars Journal*, 5 March 2011. Accessed 13 November 2014. http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-basmachi-factors-behind-the-rise-and-fall-of-an-islamic-insurgency-in-central-asia.
Kozlov, Sergei. *Spetsnaz GRU*. Moscow: Russkaya panorama, 2010–13.
McDermott, Roger. 'Moscow Resurrects Battalion Tactical Groups'. *Eurasia Daily Monitor* no. 203, 6 November 2012. Accessed 10 February 2014. http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=40071&no_cache=1.
Maigre, Merle. 'Nothing New in Hybrid Warfare: The Estonian Experience and Recommendations for NATO'. *German Marshall Fund of the United States Policy Brief*, February 2015.
Mansager, Tucker. "Interagency Lessons Learned in Afghanistan." *Joint Force Quarterly, no.* 40 (2006): 80–84.
Marsh, Rosalind. 2011. 'The "New Political Novel" by Right-Wing Writers in Post-Soviet Russia'. *Forum für osteuropäische Ideen und Zeitgeschichte* 14, no. 1 (2011): 159–187.
Marshall, Alex. "Managing Withdrawal: Afghanistan as the Forgotten Example in Attempting Conflict Resolution and State Reconstruction." *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 18, no. 1 (2007): 68–89.
Marshall, Alex. 'The Russian Army and Irregular Warfare'. *RUSI Analysis*, 18 September 2009. Accessed 17 June 2014. https://www.rusi.org/analysis/commentary/ref:C4AB36E284F483/.
Marshall, Alexander. "Turkfront: Frunze and the Development of Counter-Insurgency in Soviet Central Asia." In *Central Asia: Aspects of Transition*, edited by Tom Everett-Heath, 5–29. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.
Mearsheimer, John. "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault." *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (2014): 77–89.

Pain, Emil. 'The Second Chechen War: the information component'. *Military Review* 80, no. 4: 59–69.
Pocheptsov, Georgii. *Informatsionnye voiny*. Moscow: Refl-buk, 2001.
Pomerantsev, Peter. 'How Putin is Reinventing Warfare'. *Foreign Policy*, 5 May 2014. Accessed 12 June 2014. http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/05/05/how-putin-is-reinventing-warfare/.
Pomerantsev, Peter and Weiss, Michael. *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money*. New York: Institute of Modern Russia, 2014.
Potter, Matt. *Outlaws Inc*. London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 2011.
Rácz, András. *Russia's Hybrid War in Ukraine*. Helsinki: Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2015.
Ritter, William. "The Final Phase in the Liquidation of Anti-Soviet Resistance in Tadzhikistan: Ibrahim Bek and the Basmachi, 1924–31." *Europe-Asia Studies* 37, no. 4 (1985): 484–493.
Savinkin, A.E. and I.V. Domnin, eds. *Groznoe oruzhie: Malaia voina, partizanstvo i drugie vidy asimmetrichnogo voevaniya v svete naslediya russkikh voennykh myslitelei*. Moscow: Russkii put', 2007.
Sherr, James. *Hard Diplomacy and Soft Coercion: Russia's Influence Abroad*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2013.
Šmíd, Tomáš, and Miroslav Mareš. ""Kadyrovtsy": Russia's Counterinsurgency Strategy and the Wars of Paramilitary Clans." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38, no. 5 (2015): 650–77.
Smith, David. 'Russian Cyber Capabilities, Policy and Practice'. *InFocus* 8, no. 1 (2014). Accessed 12 June 2014. http://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/4924/russian-cyber-capabilities.
Thomas, Timothy. "Russia's Information Warfare Strategy: Can the Nation Cope in Future Conflicts?" *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 27, no. 1 (2014): 101–130.
Tolstoy, Lev. *War and Peace*. Vintage Classics edition, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Vintage, 2008.
Trenin, Dmitri. 'Russia's Breakout from the Post-Cold War System: The Drivers of Putin's Course'. *Carnegie Moscow Center*, 22 December 2014. Accessed 13 January 2015. http://carnegie.ru/2014/12/22/russia-s-breakout-from-post-cold-war-system-drivers-of-putin-s-course.
Trenin, Dmitri. 'Russia's New Tip of the Spear'. *Foreign Policy*, 8 May 2013. Accessed 13 January 2015. http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/05/08/russias-new-tip-of-the-spear/.
Walther, Ulf. "Russia's Failed Transformation: The Power of the KGB/FSB from Gorbachev to Putin." *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence* 27, no. 4 (2014): 666–686.