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Abstract: This article questions the hasty rush to label Moscow's actions in Ukraine and Donbas as proof of an alleged adoption of "hybrid warfare," and raises issues concerning Russia's capacity to replicate such approaches in future conflict.

For two years, commentators, experts, and politicians alike have expressed a myriad of views concerning Russia's involvement in separatist activities in southeastern Ukraine. Opinions and perspectives have emerged especially in non-Russian commentary on the Donbas conflict that either complicate or mislead discussions concerning Moscow's actions or the nature of the challenge Russia represents in NATOs north-eastern and eastern flanks. Among these untested and certainly unproven assertions are the ideas that Moscow has developed a doctrine and operational strategy referred to as "hybrid warfare," or that its operations in Ukraine can be explained by reference to new and evolving defense and security capabilities.[1] Unfortunately, hybrid warfare is an alien concept in Russian military theory and in its approach to modern warfare; almost all Russian military analyses of the concept ascribe its existence and parameters to Western states.[2] In order to understand the actual nature of Russia's involvement in Donbas or the challenges it poses to European security, it is necessary to re-examine Russia's actual defense capabilities, the traditions, training, and hallmarks of its military and how Moscow views its strategic threat environment.

Russia's General Staff and the Utility of Operational Models

All militaries have their own distinctive culture and seek to preserve their traditions. Likewise, Russia's armed forces despite undergoing reform, modernization, and force transformation in recent years have retained their distinctive approaches, traditions, and uniqueness.In assessing developments in the Russian military, force structure, training,

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1 One of the earliest examples of this in Western media was authored by two individuals with no background in Russian military analysis and worked for Georgia's president, Mikheil Saakashvili, and his national security advisor prior to and following the 2008 Russia-Georgia War. Molly K. McKew, Gregory A. Maniatis, "Playing by Putin's Tactics," *Washington Post*, March 9, 2014.

2 The European Union, announcing its framework strategy to counter hybrid threats, defines hybrid warfare as follows: "Hybrid threats refer to mixture of activities often combining conventional and unconventional methods that can be used in a coordinated manner by state and non-state actors while remaining below the threshold of formally declared warfare. The objective is not only to cause direct damage and exploit vulnerabilities, but also to destabilise societies and create ambiguity to hinder decision-making." EU Press Release, Brussels, April 6, 2016.

exercises or perspectives on strategic issues, it is necessary to contextualize such analyses and eschew reading into the Russian experience Western approaches or assumptions. For example, the term sergeant is common to NATO and Russian militaries, but used very differently in Russia; even in the post-reformed Russian armed forces, the non-commissioned officer is not akin to his western counterpart who plays a critical role in the training of subordinates—a task still mainly in the domain of Russian officers.[3]

Equally, there are a number of additional distinctive features of the Russian armed forces and the way they conduct military operations that are unique to the system. Two examples illustrate the point: the Russian armed forces historically avoid entering into conflict without careful and thorough preparation of the battlefield, which means conducting an analysis of the operational environment and making tangible efforts to shape it according to the requirements of the mission; part of that process avoids the use of "models" of warfare to allow for the differences inherent in each new conflict. General Staff officers are equally well versed in examining historical examples of military conflict to glean lessons relevant to present-day operations, while the top brass retains some level of interest in future warfare, building on how well versed they are in the history of the Great Patriotic War (1941-45), strong interest in the events of June 1941 and drawing on a more recent tradition going back to Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov (1917-1994, Chief of the General Staff of the USSR 1977-84) and the Revolution in Military Affairs.[4]

Western advocates of the theory that Moscow devised, adopted, and used a hybrid warfare methodology in its operations in Ukraine, tend to root their arguments to a critical article in the Russian military press. In February 2013, Russia's Chief of the General Staff Army-General Valeriy Gerasimov, authored an article in *Voyenno Promyshlennyy Kuryer*, "The Value of Science is in Foresight."[5] It dealt with Russian military perspectives on the future of warfare and the nature of its implications for military science. Gerasimov intended the article to serve as a rallying call to the military scientific community in Russia to refocus on the challenges of future conflict at a practical and meaningful level.[6] Indeed, it was rooted in the military historical framework of the Great Patriotic War and the need to avoid repeating the shock of invasion in June 1941.

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3 Mikhail Tsypkin, "The Challenge of Understanding the Russian Navy," *The Russian Military Today and Tomorrow: Essays in Memory of Mary Fitzgerald*, ed. Stephen J. Blank and Richard Weitz (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, May 2010): 331-357; Carolina Vendil, *Russian Military Reform: A Failed Exercise in Defense Decision Making* (London: Routledge, 2009); and Dale. R. Herspring, *Soldiers, Commissars, and Chaplains: Civil-Military Relations Since Cromwell* (Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001).

4 Colonel (Ret.) V. V. Zhikhaskiy, "On the Issue of Wars of the Future," *Voyennaya Mysl*, no. 4 (July-August 2000); Army-General Makhmut Gareev, "For the Army of the 21st Century: A Local War Is First of All a War," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, October 31, 2000; Vladimir I. Slipchenko, "*Voyna Budushchego [Future War]*," *Scientific Reports* no. 88 (Moscow: Social Science Foundation, 1999).

5 Valeriy Gerasimov, "Tsennost' nauki v predvidenii," *Voyenno Promyshlennyy Kuryer*, February 26, 2013, http://vpk-news.ru/articles/14632.

6 This interest in focusing the work of the leading military theorists towards the means and methods of future warfare was hardly new. Daniel Goure, "Moscow's Visions of Future War: So Many Conflict Scenarios So Little Time, Money and Forces," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, no. 1 (January-March 2014): 63-100; and Jacob W. Kipp, "Smart Defense from New Threats: Future War from a Russian Perspective: Back to the Future After the War on Terror," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, no. 1 (January-March 2014): 36-62.

Gerasimov's military intellectual antecedents can be traced to Soviet general staff officers and their specialist output both before and after June 1941. It was directed at an initial target audience of the members of the Academy of Military Sciences, and lends itself to familiar features of the intellectual framework of Russian military theorists. Gerasimov's theme reflects a long-standing interest within Russian military theory in seeking to utilize military science to gain foresight (*predvidenie*) in terms of future conflict.[7]

Gerasimov understood "ideas can not be ordered," and wanted to challenge the existing approaches among Russia's leading military theorists, and in turn to suggest the political leadership needs to be more open to innovative ideas to meet future security challenges. Instead, he called for the encouragement of "new ideas," or "unconventional approaches," laced with repeated reference to "forms and methods." Gerasimov recognized Russia must avoid the economically dangerous exercise of trying to play "catch up" with other powers, but commended an approach to produce adequate countermeasures to expose potential enemy vulnerabilities. Moreover, he appealed to the uniqueness of every conflict, which requires an understanding of the special logic involved in individual wars, drawing on the celebrated Soviet military scientist Aleksandr Svechin (1878-1938) who famously noted war is "difficult to predict."[8]

However, following Russia's seizure of Crimea in February-March 2014, Gerasimov's article became the subject of multiple Western analyses alleging it represented a holy grail to explain anything and everything about Russia's mix and use of hard and soft power.[9] Even Gerasimov's mention of soft power was nothing new, as Russian military theory certainly acknowledges its role. The article's novelty lay in identifying color revolution as a threat to the Russian state, while suggesting the means to counter it. Western analyses soon transmogrified the article into supporting the theory that Gerasimov was discussing Russia's adoption of hybrid warfare as a new tool at the state's disposal.

Thus, the myth of Russian hybrid warfare capability became embedded in Western commentary and political discussion on how to strengthen defense capabilities vis-à-vis Russia.[10] In fact, the article had little to do with hybrid warfare as such, let alone forming the basis of a Russian variant of the approach.[11] Indeed, reflecting the attitudinal and cultural approach of the general staff, Gerasimov had clearly asserted the very absence of an underlying model to support Russian military

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7 Jacob Kipp, *The Methodology of Foresight and Forecasting in Soviet Military Affairs* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Soviet Army Studies Office, 1988), http://www.dtic. mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a196677.pdf; and N. V. Ogarkov, Ed., *Military Encyclopedic Dictionary* (Moscow: Military Publishing House, 1983), 585.

8 Gerasimov, "Tsennost' nauki v predvidenii."

9 Among studies dismissing the single theory explanation: Charles K. Bartles and Roger N. McDermott, "Russia's Military Operation in Crimea: Road-Testing Rapid Reaction Capabilities," *Problems of Post-Communism* 61, no. 6 (November-December 2014): 45-63; and Mikhail Barabanov, "Prinuzhdeniye k miru-2: blizhayshaya perspektiva Rossii na Ukraine," *Odnako* (December-January 2014-15), http://periscope2.ru/2015/01/19/8298.

10 Ruslan Puhkov, "The Myth of Hybrid Warfare," *Nezavisimaya Voyennoye Obozreniye*, May 29, 2015, http://nvo.ng.ru/realty/2015-05-29/1_war.html.

11 The most convincing analysis of Gerasimov's article and effort to show its lack of connection to the development of a Russian hybrid warfare capability is by Charles K. Bartles, "Getting Gerasimov Right," *Military Review* 96, no. 1 (January/Febraruy 2016): 30-38.

operations: "Each war represents an isolated case, requiring an understanding of its own particular logic, its own unique character."[12]

Context is also important to understand what Gerasimov was trying to set in motion by publishing the article. In 2013, Russia's political-military leadership was assessing changes in the international security environment including the implications of NATO exiting Afghanistan and the long-term impact of the Arab Spring and its destabilizing effect on the Middle East and North Africa. Moreover, only a few months earlier, President Vladimir Putin had changed the defense leadership tandem in Moscow by removing the Defense Minister Anatoliy Serdyukov in the midst of a corruption scandal and the Chief of the General Staff, Army-General Nikolai Makarov. The Serdyukov-Makarov tandem had been given *carte blanche* by Medvedev and Putin in autumn 2008 to launch a root-and-branch reform of Russia's Armed Forces, marking the most radical period of change in the military since World War II.[13]

Gerasimov was keen to establish himself as a reforming general supportive of the new Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu who was eager to continue such efforts albeit in modified form. Consequently, he chose to return to the theme of Russian views of future warfare. But in so doing, he also wanted to repair the damage reform had inflicted on relations between the officer corps and the defense ministry leadership following massive cuts in staffing levels and the alleged mishandling of numerous reform initiatives.[14] Part of this process, as a careful reading of the article implies, was to calibrate appeals to officers and military scientists within their intellectual frameworks, and that meant once again appealing to the widely shared and deeply felt sense of pervasive shock stemming from Germany's sudden attack on the USSR in June 1941: the Soviet/Russian system is consequently highly sensitive to the possibilityh of a repeat of such an attack.[15] It is also important to note, as part of that process, Gerasimov selected *Voyenno Promyshlennyy Kuryer* as his publishing platform for an innately military-scientific analysis of interest more to Russian military theorists, rather than publishing in a journal such as *Voyennaya Mysl'*, which would have widened the article's readership.[16]

Moreover, testing the evidence for the alleged existence of a Russian version of hybrid warfare falls down on recalling the main witness for the prosecution. Indeed, no less an authority on whether Russia had devised a hybrid warfare doctrine and operational approach to conflict is General Gerasimov himself. By March 2016, though aware of the extent of Western speculation in this regard, it appears Gerasimov was

12 Gerasimov, "Tsennost' nauki v predvidenii."

13 Daniel Goure, "Moscow's Visions of Future War: So Many Conflict Scenarios So Little Time, Money and Forces," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, No. 1 (January-March 2014): 63-100; and Jacob W. Kipp, "Smart Defense From New Threats: Future War From a Russian Perspective: Back to the Future After the War on Terror," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, No. 1 (January-March 2014): 36-62.

14 Anatoliy Tsyganok, "Plastic Surgery: Triumphant Reports about the Success of the Formation of the Army's New Look Are Far From Reality," *Vremya Novostey*, December 3, 2009, http://www.vremya.ru/2009/218/4/242452.html; and Viktor Baranets, "The Army Will Be Getting the Latest Weapons and Lodgings and Will Be Rid of Hazing: Dmitry Medvedev Has Formulated Five Principles of Development of the Armed Forces," *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, October 1, 2008.

15 For a detailed examination of some of the historical antecedents of the Gerasimov article see: Steven J. Main, "You Cannot Generate Ideas by Orders: The Continuing Importance of Studying Soviet Military History—G. S. Isserson and Russia's Current Geo-Political Stance," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 29, No. 1 (2016): 48-72.

16 Gerasimov, "Tsennost' nauki v predvidenii."

oblivious to its actual existence. Gerasimov's more recent piece entirely contradicts the widely held interpretation of his February 2013 article and implies his earlier article was being misread and misinterpreted outside Russia. His latest contribution to this controversy stemmed from his speech prepared for the Academy of Military Science's annual conference in Moscow.[17]

Gerasimov's article "Based on the Experience of Syria," again published in *Voyenno Promyshlennyy Kuryer,* examines hybrid warfare in connection with high-technology weaponry, and assesses hybrid approaches as a foreign rather than a Russian, tool which he in turn connects to the threat to the Russian state posed by "color revolution.

In essence, among other things, Gerasimov argues Russia may need some form of hybrid tool in future to counter the threat adequately. Gerasimov again outlined the linkage between Western hybrid warfare and efforts to destabilize legitimate governments, which he likened to events in the Arab Spring and more recently in Ukraine in early 2014. In his view, this presents challenges for the Russian state, and will have implications for how defense policy and force structure evolves in future:

> Nowadays we need a scientific development of the forms and methods of applying joint institutional groups, the sequence of action of the military and non-military component of territorial defense considering the potential for crisis situations to emerge within a few days and even hours. This, in its turn, requires the practically immediate reaction of the country's leadership by activating not only the Armed Forces, but also the resources of almost all ministries and institutions. The adjustment of the strict centralized governance with the components of the military organization of the state is of primary importance to ensure the consolidation of the efforts of the federal organs of the executive authority.[18]

Again, Gerasimov appeals to Russian military scientists to advance fresh ideas in the context of recent military experience. On this occasion he highlighted the experience gained by Russian forces during operations in Syria: "We must focus on the new perspective vectors of military research, the evolution of the new forms of strategic activities of the Armed Forces, space and information warfare, and the development of requirements for the prospective armaments and command and control systems."

The article in a sense contains the paradoxical idea that if Russia's potential adversaries possess a "hybrid" capability and these may seek to destabilize Russia through promoting a color-type revolution, then Moscow needs its own form of hybrid capability to counteract this threat.[19] It is therefore highly unlikely the Russian state approached operations in Donbas according to the adoption of any single model of warfare, let alone the purported Russian hybrid version, as these approaches would be entirely contrary to General Staff culture and traditions.

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17 Valeriy Gerasimov, "Po opytu Sirii," *Voyenno Promyshlennyy Kurye*r, March 8, 2016, http://vpk-news.ru/articles/29579.

18 Gerasimov, "Po opytu Sirii."

19 Michael Kofman, "Russian Hybrid Warfare and Other Dark Arts," *War on the Rocks*, March 11, 2016, http://warontherocks.com/2016/03/russian-hybrid-warfare-and-other-dark-arts.

Donbas: Lessons Identified and Lessons Learned

On the other hand, Russia's political-military leadership places great emphasis on the capacity of the general staff to assess and detect the most valuable lessons from the involvement of the country's armed forces and security structures in conflict and to recommend how best to apply these lessons. This, of course, remains a largely secretive and highly classified process.[20] However, from Russian military media, expert commentary, subsequent military exercises, and patterns in Russian operations in Syria it is possible to glean the likely nature of at least some of these lessons identified and lessons learned; the distinction is that the latter will directly influence subsequent Russian operations.[21] In terms of the main lessons identified and learned from Donbas, these may be briefly outlined:

- Establishing and retaining command and control over proxy forces;
- Formulating and publicly articulating key strategic objectives;
- Prioritizing and discarding when needed differing types of warfare, political, information, unconventional, conventional, or various mixtures;
- The utility of modern weapons and hardware systems and their potential as force multipliers;
- Designing, implementing and managing a train-and-equip program for proxy forces;
- How to retain conflict escalation control in future crises/conflicts;
- Inhibitors in the path of developing an integrated battlespace to maximize use of C4ISR;
- Lessons pertaining to the use of electronic weapons, information warfare, and air defense systems with particular implications for Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD);
- Progress or weaknesses in manpower and experimental weapons systems as force multipliers;
- Identifying intra-agency problems in achieving integration during operations;
- Planning implications in relation to framing an exit strategy.[22]

There is no single uniting factor to help guide the analyst in how the Russian state identifies and acts on lessons from its experience in Donbas, and certainly little room for introducing a hybrid-warfare model

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20 Per Enerud, "Can the Kremlin Control the Cossacks?" RUFS Briefing No. 18, FOI Swedish Defense Research Agency, http://www.foi.se/Global/V%c3%a5r%20kunskap/S%c3%a4kerhetspolitiska%20studier/Ryssland/%c3%96vriga%20filer/RUFS%20Briefing%20No.%2018%20.pdf, March 2013; Rimma Akhmirova, 'Kto iz Rossii voyuyet protiv Kieva ha yugo-vostoke Ukrainy,' Sobessednik.ru, http://sobesednik.ru/rassledovanie/20140716-kto-iz-rossii-i-pochemu-voyuet-protiv-kieva-na-yugo-vostoke, 16 July 2014; Ilya Barabanov, 'Samovooruzhennaia respublika,' Kommersant Vlast, 2 June 2014; Oleg Falichev, 'Spetsnaz byl i ostaetsa elitoi', Voyenno Promyshlennyy Kuryer, No. 7, http://vpk-news.ru/articles/19280, 26 February 2014.

21 See: Roger N McDermott, "Brothers Disunited: Russia's Use of Military Power in Ukraine," FMSO, http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/international/McDermott/Brotherhood_McDermott_2015.pdf, April 2015.

22 Based on a review of Russian and Western analyses of the conflict and discussions with defense specialists.

of analysis.[23] Russia's plausible denial renders public discussions concerning lessons from the conflict largely closed. The most outstanding features, however, of advances in Russia's application of military power during its subsequent operations in Syria relate to the success of training proxy forces, in this case mainly the Syrian Arab Army, introducing new or advanced systems in these operations and supporting operations adequately through predominantly air and sea lines of communication.[24]

The Russian state is rapidly learning by its experience of recent conflict how to multiply its forces by exploiting local proxies, and this is manifesting itself in the extent to which its military advisers can coordinate and implement an effective train-and-equip program during the course of a conflict. These advances, while not necessarily innovative, combined with progress in military modernization and increased military capability places a more useable set of tools at the disposal of the Russian state.

Dangers of Assuming a 'Donbas' Model

By assuming Russia's general staff had, in fact, devised and implemented an operational model in Donbas, rather than using various types of force mixtures and pressures, as well improvisation and conventional combined-arms operations at key movements in the conflict, its existence would closely correspond to the course of events. If the actual model in use was hybrid warfare again it would be possible to detect aspects of the conflict conforming to the structure of the model applied.[25]

There are also sets of underlying assumptions involved in much Western analysis and discussion of Russia's approaches to warfare in Donbas that would render any operational assessment nearly impossible. These assumptions include: belief the general staff constructs its plans based upon an application of theoretical models of conflict; that the model used by the Russian state during operations in Donbas would or could be used or replicated in other future conflicts; that the distinctive features of the operational environment played only a secondary role in shaping the Russian operations in south-eastern Ukraine.

The political, economic, cultural, linguistic, historical, and governmental specific attributes of the Ukrainian state gave rise to how operations were, in fact, shaped and implemented. That is to say, Moscow shaped its operations in Ukraine not on the basis of any presumed "model," but upon careful analysis of the operational environment. These operations reflected political constraints and restraints from the leadership in Moscow. For instance, given the many weaknesses of the Ukrainian armed forces and its security structures, Moscow could

23 *The Economist*, "Control of Donbas," http://www.economist.com/blogsgraphicdetail/2014/10/daily-chart, October 1, 2014; Vladimir Socor, "Moscow Encourages Centrifugal Forces in South-Eastern Ukraine," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 11, no. 36, http://www.jamestown.org/?id=70, February 25, 2014; Vladimir Mukhin, "Rossia gotovitsa k mashtabnoi mirotvorcheskoi operatsii,' Nezavisimaya Gazeta," http://www.ng.ru/armies/2014-08-25/1_peacemakers.html, August 25, 2014; "Spetsnaz DNR zachvatil raketnye vojska 29.06.2014," June 29, 2014, *YouTube*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oAIkLkmfng.

24 Aleksei Ramm, "Pervyye pobedy rossiyskikh instruktorov — chast' I,' Voyenno Promyshlennyy Kuryer, http://vpk-news.ru/articles/28995, February 3, 2016; Aleksei Ramm, 'Pervyye pobedy rossiyskikh instruktorov — chast' II," *Voyenno Promyshlennyy Kuryer*, http://vpk-news.ru/articles/29213, February 17, 2016.

25 Puhkov, "The Myth of Hybrid Warfare."

clearly have broken resistance with a fuller deployment of forces fairly quickly. However, Putin wanted to avoid the all-out use of force, and thus operations were kept at a minimal level to apply enough pressure to force Kyiv to talks. Equally, there were inconsistencies and even setbacks for Moscow's strategy in Donbas, such as the rise and fall of public rhetoric about establishing "Novorossiya."[26]

Indeed, as the conflict ebbed and flowed, the Russian application of hard and soft power appeared to reflect improvisation and frequent indecisiveness in the political aims and strategic goals of the Kremlin. Yet, if this represents the actual model of interventionist capability, then the Russian general staff has effectively created a disposable one-time-use only approach. It would seem rather odd, to say the least, for the general staff to invest manpower and time in researching a new Russian hybrid warfare capability that can only be applied in Ukraine. And yet, this is precisely what the proponents of Russian hybrid war in Donbas expect Western governments, NATO, and other multilateral organizations to accept.

The extent to which Moscow could facilitate, let alone control, the destabilization of south-eastern Ukraine depended on a number of factors unique to the operational environment. These included close historical ties between the countries, a large part of the local population sympathetic to the separatist cause (Donbas was Yanukovych's power base in the country), corruption within the Ukrainian state system and the defense and security structures, intelligence penetration, the difficulty of ensuring control over the border, the limited combat capability of its armed forces, the political crisis that swept the existing regime from power and brought the fledgling government to office struggling to establish its own legitimacy across the entire country, among other factors.[27] In short, the broad factors that served to facilitate the relatively rapid and peaceful seizure of territory—such as the location of Russia's largest foreign military base, or the relative ease with which Russia could deploy additional forces without causing undue alarm—are not only unique in Ukraine, but would be extremely difficult to replicate beyond this single example.

If, on the other hand, the events in Donbas are to be viewed as a Russian experiment in modelling hybrid war, then there are additional difficulties in accepting this interpretation. By August 2014 Kyiv's anti-terrorist operation (ATO) against the Donbas separatists brought the latter very close to collapse. Indeed, the decisive battle of Ilovaysk in August 2014 required a traditional application of power using battalion tactical groups to conduct a Russian conventional combined-arms operation to rout the ATO forces.[28] Again, during and after the Minsk II talks a similar approach was needed to ensure a local separatist victory in Debaltseve in February 2015.[29] The key achievements of the conflict,

26 Mikhail Barabanov, 'Prinuzhdeniye k miru-2: blizhayshaya perspektiva Rossii na Ukraine,' Odnako, http://periscope2.ru/2015/01/19/8298/, December-January, 2014-15.

27 Author discussions with international defense experts, Rome, September 2014.

28 "Pod Ilovaiskom pogib 241 ukrainskii patriot – genprokuror," *Interfax Ukraina*, December 11, 2014.

29 Andrey Vinokurov, "Donbass zhdet prikaz," Gazeta.ru, http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2015/03/25_a_6614465.shtml, March 25, 2015.

from a Russian perspective, were the result of combined-arms operations rather than the use of any allegedly new approach to warfare.

The policy differences between Moscow and NATO have long been known and explicitly contained in Russia's public security documents.[30] However, since the onset of the Ukraine crisis, analysts and Western governments have largely sought to understand Russia's political-military leadership and its motives, as well as how Russia conducts war, through their own historical, cultural, psychological and institutional prism, and thus essentially mirror imaged an interpretation of Moscow's actions. It may well mark a modern example of blue assessing red, and seeing a reflection of blue.

Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of the current chasm that divides Russia and NATO is the mythical interpretation that Moscow has devised a lethal and new hybrid warfare doctrine. If this is, in fact, in error, then NATO and its governments eventually will have to correct it.

In the long term, US Army commands must endeavour to understand the nuances and evolution of Russia's defense and security polices, strategic posture and, equally important, its military thinking and capability, rather than relying upon convenient labels to encapsulate Russia's use of military power. Such an effort to understand better these internal Russian military dynamics at strategic, operational and tactical levels would involve, in some measure, constituting analytical capabilities displaced after the end of the Cold War.

However, if Gerasimov's recent article presages a version of a hybrid warfare capability to counter the threat of a color revolution, then, paradoxically, Moscow will be complicit in forcing this correction to occur, as the actual future capability will surely differ from whatever it is that NATO and the EU are currently planning to counter.

30 National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/40391, December 31, 2015; Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, Kremlin.ru, http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d527556bec8deb3530.pdf, December 26, 2014.