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Explaining Russia's New Generation Warfare and its application in the battlefield

Mariana Grilo Roberto

Master in International Studies,

Supervisor:
PhD, João David Malagueta Terrenas, Invited Assistant Professor
ISCTE- University Institute of Lisbon

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SOCIOLOGIA
E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS

Department of History

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Abstract

In recent decades, a profound transformation in the nature of warfare has unfolded, driven by globalization and the confluence of radical societal and technological shifts. This transformation has given rise to what is now known as 'New Generation Warfare,' signifying a departure from conventional military methods, blending traditional and unconventional approaches. Crucially, Russia is assuming a pioneering role in the development of this new paradigm of warfare tactics, methods and strategies which are currently being tried out and implemented in different conflicts. Against this backdrop, this research sets out to address one main research questions: How has Russia adapted and employed New Generation Warfare in its recent conflicts? Drawing primarily from articles, news sources, and official documents, and comparing different war scenarios where this paradigm has been employed, this study aims to unravel the complexities of New Generation Warfare and Russia's adeptness in utilizing it.

This investigation reveals that New Generation Warfare challenges established norms by incorporating elements like information warfare, hybrid tactics, and asymmetrical strategies, that Russia has effectively applied in recent conflicts demonstrating their expertise in exploiting vulnerabilities within modern information ecosystems. This research underscores the critical importance of comprehending New Generation Warfare in today's interconnected world, where the dynamics of warfare continually evolve. In an era characterized by uncertainty, geopolitical instability and evolving threats, the study of Russia's New Generation Warfare emerges as a timely and indispensable endeavor to both better understand the present and prepare the future.

Keywords: New Generation Warfare, Russia, Information Warfare, Unconventional Warfare

Resumo

Nas últimas décadas, ocorreu uma profunda transformação na natureza da guerra, impulsionada pela globalização e confluência de mudanças sociais e tecnológicas radicais. Esta transformação deu origem ao que hoje é conhecido como “Guerra de Nova Geração”, significando um afastamento dos métodos militares convencionais, misturando abordagens tradicionais e não convencionais. Crucialmente, a Rússia está a assumir um papel pioneiro no desenvolvimento deste novo paradigma de táticas, métodos e estratégias de guerra que estão atualmente a ser experimentados e implementados em diferentes conflitos. Neste contexto, esta investigação pretende abordar uma principal questão de investigação: Como é que a Rússia adaptou e empregou a Guerra de Nova Geração nos seus conflitos recentes? Baseando-se principalmente em artigos, notícias e documentos oficiais, e comparando diferentes cenários de guerra onde este paradigma foi empregado, este estudo visa desvendar as complexidades da Guerra de Nova Geração e a habilidade da Rússia em utilizá-la.

Esta investigação revela que a Guerra de Nova Geração desafia normas estabelecidas ao incorporar elementos como guerra de informação, táticas híbridas e estratégias assimétricas, que a Rússia aplicou eficazmente em conflitos recentes, demonstrando experiência na exploração de vulnerabilidades nos ecossistemas de informação modernos. Esta investigação sublinha a importância crítica de compreender a Guerra de Nova Geração no mundo interligado de hoje, onde a dinâmica da guerra evolui continuamente. Numa era caracterizada pela incerteza, instabilidade geopolítica e ameaças em evolução, o estudo da Guerra de Nova Geração da Rússia surge como um esforço oportuno e indispensável para compreender melhor o presente e preparar o futuro.

Palavras-chave: Guerra de Nova Geração, Rússia, Guerra de Informação, Guerra Não Convencional

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Introduction

Throughout history, warfare has undergone significant changes that have been influenced by the dynamics of technological development, changing geopolitical contexts, and evolving strategic thinking. What was once a traditional understanding of warfare characterized by large-scale battles and state-centric conflicts has given way to a new and increasingly complex form of warfare, the "New Generation Warfare", a multifaceted concept that embraces a wide range of technologies, tactics, and strategies. This paradigm shift in warfare has far-reaching implications for global security, national defense strategies, and the balance of power among nations.

Understanding the nature of New Generation Warfare and analyzing its implementation by key actors, such as Russia, is crucial to understanding the complexities of modern conflicts. The concept of New Generation Warfare encompasses a departure from conventional methods, incorporating a blend of traditional and unconventional approaches. It involves the integration of kinetic and non-kinetic elements, including information warfare, cyber operations, propaganda, hybrid tactics, and asymmetrical strategies. This new paradigm challenges the established norms and rules of engagement, making exploring its implications for security and defense imperative.

This study takes particular interest in Russia's approach to New Generation Warfare, as Russia has been at the forefront of employing these tactics and strategies in various conflicts and geopolitical operations. This thesis seeks to conceptualize New Generation Warfare and its evolution, examine Russia's approach to it, and analyze relevant case studies that illustrate Russia's implementation of these tactics. By digging into these aspects, we can answer to our main research question: How has Russia adapted and employed New Generation Warfare in its recent conflicts? And at the same time address to two more sub-research questions: What are the fundamental principles and characteristics of New Generation Warfare, and how does it differ from traditional warfare? And what role do people and communication play in New Generation Warfare?

The methodology used in this thesis is mainly theoretical in nature and is complemented by qualitative research. Various sources were used, such as books, articles, news websites and official documents, always taking care to verify the legitimacy of each source. These sources were selected and used with the aim of building a solid theoretical framework that served as a foundational tool for analyzing the subsequent chapters. This thesis also employs a comparative

analysis, this approach allows for a more holistic understanding of the evolution of the new paradigm in Russia's warfare. By employing a systematic and structured approach to comparing different cases of Russia's New Generation Warfare in practice, we will be able to identify specific parameters or dimensions of analysis that are relevant to our research questions. By clearly defining these parameters, we can ensure a deeper examination of the nuances and commonalities between cases.

The incorporation of case studies in this research offers several advantages. These case studies provide an in-depth, contextual understanding of specific instances, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the strategies, tactics, and objectives employed by Russia in a variety of settings. By analyzing real-world applications, the case studies offer practical insights into the impact of New Generation Warfare on regional and global security.

The selected cases for this study are the Russo-Georgian Conflict of 2008, the Russia-Ukraine Conflict of 2014, and the Russian intervention in Syria in 2015. These cases were chosen because they represent pivotal moments in Russia's utilization of New Generation Warfare, each offering unique insights and challenges. The Russo-Georgian Conflict showcases the early stages of Russia's adaptation, while the Russia-Ukraine Conflict exemplifies its full-scale application. Meanwhile, the Russian intervention in Syria demonstrates how New Generation Warfare can transcend borders and impact global dynamics.

Still, it is important to recognize the limitations of this research. While secondary literature provides insights of this topic, some sources may be outdated or biased, and the lack of access to primary sources, such as interviews with Russian experts, can limit obtaining direct and up-to-date perspectives on Russia's New Generation Warfare. One key limitation I found was the relatively limited depth of scholarly resources available on this evolving and specialized subject. While my intention was to incorporate a diverse range of sources to ensure a well-rounded exploration of the topic, I encountered constraints regarding the accessibility of high-quality materials addressing specific points of New Generation Warfare, consequently, I found myself gravitating toward a handful of authors who had produced substantial and pertinent research in some of those specific points. Thus, while it may appear that certain authors were favored, this approach was undertaken judiciously to navigate the limitations of the available literature and ultimately facilitate a more comprehensive and grounded analysis of Russia's New Generation Warfare. Another obstacle that limited the scope of this thesis was the language barrier since some documents and official websites utilized for research were entirely written in the Russian language, which forced me to utilize an online translator (DeepL).

The dissertation is structured in four chapters. The first chapter will provide a historical overview of the evolution of warfare, from traditional to unconventional, encompassing all Four Generation of Warfare, setting the context for the emergence of New Generation Warfare. The second chapter then will define and explore the concept of New Generation Warfare, emphasizing its distinction from hybrid warfare and delving into the roots of this transformative approach. The third chapter will delve deep into Russia's adaptation and employment of New Generation Warfare, dissecting its phases and strategies, with a particular focus on its asymmetric elements. Finally, the fourth chapter will present the selected case studies followed by an in-depth analysis of each conflict with comparisons. Through this structured exploration, this thesis endeavors to shed light on the evolution of warfare and Russia's pivotal role in shaping the New Generation of Warfare, which holds profound socio-political implications for our rapidly changing world.

Chapter 1 - The Evolution of Warfare Throughout History: From First Generation to Fourth Generation Warfare

This chapter sets out to analyze the different generations of warfare, tracing their progression and setting the stage for the emergence of New Generation Warfare. By contextualizing the development of warfare over time, we can gain valuable insight into the challenges, transformations, and innovations that have shaped contemporary military operations.

The argument guiding this analysis is that each generation of war represents a significant change in conflict, driven primarily by advances in technology, tactics, and strategic thinking. By examining these generational shifts, we can identify the patterns, trends, and catalysts that paved the way for the emergence of New Generation Warfare. To support this argument, we will examine the main aspects and defining characteristics of each generation of warfare, from the first to the fourth, where we will explore the transition from conventional warfare to unconventional and asymmetric strategies, and the growing role of information and technology.

Warfare has been a constant and transformative force throughout human history, with conflicts and battles shaping the course of societies and nations. From ancient times to the present, the nature of warfare has evolved significantly, driven by advancements in technology, changes in strategic thinking, and the emergence of new geopolitical realities.

Throughout history, warfare has passed through several stages of evolution, and we are currently witnessing the rise of a completely new concept, the New Generation Warfare. Understanding the background of traditional warfare and its evolution to New Generation Warfare is essential for comprehending the contemporary nature of some of the most recent conflicts, as we navigate the ever-changing landscape of conflict, it is essential to appreciate the historical foundations that continue to shape the strategies and tactics employed by military forces and non-state actors alike. By providing a comprehensive analysis of each of the generations of warfare and their influence on the emergence of New Generation Warfare, with illustrative examples, this chapter sets the stage for further exploration of the characteristics, implications, and prospects of Next Generation Warfare.

1.1. First Generation Warfare- The Traditional Concept of Security

After the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the period following the end of the Thirty Years' War and the establishment of the modern state system witnessed a style of warfare that can be characterized as the First Generation of Warfare. Spanning from approximately 1648 to 1860,

this type of warfare was characterized by battles fought by organized military forces of nation-states, where large forces were arranged in fighting lines and columns, formal battles, and an orderly battlefield (Băhnăreanu, 2017; Lind, 2004). Line and column tactics served to help maximize firepower through rigid drills, regardless of how poorly trained the troops were. The focus was on the enemy front and combat forces as well as battlefield ownership (van der Klaauw, 2021).

Melee combat was another aspect of warfare during this period, the battles were often small-scale and confined to specific locations, and soldiers engaged in face-to-face fighting using traditional weapons such as swords, spears, arrows, and axes, the use of gunpowder weaponry started to emerge but, as technological advancements during this time were limited compared to later generations of warfare, it did not yet dominate the battlefield, the success of these battles wars was largely dependent on manpower (Rasheed, 2021) (Lind et al., 1989).

One notable example of this warfare is the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), fought primarily in Europe, North America, and India. The battles of Quebec, Minden, and Rossbach highlight the reliance on massed infantry formations and the use of linear tactics (Anderson, 2000). Another significant conflict is the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, where armies of the Napoleonic era engaged in a traditional line and column formation. The clash between French and Coalition forces showcased the prominence of linear tactics and disciplined ranks (Barbero, 2015). These examples illustrate the prevalence of line and column tactics, the use of organized military forces, disciplined ranks, and the reliance on traditional strategies in First Generation Warfare.

During this era, the military culture was deeply influenced by the structured nature of warfare. In First Generation Warfare, an elaborate rank structure was developed to better organize men into units and distinguish the military from the civilian sphere, such as uniforms, saluting, and strict rank gradations, reinforcing the culture of order (Lind, 2004).

The evolution of fighting tools during the First Generation of Warfare was notable, this era witnessed a shift from primitive military technology to more advanced and lethal weaponry, however, around the middle of the 19th century, that evolution would cause the orderly battlefield to begin to break down. Factors such as the rise of mass armies, the emergence of rifled muskets, and later breech loaders and machine guns rendered the old line and column tactics obsolete and then practically suicidal (Lind, 2004).

This period of transition and development created a growing contradiction between the military culture and the increasing disorderliness of the battlefield. Once aligned with the environment in which it operated, the culture of the order became progressively in conflict with the evolving nature of warfare (Lind, 2004). The mismatch between the military's rigid structure

and the changing dynamics of combat posed significant challenges that led to the end of First Generation Warfare, nevertheless, the desire for linearity on the battlefield remained and is still visible in some current tactics (van der Klaauw, 2021).

In sum, first-generation warfare marked the early stages of organized armed conflict and introduced key aspects of warfare that shaped subsequent generations. Given the use of traditional weapons, hand-to-hand combat, and reliance on manpower, this era focused on capturing and holding territory through line and column tactics. Limited communication and coordination capabilities defined the nature of conflicts during this period. While primitive compared to subsequent generations, first-generation warfare laid the groundwork for the evolution of military tactics, weaponry, and strategy that would develop over the following centuries, it was also the important starting point for military culture.

1.2. Second Generation Warfare- The Artillery Conquers, Infantry Occupies

The Second Generation of Warfare emerged as a response to the changing dynamics on the battlefield, particularly with the introduction of new technologies. Also referred to as industrial warfare, this generation evolved after the invention of the rifle-musket and breech-loading weapons and continuing with the development of the machine gun and indirect fire. However, it was during World War I that Second Generation Warfare took form, even though still linear in nature, focused on mass firepower, movement, and centralized control, emphasizing indirect artillery fire where the defense attempted to prevent all penetrations, and the attack a laterally dispersed line advanced by rushes in small groups (Lind, 2004; Lind et al., 1989, van der Klaauw, 2021).

The French Army played a crucial role in the development of this approach, where the doctrine was summed up as "The artillery conquers, the infantry occupies" (Lind et al., 1989) Battles were conducted in a highly orchestrated manner, resembling a symphony led by a commander as the conductor of an orchestra where order and discipline prevailed (Lind, 2004). The United States Army and Marine Corps adopted many of these principles from the French and continued to rely on mass firepower as the primary means of warfare, even with the transition to aviation replacing traditional artillery (Lind, 2004).

Industrialization profoundly impacted warfare, particularly in mass production of weapons, transportation, and communication. Advancements in technology also played a crucial role in shaping tactics and strategies, as it provided not only ample firepower but also the economic means to supply the necessary material (Academic, 2010a, van der Klaauw, 2021). Trench

warfare, artillery support, more sophisticated reconnaissance tactics, widespread employment of camouflage clothes, radio communications, and fireteam exercises all rise during the Second Generation Warfare (Academic, 2010a).

There are some examples of Second Generation Warfare, such as the American Civil War and World War I. From 1861 to 1865 the United States of America faced a civil war between the North and the South, which featured fortifications, linear fire, and movement warfare tactics. The introduction of rifled muskets and artillery forced armies to adopt defensive positions, and engage in frontal assaults, resulting in high casualties (Lind, 2004). In addition, there were significant advances in logistics, mobility, and communication during this war (McNamara, 2019). There were some great technological advances during this war, the use of railroads to quickly transport troops and supplies, as well as the development of telegraphs, ironclads, and even reconnaissance balloons allowed for more efficient coordination between forces in the field, having played a significant role, (McNamara, 2019).

During World War I, the nations involved adopted trench warfare strategies due to the advent of technologies that made warfare more defensive. These technologies included machine guns, heavy artillery, chemical weapons, and solid fortifications (Raudzens, 1990). This type of trench warfare led to a stagnation of the front lines, with few significant advances being made over long periods of time, battles often evolved into massive frontal assaults, at enormous human cost in terms of casualties (Raudzens, 1990). Technological advances were also effective in areas other than defense and offense, such as the introduction of wireless telegraphy which was a major step forward in communications during World War I (Hartcup, 1988). These examples demonstrate the reliance on firepower, the emphasis on defensive tactics, the stagnation of the front lines, the extensive use of trenches and fortifications as a central element of military strategy, and the evolving role of technology in shaping warfare during the Second Generation.

Overall, the Second Generation of warfare witnessed a transition from the rigid line and column tactics of the First Generation to a more technologically driven approach that incorporated mass firepower and centralized control. This era marked an important phase in the evolution of warfare, setting the stage for subsequent generations and their respective advancements in tactics and strategies.

1.3. Third Generation Warfare- Decentralized Power, From Tactics to Mindsets

The Third Generation, like the Second, was a product of World War I. It was developed by the German Army and is commonly known as Blitzkrieg, it was also a response to the increased firepower on the battlefield, but this time with the use of clever strategy. Based on maneuver rather than attrition, the tactics of Third Generation warfare aimed to collapse the enemy from the rear forward, infiltrating to bypass and collapse instead of directly engaging and destroying, these were the first ever truly nonlinear tactics, and the focus was now fully on the enemy's rear (Lind, 2004; Lind et al., 1989, van der Klaauw, 2021). While the basic concepts of the Third Generation tactics were in place by the end of 1918, the addition of new technological elements once more, such as tanks, aircraft, and submarines, brought about a major shift at the operational level in World War II (Lind et al., 1998).

Not only did the tactics change during the Third Generation Warfare, but the military culture also faced significant changes. Military culture, which had traditionally been based on a rigid structure of order, proved inadequate to deal with the complexities of the battlefield (van der Klaauw, 2021). In Third Generation warfare, the military adopted a situation, enemy, and required-outcomes-oriented approach rather than internal methods and processes (Lind, 2004). During war games in the 19th century, German junior officers were often given challenges requiring them to disobey established orders, these orders stipulated the result to be achieved but left open the method to be used, in an approach known as “Auftragstaktik” (Lind, 2004). In this context, initiative was valued above obedience, and mistakes were tolerated when they resulted from an excess of initiative, rather than a lack. This approach relied on self-discipline and initiative rather than externally imposed discipline and blind obedience (Lind, 2004).

The concept of Third Generation warfare represents a significant departure from previous generations, particularly in terms of centralization. Previous generations of warfare focused on establishing centralized control and order amid a chaotic battlefield (Academic, 2010b). However, Third Generation warfare embraces the inherent chaos of warfare by adopting a decentralized approach. In Blitzkrieg, the operational art shifted from a focus on place to time. This transition was later recognized explicitly in the work of Colonel John Boyd and his "OODA¹ Loop," highlighting the importance of rapid decision-making and adapting to changing circumstances (Lind et al., 1998).

¹ OODA- “Observation, Orientation, Decision, Action”

Third Generation Warfare is present in various historical military conflicts besides World War I and II. The Persian Gulf War for example, was conducted by the United States in 1991, where the use of surveillance systems, such as satellites and reconnaissance aircraft, to monitor and gather information about enemy forces, and the implementation of rapid, deep penetrations into enemy territory, such as the famous "left hook" maneuver executed by U.S. forces in Operation Desert Storm, demonstrated the effectiveness of technology and decentralized decision-making and exploiting enemy vulnerabilities (Atkinson, 1993). The Persian Gulf War demonstrated the potential of communication, information, and precision technologies to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of decentralized military operations, all these elements contributed to shaping the nature of the battlefield and the conduct of operations during the war.

Furthermore, the Iraq War presented another example of Third Generation Warfare in action, particularly during the initial stages of the conflict in 2003, where a combination of technological factors contributed to making this war possible and influenced the battlefield. The use of precision airstrikes, rapid armored thrusts, and the maneuvering of U.S. forces in capturing key strategic objectives showcased the agility and decentralized decision-making employed by coalition forces, numerous motion sensors, heat detectors, and communications and image eavesdroppers installed on aircraft and satellites hovered over Iraq during the conflict (Wood, 2004) (Talbot, 2020). This approach aimed to collapse the Iraqi regime swiftly and minimize casualties, highlighting the effectiveness of Third Generation warfare principles (Wood, 2004). In summary, the 2003 war in Iraq was made possible by the advent of new technologies such as modern communications systems, surveillance and reconnaissance, and precision weapons. These technologies influenced the battlefield, allowing for greater coordination and effectiveness in military operations, as well as providing a more accurate surveillance and attack capability.

1.4. Fourth Generation Warfare- From Nation-States to Non-State Actors: The Shifting Landscape of Security

Fourth Generation Warfare emerged as a paradigm shift in warfare, challenging traditional tactics and introducing new dynamics on the modern battlefield. According to Lind (2004), this generation is characterized by the decentralization of military power (that carried over from the Third generation warfare), the blurring of lines between "military" and "civilian", and the emphasis on information warfare and psychological operations. Non-state actors, such as insurgent groups, terrorist organizations, and decentralized networks, play a significant role in

the Fourth generation warfare, imposing their agility, adaptability, and knowledge of the local environment to engage in asymmetrical warfare (Băhnăreanu, 2017).

In Fourth Generation Warfare, the use of unconventional tactics and strategies is prevalent. Rather than engaging in traditional large-scale conventional battles, this generation emphasizes the use of guerrilla warfare, hit-and-run attacks, sabotage, and terrorism to disrupt the opponent's capabilities and erode their will to fight. Băhnăreanu (2017) also highlights the importance of propaganda and information warfare, as combatants seek to shape public opinion, influence perceptions, and exploit information networks to gain a strategic advantage.

In this competitive new context, in which information is considered a vital production factor, propaganda and information war strategies are employed to obtain an advantage in the use of information and maximize the critical success factors of activities (Dinis, 2004). Furthermore, in this age of innovation and knowledge, propaganda and information warfare have the power to influence public opinion, shape perceptions and discredit the enemy in all spheres of society, from the individual/domestic to the transnational level. As Colonel Dinis presents in his work "The Information War: Security and Competitiveness Perspectives" (2004), these strategies become particularly relevant in a strategic environment characterized by new risks and threats, including transnational terrorism that uses cyberspace and means of mass destruction, characteristics of the Fourth Generation of Warfare. Therefore, in this era propaganda and information warfare assume a significant role in security, defense, and warfare being employed by both state and non-state actors to undermine the stability and security of states through the manipulation of information (Dinis, 2004).

During this Warfare generation, the concept of "total war" gained even more prominence. Total war refers to conflicts where entire societies are mobilized and engaged in warfare, it involves the full utilization of resources, economic systems, and propaganda efforts ("The Oxford Essential Dictionary of the U.S. Military," 2001). Although the concept of total war is usually associated with the two world wars of the 20th century, this type of warfare can be observed in different historical periods much earlier than the 20th century, such as the ancient Mongols, who, similarly to the modern Nazis, practiced total war against an enemy, marshaling all available resources, including military personnel, non-combat workers, intelligence, transportation, money, and supplies (Upshur et al., 2011).

Kaldor however recognizes the evolution of warfare over time and argues that the wars of the XX century and beyond are not so exclusively characterized by the classic idea of "total war"(Kaldor, 1999). According to Kaldor, while in traditional wars the main actors were the States and the objective was clear military victory and the imposition of conditions on the

defeated enemy, in contemporary "new wars", these dynamics have changed significantly (Kaldor, 1999). She highlights that non-state actors play a central role in these new forms of conflict and the objectives of these wars have become diffuse and include issues such as identity, control of natural resources, and local power (Kaldor, 1999). Kaldor also points out that in new wars there is a greater tendency for violence directed at the civilian population, with the use of tactics such as massacres, ethnic cleansing, and terrorism, challenging the traditional distinction between combatants and non-combatants (Kaldor, 1999). It is possible to make an association between the concept of "total war" and Fourth generation warfare, although Kaldor has not made this association explicitly in her work. Both address changes in the dynamics of contemporary wars, focusing on the participation of non-state actors and violence against the civilian population.

Lind and the US military experts (2004) note that even though some aspects of Fourth Generation warfare were elements that already existed, this generation marks the most radical change since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, here, the traditional monopoly of the state over warfare is challenged as non-state actors emerge as formidable opponents, making sometimes a return to a world of cultures, and not just states, in conflict. Across the globe, state militaries are increasingly engaged in conflicts against groups like al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the FARC that use asymmetric warfare, guerrilla tactics, and unconventional methods to challenge and undermine the authority and control of state actors, that in many instances, finds themselves on the losing side of these encounters (Kilcullen, 2006; Hammes, 2007).

The advent of technology and the rise of global connectivity have also significantly shaped the Fourth Generation Warfare. The internet, social media, and other communication platforms have provided non-state actors with unprecedented avenues to disseminate their messages, recruit members, and coordinate their activities on a global scale. The dissemination of disinformation, manipulation of narratives, and the recruitment of sympathizers have become integral components of this type of warfare (Lind, 2004).

Many examples highlight the diverse manifestations of Fourth Generation Warfare in contemporary conflicts, involving a range of actors and tactics that challenge traditional notions of warfare. One is the conflict in Afghanistan, which represents a prime example of Fourth Generation Warfare due to the nature of the Taliban insurgency and the asymmetric tactics it employs. The Taliban is an Afghan non-state insurgent group that used/uses guerrilla and asymmetric tactics to challenge US-led coalition forces and the Afghan government, employing ambushes, suicide attacks, improvised landmines, and attacks and infiltration on dense urban areas (Jones, 2015) (Lind, 2004). Employing guerrilla tactics, asymmetric warfare, strategic

information warfare with propaganda as a tool to influence public opinion and undermine confidence in the Afghan government and coalition forces, and a decentralized command structure, the Taliban has demonstrated resilience and adaptability, blurring the lines between political, military, and social spheres (Stenersen, 2018) (Hussaini, 2020).

Another example of Fourth Generation Warfare is the 2006 conflict between Hezbollah and Israel. Hezbollah, recognizing Israel's conventional military superiority, employed a carefully planned asymmetric strategy. The group launched an initial offensive, killing and kidnapping Israeli soldiers, and fired several rockets into northern Israel in order to challenge the country's reputation as the dominant military force (The Institute, 2009). To counteract Israeli superiority in terms of firepower, Hezbollah has invested significantly in underground defenses, building a complex network of tunnels, bunkers, and shelters. In addition to military tactics, Hezbollah also recognized the importance of information and propaganda warfare (The Institute, 2009). The group manipulated the media, using sympathetic photographers and journalists, and circulated a narrative that presented Israel as an aggressor and Hezbollah as a defender of Arab interests, highlighting the plight of Lebanese civilians and questioning Israel's actions (The Institute, 2009). This strategy was aimed at undermining Israel's reputation, both militarily and politically, and strengthening Hezbollah's image as an effective resistance group (The Institute, 2009). Both these conflicts are notable examples of fourth-generation warfare, where non-state groups adopt asymmetric strategies, utilize unconventional resources, and seek to influence public opinion through information warfare and propaganda.

1.5. Muskets to Missiles: The Impact of Technology on Warfare

Technological transformation and the development of ideas have played key roles in the evolution of generations of warfare throughout history. Technology has always been used to produce improved tools of warfare, and systematic research in sciences has enabled the development of new technology and innovations for both military and civilian use that have had effects both on society and the nature of warfare (Anand, 1999). The present age is unfolding an unprecedented revolution in technology. These technologies have not only touched myriad activities in the civil field but have also initiated a revolution in military affairs (Anand, 1999).

In the First Generation of warfare, technology and ideas were in the early stages of development. Battles were predominantly fought in open fields, using weapons such as swords, spears, and bows (Lind, 2004). Although technology was not advanced, ideas about

organization and military discipline were essential to achieving victory during this generation (Bunker 1996). With the arrival of the industrial age, the Second Generation of warfare was characterized by the extensive use of firearms and mass defense tactics (Bunker, 1996). Firearms technology, such as rifles and machine guns, played a crucial role in the evolution of warfare tactics (Lind et al., 1989). The Third Generation of warfare was marked by the advent of tanks and the first non-linear tactics, which, aided by new technologies, revolutionized warfare, allowing mobility and speed on the battlefields (van der Klaauw, 2021). Finally, in the Fourth Generation of warfare, technology and ideas were even more influential. This generation is characterized using advanced communication, intelligence, and electronic and information warfare technologies that, once again, are the result of ideas and technology, the tactics employed focus on asymmetric warfare, with the use of guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and special operations (Lind, 2004).

When World War I bogged down in an endless battle in the trenches, both sides called upon scientists to break the stalemate and save the nation, who quickly answered the call by creating a steady stream of effective new weapons such as fighter jets, tanks, submarines and machine guns and bombs even more effective (Harari, 2015). However, technology played an even greater role in World War II. The cavalry, trenches, and warships that were normal in 1940, in just six years, began to be replaced by jet planes, ballistic missiles, and, in the case of the United States, atomic weapons (Harari, 2015). In the 18th century, logistics and strategy had a greater impact than technology itself on the outcome of wars, the Napoleonic military machine, which crushed the armies of the European powers at Austerlitz (1805), had more or less the same weapons as the army of Louis XVI (Harari, 2015). Science, industry, and military technology were only interconnected with the advent of the capitalist system and the Industrial Revolution, which coincided during the Second Generation of warfare, however, once established, this connection quickly transformed the world, and continues to do it (Harari, 2015).

As we can see, the evolution of generations of war was practically always driven by the interaction between technology and ideas, transforming the battlefield and providing new tools and tactics. Understanding the interaction between technology, ideas and the evolution of generations of war is fundamental to analyzing the challenges and transformations that occur in the most recent military scenario.

1.6. A Resilient Evolution

Although warfare has evolved over different generations, it is important to note that elements from previous generations are still relevant and continue to be present in modern conflicts, despite their evolution and improvement, the previous generations continue to influence military strategies and tactics.

In the case of First Generation Warfare, which was based on the smoothbore musket and focuses on line and column tactics, it is no longer the dominant form of warfare, but we still find its application, although limited, in certain contexts, such as, for example, in exercises and ceremonial military parades that often incorporate elements of First Generation Warfare to show discipline and order (Bunker, 1996). Second Generation Warfare, characterized by massive firepower and centralized control, evolved into more modernized, mechanized warfare (Bunker, 1996) (Lind et al, 1989). Although advanced technology has become more prevalent, the Second Generation principles of concentrated firepower, coordinated maneuver, and the use of operational art are still important in certain conflicts and battles nowadays (Bunker, 1996). Third Generation Warfare, based on ideas rather than technology, emphasizing maneuverability and decentralized command, shaped the development of modern military doctrine (Bunker, 1996). Concepts such as maneuver warfare and fast mobile operations continue to be used in a variety of ways by military forces around the world, the ability to adapt and apply these principles to current battlefields demonstrates the lasting impact of this generation's strategies. Moreover, even in the Fourth Generation Warfare era, where non-state actors and unconventional tactics play a significant role, elements from previous generations are observed (Lind, 2004). Guerrilla warfare, a hallmark of previous generations, is still employed by insurgent groups and resistance forces seeking to challenge established powers.

It is important to recognize that war is a dynamic and ever-evolving phenomenon, and elements from different generations can be combined or adapted to suit the specific circumstances of a conflict. As military forces face a variety of challenges, they build on the lessons and strategies of the past, while incorporating new technologies, doctrines, and approaches to deal with the complexities of modern warfare. Warfare development is an ongoing process that mirrors global developments, whether current or projected (van der Klaauw, 2021). This will be illustrated once again during New Generation Warfare.

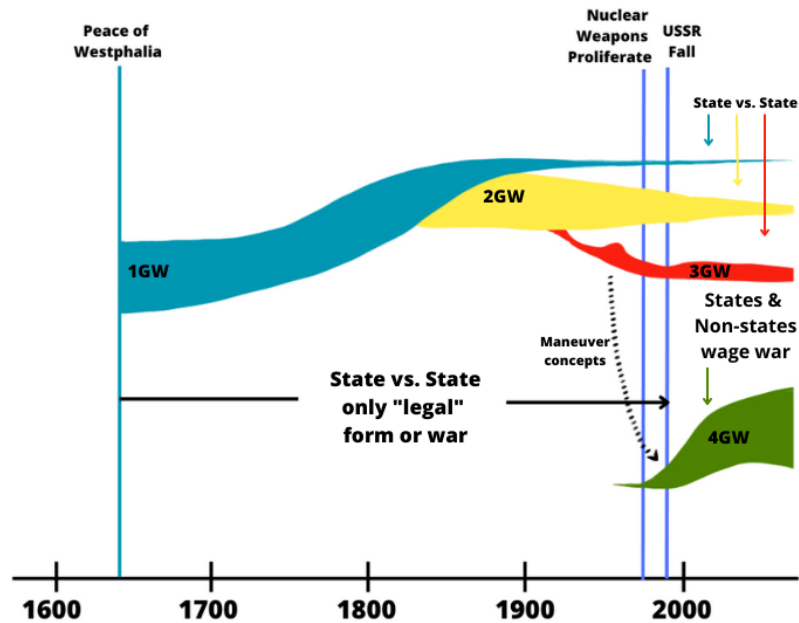


Fig.1- A diagram of the generational warfare model adapted from J. N. Nielsen “The Generational Warfare Model” (2010).

In previous sections, we delved into a comprehensive exploration of multiple generations of warfare, highlighting their distinctive features and providing illustrative examples. We discussed how each generation has brought about significant changes in tactics, technologies, and the nature of conflict, and through an analysis of some historical events, we examine the evolution from conventional warfare to unconventional and asymmetrical methods.

Building on this comprehensive understanding, the next chapters will extend our investigation into the emerging landscape of New Generation Warfare. By contextualizing our analysis in the context of past generations, we aim to discern the underlying patterns, trends, and dynamics that shape the contemporary and future operating environment. The next chapters will explore the evolving nature of warfare, encompassing the integration of advanced technologies, hybrid threats, cyber warfare, and other developments that shift the paradigm yet again. Through this exploration, we seek to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by the new generation of warfare, paving the way for informed strategy and policy in an ever-changing global security landscape.

Generation	Period	Basis
First	1648 to Present	Technology
Second	1815 to Present	Technology
Third	1918 to Present	Ideas

Fourth	late XX century to Present	Ideas and Technology
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Table 1- A representation of the Warfare Generations its periods and evolution basis adapted from Bunker, R. (1996). *Generations, Waves, and Epochs: Modes of Warfare and the RPMA*.

Chapter 2- The Role of Doctrine in Military Capabilities

Understanding the concept of military capabilities is essential in the context of International Relations, particularly when examining the dynamics of hard power. Military capabilities are the bedrock of a nation's ability to assert itself on the global stage and safeguard its interests in the defense sector, they represent a nation's capacity to translate its strategic objectives into tangible actions and effects, under specific operating environments, making them a critical element in the realm of international power politics (Taliaferro et al., 2019). These capabilities underpin a nation's ability to project force, deter potential adversaries, and respond effectively to various security challenges. Therefore, military capabilities are an essential component of hard power in International Relations, as they provide a state's ability to use force, if necessary, to achieve its objectives and protect its interests, playing an important role in national security and diplomatic negotiation, shaping international relations by influencing the perceptions and actions of other states.

The components that constitute military capabilities are multifaceted and interconnected, encompassing various elements that collectively enable a nation to achieve its defense and security goals. These elements include, but are not limited to, organization, personnel, materiel and equipment, infrastructure, leadership and training (Taliaferro et al., 2019). Each of these components contributes to the overall effectiveness of a nation's armed forces. Organization determines the structure and command hierarchy within the armed forces, facilitating coordinated actions and decision-making, personnel provide the human capital required to operate military equipment and execute strategic plans, materiel and equipment encompass the hardware necessary for military operations, from weaponry to logistical support, infrastructure includes facilities, bases, and installations essential for military activities, leadership and training ensures that military personnel are proficient and capable of executing their assigned tasks effectively (Taliaferro et al., 2019). Together, these elements form the foundation of military capabilities, allowing a nation to exert its influence and protect its interests on the international stage.

However, at the heart of these military capabilities lies a crucial component that deserves special attention: doctrine (Taliaferro et al., 2019). Doctrine serves as the guiding framework that outlines fundamental principles and strategies for the employment of military forces in a coordinated manner to achieve common objectives, it not only defines what tasks need to be accomplished but also delineates how these tasks should be executed (Taliaferro et al., 2019) (Homan, 2008). Doctrine represents the intellectual aspect of military capabilities, providing a

coherent and standardized approach to warfare and defense. In the context of International Relations, doctrine plays a central role in shaping a nation's military strategy, tactics, and posture. It influences a state's behavior and interactions with other nations, serving as a key determinant of its military power projection capabilities and the level of threat it poses to potential adversaries (Homan, 2008). Doctrine is not static, it provides a structural framework that evolves over time in response to changing security landscapes, technological advancements, and lessons learned from past conflicts, as such, it reflects a nation's adaptability and willingness to adjust its military approach to meet evolving challenges (Geluk, 2023).

In summary, the role of doctrine in military capabilities cannot be underestimated. It serves as the guiding compass that shapes a nation's military approach, strategy, and posture. Doctrine influences not only the internal workings of a nation's armed forces but also its external interactions and relationships with other states. In the study of Russia's New Generation Warfare and its application in the battlefield, an examination of Russian military doctrine will be central to understand both the capabilities and intentions of this key player in international relations, offering insights into how Russia is shaping its military capabilities to face contemporary challenges.

Chapter 3- From Traditional to Transformative: The New Generation Warfare

In recent decades, the nature of warfare has undergone a profound transformation not only due to technological advances but also the emergence of new geopolitical realities and strategic thinking. This chapter explores the concept of New Generation Warfare, a term that encompasses emerging trends and strategies in modern conflict that represents a departure from conventional methods, incorporating a mix of traditional and unconventional approaches. Understanding the characteristics and implications of New Generation Warfare is crucial for militaries, policymakers, and academics alike, as by examining its multidimensional nature, information warfare, technological advances, and hybrid and asymmetric tactics, we can gain valuable insight into the changing face of warfare in the 21st century.

3.1. Terminology

The term “New Generation Warfare” first appeared in Russian military literature in 2013 as a response by the Chief of the General Staff, General Valery Gerasimov, to the ambition to rethink warfare tactics and methods (Bowman, 2020). According to Gerasimov, the nature of military operations in the 21st century has undergone a transformation because there is now no distinction between war and peace driven by the growth of non-military means to achieve military and strategic objectives (Micallef, 2018).

According to Micallef (2018), at the core of the Gerasimov Doctrine is the belief that non-military means "in many cases exceeded the power of arms in their effectiveness"², and that is where this doctrine eliminates the distinction between war and peace, leaving only continuous warfare, conducted primarily by non-military means, where each side tries to manipulate the operational battlefield to its own tactical benefit (Echevarria, 2019). The Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831) famously declared: "War is the continuation of politics by other means", following this line of thought, in the Gerasimov Doctrine, politics is the continuation of war by other means (Micallef, 2018). To promote its doctrine Gerasimov identified significant distinctions between traditional and new military methods of conflict (Bērziņš, 2018) (Gerasimov, 2013).

² Micallef, J. V. (2018). The Roots, Tactics and Consequences of New Generation Warfare [Op-Ed]. Pg. 1

Traditional Military Methods	New Military Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military action starts after strategic deployment (Declaration of War). • Frontal clashes between large units consisting mostly of ground units. • Defeat of manpower, firepower, taking control of regions and borders to gain territorial control. • Destruction of economic power and territorial annexation. • Combat operations on land, air and sea • Management of troops by rigid hierarchy and governance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military action starts by groups of troops during peacetime (war is not declared at all). • Non-contact clashes between highly maneuverable interspecific fighting groups. • Annihilation of the enemy's military and economic power by short-time precise strikes in strategic military and civilian infrastructure. • Massive use of high-precision weapons and special operations, robotics, and weapons that use new physical principles (direct-energy weapons — lasers, shortwave radiation, etc). • Use of armed civilians (4 civilians to 1 military). • Simultaneous strike on the enemy's units and facilities in all of the territory. • Simultaneous battle on land, air, sea, and in the informational space. • Use of asymmetric and indirect methods. • Management of troops in a unified informational sphere

Fig. 2- Changes in the aspects of armed conflict according to General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the Russian General Staff, retrieved from Bērziņš, J. (2015). *Russian New Generation Warfare Is Not Hybrid Warfare: Lessons for Europe*.

3.2 New Generation, Not Hybrid Warfare

In a 2009 article, Frank Hoffman noted the emergence of the term "hybrid threat" and analyzed its multiple interpretations. Hoffman (2009) noted that some analysts were reluctant to introduce the new terminology, preferring the more traditional notions of "conventional" and "irregular" warfare. However, Hoffman believed that these ancient terms were inadequate to describe modern conflicts, and so, he described a hybrid threat as an adversary that “simultaneously and adaptively combines conventional weapons, irregular tactics, terrorism, and criminal activity on the battlefield to achieve political objectives” (Suchkov, 2021) (Hoffman, 2009).

Since its introduction, the term "hybrid warfare" has become popular and is often used in discussions of contemporary conflicts. However, the term's meaning has passed through many changes and evolutions and has been criticized for being overused and lacking clarity (Echevarria, 2019). The term is now used in the official doctrines of many nations and pervades academic and political discourses, furthermore, its meaning has been expanded to include non-state actors and has been associated with "Russia's evil activities" under Vladimir Putin

(Marshall, 2022). Initially, the term was not widely used in Russia, but recently it has been adopted and its interpretation changed significantly: Before the Ukrainian War, the term tended to refer to trends in US military thinking, but since 2014 Russia has viewed hybrid warfare as referring to tactics employed exclusively by the West, from military conflicts to issues such as sports, vaccinations, and the Eurovision Song Contest, all seen as aspects of the "hybrid warfare" the West was waging against them (Suchkov, 2021). On the other hand, Western nations see this approach as a way to guard themselves against Russian subversion and interference, including cyber warfare (Suchkov, 2021) (Marshall, 2022).

In addition to the concept of hybrid warfare, Russia has also developed the concept of "New Generation Warfare" which primarily addresses proactive engagement with foreign adversaries (Marshall, 2022). Russia's approach to New Generation Warfare differs from Western perceptions of hybrid warfare, which typically involve a mix of irregular, conventional, and cyber warfare, Russia's strategy combines discreet state involvement at a lower level with more direct and assertive superpower involvement at a higher level (Karber, 2015). Unlike Western politicians, the Russian leadership has a deep understanding of military options and executes them with precision and confidence, similar to a masterful performance on a Stradivarius (Karber, 2015).

3.2.1 Russia's Military Strategy

Russia's military strategy operates on three interlocking levels, each serving to justify and legitimize its actions. The first level is doctrinal unilateralism, which holds that the successful use of force establishes legitimacy (Hopf, 2005). Looking at the relatively weak response from the United States and the European Union to its actions in Georgia and Ukraine, Russia appears to validate this strategy, the perception of their actions as successful in achieving their goals reinforces their belief in the effectiveness of this approach (Bērziņš, 2015) (Hopf, 2005).

Second, Russia emphasizes legalism by backing up its actions with some kind of legal act. For example, in intervening in Ukraine, Putin sought authorization from the Russian parliament to use military power, presenting it as a measure of peaceful intent or defense of Russian-speaking populations (Bērziņš, 2014). Furthermore, Russia denies military occupation in Crimea, citing the presence of troops there as "local self-defense forces" and justifying troop numbers within the limits of bilateral agreements with Ukraine (Chappell & Memmott, 2014). This legal stance helps create a narrative that their actions are within the bounds of international law and peaceful in nature.

The third level involves exploring ambiguous terms and creating alternative realities. Russia points to Crimea's referendum, likening it to instances of self-determination such as Kosovo, while the West sees it as illegitimate due to violations of Ukraine's constitution and a lack of genuine voting options (Bērziņš, 2015). Russia cites commitments to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity based on international agreements from the 1990s to justify its actions (Chappell & Memmott, 2014). By employing these ambiguous terms and exploring different perspectives, Russia strategically blurs the lines between aggression and self-defense, creating confusion and making it challenging for the international community to form a unified response (Bērziņš, 2015).

As stated before, labeling Russia's modern war "hybrid war" faces significant challenges, as it does not quite fit the Western concept. The term implies a mixture of elements, including kinetic force, but Russian actions in Crimea did not primarily involve direct military force (Suchkov, 2021) (Bērziņš, 2015). Trying to force Russian military theory into a Western paradigm is a methodological error, as it stems from a US military concept and fails to consider different cultural thoughts and strategic approaches (Bērziņš, 2015). Russian analysts distinguish between hybrid warfare and New Generation Warfare, the latter being viewed as a defense strategy to protect against Western interference (Suchkov, 2021).

To gain a comprehensive grasp of Russia's military theory, logic, and operations, it is essential to acknowledge and analyze the three interconnected principles they employ: doctrinal unilateralism, legalism, and the use of ambiguous terms. These elements work together strategically to explore conflicting perspectives and create an alternate reality that supports Russia's actions. By delving into this unique and innovative model of warfare one can develop a more precise comprehension of Russia's military strategy (Bērziņš, 2015).

3.3. Renaming Warfare- The Roots of New Generation Warfare

3.3.1. In Europe But Not With Europe

According to Rumer and Sokolsky (2020), Russian strategic culture is believed to be a product of several key factors, a narrative embraced by the elite that portrays inflexible Western antagonism toward Russia, and an open geographic landscape that highlights the importance of

one of Russia's significant defense strategies, known as “depth”³. The concept of strategic “depth” has played a crucial role in Russia's security strategy due to the absence of natural barriers separating Russia from the rest of Europe, throughout history, “depth” has been instrumental in saving the country from potential defeats in critical moments, such as in 1812 and 1941 (Rumer & Sokolsky, 2020). This explains why Russia expanded its borders to the West as far as possible. The Kremlin under Putin’s leadership finds the security order that has developed in Europe since the end of the Cold War intolerable. According to Spohr (2022), the fundamental principle underpinning this order is the principle, enshrined in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, that each sovereign state has the freedom to choose its alliances (Spohr, 2022). With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, one of the primary objectives of Russian foreign policy in the 1990s was to restore the lost margin of safety, this goal was pursued with the initiation of the Russia-Belarus Union in 1996 (Rumer & Sokolsky, 2020).

After overcoming the chaos and economic challenges that marked the initial years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia became more assertive in protecting its borders and showed a reduced willingness to engage in cooperation with other European states (Rice, 2016). The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established during the early years of the Cold War when relations between the former World War II allies, including the Soviet Union, France, Great Britain, and the United States, began to deteriorate, and its expansion since the end of the Cold War was seen as a threat, for Russia, especially with the entry of the Baltic states in 2004, which were already difficult for them to accept (Rice, 2016).

The Kremlin claims that the West gave assurances that former Soviet republics and satellites would remain neutral, serving as a buffer zone, and that NATO would not expand “one inch eastward” (Spohr, 2022). True or not⁴, Regardless of the historical claims, the current geographical reality is that NATO's border is now approximately 600 km from Moscow, significantly closer than the distance of 1,700 km during the period of the Soviet Union. If Ukraine were to join NATO, the city of Belgorod, which was previously deep inside the USSR, would be located on the border between NATO and Russia (Bērziņš, 2014).

³ According to Bērziņš (2014) the concept of "depth" as a military strategy refers to the distance between opposing forces and a country's vital assets, such as military frontlines, bases, and industrial centers, operationally, a greater distance for enemy forces to cover improves the prospects of a successful defensive operation.

⁴ “Open Door Policy” is enshrined in Article 10 of NATO’s founding treaty, which says “any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic” can apply for membership (NATO, n.d).

3.3.3. The Case of Ukraine

Ukraine holds profound cultural, economic, and political significance for Russia, playing a pivotal role in shaping Russia's identity and its aspirations on the global stage, it is considered the birthplace of Russia, and something that was lost with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, however, it is to the Russians, a guarantee of their territorial integrity (Masters, 2023).

According to the Kremlin's perspective, Ukraine is expected to be a close ally or, at least, a neutral country, therefore, the involvement of the United States and the European Union in Ukrainian internal affairs is viewed as a direct challenge to Russia's regional interests (Bērziņš, 2014). In other words, the Russian perspective strongly maintains that the United States and the EU have been actively trying to draw Ukraine into their sphere of influence, disregarding Russia's inherent claims to the region. Russia's ultimate objective has always been to have Ukraine as a friendly and subordinate partner, just like Belarus, however, after the West's interference, that seems to be more impossible to fulfill (Bērziņš, 2014).

Ukraine has consistently been a sensitive and crucial issue for Russia, a red line, leading the latter to take action to safeguard its interests in the country. Starting with the most important, its military interests, and in 2014, under the presidency of Vladimir Putin, Russia annexed Crimea, solidifying its control over a vital position along the Black Sea (Masters, 2023). The justification for this act from the Kremlin's point of view is many, first, because for more than 250 years Crimea served as the base of the Russian Black Sea fleet, and an anti-Russian government could break the agreement that allows Russia to have its military bases there, adding to that, in Russia's perspective, the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine in 1954 was a mistake, as Russia considers Crimea to have always been an integral part of its territory (Bērziņš, 2014) (Masters, 2023).

The annexation of Crimea was utilized to give a clear message to the West, emphasizing that the Ukrainian issue is a critical and non-negotiable boundary for Russia, and it aimed to reiterate that Ukraine should remain within Russia's sphere of influence (Bērziņš, 2014). Additionally, the annexation was used as a demonstration of Russia's desire for respect and recognition as a significant global player on par with the United States, it sought to establish Russia as an independent actor, not integrated into the Western sphere, and that any attempt to secede the Russian Federation would not be tolerated (Bērziņš, 2014). The attack also served to withdraw public attention away from Russia's internal social and economic issues, though this impact was only temporary and short-lived. Although Putin's popularity has increased since the occupation of Crimea, it is anticipated that Russia's underlying structural problems, coupled

with the impact of economic sanctions, will likely lead to a decline in popularity soon (Bērziņš, 2014).

As Rumer and Sokolsky (2020) stated, the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014 marked a significant turning point in the relationship between Russia and the West, this event not only impacted the two principal security and political institutions of Europe- EU and NATO- but also had a profound shock on the countries located on the periphery that share borders with Russia. The aggression had far-reaching implications for the politics and security of Europe as a whole, however, when considering the context of Russian warfare strategy, Rumer and Sokolsky (2020) argue that these actions should not have been surprising.

3.3.4. The Emergence of a New Form of Warfare

The occupation of Crimea marked a turning point in warfare strategies. While similar to Russia's previous interventions, it introduced the new military guidelines that would be fully implemented in 2020 (Bērziņš, 2014).

Russian New Military Guidelines	
i.	From direct destruction to direct influence;
ii.	From direct annihilation of the opponent to its inner decay;
iii.	From a war with weapons and technology to a culture war;
iv.	From a war with conventional forces to specially prepared forces and commercial irregular groupings;
v.	From the traditional (3D) battleground to information/psychological warfare and war of perceptions;
vi.	From direct clash to contactless war;
vii.	From a superficial and compartmented war to a total war, including the enemy's internal side and base;
viii.	From war in the physical environment to a war in the human consciousness and in cyberspace;
ix.	From symmetric to asymmetric warfare by a combination of political, economic, information, technological, and ecological campaigns;
x.	From war in a defined period to a state of permanent war as the natural condition in national life.

Table 2- Russian New Military Guidelines adapted from Peter Mattsson's DSPC lecture in Riga "The Russian Armed Forces Adapted to New Operational Concepts in a Multipolar World?" on February 19, 2014, retrieved from Bērziņš, J. (2014). *Russia's New Generation Warfare In Ukraine: Implications For Latvian Defense Policy*.

Russia's strategy in Ukraine involved psychological warfare, subordination, intimidation, and media propaganda to break resistance without extensive firepower, and showcased disciplined Russian troops and advanced equipment (Karber, 2015). Consequently, a distinct military triumph was achieved on the battlefield, which was the outcome of a well-coordinated campaign of strategic communication involving well-defined political, psychological, and information strategies (Ripley & Jones, 2014), and that Russian unconventional warfare was dubbed by analysts as "New Generation Warfare".

The Russian perspective on modern warfare centers around the belief that the primary battlespace lies within the mind, in an age of increased popular engagement and attention to foreign conflicts, they emphasize the importance of understanding and leveraging these people-centered dimensions (Fedyk, 2017). According to Bērziņš, this comprehensive approach to war involves political, informational, economic, ecological, and technological instruments, presenting a true paradigm of total war (Bērziņš, 2014) (Fedyk, 2017).

In their approach to New Generation wars, the focus is on information and psychological warfare to achieve control over troops and weapons, with the aim of minimizing the necessity for deploying extensive military force, the key objective is to morally and psychologically demoralize the enemy's armed forces and civilian population, thereby gaining their support to the detriment of their own government and country (Bērziņš, 2014). For Russia, in the current geopolitical structure, Western civilization, its values, political system, and culture are the clear enemy.

Chapter 4. Understanding The New Form of War

4.1. Russia's New Generation Warfare

As we saw before, Russian efforts to enhance their warfighting capability are primarily driven by the way they perceive national threats, which significantly influences both the political landscape and the strategies employed in military operations and activities (Mattsson, 2015).

The year 1999 holds significant importance in European security as it marks a pivotal turning point. This was the year when Vladimir Putin, a former KGB agent, assumed power with the belief that the downfall of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical catastrophe and since then, his focus has been on reestablishing Russian dominance in Eastern Europe and extending Moscow's influence as far west as the Vistula River (Karber, 2015). During this period, the Russian Army underwent a decade-long restructuring process, successfully implementing new tactics in the Second Chechen War (1999-2009) (Karber, 2015).

Recognizing the diverse military opponents Russia faced, including mass armies in the East, unconventional threats from the South, and high-tech adversaries in the West, the General Staff developed a strategy for the Russian Army that emphasized decentralized and dispersed operations (Karber, 2015). This approach covered a wide spectrum of environments, ranging from unconventional and conventional warfare to tactical nuclear battlefields (Karber, 2015).

Bērziņš (2014) based on the work of Chekinov and Bogdanov "The Nature and Content of a New-Generation War" (2013) states that the strategy is executed through a phased approach comprising eight distinct steps that start long before any military conflict.

4.1.1. Phase One: Non-Military Asymmetric Warfare- Non-kinetic⁵

The first phase involves the use of various non-military measures, such as information warfare, moral and psychological tactics, ideological influence, diplomatic efforts, and economic strategies, these asymmetric actions will be heavily employed to level off the enemy's superiority, in order to establish a favorable political, economic and military environment (Bērziņš, 2014) (Chekinov & Bogdanov, 2013). This phase is considered continuous, indicating

⁵ Non-Kinetic Warfare: Military actions that do not rely on direct physical force but instead focus on indirect effects, such as psychological, information-based, or behavioral tactics, to influence and achieve strategic objectives. Examples include cyber-attacks, psychological operations, and diplomatic coercion (Teo & Air Command and Staff Coll Maxwell AFB AL, 2015).

that the line between war and peace is blurred, with a continuous state of readiness, mobilization, and utilization of all available resources always and in all places (Fedyk, 2017).

4.1.2. Phase Two: Special Ops and Deception- Non-kinetic

In the second phase, special operations are carried out to deceive military and political leaders, and coordinated measures, including leaking false data, orders, directives, and instructions through media, diplomatic channels, government, and military agencies, are employed (Bērziņš, 2014). In this phase a targeted information operation is launched, destroying critical centers of military and government control, while enforcing strict censorship and manipulating the media narrative, these strategic maneuvers weaken the defender's morale, disrupt his command and control, and create chaos, facilitating the aggressor's military and political objectives (Chekinov & Bogdanov, 2013).

4.1.3. Phase Three: Intimidation and Influence- Non-kinetic

In this phase, the focus is on intimidating, deceiving, and corrupting government and military officials to convince them to relinquish their service duties (Bērziņš, 2014). Through careful manipulation, misinformation, and incentives, the aggressor aims to weaken the defender's resolve, destabilize the government administration system, and induce disobedience among the population and military ranks, these tactics are employed to create chaos, disrupt command and control, and pave the way to achieve political and military objectives swiftly and with minimal resistance (Chekinov & Bogdanov, 2013).

4.1.4. Phase Four: Destabilizing Propaganda and Subversion- Non-kinetic

In the fourth phase, efforts are made to increase population discontent through destabilizing propaganda in order to weaken the morale and psychological resilience of not just the opponent population, but also its armed forces personnel (Chekinov & Bogdanov, 2013). This is further amplified by the involvement of Russian militants, to further exacerbate the turmoil and disorder in the target country (Bērziņš, 2014). These militants can infiltrate and fuel dissent, carrying out subversive activities that contribute to the breakdown of social order and governance, creating an environment of chaos and demoralization, this multifaceted approach

seeks to create an enabling environment to achieve the aggressor's political and military objectives by undermining the defender's ability to resist effectively (Chekinov & Bogdanov, 2013).

4.1.5. Phase Five: Enforcement of Restrictions and Private Military Support- Kinetic⁶

During this phase, restrictions are imposed on the opposing country, establishing no-fly zones over its territory and implementing blockades to restrict its mobility and access, adding to that there is an extensive utilization of private military companies that cooperate closely with armed opposition units (Bērziņš, 2014). These private military companies play a significant role in coordinating and executing operations, providing specialized knowledge and capabilities to complement the regular armed forces, by employing these enforcement measures and private military support, the aggressor seeks to gain an advantage in the conflict, weaken capabilities of the defender and create an enabling environment to achieve their political and military objectives (Chekinov & Bogdanov, 2013).

4.1.6. Phase Six: Start of Military Action- Kinetic

In the sixth phase, military action finally begins followed by large-scale reconnaissance and subversive missions. All forms of forces and methods, including special operations forces, electronic warfare, radio engineering, diplomatic efforts, secret service intelligence, and espionage, come into play (Bērziņš, 2014). The objective of this phase is to gather critical information about the defender's military and government facilities, identifying key targets for precise strikes, additionally, subversive tactics to undermine the defender's capabilities and instigate internal unrest are employed, these coordinated efforts create a favorable environment to launch a devastating attack, disrupting the opponents' military and administrative infrastructure, and ultimately weakening their ability to resist (Chekinov & Bogdanov, 2013).

⁶ Kinetic Warfare: Military actions that use direct physical force, such as bombs, bullets, and rockets, to cause damage and harm to the enemy on the battlefield (Teo & Air Command and Staff Coll Maxwell AFB AL, 2015).

4.1.7. Phase Seven: Combined Target Operations- Kinetic

In the seventh phase, a combination of targeted information operations, continuous air force harassment, electronic warfare, aerospace operations, and the use of high-precision weapons from various platforms, such as long-range artillery and new advanced weapons based on emerging technologies, are employed (Bērziņš, 2014). The objective is to achieve quick and decisive results by overloading the opponent's communication, control, and military infrastructure, leaving them vulnerable to subsequent ground operations, the use of cutting-edge military technologies and coordinated measures aimed at securing the aggressor's military and political objectives (Chekinov & Bogdanov, 2013).

4.1.8. Phase Eight: Overcoming Resistance and Cleanup Operations- Kinetic

The final phase aims to overcome the remaining resistance points and destroy the surviving enemy units, this is achieved through special operations directed by reconnaissance units, precise coordination with missile and artillery units, airdrop operations to encircle points of resistance, and ground troop clearing operations (Bērziņš, 2014). Airdrop operations are employed to encircle and isolate the last pockets of resistance, while ground troops conduct targeted mopping operations to eradicate any remaining opposition, the objective is to quickly and decisively neutralize all remaining threats and solidify the aggressor's control over the conquered territory (Chekinov & Bogdanov, 2013).

Russian Army Strategy		
Phase One	Non-kinetic	Use of non-military measures such as information warfare, psychological tactics, diplomacy, and economic strategies.
Phase two	Non-kinetic	Use of special operations to deceive military and political leaders, involving coordinated efforts like disseminating false information through various channels.
Phase three	Non-kinetic	Use of careful manipulation, misinformation, and incentives to intimidate, deceive, and corrupt government and military officials to undermine their loyalty and service, destabilizing governance, and sowing disobedience to advance political and military goals.

Phase four	Non-kinetic	Efforts intensify to foster discontent among the population through destabilizing propaganda, targeting the morale of both civilians and armed forces.
Phase five	Kinetic	Imposition of restrictions like no-fly zones and blockades on the opposing country while heavily relying on private military companies that collaborate closely with armed opposition units.
Phase six	Kinetic	Military action commences, accompanied by extensive reconnaissance and subversive missions that employ a wide array of forces and methods, including special operations forces, space, electronic warfare, diplomatic channels, secret service intelligence, and espionage
Phase seven	Kinetic	A combination of targeted information operations, persistent air force harassment, electronic warfare, aerospace operations, and the utilization of high-precision weapons, including advanced technologies, such as long-range artillery, is employed.
Phase eight	Kinetic	Eliminate the remaining resistance and annihilate surviving enemy unit through specialized operations led by reconnaissance units, precise coordination with missile and artillery units, airdrop missions to encircle resistance points, and ground troop clearing operations.

Table 3- Russian Army Strategy adapted from the works of Bērziņš, J. (2014). *Russia's New Generation Warfare In Ukraine: Implications For Latvian Defense Policy*. And of Chekinov, S., & Bogdanov, S. (2013). *The nature and content of a New-Generation War*.

A notable aspect of Russia's approach to New Generation Warfare is its preference for non-military and non-violent means, rarely escalating into full-scale armed conflict (Fedyk, 2017). The emphasis is on the use of military deception and disinformation to obscure aggressive operations, which is epitomized in the term "maskirovka" or "camouflage" in Russian (Hutchinson, 2004) (Fedyk, 2017). Russian military deception, the maskirovka, is a well-established doctrine that dates to the early 20th century and covers a wide range of tactics designed to deceive the enemy, including camouflage, decoys, deception, denial, and disinformation (Jones, 2004). This doctrine involves various measures to deceive the enemy about the disposition and the presence of forces during combat operations and daily activities. Over time, the concept of maskirovka evolved to include not only military strategies but also strategic, political, and diplomatic methods (Jones, 2004) (Hutchinson, 2004). This expanded

scope includes the manipulation of facts, perceptions, and situations, to influence media and public opinion, serving strategic, tactical, national, and international objectives (Hutchinson, 2004). Russian New Generation Warfare relies heavily on this deception that has proven to be a versatile and powerful tool, instrumental in achieving military triumphs and furthering broader national and international goals, leading to situations where war can seem like peace, where nothing is true, everything is possible (Hutchinson, 2004) (Keating, 1981).

4.2. Asymmetry in Russia's New Generation Warfare

According to Bērziņš (2018), Russia's New Generation Warfare merges three major components, the first component involves the eight phases of escalation mentioned earlier, the second component encompasses Russia's instruments of asymmetric warfare, and finally, the third component is a nine-point Russian asymmetric strategy.

Asymmetry is a crucial but often overlooked aspect of Russian military art, as stated by Vladimir Putin in 2006, instead of relying solely on quantity, Russia emphasizes intellectual superiority and employs asymmetrical and cost-effective responses to enhance the reliability of its nuclear triad (Putin, 2006). Asymmetrical warfare refers to the implementation of unconventional strategies and tactics by one party in a conflict, typically due to a substantial disparity in military capabilities between the belligerent forces (Sexton, 2016). War is seen as a political instrument and a continuation of political goals through different means, the objective of war is to accomplish political gains, and therefore, the instruments of warfare can be both military and non-military. This implies that direct military operations and territorial occupation may not always be necessary (Bērziņš, 2019). In this context, warfare can take various forms, including direct or indirect, kinetic (traditional military actions) or non-kinetic (such as information warfare, cyber-attacks, etc.), and hybrid (blending conventional and unconventional tactics) (Bērziņš, 2018).

The Russian view of asymmetric warfare was influenced by Mao Zedong's strategy "People's war", which involved the joint use of regular and irregular forces (Bērziņš, 2019). Mao saw conventional forces and guerrilla as complementary elements to defeat the enemy, employing hybrid attacks to disperse enemy strength (Kovalev, 2020). From the Chinese experience, Russia learned a crucial lesson about the ideological feature of warfare through the Sino-Japanese War, winning the hearts and minds of the population is crucial, especially during stabilization operations (Lansky, 1983). In contemporary asymmetric warfare, these influences are visible, Russia emphasizes the importance of ideological influence and narrative advantage

in shaping perceptions, gaining support, and achieving its strategic objectives which play a significant role in Russia's overall military strategy (Bērziņš, 2019).

Russia uses its eight phases of New Generation Warfare as a basis for exerting influence to shape the operational environment through the creation of an alternate reality in order to secure societal support for the state's strategic objectives during times of war, which is crucial to achieving victory (Bērziņš, 2018). The legitimation of war and gaining social support play a key role in Russia's military strategy, this involves shaping perceptions, narratives, and information to gain support and influence public opinion, the success of military campaigns, especially in armed conflicts and local wars, depends heavily on a combination of military and non-military factors (Bērziņš, 2019). These factors include political considerations, psychological aspects, ideological messages, and effective information operations, in this context the relationship between military power and these non-military elements is considered essential for achieving strategic objectives, and Russia takes advantage of the interaction of these elements to create a favorable environment for its military actions and succeed in its military campaigns (Long, 2008) (Bērziņš, 2019). The primary objective of asymmetric warfare strategy is to circumvent direct military operations and avoid involvement in other countries' internal conflicts, instead, the focus is on achieving strategic objectives through unconventional means, exploiting vulnerabilities and social dynamics to gain advantages resorting to psychological means without engaging in full-scale military confrontations (Long, 2008).

4.3. Instruments, Strategy, and Elements

The second component of New Generation warfare according to Bērziņš (2018) is the instruments of asymmetric warfare. Russia employs those instruments to shape perceptions and create an alternative operational environment reality, the primary goal is to dissuade potential adversaries from engaging in direct military operations by influencing them to perceive that such actions could lead to environmental and sociopolitical catastrophes (Bērziņš, 2019). According to Bērziņš, based on Chekinov, SG & Bogadanov, SA, work "Asymmetrical Actions to Ensure Russia's Military Security" (2013), there are ten main strategies and instruments of asymmetric warfare implemented by Russia (Bērziņš, 2018).

The Main Strategies and Instruments of Asymmetric Warfare	
1.	Employ strategic strategies to instill fear and uncertainty in the opponent about the intentions and potential actions of the Russian Federation, including the possibility of military strikes.
2.	Showcase the preparedness and capabilities of Russian forces in a strategic region to deter any invasion, ensuring consequences that the aggressor finds unacceptable
3.	Utilize troop actions to dissuade potential enemies by effectively targeting and destroying their most vulnerable military and strategically important assets, convincing them that their attack would be futile.
4.	Utilize cutting-edge, highly effective weapons systems, some based on novel physical principles, to gain an advantage over adversaries (remote versus contact warfare).
5.	Utilize indirect force and non-contact methods of troop/force deployment to gain leverage and strategic advantage.
6.	Evaluate the benefits and costs of seizing and holding enemy territory, only opting for such actions if the benefits outweigh the combat costs, or when the war's end objectives cannot be achieved through other means.
7.	Engage in information warfare as an autonomous form of struggle, alongside political, economic, diplomatic, ideological, and other non-kinetic warfare methods.
8.	Employ psychological and information operations to diminish the enemy's military capabilities by disrupting their information flow processes and demoralizing both the population and armed forces personnel.
9.	Cause substantial damage to the enemy's economic potential, with the effects manifesting later.
10.	Clearly communicate to potential adversaries that military operations may lead to environmental and sociopolitical catastrophes, serving as a deterrent against hostile actions.

Table 4- The Main Strategies and Instruments of Asymmetric Warfare adapted from Chekinov, S., & Bogdanov, S. (2013). *The nature and content of a New-Generation War*. And from Bērziņš, J. (2018). *Asymmetry in Russian New Generation Warfare*.

Russian military experts have intriguingly revealed that much of their analysis of Russia's strategic challenges reflects the very essence of how the nation conducts war (Bērziņš, 2018). Bērziņš highlights the works of Aleksandr Nagorny and Vladislav Shurygin (2013), who notably delved into Russia's most critical strategic concerns and identified potential tactics the West could employ against it. Interestingly, although his focus is on Color Revolutions as a manifestation of the West's controlled chaos strategies, his analysis inadvertently reveals key aspects of Russian strategy itself (Bērziņš, 2019). In their assessments, Nagorny and Shurygin (2013) outline nine points of strategies that could supposedly be used by the West against Russia, however, upon closer examination, these same points strikingly mirror the Russian asymmetric strategy that was put into action in Ukraine, where armed conflict ensued when information operations alone proved insufficient to shape a new reality (Bērziņš, 2019) (Nagorny & Shurygin, 2013).

Asymmetric Strategies	
1.	Promoting and supporting armed actions by separatist groups to generate chaos and territorial disintegration.
2.	Deepening the divide between the elite and society, leading to a crisis of values and a shift towards Western values.
3.	Undermining the morale of armed forces and military leaders.
4.	Strategically degrading the socioeconomic situation to weaken the nation.
5.	Instigating a socio-political crisis to create instability.
6.	Employing various forms and methods of psychological warfare simultaneously.
7.	Inciting mass panic to undermine confidence in crucial government institutions.
8.	Discrediting political leaders who oppose Russia's interests.
9.	Preventing the formation of alliances with foreign allies

Table 5- Asymmetric Strategies adapted from Nagorny, A. A., & Shurygin, V. V. (2013). *Defense Reform As An Integral Part Of A Security Conception For The Russian Federation: A Systemic And Dynamic Evaluation*. And from Bērziņš, J. (2019). *Not 'Hybrid' but New Generation Warfare*.

In practical terms, Russia's military strategy centers on high-precision non-nuclear weapons and subversive tactics, their targets include vital government and military systems, transportation hubs, energy facilities, major manufacturing plants, and potentially hazardous sites, and the objective is to demonstrate the potential for environmental and sociopolitical catastrophes, compelling adversaries to seek resolutions and avoid large-scale military confrontations (Bērziņš, 2019). By combining precision attacks and psychological warfare, Russia aims to maintain a deterrent effect and avoid direct combat, the message is clear: aggression will result in devastating consequences, urging adversaries to tread carefully and pursue non-confrontational solutions to prevent further escalation, this approach allows Russia to wield influence and control in the international arena effectively (Bērziņš, 2019).

Finally, Phillip Karber (2015), a defense and national security expert on Ukraine, outlined five key elements of New Generation Warfare:

1) *Political Subversion*: Russia's political subversion involves using various methods to undermine and destabilize target countries from within. This includes the insertion of agents to sow discord and promote Russia's interests covertly. They engage in aggressive information operations, using mass media and social media to exploit existing divisions among ethnic, linguistic, and class groups in the target country. Additionally, Russia may resort to corrupting, compromising, or intimidating local officials to gain influence and control over key decision-makers. If needed, they resort to extreme measures such as kidnapping, assassination, and terrorism. Furthermore, they recruit discontented elements and form cellular cadres, enforcing strict discipline to further their goals.⁷

2) *Proxy Sanctuary*: The concept of proxy sanctuary involves Russia's strategy of creating and supporting proxy forces in a target country. This includes seizing control of local governmental centers, airports, police stations, and military depots to establish a foothold. They arm and train insurgents to carry out their objectives, and in the process, they create checkpoints and destroy transportation infrastructure to hinder the movement of opposing forces. To further disrupt communications, they employ cyberattacks to compromise victim communications. In some cases, Russia may manipulate referendums to legitimize the formation of a "People's Republic" under its tutelage, effectively controlling the region through its proxies.⁸

⁷ Adapted from Karber, P. A. (2015). *Russia's 'New Generation Warfare*. National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.

⁸ *ibid*

3) *Intervention*: This element of New Generation Warfare involves Russia's overt military involvement in the target country. They deploy forces to the border, often under the guise of sudden large-scale military exercises involving ground, air, naval, and airborne troops. Simultaneously, they surreptitiously introduce heavy weapons to support their proxy insurgents. To bolster these proxies, Russia established training and logistics camps in close proximity to the border. They may also deploy of what is known as "volunteer" combined-arms Battalion Tactical Groups⁹ to provide additional combat power and expertise. Furthermore, these proxy troops are seamlessly integrated into higher-level formations that are supported, equipped, and led by Russian military personnel.¹⁰

4) *Coercive Deterrence*: Coercive deterrence is a key element of Russia's strategy to assert dominance and intimidate neighboring countries and opponents. This involves implementing secret strategic force alerts and snap checks to keep adversaries on edge. They forward deploy tactical nuclear delivery systems, sending a strong message about their readiness to escalate if necessary. Additionally, Russia carries out aggressive air patrolling in neighboring regions to inhibit their involvement or military maneuvers that demonstrate their capabilities and willingness to confront potential challengers.¹¹

5) *Negotiated Manipulation*: Russia skillfully exploits negotiated ceasefires and peace talks to its advantage. They use these periods of relative calm to rearm and regroup their proxy forces, ensuring they maintain their fighting capabilities during any temporary lull in hostilities. By committing violations during the ceasefire, they keep the opponent's army engaged, bleeding their resources, and creating difficulties in obtaining support from other nations due to the fear of escalation. Russia also attempts to fracture the Western alliance by presenting economic incentives and engaging in selective and repetitive negotiations with favored security partners, thereby weakening the collective response against their actions.¹²

In conclusion, this analysis of the key elements, instruments, and strategies of New Generation Warfare provides valuable insight into Russia's sophisticated and multifaceted

⁹ The Russian battalion tactical group (BTG) is a flexible tactical unit that originates from a garrisoned Russian Army brigade, specifically created to deploy combat capabilities to conflict zones, this unit is deployed by the Russian Army and is maintained at a high level of readiness (Fiore, 2017).

¹⁰ Adapted from Karber, P. A. (2015). *Russia's 'New Generation Warfare*. National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

approach to achieving its strategic objectives. Understanding these elements is essential for the international community to effectively respond to Russian aggression and coercion.

4.4. Strategic Communication

In New Generation Warfare, the importance of communication and media cannot be underestimated, as Russia deftly wields these tools to shape a carefully crafted narrative aimed at the international community and its own domestic audience (Marshall, 2022). This strategic communication serves multiple purposes, allowing Russia to avoid traditional deterrence mechanisms while at the same time gathering domestic support for its military endeavors (Marshall, 2022).

For the international community, Russia presents a narrative framed in the language of law and legitimacy, effectively employing legalism as a shield for its actions (Fedyk, 2016). The Kremlin uses its national parliament, the Federal Assembly, to issue official authorizations for the use of force in regions such as Donbas and Crimea (Fedyk, 2016). This allows Russia to assert a veneer of legality and self-defense, citing the protection of Russian citizens residing in these regions, as well as the supposed invitation to intervention by local leaders who were subtly influenced during the preparatory stages (Fedyk, 2016).

By presenting its actions as defensive measures, Russia invokes Article 51 of the UN Charter, which guarantees the right to self-defense, turning traditional deterrence mechanisms upside down (Fedyk, 2016). Strategic maneuvering blurs the distinction between non-military and military actions, causing uncertainty and confusion among its adversaries about how to categorize and respond to Russia's actions (Fedyk, 2016). The deliberate ambiguity challenges conventional definitions of an armed attack, leaving opponents uncertain about how to effectively neutralize Russia's moves (Fedyk, 2016).

At home, Russia crafts an upbeat and consistent narrative, skillfully conveyed through its dominant influence over the media landscape (Marshall, 2022). Television in particular has an unparalleled hold on public opinion, the government controls the main TV stations, newspapers, and radio stations, disseminating a carefully selected perspective on the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, this media dominance allows the Kremlin to emphasize the perceived successes of New Generation Warfare and the purported benefits it brings to Russia (Fedyk, 2016) (Marshall, 2022).

Through this widespread media influence, Russia maintains popular support for its prolonged intervention. The presented narrative portrays Russia's actions as essential to

safeguard national interests and protect Russian citizens, reinforcing the belief that opposition to Russia's undertakings amounts to an attack on the nation itself (Fedyk, 2016) (Marshall, 2022). The Kremlin deftly manipulates the perception of external threats, reinforcing a sense of unity among its domestic audience, while at the same time fostering suspicion and distrust of the West's intentions (Fedyk, 2016).

In essence, Russia's skillful use of communication and media serves as a powerful force in executing its New Generation Warfare strategy. By mixing legalism, ambiguity, and deft narrative management, Russia strives to achieve its goals with remarkable precision (Fedyk, 2016). The combination of strategic messages to the international community and manipulation of the media at home serves as a central pillar of Russia's new generation warfare approach, strengthening its regional geopolitical influence and safeguarding its autonomy against external pressures (Fedyk, 2016) (Marshall, 2022).

4.5. The Population as a Critical Center of Gravity

The population's role in warfare has long been recognized by military theorists such as Carl von Clausewitz and Sun Tzu, who emphasized the importance of popular support in determining the morality and legitimacy of a campaign (Fedyk, 2017). Leaders must exhibit benevolence and confidence toward their own population while simultaneously attacking the enemy's population, to exhaust their physical and moral resilience (Fedyk, 2017). In unconventional warfare, the population becomes even more crucial, as it can have a profound impact on the success or failure of an insurgency, it is what can also be called a "people warfare" (Tijerina, 2016). Fedyk (2017) in his work highlights the fact that guerrilla theorists, including Mao and Che, also emphasize the importance of the population in supporting insurgencies. Mao's focus is on persuading as many people as possible to embrace and support the movement, gradually building it into a mass movement, as Che believes that the people's absolute cooperation is vital to the long-term success of the insurgency, necessitating an intense popular work to justify the ends and motives of the revolution (Fedyk, 2017) (Tijerina, 2016). Accordingly, the population serves as a pivotal and critical factor in all forms of warfare, encompassing conventional and unconventional methods, insurgency, and counterinsurgency, spanning across historical and contemporary contexts, an essential pawn in the game, and in this modern era, it is more than ever (Fedyk, 2017).

Given recent and growing developments in technology, media, and even culture, the role of the population, even in unconventional warfare, has been expanding more than ever.

Continuous 24/7 news coverage and the prevalence of cable television, smartphones, and social media allow people to closely monitor their government, military, and those around the world as well, however, this increased connectivity also leads to shorter attention spans and easier susceptibility to misinformation (Fedyk, 2017). Warfare requires a long-term approach that starts well before the outbreak of violence, the so-called Phase Zero. These engagements employ nonmilitary instruments such as diplomacy, economic aid, and propaganda to shape the operational environment and prevent violence (Tijerina, 2016). However, the rewards of Phase Zero engagements are not immediately obvious to the public, and the rapid gathering of information by the public leads to impatience and skepticism (Fedyk, 2017).

To maintain popular support, strategists must encourage patience and garner "buy-in" from the population for unconventional warfare efforts, and this can be particularly challenging due to the lack of tangible, immediate indicators of victory from soft power instruments (Fedyk, 2017). Additionally, and as stated before, strategists must also employ tactics of deception and manipulation to handle international opponents who may criticize such interventions, and counter their narrative (Fedyk, 2017). The effectiveness of Russia's strategy in achieving these goals can be evaluated by assessing its ability to inspire support from its own population while simultaneously undermining the enemy's capacity to do the same (Tijerina, 2016).

4.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of New Generation Warfare and its complexities shed light on Russia's evolving military strategy and the significant departure it represents from traditional warfare paradigms. Throughout this chapter, we investigate the contrasting characteristics of New Generation Warfare versus hybrid and traditional warfare by showing the unique elements that make Russia's approach distinctive and formidable.

The roots of Russia's New Generation Warfare go back to the country's historical experiences, military culture, and its desire to adapt to contemporary geopolitical challenges. By leveraging asymmetric tactics, Russia seeks to exploit vulnerabilities in adversaries' systems while maintaining plausible, legalized deniability—a strategy that has proven highly effective in disrupting adversaries and achieving its objectives, as was the case in Crimea. The main points, elements, and strategies of Russia's New Generation Warfare revolve around the seamless integration of conventional and unconventional tactics, utilizing cyber operations, information warfare, proxy forces, and other hybrid tools to create chaos and sow discord in target nations, which do not always require military action to do so. The strategic

communications aspect plays a key role as Russia deftly manipulates narratives and propaganda to sway public opinion, incite dissent, and fracture social cohesion among its adversaries. One of the most significant findings from the Russia New Generation Warfare study is the undeniable role of people in its execution. By harnessing the power of the people, both nationally and internationally, Russia can mobilize public sentiment to further its interests and weaken the resolve of opponents. This approach underscores the importance of understanding the human dimension in New Generation Warfare and the need for customized countermeasures to guard against manipulation.

In conclusion, Russia's New Generation Warfare presents a formidable and multifaceted challenge to the international community. The blurring of lines between traditional and non-traditional methods, between war and peace combined with their strategic communication prowess, demands a comprehensive and adaptive response from those who seek to preserve peace and stability. Understanding the complexities of New Generation Warfare is essential to devising effective defense strategies and safeguarding the integrity of democratic principles in the face of evolving threats.

Chapter 5- Case Studies: Syria, Ukraine, and Georgia

As we saw earlier, as war evolves and adapts to the challenges of the contemporary world, military strategies are also undergoing a substantial transformation, and Russia, a prominent figure on the global stage, has demonstrated a remarkable capacity for innovation in adopting approaches that transcend conventional tactics. This chapter dives back into the essence of Russian New Generation Warfare, employing a detailed analysis of three crucial case studies: the conflicts in Syria, Ukraine, and Georgia.

This chapter unfolds around three main sections, each dedicated to a specific case study – Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria – that were selected not only because they illustrate Russia's practical application of New Generation Warfare, but also because they provide valuable perspective on contextual nuances, specific tactics and achieved outcomes. The analysis of these cases allows us to go beyond abstract theories, diving into the concrete operations that played a pivotal role in shaping these conflicts and their subsequent results. Based on real evidence, we can explore Russia's adaptive strategies and the tools it employed to achieve its goals.

The 2008 Russo-Georgian conflict serves as a historical precursor, where Russia's amalgamation of military force with information warfare offered early insights into the essence of what would later be identified as New Generation Warfare. This conflict revealed Russia's adeptness at employing military might in conjunction with information manipulation to legitimize its actions.

Subsequently, the Ukrainian crisis of 2014 emerged as a significant milestone, spotlighting Russia's prowess in hybrid warfare. This multifaceted approach saw the seamless blending of conventional military tactics, cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, and irregular forces, ultimately resulting in the annexation of Crimea and the exacerbation of a separatist conflict in Eastern Ukraine. This case underscores the intricate interplay between kinetic and non-kinetic methods, echoing the core tenets of New Generation Warfare.

In 2015, Russia's intervention in Syria further solidified the principles of New Generation Warfare in practice. This intervention showcased Russia's capacity to provide support through a skillful amalgamation of military interventions, proxy militia engagement, and manipulation of media narratives. The Syrian case underscores the dynamic fusion of technological leverage, information manipulation, and conventional military prowess that defines Russia's approach to contemporary geopolitics. By delving into these sequential cases – The Russo-Georgian War, the Ukrainian crisis, and the Syrian intervention - we gain a

comprehensive understanding of Russia's evolutionary trajectory toward New Generation Warfare, capturing the nuanced interactions between military action, information manipulation, and strategic objectives.

5.1. Tensions and Supports: The Russo-Georgian Conflict

The Russo-Georgian War, also known as the "five-day war," stands as a pivotal moment in modern history, when the longstanding tension between Russia and Georgia escalated into an armed conflict on August 8, 2008 (History.com Editors, 2020). Even though the war only lasted 5 days, it occurred within a much larger conflict spanning over ten years. Its importance goes beyond its regional importance, acting as a precursor to the emergence of the New Generation Warfare concept. In this conflict between Russia and the Republic of Georgia, we witness a strategic shift that would profoundly shape Russia's 21st-century approach to warfare (Kofman, 2018). While the term "New Generation Warfare" had yet to be coined during that time, the conflict's strategic elements and tactics served as early indicators of the core principles that would define this evolving concept.

5.1.1. Context and Catalysts

The Russo-Georgian War is rooted in the complex history of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, two regions of Georgia that sought autonomy and even independence. In the early 1920s, after the Red Army entered Georgian territory, South Ossetia was granted the status of autonomy within the Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, along with Soviet Socialist Republics of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan (Saparov, 2014). However, the division between North and South Ossetia, established in part due to the challenging terrain of the Caucasus Mountains, prevented their unification, despite Ossetians' desire since 1925 (Paré, 2009). Throughout the 20th century, South Ossetia actively pursued independence from Georgia, heightening tensions.

The historical narrative of Abkhazia introduces even more complexity to the region, where the situation was mirrored. Initially granted autonomy within the Transcaucasian Federation during the 1920s, Abkhazia saw its autonomy curtailed under Stalin's rule in the 1930s (Paré, 2009). Stalin's ethnic cleansing of Georgians in the region, the dominant ethnic group, led to protests against assimilation (Krama, 2014). The late 1980s witnessed Georgia's bid for independence from the USSR, intensifying tensions over the integration of Abkhazia. This

culminated in a conflict between 1991 and 1992, resulting in the displacement of many Georgians from the region (Paré, 2009). A ceasefire, brokered by the United Nations (UN) in 1994, established peacekeeping forces supervised by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). However, Georgia claims that these forces, dominated by Russia, make conflict resolution difficult (Paré, 2009).

In 2002, the Russian government initiated a substantial distribution of Russian passports to the inhabitants of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, doing so without the consent of Georgia (Van Herpen, 2014). This policy of "passportization" subsequently resulted in the deployment of Russian paramilitary forces to the region and their readiness for possible armed confrontation (Irfan, 2018). Against the backdrop of these unresolved conflicts, tensions escalated further with the "Revolution of the Roses" in November 2003 in Georgia (Paré, 2009). The consequent change in leadership and the ascent of Mikheil Saakashvili in 2004 fueled efforts to restore Georgia's territorial integrity. This move heightened tensions, and from August 8 to 19, intense clashes unfolded between Georgian forces and South Ossetians. In January 2005 during the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, Saakashvili proposed a unified state peace settlement for South Ossetia, which was rejected by its leader Eduard Kokoity. Subsequently, in 2007, Georgia established what Russia labeled a "puppet government" in South Ossetia, under the leadership of Dmitry Sanakoyev, a former South Ossetian prime minister, referred to as a provisional administration by Georgia (Georgia, 2007). In 2008, President George W. Bush of the United States declared his endorsement of Georgia and Ukraine joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Russia interpreted this action as akin to placing a potentially adversarial military presence at its borders (History.com Editors, 2020). As tensions heightened, the stage was set for the Russo-Georgian war, which broke out in August 2008 and further strained the already complex relationships between South Ossetia, Georgia, Abkhazia, and Russia (Paré, 2009).

5.1.2. Blurring the Lines and Unconventional Maneuvers

On August 8, 2008, a comprehensive military operation encompassing land, air, and sea forces was initiated against Georgia (Irfan, 2018). Russia, which had already stationed troops in South Ossetia, responded swiftly to the Georgian attack, leading to the eruption of fighting in Abkhazia as well. Despite initial Georgian advances, Russia quickly gained control of disputed territories and moved into Georgia proper. A ceasefire was established on August 13 (History.com Editors, 2020). Russia's intention was to counteract NATO's tactic of potential

military involvement and prevent encroachment into countries considered within Russia's historical "sphere of influence" (Irfan, 2018). After the war, Russia formally recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states and occupied these regions, violating the ceasefire agreement (Kofman, 2018).



Fig.2- Russo-Georgian War (Nacu, 2008)

What distinguished the Russo-Georgian War was Russia's innovative blend of conventional military operations with information warfare, psychological tactics, and cyber elements. The conflict saw a well-coordinated fusion of diplomatic, informational, and military strategies, taking the international community by surprise and undermining both NATO's and Georgia's security objectives (DeKraker et al., 2021). Russia's tactics encompassed traditional military operations along with cyber assaults aimed at media, government, and infrastructure targets, effectively overpowering Georgia's defensive capabilities, this event marked Russia's initial significant utilization of proxies and cyber warfare as integral facets of its military endeavors (DeKraker et al., 2021).

The subsequent cyber confrontation between Russia and Georgia had the objective of influencing narratives and molding public opinion. Russia's use of disinformation campaigns and media manipulation not only obscured the reality on the ground but also justified its intervention on the international stage (Irfan, 2018). Russia employed a range of cyber techniques, including Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks and the establishment of

deceptive websites, all geared toward advancing its narrative of the events (DeKraker et al., 2021). This strategic manipulation of information proved a harbinger of the information-centric approach that would later define New Generation Warfare (Irfan, 2018). Furthermore, the rapid deployment of the blending of conventional and unconventional forces highlighted Russia's emphasis on agility and flexibility—another precursor to the concept of "hybrid warfare" that would evolve into New Generation Warfare's multifaceted strategies.

5.1.3. Conclusion

The Russo-Georgian War of 2008, though not explicitly labeled as such at the time, can be understood as an early exemplar of New Generation Warfare's foundational principles. The war's multifaceted nature, combining conventional military force, irregular warfare, information manipulation, and psychological tactics, demonstrated a departure from traditional warfare paradigms. It foreshadowed Russia's evolving approach to conflict—one that transcended physical battlegrounds to encompass a complex blend of kinetic and non-kinetic engagements.

The strategic maneuvers, information manipulation, hybrid tactics, and the confluence of various elements witnessed in this conflict would serve as a blueprint for Russia's subsequent engagements. Through this retrospective lens, the war becomes a historical milestone that marks the nascent stages of a concept that would reshape modern warfare and geopolitical strategies—the emergence of New Generation Warfare.

By examining the Russo-Georgian War in the context of New Generation Warfare's later emergence, we can identify early indications of Russia's evolving warfare strategies and the foundational elements that would later become more pronounced in conflicts like the annexation of Crimea and the Eastern Ukraine conflict in 2014. This analysis offers valuable insights into the progression of Russia's military and strategic thinking and how it paved the way for the more comprehensive and refined implementation of New Generation Warfare principles in subsequent conflicts.

5.2. The Russia-Ukraine Conflict of 2014: New Generation Warfare in Action

The conflict between Ukraine and Russia in 2014 constitutes the first significant example of New Generation Warfare in execution due to its incorporation of the fusion of diplomatic,

military, and information strategies in the achievement of strategic objectives. Building on lessons learned from the previous conflict in Georgia, Russia's approach has shown continued continuity, demonstrating a deep understanding of the potential of intelligence-centric activities as potent tools for psychological manipulation, information warfare, and the pursuit of objectives. Notably, Russia's deployment of specialized "information troops" highlighted an adaptive capacity that underlined the evolution of modern warfare (Iasiello, 2019). The Ukrainian crisis thus serves as a pertinent case study, illustrating the transformative nature of contemporary warfare, where traditional military might be complemented by the strategic exploitation of information and cyber domains to shape outcomes and achieve geopolitical goals.

5.2.2. Scenario and Motivators

It was Ukraine's relationship with the EU that brought tensions to a head with Russia in 2014. Commencing with the events in Kyiv, the conflict in Ukraine was sparked by the refusal of the Russian-backed Ukrainian President, Viktor Yanukovich, to endorse an economic agreement with the EU, designed to foster ties with modern Western European economies (Irfan, 2018). This decision, perceived by Ukrainians as a capitulation to Russian President Vladimir Putin, gained credence when Yanukovich accepted substantial financial aid and other benefits from Russia (Dinan et al., 2017). The Ukrainian populace, disillusioned by their leader's actions and incensed by government corruption, interpreted this as a betrayal of national interests. In response, masses of Ukrainians converged on the streets of Kiev, vociferously demanding the President's resignation, and advocating for economic reform, in countrywide protests known as Euromaidan (Irfan, 2018).

Putin portrayed the subsequent chaos of the Euromaidan movement, which led to Yanukovich's removal from power, as a Western-supported "fascist uprising" that jeopardized the ethnic Russian majority in Crimea (Masters, 2023). On February 23rd, the Rada passed a bill aiming to revoke the 2012 law that granted official status to the Russian language. While the bill wasn't put into effect, its proposal sparked negative responses in Ukrainian regions where Russian was spoken, further fueled by Russian media's claims of an impending threat to the ethnic Russian population (Kofman et al., 2017). In reaction, Putin covertly invaded Crimea, later rationalizing it as a rescue mission (Masters, 2023). In a formal address in March 2014, Putin stated, "There is a limit to everything. And with Ukraine, our Western partners have

crossed the line, playing the bear and acting irresponsibly and unprofessionally." (Putin, 2014) as he formalized the annexation.

5.2.3. Hybrid Tactics Unleashed

The Russia-Ukraine conflict showcased the systematic application of hybrid warfare, a core element of New Generation Warfare. Russia's tactics seamlessly combined conventional military operations with non-conventional means, including cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, and support for separatist militias. This action shared several similarities with Russia's intervention in Georgia in 2008, however, it was also fundamentally distinct, as it reflected the operational implementation of new military guidelines.

The effectiveness of those unique military guidelines is evident from the fact that within just three weeks and without firing a single shot, the Ukrainian military's morale was completely broken, leading to the surrender of all 190 of their bases (Bērziņš, 2014). Remarkably, the Crimean campaign did not rely on extensive deployment of tanks and artillery, instead, it utilized less than 10,000 assault troops, predominantly naval infantry already stationed in Crimea, alongside a few battalions of airborne troops and Spetsnaz commandos - this force battled against 16,000 Ukrainian military personnel (Bērziņš, 2014).

After mobilizing all Ukrainian troops, Russia began the second phase of its strategy, psychological warfare, which consisted of subordinating, intimidating, and using a combination of cyber espionage, propaganda, and disinformation to achieve its objectives without direct military force (Iasiello, 2019). During that strategic phase, the Russian troops demonstrated remarkable discipline and showcased new personnel equipment, light-wheeled armored vehicles, and body armor (Bērziņš, 2014).

Cyber attacks targeting Crimea disrupted telecommunications, disabled Ukrainian websites, and affected key officials' mobile phones prior to Russia's entry into the region (Weedon, 2015). These cyber operations, combined with other tactics, accelerated Russia's strategic moves on the ground. Notably, cyber espionage targeted journalists, officials, and even NATO and EU personnel, aiming to gain insights into narratives and diplomatic initiatives (Iasiello, 2019). This integration blurred the lines between traditional military actions and psychological manipulation, creating a new paradigm in modern warfare.

5.2.4. Conclusion

In the context of the Ukrainian crisis of 2014, Russia's application of the lessons learned in Georgia was notable, and especially exemplified in its cyber operations against Crimea. Throughout this crisis, Russia demonstrated its ability to effectively blend conventional military strategies with asymmetric tactics, information warfare, and hybrid techniques. New Generation Warfare emphasizes the importance of exploiting vulnerabilities in an interconnected world where information, insight, and technology wield considerable power. By harnessing these elements, Russia has managed to undermine Ukraine's unity, manipulate public opinion, and test the limits of international responses. The Ukrainian crisis exemplifies the complexity of modern conflicts, where the traditional boundaries between war and peace, military and civil, and truth and deceit have become increasingly blurred.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict sent reverberations throughout the global geopolitical arena, offering valuable insights into the dynamics of New Generation Warfare. As nations adapt to this evolving landscape, the case of the Ukraine crisis reminds us of the need for comprehensive strategies that include diplomacy, military defense, cybersecurity, and efforts to combat disinformation.

5.3. The Russia-Syria Conflict of 2015: Exemplifying New Generation Warfare in Practice

The Russia-Syria conflict of 2015 stands as another paradigmatic case study that vividly illustrates the principles of New Generation Warfare in action. In 2015, Russia intervened in the ongoing Syrian Civil War, marking a significant turning point in the conflict. The Syrian Civil War, which began in 2011 as a series of protests against the government of President Bashar al-Assad, has evolved into a complex, multifaceted conflict involving multiple rebel groups, extremist factions, and international actors. The Russian government officially cited the need to combat terrorism and maintain stability in the region as the main reasons for intervening. This conflict offers a compelling demonstration of the comprehensive integration of kinetic and non-kinetic tactics, technological superiority, and information manipulation that define the New Generation Warfare concept.

5.3.1. Strategic Context and Objectives

The Syrian Civil War, which began in 2011, emerged from a wave of pro-democracy protests against the autocratic rule of President Bashar al-Assad, and what began as peaceful demonstrations rapidly transformed into a complex conflict involving a multitude of factions and international actors (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023). Over the years, various rebel groups, including both moderate factions and extremist organizations like ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), sought control of Syrian territories (Al Jazeera, 2023).

During the chaos, the international community became increasingly concerned about the rise of extremist groups and the potential regional spillover of the conflict. Syria has evolved into an arena where the geopolitical rivalries of the region have been contested, the United States, along with its allies, supported rebel groups seeking to overthrow the Assad regime, while Iran and Hezbollah backed the Syrian government (Laub, 2019).

Russia has maintained close ties with Syria for decades, dating back to the Soviet era, and since the beginning of the civil war in 2011, Moscow has provided Assad with supplied arms and critical diplomatic support (Laub, 2019). By December 2012, reports indicated the presence of Russian military personnel in Syria, ostensibly as military advisors, operating some of the Russian-supplied anti-aircraft defenses (Borger, 2018). The advanced and complex nature of Syria's air defense systems played a significant role in influencing the United States' choice to refrain from direct military intervention against the Syrian government or to implement a no-fly zone, although it would do so if the Assad government crossed the "red line" of using chemical weapons (Rhodes, 2018) (Borger, 2018).

In May 2015, the city of Palmyra in Syria was captured by ISIS, concurrently, a loose coalition led by the extremist group Jabhat al-Nusra launched an offensive against the regime in northwest Syria (Charap et al., 2019). The Syrian government was rapidly losing ground to rebel groups and facing increasing pressure, and Moscow interpreted these developments as indicators of an imminent significant defeat for its allies (Charap et al., 2019).

In September 2015, Russia directly joined the conflict by deploying military assets, including aircraft and personnel, with a narrative that justified its military intervention as a counterterrorism effort (Al Jazeera, 2023). While Moscow stated that its airstrikes were mainly aimed at ISIS and al-Qaeda, experts noted that they frequently targeted different rebel factions, including some supported by the United States (Laub, 2019). Many of these groups were closely connected with al-Qaeda's affiliate, situated near the battle lines with the government forces.

This Russian support assisted the Syrian government in regaining lost territories and solidifying its position, shifting the dynamics of the conflict (Laub, 2019).

5.3.2. Airforce Military and Non-Kinetic Tactics

Russia's involvement in the conflict in Syria went beyond its overt goals, serving as a significant platform to showcase and refine its modern military capabilities within the framework of New Generation Warfare principles. Leveraging the Information Technology Revolution in Military Affairs (IT-RMA), the Russian military strategically utilized intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR), command and control (C2), and precision fires to enhance their operational capabilities (Adamsky, 2020).

This strategic approach involved the integration of various components, such as reconnaissance, strikes, and precision-guided munitions (PGMs), at both strategic and operational levels. Lessons drawn from previous engagements, notably the conflict in Georgia, led to crucial reforms addressing deficiencies in network-centric warfare and combined-arms operations. The objective was to establish reconnaissance-fire complexes (RFC and RSC) that aimed to create a dynamic interplay between traditional battlefield engagements and information manipulation (Adamsky, 2020).

The Syrian campaign became a testing ground for these reforms, offering Russia opportunities for both ground training and the testing of strategies and equipment in the air (Giles, 2019). Significantly, this engagement provided the Russian military with unparalleled experience in conducting long-distance, intensive, and continuous expeditionary operations (Adamsky, 2020). Departing from conventional concentrated maneuvers, a new approach emerged, emphasizing comprehensive, continuous, and simultaneous actions across various confrontation zones, including remote regions (Bērziņš, 2020).

Russia's involvement in Syria showcased a notable fusion of conventional military strategies with non-kinetic components (Giles, 2019). This approach intertwined conventional military actions like airstrikes and ground operations with intricate information and psychological warfare tactics (Bērziņš, 2020). By orchestrating both physical combat and the manipulation of information, Russia achieved its broader strategic objectives, the combination of these elements underscores Russia's multifaceted approach to modern conflicts, where both physical engagement and information manipulation play pivotal roles in shaping outcomes.

5.3.3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Russia-Syria conflict of 2015 serves as a profound illustration of New Generation Warfare principles in action within a contemporary conflict setting. Not only did the operation in Syria stand out as one of the major achievements for the Russian military in recent times, but also represented a crucial avenue for training Russian military personnel under authentic wartime circumstances. The conflict's impact extended far beyond regional boundaries, reshaping global perceptions of warfare and power dynamics. By skillfully integrating a combination of conventional and non-conventional tactics, coupled with information manipulation, technological prowess, and strategic innovation, Russia demonstrated the potency of New Generation Warfare.

Furthermore, the Russian intervention in Syria provides crucial insights into the evolving nature of warfare in the 21st century. As New Generation Warfare continues to evolve, it challenges conventional notions of power projection, diplomacy, and conflict resolution.

5.4. Discussion: Comparing and Assessing The Evolution of New Generation Warfare in Practice

The case studies of Georgia 2008, Ukraine 2014, and Syria 2015 serve as critical lenses through which the paradigm of New Generation Warfare can be comprehensively examined. These instances illuminate the evolution of Russia's strategies, showcasing the shift from conventional warfare towards a more nuanced integration of technology advances, information warfare, cyber operations, and diplomatic maneuvering. As the global security landscape continues to transform, these cases provide vital insights into the ever-evolving nature of conflicts in the era of New Generation Warfare. By identifying the convergences and divergences in Russian approaches, we will be able to outline the underlying principles that guide New Generation Warfare. At the same time, this analysis will allow us to understand how Russia adapts to different contexts and scenarios, aligning its strategies with its larger goals.

5.4.1. Strategic Objectives and Influence

The case studies of Russia's conflicts in Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria reveal a consistent pattern of pursuing strategic objectives that extend beyond national borders. These conflicts underscore

Russia's determination to safeguard its apparent sphere of influence, project power and combat perceived threats that do not correspond to its interests.

In the conflict with Georgia, Russia's strategic objective was to maintain its influence in the South Caucasus region. The breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia served as leverage points for Russia to exert control over Georgia's internal affairs and prevent Georgia's integration into Western institutions such as NATO and the European Union. By intervening militarily in support of these separatist regions, Russia intended to demonstrate its ability to protect its interests and deter Western interference.

Likewise, the annexation of Crimea and support for separatist movements in Eastern Ukraine were driven by Russia's strategic objectives of safeguarding its interests in Ukraine and preventing the country's full alignment with the West. The annexation of Crimea not only gave Russia direct control over the crucial Black Sea naval base but also demonstrated its willingness to use force to redraw borders and demonstrated its military readiness. By supporting separatist movements in Eastern Ukraine, Russia sought to destabilize the Ukrainian government, create a frozen conflict, and prevent Ukraine from gravitating further toward the West, particularly NATO.

Russia's military intervention in Syria aimed to preserve the Assad regime, which was a long-time ally in the Middle East. Russia's intervention was further framed as supporting the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states. Moscow criticized what it considered to be Western-backed regime change efforts in several countries (e.g., Libya, Iraq), and, by intervening in Syria, Russia sought to demonstrate its commitment to defending the authority of established governments. The intervention allowed Russia to assert itself as a key player in international negotiations and showcase its military capabilities on a global stage, further solidifying its position as a multipolar power.

Although the specific objectives of each conflict were distinct, a common thread was Russia's determination to maintain its influence in key regions and combat what it considered to be a Western invasion. By projecting military power and supporting local actors aligned with its interests, Russia aimed to shape the geopolitical landscape in its favor. These strategic objectives reflect a continuity of Russia's historical concerns about maintaining the “depth” defense strategy zone and combating potential threats along its periphery.

5.4.2. Blurred Lines: Convergence of Conventional and Unconventional Warfare

In all three case studies, a prominent trend emerges where traditional boundaries between conventional and unconventional warfare tactics have blurred, facilitated by the integration of technological innovations. These case studies highlight how Russia's strategic adaptability, amplified by its military technological advances, shapes the landscape of the new generation of warfare.

Russia's intervention in Georgia demonstrated the fusion of conventional military actions with irregular and hybrid tactics. While conventional forces engaged in direct combat operations, irregular forces, and separatist militias acted in coordination, creating a complex operational environment. Technological innovations, like electronic warfare capabilities, have provided Russia with tactical advantages while allowing seamless coordination of conventional and irregular forces.

The annexation of Crimea exemplifies the fusion of conventional and unconventional tactics. Russia has leveraged a combination of Special Forces, proxy militias, and advanced electronic warfare tools. These technologies disrupted enemy communications systems and enabled the coordination of diverse forces, demonstrating how technological innovation enables a mixed approach to warfare.

In Syria, Russia's military intervention demonstrated the convergence of its conventional air power and precision strikes with support for proxy forces on the ground. This integrated strategy was driven by technological innovation, such as modernized fighter planes and cruise missiles, to effectively strike targets, while also aligning with the broader framework of hybrid warfare.

The fusion between conventional and unconventional warfare tactics in these conflicts demonstrates Russia's deep understanding of the advantages gained through the integration of various force elements and shows an evolution and learning from conflict to conflict. These approaches capitalize on modern military technological innovation to synergize operations, confuse adversaries, and achieve strategic objectives with reduced risk.

5.4.3. Information Warfare and Psychological Operations

Another common point in the three case studies under analysis is the skillful use of information warfare and psychological operations as integral components of Russian military strategy.

These tactics allow Russia to shape narratives, manipulate perceptions, and influence public opinion on both national and international fronts.

During the conflict with Georgia, Russia used information warfare to portray its intervention as a humanitarian response to protect Russian citizens in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. By controlling the narrative and disseminating selective information through state-controlled media outlets, Russia aimed to minimize its aggressive military actions and garner support for its actions.

In the conflict with Ukraine, Russia launched extensive disinformation campaigns that aimed to create confusion, undermine the legitimacy of the Ukrainian government, NATO, and the EU, and sow discord among Ukrainian citizens. These campaigns included cyberattacks, espionage, and spreading false narratives through social media, state-controlled media outlets, and other channels to distort the reality of events on the ground.

Russia's involvement in Syria presented a carefully crafted narrative that positioned its military intervention as a counterterrorism effort to support the Assad regime. State-controlled media outlets also aided the precision of Russian airstrikes. This framing aimed to garner international support and present Russia as an important global actor.

In these conflicts, the consistent use of information warfare and psychological operations reflects Russia's understanding of the power of perception in contemporary warfare. By controlling information flows and manipulating narratives, Russia seeks to control the course of conflicts and influence international opinion in its favor. These efforts are an integral part of its broader strategy of achieving objectives while avoiding open military escalation.

5.5. Final remarks

Regarding contemporary conflict, the cases of Georgia in 2008, Ukraine in 2014, and Syria in 2015 remain fundamental case studies that illuminate the evolution of Russia's military strategy and tactics in the realm of next-generation warfare. These three conflicts, although distinct in their geographic contexts, reveal interconnected strategic lines that highlight Russia's adaptability, innovation, and resolute pursuit of strategic objectives. By analyzing these patterns, we obtain valuable information about Russia's behavior and its potential future actions on the global stage.

The common themes that resonate throughout these conflicts speak to Russia's dominance in next-generation warfare. The concept of hybrid warfare, marked by the perfect fusion of conventional and unconventional tactics, becomes a recurring theme. Russia's deft interplay

between military intervention and unconventional operations demonstrates its ability to exploit a diverse set of tools to advance its geopolitical ambitions. The intelligent use and manipulation of information combined with military methods also underlines Russia's holistic approach, where the lines between kinetic and non-kinetic actions blur, ushering in a new era of warfare where conventional delineations no longer have influence. This convergence of forces amplifies Russia's ability to shape narratives, manipulate perceptions, and extend its influence beyond the conflict. By manipulating narratives and perceptions, Russia transcends the battlefield, shaping the outcomes of conflicts in its favor.

Conclusion

This thesis examined Russia's New Generation Warfare by tracing the evolution of warfare from its early origins to its contemporary state marked by unprecedented complexity, revealing that warfare is an ever-changing dynamic intricately linked to social, technological, and geopolitical dynamics, exploring important changes in contemporary warfare and analyzing how this new generation has been tested, applied and developed in practice.

The chapter dedicated to the historical progression of warfare underscore the dynamic nature of conflict. From the rigid structures of First Generation warfare, where armies clashed on open fields to secure territorial objectives, to the era of Second Generation warfare, which introduced the concept of maneuver warfare with artillery as the conquering force and infantry occupying territory, the evolution was palpable. Third Generation Warfare brought decentralization, focusing on the fluidity of tactics and the shift from rigid mindsets to adaptable strategies. Finally, we witnessed the Fourth Generation, a paradigm shift from nation-states dominating the landscape to non-state actors wielding considerable power, and the pivotal role of technology, transitioning from muskets to missiles. This historical progression has left an indelible mark on the way nations and actors engage in conflict. The changes that happen through the time have significantly impacted the strategies and tactics employed by nations and actors in times of conflict, reinforcing the notion that warfare reflects the evolving human condition.

However, our analysis of the past merely serves as a foundation for the core focus of this thesis: New Generation Warfare. Through a meticulous analysis of Russia's military strategy and its application in contemporary conflicts, we have revealed how this strategic paradigm challenges traditional modes of warfare both in theory and practice. It is essential to clarify that New Generation Warfare should not be conflated with the often-misunderstood concept of hybrid warfare. Instead, it represents an innovative form of conflict characterized by asymmetry, agility, and a strategic emphasis on human and informational elements, that also embraces the hybrid type.

The roots of New Generation Warfare, as observed in Europe and particularly through the lens of the Ukraine conflict, demonstrate that it is not a mere replication of past models, but an innovative form of conflict characterized by asymmetry and agility. It disrupts conventional norms, and blurs the lines between war and peace, through an examination of its instruments, strategies, and elements, we have unraveled the intricacies of Russia's New Generation Warfare. We have dissected the role of strategic communication in shaping perceptions and narratives

and the population's centrality as a critical center of gravity. It is this deliberate focus on human and informational elements that distinguishes New Generation Warfare from its predecessors.

The case studies of conflicts in Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria have served as real-world laboratories, where this emerging paradigm has been exemplified and dissected. Russo-Georgian conflict was revealed as an early exemplar of New Generation Warfare's foundational principles, the blurring of lines between conventional and unconventional military force, highlighted the adaptability of this new strategic paradigm. The Russia-Ukraine conflict of 2014 showcased its ability to effectively blend conventional military strategies with asymmetric tactics, information warfare, and hybrid techniques, further complicating the strategic landscape. Meanwhile, the Russia's intervention in Syria's conflict of 2015 illuminated the multifaceted nature of New Generation Warfare and its principles in action within a contemporary conflict setting. These case studies allowed for comparisons and contrasts, offering insights into the strategic objectives pursued by Russia and the influence exerted on various fronts. The convergence of conventional and unconventional warfare, the use of information warfare, and psychological operations underscored the multifaceted nature of this emerging paradigm.

In addressing our research questions, we have not only identified the fundamental principles and characteristics of New Generation Warfare but have also provided a clear distinction from traditional warfare. Moreover, we have extensively analyzed how Russia has adapted and employed this strategy in its recent conflicts, offering insights into the pursued strategic objectives and the influence exerted on various fronts. We also analyzed the large role that people and communication play in the success of Russia's New Generation Warfare, as effective communication and a motivated population are essential to influence public opinion, gain support and skillfully shape narratives in its favor at both national and international stages.

In the complex landscape of evolving conflict, Russia's New Generation Warfare poses a formidable challenge to global security. It defies the traditional notions of war and peace, strategy, and tactics. While this examination may conclude here, the path ahead is still full of questions, challenges, and opportunities for those committed to understanding the complexities of New Generation Warfare. As we continue to explore the ever-changing nature of warfare, we safeguard the stability and security of nations and regions, ensuring that humanity's enduring quest for power and security remains grounded in a nuanced understanding of this evolving paradigm.

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