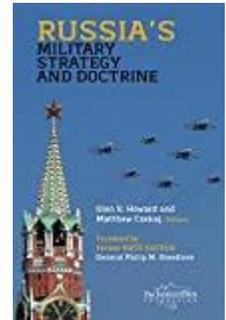


Glen E. Howard, Matthew Czekaj, Philip M. Breedlove, eds. *Russia's Military Strategy and Doctrine*. Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, 2019. 400 pp. \$33.38, paper, ISBN 978-0-9986660-1-3.



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Russia's Military Strategy and Doctrine is a well-organized compilation of perspectives that provides a valuable contribution to literature focused on the evolution and current state of Russian military strategy and doctrine. Published in 2019 with a foreword written by former NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General Phillip Breedlove, the authors of the collective writings are international experts on Russian capabilities, threats, and behavior. Glen Howard and Matthew Czekaj's compilation provides Western policymakers, strategists, defense planners, and military leaders insight into how Vladimir Putin and Russian Federation leaders conceptualize the use of force to advance their foreign policy objectives. The publication is timely as the United States and its Western allies and partners strive to interpret and counter Russia's actions in Syria and Crimea and its overall intentions as it charts an imperial pathway.

With an emphasis on answering the questions "how Russia fights wars" and "how its experiences with modern conflicts are shaping the evolution of

Russia's military strategy, capabilities, and doctrine," the editors organize the book into three sections (p. xxvii). The first concentrates on the Russian strategy's geographic vectors, including the Middle East, the Black Sea and Mediterranean, the Arctic to the Far East, and the Baltic Sea. The second section expounds upon nonconventional elements of strategy and doctrine, including information warfare and asymmetric design. However, this section does not discount Russia's irreplaceable nuclear capability, allowing it to hold its global position. The final section reviews lessons from Russia's spread offense in Ukraine and Syria. One of the essential concepts woven throughout the sections is the complex notion of "hybrid warfare," or what the Russians call "New Generation Warfare." This is the multidomain approach to countering Western liberal democratic ideals and undermining the United States through asymmetric capabilities such as direct influence, information operations, cyberspace, and sixth-generation warfare.

Consistent themes through the first section include Russian determination and ambitious objectives to deter the United States and NATO and reclaim lands for ethnic Russians with revanchist actions. However, the Russians face significant challenges in overall resources. Moscow-based defense analyst Pavel Felgenhauer explains that the main objective of Russia's strategy in the Middle East is to dislocate the United States as a partner and fill the void within the region. However, more importantly, the Russians are gaining valuable tactical and operational experience in Syria, using the battleground as a training platform. Ihor Kabanenko, a retired admiral from the Ukrainian navy, focuses on the historical importance and the Russian quest to operate freely in the Black Sea and reclaim Russian territory. Russia places similar symbolic value on the Arctic, according to Pavel Baev; however, the potential economic gains under the water make the area prime for confrontational policy. Finally, Jörgen Elvfing, a Swedish general officer, uses Russian security concepts and actions to formulate a realistic set of objectives for their Baltic Sea strategy, especially with NATO troops at the border and the possibility of Sweden and Finland becoming a part of NATO.

The second section provides comprehensive explanations of Russian military strategic goals and capabilities based on historical beliefs and current actions. Despite its size, Russia has no true allies, so leadership has determined that it must have the ability to defend itself. Yet it struggles with having the resources to do so, leading Russia to engage in hybrid warfare to reduce the amount of conventional military means needed to accomplish political goals. Jānis Bērsinš, from the National Defense Academy of Latvia, explains that this is not a new approach to warfighting; instead, this is Russian military art and to fit this into a Western framework is not beneficial for building a NATO counterstrategy. He also reminds us it is essential to remember that Russia still has nuclear capabilities despite post-Cold War reductions. Stephen Blank from the American Foreign Policy

Council and Stephen Forss from the Finnish National Defense University address Russia's current nuclear strategy. It includes an "escalate to win" approach and a nuclear first-strike option in regional conflicts, making it imperative for the United States, its partners, and allies to understand the severe consequences associated with Russian doctrine, procurement, and exercises. Finally, Sergey Sukhankin analyzes the transformation of Russian information security doctrine, illuminating Russia's challenge of relying on Soviet-era methodologies and the doctrine's potentially limited long-term effectiveness.

The final section looks at lessons learned in Ukraine and Syria and how the Russian armed forces are cultivating the positive aspects of the organization of ground forces, command and control, the role of armor, and operational creativity. While most of the specific information used by the Russian military is classified and the Russian general staff does not support one-size-fits-all approaches, Dmitry Adamsky and Roger McDermott contend in their chapters that Russian forces are studying adjustments and errors made during the conflicts to improve their overall capabilities. Both locations provided real-time testing grounds for Russia's modern strategic military concepts. Russian Federation armed forces leadership aims to synthesize the lessons learned to build flexible and innovative commanders based on the quality-over-quantity theory of victory.

Overall, the selection and organization of articles provide the much-needed context and cultural background for policymakers and strategists to frame interventions to counter Russia's increasingly aggressive actions successfully. The interpretations by international authors, many of whom have confronted these concepts in person, provide background on Russian strategy, design, intentions, and capabilities and suggestions on how the United States and NATO can prevent misunderstandings and avoid escalations. However, one challenge in some of the chapters is using

technical terminology for various weapons systems. Some chapters may be too complicated for those unfamiliar with specific military technologies and language to fully grasp the concepts.

However, the historical knowledge provided will be helpful for years to come, especially with a re-focus on Russia as a great power rival and the security challenges it poses.

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