

If we take a critical look at the situation with ensuring the state's military security, we will see, among many other problems, the ineffectively tapped intellectual potential of the domestic [military science](#). As a result, we have yet to hear coherent, clear-cut answers to these questions: What kind of [war](#) against Russia is possible in principle, considering the evolution of and the current status of the military sphere and the character of international relations? In this context, how should the country's defense be organized? And, what are the reasons for the prevailing situation?

On the one hand, public opinion tends to ignore the knowledge about the nature, essence, and substance of modern warfare. Many Russian politicians, who have rapidly risen to prominence (oftentimes riding on the crest of criticism against the military), failed to competently assess the military-political and military-strategic situation and organize the country's force development in compliance with the requirements of [science](#), not propaganda slogans. They saw any argument by military experts in defense of Russia's security as a manifestation of the corporate survival instinct. The character of the ongoing polemics around military reform is indicative in this respect. Remember Kozma Prutkov's comment to the effect that an ignoramus feels absolutely at home in any sphere unknown to him.

Politicians who have little knowledge of the military or who have a personal agenda, are heavily influenced by the U.S. simplistic ("stand-off"), high-tech vision of warfare, forgetting the essential, marked difference between U.S. and Russian military policy, predetermined by the specifics of the geopolitical situation, history, development, and values of these states. Blind projection, transplantation of the U.S. worldview and methodology in the defense sphere to Russian soil naturally leads to their rejection, and will never ensure the American standard of quality in defense here.

Russia is a special country and it needs its own, specific defense and security (by all parameters). They say that "aliens" during the era of Peter the Great and Catherine II greatly benefited Russia. Indeed that was the case because their influence was offset by a powerful counterbalance within the country, comprising various restrictions on their will and the clearly defined limits on manifestation of their creative activity in Russian land. Foreign experience did not replace but supplemented Russia's capabilities.

Today, however, we are witnessing attempts to replace the national defense system with another, based on a different worldview, other principles and methods of organization. Furthermore, what is disregarded is the great difference in the resource capabilities of Russia and the United States at present, as is the danger of ending up completely dependent on powerful "assistants" (once a foreign worldview, methodology, and principles of practical operation have been adopted, foreign specialists take charge of the defense sphere).

On the other hand, our military scientists have lost a unified scientific-methodological basis for analysis of warfare--a view thereof as a complex, integrated, systemic phenomenon, connected, through a multitude of threads, with various spheres of life. So, in their majority, they generate sound, good-quality fragments of knowledge that are easy to manipulate at will.

This fragmentation and one-sidedness is especially manifest in analysis and summarization of [combat](#) experience, in particular, in the Persian Gulf area, Afghanistan, the Balkans, on the Tajik-Afghan border, and in Chechnya. Granted, scientific analysis is necessary in any particular event, but it should not be made a fetish of and extrapolated to entirely different situations. Say, it is wrong to build the entire personnel combat training system exclusively on the experience in mountain terrain warfare. After all, tomorrow it could be flatland or forest terrain. What then? The fact is that for all the importance of the combat experience in the counterterrorist operation in Chechnya, it is inexpedient to use it as the basic component of the state's military organizational development. This also applies to the choice of [weapons](#) and military hardware and the correlation of precision and traditional and nuclear and conventional weapons. Otherwise we will have to keep acquiring new knowledge about warfare in the process of warfare itself. The cost of this kind of education is well known from history.

Experience, history and present-day reality show beyond any doubt that there has never been, nor will there ever be, a "pure" war, conducted according an "armchair" scenario. The very outbreak of any war brings in a multitude of new circumstances that can substantially change its course. Remember World War I. No one had ever especially planned it. It was simply that the political situation went out of control, and the war began to follow its own logic, producing so many unexpected twists and turns that baffled the collective brain power of the smartest of general staffs.

Today, in order to attain their objectives, Russia's opponents will seek an assortment of methods to exert pressure, special operations, and weapons (above all precision guided weapons). "Decisive intentions" against Russia could arise from the instability of its domestic situation, criminalization of society, and concern about the security of nuclear facilities or of the environment. The aforementioned circumstances are, essentially, but an excuse, not a real cause of war, because the latter lies in the sphere of vital interests of states, resulting in acute contradictions between them. These include the struggle for natural resources, material values, means of communication, land and subsoil, and water and air space; elimination of competition (obstacles) in the way to world and regional leadership (including the establishment of amenable political regimes in other countries); the aspiration by multinationals in developed countries to promote their products, and so forth. Deterrents against any forms of aggression against Russia are: the progressive character of its development, pro-active diplomacy,

the stability and effectiveness of state administration, constant protection of state interests both at home and on the international arena, and military power (the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of military organization).

Proceeding from the logic of the evolution of the present-day military-political situation and the specifics of the country's geopolitical status, it is essential to single out, among the possible kinds of [wars](#), first of all, wars against Russia, the aims of military aggression by one or several states being the country's population, its material and spiritual values, natural and scientific-production resources, and change of the sociopolitical system; second of all, wars into which Russia could get involved for various reasons. In that event its military power, international authority, and leverage over other countries could become a means (instrument) of the military policy of other states or coalitions thereof. Russia's entry into World War I is indicative in this respect. There was no pressing need for Russia to participate in it; there was no evidence of large-scale military aggression, but there were excessive military-political ambitions and heavy dependence on the allies.

Here is what the military historian A.A. Kersnovskiy wrote: "For all its mediocrity, the Russian strategy in the Great War was not so bad as it might seem judging by its results. But it was tied hand and foot by the most deplorable of policies. Russia unquestioningly followed even the most absurd demands of its allies, readily sacrificing its vital interests to their petty, mercantile designs (under the guise of the 'allied cause'). We never knew how to deal with foreigners, and in the Great War, in particular, were unable to take a fitting place, failing to use our highly advantageous political situation. We should have been selling our assistance to them just as they were selling their to us." (1) History repeated itself in 1945. The Red Army, having reached the Wisla, was unprepared for a new strike. Yet, in response to a request from its allies, it precipitated, to the degree possible, the preparation of an offensive operation to rout the Nazis deployed between the Wisla and the Order. Soviet troops saved the allies from routing in the Ardennes, but at the cost of several hundred thousand lives. Meanwhile, when celebrating the 50th anniversary of their landing in Normandy, the "grateful" allies did not even invite those who had saved them in the winter of 1945. Why is it that no historical lessons are being learned? Why it is that the dialectics of international [politics](#) and the military sphere are not being studied while important state decisions concerning the country's defense interests are made without the necessary substantiation? These also are questions for the military science.

There is yet another peculiar method of warfare--the arms race. The moral, intellectual and financial costs of the arms race are huge and can be compared to the economic damage caused by a real war.

The entirely different character of the aforementioned types of war dictates different priorities in ensuring the state's military security. Thus, the main brunt in the arms race

is borne by the national economy, the defense complex, and the high-tech branches of industry. Participation in a war as an ally requires strenuous efforts by politicians and diplomats while in the event of outright armed aggression, the main burden will be borne by the state's military organization, primarily its [Armed Forces](#).

Forms of armed aggression will be predicated on the war's political objectives and the capabilities and methods of the employment of weapons and military hardware. The form of war against Russia will to a very large extent be contingent on the experience and achievements in the military sphere of states and coalitions intending to use force to destroy us or to impose their will on us. They will above all use strategy and tactics enabling them to use precision guided weapons and weapons based on new physical principles, delivering massed strikes in a stand-off mode. These strikes will be accompanied by strong EW and psychological impacts and acts of sabotage.

The experience in antiterrorist operations in Chechnya points to the reality of non-classic (unconventional) wars. In these wars, the Armed Forces have to act according to the laws of unconventional warfare. Furthermore, it needs to be borne in mind that the scale of such wars is contingent on support from the outside. Hence their complexity. Armed forces have to deal not only with the actual perpetrators of various terrorist and criminal acts, but also with their economic, political, and military sponsors, who cover up and hide their activities from the public and are based far away from the area of operations. So it is wrong, say, to compare the effectiveness of combat operations by Soviet troops in Afghanistan with U.S. strikes on Taliban bases. In the first instance, a limited contingent had to deal not simply with mujahedin guerrillas but with a well organized opposition to the Soviet Union on the part of the United States, Pakistan, and other states. In their operations against international terrorism in Afghanistan, however, the Americans were objectively assisted by the Northern Alliance, supported by other countries. This problem is of principal importance to Russia as long as there are forces that intend to resort to a strategy of dismembering this country to prevent it from emerging as a strong competitor, especially a superpower.

A new approach to ensuring military security is based on the premise that the main threat in the future will originate not from the regular militaries of various countries, but from all sorts of terrorist, criminal, and other organizations whose participants are united into the so-called network structures. The latter are known as SPINs, or Segmented, Polycentric, Ideologically Integrated Networks. In this set-up, the main thrust is placed on what is known as operations other than war. A new term has even been coined: "network warfare."

There are several key characteristics that distinguish "network warfare" from conventional warfare. The first is the use of geographically distributed force. The second is that forces involved in "network warfare" are highly intellectual. By using knowledge acquired as a result of comprehensive surveillance over the battle area and an in-depth

penetration of command plans, these forces are able to synchronize their actions while operating more effectively in an independent mode. The third is the availability of diversified and reliable communication channels (links) between their elements in a combat area, enabling them to carry out joint operations, quickly adapting to the situation on the ground.

By relying on the laws of dialectics, we have every reason to believe that owing to the specifics of its geopolitical position, the complexity of the internal situation and the fact that Russia has yet to complete the building of a modern defense system, a whole spectrum of forms of warfare and operations other than war, including special operations, could be used against it. Everything will hinge on the wisdom of the country's military-political leadership, its reliance on the constructive sections of society, the dynamic development of the national economy, and the state of its Armed Forces.

The army and the navy have always been the most effective political instrument of the state. There are three main tasks in the structure of state policy: acquisition of power, the exercise of state power in a particular sphere (for the military, in ensuring defense of the state), and maintenance of power. The principle of depoliticization prohibits the Armed Forces from engaging in the fulfillment of the first and the third task. But this does not apply to the second. Furthermore, any evasion (including by the military science) of problems confronting the state in the defense sphere that are essentially political, has to do not with depoliticization but inaction, which should be judged on an entirely different set of standards. Virtually all matters pertaining to force development are of great state and, therefore, political significance. So an oversimplified approach to the principle of depoliticization can provide fertile soil for the emergence of irresponsible people in the military, unable to prepare objective, well substantiated material for decision-making on the state level.

Military operations are complex in many respects. Here, it is impossible to do without expert opinion. This is especially important when it is war that is at issue. There is a view that war is too responsible a matter to be entrusted to the military. Yet it is even more irresponsible to prepare for and conduct a war without the military, whose ultimate mission is in fact to strengthen the country's security.

So, what needs to be done to fulfill this paramount state task?

First, it is critical to understand that just like all countries, Russia has its own interests whose realization is designed to ensure the existence and development as an independent and sovereign state. The population, the territory, the mineral resources and production assets, transport communications and facilities and installations beyond its boundaries—all of this must be protected (there is no shortage of those wanting to appropriate "no-one's" or poorly protected facilities). It is essential to declare

national interests in a fitting and utterly comprehensible manner. They should be reflected in the Russian Constitution and other laws and regulations.

Second, establish at the top state level exactly what Russia should have and what resources and instruments it actually has to uphold its interests. To this end, a program and technology to advance state interests should be worked out.

Third, define the priorities of military organizational development and identify the resources to meet this need. Here, well substantiated proposals and calculations should be presented by the military since state security is at stake. It is perfectly clear that if a target is 1,000 kilometers away, it is senseless to fill a bomber with fuel to last only for 500 kilometers, invoking considerations of economy. Either the fuel should be provided in full or the mission should be canceled. Until recently, things in the military sphere have been done exactly in reverse. Development of the military-industrial complex and the Armed Forces was planned not in terms of what they should be in accordance with the logic of the evolution of the military-political situation but what we could afford them to be, proceeding from considerations of economic expediency, which tended to decline with crises. Furthermore, there were attempts to mechanically downsize the military and reduce the number of enterprises in the defense industry as a means to address economic and social problems although it has long been known that when security and defense become hostage to other interests, a country sooner or later turns into a military camp, paying a very high price for negligence--in the lives of its citizens. Unfortunately, with regard to this country, history has been repeating itself with striking regularity. Chechnya is a good case in point.

Fourth, it is critical to drastically review the attitude of state structures as well as individuals toward defense, toward those who defend the country's interests with weapons in hand. Unfortunately, it has yet to be fully appreciated that the armed forces of any state are not only a major institution, not only a highly complex system with state-of-the-art weapons and equipment at their disposal, but also a specially organized, large mass of people designed for action under extreme conditions.

Not only many individuals but even politicians have yet to understand military service as a specific, special state service. What is even more important is the military's attitude to society which is apparently ignored by the majority of politicians, presumably believing that people in uniforms should have endless patience, be like robots, denied civil right and isolated from society and ongoing processes. The fact is that after all is said and done, a military serviceman, just like any other person, needs a clear-cut answer to the question why he should risk his life. The military itself always stays out of politics. It is being pushed into political [battles](#) by short-sighted politicians--through humiliation, disregard for the military, and abuse of its patience and organization.

If Russia is to advance and prosper, preserving its independence in a less-than-favorable external environment, it ought to realize that military science is not simply necessary--it is objectively the state's highest priority. It is not time-serving politicians but above all scientists who should provide clear-cut answers to topical questions in the practical sphere and make appropriate recommendations to the country's political leadership.

NOTE:

(1.) *Filosofiya voyny*, Moscow, 1995, p. 35.

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