

Mobilizing the Population in Reaction to Russian Aggression

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Abstract: Russian aggression in Ukraine and other countries of the former Soviet space have increased tensions and reinforced questions of the state of security. In response, the citizenry of these countries has flocked to volunteer in self-defense forces that are being adopted by respective Ministries of Defense as reserve personnel in the case of invasion. These countries, and the Russian Federation, have opted to adopt asymmetrical means of warfare. While Estonia, Poland, and Ukraine have been reliant on American military support to supplement their own efforts, the Russian Federation has also been dependent on American military literature and using it to reshape their own military methodologies. Through a country case method, this article seeks to review and analyze the experiences of Estonia, Poland, and Ukraine in reaction to perceived Russian aggression.

Keywords: Hybrid warfare, Self-defense forces, Asymmetrical conflict, Russian aggression

Introduction

With the presence of a Russian invasion in the eastern part of the country, Ukrainian civilian volunteer battalions quickly emerged and doubled the size of the military within a matter of months³⁹⁶. In 2017, Polish Minister

³⁹⁶ Maj. Michael Cohen, "Ukraine's Battle at Ilovaisk, August 2014: The Tyranny of Means," *Army Press Online Journal*, February 4, 2016, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GOVPUB-D110-2483e4164bd-579cb2da77e8d6352379c/pdf/GOVPUB-D110-2483e4164bd579cb2da77e8d6352379c.pdf>.

of Defense Antoni Macierewicz swore civilian volunteers into the new Territorial Defense Forces (WOT) and reminded them that countless others in Polish history had done the same in times of grave danger³⁹⁷. In Estonia, the Estonian Defense League is also composed of civilian volunteers, from ages 7–18 (junior members) and 18 plus, waiting to be called on to defend the sovereignty of Estonia³⁹⁸. The success of these volunteer self-defense forces has even been recognized by the United States military in an annual report. U.S. European Command stated in its 2019 Force Posture Statement that, “Continued senior-level engagement and support for Ukrainian self-defense capabilities and institutional reform will help enhance regional security and demonstrate our continued commitment to Ukraine’s security and territorial integrity, and a rules-based international order in Europe”³⁹⁹. The current state of security with allied nations in the former Soviet space seems to be increasingly dependent upon these non-professional military units. Discounting the use of nuclear weapons, as only a handful of nations have them, this article seeks to use a country case approach to analyze the recent experiences of Ukraine, Estonia, and Poland in regard to a return to militarism in reaction to a revanchist Russia and Russian aggression.

Russian aggression in the Twenty-First Century has been primarily focused on neighboring Ukraine. The 2014 ‘Maidan Revolution’, essentially a second ‘color revolution’ 10 years following the first, created a chain reaction on the borders of Russia. This resistance to Viktor Yanukovych, the national leader loyal to Moscow, led to his eventual ousting and formation of a new government intent on joining the Liberal Democracies of the West. In the eyes of the Russian Federation, this was unacceptable. This may best be represented with President Putin’s declaration to his security council that

³⁹⁷ “Macierewicz: Territorial Defense Forces Bind Citizens With the Army,” *Defence 24*, October 28 2017, <https://www.defence24.pl/macierewicz-wojska-obrony-terytorialnej-wiazalobywateli-z-armia>.

³⁹⁸ “Estonian Defence League,” *Estonian Defence League*, July 13, 2019, <http://www.kaitseliit.ee/en/edl>. “Members of the Estonian Defence League,” *Estonian Defence League*, July 13, 2019, <http://www.kaitseliit.ee/en/members>.

³⁹⁹ “USEUCOM 2019 Posture Statement,” *U.S. European Command*, March 5, 2019, <https://www.eucom.mil/media-library/article/39546/useucom-2019-posture-statement>.

the government must do whatever it could to ensure that these ‘color revolutions’ never hit Russia⁴⁰⁰. Their response was the seizing of territory in Ukraine, known as Crimea, that was strategically, culturally, and symbolically important to both Russians and Ukrainians⁴⁰¹. This seizure of territory allowed Russia permanent access to a warm water port, its Black Sea fleet, and hold on one of its holiest sites. It was taken so quickly that Ukraine had no ability to properly respond to the loss of territory. The next step for the Russian Federation was the fomentation of war in other parts of Ukraine that border Russia.

The “oblasts” (regions) of Donetsk and Lughansk in Southeastern Ukraine form the area collectively known as the Donbass. This area is important to both Ukrainians and Russians as it is transnational and also rich in resources, such as coal. That said, not long after the timely annexation of Crimea, a “civil war” broke out in the area between “Ukrainian separatists” and Ukrainian government forces. The use of вежливые люди (polite people), also known as зелёные человечки (little green men), has been the trademark of the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. This conflict is now in its fifth year, claiming the lives of over 13,000 people, and displacing hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians⁴⁰². Yet this experience is not entirely unique to Ukraine as the Russian Federation experimented with hybrid warfare in previous years in the other former Soviet nations of Estonia and Georgia. Before beginning with the country case approach, it is necessary to provide contextual information on the experience of these countries and their dealings with the Russian Federation in the Twenty First Century and decades following their independence from Moscow’s geopolitical influence.

⁴⁰⁰ Kremlin Press Service, “Security Council Meeting,” November 20, 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47045>.

⁴⁰¹ Boris Toucas, *The Geostrategic Importance of the Black Sea Region: A Brief History*, Center for Strategic & International Studies, February 2, 2017, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/geostrategic-importance-black-sea-region-brief-history>.

⁴⁰² Fabrice Deprez, *Ukraine remains split over how to achieve peace in contested Donbas region*, November 06, 2019, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2019-11-06/ukraine-remains-split-over-how-achieve-peace-contested-donbas-region>.

Evolution of Russian Hybrid Warfare in the Twenty-First Century

Frank Hoffman defines ‘hybrid warfare’ as “threats incorporate[ing] a full range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder. Hybrid Wars can be conducted by both states and a variety of non-state actors”⁴⁰³. Hoffman continues by adding that hybrid warfare tends to blend regular and irregular components and units to blur the lines of how a unit operates, which also works to further increase what Carl Von Clausewitz dubbed “the Fog of War”, or confusion and disruption of the battle space due to uncertainty⁴⁰⁴. For the purpose of this section, the methods of cyber warfare, kinetic warfare, unconventional warfare, terrorism, and influence operations will be used under the umbrella of hybrid warfare.

The first method, cyber warfare, was introduced by the Russian Federation against its former Soviet Union compatriots of the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Georgia in 2007 and 2008 respectively⁴⁰⁵. The 2007 case with Estonia witnessed a massive Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack, which flooded network traffic so that the information system infrastructure of the country could not operate⁴⁰⁶. The case of Georgia took this a step forward by combining both cyberwarfare and kinetic warfare⁴⁰⁷. This, as in the case with Estonia, was done by flooding network traffic, but also by controlling the access points of Georgia’s network information infrastructure, which only flowed into the country through Russia and Turkey. This

⁴⁰³ Frank Hoffman, “Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars,” *Potomac Institute for Policy Studies*, December 2007, https://www.academia.edu/22883467/The_Rise_of_Hybrid_Wars.

⁴⁰⁴ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989 [1832]), 52.

⁴⁰⁵ Mason Shuya, “Russian Cyber Aggression and the New Cold War.” *Journal of Strategic Security* 11, no. 1 (2018): 1–18.

⁴⁰⁶ Jason Andress and Steve Winterfeld, *Cyber Warfare: Techniques, Tactics, and Tools for Security Practitioners* (New York: Syngress Publishers, 2011), 13.

⁴⁰⁷ Clarke and Knacke, *Cyber War The Next Threat to National Security and What to Do About It*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2010), 19.

allowed Russian forces to cut off communications between Georgian troops and their commanders in the field while kinetically engaging. As successful as the Georgian War may seem to have been for the Russians at first glance, it did alert them to the fact that they needed to modernize their military. Russia proved that it was ready in 2014, when it responded to Ukraine's second 'colour revolution' with an invasion. Russia's introduction of the little green men in Crimea allowed for a quick and successful invasion, without the need of spilling blood or wasting ammunition⁴⁰⁸. These little green men were also able to go to the Donbass and conduct 'unconventional warfare' (publicly be declaring that they were assisting the separatists) as well as through the use of terrorism, ultimately leading to, the question that Rod Thornton and Frank Hoffman pose: "are we at war, and if so, with who?"⁴⁰⁹. Rod Thornton's discussion on Russia's use of hybrid warfare originates with his article "The Changing Nature of Modern Warfare" whereby he promptly implies that the Russian use is more akin to the full integration of all aspects of the DIME (Diplomacy, Information, Military, Economic), or instruments of national power. This should not be a new concept by any stretch of the imagination. Yet what we are witnessing with Russia's use of hybrid warfare, at least theoretically, can be linked to Dr. Mark Galeotti's coining of the term 'Gerasimov Doctrine'⁴¹⁰, formerly stated in a speech/article by the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia Gerasimov. General Gerasimov's speech/article, in a comparative manner to Carl Von Clausewitz' work "On War," represented a list of observations as opposed to any authentic ingenious new strategy. In his speech, General Gerasimov discusses the Arab Spring and the implementations of soft power to destabilize the ruling orders within the countries, where each of these 'colour revolutions' were happening. Gerasimov also states, "The very 'rules of war' have changed. The role of nonmilitary means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the

⁴⁰⁸ Rod Thornton, "The Changing Nature of Modern Warfare", *The RUSI Journal*, 160:4 (2015), 40–48, doi: 10.1080/03071847.2015.1079047.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Mark Galeotti, "The 'Gerasimov Doctrine' and Russian Non-Linear War," *In Moscow's Shadow*, July 6, 2014, <https://inmoscowsshadows.wordpress.com/2014/07/06/the-gerasimov-doctrine-and-russian-non-linear-war/>.

power of force of weapons in their effectiveness”⁴¹¹. Galeotti, in an article written in 2018 in *Foreign Policy*, redacted the idea of a specific Russian military doctrine circulating⁴¹². However, it appears Galeotti was incorrect, as a year following the original article, the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation was renewed and published. Article 15 of this document outlined the same observations and sentiments that General Gerasimov had previously stated in his speech/article⁴¹³. Whether Dr. Geolotti appreciates it or not, the ‘Gerasimov Doctrine’ illustrating hybrid warfare and the full integration of the instruments of power, had become a part of the official military doctrine of the Russian Federation.

Country Case

Ukraine

The natural reaction of Ukraine to this loss of land and fomentation of war was to quickly mobilize and militarize. In early 2015 the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe noted that the government in Kiev had officially established the separatist region as an “Anti-Terrorist Zone”⁴¹⁴. This took place almost a year after the illegal annexation of Crimea and fomentation of war in the eastern part of the country. When this all began, the Ukrainian government quickly realized that it was no match for the larger and superior Russian forces that were moving in⁴¹⁵. In hindsight,

⁴¹¹ Valeriy Gerasimov, “The Value of Science is in the Foresight,” *Military-Industrial Kurier*, February 27, 2013, https://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20160228_art008.pdf.

⁴¹² Mark Galeotti, “I’m Sorry for the Gerasimov Doctrine,” *Foreign Policy*, March 5, 2018. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/05/im-sorry-for-creating-the-gerasimov-doctrine/>.

⁴¹³ Russian Foreign Ministry Press Service, “The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation,” June 29, 2015, <https://rusemb.org.uk/press/2029>.

⁴¹⁴ “Latest from OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine based on information received as of 18:00 (Kyiv time), 13 January 2015,” *Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe*, January 13, 2015, <https://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/134641>.

⁴¹⁵ Steven Erlanger and Andrew E. Kramer, “Ukraine Finds its Forces are Ill Equipped to Take Crimea Back from Russia,” *The New York Times*, March 1, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/02/world/europe/ukraine-finds-its-forces-are-ill-equipped-to-take-crimea-back-from-russia.html>.

it was an intelligent move to leave the peninsula as Ukraine's 3,500 troops would be no match for the nearly 100,000 Russian soldiers that President Putin later admitted to having moved into Crimea⁴¹⁶. To further complicate things, ousted President Viktor Yanukovich had done his best to destroy the structures and stability of the Ukrainian military, leaving the country with no more than perhaps 5,000 troops nationwide⁴¹⁷. However, volunteer militias and self-defense forces quickly organized themselves into small battalions and were adopted by formal Ukrainian government institutions for legitimacy in order to fight the increasing Russian presence in the Donbass⁴¹⁸.

These militias and self-defense forces have been successful on the battlefield, but have found themselves at the center of controversy as some of these groups are far-right in nature and have been accused of both war crimes and espousing Neo-Nazi and White Nationalist ideologies, particularly the "Azov Battalion"⁴¹⁹. The allegations have been so far reaching that the United States, which has been funding both the Ukrainian military and militias in this conflict, included the stipulation that, "none of the funds made available by this act may be used to provide arms, training or other assistance to the Azov Battalion"⁴²⁰. While at first glance this may seem unprecedented, funding of foreign security forces is prohibited under the stipulations of the "Leahy Act", which bans the funding of foreign militias or security forces with credible evidence of their violation of human rights⁴²¹. Nonetheless, the reports of these self-defense forces committing

⁴¹⁶ Erlanger and Kramer, "Ukraine Forces Ill Equipped," 2014.

⁴¹⁷ Steven Erlanger and Andrew E. Kramer, "Ukraine Finds its Forces are Ill Equipped to Take Crimea Back from Russia," *The New York Times*, March 1, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/02/world/europe/ukraine-finds-its-forces-are-ill-equipped-to-take-crimea-back-from-russia.html>.

⁴¹⁸ Cohen, "Ukraine's Battle at Ilovaisk," 2016.

⁴¹⁹ Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, "OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting," April 15, 2016, <https://www.osce.org/pc/233896?download=true>.

⁴²⁰ Rebecca Kheel, "Congress Bans Arms to Ukraine Militia Linked to Neo-Nazis," *Office of Congresswoman Ro Khanna*, March 27, 2018, <https://khanna.house.gov/media/in-the-news/congress-bans-arms-ukraine-militia-linked-neo-nazis>.

⁴²¹ Cornell Legal Information Institute, "22 U.S. Code § 2378d. Limitation on Assistance to Security forces," July 14, 2019, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/22/2378d>.

war crimes and violating human rights has not stopped their popularity in the public perception, and some are even using it as political ammunition to push their own agendas for the national politics of Ukraine.

Estonia

Like Ukraine, the Republic of Estonia is a former Soviet republic. Estonia, since a 2004, became a NATO member state. It has since then experienced instances of Russian aggression and intervention on its territory, physically and psychologically. On the physical dimension, Estonia has not been shelled or bombarded with artillery, but saw one of its intelligence officers kidnapped on Estonian soil, taken to the Russian Federation, and tried for espionage⁴²². On the psychological dimension, Estonia was the infamous first case of cyber aggression between nation states, falling victim to Russian DDoS attacks in 2007, although Russia never formally claimed responsibility⁴²³. Being a nation of only 1.3 million people, Estonia understood that it needed to quickly appeal to its Western allies to shore up its defenses. This was a main reason for Estonia's support of NATO's push to reinforce the Baltic states, especially as the Estonian professional military, the Estonian Defense Forces, only numbers 6,000 during peace time⁴²⁴. Also, like Ukraine, Estonia has looked towards its civilian population for volunteers to join the Estonian Defense League, similar to the National Guard in the United States. This force numbers 26,000 when including other volunteer forces, or just over four times that of the professional military force⁴²⁵. The National Defense Strategy of Estonia also stipulates that these volunteers will act as guerillas and resistance fighters in the case of an invasion and/or

⁴²² Shaun Walker, "Russia Jails Estonian Intelligence Officer Tallinn Says Was Abducted Over Border," *The Guardian*, August 19, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/19/russia-jails-estonian-police-officer-allegedly-abducted-border-eston-kohver>.

⁴²³ Shuya, "Russian Cyber Aggression," 2018.

⁴²⁴ Estonian Defence Forces, "Estonian Defence Forces," July 14, 2019, <http://www.mil.ee/en/defence-forces>. Justyna Gotkowska, "NATO's presence in the Baltic states – reassurance of allies or deterrence for Russia?" *Centre for Eastern Studies*, April 29, 2015, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2015-04-29/natos-presence-baltic-states-reassurance-allies-or-deterrence>.

⁴²⁵ Estonian Defence League, "Estonian Defence League," July 14, 2019, <http://www.kaitseliit.ee/en/edl>.

occupation. This same document also stresses the importance of Estonia's allies and its commitment to NATO.

In Estonia, there are nearly 1,200 allied troops as of the 2016 Warsaw Summit of NATO⁴²⁶. The majority of this contingent are British troops, but there are also French, Danish, and Belgian forces present as well⁴²⁷. In addition to the 1,200 troops directly stationed in Estonia, the country is part of the rotation for the U.S. Army's unilateral Operation Atlantic Resolve, which rotates 6,300 personnel between Bulgaria, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania⁴²⁸. These specific personnel are responsible for armor, combat aviation, infantry, and logistics. Within Estonia, they make use of Ämari Air Base and Tapa Army Base, both east of the capital Tallinn.

Poland

In reaction to Russian aggression in former Soviet Republics, the Republic of Poland has also set a main objective of improving its defensive posture. In the latest Defense Concept of the Republic of Poland, the government has set a minimal objective of reaching 2.5 percent of its Gross Domestic Product to national defense by 2030⁴²⁹. The same year that this defense strategy came out, a budget report for the Ministry of National Defense indicated that the professional Polish military numbered 129,000 troops (105,000 active duty, 20,000 reserve forces, and 4,000 cadets in the officer corps)⁴³⁰. To Poland's east, the Russian Federation has one million active duty and demonstrated the ability to mobilize over 300,000 at one

⁴²⁶ Estonian Defence Forces, "French Tanks Arrived in Tapa," March 29, 2017, <http://www.mil.ee/en/News-Archive/9713/french-tanks-arrived-in-tapa>.

⁴²⁷ Estonian Defence Forces, "French Tanks in Tapa," 2017. Estonian Defence Forces, "Belgian Troops Joined the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group at Tapa," January 18, 2019, <http://www.mil.ee/en/News-Archive/10550/belgian-troops-joined-the-nato-enhanced-forward-presence-battle-group-at-tapa>.

⁴²⁸ U.S. Army Europe, "Atlantic Resolve," July 14, 2019, <https://www.eur.army.mil/AtlanticResolve/>.

⁴²⁹ Ministry of National Defence Republic of Poland, "National Defence Concept," July 14, 2019, <https://www.gov.pl/web/national-defence/defenceconcept-publication>.

⁴³⁰ Ministry of National Defence Republic of Poland, "Key Figures of the MoND Budget for 2017," January 2019, <https://archiwum2019-en.mon.gov.pl/p/pliki/dokumenty/rozne/2017/02/budget2017.pdf>.

time for official military exercises⁴³¹. While Poland's military is the largest in NATO's eastern flank, it is still 10 times smaller than Russia's and three times smaller than what Russia has demonstrated that it can successfully coordinate at one time. What was Poland's answer to this numerical disadvantage? The answer is actually two pronged: volunteer militias and pushing for a permanent American military presence in the country.

In 2016, Deutsche Welle reported that thousands of Poles were lining up to volunteer in paramilitary militias to assist in Poland's national defense in case of Russian aggression similar to that observed in Ukraine⁴³². The idea of these paramilitary units spurred then Minister of Defense, Antoni Macierewicz, to establish the Territorial Defense Forces (WOT) to act in a similar fashion to the National Guard, similar to the Estonian Defense League and other forces in the Baltic states⁴³³. The Polish government is looking at boosting the total number of the WOT to 50,000 people, which would act as guerilla forces across Poland to supplement the professional military⁴³⁴. Besides supplementing the military with paramilitary and militia forces, the Polish government has set a security objective of establishing permanent American military bases on Polish soil, similar to that of the American military bases in Germany. When Polish President Andrzej Duda visited Washington D.C., he displayed Poland's eagerness of achieving this objective by offering to name the permanent U.S. military installations "Fort Trump"⁴³⁵. The Trump administration has taken the Polish interest in a permanent U.S. military installation seriously enough that then Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Kathryn

⁴³¹ "Size of Russian Armed Forces Decreases by Nearly 300 Personnel," *TASS*, January 1, 2018, <https://tass.com/defense/983867>. Kremlin Press Service, "Vostok-2018 Military Manoeuvres," September 13, 2018, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58548>.

⁴³² Monika Sieradzka, "Paramilitary Groups Ready to Defend Poland," *Deutsche Welle*, June 12, 2016, <https://www.dw.com/en/paramilitary-groups-ready-to-defend-poland/a-19325101>

⁴³³ Charlie Gao, "This Is How Poland Plans to Fight Russia in a War," *The National Interest*, March 3, 2018, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/how-poland-plans-fight-russia-war-24731>.

⁴³⁴ Gao, "Poland Plans to Fight Russia," 2018.

⁴³⁵ White House Press Office, "Remarks by President Trump and President Duda of the Republic of Poland Before Bilateral Meeting," September 18, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-president-duda-republic-poland-joint-press-conference/>.

Wheelbarger, testified before the House Armed Services Committee that the Department of Defense was actively looking at options for this presence, but would not go into detail in an unclassified setting⁴³⁶. Months later, when President Duda returned to Washington, President Trump would not go into specifics about the topic, but did state the plan would be to pull 2,000 troops from bases in Germany and post them at the Polish installation, which would put the number of U.S. troops in Poland at 6,000 at any given time⁴³⁷.

Analysis and Recommendations

Russian hybrid warfare has been the main instrument of President Putin's war on Liberal Democracy and the Liberal World Order as envisioned by American President Woodrow Wilson and later American international relations experts during the Cold War. In order to legitimize his campaign of fomenting anarchy within this Liberal World Order, President Putin has used the American unilateral invasion of Iraq, under President George W. Bush, as legal justification for Russian unilateral military action to achieve its own objectives⁴³⁸. Having seemed to study American literature and the American experience in Iraq and Afghanistan since the attacks on 9/11, the Putin's Russia has adopted asymmetrical warfare to attack adversaries and destabilize their institutions. Using 2001 to 2013 as a time frame, one can assume that the Russian military was studying U.S. Army General Stanley McChrystal, the pioneer of the U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) war machine in the war on terror.

⁴³⁶ *National Security Challenges and U.S. Military Activities in Europe*, 116th Cong. 25 (2019) (statement of Kathryn Wheelbarger, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS00/20190313/109096/HHRG-116-AS00-Wstate-WheelbargerK-20190313.pdf>).

⁴³⁷ White House Press Office, "Remarks by President Trump and President Duda of the Republic of Poland Before Bilateral Meeting," June 12, 2019, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-president-duda-republic-poland-bilateral-meeting-2/>. *National Security Challenges in Europe*, Wheelbarger, 2019.

⁴³⁸ Kremlin Press Service, "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," March 18, 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>.

McChrystal's understanding of the situation in Iraq and use of SOF in Iraq turned 2004's record of 18 specialized night raids against insurgents into 300 per month by August 2006⁴³⁹. McChrystal also acknowledges that part of what he and his subordinates did was learn from the situation, increase communications across a wider geographic network, and utilize intelligence to begin eliminating countless insurgent targets each and every night. Alexander Salt writes that McChrystal's approach was network-centric and allowed for retention of traditional capabilities with professionalism, technology, and overwhelming force when needed in order to successfully conduct swift and precise operations. Salt also writes that McChrystal's reforms were able, "to create a quasi-flattened command hierarchy for JSOC, which would allow for maximum organizational efficiency by attempting to streamline information gathering, analysis, and distribution"⁴⁴⁰.

McChrystal's revolution in the way that SOF were able to swiftly and asymmetrically overpower targets was an example for other major conventional militaries to admire and adopt. The operation to swiftly take over the Crimean Peninsula is an example of other militaries following this lead. Following the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Special Operations doctrine definition of the capabilities of SOF, these capabilities can be attributed to this operation. Specifically, the capabilities listed are:

- (1) Conduct operations with CF, multinational partners, and IGOs. (2) Work closely with foreign military and civilian authorities and populations, when directed. (3) Deploy rapidly and provide tailored responses. (4) Gain access to hostile, denied, or politically and/or diplomatically sensitive areas to prepare the operational environment for future operations and develop options for addressing potential national concerns. (5) Conduct operations in austere environments with limited support and a low-profile. (6) Communicate worldwide using organic equipment. (7) Assess local situations and report rapidly. (8) Execute special operations missions using nonstandard equipment⁴⁴¹.

⁴³⁹ Stanley McChrystal and Gideon Rose, "Generation Kill: a Conversation with Stanley McChrystal," *Council on Foreign Relations* 92, no. 2 (2013): 2–8.

⁴⁴⁰ Salt, "Transformation in Afghanistan," 2013.

⁴⁴¹ "Special Operations," *Joint Chiefs of Staff*, July 16, 2014, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_05.pdf.

In Crimea, the Russian SOF were able to deploy rapidly, gain access to the territory and prepare it for a future military operation, conduct their operation without any support, and execute their mission without any standard equipment. The speed was demonstrated when President Putin admitted that these SOF were able to take over the parliament of Crimea four days following his decision to retake the peninsula⁴⁴². This also paved the way for the Russian military to deploy 100,000 personnel so that the territory could not be retaken⁴⁴³. They demonstrated the ability to conduct the operation without any support or standard equipment as they were in unmarked uniforms and lightly armed⁴⁴⁴. The application of McChrystal's revolution in SOF was also being used by the Russians elsewhere around the world, such as in Syria and Venezuela.

The Special Operations doctrine also discusses the SOF role in conducting irregular warfare and unconventional warfare. The doctrine specifically defines irregular warfare as, "a violent struggle among state and nonstate actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s)." It also states that the goal is to, "create instability and disrupt and negate state legitimacy and governance to gain and maintain control or influence over and the support of a relevant population"⁴⁴⁵. According to the doctrine, this is paired with unconventional warfare to, "support an insurgency, or resistance movement against a nation state," in a hostile nation (Ukraine) and "support a nation state against an insurgency, resistance, or terrorists" (Syria and Venezuela). The Russian SOF have been supporting the nation states of Syria and Venezuela against resistance movements and an insurgency⁴⁴⁶. The Russians have also accomplished this by the use of military

⁴⁴² Sergey Kraus, *Crimea. The Way Home*. YouTube, Produced by Rossiya 1, 2015, posted by Embaixada da Rússia on May 7, 2015, accessed February 15, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbGhKfWrFOQ>.

⁴⁴³ Kraus, *Crimea. The Way Home*, 2015.

⁴⁴⁴ Rod Thornton, "The Changing Nature of Modern Warfare", 2015.

⁴⁴⁵ "Special Operations," 2014.

⁴⁴⁶ Mason Shuya, "Russia in Latin America: a Response to NATO," *Journal of Strategic Security*, July 17, 2019, <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol12/iss2/>.

contractors⁴⁴⁷. The specific military contracting company, the Wagner Group, emerged when they were engaged by U.S. SOF in Syria and suffered 200 casualties⁴⁴⁸. It was this same group that deployed to Venezuela in January of 2019 to shore up the security of President Nicolas Maduro as it seemed that his rule was in danger and a civil war would break out⁴⁴⁹.

The relevancy of the Russian SOF and their adoptions of American military doctrine would have wide implications for the security of Estonia, Poland, and Ukraine. These three countries have shown a dependence on the United States and NATO allies for their protection, but they have also shown a keen interest on the idea of guerilla forces and fighting an invasion via asymmetric means. The Russian experience has shown that, even having adopted the American doctrine, they cannot fully employ the tactics to an American level when fighting American forces. The 200 casualties in Syria display that. The casualties in Syria did something else, it showed that if you are willing to contact and destroy these Russian SOF conducting hybrid warfare operations, then you can stop the further progression and advance of their campaign⁴⁵⁰. In this regard, these three countries have the advantage, as the United States has military personnel, and SOF in each of these countries, preparing local forces in the event of such an invasion⁴⁵¹. Yet all of the training in the world won't help these people unless they are prepared to use it and repel a foreign invasion, which their very

⁴⁴⁷ Maria Tsvetkova and Anton Zverev. "Ghost Soldiers: the Russians Secretly Dying for the Kremlin in Syria", *Reuters*, November 3, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-insight-idUSKBN12Y0M6>.

⁴⁴⁸ Sergey Sukhanin, "War, Business and Ideology: How Russian Private Military Contractors Pursue Moscow's Interests," *The Jamestown Foundation*, March 20, 2019, <https://jamestown.org/program/war-business-and-ideology-how-russian-private-military-contractors-pursue-moscows-interests/>.

⁴⁴⁹ "Russian Mercenaries Arrive in Venezuela to Shore Up Maduro's Rule", *the Moscow Times*, January 26, 2019, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/01/26/russian-mercenaries-arrive-in-venezuela-to-shore-up-maduros-rule-a64299>.

⁴⁵⁰ Todd Lindberg, "A U.S. Battlefield Victory Against Russia's 'Little Green Men'", *The Wall Street Journal*, April 3, 2018, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-u-s-battlefield-victory-against-russias-little-green-men-1522792572>.

⁴⁵¹ William Leasure, "U.S. Naval Special Warfare Operators Train with Ukrainian SOF at Sea Breeze 17," July 21, 2017, <https://www.socom.mil/soceur/Pages/USNavalSpecialWarfareOperator-strainwithUkrainianSOFatSeaBreeze17.aspx>.

presence in the volunteer and professional military organizations of their countries would indicate. One recommendation that the governments of these countries could consider, is something similar to Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), which guarantees American citizens who sign up for military service (professional or reserve) protections against termination of employment⁴⁵². Adopting similar statutes in these countries would boost the morale of those seeking to volunteer for their respective uniformed services, whether it be the professional militaries or these self-defense forces being adopted by respective defense ministries, by ensuring that their participation does not threaten their “day jobs” and civilian occupations. It would also justify all of the various training opportunities and schedules that the respective defense ministries are putting in place, as there is job security for those willing to make the ultimate sacrifice in the name of patriotism.

Conclusion

The Russian use of hybrid warfare in Ukraine has spread fears across the former Soviet space that Moscow will take away the sovereignty of the citizens it once controlled. In the region, the specific attacks that have been observed have been focused on former Soviet republics but have ranged from cyberwarfare to kinetic warfare. The new Russian military school of thought appears built on American military doctrine and has adopted the tactics and methods written and used by American military leadership and thinkers. Although successful in a limited scale, the Russian adoption has not been a match against the U.S. employment of the same methods and tactics when directly engaged. A large portion of the kinetic warfare being used in this new strategy is reliant on asymmetric warfare. Defending NATO’s eastern flank, Estonia and Poland are working with the United States to prepare in the case of a Russian invasion on their soil just as Ukraine, outside of NATO, is doing the same to the south to prevent further

⁴⁵² “Veterans’ Reemployment Rights,” *U.S. Department of Labor*, accessed July 18, 2018, <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/termination/veterans>.

progression of this invasion. This security effort is also heavily dependent upon civilian volunteers who will act as guerillas if the need ever arises. What is clear is that if there is an invasion of Estonia or Poland, the professional and volunteer militaries will be dependent upon American military help, which has already proven successful when engaging Russian forces in the type of warfare that it was instrumental in developing.

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