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THE CHEKINOV-BOGDANOV COMMENTARIES OF 2010-2017: WHAT DID THEY TEACH US ABOUT RUSSIA'S NEW WAY OF WAR?

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Introduction

From 2010 to 2017 Russian Colonel (reserves) S. G. Chekinov and Lieutenant-General (retired) S. A. Bogdanov wrote 13 interesting articles in the journal *Military Thought* (nine of them are summarized below) that had a major impact on how Western analysts understood Russian military affairs and way of war. Though the authors have not written publicly since 2017, their impact continues to be felt as the West grapples with how to confront Russian activities across all domains. Asymmetric and indirect actions, the initial period of war, deterrence, military art, forecasting, strategy, new generation warfare, and other topics were discussed, ending with an article in 2017 discussing war in the 21st century. Numerous aspects of these themes remain under discussion in Russia.

Their analysis offered some interesting details, such as the following:

- They wrote intensely on new generation warfare (a focus on weapons) in 2013 yet by 2017 they had completely abandoned the concept in favor of new-type warfare (a focus on military, nonmilitary, and other types of fighting)
- They warned on several occasions of the need before conflict begins to mislead or bribe opponents, to conduct sabotage operations, and to utilize cunning and indirect actions to surprise adversaries
- They stated that the use of psychological (ultrasonic) and climate/geological (magnetic storms, tsunamis, earthquake) weapons were under consideration
- They specifically said administration and control systems should be targeted if war begins, to include dams and nuclear, chemical, and oil and gas facilities
- They forecast that future war would begin with electronic warfare operations and blend with a strategic aerospace operation, augmented with cruise missile launches and space-based strike weapons and reconnaissance units (such as remotely piloted vehicles and robots)
- They examined various elements of strategy, to include its main issues, nature, regularities, principles, content, and tasks
- They noted that 21st century war includes traditional war, noncontact war, information warfare, network-centric warfare, hybrid warfare (what the U.S. is doing), cold war, and environmental warfare. New-type war was imbedded in the discussion of cold war and mentioned 12 times by name. New-generation war was not noted.

Unfortunately, since 2017 authors Chekinov and Bogdanov have published neither as a pair nor individually. In effect they have disappeared from public view with no explanation as to why. This includes, in addition to the journal *Military Thought*, articles in the popular publications *Army Journal* and the *Journal of the Academy of Military Science*, which together are the three most popular Russian military journals for Army-related material. Their commentary has been missed for the rich discussions of warfare that they offered.

The analysis that follows intends to keep the focus on these important works and directs attention to the theme of each of the nine articles selected and the sections indicating new or

different forms and methods of warfare. The titles of each article (to include the four not examined) and the date of their publication in *Military Thought* are listed at Appendix One. Important quotations found in the nine articles but not used in the writeup are to be found at Appendix Two.

2010: Asymmetric Actions

In their conclusion to this article, the authors made a dramatic statement about the targets of future warfare. Specifically, strategically important targets that, if destroyed, lead to unacceptable damage to an opponent include:

Top government administration and military control systems; major manufacturing fuel, and energy enterprises (steel and engineering plants, oil refineries, defense industry enterprises, electronic power plants and substations, oil and gas production, accumulation and storage facilities, life support facilities, and so on); vitally important transportation facilities across the adversary's entire territory (railroad hubs, bridges, strategic ports, airports, tunnels, and so on); potentially dangerous objectives (hydroelectric power dams and hydroelectric power complexes, processing units of chemical plants, nuclear power facilities, storages of strong poisons, and so on).¹

They stated that military measures protecting Russia's national interests will combine direct or symmetrical actions (such as conducting operations) with asymmetrical actions to inflict unacceptable damage to an opponent in nonmilitary security areas.² The latter is not intended to be a benign statement. It is hard to imagine a more critical set of infrastructure targets that could be listed, save banking.

An asymmetrical approach to military security was stated to be "a combination of forms and methods of using forces and means that depend on the adversaries' unequal potentialities and allow confrontation or a direct armed clash with a potential adversary to be avoided (or their consequences mitigated)."³ Asymmetrical actions may include: measures making the opponent apprehensive of Russia's intentions; a demonstration of the readiness and potential of forces in a strategic area; and actions designed to deter through the implied guaranteed destruction of vulnerable military and other targets.⁴

The authors blamed globalization and the West's need to spread democracy and protect the weak as the rational for the increase in military conflicts.⁵ Now indirect action strategies, such as non-contact warfare, electronic and fire, aerospace, and anti-satellite operations have increased the forms and methods of using such strategies. Indirect actions have surpassed "power strategies" as ways to dominate battlegrounds. Now it is important to mislead, surprise, intimidate, bribe, or use

¹ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, "Asymmetrical Actions to Maintain Russia's Military Security," *Voyennaya Mysl'* (*Military Thought*), No. 3 2010, p. 22.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 21.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

other means to attain success. Finally, the authors stated that information confrontation is playing a major role in disorganizing military control and state administrations.⁶

2011: Indirect Actions and their Effect on War's Character

In hindsight it is not surprising that the authors would follow-up their article on asymmetrical measures with a discussion of indirect ones. However, the focus of this article was very odd, in that the indirect operations discussed involved information, climate, and psychological issues. Nonmilitary issues were discussed as well, but later articles were much more interesting on that topic. Many paragraphs from the 2010 asymmetric article appeared verbatim in this one. Therefore, this article offered little new substance about topics for which Western analysts are accustomed, but it did offer interesting discussions on “causing” weather and disasters or psychologically oriented topics.

Information technologies (IT) are a major method of ensuring the information and military security of a state when rivalries exist in political, economic, and military affairs. IT can, the authors note, pursue the same goals as can military interference, economic expansion, and other aggressive actions. Time shows that states which cannot secure a nations' information security risk losing their political sovereignty, economic independence, or role of world or regional leader.⁷ Information's impact has been so great that now it can tackle strategic tasks such as disorganizing an opponent, creating a desired public opinion, organizing antigovernment protests, and other undertakings.⁸ The authors then noted that the US military and intelligence services worked on devising methods to psychologically manipulate individuals, social institutions, and others with “color revolutions” (the overthrow of governments in Georgia, Ukraine, and elsewhere) being but one example.

Finally, the authors discussed how the U.S. had developed a High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP), which the authors state emits radio emanations that can penetrate underground and into masses of water, find bunkers, or put out of commission ballistic missiles and submarine control systems. Others believe HAARP can manipulate weather and cause disasters (earthquakes, tsunamis, etc.) or create artificial magnetic storms that will affect navigation systems and the psychological condition of humans.⁹

2012: Strategic Deterrence in Contemporary Times

Russia has two terms for deterrence, *sderzhivanie* and *ustrashenie*. The former, used most often by the military, works to contain opponents while the latter works to scare them. The military uses the former much more often than the latter. The authors defined deterrence in this work as follows:

⁶ Ibid., p. 20.

⁷ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, “The Influence of the Indirect Approach on the Nature of Modern Warfare,” *Voennaya Mysl'* (Military Thought), No. 6 2011, p. 10.

⁸ Ibid., p. 6

⁹ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

Deterrence is understood as a combination of the state's coordinated political, diplomatic, economic, military, nonmilitary, and other measures taken to convince a potential aggressor of the futility of military action he wants to undertake to achieve his political goals because of retaliation that could be too much for him to accept.¹⁰

The purpose of deterrence is to show an opponent that if conflict erupts he cannot achieve his political objective through military actions. It is designed to show resolve in defending friendly interests. Many analysts consider Russian President Vladimir Putin's demonstration of military might in March 2019, when he showed videos of several high-technology weapons under development or in the final stages of completion, as a means of deterrence.

The development of high-technology nonnuclear weapons that can fulfill strategic tasks has helped introduce the term "strategic deterrence" into the lexicon. The term includes a state's ability to show its readiness to use both nuclear and conventional forces, and its ability and resolve to conduct special, asymmetric, indirect, and other operations.¹¹ Strategic deterrence frequently involves a show of force which, in peacetime, deters aggression or attempts to pressure Russia. In wartime strategic deterrence aims to prevent aggressors from using nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction and to limit the scale and intensity of military operations.¹² The authors discussed global and regional deterrence as well. Global deterrence involves the threatening massive use of strategic conventional and nuclear weapons, whereas regional deterrence involves the threat of conventional and, in contingencies, nonstrategic nuclear weapons.¹³

2012: Initial Periods of War

Chekinov and Bogdanov mentioned the term new-generation warfare (NGW) in this article, a year before they wrote extensively on the topic (see 2013 discussion below). In NGWs, preparations will differ in that the side desiring to aggress engages, sometimes before the start of operations, in a campaign to conceal both the arming of its Armed Forces (AF) and the nature of their special preparations.¹⁴ The initial period of war (IPW) will be decisive for wars. It will be comprised of subversion and provocations, bribing that causes chaos, and information operations that include information and psychological attacks, electronic and fire operations, and aerospace operations.¹⁵

The authors stressed the close integration of the IPW with information planning. The authors defined the initial period of war as follows:

¹⁰ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, "Strategic Deterrence and Russia's National Security Today," *Voennaya Mysl'* (*Military Thought*), No. 3 2012, p. 12.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁴ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, "Initial Periods of War and their Influence on a Country's Preparations for Future War," *Voennaya Mysl'* (*Military Thought*), No. 11 2012, p. 23.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

The initial period of war is interpreted in military history as the time when the warring states conducted military operations involving groups of their armed forces deployed before the start of the war to achieve their short-range strategic objectives or to create favorable conditions for committing their main forces and continuing with more operations.¹⁶

Information planning assists in the ability “to create favorable conditions” in different ways. For example, a long time before aggression materializes, a nation’s economy must prepare the AF to fight off opponents, offering the nation the weaponry it requires. On the one hand Chekinov and Bogdanov added that a wide-scale targeted information and reconnaissance operation helps mislead an opponent about Russia’s readiness.¹⁷ On the other hand, measures that might be included in a special information campaign to prepare Russia’s population for potential conflict included the following:

- Broadcasts of information on various communications channels about intensive and wide-ranging preparation of the Russian economy and public for war
- Mobilization of reservists in many age brackets
- Relocation of army units on high alert and the deployment of reserves from the heartland
- Development of false activities designed to be captured by adversary reconnaissance
- A broad campaign (launched simultaneously) to inform the public about the adversary’s destructive intentions.¹⁸

A nation’s goals in a future war will only be achieved, Chekinov and Bogdanov noted, with the attainment of information superiority over an opponent. This requires management of the mass media, protection of national information sources, and attacks against an opponent’s control systems. The authors ended their article noting that in the IPW, goals will be accomplished through employing “military, economic, and IT measures in combination with efficient psychological information campaigns.”¹⁹

2013: New Generation Warfare

Of all the articles that Chekinov and Bogdanov co-authored, this one received the most attention in the West. It revealed both Russian paranoia over how military affairs were developing, since many of the systems mentioned were fielded in the U.S. and only under development in Russia; and Russia’s plan to confront these changes. Perhaps the article’s point of paramount importance was that a new-generation war (NGW) will be “fought by the rules and customs of the side that is best prepared to put the recent breakthroughs in warfare economics and technologies

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 27.

to a practical test.”²⁰ As Russia continues to act with impunity, the West should seriously consider how a war might appear that is fought by Russia’s rules and customs, especially its focus on using asymmetric means it says will be used “extensively.”

Of initial interest were the author’s reference to Vladimir Slipchenko’s 1990s book on sixth-generation warfare, with the main objective of such warfare to “destroy the enemy’s economic potential” and “keeping the man outside of the battlespace is what makes future wars and armed struggle cardinally different.”²¹ Many of the points that Chekinov and Bogdanov developed tended to follow and support Slipchenko’s contentions. For example, the authors stated that “defeating the enemy’s main forces and destroying the economic potential of the country attacked, and also overrunning its territory” are the objectives of NGW’s fought in a network-centric environment (the latter defined as a concept of control over combat operations).²²

Regarding the use of ground troops, the authors noted the following:

It is very probable that an attacker will achieve his political and military goals in a NGW before he deploys his ground forces. The aggressor will, most likely, send them into enemy territory only after he has assured himself that his missile and air strikes, long-range artillery fire, and weapons based on new physical principles have wiped out a majority of the defending units, destroyed government and military control centers, key military, industrial, and economic targets, and wrecked the stability of the defending country’s government administration system.²³

Chekinov and Bogdanov offered a list of some of the U.S.’s lessons learned during the Gulf War conflict of the 1990s, which included:

- Technological superiority cancelled an opponent’s numerical advantage
- An electronic operation launched in parallel with an aerial offensive and sea-based cruise missiles began the “first war of a new age”
- There were no clear dividing lines between the opponent’s forces and flanks were exposed, etc.
- Orbiting satellites played a special role in the war.²⁴

These points demonstrated to Chekinov and Bogdanov that the nature and development of warfare had changed and that changes were required in how Russia would approach future conflict. The authors then ventured “their own viewpoint on the character and content of a NGW:”

²⁰ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, “On the Nature and Content of Wars of a New Generation,” *Voennaya Mysl’ (Military Thought)*, No. 10 2013, p. 22.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

As we see it, the introduction of the latest information technologies to develop effective modern weapons, reconnaissance, electronic warfare, communication capabilities, and automated control systems has altered significantly the patterns of manpower employment and the conduct of military operations, and is going to have a decisive impact on the development of new patterns [of conflict].²⁵

Further, the authors listed in bold print ten important aspects of NGW:

- NGW will be dominated by information and psychological warfare seeking to achieve superiority
- Asymmetric actions will be used extensively to level off the enemy's superiority in armed struggles²⁶
- Aggressors will make efforts to involve all public institutions in the country it attacks, such as the mass media, religious organizations, public movements, nongovernmental organizations, and so on²⁷
- Attackers will plan for NGWs and take measures to conceal preparations²⁸
- Decisive battles in NGWs will rage in the information environment²⁹
- Aggressors may use nonlethal NGW genetically engineered biological weapons that affect the human psyche and moods
- The military phase will be preceded by large-scale reconnaissance and subversive missions
- The attack will begin with an aerospace operation of several days³⁰
- During the aerospace operation, defenders must anticipate attacks from enemy military robots³¹
- Theorists name overwhelming superior of either side in military technologies as a hallmark of NGWs³²

The authors stressed on several occasions that the only way for strategic operations to achieve their goals in NGW would be through one side gain information superiority over the other.³³ They also (as they later reiterated in 2015) offered their interpretation of what the opening (most critical) and closing periods of warfare would look like. The 2015 discussion (see article below on forecasting) included the duration of the opening and closing periods.

2015: 21st Century Military Art

²⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 19.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

³¹ Ibid., p. 22.

³² Ibid., p. 23.

³³ Ibid., p. 19.

Military art was defined as the theory and practice of preparing and conducting armed struggle, whether on land, sea, or space. It encompasses the basic means of organizing, conducting, and supporting operations and combat actions, and organizing control over them.³⁴ It has been developing under the influence of new military-political and economic situations that has emphasized nonmilitary and indirect actions. Military art will continue to study the nature of wars, their regularities and principles of conduct, the forms and methods of armed struggle, and the development and preparation of the Armed Forces.³⁵ The creation of high-precision weapons based on new physical principles will result in the emergence of more efficient forms and methods of warfare that will influence the development of military art.³⁶

A very interesting observation was that with remote noncontact impact on an adversary now becoming the chief method for attaining objectives using advanced information technologies, “differences between strategic, operational, and tactical levels will be obliterated, as will be the difference between offensive and defensive activities.”³⁷ Further, “the evolution of military art will apparently proceed along the line of the blanket introduction of information technologies.”³⁸ This will require enhanced stability and interference “immunity” in systems and control facilities.³⁹

Chekinov and Bogdanov ended this article noting the importance of ruse, cunning, and indirect actions that can mislead opponents, conceal operations, and thus surprise adversaries. Research on the use of nonmilitary actions were also stressed.⁴⁰ In conclusion, 21st century military art will include all its constituent and interacting theories, other forms and methods of struggle (above all nonmilitary and indirect actions), and military stratagems and surprise.⁴¹

2015: Forecasting Future War

In this important article, Chekinov and Bogdanov noted that forecasting helps avoid errors in future planning through the identification of principal avenues for promoting military art. Future war success will require the skillful combination of military, nonmilitary, and special nonviolent measures that include a blend of political, economic, information, technological, and environmental measures. Information superiority will be the primary avenue through which to take advantage of opponents.⁴² It was noted that a special operation (the special nonviolent measure mentioned earlier?) would be developed to mislead and misinform military and political leaders of the other side through employing actions to influence the behavior of the personnel of the Armed Forces and the population of an adversary.⁴³

³⁴ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, “The Art of War at the Beginning of the 21st Century: Problems and Judgements,” *Voennaya Mysl’ (Military Thought)*, No. 1 2015, p. 33.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁴² S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, “Predicting the Nature and Content of Future Wars: Problems and Opinions,” *Voennaya Mysl’ (Military Thought)*, No. 10 2015, p. 44.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

The authors offered their prescription as to how war would unfold and what their distinctions would be. Regarding the former, they wrote that future war would begin with electronic warfare operations that will be blended with a strategic operation of the Armed Forces that includes an aerospace operation. These operations will be augmented with cruise missile launches from space, air, land, and sea; and with space-based strike weapons and reconnaissance units (such as remotely piloted vehicles and robots) that deliver strikes and fires at detected targets. The primary task will be to win superiority in all realms, to include the information environment.⁴⁴ About distinctions, the following were listed as the primary ones:

- Weapons will be designed with new technological principles, such as high-precision weapons and the weaponry listed as starting future conflicts
- Nuclear weapons will be less significant, with strategic and political objectives now attained with high-precision weapons, weapons based on new physical principles, and other conventional weapons
- Strategic operations will be the principal form of strategic task fulfillment
- A unified system to collect and process information that integrates space, aerial, and ground reconnaissance capabilities will be used for target allocation and designation in real time.⁴⁵

Other important factors listed in the article were the following:

- Speed, synchronization, and concurrency will be the decisive factors behind the success of a military operations⁴⁶
- Future wars will be changed by space-based attack weapons, orbiting battle space stations, new weapons of improved destructive power, range, accuracy, and rate of fire⁴⁷
- Leaders must abandon the rigid canons of military art and entrenched stereotypes are to be avoided⁴⁸
- Adjustments will be made to the laws and rules of warfare⁴⁹
- Future war will be wars of surprises, to include new types of weapons, technologies, and employment forms and methods. This included infrasonic strikes against an opponent's forces.⁵⁰
- The opening period of conflict will last approximately a month, depending on specific factors⁵¹

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 47.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 44.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 42.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 46-47.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 46.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 47.

- The closing period of conflict will be as short as possible.⁵²

2016: Military Strategy

Chekinov and Bogdanov offered a lengthy (and at times difficult to follow) discussion of military strategy and its requirement to adapt to new 21st century circumstances. The last decade, in their opinion, has witnessed a new type of warfare, namely those of controlled chaos. They stated that the sphere of military strategy now encompasses all aspects of military state activity and that military strategy cannot be viewed in isolation from the general processes of the state. Not only has there been an expansion in the forms of an Armed Forces employment but also in all the structures of a state's military organization. There are new methods of warfare and a transformation in the content of armed struggle using nonmilitary measures and indirect and asymmetric actions that can affect the outcome of a confrontation.⁵³ As stated by Alexander Svechin decades ago, these new strategic components indicates that, as always, each conflict has a logic all its own.

The authors listed several subtopics of strategy.⁵⁴ For purposes of this discussion, six of them are developed below: main issues, nature, regularities, principles, content, and tasks (in the discussion of each that follows, some items are repeated due to their insertion into various subtopic areas).

The *main issues* of military strategy were stated to be:

- The nature of today's warfare and ways of preventing it by military means
- The goals and tasks of the Armed Forces in war and military activity on a strategic scale
- The necessary resources to conduct those wars
- The content, methods, and conditions of preparing and waging war on the whole and various forms of strategic actions
- Strategic planning for the AF's employment in warfare and strategic operations
- Fundamentals of the strategic, moral, and psychological and logistical support of the AF's actions
- Leadership of the AFs in peace-and wartime
- Strategic requirements to be worked out for the AF's buildup, preparation of the economy, the public and territory for war
- Strategic opinions of leading states and coalitions, their ability to prepare, unleash, and conduct wars and combat actions on a strategic scale.⁵⁵

⁵² Ibid., p. 48.

⁵³ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, "Military Strategy: A Look into the Future," *Voennaya Mysl'* (*Military Thought*), No. 11 2026, pp. 3-5.

⁵⁴ The authors listed the following terms which preceded the words "of military strategy:" definition, sphere, purpose, elements, theory, content, nature, regularities, role, principles, subject, framework, goal, and tasks.

⁵⁵ Chekinov and Bogdanov, "Military Strategy..." p. 4.

The *nature* of military strategy includes specific categories which are being elaborated and perfected. New categories of study include asymmetric methods of warfare, remote noncontact impact on an adversary, the military strategic balance, defense sufficiency, strategic deterrence, and strategic warning, among others. Categories are a way to express a scientific understanding of an entire military strategic activity.⁵⁶ *Regularities* of military strategy include changes in the nature of modern warfare, improvements in armament and hardware, the development of AF forms, progress in fighting methods, and building up a new-look military state organization. Regularities affect the formation of principles, the latter being the general rules of military activity by the state and its leadership to solve strategic objectives.

Principles depend on the objective and subjective factors of an economic, political, informational, and military nature.⁵⁷ Principles are created both by military theoretical research and by the general practice of military activity. The actions of commanders, staffs, and their subordinates discover or uncover principles, which are not cast-iron rules that stay unchanged for ever.⁵⁸ Peacetime principles of military strategy that regulate the preparation of military actions include strategic deterrence; the anticipation of the military, political, and strategic situation; the identification of military threats; the correspondence of strategic goals and tasks to political objectives; the preparation of the state for defense; the timely buildup of strategic reserves; and the prevention of war. Fighting principles of military strategy include unexpected, resolute, and continuous strategic actions; asymmetric actions; the coordinated use of cross-service groupings of troops; firm and continuous leadership of the AF; seizure and keeping of the strategic initiative, and preventive actions. The principles of military strategy serve as the initial theoretical guide for decision-making by state and military leaders.⁵⁹

The *content* of military strategy include the following elements: the discovery and assessment of views and opportunities of leading states and coalitions to prepare, unleash, and conduct war on a strategic scale; the revelation of the nature of future warfare, to include its nonviolent, indirect, and asymmetric aspects; the tasks of the AF in wartime; the methods, forms, and conditions for war's preparation and conduct; the AF's strategic planning; command and control of the AF; strategic, moral and psychological, and logistical support of the AF; and military requirements for building up the AF. This "content" will change with the appearance of threats and dangers and with the emergence of new science and technology results.⁶⁰ Indirect actions can affect the content of strategy and military art, to include the use of political isolation, economic sanctions, blockades, intimidations, and introducing the pretext of human rights protections.⁶¹

Tasks of military strategy include working out suggestions for the preparation of strategic sectors and protecting the country against enemy threats. Changing geostrategic conditions require

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 7.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 10.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 12.

research into the nature of war, preparation of the state for defense, developing AF requirements for protecting national interests, strategic planning for new conditions, developing new methods and forms of actions, organizing logistical support, and command and control of the AF in an integrated information environment.⁶² Tasks are also defined in regard to objective and subjective factors, to include the following: general laws of war and materialist dialectics; policies of the state in improving national defense; the demands of Military Doctrine; the presence of threats and dangers in regard to the use of military force by other states; the qualitative characteristics of weapons; the preparation of military activity and the experiences of war; and the state's ability to prepare for defense.⁶³

Finally, it will be necessary for the military to consider various types of nonmilitary activities in peacetime, such as increasing the number of allies, neutralizing potential threats, and strengthening strategic stability. Wartime nonmilitary actions include intimidating adversaries and imposing ones will on the latter, undermining their economic might and weakening the opposing state, and destabilizing the social situation therein.⁶⁴

2017: Understanding War in the 21st Century

This article, the last that Chekinov and Bogdanov published together in the open press, did not mention NGWs at all, which was a strange development based on the huge impact their 2013 NGW article had produced on militaries in Europe and in the U.S.. Entire studies in the latter were devoted to revealing the essence of NGWs. But by 2017 references to NGW had all but disappeared, not just in the publications of Chekinov and Bogdanov but throughout the AF. Perhaps this was because General Staff Chief Valery Gerasimov had brought up the “new-type” warfare concept in 2013 and the authors (and others) were just following his lead.⁶⁵

Instead, the authors discussed several categories of war that they saw developing, which were traditional war, noncontact war, information warfare, network-centric warfare, hybrid warfare, cold war, and environmental warfare.⁶⁶ Only two of these types received the attention and space in their article indicating current importance, those being traditional war and cold war. The authors wrote that the latter term encompasses “new-type” warfare, and they stated that this is the type of war underway now. They noted that war today is more designable and controllable than spontaneous and uncontrollable, as it was in the past. However, while the weight of nonmilitary measures, especially information ones, has increased sharply, war's main content remains a resort to armed force and violent actions.⁶⁷

The authors mentioned the term new-type 12 times in their discussion of cold war. Chekinov and Bogdanov wrote that the West began new-type warfare after World War II, using

⁶² Ibid., p. 11.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 12-13.

⁶⁵ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, “The Evolution of the Essence and Content of ‘War’ in the 21st Century,” *Voennaya Mysl' (Military Thought)*, No. 1 2017, p. 43.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 33.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 43.

nonmilitary methods to try and control Russia. The methods included political pressure, information sabotage, the exploitation of humanitarian issues, secret service activity, and unfair and cunning diplomacy.⁶⁸ They believe the U.S. is still implementing this concept today and that new-type war appears peaceful, but it surpasses traditional war in efficiency. Clear boundaries between military and peaceful methods have disappeared. New-type war is not even perceived as war. It does what it can to split societies with the use of fifth columns or inducing rioters to betray their country.⁶⁹ The authors concluded their discussion of new-type warfare noting the following:

We have been witnessing an extensive debate about the need to revise the essence and content of war necessitated by the appearance of views that not only the role of military capabilities have been diminishing, but that these are no longer any good for achieving relevant objectives.⁷⁰

Conclusions

The breadth of the Chekinov-Bogdanov commentaries offer much ground for the consideration of analysts regarding Russia's new way of war. Targets and goals were described, which included key infrastructure facilities (dams, nuclear power plants, and other infrastructure facilities). The initial period of war (IPW) discussion was extensive and appeared in several articles. It was clear that before future conflicts begin, it will be important to mislead, surprise, intimidate, bribe, or use other means to confuse opponents as part of the IPW. Subversion and provocative measures are expected to be active, which could include the use of military or nonmilitary assets. Some initial actions might include indirect actions, such as attempts to induce climate change or to utilize infrasonic or electromagnetic energy to harm or destroy humans or equipment, respectively. Deterrence concepts could be used in the IPW that involve a show of force which, in peacetime, deters aggression or attempts to pressure opponents. Such efforts can now be strategic in nature due to the development of information technologies that can reach populations or organizations anywhere on the globe. With so many important components, many Russian military analysts rightly consider the IPW to be the decisive factor in determining winners and losers in future conflicts.

There was an extended discussion of new weaponry and its role in a NGW. Yet perhaps the main point of interest was that a NGW will be "fought by the rules and customs of the side that is best prepared to put the recent breakthroughs in warfare economics and technologies to a practical test." To accomplish many of the goals of NGW, military art will undergo significant changes, especially the contention that "differences between strategic, operational, and tactical levels will be obliterated, as will be the difference between offensive and defensive activities." The reminder is that weaponry based on new physical principles is allowing Russian theorists to contemplate planetary war, a new addition to the traditional components of military art of strategy, operational art, and tactics. For Russia's new way of war to be successful, forecasting will require the ability to spot new trends. It will also require the skillful combination of military, nonmilitary,

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 40.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 41.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 42.

and special nonviolent measures that blend political, economic, information, technological, and environmental measures. Information superiority will be the primary avenue through which to take advantage of opponents in these circumstances. Further, military strategy cannot be viewed in isolation from the general processes of state activity any longer. New methods of warfare will include nonmilitary measures and indirect and asymmetric actions to a greater degree than ever before, with the capability to affect the outcome of a confrontation. Finally, the authors made clear that the boundaries between military and peaceful methods in 21st century warfare have disappeared. A “new-type” of warfare has evolved that even surpasses NGW and, for many, is not even perceived as war. It does what it can to split societies with the use of fifth columns or inducing rioters to betray their country.

In summary, the works of Chekinov and Bogdanov have provided Western analysts with a basic overview until late 2017 of the basic thinking behind how Russia might intend to go to war and with what capabilities. The discussion of these two authors will be missed. While other pairs of officers have produced similar rich discussions of warfare (Kiselev and Vorobyev naturally come to mind immediately in regard to tactical issues) rarely have the discussions focused on the overarching parameters of strategic warfare (IPW, strategy, war types, etc.) as did the commentary of these two men.

APPENDIX ONE: ARTICLES BY CHEKINOV AND BOGDANOV IN THE RUSSIAN PUBLICATION *MILITARY THOUGHT* (MT)

The list of articles below initially includes a few separate items that Chekinov and Bogdanov wrote either alone or in conjunction with other analysts. Those articles are followed by the ones the pair wrote together.

Individual or in conjunction with other authors:

MT No. 5 2003 Bogdanov: Features of the Initial Period of War: Past and Future

MT No. 3 2009 V. N. Gorbunov and Bogdanov: On the Character of Armed Conflict in the 21st Century

MT No. 7 2010 Chekinov: Forecasting Trends in Military Art at the Beginning of the 21st Century

Twelve articles the pair wrote together:

MT No. 3 2010 Chekinov and Bogdanov: Asymmetric Actions in Support of the Military Security of Russia

MT No. 6 2011 Chekinov and Bogdanov: The Influence of Indirect Actions [the Indirect Approach] on the Character of Modern War

MT No. 3 2012 Chekinov and Bogdanov: Strategic Deterrence and the National Security of Russia in Contemporary Times

MT No. 8 2012 Chekinov and Bogdanov: Modern Views on the System of Knowledge in Military Science

MT No. 11 2012 Chekinov and Bogdanov: The Initial Period of War and Its Impact on the Preparation of the Country for a Future War

MT No. 10 2013 Chekinov and Bogdanov: The Nature and Content of a New-Generation War

MT No. 8 2014 Chekinov and Bogdanov: Military Futurology: Its Origin, Development, Role, and Place in the System of Military Science

MT No. 1 2015 Chekinov and Bogdanov: Military Art in the Early Part of the 21st Century: Problems and Opinions

MT No. 10 2015 Chekinov and Bogdanov: Forecasting the Character and Content of Future War: Problems and Opinions

MT No. 11 2015 Chekinov and Bogdanov: The Development of Contemporary Military Art from the Perspective of Military Systematology

MT No. 6 2016 Chekinov and Bogdanov: Features for Supporting the Military Security of Russia in the 21st Century in Conditions of Globalization

MT No. 11 2016 Chekinov and Bogdanov: Military Strategy: A Look to the Future

MT No. 1 2017 Chekinov and Bogdanov: The Essence and Content of Understanding War in the 21st Century

APPENDIX TWO: IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS OF EACH ARTICLE NOT USED IN THIS SUMMARY BUT WORTHY OF CONSIDERATION

Asymmetric Actions: To prevent and restrain aggression by any country (or a coalition of countries) and maintain the Russian Federation’s military security, it makes sense to take asymmetrical measures of a systemic and comprehensive nature combining political, diplomatic, information, economic, military, and other efforts. As President of the Russian Federation V. V. Putin said “...Our responses are to be based on intellectual superiority. They will be asymmetrical, and less costly.” An asymmetrical approach to military security maintenance is, therefore, a combination of forms and methods of using forces and means that depend on the adversaries’ unequal potentialities and allow confrontation (or a direct armed clash) with a potential adversary to be avoided (or their consequences mitigated).⁷¹

Indirect Actions: At present there are dozens if not hundreds of methodologies for psychological manipulation and impact. The more efficient of them are capable of metaprogramming—installing program filters that force the client to perceive the world in a way desired by the programmers. The individual, social institution, corporation, or state subjected to metaprogramming can be safely left to their own devices if the “route” they follow is adjusted operationally and tactically. This is no longer a social entity, but a controllable cell of the global web. Since the web possesses intellect operating within the limits and in the direction set by the metaprogram, this type of network can be called a “thinking web.”⁷²

Strategic Deterrence: Like deterrence by force, information rivalry has become a key component of modern geopolitics. This trend is most dangerous not so much because it has to do with weapons as it does with the possible results of reflexive control by the opponent through the development of the theory and practice of information rivalry.⁷³

Initial Periods of War: It may be assumed from the way the U.S. AFs and those of its allies have conducted war in recent decades that a NGW will mostly be fought in the IPW on a large scale and at a fast rate. Conducted in a network-centric environment, powerful strikes are delivered by missiles and warplanes. The scale and persistence of military operations will grow as the attacker seeks to achieve the most tangible results that can be decisive for achieving the objectives of the war within the shortest possible time at a minimum loss of life and inventory for the attacker.⁷⁴

NGW: Intensive fire strikes against seats of national and military power, and also military and industrial objectives by all arms of service, and the employment of military space-based systems, electronic warfare forces and weapons, electromagnetic, information, infrasound, and psychotronic effects, corrosive chemical and biological formulations in new-generation wars will erode, to the greatest extent possible, the capabilities of the adversary’s troops and civilian population to resist.⁷⁵

⁷¹ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, “Military Strategy...” 2010, pp. 20-21.

⁷² S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, “The Influence of the Indirect Approach...” 2011, p. 11.

⁷³ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, “Strategic Deterrence...” 2011, p. 20.

⁷⁴ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, “Initial Periods of War...” 2012, p. 25.

⁷⁵ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, “On the Nature and Content of Wars of a New Generation,” 2013, p. 15.

Forecasting: Forecasts of the possible content of future warfare involving the use of arms suggest that it will be conducted with the use of unconventional arms causing earthquakes, typhoons, sustained heavy downpours [author's note: almost this exact wording was in the 2013 article on new-generation warfare] leading to the erosion of the economies and the intensification of sociopsychological tensions in the warring countries. These unconventional arms will certainly set off the development of new forms and methods for the conduct of military operations and changes in the pattern of military operations at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels.⁷⁶

Art of War: In modern conditions information impact capabilities have reached so high a level of development that they are now up to addressing strategic tasks. A strategic information standoff is important for disorganizing military and state governance and systems of military aerospace defense, deluding the adversary, creating the desired public opinion, organizing antigovernment demonstrations, and conducting other events aimed at reducing the opposing sides' determination to resist.⁷⁷

Military Strategy: As for the interconnection between military strategy and military doctrine, it would be pertinent to stress here that the results of research into military strategy are a basis for shaping and furthering the military technological part of military doctrine. Conclusions and proposals of military strategy that fully conform to the conditions of the given historical stage and have been approved by the state's top military and political leadership become doctrinal views and take on the force of law in the area of organizing the country's defense, first and foremost, the development, preparation, and use of the AF. In its turn, further development of military strategy proceeds in accordance with those tasks and trends that are recognized as the most topical in the content of military doctrine.⁷⁸

21st Century War: When writing about traditional war, the authors stated the following: The change in the essence and content of traditional war is currently assumed to be conditioned, on the one hand, by a considerably wider range of confrontation methods employed, thanks to including in their list all nonmilitary measures and changes in the order and sequence of using military and nonmilitary means throughout the war...confrontation in these areas is merely to enhance the effect of activity in an armed struggle or to create the most favorable conditions for using armed struggle capabilities.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, "Predicting the Nature and Content of Future Wars..." 2015, p. 443.

⁷⁷ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, "The Art of War at the Beginning..." 2015, p. 42.

⁷⁸ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, "Military Strategy..." 2016, p. 14.

⁷⁹ S. G. Chekinov and S. A. Bogdanov, "The Evolution of the Essence and Content of 'War'..." 2017, p. 35.