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Information Warfare in the Second (1999-Present) Chechen War: Motivator for Military Reform?

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This article was previously published in
Russian Military Reform 1992-2002
Published by Frank Cass Publishers, 2003
Chapter 11, Page 209-233

During the past ten years, the Russian military has attentively studied the subject of information war (IW). The main catalyst for this interest was the successful use of IW by coalition forces during Operation Desert Storm. Russian military theorists watched coalition planes bomb Iraqi targets in real time with precision and understood that warfare had entered a new phase, one dominated by information-based equipment and resources. Two further motivators were the poor use of IW by the Russian armed forces during the first Russian-Chechen war (1994-1996), which contributed to the loss of Russian morale, and the successful use of IW by NATO during the conflict over Kosovo.

The success of the coalition forces in both Desert Storm and Kosovo indicated that military reform would be bankrupt if the technical aspect of reform did not include information-based technologies. These technologies must be imbedded into new military equipment, from sensors and radars to jet fighters and cruise missiles. However, Russia was also concerned about the impact of information technologies on the brain and consequently morale. These technologies included the rapid distribution of information via the mass media and Internet. Military reform would also have to take this element into consideration.

Russia's Understanding of Information War and the Information Weapon

This rather detailed discussion of Russia's concept of information war (IW) and information weapons is necessary so that the reader can construct the correct prism through which to view Russian information operations in Chechnya. Relying on a US or British definition of the term will not suffice, because the parameters included by the Russians are so different.

Russian military theorists divide the concept of information warfare into two distinct fields: information-technical and information-psychological. If an information warfare element under consideration is a machine driven data processor component (computers, sensors, satellites,

reconnaissance-strike systems, etc.) then the category under consideration is information-technical. Electronic warfare would also be an element in this field. If the element is a human based data processor component (the brain, which can be influenced or manipulated by propaganda, psychotronics, non-lethal weapons, or special pharmaceuticals according to the Russian paradigm) then the issue under consideration is information-psychological. Thus psychological operations (PSYOP) are an element of this field.

This division of labour for IW theory has been constant for several years. For example, instructors at the Russian General Staff Academy in 1995 defined information war (using the Russian *informatsionnoye protivoborstvo* [information struggle]) in a technical-psychological sense. Their definition read:

> Information warfare is a means of resolving a conflict between opposing sides. The goal is for one side to gain and hold an information advantage over the other. This is achieved by exerting a specific information/psychological and information/technical influence on a nation's decision-making system, on the nation's populace, and on its information resource structures, as well as by defeating the enemy's control system and his information resource structures with the help of additional means, such as nuclear assets, weapons and electronic assets.[1]

In 1999 Vitaliy V. Panov, first vice president of the Russian Academy of Missile and Artillery Sciences, stated that divisions between military operations and economic or political forms of warfare were very distinct. However, he found it more and more difficult to separate strictly military aspects from the entire set of techniques (to include economic and political) that guide the information area. He felt it imperative to interpret the essence and forms of IW. Its content includes both software-hardware as well as information-psychological components…in contrast to conventional warfare, information warfare has not only overt, but also covert threats and purposeful hostile actions.[2]

Russia's military doctrine of 2000 noted that ‘information-technical and information-psychological’ hostile information operations were the main external threats to Russia. Thus, these dual themes appear to be the main prism through which Russia views the topic of information war and information threats.

Russian military officers as well as civilian intellectuals note that in order to have an information war, one needs information weapons. Dr. Vitaliy Tsygichko of the Institute of Systems Analysis has provided the best description of the information weapon from a Russian perspective. He wrote that information weapons could be classified by a number of attributes. These include single and multimission/universal purpose; short and long-range operation; individual, group and mass destruction capabilities; various types of carriers; and destruction effect. He and some Russian colleagues, in a pamphlet entitled ‘Information Weapons — New Challenges to International Security’[3] further classified information weapons as belonging to one of six forms:

1. Means for the precision location of equipment that emits rays in the electromagnetic spectrum and for the destruction of that equipment by conventional fire
2. Means for affecting components of electronic equipment
3. Means for affecting the programming resource control modules
4. Means for affecting the information transfer process
5. Means for propaganda and disinformation
6. Means for using psychotropic weapons.

The Use of the Information-Technical IW Aspect in Chechnya

The Russian armed forces utilized several types of information-technical devices during the fight for Chechnya. Three stand out. They are the use of remotely piloted vehicles (RPVs), the electronic warfare battle between the two sides, and the first use of the reconnaissance-strike system (not the reconnaissance-strike complex) to direct precision-guided weapons.

Remotely Piloted Vehicles

An August 1996 article in *Armeyskiy Sbornik* (Army Journal) discussed the American, Israeli and British use of remotely piloted vehicles in Vietnam, Grenada, Lebanon and Argentina. It was noted that RPVs provided detailed information about the situation in a zone where a strike was planned. In the same journal in December 1996, Colonels Grigoriy Budzinskiy and Vladimir Platonov wrote that reconnaissance drones, equipped with television cameras, were very successful in carrying out real-time reconnaissance missions in Chechnya. The colonels advised including a squadron of reconnaissance drones in future combined arms army reconnaissance forces.[4]

At the very start of the most recent Russian-Chechen conflict journalist Nikolay Novichkov wrote that the *Stroy-P* remotely-piloted reconnaissance system was deployed in one of the areas adjacent to Chechnya at the end of September 1999, and had been added to the list of military equipment shipped to the combat operations area. Used in Chechnya in 1995 as well, the system consists of two ground mobile remote command and control facilities with launchers mounted on them, and 10 *Pchela-1T* remotely-piloted rescue aircraft, each with TV equipment and designed for 10 flights. The RPV flies at speeds of 110-130 kilometres per hour, has an operating altitude of 100-3,000 metres, and a flight duration of two hours with a combat operating radius of 50-60 kilometres. The *Pchela* has no night vision capability, required if round-the-clock artillery strikes are to be used. Three *Stroy-P* systems were in the inventory in 1999, with a fourth planned for 2000 and 40 by 2001, but no current figures are available. If additional money is allocated, flight-technical specifications could be increased by an order of magnitude (flight time will increase from two to four and a half hours).[5] Such support is vital since Russia has admitted on more than one occasion that its space intelligence is insufficient, and the *Stroy-P* can make up for this shortcoming in a land as small as Chechnya.

The missile and artillery forces also foresee a vital need for more RPVs. Their Chief, Colonel General M. I. Karatuyev, in a lessons learned article in 2000, noted that the fighting in Chechnya demonstrated the need for remotely piloted reconnaissance vehicles with optical and infrared (IR) bands to see enemy territory in day or night, to carry out laser illumination of individual

targets for laser guided precision shells, and to support artillery fire corrections. The fighting also demonstrated the need for a reconnaissance complex allowing reconnaissance of the local area conducted from a portable, elevated platform in the optical and IR bands, and in radar mode.[6]

Electronic Warfare

In the opinion of journalist Andrei Soldatov, writing just before Russian troops surrounded Grozny in November 1999, Russia's chances of winning the second Chechen war ultimately depend on the outcome of the radio electronic struggle. Soldatov wrote that Chechnya, however, was at a real disadvantage since its radar stations, cellular and trunk-line communications and relay points were bombed in the first weeks of the war. But other systems such as satellite telephones and field commander's radios were available to the Chechen commanders and this equipment appeared to be sufficient. The low number of Russian units capable of conducting such warfare also offset this disadvantage.

Colonel Vasiliy Gumenniy, Chief of the Russian North Caucasus Military District's radio-electronic warfare service, supported this view that in spite of all the disadvantages, the Chechens had developed an extensive reconnaissance communications system by 1999. In April 2000 he and co-author Colonel Vladimir Matyash noted that the Chechens had acquired the following reconnaissance communications equipment by the start of the war: a network of NMT-450 standard cellular communications (connected to a cellular communications system in Ingushetia, allowing field commanders to have 20-60 'correspondents'[7] in their radio network, and 60-80 correspondents in the reconnaissance information network of short wave range); a trunk line communication system using Motorola and Kenwood products, among others; radio relay communication lines; stationary and mobile tele-broadcast stations; short wave communications from international organizations like the Red Cross; radio networks based on amateur short wave radio transmission resources; cable communication lines; and portable and mobile radio communications equipment and radio telephones. Satellite communications in Chechnya were conducted via INMARSAT and IRIDIUM systems, offering access to both intercity and international communication nets, and the Internet.[8] Further, they noted that Chechen reconnaissance was conducted with optical-electronic, acoustic, radio-technical, and radar means. Chechen 'front' commanders had mobile TV transmitters that could transmit 20-30 kilometres. These broadcasts were sometimes used to show Russian atrocities against Chechen civilians, or to engage in visual deception. Gumenniy and Matyash concluded that the Chechens had professionally prepared for information war with their reconnaissance communications assets.[9]

But new equipment was also on hand for the Russians this time. According to the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU), the Russian army already was equipped with new *Akveduk*-type communications assets to assure confidentiality in tactical communications. New *Vega* radio-technical reconnaissance systems were in radio-electronic units as well. Russian concerns were that the Chechens would obtain equipment from Arabic countries to test these systems, in some cases from western governments.[10]

In addition to the armed forces electronic warfare (EW) units two other Russian groups, the GRU of the armed forces and FAPSI (Federal Agency of Government Communications and

Information) conducted radio espionage. The *Tselina-2* is the most widely used radio electronic reconnaissance satellite in Russia, and the *Kosmos* model satellites are also used for the same purpose.[11] Russian intercept operators reported finding 49 enemy radio transmitters in the battle zone around Grozny in January 2000. In order to 'take out' a transmitter, radio interceptors first ascertain the location of a target. A reconnaissance group then goes out to discover the precise location of the enemy, and to ensure that the 'intercept' is real and not set up to ensure unacceptable collateral damage to the civilian population. Once the target is verified, the information is passed to the fire control command post, and a strike launched.[12]

The Russian command created groupings of radio-electronic combat (REB) forces designed to work at the tactical control level. During the first Chechen war, REB forces experienced a narrow frequency range for their equipment and an insufficient level of automation. Additionally, REB units lacked equipment for radio electronic suppression of trunk line, cellular and satellite communications systems.

In the second Chechen war REB forces conducted tests of the radio network and developed an understanding of the radio-electronic situation confronting them. They determined the coordinates of Chechen communications centres, control points, concentrations of forces and firing means. The Russian commanders called these REB groupings the eyes and ears of the forces. Their systems' ability to supply real-time enemy emission sources that were used for target reconnaissance and target data served, in essence for the first time, as prototypes of reconnaissance-strike systems on the tactical and operational levels. This was especially true for the *Arbalet-M* portable radio direction finding and radio suppression systems:

> The course of the counter-terrorist operation shows us convincingly that the effectiveness of the disorganization of the enemy's control system in many ways determines the results of interfering with his radio electronic equipment and information database. He who controls information, and he who is able to reliably destroy the communications and control systems of the enemy and to provide for the uninterrupted operation of his own automated troop command and control system (ASUV) will be the victor in modern wars.[13]

The Russian journal *Voyennaya Mysl'* (Military Thought) also discussed deficiencies in the EW force at the start of the second Chechen-Russian war. One officer noted that Chechen capabilities were underestimated, enabling the Chechens to continue to operate their information-reconnaissance networks. Russian soldiers did not do a good job of concealing methods used to command and control their troops (as in the first conflict), and consequently the Chechens were able to ascertain where Russian troops would regroup and the locations of their positions, both firing and rear sites.[14]

Lieutenant-General Valeriy Volodin, Chief of the Electronic Warfare Directorate of the General Staff, highlighted the growing importance of electronic warfare still further by celebrating the first ever Electronic Warfare Specialist Day on 15 April 2000. He noted on this occasion that the purpose of the Directorate is to use electromagnetic emissions to compromise useful information and introduce false information; and to protect Russian radio-electronic systems and reduce the likelihood of destruction by precision weapons from missile systems, aircraft, and ships. Future

combat systems will be based on reconnaissance equipment, precision direction and fire destruction, and joint automated control systems. Volodin added that the development of EW equipment is efficient and of minimal cost. According to his calculations, expenses to maintain EW equipment are only 5-8 per cent of other types of arms. More importantly, EW resources increase combat capabilities of ground troops by one and a half times, and decrease the loss of aviation by four to six times, and of ships by two to three times.[15]

A year later Volodin noted that EW was growing from a support to a new, independent, specific form of military operation. This indicates that the communications struggle in the war in Chechnya had demonstrated to the Russian military the increased importance of the service. Volodin noted that the struggle for superiority of control mechanisms includes not only electronic suppression of an enemy's communications means but also their electronic destruction. Further, he noted that success in combat depends on the 'stability of the state and military command and control system and other information systems against the information-psychological, software and electronic influence of an enemy.' In Chechnya, Volodin pointed to Russian successes in helicopter and portable electronic reconnaissance and suppression systems, specialized automated jamming systems, and automated equipment systems which permitted operational-tactical computations with the use of modern information technologies, including electronic terrain maps.[16]

These maps made a significant difference by providing Russian forces with an accurate display of the land before them. During the first Chechen campaign, maps in the troops' hands were made years before, in Soviet days. Commanders were extremely critical of the 1980 maps they received before the first Grozny battle, which resulted in many leaders getting lost. Entire 'microrayons' were absent from some maps. Those used by the troops in 1999, according to General G. Troshev, commander of Russian troops during the second Chechen campaign, were not any better at the start of the operation.

In April 2002, EW was again highlighted, this time by Major General Andrey Osin. Osin, who also works in the EW Directorate, stated that systems and complexes make it possible to suppress radio, radio-relay, and satellite communication lines and radar and radio navigation systems; to conduct reconnaissance; to control jamming stations; and to protect troops and installations from strikes and reconnaissance.[17] These items reflect the essence of the Russian effort in Chechnya in locating and destroying the Chechen resistance.

The Reconnaissance-Strike System

Without a doubt, combat operations in Chechnya have underscored the need for Russia to devote more attention to the development of integrated space and precision-guided systems, and space-based intelligence-gathering systems. According to one report, Russia only has one electronic intelligence (ELINT) and one naval intelligence-gathering satellite in space, and not a single optical electronic or photo reconnaissance asset. With three times fewer satellites in orbit than required, Russia is experiencing gaps of up to six hours a day in monitoring areas posing missile threats to Russia. Troops in Chechnya are forced to use a system similar to the US Global Positioning System since Russia's Global Navigation Satellite System (GLONASS) is on its last legs, with only 9 of 24 satellites operational.[18]

The Russian General Staff recognized the impact of new-generation weaponry on military art several years ago and began to work diligently to adapt to it. These changes have caused an evolution in Russian reconnaissance-strike and fire planning. In the past, this activity was called either the reconnaissance-strike complex (RUK) or the reconnaissance-fire complex (ROK). Today, Russian theorists are discussing the reconnaissance-strike system (RUS) and the reconnaissance-fire system (ROS), and the reconnaissance-fire operation (ROO)[19] as additions to the RUK and ROK concepts.

One of the earliest definitions of RUK and ROK was in a 1985 issue of *Voyennyy Vestnik* (Military Herald). Its information was attributed to foreign sources, a common Soviet practice to avoid revealing tactical-technical characteristics of their own systems:

> If the strike element destroys the target by fire (for example with conventional or rocket artillery), the complex is called a reconnaissance-fire complex, while if it does so by a missile strike (tactical or army aviation, tactical and operational-tactical missile launchers), it is called a reconnaissance-strike complex. Therefore reconnaissance-fire complexes are more of a tactical command resource while reconnaissance-strike complexes are operational command resources.[20]

A strike as used by the Russian military refers to a massive, simultaneous attack that is like a hammer and carries strong psychological overtones due to its destructive nature. Fire, on the other hand, is more rhythmic and takes place over a period of time. Thus ROK appears as a conceptual stepchild to RUK, with the latter much more mature and massive in nature.

Two catalysts that catapulted the RUS ahead of the RUK were the performance of the coalition forces in Desert Storm, and their use of C^4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) systems; and the revolution in military affairs under discussion at the time. Russian analysts saw the revolution as transforming warfare from a struggle of forces and means into a contest between systems of systems. The term 'military systemology', in wide use among Russian military systems analysts, was used to describe the super-large, dynamic, complex systems under consideration. The method of systemology, in fact, stands traditional analysis on its head, emphasizing complexity and the need for models based on dynamic, evolving, self-organizing systems and emphasizes a shift from modelling combat as force-on-force to system versus system.[21] Asked to mathematically demonstrate the relation of processes that lead from ‘detection to kill’ in real time, one Russian scientist offered the following: ‘destruction capability = exposure of an object (via satellite or reconnaissance asset) x strike asset’s precision and speed of its components’.[22]

Even a cursory look at Russian military writings underscores the importance placed on the acquisition of the location of the enemy, followed by fixing him through fire means. As one analyst noted:

> The increase in fire capabilities of the troops, the appearance of high-precision weapons, and the development of various types of guided missiles are objectively increasing the role of reconnaissance and command and control systems. In conditions when the likelihood of hitting targets with the first shot or salvo is

> approaching one, reaction speed is becoming a paramount factor. The main targets of battlefield reconnaissance are enemy artillery and armoured equipment.[23]

Major General (retired) Vladimir Ivanovich Slipchenko, writing on future war in 1999, noted that any state unprepared to wage 'new-generation war' will be forced to absorb the impact of an integrated precision weapon strike and electronic warfare operation. [24] The precision strike represents a combination of reconnaissance and command and control weapons, whose target kill effectiveness can sometimes surpass that of tactical nuclear weapons.[25] This system has found limited though good use in the fight in Chechnya.

The integration of satellites, command and control assets, and precision-guided weapons into reconnaissance-strike complexes became an area of added interest immediately after the end of the first Russian-Chechen conflict. In an article in *Armeyskiy Sbornik* in October 1996, Lieutenant General Yuriy Merkulov and Colonel Igor Golovanev discussed the value of destroying targets with precision non-nuclear means. The authors noted that new systems were similar to RUK in principles of organization for combat, but surpassed them in capabilities. These systems use a heterogeneous mix of weapons from strategic aircraft and precision weapons to tube artillery, and are called interbranch ROS. Merkulov and Golovanev noted that the creation of reconnaissance-fire delivery systems with space systems can drop the requirement for precision weapons fivefold. The depth of space reconnaissance is limited only by the range capability of offensive weapons. Intelligence updates should not exceed two hours for the operational echelon and 20 minutes for the tactical echelon with such systems in place.[26]

Naturally, Russia does have satellite assets in Chechnya. The 42nd Motor Rifle Division, stationed in Chechnya in 2000 on a permanent basis, reportedly has a Ministry of Defence satellite communications station co-located with it. The network of portable stations can communicate with city networks of any city in the world. A protected modern computer network is used in the division's command and control system. The computers communicate with the GLONASS navigation system, and the computers are installed at mobile command and control points of all links.[27]

In August 2001, Colonel A. A. Petrov and Lieutenant Colonel A. L. Safronov wrote in *Voyennaya Mysl'* that satellite communications had improved command and control immeasurably. They noted that over 50 satellite communications stations attached to units and subunits were used effectively in Chechnya to organize communications. Yet even this number of sets did not completely satisfy troop needs, as they lacked light, mobile, armour-protected stations. The satellites were also a problem due to their low traffic capacity.[28]

Ground forces Commander and Deputy Defence Minister Nikolay Kormiltsev noted that in Chechnya up to 80 per cent of the firing missions were accomplished by missile troops, artillery and aviation in the immediate tactical depth of the enemy. Missile troops Commander Lieutenant General Vladimir Nikolayevich Zaritskiy added that the direction of future arms development would be the creation of combined-arms reconnaissance-fire delivery systems based on the missile-artillery reconnaissance fire delivery system.[29]

The Russian military has used precision-guided ammunition for artillery and mortars.[30] Ammunition was of the *Krasnopol* and *Smelchak* varieties. A complex of guidance systems is used to fire these munitions, with a laser target designator-range finder and synchronization instruments. These munitions reduce the number of conventional projectiles and shells by a factor of ten.[31]

The use of precision-guided weapons is a key tactic in the fight with the Chechens. According to the head of the Combined Arms Academy, Colonel General L. S. Zolotov, to counter the trump cards of a guerilla (surprise and direct confrontation) it is necessary to attack the guerilla with long-range or remotely controlled fires.[32] This is similar to coalition forces in Afghanistan taking out guerilla concentrations with 'Hellfire' missiles mounted on 'Predator' unmanned aerial vehicles.

Space troops experts noted that the GLONASS System increased the efficiency of missile troops and artillery units by 40 per cent. Munition consumption is cut four or five times, and artillery munitions by 1.7 to three times. The air force and navy could also use GLONASS, and its use would reduce the inaccuracy of long-range cruise missiles to ten or fifteen metres. As a result, the Defence Ministry has requested for delivery some 9,000-10,000 navigation units before 2005.[33]

Thus, the use of RPVs, EW, and the reconnaissance-strike systems are three IW means to strike from afar and observe and listen in on the enemy 24 hours a day. While not perfect, the systems are providing more timely intelligence and accurate strikes on the Chechen positions.

The Use of Information-Psychological War in Chechnya

There were three areas of interest related to the information-psychological aspect of IW in Chechnya. First was the manner in which Russian and Chechen officials fought one another verbally to win the media or ‘information war’ for public opinion. As the Russians found out, in the information age, it is more difficult than ever to control the flow of information to a population. A second area of interest was the intense information-psychological atmosphere of the war, where deception and manipulation were used extensively and the impact on the soldier's morale-psychological condition was great. Finally, there was widespread use of the Internet for the first time as an agent of influence, manipulation, and organization for combat in a local war.

Information-psychological activities and the media

There were several important military lessons that the Russian government and military learned from their first experience in Chechnya from 1994-1996. Perhaps none was more important to long term Russian success than the battle for public opinion. In the first war, for example, Russian journalists would fly into Daghestan's Makhachkala airport and get free taxi rides into Chechnya. The Chechens would pay for the taxi ride once the journalist arrived at his or her destination, give interviews, and remunerate the journalists for articles. Federal forces, on the other hand, avoided journalists, a remnant from the Soviet days of avoiding the press. Reports indicated that the military media did less than 5 per cent of the reporting in January 1995 of the

news coming from Chechnya. Army journals came out some three months into the fighting and policy for the mass media some six months later. Nor was there a ‘musical score’ that the military followed. As a result, Russia's citizens only saw what was important from the Chechen point of view on the evening news. This situation went on for weeks, with each journalist printing his or her own truth.[34]

The Russian military learned that information support to an operation can play a key role in the operation's success or failure, can protect government interests, and can achieve military-political objectives. Major General V. A. Zolotarev noted in 2000 that ‘the Chechen campaign of 1994-1996 by military definition was three-quarters won by the Russian army by August 1996, but by that time it had lost 100 per cent in infospace’.[35] Military information specialists needed support from other professionals such as the mass media and propaganda experts. But this support was not available. The Chechens, on the other hand, had created a Ministry of Information by February 1995, and they maintained the use of several mobile television complexes to report to the Chechen people from the mountains after being kicked out of Grozny.

The Chechen newspaper *Ichkeriya* was the main backer of the concept of separatism and continued resistance to Russia's armed forces. Local publications such as *Respublika* and *Vozrozhdeniye* did their part as well. Zolotarev considered the greatest effect of this effort to be the 30,000-40,000 volunteers that supported the initial small group of Chechens opposing the Russian intervention. Two radio stations in support of the Chechen cause were opened abroad — Radio Free Caucasus in Latvia and a Chechen information centre in Krakow, Poland. Chechen President Dudayev made requests to the United Nations through other countries, and even requested NATO assistance. Zolotarev concluded that the Chechen use of information support demonstrated a corresponding influence on the course of the conflict and was a contributor to creating contradictions leading to the end of combat operations.[36]

In November 1999, while reporting on the second Chechen-Russian war, Andrey Soldatov noted that

> Whereas during the first Chechen campaign the majority of television reports and newspaper articles were couched in terms of sympathy with the rebel republic, this time the situation is the absolute opposite. Ruthless censorship is not letting Wahhabist propaganda get through…battle reports from Basayev, Khattab, and their minions, interviews with guerrillas — items given high-profile coverage on all channels during the last war — are now banned.[37]

Russian authorities initially shut off independent reporting during the second war in Chechnya, and did everything possible to ensure that official TV and newspaper reporters carefully reported their facts from the battlefield. The Chechens had unwittingly aided the Russians’ information campaign. In September 1999, Russia obtained a film of a Chechen fighter cutting the head off a Russian prisoner. This film was shown unedited on Russian TV, which did two things: first it warned Chechnya not to employ military-propaganda capabilities against Russia, and second the film caused many of the TV stations that reported Chechen news during the first campaign to take a Russian slant this time around.[38] That is, the Chechen atrocities and their incursion into Daghestan in August 1999 exhausted any sympathy the Russian populace had toward the

Chechens. It was easier for them and the journalists to swallow only an official version of events. At the same time, Russian memories were still fresh of NATO's bombing of Kosovo. This translated into permission to apply force in Chechnya, since Russia faced problems with Chechens similar to Kosovo's problems with the Serbs, from a Russian perspective. There were increased Chechen activities such as a wave of kidnappings, raids on republics bordering Chechnya, and the outbreak of additional criminal activities in Chechnya that supported, however tangentially, this line of thinking.

Russian demographic expert Emil Pain, in a January 2000 speech, described the changed atmosphere in detail. He noted that the press was met with bayonets when they tried to go into Chechnya with the Russian troops in 1994, but in the second war there was only the official, Kremlin version of events coming from the press. The army was 'working' in Chechnya, and the assault on Grozny was a 'special operation' and 'cleansing.' There was also a significant increase, as compared to the first war, in the amount of censorship, and journalists were restricted in their access to events. In December 1999, Resolution No. 1538 of the Russian President created the Russian Information Centre (RITs). The Centre filtered information from the theatre of military operations, and selected information from foreign publications to be disseminated in Russia.[39]

Pain also noted how subtle changes in the goals of the military campaign continued to develop, which helped guarantee society's support. The first goal was to repulse Chechen aggression; then the goal was to establish a sanitary cordon to protect Russian regions from Chechen raids; and by November 1999 the goal had become the complete annihilation of the 'terrorists'. Putin changed that goal once more on 1 January 2000 when he noted that the operation was designed to 'protect the integrity of Russia'.[40]

Finally, Pain noted that Russia's strategy was to 'reprogramme the mass consciousness' by introducing a number of information-propaganda clichés into it. These included the development of 'models' that included the terrorist and aggressor model; the 'new war' model (this time the army is ready); and the 'Free Chechen' model (convincing Russian society that Chechens were simply waiting for the Russian armed forces to liberate them). Pain concluded by stating that Russia, unfortunately, did not learn the real lesson of the first war, that controlling territory does not signify victory in a partisan war. Victory can only happen when one gains the trust of the population, not territory.[41]

In July 2001, an NTV reporter from Russia reported on the new travel restrictions affecting journalists attempting to work in Chechnya. In order to travel in Chechnya outside Khankala airport next to Grozny one had to obtain a permission slip from the staff of the Interior Ministry and be accompanied by a member of the military press centre. There are three press centres in Khankala: the press centre of the Russian joint task force, the military; the press centre of the Interior Ministry; and the press centre of the Internal Troops. And between them are only three cars to take people places. The Chief of the General Staff, Anatoly Kvashnin, offered the rationale for this treatment. He told the journalists that they were not doing a very good job and therefore it was decided to set up two military media outlets. Kvashnin added, 'We will have a military television studio broadcasting here. You are working for the sake of war and we are working for the sake of peace. This is what it appears to be.'[42]

As time progressed, however, and as the Chechens were able to bypass the Russian imposed information blockade via the Internet and via access to cellular phone hookups with foreign correspondents, Russia's information advantage began to slip away. As the conflict drags on it is becoming more difficult for President Putin's government to maintain public support both from Russians and from pro-Moscow Chechens living inside Chechnya. This is particularly true with regard to casualties, as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other international organizations investigate claims from both sides. Pain noted that it was inevitable that

> The current support of Russian societal opinion for the second Chechen war will not be very strong, and in the case of many people, will bring about an investigation of the domination of myths and illusions in Russian infospace created to manipulate the mass consciousness of the people.[43]

Initially, however, Russia's control of and access to information were very successful, making the armed forces appear much more effective and capable than they were. This kept public opinion strongly behind the effort to subdue the 'terrorists'. When this control began to wane after two years of fighting, the Russian Duma, in December 2001, changed the law on mass media and prohibited Russian media from publishing interviews with Chechen separatists. In addition, part of the blame for the gradual loss of public opinion can be placed on Russian tradition. The government demonstrated little accountability to its people in both Afghanistan and World War II over casualty numbers. In both Chechen conflicts it took public pressure applied by the Soldiers' Mothers Committee finally to force the government to account for its soldiers. This public pressure group demonstrated how in the information age, contradictory information could rise and escape the clutches of state control. Therefore, while it might be possible to win the IW struggle by controlling public opinion in the early going, it was demonstrated that the press or public pressure could nullify this control later on or control could be affected negatively by outside events.

President Putin alluded to this in March 2002. He warned his staff that they were beginning to lose the information war in Chechnya and must correct this situation. He was referring to the effect of a multitude of negative media events that had taken place in March. Among them were: the public showing of a film by Boris Berezovskiy that implied Russia's security forces might have played a role in the bombing of Moscow apartments that began the Chechen war; statements by Chechen special representative Akmed Zakayev in the Hague that Russia's leaders, like Milosevic, should stand trial for their 'crimes' in Chechnya; the appearance of Chechen Foreign Minister Ilyas Akhmadov before the United Nations, where he called for a tribunal on Russian actions in Chechnya; and the initiation of Radio Liberty reporting into Chechnya in Chechen (which actually took place on 3 April, but was heatedly discussed in March). In response, Russian Minister of Internal Affairs Boris Gryzlov announced in mid April that a 'counter-propaganda' agency would broadcast to Chechnya to counteract Radio Liberty.

Impact of information-psychological activities on the morale-psychological condition of the soldier

Psychological operations are a key element of information-psychological operations. Information-psychological measures are ‘those that change the conduct and emotional state of service members and the civil population of the opposing side, neutral and friendly countries to a desired direction during the determination of military-political questions’.[44] One of the key lessons of the war in Chechnya is that the psychological climate of small-scale operations is equally as complicated and stressful as large-scale operations such as Desert Storm. Correspondingly, there will be an important role for psychiatrists/psychologists to play at or near the front. It was clear from the fighting in the first Russian-Chechen conflict that the morale-psychological stability of a soldier could be easily upset and then manipulated by the side with the best information support devices.

War always invokes fear in man. But the psychological climate for Russian forces in Chechnya was exacerbated by specific conditions. For example, the toughest fighting during both interventions, the combat in and around Grozny, took place under horrible weather conditions; and this was a civil war in which Russian forces were asked to perform police functions among their own non-combatants who resented their presence. The situation could not have been worse for combat stress related injuries, and for manipulation.

The Chechen fighters had been a part of the Soviet armed forces. Therefore most of them spoke Russian fluently and had an excellent knowledge of Russian tactics and military culture (staffing procedures, logistics, etc.). Acts of subversion and terrorism also kept Russian forces on their guard and in a high state of readiness and anxiety. This increased stress, making Russian forces tentative in their planning since Chechen forces appeared able to predict their every move. Rumours easily became facts. In addition, the Russian force was not fighting for the survival of their race, as were the Chechens.

This environment persuaded the Russian force to look at everyone as their potential enemy. Was it the old man (need to check his arms for powder burns), the young child (look under his coat for a grenade), or the non-governmental organization (NGO) worker (is he a Chechen posing as a Red Cross worker simply to get inside Russian defences)? Or was it the good-looking female, or the Russian officer (who was really a Ukrainian dressed in a Russian officer’s uniform)? Such continuous uncertainty allowed the Chechens to exert intense psychological pressure on the Russian force. This point was always kept in view by the Chechens and they manipulated it to their benefit whenever possible. Also, much of the fighting in Chechnya was hand-to-hand or at close range, and mutilations or torture were commonplace practices against those captured. This further increased stress and battle fatigue. The Chechens were easily able to provoke, intimidate, persuade, and deceive Russian soldiers on many occasions.

Not surprisingly, the first Russian-Chechen conflict caused several morale-psychological problems for the Russian armed forces. The main problem was the impact of the mass media on a soldier, and the lack of material support during the initial winter months of the operation (when a quick victory was sought). The focus for morale-psychological support to the troops, according to Zolotarev, should be educating service members on their patriotic duty, formation of hatred for the enemy, the development of both moral character and fighting qualities, the timely detection of psychological injuries in their subordinates, and ideological and morale-psychological protection from enemy propaganda. This was not accomplished in the fight for

Chechnya. It was also noted that informing personnel about the situation, and propaganda to improve the fighter in battle (dissemination of combat experiences, etc.) along with preventing the dissemination of facts that damaged civil-military relations was not conducted.

In the second conflict, from October 1999 to the present, the Russian armed forces did much better in preparing the morale-psychological condition of soldiers. The Main Directorate for Educational Work and corresponding structures in the North Caucasus Military District published a newsletter on a periodic basis. It was clear that the command wanted to prevent Chechens from developing an information and psychological influence on soldiers, especially through Russian and foreign mass media outlets as happened the first time.[45]

The military publication *Morskoy Sbornik* (Navy Journal) published a long article on the morale-psychological conditioning of soldiers in Chechnya, and *Voyennaya Mysl'* did the same. The latter article highlighted the activities of a naval infantry battalion fighting in Chechnya,[46] noting both group and individual tasks. For the former, 'indoctrination' personnel offered a rundown on the propaganda machine of the Chechens and how their psychological operations impacted on the consciousness and psyche of servicemen. Instruction was provided on how to act during contacts with the population, and how to use weapons in areas where combatants were present (training which did not seem to do much good in light of the need to issue a special order to stop 'cleansing' operations amongst civilians). Servicemen were also taught the importance of interacting with representatives of the local population and with religious figures. Finally, servicemen were taught not to allow civilians to feed them false information and win them over psychologically.[47]

On an individual basis, much morale and psychological support (MPS) training was available. The main aim of such training was to teach how to achieve moral and psychological superiority over the enemy; how to maintain discipline during combat; and how to inculcate feelings of self-confidence and certainty of mission. The main forms of MPS were: twice daily fifteen minute combat briefings; a weekly political hour; weekly combat news sheets about soldiers who displayed gallantry; daily listening to radio news; agitators' conversations with personnel; and regular delivery of newspapers. MPS tasks included psychological preparation of servicemen for close support of combat operations, and psychological aid to servicemen when it was needed. Psychological preparation included practice in specific combat situations, and teaching methods of psychological self-regulation and emotional mobilization in times of stress. Psychological aid was focused at the combat crew and vehicle crew level. Mobile groups of psychologists with skills in psycho-diagnostics and correction and rehabilitation work, psychiatrists and psycho-neurologists did consultative and diagnostic work. Psycho-correction and rehabilitation programmes were provided on an as needed basis.[48]

The article asked for better information support for servicemen, including the supply of portable radios and small television sets to the area of combat. In addition, it was recommended that the armed forces operate a closed electronic media system. This would help create an 'information field' at the troop level that was under strict control.[49]

The use of the Internet during the Chechen conflict

The second Russian-Chechen conflict has witnessed a much greater use of the Internet than the first conflict. In fact, the Internet shares part of the blame for Russia's loss of state control described above. Web sites enabled combatants to mobilize public opinion and outside support for their cause. Use of the Internet demonstrated its importance to the weaker side in a conflict as a means for reaching public opinion and international organizations.

Web sites accomplished the following main tasks for the Chechens during the second conflict. First, the Chechens used web sites to gather money. One of the amino.com sites, for example, showed where to send money to support the Chechen cause, including a bank account number in Sacramento, California. Second, the web was used to unite the Chechen diaspora. By conducting a search for the term Chechnya, one would stumble across related web pages that were of Chechen origin and supported the Chechen point of view. This allowed Chechens worldwide to stay in touch with the conflict, and to offer support (material, monetary, personal, etc.) if desired. Third, web sites offered Chechens opportunities to show the world the results of successful combat actions against the Russian military through streaming video, such as Chechen ambushes of Russian convoys. It was hard for the Russian official media to refute what the video presented, especially if it showed a Russian defeat. On the other hand, this technique backfired on several occasions, in particular when Chechen sites showed the execution of Russian prisoners, losing the Chechens international support. Fourth, the Internet was used by the Chechens to rally Islamic faithful worldwide against the Israelis in their conflict with the Palestinians, serving to unite a religious sector of the world population. Fifth, the web allowed the Chechens to show the world what types of atrocities the Russians had committed against the Chechen population. Whether the Russians committed the atrocities or not was, of course, unverifiable but that is another use of the Internet — to put out one’s position on an issue and not have to justify it. Finally, the Internet offered products for sale such as CDs and other items showing the Chechen position.

The situation in Chechnya is also reflected on web sites in the context of the joint Russian-US fight against terrorism. Students from the Russian city of Omsk have tried to thwart the efforts of the Chechen web site Kavkaz-Tsentr, by writing to US government agencies, the media and private companies warning them that Kavkaz-Tsentr was transmitting from their territory. The Chechens have moved their Internet provider from the US to Canada, then to Georgia, and then back to the US.[50]

The Internet sites of the Russian Federation generally are not dedicated solely to the war, but contain many articles about it. The Chechen web sites were more dynamic than the Russian sites and more easily accessible in the West. The Chechen http://www.kavkaz.org and Russian http://www.infocentre.ru sites are particularly good, however filtered and one-sided they might be.

The ‘information war’ is not yet over in Chechnya. Initial Russian successes are beginning to fade, but the Chechens have not capitalized on Russian shortcomings as they did during the first conflict. As one analyst noted:

> The Russian media, like the free media in most Western countries, was for the most part willing to accept both government controls and the government’s story

> in the name of national security for as long as that story made sense. The public, too, seemed happy enough at first with the government-released information. Over time, however, the disparities between the official line and the increasingly obvious realities, reported both by soldiers themselves and by their parents, proved impossible to ignore.[51]

How long the government's picture of the conflict can be sustained is an open question. But then again, the name of the game is access, and Russia is in the driver's seat.

Chechen Use of Information-Psychological Issues

One of the more interesting sources encountered in the preparation of this chapter was the book 'The Armed Caucasus'.[52] It is a view of the fighting from the Chechen side, and contains a good deal of information on the information-psychological factor. According to the book, the Chechens considered their 'moral-psychological' factor as extremely high. Not less than 30 per cent of the population between the ages of 14-50 voluntarily took part in the fighting. The main characteristics of the Chechen fighters included patriotism, nationalism, religious fanaticism, decisiveness, being prepared to die, aggressiveness, strict internal discipline, the capability to continue fighting under extreme conditions, contempt for the enemy, unpredictability of actions, and revenge. Information-propaganda and political support to the Chechen campaign were viewed as an independent activity, usually associated with information war in the West. This included political and psychological work with personnel in the armed forces and society; the use of special propaganda PSYOPs against the enemy and various sectors of his society; diplomatic support for the actions of Chechens, to include use of the foreign press; and legislative support of military activity.[53]

Work within the armed forces included the use of slogans, swearing allegiance on the Koran, and acceptance of the Jihad. National ideas, Islamic values, and the military history of Chechnya were often used in this regard. Islamic slogans were frequently tied to weapons and armoured vehicles. Work among the population included the development of several factors: a base of social-political support for the armed forces; the galvanizing of the population against Russians operating in their areas; the conduct of mass meeting, and teaching how to spread rumours; and the spread of Chechen military traditions and the ideas of Islam, using audio-video cassettes, leaflets, radio, TV and the press.[54]

'The Armed Caucasus' noted that a Minister of Information and Propaganda, as well as offices of propaganda and external relations within the General Staff of Chechnya, information centres, agents, and the press were required to implement this work. The coordinator for Chechen PSYOPs was the Minister of Information and Press of the Chechen Republic, Movladi Udugov.

Of greatest interest to a student of military history is the book's listing of Chechen principles for organizing PSYOPs. It requires a combination of propaganda methods: a demonstration of real facts; keeping quiet about or negating real facts; specific distortion of facts for a particular use; and premeditated disinformation. These methods are aimed at Russia's armed forces, its population, and government leaders, as well as foreign audiences. Channels include the Internet and electronic mail, the Russian press, lobby groups and agents of influence, political

organizations and movements in Russia, the intellectual and cultural élites of Russia and other countries, the Chechen diaspora, and social organizations such as antimilitary, humanitarian, and human rights groups everywhere. Channels to spread PSYOPs among the Russian armed forces appeared to contain nothing new — agitation, leaflets, loudspeakers, and radio stations, and capturing Russian soldiers by wearing Russian uniforms as a disinformation operation. [55]

Work among the civilian population included utilizing to the maximum degree Russia's press services. It was estimated during the first Chechen war that nearly 90 per cent of the information from the zone of conflict came from Chechen sources that helped formulate favourable conditions for influencing social opinion and spreading information 'pictures'. Missions included forming an anti-military mood and a desire to stop military activity, discredit activities and the military-political leadership of Russia, and misinform Russia's leadership about future Chechen plans. Exploiting the destabilizing psychological factor of losses among Russian forces, and threatening the potential use by Chechnya of nuclear weapons helped accomplish this. The Chechens believe that work to agitate the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers in Russia greatly damaged the Russian armed forces draft in 1995.[56]

Work with foreign audiences was also discussed. It included forming a positive image of the armed forces, strengthening international support, and weakening the international position of Russia. This would be accomplished by exploiting the thesis of Chechnya fighting for liberation from Russia, by accusing Russia of violating international norms and laws on the conduct of war and using banned weapons, demonstrating cruelty by Russia's forces as well as a disregard for the ecology of Chechnya, and keeping quiet about or negating similar actions by Chechnya's forces.[57] Chechens listed unofficial news outlets in the following countries: Jordan, Azerbaijan, Poland, Latvia, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Ukraine, Denmark, Great Britain, Belorussia, Russia (since closed), Germany, the US, Lithuania, Turkey, France, Estonia, Georgia and Finland.[58]

Conclusions

Military reform in the information age will strain Russia's financial resources and its conventional military thinking. Militaries are moving out of the age of huge, ponderous armies for which the Soviet Union prepared, and into armies of sensors, satellites, and space weapons. Hidden mobilizations (by electronic weapons), deep rear fights, and space as the new theatre of military activity characterize the new military environment. Weapons required to participate are expensive and hard to test and detect.

Simultaneously, the information age is providing individuals and small groups with the power once attainable only by nation states. Armies today, while preparing for the new age, must keep a wary glance on these groups or face the probability of a surprise attack and the possible internal massive movement of populations. Much of the information to construct dirty weapons, as well as the capability to unite disparate factions and to send coded messages between them, are present on the information age's great communicator, the Internet. Instead of a Global Village, the Internet may be viewed as the terrorist's greatest planning and execution mechanism of all time.

Thus, during its period of military reform, Russian planners (already strapped for cash) have to confront a scalable series of scenarios from the terrorist to Star Wars. Russia will have to choose its weapons platforms carefully. Most important, it will have to organize the military to meet these multiple and simultaneous challenges.

The second Russian-Chechen conflict has provided insights into this dilemma. Russia's use of high technology equipment (RPVs, EW capabilities, reconnaissance-strike systems for its artillery and aircraft) have been successful but not capable of ending the conflict against an opponent fenced into a small plot of land and missing these same capabilities. These observations must be incorporated into the military reform package under consideration. Russian military theorists have undoubtedly learned a lot from the Chechen conflict, including how much even a local conflict can cost. They have also been able to test new weaponry under real conditions, much like the US and Britain in Kosovo and Afghanistan. Undoubtedly this will impact on some area of military reform.

Finally, military reform will have to take into consideration the morale-psychological aspect of the soldier. This might mean better housing, or higher pay, or even better equipment. Minister of Defence Sergei Ivanov noted that military reform could not go on indefinitely, that it is psychologically impossible to do so. Other, impartial observers to the Russian process might state that the Russian armed forces cannot stall military reform any longer. The information age train is leaving the station, and Russia still is not on board.

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