King's Research Portal

DOI:

[10.1080/13523260.2020.1757251](https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2020.1757251)

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication record in King's Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

German, T. (2020). Harnessing protest potential: Russian strategic culture and the coloured revolutions: Russian strategic culture and the colored revolutions. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 41(4), 541-563.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2020.1757251>

Citing this paper

Please note that where the full-text provided on King's Research Portal is the Author Accepted Manuscript or Post-Print version this may differ from the final Published version. If citing, it is advised that you check and use the publisher's definitive version for pagination, volume/issue, and date of publication details. And where the final published version is provided on the Research Portal, if citing you are again advised to check the publisher's website for any subsequent corrections.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Research Portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognize and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the Research Portal

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact librarypure@kcl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Harnessing protest potential: Russian strategic culture and the colored revolutions

Abstract: The perceived threat posed to Russia from so-called colored revolutions—popular uprisings attributed by Moscow to malign sponsorship by external forces—has become a central theme in Russian security discourse. This article analyses how colored revolutions came to be characterized as a specific threat to national security and how they continue to shape Russian thinking about the changing character of conflict. It explores Russian perceptions of the threat from colored revolutions, using the concept of strategic culture as a framework to analyze these perceptions through an analysis of the Russian military theoretical literature and strategic documents. The article establishes that concerns about non-military means of destabilization reflect continuities in Russian strategic assumptions about adversaries and how they seek to achieve their national objectives. It also reveals the perpetuation of specific narratives about the country's vulnerability to foreign interference.

Key words: Russia, colored revolutions, strategic culture, character of conflict, securitization, destabilization

Acknowledgements (if any)

Funding information (if any)

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest has been reported by the author.

Notes on contributor (max 150 words)

The perceived threat posed to Russia from so-called “colored revolutions”—popular uprisings attributed by Moscow to malign sponsorship by external forces—has become a central theme in Russian security discourse. Despite being predominantly political events, there has been a growing military focus on colored revolutions over the past decade; they have become a recurrent leitmotif in Russian strategic thought and writing on the character of future conflict. This reflects growing concern about (and interest in) non-military means of destabilization, such as “controlled chaos” and the threat from colored revolutions, which are conceptualized as distinct features of contemporary warfare, as well as elements of a strategy deliberately employed by the West to undermine its strategic competitors.

Although “colored revolutions” are a relatively recent phenomenon, the reaction of Russian military and political elites to such events is rooted in deeply held values and beliefs based on historical experience and narratives. This article explores the strategic assumptions underpinning the Russian conception of colored revolutions using the lens of strategic culture, which emphasizes continuity and the persistence of certain beliefs and attitudes. The Russian discourse around such events reveals enduring habits of thought and shared beliefs within the strategic community and amongst decision-makers, as well as the perpetuation of specific narratives about the country’s vulnerability, particularly to invasion, which is associated with Moscow’s perception of external threat, and the ongoing possibility of foreign interference. The discourse also reflects continuities in Russian assumptions about adversaries and how they seek to achieve their national objectives, using all available means. While there has been a change in the “means” used by Russia’s opponents, the supposed manipulation of democratization and popular protests, the perception of the “ends” remains the same: to undermine Russia and take advantage of any weakness.

To Western eyes, the Russian characterization of colored revolutions as part of a new strategy deliberately employed by the West to undermine Russia seems incongruous. However, when viewed through the lens of a specific strategic culture, based on a different worldview, it seems more logical. Western policy-makers often appear to be struggling to comprehend Russian strategic behavior and a sense of surprise is prevalent in their reactions, partly the result of mirror-imaging and an expectation of similar strategic behaviors. Labels such as the Gerasimov doctrine and hybrid warfare have been advanced in an attempt to interpret Russian activity, without a proper understanding of the ideational underpinnings of the country’s approach to national security, and the strategic assumptions that their thinking and policies are based upon. The importance of this was emphasized by Booth (1979), who warned of the danger of strategic “ethnocentrism,” the tendency to assume an opponent will analyze a situation using similar logic and come to the same conclusion. He called for cultural relativism to aid understanding of how adversaries perceive reality, emphasizing the importance of looking at problems “from the other side of the hill.” Thus, in spite of the contested nature of the concept, strategic culture has some utility in an analysis of how states conceive the strategic environment and the assumptions that underpin these conceptions.

This article does not seek to elucidate a specific Russian strategic culture *per se*. Rather it seeks to illuminate the strategic assumptions underpinning the elite reaction to events labelled “colored revolutions” and explore the evolution of the threat narrative. It analyses how colored revolutions came to be characterized as a specific threat to national security and how they continue to shape the Russian approach to conflict, focusing in particular on thinking about the changing character of conflict. In doing so the article makes two original contributions. The first relates to the conceptual framing of issues of continuity and change in Russia’s strategic thinking. Several authors have suggested a strong element of continuity in

current Russian strategic thinking with echoes of Soviet-era concerns about the subversive activities of adversaries and a long-running mistrust of the West (e.g. Covington, 2016; Skak, 2016). Others have argued that the “colored revolutions” label is the latest manifestation of enduring Russian concern about external subversive interference in its internal affairs and a long-running suspicion of the West. Skak (2016), for example, argues that the Kremlin’s narrative around colored revolutions indicates a degree of continuity between Soviet and post-Soviet Russian strategic culture, manifest in the “*chekist* instinct of *kto kogo* [a Soviet-era belief in the zero-sum nature of international relations], which turns Russian strategic culture into a ‘besieged fortress’ Cold War mentality” (p. 330). Building on Skak’s work, the conceptual novelty of this article is that it uses the concept of strategic culture as a framework to analyze Russian threat perceptions.

The second, empirical contribution, is the evidence base employed to draw inferences about colored revolutions in the context of Russian military thinking on the potential future character of conflict. There is a long tradition of rigorous military strategic debate in Russia, as well as an emphasis on the systematic, scientific study of the theoretical foundations of war and conflict. The issue of foresight and forecasting the future character of war is an enduring concern, reflected in the writings of serving or retired military officers in open source publications such as *Voennaya Mysl’*, *Voennno-promyshlenniyi kur’er (VPK)*, *Vestnik Akademii voennykh nauk* and *Nezavisimoye voennoye obozrenie (NVO)*, as well as service journals such as *Armeiskii Sbornik*. Analysis of these publications, which are intended for an internal Russian audience, provides new insights into what are considered to be key national security issues, and seemingly embedded ideational preoccupations leading to dominant lines of inquiry.

On the basis of this empirical analysis, the article establishes that the Russian narrative surrounding colored revolutions is part of much broader thinking about the changing character of conflict and reflects long-running debates within the wider Russian military strategic community about the features of contemporary conflict, particularly non-military means of destabilization, such as “controlled chaos” and the threat from colored revolutions. This article also establishes that the framing of colored revolutions as a national security threat and concern about internal destabilization through non-military means reflects Soviet-era thinking, suggesting a strong element of continuity in Russian strategic thought.

The article falls in to two main sections. The first frames drivers for continuity and change in Russian strategic thought through the analytical lens of strategic culture. The second section explains the emergence and Russian understanding of the meaning of the term “colored revolution,” firstly through an analysis of the scholarly and popular literature. It then traces the emergence of the issue in the military theoretical literature, charting its transition from a designation of a political to a military threat, concluding with a look at the counter-measures that have been enacted in response to the perceived threat.

Strategic culture and Russian strategic thought: Continuity or change?

The concept of strategic culture counters the assumption that there is a common strategic rationality guiding actors within the international system. In addition to calculations made on the basis of structural power considerations, decision-makers can be influenced by cultural preferences specific to their state. The traditional focus of rationalist explanations (such as realism) for state behavior within the security realm are the tangible attributes of a state such as power capabilities; strategic culture offers a wider explanation that incorporates intangible

attributes such as ideational factors, although it is important to note that strategic cultural explanations can augment realist explanations, rather than displace them. Johnston (1995) argues that “[r]ather than rejecting rationality per se as a factor in strategic choice, the strategic culture approach challenges the ahistorical, non-cultural neorealist framework for analysing strategic choices” (p. 35). Deep-seated ideas, values, and beliefs, a state’s “ideational inheritance,” can guide an actor’s interpretation of the various material variables that affect strategic decision-making, as well as the underpinning strategic assumptions. As Bloomfield (2012) notes, decision-makers bring cultural assumptions and biases about other actors to the strategic decision-making process.

The concept evolved out of Cold War Sovietology, the parsing of the Soviet political system and its signals, although the idea of “national ways of war” had existed for far longer. Snyder (1977) coined the phrase “strategic culture” in his seminal work on Soviet nuclear strategy, defining it as the sum of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other with regard to nuclear strategy, and foreign policy more generally. Snyder’s work was a reaction to the American scholarly focus on abstract game-theoretical conceptions of strategy, which proceeded from the assumption that there was a single, universal strategic rationality that “generic rational man” would adopt in the event of limited nuclear strikes. In Snyder’s view, “Soviet man” approached the key questions of strategy in the nuclear era from a viewpoint that was distinctive and deeply rooted in a strategic culture shaped by a specific political, historical, and organizational context: Soviet strategy and strategic decision-making was influenced by a number of factors unique to the Soviet (and Russian) historical experience.

A variety of sources of strategic culture have been posited, including geography, political structure, and history, as well as myths and symbols, a “body of beliefs that express the fundamental, largely unconscious or assumed political values of a society” (Lantis, 2014, p. 173). Strategic culture is characterized by a degree of semi-permanence, which in turn facilitates continuity in national approaches to strategy and policy-making, although both Gray (2007) and Bloomfield (2012) argue that it is not entirely inert and is responsive to radical shifts in national context.

The concept has been contested since it was first mooted, with Snyder (1990) himself warning against over-exaggerating differences in national security approaches and arguing that “culture is an explanation of last resort” (p. 4). A particular bone of contention concerned the methodological rigor and falsifiability of the concept (Johnston 1995; Gray 1999). This article follows, in this respect, Gray’s notion that culture provides context, guiding and shaping an actor’s interpretation of events. It understands the concept as “a distinctive and lasting set of beliefs, values and habits regarding the threat and use of force, which have their roots in such fundamental influences as geopolitical setting, history and political culture” (Macmillan et al., 1999, p. 8). Strategic culture can provide valuable insights into a country’s self-image and policy drivers with regard to the use of force, security and foreign policy. The concept also has some utility in helping to avoid “mirror-imaging” when trying to understand state behavior. It offers a cultural context for strategic decision-making within a country: by understanding a state’s collective beliefs about security policy and the use of force, shaped by shared experience and history, it may be possible to gain an insight into what shapes the threat perceptions of a state’s policy-making elites and how they might interpret, and therefore react to, international events such as popular uprisings or colored revolutions. As Beeson and Bloomfield (2019) assert, because “states’ ideational histories and cultural

traditions differ, different states interpret the same material variables somewhat differently, meaning they may respond differently to similar stimuli” (p. 338).

Scobell (2014) refers to the two “faces of strategic culture”: the first referring to how leaders and society perceive the policies and actions of their own country, the second to how the policies and action of an adversary are perceived. This article focuses on the “second face, examining the Russian perception of threat and how adversaries seek to achieve their national objectives through an exploration of the Russian strategic discourse surrounding events labelled “colored revolutions.” It establishes that the elite reaction to these events reflects continuities in Russian strategic assumptions about adversaries and how they pursue their national objectives by all available means, revealing the perpetuation of certain myths and historical narratives. It focuses on the military as the purveyor of these narratives and traces the evolution of thinking about the perceived threat, from scholarly debates in the military theoretical literature to strategic documents such as the Military Doctrine and National Security Strategy.

There has been limited work on the strategic culture of post-Soviet Russia, in contrast to the body of work on both the strategic cultures of the Asia-Pacific region and the European Union (Lantis, 2014; Scobell, 2014; Rynning, 2003). Eitelhuber (2009, p. 2) argues that Russia has a strategic culture that is deeply rooted in its history and geography, and fairly stable vis-à-vis threat perceptions, despite undergoing some changes post-1991, discussed below. The concept of strategic culture implies a degree of continuity between the USSR and Russia: Although the ideological element of Marxism-Leninism has disappeared, the geographic and historical contexts remain constant. Furthermore, Russia’s strategic community comprises many individuals who were either part of the USSR’s strategic community or were educated and trained during the Soviet era. These continuities denote an inevitable element of constancy in thought, thus it is apposite to consider the roots of Soviet strategic culture briefly to assess the degree of continuity and change.

Snyder’s work on Soviet strategic culture (1977) recognized that the development of Soviet nuclear strategy was conditioned by the country’s particular historical, political, and institutional contexts, resulting in very different strategic beliefs and behaviors to those displayed by the United States. However, Snyder’s work is limited by his reduction of Russia’s historical legacy to lessons learnt from the Great Patriotic War (World War Two) and the Soviet military under Stalin. Jones (1990) takes a broader view, suggesting that Soviet strategic culture is rooted in Russia’s imperial past before October 1917 combined with the political culture of Marxism-Leninism. Throughout history, Russian threat perceptions have been shaped by a persistent fear of external aggression, hostile encirclement, and deliberate interference in the country’s internal affairs. The worldview of the political and security elites is also shaped by the sheer size of territory, which has endured a number of invasions over the centuries, prompting a sense of strategic vulnerability and fear of being taken by surprise. Carlton (2017) notes that Russia cannot be fully understood without “recognising its experience of war and the resulting stories it tells of itself” (p. 7): From the Mongol invasion of the 13th century, to Napoleon’s Grand Armée at the beginning of the 19th century and the German attack in June 1941, the belief that Russia has been constantly threatened throughout its history constitutes an enduring element of the country’s strategic culture.

This sense of vulnerability has been exacerbated by an enduring preoccupation with technological inferiority compared to adversaries (Adamsky, 2010). Russia has traditionally

sought to counterbalance this perceived technological inferiority with a reliance on mass (both human and territorial). There was a prevailing anxiety evident in both Russian and Soviet strategic thought that enemies would take advantage of any weakness, prompting an expectation of surprise attacks, as well as the fundamental danger posed by encirclement and deception (Leites, 1951). In his study of the Soviet “operational code” (his term for strategic culture), Leites also drew attention to the fact that the Politburo tended to see connections and complicated planning between isolated, unplanned events, regarding “unrelated details as symptomatic of major political trends” (1951, pp. 3-4). The formative experience of the Soviet state, which was a product of revolution and civil war, prompted persistent unease about counter-revolution, internal subversion, and any perceived challenge to regime stability. Enduring Soviet concerns about the potential for counter-revolution and Western attempts to undermine the USSR using indirect, non-military means were evident during the 1968 Prague Spring when the Warsaw Pact broadened its interpretation of security to incorporate efforts to subvert socialism from within, as well as securing the state against external military attack (Allison 1990, p. 404). The Brezhnev Doctrine, enunciated in the autumn of 1968, represented the formal manifestation of this view, justifying Soviet intervention in the internal affairs of any country perceived to be threatening the integrity of the socialist bloc.

Another central pillar of Soviet strategic culture was a firm belief in the utility of the military lever of power in support of political objectives. In addition to historic concerns about the country’s vulnerability to attack, Soviet strategic culture was fundamentally shaped by the principles of Marxism-Leninism, which characterized war as a continuation of politics by means of armed violence, equating it with both politics and the class struggle as a whole (Sokolovsky, 1963). War was viewed as the apogee of the ideological struggle between the USSR and its class enemies, a conflict where the pursuit and achievement of victory, rather than victory denial or conflict termination, was the principal objective (Klein, 1989, p. 455). Compromise was not considered to be an option, either in external relations or internally. This zero-sum approach is encapsulated in the Leninist notion of *kto kogo*, “who will prevail over whom,” and is reflected in what Snyder (1977) characterized as the Soviet preference for a unilateral approach to damage limitation in the event of deterrence failure, which contrasted starkly with the U.S. preference for a cooperative strategy of mutual restraint. The offensive was seen as the stronger form of war, rather than defense, partly because of a belief in the impact of surprise and the need to dominate the initial period of war. Snyder (1977) noted the blurring of notions of deterrence and pre-emptive defense (often perceived as offensive action) in Soviet writings, an approach that continues in the contemporary era: Speaking in 2019, Gerasimov described Russia’s “strategy of active defense,” which combines pre-emption with deterrence to ensure the capture and retention of the strategic initiative.

Although strategic culture (and culture more broadly) is characterized by a degree of inertia, change can and does occur. Bloomfield (2012) suggests that continuity is often linked to the dominance of a particular strategic subculture; if there is a change to the dominance of a subculture, prompted by shifts in either a state’s external strategic environment, its culture or identity, change to its strategic culture may occur. There was a brief period during the 1990s when Russia’s dominant military strategic subculture was marginalized and a far more cooperative approach toward relations with the West emerged. This represented the culmination of a period of military retrenchment initiated by Gorbachev during the late 1980s, which saw a reduction in the influence of the military on Soviet security policy formulation in favor of civilian experts, who pursued diplomatic rather than military solutions

(Allison, 1990). The year 1999 represented another key tipping point: Against a backdrop of NATO's Kosovo campaign and the issue of NATO enlargement, as well as Russia's renewed military operation in Chechnya, the influence of the pro-Western camp waned dramatically to the benefit of the "Statists," who emphasize Russian vulnerability to external threats and prioritize values of power, stability, and sovereignty over those of freedom and democracy (Tsygankov, 2013).

With the ascendancy of Vladimir Putin, the military subculture resumed their dominant position within Russia's strategic community and a number of enduring themes re-emerged. Although the ideology of Marxism-Leninism is no longer central to Russia's strategic culture, the notion of *kto kogo*, an assessment of global competition that tends to be zero-sum in nature, still lies at the heart of Russian strategic thought. Other enduring elements identified by scholars such as Ermath (2006), Adamsky (2010), Covington (2016), and Skak (2016) include suspicion and mistrust of the West, particularly its efforts to promote liberal democracy around the world, a conviction that there is a master plan behind isolated events, enduring concern about the country's technological inferiority, and apprehension that adversaries will use any means to undermine their competitors, including subversion, which may undermine the stability of the state.

There are several themes associated with these assessments of Russia's strategic culture that are apparent in the characterization of the perceived threat to Russia from colored revolutions, suggesting certain habits of thought. Firstly, the notion of Russia as a "besieged fortress" that is surrounded by enemies and needs to be prepared for an attack at any time: The narrative of adversaries seeking to surround and isolate Russia is a common one in the strategic discourse, and is manifest in the perceived threat from colored revolutions, which are attributed to external, malign influence rather than domestic problems. The contemporary Russian attitude towards the use of force—both by itself and others—is rooted in a sense of vulnerability linked to the country's experience of invasion, as well as the revolutionary foundations of its predecessor state, the USSR. The perpetuation of a siege mentality enables the Russian leadership to take actions that may be unpopular internally, but which can be justified by reference to the country's historical experience (particularly of invasion) and the narrative of adversaries always being "out there," ready to exploit any weakness. This links to the second theme, the narrative of competition and the belief that powerful states will exploit whatever means possible to undermine their adversaries, in what is perceived to be an ongoing, covert struggle for global power and dominance.

These characteristics of Russian strategic culture have conditioned elite responses to perceived threats, leading to the conceptualization of colored revolutions as an existential threat to the Russian state. The Copenhagen School's theory of securitization helps to explain how this has occurred by providing a framework to analyze the discourse of threat and how certain issues are constructed as existential threats to a referent object (Buzan et al., 1998). The concept focuses on the processes by which a specific concern can be framed as a security issue by a securitizing actor (in this case the military strategic community), triggering the imposition of extraordinary measures. Success depends upon whether the relevant audience (the Russian leadership) are convinced by the discursive representation of a specific issue (the "speech act") as an existential threat to a referent object and take action. Strategic culture does not trigger the securitization process, but it conditions the process by constituting the culture from which securitizing actors are drawn (Mirow 2016). Thus, strategic culture can facilitate an understanding of why certain issues are securitized. As subsequent sections will illustrate, elements of securitization are clearly observable in the Russian threat assessment

of, and response to, the issue of colored revolutions: The manipulation of a state's "protest potential" is depicted as an existential threat to the Russian state.

The Russian view of colored revolutions

The term "colored revolution" (*tsvetnaya revolyutsiya* in Russian) emerged in reference to a series of anti-government protests and popular uprisings that occurred across the post-Soviet space in the early to mid-2000s, intended to result in non-violent regime change. A narrow definition only includes the 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia, 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine, and 2005 Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan. However, there is a level of ambiguity around the Russian interpretation of the term and it has also been applied to a wide range of events from the 2000 "Bulldozer" revolution in Serbia to the events across North Africa and the Middle East in late 2010/early 2011, commonly known as the Arab Spring or Arab Uprisings. There is a noticeable difference in the literature on colored revolutions produced in Russia and the West. The majority of Western scholarship on the subject was published between 2009 and 2013; by contrast, Russian scholarly writing on the issue continues apace. Furthermore, Western scholarly literature focused predominantly on the domestic implications and inconsistencies in the Russian discourse (Lane, 2009; Ó Beacháin, 2009; Wilson, 2010; Finkel & Brudny, 2012; Mitchell, 2012). The Russian perspective considers the Arab Spring and color revolutions to be directly related, part of a chain of events instigated by the United States, with the support of its Western allies, in pursuit of American strategic objectives. From the outset, the term "colored revolution" has had negative connotations in Russia, used to describe a threat from outside.

One of the earliest Russian analyses of colored revolutions was by Markov (2005), who outlined a range of defining characteristics, including the overthrow of the incumbent regime by both violent and non-violent means; mass demonstrations and the seizure of key government buildings; and such events being prepared openly and publicly. Another important attribute, identified by Denchev and Pavlova (2016), is the fundamental role of information and technology in a "colored" revolution, distinguishing it from a traditional revolution. Other key features of colored revolutions, according to the Russian interpretation, is the central role played by external or foreign actors, particularly non-governmental organizations (considered to be representative of foreign governments) and a belief that such events trigger a change in geopolitical orientation that benefits the external actor who ostensibly underwrote the uprising. Thus, they are perceived to be events that come from outside, sponsored by an external agitator, thereby discounting any potential domestic motivations for popular unrest. They are considered to be an externally-sponsored form of regime change and a challenge to the Westphalian model of sovereignty, part of a Western conspiracy to usurp Russian influence. This interpretation of events was clearly manifest in a speech to the Russian Duma in May 2005 by then director of the Russian intelligence service (FSB), Nikolai Patrushev, who accused "certain political forces" from the West of acting in the "worst traditions" of the Cold War:

In particular, our opponents are purposefully and consistently seeking to weaken Russian influence in the CIS space and the international arena as a whole. The latest events in Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan unequivocally confirm this. (State Duma 2005)

Patrushev claimed that foreign intelligence services were using "non-traditional methods" to covertly manipulate states from within, using non-governmental organizations as a cover for

a variety of influence operations. A common theme in Russian scholarly writing on the colored revolutions phenomenon is the notion that they are a manifestation of the struggle for dominance of the post-Soviet space that has been taking place between Russia and the United States, deliberately engineered to isolate Russia from its neighbors (Filimonov et al., 2016; Belsky & Klimenko, 2014). They are equated with the implementation of a coup d'état, part of an Anglo-Saxon strategy of preserving power and influence through the "creation and manipulation of conditions of chaos" around the world in order to weaken competitors (Filimonov et al., 2016, p. 256).

The United States is deemed to be the instigator of this strategy, which it pursues around the world in the form of direct and covert military intervention, including colored revolutions, part of a wider strategy of democratization and, consequently, regime change. The text by Sharp (2012), *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, is pinpointed as an important instrument of U.S.-sponsored regime change and the inspiration for a number of non-violent uprisings, including the Arab Spring. It is referred to in a number of Russian analyses of the colored revolution phenomenon, including Filimonov et al. (2016), who describe Sharp as the architect of the theory and practice of color revolutions, a "prophet of non-violence." This assessment of Sharp's publication accentuates a fundamental difference between Western and Russian interpretations of "colored revolutions" and non-violent opposition to established political regimes. From a Western perspective, popular uprisings against authoritarian and/or corrupt leaderships are seen as an expression of support for democratic forms of governance and a triumph for the will of the people. From a Russian perspective, colored revolutions are connected to the implementation of a coup d'état, part of a strategy of maintaining power through the creation and manipulation of conditions of chaos around the world in order to weaken strategic competitors.

The attitude of contemporary Russian political elites and analysts toward colored revolutions reflects a Soviet tradition of attributing domestic problems to foreign sabotage, combined with a fear of being taken by surprise by adversaries using any means to undermine their ideological competitors (Ó Beacháin, 2009, p. 22; Duncan, 2013). Leites (1951) noted a propensity on the part of the Soviet Communist Party to believe that all "ostensibly unconnected hostile actions" of outside groups are governed by a single master plan, that enemies will take advantage of any weakness and use deception, hence it is imperative to be suspicious of all activities even if they appear "friendly." There is considerable continuity in the Russian understanding of, and approach to, colored revolutions, revealing a deep-rooted concern about being taken by surprise by adversaries, who are deemed to be willing to use any means (including democratization) to undermine Russian influence and further their own positions. This interpretation helps to explain how anxiety about the colored revolution phenomenon has shifted from the political to the military domain, and become securitized, as such events are believed to constitute a fundamental threat to Russia's national security.

From a political to a military threat: The securitization of colored revolutions

The post-Soviet colored revolutions coincided with (and contributed to) a growing sense of insecurity within Russian political and security circles, as they took place around the same time that Russia was facing a growing number of terror attacks from Islamist insurgents, culminating in the Beslan school siege in September 2004. They also took place shortly after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, which Russia had opposed largely on the basis of its opposition to, and concerns about, international interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state in pursuit of regime change (echoed in its concerns about the threat from

colored revolutions). A sense of vulnerability and insecurity was evident in Putin's statement in the wake of the Beslan school attack in 2004:

We stopped paying the required attention to defence and security issues.... We need to admit that we did not fully understand the complexity and the dangers of the processes at work in our own country and in the world... We showed ourselves to be weak. And the weak get beaten. (The President of the Russian Federation, 2004)

Putin's statement revealed the depth of concern about both the domestic and international security environment and the implications for Russia, which was felt to be lagging behind other state actors. This was reflected in Russian military publications such as *Voennaya Mysl'* and *Voенно-promyshlenniyi kur'er* (VPK). During the mid- to late-2000s there was a consistent number of articles focusing on the characteristics of 21st century conflict and the security threats facing Russia, particularly those believed to derive from the United States, which is held responsible for many of the conflicts in the 21st century and posited as a potential threat to Russian national security (Zhikharskii, 2000; Gareev, 2006). Common themes included a focus on the lessons that Russia could draw from Western interventions, and the perceived threat to Russian national security from internal instability, subversion and regime change initiated by external actors (particularly the United States), including color revolutions (Chengaeв & Balenko, 2009; Aliyev, 2010). Gorbunov and Bogdanov (2009) outlined the appearance of new forms of conflict in which military means are either not used at all or have no fixed role, arguing that the weakening of a state in order to deprive it of the will to resist is a key objective of contemporary aggression.

The need to prepare for future conflict, based on a detailed analysis of previous conflicts, reflects another leitmotif in Russian strategic thought: Anxiety, rooted in historical experience, of being caught unaware by a surprise attack, of failing to predict the action of an adversary. The German invasion of 1941 is frequently cited as an example that should never be repeated. Russian military science, particularly its emphasis on foresight and forecasting the future character of war, is a deliberate countermeasure to this fear of surprise. Popov and Khamzatov (2017, p. 29) contend that the military need to be prepared for any eventuality; in their view it is naïve to believe that there will always be intelligence warnings of an opponent's preparations for war, arguing that the last time Russia believed this was in 1941. Russia's history and experience of unexpected regime collapses (the 1917 revolution, the fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the outer Soviet empire in 1989, as well as the collapse of the USSR in 1991) has fostered a belief that strategic decision-makers should expect the unexpected.

One of the principal exponents of the potential threat to Russian national interests from externally-sponsored internal instability and deliberate destabilization has been General Makhmut Gareev, the president of the Academy of Military Sciences. For over a decade he has argued that large-scale war is unlikely, as other, non-military, methods of achieving political goals have been developed, such as economic sanctions, diplomatic pressure and information war. Speaking in 2004, he asserted that it is possible to conquer one country after another by subversive actions from within, referencing events in Iraq to support his argument. The US and its allies were not a specific focus of Gareev's 2004 lecture, but his subsequent work has concentrated on the threat to Russian national security perceived to emanate directly from Washington's support for democratization efforts around the world. In a 2008 article published in VPK, Gareev examined US foreign policy, particularly Washington's support for democratization efforts around the world, and concluded that a key threat to

Russian national security was interference in its internal affairs. He developed this analysis further the following year, arguing that the leading powers of the 21st century achieve their political and strategic aims in two ways: “firstly through subversive actions, ‘colored revolutions’ within opposing states and large-scale info operations...., secondly, by stimulating local wars and conflicts” (Gareev, 2009).

Gareev was one of the first military theorists to be talking specifically about “colored revolutions” as a means for powerful states to achieve their strategic objectives: this article was published in 2009, four years before Gerasimov’s infamous 2013 speech and subsequent article. Although Gareev is representative of a previous era, having fought during the Great Patriotic War and served throughout the Cold War, his articles are given top billing in military publications and his views continue to shape the parameters of contemporary Russian strategic thought. Their prominence implies that the message resonates with the audience and fits comfortably within the existing threat narrative, indicative of a continuity both in terms of mindset and worldview.

Gareev built on the narrative of externally-sponsored internal instability and deliberate destabilization in 2012, calling for a wide-ranging discussion of the security challenges facing Russia in the 21st century. Referring to the events of 1941, when the USSR was caught unaware by the Nazi invasion, Gareev (2012) warns that passivity in the fields of politics, diplomacy and information has been Russia’s greatest weakness and insists that if threats and defense problems are not effectively “neutralized” by political means then adversaries will take advantage. According to this thesis, popular uprisings, civil unrest and controlled chaos are all specifically designed by an adversary to undermine the stability of a state and collapse it from within, and represent a key threat to Russia:

On the whole we see an erosion of the lines between military and non-military means of international confrontation, as well as an increase in the possibility of covert, asymmetric, violent military and non-military influence. (Gareev, 2012, p. 4)

The tone of Gareev’s article needs to be understood within the context of both the domestic and international instability that had occurred during 2011: There were protests in Russia during the run-up to the Duma elections of December 2011, which followed the Arab Uprisings of 2011 and the post-Soviet “colored revolutions” of 2003-2005. The Russian Chief of the General Staff (CGS) in 2011, Nikolai Makarov, voiced apprehension about the potential for internal instability in Russia instigated by external interference, warning that certain states were seeking to use the “technology” of colored revolutions to achieve their own strategic objectives. This followed on from his warning a few months earlier that, following events in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya “the Russian army must be prepared for the worst-case scenario vis-à-vis the development of the country’s political environment” (Makarov, 2011). This reflected a belief prevalent amongst the security elites that the recent instability and conflict in the Middle East and North Africa demonstrated the unquestionable threat posed by anti-government demonstrations, which could quickly turn into a state of chaos, “controlled chaos” (*upravliaemyi kaos*), and pose an existential threat to the security of a state. The term “controlled chaos” was used by Vladimir Putin in a 2012 *Rossiskaya Gazeta* article published during the presidential election campaign, when he contended that the West used various methods (political and economic) to destabilize and undermine Russia’s neighbors and therefore Russia:

Before our eyes, new regional and local wars are breaking out. Zones of instability and artificially incited, controlled chaos. And there are targeted attempts to provoke such conflicts in the immediate vicinity of the borders of Russia and our allies. (Putin, 2012)

There was a significant change in the tone of officials statements following Putin's return to the presidency in 2012, a return that was preceded by domestic protests and renewed fears of a Russian "colored revolution," and the threat from internal destabilization sponsored by an external agitator began to be publicly promoted by those at the highest levels of government. The prominent statements and writing on the perceived threat from colored revolutions from the Russian CGS, General Valery Gerasimov, in 2013 are the most obvious manifestation of this. His now infamous article in VPK, "The value of science in foresight", summarized a speech he had made to the annual meeting of the Russian Academy of Military Sciences (AVN) in January of that year in which he had reflected upon the changing character of conflict, implicitly encouraging members of the AVN to address these challenges in their future work (Gerasimov, 2013).

Gerasimov built on the themes that had been developed by other writers and analysts, such as those outlined above, asserting that the experience witnessed in the "so-called colored revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East confirm that a prosperous state can in a matter of months....become a victim of foreign intervention and sink into an abyss of chaos, humanitarian disaster and civil war." Using the events of 2011 in North Africa and the Middle East as an example of how 21st century conflict is changing, Gerasimov noted that there has been a shift towards the "widespread use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian and other non-military measures implemented along with the manipulation of the protest potential of the population. All this is supported by hidden military measures, including the implementation of information operations and special forces..." (Gerasimov, 2013, p. 2). This echoes Gareev's 2012 piece, discussed above, in which he warns about the erosion of the lines between military and non-military means in international confrontation. Gerasimov was deeply critical of the United States and NATO for destabilizing the international environment with these new, predominantly non-military, methods to advance their own national and coalition interests "under the pretext of spreading democratic values." Colored revolutions were perceived to be the principal instrument of this new approach:

[Colored revolutions] are based on political technologies involving external manipulation of the protest potential of the population in combination with political, economic, humanitarian and other non-military measures. Over the last decade, a wave of such "colour" revolutions has been initiated by the United States in the post-Soviet space, in North Africa and in the Middle East. (Gerasimov, 2014)

An underlying theme central to Gerasimov's 2013 piece is unease about the possibility of being taken by surprise by similar events occurring in Russia. He references the Soviet military theorist Georgii Isserson and his 1940 book, *New Forms of Warfare*, in which the latter warned that "in general, war is not declared. It simply begins by earlier deployed forces. Mobilisation and concentration [of forces] refers not to the period after the declaration of a state of war..., but [what took place] unnoticed, gradually, long before this. Isserson was writing prior to the German invasion of 1941, but nevertheless his work still reflects concerns about being caught unaware by an adversary's preparation for offensive operations, an enduring concern of the Russian strategic community.

Countering the threat

Gerasimov's prominent 2013 article echoed long-running debates within the wider Russian military strategic community vis-à-vis the perception of a significant threat to national security from colored revolutions. The idea that colored revolutions were a tool of subversion utilized by the West against its opponents had been discussed for a number of years prior to Gerasimov's involvement, but his 2013 contribution to the ongoing debate about colored revolutions and the character of conflict in the 21st century was an indication of the seriousness with which the threat was being taken by the national security elite in Moscow, as well as a call to arms to Russian defense. This represents an important step in the securitization of colored revolutions, as popular uprisings and protests were identified as a specific strategic threat to Russia's national security, a non-military threat which had to be countered with coercive force and the involvement of the military.

The threat was the primary topic of discussion by military speakers at the 2014 Moscow Conference on International Security, where Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu (2014) asserted that colored revolutions had become a major factor in instability around the world. Of particular significance was his contention that such events were increasingly taking the form of armed struggle and being developed "according to the rules of war", using all available tools, notably information warfare and special forces. This theme was developed by Colonel General Zarudnitsky (2014), Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the General Staff, who countered the Western view that colored revolutions are a way of spreading democracy by non-violent means, stating that analysis of events in the Middle East and North Africa indicated the opposite: that military power is in fact an integral part of these events, present at all stages. Russian involvement in Syria from 2015 lends credence to this belief, as well as the view that military force is vital to counteract the spread of popular protests.

It was reported at the end of 2014 that the Military Academy of the General Staff had commenced a study of how to counter colored revolutions. The issue also featured as a topic of discussion at Army-2015, where colored revolutions were described as a form of "warfare," specifically an element of hybrid war, which have been developed according to the "rules of the art of war" (Nagornyikh & Safronov, 2015). Thus it was argued that the military had to be involved in ways to counter what are fundamentally political events. The evolution of official concerns about the potential challenge to Russian national security from "colored revolutions" is evident across policy documents, notably the National Security Strategy (NSS) and Military Doctrine (MD), which are revised and updated frequently, providing a good indication of the state's strategic parameters and threat perceptions. These documents formalized moves by the military and political elites to securitize "colored revolutions," positioning them as an existential threat to the state. The threat to national security from "deliberate ... interference by foreign states and international organizations" in Russia's internal affairs has been a constant refrain in both the NSS and MD documents since 1991.

All iterations of the Russian Military Doctrine (and National Security Strategy) since 1993 have identified attempts to overthrow the constitutional system by force as one of the principal internal sources of military threat, although the language used has intensified with each iteration. The 1993 Military Doctrine identified "attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of and destabilize the internal political situation in the Russian Federation" as a source of external military danger, whilst noting that a significant source of internal military threat

stemmed from the possibility of “attempts to overthrow the constitutional system by force or to disrupt the functioning of organs of state power and administration.” The 2000 Military Doctrine reiterates the threat from attempts to overthrow the constitutional order by force, but goes further in a section on the nature of modern wars, key features of which are thought to include the extensive use of “indirect, non-close-quarter, and other (including non-traditional) forms and means of operation.” The 2010 iteration of the doctrine codified Russian views of the changing character of conflict and greater global instability, noting an intensification of military dangers to Russia, including “attempts to destabilize the situation in individual states and regions,” as well as interference in a state’s internal affairs (Military Doctrine, 2010).

The 2014 Military Doctrine emphasizes the threat to vital national interests from foreign subversive influence, stating that contemporary military conflict is characterized by the “integrated employment of military force and political, economic, informational and other non-military measures implemented with widespread use of the protest potential of the population and Special Forces.” This echoes the language used by Gerasimov in his 2013 piece, outlined above, and reflects the codification of military and strategic thought. The protest potential of the population is characterized as a new tool of warfare, which can and will be exploited by adversaries, largely by subversive action. The terminology associated with the threat implies that popular protests are not perceived as spontaneous events: Phrases such as colored revolution technology, engineering and the use of algorithms to foment popular unrest are a common part of the discourse, suggesting something artificial, constructed occurrences controlled by another actor. A population’s “protest potential” is a concealed weapon to be wielded against the unsuspecting target. This feeds into the narrative that colored revolutions are part of a wider Western strategy to undermine its competitors, a tool of subversion utilized by the West against its opponents, necessitating a military response.

By 2015, the term “colored revolutions” was being also used in the NSS, listed as one of the principal threats to state and public security in an era when the “practice of overthrowing legitimate regimes and provoking intrastate instability and conflicts is becoming increasingly widespread”, suggesting acceptance of the military perspective of such events. Analysis of the 2015 US NSS conducted by the Russian Security Council concluded that there was a high probability that “improved color revolution technologies,” designed to undermine regimes that are hostile to the US, would be utilized against Russia (Security Council of the Russian Federation, 2015). The final step in the securitization of “colored revolutions” was the establishment of a Russian National Guard (*Rosgvardiya*) in 2016, an extraordinary measure, charged with ensuring public order, securing borders, combatting terrorism and organized crime and guarding important state facilities. Plans for the paramilitary security force, which falls under the aegis of the Interior Ministry, were prompted by the internal unrest of 2011 and reflect enduring concerns about internal subversion and destabilization.

Conclusion

This article has sought to illuminate the assumptions underpinning the Russian conception of colored revolutions using the lens of strategic culture to explore enduring habits of thought and shared beliefs within the strategic community and amongst decision-makers. What emerges from the debates taking place within the military theoretical literature and the declarations of the security elites is the existence of an entrenched belief that the concept of “colored revolutions” and internal destabilization has been evolved to deliberately target regimes viewed as “unfriendly” to Western interests, including Russia. Addressing a session

of the Russian Security Council in July 2014 Putin argued that “countries that pursue an independent policy or simply stand in the way of someone’s interests are destabilized. In this way, the so-called color revolutions are taking place...state coups provoked and financed from the outside” (Kommersant, 2014). This reflects continuities in Russian assumptions about adversaries and how they seek to achieve their national objectives, using all available means, as well as Moscow’s perception of external threat and the ongoing possibility of foreign interference.

As has been discussed, the Russian narrative surrounding colored revolutions is part of much broader thinking about the changing character of conflict. Gerasimov’s much-publicized analysis of 2013 reflected long-running debates within the wider Russian military strategic community about the features of contemporary conflict, particularly non-military means of destabilization, such as “controlled chaos” and the threat from colored revolution, which were considered to be part of a wider strategy of U.S.-sponsored democracy promotion and regime change, a tactic used to achieve fundamental security objectives; they were perceived to be part of a new U.S.-led approach to warfare, which involved the internal destabilization of rival states through largely non-military means. The framing of colored revolutions as a national security threat suggests a degree of continuity in the Russian view of how adversaries may seek to achieve their strategic objectives and the perpetuation of global competition between Russia and the West that tends to be zero-sum in nature (*kto kogo*).

Another enduring element is the fear of being taken by surprise by an adversary who may use any means to undermine their competitors, including subversion, which was a constant preoccupation of the Soviet elite. The USSR (of which Russia is the successor state) was a product of revolution and its formative experiences were of the threat of counter-revolution, the fear of being undermined from within, supporting Johnston’s contention (1995) that the different predominant strategic preferences of a state are rooted in its early and formative experience. Finally, the framing of the colored revolutions as an external military threat to Russian national security has facilitated the expansion of defense and security responses to an essentially political issue, allowing the military to justify its involvement and interest in a range of non-military activities, again in the name of “protecting” state sovereignty and regime stability. This securitizing move was conditioned by Russia’s strategic culture, which is characterized by a siege mentality, a tendency to see connections between unrelated events, and deep-rooted concern about the possibility of strategic surprise.

The instrumental use of the colored revolution threat should not be overlooked, as the concept of externally sponsored popular uprisings serves several purposes for the Russian state and security elites. It allows the state to point to a possible threat from within and therefore take whatever measures it deems necessary to secure both the state and the regime itself. It also allows the Kremlin to point to the ostensible threat from the United States and the West, which it believes have sought to promote democracy around the world in the controversial pursuit of international security and stability at the expense of state sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. The specter of colored revolutions also allows the government to discern threats on its periphery, which has seen a number of popular uprisings, and potentially use force against its neighbors either preventatively or in self-defense. However, it is important to note that this is not just about regime security: There is a deep-rooted concern that colored revolutions are part of the character of conflict in the 21st century, a new means for an adversary to achieve its strategic objectives without the need for a large-scale military invasion. Although a relatively recent phenomenon, the reaction of the Russian strategic community to the perceived threat from

colored revolutions and concern about internal destabilization by non-military means is rooted in habits of thought, based on historical experience and the perpetuation of specific narratives about the country's vulnerability and how adversaries pursue their strategic objectives.

Reference List

Adamsky, D. (2010). *The Culture of Military Innovation: The Impact of Cultural Factors on the Revolution in Military Affairs in Russia, the US, and Israel*. Stanford University Press.

Aliyev, S. (2010, April). Voennaya bezopasnost' Rossii i sotsial'nyie konfliktyi [The military security of Russia and social conflicts]. *Voennaya Mysl'*, 4, 3-7.

Ó Beacháin, D. (2009). Roses and Tulips: Dynamics of Regime Change in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 25(2-3), 199-226.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13523270902860550>

Beeson, M. & Bloomfield, A. (2019). The Trump effect downunder: U.S. allies, Australian strategic culture, and the politics of path dependence. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 40(3), 335-336. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2019.1594534>

Belsky, A.N. & Klimenko, O.V. (2014, September). Politicheskie tekhnologii "tsvyetnykh revolyutsii": puti i sredstva protivodeystviya [The political technologies of "coloured revolutions": ways and means of counteracting them]. *Voennaya Mysl'*, 9, 3-11.

Bloomfield, A. (2012). Time to Move On: Reconceptualising the Strategic Culture Debate *Contemporary Security Policy*, 33(3), 437-461.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2012.727679>

Booth, K. (1979). *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*. Croom Helm.

Buzan, B., Waever, O. & Wilde J.D. (1998). *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers

Carlton, G. (2017). *Russia: The Story of War*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Chengaev, V.L. & Balenko, S.V. (2009, September). Usloviya vozniknoveniya vooruzhennykh konfliktov v XXI veke na territorii Rossiiskoi Federatsii i vozmozhnyi ikh kharakter v period obostreniya voenno-politicheskoi obstanovki [The conditions for the beginning of armed conflicts in the 21st century on the territory of the Russian Federation and their potential character at a time of a worsening of the military-political environment], *Voennaya Mysl'*, 9, 2-7.

Covington, S.R. (2016). *The Culture of Strategic Thought Behind Russia's Modern Approaches to Warfare*. Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.
<https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/Culture%20of%20Strategic%20Thought%203.pdf>

Denchev, S. & Pavlova, M. (2016). Tsvetnyie revolyutsii: kto smeshivaet kraski i kto khudozhnik [Coloured revolutions: who mixes the colours and who is the artist]. *Geopoliticheskii zhurnal*, 2(14), 31-36.

Duncan, P.J.S. (2013). Russia, the West and the 2007–2008 Electoral Cycle: Did the Kremlin Really Fear a ‘Coloured Revolution’? *Europe-Asia Studies*, 65(1), 1-25.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2012.698049>

Eitelhuber, N. (2009). The Russian Bear: Russian Strategic Culture and What It Implies for the West. *Connections: The Quarterly Journal*, 9(1), 1-32.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.11610/Connections.09.1.01>

Ermath, F.W. (2006). *Russia's Strategic Culture: past, present and...in transition?* Paper prepared for Defense Threat Reduction Agency Advanced Systems and Concepts Office.

Filimonov, G., Danyuk, N. & Yurakov, M. (2016). *Perevorot* [Overthrow]. Piter.

Finkel, E. & Brudny, Y.M. (2012). Russia and the colour revolutions. *Democratization*, 19(1), 15-36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2012.641297>

Gerasimov, V.V. (2013, February 5-March 1-3). Tsennost' nauki v predvidenii [The value of science in foresight]. *Voенно-promyshlenniyi kur'er*, 8 (476), 27.

Gerasimov, V.V. (2014, 23 May). *O roli voennoi cilyi v sovremennykh konfliktakh* [The role of armed forces in contemporary conflicts]. Speech delivered at III Moscow Conference on International Security MCIS-2014.
https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11929743%40egNews&m=

Gerasimov, V.V. (2016, March, 1-4). Po opitu Sirii [The Syria experience]. *Voенно-promyshlenniyi kur'er*, 9(624), 9-15.

Gerasimov, V.V. (2019, March 4). Vektoryi razvitiya voennoi strategii [Vectors of development of military strategy]. *Krasnaya Zvezda*. <http://redstar.ru/vektory-razvitiya-voennoj-strategii/>

Gareev, M.A. (2004, April 1). *Rossiia v voynakh XX veka* [Russia in the wars of the 20th century]. Transcript of public lecture by General MA Gareev on 25 March as part of Polit.ru's Public Lecture series. <http://www.polit.ru/article/2004/04/01/gareev/>

Gareev, M.A. (2006, June). O nekotorykh kharakternykh chertakh voyn budushchego [A few characteristics of future wars]. *Voennaya Mysl'*, 6, 52-59.

Gareev, M.A. (2008, January 10). Rossiia dolzhna snova stat' velikoi derzhavoi [Russia must become a great power once again]. *Voенно-promyshlenniyi kur'er*, 2(218), 16-22.

Gareev, M.A. (2009, April). Problemyi strategicheskogo sderzhivaniya v sovremennykh usloviyakh [The problems of strategic deterrence and contemporary conditions]. *Voennaya Mysl'*, 4, 3-15.

- Gareev, M.A. (2012, January 4-5). Obespechenie bezopasnosti strany – rabota mnogoplanovaya [Maintaining the country's security – work of many plans]. *Voenno-promyshlenniyi kur'er*, 3(420), 25-31.
- Gorbunov, V.N. & Bogdanov, S.A. (2009, March). O kharaktere vooruzhennoi bor'by v XXI veke [The character of armed conflict in the 21st century]. *Voennaya Mysl'*, 3, 2-15.
- Gray, C.S. (1999). Strategic culture as context: the first generation of theory strikes back. *Review of International Studies*, 25, 49-69.
- Gray, C.S. (2007). Out of the Wilderness: Prime Time for Strategic Culture. *Comparative Strategy*, 26(1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495930701271478>
- Johnston, A.I. (1995). Thinking About Strategic Culture. *International Security*, 19(4), 32-64.
- Jones, D.R. (1990). Soviet Strategic Culture. In Jacobsen C.G. (Ed.), *Strategic Power: USA/USSR* (pp. 35-49). The Macmillan Press.
- Kipp, J.W. (2007). A Review of: 'Vladimir Slipchenko and Makhmut Gareev'. *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 20(1), 147-158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518040701205878>
- Klein, Y. (1989). The sources of Soviet strategic culture. *The Journal of Soviet Military Studies*, 2(4), 453-490. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518048908429961>
- Kommersant*, (2014, July 22). Priyamoi ugrozyi suverenitetu Rossii seichas net [There are no direct threats to Russia's sovereignty at the moment]. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2530689>
- Lane, D. (2009). "Coloured Revolution" as a Political Phenomenon. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 25(2-3), 113-135. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523270902860295>
- Lantis, J.S. (2014). Strategic Cultures and Security Policies in the Asia-Pacific. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 35(2), 166-186. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2014.927676>
- Leites, N. (1951). *The Operational Code of the Politburo*. McGraw-Hill.
- Macmillan, A., Booth, K. & Trood, R. (1999). Strategic Culture. In Booth, K. & Trood, R. (Eds.), *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region* (pp. 3-26). Macmillan Press.
- Main, S.J. (2016). "You Cannot Generate Ideas by Orders": The Continuing Importance of Studying Soviet Military History—G. S. Isserson and Russia's Current Geo-Political Stance. *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 29(1), 48-72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2016.1129866>
- Markov, S. (2005, 11 November). Tsvetnaya revolyutsiya – eto novyi tip politicheskikh tekhnologii po smene politicheskoi vlasti [Coloured revolution – a new type of political technology to replace political power].

<http://www.km.ru/glavnoe/2005/11/15/arkhiv/smarkov-tsvetnaya-revolutsiya-eto-novyi-tip-politicheskikh-tekhnologii-po>

The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation (2014). Approved by the President of the Russian Federation on December 25, No. Pr-2976.

Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, (2014, May 23). Ministr oborony Rossii vyisutpil na III Moskovskoi konferentsiya po mezhdunarodnoi bezopasnosti [Russia's Minister of Defence presents at the III Moscow Conference on International Security]. https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11929731@egNews

Mirow, W. (2016). *Strategic Culture, Securitisation and the Use of Force*. Routledge.

Mitchell, L.A. (2012). *The Color Revolutions*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Nagorniykh, I. & Safronov, I. (2015, June 24). Minoboronyi podklyuchaetsya k bor'be s "tsvyetnyimi revolyutsiami"[Ministry of Defence becomes involved in the battle against "coloured revolutions"]. *Kommersant*, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2753508>

National Security Blueprint of the Russian Federation (1997, December 26). Approved by Russian Federation presidential edict No. 1300. Published in *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 1997, pp. 4-5.

National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation (2015, December 31). Approved by decree of the President of the Russian Federation. <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/ru/l8iXkR8XLAtxeilX7JK3XXy6Y0AsHD5v.pdf>

Ogarkov, N.V. (1982). Military Strategy. In Scott, H.F. & Scott, W.F. (Eds.). *The Soviet Art of War: Doctrine, Strategy and Tactics* (pp. 246-250). Westview Press.

Popov, I. M. & Khamzatov, M.M. (2017). *Voina budushchego: kontseptualnye osnovy i prakticheskie vyvody*. [War of the future: conceptual foundations and practical conclusions]. Kuchkogo Polye.

The President of the Russian Federation (2004, September 4). *Address by President Vladimir Putin*. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22589>

Putin, V. (2012, 20 February). Byit' cil'nyim: garantii natsional'noi bezopasnosti dlya Rossii [To be strong: national security guarantees for Russia]. *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 5708(35), <https://rg.ru/2012/02/20/putin-armiya.html>

Rynning, S. (2003). The European Union: Towards a Strategic Culture? *Security Dialogue*, 34(4), 479-496. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010603344007>

Safronov, I. (2011, November 18). Genshtab gotovitsya k voine [General Staff prepares for war]. *Kommersant*. www.kommersant.ru/doc/1818296

Security Council of the Russian Federation, (2015, 25 March). O strategii natsional'noi bezopasnosti SshA [On the US's National Security Strategy].
<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/865/>

Scobell, A. (2014). China's Real Strategic Culture: A Great Wall of the Imagination. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 35(2), 211-226.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2014.927677>

Sharp, G. (2012). *From Dictatorship to Democracy*. Serpent's Tail.

Skak, M. (2016). Russian strategic culture: the role of today's chekisty. *Contemporary Politics*, 22(3), 324-341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2016.1201317>

Snyder, J. (1977). *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*. RAND.

Snyder, J. (1990). The Concept of Strategic Culture: Caveat Emptor. In Jacobsen C.G. (Ed.), *Strategic Power: USA/USSR* (pp. 3-9). The Macmillan Press.

Sokolovsky, V.D. (1963). *Military Strategy: Soviet Doctrine and Concepts*. Pall Mall Press.

The State Duma of the Russian Federation (2005). *Stenogramma zasedaniya 12 May 2005* [Transcript of session of 12 May 2005], N 97 (811),
<http://transcript.duma.gov.ru/node/1089/#sel=>

Wilson, J.L. (2010). The Legacy of the Color Revolutions for Russian Politics and Foreign Policy. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 57(2), 21-36. <https://doi.org/10.2753/PPC1075-8216570202>

Zarudnitsky, V.B. (2014, 23 May). Voennyye aspekty "tsetnykh revolyutsii" [Military aspects of "coloured revolutions"]. Speech delivered at III Moscow Conference on International Security MCIS-2014,
https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11929746%40egNews

Zhikharskii, V.V. (2000, July-August). K voprosu o voinakh budushchego [On the question of wars of the future]. *Voennaya Mysl'*, 4, 77-79.