

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE
Doctoral School of Military Sciences



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**The transformation of Russian military thinking in the 21st century
in the light of the military doctrines of the Russian Federation**

THESES OF THE DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION
(THESIS BOOK)

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1. Description of the scientific problem

The declared purpose of the Russian Federation is to regain the political, military and economic influence of the former Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. The aim of the Russian state leadership is to achieve Russia's renewed presence in the international political and security arena as a great power and as one of the poles of the emerging multipolar system. Russian great power aspirations may pose a security risk to NATO and the European Union. From the perspective of the military sciences, this is particularly valid for the military dimensions of security. However, the experiences of the last few years show that we should not evaluate the changes in the Russian military strategy exclusively from the military point of view.

The indirect (non-linear) warfare with its holistic approach, i.e. combining political, diplomatic, economic and further non-military means, as well as the indirect use of military force, developed and endorsed as a part of the official military doctrine by the Russian leadership – which NATO defines as hybrid warfare – could represent a challenge in many dimensions of security. The Russian Federation is ready to use the whole spectrum of the means of the indirect (non-linear) warfare at its disposal, including the military force, in order to defend its national strategic interests. Hungary is not an ally of Russia, and as a Member State of the European Union and the NATO it is a part of the West which has introduced political and economic sanctions against Russia due to the latter's role in the Ukrainian conflict and the annexation of Crimea. The current Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation and the National Security Strategy modified in 2015, defines the activities and efforts of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization aiming at strengthening the build-up of its power potential by further expansion of the Alliance and moving its military infrastructure closer to the borders of the Russian Federation as a main military danger and even threat.

In recent years, Russia has made significant improvements in all segments of its Armed Forces, both in structural and organizational terms, as well as in military technology and weaponry supply. Therefore, for Hungary and its allies it could be of a special importance in terms of safeguarding their own security to follow the military strategic trends defined by the Russian political and military leadership and their possible changes, also to learn about the Russian military policy, present status and guidelines for Armed Forces development programs. Based on this knowledge, we should be able to identify the potential Russian threats in time and prepare ourselves to prevent them.

These abovementioned thoughts have lead me to make an attempt to disclose the key features of the Russian military thinking in the 21st century in this thesis.

2. Research hypotheses

The basis for the formulation of my research hypotheses was the fact that the development, the changes and the constant elements of the Russian military thinking are reflected in the basic defense policy documents approved after the establishment of the Russian Federation first and foremost in the military doctrines. Military thinking has undergone significant changes over the past 25 years. Already at the beginning of the 21st century a new strategic concept was outlined to replace the military approach inherited from Soviet times, then a new, holistic military thinking emerged in 2010s. Along with this, the fundamental military-strategic theses related to the earlier military confrontation such as priority of ensuring the security and sovereignty of Russia by military means, by maintaining military deterrence have remained in place.

My research and analysis was aimed at justifying or refuting the followings:

- 1.) The Russian defense policy documents prove that the essence of the Russian military thinking can be summarized as follows: in order to defend its national interests Russia, as a primary task, maintains and improves its military strength and military retention/deterrence policy, meanwhile it consistently represents Russia's national interests in its continuous opposition to the West.
- 2.) The Russian Federation declares that it is committed to strengthening of the global, the regional and especially the European security. With regard to the protection/enforcement of its national interest it considers the military retention/deterrence policy a priority. Moreover, in case of a violation of its interests Russia is ready to use its Armed Forces. In my dissertation I would like to prove that the Russian Federation whose position, weight and role is currently changing and strengthening on the global and regional levels of security, in the possession of its growing military power is able to ensure its policy aimed at assertion of interests.

- 3.) In the beginning of the 2010s, following the entry of the new defense leadership the Russian military thinking went through some significant changes. The military-strategic principles have been expanded with the concept of a new type of indirect (non-linear or hybrid) warfare that has been – from military aspects – successfully used in the Eastern Ukrainian conflict and in the course of annexation of the Crimea and Sevastopol. Formally, the Russian military leadership has developed the principles of the indirect (non-linear) warfare as a conflict management model for the application of non-military means and methods. However, it has dedicated a significant role in it to the retentive/deterrent and general purpose forces of the Armed Forces. Besides the indirect (non-linear) operational concept, the Russian military leadership still preserves the principles of the direct warfare, what is more, it envisages it in a more decisive manner and form, i.e. with immediate launch of operations without strategic deployment of forces. Along with that, it does not exclude the simultaneous and coordinated execution of direct and indirect (non-linear) warfare. In my dissertation I have analyzed whether the Russian military reform and the development of the military have enabled the Russian Armed Forces to achieve real and effective capabilities and whether the process of the further developments in military technology and weaponry could lead to the decrease/termination of the military dominance of the Western powers in the near future?
- 4.) The Russian Armed Forces have always been a reliable base for Russian foreign and security policy. In my dissertation I was trying to find out whether the Russian Armed Forces reinforced by the developments and rearmament could intensify the Russian great power aspirations and whether the Russian leadership shall continue its confrontational policy and military retention/deterrence towards the West?

3. Research objectives

In my dissertation I have analyzed the effects of the changing global and regional environment on Russian military leaders after two and a half decades following the establishment of Russia. I have also tried to explore the essence of the newly formulated Russian military thinking tested under real circumstances, what security challenges it poses to Hungary and its allies.

My research of the topic has been carried out by taking into consideration of the following aims:

- 1.) To process and analyze the key defense policy documents, i.e. military doctrines, national strategic concepts and strategies approved since the establishment of the Russian Federation, and also the statements of the Russian political and military leadership in order to get acquainted with and evaluate the evolution of the Russian military thinking in the last 25 years.
- 2.) To analyze whether the security situation of Russia and its activities manifested in the international arena are consistent with the theses and intentions declared in defense policy documents. Also, to find out how the Russian military thinking interprets the principle of the strategic deterrence in parallel with the importance of maintaining international security.
- 3.) To demonstrate and to analyze the key phases, the substance and the results of the military reform started in 2008. Also, to explore the new Russian military-strategic principles, the essence and effects of the indirect (non-linear) warfare on the international security, especially on the security of the Central and Eastern European region.
- 4.) To discover whether in the light of changes in military thinking the Russian Federation shall continue its confrontational policy towards the West or are there any signs of its ambitions in the opposite direction?

4. Research methods

I have studied the relevant Hungarian and foreign language literature, also the previously existing and current official documents in force, and reviewed the relevant scientific works as well as the doctoral dissertations.

I have followed the Russian official statements and publications, also the international reactions. I have analyzed and compared the Hungarian, Russian and English literature published in the subject.

I have participated in international conferences, seminars and meetings in Hungary and abroad, so that I could get better acquainted with the opinion and viewpoint of the experts dealing with the Russian Federation and the security of the European region.

5. The structure of the dissertation and the description of the research

Introduction

In the introduction to the dissertation, I have explained the relevance and significance of my research topic for Hungary, the European Union and NATO in the current security situation.

I have drawn attention to the importance of following and understanding the transformation of Russian political and military thinking. I have pointed out the inherent risks of the new tendencies and I have also indicated the security challenges caused by them.

I have elaborated my research topic in five chapters.

Chapter I: Historical background – shaping the Russian military thinking in the decade after the dissolution of the Soviet Union

In the first Chapter, as a historical review, I have reviewed the security and military political situation of the Russian Federation after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. I have outlined the geopolitical changes in the Central and Eastern European region in the period of the establishment of the Russian Federation. I have also described the initial period of bilateral relations with the former Cold War adversary. In the first Chapter I have also analyzed the military doctrine reflecting the military thinking of those times, i.e. formulated for the Armed Forces inherited from the Soviet Union and in need of renewal. Out of the strategic documents of the Russian Federation in this Chapter I have processed the Military Doctrine approved in 1993.

Chapter II: The Russian Federation and the Millennium – the military security in traditional “soviet” concept

In the second Chapter I have introduced how did the Russian leadership meet the Millennium: I have recalled the main features of the changes in the security context of the Russian Federation and the main strategic documents formulated by the country's leadership based on those, i.e. the national security concepts and the military doctrine compiled along the new terms. I have also elaborated on the White Paper, i.e. the concept of the then-defense minister regarding the development of the Armed Forces. Out of the strategic documents of the Russian Federation in this Chapter I have processed the

National Security Concept 1997, the National Security Concept 2000, the Military Doctrine 2000 and the White Paper on the development of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces 2003 (Ivanov's doctrine).

Chapter III: The first decade of the 21st century: great power aspirations of the Russian Federation, reform of the Armed Forces and the military doctrine

In the third Chapter I have analyzed the changes of the geopolitical environment in the first decade of the 21st century. I have explored how those changes influenced the Russian security policy approach and military thinking of the economically, financially and militarily strengthened Russia after the reorganization of the country. In this Chapter I have analyzed and evaluated the key elements and results of the military reform started in 2008. I have also introduced the changes in the military leadership and in the process of the military development. Out of the strategic documents of the Russian Federation in this Chapter I have processed the National Security Strategy 2009 and the Military Doctrine 2010.

Chapter IV: The new strategy of the Russian Federation's military leadership in the beginning of the 21st century: the indirect (non-linear) warfare

In the fourth Chapter I have evaluated the indirect (non-linear) warfare theory developed by the Russian military leadership for the resolution of potential conflicts. I have assessed the model compiled on the grounds of a new comprehensive approach, its implementation in practice and its declaration on the level of a strategic document. In this chapter I have also analyzed and evaluated the implementation of the concept and the experiences of the indirect (non-linear) warfare accomplished by Russia in Ukraine. Out of the strategic documents of the Russian Federation in this Chapter I have processed the Military Doctrine 2014.

Chapter V: The implementation of the new Russian military strategy

In the fifth Chapter I have described the changing security policy environment of the Russian Federation, the current situation and the outcomes of the military development/reform – reflecting the results of the changes in the Russian military thinking – launched in order to reach the strategic objectives, the capabilities of the renewed Armed Forces. In this chapter I have also outlined the limits of application of the indirect (non-linear) warfare as well as the experiences of the first ever operation

conducted by the Russian Armed Forces out of the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States since the establishment of the Russian Federation.

Final remarks

In the concluding part of my dissertation I have demonstrated the summarized conclusions of my research as well as the new scientific results/findings and also my recommendations for practical utilization of the dissertation.

6. Summarized conclusions

After the end of the Cold War, after the dissolution of the former superpower, the Soviet Union, following the political, economic and social recovery and stabilization the Russian Federation sought to be recognized by the international community as a dominant power again.

In the beginning of the 1990s, the Russian leadership realized that the stabilization and consolidation of the country is impossible without the establishment of the country's military security. In this regard, in the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States the Collective Security Treaty has been formed to provide a background as a military alliance. Additionally, the Russian leadership has set the development of the Russian Armed Forces as the most important goal. Despite the deep political, social and economic crisis that took place in the early 1990s, the Russian Federation was able to maintain the most important elements of its military potential, above all its nuclear forces. The Russian military doctrine, adopted in 1993, served as a political and professional basis for the stabilization and later on for the development of the Armed Forces, thus the Russian Armed Forces served as a reliable base for the Russian foreign policy, security policy and diplomatic aspirations in the 1990s. In the National Security Concept 1997, the Russian leadership declared that Russia did not seek to preserve the general military parity but it maintained a military force sufficient for the defense of the country and it defined nuclear retention/deterrence as a basic defense principle.

By the turn of the Millennium, due to the changes in the international security situation the Russian leadership reassessed the security and military policy of the country and that was reflected in the National Security Concept 2000 and the Military Doctrine 2000. The Russian leadership has stated that Russia did not agree with the establishment of an

international relations structure based on domination by developed Western states, especially the United States of America. They have assessed the strengthening of the Western military-political blocs and alliances as a threat, in particular NATO's eastward enlargement as well as the efforts to weaken Russia's political and economic influence. It has been defined as a national interest to preserve Russia's sovereignty, furthermore, it has been set as a goal that Russia becomes one of the centers of a multipolar world. It has also been declared that in line with Russia's national security ensuring the military security of Russia was a major thrust area of the state. The White Paper, published in 2003, has reflected that the Russian Armed Forces has faced a new phase of development: the legal background for the development and a new system of political-social control have been created, the former order of battle, the force structure (services and arms) and the system of military districts have been reorganized. Meanwhile, not only the military threats have been seen as a risk and challenge to the country's security but also the political-domestic, economic, and social challenges. Thus, the possibilities of their prevention have also been studied with a more complex approach than before. The Military Doctrine 2000 and the White Paper 2003 have demonstrated that – in accordance with the renewed approach and ambitions of the state-political-military leadership as well as with Russia's growing international weight and role – the Russian military policy has become more confident.

By the end of the 1st decade of the 21st century, considerable changes were reached as a result of the military reform started in 2008 and continued according to the theses of the National Security Strategy 2009 and the Military Doctrine 2010: the structure, the internal modus operandi and the supply system of the Armed Forces were reorganized, its social acceptance improved. The Military Doctrine 2010 has been of epoch-making importance: as a strategic document for the period lasting until 2020 it has confirmed the Russian state, political, and military leadership's commitment to the further development of the Armed Forces defense capabilities. As a result of the doctrinal theses announced in the Military Doctrine 2010, the creation of the present state of the Russian army has begun. During the process of the reform the Russian Armed Forces' territorial-administrative and organizational structure and its command and control system have been reshuffled. The modernization of the Armed Forces has commenced, the conversion to the professional army has been started.

In November 2012, the newly appointed military leadership actively continued the military reform started in 2008. Besides this, the leadership of the Defense Ministry has realized and stated that in order to achieve the goals set by political leadership it was necessary use – besides the Armed Forces and military tools – also political, economic, information and other tools, as well as to coordinate the operations of the Armed Forces and the irregular forces. The principles set out in the new strategy that has become also known as “Gerasimov’s Doctrine” in 2013, reflecting a modern holistic approach, have also stated that the characteristics of armed conflicts (wars) have changed by now. In the Ukrainian conflict Russia has been able to prove in practice the feasibility of the new theory/of the new operational concept, meanwhile it also became clear that this model could pose a real challenge and threat to other countries too. The Military Doctrine 2014 includes the theses created by Army General Gerasimov in 2013, in addition it reflects that the strategic goals of the Russian leadership have not been changed, and the political leadership continues to devote a distinctive role to the Armed Forces. According to the assessment of the Russian leadership, military risks and threats against Russia have increased, therefore it must be prepared to fight a possible armed conflict. The National Security Strategy 2015 is more confrontative in its wording than the previous ones, it states that NATO – violating the norms of the international law – increases its force potential, aspires for global functions, strengthens its military activity and moves its military infrastructure closer to Russian borders thereby it creates threat to Russian national security. The Russian leadership declared that in order to reach its strategic objectives it would continue to pursue a policy that would strengthen the Armed Forces, especially in the field of the strategic retention/deterrence. During this period the Russian Armed Forces participated in the implementation of the political objectives of the Russian Federation both in the Near Abroad – in Ukraine, in annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol – and in a distant region (Syria) too.

The Armed Forces of the Russian Federation went through fundamental and radical changes in the past quarter century. The National Security Concepts (Strategies), Military Doctrines and the basic security policy documents served as essential foundations for the transformation and development of the Armed Forces. It can be stated that the development of the Armed Forces in Russia could be interpreted as a continuous, step-by-step process, its temporal stages coincide with the political, economic changes and development of the country. Analyzing the theses of the Military Doctrines and National

Security Strategies of the Russian Federation, we can conclude that they are coherent, consistent and well-developed documents, which could/should provide the necessary background and base for the Russian Federation's defense policy and military development.

The development of the Russian Armed Forces should not be regarded as a self-made or a stand-alone process, because it has an impact on Russia's security situation, on its ability to influence foreign politics, on European and global security. The Alliance, and Hungary as a Member State should continuously follow the developments, rearmaments and the changes in the military thinking. We should also take into consideration the Russian threat assessment in order to understand what makes the Russian state and military leadership anxious, what they are afraid of, against what challenges they prepare for, what capability development goals they have set. This is important even if Russia does not pose a military security risk directly to Hungary.

However, for our country as for a Member State of NATO, Russia should be considered a potential risk from the military aspect – due to the obligation defined by the collective defense clause of the Alliance, Hungary must follow and monitor the challenges and threats to the other Member States and must be prepared to prevent them.

7. New scientific results

Based on my research and analysis I have formulated the following scientific results:

- 1.) As a result of the analysis and evaluation of the security and defense policy documents that portray Russian military thinking, I have proved that the Russian military doctrinal thinking reflected in the theses of the basic strategic documents has not changed over the last 25 years, it consistently represents the national interests of Russia and the opposition to the West.*
- 2.) I have also proved that the Russian military thinking is controversial in the eyes of the international community: on the one hand, at the level of declarations it is committed to security. But on the other hand, it maintains the policy of military retention/deterrence as a priority. I have also proved that Russia possessing its strengthened military power is capable and ready to assert its interests by military means.*

- 3.) *I have further proved that as a result of the reforms and developments, as well as the approval of the new operational concepts the Russian Armed Forces have reached their strategic-operational deployment capability by now. It means that Russia, besides the constant preservation of nuclear retention/deterrence may cause a real challenge also in the field of traditional and the new type non-linear (hybrid) warfare too. And consequently, Russia could question the military dominance of the Western powers in the near future.*
- 4.) *I have finally proved that Russia, in order to secure its interest as a power and in order to assert its geopolitical goals, will continue to pursue the policy of confrontation/opposition and deterrence towards the West, which may become a decisive factor of international relations over the coming decades.*

8. Recommendations and practical use of the research results

The security and defense policy documents analyzed and evaluated in the chapters of the dissertation, as well as the demonstration of the military reform and its results could be interesting for the specialists and researchers dealing with Russia, with Russian foreign and security aspirations.

In my opinion, the dissertation could be of use for the programs of the National University of Public Service, also for Bachelor and Masters Courses organized by the Faculty of Military Science and Officer Training and for the Faculty of International and European Studies and the Institute of National Security.

The dissertation, and the research results formulated in it could be used for educational purposes in higher education within the framework of the security, security policy studies and also in the military science topics regarding Russia.

I would also recommend the dissertation to the attention of students, researchers and experts dealing with the security policy of NATO and European Union.

The elaborated topics of the dissertation could support the professional training programs for the commanding staff and staff officers of the Hungarian Defense Forces as well as the work of the officials and specialists dealing with foreign affairs and defense policy working for the different branches and organizations of the government and for the Hungarian – military and civilian – national security services.

List of publications

In Hungarian:

1. *Változások az orosz katonai doktrínában: a veszélyek és a fenyegetések értékelése*
MK KFH FELDERÍTŐ SZEMLE IX. ÉVF. 1. szám – 2010. március, HU ISSN 1588-242X, pp. 14-23.
2. *Az Oroszországi Föderáció nemzeti biztonsági kihívásai: az észak-kaukázusi térség biztonsági helyzete*
Honvédségi Szemle online 2010/1.
https://www.parbeszed.hm.gov.hu/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_244_1527_0_0_0_18/deak_anita.pdf
3. *Az észak-kaukázusi térség biztonsági helyzete*
SZAKMAI SZEMLE 2010. 1. szám, KBH, ISSN 1785-1181, pp. 195-202.
4. *Az Oroszországi Föderáció haderőreformja – az átfegyverzés: célok, tervek, eredmények*
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5. *Az Oroszországi Föderáció és az európai térség biztonsági viszonyrendszere*
KNBSZ FELDERÍTŐ SZEMLE X. évfolyam 3-4. szám 2011. szeptember-december, XI. évfolyam 1. szám 2012. március, KNBSZ, HU ISSN 1588-242X, pp. 23-32.
6. *Regionális biztonsági komplexum – a Független Államok Közössége*
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7. *Az Oroszországi Föderáció és a Kollektív Biztonsági Szerződés Szervezete*
KNBSZ FELDERÍTŐ SZEMLE XII. évfolyam 3. szám 2013. december, KNBSZ, HU ISSN 1588-242X, pp. 51-59.

In Hungarian – with 50% contribution of the author of the present dissertation:

8. Deák Anita – Deák János: *Az Oroszországi Föderáció fegyveres erői átalakításának helyzete, az abból levonható következtetések*
Hadtudomány XXII. évfolyam 1-2. szám, 2012. május, ISSN 1215-4121, pp. 35-46.
9. Kálló László – Deák Anita: *Az Északi-sark – a „versenyfutás” kezdete*
FELDERÍTŐ SZEMLE X. ÉVF. 1-2.szám - 2011. március-június, MK KFH, HU ISSN 1588-242X, pp. 43-64.

In foreign language (English):

10. *Line change: replacement of the Russian military leadership*
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11. *Great Power Ambitions of the Russian Federation: Military Presence in the Near Abroad*
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Lectures and presentations:

12. National University of Public Service – National Security Studies specialization
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13. National University of Public Service – National Security Studies specialization
students: „*Az Oroszországi Föderáció nemzetbiztonsági szolgálatai*”, 05.09.2014
14. Special Service for National Security: „*A FÁK országok biztonságpolitikai szempontból*”, 10.13.2014
15. Military National Security Service: „*Az Oroszországi Föderáció nemzetbiztonsági szolgálatai*”, 2015–2018.
16. Lectures in the framework of the annual training programs for military diplomacy
representatives: „*A FÁK-térség helyzete*”, 2016–2018.
17. Ministry of Defense: „*Az orosz–ukrán konfliktus és Moldova helyzete*”, 04.16.2015
18. Special Service for National Security: „*Az orosz biztonságpolitika új irányai, különös tekintettel az ukrán válságra*” és „*Az orosz indirekt hadviselés*”, 06.10.2015
19. NCO Academy of the Hungarian Defense Forces: „*Az orosz–ukrán helyzet aktuális kérdései, Oroszország biztonságpolitikai törekvései*”, 10.18.2016
20. Special Service for National Security: „*Magyarország geopolitikai helyzete*”, 10.20.2017

Professional and scientific biography

Anita Deák was born in Jászberény, in 1969. She completed the secondary studies in Székesfehérvár at the Blanka Teleki Grammar School with Russian-English language specialization. After graduating from the secondary school, she was admitted to one of most distinguished universities of the former Soviet Union, to the Faculty of Economics and International Economic Relations of the Leningrad State University. In 1992, she graduated from the State University of Saint Petersburg as an economist with specialization in international economic relations. She has spent ten years in the former Soviet Union and in Russia. Her university diploma has been naturalized by the Budapest University of Economics. In 1998, she graduated from postgraduate courses at the Eötvös Loránd University Postgraduate Training Institute and earned a certificate in law for economists.

In September 2010, she began the doctoral studies at the Doctoral School of Military Sciences of the former Miklós Zrínyi National Defence University. In autumn 2013, she received her pre-degree certificate at the Doctoral School of Military Sciences of the National University of Public Service, Faculty of Military Sciences and Officer Training.

She has two advanced level complex state accredited foreign language certificates of Russian and English languages as well as an intermediate level complex state accredited foreign language certificate of French.

Her major fields of research include: Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Russia's foreign policy, security policy, military policy, and Russian–NATO and Russian–EU relations.

She has published 11 studies on Russia – its security situation, military policy, military reform, its great power ambitions, its relations with the EU and with the post- Soviet states – nine of them she has wrote in Hungarian (two as co-authors) and two in English.

Since 2003, she has been serving at the Military National Security Service and its predecessor the Military Intelligence Office. Since 2015, she has been a member of the Editorial Board and the managing editor of the scientific-professional journal called *Felderítő Szemle* (Intelligence Review) of Military National Security Service. From March 2015 to March 2016 she was an Assistant Lecturer at the Military National Security Department, Institute of National Security of the National University of Public Service.

Budapest, May 27, 2018