

This is a topical thesis which deals with one of the most pressing issue of contemporary strategic analysis: shifting balance and nature of strategic competition between NATO and Russia. The focus is on "causes of shortcomings" (an slightly awkward phrase) on the side of NATO when dealing with and facing Russian evolving and rising hybrid strategy and capabilities. I think the author succeeds in the empirical breakdown of Russian hybrid strategy, which I consider the strongest part of the thesis. While it reads more as a scientific report than a final thesis, a helpful overview of its key legs is provided. Where I am much more sceptical is a conceptualization of deterrence which is based almost exclusively on three references and these are not particularly helpful for the issue in question which needs broader and innovative take on the concept. Also, the research design of the thesis is not too robust and disciplined, as is a deep analysis of NATO's decisionmaking, political and strategic considerations. The actual causes are specified in the conclusion but i am not so sure they are coming as a synthesis, or distillation, from the previous text. The seem too solitary and disconnected. Formatting is not unproblematic either, especially sequences and spaces between sections of the text. For the above reasons, I grade this thesis "C/D", where the final mark would depend on the robustness of the defence itself.