

## Abstract

This thesis addresses the still highly relevant topic of the failure of Russia's lightning invasion of Ukraine in the period from February to March 2022. During this period, the Russian Federation launched a full-scale invasion intended to be rapid and decisive, which was supposed to quickly paralyze Ukraine and take control of it. However, contrary to all expectations this strategy, based on massive quantitative and technological superiority, failed, leading to the withdrawal of Russian forces from Kyiv and resulting in an ongoing war at the time of writing. The main objectives of this thesis are therefore to characterize the specific features of the Russian concept of lightning warfare and to identify key factors that led to its failure. The research builds upon the theoretical framework of lightning warfare, emphasizing that the Russian approach is inspired more by the concept of rapid dominance than by traditional blitzkrieg. Methodologically, the thesis employs a qualitative research strategy based on a case study design and analyses of primary and secondary sources, supplemented by semi-structured interviews with military experts, including both active and former members of the Czech Army and the U.S. Marine Corps. The findings indicate that the invasion's failure was caused by a complex combination of diverse and interconnected factors acting in synergy. However, these factors shared a common denominator on the Russian side in the form of the contemporary Russian centralized system of power rooted in its Soviet heritage. This system was then naturally reflected in deeply embedded systemic problems within the Russian armed forces, which at the time of the invasion could be characterized as an unprepared "Potemkin army", attempting to execute a poorly prepared and unrealistic plan through rigid and inefficient command structures. This then enabled Ukrainian forces to conduct a successful defense based primarily on qualitatively superior human combat potential, enhanced by Western support.