

Abstract

Until 2008, almost two decades since the end of the cold war, Russia still retained old Soviet military structures. Steady opposition by the Russian generals against military modernization and reforms was finally broken in relation with the poor performance of Russian forces during the Russia-Georgian war in 2008. The process of modernization commenced in the following years has important security implications for post-Soviet countries. We could observe the new abilities of the Russian military during the seizure of the Crimean peninsula in 2014. Russian forces had been considered an ineffective institution with outdated military technology where corrupt practices were the rule rather than the exception. As we could see in 2008 Georgia Russian forces depended on numerical superiority and blunt military force. On the other hand during the Crimean events of 2014 the Russian military conducted the whole operation with high level of professionalism, without any bloodshed, and with modern weaponry. This research is based on the theory of neorealism which defines key parameters for performing a military modernization analysis. These include numbers, effectivity and strategy of military forces that help us to determine the current strength and power of each state. Therefore this research focuses on the analysis of changes in Russian strategic military documents, and quantitative and qualitative reforms in the Russian armed forces. In addition the performance of the reformed military is demonstrated on the case of the seizure of the Crimean peninsula in 2014 by Russian soldiers. In a nutshell, this text concludes that Russia has developed a military force sufficiently capable of destabilizing post-Soviet states. Such actions may prevent them from leaving the Russian sphere of influence and joining competitive groupings such as NATO and EU.