



# What Would a War between Russia and the USA Look Like?

” Debunking Popular Clichés about Modern Warfare

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“What would a war between Russia and the USA look like?”

*This must be the question which I am most frequently asked. This is also the question to which I hear the most outlandish and ill-informed responses to. I have addressed this question in the past and those interested in this topic can consult the following articles:*

- [Remembering the important lessons of the Cold War](#)
- [Making sense of Obama's billion dollar hammer](#)
- [Why the US-Russian nuclear balance is as solid as ever](#)
- [Short reminder about US and Russian nuclear weapons](#)
- [Thinking the unthinkable](#)
- [The Russia-U.S. Conventional Military Balance](#)

*It would be pointless for me to repeat it all here, so I will try to approach the issue from a somewhat different angle, but I would strongly recommend that those interested take the time to read this articles which, while mostly written in 2014 and 2015, are still basically valid, especially in the methodology used to tackle this issue. All I propose to do today is to debunk a few popular clichés about modern warfare in general. My hope is that by debunking them I will provide you with some tools to cut through the nonsense which the corporate media loves to present to us as “analysis”.*

Cliché No 1: the US military has a huge conventional advantage over Russia

It all depends by what you mean by “advantage”. The US armed forces are much larger than the Russian ones, that is true. But, unlike the Russians ones, they are spread all over the planet. *In warfare what matters is not the size of your military, but how much of it is actually available for combat in the theater of military operations TMO (conflict area).* For example, if in any one given TMO you have only 2 airfields each capable of sustaining air operations for, say 100 aircraft, it will do you no good to have 1000 aircraft available. You might have heard the sentence “*civilians focus on firepower, soldiers on logistics*”. This is true. Modern military forces are extremely “support heavy” meaning that for one tank, aircraft or artillery piece you need a huge and sophisticated support line making it possible for the tank, aircraft or artillery piece to operate in a normal way. Simply put – if your tank is out of fuel or spares – it stops. So it makes absolutely no sense to say, for example, that the USA has 13,000 aircraft and Russia only 3,000. This might well be true, but it is also irrelevant. What matters

is only how many aircraft the US and NATO could have ready to engage on the moment of the initiation of combat operations and what their mission would be. The Israelis have a long record of destroying the Arab air forces on the ground, rather than in the air, in surprise attacks which are the best way to negate a numerical advantage of an adversary. The reality is that the USA would need many months to assemble in western Europe a force having even a marginal hope to take on the Russian military. And the reality also is that nothing could force the Russians to just sit and watch while such a force is being assembled (the biggest mistake Saddam Hussein made).

Cliché No 2: an attacker needs a 3:1 or even 4:1 advantage over the defender.

Well, this is one “kinda true”, especially on a tactical level. There is an often used as a general rule of thumb that being in the defense gives you a 3:1 advantage meaning that if you have 1 battalion on the defense you should could about 3 battalions on the offense in order to hope for a victory. But when looking at an operational or, even more so, strategic level, this rule is completely false. Why? Because the defending side has a huge disadvantage: it is always the attacker who gets to decide when to attack, where and how. For those interested by this topic I highly recommend the book “[Surprise Attack: Lessons for Defense Planning](#)” by Richard Betts which, while relatively old (1982) and very focused on the Cold War, provides a very interesting and thorough discussion of the advantages and risks of a surprise attack. This is a fascinating topic which I cannot discuss in detail here, but let’s just say that a successfully pulled off surprise attack almost totally negates the advantage in theoretical forces ratios for the defender.

Let me give you a simple example: imagine a front line of 50 km in which each 5 km are defended on both sides by a one division. So each sides has 10 divisions, each responsible for the defense of 5km of front, right? According to the 3:1 rule, side A needs 30 divisions to overcome the 10 divisions in the defense? Right? Wrong! What side A can do is concentrate 5 of its divisions on a 10km wide front and put the other five in the defense. On that 10km wide front of attack side now had 5 attacking divisions against 2 defending ones while on the rest of the front, side A has 5 defending divisions against 8 (potentially) attacking ones. Notice that now side B does not have a 3:1 advantage to overcome side A’s defenses (the actual ration is now 8:5). In reality what B will do is rush more divisions to defend the narrow 10km sector but that, in turn means that B now has less divisions to defend the full front. From here on you can make many assumptions: side B can counter-attack instead of defending, side B can defend in depth (in several “echelons”, 2 or even 3), side A could also begin by faking attack on one sector of the front and then attack elsewhere, or side A can send, say, one reinforced battalion to move really fast and create chaos deep in the defenses of B.

My point here is simply that this 3:1 rules is purely a tactical rule of thumb and that in real warfare theoretical forces ratios (norms) require much more advanced calculations, including the consequences of a surprise attack.

Cliché No 3: high technology wins the day

That is a fantastically false statement and yet this myth is sacred dogma amongst civilians, especially in the USA. In the real world, high teach weapons systems, while very valuable, also come with a long list of problems the first one of which is simply cost.

[Sidebar: when I was studying military strategy in the late 1990s one of our teachers (from

the US Air Force) presented us with a graph showing the increasing cost of a single US fighter aircraft from the 1950s to the 1990s. He then projected this trend in the future and jokingly concluded that by roughly 2020 (iirc) the USA would only have the money to afford one single and very, very expensive fighter. This was a joke, of course, but it had a very serious lesson in it: runways costs can result in insanely expensive weapon systems which can only be produced at very few copies and which are very risky to engage].

Technology is also typically fragile and requires a very complex support, maintenance and repair network. It makes no sense to have the best tank on the planet if it spends most of its time in major repairs.

Furthermore, one of the problems of sophisticated high tech gear is that its complexity makes it possible to attack it in many different ways. Take, for example, an armed drone. It can be defeated by:

1. shooting it out of the sky (active defense)
2. blinding or otherwise disabling its sensors (active defense)
3. jamming its communications with the operator (active defense)
4. jamming or disabling its navigation system (active defense)
5. camouflage/deception (passive defense)
6. providing it with false targets (passive defense)
7. protecting targets by, for example, burying them (passive defense)
8. remaining mobile and/or decentralized and/or redundant (passive defense)

There are many more possible measures, it all depends on the actual threat. The key here is, again, cost and practicality: how much does it cost to develop, build and deploy an advanced weapon system versus the cost of one (or several) counter-measures.

Finally, history has shown over and over again that willpower is far more important than technology. Just look at the absolutely humiliating and total defeat of the multi-billion high tech Israeli Defense Forces by Hezbollah in 2006. The Israelis used their entire air force, a good part of their navy, their very large artillery, their newest tanks and they were defeated, horribly defeated, by probably about less than 2000 Hezbollah fighters, and even those where not the very best Hezbollah had (Hezbollah kept the best ones north of the Litani river). Likewise, the NATO air campaign against the Serbian Army Corps in Kosovo will go down in history as one of the worst defeats of a huge military alliance backed by high tech weapons by a small country equipped with clearly dated weapon systems.

[Sidebar: on both these wars what really « saved the day » for the AngloZionists is a truly world-class propaganda machine which successfully concealed the magnitude of the defeat of the AngloZionist forces. But the information is out there, and you can look it up for yourself].

Cliché No 4: big military budgets win the day

That is also a myth which is especially cherished in the USA. How often have you heard something like “the billion dollar B-2” or the “6 billion dollar Nimitz class aircraft carrier”? The assumption here is that if the B-2 or the Nimitz costs so much money they must be truly formidable. But are they?

Take the three hundred million dollar plus dollar F-22A “Raptor” and then [look up the](#)

[“deployment” subsection in the Wikipedia article about the F-22A](#). What have we got? A few Russian T-95 (date of introduction: 1956) bomber intercepts and one Iranian F-4 Phantom (date of introduction: 1960) interception. That, a few bombing runs in Syria and a motley assortment of overseas deployments for PR reasons. That’s it! On paper the F-22A is an awesome aircraft and, in many ways is really is, but the real life reality is that the F-22A was only used on missions which an F-16, F-15 or F-18 could have done for cheaper and even done it better (the F-22A is a crappy bomber, if only because it was never designed to be one).

I already hear the counter argument: the F-22A was designed for a war against the USSR and had that war happened it would have performed superbly. Yeah, maybe, except that less than 200 were ever built. Except that in order to maintain a low radar cross section the F-22 has a tiny weapons bay. Except that the Soviets deployed infra-red search and track systems on all their MiG-29s (a very non-high-tech fighter) and their SU-27s. Except that the Soviets had already begun developing “anti-stealth” radars and that nowadays the F-22A is basically useless against modern Russian radars. None of that negates that in terms of technology, the F-22A is a superb achievement and a very impressive air superiority fighter. But one which would not have made a significant difference in a real war between the USA and the Soviet Union.

Cliché No 5: big military alliances help win wars

One more myth about wars which is cherished in the West: alliances win wars. The typical example is, of course, WWII: in theory, Germany, Italy and Japan formed the “[Axis powers](#)” while 24 nations (including Mongolia and Mexico) formed the “[Allies](#)”. As we all know, the Allies defeated the Axis. That is utter nonsense. The reality is very different. Hitler’s forces included about 2 million Europeans from 15 different countries which added 59 divisions, 23 brigades, a number of separate regiments, battalions and legions to the German forces (source: [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)). Furthermore, the Red Army account for no less than 80% of all the German losses (in manpower and equipment) during the war. All the others, including the USA and the UK, shared the puny 20% or less and joined the war when Hitler was already clearly defeated. Some will mention the various resistance movements which did resist the Nazis, often heroically. I don’t deny their valor and contribution, but it is important to realize that no resistance movement in Europe ever defeated a single German Wehrmacht or SS division (10 to 15 thousand men). In comparison, in Stalingrad alone the Germans lost 400,000 soldiers, the Romanians 200,000, the Italians 130,000, and the Hungarians 120,000 for a total loss of 850,000 soldiers. In the Kursk battle the Soviets defeated 50 German divisions counting about 900,000 soldiers.

[Sidebar: While resistance movements were typically engaged in sabotage, diversion or attacks on high value targets, they were never designed to attack regular military formations, not even a company (120 men or so). The German forces in the USSR were structures into several « Army Groups » (*Heeresgruppe*) each of which contained 4-5 Armies (each with about 150,000 soldiers). What I am trying to illustrate with these figures is that the magnitude of the combat operations on the Eastern Front was not only different from what any resistance movement can deal with, but also different from any other theater of military operations during WWII, at least for land warfare - the naval war in the Pacific was also fought on a huge scale].

The historical record is that one unified military force under one command usually performs much better than large alliances. Or, to put it differently, when large alliances do form, there

is typically the “one big guy” who really matters and everybody else is more or less a sideshow (of course, the individual combatant who gets attacked, maimed and killed does not feel that he is a “sideshow”, but that does not change the big picture).

Speaking of NATO the reality is that there is no NATO outside the USA. The USA is the only country in NATO which really matters. Not just in terms of numbers and firepower, but also in terms of intelligence, force projection, mobility, logistics, etc. Every single US commander knows and understands that perfectly, and while he will be impeccable courteous to his non-US colleagues in Mons or during cocktail parties in Brussels, if the proverbial bovine excreta hits the fan and somebody has to go and fight the Russians, the Americans will count solely on themselves and will be happy if the rest of the NATO members get out of the way without delay.

Cliché No 6: forward deployment gives a major advantage

Day after day we hear the Russians complaining that NATO has moved to their borders, that thousands of US troops are now deployed in the Baltics or Poland, that the US has deployed anti-ballistic missiles in Romania and that USN ships are constantly hugging the Russian coast in the Black and Baltic Sea. And it's all true and very deplorable. But where the Russians are being a tad disingenuous is when they try to present all this as a military threat to Russia.

The truth is that from a purely military point of view, deploying US forces in the Baltic states or sending USN ships into the Black Sea are very bad ideas, in the first case because the three Baltic states are indefensible anyway, and in the second case because the Black Sea is, for all practical purposes, a Russian lake where the Russian military can detect and destroy any ship within 30 minutes or less. The Americans are quite aware of that and if they decided to strike at Russia they would not do it from a forward deployed ship but with long-range standoff weapons such as ballistic or cruise missiles.

[Sidebar: the notion that Russia would ever want to attack any of the Baltic states or sink a USN ship is ridiculous and I am in no way suggesting that this might happen. But when looking at purely military issues you look at capabilities, not intentions.]

The range of modern weapons is such that in case of war in Europe there will probably not be a real “front” and a “rear”, but being closer to the enemy still makes you easier to detect and exposes you to a wider array of possible weapons. Simply put, the closer you are to Russian firepower, electronic warfare systems, reconnaissance networks and personnel, the greater number of potential threats you need to worry about.

I would not go as far as to say that forward deployment does not give you any advantage, it does: your weapon systems can reach further, the flight time of your missiles (ballistic and cruise) is shorter, your aircraft need less fuel to get to their mission area, etc. But these advantages come at a very real cost. Currently forward deployed US forces are, at best, a trip-wire force whose aim is political: to try to demonstrate commitment. But they are not any real threat to Russia.

Cliché No 7: The US and NATO are protecting East European countries

On paper and in the official NATO propaganda, all of Europe and the USA are ready, if needed, to start WWIII to defend Estonia from the revanchist Russian hordes. Judging at how

the tiny Baltic states and Poland constantly “bark” at Russia and engage in an apparently never-ending streams of infantile but nonetheless arrogant provocations, folks in eastern Europe apparently believe that. They think that they are part of NATO, part of the EU, part of the “civilized West” and that their AngloZionist patrons will protect them from these scary Russkies. That belief just shows how stupid they are.

I wrote above that the USA is the only real military force in NATO and that US military and political leaders all know that. And they are right. Non-US NATO capabilities are a joke. What in the world do you think the, say, Belgian or Polish armed forces are in reality. That’s right – both a joke and a target. How about the glorious and invincible Portuguese and Slovenians? Same deal. The reality is that non-US NATO armed forces are just fig leaves hiding the fact that Europe is a US colony – some fig leaves are bigger, other are smaller. But even the biggest fig leaves (Germany and France) are still only that – a disposable utensil at the service of the real masters of the Empire. Should a real war ever break up in Europe, all these pompous little European statelets will be told to get the fuck out of the way and let the big boys take care of business. Both the Americans and the Russians know that, but for political reasons they will never admit this publicly.

Here I have to admit that I cannot prove that. All I can do is offer a personal testimony. While I was working on my Master’s Degree in Strategic Studies in Washington DC I had the opportunity to meet and spend time with a lot of US military personnel ranging from Armored Cavalry officers deployed in the Fulda Gap to a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. The first thing that I will say about them is that they were all patriots and, I think, excellent officers. They were all very capable of distinguishing political nonsense (like the notion of forward deploying US carriers to strike at the Kola Peninsula) from how the US would really fight. One senior Pentagon officer attached to the Office of Net Assessment was very blunt about that and declared to our classroom “no US President will ever sacrifice Chicago to protect Munich”. In other words, yes, the US would fight the Soviets to protect Europe, but the US will never escalate that fight to the point where the US territory would be threatened by Soviet nukes.

The obvious flaw here is that this assumes that escalation can be planned and controlled. Well, escalation is being planned in numerous offices, agencies and departments, but all these models usually show that it is very hard to control. As for de-escalation, I don’t know of any good models describing it (but my personal exposure to that kind of things is now very old, maybe things have changed since the late 1990s?). Keep in mind that both the USA and Russia have the use of nuclear weapons to prevent a defeat in conventional warfare included in their military doctrines. So if we believe, as I do, that the US is not willing to go nuclear to, say, save Poland then this basically means that the US is not even willing to defend Poland by conventional means or, at least, not defend it very much.

Again, the notion that Russia would attack anybody in Europe is beyond ridiculous, no Russian leader would ever even contemplate such a stupid, useless, counter-productive and self-defeating plan, if only because Russia has no need for any territory. If [Putin told Poroshenko that he did not want to take over the Donbass](#), how likely is that that the Russians are dreaming of occupying Lithuania or Romania?! I challenge anybody to come up with any rational reason for the Russians to want to attack any country in the West (or elsewhere, for that matter) even if that country had no military and was not member of any military alliance. In fact, Russia could have \*easily\* invaded Georgia in the 08/08/08 war but did not. And when is the last time you heard Mongolia or Kazakhstan fearing a Russian (or Chinese) invasion?

So the simple truth is that for all the big gesticulations and vociferous claims about defending the Europeans against the “Russian threat” there is no Russian threat just like the USA will never deliberately initiate a nuclear slugfest with Russia to defend Chisinau or even Stockholm.

## Conclusion

So if all of the above are just clichés with no bearing on reality, why is the western corporate media so full of this nonsense? Mainly for two reasons: journalists are mostly “Jack of all trades, master of none” and they much prefer to pass on pre-packaged propaganda than to make the effort to try to understand something. As for the talking heads on TV, the various generals who speak as “experts” for CNN and the rest, they are also simply propagandists. The real pros are busy working for the various government agencies and they don’t go in live TV to speak about the “Russian threat”. But the most important reason for this nonsensical propaganda is that by constantly pretending to discuss a military issue the AngloZionist propagandists are thereby hiding the real nature of the very real conflict between Russia and the USA over Europe: a political struggle for the future of Europe: if Russia has no intention of invading anybody, she sure does have huge interest in trying to de-couple Europe from its current status of US colony/protectorate. The Russians fully realize that while the current European elites are maniacally russophobic, most Europeans (with the possible exception of the Baltic States and Poland) are not. In that sense the recent Eurovision vote where the popular vote was overturned by so-called “experts” is very symbolic.

The first Secretary General of NATO did [very openly spell out its real purpose](#) “to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.” The Russians want it exactly the other way around: the Russians in (economically, not militarily, of course), the Americans out and the Germans up (again, economically). That is the real reason behind all the tensions in Europe: the USA desperately wants a Cold War v.2 while Russia is trying hard as she to prevent this.

So, what would a war between Russia and the USA look like? To be honest, I don’t know. It all depends on so many different factors that it is pretty much impossible to predict. That does not mean that it cannot, or will not, happen. There are numerous very bad signs that the Empire is acting in an irresponsible way. One of the worst ones is that the [NATO-Russia Council](#) (NRC) has almost completely ceased to function.

The main reason for the creation of the NRC was to make sure that secure lines of communications were open, especially in a crisis or tension situation. Alas, as a way to signal their displeasure with Russia over the Ukraine, NATO has now almost completely closed down the NRC even though the NRC was precisely created for that purpose.

Furthermore, forward deploying, besides often being militarily useless, is also potentially dangerous as a local incident between the two sides can rapidly escalate into something very serious. Especially when important lines of communications have been done away with. The good news, relatively speaking, is that the US and Russia still have emergency communications between the Kremlin and the White House and that the Russian and US armed forces also have direct emergency communication capabilities. But at the end of the day, the problem is not a technological one, but a psychological one: the Americans are apparently simply unable or unwilling to negotiate about anything at all. Somehow, the Neocons have imposed their worldview on the US deep state, and that worldview is that any

dynamic between Russia and the USA is a zero sum one, that there is nothing to negotiate and that forcing Russia to comply and submit to the Empire by means of isolation and containment is the only thinkable approach. This will, of course, not work. The question is whether the Neocons have the intellectual capability to understand that or, alternatively, whether the old Anglo US patriots can finally kick the “crazies in the basement” (as [Bush senior used to refer to the Neocons](#)) out of the White House.

But if Hillary makes it into the White House in November, then things will become really scary. Remember how I said that no US President would ever sacrifice a US city in defense of a European one? Well, that assumes a patriotic President, one who loves his country. I don't believe that the Neocons give a damn about America or the American people, and these crazies might well think that sacrificing one (or many) US cities is well worth the price if that allows them to nuke Moscow.

Any theory of deterrences assumes a “rational actor”, not a psychopathic and hate-filled cabal of “crazies in a basement”.

During the last years of the Cold War I was much more afraid of the gerontocrats in the Kremlin than of the Anglo officers and officials in the White House or the Pentagon. Now I fear the (relatively) new generation of “[ass-kissing little chickenshit](#)” officers *à la* Petraeus, or [maniacs like General Breedlove](#), which have replaced the “old style” Cold Warriors (like Admirals Elmo Zumwalt, William Crowe or Mike Mullen) who at least knew that a war with Russia must be avoided at all cost. It is outright frightening for me to realize that the Empire is now run by unprofessional, incompetent, unpatriotic and dishonorable men who are either driven by hateful ideologies or whose sole aim in life is to please their political bosses.

The example of Ehud Olmert, Amir Peretz and Dan Halutz going to war against Hezbollah in 2006 or Saakashvili's attempt at ethnically cleansing South Ossetia in 2008 have shown the world that ideology-driven leaders can start absolutely unwinnable wars, *especially if they believe in their own propaganda about their invincibility*. Let's is hope and pray that this kind of insanity does not take over the current US leaders. The best thing that could happen for the future of mankind would be if real patriots would come back to power in the United States. Then mankind could finally breathe a big sigh of relief.

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