

You Say You Want a (Russian) Revolution?

Andrei Martyanov's latest book provides unceasing evidence about the kind of lethality waiting for U.S. forces in a possible, future war against real armies (not the Taliban or Saddam Hussein's).

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Once in a blue moon an indispensable book comes out making a clear case for sanity in what is now a post-MAD world. That's the responsibility carried by "[The \(Real\) Revolution in Military Affairs](#)," by Andrei Martyanov (Clarity Press), arguably the most important book of 2019.

Martyanov is the total package — and he comes with extra special attributes as a top-flight Russian military analyst, born in Baku in those Back in the U.S.S.R. days, living and working in the U.S., and writing and [blogging](#) in English.

Right from the start, Martyanov wastes no time destroying not only Fukuyama's and Huntington's ravings but especially Graham Allison's childish and meaningless Thucydides Trap argument — as if the power equation between the U.S. and China in the 21st century could be easily interpreted in parallel to Athens and Sparta slouching towards the Peloponnesian War over 2,400 years ago. What next? Xi Jinping as the new Genghis Khan?

(By the way, the best current essay on Thucydides is in Italian, by Luciano Canfora ("[Tucidide: La Menzogna, La Colpa, L'Esilio](#)"). No Trap. Martyanov visibly relishes defining the Trap as a "figment of the imagination" of people who "have a very vague understanding of real warfare in the 21st century." No wonder Xi explicitly said the Trap does not exist.)

Martyanov had already detailed in his splendid, previous book, "Losing Military Supremacy: The Myopia of American Strategic Planning," how "American lack of historic experience with continental warfare" ended up "planting the seeds of the ultimate destruction of the American military mythology of the 20th and 21st centuries which is foundational to the American decline, due to hubris and detachment of reality." Throughout the book, he unceasingly provides solid evidence about the kind of lethality waiting for U.S. forces in a possible, future war against real armies (not the Taliban or Saddam Hussein's), air forces, air defenses and naval power.

Do the Math

One of the key takeaways is the failure of U.S. mathematical models: and readers of the book do need to digest quite a few mathematical equations. The key point is that this failure led the U.S. "on a continuous downward spiral of diminishing military capabilities against the nation [Russia] she thought she defeated in the Cold War."

In the U.S., [Revolution in Military Affairs](#) (RMA) was introduced by the late Andrew Marshall, a.k.a. Yoda, the former head of Net Assessment at the Pentagon and the de facto inventor of the “pivot to Asia” concept. Yet Martyanov tells us that RMA actually started as MTR (Military-Technological Revolution), introduced by Soviet military theoreticians back in the 1970s.

One of the staples of RMA concerns nations capable of producing land-attack cruise missiles, a.k.a. TLAMs. As it stands, only the U.S., Russia, China and France can do it. And there are only two global systems providing satellite guidance to cruise missiles: the American GPS and the Russian GLONASS. Neither China’s BeiDou nor the European Galileo qualify – yet – as global GPS systems.

Then there’s Net-Centric Warfare (NCW). The term itself was coined by the late Admiral [Arthur Cebrowski](#) in 1998 in an article he co-wrote with John Garstka’s titled, “Network-Centric Warfare – Its Origin and Future.”

Deploying his mathematical equations, Martyanov soon tells us that “the era of [subsonic anti-shipping missiles](#) is over.” NATO, that brain-dead organism (copyright Emmanuel Macron) now has to face the supersonic Russian P-800 Onyx and the Kalibr-class M54 in a “highly hostile Electronic Warfare environment.” Every developed modern military today applies [Net-Centric Warfare](#) (NCW), developed by the Pentagon in the 1990s.

Martyanov [mentions](#) in his new book something that I learned on my visit to Donbass in March 2015: how NCW principles, “based on Russia’s C4ISR capabilities made available by the Russian military to numerically inferior armed forces of the Donbass Republics (LDNR), were used to devastating effect both at the battles of Ilovaisk and Debaltsevo, when attacking the cumbersome Soviet-era Ukrainian Armed Forces military.”

No Escape From the Kinzhal

Martyanov provides ample information on Russia’s latest missile – the hypersonic Mach-10 aero-ballistic Kinzhal, recently [tested](#) in the Arctic.

Crucially, as he explains, “no existing anti-missile defense in the U.S. Navy is capable of shooting [it] down even in the case of the detection of this missile.” Kinzhal has a range of 2,000 km, which leaves its carriers, MiG-31K and TU-22M3M, “invulnerable to the only defense a U.S. Carrier Battle Group, a main pillar of U.S. naval power, can mount – carrier fighter aircraft.” These fighters simply don’t have the range.

The Kinzhal was one of the weapons announced by Russian President Vladimir Putin’s game-changing [March 1, 2018 speech](#) at the Federal Assembly. That’s the day, Martyanov stresses, when the real RMA arrived, and “changed completely the face of peer-peer warfare, competition and global power balance dramatically.”

Top Pentagon officials such as General [John Hyten](#), vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs, have admitted on the record there are “no existing countermeasures” against, for instance, the hypersonic, Mach 27 glide vehicle Avangard (which renders anti-ballistic missile systems useless), telling the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee the only way out would be “a nuclear deterrent.” There are also no existing counter-measures against anti-shipping missiles such as the Zircon and Kinzhal.

Any military analyst knows very well how the Kinzhal destroyed a land target the size of a Toyota Corolla in Syria after being launched 1,000 km away in adverse weather conditions. The corollary is the stuff of NATO nightmares: NATO's command and control installations in Europe are de facto indefensible.

Martyanov gets straight to the point: "The introduction of hypersonic weapons surely pours some serious cold water on the American obsession with securing the North American continent from retaliatory strikes."

Martyanov is thus unforgiving on U.S. policymakers who "lack the necessary tool-kit for grasping the unfolding geostrategic reality in which the real revolution in military affairs ... had dramatically downgraded the always inflated American military capabilities and continues to redefine U.S. geopolitical status away from its self-declared hegemony."

And it gets worse: "Such weapons ensure a guaranteed *retaliation* [Martyanov's italics] on the U.S. proper." Even the existing Russian nuclear deterrents - and to a lesser degree Chinese, as paraded recently - "are capable of overcoming the existing U.S. anti-ballistic systems and destroying the United States," no matter what crude propaganda the Pentagon is peddling.

In February 2019, Moscow announced the completion of tests of a nuclear-powered engine for the Petrel cruise missile. This is a subsonic cruise missile with nuclear propulsion that can remain in air for quite a long time, covering intercontinental distances, and able to attack from the most unexpected directions. Martyanov mischievously characterizes the Petrel as "a vengeance weapon in case some among American decision-makers who may help precipitate a new world war might try to hide from the effects of what they have unleashed in the relative safety of the Southern Hemisphere."

Hybrid War Gone Berserk

A section of the book expands on China's military progress, and the fruits of the Russia-China strategic partnership, such as Beijing buying \$3 billion-worth of [S-400 Triumph](#) anti-aircraft missiles - "ideally suited to deal with the exact type of strike assets the United States would use in case of a conventional conflict with China."

Because of the timing, the analysis does not even take into consideration the arsenal presented in early October at the Beijing parade celebrating the 70th anniversary of the People's Republic.

That includes, among other things, the "carrier-killer" DF-21D, designed to hit warships at sea at a range of up to 1,500 km; the intermediate range "Guam Killer" DF-26; the DF-17 hypersonic missile; and the long-range submarine-launched and ship-launched YJ-18A anti-ship cruise missiles. Not to mention the DF-41 ICBM - the backbone of China's nuclear deterrent, capable of reaching the U.S. mainland carrying multiple warheads.

Martyanov could not escape addressing the RAND Corporation, whose reason to exist is to relentlessly push for more money for the Pentagon - blaming Russia for "hybrid war" (an American invention) even as it moans about the U.S.'s incapacity of defeating Russia in each and every war game. RAND's war games pitting the U.S. and allies against Russia and China [invariably ended](#) in a "catastrophe" for the "finest fighting force in the world."

Martyanov also addresses the S-500s, capable of reaching AWACS planes and possibly even capable of intercepting hypersonic non-ballistic targets. The S-500 and its latest middle-range state of the art air-defense system S-350 Vityaz will be operational in 2020.

His key takeaway: “There is no parity between Russia and the United States in such fields as air-defense, hypersonic weapons and, in general, missile development, to name just a few fields – the United States lags behind in these fields, not just in years but in *generations* [italics mine].”

All across the Global South, scores of nations are very much aware that the U.S. economic “order” – rather disorder – is on the brink of collapse. In contrast, a cooperative, connected, rule-based, foreign relations between sovereign nations model is being advanced in Eurasia – symbolized by the merging of the New Silk Roads, or Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Eurasia Economic Union (EAEU), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the NDB (the BRICS bank).

The key guarantors of the new model are Russia and China. And Beijing and Moscow harbor no illusion whatsoever about the toxic dynamics in Washington. My recent conversations with top analysts in Kazakhstan last month and in Moscow last week once again stressed the futility of negotiating with people described – with overlapping shades of sarcasm – as exceptionalist fanatics. Russia, China and many corners of Eurasia have figured out there are no possible, meaningful deals with a nation bent on breaking every deal.

Indispensable? No: Vulnerable

Martyanov cannot but evoke Putin’s speech to the Federal Assembly in February 2019, after the unilateral Washington abandonment of the INF treaty, clearing the way for U.S. deployment of intermediate and close range missiles stationed in Europe and pointed at Russia:

“Russia will be forced to create and deploy those types of weapons...against those regions from where we will face a direct threat, but also against those regions hosting the centers where decisions are taken on using those missile systems threatening us.”

Translation: American Invulnerability is over – for good.

In the short term, things can always get worse. At his traditional, year-end presser in Moscow, lasting almost four and a half hours, Putin stated that Russia is more than ready to “simply renew the existing New START agreement”, which is bound to expire in early 2021: “They [the U.S.] can send us the agreement tomorrow, or we can sign and send it to Washington.” And yet, “so far our proposals have been left unanswered. If the New START ceases to exist, nothing in the world will hold back an arms race. I believe this is bad.”

“Bad” is quite the euphemism. Martyanov prefers to stress how “most of the American elites, at least for now, still reside in a state of Orwellian cognitive dissonance” even as the real RMA “blew the myth of American conventional invincibility out of the water.”

Martyanov is one of the very few analysts – always from different parts of Eurasia — who have warned about the danger of the U.S. “accidentally stumbling” into a war against Russia, China, or both which is impossible to be won conventionally, “let alone through the

nightmare of a global nuclear catastrophe.”

Is that enough to instill at least a modicum of sense into those who lord over that massive cash cow, the industrial-military-security complex? Don't count on it.

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