



RUSSIA'S FUTURE MILITARY DEVELOPMENT

Lessons from Ukraine, Force Reconstitution and the Post-War Armed Forces

An assessment of the military model Russia is likely to build from the operational, technological, organisational and industrial experience of the war against Ukraine.

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Russia is unlikely to emerge from the war with a fundamentally new military model. The more plausible outcome is an enlarged and adapted version of the existing force: still dependent on mass, artillery, centralised authority and strategic deterrence, but with a larger unmanned-systems component, more persistent electronic warfare, greater emphasis on dispersed operations and faster links between observation and fires. The change is consequential, but selective. It does not by itself resolve the weaknesses in leadership, training, logistics and joint integration exposed since 2022.

The war has demonstrated that Russia can sustain a large force in prolonged attritional combat by combining contract recruitment, high expenditure, refurbishment of stored equipment, expanded production and external supply. These mechanisms have prevented operational exhaustion; they do not prove that Russia can regenerate high-readiness formations at the same pace. Headcount, authorised strength and equipment deliveries are inputs. Combat capability depends on trained personnel, junior leaders, serviceable platforms, ammunition, maintenance, communications and coherent command at unit level.

The most durable learning is likely to be practical rather than doctrinal: routine UAV use, local reconnaissance-to-fire chains, rapid adaptation of electronic-warfare measures, camouflage and dispersion, field fortification, and the use of expendable systems to impose sustained costs. A Russian Unmanned Systems Forces branch is being formed, but its creation is an institutional signal, not evidence that integration has become uniform across the force. Similar unevenness is likely in digital command, cyber support and space-enabled targeting.

By 2030, Russia is likely to field a hybrid force combining regenerated conventional formations with larger stocks of lower-cost drones, missiles and electronic-warfare systems. Its quality will depend on whether battlefield adaptations become repeatable training, procurement and command practices after the immediate wartime pressure declines. Manpower scarcity, competition for skilled labour, sanctions-related technology constraints, fiscal pressures and organisational incentives will limit the pace and depth of change.

The Ukraine War as a Military Transformation Laboratory

The battlefield has become persistently observable. Small UAVs, commercial imagery, electronic emissions and long-range sensors expose movement, assembly areas and logistics well beyond the forward edge. This has raised the cost of concentration and made concealment, decoys, mobility and signature management routine requirements. The effect is not continuous omniscience: weather, terrain, jamming, sensor coverage and command delays still create gaps. But forces can no longer assume that the rear is protected from observation or attack. The practical consequence is a shift in the time available to move, assemble and resupply. Units increasingly need to break movement into shorter periods, conceal staging areas, separate command posts from communications nodes and use decoys to complicate target identification. These measures reduce exposure but also slow coordination and add demands on trained staff.

UAV proliferation is the most visible adaptation. Reconnaissance drones support artillery and local targeting; first-person-view and other short-range strike systems attack vehicles, positions and personnel; longer-range one-way systems impose demands on air defence and rear-area security. Their value is generated by the supporting system—operators, relays, data links, payloads, repair, batteries, launch teams and replacement supply—not by airframe totals alone. Persistent attrition and rapid redesign favour simple platforms that can be replaced and modified at scale.

The observation-to-fire cycle has shortened in many sectors. UAVs, ground observers, electronic support and artillery can combine to detect, identify and engage targets before they relocate. This is a local and variable capability rather than a seamless national network. The chain remains vulnerable to jamming, deception, counter-battery fire, poor communications and friction in passing target data between organisations. The lesson is therefore as much about delegated authority, resilient communications and trained teams as about sensors or precision munitions.

Electronic warfare has become a continuous contest over navigation, control links, positioning and communications. Neither side has achieved a permanent advantage: frequencies, waveforms, routes and control methods change as countermeasures spread. Russian forces are likely to retain a stronger institutional role for EW than in many Western armies, while increasing demand for mobile, local systems that can protect units without announcing fixed locations. Cyber activity, space support and conventional EW are complementary but not interchangeable; their integration remains dependent on access, command arrangements and mission-specific networks.

Long-range strike and artillery remain central to Russian operations. Precision weapons can impose disproportionate effects against selected targets, but sustained campaigns also depend on volume, target-quality intelligence, launch

platforms, stockpiles and the ability to assess damage. Artillery continues to provide massed effects, although UAV observation and counter-battery threats require more dispersion, concealment and movement. Fortifications and minefields have regained operational importance because they slow attacks, canalise movement and increase the time available for fires. They do not substitute for mobile reserves or competent command. Nor do fortifications guarantee operational advantage: fixed positions can be mapped, isolated or bypassed, and minefields require maintenance and protected routes for friendly movement. The experience is likely to reinforce a combined defensive system in which obstacles, fires, UAV observation and counterattack forces support one another. The balance between static protection and manoeuvre remains contingent on manpower, terrain and the availability of reserves.

Dispersion, deception, hardened positions, camouflage and short exposure windows are likely to persist beyond this theatre. So are the requirements to distribute fuel and ammunition, protect repair sites, provide redundant routes and defend command nodes from drones and precision strike. Other adaptations—specific assault-group practices, improvised vehicle protection and sector-specific use of older equipment—are more contingent. They respond to current force shortages and local conditions; their value after a ceasefire would depend on changes in the threat, equipment mix and training system.

Reconstituting the Russian Armed Forces

Russia has generated personnel during the war through contract recruitment, mobilisation, regional incentives and other channels, while seeking to avoid another nationwide mobilisation on the scale of 2022. Official recruitment totals should be treated as claims about accessions, not measures of net force growth. Casualties, medical discharge, desertion, rotation requirements and the retention of experienced personnel all affect the number and quality of troops available for units. Financial incentives can sustain recruitment, but they also raise the cost of retaining personnel and may weaken once wartime pay and benefits become fiscally harder to maintain.

The key personnel constraint is not only the supply of soldiers. Experienced officers, platoon commanders, sergeants, instructors, specialists and technical maintainers are harder to replace than individual recruits. Casualties among junior leaders reduce cohesion and the capacity to train replacements. Expanded force structures and newly formed units compete for the same scarce cadre. Russia can fill billets faster than it can create cohesive formations with trained leadership, collective practice and reliable support. Recruitment also competes with conscription and the need to preserve a trained reserve for future contingencies. Returning veterans may offer a pool of experienced personnel, but their willingness to remain in service, medical fitness and suitability for instructor or command roles will vary. Veteran status alone does not ensure that lessons are accurate, transferable or institutionally accepted.

The expansion of military districts and the announced formation or reorganisation of units indicate a long-term effort to increase force structure and orient it toward NATO's northern and western flanks. Such measures establish command frameworks and authorised formations; they do not show that every unit is fully manned, equipped or ready. Readiness will vary by mission, region and the availability of experienced personnel. Units committed to Ukraine, units regenerating in the rear and forces assigned to other theatres draw on overlapping pools of staff, equipment and training capacity. Force expansion also creates a sequencing problem: new headquarters and formations can be announced before the required personnel, weapons, communications and support units are available. A formation becomes militarily useful only when its subordinate elements can train and deploy together and when its sustainment arrangements are tested under realistic conditions.

Equipment regeneration combines new production with repair, refurbishment and cannibalisation. Refurbishment of stored Soviet-era vehicles and artillery has provided useful capacity, but accessible stocks of the best-condition equipment are finite. As stored vehicles require more extensive overhaul, the time, labour and parts needed per platform increase. New production can improve quality and standardisation, yet it is constrained by machine tools, electronics, engines, skilled labour and competing orders. Delivery counts do not show how many platforms are serviceable, crewed, integrated into units or available after maintenance.

Training remains the bridge between replacement and capability. Short courses and in-theatre adaptation can prepare personnel for bounded tasks, but they cannot fully replace collective training for combined-arms operations, large-scale manoeuvre, air defence, logistics or joint command. Combat veterans provide valuable practical knowledge; transferring it requires instructors, doctrine, training time and incentives that reward candid reporting. The Russian system has shown an ability to adapt tactically under pressure. Whether those adaptations survive the transition from wartime improvisation to institutional routine is less certain. Combat rotation is essential to this process: units must be withdrawn

early enough to recover, receive replacements and train, rather than being returned to the line as soon as manpower is replenished. If operational demand continues to absorb regenerated units, the army may preserve frontline strength at the cost of force-wide proficiency and the development of a reserve.

From Mass to Networked Attrition

The phrase 'networked attritional warfare' is useful as a hypothesis, not as an established Russian doctrine. It describes an approach in which massed personnel and industrial output are combined with widespread sensors, UAVs, electronic warfare, rapid targeting and fires. Lower-cost or replaceable platforms absorb losses while more capable systems are reserved for targets that justify their cost. The concept explains several observed practices, but it should not be mistaken for a fully integrated force design or a uniformly available capability.

The model's potential advantage is cumulative pressure. Persistent observation can expose movement; electronic warfare can disrupt or constrain response; artillery, drones and missiles can then impose losses on forces and support systems. This can reduce an opponent's freedom of movement even when no single strike is decisive. Russia's ability to sustain this pattern rests on ammunition stocks, production, repair, target development, communications and the willingness to accept high personnel and materiel costs.

Its central vulnerability is network dependence. Sensors and operators must communicate, target data must be trusted and fires must arrive before the opportunity closes. Jamming, deception, cyber disruption, counter-battery action and strikes on production or logistics can break the chain. Mass remains valuable but can be wasted when coordination is weak or when units cannot exploit fires. Precision remains valuable but cannot compensate for insufficient volume or poor target selection. A future Russian force may therefore combine concentrated fires with small, dispersed tactical elements, without becoming a consistently networked force at every echelon.

The likely direction is a layered force in which expendable UAVs and munitions multiply the effect of conventional units. This is a change in the way mass is generated and applied, not a move away from mass. Its operational effectiveness will depend on whether Russia can connect local kill chains to operational command and sustain them across several sectors while maintaining reserves, mobility and protection.

Command, Control and Multi-Domain Integration

Russian command performance in Ukraine has varied from rigid, slow higher-level control to effective local adaptation by experienced formations. Operational pressure has encouraged more direct links between UAV operators, artillery and assault units, as well as practical delegation where communications are available. These local arrangements can be lethal and fast, but they are not necessarily evidence of a force-wide digital command architecture. Replication across units requires compatible equipment, secure communications, shared procedures and a cadre capable of using them under electronic attack.

Battlefield digitalisation is likely to expand through mission-specific systems rather than a single seamless network. The priorities are resilient voice and data links, common location and target formats, rapid reporting, and the ability to operate when satellite navigation or broadband communications are degraded. Russia has fielded digital command tools and has expanded their use, but reported implementation remains uneven. Reliance on commercial components and improvised software can accelerate fielding while creating vulnerabilities in security, interoperability, maintenance and supply.

UAV-to-artillery integration is the clearest practical example of multi-domain convergence at the tactical level. Electronic warfare both protects Russian units and interferes with opposing systems; cyber activity can support broader operations but offers different effects and timelines. Space-based communications, navigation and imagery can enhance reach, yet availability and resilience under conflict cannot be inferred from peacetime access alone. Integration across air, land, maritime, cyber and space remains an organisational challenge: services and branches must share priorities, authorities and information in time to affect operations.

The establishment of a separate Unmanned Systems Forces branch signals recognition that unmanned systems require institutional ownership, force generation and career structures. Its operational contribution will depend on command relationships with ground formations, the Aerospace Forces and the Navy; control of procurement and training; and the ability to retain rapid feedback from frontline units. Formal designation may improve standardisation while also creating bureaucratic seams. Evidence of integration should be sought in joint exercises, common procedures, force readiness and operational tasking, rather than the branch title alone. A mature arrangement would also clarify which commander owns

sensor tasking, who validates targets, how electronic-warfare deconfliction is conducted and how data moves between services. The answers affect practical tempo. Without common procedures, additional sensors can increase reporting volume without improving target quality or reducing decision time.

Defence Industrial Base

Russia has expanded wartime production and shifted a large share of industrial capacity toward defence requirements. State direction, long production runs, additional shifts and predictable procurement have increased output in selected categories. Repair and refurbishment have also returned equipment to service more rapidly than new production could alone. These measures demonstrate substantial surge capacity. They do not establish that the same rates can be sustained indefinitely or that output is balanced across complete systems, components, ammunition, maintenance and trained crews.

Ammunition, missiles and one-way attack UAVs are well suited to high-volume production, but each depends on energetic materials, motors, guidance components, electronics, test facilities and quality control. Imported or diverted components have helped offset restrictions; this introduces uncertainty in availability, cost and reliability. Production figures reported by state firms or officials are indicators of declared output, not independent evidence of delivered, accepted and combat-ready systems. The more useful measures are delivery continuity, defect and failure rates, repair times, stock replenishment and demonstrated operational use. Production growth in one category can conceal shortfalls elsewhere: a drone requires secure control components and trained operators, while a missile requires propulsion, guidance, testing and a platform able to launch it. The bottleneck may migrate as production expands. This makes the industrial base a system of interdependent suppliers rather than a simple count of finished weapons.

The defence-industrial workforce is a binding constraint. High demand for engineers, machinists, software specialists and technicians competes with civilian sectors, while demographic contraction narrows the recruitment base. Higher wages can attract workers but raise unit costs and intensify labour-market competition. Expanding vocational training may improve supply over time; it cannot quickly replace experienced engineers or restore advanced machine-tool capacity. Industrial expansion also competes with the Armed Forces for technicians and skilled military personnel.

External military-industrial cooperation provides access to ammunition, components, machine tools and technical assistance, but it creates dependencies and is vulnerable to political change, interdiction and sanctions enforcement. Cooperation with China may reduce selected technological constraints, yet there is no basis to assume that Beijing will provide unrestricted access to its most advanced military technologies. Russia's domestic electronics and component base can substitute for some imports, often with trade-offs in performance, scale or reliability. External support can also have military effects that are hard to quantify: access to technical knowledge, production inputs and manufacturing equipment may matter as much as direct weapons transfers. At the same time, dependence on a small number of foreign partners creates exposure to export controls, diplomatic pressure and supply interruptions. The availability of imported components is therefore an enabling factor, not a guaranteed long-term foundation.

The post-war test will be whether wartime output can shift from emergency expansion to stable regeneration and modernisation without continued extraordinary state spending. If the conflict declines, Russia may retain production lines and higher stocks but face difficult choices between procurement, pay, maintenance, research and civilian investment. Surge capacity is strategically useful; sustainable capacity requires a trained workforce, dependable inputs, capital renewal, quality assurance and demand that does not crowd out the wider economy.

The Future Force

Ground Forces. The Ground Forces are likely to remain the centre of Russian conventional power in a prolonged land conflict. Reconstituted formations will probably retain artillery, armour, engineers and air defence as core elements, with more UAV detachments, EW teams and small reconnaissance-strike cells embedded at lower echelons. The war has increased the importance of protected mobility, field engineering, mine-clearing and rapid repair. Russia may rebuild larger formations while continuing to employ dispersed assault groups and attritional tactics where manpower or equipment quality limits conventional manoeuvre. The key measure will be the ability to train and sustain combined-arms formations, not the number of units announced.

Aerospace Forces. The Aerospace Forces are likely to preserve their principal roles in long-range strike, air defence, tactical support and strategic deterrence. The war has shown that capable aircraft and precision weapons can generate effects, but also that air operations are constrained by integrated air defences, risk tolerance, sortie generation, pilot experience and munitions supply. Stand-off strike and glide-bomb employment reduce exposure but depend on

targeting, stockpiles and aircraft availability. The force may add unmanned reconnaissance and strike systems and improve base defence, yet these developments are unlikely to remove the need for manned aviation or resolve weaknesses in joint air-ground coordination. A central issue will be the generation of trained aircrew and maintainers while keeping aircraft serviceable at an adequate sortie rate. Aircraft inventories provide little indication of how many crews can fly complex missions repeatedly, how quickly damaged airframes can be repaired or how effectively aviation can be coordinated with ground manoeuvre and air defence.

Naval Forces. The Navy is likely to emphasise strategic nuclear survivability, long-range missile strike, coastal defence and protection of maritime approaches. Ukraine's attacks have demonstrated that ships and bases can be threatened by inexpensive uncrewed systems, missiles and intelligence support. The Black Sea experience will encourage dispersal, layered base defence, hardening and more careful use of high-value vessels. It does not imply that Russia will abandon surface forces. Shipbuilding timelines, propulsion, electronics and maintenance constrain regeneration, and fleet-level readiness depends on trained crews, repair yards, logistics and access to secure bases. Uncrewed surface and underwater systems may gain greater prominence for reconnaissance, mine warfare, patrol and attack, particularly in restricted waters. Their operational utility will depend on communications, autonomy, navigation and the ability to process sensor data. They are likely to complement rather than replace conventional vessels, whose command, payload and endurance remain important for distant operations.

Strategic Forces. The nuclear triad will remain central to Russia's deterrence posture and a protected priority in force planning. Modernisation of land-based, sea-based and air-delivered systems is likely to continue alongside investment in command, warning and survivability. The war has reinforced the utility of nuclear signalling in shaping adversary risk calculations, but this does not demonstrate a change in the threshold for nuclear use. Conventional force regeneration and strategic-force modernisation will compete for industrial and budgetary resources; the Kremlin is likely to protect the latter while accepting unevenness elsewhere.

Structural Constraints

Manpower is the most persistent constraint. Russia's demographic profile, wartime casualties, outflow and competition for workers limit both military recruitment and industrial staffing. Contract recruitment can produce substantial inflows, but retention after combat, demobilisation and any reduction in financial incentives is uncertain. Mobilisation remains an available state instrument, yet its political and economic costs make repeated large-scale use less attractive than targeted recruitment and administrative pressure.

Training and leadership quality constrain how quickly force expansion becomes effective capability. Unit formation requires instructors, experienced officers and NCOs, collective training areas, ammunition and time away from operational commitments. Compressed individual training can fill gaps but will not replace field exercises at scale. Combat experience is valuable but uneven; it can also entrench practices adapted to the current front that may be ineffective in other theatres or against a different opponent.

Technology and industry impose a second set of limits. Russia can field large numbers of relatively simple systems and modify designs rapidly, but advanced electronics, precision components, engines, software and machine tools remain harder to produce or source reliably. Sanctions do not stop all access, but they increase transaction costs, reduce predictability and constrain some forms of modernisation. Industrial policy can prioritise defence output; it cannot eliminate shortages of skilled labour, capital equipment or high-quality inputs.

Financial sustainability will shape the balance between quantity and quality. High defence spending can be maintained for a period by reallocating public expenditure, borrowing, taxation and resource revenue. Over time, debt service, inflation, civilian investment and social obligations compete with military procurement and compensation. The scale of the future force is therefore a political-economic decision as much as a military requirement. A larger authorised establishment may be maintained on paper while readiness and equipment quality vary sharply among units. The distribution of spending matters as much as its headline level. Personnel compensation, veterans' benefits, procurement, operations, maintenance and research all draw on the same fiscal base. If the state protects immediate readiness and recruitment bonuses, it may defer capital renewal or civilian investment; if it protects long-term procurement, it may struggle to retain personnel. The resulting force could be large but hollow in selected enabling functions.

Organisational rigidity and corruption can weaken feedback. Centralised systems can mobilise resources quickly and standardise priorities, but they can also discourage reporting failure, slow adaptation outside approved channels and protect incumbent programmes. Wartime improvisation has flourished partly because local actors have bypassed normal

procurement and command processes. Institutionalising the useful parts without preserving waste, informal patronage or distorted performance reporting will be difficult.

Implications for NATO

For NATO's Eastern Flank, the principal implication is a Russian force that may recover substantial capacity over time while remaining uneven in readiness and quality. The end or reduction of large-scale combat in Ukraine would free personnel, equipment and industrial capacity for other missions, but the redeployment and regeneration timeline would depend on losses, unit condition, political choices and the duration of recovery. Declared force size should therefore be separated from formations that can deploy with trained staffs, logistics and sustainable support.

Russia's experience reinforces the operational value of long-range strike, UAV saturation, electronic warfare and attacks on logistics, command nodes and infrastructure. NATO forces would face pressure to disperse, harden, conceal and sustain operations under persistent observation and contested communications. Air and missile defence will need to manage both high-end threats and large volumes of lower-cost systems, while preserving scarce interceptors. Counter-UAV capability must combine sensors, jamming, guns, interceptors and passive measures; no single layer will cover every target or terrain.

Prolonged conventional warfare would test ammunition reserves, repair capacity, industrial surge, casualty replacement and political endurance. Russia has demonstrated willingness to sustain high losses and mobilise national resources, although these practices carry growing economic and personnel costs. NATO planning should account for a force able to regenerate selected capabilities while also recognising the time required to rebuild quality formations. The relevant comparison is between sustainable combat functions and regeneration rates, not aggregate inventories or announced production totals. NATO should monitor the condition and activity of training grounds, the reappearance of experienced staffs, the scale of repair and production shifts, and whether units can conduct sustained exercises beyond scripted demonstrations. The ability to deploy a formation is only the first test; its ability to maintain tempo, replace losses and continue operating under attack is the more demanding measure.

Outlook to 2030

The following trajectories are non-exclusive. They describe possible emphases in Russian force development, not mutually exclusive predictions.

A. Quantitative Reconstitution. Russia prioritises filling personnel establishments, restoring formations, rebuilding ammunition stocks and replacing equipment losses, relying heavily on recruitment, refurbishment and expanded production. This trajectory would be supported by continued high enlistment, new formations reaching trained readiness, replenishment of stored equipment with serviceable platforms, sustained ammunition output and the reappearance of larger-scale combined-arms exercises. It would be weakened by persistent manpower shortfalls, prolonged regeneration times, declining equipment condition, reduced contract retention or procurement cuts that limit training and maintenance.

B. Selective Technological Transformation. Russia directs resources toward unmanned systems, electronic warfare, communications, sensors, precision strike and air defence while accepting a smaller or more uneven conventional force. Supporting indicators would include a functioning Unmanned Systems Forces structure, common training and procurement standards, routine UAV-to-fire integration across formations, resilient tactical communications under jamming, shorter field-to-factory feedback cycles and repeatable operational use beyond Ukraine. The trajectory would be weakened if new structures remain nominal, equipment is unavailable at scale, technical personnel cannot be retained, or battlefield adaptation remains confined to a few experienced units.

C. Hybrid Force Model. Russia restores mass in selected formations while adding networked, expendable systems and local reconnaissance-strike capacity. It would combine artillery and missiles with UAVs and EW, preserve strategic forces, and use different force packages for theatre-specific missions. Evidence would include simultaneous recovery of conventional readiness and growth in unmanned, electronic-warfare and long-range strike capabilities; improved logistics and command procedures linking them; and exercise activity demonstrating dispersion, regeneration and joint fires. This trajectory would be weakened by widening gaps between high-priority formations and the rest of the force, or by industrial and manpower constraints that force quantity and quality into direct competition.

The central indicator through 2030 is institutionalisation. Russia has already shown that units can adapt under combat pressure. A more consequential transformation would be visible when those practices are embedded in force design,

officer and NCO education, training cycles, procurement standards, maintenance systems and operational command. If adaptation remains local and dependent on experienced individuals, the post-war force will be more experienced and better equipped in selected areas but retain much of the pre-war system's unevenness. The trajectories could coexist across services and regions: Russia may regenerate mass in ground forces, prioritise strategic weapons, and pursue a more experimental approach in unmanned systems. A single national label would obscure these differences. Assessment should track which capabilities receive people, recurring funding, training time and operational responsibility over several years. An operational pause in Ukraine would not itself demonstrate successful regeneration. The first test would be whether Russia can withdraw, reconstitute and retrain units without consuming the personnel and equipment intended for follow-on formations. A second would be whether replenishment rates exceed routine maintenance and training demand. A third would be whether command systems and industrial supply chains support sustained operations outside the immediate Ukrainian theatre. These indicators are observable over time and distinguish a temporary postwar surge from a durable change in force structure. A further test is whether regeneration is spread across the force or concentrated in a limited number of priority formations. Persistent gaps in manning, maintenance and exercise performance would indicate that Russia is preserving a large establishment by accepting uneven readiness. Conversely, repeated evidence of rotation, collective training, functioning logistics and integrated fires across multiple formations would show that learning has moved beyond frontline improvisation. Procurement should be assessed in the same way: new systems matter when they are available in sufficient numbers, supported by trained crews and maintainers, and used in exercises that test them under degraded communications and air-defence conditions. The resulting pattern may differ between the Western and Eastern military districts, between land and maritime forces, and between conventional units and strategic forces. Analysts should therefore compare capability by mission and readiness tier, while tracking whether resources, personnel and training cycles follow the announced structure. Through 2030, the distinction between expansion and transformation will be visible in these recurring institutional outputs, rather than in a single reform announcement or one year of production growth. The operating context will also matter. If high-intensity fighting continues, personnel, equipment and industrial output will remain committed to immediate replacement, limiting time for broad training and experimentation. A ceasefire or reduction in combat could release resources, but would not automatically restore unit cohesion or maintenance stocks; demobilisation, veteran retention and the redeployment of formations would create their own demands. The force Russia seeks to build will therefore reflect not only lessons from the battlefield, but also the political settlement, the perceived duration of the NATO challenge and the state's capacity to sustain military spending. These factors can change the balance among expansion, modernisation and readiness without altering the basic institutional model.