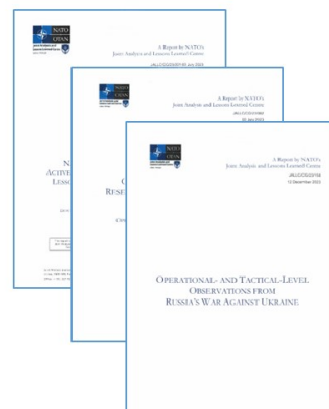


Observations from Russia's war against Ukraine

Report Published 12 December 2023

Project Overview

It has often been stated that wars are not just contests of weapons and will; they are also laboratories of sort that provide lessons that will shape the way future wars are approached. Russia's war against Ukraine is such a laboratory, one in which every military across the globe is studying to learn lessons that will impact on military plans and technologies for future conflicts. The war also provides an opportunity to incorporate lessons learned into NATO training and exercises. Consequently, the Joint Force Training Centre (JFTC) requested the JALLC's assistance to provide observations from the war that could help develop operational dilemmas for the LOYAL LEDA series of exercises that are delivered by the JFTC.



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In response, the JALLC produced three reports in 2023. The first reported on Ukraine-related entries submitted to the NATO Lessons Learned Portal (NLLP). The second presented the analysis of relevant open-source publications. In total, 17 publications were reviewed from Think-Tanks and Research Centres such as the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS), and included articles written by prominent authors such former top military commanders. Both of these reports were delivered to the JFTC in July 2023.

The JALLC has delivered three analysis reports on Russia's war against Ukraine representing a body of work that references both open source material and NATO information such as NLLP items and reports from various NATO

“Operational Dilemma: A situation where a commander has to make a choice between equally undesirable alternatives i.e. difficult or perplexing situations or problems that will require the Training Audience to demonstrate all the skills outlined on their Training Objectives.”

NATO Directive on Training and Exercises Reporting

Continued

The final report in the JALLC's 2023 Ukraine series was completed in December and contains a number of observations extracted from publications provided by a range of sources including from NATO Nations, NATO HQs, and again, from open-source material.



Left: *New Scientist: Drone pilots defending Ukraine* (<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2307922-meet-the-amateur-drone-pilots-defending-ukraines-border-with-russia/>). Right: *HCSS* (<https://hcss.nl/report/lessons-from-land-warfare-one-year-of-war-in-ukraine/>)

Key Takeaways

Collectively, these reports offer insights into how the nature of the war is unfolding across a number of functional areas, and provide JFTC exercise planners with proposals to consider in their development of operational dilemmas for future LOYAL LEDA exercises. The following key areas were identified:

- **Drones:** The war highlights the increasing stealth, speed, lethality, and availability of drones posing significant challenges to air defences.
- **Private sector support to military operations:** Support provided to the Ukrainians by the private sector helped to defend against Russian cyber attacks.
- **Battle for cognitive superiority:** Both sides have extensively used social media platforms as tools to spread their narratives and, at times, to manipulate public opinion.
- **Sustainment:** The high attrition rates of equipment highlights that the 'just in time' approach to logistics is no longer conducive to sustaining forces in an enduring, high-intensity conflict.
- **Civilian resilience:** The reports note the resolve of the Ukrainian people to win the war and highlight how they have materially contributed to ensuring that critical infrastructure and services are maintained.

In conclusion, the reports indicate that, almost two years into Russia's war against Ukraine, new realities of war are emerging characterized by, among other factors, extensive use of drones, increasing need to utilize specialized services provided by the private sector, false-flag operations awash with fake videos and disinformation, and a rethink on how to sustain masses of troops in an high-intensity fight throughout a long-haul operation.

Copies of the reports mentioned in this factsheet can be requested from the JALLC upon demonstration of the appropriate security clearances.

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You can read more about the JALLC's work in the area of Russia's war against Ukraine in the 2023 edition of the JALLC's magazine: The Explorer. Click the link [here](#) or got to the JALLC's website under Products to download a copy.

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