

**THE CULTURE OF MILITARY  
INNOVATION: THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL  
FACTORS ON THE REVOLUTION IN  
MILITARY AFFAIRS IN RUSSIA, THE US,  
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The Impact of Cultural Factors on the Revolution  
in Military Affairs in Russia, the US, and Israel



Dima Adamsky

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This book studies the impact of cultural factors on the course of military innovations. One would expect that countries accustomed to similar technologies would undergo analogous changes in their perception of and approach to warfare. However, the intellectual history of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) in Russia, the US, and Israel indicates the opposite. The US developed technology and weaponry for about a decade without reconceptualizing the existing paradigm about the nature of warfare. Soviet 'new theory of victory' represented a conceptualization which chronologically preceded technological procurement. Israel was the first to utilize the weaponry on the battlefield, but was the last to develop a conceptual framework that acknowledged its revolutionary implications.

Utilizing primary sources that had previously been completely inaccessible, and borrowing methods of analysis from political science, history, anthropology, and cognitive psychology, this book suggests a cultural explanation for this puzzling transformation in warfare.

The Culture of Military Innovation offers a systematic, thorough, and unique analytical approach that may well be applicable in other perplexing strategic situations. Though framed in the context of specific historical experience, the insights of this book reveal important implications related to conventional, subconventional, and nonconventional security issues. It is therefore an ideal reference work for practitioners, scholars, teachers, and students of security studies.

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Book Review for *The Culture of Military Innovation*

By E. Klann

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This meticulously researched volume presents a rigorous case study in comparative strategic cultures and the revolution of military affairs (RMA). It addresses two central questions: first-- what explains how military innovations, based on similar technologies, develop in different nation states? Secondly--how does a "new theory of victory" originate in different cultural settings? It compares and contrasts the cultures of the United States, Israel, and Russia and how they have approached and interpreted the changing nature of warfare. According to the author, the most recent roots of RMA can be traced to the mid 1970s when standoff precision-guided munitions (PGM) were introduced. The Russians were the first to recognize that PGMs would radically change modern warfare and constitute a fundamental discontinuity which they called the military-technical revolution (MTR). RMA and MTR are terms describing "radical military innovation that render existing doctrine and forms of combat obsolete."

Mr. Adamsky contends that the cognitive art of each national culture dominates and conditions the manner in which their militaries integrate strategy, doctrine, operational concepts, organization, and new weapons technology.

The author argues that the American way of war has relied on material superiority, massive firepower, and advanced technologies over a fighting style focused on an intellectual approach of creative maneuvering and strategic innovation. This evolved from an American cognitive style that is inductive, logical-analytical, and centered on the object being independent from the context in which it is embedded.

The Israeli way of war was founded on a siege mentality, the quest for absolute security, the ability to improvise, and tactical offensive excellence. The Israeli's viewed heroism, combat experience, and leadership as the essence of military art rather than theoretical knowledge or formal education. This resulted in a weak institutional commitment to the areas of military theory and doctrine. They developed and procured new weaponry but treated it as a force multiplier for their current concept of operations rather than

something that could change the existing military architecture. Israeli cognitive style is based on a pragmatic, problem-solving approach in which doing comes before understanding.

According to the author, the Russian way of war was based on the notion that battles are won by men and not machines. Technology was considered lifeless if divorced from human and operational factors. As a result, the requirements for weapons were based on doctrine and operational concepts and not the newest technology. Their approach was institutionalized by selecting the best and brightest officers for their general staff. These officers were extensively trained and were expected to have encyclopedic military knowledge. In this intellectual atmosphere, the Russians developed futuristic strategies and creative theories regarding the nature, conduct, and future of warfare. They did, however, lack the material capacity to put their theories into effect on the battlefield. The Russian cognitive style was oriented toward "holistic-dialectical" thinking. Understanding an issue and the unifying principles that underlay all its interacting systems was more important than doing.

This volume has a highly academic and uneven literary flow, an annoying redundancy of key ideas, and seventy-seven pages of detailed notes. Regardless, its originality, the extensive use of primary sources, and the critical thought-processes employed, make it an ideal reference for military strategists, students of security studies, scholars, and those interested in applying cultural models to organizational behavior.

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