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The weakening Russian Army

In the near future Russia will not replace quantity with quality: rather, in absolute terms all the numbers are going down. Technologies capable of transforming conventional weaponry lie in the distant future, if not beyond the horizon with the current budgets.

The chronic funding shortages, the endemic criminal activity, and the widespread corruption, along with Russia's now more engaging politics drive the change. The Army's budgeted 32 billion euros is now spent alleviating social problems, e.g. over 44 000 new troop homes are to be bought in 2009.

The book strength of the Russian Army is scheduled to drop from 1.34M to 1 million in 2012. The real strength is currently estimated at six to eight hundred thousand. In two years, this means e.g. 200 000 officers are to go, leaving 150 000, which may well lead to severe social unrest like the cuts of the 1990s.

Regardless, in a crisis Russia may be capable of improving its military faster than perceived. It is no longer possible to do in complete secrecy, however.

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The postmodern war in Iraq

The US-led coalition took the key cities in Iraq in 3 weeks and declared the fighting over. Only 173 out of the 4700 current casualties occurred during that time. 2009 has seen less than 150 dead.



Is the war over? Did the US win or lose? According to **Basil Liddell Hart**, in victory a nation's prospect after the war is better than if it had not made war.

The Iraq war doctrine was Shock and Awe: quick win by use of superior force. In the war, Islamic predestination encountered Western determinism. The coalition's economical and technological resources were superior, but in a war of occupation superior strength is a function of time. The coalition's Western perception of time is evident in the goals, the leadership, and the organisation. The enemy has a different world view, and the networked and non-linear use of force has proven an effective counter.

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New focus on Afghanistan

In 2009 the Nato forces have been in almost daily combat with the stirring insurgents. The Finnish peacekeepers' Swedish command near Mazar-i-Sharif has also had over 20 enemy contacts, including IED and suicide bomber attacks. Due to the worsening security situation the US commander has requested 40 000 reinforcements. The potent insurgency, the troubled elections, war weariness, and the weak government of President **Karzai** put pressure on the West to again concentrate on Afghanistan.

Read more:
www.suomensotilas.fi