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WHITE KNIGHTS VERSUS DARK VADER?
ON THE PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS OF DEBATING HYBRID WARFARE

Prof. Dr. Dr.h.c.mult. Reinhard Meyers

Professor emeritus of International Politics,

Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster

meyersr@uni-muenster.de

Abstract

Ever since Russia occupied the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, debating the concepts and boundary conditions of Hybrid Warfare has become an academic growth industry in European social science. There is, however, no agreement on the exact content of the concept, nor on its qualitative characteristics, nor on its political implications. While some sources stress its newness and see Hybrid Warfare as a further development of asymmetric warfare located in a postmodern gray zone between peace and war, others maintain that a combination of regular and irregular forms of war fighting has been with Humanity at least since Antiquity. The paper adduces much of the confusion over terms to the blending of two distinct hybrid warfare concepts: an additive concept, which indeed reaches back to the very early (pre-)historic sources and forms of war fighting, and a "hybrid warfare plus" concept, which, in a materialistic view of history, is the reflection of the development of the forces of destruction during the Third Industrial Revolution, particularly taking account of digitalization, globalization, and anonymization of responsibilities.

Keywords: Hybrid warfare; Add-on concept of hybridity; Hybrid warfare plus; Gray zone; Warfighting in the 21st century.

Next to the intricate complexities of Humanitarian Intervention and the Responsibility to Protect [R2P] (Meyers, 2014; Thakur, 2017), the development and discussion of the concept of Hybrid Warfare has become one of the most prominent academic growth

industries of the last decennium[1]. As in February 1848, again a "…spectre is haunting Europe…" [or, more precisely, the Euro-Atlantic area] – now, however, no longer that of Communism as stated by Marx and Engels in their famous Manifesto (Manifesto, 2010, p.14), but rather that of renewed Russian expansionism, as manifesting itself in a still somewhat garbled form in Georgia in 2008, and on the Crimean and in the Donbass from 2014 onwards. Hybrid Warfare, so some Western strategic pundits have it, is the cleverly fiendish ruse by which Dark Vader undercuts and evades the defensive promises of Art. 5 NATO Treaty, moving "…below the radar of traditional collective defence…" (Reisinger/Golts 2014). And more – one of hybrid warfare's most prominent characteristics – the "strategically innovative use of ambiguity…" (Reichborn-Kjennerud/Cullen, 2016) – conveys to the offensive party qualities of camouflage, invisibility, and nonattributability, the likes of which originally have been, long ago, ascribed to Alberich the gnome[2] in the Nibelung saga. We would submit, however, that the difference between Wagner's Rhinegold Ring as of yore and NATO's predicaments today is that NATO has not yet found its Siegfried successfully grasping the magic cap in order to demystify and debunk the more bizarre outgrowths of the hybrid warfare discussion. Therefore, a little exercise in deconstruction seems in order.

In the following – admittedly rather sketchy – paragraphs we will have to deal with a number of questions:

- what is the nature of the beast we are talking about ? Is it true that there is no agreed definition of hybrid warfare, that the members of NATO "…cannot define what they believe is the threat of the day…" (Van Pulvelde, 2016)? If, thus, our discussion is informed by phenomenologically different concepts of [not only hybrid] warfare

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[1] NATO Multimedia Library kindly provides a web-based bibliography and repositorium of articles, ebooks, reports, and other literature on hybrid warfare under http://www.natolibguides.info/hybridwarfare going back to 2010 [last accessed14.01.17], and on related subjects – like e.g. cyber warfare – under http://www.natolibguides.info/srch.php?tag=hybrid%20warfare&default_lg=1

[2] Whose role has been taken over by little green men – not under, but in camouflage – not attributable to anybody for lack of national insignia on their battle dress?

(Wassermann 2016) – would we then not have to take note of the Thomas theorem[3] and conclude in good constructivist fashion that different concepts also generate different politico-strategic realities[4] ?

- is there a specific backdrop, an intellectual lineage if not of the concept, then at least of the phenomena it covers – or: to what extent is hybrid warfare really historically new ? Does it justify the commotion, if not even hysteria (Biscop, 2015), which makes it the favourite buzzword, the all-in container notion of at least some of the politico-strategic circles in Brussels, Washington, and elsewhere? Or is it just "…a catch-all description for the new Russian threat to European security…" (Charap, 2015, p.51), an analytic bogeyman suffering from intellectual overstretch?

- where is its place on a developmental continuum bordered by classical, symmetric, regular, inter-state warfare on the one hand, and post-modern, asymmetric, irregular, intra-state, if not non-state warfare on the other (Ehrhart 2016) ? Or – has this continuum as of late dissolved itself, experienced a process of deconstruction, of evaporation into a gray zone of conflict (Mazarr, 2015) in which adversaries incrementally seek decisions[5] on their competing interests in complex integrated campaigns, as a rule aiming to stay below thresholds of kinetic response or, as stated above, "…below the radar of traditional collective defence…"?

- does it follow a selectivity in interpretation and legitimation – or, as our Roman ancestors would have it, the maxim of *quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi* – nicely

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[3] i.e. the statement that „…if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences…" – on the intellectual history and epistemological relevance of Thomas cf. Merton (1995), pp. 382 et seq.

[4] I have dealt with this epistemological problem in a number of publications; cf. for a more extensive survey Meyers (2011a), and an abbreviated English version – The Role of Theory in the Study of International Politics – under http://reinhardmeyers.uni-muenster.de/aktuelles.html entry for 13.04.2011

[5] In the good old days of the Cold War, this form of behavior was better known as "salami tactics" – an approach to negotiation and decision-making on which the Stalinists certainly did not hold a monopoly; cf. Dixit (2006) on Thomas Schelling's contributions to the subject. For an interesting 2014 parallel, cf. Cimbala (2014).

expressed by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in his keynote speech at the opening of the NATO Transformation Seminar on March 25, 2015:

> *"...how to deal with hybrid warfare? Hybrid is the dark reflection of our comprehensive approach. We use a combination of military and non-military means to stabilize countries. Others use it to destabilize them…" (Stoltenberg, 2015).* And: *"...Hybrid warfare seeks to exploit any weakness. ... So good governance is an essential part of defence…".*

- and, finally, what is its practical use: does it provide some analytical surplus value over and beyond the imagery and conceptuality of irregular, asymmetric conflict and/or New Wars – or is it just a product of metaphoric hyperbole, a truism in refined academic form ?

We invite the reader to follow us on this little critical journey – and at the same time, we would like to draw his attention to the other contributions in this volume, spanning a fair arc from grappling with the definitions of hybrid warfare via its background in sociological and communication theory to Russia's aims and policies in Georgia, on the Crimean, in the Ukraine and elsewhere. We will certainly not deliver a series of comprehensive answers. But what we will at least try to achieve is to show that – *pace* Shakespeare's Hamlet (Act I, Sc. 5) – there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in NATO philosophy…

To drain the swamp – or how to gain firm ground by embracing complexity at the edge of chaos[6]

Some forty years ago, Stanley Hoffmann (1977) asked the pertinent question whether International Relations was an American social science – and answered it in the positive, pointing towards the domination of the field by scholars from North America (E. H. Carr, Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, or Ernst Haas notwithstanding); the explanation could *au fond* be found in the dominant global role of the U.S. in the post-World War II world. Some three and a half decennia later Stephen M. Walt (2011) asked nearly the same question

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[6] The latter formulation is that of John R. Davis (2014, p. 63) who strongly advocates the formation of a hybrid mindset rather than the adding up of known forms of regular and irregular warfare to make up the new hybrid concept; more on this below.

again – and the result was hardly different[7]! Explanation, not unlike Hoffmann's: "…major powers inevitably spend a lot of time thinking about global affairs and the rest of the world pays a lot of attention to what thinkers in the major powers are saying because they worry about what the major powers are going to do…". Admittedly, Raymond Aron[8], Fernand Braudel, or Antonio Gramsci might have taken leave to differ – but a muster of the literature on Hybrid Warfare[9] demonstrates that Walt is right at least in this respect: the discussion is dominated by U.S. American military voices[10], and the Western European Continentals[11]

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[7] In his proper words: "…one reason was the simple fact that there were hardly any world-class foreign policy intellectuals outside the Anglo-Saxon world…there are very few people writing on foreign affairs outside North America or Britain whose works become the object of global attention and debate. In other words, there's no German, Japanese, Russian, Chinese, or Indian equivalent of Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations,* Frank Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man,* or Joseph Nye's various writings on "soft power."

[8] Who incidentally was Stanley Hoffmann's PhD thesis supervisor…so he might have known better…

[9] Cf. footnote 1) above

[10] *Locus classicus* of the debate of course the works of Lt.Col. (U.S.Marines) Frank G. Hoffman (2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2014); most useful also McCulloh/Johnson 2013, and Mazarr (2015). On the necessary mental redefinitions and changes of perspective Davis (2014).

[11] Thoughtful analyses can be had particularly by French authors – e.g. Henrotin (2014), Schallock/Pourny 2015, and Tenenbaum (2015).We recommend occasional visits to the publication websites of IRSEM – l'Institut de Recherches Stratégiques de l'Ecole Militaire, under http://www.defense.gouv.fr/irsem/publications/etudes/etudes-de-l-irsem . The Institut de Stratégie Comparée has also devoted a complete edition of its journal Stratégique – No.111, 2016 (1) – to the subject of "Hybridité et guerre hybride"; table of contents under http://www.institut-strategie.fr/?p=3566 [last access 22.01.17].
The German strategic community has really risen to the Hybrid Warfare debate only as a consequence of the occupation of the Crimea peninsula by Russia in 2014; cf. Asmussen/Hansen/Meiser (2015), and the respective thematic editions of: Sicherheit und Frieden – Security and Peace 34 (2) 2016 on Hybrid Wars and Threats, and the relevant contributions in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte 66 (43-45) 2016 on " Internationale Sicherheit ", and: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte 66 (35 – 36) 2016 on " Moderne Kriegführung ". There is also a thematic 2015 edition of the journal Ethics and Armed Forces on "Hybrid warfare – enemies at a loss", which can be downloaded in full from the internet under http://www.ethikundmilitaer.de/en/full-issues/20152-hybrid-warfare/ [last access 20.01.17]. A very useful overview of the debate now in Rucker (2016). The recent White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr [19.09.2016] contains a few §§ on Hybrid Warfare

chime in only haltingly, and, if so, as the resource-starved poorer relatives (Bachmann 2012; Bachmann/Gunnariusson 2015, p. 79).

Worse, however, is the lack of conceptual clarity of the Hybrid Warfare concept, and the vast array of meanings and connotations imputed to it: from the Rosetta Stone of the modern warrior – "twenty-first century warfare will by hybrid" (Brown 2011) – to the catch-all terminological dustbin of the lazy thinkers and myopic interpreters – "…to some observers the current preoccupation with hybrid warfare is a fad at best, and represents intellectual laziness at worst…" (Giegerich 2016, p. 67) - all possible embellishments under the sun can be found in the literature. Not too seldom do we discover the academic equivalent of the every-day "so what" attitude shrugging its gowned shoulders: "The real issue with hybrid warfare is not so much the problem of defining the term as how to clarify the concept so to make it useful…" (Reichborn-Kjennerud/Cullen 2016, p. 1)[12]. *Pace* The Donald: this

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pp. 38 – 39. cf. *inter alia* under http://www.gmfus.org/publications/white-paper-german-security-policy-and-future-bundeswehr [last accessed 20.01.17]. Parliamentary attention to the subject is given so far only by the German Left – cf. the respective answers of the Federal Government to a number of Bundestag interpellations concerning "So-Called Hybrid Threats and their Real Danger" (Drucksache 18/9388, 11.08.2016); and "Mission Possibilities of the Military and the Secret Services to counter so-called hybrid threats" (Drucksache 18/8631, 01.06.2016).The debate is also slowly percolating through to the CEE and SEE members of the EU; paradigmatic examples are Jagello 2000 (2015), Prague; Sandor (2015), Budapest; Josan/Voicu (2015), Bucharest. Anton (2016) is dealing with the cognitive skills necessary in dealing with future war forms and hybrid threats.

[12] A good characterization of the wider problem area is given by these two authors: "…The term Hybrid War or Warfare (HW) rose to prominence in defense and policy circles as well as in the media after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. It was dragged out from the relative obscurity of military theory circles to become a mainstream term used to describe a myriad of seemingly different security and defense challenges to the West. The invention of new terms (or the adaptation of old ones) to describe and explain the challenges we face is a common tendency among security and defense analysts and practitioners. And like many new terms that become widely used, HW has received a substantial amount of criticism. Largely because the concept was deduced from looking at the enemy, thus shifting its definition and meaning according to the subject of analysis, HW lacks conceptual clarity. It has been attacked for being a catch-all phrase or a buzzword with limited analytical value that does not contain anything distinctly new. It is also criticized for distorting the traditional

conceptual swamp must be drained, in order to lay the "Ghost of Hybrid War" (Charap 2015) to rest.

What is the doctor's diagnosis? Confusion of concepts (Sadowski/Becker, 2010, p. 2)? Lack of historical perspective (Wither 2016, p. 74)? Conceptual overstretch?

My suggestion is to start with a simple definition, which however informs much of the U.S.-American discussion of Hybrid Warfare. I call it the *add-on concept of hybridity* and find its most prominent advocate in the works of Frank G. Hoffman:

- "I define a hybrid threat as: Any adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs a fused mix of conventional weapons, irregular tactics, terrorism and criminal behavior in the battle space to obtain their political objectives…" (Hoffman 2009c)

Or – to be somewhat more informative:

- "Hybrid threats incorporate a range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts (including indiscriminate violence and coercion), and criminal disorder. Hybrid wars can be also be multinodal—conducted by both states and a variety of nonstate actors. These multimodal/multinodal activities can be conducted by separate units or even by the same unit but are generally operationally and tactically directed and coordinated within the main battlespace to achieve synergistic effects in the physical and psychological dimensions of conflict. The effects can be gained at all levels of war.
  Hybrid threats blend the lethality of state conflict with the fanatical and protracted fervor of irregular warfare. In such conflicts, future adversaries (states, state-

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distinctions between peace, conflict and war, and for being stretched so broad as to become conceptually synonymous with grand strategy itself. Just how far to extend the concept of HW to include the full spectrum of conflict without denuding it of its utility – or breaking the meaning of war by slipping into a broader discussion of coercion and competition—is still an open and heated question debate. While these criticisms remain valid, it is also clear that the literature on HW, as well as its critics, provide fertile grounds for discussing the future of war and warfare as well as broader security and defense challenges to which the West currently lack responses. …"

sponsored groups, or self-funded actors) exploit access to modern military capabilities including encrypted command systems, man-portable surface-to-air missiles, and other modern lethal systems, as well as promote protracted insurgencies that employ ambushes, improvised explosive devices, and assassinations. This could include states blending high-tech capabilities such as antisatellite weapons with terrorism and cyber warfare directed against financial targets, …" (Hoffman 2009 a, p. 5)

Finally – more of the same, but crisper to the point:

- "Hybrid threat (1): Any adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs a tailored mix of conventional, irregular, terrorism and criminal means or activities in the operational battlespace. Rather than a single entity, a hybrid threat or challenger may be comprised of a combination of state and non-state actors."

- "Hybrid threat (2): An adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs some combination of (1) political, military, economic, social, and information means, and (2) conventional, irregular, catastrophic, terrorism, and disruptive/criminal warfare methods. It may include a combination of state and non-state actors." [source in both cases R. W. Glenn (2009)].

What can be shown in all these cases is the *additive* character of the concept, the stringing together of a larger number of attributes around a common kernel or gravity center formed by a combination of regular and irregular and/or conventional and unconventional types, strategies, and tactics of warfare. Granted – "…this may well form a hybrid set of threats and strategy, but it is not clear why the term "hybrid" should be used, beside its mere descriptive value. … In practice, any threat can be hybrid as long as it is not limited to a single form and dimension of warfare. When any threat or use of force is defined as hybrid, the term loses its value and causes confusion instead of clarifying the "reality" of modern warfare…" (Van Pulvelde 2016). We are left in a quandary: if the definition of hybridity is too wide, too add-on, it defines nothing at all, becomes useless as an analytic category[13].

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[13] a similar development can be seen in the field of security politics: while as of yore security was defined "only" as the protection of one's own sociopolitical order from unwanted foreign intrusions – or in the case of

So – what is the surplus value of the hybrid warfare concept? Is there some sort of dialectical power in the developmental history of warfare which lifts our add-on quantitative concept of hybridity onto a *qualitatively* new plane (rather like the introduction of nuclear-headed intercontinental ballistic missiles did with conventional war fighting)? Of course – if Marx and Engels would live today to see the effects of the 4th industrial revolution (Schwab 2016), they would still point to the development of the forces of production - and nowadays the effects of digitalization - as the main driver of the development of what - *faute de mieux* - we may call *hybrid warfare plus,* supported by the time-space compression of postmodernity and/or the victory of time over space which informs the sum total of globalization phenomena. However – Friedrich Engels, also an eminent military writer of his time, is no longer with us – and the Political Economy of Hybrid Warfare is still categorically void[14].

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states as an inter-state negative peace – the concept over the last decennia has widened beyond all recognition: from inter-state security [e.g. in the Balance of Power] via socioeconomic security [e.g. provided by the modern Welfare State] to environmental and ecological security, developmental security, transport security, internet security, human security, psychic security, etc. etc.. If the process of securitization thus permeates and engulfs all walks of socioeconomic and political life – what is then still left for traditional politics? And – nota bene – if all walks of life become subject to the analytical and practical interests of Security Politics – what is then still left for Political Science? Cf. Daase 2010 for a pertinent overview; on the consequences of securitization Daase et al. 2016.

[14] The same of course applies to an ancillary – or perhaps even a full-scale ally – of Hybrid Warfare [with which we cannot deal here for reasons of space, though it would certainly merit its own edition of this journal]: Warfare in Cyberspace. "…The basic message is simple: Cyberspace is its own medium with its own rules. Cyberattacks, for instance, are enabled not through the generation of force but by the exploitation of the enemy's vulnerabilities. Permanent effects are hard to produce. The medium is fraught with ambiguities about who attacked and why, about what they achieved and whether they can do so again. Something that works today may not work tomorrow (indeed, precisely because it did work today). Thus, deterrence and warfighting tenets established in other media do not necessarily translate reliably into cyberspace. Such tenets must be rethought…" (Libicki 2009, p. 3). For a good general introduction, cf. Schreier 2015; briefer Klimburg 2014, and for a more critical discussion Gartzke 2013. Useful starter collection of English and German language articles in Sicherheit und Frieden/Security and Peace 33 (1) 2014.

To come back to the above question: how can we grasp Hybrid Warfare as a concept that is more than just the sum total of its parts? Do we need new thinking (Saurugg 2014), a new intellectual mind frame, a perspective on *networks* of actors, motives, and effects rather than on linear causal relationships in order to keep in step with what Hoffman (2014) aptly describes as the realization "…that war is morphing beyond our current conceptions…"?

Or do we have to make do with a refinement of the additive concept, hoping that one day conceptual quantity will transform itself into conceptual quality? As we are not convinced that concepts, on the intellectual stage, lead a *deus ex machina* existence, but rather are subject to, constituted by interpersonal agreements, conventions, and sociopolitical traditions solidifying over time and space, yet also harbouring the seeds of permanent change, the question of course has to be: "By whom?"; "In whose interest ?"; "Why in this particular way ?"; "Why with this particular outcome ?"

Be this as it may – what we can discover in the Hybrid Warfare discussion is some sort of median consensus which moves the concept over and beyond the traditional competitive state-vs.-state zero-sum game perspective. We quote a typical example (Thiele 2015, pp. 49 et seq.) at some length:

The term "hybrid" refers to something heterogeneous. It implies a blurring of the distinction between military and civilian. Hybrid warfare employs all dimensions of state and non-state actors with elements of state-like power such as:
›› The use of conventional military force (including use of unmarked Special Forces).
›› Intimidation by the threatened use of nuclear weaponry.
›› Employment of cyber to disrupt and destabilise.
›› Use of economic levers to undermine the political cohesion of states and institutions.
›› Massive propaganda and disinformation campaigns, through strategic communications and a distorted form of "*public diplomacy*".

Thus hybrid warfare is characterised by:
›› A broad mix of instruments – which include the use of military force, technology, criminal activity, terrorism, economic and financial pressures, humanitarian and religious means, intelligence, sabotage, disinformation – are employed across the whole spectrum of warfare – traditional, irregular and/or catastrophic.
›› Its stealthy approach and disruptive capacity, executed within the context of a flexible strategy.

›› Non-state actors' involvement such as militias, transnational criminal groups, or terrorist networks, mostly backed by one or several states, via a form of sponsor-client or proxy relationship. In other cases, states can also intentionally act in "hybrid" manners when they choose to blur the lines between covert and overt operations. Of particular interest in this context are irregular forces clothed in uniforms without national identification tags. As these irregular actors often are provisioned with modern military equipment, they can perform and resist organised military assaults in force-on force engagements.

›› Unlimited use of space. Hybrid warfare is not limited to the physical battlefield. On the contrary, hybrid actors seize every opportunity to engage in whatever space is available. This includes traditional and modern media instruments. The main intention in the strategy for political subversion is to isolate and weaken an opponent by eroding his legitimacy in multiple fields. "Under this model, war takes place in a variety of operating environments, has synchronous effects across multiple battlefields, and is marked by asymmetric tactics and techniques."(Deep 2015)

Hybrid war appears to be a construct of vaguely connected elements. But the pieces are a part of a whole. It is a war that appears to be an incomprehensible sequence of improvisations, disparate actions along various fronts – humanitarian convoys followed by conventional war with artillery and tanks in, for instance, eastern Ukraine, peacekeeping operations in Transnistria, cyber-attacks in Estonia, vast disinformation campaigns on mass media, seemingly random forays of heavy bombers in the North Sea, submarine games in the Baltic Sea, and so on. The diversity of hybrid tactics masks an order behind the spectrum of tools used. It is this order and goal that makes it incumbent upon political leaders and strategic thinkers to classify such activities accurately within the political objectives discussed by Carl von Clausewitz, who noted that war is an extension of politics by other means.

A lot of these instruments and building blocks are of course not new at all, but part and parcel of the time-honoured toolbox of conventional warfare. What is novel is the scale of their use and their exploitation in modern networked societies (Thiele 2015, p. 49), their multimodal character aiming for the strategic and tactical realization of synergy effects in the physical as well as the psychological dimensions of conflict (Asmussen/Hansen/Meiser 2015, p. 5). And: "…the exploitation of modern information technology, including modelling and simulation, has enhanced the learning cycle of hybrid opponents, improving their ability to transfer lessons and techniques learnt both inside a specific theatre of conflict, as well as from

one theatre to the next…"(Thiele 2015, p. 56). What may also be quite novel is the tendency of the adversaries to stay below the radar of collective defence (Reisinger/Golts 2014) – the intention to produce *political* results, to impair the action - and reaction – capabilities of the adversary without crossing the threshold of armed largescale attack (Schaurer/Ruff-Stahl 2016). Hybrid threats as a rule manifest themselves in the peripheries and influence areas of actors who willfully steer a planned course of non-attributability, of camouflaging, false-flagging [or even better: non-flagging] and veiling, so that they may disown at any time – if needs be – the actions and infringements of their agents and proxies: plausible deniability (Schreiber 2016, p. 13). This undercuts classical deterrence by retaliation – whom to retaliate against with some certainty? And it stands classical deterrence by denial on its very head: instead of the defender demonstrating to the potential attacker that the cost of his action will be so high that the profit to be gained will not be worth his while, the attacker can now demonstrate to the defender that the cost of his defence ("from bits to bullets") of whatever value is under attack will by far outweigh the minimal loss suffered by giving in just a little bit to the attacking side – a renaissance of Cold War salami tactics in digitalized garb?

In short – it is not the blending of elements of regular and irregular, symmetric and asymmetric *kinetic warfare* which produces the specific character of the hybrid, but its location in the gray zone (Mazarr 2015), where the once clear-cut boundaries between peace and war are blurred, where the attribution of individual acts of violence is left in the vague, or made unclear on purpose. "The art of hybrid warfare is not found in front line manoeuvres, but rather in the zones of security that …[sc. are] …not black-and-white: grey is the new colour of war. In the past, irregular tactics and protracted forms of conflict have mostly been marked as tactics of the weak, employed by non-state actors who…[sc.did]… not have the means to do better. Today and in the future, opponents may exploit hybrid opportunities because of their effectiveness…"(Thiele 2015, p. 56). In 1975, Robert B. Asprey published his massive two-volume history on the guerilla in history under the title: "War in the Shadows". Four decennia later, the equivalent publication could be on: "War in the Gray Zone" – on outpositioning rival parties rather than merely subduing them by kinetic force (Echevarria II 2016). In this interpretation, the more coherent and intentional form of gray

zone conflict[15] can be explained by four factors: as a form of conflict that pursues political objectives through integrated campaigns; employs mostly nonmilitary or nonkinetic tools; strives to remain under key escalatory or red line thresholds to avoid outright conventional conflict; and moves gradually toward its objectives rather than seeking conclusive results in a relatively limited period of time (Mazarr 2015).

All this may be rather disturbing to the more traditional military mind – "…gray zone conflicts are designed, almost by definition, to circumvent traditional U.S. military power…" (Barno/Bensahel 2015), are being fought at the lower end of the conflict spectrum, and threaten (not only U.S.) critical interests "…through "strategic disruption" — the danger that instability in key regions can upend the international political or economic order…" (ibid.). However, as with Hybrid Warfare, reactions in the strategic community are divided, if not partly antagonistic: some analysts "…have identified gray zone conflict as a new phenomenon that will increasingly characterize, and challenge, the international system in the years to come. Others have argued that the concept is overhyped, ahistorical, and perhaps even meaningless…" (Brands, 2016, p. 2 of 8)[16].

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[15] "Gray zone conflicts are not formal wars, and little resemble traditional, "conventional" conflicts between states. If the spectrum of conflict is conceived as a line running from peaceful interstate competition on the far left to nuclear Armageddon on the far right, gray zone conflicts fall left of center. They involve some aggression or use of force, but in many ways their defining characteristic is ambiguity — about the ultimate objectives, the participants, whether international treaties and norms have been violated, and the role that military forces should play in response." (Barno/Bensahel, 2015).

[16] For a critical voice on frustrating gray-zone experiences and hazardous future strategic setbacks, cf. Hume et al. (2016): "…Why "gray?" The simple answer is that there is a yawning conceptual gap between the traditional models of war and peace (call them black and white) that American strategists employ to pace plans and capabilities. Increasingly, revisionist and rejectionist actors and forces exploit the "gray" space in this gap, militating against the U.S.-led status quo by purpose or consequence and challenging American efforts to effectively match and reverse mounting strategic losses. …". A lot of U.S. military personnel seems to feel itself outplayed by the aforementioned revisionist and rejectionist forces – so it is not very surprising that the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College has recently published a report under the title of: OUTPLAYED. Regaining Strategic Initiative in the Gray Zone – under http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1325 [last access 20.01.17].

Yet - what the hybrid warfare in the gray zone pundits have not explained to us, so far, is the exact course of the dividing line between their object of analysis and the sort of hard power projection most of us know from Realism 101. The famous Clausewitzian dictum on war being a continuation of politics by other means could thus be reformulated: hybrid war is a continuation of (power) politics by (nearly) the same means – at least if one disallows all those elements and strategies of soft power so aptly described by Joseph S. Nye already in the late 1980s (Nye, 2004; paradigmatic application by Czempiel, 1999). So – where is the difference?[17]

From Trojan Horses to Little Green Men: What's New in Hybrid Warfare?

If we remain for a moment with our hypothetical assumption that hybrid warfare can be interpreted as a continuation of traditional hard power politics by (nearly) the same means (minus the cyberspace activities, perhaps) – why then the lack of conceptual clarity, the vast array of multi-faceted definitions (overview Rucker 2016, pp. 62 et seq.; Reichborn-Kjennerud/Cullen 2016) we find in the field? Do we indeed not provide "…explicit demarcation criteria for distinguishing between classical and hybrid warfare…" (Jagello 2000, 2015, p. 8)? Is it indeed the case that "…Hybrid warfare has become the most common term used to try and capture the complexity of twenty-first-century warfare, which involves a multiplicity of actors and blurs the traditional distinctions between different types of armed conflict and even between war and peace…" (Wither 2016, 74)? Are hybrid tactics "…neither new nor only Russian…" (Popescu 2015)? Is hybrid war indeed an old concept with new techniques added (Deep 2015)?

The prevailing conceptual confusion can be explained by reference to the first section of this paper: it is due to a mixing or blending of what I have called the *add-on concept of hybridity* on the one hand, and the *hybrid warfare plus* concept on the other. If we understand by hybrid warfare "…the concurrent use of both conventional and irregular forces in the same

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[17] Nice reformulation of the question by David Hume Footsoldier on http://www.thinkdefence.co.uk/2015/02/war-not-war-hybrid/ : When is a war not a war? When it's Hybrid…

military campaign…" (Wither 2016, 75), of forces engaged "…in both symmetric and asymmetric combat…" (Mansoor 2012, 3), the combination "…of conventional and irregular methods to achieve a political objective…" (Deep 2015), and/or finally "…the combination of conventional and unconventional methods of warfare so as to confuse an adversary…" (Andersson/Tardy 2015), then this particular war form has been with us since time immemorial: the Troian Horse of the 12th century BC, and Sun Tsu's Art of War of the 6th century BC may be the earliest examples still known to us. Hybrid warfare, in this perspective, "…has been an integral part of the historical landscape since the ancient world… Great powers throughout history have confronted opponents who used a combination of regular and irregular forces to negate the advantage of the great power's superior conventional military strength… (Murray/Mansoor 2012, p. i). Yes, "…the historical record suggests that hybrid warfare in one form or another may well be the norm for human conflict rather than the exception…" (Murray 2012, p. 291).

If, however, we talk about *hybrid warfare plus*, it might be a good idea to adapt a concept from Historical Materialism (Shaw 1985): in the same way as Marx and Engels maintained that the development of the forces of production, and the consequent different socioeconomic organizations of production characterize human history and explain its general course, we posit that the development of the forces of *production* has a necessary companion in the development of the forces of *destruction,* which explains the direction, forms, and stages the development of warfare throughout history has taken and is still taking (overview Strachan/Scheipers 2013, first tentative formulation Meyers 2015, pp. 259 et seq.). Very cursorily formulated: at bottom, both developments reflect technological progress – and it might, therefore, be a further good idea to borrow the main concepts which delineate the Second and the Third Industrial Revolutions from each other to sketch out and construct a toolbox the contents of which would allow us to differentiate between traditional and hybrid warfare that much better. We point to globalization and its victory of time over space, digitalization and its division of (message) content from (material) carrier, governance and its liberation of decision-making from formal-legal roles and formal structures – as contrasted against the mechanization, motorization, and mass industrialization of war fighting (and of

course also the industrialization of mass killing up to and including MAD nuclear warfare) which characterized traditional warlike conflict in much of the 20th century.

Alas – a holistic materialistic view of history has become somewhat unfashionable over the last quarter century or so. In good empiricist tradition we are therefore left – in most of the literature on the subject – with an enumerative summation of differentiation criteria – such as:

"Simply put, for a threat to be of a 'hybrid' nature it needs to be the product of multiple ways to threaten or attack its intended target – much as a hybrid species is produced by combining different breeds or varieties. It is therefore the mix of different methods – conventional and unconventional, military and non-military – which makes a threat hybrid…" (Andersson/Tardy 2015, p. 1).
And we have another paradigmatic example:

"Hybrid war encompasses a set of hostile actions whereby, instead of a classical large-scale military invasion, an attacking power seeks to undermine its opponent through a variety of acts including subversive intelligence operations, sabotage, hacking, and the empowering of proxy insurgent groups. It may also spread disinformation (in target and third countries), exert economic pressure and threaten energy supplies. In order to be successfully executed, a degree of integration between these elements is required, as is their subordination to some sort of strategic command. It is also imperative that the aggressor be in a position to plausibly deny having supported these actions to the local and international communities…" (Popescu 2015, p. 1).

All this is further augmented by references to the extension of the combat zone (Mölling 2015), the expansion of the battlefield beyond the purely military realm, the blurring of the distinction between combatants and non-combatants, the emphasis on greater military sophistication and better material capabilities of non-state actors active in hybrid conflict situations, the growing importance of non-military tools including terrorism and organized crime, and, last but not least, to information warfare: control of the battle for the hearts and minds, ideological mobilization, definition of agendas and narratives, online propaganda, money collection, recruitment (Reichborn-Kjellerud/Cullen 2016). Recently, we have a new subsidiary of hybrid warfare – Lawfare - the use of law as weapon to transform the strategic calculations of belligerents by undermining current international legal frameworks and trying to change the international public legal rules of the game

(Bachmann/Mosquera 2015). In short - what the sum total of additive elements provides, is a form of horizontal escalation: granting asymmetric advantages to non-state actors in conflicts with militarily superior state adversaries.

And: for those who are still not quite satisfied, we can also stress the intentions of hybrid warfare actors: subversion, secrecy, non-committance, non-accountability.

If we want to differentiate between hybrid warfare and classic war, the main demarcation criterion, in our judgment is the use of the means that are primarily used to achieve the objectives of war. In hybrid warfare, it is important that non-military means of subversive nature play the leading role. Ideally, an attacking state need not make explicit use of military force. The aim of the attacker is to control the minds of the political leadership and the population of the attacked state through propaganda (psychological operations), deceptive campaigns and intimidation by terror. If military force is used, it is used in secret. Use of demarcation criteria, prioritising non-military tools of subversion and conducting secret warfare, these aspects clearly distinguish hybrid warfare from other types of war. (Jagello 200, 2015).

The new quality of hybrid warfare, in consequence, seems not so much founded in the actors/subjects or the objects of a conflict, but in the ways and means of their handling (Keim 2017), in the combination and orchestration of the tools available (Tamminga 2015)."…hybrid refers to the means, not to the principles, goals, or nature of war…" (Schadlow 2015). We see, so to speak, the dark side of NATO's Comprehensive Approach, the planned, pre-arranged, and centrally coordinated use of diplomatic, military, humanitarian, economic, technological, and information technology tools for the achievement of political aims in a hard power political way. In the end, we talk about the intrusion of military behavior into civilian ways of life – not, as the Comprehensive Approach might originally have intended, the permeating and incremental solving of hard conflicts by coordinated soft power, civilian actors, and well-minded international organizations (critical outline Wendling 2010), with the military providing only technical assistance from the wings. And – *pace* Clausewitz – the final question will be "Who is going to keep the upper hand?" – responsible, reliable, and predictable politics, or militia-structured mafia gangs, operating in a world-wide parasitic shadow economy, who rephrased Clausewitz in their own greedy, profiteering interest: hybrid war not even any longer the continuation of power politics with

nearly the same means, but the continuation of exploitative economics for purposes of profiteering, lust, and domination (tentative approach in Meyers 2011b, pp. 308 et seq.).

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UNDERSTANDING HYBRID WARFARE AS ASYMMETRIC CONFLICT: SYSTEMIC ANALYSIS BY SAFETY, SECURITY AND CERTAINTY

Prof. Dr. Markus BRESINSKY

Professor of International Politics and Social Science,

Faculty of General Science and Micro System Engineering,

Technical University of Applied Science (OTH), Regensburg, Germany

markus.bresinsky@oth-regensburg.de

Abstract

The emergence of innovative methods and operations in asymmetric conflicts as for example unidentifiable soldiers during the Crimean conflict in 2014 or sophisticated cyberattack against Estonia in 2007 was a trigger for both analysts and scholars to rethink scientific concepts of asymmetric conflict. With introduction of the concept 'hybrid warfare' a new systematic element was established in scientific research. Nevertheless, the concept is discussed rather controversially and often its scientific value is questioned. Most of the literature describes the empirical phenomena of hybrid warfare, but does not provide a theoretical based argumentation. This paper addresses the neglected aspect of systemic analysis by focusing on vulnerability of modern societies and outlines a concept based on the theoretical idea of safety, security and certainty to grasp the underlying driving factors of new forms and methods in asymmetric conflicts. The analysis presented here shows that sociology and system engineering have already developed valuable conceptual definitions of safety, security and certainty that can be used for the analysis of asymmetric conflicts. The missing link, closed by this paper, was an interdisciplinary approach to integrate these concepts into an analysis framework. The findings indicated that the new forms of asymmetric conflicts can be understood as a concise and precise analysis of systemic weaknesses of nation states and their societies. Still, Western European nations focus their security policy mainly on past challenges of war and peace. Therefore, societies of these nations remain highly vulnerable to safety threats and uncertainty. The presented theoretical framework supported this result and should, therefore, be of value to analysts and scientists alike aiming to identify the underlying systemic factors of innovative asymmetric conflict.

Keywords: Hybrid warfare; Safety; Security; Certainty; Systemic analysis; Theoretical framework.

I.   Introduction - Political analysis of asymmetric conflicts

One major task for political science and analysis is to give order to empirical observations by providing conceptual definitions, theories and models for the purpose of understanding and explanation. Difficulties arise, however, when an attempt is made to develop new concepts in the light of new emerging phenomena. Several academic attempts have been made to describe and explain the existence of irregular and asymmetric warfare (Freudenberg, 2007; Manwaring, 2008; Manwaring 2012). But with events in the Crimea during 2014 and the occurrence of sophisticated attacks in the cyber space (e.g. Estonia 2007), analysts struggle with the challenge to explain the innovation in asymmetric conflicts. The concept of hybrid warfare should solve the problem to explain why a nation state is using asymmetric methods and tactics and why this kind of conflict does not escalate into an interstate war.

Existing research often concentrates on the categorization of conflicts and has not treated the underlying systemic drivers for asymmetric conflicts systematically. This is especially true in the case of hybrid warfare, in which western societies are attacked not with conventional means but with asymmetric methods both by irregular actors like insurgents, guerrillas or terrorist and by nation states. Overall the new kind of asymmetric methods try to exploit the inherent vulnerability of western societies. Inherent vulnerability refers to the systemic interdependency between security provided by nation states and safety demanded by the society. One core assumption of this paper is that in western European nations with a high degree of interdependent social, economic and political processes the necessary connection between security and safety is undermined. This is rooted in the observation that the safety demand of the society is not met by the available security instruments of the nation state. The nation state as security provider does not fit into the requirements of a highly networked, data driven, globalized and specialized society and economy.

In the following it will be argued that in highly developed and networked societies like Western European nations the aspect of safety and security can help to understand and

analyse modern forms of non-international armed as well as non-armed conflicts. The aim of this paper is to support the argument above by outlining the challenges of existing definitions of hybrid warfare and in a second step by focusing on the missing part of a systemic perspective to this kind of conflict. It will be argued that hybrid warfare does not implement a new instance of asymmetric conflict or warfare. In contrast, it will be examined whether the perspective of systemic vulnerability can be helpful to understand the existence of hybrid warfare as a part of an innovative development of asymmetric warfare and conflict.

II.   Hybrid warfare – definition of a phenomenon without epistemological surplus value

There is a degree of uncertainty around the terminology of hybrid warfare. The concept as it is discussed recently by scholars is by far not as precisely and concisely defined as necessary for a sound analysis of the phenomenon. According to a definition of Hoffman (2007, 8) hybrid threats "[...] incorporate a range of different modes of warfare, including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder." These operations can be conducted by state and non-state actors alike, creating what Hoffman calls "…multimodal activities [...] operationally and tactically directed and coordinated within the main battlespace to achieve synergistic effects in the physical and psychological dimension of the conflict…" (Hoffman, 2007, 8). This definition highlights the variety of actors involved in such kind of conflict and stresses the importance of a comprehensive strategy and leadership. By that Hoffman assumes a coherent planning and decision making process during warfare campaigns and operations. This assumed strategic coherence can be challenged by questioning the coherent intentions and objectives of actors involved in the conflict. The complexity of operations and heterogeneity of participating actors is too big to be organized

successfully under one single command. Experiences from the comprehensive approach[18] in Western European nations confirm the difficulties to implement a synchronized and complementary strategy both in international missions (Furness, 2016) and in national or European missions. However, Hoffman's definition is too broad to be very specific for analytical purposes and it is therefore necessary to think beyond the categorization of the phenomenon.

Traditionally, there is a clear distinction between peace and war in international law, dating back to the period of the formation of the European states system between the Peace of Westphalia 1648 and the Treaty of Utrecht 1713 (Kleinschmidt 2013, ch.vi), limiting the legitimate exercise of armed force (ius ad bellum) to sovereign international actors. Successively, the actual mode of fighting such wars, and the behavior of the warring parties was subjected to an ever tightening regulatory framework (ius in bello) (Berber, 1969) – until the United Nations Charter in its famous Article 2 No.4 decreed that all "[…] Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state […]".
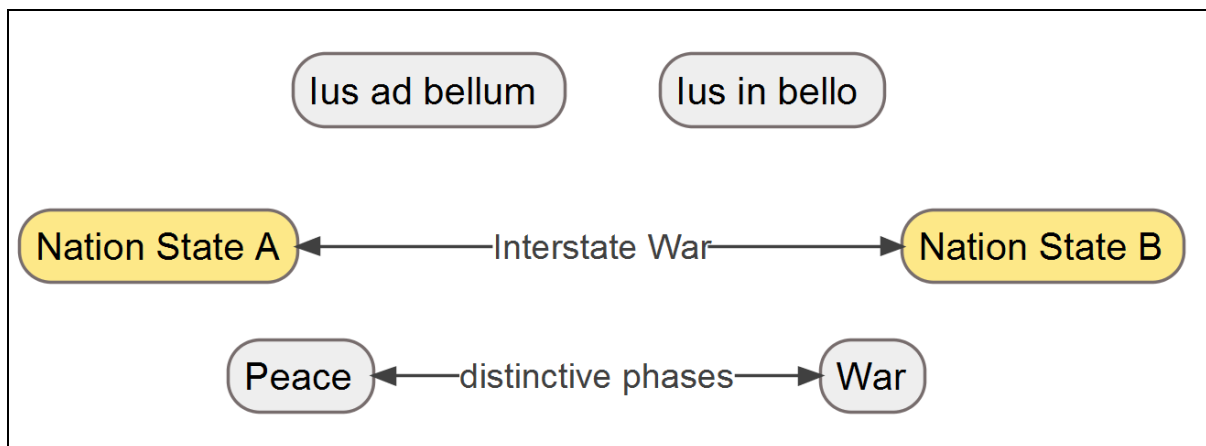
Figure 1: Classical concept of interstate war and peace

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[18] Comprehensive approach is a strategy that combines military, political and civilian instruments to achieve a common goal in crisis and conflict management. NATO has adopted this strategy in 2010 at the Lisbon summit (NATO, 2010, 19).

Münkler is sceptical about a successful definition of hybrid warfare by specifying the problem with regard to the legal aspects of international law: "What we are currently observing, and what the expression 'hybridization' of war also signifies, is a growing distance between the norm structure of international law and the actual events of violence and war." (Münkler, 2015, para 4) Therefore, neither a distinctive and politically well-defined line between war and peace can be drawn nor a concise definition of actors within the armed conflict (military, civilians or irregular forces) is possible (see figure 1). With respect to the problem of the existing order of international law Münkler continues "[...] the term 'hybrid war' is just a placeholder that stands for the end of the old order, but is not itself able to provide a cornerstone for the development of a new order." (Münkler, 2015, para 8). He concludes that "[...] the concept of hybrid war is nothing more than a semantic brand for the current practice of 'muddling through' in security policy." (Münkler, 2015, para 9)

Both Hoffman and Münkler try to grasp the complexity of the phenomenon by describing its very character and nature. While Hoffman stresses the point of how hybrid warfare is conducted from a leadership and decision-making point of view, Münkler outlines the legal implications for security policy and international relations. Generally, neither Hoffman's definition nor Münkler's statements do support the idea that the concept of hybrid warfare can really provide epistemological value for research and analysis. However, it is valuable to investigate Münkler's notion about international law and to ask analytically if in international law indicators exist that can help in understanding the new conflict form.
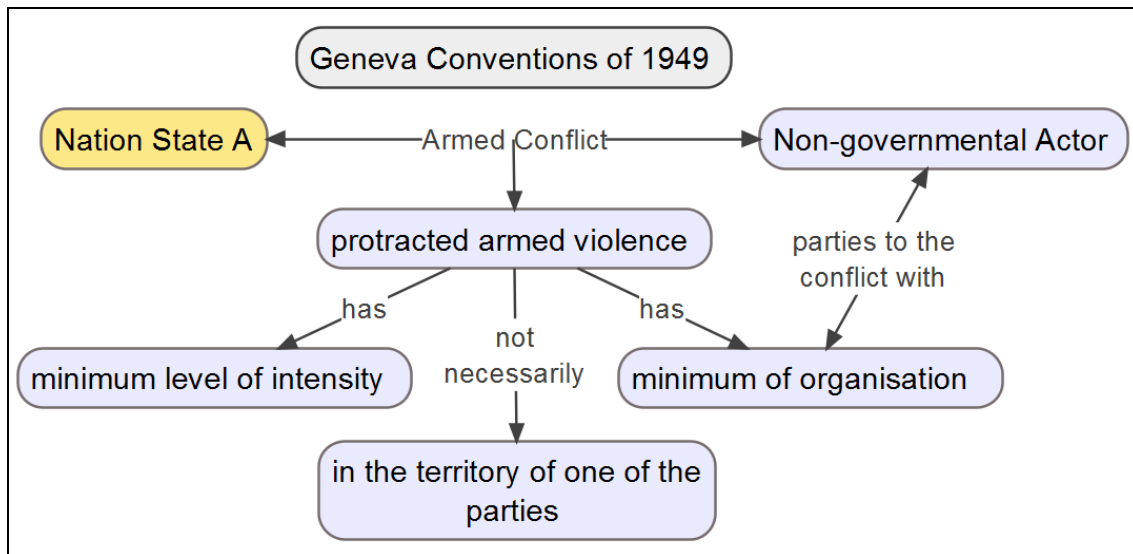
Figure 2: Non-international armed conflict in International Humanitarian Law

One of the most important challenges of hybrid warfare originates from the very nature of international humanitarian law (ICRC, 2008). In contrast to the law of war in public international law the international humanitarian law addresses explicitly non-governmental actors and hence implicitly actors using asymmetric methods (ICRC 2011 and 2015).

As shown in figure 2, for a conflict to be labelled as a non-international armed conflict it is necessary to identify the involved actors and the minimum level of intensity of the conflict as well as the minimum level of organization of non-governmental actors. If non-governmental forces are supported, organized or even informally manned by another nation state the configurations of the conflict get even more complicated, because the status of such forces are not clarified by the concept. Exactly this was the case with the unidentified forces – the so-called 'little green men' - during the Crimean conflict in February 2014. Obviously organized but due to missing badges not identifiable soldiers, presumably part of the Russian army, entered and occupied terrain on the Crimea and sized military facilities, public administrations and important businesses and companies. Accompanied by information and cyber operations this conflict has shown a new brand of elements not covered by international humanitarian law so far.

Conclusively, it can be said that hybrid warfare does not require a new category or definition in international humanitarian law. Even though hybrid warfare uses an innovative brand of elements and presumably involved actors apply a comprehensive approach in conducting operations, in total the new aspect can be seen in the participation of nation states via an interface, ally or a proxy represented by non-governmental actors.
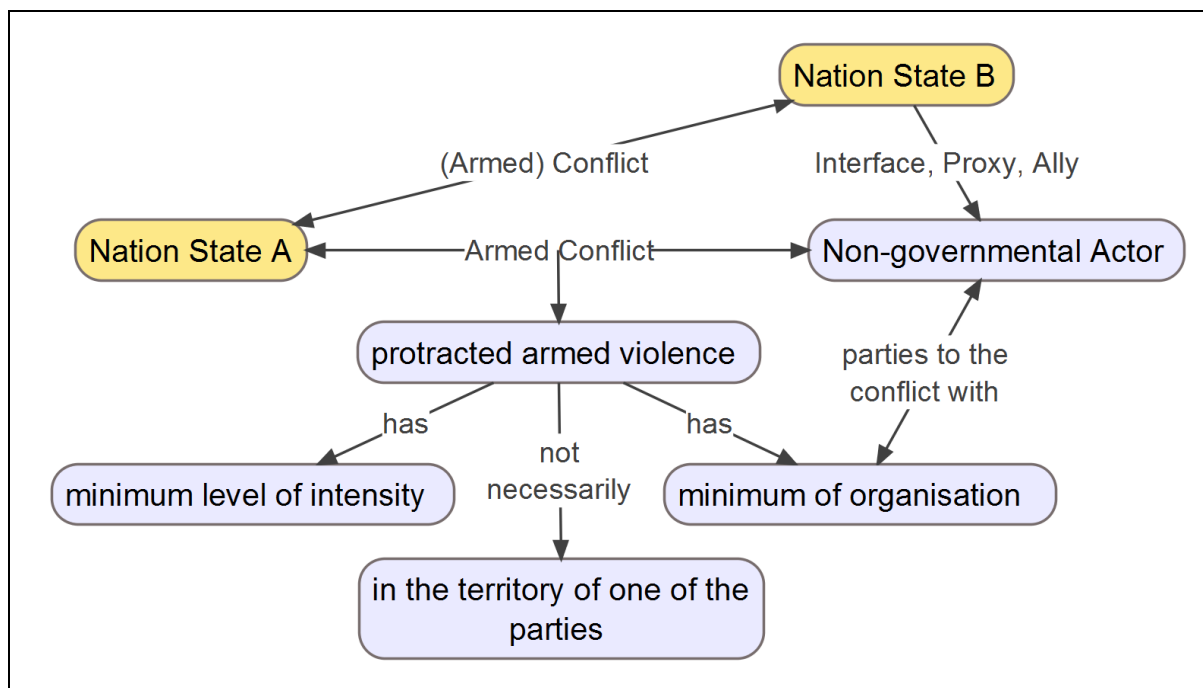
Figure 3: Hybrid warfare by implementing asymmetric strategies via non-governmental actors

In conclusion, new and complex definitions of hybrid warfare do not grasp the underlying systemic interdependencies and influences. They therefore disguise the real problem of analysis and research. With respect to international law it can be said that the new forms of hybrid warfare can be understood analytically as a form of asymmetric conflict and warfare enhanced by the active yet covert support of a nation state. This is the essence of hybridization, and in the following hybrid warfare will still be labelled as asymmetric conflict and warfare.

III. Vulnerability – key target for asymmetric operations

To understand the new form of hybridization it is more important to understand why actors apply such elements and which intentions of the actors can be identified. "Hybrid warfare is built on capitalizing on the weaknesses of a country, on flaws in its political system, administration, economy and society" (Rácz, 2015, 92). One of the central arguments of this paper is that in asymmetric conflicts nation states as well as non-governmental actors try to target the weak points of the adversary by asymmetric means. Mostly, such weak vulnerable points are critical assets within a social, political, economic or military system characterized by a high risk. High risk means high costs in a case of possible damage of an asset combined with a rather easy way to attack it. It is therefore crucial to understand vulnerabilities of a system to understand potential targets for actors using asymmetric methods.

One approach to understand the vulnerability of conflict actors is provided by the 'Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive' of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This document is quoted here for two purposes. One is that it reflects the security policy of western European nations and hence supports the empirical view of the phenomenon. On the other side, it is one of those rare sources that clearly define the concept of vulnerability and by that supports the conceptual view.

The doctrine argues for a concept called center of gravity which is defined as "[…] characteristics, capabilities or localities from which a nation, an alliance, a military force or other grouping derives its freedom of action, physical strength or will to fight." (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe Belgium, 2010, 3-27). The inherent logic of center of gravity is that not only the core strength but also the crucial vulnerability can be found in the capabilities and requirements to implement a successful policy or strategy. Therefore, the main intention of an asymmetrically acting adversary is to exploit exactly those weak points that can endanger easily the overall strategy of a targeted actor. To achieve this outcome, the doctrine outlines a three step process to identify the center of gravity and its vulnerabilities (3-28).

One example could be that the center of gravity for a nation state is the continuity of a political coalition in a system of collective defense like NATO. Another example could be the development of an internet based economy for the purpose of achieving sustainable growth of the national economy in a highly competitive and computer technology driven globalized world. For both examples the identification of weak points in the systems starts with the identification of critical capabilities for the center of gravity. As depicted in figure 4 this could be the policy to unify actors in a coalition like NATO or to support innovation in internet based businesses. The second step investigates the critical requirements necessary for the functioning of capabilities. For the unity of actors in a coalition political decision-making processes that result in a political consensus or at least in a reliable majority are necessary. With regard to the example of an internet based economy the reliability and sustainability of internet services and infrastructure is a necessary precondition for innovation development. Having identified the requirements, one can logically derive the critical vulnerabilities of the system. With respect to the consensus finding of political actors a vulnerable point can be clearly seen in the latent conflicting interests of allies as well as in latent free-riding tendencies. Just as well the technological availability of IT services and infrastructure is a weak point for the internet driven innovations of highly connected businesses.
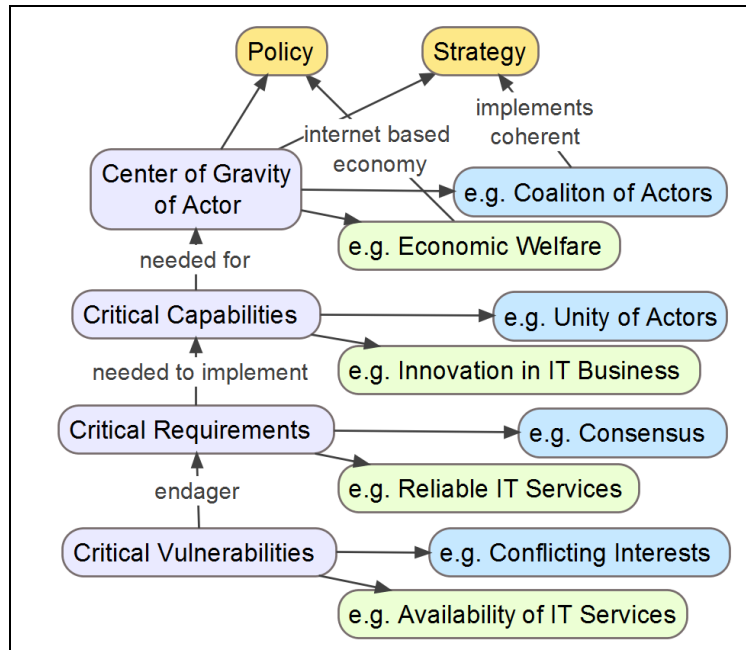
Figure 4: Center of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities

Overall, a promising strategy in an asymmetric conflict will always target this chain of value for the center of gravity. If this is done systematically and with narrow focus on the weak points it is hard to counter such strategies successfully. With this conceptual model Russian operations on Crimea in 2014 can be understood not only as a direct attack on a nation state but also as a larger strategy to target the unity of NATO. So this can be seen as center of gravity of Russian operations in reaction to the expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe. In the same sense the cyberattack on Estonia 2007 can be understood not only as a direct attack on IT infrastructure of a nation state but also as a strategic proof of a concept to harm innovative internet based economies. In a larger scale this demonstrates the vulnerability of the Western European nations to such attacks.

Whilst the concept of center of gravity provides a better idea about the interdependencies between capabilities and requirements, it still does not explain the underlying causes for the vulnerabilities. From a system perspective it is therefore important to develop a better understanding of vulnerabilities with respect to risk and uncertainty (Gigerenzer, 2014). In the following it will be argued that the notion of safety and security

can be helpful to enrich the concept and the analytical endeavour to understand new forms of asymmetric conflicts.

IV.   Systemic triad of security - security, safety and certainty

Sociological perspective

Zygmunt Bauman in his book 'In search of politics' (1999b) develops a remarkable argument by making a precise distinction between the linguistic terms 'safety', 'security' and 'certainty'. A triad that is not easily understood by English-speakers, but much better grasped by speakers of German. "In the case of Sicherheit the German language is uncharacteristically frugal; it manages to squeeze into a single term complex phenomena for which English needs at least three terms —security, certainty and safety — to convey." (Bauman, 17, 1999b). The interesting finding here is that Burns, McDermid & Dobson already in 1992 mentioned this very aspect in an article about computer and system engineering. It is an interesting question whether Bauman or Burns, McDermid & Dobson should be named as the first one who in detail clarified the difference between the concepts 'safety' and 'security'. Kaufmann (1973) had already discussed different aspects of security by addressing the interdependency between external threats to a society and individual stability of persons within this society. As German speaking author he was not addressing the conceptual distinction between 'safety' and 'security'[19], but he developed a notion about the development of security with respect to the development of modern societies and people's demand for security in these societies.[20] Later Daase (2010) worked on the conceptual notions of 'security' and based his analysis also on Kaufmann, therefore Kaufmann has influenced the discussion at a very early stage.

However, for this paper both Bauman and Burns, McDermid & Dobson have the

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[19] However, he uses German terms like ,Geborgenheit'(Kaufmann, 2003, 88), which translated as 'security' does not capture the distinctive meaning of this term in the German language.

[20] In his work 'security' is differentiated in three categories (Kaufmann, 2003, 88): lost security due to social developments; security of a collective system; and security of a person in the sense of self-assurance.

merit to prove the benefits of interdisciplinary research and transfer.[21] Based on the perspective of system engineering the concepts can be useful to grasp the nuance of risks and threats to an object, society or actor. A first step in this effort is to create a conceptual model. Such a model can help to differentiate observable phenomena and by that support the categorization of risks and vulnerabilities of modern societies. This will result in better analytical approaches to the impact of asymmetric or hybrid warfare.

As a starting point to develop a conceptual model Bauman's definition of the three different terms are helpful. Later these definitions will be contrasted with definitions of the system engineering domain.

"*Security*. Whatever has been won and gained will stay in our possession; whatever has been achieved will retain its value as the source of pride or respect; the world is steady and reliable, and so are its standards of propriety, the learned habits to act effectively as well as the learned skills needed to stand up to life's challenges.

Certainty. Knowing the difference between reasonable and silly, trustworthy and treacherous, useful and useless, proper and improper, profitable and harmful, and all the rest of the distinctions which guide our daily choices and help us take decisions we — hopefully — will not regret; and knowing the symptoms, the omens and the warning signs which allow us to guess what to expect and to tell a good move from a bad one.

Safety. Providing one behaves in the right manner, no terminal dangers — no dangers one cannot fight back against — threaten one's body and its extensions, that is one's property, home and neighbourhood, as well as the space in which all such elements of a 'greater self' are inscribed, like one's home ground and its environment." (Bauman, 1999b, 17)

Translated in a more compact definition it can be said that security refers to the protection of vested rights and social achievements; certainty is the skill to use proper indicators to solve the problem of prognosis and forecast in the context of decision-making;

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[21] Daase (2013) demands exactly this kind of interdisciplinary research in the domain of security policy to advance scientific analysis.

safety results in the guarantee of one's own survival and existential functions. A more in-depth analysis of the definitions reveals an overlapping between security and safety. Nevertheless, the core idea of the triad is useful to distinguish between different vulnerabilities and the necessary requirements for protection.

Bauman connects these concepts to the individual human being and its decision-making process driven by emotions and motivations: "All three ingredients of Sicherheit are conditions of self-confidence and self-reliance on which the ability to think and act rationally depends. The absence or dearth of any of the three ingredients has much the same effect: the dissipation of self-assurance, the loss of trust in one's own ability and the other people's intentions, growing incapacitation, anxiety, cageyness, the tendency to fault-seeking and fault-finding, to scapegoating and aggression." (Bauman, 1999b, 17) By that, Bauman outlines the hypothesis: if Sicherheit is missing then decision-making and problem-solving tends to be more failure prone. At this point cognitive and social psychology steps in and provides a rich set of theories and empirical findings that validates Bauman's hypothesis (Kahneman 2012; Janis 1989; Mintz, deRouen & Karl 2010)

Good conceptual models support the analyst and researcher in their scientific endeavour to produce new insights into a problem, given that the model really helps to differentiate between specific causes and consequences. At this point Baumann issues an epistemological warning: "The effects of weakened security, certainty and safety are remarkably similar, and so the reasons of troublesome experience are seldom self-evident, but notoriously easy to displace. The symptoms being virtually indistinguishable, it is not clear whether the ambient fear derives from the inadequate security, the absence of certainty, or threats to safety; [...]" (Bauman, 1999b, 18). Therefore, a precise delimitation between explanans and explanandum in the model's arguments is needed. The following table shows how this can be accomplished.

Phenomenon	Explanans	Explanandum
Security	If actors are threatened with the loss of assets, capabilities and skills...	...then they feel unsecure.
Safety	If actors are threatened with irreversible loss of personal existence and health...	...then they feel unsafe.
Certainty	If actors are threatened with self-inefficacy …	...then they feel uncertain.

Table 1: Conceptual model based on Bauman

If this model is applied to understand the complexity of societies, Bauman points to a challenging state of those societies in the mid-nineties: "All three ingredients of Sicherheit nowadays suffer continuous and intense blows; and the awareness is spreading that — unlike in the case of the uncertainties of yore — the shakiness of life road-signs and the elusiveness of existential orientation-points can no longer be seen as a temporary nuisance likely to be cured if more information is discovered and more effective tools are invented; it becomes increasingly obvious that present-day uncertainties are, in Anthony Giddens's apt expression, manufactured — and so living in uncertainty is revealed as a way of life, the only way there is of the only life available." (Bauman, 1999b, 18) If we look at societies today, we can identify a similar state: fear of uncertainty and insecurity and, with regard to the effects of transnational terrorism, also unsafety.

System engineering perspective

An interdisciplinary approach can help to solve the problem of lacking precision in Bauman's definitions. In engineering safety and security terms are often used to outline different aspects of risks of technical systems and processes.

In contrast to the fact that these terms are used frequently in the engineering domain there is no common and comprehensive definition in a single norm or standard. In different international norms (e.g. ISO 26262 with regard to the automotive industries) one can find singular definitions, but an overall definition is missing.

For the purpose of clarifying matters this paper refers to the primary definition of

safety and security outlined in the paper of Burns, McDermid & Dobson (1992). Remarkably, the authors looked for a more generalized definition even though they started with specific examples from computer and software engineering. By focusing on the idea that a fruitful definition should address behaviour of systems rather than specific properties of systems they provide the following definition: "a safety critical system is one whose failure could do us immediate, direct harm; a security critical system is one whose failure could enable, or increase the ability of, others to harm us" (Burns, McDermid & Dobson, 1992, 4). Later in their analysis they specify the concept with regard to critical services and the absolute or relative harm done to resources. If one replaces the term enterprise with the term actor the relation with Bauman's definition is apparent: "a service is judged to be safety-critical in a given context if its behaviour could be sufficient to cause absolute harm to resources for which the [actor] operating the service has responsibility; a service is judged to be security-critical in a given context if its behaviour could be sufficient to cause relative harm, but never sufficient to cause absolute harm, to resources for which the [actor] operating the service has responsibility." (Burns, McDermid & Dobson, 1992, 11) This set is enhanced with the following definition: "a service is judged to be integrity-critical in a given context if it is in the causal chain of service provision for a safety-critical or security-critical service but whose behaviour is not sufficient to cause relative or absolute harm with respect to resources for which the [actor] operating the service has responsibility." (Burns, McDermid & Dobson, 1992, 12)

As a first result it can be concluded that a differentiated look on security and safety can help to understand the risks resulting absolutely (safety) or relatively (security) from the implemented services (integrity).

Philosophy of security

Frederic Gros (2015) works on the different meanings that the term security has had in western societies and the historical development of the concepts. He argues that by the different definitions of security one can understand the change in philosophical, political and

social concepts of security. Until today linkages exits between these developments and the current understanding of security, Gros argues. Starting with Greek philosophers and their concept of security as the tranquillity of spirit or serenity; followed by the Christianity concept, that saw security as the absence of danger; later contractualist philosophers define security as the protection of a state and the guarantee of individual rights. Today the security of resource, labelled as biosecurity, means the protection, monitoring and regulation of massive movements of people, goods and data which characterize modern globalization.

Period	Concept	Implication
Classic philosophy	Tranquillity and serenity	Soul and mind oriented; subjective situation of security
Christianity	Absence of danger	Utopia, myth and religion oriented; objective situation of security
Enlightenment	State, social contract and human rights	State oriented; collective situation of security: rule of law, domestic and foreign security
Globalization	Monitoring, control and regulation of resource flows	Continuity and safety oriented; protection of individual human being

Table 2: Gros (2015) periods of security

Gros develops an insightful historical pattern of security. He points to the influence of globalization and the importance of continuity and safety in modern societies.

Integrated model

The following table gives an overview of the definitions and shows the connections to the conceptual analysis framework of this paper.

	Bauman	Burns et al.	Gros	Own Analysis Framework
Safety	Guarantee of survival and existential functions.	Absence of direct harm to a user of a system. No absolute harm of services to resources.	Protection of the individual being.	Providing system of systems that guarantee existence and development of society.
Security	Protection of vested rights and social achievements.	Absence of other's ability to harm a user of a system. No relative harm of services to resources.	Monitoring, control and regulation of resource flows.	Protecting system of systems that guarantee existing and functioning of nation state.
Certainty	Decision-making based on reliable indicators and prognoses.		Continuity of flow of resources.	Sustaining system of systems that guarantee existing and functioning of nation state or society.
Integrity		Absence of harm to services by safety-critical or security-critical events.		Implementing system of systems that guarantee existing and functioning of nation state or society.

Table 3: Conceptual overview

With respect to the concept of a nation state in the sense of the Westphalian ideal and international law, the above provided distinction between security and safety leads to the assumption that with the separation between foreign and domestic affairs modern nation states guarantee the safety and certainty of their societies by mainly providing security against external threats. For the following analysis it is stated that precisely this relationship between safety and security equals to the centre of gravity of nation states.

V.   Conclusion

The main hypothesis of this paper states that, the more safety aspects are in focus of asymmetric methods of warfare, the more successfully is the centre of gravity of nation states targeted. This is in the author's opinion exactly the case in the phenomenon called hybrid warfare. What can be seen there is an innovative approach of a nation state together with its asymmetrically acting allies, proxies or interfaces to attack another nation state in its safety domain.
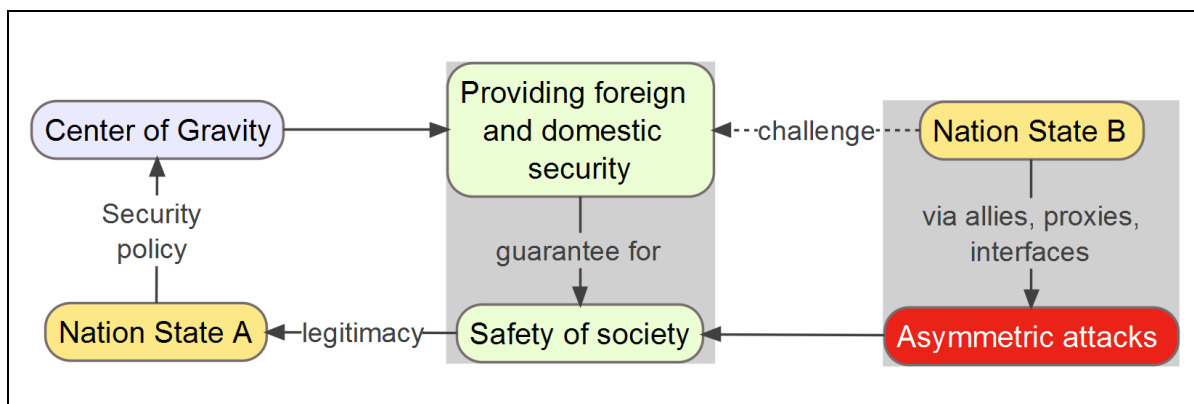
Figure 5: Safety targeted as critical requirement of society

Considering the phenomenon of asymmetric warfare one can see that nation states are faced with challenges that no longer target the classical domain of security. The main focus is not the threat to the existence of a nation state in itself. Therefore, policies that are trying to secure the existence of a nation state per se will fail to tackle most of the asymmetric challenges. Unlike war between nations, the new threats are no longer targeting the physical and political existence of a state with its basic elements of territory, people and power. Increased investment in conventional defence policy and by that in conventional armies will not solve the problem. Especially NATO member states tried to overcome this shortcoming with the implementation of a networked or comprehensive approach of different policy domains (Werner, 2016). In most cases those attempts did not keep their promises, because classical distinctions between foreign and domestic policies on the one hand and civil and military domains on the other hand could not easily be harmonized. The list of reasons for

friction is long: whether it was legal restrictions due to constitutional issues or organisational cultural differences between agencies, it showed to be more difficult than expected to adapt security policies to new asymmetric challenges.

Gros (2015) is correct in stating that modern societies rely more on the reliable and sustainable flow of resources for their members (citizens, companies, institution, etc.). This is especially true for highly interconnected and globalized societies with a high degree of interdependent markets and chains of production. Therefore, it is not the security of such a nation state that experiences the biggest vulnerability, it is its safety.

The vulnerability gets even bigger if uncertainty is taken into account. Modern societies are dependent on reliable and sustainable economic growth and development. This in turn needs a business friendly environment and stable democratic majorities. With progress of internet driven economies and acceleration of information flows in societies the disturbance of trust into future developments is having a greater impact on social and political cohesion than some decades before. Such disturbance can have its origin in information manipulation, interruption or delay. Western societies are confronted with a high demand for complex problem-solving capabilities. Due to the increased demand for problem-solving processes in policy making and at the same time shrinking returns of such policies western societies are losing trust in political processes and hence certainty in their development or even existence.

Actors of hybrid warfare as well as transnational terrorism have recognized the vulnerability of modern societies to safety challenges long before. They do not target the security of nation states directly and therefore do not aim at the existence of the targeted nation states in itself. Recently, Rácz (2015) outlined a set of asymmetric methods and strategies which facilitated the success of Russia's operations in the Crimean conflict. Clever asymmetrically acting actors try to hit the safety of a society and by that undermine the legitimacy of a national security policy. It is more effective to threaten e.g. information infrastructure and the public information domain to endanger social safety in a society. Combined with hard power elements which challenge national security, the impression is created that national security policy is not able to cope with security challenges. The inherent

logic of safety and certainty make operations easy for asymmetric actors. They do not need to implement spectacular operations frequently. Certainty and safety react very sensitively to abstract threats. So, it is enough to keep the threat on a high abstract level to undermine the legitimacy of national security policies.

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RUSSIA'S HYBRID WARFARE –
WHY NARRATIVES AND IDEATIONAL FACTORS PLAY A ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Laura M. HERȚA

Assistant Professor, PhD

Department of International Relations and German Studies

Faculty of European Studies, Babeş-Bolyai University

laura.herta@euro.ubbcluj.ro

Abstract

The article's main objective is to discuss Russia's hybrid warfare in terms of both material and ideational factors. Therefore, a social-constructivist interpretation will show that an important part of Russia's "hybrid warfare" revolves around ideational factors and discourse constructions. In other words, alongside cyber, kinetic, information, malware operations, backed up by auxiliary troops (which in this approach represent material facts), a narrative meant to explain Russia's rationale played an equally important role (and these were ideational facts). The first part will briefly present the origins and features of hybrid warfare. The second part will tackle Russia's hybrid warfare as a response to asymmetry at the global level. The last part will stress a different form of "hybridity" in Russia's recent action, which entails both material facts (the blended strategies employed in eastern Ukraine) and ideational facts (the Russian narrative of events and the meanings assigned to Russian actions).

Keywords: Hybrid warfare; Russia; Eastern Ukraine; Constructivism; Narratives; Ideational factors.

Hybrid warfare: origins, definition, core features

The last three decades witnessed a vivid discussion on the transformation of warfare. Different approaches were adamant to prove the asymmetric nature of future war, the simultaneous use of conventional and unconventional means, and the moving away from the

traditional battlefield or military sector to the societal sector and dense urban centres. The most recent concept which stirred up both controversy and adherence is *hybrid warfare*.

The concept *hybrid warfare* emerged during the first decade of the 21st century when several scholars were focusing on "the blending and blurring character of future conflicts" (Hoffman, 2007, p. 31). It was initially perceived as merely one label among others (Berdal, 2011, pp. 109-110), such as *new wars* (Kaldor, 2001; Kaldor, Vashee, 2001; Münkler, 2005; Duffield, 2001), *compound warfare* (Huber, 2004), *small wars* (Merom, 2003), *asymmetric wars* (Arreguín-Toft, 2005; Arreguín-Toft, 2012), *fourth generation warfare* (Lind; Nightengale; Schmitt; Sutton; Wilson, 1989; Hammes, 2005), all committed to in-depth analyses on the novel features of post-conventional belligerence at the end of the 20th century. The non-linear form of warfare had been observed by American strategists already during the Cold War period. The term *low intensity conflicts* had been coined in order to capture the neither full-blown war, nor peace dynamic, but also the employment of "political, economic, informational, and military instruments."[22] But, as emphasized by Michael Evans,

> "for most of the Cold War the Western understanding of war was based on generic intellectual categories of 'conventional' (high-intensity) and 'unconventional' (low-intensity) conflict. Most in the field of strategic studies thought in terms of separate worlds of conventional interstate (or high-intensity) and unconventional intrastate (or low-intensity) military activity. Unfortunately, the spectrum of conflict that is emerging in the early twenty-first century is distinguished by merged categories, multidimensionality, and unprecedented interaction." (Evans, 2003, p. 139)

The term *hybrid warfare* has been used over the last ten years in reference to non-state actors waging (sometimes successful) wars against militarily superior state adversaries, but also as illustrative term for Russia's strategies in eastern Ukraine. The term was used for

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[22] U.S. Army, "Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict", in *Field Manual 100-20*, Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1990.

the first time in 2002 in a master's thesis by William J. Nemeth (Neag, 2016, p. 16). In his *Future war and Chechnya: a case for hybrid warfare*, Nemeth used this concept in order to analyze how "increasing dislocation brought about by globalization enhances the drive toward ethnic or tribal affinity", hence determining "devolving societies" to reorganize their military forces and conduct in warfare. Additionally, Nemeth claimed that "hybrid warfare will become increasingly prevalent" and that the "Chechen insurgency [is] a model for hybrid warfare" (Nemeth, 2002). It was in 2007 that Franck Hofmann tackled hybrid threats as those that are simultaneous, fused and subordinated to one command unit. Focusing on "multi-modal activities" which are "operationally and tactically directed and coordinated within the main battlespace to achieve synergistic effects", Hoffman argued that "hybrid wars incorporate a range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder" (Hoffman, 2007, p. 29). The underpinning postulate is that "hybrid wars blend the lethality of state conflict with the fanatical and protracted fervour of irregular warfare" (Hoffman, 2007, p. 28).

The war fought by Israel against Lebanon-based Hezbollah in 2006 was the one that triggered preoccupation for the capacity of a non-state actor, such as Hezbollah, to pose a serious threat to the conventional Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) not because it merely employed irregular strategies, but because its strength combined military force with "political, social, diplomatic, and informational components that provide[d] bedrock support for its military organization" (Glenn, 2009, p. 3). At the time, several works focused on Hezbollah's war against Israel as emblematic case-study for hybrid warfare waged by non-state actors (Huovinen, 2011; Glenn, 2009; Hoffman, 2007; McCulloh, 2013).

Referring to the nature and dynamic of "hybrid threats", Russell W. Glenn advanced two illustrative definitions:

> "Hybrid threat (1): Any adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs a tailored mix of conventional, irregular, terrorism and criminal means or activities in the operational battlespace. Rather than

a single entity, a hybrid threat or challenger may be comprised of a combination of state and non-state actors.

Hybrid threat (2): An adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs some combination of (1) political, military, economic, social, and information means, and (2) conventional, irregular, catastrophic, terrorism, and disruptive/criminal warfare methods. It may include a combination of state and non-state actors" (Glenn, 2009, p. 2).

Hoffman uses the "multi-modal" underlying nature in hybrid warfare in order to distinguish it from previous guerrilla tactics or from compound warfare whose aim was to pose a persistent threat by protracting the conflict. In such a scenario, the militarily, technologically and numerically weaker side aimed at avoiding direct confrontations with the opponent and decisive battles were not strategically envisioned. "Hybrid opponents", Hoffman argues, "seek victory by the fusion of irregular tactics and the most lethal means available in order to attack and attain their political objectives. The disruptive component of Hybrid Wars does not come from high-end or revolutionary technology, but from criminality" (Hoffman, 2007, p. 29). The traditional intellectual categorizations seem obsolete, since they are based on separation between regular and irregular warfare, which becomes transcended by "a fusion of war forms". According to Hoffman,

"Instead of separate challengers with fundamentally different approaches (conventional, irregular or terrorist), we can expect to face competitors who will employ *all* forms of war and tactics, perhaps simultaneously. Criminal activity may also be considered part of this problem as well, as it either further destabilizes local government or abets the insurgent or irregular warrior by providing resources, or by undermining the host state and its legitimacy" (Hoffman, 2007, p. 7)

Hybrid wars, therefore, neither supplant conventional warfare, nor do they confine future threats to mere sub-state or trans-state irregular actors. They represent the blending of various forms of tactics and strategies, the simultaneous military and cyber attacks, the instantaneity of targeting and inflicting harm, all facilitated by globalization and

developments in technology and information. At the same time, hybrid wars will retain basic and brutal forms of violence, trying to instil terror and human costs, while exploiting virtual dimensions of warfare. Hybrid wars basically combine cyber, kinetic, media, terrorist, and military (regular and irregular) command structures. They blend malware and hacking with conventional military decision-making.

Mike Evans described such evolution as follows:

> "During the 1990s, the bipolar world that had for so long conditioned military conflict was swiftly replaced by a new globalised security environment characterised by weapons proliferation, internal wars, failed states, ethnopolitical violence, the rise of terrorism and a 24-hour electronic media [...] Armed conflict also began to reflect a bewildering mixture of modes—conventional and unconventional activity merged—while many combatants simultaneously employed modern Kalashnikov assault rifles, pre-modern machetes and post-modern cellular phones in their operations" (Evans, 2007, p. 6)

In an astute analysis, Sascha-Dominik Bachmann and Håkan Gunneriusson tackle the role the internet and social media as "enhancer and force multiplier" in terrorist activities and emphasize the "readiness, availability and affordability of using new technologies for setting up effective" systems of "command and control" (Bachmann, Gunneriusson, 2015, p. 83).

The terms "hybrid warfare" and "hybrid threats" seem to have been gradually incorporated in institutional lexicons. In 2014, the Statement of NATO summit in Wales described hybrid warfare threats as "wide range of overt and covert military, paramilitary, and civilian measures [which] are employed in a highly integrated design."[23] In a 2011 report, NATO referred to hybrid threats as "an umbrella term, encompassing a wide variety of existing adverse circumstances and actions, such as terrorism, migration, piracy, corruption,

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[23] Wales Summit Declaration, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales, Press Release (2014) 120, Issued on 05 Sep. 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm, accessed December 2016

ethnic conflict etc" (Bachmann, Gunneriusson, 2015, p. 79). The European Commission adopted a Joint Framework "to counter hybrid threats and foster the resilience of the EU and partner countries while increasing cooperation with NATO on countering hybrid threats." As expressed by Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, "the security environment has changed dramatically. We have seen the rise of hybrid threats on EU's borders."[24]

On the other hand, like many other conceptualizations on warfare, the concept *hybrid war* spurred both analyses applied to state or non-state behaviour in international relations and controversy or corroborated dismissal in the academic and military field. Mark Galeotti emphasized *non-linear warfare*, a terminology meant to supplant "hybrid warfare", since the latter is merely "a term that was designed to discuss how insurgents fight modern armies" (Galeotti, interview in *Small Wars Journal*, 2015; Galeotti, 2015).

Referring to non-state terrorist actors, such as Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, ISIS, Bachmann and Gunneriusson stressed the increasing capacity of non-state actors to replicate the command and control structures of conventional military and observed that recent "developments have changed the traditional view of asymmetric warfare, where an AK-47 and the insurgent's morale were traditionally the only and often most important factors in achieving victory". The two scholars argued that "hybrid threats as such are not new threats; what is new is the recognition that such multi-modal threats command a 'holistic' approach, which combines traditional and non-traditional responses by state and NSAs [non-state actors] as well" (Bachmann, Gunneriusson, 2015, p. 86).

Hybrid warfare and Russia's response to asymmetry at the global level

A considerable amount of recent literature links hybrid warfare with Russia's actions in eastern Ukraine and the subsequent annexation of Crimea. Most articles focus on Russia's

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[24] European Commission - Press release, *Security: EU strengthens response to hybrid threats*, Brussels, 6 April 2016,http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1227_en.htm , accessed December 2016

combined strategies and tactics, ranging from subversion, cyber-attacks, media manipulation, the presence of "little green men", staged military exercises, criminal disorder, agitation and fifth columns. Valuable and detailed analyses describe the entire set of tools employed by Russia in eastern Ukraine (Lanozska, 2016; Pomerantsev, Weiss, 2014). Some scholars focus on cyber warfare or information warfare as major shifts in Russia's strategies (Bachmann, Gunneriusson, 2015; Giles, 2016) while others are rather preoccupied with the asymmetric nature of Russia's operations (Thornton, 2016). Other approaches focus on the difficulty of conceptually coining Russia's strategy as hybrid war, terming them "gray-zone wars" (Echevarria, 2016) or a form of "compound 'indirect' approach" (Scheipers, 2016). Bachmann and Gunneriusson focused on the somehow "undefined nature of the conflict" stressing the quandary over defining Russia's actions in Crimea as "war or civil unrest, interstate aggression or intrastate conflict". The two scholars captured the core "hybrid approach", as Russia "actually deni[ed] the existing of a state of war but defin[ed] military action in a holistic way with armed as well as unarmed civilians, supported by regular combat elements, doing the actual military manoeuvre acting" (Bachmann, Gunneriusson, 2015, pp. 88-89).

As already mentioned, Russia's recourse to information warfare and cyber attacks are considered crucial in transforming the modes of waging war against Ukraine. Keir Giles focused on the way in which information technologies and social media were employed as both tools for disinformation, amounting to "hacking of the news" according to some (Tikhonova, 2015), and for the media construction of Russia's version of events (Giles, 2016, p. 40). What Keir Giles dubs the "next phase of Russian information warfare" basically centres on employment of "Pro-Russian trolls – online profiles controlled by humans - and bots, those controlled by automated processes" (Giles, 2016, p. 40). A complex and systematic process has been developed, which tends to supplant the conventional deployment of troops, with "Russia amassing abilities on social media, ready to be deployed when needed" (Giles, 2016, p. 43). This led other scholars to assess Russia's actions in terms of capacity "to hybridize not only its actual warfare, but also its informational warfare" (Pomerantsev, Weiss, 2014, p. 5). The core interplay of cyber, kinetic, information, malware

operations in eastern Ukraine represent "a case-study in the potential for cyber-electromagnetic activities", according to the head of the U.S. Army's Cyber Center of Excellence: "It's not just cyber, it's not just electronic warfare, it's not just intelligence, but it's really effective integration of all these capabilities with kinetic measures to actually create the effect that their commanders [want] to achieve" (quoted in Giles, 2016, pp. 44-45).

Russia's strategies in eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea are considered hybrid challenges for the 21st century, since they heavily rely on what Peter Pomerantsev and Michael Weiss have called " 'the weaponization of information, culture and money', vital parts of the Kremlin's concept of 'non-linear' war" (Pomerantsev, Weiss, 2014, p. 4). Alongside with covert and small military operations, Russia concentrated on the news channel *Russia Today* (later rebranded *RT*) which is a wire service that includes "multilingual rolling news, a wire service and radio channels" and "has an estimated budget of over $300 million". The latter is a key item in what Pomerantsev and Weiss called "the Kremlin tool kit", meant to achieve the following goals: to shatter communications by conveying mixed messages, constructing a Russian-made version of reality, and "paralyzing journalism with threat of libel", and to "demoralize the enemy" via "disinformation campaigns" (Pomerantsev, Weiss, 2014, p. 6 and pp. 14-16). Russia's strategy of exploiting some of the core elements of Western liberal democracies, such as free speech and legal concepts such as *jus ad bellum*, is considered a pivotal attribute of the new information war (Bachmann, Gunneriusson, 2015; Pomerantsev, Weiss, 2014).

Other approaches focusing on the "hybrid" aspects of Russia's strategies in eastern Ukraine reject the intertwining elements of hybrid warfare and the beginning of a new form of Russian belligerence. Some cautiously argue that hybrid warfare is not synonymous to a "quasi-theory of Russian foreign policy" (Renz, Smith, 2016) while others analyze hybrid tactics as "neither new, nor Russian" (Popescu, 2015). Bettina Renz and Hanna Smith argued that there is "a dangerous misuse of the term 'war'" in Western recent literature stemming from overemphasis on combined use of information and psychological operations, which "were important factors leading to Russian military victory and were more important than the use of actual military force [...]." The authors remind us that Russia accomplished its goals

only because "these efforts were backed up by special forces, auxiliary fighters and the implicit threat of more military force to come" (Renz, Smith, p. 11). Consequently, treating Russia's annexation of Crimea and "hybrid warfare" as twin developments creates a western-made "model of Russian 'hybrid warfare' reverse-engineered from the approach pursued in Crimea" (Renz, Smith, p. 11). Andrew Monaghan also showed that analyses on Russia's hybrid warfare should entail "understanding the implications of the much deeper and wider Russian state mobilization", since the risk is to obscure or overlook the role of conventional force in Russian military thinking (Monaghan, 2016, p. 72).

In a different argument-built approach, Alexander Lanoszka discusses "hybrid warfare as a strategy rather than a new form of war" (Lanoszka, p. 178). The author shows that hybrid warfare is not necessarily a model for the future of warfare and does not indicate Russia's mixed strategies "born out of weakness" or determined by global asymmetries. Instead, Russia's hybrid strategies were used to "advance political goals on the battlefield by applying military force subversively" (Lanoszka, p. 178). But such strategies are effective only when directed against a weaker neighbour (such as Ukraine or the post-Soviet space in general) and only when some endogenous elements or situational factors facilitate their success. Lanoszka argues that certain key attributes of the former Soviet region foment the use of hybrid strategies: ethnic heterogeneity, latent historic grievances, weakness in civil society, and regional complexity. Such regional peculiarities are relevant, rendering the former Soviet republics vulnerable (even though it is not "equally effective across all parts of the former Soviet space"), since "hybrid warfare exploits nationalist identities, thereby blurring responsibility and even gaining political support among foreign audiences" (Lanoszka, p. 176 and pp. 181-189). Other scholars also focused on the "permissive environment" in eastern Ukraine which provided the opportunity for "Soviet-inherited practices" (Beznosiuk, 2016; Charap, 2016, p. 54).

Referring to Russia's actions in 2014, "hybrid threats" and "hybrid challenges" are often emphasized in a post-conventional international security framework. Some analysts believe this development poses a real threat to Europe, but most importantly to the Baltic states (Hunter, Pernik, 2015; Kudors, 2015). Others have been keen to formulate US policies

or contemplate NATO's strategic planning in order to counteract or avert such future threats, whether posed by state or non-state actors (Abbott, 2016; Fleming, 2011). And yet, others warn that inadequate attention leads to "a misguided attempt to group everything Moscow does under one rubric" (Kofman, Rojansky, 2015, p. 6). As such, Kofman and Rojansky argued, hybrid warfare becomes a "catchall phrase" which poorly describes Russian foreign policy and hastily foresees the duplication of similar scenarios, like the ones in Crimea and Donbas, elsewhere (Kofman, Rojansky, 2015, p. 7).

The most convincing criticism focuses on the speedy identification of a pre-planned new form of warfare which Russia has been designing over the last years and which had already been described by Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the Russian General Staff, in 2013. According to this critique, some Western accounts suggested that the Russian operations in Crimea and eastern Ukraine marked the beginning of a new form of "hybrid warfare" and, hence, they hastily and wrongly equated it to a so-called "Gerasimov doctrine" (Charap, 2016, p. 53; Monaghan, 2016, pp. 65-66; Bartles, 2016). Andrew Monaghan showed that Russian "commentators use the term *gibridnaya voina*, a direct transliteration of hybrid warfare, when they assert that the notion of Russian hybrid warfare is a myth" (Monaghan, 2016, pp. 67-68). The purpose of this critique is to show that the Western identification of a Russian theorizing of such strategies is inaccurate, because, as emphasized by Samuel Charap, "Gerasimov is actually describing what he sees as the new US way of war, not Russian doctrine" (Charap, 2016, p. 53).

The question we tackle here is: Against whom is Russia waging this type of hybrid war? In order to fully understand whether Russia's strategies and combined tactics in eastern Ukraine amount to a novel and distinct category, labelled by many as "Russia's hybrid war", we should first consider the goals of Putin's Russia. This would also enable us to problematize whether Russia acted out of a weaker position, and in this sense we witnessed a form of asymmetric warfare, or out of a stronger position against a vulnerable neighbour, and in this sense we witnessed the manifestation of regional hubris. In our interpretation, involvement in former Soviet republics (by stirring up local pro-Russian feelings and destabilizing post-Soviet states), whether this was the case of Abkhazia and South Ossetia,

Transnistria or, more recently, the case of eastern Ukraine, are episodes of a larger perspective. Putin's ultimate goal is not just to weaken former Soviet republics, but rather to react to global asymmetries. As such, Russia needs to preserve its status of great power and to counteract not only a militarily stronger coalition of adversaries, but a Western ascendancy and a form of advancement of discursive persuasive power. The latter is geared towards an international order wherein the United States and the European Union play the key roles. What Putin ultimately wants for Russia is to be on equal footing with other major players of international politics. As underlined by Dmitry Trenin, "Russia's ultimate interest is a status of a major world power, on par with the USA and China" (Renz; Smith, 2016, p. 16). Therefore, part of Russia's hybrid warfare is propaganda and the construction of a Russian version of events. This represents a discourse construction meant to reverse uneven global conditions and the impaired status of post-Soviet Russia. This is precisely why Putin resorts to a narrative meant to rationalize and justify Russia's actions. It has often been mentioned that Putin referred to the demise of the Soviet Union as a great tragedy (Lanoszka, 2016, p. 187). Consequently, Russia should strive, according to the rationale, to regain its great power status and reverse post-Soviet international order characterized by the dominance of US and Western Europe.

According to Bachmann and Gunneriusson, hybrid warfare entails, *inter alia*, the use of media as "force multiplier" which represents a fundamental tool for both non-state actors, such as radical Islamists, and for state actors, as the Crimean case revealed. Even though the use of media is the common denominator, there is a huge difference to be noted. Non-state actors like "Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab try to translate tactical success into terror, while in the Crimean and Ukrainian examples, Russia tried the opposite while denying being an active agent. In the former case, *jus ad bellum* is ignored; in the latter, it is evaded" (Bachmann, Gunneriusson, 2015, p. 90). Building on this insightful observation, we shall emphasize the way in which Putin's Russia tried to not openly reject the rules of war in international law, but to elude and alter them.

The dynamic indicating neither full-blown war nor merely irregular warfare in eastern Ukraine was not intended to overtly defy international law, but to escape its provisions and find loopholes by using the lexicon of Western liberal democracies.

In this sense, Russia's "hybrid war" is a reaction to a stronger opponent (the West, represented by two important actors, the US and EU), whose weaknesses and vulnerabilities are identified and targeted. Hence, Russia's combined tactics reveal a very improved form of asymmetric warfare. As Pomerantsev has put it, "feeling itself relatively weak, the Kremlin has systematically learnt to use the principles of liberal democracies against them" (Pomerantsev, Weiss, 2014, p. 4)

Russia's tactics and modes of warfare could be best described in terms of the combination of covert small military operations with criminal disorder and hijacking social media, the blending of special forces, intelligence, malware, and local militias, but most importantly, in ideational terms, in terms of systematic and integrated attempts to reverse realities. In what follows, we shall try to show how Putin's Russia resorted to a construction of international reality in which international law and norms are not rejected as Western-made, but reinterpreted and amended in a Russian-made rhetoric.

Russia's hybrid warfare – corollary of the distribution of both capabilities and ideas

This section will analyze Putin's speeches referring to events in Ukraine and will identify systematic attempts to counteract a Western discourse by creating another version of events. Building on conventional constructivist claims (*id est.* the works of Alexander Wendt) we shall try to show that an important part of Russia's "hybrid warfare" revolves around ideational factors and discourse constructions. In other words, alongside cyber, kinetic, information, malware operations, backed up by special forces and auxiliary troops (which in this approach represent material facts), a narrative meant to explain Russia's rationale played an equally important role (and these were ideational facts).

The basic claims in Alexander Wendt's constructivist theorizing refer to the character of international life which is determined "by the beliefs and expectations that states have about each other and these are constituted largely by social rather than material structures" (Wendt, 1999, p. 20). Such assertion does not suggest that material power and state interests are unimportant, but rather that they are incomplete, since "their meaning and effects depend on the social structure of the system" (Wendt, 1999, p. 20). Building on this understanding, we argue that Putin's decisions pertaining to intervention in eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea are embedded in an international *material and ideational* structure. The material facts of international systems and the distribution of capabilities have always been considered decisive (and exclusive) factors for assessing state behavior in Realist and Neorealist accounts. In this section, though, we treat Russia's recent foreign policy decisions as corollary of a distribution of both capabilities (material facts) and ideas. A Realist interpretation of events would focus solely on Russia's decision to use threat and military power against the territorial integrity of a weaker neighbour, hence validating the states' strength in military terms and the weakness of norms, rules and international law. If we consider Russia's actions in terms of offensive realist behaviour, which would downplay international law and norms, then the following question is raised: why did Putin try so hard to narrate Russia's actions in eastern Ukraine in terms of "people's right to determine their future"? Why did Putin try to shape a line of arguments built on essentials of international law and importance of the United Nations? Why did he invoke the 1999 NATO intervention in Kosovo and presented it as similar to the intervention in eastern Ukraine? According to Vladimir Putin,

> "if I do decide to use the Armed Forces, this will be a legitimate
> decision in full compliance with both general norms of international
> law [...] and with our commitments, which in this case coincide with
> our interests to protect the people with whom we have close

> historical, cultural and economic ties. Protecting these people is in our
> national interests. This is a humanitarian mission."[25]

Some might answer the questions raised above by showing that Putin simply tried to justify Russia's military actions in order to confer legitimacy and dissuade a military reaction from the West (which usually is expected in case of aggression against the territorial integrity of other states). But, he was doing more than simply trying to fend off criticism or military reaction. After all, Russia fought a war against Georgia in 2008 (and supported breakaway Abkhazia and South Ossetia) and there was no such drastic response from the international community. According to former Russian TV producer Peter Pomerantsev, Russia's decisions towards Ukraine amount to much more than information warfare operations. He argues that "the new Russia doesn't just deal with the petty disinformation, forgeries, lies, leaks, and cyber-sabotage usually associated with information warfare. It reinvents reality [...]" (Pomerantsev, 2014). A careful reading of Putin's statements reveals a re-description of events based on cautiousness towards international law, and not on defiance of rules. According to Putin,

> "[...] what do we hear from our colleagues in Western Europe and
> North America? They say we are violating norms of international law.
> [...] what exactly are we violating? [...] Russia's armed forces never
> entered Crimea; they were there already in line with an international
> agreement. True, we did enhance our forces there; however - this is
> something I would like everyone to hear and know - we did not
> exceed the personnel limit of our armed forces in Crimea, which is set
> at 25,000, because there was no need to do so."[26]

This constitutes more than justification, it represents an attempt to construct another reality and to shape a persuasive discourse construction (a competing version of events)

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[25] *Vladimir Putin answered journalists' questions on the situation in Ukraine*, March 4, 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20366, accessed December 2016.

[26] "Crimea crisis: Russian President Putin's speech annotated", *BBC News*, March 19, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26652058, accessed December 2016.

which is consistent with international law. In our interpretation, alongside all blended strategies employed by Russia (which reveal the strengths in material terms) an ideational force multiplier was also at work. The construction of reality and the Russian-made narrative about the nature of intervention in Ukraine indicate the role of ideas and meanings. In trying to "make sense of hybrid warfare" James Wither lucidly showed that, just "like IS, Russia used information operations to influence and shape public perception, a recognition that the latter has become the strategic centre of gravity in contemporary armed conflicts" (Wither, 2016, p. 77). Our constructivist interpretation stresses the role of perceptions, meanings, and shared beliefs which accompanied cyber, information and military means employed by Russia. The Russian hybrid strategy/warfare entailed military and information tools, but also meanings which Putin assigned to events in eastern Ukraine in an attempt to construct an international reality based on "Western double-standards" (in Putin's words). Such a narrative is meant to persuade audiences (and attract allies) and to gradually shape Russia's great power status in international politics. Relying exclusively on combined tactics (as those employed in Ukraine), Russia would be confronted with the status of outcast in international politics. But this is not Russia's ultimate goal. Rather than self-marginalizing from the Western world, Russia's main concern is to become an equal partner. Others have also emphasized Russia's complicated relation with Europe; for instance, Bettina Renz and Hanna Smith focused on one "important misperception" which is that "Russia wants to cut itself off from Europe" (Renz, Smith, 2016, p. 18). We argue that Putin's Russia resorted to a narrative, a re-description of events which aims at shaping the construction of international reality in which international law and norms are not rejected as Western-made, but reinterpreted and amended in a Russian-made rhetoric. Consequently, this is process wherein ideational facts and perceptions complete the military, cyber or technological strengths.

Putin's speeches try to constantly reiterate a form of legitimacy and compliance with international rules: "we proceed from the conviction that we always act legitimately. I have

personally always been an advocate of acting in compliance with international law"[27]; "people should have the right to determine their own future"[28]; "if we see such uncontrolled crime spreading to the eastern regions of the country, and if the people ask us for help [...] we retain the right to use all available means to protect those people. We believe this would be absolutely legitimate. This is our last resort."[29] He invokes NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1999 and uses it as precedent setting: "the Crimean authorities referred to the well-known Kosovo precedent - a precedent our Western colleagues created with their own hands in a very similar situation, when they agreed that the unilateral separation of Kosovo from Serbia, exactly what Crimea is doing now, was legitimate and did not require any permission from the country's central authorities."[30] Such discursive elements are not mere justifications, they are ideational factors geared towards shaping reality. Putin's narrative and efforts to confer legitimacy and to employ the key terms of international law represent a speech act.

One major conceptual pillar in Alexander Wend's social-constructivism is symbolic interactionism. The latter derived from George Herbert Mead's sociological framework according to which, throughout social interactions, individuals employ symbols and meanings and, based on them, define their own identity (the *self*) and understand certain situations in relation with the co-presence of others (Mead, 1934). Moreover, social interaction plays a major role in the development of the *self*. By extrapolating the role of meanings and symbols to state behaviour, we could examine how states tend to take on the perspective of the *generalized other* (in Mead's conceptualization) in international politics. Therefore, Russia's role in the international contemporary structure is best understood in terms of

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[27] *Vladimir Putin answered journalists' questions on the situation in Ukraine*, March 4, 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20366, accessed December 2016.

[28] *Ibidem.*

[29] *Ibidem.*

[30] "Crimea crisis: Russian President Putin's speech annotated", *BBC News*, March 19, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26652058, accessed December 2016. See also Bojana Barlovac, "Putin Says Kosovo Precedent Justifies Crimea Secession", *Balkan Insight*, March 18, 2014, http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/crimea-secession-just-like-kosovo-putin

meanings assigned by Putin to certain events, but also in terms of the construction of *self* in relation with *or* co-dependence on *others*. Russia can only be a great power when the others (and "by others" we refer to "the Generalized Other", as coined by Mead) acknowledge it and treat it as such. Moreover, Russia's great power status is dependent on the socially constructed recognition of such attributes in international politics. Great power status in this respect entails much more than regional hegemony. The ultimate goal is to push Russia's pre-eminence so as it can really act as key player in international politics (on equal footing with the US and the EU) and to persuade international audience of such status held by Russia at the beginning of the 21st century. The formulation of such claims by Putin or other Russian political figures is not enough. What is needed is the recognition of the international community (the "generalized other") in relation with which Putin is constructing a great power identity for Russia.

Several scholars focused on states' identities and decision-making as being contingent on "'a discourse of danger' in which state elites periodically invent or exaggerate threats to the body politic in order to produce and sustain an 'us' in distinction to 'them'" (Wendt, 1999, p. 275). This assertion is valid for any state and was applied to the United States in various works. Is Russia competing with the West or does it perceive an escalating confrontation in its relations with the West? As emphasized by James Wither, "many Russian commentators and analysts claim that Russia has been under sustained and effective information attack by the US since the 1980s" and hence, "from a Russian perspective, the seizure of Crimea and operations in eastern Ukraine are strategic defensive campaigns to counter US hybrid warfare against its national interests and values" (Wither, 2016, p. 80).

One might argue that Putin's Russia found itself in stark military and economic competition with the West. But we believe that this competition entails more than mere military, material factors and that it is grounded in a socially defined relation between *self* (Putin's Russia) and *others* (the international community at large, but most importantly US and EU). According to James Wither, "many of the statements emanating from Russia's government and media suggest that Russia perceives itself as at 'war' with Western democracy, culture and values" (Wither, 2016, p. 79). In this interpretation, the elements

which complete the material (military, economic, technological) form of competition are ideational. Not only physical security needs are at stake here, but also self-esteem needs. Putin's Russia is in a competition wherein the following pivotal point is equally and crucially important: whose "truths" are more persuasive in global politics? The Western discourse centred on post-Cold War international order, built on international law, the United Nations' system, the outlawing of aggression, state sovereignty, but also the promotion of human rights and democratic values throughout the world? Or Putin's reinterpretation of such international developments, built on what he dubbed "Western double-standards" or Western "hypocrisy"? As some of Putin's statements indicate, he is not formulating a worldview against international law or against the United Nations, but a reinterpretation of events. He tries to shape a competing "truth". Putin is waging a war against a dominant discourse. In this sense, discourse and ideational factors are at work, much more than tanks or price of gas.

Conclusion

In this article the aim was to tackle a different form of "hybridity" in Russia's recent actions. We tried to show that the hybrid aspects in Russia's warfare entail both material facts (the blended strategies employed in eastern Ukraine) and ideational facts (the Russian narrative of events and the meanings assigned to Russian actions). The latter are highly relevant in Putin's attempts to construct Russia's identity in relation or co-dependence with the *others*.

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Hybrid warfare – identifying the cause of potential conflict is important – not the ways and means?

Georg F. Fuchs

Lieutenant Colonel, German Armed Forces

Lecturer for Intelligence, Security and Strategic Studies

georg.f.fuchs@gmail.com

Abstract

Modern warfare "blurs the lines between war and politics, conflict and peace, soldier and civilian, and battlefield violence and safe zones. The new form of warfare has arisen from the loss of the nation-state's monopoly on violence; from the rise of cultural, ethnic, and religious conflict; a changed narrative for participation in conflict and from the spread of globalization, particularly advanced technology"(Williamson, 2009, p.3). *It is more important to understand the potential aggressor and its motivation to conduct aggressive action, than discuss the ways and means he will deploy during confrontation. The adaptability, agility of forces and access to modern, global communication and modern technologies as well as resources, enables actors other than states and increases states' portfolios during modern war fighting. The discussion of the difference between asymmetric or irregular warfare and hybrid warfare is not academic only. It is even to question if the so-called hybrid warfare is something new at all. Hoffman argues that "hybrid wars are not new".*

More frequently it is stated by experts that there is nothing new regarding hybrid warfare and it is just a new abbreviation for an old type of warfare. The legal framework for international conflict is not meeting the modern conflict realities and it is required to review and adapt them accordingly. Traditional mechanisms for conflict mitigation and the relevance of time and space during conflicts are changing dramatically and will inflict a far more complex conflict environment. Near real time access to information, powerful pictures, the availability of the internet and access to resources and high sophisticated technology will increase the power of small proxies or networks.

The state will lose its monopoly of power and the borders between internal and external security within states and regions will diminish. Modern warfare will be adaptive, agile, well-resourced and very unlikely conducted between states in a conventional manner. The better states are willing to accept these changes and conduct modernization accordingly the better will they be prepared for future conflicts.

Keywords: Hybrid warfare; Future conflicts; Permanent war; Dark networks; Cyber space.

Introduction – Development of modern warfare

After the end of the Cold War in 1989 everybody was expecting political stability, cooperation instead of confrontation and continuous freedom for the immediate and mid-term future. The western countries expected to bring home the so called 'Friedensdividende'[31] and conflict seemed to be far away. Although some political and intelligence analysts predicted a troublesome future, especially along the former borders of the Soviet Union, they had been accused by the majority of pessimism and negativism in their analysis. For most analysts nothing could endanger the now likely everlasting peace after the two superpowers resolved their controversy over political ideas. It seemed even, that Russia analysts thought about giving up their professions and wondered if they were still relevant and required. Soon did they learn that the future will not be as peaceful as expected and the large block confrontation, starting after the end of the Second World War in 1945, was just overshadowing smaller conflicts which emerged out of the shadows after the Wall came down in 1989.

Over time the narrative causing these conflicts changed: it was not the political ideas, communism versus democracy, which inflicted the Cold War or proxy wars anymore, but regional, ethnological and tribally narrated or religiously motivated groups and networks which caused trouble within mainly autocratic countries and against the globalizing western world. During this time with reduced state and border control, there emerged an increasing number of organized crime groups gaining enormous amounts of money and influence enabling them to either provide financial support or access to other resources like weapons and global terrorist groups, which caused thousands of casualties.

But the core problem for nation states started with the second Gulf War fought after the Iraqi military occupied Kuwait. Since then around 60 more conflicts progressed or continued. Some smaller ones have not even been publicly recognized but others like the conflicts in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, the Intifadas, Somalia, or the

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[31] English: „peace dividend"

Congo had been or are still heavily impacting the political and economic situation within their regions as well as globally.

But the greatest challenge for the global society inherited by these conflicts was and still is that they question the western nation state model. Agreed upon by all member nations of the United Nations, developed after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, it is based on the agreement that internal and external power is the core responsibility of a nation, and it also defined the legal framework for state to state conflicts: the Hague Regulations as well as the Law of Armed Conflict. These developments had ensured for centuries that humanitarian principles and the protection of the civilian population during conflict, as well as brutality against enemy military, was regulated, and if not followed, responsible actors prosecuted. All this was fundamentally questioned during the comparable short period of time since 1989, in overall less than 30 years. These developments had an impact on the mechanisms for crisis prevention and on warfare.

This article will discuss modern types of warfare and immanent transformation of warfare since the end of the Cold War. It will give a perspective for future warfare and what is to be expected during future conflicts.

Different concepts explaining modern warfare

Since the Wall came down recent conflicts and emergencies heavily influenced the development of new concepts concerning future warfare. To emphasize and discuss the most important ones, it is necessary to understand the situation in which these concepts had been developed.

The only remaining superpower, prepared to fight and win conventional battles, dominated the power structures globally. The United States of America in concert with its Allies was able to defeat all potential military threats due to technological supremacy and overwhelming resources. During two Gulf Wars this Coalition did destroy a strong conventional Iraqi military force in weeks, if not days. Potential opponents needed to develop methods to threaten, defeat and weaken these mainly western powers. Knowing that the

Coalition was conventionally unbeatable, it was the asymmetric, irregular, unconventional approach of a weaker opponent which was used and continuously developed against the western military might.

On the western side the military did understand that their conventional power, although never beaten in combat, was not well prepared to defeat such an enemy. Identifying these shortfalls strategists, academia and military did respond in developing concepts to better prepare the forces for similar conflicts. The hybrid warfare concept is one in a row of many such concepts or models. The most popular ones had been first the Unrestricted, second the contemporary, third the Fourth Generation and finally the Hybrid Warfare concept. All four did reflect different military and political perspectives, explaining future conflicts based on the experience made in current and recent conflicts. Out of this short and not comprehensive selection the hybrid warfare concept is the most recent. It became especially prominent during the Russian aggression against Georgia and Ukraine. The 4th Generation Warfare concept in contrary was developed because of "…a major geopolitical shift in which the fall of the Soviet Union ended a bipolar world; many ethnic and national groups quickly sensed a new opportunity for freedom or recognition. We should not be surprised by these actors' innovative methods and techniques of warfare as they release pent-up energy and pursue long-held ideological and nationalistic objectives. In the context of the information technology revolution of rapid globalization, of ethnic and nationalist struggles and reactionary religious movements - all layered against the back-drop of the end of the Cold War and the subsequent breakup of a familiar geopolitical and balance-of-power dynamic – a concept like Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW) would inevitably emerge" (Williamson, 2009, p.2). Instead of developing this concept further a new catch phrase was inaugurated "Hybrid Warfare". This concept focused a little more on the development of military methods developed by nation states using the successful irregular warfare methods and integrated them into their conventional military, adding modern technology to the very basic kind of asymmetric or irregular warfighting.

If hybrid warfare is the way future conflicts are conducted and what hybrid warfare means is the question since many years. The discussion was started after David Johnson

differentiated "three levels of military competence and each level places different demands on the military forces being designed to confront them" (Johnson, 2010) the first time in 2009. His paper had been based on the insights from the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in Lebanon and Gaza.

Source: David Johnson, 2009
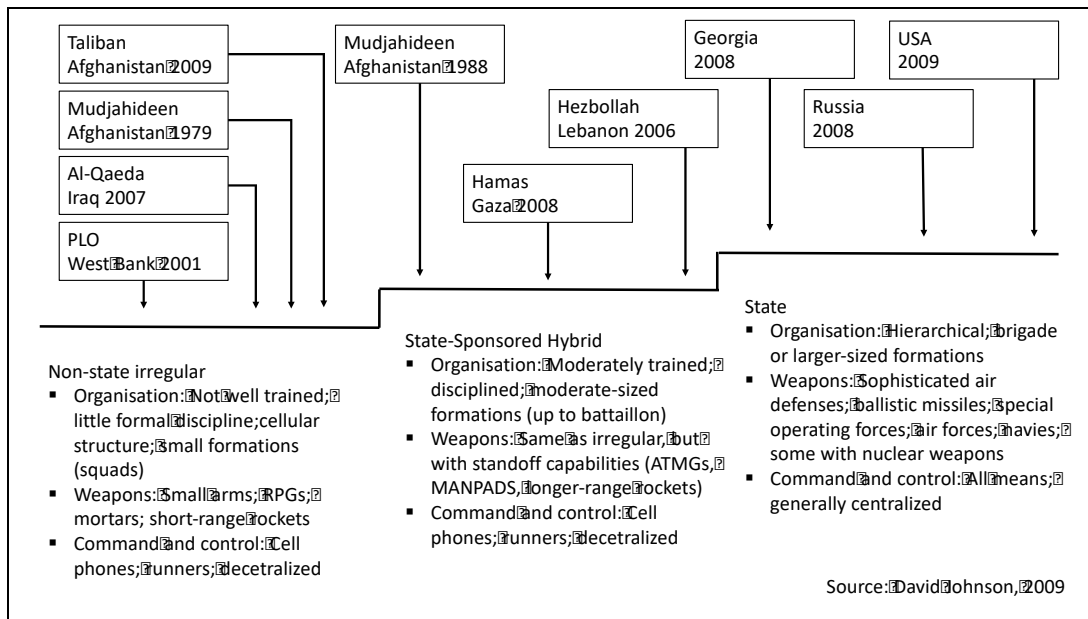
Johnson's guiding concept was developed out of past experiences examining several conflicts and was mainly quantified by quality of organization, deployed weapons and command and control mechanisms. The question still remains if the three selected aspects are really predicting the future of warfare or if they are just a reflection of past experiences.

Vladimir Gerasimov, the Russian Chief of General Staff, in contrary wrote in his doctrine: "New generation wars are to be dominated by information and psychological warfare, in order to achieve superiority in troops and weapons control, morally and psychologically depressing the enemy's armed forces personnel and civil population." In his guidelines for Russian military development he stated additionally, that modern militaries have to be prepared for a change in warfare: „From war in a defined period of time to a state

of permanent war as the natural condition in natural life." In his doctrine and following papers he was far more trying to predict future warfare and review Russian doctrine accordingly and prepare his military forces to meet future requirements.

But did the Russian leadership develop this concept on its own? No, this knowledge was already available in concepts mentioned earlier. Hoffmann for example wrote in 2009: "Hybrid threats blend the lethality of state conflict with the fanatical and protracted fervor of irregular warfare. In such conflicts, future adversaries (states, state-sponsored groups, or self-funded actors) exploit access to modern military capabilities including encrypted command systems, man-portable surface-to-air missiles, and other modern lethal systems, as well as promote protracted insurgencies that employ ambushes, improvised explosive devices, and assassinations. This could include states blending high-tech capabilities such as anti-satellite weapons with terrorism and cyber warfare…" (Hoffman, 2009a, p. 5). Gerasimov published his prominent article in the Voyenno Promyshlennyy Kuryer, "The Value of Science is in Foresight" in 2013, four years later. NATO's comprehensive approach concept[32] developed at the Lisbon Summit, in November 2010, described a very similar approach already three years earlier.

It is more likely that most experts tend to "win the last war" as Sir Basil Liddell Hart once wrote. They are looking backwards instead of forward into the future. In doing so they frequently reflect past conflict forms and methods of warfighting but are not predicting the future. He also stated that: "The downfall of civilized states tends to come not from the direct assaults of foes, but from internal decay combined with the consequences of exhaustion in

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[32] "NATO's new Strategic Concept, adopted at the Lisbon Summit in November 2010, underlines that lessons learned from NATO operations show that effective crisis management calls for a comprehensive approach involving political, civilian and military instruments. Military means, although essential, are not enough on their own to meet the many complex challenges to Euro-Atlantic and international security. Allied leaders agreed at Lisbon to enhance NATO's contribution to a comprehensive approach to crisis management as part of the international community's effort and to improve NATO's ability to contribute to stabilization and reconstruction." Available from: http://www.natolibguides.info/comprehensiveapproach [accessed 01.01.2017]

war." This is exactly what Russia's establishment fears the most. This is the first time in this paper that the cause of conflict becomes more relevant then the methods used to achieve identified objectives.

The competitor's in Future Warfare

It is to believe, that a different way of discussing future warfare is necessary. The named or identified objectives of an actor are the driving factor for political as well as military action and decision. It makes a difference if you want to invade a country or if you just want to destabilize a region in order to stabilize your country internally and in parallel weaken a coalition. These objectives can be described as ends, meaning the goals an actor wants to achieve or the purpose why he deploys power. In order to achieve these ends, it is necessary to choose appropriate tactics, techniques and approaches following different ways. Adversaries, either states or non-state actors, who employ irregular and hybrid warfare approaches that combine the conventional and unconventional methods are far more likely shaping a concept of future warfare. This requires the employment of means which can be explained as resources, weapons, propaganda, etc., in order to achieve the actors' ends. Opponents employ these means not only to destroy, kill, and manipulate, but they do so for a purpose.

Objectives	Ways	Means	Ends
▪ Cause ▪ Narrative ▪ Purpose ▪ Motivation	▪ Tactics ▪ Techniques ▪ Procedures ▪ Doctrine	▪ Command&Control ▪ Weapons ▪ Manpower ▪ Information Space	▪ Cause ▪ Objectives ▪ Goals ▪ Purpose
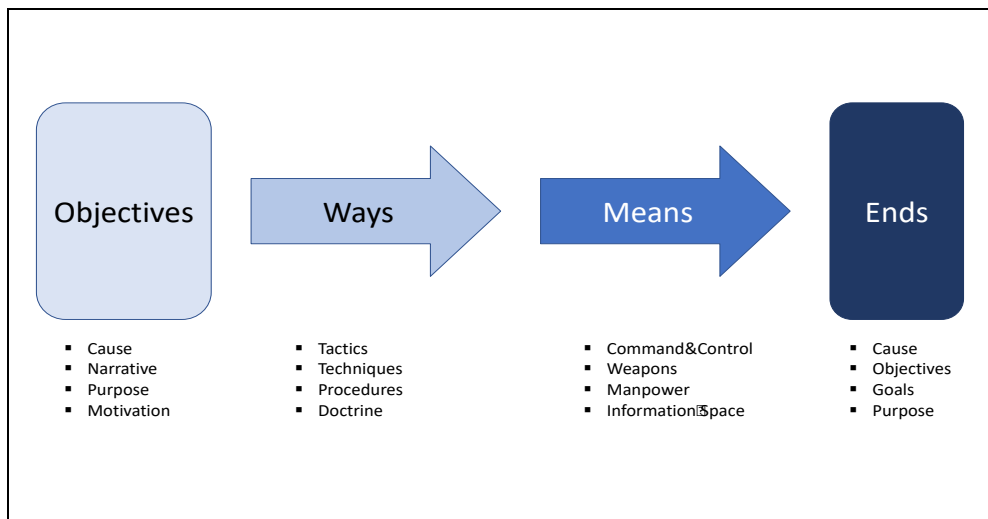
Adversaries determine goals and objectives, and they employ irregular and hybrid approaches to attain them asymmetrically when faced with opponent's conventional strength. This approach to explain future warfare makes it easier to understand different methods used by state and non-state actors. Meaning that either can choose to deploy irregular, terrorist or conventional methods to achieve its goals.

The difference is far more framed by available resources or means than by the status of an actor as a state or for example a network. Although states are threats to each other due to their capabilities it is very unlikely that they develop an intent to attack other states by conventional means in the near future. Non-state actors and networks are far more likely to pose threats to our societies. Arquilla and Ronfeldt describe netwar as an "emerging mode of conflict and crime at societal levels, involving levels short of war, in which protagonists use network forms of organization, doctrine, strategy, and communication" (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 1996, p.5). These dark networks are becoming increasingly capable due to technological proliferation and access to sophisticated knowledge via the internet. If the new terrain in which conflicts are waged is the mind of the people, the cyber space becomes more important than geographical territory. This virtual space becomes real when people come to believe that it is worth joining a network or just accept a narrative. The cyber space facilitates the spread of ideas and thoughts without any regulatory mechanism. Daesh or the so called Islamic State is a good example how the cyber space can be utilized for spreading information, an idea and concepts for attacks. A different but positive one is TED[33] which claims that it spreads ideas. Arquilla stated that "There are five levels of theory and practice that matter: the technological, social, narrative, organizational, and doctrinal levels. A netwar actor must get all five right to be fully effective" (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 1996). At the end, it is to understand why and how decision makers and leaders as individuals act under certain conditions, to understand a developing threat. The better we understand either Vladimir Putin or Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, including their social background, their networks and

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[33] Abreviation for Technology, Entertainment, Design – referring to a global conference movement spreading ideas in Education, Business, Science etc., in video form via the internet for free – https://www.ted.com/talks

organizational hierarchy, the more likely are we able to predict future developments correctly. It was the narrative which could either be religious, cultural, ethnological or political which influenced threat groups the most, created enemies and helped identifying other actors than the state.

The narrative – a better selector?

Besides the technological dimension which was already discussed, the narrative is the most important driver for individual's activities. It is to be developed in line with social examination and leads to decisions about organizational structures. Daesh did chose the lost caliphate as the narrative to convince people to join and develop a structure in line with former caliphates. To differentiate conflict forms and the ways wars are conducted it seems to be necessary to discuss the narrative or cause of a potential future conflict. Why is this important? The term hybrid warfare describes the way how conflicts are conducted but not the reason of a conflict and it does not differentiate actors. Although both are closely linked together; it is nearly impossible to discuss the potential form of a conflict, without reflecting its potential cause, including the competitors. The conflict form is just a developing and transforming way of warfare based on the cause, the availability of weapons, manpower and resources as well as the geography[34] of the battlespace. In this understanding the competitors, including available resources, as well as the circumstances in which a conflict is conducted, do influence heavily which type of warfare is chosen by the parties. At the end, it is a competition between two parties. The attacker or aggressor is potentially choosing the methodology first and will impose power against the rival. It is up to the defender how imaginative, agile, adaptable he and his forces are to meet these challenges successfully.

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[34] Geography in its human as well as a geographical dimension. Definition: "the study of the physical features of the earth and its atmosphere, and of human activity as it affects and is affected by these, including the distribution of populations and resources and political and economic activities."

This might be a different and more pragmatic than theoretical approach to other theorists of warfare. It is reflecting the concept of 4th Generation Warfare or the Contemporary Warfare model as developing models for ways warfare is conducted but far more focused on potential choices of an aggressor reflecting his capabilities, resources and chances. Everything which seems to help him to be successful will be chosen or conducted against a defending or invading enemy. Success in warfare is the capability to impose the aggressors will over the defenders and sustain it.

What is really New?

It remains to discuss whether any element of warfare has changed over time. If the assumption is still valid that an aggressor's will to achieve its objectives or ends is not necessarily a question of attacking or defending space but the will of the population, this would change ways and means dramatically. In consequence does this mean that a core question might be:

- will the classical belief that warfare is about conquering territory remain valid?

    or

- will territory just be conquered to gain access to resources if required?

Historically an attacking country does conquer land to impose its will over the opponent. The territory is conquered against the will of the defender mostly against his military force which is to be defeated. After conquering land, it is the task of the attacker to sustain the achievement: he has to implement a system of control and defend the territory. Because the attack is mostly conducted out of a situation in which the attacker has a superiority over the defender, it is the easier phase to conquer and far more difficult to control and defend the conquered territory over a long period of time. This was the case for Nazi Germany during World War II in which the Wehrmacht won every major battle and conquered huge territories but was not capable to completely control either. This opened

immense room for partisan movements in nearly all occupied countries and lead to defeat because of the massive number of troops required to basically control conquered space.

Particular difficulties arise in our time of political mechanisms controlling the state of conduct between countries through the United Nations Security Council. In this context one has to mention, that two different entities are to be recognized as potential aggressors. One is still the nation state; the other is a non-national group or network which might be supported or sponsored by a nation or nations. The circumstances which are framing the opportunities for either entity are different. The nation state agreed on the legal framework at least once in the past, the non-nation did never. Nevertheless, is it necessary for the non-nation to become recognized internationally to become recognized as a state at a point to become firstly a legal body and secondly a politically relevant entity. The two current examples are Russia which conquered Crimea and attacked Eastern Ukraine indirectly by proxies and the so called Islamic State which was a non-state network and became a state-like construct. Both used military power to impose their will against a defending nation and conquered territory aiming for the destruction or reduction of global or regional dominance to achieve or promote political objectives.

Military action was always supporting political objectives over centuries. It might be necessary to highlight that it was a way to an end but rarely an end in itself. Clausewitz wrote that: "war is not an independent phenomenon, but the continuation of politics by different means."[35] But is this still valid or did war become an end in itself, similar to the Thirty Years' War in Europe which is associated with the phrase "the war will feed itself"[36]? It is not as important how someone defines modern warfare, and it really does not matter – what is more important is to understand the reason and narrative of a potential aggressor or opponent.

These are the far more relevant questions: what is the narrative or cause for threatening the West, who has an interest and what are his underlying reasons for attacking?

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[35] Carl v. Clausewitz; "On War"

[36] Latin: "bellum se ipsum alet". The phrase, coined by Ancient Roman statesman Cato the Elder, is primarily associated with the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648).

The ends are important, not so much the ways and means which enable an opponent to achieve its intentions. To compare this statement with medicine: it is not about doctors attacking the symptoms but identifying the cause of an illness to find a successful cure. The symptoms might change within each conflict but the reasons for attacking are to be differentiated and identified to avoid confrontations. In order to discern what the motivations of a potential opponent may be and to understand the probable character of a conflict one must "possess a realistic understanding of the "other"" (Mansoor and Williamson, 2012, p. 293). Such a realistic appraisal can only come about through understanding the culture, history, values, approach to warfare, and the putative goals of the adversary (Ibid.). [37]

States as well as non-state actors are using and will use similar methods or ways and means to achieve their objectives. These are regularly blurring the lines between combatants and civilian population and include all possible or necessary means, cross-departmentally and if possible internationally. As Herfried Münkler wrote in 2004: "The dividing line between combatants and non-combatants had been blurred during World War II at the latest, the consequence had been total war. This dividing lines could not be implemented again after the war was over" (Münkler, 2004, p. 124). For the western nations, including their intelligence and military this does mean, that the challenge to identify either the activities or the individuals conducting violent action remains. It is to believe also, that future conflicts are "protracted slow-burning conflicts of attrition."[38] This is creating a problem for western nations because neither their governments nor their populations have the endurance or serenity to await success. Our governments decide only in electoral periods and are just limited willing to threaten their political success by engagements in foreign countries. The

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[37] See also McCulloh and Johnson (2013, p. 17) who demonstrate throughout their study that context is critical. Indeed, their summary statement for "hybrid warfare theory" is "a form of warfare in which one of the combatants bases its optimized force structure on the combination of all available resources—both conventional and unconventional—in a unique cultural context to produce specific, synergistic effects against a conventionally-based opponent.".

[38] Canadian Chief of Force Development, Directorate of Capability Integration, 'Hybrid Warfare Concept', p. 1, June 2012.

western populations are unwilling to risk the lives of their soldiers or overstretching resources in our post-heroic communities. The Afghan saying: "you possess the watches but we have the time" articulates the problem very well. Since these entities do not have to win a conflict, they just need to avoid losing it, or at least neglecting a defeat. Taking the mentioned circumstances into account a potential western success in such conflicts is very unlikely. Since "irregular warfare (in all its forms) in its nature is even more obviously a contest of political wills than is regular combat" (Gray, 2006, p. 229). The pure military might will not be enough to achieve victory. The prime examples are Iraq and Afghanistan: in both conflicts did the coalition, steered by the US, leave or reduce its footprint far too early to stabilize the countries or potentially far too late to just defeat the known enemy.

But how is a conflict evolving and which states are involved on both sides, either as sponsors, using proxies, or directly? The available capabilities and resources are shaping the ways and means of warfare. Two examples should explain how this has an impact. The reason why nuclear weapons are becoming important again is the fact that they, in the same way as sophisticated anti-access and areal denial (A2AD) weapons, are providing the environment in which the effects of a potential military engagement will be so tremendous that no decisions are made to openly defend a threatened partner. The deterring function of such weapons is not so much that of avoiding conflict entirely anymore, but to limit the measures against an opponent's approach. This has changed the way deterrence worked during the Cold War, in which the functionality was to avoid direct conflict entirely. Nowadays the conflict is already eminent due to assumed involvement; a hybrid confrontation below conflict level and a subsequent escalation of force is far more likely. As an example: Russia did assume an offensive campaign by NATO to expand its territory to the East to its disadvantage and in assuming it already became a competitor. It is not important if this is true or not, the assumption is enough to enforce or allow action. In employing A2AD weapons, which could be sophisticated air-to-air weapons or improvised explosive devices the opponents will to continue or begin an engagement or his freedom of maneuver, decision and action, is limited due to the cost of lives and resources. The increasing proliferation of sophisticated weapons systems or technology, either by sponsors or the internet, enhance the

capabilities of non-state actors. Additionally, access to resources, by gaining territory, criminal activities, or support from sponsors do enable the development of improvised and adapted weapons, enabling actors to restrict freedom of action and decision even further.
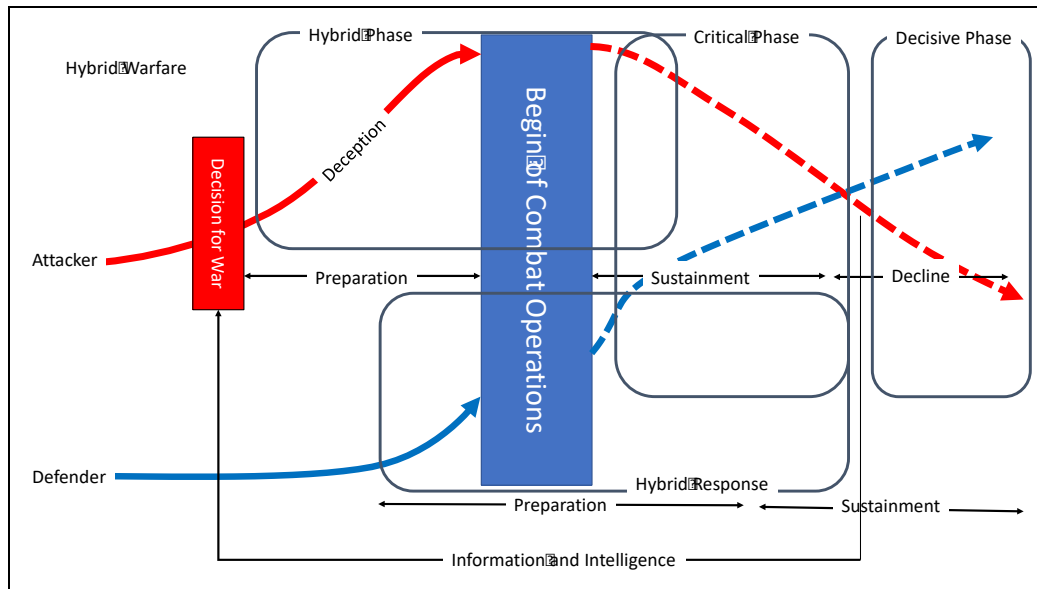
The most critical factors in a hybrid environment are time and information as the graphic shows. The momentum is always with the aggressor and it does not matter which kind of actor he is. The longer a hybrid phase lasts undetected or without appropriate counter measures taken, the less likely is a potential success, even if combat starts. Increasingly important nowadays, when the world is rediscovering "the flare up of interstate conflicts" (WEF, Global Risk Report), besides civil war as a major threat, one of the most critical elements in any strategic situation is the „time". The actors are using this window of opportunity to prepare for offensive action. Western states or coalitions are unable to respond timely because of the intended activities below conflict level. This gray zone during which different activities are conducted is legally problematic and own activities very unlikely supported by the western population. The means taken by an opponent are characterized in US Army Doctrinal Publication 3.0: Unified Land Operations as: "the diverse and dynamic combination of regular forces, irregular forces, and/or criminal elements all unified to achieve

mutually benefitting effects."[39] It further describes the hybrid threat as incorporating high-end capabilities traditionally associated with nation-states to exploit vulnerabilities and erode political commitment. In an acknowledgement of the ability to protract war in these circumstances, the threat will seek to wage war in more battle spaces and populations than U.S. forces can directly control.

In order to overcome these large grey spaces, it is important to understand their existence first. Traditional rules and mechanisms like a formal declaration of war, the separation of combatants and non-combatants or civilians or the concept of deterrence do not work under these circumstances.

Hybrid Warfare – a new concept?

The discussion of the difference between asymmetric or irregular warfare and hybrid warfare is not academic only. It may even be questioned if the so-called hybrid warfare is something new at all. More frequently it is stated by experts that there is nothing new regarding hybrid warfare and it is just a new shorthand description for an old type of warfare. Academia and practitioners alike are claiming that hybridity is exactly what happened during previous conflicts. Argumentation used is reaching back to the Spanish guerrilla fighting Napoleon's Army between 1808 and 1814 or the different resistance movements during the Nazi occupation in France, Yugoslavia or Russia during World War II. Although there are some similarities in several aspects of warfighting as a whole of government approach, it is probably better as an example to look at the development of the Russian doctrine concerning deception, misinformation and resistance after a foreign occupation developed since the Russian Revolution[40] instead of assuming that Russia developed a new form of warfare.

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[39] US Army Doctrinal Publication 3.0; Unified Land Operations; p. 4; 2011; accessed 01.01.2017; https://www.army.mil/e2/rv5_downloads/info/references/ADP_3-0_ULO_Oct_2011_APD.pdf

[40] "Kennan Telegram", US Ambassador in Moscow in 1946, http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm, accessed 09.12.2016

But what really has changed since the hybrid warfare concept was developed, is the time and the status globalization and communication have reached at this point. It is to a lesser extend a totally new phenomenon but it is enabled by modern technology and conducted within today's societies. Some aspects are to be highlighted below. Besides the dynamics of modern societies including urbanization and litoralisation (Kilkullen, 2013), increasing educational standards, access to information globally in near real time, a global and connected economy is probably the most influential aspect and the backbone enabling everything mentioned above: modern communication, internet, social media, the speed with which information is spread and is impacting decision making processes. Information dominance operating in the cyber space is probably the most crucial capability in the future. The fact that actors are able to spread information with extremely high speed to never before existing recipient numbers within our societies, not being limited by borders or state control, changes a lot.

Conclusion and implications

There are many different competing theories and models which explain hybrid warfare, but as Hoffman states: "[i]f at the end of the day we drop the 'hybrid' term and simply gain a better understanding of the large gray space between our idealized bins and pristine Western categorizations, we will have made progress. If we educate ourselves about how to better prepare for that messy gray phenomenon and avoid the Groznys, Mogadishus and Bint Jbeils of our future, we will have taken great strides forward." (Hoffman, 2009b)

The concepts which explain ways and means of warfare are not as important as the narrative and potential ends, intentions and objectives of an aggressor but the discussion about it is and will remain important. If opponents are understood and their capabilities and available resources are not overseen, conflicts are manageable if the leadership is adaptable, agile and willing to make unpopular decisions. Future conflicts will last long and time is working against western states and coalitions due to their tendency to avoid casualties and political turmoil. The future of warfare encapsulates some continuing challenges: states did

already lose their monopoly of power, all actors are using similar methods or ways and means and they will occur in grey spaces below the radar of western analysts and political leaders. They will be conducted very likely in the cyber space and as David Kilcullen wrote: "out of the mountains" in urban densely populated areas.

The territory will not be geographically defined anymore but contains the narrative, fighting for the hearts and minds and potential support, cross borders and outside traditional legal and ethical rules. It is necessary to develop agile processes, forces and modern legal frameworks meeting the challenges of blurring lines between internal and external security, law enforcement and military, civilians and combatants to name just the most important ones. If these types of future wars are to be won it will take time, confidence and endurance.

The threat will not stay in foreign lands but will come to the West, as the attacks in London, Madrid, Paris, Brussels, and Berlin have shown. If the opponents are not able to achieve their goals within their countries or regions they will continue to spread into Western communities and attack at their weak spots. Borders are not providing security anymore and the capabilities of the cyber space are just beginning to emerge. Finally, from the existing concepts of hybrid warfare, we retain the central themes of a deliberate synergistic effect, the concept of forms of warfare in a continuum, and the rapid organizational adaptation of hybrid threats which will continuously frame further discussions.

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HYBRID WARFARE: FROM "WAR DURING PEACE"
TO "NEO-IMPERIALIST AMBITIONS".
THE CASE OF RUSSIA

Alexandru Constantin APETROE

M.A. Student

Faculty of European Studies, Babeş-Bolyai University

alex_apetroe@yahoo.com

Abstract

The term "hybrid warfare" has been used to refer to the combined usage of unconventional military tactics such as conventional warfare with irregular warfare and cyberwarfare, as well as the employment of other instruments and tactics (subversive elements), to achieve a double goal: first to avoid responsibility and retribution, and second to weaken and destabilize the enemy without direct involvement. The rigidity of the current international system pertaining to the usage of non-peaceful methods of solving an international dispute and/or furthering state interests, have made it increasing difficulty, without the support of the international community (humanitarian interventions and UN-sanctioned interventions) to employ the 'classical methods' which pre-date the provisions of the UN Charter, relevant to what we now consider as "acts of aggression". Discussing the resurgence of the Russian Federation as a great power, we argue that because of the innate historical and traditional factors of Russian geopolitics, it was only a matter of time until the Kremlin's military doctrine pivoted from the defensive phase it entered after the fall of the Soviet Union, to the pro-active involvement at the limit of international law: Georgia in 2008, East Ukraine in 2013, Crimea in 2014, and Syria in 2015. Therefore, in this article we will contend, firstly, by discussing the example of the perception of the so-called Russian "Gerasimov doctrine", that hybrid war can have two different connotations: "war during peace" and "neo-imperial ambitions". Secondly, we will try to argue that the NATO military doctrine of deterrence has become obsolete, still envisaging the possible threats posed by a future Russian involvement in the Baltic and Eastern Europe in cold-war terms and not in terms relevant to the shifting international security environment.

Keywords: Russia; Hybrid warfare; Crimea; NATO; Neo-imperialism.

Introduction

Following the involvement of Russia in Georgia in 2008, the annexation of Crimea in 2014, an event which literally took the world by surprise and the follow-up in Eastern Ukraine 2014-present, western military analysts and NATO enthusiasts rushed to announce the new threat posed by "Russia's hybrid warfare against Ukraine" (Umland, 2016). This new 'Russian invention' could very well be used in the future against NATO member states in the Baltic region or Eastern Europe. However, the frequency with which the term is employed alongside Russia's military involvements in the former Soviet space or furthering Russian interests abroad seems, we believe, somewhat suspicious. If we simply analyse the phases of which a "hybrid war" is composed (conventional and unconventional military tactics and operations, direct foreign involvement such as the support of political protests, economic warfare, cyberwarfare and (dis) informational and propaganda campaigns), we can reach the conclusion that it is not a novelty.

Hybrid war, in its "classical interpretation" (i.e. the methods employed) is *not strictly limited* to *neither Russia* (the US, some European member states, even some Asian states have used it/are using it[41]), *nor to nation-states or state-like entities* (Daesh in Syria and Iraq, other insurgent groups worldwide). Yet, according to Puyvelde, "the term 'hybrid warfare' *appeared at least as early as 2005* and was subsequently used to describe the strategy used by the Hezbollah in the 2006 Lebanon War", adding that since then, "it has dominated much

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[41] In this respect, the Southeast Asia theatre (South China Sea) is comprised by a multitude of various small states (compared to China's might), insurgent/irredentist political entities, which are "ideologically or culturally opaque for Chinese hybrid warfare actors", therefore the finality or end-game envisaged by Beijing is not territorial and/or political control (as we saw with Georgia, Crimea and the Donbass region) but rather economic and regional dominance. Another factor is the limited interest of the region, considered as a *de facto* sphere of influence of China, again, as compared to Ukraine and the Black Sea region which are very close to the political and military borders of NATO and the EU, particularly if we invest in the interpretation of the political dimension of US-NATO's Aegis BMDS in Eastern Europe as a *political* rather than *military* claim in the area (Miani, 2016).

of the discussion about modern and future warfare, to the point where it has been adopted by senior military leaders and promoted as a basis for modern military strategies" (Puyvelde, 2015).

In addition, in one opinion (Wither, 2016), the emergence of "hybrid warfare" poses a series of interesting yet potentially dangerous consequences. *First*, he discusses the superfluous usage of the term to address the "complexity of twenty-first-century warfare", which is difficult to understand by the traditional monochrome approach divided into 'war and peace'. *Second*, "hybrid warfare entered the public domain" arriving in the centre of attention after the Russians 'pulled one' on the West with Crimea, thus becoming politically infused and a major concern for Western governments" (Wither, 2016, p. 74).

Therefore, we pose the question "how has 'hybrid warfare' become the designated denomination of Russia's involvement in the former Soviet Union's zone of control"? *Firstly*, there is no legitimate proof that the Russian Federation switched from its former Soviet "vital-space" geopolitical doctrine to the "Velikiy limitrofnyy doctrine"[42] and then towards the so-called "Gerasimov doctrine"[43] in just a decade. *Secondly*, military doctrine-wise and

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[42] The post-Soviet Russian concept of "Velikiy limitrofnyy" ("Great Limitrophe" or *Island Russia*,) was a reinterpretation of early pre-*Soviet buffer-zones* and *satellite-states theory* (creation of the Little USSR in Eastern and Southern Europe), as to 'shield' and 'protect' the vulnerable Russian territory from the influence of the West (Khatuntsev, 2008). While some argue that this type of geopolitical thinking is outdated, we disagree, as we believe that this concept is very much in line with the main strategic advantage that Russia possesses – its huge territory and large uninhabited hostile environment. Because of this, one cannot possibly conquer Russia without first surrounding it, therefore, the control of the regions adjacent to it is of paramount importance (Wilson, 2014).

[43] *Discussing the "Gerasimov doctrine", Douglas Farrah writes: "General Valery Gerasimov, the Chief of Staff of the Russian Federation's military, developed The Gerasimov Doctrine in recent years. The doctrine posits that the rules of war have changed, that there is a "blurring of the lines between [the states of] war and peace" (Farrah, 2016) and that "non-military means of achieving military and strategic goals has grown and, in many cases, exceeded the power of weapons in their effectiveness." Gerasimov argues for asymmetrical actions that combine the use of Special Forces and information warfare that create "a permanently operating front through the entire territory of the enemy state" (Galeotti, 2014).

from Putin's standpoint, hybrid warfare is considered simply as the means by which Russia can reclaim the lost title of "great power", and by judging the string of actions (from the 2008 war in Georgia to its 2015 involvement in Syria), simply as a military instrument devoid of any higher political meaning above the one which the Kremlin has given it, of re-assessing its former spheres of influence. *Thirdly*, on the international level, the importance of hybrid warfare is that of either *avoidance of responsibility*, as it is very difficult in the current *Geneva system*[44] and *UN Charter definition of aggression*[45], to pursue a state which is suspected of breaking international law and the laws of war if the methods used add-up to those which can be part of a hybrid warfare; or as a *clear signal given to contesters and allies alike* by the use of *intimidation* (in the form of muscle-flexing and aggressive stance) and also by taking some *insurance* (in the form of an example of what will happen) against the

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**Valery Gerasimov also writes, in the context of the Syrian civil war, of the existence of "non-linear conflicts" and he elaborates some on the usage of integrating military tactic into a broader and larger principal direction. He formulates that: "the focus of applied methods of conflict has altered in the direction of the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other non-military measures—applied in coordination with the protest potential of the population. All this is supplemented by military means of a concealed character, including carrying out actions of informational conflict and the actions of special-operations forces. The open use of forces – often under the guise of peacekeeping and crisis regulation – is resorted to only at a certain stage, primarily for the achievement of final success in the conflict" (Gerasimov, 2013, p. 476).

[44] Referring to the employment of unofficially recognized armed forces, in particular those without distinctive signs or military insignia, their usage is condemned as a breach of the Laws of war. (Pfanner, 2004, pp. 103-118).

[45] "This definition makes a distinction between aggression (which "gives rise to international responsibility") and war of aggression (which is "a crime against international peace"). Acts of aggression are defined as armed invasions or attacks, bombardments, blockades, armed violations of territory, permitting other states to use one's own territory to perpetrate acts of aggression and the employment of armed irregulars or mercenaries to carry out acts of aggression. A war of aggression is a series of acts committed with a sustained intent. The definition's distinction between an act of aggression and a war of aggression make it clear that not every act of aggression would constitute a crime against peace; only war of aggression does. States would nonetheless be held responsible for acts of aggression" (Dinstein, 2003, p. 118); Definition of Aggression, General Assembly Resolution 3314 (XXIX) 14 December 1974.

prospective perfidy of allies.

As such, we consider that "hybrid warfare" cannot be totally equated or considered as *Russia's definitive replacement doctrine* or as a *purposely novel military theory* or particularly, a *new type of Russian threat towards NATO's borders*. Taking into consideration the "hybrid" character of hybrid warfare, it seems very difficult to us to assume that any military doctrine involving the hybridisation and combination of Cold War era tactics with modern ones will become an original concept employed *only* by the Kremlin. It seems, from the perspective of NATO and the US, that labelling Russian involvement in Ukraine and the Crimea is a *reactionary and tardive response* to a rapid upscaling, military investment and political muscle-flexing on the part of the Russian Federation which has surprised everyone, even though *nobody seemed to think the same in 2008* as Putin invaded Georgia. However NATO and the EU felt seriously threatened by the Russian annexation of Crimea and the war in the Donbass. Consequently, a plethora of military analysts have rushed to classify the 'new Russian threat of hybrid warfare' in an effort to understand why all except the Russians have been caught off-guard in the shifting realm of modern warfare[46]. But, continuing to envisage the Kremlin's actions in Cold War terms poses in our opinion two significant draw-backs. *First*, *from NATO's perspective*, is shows the complacency and the strategic imbalance in which it finds itself as its military doctrine of deterrence has become obsolete, being severely limited by the Article 5 provisions, and by the fact the NATO cannot respond fast enough to the non-linear threats of today's challenging security environment. *Second*, from *the European perspective*, Russia, still being viewed as a possible aggressor, is theoretically capable of launching an attack with great chances of success[47], because the mainstay of

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[46] Though we do not support this view, it is interesting to see a very wide debate over the real nature of hybrid warfare, which many consider it as being a tool of the Kremlin, as some authors write: "For now, Russia seems to hold the edge in the Hybrid War in Ukraine: it has successfully annexed Crimea and effectively turned Ukraine in a state on the brink of wider failure" (Bachmann and Gunneriusson, 2015, p. 207).

[47] There are fears, particularly in the Baltic region, that Russia is developing capabilities so as to disrupt, if not fully control, the maritime lines of communication between the Baltic States, Poland and NATO. In respect to the A2/AD ("anti-access/area denial") Russia has developed a multitude of weapons systems, complex areal

NATO's military hardware is deployed in the Western part of Europe, and not the Eastern part, in which countries like Poland and the Baltic states, perceive the threat of a Russian aggression much more higher than Italy, Germany or France.

Defining "Hybrid warfare", a heuristically flawed concept?

The usage of the term "hybrid warfare" is not a new choice of words[48], neither from the syntax nor from the rhetoric aspects. War has never been a static field, it changed alongside the development of human society and in fact, *all wars were more or less hybrid*, in the sense that they combined different tactics, aspects, instruments and methods to insure the victor's advantage. However, the recent decades saw war change rapidly. This happened not particularly in the sense of a positive shift towards modern military technology and increased capabilities, but in the sense of a *limitation of traditional operations.* This is characterized by a change from the classic land-air-sea based warfare, theorized in the Cold War period, towards a more *subtle deployment of forces* (Special Forces, Black Ops etc.) such as surgical

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defence systems, and coastal defence systems, as well as land- and sea-based as well as air-launched cruise missiles and tactical ballistic missile platforms. This poses a threat that these capabilities can be used by Russia in a complex joint-arms attack by coordinating its naval surface and submarine forces, electronic and cyber warfare, and other capabilities, targeting special areas, designated as "bubbles". (Shirreff and Olex-Szczytowski, 2016, p. 2).

[48] Bertina Renz (2016, p. 287) cites that the term "hybrid warfare" was first coined by Frank Hoffman (2007) as a response to the mutations in the post-Cold war environment which he observed in the conflict areas of interest to the US, in the sense of trying to define "the success achieved by comparatively weak opponents – non-state actors such as the Taliban, Al Qaeda or Hezbollah – against the vastly technologically and numerically superior militaries of the US coalition forces in Afghanistan and Iraq and Israeli forces in the 2006 Lebanon war" and "the coordinated and combined use of different modes of warfare, both military (use of force) and non-military (irregular tactics, criminal disorder, terrorist acts, and so on), to achieve 'synergistic effects in the physical and psychological dimensions of conflict' within the main battlespace".

strikes, drone warfare, cyberwarfare and non-peaceful methods of settling disputes[49]. If we consider the heavily criticised conceptualisations of Smith's "modern wars" and Kaldor's "new wars" (as cited by Erol and Oğuz, 2015, p. 262), the scene was set for hybrid warfare as a novel area for discussion in academic circles. Yet despite the fact that "both use of the term and the study of hybrid warfare are new compared to the long history of warfare" (Erol and Oğuz, 2015, p. 262), this changed because in the aftermath of the 9/11 and with the War and Terror and other non-linear conflicts (the 2006 Israel-Lebanon War, and the 2008 Russo-Georgian War), the *asymmetric element* became the defamatory characteristic of hybrid warfare. In line with the above, Wither (Wither, 2016, p. 75-76) remarks on the inflection point, the year 2014, as a defining point from which *hybrid warfare changed*. Before 2014, the most cited example of hybrid warfare was the Israeli-Lebanese conflict (2006). After 2014 (Crimea and East Ukraine) the focus on Russia's perceived success was at an all-time high, with the former NATO Secretary General Rasmussen affirming that the Russian involvement was a hybrid warfare.

Owning there is no clear or universally-accepted definition, in particularly when it is being used either as a *catch-all term for all non-linear threats* (the US usage of the term "hybrid threats"[50]) or as *abstract term referring to irregular methods of countering a*

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[49] *Non-peaceful methods* imply any accepted customary/codified institutions in public international law (Lawrence, 1910), such as: *reprisals*, *embargo*, *armed reprisals* (not to be confused with *military aggression* or *simple reprisals*, Hans Kelsen (as cited by Bernstorff, 2010), writes that: "armed reprisals are a limited (decentralized) intervention into the sphere of state interests").

[50] In 2008, the US Army Chief of Staff defined a "hybrid threat" as "an adversary that incorporates diverse and dynamic combinations of conventional, irregular, terrorist and criminal capabilities". Also, the US Joint Forces Command defines the concept as being "any adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs a tailored mix of conventional, irregular, terrorism and criminal means or activities in the operational battle space. Rather than a single entity, a hybrid threat or challenger may be a combination of state and non-state actors". In 2011, the US Army came up with another definition, as "the diverse and dynamic combination of regular forces, irregular forces, criminal elements, or a combination of these forces and elements all unified to achieve mutually benefiting effects". NATO's definition is somewhat similar, using the term to describe "adversaries with the

conventionally superior force (the case of modern guerrilla and insurgent warfare, adding also the threat posed by Daesh), "hybrid warfare" can be interpreted differently, relevant to the source of the hybrid actions: a *state* or a *non-state actor[51]*. This is important if we desire to discern if the current Russian "Gerasimov doctrine", which makes use heavily of hybrid warfare (in certain situations), can be considered as being either *a new type of "hybrid warfare"*, or *has completely switched to "hybrid warfare" as their main military doctrine*.

A definition of "hybrid warfare" could be formulated only by taking into account certain *elements* and *characteristics* (Johnson and McCulloh, 2013, pp. 1-17). The *first* is the existence of a non-standard, complex and *fluid* (*hybrid*) adversary[52]. The *second* implies that the hybrid adversary uses a combination of conventional and irregular methods (hence the *hybridisation* phase). *Third*, said adversary is flexible and adapts quickly (hence the term *fluid*). *Fourth*, said adversary uses advanced weapons systems and other disruptive technologies (this could imply the involvement of a stately and/or terrorist entity). *Fifth*, said adversary employs mass communication for *propaganda purposes* (again, a more subtle usage of *hybridisation*, albeit on a non-military level). *Finally*, according to one opinion (Pindják, 2014), hybrid warfare takes place on *three distinct battlefields*: (a) the conventional battlefield (operation theatres), (b) the indigenous population in the conflict zone (if we consider insurgency and/or terrorist *aspects*[53]), and (c) at the level of the international community.

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ability to simultaneously employ conventional and non-conventional means adaptively in pursuit of their objectives" (Fleming, 2011, pp. 1-3, 22-24).

[51] For example, it is argued that both Russia and Daesh have used hybrid warfare, though we do not agree with this opinion, that irrespective of the source (actors) hybrid warfare is the use of different tactics with either similar or with the same results: "what characterizes the hybrid approach is the fact that all the means at a state or non-state actor's disposal […] are combined to achieve a political goal" (Lasconjarias and Larsen, 2015, pp. 3-4).

[52] For example, the case of the 2006 Lebanon War, between Hezbollah and Israel (Grant, 2008).

[53] For example, Daesh has been viewed as a "hybrid threat" because of its mixed usage of hybrid tactics, fluid formations, cruel use of terror for propaganda purposes and recruitment tactics, all integrated within its transnational aspirations, (Jasper and Moreland, 2014).

Other interpretations take into account *different elements or conditions*. One of these is represented by a *clear political purpose*: hybrid warfare is any action of the enemy which instantly and coherently uses a complex combination of authorized weapons, guerrilla warfare, terrorism and criminal behaviour on the battlefield, to achieve political goals (Hoffman, 2009a, pp. 35-36). Another is the *employment of all types of war*, conventional, irregular or terrorist, including even criminal behaviour (Hoffman, 2009b, p. 5)[54]. Also, relative to *tactical and military variations*, hybrid war "erases the differences between conventional and irregular wars" (Isherwood, 2009, p. 3), or as Johnson (2015, p. 11) puts it, "blurring the line between peace and war".

From an *operational perspective* (Balan, 2016, pp. 319-321), hybrid war can be explained via the existence of *several conditions*: (1) the employment of a "combination of state and non-state actors" in conducting the hybrid actions; (2) the "attribution of the conflict" or "the absence of assumption" by the actors involved in the action; (3) the use of "intermediaries" in conjecture with "informational warfare". This interpretation shows that strictly from the standpoint of the military, hybrid warfare is a relatively widespread tactic, not at all limited to only a handful of actors.

Therefore, keeping in mind the abovementioned aspects, we would define "hybrid warfare" as follows: a situation in which a non-standard, complex and fluid adversary is using a combination of conventional and irregular methods, employing advanced weapons systems and other disruptive technologies, whilst also employing means of mass communication for propaganda purposes, in a mixed theatre of operations (conventional, local, international) with the intent (overt or covert) of furthering the general interests of, including but not limited to, a known emerging, established, political or stately entity.

However, the ambiguity and the complexity of the proposed definition is accentuated by the fact that if some scholars prefer the term "hybrid *warfare*", the military prefers the term "hybrid *threat*". As such, we can assume that in an *in extenso* interpretation, "hybrid

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[54] Hoffman gives the example of Hezbollah, which has evolved from a non-state actor towards a hybrid of guerrillas and regular troops, by "studying and deconstructing the capabilities employed by Western forces".

threats", which are perceived as emanating from a stately entity or are conducted and/or benefit a certain state, are transformed via the infusion of political interests ("political warfare"[55]) in "hybrid warfare". As a result, they become immoral and barely-legitimated (from the perspective of international law) methods of eluding international responsibility for acts which, in normal circumstances, would attract the culpability of the state in question. Thus we can assume that the definition of "political warfare" proposed by Kennan[56] can very well overlap with the one of "hybrid warfare", though in the sense of a *hybridisation* between *complex political interests* and *compound military tactics*.

With regard to the roots of "hybrid threats", Fleming considers that the contemporary usage of mixed tactics correspond and operate "from the same principles the Soviets envisaged for conventional war" adding that using a multidimensional matrix, "they aggregate a combination of simultaneous and sequential military actions to attain political and military objectives" (Fleming, 2011, p. 30). Interestingly, Fleming also speaks about the "*sine qua non* condition of hybrid threats" (Fleming, 2011, p. 29), which he calls "unrestricted form of operational art", also citing the definition of the concept of "operational art" given by US Joint Chiefs of Staff:

> "Application of creative imagination by commanders and staff supported by their skill, knowledge, and experience to design strategies, campaigns, and major operations and organize and employ military forces. Operational art integrates ends, ways, and means across the levels of war…without operational

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[55] The concept of "political warfare" could be explained as a means to limit the effects of a conflict or any other possible threat to national security, whilst keeping the state's interests abroad well supported. In the words of Michael Noonan, "while the publics' mood for involvement in further overseas adventures is less than sanguine, it still remains important for the United States to at least try to be able to shape events on the ground overseas with as little force as possible or else live with the consequences of outcomes that may call for the use of more force down the road" (Noonan as cited by Hoffman, 2014).

[56] George Kennan defined political warfare as "the employment of all the means at a nation's command, short of war, to achieve its national objectives" (Kennan, 1948).

art, campaigns and operations would be a set of disconnected engagements". [57]

This vision makes sense since the *military and the political spheres* are highly dependent one from the other, almost becoming a single entity. This is largely due to the extreme difficulty in dissociating politics from the military, especially in states without a clear separation of powers, and where the society is more or less familiarised with authoritarian regimes.

The different perspectives of "hybrid warfare" as the "new Russian military doctrine" and as a "deterrence factor" against perceived Russian "hybrid threats"

Discussing the perception of the recent Russian involvements in East Ukraine and Syria, it is important to understand how the Russian Federation's military doctrine has evolved and how it was integrated into the larger geopolitical context of the time. Starting from the classic military doctrine of the Soviet Union (the *vital space*, *buffer-zones*), deeply influenced by defensive realism as the USSR was considered as a "one-dimensional superpower" (Odom, 1988). After the fall of the Soviet Union, the Kremlin opted towards a doctrine characterized by *revolutionary expansionism* and *initiative-taking actions* as to insure its defence and interests abroad. A good example of this are the *BRICS initiative* and *the pivot towards Asia* as "coexistence and soft-power policy" envisaged as "complex three-stage strategy: soft power helps to build up normative power which in turn helps to shape the future world order in Russia's and BRICS' image" (Sergunin, 2015). Though it can be considered that the current conflict in Ukraine has challenged the *classical concepts of warfare* (divided into *irregular* and *conventional*) "the current crisis […] does not fit neat Western categories of 'war', in one sense it's a civil war, or perhaps a proxy war that pits Ukraine against Russia" (Hoffman, 2014). This is largely due to the complexity of the actors involved: the national government, the separatist forces, the ultra-nationalists, foreign volunteers and Russian military personnel.

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[57] Joint Operation Planning, Joint Publication (5-0, IV-1), (Fleming, 2011, p. 29).

From NATO's perspective, the situation in Ukraine is a convincing argument that hybrid warfare has *two main purposes*. *At ground level*, hybrid conflicts involve complex multidimensional efforts (clandestine actions) designed to "destabilise a functioning state and polarize its society", and as a direct consequence "unlike conventional warfare, the 'centre of gravity' is […] a target population". *At the international level*, it tries to "influence influential policy-makers and key decision makers by combining kinetic operations with subversive efforts", with the goal of "avoiding attribution or retribution" (Pindják, 2014). The end-result will be difficult to interpret, as NATO cannot initiate any retaliatory actions outside the provisions of Article 5, being limited only to *deterrence measures*. This is particularly so in the Baltic region, though the deployment costs of a deterrence force and the difficult decision-taking process at NATO's level are, in absolute terms, a significant drawback to any re-deployment plans. Though, some argue (Shlapak and Johnson, 2016) that: "it is hard to say that it is *a fortiori* unaffordable, especially in comparison to the potential costs of failing to defend NATO's most exposed and vulnerable allies".

Yet it is also true that the so-called "red line" has never been crossed (Michel, 2015), because Putin does not have the desire to provoke a conflict between NATO and Russia. On this account, the whole bellicose posture in which NATO finds itself now, is not actually needed, with the exception as a badly needed reassurance factor for the Baltic and Eastern Europe NATO member states. However, we believe that it's very difficult from the perspective of abovementioned states to 'trust' Russia with not attacking them. If we take for example, the 2007 cyberattacks on Estonia (Kozlowski, 2014, p. 238), Georgia in 2008 (Bachmann, 2011, p. 16), the *coup de main* in Crimea[58] and the protracted conflict in East Ukraine, all of these attest to the reluctance of the Eastern NATO Member states in their relationship with Russia. Also, there are some who voice the threats posed by the "fifth columns": "groups of individuals, usually acting covertly, embedded within a much larger

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[58] Renz (2016, p. 298) writes that "the description of Russian foreign policy vis-à-vis the West as 'hybrid warfare' unnecessarily militarizes the language of international politics in an already tense situation. The reason why 'hybrid warfare' is considered 'hybrid' in the first place is because it uses a mixture of both military and non-military approaches".

population that they seek to undermine" (Lanoszka, 2016, p. 179) as the *casus belli* to intervene. This tactic, which has been used in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions (the Russian-speaking minority), brought into discussion the *Russian minority in the Baltic States* (Estonia in particular) (Lanoszka, 2016, p. 187) as a possible vulnerability for a Russian involvement.

In addition, to complicate the situation, *deterrence*[59] has always been seen as the best option. NATO is vaguely trying to keep-up to Moscow's muscle-flexing reminiscent of Cold War days, as a response to their large military exercises in the Baltic and Arctic regions[60], some of them involving the deployment of strategic ballistic missiles (Michel, 2015). This was seen as crucial after the independence of Kosovo in 2008 and the so-called "five-day" war in Georgia in the same year. However, this was the case until recently (2014), when Russia decided to destabilise Ukraine and annex Crimea. Furthermore in 2015, Russia decided to simultaneously involve itself into both the Syrian Civil War and the fight against Daesh, taking the world by surprise once more.

Notwithstanding the ambiguity of the term "hybrid warfare", Russia's actions can be,

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[59] Discussing about *deterrence*, it is important to add that this concept (alongside *containment*) were devised to deal with the threats posed by the former Soviet Union and not the Russian Federation. In today's terms, NATO's defensive stance is not sufficiently aggressive to achieve the deterrence result. This is due to the fact that NATO, as comprised by its 28 member states, requires a complicated system of prior approvals integrated in a slow decision-making process, which cannot hope (as it has been envisaged) to compete with the swiftness of Kremlin's small group of decedents. This clearly shows that NATO was designed not as a pro-active and offensive military alliance, but rather as a passive-defensive emanation of a political consensus in the military sphere. A good example of NATO's intrinsic weakness is the self-limitation imposed as not to antagonize Russia while investing in defensive cyber capabilities (i.e. refraining from using offensive cyber operations) and helping Ukraine with its similar project which is equal with limiting the field options and giving your enemy the advantage of initiating first contact (El Fertasi and de Vivo, 2016).

[60] For example the "Zapad" ("West") military exercise in 2013 held jointly with Belorussia (Druzhinin, 2013), which followed an established pattern by rehearsing offensive operations towards the West (the Baltic States). The main purpose of the exercise was strengthening the cooperation between the various branches and sectors of the military, the use of joint actions, usage of modern technologies, "with emphasis on the experimental use of automated command and control, and combining civilian agencies and the military in a mobilized format". (Shirreff and Olex-Szczytowski, 2016, p. 6).

therefore, *interpreted in various ways*, giving rise to the fear of a suspicious overextension of its sphere of influence. In one opinion, "there can be no credible defence, and therefore deterrence, without an effective joint defence plan that unifies military capabilities […] maritime, land, air, cyber, and space domains" (Shirreff and Olex-Szczytowski, 2016, p. 12). Yet if we analyse the phrase we can clearly see that is points towards elements of "hybrid warfare" and therefore, NATO's response towards the Russian threat of "hybrid warfare" would be a "hybrid warfare" of its own, to ensure that the deterrence factor is being implemented. Yet what is most concerning is fact that the Russians have the advantage in using a relatively flexible decision-taking system (due to the concentration of powers[61]), as compared with NATO's system characterized by the fact that it uses complicated and time-consuming consensus and consultation procedures. Thus, NATO is forced to act as a defensive alliance and at the same time invest in deterrence moves to counter the "hybrid threat" posed by Russia to reassure its Eastern members. However, the decrease in capabilities during the last decades, in particular that of the Land Forces personnel, "were significant" (Shirreff and Olex-Szczytowski, 2016, p. 9). They were replaced by light counter-terrorist and counter-insurgency units which were better suited to counter the problems posed by today's security threats and which were shaped by the expeditionary tactics used in Iraq and Afghanistan. As such, NATO which abandoned "standard tactics" finds itself in a difficult position to mount a defence against a possible traditional threat from Russia, threat which would involve, in its majority, conventional weapons and not elements of hybrid war. The Very High Readiness Joint Task Force of approx. 5000 troops, even if they manage to mobilize quickly, may still be too late to "deter Russian adventurism" (Wither, 2016, p. 85). In addition, one of the biggest problems we see when countering Russian hybrid tactics is their flexibility and adaptability. If we take the example of Ukraine, in late 2014, the Russian switched from hybrid tactics to a series of surgical strikes, meant to

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[61] Or as Johnson (2015, p. 10) sees it, as a modern STAVKA, as he argues that Putin has placed the entire Russian military and its population "at or near war footing", by centralizing and restructuring the entire decision-making system.

crush the Ukrainian army. It will be very problematic we believe, if NATO troops, trained to counter hybrid treats, will meet conventional enemy troops on the battlefield.

The Russian perspective on "hybrid warfare" mirrors the Western one. This is done by assuming that it, more precisely the highly controversial Russian-style of "hybrid warfare", is *in fact legitimate* or *gains legitimacy as a valid countermeasure*. In this light, Russia will continue to view the US run NATO as the main antagonist and as its principal security threat. As such, the relationship between Russia and the West will always be marred by fears of conflict, in spite of any actions undertaken to stabilize the situation. Discussing this theory, Samuel Charap writes that:

> "[…] both perspectives are equally misguided; Russian strategists use the term 'hybrid war' to refer to alleged US efforts to weaken and ultimately overthrow unfriendly governments, particularly, but not exclusively, the Russian government, using a variety of kinetic and non-kinetic means" (Charap, 2015, p. 51).

He also writes that, in the case in Ukraine, the Kremlin considered that is was in fact the US which launched a 'successful operation' (or "hybrid war") to replace the former President Yanukovych with a puppet government, so as to forcefully rip Ukraine from the sphere of influence of Russia. Also, it was done as a military exercise for a future similar operation in Russia (Charap, 2015, pp. 51-52). Discussing the so-called "Gerasimov doctrine", McDermott (2016, pp. 101-102) writes that General Gerasimov, learning from the experience of the Syrian Civil War, "examines hybrid warfare in connection with high-technology weaponry", and that he interprets hybrid war "as a foreign rather than a Russian", connecting what he considers a negative Western influence in Syria (Arab Spring) with the threats posed by a similar intervention into Russia (the Colour revolutions). McDermott's argues that in essence, what Gerasimov postulates is the *paradoxical idea* that if Russia's adversaries possess "hybrid capabilities" and may seek to destabilize Russia through colour-type revolutions, "Moscow then needs its own form of hybrid capability to counteract this threat" (McDermott, 2016, p. 101 and Kofman, 2016).

Approaching the so-called "Gerasimov doctrine", Michael Kofman argues that:

"it seems unlikely that after barely a few months on the job Gerasimov wrote

the Rosetta Stone for Russian military thinking, […] and that within a year

the Russian General Staff had moved this collection of observations […] into

a brilliant hybrid warfare campaign in Ukraine" (Kofman, 2016).

In support of this view, Charles Bartles writes: "[…] it is important to keep in mind that Gerasimov is simply explaining his view of the operational environment and the nature of future war, and not proposing a new Russian way of warfare or military doctrine" (Bartles, 2016, pp. 30-37).

In our opinion, McDermott, Hoffman and Bartles have some credit, in the sense that if we look at Russia's post-Soviet period, in particular towards the Caucasus, we can clearly observe that their involvement in the area (The Chechen Wars) have made them more open to what Gerasimov calls "non-linear war" (Gerasimov, 2013). In essence, this represents the adaptation of traditional warfare tactics to modern guerrilla warfare, and the combined support from other instruments controlled by the state (media, cyber-security, economy, etc.) As such, "the purpose of using non-military means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown" and, in many cases, "have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness" (Gerasimov, as cited by Charap, p. 53). Therefore, the result of this was to use the past experiences for consolidating Russia's defences against all possible threats. Charap continues with the fact that this is not actually a new military doctrine, but in fact, an analysis of the ways and methods used by the United States in their military involvements abroad, again for defensive purposes. Therefore, the Russian perspective on "hybrid warfare" seems almost the same as the Western one, with the big difference that the source of "hybrid warfare" is each other, and with the fact that the Russians have taken a more pro-active stance involving threats which they perceive as "vital".

The Russian involvement in Ukraine – a classic case of "hybrid warfare" or the "new war" in practice?

After the Euromaidan protests which led to the Ukrainian Revolution of 2014 and the

flight of the deposed president Viktor Yanukovych, Russian soldiers without insignias (the "little green men"[62]) took control of strategic positions and infrastructure within Crimea. This lead to the Annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in March 2014 and the subsequent tensions in Eastern Ukraine (the Donbass regions of Luhansk and Donetsk) which erupted into an all-out civil war. In the first phase of the conflict (from March-July until September 2014) Russian military personnel contributed to the defeat of the Ukrainian army. In November 2014, by using humanitarian aid convoys, Russia supplied the separatists with a variety of military hardware and ammunition. These events, which repeated in August 2015, were observed by the OSCE, which reported a number of special transit zones alongside the Donbass-Russian porous border, controlled by mixed separatist-Russian security forces.

If we return to the example of Crimea, some consider this as a clear sign of "new war", (Galeotti, 2016, p. 285) with emphasis on the "the distinctiveness [which] appears not so much in essence, but in degree" (Galeotti, 2016, p. 285), which is interpreted as referring to the Western perception of Russian counterinsurgency tactics in Crimea as a 'traditional war' between two stately entities (Russia vs. Ukraine) but enacted using 'hybrid tactics'. Other authors, though, contest this interpretation, accentuating a supportive (adjacent) presence, dismissing the primary role given to the presence of Russian Special Forces' elements in Crimea:

> "in the annexation of Crimea, which was a classic covert operation to enable a conventional invasion — the lead element was Russia's 810th Naval Infantry Brigade, already based in Crimea as part of the Black Sea Fleet […] there were some irregular aspects, like an information warfare element and a circus of inconsequential auxiliaries, but what measurable significance did they have in relation to Russia's deployment of special forces, elite infantry, and conventional capability?" (Kofman, 2016).

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[62] Multiple sources cite that the "little green men" (in Western media) or ("polite people" – "вежливые люди, vezhlivye lyudi" in Russian-oriented media (Oliphant, 2014)) were in fact members of Russian Spetsnaz Special Forces: the 45th Detached Guards Regiment, 3rd Brigade, as well as elements of the 16th Brigade (Galeotti, 2016, p. 284 and Bukkvoll, 2016, pp. 15-17)

Furthermore, we must take into consideration the fact that "hybrid tactics are neither new, nor exclusively (or primarily) a Russian invention, […] Western states have often used elements of it quite effectively, at least on a tactical level" (Popescu, 2015). In the early 2015, the Kremlin decided to abandon the 'hybrid tactics' it has used up until then and concentrate on 'traditional tactics' (Charap, 2015, p. 55) such as shelling Ukrainian Army positions from over the border (Borger and Higgins, 2015) and using "volunteers" to boost the ranks of the separatist forces. Also, some evidence (provided by NATO) has surfaced which positively identifies elements of Russian armour used by separatist forces. Most importantly, NATO experts pointed out that the tanks in question did not have any military markings (a previously used tactic from Crimea and subsequently used in the Donbass) and that the camouflage paint used on the vehicles was not like any used by the Ukrainian army, thus "voiding the argument that all tanks were simply captured from Ukrainian military stockpiles or from attacks on military bases" (Abbot, 2016, pp. 12-13).

In addition, we can view Ukraine not as a "hybrid warfare in the experimental phase", but rather as "the only hybrid warfare" which Russia can fully support (for now). By analysing the underlying causes of the Russian intervention in the East of Ukraine, we can discern that the relative success which the Russian enjoyed is not at all due to their "new type of war" or the greatness of the "Gerasimov doctrine" but rather due to the special characteristics of Ukraine and the very special circumstances in which it finds itself.

First, the nature of the intervention was to prevent an 'illegal' government to seize control of strategic zones previously under Russian influence (the port of Sevastopol, home to Russia's Black Sea Fleet and the industrial hub of Donbass). *Second*. the relative ease with which Russia annexed Crimea and the ongoing conflict in Eastern Ukraine are mostly due to the pre-existing connections and interests in the region which pre-date the Soviet era altogether. As Charap (2015, p. 54) writes: "the region is the most permissive environment outside Russia's borders for this kind of operation […] eastern Ukraine is perhaps the only place beyond Russia's borders where Moscow can sustain an insurgency".

Consequently, the Russian involvement in Ukraine was certainly full of "hybrid warfare" elements but it did not constitute the sort of operation envisaged by the West, since

it merely "stopped Ukraine from completely pivoting towards the West" (DSC 2015 General Report, NATO-PA, p. 5). While Russia did intend to 'convince' the leaders from Kiev to take a step back from their pro-Western journey, they clearly failed, as Ukraine is pursuing a closer integration with NATO and the EU. Though we cannot ignore that the costs for Ukraine are, at worst, a protracted civil war which will severely affect its economy and stability (FDI's typically avoid conflict areas) and at its best, a staple post-Soviet "frozen conflict".

The bi-dimensional characteristic of Russia's "hybrid warfare" – "war during peace" and "neo-imperialist" tendencies

The first dimension, or "war during peace", refers to the confusion and the elusive behaviour of a state actor by employing hybrid warfare (or elements associated to it) so as to escape international responsibility for actions which, under 'normal circumstances', would be punishable. Though the Russian Federation did receive sanctions after the Annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, they did little damage, as it made Moscow aware of the reactionary politics embraced by the West, and it gave a reason to strengthen the cooperation with the rest of the BRICS countries. Needless to say that the EU suffered more because of the sanctions imposed, as it had to find different economic partners to whom to sell their goods which were banned from Russian markets. Also, "war during peace"[63] can also refer to the actions of Moscow with regard to the situation in the East of Ukraine. Since Russia is involved in a *unilateral proxy war*, with the assumed objective to weaken and break the country by supporting the separatist pro-Russian elements in the Donbass region, its main

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[63] We use the collocation "war during peace" from the perspective of international law (relative to the provisions of the UN Charter and the current system of UN Security Council's approval). For an opinion (with which we do not agree with) outside of the "operational perspective" (the theoretical model of 'kinetic' hybrid warfare) see (Dayspring, 2015) which writes that hybrid warfare: "begins by establishing strategic objectives and employing means that violate another state's sovereignty during a time of peace […] when coercive violence is timed to minimize the chances of international military response".

goal is to re-adjust Ukraine as a satellite-state in its orbit, much like Belorussia, Kazakhstan or other former Soviet republics. Geopolitically speaking, Ukraine presents *two serious problems*. *First*, it represents a potential threat to the regional hegemony of Russia in the post-Soviet space, Russia must never allow that. *Second*, in the case in which the now Western-supported Ukraine will be forced to yield before the might of Russia, it will show that the West is weak and reactionary. This must also not be allowed to happen, since it will produce a double-victory for the Kremlin: (a) as a lesson to other Eastern European states, not to interfere with the geopolitical goals of Russia; and (b) as a show of force, that the neo-imperial ambitions of Russia have been finally met, the weak Russia of the Yeltsin years is no more. If we take a closer look at what the Russians have been doing in Ukraine, we can clearly observe a trend in Western media to ridicule and to "caricaturise how Moscow uses its instruments of national power" (Kofman, 2016). This is because we have long been accustomed to see an enemy in Russia and even if we are all aware of the changes which the world suffered after the fall of the USSR, we cannot avoid the feeling that Russia is re-enacting previous scenarios. To cut a long story short, we understand that times have changed, yet we still use pre-Cold War instruments to analyse and predict Russian foreign policy.

Depending on the economic ties and proximity (more or less) it is still not a viable solution to choose *not to invest* in real technologies and strengthen the cooperation between NATO member states, steps which could prove critical in the future. Though we do not agree with what the Russians have been doing in Ukraine, we cannot say that Putin's Russia is not doing what some Western countries have been doing for a long time, irrespective of the reasons or rationale behind their actions. If the Kremlin has been using "war during peace", it is because the West first pioneered its use, since Russia is not capable to sustain a veritable hybrid conflict outside its area of control, in which sadly, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and the Baltic States are located.

The second dimension, is the neo-imperialist dimension of "hybrid warfare" seen from the perspective of *Russia's resurgence as a great power*. Starting from 2008 (Georgia), Russia has systematically targeted weak and vulnerable former-Soviet republics in an effort

to re-establish itself as the successor of the Soviet Union, in fact and not in name only. Van Harpen (2014, p. 5) argues that "Russia is both a post-imperial state and a pre-imperial state", giving the examples of certain moves[64] (soft power and influence 'building') that the Kremlin made to insure its interests in the adjacent regions are respected. Van Harpen (2014, p. 248) also cites the former the President of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel, who said that "if the West does not stabilize the East, the East will destabilize the West". Subsequently, he added that if Ukraine does not tread carefully, Russia could provoke tensions in Eastern Ukraine (where a considerable Russian minority lives) and this could lead to a repeat of the Georgian scenario of 2008, where the Kremlin invoked the protection of Russian nationals as an excuse to intervene in South Ossetia (Harpen, 2014, p. 248).

Kushnir (2016, p. 3) writes that the involvement of Russia in Ukraine is a violent yet 'understandable' reaction towards a very serious threat posed by the loss of influence in a country which has a very important role to play from *multiple angles*: *geopolitical*, as a buffer-zone, *energetic*, as the transit-zone for Russia's gas pipelines, *economic* as a market and source of labour, etc. Also, one must not underestimate the "historical, political, economic, cultural, and other ties between states provide the explicit rationale for them to intervene in Ukraine's affairs". He also discusses that the political philosophy of Russia has changed little from the Soviet era. For example, he talks about Aleksandr Dughin (Putin's favourite ideologist) who "continued to perceive Russian expansionism – especially in its Eurasian dimension – as something natural and inescapable, contributing to the idea of Russia as the Third Rome […] Russia finds itself in an eternal struggle with the global maritime Carthage, which is the US" (Kushnir, 2016, p. 5).

The motivations behind the Kremlin's actions are difficult to discover, due to the sheer number of scholars and analysts which still consider Russia as the direct descendant of the Soviet Union. As such, Russia's goals are the same as they were in the past: *the*

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[64] For example, the suggestion made by Putin to Lukashenko that Belorussia should join the Russian Federation (2003), or the historical claims on the Crimea (now redundant), the 'gift' of Russian citizenship en masse to nationals living in the Eastern Ukraine, the suggestion for the Federalization of Ukraine (2004)

restoration of the Kremlin's rule over former Soviet lands (Bernd, 2016), and the *defeat of the American archenemy*. Alternatively, we can also look at the aggressive stance of Russia from the point of view of domestic politics, as a *means to distract the populace's attention* from the difficult situation which gripped Russia after the Financial Crisis and the drop in oil and gas prices.

Conclusions

Trying to make sense of "hybrid warfare" has become a new trend in the scholarly field concerned with the subject of military and operational tactics. If hybrid warfare has been something used from Antiquity, why does it still cause such debates? The answer to this comes when hybrid warfare is mixed with power politics and ruthlessness in pursuing national interests. To complicate things, today's world (particularly in the West) is constructed in a *monochrome fashion*: the public always knows who the hero is and who the enemy is. Hybrid warfare changes all that. It uses any other means short of war to achieve its purpose. It blurs the lines between opposites and creates a grey space where nuances are more important than the relative truths. Hybrid warfare has multiple dimensions, each specifically connected to a set of objectives and precise purposes. From the Russian perspective we believe that they are, as we stated in this article, *eliminating the limitations of the current international system and eluding international responsibility* ("war during peace") and a *resurgence of Russia as the successor of both the Tsarist and Soviet Empires* ("neo-imperialist ambitions").

On Russia's intervention in Ukraine and the claims that it is using the concerted attacks as a rehearsal for a future involvement in Eastern Europe, the chances of a repeat of so-called Crimea or a Donbass scenarios elsewhere are, in our opinion, fortunately low. However, we do not believe that "hybrid warfare" is a weak concept, only that its current interpretation is somewhat lacking. Simply equating "hybrid warfare" with a Russian plan for world domination is just not feasible. Yet we do believe that Russia is using certain elements which some authors consider as being *sine qua non* conditions for the existence of "hybrid

warfare/threats". In this respect, Russia's intervention in Ukraine should be interpreted using a different set of optics, that of the coordinated employment of certain instruments (military, economic, diplomatic, informational and cyber) in its perceived sphere of influence so as to ensure that its vested, national or vital interests are protected.

Though not a new invention, in the past decade, "hybrid warfare" has become the "catchall phrase" for a number of highly controversial actions undertaken by the Kremlin. In our opinion, the rhetoric used in Western circles, or more correctly, the over-emphasis on trying to discern the ulterior motives in all of Putin's moves, has made the West blind to the real problems as terrorism has clearly become the major threat for Europe's well-being. On the Asian theatre, the cooperation between the BRICS countries (half of them having nuclear capabilities), the increasingly cordial relations between Turkey (a key-NATO member state) and Russia, the economic and financial partnership between Russia and China which is heralding a 'golden age' of Eurasian economic ties and the words of President-Elect Donald Trump who no longer considers Russia an *existential threat*, are clear signs that an important change will come to pass.

Therefore, we will see more of this "hybrid warfare" in the future, but not between the old powerful actors (the US, Russia, Europe) but rather between the regional powers such as China, Japan, Iran and Saudi Arabia. Also, between state actors and non-state actors, revealing once more the threat posed by terrorism. As we saw in 2015 and 2016, Europe is not threatened by Russia, the menace posed by Daesh is the primary concern in Western Europe. Comparatively, in Eastern Europe, where the terrorist threat is minimal, *the major concern remains Russian aggression*. This dichotomy is important because it shows the differences in the approach and interpretations on the foreign policy moves made by the Kremlin.

Vis-à-vis Russian interests in Europe, we can distinguish, on one side, the Western EU and NATO Member States, on the other, the former satellite states in Eastern Europe. This dual approach is not to be taken lightly, the West has always taken advantage of the fear and complex historical relationship between Russia and Eastern Europe. One example is NATO's enlargement process (2004, 2007), the other, the missile defence systems in states

like Poland and Romania, originally 'planted' by the US, now under NATO control (Deveselu, Romania). On the opposite side, the close relationship between Russia and countries like France, Germany, and even Italy, constitutes the argument behind the idea that *maybe* the West has always used the East as a bargaining chip in its dealings with Russia. As such, blaming the Kremlin of 'inventing' and 'deploying' hybrid warfare or hybrid tactics against NATO and the EU are, in our opinion, speculations and machinations in the grand scheme of legitimating NATO's ever fledgling purpose in a changed world.

Addressing the problem from the perspective of international law, Russia does not have many options. Due to the impediments within the UN Security Council, a repeat of the United Sates' endeavours in Kosovo (1999) and Iraq (2003) are no longer possible, let alone achievable by Russia. Consequently, born from the desire to circumvent an impossible vote on a resolution approving intervention, the usage of hybrid warfare is, in our opinion, a feasible bargain. Blurring the lines between war and peace and the usage of "war during peace" may be the only way to achieve the compromise between vital state interests and the current rigid international framework. Yet, if we accept this rationale, then hybrid warfare will not be associated with Russian interests, but with the interests of all important international actors. It comes as no surprise why the US and NATO are insisting so much on the 'Russian' element in "hybrid warfare".

Russia's 'political war' is interpreted by the West as a 'hybrid war'. To be blunt, Russia is doing exactly what other powerful states have done before, ruthlessly following their national interests, though with a certain aura reminiscent of Soviet times (*maskirovka*). In a similar optic, we see that NATO has (finally) taken the 'initiative' of switching from its characteristically defensive posture of deterrence. Though a step forward in itself, it seems like a timid effort to keep-up to the changing times. The façade which NATO has put up until now rested on the image of Russia as the everlasting enemy of Europe. Unfortunately for NATO, this is not the case anymore. The weak Russia of the 90s exists only in history books and biased interpretations. To keep-up the façade in order to continue to give NATO a *raison d'être* seems unwise, if not foolish. In NATO's terms, interpreting hybrid warfare" as the new military doctrine of Russia, or putting 'Russia' and 'hybrid warfare' in the same

sentence for propagandistic purposes can rebound with serious consequences. If we take the *positive aspect,* it will encourage cooperation at the national level, giving NATO the much-needed breath of fresh air. However, *if it will backfire*, it will, paradoxically, make Europe and NATO weak by over-investing in countering the so-called *hybrid threats from state actors*, a threat which may never come. The danger is that, whilst investing in defences against a clear source, it will also mean ignoring the serious threats posed by *hybrid threats originating non-state actors*.

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CONFLICTS IN GEORGIA 1991-2008. "THE 2008 FIVE-DAY WAR "- A DIFFERENT CONFLICT FROM THE 1990S.

Dato Tabatadze

PhD. Student

Faculty of European Studies

Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca,

dattotabatadzee@yahoo.com

Abstract

The ethnic conflicts in Georgia erupted at the beginning of the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union and they are still not solved, creating problems not only for Georgia and its development, but also for the Black Sea region. The solution for such conflicts is in the best interests of Georgia and the Black Sea region, as well as of the European Union, because after the recent enlargement, the EU has two member countries from that region. Another issue is the security role Georgia can play by providing the corridor for energy resources from the basin of the Caspian Sea to Europe.

The stereotype of these conflicts is that they exist in Georgia between different ethnic groups and become active from time to time. This article argues that the 2008 war was not an intrastate war which happened inside the country between different groups, but it had also two participants from the international system. This kind of war also happens because there is no other leverage which can be used by country "A" to maintain its influence on country "B" as it did in the past, thus provoking the military conflict between different identity (here: ethnic) groups and supporting the minorities who are controlled by country "A".

Keywords: Ethnic identities; National interests; Georgia; War, Constructivism; Realism

Introduction

The reason why I have decided to write an analytical comparison of the conflicts in Georgia in the 1990s and in 2008 is that there is little written on this subject and this article will fill the gap to some degree. Another reason is the applicability of it to the current conflict

in Ukraine, for example. There are various studies written about the war in 2008 and the conflicts in the 1990s in Georgia, but they mostly offer a mere history of the conflicts and not the comparative analysis of the conflict that will try to exhibit the differences and similarities and provide a more thorough search for the real reasons behind these conflicts. I will draw parallels with the Ukrainian conflict and show the similarities and differences there are with the conflicts in Georgia and how these experiences from Georgia can be applied to better analyse the current conflict in Ukraine.

To explain more why I have opted for this question for my research, which I will mention later, I shall state that nowadays many local conflicts have gained international importance and become matters of international disagreement. As I will show in this article, this is the exact situation in Georgia's case and I will prove it. The local ethnic conflict not only gained major importance for the international society, but it also *de facto* and *de jure* evolved from a local to an interstate conflict. This is the reason why the main research question of this article is very important and provides new insight into to the so-called frozen conflicts in Georgia.

In the 1990s, the conflicts in Georgia were considered to be ethnic conflicts and the actors of these conflicts were the ethnic groups that were demanding independence and separation from Georgia (see the history part below) and they were regarded as an intrastate war, i.e. one that happened inside Georgia. But in 2008 there was a military conflict between two independent states – the Russian Federation and Georgia and it became an international military conflict. The main question of this article reads as follows: What was the reason for changing the type of conflict and its actors/characters (officially recognized parties of the conflict) of the 2008 Five-Day war in Georgia?

At the beginning I shall provide a historical background: how these conflicts appeared after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and what kind of roots they had in the Soviet Union.

 I have reviewed the methodology through which the research question is answered and for a better explanation of the issue, I have resorted to different schools of international relations and decided which ones are better suited to the current cases.

To render clear the scale of the research, it is to be mentioned that it spreads across both intrastate and interstate levels because, as I have already mentioned, it changes from a local to an interstate conflict.

Theory and Methodology

For any article, the theoretical consideration is important and adds scientific value. Thus, I have decided to base my work on the constructivism theory and explain the case with the help of the latter. Nevertheless, I do not intend to give myself the benefit of choosing one of the International Relations schools I feel comfortable with. I will challenge accordingly the explanatory power of constructivism with realism, which is one of the leading and most interesting schools in the field of international relations. Why have I chosen these two theories and not the others? Why have I used the method of challenging one theory with another? To answer the first question, I plan to argue in the main part of my article that these two theories best explain the cases mentioned here.

The second question already deals with methodological aspects, which I prefer to also include in the introductory part of my work. This article is grounded on qualitative research, where analysis relies on argumentation and the findings stemming from it. As far as the field of qualitative research methodology is concerned, I mainly use the comparative approach, which best suits the tasks and goals I aim to reach. My purpose is to show that the 2008 war exhibits some similarities but was different in essence from the conflicts of the 1990s, and to discover the reasons why this change occurred in 2008. The comparative method enables me to compare not only the cases, but also two international relations theories/schools which best explain the situation and offer a forecast and possible solutions.

Analysis of the conflicts

The hypothesis mentioned here is that the regional player (Russia) has its own interests in maintaining its influence on Post-Soviet countries and it uses different kinds of

tools to reach these goals, including the conflict between various identity groups (here, ethnic groups).

As it results from the hypotheses, the main reason for the intrastate conflict is the outside force and the behaviour of it can be explained by Realism. I will provide a theoretical explanation from Realism in the conclusive part of the article. However, is this the best theory for explaining the cases? If so, do small (weak) countries have any chance of altering anything? Is there any other theory which better explains these cases? Or even, do we have to use only one theory in our scientific work or can we use more than one pertaining to international relations within the same scientific work?

History:

South Ossetia (called 'Tskhinvali region' or 'Samachablo' by Georgia) is a territory of 3900 square kilometres located within the Caucasus. Its status in international law is controversial. Whereas South Ossetia considers itself as being an independent State since its declaration of independence of 29 May 1992 and it has also been recognized by five Member States of the United Nations (UN) in the aftermath of the military conflict between Russia and Georgia in 2008 (the Russian Federation, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nauru, and Tuvalu), the Georgian government, as well as the majority of Member States of the UN, consider it to be part of the Georgian territory.

The present-day conflict between South Ossetia and Georgia is rooted in a different understanding of historical facts and developments. Whereas Ossetians consider South Ossetia as being part of the Ossetian territory from ancient times and argue that Ossetians were always closer to Russia than to Georgia, Georgians hold that the ancestors of the Ossetians migrated from their homeland north of the Caucasian mountains into the territory they call Samachablo (Nussberger, 2015, p. 1). For a better understanding of the analyses of this work what will be made below, it is necessary to thoroughly explore history. For this purpose, another more comprehensive background review is offered by the U.S. Congressional research service: "Tensions in Georgia date back at least to the 1920s, when

South Ossetia made abortive attempts to declare its independence but ended up as an autonomous region within Soviet Georgia after the Red Army conquered Georgia. In 1989, South Ossetia lobbied for joining its territory with North Ossetia in Russia or for independence. Georgia's own declaration of independence from the former Soviet Union and subsequent repressive efforts by former Georgian President Gamsakhurdia triggered conflict in 1990. In January 1991, hostilities broke out between Georgia and South Ossetia, reportedly contributing to an estimated 2,000-4,000 deaths and the displacement of tens of thousands of people. In June 1992, Russia brokered a cease-fire, and Russian, Georgian, and Ossetian "peacekeeping" units set up base camps in a security zone around Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia. The units usually totalled around 1,100 troops, including about 530 Russians, a 300-member North Ossetian brigade (which was actually composed of South Ossetians and headed by a North Ossetian), and about 300 Georgians. Monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) did most of the patrolling. A Joint Control Commission (JCC) composed of Russian, Georgian, and North and South Ossetian emissaries ostensibly promoted a settlement of the conflict, with the OSCE as facilitator. Some observers warned that Russia's increasing influence in South Ossetia and Abkhazia over the years transformed the separatist conflicts into essentially Russia-Georgia disputes. Most residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia reportedly were granted Russian citizenship and passports and most appeared to want their regions to be part of Russia." (Nichol, 2009, pp. 2-3).

One must highlight the last fact about passportization from this historical review. As it becomes apparent, south Ossetia and Abkhazia were parts of Georgia in the Soviet period and accordingly people residing in these territories were citizens of Soviet Georgia, but after the independence of Georgia from the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation gave its citizenship to the majority of the people who lived in other independent countries and were not citizens of the Russian Federation. What are the goals of these actions taken by Russia? The hypothesis of this article claims that Russia is using different methods for reaching its interests so as to keep its influence on Post-Soviet Georgia and one of the methods used is granting Russian citizenship as leverage for manipulation.

Eruption of military clashes

Once again, it should be emphasised that the goal of this article is not to discover who is guilty and who is innocent, but to thoroughly analyse the reasons for the conflict. But to reach such a goal, it is important to know the background. Here I will provide some details on actual fighting and the assessment made by the International Crisis Group: "Close to midnight on 7 August 2008, a senior Georgian military official announced that Tbilisi had decided to restore "constitutional order" in South Ossetia. The Georgians had declared a unilateral ceasefire several hours earlier, after another day of fighting between Georgian and Ossetian forces in and around the region's capital, Tskhinvali. But Georgia's defence ministry said South Ossetian militias had nevertheless continued into the evening to heavily shell Georgian villages and positions. By 1:00am on 8 August, Georgian troops had launched a large-scale military offensive on Tskhinvali, supported by artillery, and advanced quickly. At approximately 1:30am, tank columns of the Russian 58th Army started crossing into Georgia from the Roki tunnel separating North and South Ossetia. Apparently, the Russians had anticipated, if they did not actually entice, the Georgian move. Prior to these opening events of 7-8 August, the security situation in South Ossetia had deteriorated sharply. In July, four Georgian soldiers serving in the Joint Peacekeeping Force (JPKF) 3 were detained by the South Ossetian de facto authorities. They were released after an ultimatum by Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, but shortly thereafter, Russian warplanes flew over Georgian territory in an open warning to Tbilisi. The South Ossetians and Georgians reinforced their forces and weaponry in the zone of conflict, in violation of ceasefire agreements. In the past months, Russia also had been bolstering its position in both South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Starting in March, talk of war – an attack on the southern part of Abkhazia – had been rife in Tbilisi. A senior European diplomat said that U.S., German and European Union (EU) leaders had on repeated occasions talked Saakashvili out of launching an attack. Each conversation worked for "about two weeks", the official said. A South Ossetian told Crisis Group in late July that Russian advisers and military officers had recently arrived in the town of Java. They hired local Ossetians at salaries of €1,000 a month – huge by local standards –

to help construct military buildings. Russia also sent extra "peacekeepers" into Abkhazia in April and army railway workers on 30 May. Georgia denounced these moves as illegal occupation. But in two months the railway crew repaired the rail link from Sukhumi to the city of Ochamchire which had been broken for years. Moscow insisted that was for "humanitarian" purposes, but only a few weeks later, at least a portion of the 9,000 Russian troops who went into Georgia via Abkhazia travelled with their hardware via the railway." (Crisis Group Europe Report N°195, 22 August 2008, pp. 1-3.)

According to the assessments made by the same group, all parties breached the rules and all are guilty of various things: "The Russia-Georgia conflict has transformed the contemporary geopolitical world, with large consequences for peace and security in Europe and beyond. Moscow's initial moves into South Ossetia as large-scale violence broke out there on 7-8 August were in part a response to a disastrous miscalculation by a Georgian leadership that was impatient with gradual confidence building and a Russian-dominated negotiations process. But Russia's disproportionate counter-attack, with movement of large forces into Abkhazia and deep into Georgia, accompanied by the widespread destruction of economic infrastructure, damage to the economy and disruption of communications and movement between different regions of the country, constitutes a dramatic shift in Russian-Western relations. It has undermined regional stability and security; threatened energy corridors that are vital for Europe; made claims with respect to ethnic Russians and other minorities that could be used to destabilise other parts of the former Soviet Union, with Ukraine a potential target; and shown disregard for international law. Russian actions reflected deeper factors, including pushback against the decade-long eastward expansion of the NATO alliance, anger over issues ranging from the independence of Kosovo to the placement of missile defence systems in Europe, an assertion of a concept of limited sovereignty for former Soviet states and a newfound confidence and aggressiveness in foreign affairs that is intimately linked with the personality and world view of Russia's predominant leader, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. Georgia, too, has mishandled its relationships with Russia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia since 2004, abandoning real confidence building and often following confrontational policies towards the conflict regions.

With patience it might have demonstrated that the regions would be better served by enjoying extensive autonomy within an increasingly prosperous and democratising Georgia. Instead, President Mikheil Saakashvili and a small inner circle of bellicose officials used menacing and arrogant rhetoric that made the dispute with Moscow and the conflict regions bitter and personal. All sides bear responsibility for the humanitarian consequences of the violence, as tens of thousands of civilians in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and the rest of Georgia have been displaced amid disturbing reports of atrocities." (Crisis Group Europe Report N°195, 22 August 2008, p. i).

Identity Groups:

The conflict between the two ethnic groups has roots that date back to the Russian Empire, so it did not start in the 1990s, as the Russian Empire was trying to create different identity groups on the territory of Georgia on the grounds of various ethnicity and ideational structures, e.g. Ossetians have the belief that they are closer to Russians and have accordingly the right to join North Ossetia and Russia.

According to the Constructivist school of international relations: "normative or ideational structures are just as important as material structures Constructivists argue that material resources only acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared knowledge in which they are embedded. For example, Canada and Cuba both exist alongside the United States, but the simple balance of the military power cannot explain the fact that the former is a closer American ally, and the latter a sworn enemy. The ideas about identity, the logic of ideology and established structures of friendship and enmity lead to the fact that the material balance of power between Canada and the United States, and Cuba and the United States has radically different meanings. Constructivists also stress the importance of normative and ideational structures, because they are thought to shape the social identities of political actors." (Burchill at al., 2005, Constructivism-Christian Reus Smit, p. 196).

The South Ossetia case in Georgia is an example of how Russia tries to create leverage so as to control Post-Soviet countries. Nicu Popescu describes and compares other

cases where Russia uses the same methods to keep its influence on Post-Soviet countries: "Russia has been a player during and after the conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria. During the 1990s, Russia's policies towards the conflicts were largely supported by the secessionist forces, even if not always so unambiguously. The main type of Russian support was directed through the conflict settlement mechanisms. Russian-led peacekeeping operations have *de facto* guarded the borders of the secessionist entities, helping to maintain a status quo that was favourable to the secessionist sides. The open phase of the conflict in South Ossetia (Georgia) lasted between 1990 and 1992 and claimed approximately a thousand lives. The conflict ended with a ceasefire agreement signed on 14 July 1992. As a result of the ceasefire agreement, there is a trilateral peacekeeping operation consisting of Russian, Georgian and South Ossetian troops. A Joint Control Commission (JCC) consisting of Russia, South Ossetia, North Ossetia (a Russian region) and Georgia oversee the security situation and pursue negotiations on conflict settlement. The OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) supervises the situation. The EU is an observer in JCC meetings on economic issues.

The conflict in Transnistria (Moldova) lasted for a few months in the spring and summer of 1992. It resulted in some 1,000 casualties. A ceasefire agreement was signed on 21 July 1992. The war ended after the Russian 14th Army intervened on behalf of Transnistria and defeated the Moldavian troops. A trilateral peacekeeping operation has been in place since the ceasefire was declared. As in South Ossetia, the peacekeeping troops consisted of military forces from the two parties in conflict (Moldova and Transnistria), and Russia as the leading peacekeeper. The OSCE oversees the situation. The negotiations on conflict settlement were carried out in the so-called 'five-sided format', which consisted of Moldova and Transnistria as conflict parties, and Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE as mediators. In October 2005, the format became '5+2' after the EU and the US joined in as observers" (Popescu, 2006, pp. 1-2). From these two cases, we can conclude that the main outside force is Russia and that it uses similar tools to reach its goals of influence to the ones mentioned above. According to realism and its balance of powers principle, small/weak Ossetia and Transnistria should be in alliance with Georgia and Moldova to balance Russia's military

power, but according to their beliefs and shared values/knowledge, Ossetia (now already officially) and Transnistria have created an alliance with Russia in order to balance not the power but the danger, which is the social perception of societies. As Barry Buzan states in his book "Security-a New Framework for Analysis", danger/threat is a social perception rather than existing materially, and the securitization of the issue happens according to this perception and not according to the real, materially existing threat. (Buzan, Waewer and De Wilde, 1998 p. 50). This perception of threat is the result of the shared ideas, beliefs and values, which according to constructivists, have structural characteristics and exert a strong influence on social and political action.

Another tool for creating different identity groups so as to possess ground for influence in a country is to strengthen the affiliation of the ethnic minority groups to Russia. Is it enough for Russia to trust what ethnic minorities think in a certain moment of history? Maybe they will change their mind in the future and claim they can live in a country next to the majority ethnic group, and so the social perception of the threat dilutes. Then, this means that Russia had quite a fragile influence in that country, be it Georgia, Moldova (Corpădean, 2015, pp. 249-268) or other Post-Soviet target countries. Thus, this was the reason why Russia implemented an illegal passport policy in Georgia, so as to claim that it had citizens living there and thus it benefitted from the right to protect them.

Kristopher Natoli offers an interesting legal analysis in his article "Weaponizing Nationality: an Analysis of Russia's Passport Policy in Georgia": "Prior to Russia's military campaign into Georgia, the Russian government implemented a policy of distributing Russian passports to and thereby conferring Russian citizenship on South Ossetia's population. Attempting to legitimize its invasion, Russia asserted its sovereign right to protect its citizens against the aggression of another state. As the international community responded to Russia's actions, the focus was on the proportionality of Russia's response and not whether the invasion was actually justified or legitimate. A state's sovereign right to confer citizenship is a powerful right. Not only does it establish a reciprocal relationship of rights and obligations between the state and the individual, but it affects a state's rights vis-à-vis the other states. By marrying the state's sovereign right to confer the citizenship with the state's sovereign right

to protect its citizens, the former right can be effectively transformed into a tool of state aggression. Russia's policy of conferring its citizenship *en-masse* to the citizens of another country seems like just such an arbitrary and abusive use of an acknowledged right. Whether Russia's passport policy is viewed as a creeping annexation or naked aggression, international law should not, and, this author believes, does not, legitimate such a scheme. Although identifying Russia's passport policy as unlawful and illegitimate may not prevent it from continuing to carry out such a policy, the international community should not allow Russia to aggressively re-establish its sphere of influence under the pretence of legal legitimacy Identifying Russia's policy as an abuse of rights, it would expose any future action based on that policy as an aggressive action and give the international community grounds for refuting Russian's claim of having the right under international law to protect its "citizens." (Natoli, 2010 pp. 416-417).

A similar concern is expressed in report #195 on the Five-day War between the Russian Federation and Georgia by the International Crisis Group, published on 22 August 2008: "Russia's actions in Georgia have been a warning to all other former Soviet republics, amounting to pursuit of a doctrine of limited sovereignty with respect to countries it views, because of history and geography, as within its natural sphere of influence. Ukraine, with its Western predilections and NATO ambitions, is potentially vulnerable to this doctrine. Russia has considerable leverage, of which it has already made some use: the Crimea was for a time Russian; the eastern part of the country has a large ethnic Russian population and close cultural ties to Russia; the economy has more than once been targeted by energy blackmail. Putin reportedly told President Bush at NATO's Bucharest Summit in April 2008: "You understand, George, that Ukraine is not even a state! What is Ukraine? Part of its territory is Eastern Europe, and another part, a significant one, was donated by us!" The Baltic States have the protection of membership in the EU and NATO but also the vulnerability of large ethnic Russian populations. Moscow's claim that the rights of those populations are abused has taken on a more ominous tenor in the wake of its post-7 August assertions with regard to its constitutional obligations and interpretation of responsibility to protect (R2P) claims in the Georgia case" (Crisis Group Europe Report N°195, 22 August 2008, p. 17).

Hence, as we have seen since the beginning of the 1990s, Russia has been supporting ethnic minorities and trying to keep its influence in Georgia. The next step to a passport policy was to strengthen its influence and prepare the ground for a possible necessary invasion of the country, which eventually happened in 2008. But why did it become necessary for Russia to invade another sovereign country since it was known that the international society would recognize that action as an aggression against one of its member states, Georgia? The answer is, as I have suggested in my hypothesis, that the regional player (Russia) has its own interests of maintaining its influence in Post-Soviet countries and uses various kinds of tools to reach these goals, including the conflict between different identity groups (here, ethnic groups). From the beginning, the ethnic conflict and the act of supporting ethnic minorities was enough for Russia to keep its influence on its Post-Soviet republic, but since the official declaration of the wish to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and especially after the Rose Revolution, as well as following the reforms which made Georgia's integration a real issue, Russia's politics became more aggressive and merely supporting separatists to maintain the status quo was impossible.

NATO Stance:

In 2002, at the NATO Summit of Prague, Georgia officially declared its Euro-Atlantic aspirations, thereby starting its NATO integration process. Since 2003, following the "Rose Revolution" in Georgia, NATO-Georgia relations became more intense and dynamic. On October 29, 2004, the Alliance launched an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with Georgia in order to assist the country in attaining NATO standards and successfully implementing democratic reforms. Georgia was the first country ever to start the implementation of the IPAP. On September 21, 2006, at the Informal Meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers in New York, the Alliance made a decision to start its Intensified Dialogue on Membership Issues with Georgia. This decision vividly marked a qualitatively higher level in NATO-Georgia relations and was a logical step forward from a partnership format towards the membership candidate status of Georgia. As a result of the successful

implementation of IPAP requirements and the progress achieved within the Intensified Dialogue, on April 3, 2008, at the Bucharest Summit, the Allies made the decision that Georgia would become a member of NATO. The decision is a momentous political message on the way to Georgia's NATO membership. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, n.d.) To conclude, the reason why Russia invaded Georgia in 2008 was the fact that the old tool of controlling and manipulating Georgia with frozen conflicts was not effective anymore for reaching Russia's goal of keeping its influence on this Post-Soviet neighbour, since Georgia made a different choice, to integrate into western economic and security alliances, and the new reforms and development in Georgia made this a real perspective. Ronald D. Asmus claims as one of the main thesis of his book "A Little War that Shook the World" that: "The war did not happen because of the protection of rights of minorities or the status of separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The main reason for the war is a geopolitical one - Georgia was looking to the west and this was unacceptable for Russia. Moscow used these conflicts as the means and ground for the much bigger Russian strategy to disorient Georgia, keep it in its sphere of influence and break all pro-western aspirations of Tbilisi". (Asmus, 2010, pp. 9-10).

I shall now present another two arguments to prove that Russia genuinely had as its strategic goal to stop Georgia from developing pro-western aspirations and preserve its influence on it. Firstly, from the analysis of the "Six Point Agreement" which was negotiated between Georgia and Russia and which aimed to end the war between the Russian Federation and Georgia in August 2008, it results that Russia was conducting military operations outside the conflict zone, which is a clear indicator that its official reason, that of protecting its citizens in Georgia, was simply untrue, because in territories outside the South Ossetian region there were no Russian citizens. Georgia had never recognized the passportization policy of Russia in South Ossetia and, accordingly, any person with this kind of passport would not be able to live outside South Ossetia, in the territory of Georgia that was controlled by the Georgian government. Then, what was Russia's aim? The answer lies in what we have already mentioned, to control the whole of Georgia, change its foreign policy priorities and pro-western integration. Here is what we have read in the Six Point Agreement: "1) Russian

troops will leave areas outside Abkhazia and South Ossetia within a month; 2) At least 200 EU monitors will be deployed to those areas; 3) OSCE monitors will be able to return to Tskhinvali; 4) UN observers will remain in Abkhazia; 5) Int. discussions to start on October 15; 6) Saakashvili pledged not to use force." (Civil Georgia, 2008). The Second argument to prove that Russia really had as its strategic goal to stop Georgia from developing pro-western aspirations and keep its influence on it is found in Dmitry Medvedev's speech of November 21, 2011, delivered to soldiers at a base in Vladikavkaz, north of the Georgian border, where he admits that Russia managed to stop the spread of NATO to its borders with the invasion of Georgia: "NATO would have expanded by now to admit ex-Soviet republics if Russia had not invaded Georgia in 2008 to defend a rebel region, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said on Monday. Moscow has strongly opposed the expansion of the Western military alliance to include former Soviet republics such as Georgia and Ukraine. NATO promised Georgia eventual membership at a summit in 2008, but enthusiasm for Tbilisi's entry cooled after the brief war later that year, which saw Russian troops invade Georgia to protect Georgia's tiny rebel region of South Ossetia. "If you... had faltered back in 2008, the geopolitical situation would be different now," Medvedev said in a speech to soldiers at a base in Vladikavkaz, just north of the Georgian border. "And a number of countries which (NATO) tried to deliberately drag into the alliance, would have most likely already been part of it now. We abandoned direct competition (with NATO), but... we now have different visions of the solutions of a number of security issues," Medvedev said." (Dyomkin, 2011). From this it is also clear that Russia has the same interests in Ukraine, i.e. to deter/stop it from joining NATO. The new Government which is in power after the famous Maidan protests has pro-western integration aspirations and, together with Georgia, Ukraine was also promised at the NATO Bucharest summit in 2008 that it would become a member of NATO. "NATO welcomes Ukraine's and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO" (NATO, 2008). These similar circumstances make it possible to generalize some of the analyses and conclusions of this article in the light of the ongoing conflict in Eastern Ukraine, where ethnic minorities demand the separation from Ukraine, as it was the case of Georgia.

But how was the Five-Day War of 2008 in Georgia different from the ethnic conflicts that started in the 1990s in Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Samachablo, as Georgians call it)? The first argument for this difference is the level of the conflict. In the 1990s, the conflict was located inside the state of Georgia, but the 2008 war happened between two sovereign countries, Russia and Georgia, both members of the United Nations. This means that the conflict changed from a local to an international one. The second characteristic is the different status of Russia from what we have seen at the beginning of this article. Russia had been the mediator in this conflict since 1990s, but after 2008 it became part of it. To prove all this, what I have mentioned here is useful as it provides information about the Geneva talks, which mark the official international platform of negotiations after the Five-Day War in 2008.

"In the aftermath of the Georgian-Russian war in August 2008, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) called for the establishment of a mediation forum which was aimed at security and stability in the South Caucasus. The initiative goes back to the "Six-Point Ceasefire Plan" reached by the French (and then EU) President Nikolas Sarkozy and his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev, which brought to an end the military confrontation between Moscow and Tbilisi. The agreement, together with its follow-up document from 8 September 2008, envisaged the creation of a new platform involving the EU, the OSCE, the UN and the US, as well as the conflict parties: Georgia and Russia. On Russian request, officials from Abkhazia and South Ossetia were also included in the talks. Moscow's demand coincided with that of the EU and OSCE, the latter also considering that the talks should be all-inclusive. Tbilisi acquiesced. Thus, in October 2008, an international mediation process – the Geneva talks – started over the Abkhaz and South Ossetian conflicts. The negotiations began with high expectations. Predictably, many of these have not been met yet. The main failure of the talks has been the inability to prevent Russia from vetoing the extension of the UN and OSCE missions to Georgia's breakaway regions. To date, the Geneva talks have achieved limited concrete results: Russia's decision to withdraw its military troops from Perevi, a small Georgian village beyond the South Ossetian administrative border. More broadly, the forum remains a unique international mediation

platform, which keeps the conflict parties at the negotiating table and in contact with one another." (Mikhelidze, 2010, p. 2)

Hence, as we can see, unlike in the 1990s, Russia lost the status of mediator and became part of the conflict which in itself changed from a local to an international one, and this happened as a result of Georgia's choice and successful reforms after the Rose Revolution, meant to implement this new approach. The fact that Russia became part of the conflict or, in other words, participated in this conflict as one of the parties involved, can be seen from the abovementioned chapter called "Eruption of Clashes", where it is shown that the Russian army invaded Georgia and was involved in a fight against the Georgian army. The second argument is the Six Point Ceasefire agreement which was negotiated between Georgia and the Russian Federation on August 12, 2008 by Nicholas Sarkozy, President of France at that time, as the mediator between the participants in the military conflict[65].

More proof that the Russian Federation is no longer a mediator is that in the Geneva Talks it does not have the status of mediator, but the same status as Georgia, which unarguably is one of the sides in the Five-Day War. Both Georgia and Russia are official parties in the negotiations. This is a clear fact that one can find, for example, in news articles: "On March 22-23, the 35th round of the Geneva International Discussions took place. As per tradition, the main format for discussing Georgia's occupied territories involved official parties from Georgia, the Russian Federation, as well as OSCE, UN, and EU representatives and the US as co-chairs of the format. Representatives of the de facto governments of Abkhazia and South Ossetia were also invited." (Adzinbaia, 2016). Here, no one mentions Russia as a mediator.

To put it simply, Russia had to implement more aggressive policies towards Georgia to deter its shift towards the west and because Russia understood that the old tool of supporting separatists was not effective any more so as to reach its goals.

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[65] see the Six Point Peace Plan, available from: http://smr.gov.ge/Uploads/9bbbc7.pdf

Conclusion

As a conclusion, I shall admit that this topic prompts a different attitude from the perspective of various countries. I have striven to give this article a nonbiased and high scientific value, which has been my main goal. The article's main research question and thesis are proved through the analyses of the main and secondary resources and now I will try to analyze this case in the conclusion part through the comparative method of two different international theories: constructivism and realism. I will start with constructivism. In the section called "Identity Groups", I have written about constructivism and its theoretical suggestions; so how can this theory of constructivism be adjusted to the case of Georgia? We have already seen two notions of constructivism: the idea of identity, as well as friendship and enmity. For more thorough analyses we also need to discover how interests work according to constructivism. Alexander Wendt claims in his article "*Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics,*" that: "Identities are basis of interests. Actors do not have a "Portfolio" of interests that they carry around independent of social context; instead, they define their interests in the process of defining situations" (Wendt, 1992, p. 398).

From this, we can conclude that interests of identities are formed in the process of social interaction. The same social interactions and perceptions of danger define enmity and friendship. If we take the case of Georgia, there are three parties involved in the interactions: Georgia, the Russian Federation and two ethnic minority groups. These minority groups which believe they possess different ethnic identities have the perception of danger from Georgia because of the abovementioned ethnic conflicts with Georgia at the beginning of the 20th century and in the 1990s. They try to balance this perceived danger through the alliance with Russia and this makes them very dependent on Russia, as well because only Russia and another four countries recognize them as independent states. Now, if Russia wants to implement its strategic goals – which is, as we have already shown above, wishing to stop NATO enlargement close to its borders - will it be interested in solving the ethnic conflicts in Georgia? The answer is no. Because it is in Russia's best interests to keep these conflicts

frozen, when it has leverage on both, namely on Georgia because it will be impossible to solve these problems without Russia, and on ethnic minorities who will not be able to get recognition from other countries. Otherwise, if these conflicts are solved and Georgia is able to restore its territorial integrity, it will continue to move towards NATO until it becomes a member state. It is in Georgia's best interest to be a member state of NATO because it provides collective security to all its member states. This is not only the priority of a certain Georgian Government, but it is the choice of the citizens of Georgia which was approved by the plebiscite conducted on January 5, 2008. The citizens of Georgia were asked the following question: Should Georgia pursue integration into NATO? - 77.0% of Georgian citizens answered Yes. With this, they approved that they wanted to see Georgia as a member state of NATO (Election Administration of Georgia, 2008). More recent public opinion polls in Georgia were conducted in 2015 by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and support for the accession of Georgia to NATO is still high at 69% (Kokoshvili, 2015).

At the beginning of the article I set out to provide an analysis from the standpoint of realism and constructivism. Why was it necessary to use two theories and, as I have mentioned above, to build bridges between them? The reasons are two: first, they are different theories, but they both belong to the discipline of international relations. When a researcher chooses only one theory it can provide good explanations for several things but there are also issues where the explanatory power of one of the theories is weak and another theory offers a better explanation. So, the principle I have used has enabled me to exploit the potential of both theories. It has become possible in the following way: I have divided the issues that would be better explained by constructivism and the other issues that would be better explained by realism. This kind of method is correctly used if they do not produce controversial results. But if they produce the results which answer to the researcher's main research question and prove the hypotheses that the researcher suggests at the beginning of his/her work, the scientific value of a study will be stronger than in the case of using one theoretical school for explaining all the issues that a researcher wants to discuss. To follow this method, I would like to explain why I have decided to use constructivism for the analysis of the local intrastate issue; unlike realism, which is a state-centric theory, constructivism

offers a good social explanation of the behaviour of the local ethnic identity groups and shows how they define their interests through the interactions with other ethnic identities or states. But these local interests are partly, if not significantly influenced by the interactions at the international system level and on that level interacting actors are already independent sovereign states, and realism is the theoretical school that provides a strong explanation on the behaviour of states.

When I mention realism, I mean its various dimensions. They are quite different in details but they share a clear family resemblance (Burchill at al., 2005, Donnelly, p. 30). As the reader may notice, I do not support too much division between theories or explain all issues only from one theoretical perspective. What I will do again is take the issues and explain them through the premises from realism, as a family of different dimensions. The premises/suggestions which will be used for the explanation can derive from neo-realism, from classical realism or from other dimensions. This makes the ongoing work issue-driven, which means that I write the work not to adjust to any of the theoretical schools or even to any dimension inside a theoretical school, but first I discuss the issue or suggest the hypothesis and then employ the theories which I believe best fit the explanation. I will use several assumptions that Realism makes to explain the reasons why the Five-Day War erupted in Georgia in 2008 and why this case is useful for analysing the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The assumptions are as follows:

"1) The keystone of Morgenthau's realist theory is the concept of power or "of interest defined in terms of power," which informs his second principle: the assumption that political leaders "think and act in terms of interest defined as power". This concept defines the autonomy of politics, and allows for the analysis of foreign policy regardless of the different motives, preferences, and intellectual and moral qualities of individual politicians. Furthermore, it is the foundation of a rational picture of politics 2) International politics, like all politics, is for Morgenthau a struggle for power because of the basic human lust for power. But regarding every individual as being engaged in a perpetual quest for power—the view that he shares with Hobbes—is a questionable premise. Human nature is unobservable. It cannot be proved by any empirical research, but only imposed on us as a matter of belief and

inculcated by education. 3) In the fourth principle, Morgenthau considers the relationship between realism and ethics. He says that while realists are aware of the moral significance of political action, they are also aware of the tension between morality and the requirements of successful political action. "Universal moral principles," he asserts, "cannot be applied to the actions of states in their abstract universal formulation, but …they must be filtered through the concrete circumstances of time and place". These principles must be accompanied by prudence for as he cautions "there can be no political morality without prudence." (Carpowicz, K., Julian, W., 2013, Column 2.2).

Briefly, we can extract the following conclusions from this citation: 1) States are motivated by a drive for power, security and pursuit of 'national interest', much like people, because people often behave in a self-interested manner. 2) Human nature could be inherently selfish and there is no chance for it to be changed. As a result, humans will act to further their own interests even if the implementation of these interests is against and harms the interests of others. This can often cause conflict. Since human nature is unchanging, there are few prospects that this kind of behaviour will change. 3) International institutions and law play a role in international relations, but are only effective if backed by force or effective sanctions. It is time now to use all the above mentioned historical facts, analyses and assessments to explain and generalize the case of Georgia through realism: let me start with interests; because realism is a state-centric theory, I will analyse the interests of Georgia and Russia. Another reason for this is that I have already discussed the interests of the ethnic minority groups when I explained them by means of constructivism. As we have seen, Russia's interests were to stop NATO enlargement in Georgia and to keep its influence on Post-Soviet Georgia. Georgia's interests were to restore *de-facto* territorial integrity, as it was put by one of the Georgian military officials, they were going to restore the constitutional order in South Ossetia (Crisis Group Europe Report N°195, 22 August 2008, pp. 1-3.). These interests are conflicting. Thus, as realism says, for the states the most important driving force are interests and Russia successfully implemented/pursued its interests even though this was detrimental to the interests of Georgia and stopped NATO enlargement in Georgia. For reaching these strategic goals, Russia used all the methods I have discussed above against Georgia, such as

the support for minorities, or the Passportization policy so as to create juridical grounds for invading Georgia when it was necessary. The next assumption of realism claims that international institutions and law play some role, but are effective if they are supported by the power. Effective sanctions also suit this case of Georgia; despite the fact that the international society and institutions recognize the territorial integrity of Georgia, Russia recognized the two breakaway regions of Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as independent states.

The next issue for this conclusive part of the article is: How is the case of Georgia similar to the conflicts in Ukraine and how can it be used for future policy analysis? In Ukraine, there are two types of conflict: one is similar to Georgia's conflicts in the 1990s and the second is different. The one that is similar to Georgia's case is the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, where Russia supports pro-Russian-separatists (Reuters, 2015). The second is the Crimean Peninsula, which is now occupied by the Russian military. As the international crisis group reports: "Despite repeated expressions of support for the Minsk process and recognition of Ukraine's sovereignty over the separatist Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics (DNR, LNR), Moscow's policy in Ukraine's east looks more likely to strengthen those entities than prepare for the dismantlement the Minsk agreement envisages. The Kremlin views Ukraine's European choice as a major security threat and the 2014 overthrow of President Viktor Yanukovych as Western-backed and aimed at isolating Russia. It wants to keep Ukraine under its pro-Western leadership unstable, embroiled in open-ended military confrontation it cannot afford, so as to return it eventually to its sphere of influence. Moscow often seems to play with several options, but its tactical fluidity is dangerous. Almost 10,000 have died in the conflict, and tens of thousands of troops face each other along a 500-km line of separation." (Crisis Group Europe and Central Asia Briefing N°79, 2016, p. 1).

If we add the fact that has already been mentioned above, that Ukraine was promised together with Georgia to become a member of NATO, it becomes clear that the Russian Federation has the same goal in Ukraine that it had in Georgia. These interests are to stop Ukraine's western integration and keep it under its influence. Another similarity to Georgia is that Russia supports ethnic minorities in the fight against the pro-western government of

Ukraine. How are these similarities important for future policy analysis? Because Russia has similar interests in Ukraine to the ones it had in Georgia and because they show the will to use military power and even get involved in war and invade the neighbouring country to reach its interest. Hence, there is a possibility that if Russia is not able to reach its strategic interests with the support of ethnic minorities, it will use its large army and start a full-scale war against Ukraine. Russia will only avoid this kind of large military conflict if it sees a power and serious international support behind Ukraine; otherwise, realism says that for states, interests are the most powerful driving force and they will implement them even if they are against the interests of others. Another assumption which I will repeat is that international institutions and law work or are effective if they are supported by power. This is also quite suitable in the Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula. Russia occupied it and despite the fact that it breaks the principle of inviolability of frontiers which is a cornerstone of European security (See the Helsinki Final Act, p. 5), Russia still thinks that historically it was Russia's territory and Russia has right to regain it. (Alpert, 2014). According to Article I of the Helsinki Final Act (See the Helsinki Final Act, available from: http://www.osce.org/helsinki-final-act?) which established the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 1975, every country has the right "to belong or not to belong to international organizations, to be or not to be a party to bilateral or multilateral treaties including the right to be or not to be a party to treaties of alliance." All OSCE member states, including Russia, have sworn to uphold these principles. In line with such principles, Ukraine has the right to choose for itself whether it joins any treaty of alliance, including NATO's founding treaty. Moreover, when Russia signed the Founding Act, it pledged to uphold "respect for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all states and their inherent right to choose the means to ensure their own security" (NATO, 2016). This is why realism is right about institutions and law in international relations. The reason why I believe that unlike the conflicts in eastern Ukraine, the case of Crimea is different is that Russia used another type of reasoning to invade another country, and this reason was a resurrection of historical justice. If other countries uphold the same reasoning to resurrect historical justice, there is a high possibility that wars will erupt in various places in the world. If Russia has political will, it

has all the necessary resources to help end the conflicts mentioned above. As a final word, I would like to mention that the goal of this article has been to analyse and discover the deeper reasons for the Five-Day War in Georgia in 2008, as well as to show the differences and similarities between the conflicts in Georgia in the 1990s and in 2008.

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UKRAINE: RUSSIA'S NEW ART OF WAR

Ioana-Nelia Bercean

MA Student

Faculty of European Studies, Babeş-Bolyai University

berceanioana2000@yahoo.com

Abstract

The beginning of the twenty-first century was marked by a proliferation of hybrid wars, fought between flexible and sophisticated adversaries engaged in asymmetric conflicts using various forms of warfare according to the purpose and timing. The emergence of this kind of war specifically for the new globalized economy, increasingly integrated and polarized, has questioned traditional and conventional military thinking, generated a debate on the definition of the new concept of hybrid war and appropriate measures to take, in order to adapt to the new reality imposed by it. The violent conflict between Russia and Ukraine that broke out in 2014 has become a case study for hybrid conflict thru which Russia revealed only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to reinforce its imperialistic view on foreign policy. Russia will continue to wage a massive propaganda and information warfare campaign with the ultimate goal of undermining NATO and the EU by creating a pro-Russian narrative and even political change. This part of hybrid warfare will not easily disappear: it has been part of Russian thinking for over half of a century. This article focuses on the Russian strategy of indirect warfare during the Ukrainian crisis, providing also an analytical overview of the political developments of relations between Russia and the EU following the 2014 events in Ukraine.

Keywords: Hybrid warfare; Ukraine; Russian Federation; crisis; European Union.

The concept of hybrid warfare is not new, and definitely was not invented by Russia. This type of war has been used throughout the centuries, often combining elements of classic or asymmetric conflicts, including guerillas, as seen from ancient history through Mao's victories, in Vietnam, and even in Hezbollah's approaches on its conflict with Israel (Josan and Voicu, 2015: 49-52). After all, what were the Greek's use of the Trojan horse but an element of hybrid warfare? The Mongols deceived their enemies by using stuffed

mannequins atop spare horses to inflate the apparent size of their own hordes. In 1941, Adolf Hitler used a deception within a deception to surprise the Soviet Union with an invasion involving three million men, while in 1944, the Allies provided the truth with what Winston Churchill called a "bodyguard of lies" (Brown 1975: 389) to deceive the German high command about the timing, location and size of the Normandy landings. In 1973, the Egyptians employed more than 150 deception operations to achieve surprise when they attacked Israel on Yom Kippur, and in 1991 the coalition led by the United States used deception to fool Saddam Hussein about the planned location of their attack that resulted in the eviction of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. And the examples can go on.

The Kremlin has been implementing a novel strategic approach in Ukraine since at least February 2014 that depends heavily on Russia's concept of "information warfare" (Snegovaya, 2015: 9). The Kremlin's information war is part of Russia's method of conducting hybrid warfare, which consists of a deliberate disinformation campaign supported by actions of the intelligence organs designed to confuse the enemy and achieve strategic advantage at minimal costs. The nature of hybrid operations makes it very difficult to detect or even determinate *ex post facto* when they begin, since confusing the enemy and neutral observers is one of its core components. It has become clear, however, that Russia is actively using its information warfare techniques in support of a hybrid-warfare effort to achieve its current objectives, namely federalization of Ukraine or Kiev's concession of special legal status to the separatist – controlled regions of eastern Ukraine.

Russia considers Ukraine and Belarus as parts of itself, something that was lost with the collapse of the Soviet Union. As Henry Kissinger put it, "to Russia, Ukraine can never be just a foreign country" (Kissinger, 2014, *The Washington Post*). Moreover, it is considered, together with Belarus, to be a guarantee of Russia's territorial integrity. This is a very sensitive issue. Historically, one of Russia's most important defense strategies is depth (Bērziņš, 2014: 1). This explains why it expanded its borders to the West as far as possible. For Russia, it was already difficult to accept the Baltic States becoming NATO members in 2004. Moscow claims the West guaranteed that former Soviet republics and satellites would be left as a natural buffer zone. True or not, the fact is that nowadays NATO's border is

approximately 160 km from St. Petersburg, instead of 1600 km during the existence of the USSR. In the hypothetical case of Ukraine joining NATO, the city of Belgorod that was deep inside the Soviet Union, would be on the border, and this is more than a sufficient motive for the Kremlin to take action against this hypothetical situation.

Since for Russia Ukraine is supposed to be a close ally or, at least, neutral, it considers the involvement of the United States and the European Union in Ukrainian internal affairs to be a direct confrontation to its regional interests. Moscow is rightly convinced that Washington and Brussels were working to attract the Ukraine to their sphere of influence, ignoring Russia's natural right to the region. Russia's goal has always been to make Ukraine a friendly and subordinate partner. For the Kremlin, after the West's interferences, this seemed to be further out of reach than ever, so Russia did exactly what it knows best, to destabilize a region in order to control its future.

In this article I will briefly revisit the causes, which generated the Ukrainian crisis, and the events up to May 2014, and then concentrate on the later intensification of the conflict and the aftermath of the ceasefire of September 5. Strategic lessons might be drawn from this most recent stage in the conflict, looking in particular at the concept of hybrid warfare. The third part of this essay provides an analytical overview of the political and institutional development of relations between the EU and the Russian Federation after the latter's invasion in Ukraine.

The Last Post-Soviet War

"Ukraine is not even a state!" Putin reportedly advised former US President George W. Bush during the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest. In 2014 this perception became reality. Russian behavior during the Ukraine crisis was based on the traditional Russian idea of a sphere of influence and a special responsibility, and on the right to interfere with countries in its near abroad. This perspective is also implied by the equally misleading term "post-Soviet space" (Reisinger and Golts, 2014: 1). The former soviet states are nowadays-sovereign countries that have developed differently and no longer have much in common.

Some of them are now European Union and NATO members, while others are trying to achieve this goal.

Ukraine's membership aspirations have been on the agenda since 2010, and NATO, as Mearsheimer suggested, did not trigger the whole crisis, the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement provoked it. Up to one point Mearsheimer was right; NATO indeed extended "too far to the East, into Russia's backyard" (Mearsheimer, 2014, *Foreign Affairs,* quoted by Reisinger and Golts, 2014: 1), against Moscow's will, but NATO was not hunting for new members; it found them knocking at its door (*Ibid.*).

The Russian leadership felt indeed threatened by NATO's *open door* policy, but not that much as by the prospect of the EU's soft power transforming its neighbor, the *brother* nation or *Little Russia* as Ukraine has been referred to since the 18th century. This prospect raised the possibility of an alternative to Vladimir Putin's "managed democracy" (Snegovaya, 2014: 9-12). There was fear that "democratic change in brotherly Ukraine could therefore spread to Russia" (*Ibid.*). It was this fear of "regime change and a color revolution" (Reisinger and Golts, 2014: 2) that prompted the Putin regime to use all means available – if necessary – in order to stop the expansion of NATO or EU. One of the main measures taken by the Kremlin was Anatoly Serdyukov's replacement, from the position of Minister of Defense, with Valery Gerasimov, in November 2012. The latter became the face of Russia's hybrid war approach, which some assess to have been first applied in Ukraine in 2014 (Galeotti, "The Gerasimov Doctrine and Russian Non-Linear War", quoted by Maria Snegovaya, 2014: 10).

Until more will be revealed about the Russian decision-making process during the course of the Ukrainian crisis, any analysis relies on inferences about Russian President Vladimir Putin's objective and calculations. This is not straightforward, because the evidence supports a number of interpretations, depending on the perspective, but the starting point is "relatively uncontroversial: Putin viewed the break-up of the Soviet Union as a retrograde step" (Freedman, 2014: 12) which created opportunities for Russia's adversaries that they will not hesitate to exploit. Against this backdrop, Moscow came to consider the overall political orientation of Ukraine as a vital interest. This issue came to the fore in 2013 as

Russia put pressure on Ukraine not to sign the association agreement with the European Union, and so become the latest stage in the West's expansion into the former Soviet space. Instead, it urged Ukraine to join the Russian-led Eurasian Union, an organization modeled after the EU concept, but under firm Russian leadership.

At the beginning Kiev showed an option for the West, only to turn instead to the Eurasian Union with the incentive of a large Russian loan (*Ibid.*). In 2013, Ukraine's Prime Minister Mykola Azarov has described a $15 billion aid package from the Russian Federation as a historic deal to allow the ex-Soviet republic return to economic growth, as protesters in Kiev voiced over a "sell-out" to Moscow (Walker, 2013, *The Guardian*). The deal between former Ukrainian president, Viktor Yanukovych, and Russia's Vladimir Putin, also included the lowering of the price for Russian gas delivered to Ukraine, by about a third. Putin's intervention raised the stakes in the battle over Ukraine's future. It has also been suggested by former Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski that this was combined with a threat to seize Crimea and possibly personal blackmail, based on evidence of the organized corruption of Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich's government. Ukrainian intelligence had been aware of Russian operatives moving into Crimea earlier in the decade, with the possibility of annexation discussed from the middle of 2013, which is when the question of EU versus Eurasian Union was moving up the agenda. According to Sikorski, Polish intelligence became aware of Russian calculations on "what provinces would be profitable to grab" (Judah, 2014, *Politico Magazine*).

In February 2014, Ukraine appeared to be on the brink of civil war, as violent clashes between protesters and special police forces led to many deaths and injuries (Radia, 2014, *ABC News*). On February 21, 2014, Yanukovych claimed that, after lengthy discussions, he had reached an agreement with the opposition. However, later that day, he fled the capital for Kharkiv, travelling next to Crimea, and eventually to exile in southern Russia. On the very next day, the Ukrainian Parliament voted to remove him from his post, on the grounds that he was unable to fulfill his duties (Higgins and Kramer, 2014, *NY Times*). Yanukovich's turn to Russia triggered the revolt in Kiev, the overthrow of his government and, in consequence, an apparently decisive Western turn of Ukrainian policy. If Moscow had formed a link between

such a hostile turn in Kiev's policy and the seizure of Crimea and other Ukrainian territory, then this might explain the speed with which agitation soon began in these territories. The effort to generate a counter-revolutionary movement failed, other than in Crimea, where Russia had the benefit of its Sevastopol base as well for a prior preparation (Freedman, 2014: 12-13). Initially, the Russians may have hoped to retain annexation as a threat to encourage Kiev to reconsider its West-oriented position, although, given the revolutionary enthusiasm in Ukraine, concessions to Moscow were less likely to happen, because when it comes to choose between an European future or one linked to Russia, it seems that the majority would prefer the first option.

The annexation of Crimea was a definitive move and introduced a problem into all later attempts to achieve a political settlement. By annexing a neighboring country's territory by force, Putin overthrew in a single stroke the assumption on which the post-Cold War European order had rested (Treisman, 2016, *Foreign Affairs*). However, nothing concretely happened in order to force Russia to hand Crimea back, just a limited number of agitations, especially in Odessa, but they just gained a little attraction, with no concrete result. Eventually, Russian efforts concentrated on the Donbas region and, in particular, the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. Putin described these areas using the historic name of Novorossiya, expressing his astonishment that they had ever been allowed to become part of Ukraine in 1922, a ruling he considered to be as perverse as the transfer of Crimea and Sevastopol to Ukraine in 1956 (Freedman, 2014: 13).

While the loss of these territorial slices directly challenged Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, unless the whole price was taken, the rest of the country would be left hostile to Russia, and more important, beyond its influence. This would permit its embrace by the EU, and even NATO, in order to continue their approaches. This pointed to a fundamental tension in Russian objectives from the start, between carving out a chunk of Ukraine that would be effectively controlled by Russia or even annexed, and gaining influence over Ukrainian decisions to prevent moves inimical to Russians interests – what used to be called "Finlandisation" (Milne, 2014, *Financial Times*). The question of why Putin took this step is of more than historical interest. Understanding his motives for occupying and annexing

Crimea is crucial to assessing whether he will make similar choices in the future (e.g. sending troops to "liberate" ethnic Russians in the Baltic states), just as it is key to determining what measures the West might take to deter such actions (Treisman, 2016, *Foreign Affairs*).

Three plausible interpretations of Putin's move have emerged. The first one is that Crimea annexation was a response to the threat of NATO's further expansion along Russia's western border. By this logic, Putin seized Crimea in order to prevent two dangerous possibilities: first, that Ukraine's new government might join NATO, and second, that Kiev might evict Russia's Black Sea Fleet from its long-standing base in Sevastopol (*Ibid.*). The second interpretation casts the annexation of the peninsula as a part of a Russian project to gradually recapture the former territories of the Soviet Union. The imperialist mindset of Vladimir Putin never allows him to accept the loss of Russian prestige that followed the end of the Cold War. Third, but not necessarily the last, this move was a strategic one, combined with geopolitical ambitions (*Ibid.*).

Annexation of Crimea was the first move in this crisis. Doing so, Russia almost solved the problem of its naval presence in the black Sea and of its military base in Sevastopol. This move was a net strategic gain. Yet, it was not sufficient. Crimea relies almost entirely on Ukrainian supplies for power and water. According to the Crimean energy ministry, the peninsula's own power generation capacity covers less than 20% of peak demand. In December 2014 Ukraine briefly switched off power to Crimea, so Russia considered, as a next step, annexing more Ukrainian territory (Hille and Olearchyk, 2015, *Financial Times*) in order to secure a land bridge between Russia and Crimea. Also, Crimea was separated from main Russian military capabilities, thus, the peninsula is difficult to defend. In consequence, the Russian long-term strategy for Ukraine had to take into account

that Crimea had serious vulnerabilities that must be solved. So, the security of the peninsula should be part of a new Russian strategy towards Ukraine. More than that, Russia perceived Crimea as its own territory, so it must be defended by all means (Velenciuc, 2015: 7-8).

The second Russian move in this crisis was the support for uprising in Eastern Ukraine. It started in April 15, 2014, when irregular armed groups seized a couple of cities in the Donetsk region. Soon, this uprising escalated in a full-scale war between separatist military forces and the Ukrainian army. The causes of the uprising could be considered the desire of Donetsk and Lugansk regions to become federal entities in Ukraine. Journalists reported that applications for Russian passports in Eastern Ukraine were being encouraged with food packages (Sabine Adler, 2014, quoted by Reisinger and Golts, 2014: 3), so this action increased the number of Russian citizens that have to be protected.

Russia denied its involvement in the fighting in Eastern Ukraine. In the beginning, one explanation was that Russian soldiers turned up in Eastern Ukraine by mistake. When a group of Russian paratroopers was arrested close to Mariupol, the Russian news stated "they patrolled the border and got lost" (Reisinger and Golts, 2014: 6). After the battle for Donetsk Airport on May 26, the official narrative changed. Reportedly Russian servicemen were now "volunteers" (Maria Turcenova, 2014, *Novayagazeta*, quoted by Reisinger and Golts, 2014: 7) following their convictions to fight for freedom. These volunteers were fighting in Ukraine, without their commander or unit's knoledge, "during their vacation" (Reisinger and Golts, 2014: 6). Soldiers also reported that they were taken to the Ukrainian border and offered the choice between fighting there, after signing an application for leave, or de facto deserting (Virnich, 2014, *ARD Weltspiegel*; Higgins and Gordon, 2014, *The New York Times*).

With Russia's true ambitions still unclear, the controversial concept of "Novorossiya" ("New Russia") emerged and the people's governor Pavel Gubarev proclaimed it on May 24, 2014. The People's Republic of Donetsk and Lugansk announced the independence of the new state Novorossiya, comprising Donetsk, Lugansk, Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporizhia, Odessa, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv and Khersim (Reisinger and Golts, 2014: 7).

The third important move in the Ukrainian crisis was the introduction of Russian army corps in the Ukraine. The Kremlin began in 2013 to set up a pool of rapid deployment forces, in order to be able to intervene in its neighborhood. These well-equipped, well-trained, modern forces consist of Airborne Forces (four divisions, five brigades), Marines (four brigades, eight separate regiments), GRU Intelligence Special Forces (GRU spetsnaz) brigades, three or four elite Ground Forces units, as well as air and naval support. The defense ministry planned that, in the coming years, all these units would be made up of professionals (Golts 2014, *Pro et Contra*). In August 2014 new Russian volunteers proved an efficiency that only an army could have and, in order to cover the real actions and objectives, the Russian Federation used another information technique, namely "the plausible negation" (Anghel, 2016: 72). The officials gave hallucinating explanations, such as the one of March 4, 2014, by the Russian president, in which he stated that the unidentified troops were not Russian, and the new uniforms they were wearing could be bought from any second hand store (Vladimir Putin quoted by Anghel, 2016: 72).

The conflict became less of an external sponsored insurgency in eastern Ukraine and more of a limited war between Ukraine and Russia. The costs are already too high. According to the Amnesty International Report 2015/2016, the conflict had claimed about 9,000 lives, and about 4 million people affected by this conflict. 1,1 million people had fled to neighboring countries, while a further 2,5 million were internally displaced (Amnesty International Annual Report, 2015/2016).

The Kremlin has been implementing a novel strategic approach in Ukraine since at least February 2014 that depends heavily on Russia's concept of "information warfare" (Snegovaya, 2014: 9). Russian information war is part of Moscow's method of conducting hybrid warfare, which consists of a deliberate disinformation campaign supported by actions of the intelligence organs designed to confuse the enemy and achieve strategic advantage at minimal cost. The nature of hybrid war operations makes it very difficult to detect or even determinate ex post facto when they begin, since confusing enemy and neutral observers is one of its core components. It has become clear, however, that Russia is actively using its information warfare techniques in support of a hybrid-warfare effort to achieve its current

objectives, namely the federalization of Ukraine or Kiev's concession of special legal status to the separatist-controlled regions of Eastern Ukraine (*Ibid*.).

Russia's information warfare approach is designed to work within the limitation of the 21st century strategic environment and within Russia's budget constraints. The novelty of this approach should not be overestimated, however, as it is fundamentally based on older, well-developed and documented Soviet techniques (*Ibid*.). The crisis in Ukraine turned into a hybrid war (or asymmetric conflict) not only and so much because of a combination of forms of warfare – the use of Russian army special forces or elite units, supported by volunteers and irregular groups formed by loyal elements of the local population and former law enforcement officers against Ukrainian volunteer battalions and the regular Ukrainian army. The dynamics of the conflict from the very beginning showed resource and status asymmetry of the conflicting parties: the West and Ukraine against Russia; the new central government of Ukraine against the authorities of Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics, both accusing each other of illegitimacy. Status and resource asymmetry is a common feature of all post-Soviet conflicts (Minasyan, 2016: 3).

Russia's Regional Strategic View

At the very beginning of his term, Vladimir Putin suggested Russia should reassure its role in a multipolar world, one where no single regime has sovereignty. Although there were clear signs of deepening the Eurasian trend in Russian foreign policy, Putin also tried to develop friendly ties with the West, especially with the United States. Soon he understood the relationship would not be smooth. The US – Russian Strategic Stability Cooperation Initiative of 2000 is one example. Moreover, NATO has wiped out politically and militarily most of Russia's natural potential allies. This can be exemplified by NATO's expansion into the former Warsaw Pact space. Since there are many factors outside Russia's control, Vladimir Putin believes external factors can influence internal ones, and result in Russia's crush. This explains why Russia is engaged in not letting Ukraine be closer to the West (Pabriks and Kudors, 2015: 41).

Russia has some net gains from the pro-Russian uprising in Donbas. First, two pro-Russian separatist republics were built: the Popular Republic of Donetsk and the Popular Republic of Lugansk. Historically, Russia succeeded to use its influence on separatist authorities of Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and even Nagorno-Karabakh, as leverage to control internal and foreign policies of former Soviet Union states. So, Russia successfully blocked all attempts of some former Soviet Union states to join NATO and EU because of unsolved territorial conflicts. The same scenario was accomplished in Ukraine.

Second, usually Russia plays key roles in negotiations between separatist and central powers in the post-soviet area. Also Russia is a member of 5+2 format negotiations on the Transnistrian conflict, is a part of the Minsk group on Nagorno-Karabakh, and it deployed its peacekeeping forces in Transnistria, South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In fact, Russian participation in negotiations is a guarantee of the non-resolution of these frozen conflicts, as the only formula agreed by Moscow to settle the conflict is federalization (Sergey Lavrov, 2014, quoted in *Russia Today*, 2014; by Kathy Lally, 2014, *The Washington Post*; in *The Voice of Russia*, 2014). The Republic of Moldova refused this kind of resolution in 2003, when Russia pushed the Kozak Memorandum[66]. The Kremlin pushed this kind of solution in the Ukraine but President Petro Poroshenko quickly rejected this proposal. However he promised an extended autonomy for Lugansk and Donetsk (Velenciuc, 2013: 11).

Third, the regional actors need to pay attention to what kind of separatism was the Russian Spring in Eastern Ukraine. Ideologically it has a pro-Russian, anti-Ukrainian and anti-Western appeal, and the creation of a region, even an independent state if possible, in order to ensure the security of the new-annexed Crimea and become a buffer zone between Russia and the West. Yet, the Novorossiya project failed (Velenciuc, 2015: 12), as well as Russians hopes to build a land corridor to Crimea and a friendly buffer zone. But Donetsk and Lugansk popular republics still matter for Russia, because they are additional leverages

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[66] A plan presented in mid-November 2003 by Russia, officially named *Russian Draft Memorandum on the Basic Principles of the State Structure of a United State in Moldova*, promoted by Russian politician Dmitry Kozak, close ally of President Vladimir Putin, was a detailed proposal for a united asymmetric federal Moldavian state. Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin rejected it; see full text in Regnum, 2005).

on Ukrainian internal and foreign policy. The economic factor is also important for this region. In terms of prosperity and the quality of life, pre-war Donbas was essentially on par with Kiev, significantly surpassing other Ukrainian and most Russian regions. The area around the city of Donetsk makes up only 5% of Ukraine's territory, and only 10% of the population lives here – but they produce 20% of the GDP and about a quarter of Ukraine's export volume (Seiffert, 2014, *DW)*.

The Eastern Ukraine is also very important for Moscow because twelve types of Russian intercontinental ballistic missiles, along with spare parts and maintenance, come from the city of Dnepropetrovsk. In the Donbas area, special steel is produced for the tanks of the Russian armed forces, and most combat helicopters fly with engines from Zaporizhia (Seiffert, 2014, *DW*; Ewald Böhlke, 2014, quoted by Seiffert in *DW*).

Fourth, the war in Eastern Ukraine caused additional pressures on the Ukrainian economy. According to the IMF, Ukrainian GDP decreased with 6.5% in 2014, fell 5.5% in 2015 and grew only 2% in 2016 (IMF Reports, 2014, 2015, 2016). Also, because of this war, Ukraine became more dependent on Russian energy imports, because all its coalmines were situated in the Donetsk region. President Poroshenko affirmed, for several publications, such as *International Business Times*, *The Moscow Times* or *Newsweek*, that every day of war Ukraine is spending 6-7 million dollars (Grusha, 2015, *Business. ua*), without mentioning on which means, but one can assume that it is on military costs, army maintenance, the usual costs of war. So the separatism in Donbas provides net gains for Russia: it will be the arbiter in all disputes between Kiev and the separatist regions, it will have leverages on Ukrainian internal and foreign policy and it will weaken the Ukrainian state that is facing already serious economic problems (Velenciuc, 2015: 12).

Russia succeeded to establish a couple of comfortable negotiation groups to deal with this crisis. Rising complaints against Russian use of force in the Ukraine, as well as three waves of sanctions against Russia, proved that Moscow strongly needs a diplomatic formula to solve this crisis. However, the success of all negotiations depends on partners and on format. The first group to deal with the crisis in Ukraine was the so-called Normandy Four, consisting of heads of state, government and Foreign Ministers – François Holland, Angela

Merkel, and Sergey Lavrov – of Russia, Ukraine, Germany and France. The group has been in existence since 2014 and has been the principal international mechanism for settlement of the Ukrainian crisis. It is the "Four" who made the key political decisions while the OSCE Contact Group that played the first violin in the political settlement process back in the summer of 2014 was repurposed into technical executive. The main decision – basically the only document hammered out by this group – is the so-called Minsk II Agreement, stressing the complex of measures for realization of the Minsk Agreements and containing the chief principle of political settlement of the Ukrainian conflict. It can be formulated as "peace in exchange for constitutional reform" (Suslov, 2015, *Valdai Discussion Club*). Excluding Poland and the United States from this group was a net gain for the Kremlin, because the latter would have supported a hard line position towards Russia, and by excluding Poland and the EU, Russia managed to isolate Ukraine.

The Minsk groups also were very comfortable for Russia, consisting of Ukraine, Donetsk and Lugansk separatist republics, OSCE and Russia. The Minsk Agreements were signed on September 5, 2014, at the peak of the armed conflict between Ukraine and the unrecognized rebel republics in its Donbas region, calling on the sides to stop the clashes. In this format, Russia played the role of the arbiter for disputes between Ukraine and the separatists, because it had leverages on both sides (Velenciuc, 2015: 15). This approach helped to solve some low-politics issues and to establish a solid base of dialogue between Kiev and separatist regions, but, without Russia, the OSCE cannot realize important steps to solve the conflict. But this agreement, known as Minsk I, soon broke down. Full-scale fighting had broken out again by January 2015. In February 2014, the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel and the French President, François Hollande, stepped in to revive the ceasefire, brokering a "Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements", known as Minsk II (s.n., 2014, *The Economist*).

Therefore, the Normandy 4 and Minsk formats are Russian net gains from this crisis, because Russia preserves the veto on the Ukrainian rapprochement with the EU, it discusses the Ukrainian problem directly with Germany and preserves its rights to be the arbiter in the conflict. Also, it allowed Vladimir Putin the possibility to negotiate the fate of Ukraine

directly with Chancellor Angela Merkel, because the Ukrainian EU path depends on Germany and thus, Kiev will be forced to accept the German formula on the crisis (Velenciuc, 2015: 13).

Conclusions: The EU's Choice – War, Shame, Neither or Both?

When debating Western response to Russian aggression and European security in general, what comes to mind, albeit unwillingly, are Winston Churchill's speeches and texts from 1938-1939 about the choice between shame and war (Churchill, 1938: 1117). The EU is not facing such a choice yet, but there is a context in which the political choices currently being made are degrading the principles and the integrity of European politics. For quite a long time, and for the reasons of political divide and military weakness, the EU "has favored humiliation over confrontation, paradoxically letting the dangers of confrontation come even nearer" (Pabriks and Kudors, 2015: 121). This was exemplified during the months of increasing Russian assertiveness towards Ukraine, when European and American leaders were quick to stress they could only see a diplomatic solution to the crisis, while Russia saw its solution in skillful diplomatic moves combined with military activity (*Ibid.*).

The crisis in the Ukraine can be seen as a culmination of a negative trend from the post-Cold War era. Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine were on Vladimir Putin's list, but the real target and prize of Russia's actions was Ukraine. In the late summer of 2015 Russia had started to apply economic sanctions in anticipation of the negative economic consequences that Kiev's "European Choice" would entail for Russia (Haukkala, 2015: p. 9). In addition, Russia also dangled enticing carrots in front of Ukraine. In exchange for deferring the signing of the Association Agreements indefinitely, Moscow offered the Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovych a significant discount in the price of natural gas as well as preferential loans and other trade concessions to the overall tune of $17 billion (Wierzbowska-Miazga and Sarna, 2013, quoted by Forsberg and Haukkala, 2016: 36).

The Russian response to the downfall of President Yanukovych was the "surprising" appearance of the so-called little green men – soldiers without any identifying insignia – on

the Crimean Peninsula taking full military control of the area in a matter of days. The loss of Crimea was quickly coupled with a series of "popular" uprisings in Eastern Ukraine that have resulted in still on-going destabilization of the country (Haukkala, 2015: 10). Although the direct role that Russia has played in Eastern Ukraine remains somewhat contested, it seems clear that such a role does indeed exist (Granholm, Malminen and Persson, 2014; Menkiszak, Sadowski and Zochowski, 2014, quoted by Haukkala, 2015: 10).

Putin's power play in Ukraine was impulsive and improvised, but recognizing the limitations of Russia's hybrid warfare is as important as recognizing its strengths. Its success depends heavily on certain conditions holding in the minds of the adversary. The hybrid strategy will always pose significant challenges to the West, and it must be much more alert to the indicators of Russian attempts at reflexive control (Snegovaya, 2015: 21). Hybrid warfare relies for success on taking advantage of the vulnerabilities of a stronger adversary. Russian information warfare, particularly the doctrine of reflexive control, is a critical component of Russia's hybrid warfare. It plays on the reluctance of the Western leaders and peoples to involve themselves in conflict by surrounding it with confusion and controversy. In the case of Ukraine, the West chooses inaction, and Russia's information operations have provided support to the policy of inaction. The Kremlin has been successful in this regard: the West has largely refrained from meaningful intervention despite Russia's multiple violation of international laws, its support for the first major conflict on the European continent since 1945, and the steady destruction of a Ukrainian state that had been seeking to join the European Union and NATO.

The European political elite must follow Machiavelli's advice to rulers and acquire a leadership mentality instead of adopting a wait-and-see attitude (Machiavelli, 1997: 84-87). It was not until the shooting down of Malaysian Airlines passenger flight MH-17, on July 17, 2014, however, that the EU was forced to take a tougher stand. At the end of July 2014, the EU agreed to impose tier three sanctions, a shift from a focus on sanctioning individuals (people responsible for misdeeds and/or close to Vladimir Putin) to sanctioning key sectors in the economy. This restricted Russia's access to capital markets in the EU, prohibiting the buying or selling of bonds and equity as well as services. Imports and exports of arms were

prohibited, and, addressing previous criticisms of the EU, sanctions have clearly managed to ruffle the export of dual use goods. The steady hardening of sanctions has clearly managed to ruffle some feathers in Moscow (Haukkala, 2015: 11). For example, during his visit to Finland in June 2014, the Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was very outspoken in his criticism of the EU, calling its position in the crisis "dishonest, vindictive and not constructive in dealing with Russia" (Rossi, 2014, *The Wall Street Journal*).

The extension of sanctions signaled to the Russian leadership the status regarding sanction would continue, meaning that the EU will not give up easily in front of this type of aggression. Combined with low oil prices, which is the real reason for Russian political nervousness, sanctions diminish Russian fiscal reserves and endanger its economic policies at home. It is also true that sanctions, low oil prices or diplomatic talks will not change Russian policies regarding its neighbors. Russia seems to be ready for confrontation, but the question remains for what period of time and for how serious a confrontation (Pabriks and Kudors, 2015: 120). This would be a situation that entails serious dangers for the EU and Russia as well as the countries residing in-between.

The conflict in Ukraine has brought the EU and Russia directly at loggerheads (Haukkala, 2015: 13). It also looks like a dramatic policy reversal on the part of Russia. The rhetorical flirtations with Russia's basic incompatibility with Western "repugnant liberalism" already evident before the crisis (Vladimir Putin, 2013, quoted by Haukkala, 2015: 13) have been followed with an all-rhetorical assault combined with determined steps to use the full spectrum of Russian power to counter the EU's influence in Ukraine. To a degree, the crisis in Ukraine is in fact a proxy conflict between the EU and Russia. It can be also seen as a parting of ways with Russia clearly putting its foot down and renouncing its willingness to find its place in a unipolar EU-centric Europe (Haukkala, 2015:13).

To summarize, what some are seeing as a surprise in recent Russian politics is, in fact, the outcome of the carefully tailored policies of the current Russian leadership, which claims to draw its legitimacy from a special path of Russian development. This leadership does not want to follow the modernization path of Atatürk or Meiji; rather its choice is associated with imperial revisionism at the expense of Russians citizens and neighbors (Pabriks and Kudors,

2015: 119), and sanctions policies or diplomatic efforts, even if giving certain relief, did not solve the problems caused by Russian aggression. The EU internal split on Russian policy is less obvious, but it exists, and Russian intervention in the Ukraine remains a fact with unforeseeable consequences also internally in the EU, itself being challenged domestically, by financial crises, the refugee crisis, the Brexit file, apathy regarding deeper internal integration, or by the rise of the populist right.

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