

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ARMED CONFRONTATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND UKRAINE

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The current paper highlights the possibilities of methodologically working with the concept of hybrid warfare within an international environment characterized by high marginal conflicts. In this context, the convergence of opponents, methods and means as well as the fusion of capabilities have appeared within hybrid wars. These wars defy and incorporate conventional, unconventional, military and non-military capabilities, as well as combined tactics and terrorism. Thus, the hybrid war aims at catching up with technical or doctrine asymmetry. Defining hybrid war cannot be a stand-alone operation. It requires a reconfiguration of the entire definition frame, primarily a reconfiguration of the sensitive boundaries between peace and war, as they were foreshadowed by the first representatives of political realism. The work brings to the fore not only the issue of reconsidering conflictuality, but also the challenge of a broader framework for defining the war itself, the coordinates being different from those that defined the classic war.

Key words: hybrid war, hybrid confrontation, terrorism, hostile action.

1. INTRODUCTION

In a confused world of dynamic changes in time and space, of tacit fight, sometimes with harsh accents on the globalization trend supported by rich and powerful nations and on maintaining national identity promoted by the small and medium states, the great powers are trying the experimental application of "chaos theory" globally, behind an "order in disorder" being actually driven by a fierce desire to maintain hegemony in their areas of influence and to expand them.

The international environment is characterized by: ethnic and religious disputes, serious economic deficiencies, persistence of the risks related to the tension generated by border disagreements, risks with serious implications on the biosphere and fragile peace in Europe. The conflictuality of the current international environment leads us to putting it under the conceptual umbrella of "ongoing war", defined by gl. Mihail Orzeata as

the result of permanent confrontation "between individuals, between communities (states, alliances, religious, ethnic, professional entities, etc.), between individuals and communities, etc. to impose their interests in many fields: power, influence, territories and resources (human, material and financial)"[1]. However, for a more rigorous approach, it is necessary to first generally define the term war as follows:

War [2] = Armed Conflict (long-term) between two or more states, nations, human groups to achieve economic and political interests;

Civil War = armed struggle waged in order to seize power and political supremacy in a state;

World War = armed combat involving, directly or indirectly, many countries of the world;

Cold War = the state of tensioned relations between some countries (notably the US and the USSR after 1950);

Psychological warfare = tension, emotional and mental harassment, initiated and maintained in order to undermine the morale of adverse troops and demoralize the population;

Total Warfare = armed combat in which the attacking state uses all destructive means not only against the armed forces but also against the entire population. State of war = belligerence.

New types of conflicts have shown an insufficient ability of armies structured according to the concepts of Clausewitz to be effective. The new face of war requires a rethinking of the structure of the armed forces and their continuous adaptation to the changing security environment in line with the new requirements of the battlefield.

If during World War I millions of soldiers stood face-to-face within fortifications for weeks or even months, now and, even more in the future, confrontation takes place in the front and last lines, on the flanks and in the airspace, with great expansion of the confrontation in terms of distance, depth, and altitude.

Profound changes in space and time are being made so as to extend the space of operation while reducing duration, which is facilitated by online information flow.

2. HYBRID WAR

Recent conflicts and wars have developed other principles, opponents no longer being separated by tens and hundreds of kilometers away from the line of contact.

Nowadays, there is a convergence of opponents, methods and means as well as a fusion of capabilities within hybrid wars. These wars do not comply with any categorization criterion, incorporating conventional, unconventional, military and non-military capabilities, combined tactics, terrorism and criminal disorder.

Currently, there are opinions that the war of the future will be nameless and involving a faceless enemy [3], or

that it will be "hybrid" (a combination of classical and unconventional warfare to create difficulties to the armies of powerful states that cannot be defeated through classical confrontation conducted according to the laws of war).

NATO defines "hybrid warfare" as the war with a wide range of hostile actions in which the military force is only a small part and which are executed together as part of a flexible strategy with long-term goals.

The most lucid description of this concept comes also from the Russians - in February 2013, Valery Gerasimov, Chief of Staff, published an article in the journal of Russian Defense VPK. War and peace, wrote Gherasimov, are becoming increasingly mixed. Methods of conflict have changed and now involve a large use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian and other non-military measures. All of these, he said, may be supplemented by stirring the local population and using disguised armed forces.

"We need to start thinking about security in a more sophisticated and in a more comprehensive manner", said Robin Niblett, director of Chatham House, referring to politics, citizenship, multinational corporations, energy markets and crime as the new strategic borders.

In a world of hyper-competition, of hybrid war or nonlinear conflict, "we must find new forms of deterrence", concluded Niblett.

It has been demonstrated throughout history that wars (regardless of their extent) are great consumers of resources, especially financial and human ones. The statistics of the Second World War mainly qualified it as, by far, the biggest war in history in terms of expense of people and material resources. In total, 61 countries with 1.7 billion people, three-quarters of the world population took part in it.

Since the hybrid war cannot be defined in time and space, risks should

be assessed. They may be: military: the arms race, NMA proliferation and nonmilitary: impoverishment of certain ethnic or religious communities, environmental degradation, massive illegal immigration, spread of extremist ideas, ineffective government.

Depending on their area of operation these risks may be: political and military, social, cultural, ethnic, demographic, military, etc.

Depending on their intensity, risks and threats may be short-term as well as medium or indefinite term.

In terms of the number of people affected, risks and threats are: small-scale (relatively small number of people); medium-scale (relatively high number of people); large scale (high number of people).

The mode of manifestation of risks depends on the area where they happen, the ethnicity, the religion of the ones generating them, level of education of the initiators.

Therefore, risks can be:

- violent: the use of conventional military action, with the use of unconventional military action or terrorist means and methods;

- nonviolent: non-military threats of political, economic, social and cultural nature.

The contemporary hybrid war is novelty that it involves simultaneous success on all "battlefields", which implies the presence of populations. It is carried in populated conflict areas populated with public participation, in front of the international community's eyes.

Hybrid War is "combinations of symmetric and asymmetric armed conflicts in which military intervention forces conduct traditional military operations against enemy forces and targets while simultaneously and decisively acting to get control of the indigenous population of the area of operations by stability operations"[4].

2.1. Hybrid warfare in Ukraine

The hybrid war in Ukraine has surprised the entire Europe as well as a military alliance still enjoying the peace that followed the Cold War. The difference between the West and Russia in the last 25 years has arisen due to the fact that the West was concerned with ensuring an important relationship with Moscow which has thus become a strategic ally (by building pipelines and developing a political and military relationship within the NATO Committee - the Russian Federation through which to discuss European security issues, a technology transfer towards Moscow began). First of all Russia created a network of support and influence in the West, including a network based on the former KGB and, beginning with media propaganda used under the patronage of the two entities, Russia Today and Sputnik, it funded think-tanks in the great capitals of the world where the future policies of globalization were being built, installed spies and influenced people in key areas of political life in the West as well as in Eastern and Central Europe, where countries were connected to the EU and NATO. After a period of decay (1990-1999), Russia tried restoring the former USSR or, if not, at least a Eurasian Union.

Under the pretext of supporting the Russian-speaking population in the area, Russia occupies resource-rich areas of Ukraine.

It is a much more sophisticated Third World War that is happening under the pressure of the nuclear triad held by the Russian Federation. Political technology includes dissemination of false information, assiduous cultivation of conspiracy theories, blackmail and destruction of adversaries through compromising materials published by the opposition, but also undercover actions such as creating false opposition parties, fictional independent NGOs or fake independent publications which,

under the apparent respectability, serve the interests of political masters. The concept is closely related to the manipulating the economy and markets and to strict control on intelligence, law enforcement and judiciary bodies, which can be put against real or designated opponents anytime. In the new war, Russian generals erased the boundary between conventional and unconventional warfare, offsetting endowment deficit with the latest technology available to the West.

The first contact with the new type of war is the taking over by the little green men of Crimea. Troops apparently non-military but armed to the teeth occupied Crimea in a few days, while the Kremlin was speaking about fascists who had occupied the legitimate government in Kiev and had forced President Viktor Yanukovych to go into exile in Moscow.

The new war jointly uses political, economic, informational, humanitarian means, generally non-military measures. These are supplemented by military measures covered by military pressure on the border (deployment of troops to carry out military exercises), including information conflict actions and actions of Special Forces. NATO has decided to develop a set of ambitious means to deter and defend against opponents who lead such wars. Hybrid War destabilizes the state and polarizes society, its center of gravity of the population.

2.2 Hybrid War in Middle East

The history of each state from its formation to maturity itself is a continuous process in which successive leaders of different political views and orientations in international politics take part, but beyond this, along the civilization and maturation process, countless civil or interstate conflicts occur for the delimitation of territories or areas of influence. In addition to these, manifestations of the people, revolutions

or coups d'état occur for various reasons: economic, political or social.

This is what happened to the states after the dismantling of great Colonial Empires like the British (the greatest in history, at a certain time measuring 44 million km²), the French, the German, the Spanish, the Italian, or the Portuguese, which occurred after World War II. It happened precisely to most African countries except a few such as Egypt, South Africa, and Southeast Asia countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Singapore and the Middle East and Israel (1947). The independence of the latter caused numerous conflicts between the Zionists and the Arab states, which has led to disastrous humanitarian effects, hundreds of thousands of refugees, thousands of dead, and the destruction of infrastructures.

This process was surpassed after a long series of wars, ethnic conflicts or even international crises to define territorial borders.

In the past 60 years, countless wars occurred in Middle East, some short-term (most of them), the longest being those between the USSR and Afghanistan for 9 years (1979-1988) and Iraq - Iran (1980-1988). But they all had the same effects: damage to the economies of those countries, mass refugees, millions of people killed, destruction of goods and infrastructure, industrial crimes and even a certain influence on the global economy, jeopardizing it through the rise of oil prices caused by the instability in the area and lack of transport safety.

The Middle East includes Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, UAE, Iran, Turkey, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Syria, Yemen and the Palestinian Territories West Bank and Gaza Strip. In addition to these, there is Cyprus although it considers itself part of Europe and Afghanistan located in the East of Middle East.

The causes of these conflicts can be divided into several categories: the desire for independence of some populations, operating the principle of self-determination stipulated in Article 1 of the UN Charter, the oil resources that great consumer states want to cover but face resistance from the owner state (Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran) and to which they attribute other reasons to be attacked and subjected to the "aggressor" state solution to yield to the wishes of big states. Some of these reasons include supporting terrorism, possession chemical or nuclear weapons of mass destruction, or the guilt of being responsible for terrorist attacks.

The situation in the Middle East is very complicated and highly dangerous, any possible Zionist-Iranian conflict having great implications at world level for the USA, China, Russia, EU, Venezuela and other large states. Global economy will have a lot to suffer due to a world conflict.

Terrorism remains a global issue because this phenomenon cannot be stopped no matter how much they would like this. Paul Robinson, former associate director for national security at Los Alamos National Laboratories, USA, drew the attention: *"The number of things that a terrorist can do is far more than we could imagine. We will always be in a position of assuming future rational action of an often irrational enemy"* [5].

3. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ARMED CONFRONTATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND UKRAINE

Among the **similarities** between armed confrontations in the Middle East and Ukraine, the following are noteworthy:

- armed confrontations occur between the regular army of the state and paramilitary pro-Russian, anti-Israel or anti-American groups;

- the parties involved in the conflict cannot be clearly identified and defined;

- the targets cannot be clearly identified and target prioritization cannot be achieved;

- these groups are supported with state-of-the-art weapons and military equipment by the major actors of the international political scene;

- the reasons for these confrontations are, on the one hand, the rich resources in the respective regions (coal - Ukraine, hydrocarbons - the Middle East - 75% of the world reserves), and on the other hand, the geostrategic position of the respective regions;

- an active involvement of the intelligence services of the interested countries before escalation of conflicts;

- threats will come from extremist groups and their ideology, which derive their strength from poor urban areas of the world where the youth are facing serious economic and social problems, advocating for change. These unconventional actors can operate beyond state control, evading borders, rules and international agreements [6]. Some of them belong to the global terrorist networks and cooperate with other criminal elements to destabilize certain areas. Hybrid dealing with these groups will become *"a struggle beyond the physical elements of the conflict, one in which the media manipulation, use of the Internet and the integration of information operations with strategic communication programs are as important as weapons systems on the battlefield"* [7].

As far as the **differences** are concerned, they are as follows:

- in the Middle East, most conflicts are due to the existence of Israel or the US presence in the area, the Arabic states forming coalitions against them (the Arab-Israeli war, the war of 6 days, Yom Kippur war, the war of attrition, the war in Iraq, the war in Afghanistan), while in Ukraine, Russia attempts a restoration of the former Soviet bloc;

- the formation of various terrorist groups in the Middle East: Fatah, Hamas, Hesbollah, Al-Oaida and the new SIIL, funded by the Arabic states with large sums of money. They recruit and train members (men, women, children) who they use in carrying out terrorist attacks all over the world;

- the Arabic states (Iraq, Iran) invest heavily in the development of nuclear weapons to counter Israel in the area, while Russia annexes Crimea where the Russian Black Sea fleet is stationed, thus facilitating a faster exit through the Mediterranean to the west.

4. CONCLUSION

The hybrid war consists of a mixture of conventional and unconventional as well as lethal and non-lethal capabilities which ensure one party a decisive advantage over its opponents. It is generated and led by merging threats and capabilities, thus preserving the convergence of opponents, methods and means in order to achieve the political goals of the parties.

Hybrid warfare will be the dominant form of future confrontations in the

XXI century through wider presence of hybrid threats that combine attributes of different forces, simultaneously operating as regular troops, guerrilla formations, terrorist or criminal elements, using weapons and tactics of all kinds and disregarding the laws of war.

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