САНКТ-ПЕТЕРБУРГСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ

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Выпускная квалификационная работа

The evolution of the hybrid threats for NATO: new challenges for the Alliance

Эволюция гибридных угроз для НАТО: новые вызовы для Североатлантического союза

Уровень образования: магистратура

Направление *41.03.05 - «Международные отношения»*

Основная образовательная программа *ВМ.5569 «Международные отношения (на английском языке)»*

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Санкт-Петербург

2022

Abstract

The work provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the hybrid threats for NATO, focusing on the new challenges that the Alliance is facing. The Master's thesis focuses on the evolutionary process of the hybrid threats and NATO's adaptation and transformation towards the hybrid phenomenon with new implemented strategies and policies of the Alliance. The continued tensions around the hybrid threats and how it become such an efficient tool of warfare is one of the central aspects first thoroughly described. It makes studying a topic especially significant. The thesis examines and analyzes the evolution of the hybrid threats for NATO from various prisms and angles starting from the theoretical framework and finishing with the factors in practice.

Keywords: hybrid threats, hybrid warfare, hybrid phenomenon, evolution, NATO, Alliance, transformation, adaptation, foreign policy, Washington treaty.

Аннотация

В работе представлен всесторонний анализ эволюции гибридных угроз для НАТО с акцентом на новые вызовы, с которыми сталкивается Североатлантический союз. Магистерская работа посвящена эволюционному процессу гибридных угроз, а также адаптации и трансформации НАТО к гибридному явлению с новыми реализуемыми стратегиями и политикой Североатлантического союза. Сохраняющаяся напряженность вокруг гибридных угроз и то, как они становятся таким эффективным инструментом ведения войны, является одним из центральных аспектов, подробно описанных впервые. Это делает изучение темы особенно значимым. В диссертации рассматривается и анализируется эволюция гибридных угроз для НАТО с разных точек зрения, начиная с теоретических рамок и заканчивая практическими факторами.

Ключевые слова: гибридные угрозы, гибридная война, гибридный феномен, эволюция, НАТО, Альянс, трансформация, адаптация, внешняя политика, Вашингтонский договор.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations……...3

INDTRODUCTION……5

CHAPTER I. THE EVOLUTION OF THE HYBRID WARFARE: ORIGINS, BOUNDARIES AND CONCEPTS……..11

1.1 Hybrid threats as a theoretical concept: the boundaries between conventional and irregular…12

The boundaries between conventional and irregular: operationalizing hybrid warfare……14

Conceptual Clarity……19

1.2 The hybrid warfare in the 21th century: an old concept with a new face……20

The space of activity of the hybrid threats in 21th century……..20

Conclusion of the chapter……25

CHAPTER II. HYBRID WARFARE IN ACTION: ANALYZING HYBRID IN PRACTICE...29

2.1 Russian military and experts about hybrid wars……29

2.2 Case study: the Transnistrian conflict and elements of the hybrid warfare……31

Conclusion of the case study……40

2.3 Case study: Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, evolution of the methods of hybrid warfare..43

Center of Gravity Analysis of the case……..45

Information warfare: use of propaganda ……..48

Conclusion of the case study……50

CHAPTER III. NATO'S ADAPTATION TO HYBRID THREATS: STEP BY STEP EVOLUTION TOWARDS NEW THREATS……...52

3.1 NATO's new strategic challenge……..53

Tracking the narrative "hybrid"……58

3.2 NATO's response: hybrid warfare against NATO's structures……63

The role of 'cyber-space' in hybrid threat scenarios: NATO's Response Mechanisms……66

Recommendations and Conclusion of the chapter……70

Conclusion……74

Literature……76

List of Abbreviations

CC-Critical Capabilities

CCOMC-The Comprehensive Crisis and Operations Management Centre

COG-Center of Gravity

CW-Compound War

Daesh-Islamic State

EU-European Union

Hybrid CoE-The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats

IED-Improvised Explosive Devices

IS- Islamic State

ISIL-Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

ISIS-Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

MENA-Middle East to North Africa

MISP-The Malware Information Sharing Platform

MN CD2-Smart Defense Multinational Cyber Defense Capabilities Development

NAC-The North Atlantic Council

NCIRC-NATO Computer Incident Response Capability

NRF-The NATO Response Force

OSCE-Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

SACEUR-Supreme Allied Commander Europe

SHAPE-Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe

UAV-Unmanned Armed Vehicles

UN-the United Nations

VJTF-Very High Readiness Joint Task Force

Introduction

The relevance of the study is determined by the significance of political and warfare methods modifications in the world in the early XXI century. Starting from the idea that the war begins long before military forces are used and that international actors examine a wide range of means to reach their goals, it can be stated that the hybrid threats are more and more present and that it becomes omnipresent in all current confrontations.

In the past two decades, hybrid threats had emerged as a priority security issue on international diplomatic agendas. At the heart of this thesis is a discussion about how the evolution of the hybrid threats and hybrid warfare shapes our understanding of warfare. The topic of how the growth of hybrid threats and hybrid warfare alter our concept of warfare is at the center of this thesis. The process of describing, studying, and, perhaps most crucially, structuring knowledge requires evolution. War is a line that separates peaceful competitiveness from the use of violence for political gain. Conventional and irregular wars, limited and total wars, industrial and pre-industrial wars, and so on are all classifications used in military and security studies. These categories, while necessary, constrain and shape our understanding by defining subject and concept limits, and hence limit our knowledge.

Not only states, as actors of International Relations, are trying to navigate in the domain which lacks rigid international rules, but also international organizations. This Master Thesis also aims to analyze NATO's adaptation and readiness to the new challenges that emerged because of the evolutionary processes of the hybrid phenomenon. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is currently up against a new, but a well-known adversary. It is not a new phenomenon to use hybrid warfare to combat hybrid threats. History is littered with examples of the weak employing a variety of hybrid methods to reach their desired end state and destroy the powerful[1]. However, NATO has a substantial and challenging issue in deterring and defeating future hybrid threats. Hybrid threats will continue to evolve and emerge in the future as more lethal and precise weaponry becomes more readily available to information age guerillas who are sponsored by global criminal activity.

[1] Davis J., The Hybrid Mindset and Operationalizing Innovation: Toward a Theory of Hybrid, Monograph, Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies, 2014.

The analysis and the track of the evolution of the hybrid threats and NATO's adaptation to this kind of threats of special interest in as much as the hybrid is declared as a domain of operations and a large-scale attack on a Member State could potentially invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.

Thus, the perception of the evolution of the hybrid threats, understanding the theoretical core of such methods of warfare, examining the process of evolution through the examples of conflicts where the use of hybrid methods was tracked and the NATO hybrid threats defense policy could potentially portray the reality of the threats and warfare that the world is facing now and will surely face in the future decade.

Practical significance of the study. Certain provisions of the study represent the basis for analytical forecasting of the further development of the hybrid threats and hybrid warfare and how all of that will challenge on of the strongest alliances of the international arena. Some of the results obtained in this work can be used in the educational process, in the development and reading of courses on international relations, world politics and regional studies, as well as predicting and analyzing the future outcome of these processes.

The scientific novelty of the research lies in the enlightenment and step by step analysis of the evolutionary processes of hybrid, especially relying on the prediction of the future path of the hybrid threats evolution and the challenges they create for the NATO, which in reality is rarely included in scholars works. For the first time there was an examination of the hybrid phenomenon by operationalizing hybrid threats and discussing it under a prism of Securitization theory and Deception strategy.

The research question guiding this thesis is the following, 'How can one understand evolution, adaptation and transformation of the hybrid phenomenon in general with regards to security, adaptation and defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization?'.

The object of the study is the evolution of the hybrid threats and hybrid warfare.

The subject of the study is the NATO adaptation and defense from hybrid threats in the era of increased great powers competition and globalization.

The aim of the work is to examine and track the evolution, arsenal and tools of hybrid threats and hybrid warfare with regards to the new challenges they introduce to NATO.

The objectives of the research are:

1. Trace the evolution of hybrid threats and challenges of hybrid warfare for NATO;
2. Use different analysis methods and International Relations theories in order to reveal nowadays interest towards hybrid threats, with a track of the evolution of narratives "hybrid threats" and "hybrid warfare" , and by the content analyze of NATO's official documents and declarations show the challenges that hybrid is bringing to the international arena and the impact the complexities within this domain have on the pre-existing world order;
3. Identify NATO Hybrid Defense Policy: determine NATO's adaptation and transformation processes in regard with the evolution of the hybrid threats;
4. Analyze and Enlighten the evolution of the hybrid threats in practice by using case studies; reveal new tools and methods which emerged during the evolution of the hybrid threats and are examined by the actors which rely on hybrid methods;

Literature and sources analysis. This thesis is based on the analyses of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are the official NATO documents from 2010 up to 2021 and NATO News Conferences, Summits, Declarations, Speeches and Keynote Speeches, as well as the works of scholars from Russia and foreign countries and "founder" users of the term "hybrid threats" and the analytical value these works represent. Secondary sources include the analytical studies, such as The European Center of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats and RAND Corporation articles and monographs, scientific articles, collections of scientific conferences as well as Russian and foreign media materials.

We begin the literature review by examining the origins, boundaries and concepts of the hybrid threats and hybrid warfare. Furthermore, discussing hybrid threats as a theoretical concept and operationalizing hybrid warfare would be impossible without the works of three hybrid scholars: Hoffman F. G.[2], McCuen J. J.[3] and Glenn W[4].

[2] Hoffman G. F., "Hybrid vs. compound war", Armed Forces Journal, Military Strategy, 2009, Global Defense Strategy,
http://indianstrategicknowledgeonline.com/web/4198658.pdf
Hoffman F. G., Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, Arlington, Virginia, 2007,
https://www.potomacinstitute.org/images/stories/publications/potomac_hybridwar_0108.pdf

[3] McCuen J. J.," Hybrid Wars", Military Review, 2008.
[4] Glenn R. W., "Thoughts on 'hybrid' conflict," Small Wars Journal, 2009.

As a logical continuation of this research, it was vital to analyze and focus attention on the works of Russian scholars as; Mescner E. E.[5], Konyshev V. N.[6], Nikolaichuk I. A. and many other influential works of other scholars.

Moreover, for more comprehensive case studies, which aim to show the hybrid phenomenon and its effect in practice at the point of contact with NATO, we relied on the works of Guillaume Lasconjarias and Jeffrey A. Larsen.

Finally, in order to precisely reveal NATO's policy, cooperation and adaptation towards countering hybrid, other than official NATO documents, we used the analytical report of Miranda Calha[7] and Michael Miklaucic[8]

The following groups of documents served as the study's source base:

1. Scholar works and publications which examine hybrid threats from the scientific perspective.

2. NATO official materials, primarily NATO Summit declarations, communiques, press releases by NATO officials were utilized to analyze and show the alliance's adoption and transformation towards hybrid threats;

3. Articles from the media were used in the research process to determine whether the phenomenon is "trendy" or has evolved into a significant threat.

Theoretical Foundations assist us in the path of understanding the topic. Except the fact that we revealed hybrid threats as a theoretical concept, we also relied on the theories of Deterrence theory and grey zone strategies, which can be described as a steady-state deterrence and assurance effort or sequence of actions that tries to fulfill one's security objectives without

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[5] Месснер Е. Э., Хочешь Мира, Победи Мятежевойну! Москва, Военный Университет, русский путь, 2005. 696 с. [Mescner E. E. Khochesh' mira, pobedi myatezhevoinu!], [If You Want Peace Win Mutinywar!] Moscow, Voennyi Universitet, Russkii put', 2005.

[6] Конышев В. Н., Сергунин А. А., Дискуссии О Войнах Будущего В Российском Эспертноаналитическом Сообществе: Мифы и Реальность, Проблемы Национальной Стратегии, 2013, № 4, сс. 100114. [Konyshev V. N., Sergunin A. A. Diskussii o voinakh budushchego v rossiiskom ekspertnoanaliticheskom soobshchestve: mify i real'nost' [Discussions about Future Wars within Russian Expert Community: Myths and Reality, Problems of National Strategy, no. 4, pp. 100114, 2013].

Николайчук И. А., О Сущности Пибридной Войны В Контексте Современной Военнополитической Ситуации. Проблемы национальной стратегии, 2016, № 3(36), сс. 85104. [Nikolaichuk I. A., O sushchnosti gibridnoi voiny v kontekste sovremennoi voennopoliticheskoi situatsii [About Essence of Hybrid War in the Context of Modern Military-political Environment]. Problemy natsional'noy strategii, no. 3(36), 2016.

[7] Calha M. J., "Hybrid Warfare: NATO's New Strategic Challenge?", General Report, Defence and Security Committee, 10 Oct. 2015

[8] Miklaucic M., "NATO Countering the Hybrid Threat," Sep. 23, 2011, http://www.act.nato.int/nato-countering-hybrid-threat

resorting to direct and large-scale use of force[9]. Furthermore, Dr. Frank Hoffman's works helped reshape and understand grey zone and hybrid challenges[10].

In general, hybrid threats are used to imply that there is a threat from all directions, all their tactics, even relatively peaceful ones, lying in the sphere of diplomacy, are transferred to the category of hybrid threats and hybrid warfare at the discursive level. This leads to the hybridization of conflict.

Methodology is one of the most crucial parts of the thesis. In addition to the general scientific methods of induction and deduction, the author used a number of special scientific methods, allowing a comprehensive analysis of the study subject. In particular, the historical retrospective method was used to study the "evolution" of the term "hybrid threats". Also, some specific elements of the work were examined by using case studies, center of gravity analysis methods (COG) and operationalization of hybrid warfare.

Analyzing a center of gravity (COG) provides a means of focusing efforts, both offensively and defensively, attempting to relate what is critical to what is vulnerable in some useful way, so it would be easy to identify and prioritize critical, targetable vulnerabilities. Joint COG model enables to understand critical capabilities, critical requirements and critical vulnerabilities of hybrid threats in some specific cases. While operationalization of hybrid warfare for revealing certain modes of warfare.

For understanding NATO's perception of the issue, examination and analysis of NATO summits decisions and consequences of that decisions played a significant role.

The chronological framework of the study is limited to 1990-2021. Hybrid threats became "mainstream" in wide scientific circles after the events of 2014, but the term was in use even in the 2000s. As we are analyzing the evolution of the hybrid threats, we are obligated to dig deep beyond the emergence of the term "hybrid" for more precise results. Doctor of Military Sciences Frank Hoffman, a retired lieutenant colonel of the US Armed Forces and a researcher at the US National Defense University, is thought to have coined the term "hybrid warfare" in

[9] Green M., Hicks K., Cooper Z., Schaus J., "Countering Coercion in maritime Asia: The Theory and Practice of Gray Zone Deterrence," Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2017.
[10] Hoffman F. G., "Examining Complex Forms of Conflict: Grey Zone and Hybrid Challenges," prism 7 No 4, Nov 2018, https://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/prism/prism7_4/181204_Hoffman_PDF.pdf?ver=2018-12-04-161237-307

2005. However, this viewpoint is incorrect, as this phrase was previously used, for example, in US Army Major William Nemeth's final master's thesis, "The Future War and Chechnya: An Example of a Hybrid War" written in 2002. This actively demonstrates that for the full perception of the topic there can't be a precise chronological limitation, even if the major part is centered between 1990-2021.

The structure of the thesis consists of an introduction, 3 chapters, including 7 paragraphs, a conclusion, a bibliography and appendices.

The author's hypothesis:

1. The use of the term "hybrid" in official NATO documents, in military doctrines of some states and in the works of the scholars increased dramatically after 2014, but the evolution of the phenomenon started long before 2014,
2. The geopolitical situation of 21st century lead to the evolution of the hybrid threats, especially from 2010-2015 is the reason for the increased interest and presence of the hybrid threats in the international arena nowadays.
3. The term "hybrid" is not new, and its origin has faded away with the flow of time. This concept appears again in the world's attention now that the nature of the war has changed completely and the mix of conventional actions with irregular, asymmetrical and unconventional has become a reality by creating new challenges for NATO states and others.

I. The Evolution of the Hybrid Warfare: Origins, Boundaries and Concepts

In the twentieth century the world has become accustomed to seeing things in black and white, in terms of peace or war, and the cold war has been officially recognized as a state of tension between the main political and military blocs. At that time, things began to get shades of gray, and the techniques specific to the hybrid war were reinvented. In the 21st century gray is the new dominant color in the international environment, and the hybrid confrontation is an expression of this change of perspective.

Starting from the idea that a war begins long before the military forces are used and that international actors use a wide range of means to reach their goals, we can say that the hybrid threat is more and more present and that it becomes omnipresent in all current confrontations, therefore as society is becoming more vulnerable in the era of globalization, technology and informatization. With the increase in the speed of information transmission, with the huge amount of information available at all times, all actors whether they are states, institutions or individuals have become increasingly vulnerable, and the promoters of the hybrid war are doing nothing but exploiting these vulnerabilities.

Hybrid warfare, a term that emerged in 2005, is a concept that attempts to reshape these traditional boundaries of conflict and focus upon actors or strategies that are effective because they straddle the lines between categorizations. For instance, one of many definitions of hybrid warfare describes a form of warfare that combines regular, irregular, and terrorist as well as criminal elements which can, through this hybridity, challenge a conventionally superior force. This concept[11] has become increasingly popular within Western military and security thought. This concept has grown in popularity among Western military and security thinkers. "The most likely security risks that Army personnel will meet are best characterized as hybrid threats," according to the US Army's capstone doctrine, a proposition echoed by Australian and British doctrine.[12]

[11] Mattis J. and Hoffman F., 'Future Warfare: The Rise of Hybrid Wars', Proceedings Magazine, vol. 132:11, 2005, pp. 1-5.
[12] British Army, 'Operations', The Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Swindon, 2010, p. 571.

Western political leaders also comment on the need to "counter hybrid threats"[13] and on the growing significance of hybrid warfare in the contemporary security environment.[14]

Hopefully, this research will contribute to the academic disclosure of how the concept of hybrid warfare is frequently too narrowly concentrated on a conflict's "kinetic" facets and had not been paid its tribute to such modern and enigmatic aspects as a the evolution and digital struggle for primacy in the minds of the population, self-interpretation of strategic arms race on the different levels of battlefields and superiority of national brinkmanship. In practice, hybrid warfare is being commenced by setting up vital strategic objectives and utilizing implies that breach another state's sovereignty, not as if it were wartime but moreover inside peace transactions. Discoveries lead to the point of results when a coercive disturbance is concurred to play down the chances of international military and juridical responses.

1.1 Hybrid threats as a theoretical concept: the boundaries between conventional and irregular

If one considers hybrid threats and hybrid warfare as a valid self-subsistent theoretical concept with the real intention to impact the way state/non-state actors fight in 21st-century conflicts have been left under the barrage of criticism that this concept blurry represents tactical level issues, and is not unique compared to other previously existing theories describing irregular and asymmetric warfare. Yet, none of those critiques predicted war that would be fought using plane attacks against NATO's city skyscrapers, improvised explosive devices, decade-long wars out of NATO territories, and permanent violence in cyberspace.

Critics of the hybrid war concept have also failed to predict that rogue state and non-state actors continue to pose a threat to NATO populations deep within North-Atlantic space by instilling fear in both virtual and real space by bombing subway trains, hacking public/private websites, and perpetuating the narrative that people in NATO states cannot feel safe and will be penetrated again, as happened in New York. As a result, beyond the "straw-man" argument, it is critical to consider expert opinions on the hybrid war, because improved theoretical knowledge of these concepts, not

[13] NATO Media Office, 'Joint declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization', NATO Website, 2021, viewed on the 13 Jan 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_156338.htm?selectedLocale=en

[14] ibid.

criticism, is the key for NATO to protect against hybrid threats and fight hybrid conflicts successfully.[15]

Hybrid war is at best simply a neologism for tactical innovation. Moreover, the theoretical problem is compounded when diving more deeply into the key texts. It is nebulous, whether hybrid war is supposed to refer to war, warfare, or a threat. For example, hybrid threats may be "competitors who will employ all forms of war and tactics, perhaps simultaneously," as well as "criminal activity."[16] This explanation is followed by the following: "Hybrid threats incorporate a full range of different modes of warfare." The same paragraph adds that "Hybrid Wars can be conducted by both states and a variety of non-state actors." [17] In a 2009 article we find the following: "It appears that Compound War is more frequent type, and that hybrid threats are simply a subcomponent of CW in which the degree of coordination or fusion occurs at lower stages." [18] This describes hybrid war as a subtype of compound war, which is simply an utterance of the reality that nations use a variety of military means to fight wars.

The hybrid conversation perhaps has been linked most heavily to the 2014 events between Russia and Ukraine, but the attention rapidly had spread to discussions of the Islamic State's war. In the case of the Islamic State, just as in every other example held up as hybrid, there is nothing new here. Just like its insurrectionist predecessors, the Islamist group took pages from the "Revolutionary Warfare" and protracted war playbooks of the Vietnamese Communists and China's Mao Zedong. [19] The Islamic State moved through three phases described by M. Zedong, from weak insurgency to conventional war, utilizing all political and military means—from

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[15] Kaspars G., NATO and Hybrid Conflict Unresolved Issues from the Past or Unresolvable Threats of the Present, 2012-09, Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School, p. 28, viewed on the 20 Jan 2022, https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/17369/12Sep_Galkins_Kaspars.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[16] Hoffman F. G., Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, Arlington, Virginia, 2007, p. 14, viewed on the 5 Feb 2022, https://www.potomacinstitute.org/images/stories/publications/potomac_hybridwar_0108.pdf
In a later piece Hoffman writes, "Hybrid wars are not new, but they are different. In this kind of warfare, forces become blurred into the same force or are applied in the same battle space. The combination of irregular and conventional force capabilities, either operationally or tactically integrated, is quite challenging, but historically it is not necessarily a unique phenomenon." See Frank G. Hoffman, "Hybrid War and Challenges," Joint Force Quarterly, no. 52 (1st Quarter 2009), p. 7.

[17] Ibid., p. 8.

[18] Hoffman F. G., "Hybrid vs. Compound War," Armed Forces Journal, 1 October 2009.

[19] Felter J., "Harmony and Disharmony: Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities," West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 14 February 2006, pp. 25–39, 49–55, 78–83.

terrorism and UAVs to recruiting former Baathists, in the manner of the Bolsheviks building the Red Army—and then wrapping it all in an effective information operations campaign, operating social media instead of just a printing press.[20]

The boundaries between conventional and irregular: operationalizing hybrid warfare

After we got the idea and theoretical back ground of what Hybrid is, we must analyze and capture the main pillars of Hybrid Threats and its main "weapon" Hybrid Warfare. We are going to operationalize Hybrid Warfare according Table 1. By using three hybrid warfare scholars perspectives, certain modes of warfare will be presented. This section will explain dimensions, and enlightening the modes and indicators of warfare. Only precisely defined signs can be utilized to detect hybrid warfare in practice, hence this step was important.

Table 1-Operationalizing hybrid warfare.

Author	**Definition**	**Dimensions**	**Modes**
F. G. Hoffman	"any adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs a fused mix of conventional weapons, irregular tactics, terrorism and criminal activities in the battle space to obtain their political objectives."[21]	1. Fusion 2. Simultaneity 3. Multi-modelity	1. Terrorist acts 2. Irregular Tactics 3. Conventional Capabilities 4. Criminal Activities

[20] Craig Whiteside, "New Masters of Revolutionary Warfare," Perspectives on Terrorism 10, no. 4 (2016), pp. 6–20.
[21] Hoffman G. F., "Hybrid vs. compound war", Armed Forces Journal, Military Strategy, Global Defense Strategy, 2009, pp. 34-39, http://indianstrategicknowledgeonline.com/web/4198658.pdf

J. J. McCuen	"battles are not only fought on the conventional battlegrounds, but as well as on the both physical and conceptual dimensions: the former a struggle against an armed enemy and the latter, a wide struggle for control and support of the combat zone's indigenous population, the support of the home fronts of the intervening nations, and the support of the international community."[22]	1. Simultaneity	1. Conflict Zones population 2. Home Front population 3. International Community
R. W. Glenn	"when an adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs some combination of political, military, economic, social, and information means,	1. Simultaneity 2. Multi-modality 3. Catastrophic 4. Fusion	1. Conventional Methods 2. Terrorism 3. Disruptive methods 4. Non-military 5. Political, social,

[22] McCuen J. J., Hybrid Wars. Military Review, 2008, pp. 107-113.

	and conventional, irregular, catastrophic, terrorism, and disruptive/criminal warfare methods. It may include a combination of state and nonstate actors."[23]		economic and information 6. Irregular methods

[24]

By talking about indicators, we must understand that, at the center of hybrid warfare is the categorical differentiation between regular and irregular warfare and the significance of actors who blend these forms of warfare, though, as will be discussed later, terrorism and criminal behavior also represents a popular component of hybrid warfare. Nevertheless, the most important feature of hybrid warfare is the coalescing of regular and irregular warfare. The distinction between regular and irregular conflict is blurrier than is often assumed. Some analysts, most notably Colin S. Gray, argue that the distinction itself is complex and problematic.[25] Sometimes, this is because thinkers often take an ambiguous and baffling approach to differentiating between conventional and irregular. For instance, Hoffman distinguishes between conventional and unconventional on the basis of broadly subjective characteristics. Broadly, in Hoffman's usage, 'conventional' refers to the realm of inter-state conflict, while 'irregular' refers to the actions of non-state actors.[26]

Speaking about Dr. Hoffman even more, it is vital to underline that he defines hybrid threat as any opponent who simultaneously and adaptively uses the alloyed combination of conventional

[23] Glenn R. W., "Thoughts on 'hybrid' conflict," Small Wars Journal, 2009, pp. 1-8.
[24] Multimodality can be defined as the extent to which an adversary can mix and apply different modes of warfare (Hoffman, 2009).

[25] Collin G. S., "Categorial Confusion? Strategic Implications of Recognizing Challenges Either as Irregular or Traditional', Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle, 2012, viewed on the May 20, https://publications.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/2171.pdf
[26] F. Hoffman, 'Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars', Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, 2007, p. 7.

weapons, irregular tactics, terrorism and criminal behavior in the battlespace for the achievement of the one's political goals. There is a number of questions, lifted by definition of Mr. Hoffman. Five various indicators of definition concern them:

a) A modality against structure: Whether our definition has to focus on modes of the fighting of the opponent or on its structure (a combination of the states, non-state actors, foreign fighters)?

b) Simultaneity: Whether force has to use at the same time four various modes of the conflict or show an opportunity to use all four during the campaign?

c) Fusion: Whether force has to combine various forces, regular and irregular, to the battleground or it has to mix various modes of the conflict? How much does coordination qualify and in what level of war?

d) Multimodality: Whether the actor has to mix all four ways or three of four enough to make the conflict hybrid?

e) Criminality: Is criminality a deliberate mode of conflict, or simply a source of income or support for gangs and terrorists?[27]

A good articulation of this difference is provided by Mao Zedong in his influential work "On Guerrilla Warfare". For Mao Zedong, irregular forces are a distinct phase of a 'revolutionary campaign', employed to lower the resolve of an adversary while enabling the growth of a political and economic organization. From the conception of M. Zedong, regular forces would be employed once these irregular forces have made difference in the political and economic balance such that the revolutionary force holds the wherewithal to 'seek decision' through the employment of conventional forces. The particular reason for this is the fact, that conventional forces "are alone capable of producing the decision."[28] The distinction therefore lies in the purpose of employment. Zedong's conceptualization is useful because it logically and effectively demonstrates that the core gap between irregular and regular is the ability to create or impose decision.

[27] Frank G. Hoffman, "Hybrid vs. compound war", Armed Forces Journal, Military Strategy, 2009, Global Defense Strategy, p.3.
http://indianstrategicknowledgeonline.com/web/4198658.pdf
[28] Zedong M., "On Guerrilla Warfare", Dover Books on History, Political and Social Science, Dover, 2005, p. 57.

Centering upon the characteristics of a conventional or irregular force, such as whether it is state based or hierarchical or possesses advanced arms, is absurdly confusing the 'how' of actor with the 'what.' These traits are associated with conventional force, because they support the creation of combat power needed to contest ground and overpowering the opposing military force. Lacking these traits usually implies a conventional weakness that drives the actor into the path of using irregular strategy.

Some authors suggest that the value of hybrid warfare rests in its potential to present opponents with several "dilemmas." Others think that hybrid warfare refers to a force's ability to embrace complexity and reshape and morph activities more quickly than other combatants. Frank Hoffman's work has even developed the notion of blending or convergence, writing that "…the evolving character of conflict is best characterized by convergence. This includes the convergence of the physical and psychological, the kinetic and non-kinetic, and combatants and noncombatants."[29]

The significance of hybrid warfare, in this view, is thus not about the acquisition of conventional capabilities by irregular actors, but rather relies in the extensive ability of actors to operate across the military and non-military spectrum and blur the traditional distinctions between forms of power into a comprehensive approach. It is this conception that came to dominate the idea of hybrid warfare and grew into what we personally understand as hybrid campaigns.

To sum up everything that has been stated so far, appendix 1[30] demonstrates modes of warfare and dimensions of the warfare. This modes of warfare and dimensions will be used for further research in examining whether certain actions can be labeled as hybrid warfare from the prism of the Alliance, against NATO or against its border states.

[29] Freedman F., 'Hybrid Warfare and Challenges', Joint Force Quarterly, vol. 52:1, 2009, pp. 34-39.
[30] See Appendix 1: Modes of warfare and dimensions of hybrid warfare

Conceptual clarity

It should be noted, that an essential characteristic of all elements of warfare is evolution and adaptability. Clausewitz, for instance, characterized war as a duel, with both sides dynamically attempting to overcome the other. While hybrid threats are keen to stress the existence of an apparently universal trait in organizations engaged in war, it offers little clarity about how a hybrid threat is more adaptable than other less 'hybrid' actors. For instance, a key trait is what hybrid threats entitles 'function tactics' in which: It determines the functions that need to be performed as part of an action to bring about its success. Then it allocates appropriate actors to each function and synchronizes the effort." Furthermore, the adaptation to new obstacles is what makes hybrid threats and its "arsenal" to evolve.

This is the process that almost all actors in conflicts engage in to achieve their goals. Identify a strategy for success then allocate means to achieving this goal. This doctrine claims, that hybrid threats will "disaggregate enemy combat power by destroying or neutralizing vulnerable single points of failure in enemy warfighting functions." Again, this is applying pragmatism to the strategy of hybrid threats, who seeks an effective way to overcome US force by aiming its resources at a critical point, usually called the principle of Centre of Gravity within military planning. Further, hybrid threats in nature have claims, that it will "hide and disperse its forces to avoid detection".[31] The essential problem of hybrid threats is that it fails to identify what makes it different from other forces. The hybrid threats exist across the spectrum of not just warfare, but also political and criminal means and employs these resources with pragmatic intent. This range and pragmatism means, that there is nothing discernibly unique about the hybrid threats which can be employed to focus the conceptual model, but the efforts of hybrid tactic users to implement new ideas and tools for achieving their goals made hybrid evolve and maybe at some point hybrid will have it's unique "bones" and "mind".

[31] US Army, 'TC 7-100: Hybrid Threat', p. 33.

1.2 The hybrid warfare in the 21th century: an old concept with a new face

The term “hybrid” is not new, and its origin has faded away by the flow of time. This concept appears again in the world's attention now that the nature of the war has changed completely and the mix of conventional actions with irregular, asymmetrical, and unconventional has become a reality, as mentioned above in the first chapter.

The space of activity of the hybrid threats in 21th century

Hybrid challenges are not limited to nonstate actors. States can shift their conventional units to irregular formations and adopt new tactics as Iraq’s fedayeen did in 2003. Evidence from open sources suggests that several powers in the Middle East are modifying their forces to exploit this more complex and diffused mode of conflict. We may find it increasingly perplexing to characterize states as essentially traditional forces, or nonstate actors as inherently irregular. Future challenges will present a more complex array of alternative structures and strategies as seen in the battle between Israel and Hizballah in 2006. The latter effectively fused militia forces with highly trained fighters and antitank guided missile teams into the battle. Hizballah clearly demonstrated the ability of nonstate actors to study and deconstruct the vulnerabilities of Western-style militaries and devise appropriate countermeasures.

The exploitation of modern information technology will also enhance the learning cycle of potential irregular enemies, improving their ability to transfer lessons learned and techniques from one theater to another. This accelerated learning cycle has already been seen in Iraq and Afghanistan, as insurgents appeared to acquire and effectively employ tactical techniques or adapt novel detonation devices found on the Internet or observed from a different source. These opponents will remain elusive, operate in an extremely distributed manner, and reflect a high degree of opportunistic learning.[32]

[32] Hoffman F. G., Hybrid Warfare and Challenges, Issue 52, 2009, p. 37-38, https://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/jfqhoffman.pdf

Although hybrid threats are described, defined and analyzed in different ways, some examples of hybrid threats can assist to better understanding such a threat:

1. Terrorism and terrorist groups such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, and Daesh (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) pose a threat to sovereign states. They work globally and use a variety of economic, military, and technological tools to achieve their political objectives.

2. Organized crime perpetrated by armed criminal gangs and drug cartels jeopardizes national security and has a negative influence on the economies of states. As a multinational Alliance, NATO is particularly concerned with transnational criminal organizations.

3. Scarcity of resources: countries' resource dependence is increasingly being used for political ends. The refusal of Russia to sign an oil-sharing agreement with Ukraine and other European nations has put more strain on bilateral and international relations.

4. Covert operations with the strategic use of Special Forces and information/cyber tools, which aim target state.

A hybrid threat uniquely focuses on organizational capability and generally attempts to gain an asymmetrical advantage over purely conventional opponents within a specific environment.

The Military Balance 2015 tries to give a more descriptive definition for hybrid warfare and explains it as "sophisticated campaigns that mix low-level conventional and special operations; offensive cyber and space actions; and psychological operations that use social, public and traditional media to influence popular acumen and international opinion.[33]

By taking into the consideration all mentioned in this chapter, we can see that the evolution of hybrid threats adjusted and boosted their tools, and nowadays we can divide hybrid war into three stages. First, identify a given situation in a victim-state, then through the crisis, stimulate the domestic conflict in a favored way. Second, devolve, destroy, and trough the dissolution of the country, convert it to a so-called "incompetent" state. Third, shift a political power for the one that is entirely controlled by the aggressor.

[33] International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance, Milton Park, Abington, Oxfordshire: Routledge for International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2015, viewed on the March 16, 2022, https://www.iiss.org/topics

Starting from the idea that a war begins long before the weapons are used and that international actors use a wide range of means to reach their goals, we can say that the hybrid threat is more and more present and that it becomes omnipresent in all current confrontations, all the more so as society is more vulnerable in the era of globalization, technology and informatization.

It is interesting to notice, that the hybrid threats, and as many field experts notice: hybrid conflicts came to the attention after the Russian actions in Crimean Peninsula and its perpetuation of the conflict in the East Ukraine. Field experts, military specialists and even public were surprised by the efficacy of these methods due to the shock effect and the complexity, or even impossibility of combating them.

Furthermore, the delimitation between peace and conflict has become increasingly difficult; hostile activities may occur long before a conflict is officially declared and long before the victim is aware of it.

All states, institutions, and individuals have grown increasingly vulnerable as the speed of information transmission and the amount of information available at all times has increased, and the supporters of the hybrid conflict are doing nothing but exploiting these weaknesses.[34]

In this context, in order to avoid direct confrontations between states, confrontations that may have enormous costs and unpredictable effects, there is a growing preference for using asymmetric and hybrid means to weaken the opponent, due to lower costs, huge potential, and the difficulty of identifying the real attacker, especially in the informational and cybernetic environment. In addition, the employment of hybrid warfare gives desperate governments or terrorist organizations a chance to win a fight, even when there is a significant asymmetry, transforming this sort of combat into the struggle of the twenty-first century.

Over two thousand years ago, the legendary Chinese general Sub Tzi emphasized the significance of utilizing hybrid tactics to win a victory over any opponent, claiming that the most efficient victory is to tame the enemy, lower his power without resorting to weaponry. In other words, any non-military means available to exploit the adversary's weaknesses must be employed, including economic, social, political, and diplomatic means, and we must do so without the adversary's

[34] Ionuț Alin CÎRDEI, Rolul securității energetice în asigurarea securității naționale și collective (The role of energy security in ensuring national and collective security), Editura Techno Media, 2015.

knowledge. Kneeling the opponent, influencing it, guiding its actions, or deciding whether to act or not act can all be done using hybrid war methods in a modern sense.

It's not about inventing new processes, actions, or a strategic thinking revolution; it's about using modern means to achieve goals by employing methods that exploit the ever-increasing vulnerabilities of any system, as well as interdependencies between systems and system elements, in a timely manner, from the perspective of time and space.

Several elements can be distinguished as a result of specialist analyses, which take into account the different levels of threat intensity and the intent of the actors involved, such as hybrid threat, hybrid conflict, and hybrid warfare. Hybrid conflict is defined as a situation in which the parties involved refrain from openly using the armed forces, instead using a combination of classical, irregular, and hybrid means, and hybrid warfare is defined as a situation in which the armed forces are used a combination of classical, irregular, and hybrid means.[35]

The hybrid war of the twenty-first century exploits internal weaknesses through non-military, political, informational, and economic means, as well as manipulation, intimidation, and misinformation, and it does not exclude, and is frequently accompanied by, the use or threat of

conventional military means , as was the case with recent Russian actions in Ukraine (2014 events). Many experts were sure that this wil most likely turn into a frozen conflict and will exclude Ukraine from the process strengthening the ties with NATO and the EU[36] but nowadays we see drastically different pictures. And if we agree on the point that all modern conflicts have the elements of hybrid warfare, we can clearly see how the expectations and outcomes can be unpredictable and change rapidly.

The new hybrid conflict is not limited to states; it can be waged by any state or non-state actor who disobeys or ignores international law.

The use of subversive techniques, according to experts of the hybrid conflict and threats field is the foundation of the hybrid war, which focuses on four main stages: demoralization and

[35] Pawlak P., Understanding Hybrid Threats, At a glance, June 2015, European Parliamentary Research Service, viewed on the 20 May 2022, available on http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank

[36] Ionut Alin Cirdei, The Hybrid Warfare in the 21ST century: An Old Concept With A New Face, published in 2017, p. 75.
https://drive.google.com/file/d/13SsX5TuuOmYoAM2ixnWcay-_lJkClg72/view?usp=sharing

successive or simultaneous destabilization of the target, creation of the conditions for the emergence of a crisis in the target society, and taking control of the target society using internal forces acting in concert with the attacker.[37]

Once again, we can say that it is about the reinvention of techniques and old strategies in line with the growth of technology and computerization, allowing the intense use of cybernetic space to conceal both the real face of threats and their perpetrators. Hybrid threats exist today, just as they did in the past, across the entire spectrum of confrontations, with the indication that they manifest themselves either as hybrid threats in the gray area or as open hybrid threats[38] with the first category being far more difficult to identify and counteract.

Because society is weak, both in the physical and especially in the cybernetic environment, we anticipate that the hybrid struggle will develop, gain new supporters, and new forms of manifestation will emerge in the future. Protective measures taken by states, organizations, and individuals may temporarily mitigate the effects of hybrid attacks, but they will almost surely lead attackers to develop new methods and tactics.

The fact that this form of combat can occur at any stage of a crisis, without the target being aware of being attacked, is crucial. In times of peace, hybrid aggression methods can be utilized under the appearance of regular activities such as funding of particular groups, parties, and individuals in order to promote interests, ideas, or prevent certain activities from taking place.

Supporting nongovernmental organizations that appear uninterested in promoting or restricting certain activities, supporting publications or television stations that focus on a specific direction, promoting messages with a specific target, supporting political parties or candidates for various positions in the state so that they can be used in the interests of certain actors, or launching campaigns to influence public opinion are all examples of the phenomenon mentioned above.

In times of crisis, hybrid weapons will become more aggressive and multiply, focusing on the most strategic points on the opponent's territory, without a clear initiator and without being easily

[37] Hybrid Warfare: A New Phenomenon in Europe's Security Environment, Updated and extended 2nd edition Published by Jagello 2000 for NATO Information Centre in Prague. Praha – Ostrava 2016.
[38] Chambers J., Countering gray-zone hybrid threats, An Analysis of Russia's New Generation Warfare and Implications for the US Army, Modern War Institute, October 18, 2016. p. 13-15.

countered, because the target's efforts will be focused on limiting the effects and identifying appropriate protection and control measures.

The hybrid war is even more important for some states, since the use of its specific methods cannot be considered as an aggression, and when a state discovers that the specific techniques against its institutions have been used, whether it is economic, financial, military or in the field of cyberspace, that state can only identify the starting point of the attack and, as far as possible, try to counter the actor, whether it is a group, state or a person, that carried out the attack by resorting to domestic or international legislative provisions.

To sum up everything that have been stated in this chapter, we can clearly understand that the logic of using a hybrid war tools may be found in the very core of the conflict, because the ultimate goal of all those involved in the conflict is to win, and for the most part, the end justifies the means. Furthermore, some experts feel that the opponent's purpose is to break the war dialectics and avoid being lured into a sort of conflict that he knows he will lose.

Conclusion of the chapter

Starting from the common understanding of hybrid phenomenon than, attempting to understand hybrid as theoretical framework we came to the operationalization processes and the nowadays version of the hybrid threats and hybrid warfare.

As an outcome we can underline the fact, that hybrid warfare plays out at all levels of war, from the tactical to the operational and up to the strategic. The evolution of hybrid threats boosted and transformed some features of modern hybrid warfare, which are:

1. The goal is to take control of people's minds. Control the minds of the political leadership and the general public primarily through propaganda, deception tactics, and terrorism.

2. Use unconventional methods to achieve your objectives. Non-military means such as psychological operations and propaganda play the most important roles in achieving the goals of war. Economic sanctions, as well as criminal and terrorist activity, might be considered as options for achieving aims.

3. Prioritization: Prioritizing non-military subversion instruments and secret warfare operations. Irregular forces use a variety of techniques to carry out military operations in secret against entire societies. Irregular forces attack and engage political structures, local governments, the economy, public morale, and the military forces.

4. Ties with belligerents: The attacker can less clearly integrate into the target's society if there is some degree of ethnic or linguistic links.

5. Below the radar: The goal of hybrid warfare is to keep war below the threshold where traditional defense institutions and organizations will not be able to respond.

6. Blurred lines: Lines among state and non-state actors, state-on-state wars, counterinsurgency conflicts or terrorism, and cyber-attacks are complex and fuzzy.

7. Simultaneous: In time and space, elements are applied concurrently and adaptively.

8. Active use of irregular warfare.

The logic of using a hybrid war tools may be found in the very core of the conflict, because the ultimate goal of all those involved in the conflict is to win, and for the most part, the end justifies the means. Furthermore, some experts feel that the opponent's purpose is to break the war dialectics and avoid being lured into a sort of conflict that he knows he will lose.

Hybrid warfare is built on two fundamental components. The color revolution is one, and unconventional warfare is the other. Psychological operations, information operations, and propaganda are used in color revolutions to spread a pre-planned message (typically anti-government) to large audiences[39].

To successfully manage hybrid risks, all stakeholders must work together closely, both internally and globally. It's about combining efforts to understand this phenomenon, developing mechanisms for detecting hybrid actions as early as possible, sharing real-time information between states and specialized agencies, developing active and passive cyber defense capabilities, and making

[39] Aurelian RAŢIU, Countering Hybrid Threats by Integrating Civilian-Military Capabilities, published at the 22-th International Scientific Conference „The Knowledge Based Organization", Sibiu, June, 2016,"Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy, 2016, pp. 109- 115.

operational effective tools to punish those who support, promote, or even directly use hybrid methods of aggression, whether they're people, organizations, or states[40].

The vulnerabilities of a society or state are targeted, networks are developed, media and other information outlets are positioned to influence targeted masses, local separatist movements are supported, politicians and other key establishment actors are bribed, dissatisfaction with the central authority is induced, local oligarchs and armed bands are contracted, anti-state interest movements, marches, and protests are planned and compelled, and anti-state interest movements, marches, and protests are planned and compelled.

In the chapter we have discussed, how European and the U.S. based researchers point that the term "Hybrid threats" become trending after the 2014 Ukrainian crisis, and that Russia is the main user of the hybrid tools. But, from the other hand, within geopolitics and the theoretical framework of hybrid warfare, Mackinder recognized Russia as the Heartland of the World Island. Cohen and Spykman discovered the flaws in the system. Pilsudski supplied means for dismantling it through destabilization, and Zbigniew Brzezinski combined all of these lessons into a geostrategic plan for the United States to preserve its supremacy. As a result, Korybko believes that the United States' objective is to destabilize the Russian and Chinese cores in order to maintain its worldwide hegemony[41].

Propaganda, domestic media, international media, social media, fake news, strategic leaks, funding of organizations, use of political parties, protests, oligarchs, religions, cyberwarfare and cyber tools, economic leverage, proxies or nonstate actors, unacknowledged war (silent warfare), lawfare, and paramilitary organizations, and asymmetric warfare are all examples of hybrid warfare tools (such as destabilizing a nation)[42]. In addition to irregular tactics including insurgency, revolt, proxies, terrorism, and criminal activities, it can use conventional capabilities such as political means, economic means, informational means, and social means.

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[40] Ionut Alin Cirdei, The Hybrid Warfare in the 21ST century: An Old Concept With A New Face, published in 2017, p. 77, https://drive.google.com/file/d/13SsX5TuuOmYoAM2ixnWcay-_lJkClg72/view?usp=sharing

[41] Korybko A., "Hybrid Wars: The Indirect Adaptive Approach to Regime Changes", Moscow, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, 2015, p. 18, https://orientalreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AK-Hybrid-Wars-updated.pdf

[42] Treverton G. F., Thvedt A., Chen A. R., Lee K., and McCue M., "Addressing Hybrid Threats", The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, 2018, p. 45-48.

Jumping to the challenges of the hybrid threats and how one can deal with it, one implies that the key is to create a detection system that is aware of both false positives and false negatives at the same time. Within and across countries, pragmatism, flexibility, and inclusivity of actors, sectors, and levels are required[43]. The hybrid measure will not always appear where you want it to appear. The opponent's attack pattern will change if countermeasures are successful. All players must be involved, and both short- and long-term viewpoints must be considered. The reaction cannot be divided; hybrid warfare is targeting long-term vulnerabilities, and resilient societies will boost the effectiveness of responses and countermeasures. The concept of constructing a total- or comprehensive defense is, at least in theory, a solid model for success.[44]

More precisely, it is vital that key international organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union work together with different states both within and outside international organizations. Moreover, including dedicated organizations like the Hybrid CoE and the different NATO centres of excellence. In addition, though also part of NATO and many of the dedicated centers, the US is a key actor that is of foremost importance to the protection of Western democracies against hybrid threats and hybrid warfare. Furthermore, despite being a member of NATO and many of the dedicated centers, the United States is a significant player in the safeguarding of Western democracies against hybrid threats and hybrid warfare. NATO's contact and interactions with the hybrid phenomenon will be discussed in the next two chapters.

[43] See appendix 2 for Hybrid threats models.
[44] Weissmann M., Thunholm P., Nilsson N., "Hybrid Warfare: Security and Asymmetric Conflict in International Relations", January 2021, p. 270-272, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OQWV7DLiG92nBZu2NLmTrxpA55gPEKo9/view?usp=sharing

II. HYBRID WARFARE IN ACTION: ANALYZING HYBRID IN PRACTICE

2.1 Russian military and experts about hybrid wars

In recent years, Russian military doctrine has not expressly developed the notion of hybrid warfare, and the phrase itself only became popular in the West in the last three or four years. However, nonviolent power transitions and the widespread employment of non-military confrontation measures have a long history in Russian military doctrine.

"In prior conflicts, the conquering of territory was deemed vital," according to E. E. Messner's ideological heritage. The most essential thing from now on will be the capture of souls in difficult environments. The front line between the enemies in the previous war was hazy, with partisans in the back of one side or the other erasing it. They will battle in future conflicts not on the line, but on the entire surface of both opponents' territories, since political, social, and economic fronts will emerge behind the armaments front; they will fight in four-dimensional space, where the psychology of fighting peoples is the fourth dimension.[45]" These ideas were then developed in discussions about the nature of modern warfare[46].

In modern history, the military has debated a number of theoretical and practical issues related to changes in the nature of modern warfare, including the lessons learned from a long struggle against bandit formations in the North Caucasus, the war with Georgia (2008), a series of "color revolutions" in North Africa, Ukraine (2014), and the Syrian campaign (2011–2018). In contrast to the United States, where experts are primarily concerned with the hazards to the US military when the enemy employs hybrid methods, the Russian military places a premium on the link

[45] Месснер Е. Э., Хочешь Мира, Победи Мятежевойну! Москва, Военный Университет, русский путь, 2005. 696 с. [Mescner E. E. Khochesh' mira, pobedi myatezhevoinu!], [If You Want Peace Win Mutinywar!] Moscow, Voennyi Universitet, Russkii put', 2005. P. 696.

[46] Конышев В. Н., Сергунин А. А., Дискуссии О Войнах Будущего В Российском Эспертноаналитическом Сообществе: Мифы и Реальность, Проблемы Национальной Стратегии, 2013, № 4, сс. 100114. [Konyshev V. N., Sergunin A. A. Diskussii o voinakh budushchego v rossiiskom ekspertnoanaliticheskom soobshchestve: mify i real'nost' [Discussions about Future Wars within Russian Expert Community: Myths and Reality, Problems of National Strategy] 2013, no. 4, 2013.

between "color revolutions" and politics. The principal means of attaining the political goals of a hybrid conflict are "color revolutions.[47]"

The Russian military is focused on circumstances in which relatively stable regimes unexpectedly became embroiled in armed war, governmental institutions were quickly destroyed, and society was thrown into turmoil. The informational impact is regarded the most essential component of a hybrid war, which is indirectly corroborated by quantitative estimations of their joint prevalence in texts[48].

Hybrid influence allows a desired political grouping to rise to power without resorting to force or conquest of territory, instead relying on deception. The distinction between peace and war has blurred, and non-military confrontation approaches have grown in importance. The general staff estimates that the military-to-non-military warfare ratio is 1:4[49]. In 2013, Chief of the General Staff V. Gerasimov stated that understanding the military's role in changing wars, in which both classic and non-traditional means of confrontation have evolved, is critical. The emergence of non-standard types of confrontation, such as asymmetric actions, received insufficient attention in Russian military research. V. Gerasimov created new aspects of war without utilizing the phrase "hybrid war" in his article "The Value of Science in Foresight." "The emphasis of the confrontation methods deployed is shifting," he adds, "to the broad employment of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other non-military means implemented employing the protest potential population." Covert military measures, such as the adoption of information warfare measures and the actions of special operations troops, are complemented by all of this. only at some points are moved to the open use of force, frequently under the cover of peacekeeping and crisis management..."[50].

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[47] Конышев В., Парфенов Р., "Гибридные Войны: Между Мифом и Реальностью", Мировая Экономика и Международные Отношения, 2019, том 63, No 12, с. 56-66. [Konyshev V., Parfenov R., "Hybrid Wars: Between Myth and Reality", World Economy and International Relations], Tome 63, No 12, 2019 pp. 55-66, file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/HYBRID_WARS_BETWEEN_MYTH_AND_REALITY.pdf

[48] Николайчук И. А., О Сущности Пибридной Войны В Контексте Современной Военнополитической Ситуации. Проблемы национальной стратегии, 2016, № 3(36), сс. 85104. [Nikolaichuk I. A., O sushchnosti gibridnoi voiny v kontekste sovremennoi voennopoliticheskoi situatsii [About Essence of Hybrid War in the Context of Modern Military-political Environment]. Problemy natsional'noy strategii, 2016, no. 3(36), p 98.

[49] Бартош А. А., "Трение" и "Износ" Гибридной Войны. Военная мысль, 2018, № 1, сс. 513. [Bartosh A. A. "Trenie" i "iznos" gibridnoi voiny],["Friction" and "Wear" of the Hybrid War]. Voennaya mysl', no. 1, 2018, p. 6.

[50] Герасимов В. В., "Ценность науки в предвидении," Военно-промышленный курьер, 26.02.2013. [Gerasimov V. V. Tsennost' nauki v predvidenii [The Worth of Science Consists in Prediction]. Voenno-promyshlennyi kur'er, 26.02.2013], viewed on the 20 May 2022, https://www.vpknews.ru/articles/14632

In hybrid actions, the emphasis is on rapid internal destabilization of the state by undermining its military and economic potential, large-scale information and psychological operations with broad population coverage, supporting internal opposition and extremist organizations of various kinds, and using insurgent, sabotage, and terrorist warfare methods.

2.2 Case study: the Transnistrian conflict and elements of the hybrid warfare

Until recently, little was known about the Transnistrian War, which has been weakening the Republic of Moldova's territorial integrity and sovereignty since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Transnistria has been viewed as one of the "frozen conflict zones" in the post-Soviet area, with Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh, while NATO and the European Union increase their membership to the east. However, because no breakouts of large-scale hostilities or human casualties have been reported in the region during the 1990s, the Transnistrian issue has not been seen as a severe danger to Euro-Atlantic security. The 1992 ceasefire has been observed for more than two decades, with the exception of a few minor events in the demilitarized zone. This confirms that the Transnistrian problem is the only genuine "frozen war" among the post-Soviet territorial disputes of the 1990s[51].

Because it was the shortest and least violent of the separatist conflicts in the post-Soviet era, the Euro-Atlantic community had hoped for a peaceful resolution of the Transnistrian dispute. Nonetheless, the Russian-Georgian war and the Ukrainian crisis have drastically altered Western perceptions of post-Soviet separatist conflicts, including the Transnistrian conflict: the August 2008 war in Georgia revealed a dangerous thaw in the "frozen conflicts," while the 2014 Ukrainian crisis revealed that a new period of tension threatens to engulf other areas in the post-Soviet space. These developments have provided considerable reason for the Euro-Atlantic community to view the Transnistrian question as a source of severe concern. NATO officials highlighted their concerns about the security dangers in the breakaway area of Transnistria following Russia's unlawful annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of military hostilities in Eastern Ukraine[52].

[51] For the map see appendix 3.
[52] General P. Breedlove, "Concern about Transnistria-NATO Commander: We are concerned about risk of Russian intervention," Teleradio Moldova, March 23, 2015, viewed on the 15 April 2022,

As one of the conflicts, which had erupted in the end of last century, and which is echoing and revealing itself from the new angle after the Ukrainian crisis, it was vital for the research to include this case study.

Following crisis in Ukraine and the commencement of military hostilities in Eastern Ukraine, NATO officials expressed their concern about security threats in the breakaway region of Transnistria. As already discussed, many scholars view the term "hybrid" because it became mainstream after the 2014 events, but maybe the transformation of the methods of warfare had started evaluating from the very beginning of our century. From my perception, this chapter actively demonstrates that the trigger point of evolution of the hybrid methods, and the idea that "old concept is mainstreaming armed with new tools" has been going on long before the 2014 Ukraine Crisis, and got new breath in the start of the 21st century.

The Transnistrian conflict, which is located on the European Union's and NATO's eastern borders, near the Ukrainian seaport of Odessa, resembles a ticking time bomb whose explosion could have major consequences for NATO's Eastern Alank's stability. At the same time, there are grave concerns that the present crisis in Ukraine would lead to a situation similar to Transnistria, given the striking similarities between the Moldovan and Ukrainian scenarios[53].

First of all, it is necessary to answer the question: Can the Transnistrian conflict be classified as a "hybrid war"? There are several definitions characterizing this type of conflicts, which were mentioned before. One example is a "classical" definition by F. Hoffman: "Hybrid wars can be conducted by both states and a variety of non-state actors. 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. These multi-modal 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"[54].

http://www.trm.md/en/politic/ingrijorare-privind-transnistria-comandant-nato-suntem-preocupati-de-riscul-unei-interventii-ruse

[53] Guillaume Lasconjarias and Jeffrey A. Larsen, "NATO's Response to the Hybrid Threats", Inessa Baban, The Transnistrian Conflict in the Context of Ukrainian Crisis, DeBooks Italia, 00195 Rome, Italy, 2015, pp. 201-203.

[54] F. Hoffman, Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies: Arlington, p. 14.

Huge number of researchers from the alliance countries imply, that Russia's engagement in the Transnistrian crisis is motivated by geostrategic calculations aimed at stopping Moldova's "Europeanization," if not "Euro-Atlantization," keeping its influence on the former Soviet space's Western flank, and preventing any further EU and NATO Eastern enlargements.

The language issue was the formal reason for confrontation (adoption of the Law of the Republic of Moldova "On the functioning of languages on the territory of the Moldavian SSR" [September 1989], according to which the Moldovan language received the status of a state language and was transliterated into Latin).

Transnistria, the land beyond the Nistru River, is a strip of land located in the Eastern part of the Republic of Moldova which borders Ukraine for 405 km. The territory of Transnistria covers an area of 4,163 square km. According to the Moldovan constitution, Transnistria is part of the territory of the Republic of Moldova. The reality is, however, that Moldovan authorities have no control over the region which has been functioning as a de facto state since the early 1990s. The loss of control over this region occurred in the context of the collapse of the Soviet Union when a complex conflict emerged between the left and right banks of the Nistru River. Although the conflict in Transnistria had some ethnic and linguistic origins, it was not essentially rooted in these cleavages. Transnistria used to be home to a mixed Latin and Slavic population mostly committed to Orthodox Christianity. In 1989, the population of Transnistria was comprised of three major ethnic groups including 39.3% Moldovans, 28.3% Ukrainians and 25.5% Russians. At the same time, the overall ethnic composition of Moldova consisted of 64.5% Moldovans, 13.8% Ukrainians, 13% Russians, 3.5% Gagauz and 5.1% others[55].

The formation of two poles of the social confrontation: the Popular Front of Moldova against the International Movement.

The conflict arose from a fundamental dispute between local authorities in Transnistria and the central government in Chisinau about the Republic of Moldova's post-Soviet destiny. Transnistria's Russian-speaking and Russified elites opposed Chisinau's efforts to restore Romanian identity and collaboration, if not reunion with Romania. The Western bank of the Nistru River, unlike the

[55] Hill H. W., The Moldova-Transdniestria Dilemma: Local Politics and Conflict Resolution, 24 Jan, 2018, viewed on the 2 May 2022,
https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/75329

Transnistrian region, has significant historical, political, and cultural ties to Romania. Prior to its Sovietization in 1940, this territory, also known as Bessarabia, was a part of Greater Romania.

Moldovan elites in Chisinau sought to reestablish Moldovans' Romanian identity on the brink of the Soviet collapse by establishing Romanian as the official state language and replacing the Cyrillic script with the Latin alphabet. These steps attempted to put an end to Moscow's Russification strategy, which consisted of expanding the Russian language over Moldova's territory and replacing the Latin alphabet with the Cyrillic character during the Soviet period.

Local elites in Transnistria were hostile to Chisinau's initiatives because they wanted to keep their ties to Moscow in order to maintain their hegemony in Moldovan politics. Transnistria had become more urbanized, industrialized, and "russified" than the rest of the country during the Soviet period, and a local Russian-speaking and Russified elite quickly controlled governmental and communist party structures. Despite the fact that Russian was designated as a "language of interethnic communication," they had the support of the local Slavic minority, who feared losing their language and cultural privileges in a totally Moldovan/Romanian nationalist state[56]. The fundamental concern was the loss of Russian ethnics' high professional and social prestige during the Soviet era, when Russian dominated all social spheres and served as the common administrative and judicial language. The region's separation from the Republic of Moldova and proclamation of independence in 1990 resulted from a convergence of interests between the region's Russian-speaking populace and local elites.

The control over the Trnasnistrian region was lost by the authorities in 1992, when political disputes between two sides of the Nistru River flowed into a military conflict. These events lead to the 1992 civil war between Moldovan central forces and Transnistrian separatist forces: dramatically in the day of formal recognition of the Republic of Moldova as an independent state at the UN. With the assistance of the former 14th Soviet Army stationed in Moldova, the Transnistrian took the victory on the battlefield. In Moscow, on 21st July of 1992 two sides reached a ceasefire[57].

[56] NATO Parliamentary Assembly, "Visit to Moldova by the Sub-Committee on Democratic Governance," March 2004.
[57] Oleynikov Sergei Viktorovich, “The Political Elite of Transnistria: On a Question of the Prerequisites of Emergence of the Republic”, 2015,

If we analyze Ukrainian sources: Transnistria was supported by Moscow, which was, at that time, the centre of the Soviet Union, seeking to retain Moldova in the USSR with the help of separatist enclaves, though the position of the Communist Party Central Committee was not consistent in this matter. In 1990-1991, the leaders of Transnistrian separatists, I. Smirnov and G. Marakutsa, as well as the leadership of Gagauzia had numerous informal meetings in Moscow with the Head of the Supreme Council of the USSR, A. Lukyanov, who fully supported and contributed to declaring and establishing new state entities on the Moldovan territory. Despite the fact that Moldova boycotted the referendum on the preservation of the USSR (17 March 1991), it was held in Transnistria and Gagauzia. Among 84% of the Transnistrian population, 98% voted for the preservation of the Soviet Union[58].

Chisinau's postwar offers providing Transnistria a special status within Moldova and the ability to separate if Moldova changed its statehood were rejected by Transnistria's separatist authority (i.e. if it united with Romania). Instead, Transnistria was able to get all of the necessary elements of statehood, including a constitution, presidential, legislative, executive, and judicial branches, military and security forces, a postal system, and currency. Since then, Tiraspol (the capital of the self-proclaimed Transnistrian republic) has attempted to construct a "Transnistrian country" on the left bank of the Nistru River using numerous Soviet-era instruments and symbols to create the perception of a different identity. In the self-proclaimed Transnistrian republic, Russian, Ukrainian, and Moldovan have been declared official languages. In actuality, Russian was retained as the primary language of government service, with the Moldovan/Romanian language using the Cyrillic script, as opposed to Moldova itself, which has reverted to the Latin script. Despite these characteristics of statehood, the self-proclaimed Transnistrian republic is not recognized by the international world. It is not recognized by any member state of the United Nations. As a result, Transnistria lacks international recognition, which is a necessary condition for statehood. Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh, are the only entities that have acknowledged

https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/politicheskaya-elita-pridnestrovya-k-voprosu-o-predposylkah-vozniknoveniya-respubliki/viewer

[58] Fylypenko A., "THE “FIRST HYBRID”: THE TRANSNISTRIAN CONFLICT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINIAN CONFLICT", UA: Ukraine Analytica · 3 (9), 2017.

Transnistria's independence. These are, however, political entities that have little or no international recognition[59].

Russia acts as a defense barrier against the Tiraspol dictatorship, defending Transnistrian statehood politically and diplomatically. As a key member of the "5+2" negotiating format (which also includes the Republic of Moldova, Transnistria, Ukraine, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United States, and the European Union as observers), Russia wants to make sure Tiraspol's interests are well represented in the conflict talks. Moscow also intervenes when the Moldovan or Ukrainian governments take actions that appear to be adverse to the interests of Transnistrian statehood, thereby jeopardizing its tenuous survival. Russian officials frequently criticize Moldovan and Ukrainian actions aimed at tightening controls at "the frontiers" with Transnistria, dubbed the "European black hole."[60] While China and Ukraine perceive these steps as vital to combat arms smuggling and other forms of trafficking in the region, Russia sees them as a "blockade" against Transnistria and an attempt to alter the structure of the peace process.

Russia also provides assistance to Transnistria through its substantial military presence in the territory, which includes the Russian Operational Group and Russian peacekeepers. The Russian Operational Group was founded to replace the defunct 14th Army, which was stationed in Moldova during the Soviet era. Russian peacekeepers are part of a tripartite peacekeeping force overseeing the implementation of the 1992 ceasefire agreement between Russia, Moldova, and Transnistria.

It is stationed in the demilitarized zone along the Nistru River, under the command of the Joint Control Commission (JCC). In Transnistria, Russia's troops are tasked with two separate, but overlapping missions: peacekeeping and guarding enormous armament stockpiles left over from the Soviet era. About 45,951 tons of ammunition were stockpiled in Transnistria when the Republic of Moldova declared independence in 1991, making it one of Europe's largest armament storage locations.[61]

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[59] Бабилунга Н., “Приднестровье: Шаги Истории” [Balugina N., Transnistria, Steps of History, Tiraspole, 2015], Тирасполь 2015,
https://mfa-pmr.org/sites/default/files/publish/pdf/shagiist.pdf

[60] European Parliament, "Ad hoc delegation to Moldova," June 5-6, 2002,
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/473/473437/473437fr.pdf

[61] Ceslav Ciobanu Ceslav, "Frozen and forgotten states: Genesis, Political Economy and Prospects for Solution," Virginia State University, U.S. Institute of Peace, 2008.

According to current official data, Russia's military presence in Transnistria consists of approximately 1,500 troops from the Operational Group of Russian Forces, who are supplemented by over 400 Russian peacekeeping forces." However, Moldovan sources suggest that the force is far larger, and that if combined with the Transnistrian military and security forces, it could easily exceed 10,000-12,000 units.[62] But some other sources state that Operational Group of Russian Forces in Transnistria combined with Armed Forces of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic approximately has 20,000-25,000 personnel.[63]

From the angle of geography and, more importantly, geopolitics, Russia is unwilling to accept Transnistria's independence. Transnistria would have followed Georgia's breakaway provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia if it shared a border with Russia. In contrast to these territories, Russia is unable to enter Transnistria without first passing through. Chisinau, the capital of an autonomous state that does not align with Russia's objectives, controls Ukrainian land or the western bank of the Nistru River. While Russia's short and medium-term intentions in the conflict are to maintain the status quo, Moscow's long-term and ultimate goal is to reintegrate Transnistria into the Republic of Moldova on a federal basis under Russian political and military protection. To this purpose, Moscow has proposed a number of conflict resolution ideas, including the federalization of Moldova and Transnistria. The 2003 "Kozak Memorandum," drafted by Dmitri Kozak, was one of the most recent and comprehensive of Russia's suggestions[64].

The document's central theme was the transition of Moldova into a "asymmetric federation" with Transnistria, which was officially named "Russian Draft Memorandum on the Basic Principles of the State Structure of a United State in Moldova." The Transnistrian territory would have substantial autonomy over its own affairs, as well as veto power over constitutional modifications and international treaty ratification that would limit its autonomy. The new federal Moldovan state would be neutral and demilitarized, according to the agreement. Nonetheless, Moscow has stated

[62] Manzarari D., "Crimea Crisis Exposes Severe Deficiencies in Transnistria Negotiations Format," Eurasia Daily Monitor, vol.11, issue 67, April 9, 2014, http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=42205&cHash=4c7b7a7d678fcfdf15b51ffecc093a58#.VXAgjk3GOUk

[63] Detailed information can be found: 14th Guards Red Banner Combined Arms Army, Military Unit: 13962 http://www.ww2.dk/new/army/armies/14gvoa.htm

[64] Devyatkov A. V.," «Kozak Memorandum» in the History of the Transdniestrian Settlement", Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education "Altai State University", ББК 63.3(4Мол5) 64-6, 2010, pp. 52-55.

that it will keep a military presence in the region for the next twenty years in order to ensure that the agreement is implemented. If signed, the Republic of Moldova would have been turned into a bigger Transnistria under Russian governmental control.

Many scholars, experts and pro-western politics claim that, Transnistria serves largely an instrumental purpose for Russia, as it allows Moscow to maintain a lever of control over Moldova's domestic and, more significantly, foreign affairs. The Republic of Moldova's Achilles heel is Transnistria, which inhibits the country from drawing closer to the West. The Republic of Moldova will not be admitted to the EU as long as the conflict in Transnistria is not resolved via political means. The Republic of Moldova seeks towards European Union membership as a signatory country to the Association Agreement with the EU. Transnistria, on the other hand, could be useful in reintegrating the Republic of Moldova into the Russian sphere of influence. The primary political goal for Moscow is to build a pro-Russian political system in Chisinau. The ultimate goal is for Moldova to join Russian-led integrationist formations like the Eurasian Union. In this regard, Moscow's choice of Dmitry Rogozin, Russia's deputy prime minister, as special representative on Transnistria is not coincidental. Mr. Rogozin, a former NATO ambassador, is a Russian nationalist who firmly favors the idea of a Eurasian union. The current geographic location of Moldova's breakaway area depicts Transnistria as a thorn in Ukraine's side, which Russia can utilize to destabilize Ukraine and reshape Ukrainian statehood in its own interests. Transnistrian involvement in the 2014 Ukrainian crisis establishes Transnistria as a serious threat to Ukraine's territorial integrity. For example, the Transnistrian "siloviki" (representatives of the military-security apparatus) played a key part in Russia's actions in Crimea, the outbreak of violence in Eastern Ukraine, and the formation of the Donetsk Peoples Republic[65]. Many Transnistrian figures have been involved in recent Ukrainian events, leading some to conclude that Ukraine is on the verge of becoming a Transnistrian-style situation. Transnistria can also be used as a launchpad for separatist attacks in other Ukrainian regions, such as Odessa's southwestern sector. Transnistrian elements were reportedly involved in skirmishes between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian forces in Odessa during the 2014 May incidents, according to Ukrainian sources[66]. This raised suspicions

[65] Lasconjarias G and Larsen A. J., "NATO's Response to the Hybrid Threats", Inessa Baban, The Transnistrian Conflict in the Context of Ukrainian Crisis, DeBooks Italia, 00195 Rome, Italy, 2015, pp. 201-219.
[66] Sukhov A., "Transnistriabecomes potential hotspot in Russia's war, May 9 2022, viewed on the 22 May 2022, https://kyivindependent.com/national/transnistria-becomes-potential-hotspot-in-russias-war/

that Russia was attempting to destabilize, if not take control of, the Ukrainian seaport of Odessa, in which Transnistria would have played a key part. It is hard to predict, whether these are reality or just anti-Russian claims.

But the coin has two sides, and we can clearly see that beside the view of the "West" there are also opposite side, which has a different perspective on this issue. As one of the Transnistrian officials, Vadim Kravchuk had claimed. "We see the purposeful work of some forces, including the leadership of Moldova, who continue their militant rhetoric towards Pridnestrovie (Russian name of Transnistria) since those 90s. Neither for us, nor for them, this is not a turned page, the war has not ended, the armed confrontation has ended.", which is direct imply that they accuse Moldovian government in the use of hybrid elements. When Moldovan politicians need to score political points, they begin to aggravate the situation by intensifying the economic war or in other ways, the Transnistrian MP said[67].

Furthermore, economic, diplomatic, informational wars are being waged against Pridnestrovie, which are the components of a hybrid war, the president of the unrecognized PMR, Yevgeny Shevchuk, believes. "The goal is to stifle the economy of Pridnestrovie with a "soft cushion", thereby provoking serious social problems and, as a result, internal discontent, stimulating protests on this wave, so that then, referring to the" destabilization of the situation ", try to change the format of the peacekeeping operation and create conditions for the introduction of law enforcement agencies of the Republic of Moldova, possibly Romania, into Pridnestrovie," he said.[68]

Another claim of "Western" sources underlines the fact that, state security institutions of Transnistria were established with the assistance from Moscow. In late 1991, Vladimir Artyufeev, under the name of Vadim Shvetsov, and other wanted (because of the armed dispersal of Latvian protests for independence) officials of the Latvian Ministry of Internal Affairs came to the unrecognized republic to participate in the establishing of the Transnistrian Ministry of State Security. It is noteworthy that V. Artyufeev, forced to leave the post of the head of the Transnistrian

[67] Deputy of the PMR: a hybrid war is going on between Pridnestrovie and Moldova, Мироустроительная война, Приднестровско-молдавское урегулирование, ИА Красная Весна, 8 March 2020, viewed on the March 2022, https://rossaprimavera.ru/news/f34344e9

[68] Infotag, "Shevchuk: a "hybrid war" is being waged against Transnistria", October 2015, viewed on the May 2022, https://noi.md/ru/news_id/71553

special services in 2011, and his former employees have become active in the Russian "hybrid war" against Ukraine[69].

Conclusion of the case study

Upon analyzing Transnistria's geographical position, we can see that it can be vital for Russia's geopolitical interests. Initially, Transnistria enables Russian government to have a mechanism of influence over the South-Western flank of the former Soviet space, including Ukraine and Moldova.

The Moldovan breakaway region denies accession of these states to the Euro-Atlantic community, by being stalemate of the path of NATO's enlargement to the East. Furthermore, there is a chance that Transnistria is a key component of Russia's future strategy towards the wider Black sea region. Some NATO member state leaders have underlined that this strategy aims to transfer Black sea into a "Russian lake"[70]. Finally, Transnistria is one of the three angles of Russia's geographic influence in Europe alongside with Crimea and Kaliningrad.

Taking into the consideration everything mentioned above, we can state that it is logical for Kremlin athorities refusal to withdraw troops from Transnistria, despite the repeated requests by Moldovan government and the international community. During the 1999 OSCE Summit held in Istanbul Russia signed an obligation to withdraw its forces from Transnistira by the end of 2002. Even when Russia removed some quantities of ammunition from Transnistria, over 20,000 tons remain stored in the depots there. According to the OSCE Mission to Moldova, total 42,000 tons of ammunitions stored in Transnistria, during 2001-2003 period more than 21,000 tons were transported to Russia.[71]

The rapid spread of NATO's influence near Russia's boarders, logically places Russia in a situation, in which it must boost the capabilities and characteristics of Kaliningrad, Crimea and of

[69] Artem Fylypenko, "THE "FIRST HYBRID": THE TRANSNISTRIAN CONFLICT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINIAN CONFLICT", UA: Ukraine Analytica · 3 (9), 2017.
[70] Traian Basescu, former Romanian President, Liliana Ruse, "Marea Neagra-lac rusesc," 9 AM News, Sep. 17, 2005, viewed on the April 2022,
http://www.9am.ro/stiri-revista-presei/Politica/18651/Marea-Neagra-lac-rusesc.html
[71] You can find this information in Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe: News and Press Releases , https://www.osce.org/ru/press-releases?filters=+im_taxonomy_vid_1:(25)

course of Transnistria, otherwise Russia will lose not only geographically important domains, but also will lose in the spheres of geopolitics, economy and national interests.

Furthermore, there is a risk of retaking the Kozak Memorandum as a model of the Transnistrian conflict resolution. President of Moldova, I. Dodon claimed reintegration of Transnistria by means of transforming Moldova into a federation to be one of his priorities. He reaffirmed his intention during his visit to Moscow in January 2017. At the joint press conference with the Russian president, Dodon admitted that the refusal to implement the Kozak Memorandum in 2003 was a mistake[72].

Finally, considering all mentioned above, we can indicate several methods, which have a "spicy taste" of hybrid methods. Some of them were:

- active use of irregular forces supported by Russia;
- information warfare: discrediting the leadership of the states, their armed forces and security forces within and outside of the state; shaping a negative attitude toward attempts of the government to regain control over the separatist territories (both sides of the conflict use the mentioned methods∆
- direct participation of the Russian armed forces in military actions;
- dehumanization of the enemy, dissemination of information about their cruelty and inhumanity (examined by both sides of the conflict);
- manipulation of historical facts, There were also active attempts to use historical facts for justification of claims for independence in Transnistria: for example, a constant emphasis on the difference between Romanians and Moldovans; also, Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, which existed within Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1924-1940 and covered territory of TMR and several districts of Odessa region in Ukraine, was considered a historical basis for Transnistrian statehood, but from the other hand, we can see that In view of the foregoing, it becomes more prominent and convex is the role that the Russian idea plays in the life, politics, culture and self-consciousness of the population of Transnistria, which, during the collapse of the USSR, declared in

[72] Joint Press Conference with President of Moldova Igor Dodon, "Kremlin", 17 January 2017, viewed on the May 2022,
http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53744

referendums its will to revive its own statehood. Pridnestrovians managed to defend their state in 1991-1992. from the aggression of the Chisinau regime, which intended to include their lands in Romania[73].

- restoration of the constitutional order and the fight against separatism and terrorism are presented as an aggression of one state against another. Therefore, there are attempts to bring negotiations into an "equal" bilateral format, with the presentation of a mediator (each side has its own trusted mediators);
- dissemination of information about the participation of foreign mercenaries in military actions on the side of governmental forces: Lithuanian snipers and Romanian soldiers in the Transnistrian conflict in 1992.

[73] Babulinga N., "RUSSIAN CIVILIZATION IN GLOBAL CONFLICTS: HISTORICAL LESSONS AND SPIRITUAL MEANINGS", RUSSIAN NATIONAL IDEA AND TRANSNISTRIA, Russian Research Institute of Cultural and Natural Heritage named after D.S. Likhachev, 2020, pp. 14-16.
https://heritage-institute.ru/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/russkaya-czivilizacziya-v-globalnyh-konfliktah.pdf

2.3 Case study: Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, evolution of the methods of hybrid warfare.

The US government hosted an international meeting in February 2015 to discuss methods to combat violent extremism. The debates were centered on the definition of a strategy to counter the so-called Islamic State's propaganda (IS). The innumerable movies chronicling the slaughter of minorities and the beheading of Westerners, created to almost Hollywoodian standards during the previous two years, make al-communication Qaeda's look positively primitive. As a result, beyond the armed conflict, a potentially difficult battle of ideas looms. When the media and experts now speak of an Islamic "State" or casually use the term "caliphate," they are making two critical errors: they are not only endorsing IS's narrative, but they are also offering a false picture of the group's territorial reach. As a result, the difficulty for the US and its transatlantic partners against ISIS is to precisely understand the logic of the group's rhetoric in order to develop a strong communication plan. The lack of proper narrative, and the arsenal of hybrid methods of warfare give the organization an opportunity to reach goals in more flexible and agile manner.

The aim of the study is to show that the use of an hybid arsenal can transform the organization to the point, that it must be viewed as a full actor in the international arena and not just a terroristic organization. This is a phase of evolution of hybrid threats.

Unfortunately, the ten-year experience gained in the war against al-Qaeda does not truly help. IS' media aura is based on considerations that are diametrically opposed to those that apply to al-Qaeda: by controlling certain regions in Iraq and Syria and claiming the establishment of a Caliphate that is ultimately supposed to cover the entire Muslim world, IS wants to be seen as a group representing a holy struggle rather than a complex web or network. The Islamic "State" in question (al Dawlat al Islamiyah) is a self-created utopia based on an eschatological worldview. While the project's reality can be questioned, its ascent is founded not just on territorial conquests, but also on the effective employment of a geopolitical fiction that fuels the movement.

While al-Qaeda in the 1990s spread through the Arab world before establishing its presence elsewhere, this was not the case with IS. Its roots can be traced back to Iraq in the 2000s, with the emergence of jihadist movements such as Ansar al Islam and Abu Mussab al-Zarqawis Jamaat Al Tawhid wa al Jihad. Al-Zarqawi officially swore allegiance (bay'a) to al-Qaeda in September 2004,

and the group was renamed Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn (literally "Organization base of jihad/Mesopotamia") Yet the organization was no mere appendage of al-Qaeda, having its own agenda and strategy. In particular, al-Zarqawi made the religious war between Sunni and Shia the cornerstone of his terrorist strategy, leading to gradual divergences of opinion with Ayman Zawahiri and Osama Bin Laden. Following the killing of al-Zarqawi in the summer of 2006, al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia had a close relationship with the Mujahideen Shura Council of Iraq, a coalition of six relatively minor organizations. In the autumn of that year, they agreed to form Dawlat al Iraq al Islamiyah, the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). [74]

Though hybrid tactics have long existed in the Middle East, they finally came to the fore in the summer of 2006 during Hizbullah's battle with Israel. In the face of a significant military attack by the Israeli Defense Forces, the Shia organization demonstrated a remarkable ability to integrate guerilla tactics with more traditional ones over the course of several weeks.

ISIL's evolution from a terrorist organization to the political-military entity it is now was largely due to the use of hybrid tactics. This can be dated back to 2010, when the organization solely tasked former Baathist officers with military decision-making (because to their tactical expertise). ISIL was able to use traditional military tactics from that point forward, as well as acquire and learn to use advanced heavy military weapons and find techniques to demoralize Iraqi military soldiers. ISIL, on the other hand, hasn't completely abandoned 'asymmetric' tactics: it still employs improvised explosive devices (IEDs) when necessary. In military terms, it is thus the prototypical hybrid organization.

ISIL's soldier strength varies between 20,000 and 60,000, putting it closer to militias than terrorist organizations. ISIL has 'franchised' into Egypt and Libya through resident terrorist organizations that have sworn allegiance to the so-called caliphate, in contrast to militias that tend to have a national or even local goal. As a result, its territorial goals are regional or even global, while its military posture is always influenced by the local strategic environment. [75]

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[74] Wilson Center, Timeline: the Rise, Spread, and Fall of the Islamic State October 28, 2019, viewed on the April 2022, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/timeline-the-rise-spread-and-fall-the-islamic-state#:~:text=The%20Islamic%20State%20%E2%80%93%20also%20known,began%20to%20reemerge%20in%202011.

[75] Florence Gaub, “Hybrid Tactics: ISIL and CO., Issue Alert 47, 2015,

The Islamic State is a distributed multitude of territories, eclectic unions pro and con, the resettlement of millions, "invisible brigades," a foreshadowing of a situation fraught with culture shock: the destruction of cultural heritage sites and civilizational memory (cf. Palmyra as a prototype of similar actions in Europe), i.e. the strategy of crushing the spirit is the destruction of modern civilization's national, cultural, and religious symbols.

The shift in the relationship between actual combat operations and other destructive-aggressive actions, as well as the actualization of military-civilian means of suppression and dominance, is a significant turning point[76].

Center of Gravity Analysis of the case (COG analysis)

COG analysis is implemented in order to view the hybrid phenomenon of the ISIL from different levels, and to show the reality of the effectiveness of the methods examined by the organization.

Identify observed modalities

The most critical stage is to figure out what modalities the opponent uses. Every enemy action is classified into one of four hybrid modalities at this step: classic, catastrophic terrorism, irregular, or disruptive technology/criminal activities. Operational planners should pay close attention to their commander's indications and warnings constructions, as well as priority intelligence requirements, as these drive intelligence collection activities and have a significant impact on what adversary conduct is observed and reported. If information gaps are discovered, they must be remedied quickly to guarantee that threat modes are identified and observed.

https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Alert_47_hybrid_ISIL.pdf

[76] Neklessa A., “Hybrid warfare and the development of conflict management methodology in the 20th-21st centuries”, ALL-RUSSIAN SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL CONFERENCE "Analytics in the strategic development and security of Russia: a look into the future - 2030" Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation Moscow, October 22, 2015,

https://www.inafran.ru/sites/default/files/news_file/neklessa-gibridnaya_voyna.pdf

ISIL possesses characteristics from all four hybrid modes. First, with its deployed military and militia formations, ISIL demonstrates the traditional modus. Traditional military actions are carried out by these troops using modern weaponry systems against traditional armies (Iraqi and Syrian armed forces) and local militias. ISIL members usually wear uniforms, operate in groups, and use primitive combined arms offensive tactics. They also take defensive positions to defend the ground they have captured. Second, ISIL employs irregular tactics such as shadow governments, high-profile terrorist operations, assassinations of Sunni and Shia "apostates," and Internet-based recruitment. This tactic strengthens its grip on acquired territory, frightens potential enemies, draws foreign recruits, and raises its international profile.

Third, through its massive network of illicit oil trafficking and sales, unlawful bulk financial transfers through charities and individuals, stolen foreign aid, abduction operations, taxes, and illegal checkpoints, ISIL demonstrates the disruptive/criminal modality. Fourth, ISIL appears to have obtained or manufactured chemical weapons, with the potential to use them. If this is true, it demonstrates a devastating terrorism mode that may be employed against vulnerable, high-profile targets.

Determine of the Critical Capabilities

The techniques or acts required in accomplishing the desired outcomes must be identified by planners. Critical Capabilities (CC) are typically defined as the "capacity to" do a specific action that is vital to the operation's success. If several CCs are necessary to achieve the intended results, they should be prioritized in order of importance. If at all practicable, capabilities should be reduced to the bare minimum of critical capabilities. The capacity of ISIL to generate international Sunni sponsorship while deterring the US from directly engaging its forces on the ground in Iraq and Syria is its strategic CC. One of the strategies utilized to keep the United States at bay is its ideological call for a final struggle in western Syria against Western soldiers.

In order to execute ISIL's operational objectives, four Critical Capabilities are required. To begin, it is necessary to be able to vanquish regional opponents and acquire territory. Second, it must be able to rule the conquered territories. Third, it must be able to support itself and produce revenue. It must also be able to recruit, train, and employ personnel.

Enlightening the COG: principal use modality

Once the employed modalities have been identified, the adversary's objectives and limitations have been assessed, and the required capabilities to achieve these objectives have been revealed, the decision is made as to which modality (irregular, traditional, catastrophic, or disruptive/criminal) will be the enemy's primary means of achieving those objectives. The enemy's center of gravity is now determined as the modality with the requisite critical capabilities to achieve the intended objectives within the defined restrictions. It takes on the role of primary "doer of the action that achieves the goals."[77] Because this is the enemy's primary effort, the ensuing approach and follow-on activities should be targeted to attack the center of gravity identified as the modality of principal use.

The major usage modality provides a form of cohesion for the utilized forces to bond in a hybrid force. This force coherence under a major modality permits the main effort to deliver the most effective strikes and is consistent with a Clausewitzian notion of the center of gravity[78].

Traditional methods of determining ISIL's center of gravity are complex and potentially irrelevant. Applying doctrinal COG analysis to ISIL is likely to provide a variety of "mirages" that appear "excellent in theory, but rarely exist in the real world in a form beneficial to military strategists.[79]". In truth, ISIL is a network of networks with no single, essential node; it is a network of networks with no one, critical node. It's a true hybrid danger. However, this does not imply that it is impregnable or unbeatable.

Within its hybrid nature, ISIL comprises all four modalities, but one shines out as its main effort: conventional. This is ISIL's focal point for achieving its operational goals and establishing the caliphate. Its true authority comes from its state-like armed forces deployed on the battlefield to seize or defend territory, not from its ideology or other moral issues. This is a key distinction because many people mistake it for a terrorist organization when it is actually a pseudo-state.

[77] Eikmeier D. C., "A Logical Method for Center of Gravity Analysis," Military Review 87, no. 5, September 2007, pp. 62–66.
[78] Carl von Clausewitz, On War, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 486-487.
[79] Mark Cancian, "Centers of Gravity Are a Myth," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 124, no. 9, September 1998, p. 30.

As the finish point of the analysis we enlighten the Critical Vulnerabilities, even though finding an hybrid threats weak points was complex, because of the enigmatic attitude of the hybrid.

ISIL is behaving more like a traditional conventional force and should be dealt with accordingly. Because ISIL's essence is more traditional than irregular, any operational approach that treats it as just another nonstate entity engaged in irregular warfare or terrorism would fail to defeat it. Understanding this reality helps to explain why present coalition efforts to defeat it are failing.

Information warfare: use of propaganda

Support for the Islamic State came from all over the world. Through sophisticated web-based efforts, foreign combatants, especially North Americans and Europeans, are radicalized. In carefully crafted video films, terrorists from as far away as Australia and Kosovo pledge their allegiance to the IS and threaten world leaders. Meanwhile, intense social media efforts are luring adolescent females from Austria and even the United States to join the cause as jihadist spouses. Foreign fighters have an influence not because of their modest numbers, but because of the feeling of global reach that their recruitment implies. It's difficult not to acknowledge Islamic State as an internationally relevant group when a terrorist with a British accent beheads an innocent journalist or an American citizen-turned-insurgent gets killed in Syria[80].

NATO delivered strong rhetoric at its September summit in Wales, condemning the Islamic State's "barbaric acts" against civilians and "planned targeting of entire religious and ethnic communities." However, condemnation has not converted into concerted action. The apparent lack of unity in the Alliance's response to the Islamic State's push on NATO's southern flank in Turkey reflects deep national divisions among member states. However, the savagery of IS's activities is beginning to backfire. The widespread condemnation of the recent beheadings of Alan Henning, James Foley, and others found a voice in the international community. The victims' family members' plainspoken, yet riveting pleas for mercy resonated across nations and religion systems.

[80] Psaki J., et al, 'Why do foreign fighters join the Islamic State?' Interview with Gwen Ifill on PBS Newshour, 27 August 2014, viewed on the 15 May 2022, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/foreign-fighters-join-islamic-state/

It is up to the international community to continue to expose the Islamic State's dark ideology and to develop, promote, and deliver a positive and just alternative.[81]

The Islamic State's tactical victories in the summer of 2014 can be attributed in part to their perplexing ability to absorb and integrate new forces, funds, and captured equipment while on the move. Official intelligence estimates put the militant population at around 10,000, with forced enlistments, foreign fighters, and marginalized Iraqi Arab Sunni factions pushing it up to 50,000.[82] Hybrid threat organizations like IS have charismatic ideologues as well as pragmatic military commanders from fallen governments or seconded from friendly nation-state militaries as leaders. This charisma and expertise combine to give the zeal for successful military operations that appeal to their recruiting base of impassioned and alienated young men and women.

In Iraq and to some extent in Syria, Europe has handled ISIL as a regular military force, but as a terrorist organization at home. As a result, in the Middle East and North Africa, ISIL is being combated with traditional military methods, while in Europe, counter-terrorist measures are being used. In Syria and Iraq, however, ISIL must be combated with traditional counter-terrorist methods such as intensified intelligence collecting, political actions aimed against the group's control population, and customized incentives to defect and participate (akin to 'crown witness' programmes).

ISIL is likely to expand beyond al-Qaeda-style hit-and-run strikes or suicide attacks in Europe. Indeed, ISIL's desire and territory control capacity might lead to a hypothetical situation in which it seizes important infrastructure in European cities, even if only for a short time. This would be a boon to its narrative of invincibility, as well as generating significant disruption. The first step in combating ISIL is to treat it as the hybrid organization that it is, and to respond to it regardless of the terrain.[83]

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[81] North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) North Atlantic Council, Wales Summit Declaration, Wales: 5 September 2014: paragraph 33.

[82] Brian Fishman, 'The Islamic State: A Persistent Threat.' Prepared testimony to the House Armed Services Committee. 29 July 2014, http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS00/20140729/102590/HHRG-113-AS00-Wstate-FishmanB-20140729.pdf

[83] Gaub F., "Hybrid Tactics: ISIL and CO.", Issue Alert 47, 2015, https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Alert_47_hybrid_ISIL.pdf

Conclusion of the case study

IS' geopolitical rhetoric has its own inherent logic, far from being an irrational and delusional transcription. The group uses carefully chosen speech and terminology based on a literal reading of the Koran and Muslim historiography. We could simply respond that this is an antiquated and abnormal interpretation of Islam, but that would be irrelevant to IS's intended audience - potential recruits. IS's claims and predictions are undoubtedly incompatible with the organization's real territorial expansion, but this geopolitical fantasy and messianism must be treated seriously nonetheless.

If Hezbollah is the archetypal hybrid danger, it's worth contrasting its operations with those of the Islamic State, and perhaps broadening the concept. Marking that hybrid threats employ a fused mix of conventional weapons, irregular tactics, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, cyberattacks, and criminal behavior, supported by a malicious information campaign, recognizing previous efforts by a range of NATO states defense analysts to create a working definition. To add further clarity, the following six revised hybrid threat characteristics are offered:

- Terrorist campaigns are used by hybrid threats to spread hate and sorrow and instill fear in their opponents. They go after cultural icons and symbols in order to eliminate identities, heritages, and belief systems that are in opposition to their ideology;
- International laws are viewed cynically by hybrid threats as a restraint on their adversaries that may be exploited;
- Hybrid threats use global communications networks to disseminate Islamist plots, gather finances, and recruit, more precisely-use of propaganda;
- Paramilitary forces that can organize both in massed conventional formations and as small, scattered cells make up hybrid threats. Hybrid threats necessitate a governance component in order to maintain stability and operations, speaking in a simple manner, hybrid methods foster the flexibility and adaptability of ISIL;
- Finally, Traditional military capabilities are combined with small-unit guerrilla tactics, asymmetric attacks, and agile mobile standoff combat technologies in hybrid threats.

However, there is a regression and a return to the archaic in terms of the quality and structural complexity of the new actors: various tribal militias, led by tribal leaders and military leaders

recruited from the tribal nobility, begin to play a significant role in regional armed conflicts; gangs of drug cartels organized according to the criminal principle and cemented by a primitive medieval ideology (created for illiterate villagers and illiterate Bedouins) terrorize[84]

In other words, IS' true power stems from the geopolitical narrative it developed about the war for the Caliphate, not from the reality of its territorial claims. Beyond the aerial and ground battles, the decisive war may well be fought over this story. Monitoring the ways by which IS spreads its propaganda (through Twitter and other social media) will not suffice for NATO countries involved in the continuing conflict. They will eventually need to develop a counter-narrative that confronts IS's main message in order to portray it in a less appealing light and halt the movement's growing influx of foreign fighters.

Taking into the consideration all the facts gathered in this chapter, we can see the evolution of the hybrid threats and variety of directions of action that these methods enables to use. Even if ISIL is struggling to reach its new aims and goals, the factor that they were able to shatter the international peace is showing that weaker actor can really become an obstacle even for well- developed and much stronger actors. Furthermore, at some point a terroristic organization can become something similar to a state, and all due to the hybrid tactics.

[84] Filin N.A., "The failed revolution of the color of Islam. Reasons for the rise and fall of the Green Movement," 2015, pp. 87-90.

III. NATO'S ADAPTATION TO HYBRID THREATS: STEP BY STEP EVOLUTION TOWARDS NEW THREATS

As mentioned before, since the start of the events in Ukraine in 2014, new term started to dominate and reshape the international security debate. As you already understood, it is "hybrid warfare". In a recent speech, NATO Secretary-General Jens Soltenberg underlined, that the first hybrid warfare famous to the mankind might be Trojan Horse, so it is not something new[85].

But now, we can surely state that what we may have not seen before in warfare is the scale, area of use and exploitation of common tools in new ways. NATO's Supreme Allied Commander (SACEUR) P. M. Breedlove once said, " ... new things are how these tools that we have recognized from before are now put together and used in new ways to bring new kinds of pressure ...."[86]

To understand the reality of the evolution of hybrid threats and how they affect NATO, we must implement analysis of the directions of the hybrid threats, detect where they may be a risk of hybrid.

NATO has not only acknowledged these new forms of pressure, but it has also taken up the challenge and begun the process of changing its strategy and structures to the new security environment.

However, this strategic change still confronts many challenges and has significant flaws. Within NATO, there have only been a few ideas and some preliminary operational considerations that systematically address hybrid threats thus far.[87]

[85] NATO Official YouTube Channel, NATO Secretary General J. Stoltenberg, "Zero-sum? Russia, Power Politics, and the Post-Cold War Era", Brussels Forum, March 20, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-qA-pWJm18
[86] Defensa.org, quoted by P. M. Breedlove, March 24, 2015, http://www.dedefensa.org/article-le_g_n_ral_breedlove_et_the_hybrid_war_24_03_2015.html
[87] Schadlow N., "The Rroblem With Hybrid Warfare," War on the Rocks, April 2015, http://warontherocks.com/2015/04/the-problem-with-hybrid-warfare/

Furthermore, there is no shared understanding of the hybrid warfare concept's usage, significance, or practical advantage for the Alliance, particularly when considering NATO's eastern and southern flanks at the same time.

The concept of hybrid warfare, according to this chapter, provides a useful, holistic understanding of security challenges from both the East and the South, allowing NATO to remain "... a strong, ready, and responsive Alliance capable of meeting current and future challenges from wherever they may arise."[88]

As a result, it conceptualizes the various viewpoints and understandings of hybrid warfare and proposes a thorough working definition. Finally, the chapter looks at NATO's responses to new hybrid threats from the east and south, as well as other areas where collective action is needed. It contends that the notion of hybrid warfare has the potential to assist NATO's strategic planners and decision-makers in developing a strategy to counter hybrid threats, allowing NATO to respond comprehensively to such threats.

3.1 NATO's new strategic challenge

In order to fully understand the hybrid threats for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization we have to understand, reveal, and if needed predict the directions and strategies from all directions toward NATO states.

South direction: To the South, NATO faces a new era of protracted instability, stretching from the Middle East to North Africa (MENA) to the Sahel. Non-state armed groups continue to erode state structures, leaving a slew of issues in their wake, including resource scarcity, mass migration, and violent localized violence. The most imminent new threat is the rise of Daesh- also known as ISIS or the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, which has carved itself a base of operations in eastern Syria and western Iraq following fast advances in the summer of 2014. The group's ability to gain loyalty from other groups in North Africa and the Sahel demonstrates the popularity of the group's message of building a new caliphate in place of post-World War II MENA state institutions.

The group's ability to retain territory, employ a combination of terrorist and conventional tactics, and attract thousands of fighters from all over the world makes it a particularly powerful opponent

[88] NATO, Wales Summit Declaration, September 5, 2014, paragraph 5.

in the field of non-state armed groups. When Daesh overran Iraqi soldiers in Mosul, it was also able to take considerable quantities of powerful weaponry and cash; this, together with its capacity to keep control over oil reserves in its region, allowed it to be relatively self-financing. Daesh's violent tactics have disrupted local people and weakened state authority across a large area, resulting in greater outflows of mass migration as well as increased arms, drug, and human trafficking within its borders[89]. Nowadays, ISIL is not as strong as it was from 2011 to 2015, but the echoes of the organization and the latest activites are showing that the fundament is not collapsed yet. As an example proving my statement, Daesh conducted a surprise attack on the al-Sina'a prison in Al-Hasakah, Syria's far northeast, on January 20, 2022. Their goal was to release 3,500 of their fighters who were being taken captive by the Syrian Defense Forces (SDF). The move demonstrated to the rest of the world that the terrorist group was still capable of resuming its onslaught and was a force to be reckoned with[90].

Eastern direction: NATO member states were obliged to rethink the worldwide security context in which they operate in 2014 as a result of the events of that year. Russia's takeover of Crimea posed a major challenge to established international behavioral norms in the East. The use of force to modify Ukraine's internationally recognized boundary cast doubt on beliefs about European states' sovereign territorial integrity, casting doubt on the post-Cold War dividend of a Europe that is becoming increasingly whole, at peace, and free[91]. Fears that Russian President Vladimir Putin was undermining the basic concept of the pluralistic nation state – the reality of the great majority of nation states in existence today – were sparked by rhetoric suggesting spheres of influence and protection for "Russians everywhere." Despite this, Russia's broad strategic vision that guides its actions remains a mystery.

As the pendulum swings from cooperation to competition, NATO faces the challenge of reassuring its internal audience and deterring Russia from taking additional actions that could jeopardize the

[89] Jasper, Scott and Scott Moreland, "The Islamic State is a Hybrid Threat: Why Does That Matter?", Small Wars Journal, 2 December 2014.

[90] Zvi Mazel, "The Risks of an ISIS Comeback", March 18, 2022, viewed on the May 2 2022, https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/isis-return/

[91] Bradshaw, A., "To Assure and Deter: NATO's Next Steps", RUSI Newsbrief, vol.34, no.5, September 2014.

territorial integrity of any Alliance member, particularly those in the east, from the Baltics to Southeast Europe. In the age of hybrid warfare, however, being able to accomplish both will necessitate a higher level of strategic awareness and greater cooperation between Brussels and individual member states. A new period of credible collective political will will be required to achieve and sustain a new reality of increased readiness and strategic awareness.

The capacity to utilize hybrid warfare techniques is a vital component of both competitors' tactics on the eastern and southern flanks. The 2006 Hizballah-Israel war highlights a non-state actor's capacity to exploit the vulnerabilities of militaries that are traditionally stronger and design effective remedies. For the stronger opponent, the use of hybrid tactics is inherently destabilizing. However, one of hybrid warfare's intrinsic flaws is that it frequently entails the deployment of a variety of tactics without regard for strategy, which presents long-term challenges for its proponents[92].

There is no uniform definition of hybrid warfare, as there is no uniformity in the way it is and can be used. This Committee defines it as the use of asymmetrical tactics to probe for and exploit weaknesses via non-military means (such as political, informational, and economic intimidation and manipulation) and are backed by the threat of conventional and unconventional military means. The tactics can be scaled and tailor fit to the particular situation. Russia's hybrid methods are nothing new in the Alliance's eyes. The Soviet Union tried to manage political issues within NATO member states on a regular basis, leaving murky grey zones around the extent of its engagement. Today, Russia is attempting to create an ambiguous grey zone along NATO's eastern flank – attempts at domestic political and economic destabilization, as well as manipulation of states along NATO's eastern border from the Baltics to the Black Sea, have led many political leaders to claim that they already fall into this grey zone. However, one significant distinction between Soviet and current Russian hybrid tactics is that, whereas the Soviets used them largely to soften their opponents, President Putin appears to be employing them to achieve his goals of a politically reorganized Europe[93].

[92] Calha M. J., "Hybrid Warfare: NATO's New Strategic Challenge?", General Report, Defence and Security Committee, 10 Oct. 2015, pp. 2-3,
Can be found in www.nato-pa.int
[93] Kroenig, M., "Facing Reality: Getting NATO Ready for a New Cold War", Survival, 57(1), pp. 49–55, Feb 2015,

Furthermore, for more deep knowledge, we must include possible future directions of hybrid threats for the NATO.

One of the flanks is Northeastern Europe, which, because of their close proximity to Russia, large ethnic Russian populations, and comparatively under-equipped military forces, the Baltic republics are widely seen as NATO's Achilles heel. NATO member states are devoting significant resources to reassure and fortify the region's governments, as mentioned in this Committee's recent reports on the RAP and the Transatlantic link. The Alliance's main goal in 2015 was to build credible deterrence in the Baltics; a greatly enlarged NATO presence in the region was greeted by a concerted effort by the Baltic states to invest in their defense institutions at all levels. Through 2016, this Committee will continue to examine the Baltics' reassurance and deterrent activities.[94]
On the other hand we can also make an assumption about Southeastern Europe. The particluar reason of this circumstance is the fact, that NATO parliamentarians expressed concern about certain governments in Southeastern Europe and their possible vulnerability to Russian manipulation during the Budapest Session in May 2015. Greece and Hungary were specifically named. Fears of a Grexit from the EU arose correctly in the spring and summer of this year, prompting debate about the Alliance's ramifications. Many were concerned that if Moscow stepped in as an alternative source of financing for Greece, not only would Athens feel more comfortable exiting the EU, but it would also be drawn further into Moscow's sphere of influence on a security level, which would have serious implications for NATO's ability to make unanimous decisions. After a long period of brinkmanship on both sides during the Greek financial crisis, a solution was eventually reached to keep Greece stable and, thus, in the EU. Greece continues to be dedicated to the Alliance and all of its duties.
In addition to Greece, some members questioned the precarious balancing act Budapest seemed to be playing between Brussels and Moscow. In response to such suggestions, several Hungarian members noted that Hungary’s relationship with Moscow was guided by pragmatism: Budapest understands that it has near and long-term strategic interests of a closer relationship with the Euro-Atlantic community, but that it has clear domestic economic interests that make a relationship with Moscow inevitable. Hungary looks to its East almost exclusively for its energy security, depending

http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2015.1008295
[94] Miranda J. C., “Hybrid Warfare: NATO’s New Strategic Challenge?”, General Report, Defence and Security Committee, 10 Oct. 2015, pp. 3-5,
Can be found in www.nato-pa.int

upon Russia for almost the totality of its oil and natural gas supply. The Hungarian Defence Minister noted to members, however, that Hungary sees its future as a strong contributing member within the Euro-Atlantic community, particularly within NATO.

Finally, we have Western Balkans, which question of stability also surfaced . As the members of this Committee know well, Balkan stability has a direct impact upon European stability. The balance of interests in the region between Brussels and Moscow has also been a sensitive issue since the end of the cold war. Recent Committee visits to Belgrade and Pristina revelead relative progress in the dialogue between the two parties, as well as a desire to work toward a closer relationship with the Euro-Atlantic community. Still, it is clear that ethnic and religious faultlines continue to exist in the region. Relatively poor economic performance, persistant corruption at all levels, and significant regional and international stresses on the Balkans (particularly the wake of the recent migrant crisis) make the region susceptible to external manipulation. As such, the Western Balkans will continue to be an area of focus for the Committee.[95]

NATO has not only acknowledged these new forms of pressure, but it has also taken up the challenge and begun the process of changing its strategy and structures to the new security environment.

However, this strategic change still confronts many challenges and has significant flaws. Within NATO, there have only been a few ideas and some preliminary operational considerations that systematically address hybrid threats thus far.[96] Furthermore, there is no shared understanding of the hybrid warfare concept's usage, significance, or practical advantage for the Alliance, particularly when considering NATO's eastern and southern flanks at the same time.

According to NATO’s state representatives, the concept of hybrid warfare, according to this chapter, provides a useful, holistic understanding of security challenges from both the East and the South, allowing NATO to remain "... a strong, ready, and responsive Alliance capable of meeting current and future challenges from wherever they may arise."[97] As a result, it conceptualizes the various viewpoints and understandings of hybrid warfare and proposes a thorough working definition. Finally, the chapter looks at NATO's responses to new hybrid threats from the east and

[95] Juola C., Smith H., “Hybrid CoE Trend Report 2: Western Balkans”, 17 March, 2020, https://www.hybridcoe.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Hybrid-CoE-Trend-Report-2.pdf
[96] Schadlow N., "The Rroblem With Hybrid Warfare," War on the Rocks, April 2015, viewed on the April 2022, http://warontherocks.com/2015/04/the-problem-with-hybrid-warfare/
[97] NATO, Wales Summit Declaration, September 5, 2014, paragraph 5.

south, as well as other areas where collective action is needed. It contends that the notion of hybrid warfare has the potential to assist NATO's strategic planners and decision-makers in developing a strategy to counter hybrid threats, allowing NATO to respond comprehensively to such threats.

Tracking the narrative "Hybrid"

By using content analysis, we can deeply engage in the process of understanding when the evolution of hybrid reached to the point that it became a threat for the Transatlantic alliance. In order to achieve formulated aims, we must track the narratives: "hybrid", "irregular", "hybrid warfare", "hybrid threats".

General James Mattis' address at the Defense Forum, sponsored by the Naval Institute and the Marine Corps Association, in September 2005 was the first widely circulated articulation of the term "hybrid warfare."[98] Mattis and Hoffman issued a brief article on "hybrid warfare" in November 2005, shortly after the conference. The authors of the report stated that future threats will be a synthesis of several kinds of warfare, which they refer to as "hybrid warfare." The idea of 'hybrid warfare' was not fully established in that essay, and instead of defining it, the authors described the fundamental elements of the 'hybrid model of combat.[99]

After Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, NATO chose the phrase "hybrid warfare" to describe Russia's "new" kind of combat in Ukraine. This decision is likely the most pivotal in the evolution of the notion of "hybrid warfare." The use and use of the phrase "hybrid warfare" in military and strategic debates in the West expanded considerably as a result of these circumstances.[100]

"We will ensure that NATO is able to effectively address the specific challenges posed by hybrid warfare threats, where a wide range of overt and covert military, paramilitary, and civilian measures are employed in a highly integrated design. It is essential that the Alliance possesses the necessary tools and procedures required to deter and respond effectively to hybrid warfare threats, and the capabilities to reinforce national forces. This will also include enhancing strategic communications, developing exercise scenarios in light of hybrid threats, and strengthening

[98] Hoffman, Frank G., Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars. Arlington, VA: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, 2007.
[99] Mattis N. J. and Frank G. Hoffman F. G., 2005. "Future Warfare: The Rise of Hybrid Wars." Proceedings, November 2005, pp. 18-19.
[100] Solmaz T., "Hybrid Warfare: One Term, Many Meanings", Small Wars Journal, 25 Feb, 2022.

coordination between NATO and other organizations, in line with relevant decisions taken, with a view to improving information sharing, political consultations, and staff-to-staff coordination. We welcome the establishment of the NATO-accredited Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Latvia as a meaningful contribution to NATO's efforts in this area. We have tasked the work on hybrid warfare to be reviewed alongside the implementation of the Readiness Action Plan"[101]. In this point, taken out from the Declaration itself, we can see first official use of the term "hybrid warfare" from official NATO. This actively demonstrates, that from 2010 to 2014 the evolution and transformation of the hybrid tools, and the smart implementation of the using actors has reached to the point that it can concern one of the strongest organizations of international arena.

In their official papers, NATO and the EU define 'hybrid warfare' as a method of attaining political goals by combining kinetic and non-kinetic measures while remaining below the threshold of traditional war. Hybrid threats, for example, combine military and non-military as well as covert and overt techniques, such as disinformation, cyber-attacks, economic pressure, the deployment of irregular armed groups, and the use of regular forces, according to the NATO (n.d) website. To blur the lines between war and peace and instill uncertainty in the minds of target populations, hybrid approaches are deployed. They seek to weaken and destabilize societies.[102]

Federica Mogherini, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg are in Helsinki, Finland on the 2 October for the inauguration of the Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats.

The Secretary General stated, "The center will make a significant contribution to our security." It will assist countries and international organizations such as NATO and the EU in better understanding modern, complex threats and strengthening our societies' defenses against them.[103]

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[101] Wales Summit Declaration, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales, Issued on 5 Sep, 2014, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/sede/dv/sede240914walessummit_/sede240914walessummit_en.pdf

[102] Solmaz T., "Hybrid Warfare: One Term, Many Meanings", Small Wars Journal, 25 Feb, 2022.

[103] NATO.INT, NATO Deputy Secretary General to Speak on Countering Hybrid Threats, 15 Feb 2018, Press Release 2018, 017, Issued on Feb 14, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_151971.htm

Tracking the creation of the Hybrid Center of Excellence as the one of the tools of the counter measures against hybrid threats will be discussed later in this chapter.

By chronological order next our target is Brussels Summit of 2018, which majorly reshaped the understanding of "hybrid" for the alliance. Some of the most important decisions of the Brussels Summit of 2018 were the redoubled efforts for Burden sharing, the reform of NATO's core structures, the Readiness Initiative upgrade, the Counter-Hybrid Support Team initiation, the new NATO mission in Iraq, the Southern Package (development of mechanisms to counter southern threats) challenges), further assistance to Afghanistan, accession talks in Skopje (Northern Macedonia) new phase of partnership with the EU.[104]

As a continuation, we can underline the NATO-Russia Council in May, where three major issues were discussed:

1 . The crisis in Ukraine, including the Minsk agreement,

2 . Issues related to military activity, transparency and risk reduction,

3 . Asymmetric techniques as aspects of teaching and strategy[105].

Therefore, the third point points out the element of the concern of the NATO members on the issue of Hybrid threats, also strengthening the thought of the alliance members viewing Russia as the main source of nowadays hybrid threats.

Consequently, as the measure of fostering its border states, NATO has set up six temporary funds to help Ukraine ensure its own security. Funds cover:

1 . command, control, communication;

2 . logistics and standardization;

3 . cyber protection;

4 . military careers;

[104] NATO Factsheet November 2018, Brussels Summit Key Decisions 11-12 July, file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/20181105_1811-factsheet-key-decisions-summit-en%20(1).pdf

[105] NATO Summit Guide, Brussels, 11-12 July 2018, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_07/20180718_180711-summit-guide-brussels.pdf

5 . mechanisms to counteract and destroy explosive devices;

6 . medical care.[106]

The theme for London 2019 is "keeping safe by looking to the future together." To sustain members technological edge, NATO countries are tackling the breadth and size of emerging technologies while preserving their values and traditions. NATO will continue to strengthen their societies' resilience, as well as their key infrastructure and energy security. NATO and its allies are committed to safeguarding the security of their communications, including 5G, within their respective jurisdiction, recognizing the necessity to rely on secure and robust networks. By designating space as an operational area for NATO, it recognizes the importance of space in maintaining security and addressing security concerns while adhering to international law. By improving their ability to respond to cyber threats and preparing for, deterring, and defending against hybrid tactics aimed at undermining NATO security and societies. NATO's responsibility in human security is being expanded by its members. Furthermore, NATO must recognize that China's expanding influence and international policies present both possibilities and problems that the Alliance must confront collectively. [107]

NATO made significant progress in reacting to hybrid threats in 2019: increased exercises, strengthened cyber defenses, and the first use of a Counter Hybrid Support Team demonstrated that even in the face of new security challenges, the Alliance's hallmark remains togetherness.[108]

NATO increased its efforts in 2019 to assist the Allies in fighting hybrid warfare. A NATO-wide crisis management exercise was staged in May to test NATO's and Allies' abilities to respond with a variety of challenges in the political, economic, and military domains. A historic gathering of Allied National Security Advisers was held at NATO Headquarters later that month. This forum

[106] Luke Coffey, Daniel Kochis, Brussels NATO Summit 2018: Don't Lose Focus on Ukraine, 2018, file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/Brussels%20NATO%20Summit%202018_%20Don%E2%80%99t%20Lose%20Focus%20on%20Ukraine%20_%20The%20Heritage%20Foundation%20(1).pdf :

[107] London Declaration, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in London 3-4 December 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_171584.htm?selectedLocale=en

[108] Ruhle M., (Germany), Head, Hybrid Challenges and Energy Security Section, NATO Headquarters, Brussels.

gave a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Allies to share their hybrid threat experiences and discuss methods for NATO to better support nations. NATO's first counter-hybrid force.

In November, a support team was dispatched to Montenegro for a week to assist Podgorica in its efforts to prepare for hybrid activities. With the work of the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki, Finland, cooperation with the European Union has grown. Since its inception in September 2017, the Centre has acted as a vital venue for dialogue between NATO and the European Union, as well as doing valuable work in the areas of education, training, tabletop exercises, and hybrid threat resilience.[109]

As the result from the analysis of the selected narratives, we can state that from the initial period 2014 Wales Summit, to the discussed finishing point of 2019 London Summit, NATO officials, official documents, declarations or other structure statements are using hybrid warfare and hybrid threats more and more often, from which we can assume the reality of NATO respond mechanisms trying to go foot by foot with the evolution of hybrid threats and emergence of new tools and mechanisms of the hybrid warfare.

[109] Defending Against Hybrid Threats, NATO Secretary General's Annual Report 2019, 19 March 2020, p. 29, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/3/pdf_publications/sgar19-en.pdf

3.2 NATO's response: hybrid warfare against NATO's structures

The previous case examples demonstrate why hybrid warfare is a valuable and significant idea (disregarding the issue of whether or not the tactics are new). The goal of hybrid warfare is to keep war "beyond the radar of traditional collective defense," or below the threshold of a response from traditional military institutions and organizations like NATO. As a result, NATO is having trouble responding to hybrid warfare with traditional collective defense mechanisms, which aren't geared to deal with sneaky and ambiguous threats. As a result, a new notion of hybrid threat defense, capable of reacting flexibly to hybrid problems, is required. NATO and its members have already made some preliminary measures toward developing and implementing such a strategy. This, however, must be made more effective and thoroughly integrated into doctrine and military thinking.

The United States, unsurprisingly, took the lead in these efforts. The 2005 National Defense Strategy, as well as the 2006 and 2010 Quadrennial Defense Reviews, were prompted by the Iraq War and addressed the use of US military forces in non-permissive environments, as well as the question of how forces would support "political, informational, and economic projections of national power, in addition to conventional military force, to achieve political objectives."[110]

NATO is designed to be a collective security alliance capable of deterring threats and defending its people in the event of a conflict. The North Atlantic Council (NAC) must approve the use of force collectively, which involves the identification of an armed attack against a member, as defined by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Only unanimous votes in the NAC authorize the Alliance to take collective action. Hybrid warfare techniques, on the other hand, pose significant challenges in terms of NAC-authorized collective action; their ambiguity makes it impossible to effectively detect and define a threat.

One of the main advantages of hybrid tactics is that they can build up to a potentially dangerous situation while staying under the Article 5 threshold. It is obvious that avoiding clear violations of Article 5 is in Russia's best interests. As a result, the most plausible alternative for Russia to

[110] M. Bond, Hybrid War a New Paradigm for Stability Operations in Failing States, strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College, March 30, 2007, p. 3.

achieve its aims today is a sort of strategic rivalry that targets the West's political, economic, and societal vulnerabilities while remaining hidden and below the threshold of conventional retaliation.

"The parties will confer together if, in the view of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence, or security of any of the parties is threatened," says Article 4 of the Washington Treaty. The difficulty with Article 4 is that it is impossible to reach a unified and coherent view of the threat when perceptions can and will differ across the 30 member states. Russia's employment of hybrid tactics has a clear objective of sowing doubt about the nature and severity of any potential threat. While a single action may not be viewed as a direct danger, a series of actions combined might pose a serious challenge to the Alliance.[111]

In 2009-2010, Allied Command Transformation (ACT) began developing an overarching concept for NATO's military contribution to counter hybrid threats, highlighting not only the challenges posed by current and future threats, but also the need to adapt the Alliance's strategy, structure, and capabilities.[112]

Allied Command Transformation (ACT) began developing an overarching concept for NATO's military contribution to counter hybrid threats in 2009-2010, highlighting not only the challenges posed by current and future threats, but also the Alliance's need to adapt its strategy, structure, and capabilities.[113]

With Russia's actions in Ukraine, however, the Allies saw the necessity for a response that encompassed all aspects of the ongoing issue, rather than just adapting to it. The result was the "Readiness Action Plan," a political initiative that provided a revived "Reassurance Policy" in the form of assistance and support to any member state that was attacked. "...provides a cohesive and comprehensive package of required actions to respond to changes in the security environment on NATO's frontiers and beyond that are of concern to Allies," according to this measure.[114] One of NATO's "biggest strengths," according to Secretary General Stoltenberg, is the Alliance's capacity

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[111] Calha M. J., "Hybrid Warfare: NATO's New Strategic Challenge?", General Report, Defence and Security Committee, 10 Oct. 2015, pp. 4-5.

[112] Miklaucic M., "NATO Countering the Hybrid Threat," Sep. 23, 2011, http://www.act.nato.int/nato-countering-hybrid-threat

[113] For an assessment of the Wales Summit see Larsen J. A., "The Wales Summit and NATO's Deterrence Capabilites-An Assessment," Research Report, NATO Defense College, Nov. 2014.

[114] NATO Wales Summit Declaration, Sep. 5, 2014, paragraph 5.

to adapt. The three buzzwords that this adaption of NATO's policy focuses on are comprehensive, responsive, and quick.[115]

NATO's doctrine against hybrid threats was not created out of thin air, as the Readiness Action Plan proved. First, hybrid threats might be seen as a "dark reflection" of NATO's Comprehensive Approach, as they are made up of a variety of tactics used by different actors in many domains.[116] This isn't to claim NATO already knew the solution before looking into it. NATO, on the other hand, could build on the Comprehensive Approach's important lessons learnt while shifting the setting and increasing participation from other parties.[117] Considering all of these, SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) established the Comprehensive Crisis and Operations Management Centre (CCOMC) inaugurated in 2012.

Second, NATO is equipped with a force organization. The NATO Response Force (NRF) was formed in 2002 with the goal of serving as the Alliance's "iron fist," capable of completing any mission.

Unfortunately, the NRF was on the verge of shutting down. However, it is expected to make a breakthrough after years of debate regarding its size and true responsiveness.

The spearhead element is the "Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF)," a brigade-sized land component with enablers (air, sea, and Special Forces) that may be deployed anywhere in the South and East to reassure Allies and deter potential adversaries[118].

These exercises are expected to reveal that NATO's eastern and southern flanks require more deployable forces, contemporary equipment, and the availability of ships, planes, and troops. Some think that pre-deployment and pre-positioning NATO forces in countries where similar threats are suspected, such as the Baltic states, could be a good preemptive tactic[119]. If "conventional military

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[115] NATO Secretary General, Remarks at the ACT Transformation Seminar, Washington DC, March 25, 2015, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_118430.htm
[116] Ibid.

[117] Aaronson M., Diessen S., Kermabon D., Lon M. B., and Miklaucic M., "NATO Countering the Hybrid Threat," PRISM No. 4, 2011, pp. 111-120.
[118] Abts J., "NATO's Very Hight Readiness Joint Task Force- Can the VJTF give new elan to the NATO Response Force?", Research Paper No. 109, NATO Defense College, Feb. 2015.
[119] Kelly T., "Stop Putin's Next Invasion Before It starts, " The RAND Blog, March 20, 2015, viewed on the April 2022,
http://www.rand.org/blog/2015/03/stop-putins-next-invasion-before-it-srats.html

threats... against NATO members were plausible and needed to be halted, ideally outside NATO territory and sooner rather than later," this plan could work in the case of Russia[120].

However, such a strategy is still seen as insufficient in addressing the hybrid threat, and it ignores the growing security threats on NATO's southern flank.

As previously stated, and underlined by NATO officials, employment of hybrid tactics by some actors, offers a clear challenge to the Alliance, and regional disruption by non-state armed organizations will continue to have an impact on Alliance security at its borders and from within in the form of terrorism. For 2015, the Defense and Security Committee has committed to researching the shifting strategic security environment. Adopt, adapt, and be proficient should be NATO's slogan in the face of these simultaneous threats. As the Alliance develops new strategies to address the East and South's new state and non-state concerns, it will need to alter its structure and readiness to meet these new difficulties.

The role of 'cyber-space' in hybrid threat scenarios: NATO's Response Mechanisms

'Cyber-conflict' and 'cyber-war' serve as examples of the use of new technologies within the scope of hybrid threats. Cyber-war21 basically refers to a sustained computer-based cyber-attack by a state (or NSA) against the IT infrastructure of a target state. An example of such hostile action taking place in the fifth dimension of warfare is the 2007 Russian attempt to virtually block out Estonia's internet infrastructure as a unilateral countermeasure and retribution for Estonia's removal of a WWII Soviet War Memorial from the center of Tallinn.

"New technologies, with their disruptive potential, have a catalytic effect on hybrid means, methods, tactics and strategies," according to Schmid. "It is worrying that they provide offensive options in particular. At the same time, new technological developments may offer options to better identify, understand, defend against and counter hybrid attacks.[121]"

[120] Oliker O., McNerney M. J. and Davis L. E., "NATO Needs a Comprehensive Strategy for Russia," RAND Perspective, 2015, P. 4,
http://www/rand.org/pubs/prespectives/PE143.html

[121] Dr Johann Schmid, Hybrid CoE's Director COI Strategy & Defence, contributed to TechNet Europe 2021 (1–2 June, Lisbon, Portugal) with a keynote speech on *Hybrid Threats/Warfare: Key Characteristics, Strategic Challenges, New Developments and Implications*.

"In order to prevent, defend against and – if necessary – counter and out maneuver hybrid opponents, it is important for political, civilian and military leaders and decision-makers, as well as for industry and academia, to develop a common and comprehensive understanding of the implications of new technologies in a hybrid threats/warfare context," Dr Schmid said[122].

NATO member states may explore offensive cyber war for a variety of reasons, but there are two key goals that stand out[123]. One example would be gaining a military edge over opposing forces in an armed war by assaulting command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems or logistic networks. Another option would be to disrupt civilian functions (such as transportation, the electrical grid, communications, financial, or government-services networks) during a conflict to force a hostile state to comply with US demands without resorting to armed action[124].

Civilian systems are more vulnerable to destruction because they are more accessible and interconnected; while some of them serve military functions (and hence are 'fair game'), the military–civilian distinction is critical. This actively demonstrates, that in our era one of the newest and most advanced "weapons" for the hybrid warfare tools using actors.

Cyber-attacks vary in scope, duration, and desired effects, ranging from those that are limited in scope, duration, and desired effects, such as taking down a single military or commercial system, to those that are more expansive, prolonged, and damaging, such as isolating a nation's leaders from their forces, or shocking the economy. The likelihood of collateral damage rises in tandem with the attack's aims[125].

The multi-purpose nature of many computer systems, their interconnection, and the lack of obvious firebreaks all increase the risk of escalation. Whereas nuclear war can either happen or not happen, cyber activities might be ambiguous — for example, distinguishing between intelligence gathering

[122] Ibid
[123] See appendix 4: cyberattacks, misinformation strategies.
[124] Gompert D. C. and Binnendijk H., Power to Coerce, RAND paper on the 'power to coerce' include cyber operations as a potentially advantageous, albeit risky, way to bring adversaries into line with US demands without requiring the use of physical force. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
[125] Cavaiola L. J., Gompert D. C., Libicki M., "*Cyber House Rules: On War, Retaliation and Escalation", 2015, p. 83.*

and attack preparations – and hence lead to multiple interpretations.[126] In actuality, vertical escalation might take several forms, each of which could signal and hasten the transition from tactical to strategic cyber warfare. The horizontal path can also be traversed in increments or accidentally. A factor of mere unpredictability exacerbates the hazards of escalation along any of these avenues. Unlike nuclear war, cyber war can escalate without either party wanting to escalate.[127]

Despite the fact that NATO has always secured its communications and information systems, the 2002 NATO Summit in Prague was the first time the Alliance's political agenda included cyber defense. At the 2006 NATO Summit in Riga, Allied leaders emphasized the importance of providing extra protection to critical information systems.

The National Advisory Committee agreed in April 2014 to rename the Defense Policy and Planning Committee/Cyber Defense Committee the Cyber Defense Committee.

Allies agreed a new cyber defense doctrine during the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales. Cyber defense was recognized as part of NATO's basic job of collective defense in this strategy, which means that a cyber strike might trigger NATO's founding treaty's Article 5. Allies also acknowledged that international law governs cyberspace.[128]

The engagement with partner countries is based on shared principles and cyber defense techniques. Requests for Alliance cooperation are considered on a case-by-case basis, based on mutual interest.

NATO also works with, among others, the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

Allies reaffirmed their commitment to acting in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter, international humanitarian law, and international human rights law, in order to promote a free, open, peaceful, and secure cyberspace; and to continue efforts to enhance stability and reduce the risk of conflict at the NATO Summit in June 2021.

[126] Compert D. C. and Libicki M., "Cyber Warfare and Crisis Instability", Survival, vol.56, no. 4, Sep 2014.
[127] Libicki M., "Crisis and Escalation in Cyberspace", Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2013, pp. 73-76.
[128] NATO.int, Cyber Defense, last updated 23 March 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_78170.htm

Allies addressed the evolving security scenario during the Brussels Summit in June 2021, realizing that cyberspace is constantly contested. NATO's three fundamental tasks of collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security, as well as its overall deterrence and defense posture, have all been accepted by allies. At all times – during peacetime, crisis, and conflict – NATO must actively deter, protect against, and fight the whole spectrum of cyber threats at the political, military, and technical levels[129].

NATO's own networks are protected by the NATO Computer Incident Response Capability (NCIRC), which is situated at SHAPE in Mons, Belgium. To stay up with the always changing threat and technology environment, this skill is expected to increase over time.

NATO's Smart Defense efforts have also included cyber defense. Smart Defense allows countries to collaborate to build and sustain capabilities that they couldn't afford to develop or acquire on their own, freeing up resources for other purposes. The Malware Information Sharing Platform (MISP) and the Smart Defense Multinational Cyber Defense Capability Development (MN CD2) projects are two of the current Smart Defense cyber defense programs.

Taking into the consideration NATO’s cyber defense capabilities, new updates in the structure of cyberspace, cooperation with partners in this sphere plus the cooperation with industry, we can see that hybrid tool of “cyber” is a vital point of NATO’s perception of hybrid threats.

[129] Brussels Summit Communique, issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of The North Atlantic Council in Brussels 14 June 2021, Press Release (2021) 086, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_185000.htm

Recommendations and Conclusion of the chapter

Starting the conclusion with NATO rapid response forces. Written early in the VT's development, this chapter, too, makes appropriate use of past experience to forecast expected results - in this case, lasting skepticism about the VJTF's efficacy, and in particular the speed with which a decision to deploy it could be reached and implemented.

Aside from the factors of Russia's most striking achievements in the course of action in Ukraine has been to give NATO a new sense of purpose and stimulate Alliance unity, stating that "the new VJTF will only be successful when some basic conditions and needs are met - e.g., an overhaul of the current funding rules for NATO's stand-by forces, an adequate activation mechanism, and robust command and control system."

Despite hybrid threats' conceptual references to indirect and asymmetric techniques, this necessity shows the realization that hybridity does not characterize the totality of the new ways of conflict. The use of conventional and asymmetric tools and capabilities in military thought and doctrine must be considered in the context of a hybrid actor's broader strategic problems, which include significant conventional and nuclear confrontation. As a result, hybrid threats complement, rather than replace, traditional defense problems. "We can expect to see more hybrid conflicts in which the enemy combines regular warfare tactics with irregular and asymmetric form of warfare," said Michele Flournoy, then US Under-Secretary of Defense for Policy, in 2009 - but, within this framework, the US must remain prepared to deal with high-end threats, in particular sophisticated anti-air and anti-ship weapon systems to deny access to critical regions.[130]

We can say that "hybrid" is based on the ability to use full-spectrum conventional, unconventional, and nuclear combat weapons. As a result, immediate readiness for challenges and rapid escalation from non-military to direct military aspects of conflict are critical. Instead, public criticism from defense officials and analysts in front-line states express worry that an emphasis on hybrid threats gives other NATO members an excuse to focus on low-intensity problems rather than investing in

[130] Flournoy M., “Hybrid War to Pull US Military in Two Directions”, Defense Talk, May 6, 2009, viewed on the May 2022,
https://www.defencetalk.com/hybrid-war-to-pull-us-military-18521/

more expensive high- level warfighting assets. However, these expensive defenses are required to deter conventional enemies[131].

The unique elements of multimodal, ambiguous, and inclusive threats to the entire government should not be overlooked. However, it must be accepted that many components of threats, whether classified as "hybrid" or not, are beyond of NATO's purview. Because the key components of the hybrid techniques user's model are non-military and must be addressed with campaigns that NATO cannot and should not control, many experts in this field argue that cooperation with other international organizations such as the EU and the OSCE is required.

Simply defined, hybrid threats necessitate both troop and resilience responses. However, the lines that separate competences are difficult. Transformations would be required, based on SACEUR's idea of tighter coordination between NATO members in the sphere of police and intelligence, and taking into account that this is not a traditional NATO role: Intelligence cooperation with domestic agencies would be a new area of alliance security cooperation. However, whatever else NATO, the states, the US, or the EU may undertake to safeguard Alliance members, there is just no justification for the forward presence of sizable, credible conventional forces at the Alliance's most vulnerable sites, such as Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia even if Baltic states are the main locations for NATO's excellence centers[132]. Maybe the events of 2022 will trigger the alliance to work in these directions.

While the VJTF, Readiness Action Plan, and exercises like Trident Juncture 2015 are presented by NATO as substantive measures, the limited and tentative nature of actual reinforcement and pre-positioning carried out directly within periphery states does send a message to Kremlin, but not the one intended. It claims that the Western Allies are not completely dedicated to upholding their treaty responsibilities. Rather than preventing the Kremlin from intervening, this aspect may encourage it to believe that it can do so without facing major consequences. To an outsider, it is

[131] See appendix 5: threats to international peace and security.
[132] For more detailed information look:
Strategic Communication Centre of Excellence in Riga- https://stratcomcoe.org/
Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn- https://ccdcoe.org/

unfathomable. Another phenomenon that has existed since the beginning of conflict is debate over new kinds of warfare.

Hybrid language could follow in the footsteps of another operational notion from a decade ago, which, although initially fashionable, suffered from being applied to a wide range of issues. The growth of terminology was unavoidable, and the resultant second-order effect was doctrinal instability, as well as misunderstanding between NATO and national interpretations[133]. These realities make it critical that NATO forces - and, more importantly, the political structures that now decide when and where they should be deployed - train and exercise for the appropriate threats and decision-making issues. Meanwhile, while the concept of "hybridity" may not be a permanent addition to the debate over the nature of combat, it will continue to occupy academics and practitioners in the short term.

Briefly, all these efforts of the Alliance brought to the point that NATO's strategy briefly can be explained by the prism of prepare, deter, defend:

NATO has had a strategy for addressing hybrid threats in place since 2015. NATO will ensure that its members and their partners are adequately equipped to confront hybrid attacks in any shape they may take. It will detect hybrid attacks against the Alliance and, if required, protect the Allies in question. NATO regularly acquires, exchanges, and evaluates information in order to detect and attribute any continuing hybrid action in order to be prepared. At NATO Headquarters, the Joint Intelligence and Security Division advances the Alliance's understanding and analysis of hybrid threats. The hybrid analysis branch gives decision-makers a better understanding of potential hybrid risks.

NATO is determined to act quickly, whenever and wherever necessary, to deter hybrid threats. As part of its deterrence and defense posture, it continues to boost the readiness and preparation of its forces and has reinforced its decision-making process and command structure. This sends a clear message that the Alliance is strengthening its political and military responsiveness, as well as its capacity to send the right forces to the right place at the right time.

[133] Mattis J. M., "USJFCOM Commander's Guidance for Effect-based Operations", Parameters, Autumn 2008, pp. 18-25.

NATO stands ready to protect any ally against any threat if deterrence fails. NATO forces must be able to react quickly and agilely whenever and wherever they are required.[134]

Finally, as of the beginning of 2021, we can highlight some points of NATO's response to the hybrid threats, even if some of these points are examined effectively and others leave much to be desired:

- In order to fight hybrid threats, NATO is strengthening its coordination with partners, particularly the European Union and OSCE;
- The Alliance actively combats propaganda online, on radio, and in print — not answering with more propaganda, but with the pure facts;
- The targeted nation bears the primary responsibility for responding to hybrid threats or attacks;
- As part of collective defense, NATO is ready to assist any ally facing hybrid threats. To address these dangers, the Alliance has created a strategy for its involvement in combatting hybrid warfare;
- A hybrid analysis division of NATO's Joint Intelligence and Security Division improves situational awareness;
- NATO leaders agreed in 2018 to establish counter-hybrid support teams, which will give specialized targeted help to Allies in preparing for and responding to hybrid operations upon request.

[134] Aaronson M., Diessen S., Kermabon Y. D., Long M. B. and Miklaucic M., "NATO Countering the Hybrid Threat," Prism 2(4), 2012, pp. 111-124, https://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/prism/prism_2-4/Prism_111-124_Aaronson-Diessen.pdf

Final Conclusion

Considering the fact, that every chapter has its own detailed conclusion, the final conclusion will define only general and most important outcomes of the research. As a result of the study, the author came to the following conclusions:

- It should be highlighted that evolution and flexibility are fundamental characteristics of all aspects of combat. While proponents of hybrid threats are quick to point out the existence of a seemingly universal quality among warring organizations, it's offers a little clarity how a hybrid threat is more flexible than less 'hybrid' means of warfare. For example, one of the most important characteristics is what hybrid threats refers to as 'function tactics,' in which: It identifies the tasks that must be completed as part of an action in order for it to be successful. The system then assigns appropriate actors to each function and coordinates the effort. Furthermore, it is the ability to adapt to new challenges that allows hybrid threats and their "arsenal" to evolve.
- The main issue with hybrid threats is that they are unable to distinguish themselves from other forces. Hybrid threats come in a variety of forms, including military, political, and criminal, and they deploy these resources with a pragmatic goal. This range and pragmatism mean that there is nothing distinguishably unique about hybrid threats that can be used to focus the conceptual model, but hybrid has evolved as a result of hybrid tactic users' efforts to implement new ideas and tools for achieving their goals, and hybrid may one day have its own "bones" and "mind."
- It is hard to view hybrid threats as an independent theoretical framework, because it lacks many vital points as an independent theory.
- We can say that the hybrid threat is becoming more and more present and omnipresent in all current confrontations, all the more so as society becomes more vulnerable in the era of globalization, technology, and informatization, starting with the idea that a war begins long before weapons are used and that international actors use a wide range of means to achieve their goals.
- Our research has proven, without a doubt, that it is about the reinvention of techniques and old strategies in tandem with the rise of technology and computerization, allowing the intensive use of cybernetic space to mask both the true face of threats and their perpetrators.

Hybrid threats exist today, as they did in the past, across the entire spectrum of conflicts, with evidence suggesting they manifest as hybrid threats in the gray area or open hybrid threats, with the first group being more difficult to recognize and counteract. The era of globalization processes and the rapid growth of the technological world prompted the adoption of subversive measures, which led to the emergence of hybrid approaches.

- Two implemented case studies of Transnistrian conflict and ISIL's use of hybrid methods allow us to track the evolution and new emerging tools of hybrid threats in practice, proving that while 2014 was the breakpoint year of the hybrid threats to become mainstream topic for scholars and researchers, in reality the end of the 20th century and the start of our century conflicts gave a path of rapid growth and evolution for hybrid methods. Even if ISIL is struggling to reach its new aims and goals, the factor that they were able to shatter the international peace is showing that weaker actor can really become an obstacle even for well-developed and much stronger actors. Furthermore, at some point a terroristic organization can become something similar to a state, and all due to the hybrid tactics.

- As the result of the content analysis of the narratives "hybrid threats" and "hybrid warfare" within NATO, we can state that from the initial period 2014 Wales Summit, to the discussed finishing point of the 2019 London Summit, NATO officials, official documents, declarations, or other structure statements are using hybrid warfare and hybrid threats more and more often, from which we can assume the reality of NATO respond mechanisms trying to go foot by foot with the evolution of hybrid threats and emergence of new tools and mechanisms of the hybrid warfare. But some statistics and researches show that there is a lack of common perception of the hybrid threats between the politics of the Alliance and that without a universal understanding of the phenomenon of hybrid it is nearly impossible to counter this kind of threats.
- From the Wales Summit of the 2014 to the 2021 Brussels Summit NATO transformed itself so it could effectively withstand and adapt to the new techniques of the hybrid threats. The main strategy is "prepare, deter, defend", for the effective implementation of this strategy many adjustments and new tools were created by NATO in the territories of member states.

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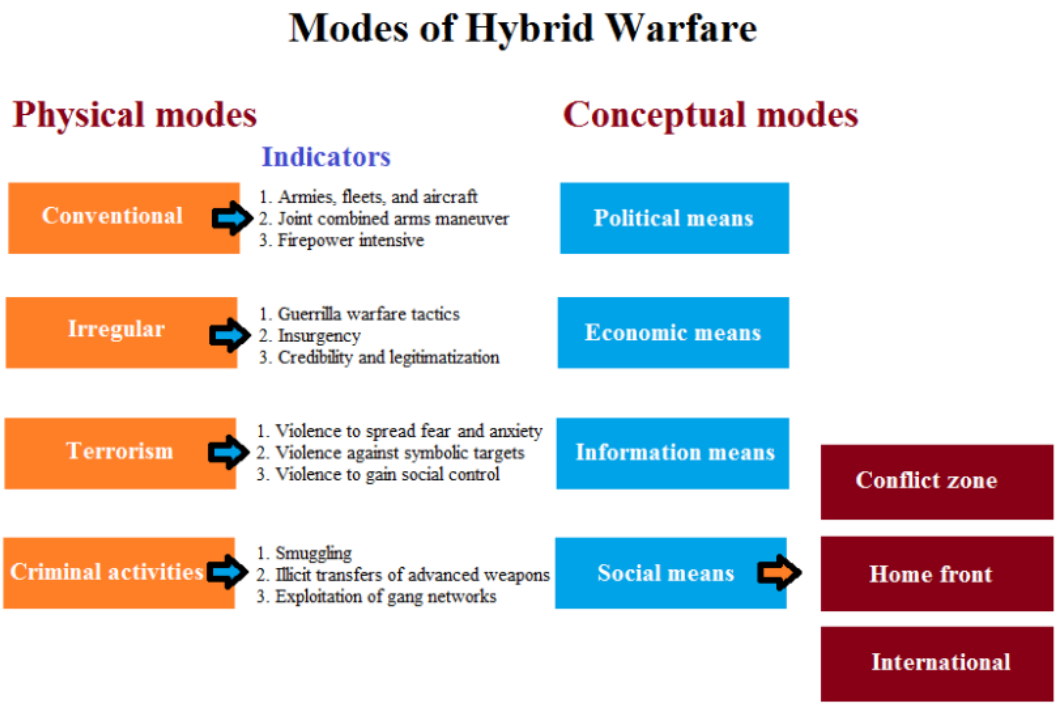
Appendix

Appendix 1. Modes of warfare and dimensions of hybrid warfare

Figure 5 – Modes of warfare and dimensions of hybrid warfare



Made by Tienhoven M.

Appendix 2. Hybrid threats model

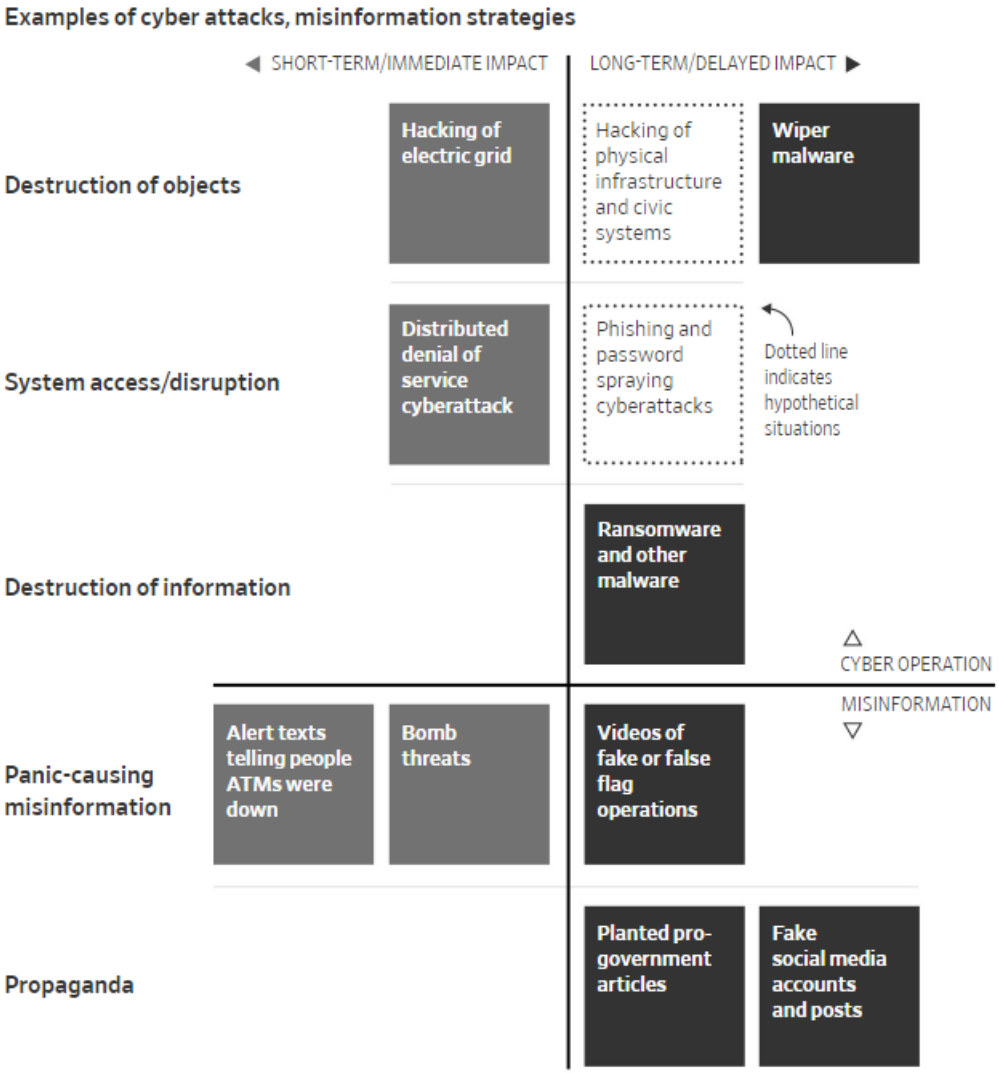
Corruption
Critical Infrastructure and Critical Information Infrastructure
Criminal Elements
Social
Subversion/Terrorism
Information Operations/Censorship/Strategic Communication-Propaganda
Politics/Diplomacy/Intimidation/ Law/Travel Restrictions
Ideology/Religion/ Worldview/Education/Culture
Cyber Threats/Cyber Intrusions/Cyber Attacks/Black Information Operations/Cyber Deception
Intelligence Activities
Civic Clubs/Support of Local Unrest/Election interference
Economic (Public Finance, Banks, Pension Funds, Food, Transportation)
Physical Environment

Made by Emil Antaranyan

Appendix 3. Map of Moldova and Transnistria

From: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Moldova-with-Transnistria-y-Gagauzia-marked-see-online-version-for-colours_fig5_326333403

Appendix 4. Cyber-attacks example



Appendix 5. Hybrid threats to international peace and security

By Richterova G.