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NATO STRATEGY TO DEFEAT ENEMY FORCES IN THE HYBRID WAR

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Abstract: *The current paper brings forward the present issues concerning the challenges of the new types of armed conflict in its hybrid form. The need for preparation in order to adequately prepare to react to the new national/regional security challenges, such as the conflict at the western European border, in particular, has forced NATO to improve its response capacity. First of all, NATO is required to identify a conflict in which the organization rules are not the well-known ones. For such situations going beyond the limits of Article 5 and even Article 4 of the Treaty of Alliance, the immediate reaction as well as the North Atlantic Council (NAC) authorization for action is very difficult to achieve. In such circumstances NATO policies need to be seriously reconsidered in terms of flexibility. The current paper, therefore, draws attention to the need of reconfiguring the framework for defining conflict nowadays and hence the appropriate ways to respond.*

Keywords: *hybrid threats, hybrid warfare, hybrid tactics, deterrence policy, destabilization*

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, we are facing a difficult period of time generated by advanced technology use, globalization and violent extremists. All these resulted in hybrid threats in which state and non-state actors make use of various, more or less legal forces and means, combining diverse tactics and technologies to achieve their goals.

These confrontations do not submit to classic warfare rules as the parties involved use conventional and unconventional as well as military and non-military capabilities, combined tactics, terrorism and crime and disorder [1].

2. HYBRID WARFARE

The latest military conflicts have demonstrated that the belligerents use new methods and state-of-the-art technology in order to plan and shape conflict. The technological advances and the globalization have ensured the legal and material foundation for the belligerents.

Although civilian and interstate conflicts happen more frequently, their strategic and operational effects have had little impact on the West.

Looking into the more recent military conflicts, military analysts have classified war generating threats as follows:

- conventional threats;
- unconventional threats;
- hybrid threats.

Future threats are evolving by incorporating new ideas and capabilities while divesting others through atrophy.

Furthermore, many contemporaneous writings on the future threat deal directly with the *means* by which an adversary may fight (precision guided mortars, cyber warfare, armed unmanned aerial systems) without a coherent understanding of the *ways* in which adversaries will approach both strategy and warfare to serve their political objectives (deterrence through low scale attrition, active defense, war on the enemies' infrastructure and economy). We intend to provide a clearer description of the emerging threats that forces will confront and to frame a more specific problem set for use in guiding the design of a future joint force that is as agile and adaptive as the threats we may face in the future.

Future threats will be entities or movements that continually scan the environment for opportunities, and threaten to or apply violence to affect the will and psyche of others to achieve their political objectives.

Hybrid threats lead to hybrid warfare.

Hybrid warfare concept appeared and evolved within the military thinking of the last decade as a theoretical response to the necessity to adapt armed forces to the new realities of an unclear conflict environment.

Even terms, tools, and techniques that Russia has employed in Ukraine are new, hybrid warfare concept is not. At the beginning of World War II, German disguised in Polish uniforms and shot down German regular forces to provide justification for the entire world for Hitler's invasion of Poland.

The Soviets would regularly establish friendly "governments" of exiled communists and fellow-travelers to legitimize their foreign military invasions and occupations. The Chinese have advanced warfare strategy that includes information, media and psychological elements.

The hybrid warfare concept first appeared in 2005 in the article entitled "Future Warfare. The Rise of Hybrid Wars" [2].

Hybrid warfare is a military strategy that combined irregular warfare, conventional warfare and cyberwarfare. More over, hybrid warfare describes attacks by nuclear,

biological and chemical weapons, improvised explosive devices and information warfare. This approach to conflicts is a potent, complex variation of warfare. By combining kinetic operations with subversive efforts, the aggressor wants to avoid attribution or retribution. Hybrid warfare can be used to describe the flexible and complex dynamics of the battlespace requiring a highly adaptable and resilient response [3].

Lt. Col. Bill Nemeth, United States Marine Corps, described hybrid warfare as "the contemporary form of guerrilla warfare" that "employs both modern technology and modern mobilization methods" [4].

Retired United States Army Col. Jack McCuen presents hybrid warfare as the focus of activity of asymmetric warfare, fought on three decisive battlegrounds: (1) within the conflict zone population; (2) home front population; and (3) international community [5].

David Kilcullen, author of the book "The Accidental Guerrilla", states that hybrid warfare is the best explanation for modern conflicts, but highlights that it includes a combination of irregular warfare, civil war, insurgency and terrorism [6].

Hybrid war combined a variety of military activities, resources and applications to reform hostile governments, movements, or trends in politically, socially, and economically unstable conditions, characteristic of failing/failed states. In addition, includes a full spectrum of military intelligence capabilities, armaments, nonconventional weapons, support units, and combat equipment, available for instant employment if opposing elements of regular forces or irregular insurgents, terrorists, or other non-state actors ever cross the hostility threshold and constitute a direct threat to or threaten these non-hostile activities [7].

In comparison to conventional warfare, the "centre of gravity" in hybrid warfare is a target population. The adversary tries to influence the policy-makers and key decision makers by combining kinetic operations with subversive efforts.

In his 2007 work entitled "Conflict in the 21st Century. The Rise of Hybrid Wars", Frank Hoffman highlights the special adaptation



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ability of the adversaries who prepare and employ different asymmetrical capabilities and methods. Therefore, future conflicts cannot be classified as conventional or irregular as the most capable of the opponents will aim at combining multiple capabilities and capacities in a complex typological mixture while constantly keeping approach methods unclear. The challenge will not originate in a single state choosing a particular approach but in states or groups that choose the entire arsenal available as well as the technologies and tactics which are applicable to own geography and culture.

Russia may be the main example in terms of hybrid war but others states also own the resources and the will for it. For instance, competing for resources combined with geo-strategic tensions and a huge Chinese Diaspora turn South China Sea region into another "hybrid war" hotbed.

The situation is similar in the Middle East. The ethnic and religious tensions there can contribute to "hybrid war". Iran has invested huge sums of money in developing electronic intelligence. It owns huge amounts of energy resources and a media-controlled regime. If international negotiations are successful by the end of the year and Iran takes its place back in the international economic system, a significant evolvement of the "hybrid war" in Teheran can be the unintentional effect, as a new and strong regional politics tool.

3. NATO STRATEGY TO DEFEAT ENEMY FORCES IN THE HYBRID WAR

NATO is a military alliance that never covers the full spectrum of hybrid warfare challenges. NATO has a lot of instruments at its disposal. The Alliance spent a lot of money

and effort during the last years to stay abreast of new threats, especially in cyberspace.

NATO is a collective security alliance which is able to deter threats and defend its populations in the event of conflict. The collective use of force needs authorization of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) – which requires the identification of an armed attack against a member as understood by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The NAC authorize military action only by the Alliance unanimous votes. Hybrid warfare tactics present difficulties vis-à-vis NAC – authorized collective action as their ambiguity makes them difficult to detect and define accurately.

A strength point of hybrid tactics is that they can progress incrementally towards a threatening situation while remaining under the Article 5 [8] threshold. It is obvious that avoiding Article 5 violations is in Russia's interests, as NATO's military superiority has effectively removed conventional warfare from the suite of practical options. As a result, a form of strategic competition targeting the political, economic, and societal vulnerabilities in the West, while remaining concealed and below the threshold of conventional response, is the only viable option for Russia today to achieve its goals.

The new field for the strategic competition between NATO and Russia is subject for the Article 4 level. Article 4 of the Washington Treaty states: "The parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened." The challenge to Article 4 is coming to a unified and coherent understanding of the threat is difficult when perceptions are different around the 28 member states.

2014 forced NATO to reanalyze the international security environment in which they are operating. In the East, the international behavioral norms established by NATO, were challenged by Russia's annexation of Crimea. Using force to alter Ukraine's established border called into question assumptions about the sovereign territorial integrity of European states – introducing doubt into the post-Cold War interest of a Europe increasingly whole, at peace, and free.

Rhetoric evoking spheres of influence and protection of “Russians everywhere” provoked fears that Russian President Vladimir Putin was even challenging the very notion of the pluralistic nation state – the reality of the vast majority of the nation states in existence today. Despite all of this, the grand strategic vision driving Russia's actions remains unclear [9].

President Putin is trying to alter a problem which he seen it to be counter to Russian interests. He want a new geopolitical map for Europe. Putin's vision for a new Europe appears to be one wherein closer European political and economic union stalls, and the role of the United States declines to a point where the Euro-Atlantic security community splinters. New Russian military doctrine, published on 2014, stated that Russia considered NATO and US efforts in Central and Eastern Europe to be a direct threat – a memory of the days when NATO and Russia tried to forge a partnership after Soviet Union collapsed.

NATO faces a new unstable era from the Middle East to North Africa to the Sahel. There are powerful non-state armed groups which continue to grind away at state structures and leave a host of problems in their wake from resource deprivation to mass migrations to intense localized conflict. The new threat which has grown recently is the rise of Daesh with its base of operations in Syria and Iraq. Daesh's rapid advance in Iraq during the summer of 2014 brings the control over extensive areas of both Syria and Iraq. The group has the capacity to attract pledges of allegiance from other groups from North Africa and the Sahel. Recently Libya shows the appeal of the group's message of forming a

new caliphate in the state structures in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region since the WWI.

The group's capacity to organize that territory, using a mix of conventional tactics and terrorists, and recruiting thousands of fighters from the entire world gives it a particularly new challenge in the domain of non-state armed groups. Daesh achieved important stocks of powerful weaponry and a lot of cash when it overran Iraqi forces in Mosul; this, in addition with there's ability to maintain control over oil fields placed in occupied territory, allows for it to be relatively self-financing. Daesh's violent campaigns have disrupted local populations and broken down state authority through a vast area causing an increased outflow of mass migration and arms, drug, and human trafficking within its areas.

NATO deterrence policy for hybrid warfare is based on a rapid military response. It has three potential weaknesses. First, it is difficult for all member states to agree on the source of a conflict, creating a problem when they have to vote for a collective action. Second, fighting alone is insufficient to counter irregular threats. Although it will be a rapid response, deploying military force to a hybrid warfare area will turn out as “too little too late”. Sometimes, the conflict evolves under the radar. Finally, a deterrent built upon military force alone will not be credible. NATO cannot use the strategy of massive retaliation, or rely exclusively on one course of action, fighting against irregular threats. States which appear vulnerable to destabilization could adopt early measures to increase the resilience of their security.

NATO can apply for a flexible policy and strive to deter prospective adversaries with a lot of means: reinforcing links between domestic agencies, intelligence sharing, increased role of NATO's Special Forces political will and investment, force mobilization, political authority.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Future conflicts will make use of no conventional or asymmetrical actions



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exclusively but of a combination of these. The enemies will employ a combination of traditional, asymmetrical and disruptive methods to achieve operational and strategic superiority. Consequently, hybrid threats refer to the evolution of contemporary actors, the need of sustained national effort to effectively respond to them in due time.

The diversity and complexity of the issues raised by hybrid threats confirm the need of finding something more than technical or regional answers. Therefore, a suitable security strategy is needed to stand against hybrid threats effectively operationally and in a unified manner.

Additionally, flexible command and control structures need to be established to quickly adapt to the tactics, methods and means employed by the new actors that put into practice hybrid threats.

The best means of countering hybrid warfare is to prevent it before development. It is more difficult to deal with irregular threats once they become an overt attempt at destabilization. The open fire exchanges, as it happened in Ukraine, signify that a hybrid conflict has evolved to its later stages. Those kinds of actions could easily escalate into an insurgency with no foreseeable political or military solution. For instance the conflict from Ukraine could be a "frozen conflict."

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