

RUSSIAN HYBRID WARFARE

*Captain Dragoș-Mihai PĂUNESCU, PhD Candidate**

Abstract: *The annexation of Crimea and the conflict in eastern Ukraine brought the notion of hybrid warfare in the public attention faster than ever. The aggressor is involved in hybrid wars with mostly irregular troops, as paramilitary groups, destabilization groups, diversionary groups, and agents operating inside local rebel groups or under security companies' umbrella. Moscow uses a combination of conventional and unconventional methods with new and sophisticated capabilities to limit Western influence. The actual strategy is a warning to the West that Russia is denying any NATO activity close to its borders.*

Keywords: *hybrid, Ukraine, Russia, NATO, private security companies.*

In the last two decades, Moscow's main goal, articulated in words and demonstrated in actions, was to reshape the international system from a unipolar world where the United States was the primary power with a multipolar world order in which Russia would have greater room for manoeuvre to conduct Kremlin's chosen strategy. Advocating for a "democratic" or "multipolar" world order was clearly directed against the dominating position of the United States and the cooperation with China contributed to the nowadays new competition between US and a communist giant.

Having the nostalgia for the old imperial order, Russia aims to secure and control the post-Soviet area by limiting the sovereignty of its neighbours. Confronting the West to reshape the sphere of influence and to limit its ability to act unilaterally in various crises through diplomatic or economic means, represents another objective of Moscow's strategy. This includes as well preventing closer cooperation between the West and former Soviet states by deterring with the ability to inflict a credible conventional, hybrid or nuclear threat.

The strategic goal for Russia is to have a ring of states along its periphery that relate to Moscow out of fear for their survival, while at the same time serving as buffer zones between Russia and NATO.

* "CAROL I" National Defence University, paunescu.dragos@yahoo.com.