

## CONCLUSIONS ON HYBRID WARFARE

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**Abstract:** *A pioneer in the field of Public Relations, Edward L. Bernays, emphasized the use of words as weapons in his work entitled „Propaganda” in 1928. In „Public Relations”, he considered the word and image to be the representation of tools for building peace or war. Therefore, in 2013, the chief of the Russian General Staff, Valery Gerasimov stated that „the non-military means have proved to be used four times more frequently in modern conflicts than in conventional conflicts.”*

*The Russian Federation is led following Lenin’s idea: “If Russia cannot control a country, then the respective country must be at least destabilized.”*

**Keywords:** *hybrid warfare, techniques of persuasion, the word as a weapon of war, invisible government, special forces, misinformation operations, threat, subversion, green men, cyber-attacks, Russian hackers, asymmetric tactics, NATO, EU, The Russian Federation, USA, mineral resources.*

**H**ybrid warfare, probably the last manner of waging current wars was defined by NATO as: „a large array of hostile actions of which military force is just a small amount which are used in a focused, concerted manner, as part of a flexible strategy with long-term goals.”

The Chief of Russian General Staff, Valery Gerasimov stated in 2013 that „non-military means proved to be used with a four times bigger frequency in modern conflicts than in conventional ones.”<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, resorting to political, economic, information, humanitarian and other non-military measures, besides other non-military measures and special forces in addition to local population can decide the fate of a war

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<sup>1</sup> *Revista Geopolitica* nr. 74 (2/2018), p. 37

(see the model used by the Russian Federation in Georgia, but especially in the Ukraine).

Everything is achieved in time, during several years, for consolidating the intentions of this new way of waging war through means such as the following: propaganda, unconventional military training, perfect acknowledgement of the terrain, of the state of the population in the targeted areas controlling it very well, being able to succeed in large measure in whatever „tzar” Putin had set out as goals.

Hybrid warfare is not declared by any state; no action is conducted, taking advantage of all the weaknesses of the targeted state, such as those ethnical or organizational, where the case may be, in order to accomplish the goals that were set.

Mass-media plays an especially important role in this kind of war, influencing in large manner the morale of military, security and public order forces as well as that of citizens generally speaking.

It is not merely by chance that the founding father of Public Relations, Edward L. Bernays<sup>2</sup>, emphasized even as long ago as 1928 the use of the word as lethal weapon in his work *Propaganda in Public Relations*; thus, the word and the image it creates become tools for building peace or war.

By making use of persuasive techniques and supporting a minority of people, in this case, forces trained especially for this purpose get to put into practice that invisible reality that afterwards becomes official.

As a result, this type of wars waged by the Russian Federation are no longer declared as such and they are waged outside the usual patterns, such as that in Ukraine especially.

Differences are erased between the following: the state of peace and the state of war; involving militaries and involving civilians; classical offensive – attack – actions and defensive actions:

Differences among special forces, which are quite large in number, intelligence services and the simple soldiers;

The role of undercover officers grew significantly, bringing an extremely important, even decisive, contribution to a complete collision, sometimes with dramatic consequences;

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<sup>2</sup> Edward L. Bernays, *Relații Publice*, Editura Alexandria Publishing House, Suceava, 2014, p. 3.

The mobilization undertaken at a certain time disappears, being replaced by the secret one a long time before performing the intended actions;

Gathering intelligence has been and still is of capital significance; the most important way of obtaining victory, even without military measures and classical, routine operations;

All possible measures are used, not necessarily the classical ones, especially for decreasing the morale of people in the targeted state, by making use of the means of influencing the behavior of the respective population. Examples in this regard are the situation in Ukraine as well as that in Romania in 1989, when Romania was subject to disinformation operations.<sup>3</sup> These were added „a series of unexpected explosions, arsons in factories, public places, National Theater, 23 August Plant etc.”<sup>4</sup>

„The investigation made by Romanian Senate upon the events in December 1989 mentions a sudden increase of Soviet tourists from 30,000 up to over 67,000 in December 1989 who remained in the country, without legal permission, one more year, until October 1990, when they were officially asked by the Romanian Prime Minister to leave Romania.”<sup>5</sup>

A common practice used by the USSR was „*stirring ethnic minorities in order to bring Romania on the Soviet path*”<sup>6</sup>, as well as inculcating the idea that „*Romania is unable to rule Transylvania.*”<sup>7</sup>

Budapest also used Hungarian paramilitary forces who spoke Romanian and were dressed in Romanian traditional attire against Hungarian and German ethnic population in Transylvania.<sup>8</sup>

We have mentioned but a few of the numerous actions made by the USSR (Russian Federation) and Hungary against Romania, while at the same time, „High Commissioner on National Minorities of European Council and independent organizations in the West talked about Romania as a model regarding the management of ethnic relations.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Larry L. Watts, *Ferește-mă Doamne de prieteni*, Editura Rao, București, 2011, p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> Idem pct. 3, p. 710.

<sup>5</sup> Idem pct. 3, p. 55.

<sup>6</sup> Larry L. Watts, *Cei dintâi vor fi cei din urmă*, Editura Rao, București, 2013, p. 223.

<sup>7</sup> Idem pct. 5, p. 226.

<sup>8</sup> Idem pct. 5, p. 242.

<sup>9</sup> Idem pct. 3, p. 54.

There is an invasion of fake news for generating complete confusion and, implicitly, a decrease in soldiers' morale as well as in the state of mind of public safety and order forces and population itself.

It is increasingly popular to make use of software products and applications for monitoring the audience's opinions.

Extremist materials are issued in huge quantities in order to intimidate citizens and make them submissive.

Another current strategy is the open use of the threat with conventional weapons, as well as the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Russia's example in the hybrid warfare in Ukraine is relevant in this respect: the means used there were propaganda, corruption, threats, manipulation, subversion, exploitation of ethnic and religious divergences, intense migration in the latest years in Europe etc.

Conventional military attacks were used alongside non-military ones, and even assassinations.

The goal of the hybrid warfare in Ukraine waged by the Russian Federation was to destabilize the state power exercised over the territory without being forced to take into consideration the rules and losses of classical warfare.

Thus, Ukraine actually turned into huge range area for experimentation for this type of modern warfare, a combination between conventional military attacks, coupled with disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks, and the use of all kinds of corruption plus manipulation of energy issues: gas, electricity, other mineral resources, etc.

The use of "little green men" in Crimea, who were actually soldiers from the Russian special forces, without military insignia, but benefitting from excellent equipment and high-level training – physically, mentally, and militarily – ultimately produced significant results.

Those professionals, helped by other people, carefully prepared in advance, Ukrainian citizens but attached to the Russian cause, occupied the strategic points of interest in Crimea and the South-East of Ukraine, such as the Parliament and International Airport in Simferopol, they blocked all Ukrainian military units, other institutions from outside the capital city while in the capital city of Ukraine, authorities were busy with "Maidan" action.

According to specialists in the field, Ukraine turned into a huge laboratory and testing range for these multiple and especially efficient forms of modern warfare.

The victory in this area was also facilitated by the cyber-attacks conducted by Russian hackers in the latest years in Ukraine, against NATO and, why not, all over Europe in the very near future.

Military specialists in the field consider that this type of warfare was actually initiated in Russia, determined by losing in the economic competition and thus hoping to influence the public policies of the Western world.

The official employment of soldiers in the Russian Federation could be accomplished in the final phase, namely the activities related to peace keeping in the respective areas in Eastern Ukraine for being as close to reality as possible.

The need to take again its place as super-power held by the Russian Federation next to the USA led to Russia's return to the forefront of world politics, by any means, including by taking advantage of the alliance with China which has a detached leading role in the world regarding its GDP of over 23 trillion dollars.

Hybrid wars are not declared by states; the military component of a hybrid war is not explicitly assumed as it is not the only one used, but rather advantage is taken of the military and non-military weaknesses of the targeted states, the internal tensions and frictions, their weak, corrupted institutions, as well as their economic or at least energetic dependence.

Ambiguous, asymmetric, hybrid tactics were used – in one word, “unconventional” – carefully adjusted to the area, taking advantage of the enemy's weaknesses and making use of the „small steps policy”.

This is what the Russian Federation did in Crimea, Lugansk, Donetsk, Transnistria, Moldova, Georgia etc. A lot of the actions were based on the support of Russian-speaking community and not only, according to current Karaganov doctrine.

Moscow wishes to rule over its neighbors in order to prevent them from coming too close to the Western world as well as to undermine its main opponents: the USA, NATO, the EU; furthermore, it wishes to regain its influence in the Balkans, Northern Africa, the Middle East, by cultivating its relationships with Turkey and by establishing a partnership with Egypt,

while by conquering Crimea it comes back as a main power at the Black Sea. Clearly, Putin's ambitions do not stop there.

The Russian Federation has as a creed Lenin's idea that „If Russia cannot control a country, then that country has to be at least destabilized.”<sup>10</sup>

The new Russian strategy of returning to the superpower position is going to intensify the rivalries among the great powers, namely: Russia – USA, China – USA etc.

The policy of modern Russia, as a legitimate successor of USSR, is determined by historic traditions, in addition to promoting a new government strategy, by making use of tough measures for raising the rating, such as the overnight emergence in Russia of disasters, fake terrorist attacks, serious explosions, with lots of casualties followed by the inevitable conquering of the targeted territories by Russian Federation.

Putin threatened several times the USA and the EU with the possible annexation of Crimea and Eastern Ukraine and the US and Western countries' reactions were quite weak.

It should not come as a surprise that Kremlin's ambitions are not going to be satisfied once and for all with Ukraine, the history proving just that.

Unfortunately, the EU is confused, it lacks valuable leaders, a clear position generated by consensus and hence the present consequences that bother the population raising their level of discontent.

The prevention measures of hybrid tactics are complex and they pertain to all the fields of activity, starting with defense, public order, finances, intelligence services, diplomacy, efficient combating of cyber-attacks, political consensus and a firm position of EU leadership against Russia.

We should keep in mind that the perception on Russia has almost always been reduced to a feeling of contempt and aversion in many countries of the world, and especially Europe.

In hybrid warfare, the essential issue is finding the weak points of the leaders of the targeted states, of their armed forces, public order forces, intelligence services, corruption, economic and energetic dependence etc.

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<sup>10</sup> Geopolitica nr. 67 (4/2016), p. 122.

What is important is the adhesion and support of the population and not really the actual invasion of the targeted areas. It is also believed that Russia is going to always choose national pride over people's prosperity.

Putin, aided by his former KGB colleagues, appointed in highly influential positions in Russia, started a few years ago an aggressive, expansionist policy of the country, despite considerable costs for the country.

Western sanctions, international isolation, the crisis determined by the decrease in oil and natural gas prices have not yet managed to bring "tsar Putin" down on his knees.

The intensification of rivalries between the great powers is going to become pure certainty, such as the confrontation Russia – USA, China – USA, including through the battle for acquiring the last reserves of mineral resources in the world, including those in Antarctica.

Thus, we are witnessing a fierce race for mineral resources as well as water and fresh air resources.

At the same time, Russian Federation will act for consolidating its position in Europe, especially against ex-socialist countries, encouraging nationalism, undermining NATO, the EU and the USA, and increasing again the role of military forces in international relations as well as, and especially between the relations among the world's greatest powers.



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