

IS HYBRID WARFARE REALLY NEW?*

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Abstract

The 2014 Russian - Ukrainian crisis and Russian military activities in the crisis, that changed the security paradigm in Europe, reopened the debate on the characteristics of post Cold War conflicts, which have been associated mainly with terrorism and civil war. The post-Cold War conflicts produced new warfare theories, including “low intensity warfare”, “fourth generation warfare” or “compound warfare”, followed by “hybrid warfare,” the term used by the West for Russian military activities in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. This paper first outlines the basis of warfare principles and characteristics described in official military doctrines, and describes post Cold War warfare theories focused mainly on the evolution of hybrid warfare theory. It basically examines Russian military activities within the framework of warfare doctrines in official military documents. It will be argued that hybrid warfare, like the other theories that describe post Cold War conflicts, does not constitute a new form of warfare.

Keywords: Hybrid Warfare, Ukrainian Crisis, Low-Intensity Conflict, Fourth-Generation Warfare, Compound Warfare

Hibrit (Melez) Savaş Gerçekten Yeni Mi?

Öz

2014 Rusya - Ukrayna Krizi ve Rusya'nın kriz kapsamında Avrupa'nın güvenlik paradigmasını değiştiren askeri faaliyetleri, esas olarak terörizm ve iç savaş ile özdeşleşen Soğuk Savaş sonrası çatışmaların niteliğine yönelik tartışmaları tekrar başlatmıştır. Soğuk Savaş sonrası çatışmalar düşük yoğunluklu çatışma, dördüncü nesil savaş ya da bileşik savaş dahil yeni teoriler ortaya çıkarmış ve bunları batılı devletler tarafından Rusya'nın Kırım ve Ukrayna'nın doğusundaki askeri faaliyetleri için kullanılan hibrit (melez) savaş teorisi takip etmiştir. Bu çalışma öncelikle resmi askeri doktrinlerde belirtildiği şekilde savaş prensiplerinin ve niteliklerinin temelini ortaya koymakta ve hibrit (melez) savaş teorisinin gelişimi ağırlıklı olarak üzere Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönem savaş teorilerini tanımlamaktadır. Temel olarak Rusya'nın askeri faaliyetlerini resmi askeri dokümanlardaki savaş doktrinleri çerçevesinde incelemektedir. Çalışmada Soğuk Savaş sonrası çatışmaları tanımlayan diğer teoriler gibi hibrit (melez) savaş teorisinin de yeni bir savaş biçimi olmadığı ileri sürülmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Hibrit Savaş, Ukrayna Krizi, Düşük Yoğunluklu Çatışma, Dördüncü Nesil Savaş, Bileşik Savaş

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Introduction

As Douglas C. Lovelace, former Director of the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College, put it, “In an era of broad and perhaps profound change, new theories and concepts are to be welcomed rather than shunned. However, before they are fully embraced, they need to be tested rigorously, for the cost of implementing a false theory and developing operational and strategic concepts around it can be greater than remaining wedded to an older, but sounder one” (Echevarria, 2005: III).

In other words, new theories without sound background support weaken and dilute warfare studies. This has been especially true for the post-Cold War era, in which intrastate and asymmetrical conflicts along with terrorism came to dominate international security. This shift persuaded scholars to explain emerging conflicts by means of new theories, including “Low-Intensity Conflict” and “Fourth-Generation” or “Compound” Warfare. While the new theories found great reception at the beginning, in essence they re-conceptualized past conflicts, including wars in ancient times, using different terminology.

Russian warfare activities in eastern Ukraine and in Crimea brought the term “hybrid warfare” onto the agenda of the NATO, although there has been intense work on hybrid warfare theory since the beginning of the Cold war, with great emphasis on its asymmetrical character. Theorists revised the existing hybrid warfare definition to conceptualize Russian military activities, which according to Russian officials have been based on experience gained during the Color Revolutions (Golts, 2014: 1) and the Arab Spring (Coalson, 2014). Especially Russia’s technology-based tools, including mass media and cyber warfare, have been highlighted as major characteristics of Russian hybrid warfare alongside traditional and irregular warfare capabilities.

The central question is whether “hybrid warfare” (especially as performed by Russia during the Ukrainian crisis) constitutes a new form of warfare. Or is it essentially derived from classical warfare forms and principles, applied with new strategies, tactics and technologies? When one compares existing official military doctrines with Russian military strategies -the most frequently cited example of hybrid warfare theory- one sees that Russian hybrid strategy, despite its new and unusual tactics based on massive use of

technology, constitutes simply a new version of classical warfare rather than a breakthrough in warfare theory.

1. Evolution of Warfare Theory

The capstone doctrine US Armed Forces describes war as “socially sanctioned violence to achieve a political purpose”, and warfare as “the mechanism, method, or modality of armed conflict against an enemy.” The documents underlines that warfare is “the how” of waging war and it continues to change and be transformed by society, diplomacy, politics, and technology (Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the US, 2013: I-2/4). Therefore evolution of warfare theory is important to understand basics of hybrid warfare theory.

Warfare tactics, strategies, and technologies have of course been evolving since ancient times, but the basic principles and forms of warfare have not been changed since then. Therefore, warfare in the 21st century remains what it has always been: a violent clash of interests between or among organized groups characterized by the use of military force (Irregular Warfare Joint Operation Concept, 2007: 6). Thus, *The Art of War*, composed by Chinese strategist Sun Tzu in the 6th century BC, remains one of the most-cited warfare strategy texts today. In the same way, the 18th-century Prussian general von Clausewitz’s *On War* still constitutes a veritable bible of warfare strategy, despite rapid advancement in weapons technology since Clausewitz’s day.

US warfare doctrines have dominated Western warfare strategies and tactics since the beginning of the Cold War, due to the vast American experience gained during the wars the US has fought since World War II, America’s huge nuclear arsenal, and its strong influence in NATO. Not surprisingly, then, since traditional warfare strategies based on US doctrines remain the focus of the Alliance even in the post-Cold War era (Frantzen, 2005: 81), principles of modern warfare as practiced by Western countries, especially NATO members, derive from US doctrines and field manuals.

The doctrine of the Armed Forces of the United States declares that “the US military recognizes two basic forms of warfare -traditional and irregular” and that “forms of warfare are applied not in terms of an ‘either/or’ choice, but in various combinations to suit a combatant’s strategy and capabilities” (JP-1: Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States, 2013: X). The term “traditional warfare” has usually been defined as conventional (Boot, 2013: 100) or regular warfare, while scholars, theorists and strategists define “irregular warfare” by means of various terms such as unconventional (AJP-01 (D) Allied Joint Doctrine, 2010: 2-7), non-conventional, or guerilla warfare (Bellamy, 2016: 10).

US doctrine characterizes traditional warfare as a violent struggle for domination between nation-states or coalitions and alliances of nation-states, and goes on to state that “with the increasingly rare case of formally declared war, traditional warfare typically involves force-on-force military operations in which adversaries employ a variety of conventional forces and Special Operations Forces (SOF) against each other in all physical domains as well as the information environment (which includes cyberspace)” (JP-1: Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States, 2013: X). In other words, operations by conventional forces and special forces, with support by information and cyber warfare, constitute the central components of traditional warfare.

Irregular warfare, on the other hand, is “a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). In irregular warfare, a less powerful adversary seeks to disrupt or negate the military capabilities and advantages of more powerful military force, which usually serves the more powerful nation’s established government” (JP-1: Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States, 2013: X). Irregular warfare favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary’s power, influence, and will (Irregular Warfare Joint Operation Concept, 2007: 1). The focus of conventional military operations is normally an adversary’s armed forces with the objective of influencing the adversary’s government. Irregular warfare focuses on the control or influence of populations, not on the control of an adversary’s forces or territory (Irregular Warfare Joint Operation Concept, 2007: 1).

Throughout recorded history, traditional and irregular warfare have been employed together. However, Boot (2013: 100) argues that traditional warfare (using the term “conventional”) is a relatively recent innovation compared to irregular warfare, which was carried out by bands of loosely organized, ill-disciplined, and highly armed volunteers who disdained open battle warriors. After the formation of nation-states, he states, traditional warfare became the dominant form until the end of the Cold War, when warfare characteristics underwent a major shift due to the disappearance of the bipolar West/East paradigm. Osinga and French (2010: 22) argue that traditional warfare disappeared due to the dominance of Western militaries in conventional warfare and globalization. At any rate, the changing character of warfare after the end of the Cold War, and the evolution of warfare due to evolving weapons technology, methods, and tactics, led warfare theorists to conceptualize new warfare theories, just as scholars likewise developed new definitions and categorizations.

Low-intensity warfare, one of these new theories, [and, it should be noted, officially replaced in the US Department of Defense parlance by the term

“irregular warfare” (Irregular Warfare Joint Operation Concept, 2007: 6)] is defined as “a political-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states. It frequently involves protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies. Low intensity warfare ranges from subversion to the use of armed force. It is waged by a combination of means, employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments. Low intensity wars are often localized, generally in the Third World, but contain regional and global security implications” (Field Manual 100-20: Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict, 1990: 11). Boot (2013: 114) predicts that low intensity conflict could pose greater problems for the world's leading powers than it has in the past.

The term “Fourth Generation Warfare” first appeared in an article by several US officers including William S. Lind. After defining the first three generations, the authors argued in the article that “a fourth generation warfare may emerge from non-Western cultural traditions, such as Islamic or Asiatic traditions,” and that the genesis of idea-based fourth generation warfare may be visible in terrorism (Lind et al., 1989: 114). Fourth-generation warfare theorist Thomas X. Hammes describes it as “a modern form of insurgency” in which “its practitioners seek to convince enemy political leaders that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit” (Hammes, 2015: 1).

Having coined a new term, however, Lind accepts that “fourth generation tactics are not new and many of the tactics fourth generation warfare opponents use are standard guerilla tactics” (Lind, 2004: 16). Echeverria, meanwhile, critiques fourth generation warfare theory as “reinventing the wheel with regard to insurgencies” and argues that theorists’ logic is too narrowly focused and irredeemably flawed (Echevarria, 2005: 15).

Thomas Huber employs the term “compound war,” defining it as “simultaneous use of a regular or main force and an irregular or guerilla force against an enemy”. Claiming that compound warfare “increases . . . military leverage by applying both conventional and unconventional force at the same time” (Huber, 2002: 1), he presents numerous examples of what he calls compound war, including American War of Independence (1775-1813) and Mao Zedong in the Chinese revolutionary wars (1927-1949), most of which will be cited as hybrid warfare examples by many scholars, just as McCulloh and Johnson argues that compound war might be a precursor to our current understanding of hybrid warfare (McCulloh and Johnson, 2013: 3).

Hybrid warfare, then, figured as one of the shining new theories to describe the emerging conflicts after the Cold War, with debate about the theory intensifying since the beginning of the 2014 Ukrainian crisis because

Western countries described Russian activities as “hybrid warfare”. The debate focused mostly on the question as to whether hybrid warfare is a new type of warfare, with theorists divided into two camps on the question.

One group supports the idea that “hybrid warfare is not a new type of warfare”, emphasizing that throughout history adversaries have resorted to many different tactics and strategies in order to gain victory with new, creative, and theretofore untraditional methods, which subsequently became part of traditional warfare. For example Damien Van Puyvelde states that “warfare, whether it be ancient or modern, hybrid or not, is always complex and can hardly be subsumed into a single adjective” (Puyvelde, 2015). Peter R. Mansoor (2012: 4) argues that “despite its prominence as the latest buzz word in Washington, hybrid warfare is not new, and its historical pedigree goes back at least as far as the Peloponnesian war in the fifth century B.C”. Kober (2008: 7) writes that “changes on the battlefield and the search for new force multipliers, such as innovative or particularly destructive technologies or new evasion tactics, have always taken place and should not be viewed as fundamental transformations”, thus opposing labeling the 2006 Lebanon War as hybrid warfare.

The second group argues that hybrid warfare *is* a new type of warfare and will dominate future wars. As one example, Hoffman argues that “at the strategic level, many wars have had regular and irregular components. However, in most conflicts, these components occurred in different theaters or in distinctly different formations. In hybrid warfare, these forces blurred into the same force in the same battle space” (Hoffman, 2007: 8). Rob de Wijk (2012: 358) argues that at the beginning of twenty-first century, hybrid warfare constitutes the best concept for understanding contemporary wars; he adds that in hybrid warfare the distinction between large, regular wars and small, irregular wars has become blurred, and he emphasizes the asymmetrical nature of hybrid war. For him, asymmetry is the key concept for understanding hybrid warfare, and irregular warfare has been always the tool of the weak, a method of offsetting imbalances between forces and capabilities. Mary Kaldor (2012: 1) accepts hybrid warfare as a form of “new war” in which she defines new war as “wars in which the difference between internal and external is blurred: both global and local, different from classical inter-state and classical civil wars”.

2. Hybrid Warfare: Old Concept New Techniques

Hybrid warfare studies after the Cold War began by focusing in particular on the asymmetrical nature of hybrid threats. The US national

security reports describe emerging threats as “state or non-state actors seeking capabilities to challenge the conventional warfare superiority of the US¹ “The documents describe mature and emerging challenges as traditional, irregular, catastrophic and disruptive challenges, without referring to the term ‘hybrid’, and argue that this volatile mix requires new methods of deterrence and operational approaches to defeat these threats should deterrence fail.

The term “hybrid warfare” is attributed to retired US naval officer Robert G. Walker, who in 1998 defined it as “lying in the interstices between special and conventional warfare.” Throughout its history, Walker writes, the United States Marine Corps has demonstrated itself to be a hybrid force, capable of conducting operations within both the conventional and unconventional realms of warfare. Walker also noted that “there is nothing new about the concept of hybrid operations or their utility in conflict. The combination of closely coordinated special and conventional operations has impacted the outcomes of numerous military campaigns” (Walker, 1998: 5). Thus, the father of the term himself stresses that hybrid warfare is not a new type of warfare, but rather a combination of existing warfare forms.

Frank G. Hoffman, a retired US colonel largely associated with hybrid warfare theory, argues that “hybrid warfare incorporates a full range of different modes of warfare, including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder” (Hoffman, 2009: 37). He also argues that “the future does not portend a suite of distinct challengers with alternative or different methods but their convergence into multimodal or hybrid wars” (Hoffman, 2007: 28) implying that wars in future will be hybrid.

The 2006 Lebanon crisis has been frequently put forth as a central example of hybrid warfare. As one example, Tuck argues (2014: 219) that in pitting Israel against Hezbollah, the Lebanon War forms the key Hybrid Warfare example, wherein Hezbollah has fought successfully against conventionally stronger Israeli Defense Forces, employing a mixture of conventional and especially irregular warfare tactics. Johnson (2010: 4) also cites Hezbollah as a hybrid opponent, likewise terming the 2006 war between the Israeli Defence Forces and Hezbollah as a hybrid war. Kober (2008: 7), however, argues that none of the recent literature on hybrid warfare offers any new insights into asymmetric conflicts, but instead reflects the fact that asymmetry can take on different forms, and he sees the 2006 Lebanon war as

¹ See 2002 The National Security Strategy of the US <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf> or 2005 National Defense Strategy of the US http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/dod/nds-usa_mar2005.htm

simply asymmetrical warfare. On the other hand, David M. D'Agostino (2016: 97) asserts that “after the 2006 conflict in Lebanon, a cavalcade of literature on hybrid warfare and threats emerged and some of these offered definitions of hybrid warfare that now seem almost singularly custom-fit to Hezbollah's operations in Lebanon”. It is worth noting that his comments came after the 2014 Ukrainian crisis.

And so, there has been confusion about the terminology of hybrid warfare. According to the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on hybrid warfare prepared in 2010, even parts of the US Department of Defense (DOD) did not act in unison on use of the term hybrid warfare, “where Air Force officials stated that the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are irregular warfare and hybrid, while Army and Navy officials both considered Afghanistan irregular warfare and Iraq initially conventional warfare and then later, irregular warfare or U.S. Special Operations Command, and Army officials characterized the Russia-Georgia conflict as conventional warfare, while Air Force officials considered it a hybrid conflict” (United States Government Accountability Office, 2010: 14).

The report also makes clear that “the US DOD has not officially defined ‘hybrid warfare’, and has no plans to do so because the DOD does not consider it a new form of warfare. DOD officials from the majority of organizations agreed that ‘hybrid warfare’ encompasses all elements of warfare across the spectrum; therefore, to define hybrid warfare risks omitting key and unforeseen elements. DOD officials use the term ‘hybrid’ to describe the increasing complexity of conflict that will require a highly adaptable and resilient response from US forces, rather than using the term to describe a new form of warfare” (United States Government Accountability Office, 2010: 11).

Russian warfare activities in Crimea and eastern Ukraine are also defined as hybrid warfare by Western countries and international organizations, including NATO as well as most Western officials and scholars. NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg, described it as warfare that combines disguised military operations with the power of unconventional means such as cyber and information operations (Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at Chatham House, 2014). The 2015 UK National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review defined hybrid tactics by states as “combining economic coercion, disinformation, proxies, terrorism and criminal activity, blurring the boundaries between civil disorder and military conflict” (National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015, 2015: 82).

Michael Rühle and Julius Grubliauskas defines Russia's action as “overtly and covertly employing military and paramilitary forces, supplying

separatist groups, staging cyber attacks and waging a massive propaganda campaign” (Rüchle and Grubliauskas, 2015: 19). They also argue that “Russia provided a textbook example how non-traditional warfare can effectively be employed to achieve political objectives.” As McCulloh and Johnson (2013: 1) points out, however, definitions of hybrid threats and hybrid warfare vary and contradict each other.

Russian officials and scholars, on the other hand, prefer the term “non-linear warfare,” rejecting the term “hybrid warfare”. One of Putin’s closest political advisors, Vladislav Surkov, used the term “linear war” in a short story published under his pseudonym, Nathan Dubovitsky, just a few days before the annexation of Crimea (Pomerantsev, 2014). Russian officials claim that “the actions attributed to so-called hybrid warfare are fairly standard to any low-intensity armed conflict of recent decades, if not centuries, and it is difficult to imagine any country using military force without providing informational support, using methods of ‘secret warfare’, attempting to erode enemy forces, exploiting internal ethnic, social, economic, political or other divisions in the enemy camp, and without the use of retaliatory economic sanctions” (Pukhov, 2015). This Russian statement is consistent with the main argument of this paper: that all wars have consisted of different components, and Russian methods and tools used during the Ukrainian crisis have not been unique to the Russian military.

Russian hybrid warfare studies are based on lessons learned from Western strategies during the Color Revolutions and Arab Spring, which one might define as Western-style “hybrid warfare.” Russian officials have often stated as much, for example during the Moscow Conference on International Security in 2014 when Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu stated that “color revolutions are increasingly taking on the form of warfare and are developed according to the rules of warcraft” (Golts, 2014: 1). Valeriy Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation argued “that Arab Springs are precisely typical of warfare in the 21st century” (Coalson, 2014). The crisis in Ukraine bolstered this idea. As Bouchet (2016: 2) pointed out, since Ukraine’s Euromaidan protests of 2013-2014 Putin and senior Russian officials have adopted a stronger line in depicting Color Revolutions as a form of warfare used by the US and its allies.

The 2014 Russian Military Doctrine also described modern warfare conflict as “the integrated use of military force, political, economic, informational and other non-military measures, implemented with the extensive use of the protest potential of the population, and special operations forces”. Other characteristics include participation in hostilities by irregular armed groups and private military companies, the use of indirect and asymmetric methods of action, and the use of externally funded and run political forces and

social movements (Russia's 2014 Military Doctrine, 2014: 4). The doctrine raised the possibility of a military response to domestic protests seen as the work of foreign special forces (Bouchet, 2016: 3).

Upon the removal of Ukrainian pro-Russian president Yanukovich, Russia initiated military activities in Crimea as well as in eastern Ukraine. Multiple small-scale military infringements of Ukrainian sovereignty in Crimea did not appear to amount to a single unambiguous *casus belli* for the Ukrainian authorities (Allison, 2014: 1260) at the beginning, but further Russian military and political activities and especially the invasion of Ukrainian military facilities and the arrest of Ukrainian troops in Crimea alerted not only the Ukrainians but also the entire Western world to Russia's aggression.

Russian military strategies in eastern Ukraine and especially in Crimea consisted of various military activities based on deception, denial, and ambiguity similar to *maskirovska* (masked warfare), a concept developed by the Soviet military in the 1920s and including active and passive measures to deceive the enemy and influence the opinion making process in the West. By achieving a surprise effect and creating ambiguity, Russia's actions made adequate reaction especially difficult for multinational organizations that operate on the principles of consensus (Maigre, 2015: 2), as does NATO.

First, Russia resorted to traditional warfare by its regular units and Special Operation Forces in all physical domains as well as the information environment, including cyberspace, described as traditional warfare in the US Doctrine. The Russian military conducted snap exercises with its regular forces on the Ukrainian border and simultaneously in other parts of Russia, in order to mask their main purpose. That deception strategy allowed for the option of a military incursion, imposed political pressure, and complicated political and military decision-making for Ukraine and third parties, especially NATO; the strategy also masked its main political and military intention, diverting attention from Crimea.

Information warfare based on Russian propaganda has been an important part of Russian conventional warfare. Russia performed information operations in Ukraine to undermine the Ukrainian people's support for the central government, garner support of the Russian-speaking population in eastern Ukraine, and threaten certain targeted countries. The justification Russia offered for its action exploited grey areas and flux in legal and normative development as well as playing back to Western states their own liberal discourse. The latter included the claim to be protecting Russian citizens from danger, and to be intervening by invitation, while making reference to the Western focus on human protection and Kosovo's secession from Serbia (Allison, 2014: 1259).

It is often stated that cyber capabilities and cyber assaults have constituted one of the most important aspects of Russian hybrid warfare since the crisis began. Ukraine's energy ministry accused hackers employed by a Russian-based internet provider, and phone calls from inside Russia, as part of a coordinated cyber attack on Ukraine's power grid in December 2015 (Polityuk, 2016). Germany's domestic intelligence agency accused Russia of engaging in ongoing cyber warfare (as part of hybrid warfare) that aimed to steal information and to carry out sabotage against its enemies, both real and imagined (Deutsche Welle, 2016).

All this notwithstanding, no credible report of cyber warfare that changed the course of the crisis in Ukraine has as yet emerged. Still, NATO cited Russian cyber capabilities as an imminent and crucial threat, even declaring that the Alliance is working on legal procedures in the event that cyber attack is considered under Article 5 in the framework of new measures to counter possible Russian future hybrid military strategies.

On the other hand, irregular warfare has dominated Russian military activities in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. Right after Yanukovich was overthrown, armed men in military uniform without marks of identification, called “little green men” by Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General Philippe M. Breedlove, were reported to control all strategic locations in Crimea. Civilians and organized civilian “self-defense forces”, as defined by Vladimir Putin (Interview with Vladimir Putin, 2014), in Ukraine have been a major resource in Russian efforts to neutralize and counter the reaction of the Ukrainian central authorities. Annexation of Crimea seemed to mark a transition in the use of special forces (spetnaz) to a more clearly defined role based in combat rather than in reconnaissance (McDermott, 2014). The timing was also crucial. Russia reasoned that it could take advantage of a moment of opportunity when the military and internal security forces of the Ukrainian state were fragmented, demoralized, and uncertain where their loyalties lay, having served under the Yanukovich regime that had so suddenly collapsed (Allison, 2014: 1258).

Russian irregular warfare activities provided denial for Russia, especially at the early stage of the crisis. Vladimir Putin stated during the interview that “there are no armed forces, no Russian instructors in southeastern Ukraine, and there never were any” (Vladimir Putin’s Interview with Radio Europe 1 and TF1 TV channel). However, he later admitted that Russian forces had been part of military activities that resulted in the annexation of Crimea (Shuster, 2015). Denial by Russia at the beginning also made attribution hard for Western countries and especially for NATO.

Moscow also proved to be remarkably effective in non-military instruments of influence and diplomacy, which emphasized in particular a more or less plausible deniability in an effort to disable international responses and bolster domestic Russian support (Allison, 2014: 1258). Pressure on Ukraine as well as on other countries, using the energy card, formed one of Russia's main tools. Russia caused an energy crisis in Ukraine, seizing energy resources in Crimea and nationalizing the Ukrainian company operating in Crimea, thus forcing Crimea to depend solely on Russia, helping separatists to control coal resources in the Donbas region that produces 90 percent of Ukraine's coal, and provided safety for the energy routes in eastern Ukraine that carry Russian natural gas to Europe.

In sum, blurred boundaries between the strategical to tactical level, and across the spectrum of political, military, economic, informational and technological elements of power, characterize Russian warfare strategies in Ukraine. With its opportunistic nature, Russia took advantage of weaknesses and vulnerabilities in Ukraine, and used all available tools to create vulnerability if none were previously present. The West called this hybrid warfare. However, military doctrines have traditionally characterized all these elements simply as components of traditional warfare. As pointed out by Renz and Smith (2016: 3), "in the context of the history of military-strategic thought, hybrid warfare is only one of many concepts that have seemed to offer a new war-winning formula".

Conclusion

To state the obvious, since ancient times warfare has constituted one of the major tools for groups or states to achieve political ambitions and targets. Despite evolution in weapons technology over the many centuries, though, the basic forms and principles of warfare have not changed. Regardless of what different authors may call them, traditional and irregular warfare have constituted the basic forms of warfare throughout the centuries, including in the Cold War era.

Post-Cold-War warfare, which occurred during the transition from Westphalia-style state-based conflicts to non-state or intrastate conflicts, inspired scholars to study modern warfare theories. Asymmetrical warfare against conventionally superior countries or terrorism has been styled the emerging and imminent threat for Western countries, while theories concerning so-called low-intensity conflicts and fourth generation or compound warfare have aimed to describe the changing nature of modern conflicts.

Russian warfare strategies in Ukraine and Crimea, called "hybrid warfare" by Western scholars and officials, have figured as the focal point of

warfare theorists and strategists since the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis, when Russia employed a wide range of military, civilian and paramilitary tools in a highly integrated design. These strategies include overt and covert conventional and irregular activities supported mainly with information warfare and cyber warfare, as argued by Western states and international organizations.

And yet none of these activities called “hybrid warfare” is new, or unique to the Ukrainian crisis, or resulted in a breakthrough in warfare strategy, or changed the basic rules of warfare. Although employing unusual and new techniques and methods, Russia simply resorted to traditional and irregular warfare strategies, as they have throughout their history. We also have recently witnessed these strategies performed by Russia.

Russia conventionally invaded Georgia using land, air and navy forces right after a snap exercises next to Abkhazia. Additionally Russia's warfare tactics during the Russia-Georgia war in 2008 included massive use of irregular troops. For example, it is well known that Russia sent 400 special forces under the name of “railway workers” to Abkhazia before (Wagstyl, 2008). Cyber attacks are also not new for Russia. Russian performed cyber capabilities successfully against Estonia in 2007 and against Georgia in 2008.

Deception, denial, and ambiguity have always figured as major characteristics of traditional and irregular warfare both, as adversaries have sought strategies to exploit vulnerabilities with an integrated and adaptive array of military and civilian actions. In the same way, Russia's strategies in Ukraine were based on ambiguity, denial, and deception, especially with the use of irregular units -but that did constitute a new form of warfare, it rather reflected the addition of new tactics in irregular warfare.

Likewise, in evolving the theory the term “hybrid warfare” has been used to describe different warfare strategies. Although both examples are called hybrid warfare, huge differences separate Russian warfare strategies in Ukraine, in which powerful Russia annexed Crimea, and the Hezbollah strategies against robust Israeli Defence Forces during the 2006 Lebanon War. Therefore, warfare strategies called hybrid warfare by some theorists, is neither a new type of warfare nor it will be the warfare of the future.

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