HYBRID WAR: CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

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Abstract
Relationships between the geographic space and the policy of a region have been archaically imposed before the scientific concept crystallizes. Some archaic ideas have survived and have been taken over by various political, geographic or humanist research schools. Geopolitics, Geostrategy and, more recently, GeoIntelligence have adapted to new areal, regional or global challenges.

Together with the danger of nuclear escalation, the hybrid war has returned to the forefront of the worst threats to the West, after the “rate” of the Russia-NATO dialogue. NATO member states, in addition to the rights conferred by the Alliance, also have duties and, indirectly, are part of areal, regional or global threats. It is important to identify the level of knowledge and understanding of hybrid warfare mechanisms, on the following coordinates: notions and concepts, institutions capable of counteracting it and security.

As we have shown in many analyses published over the years, geopolitical research is of particular interest in studying with insistence the conditions that determine the evolution of a nation in a certain geographic space, comprising two distinctive aspects of meaning and importance. The first is the relations with the states in the more distant geographic area, and the second is the economic, political, cultural, ethno-confessional and military-strategic relations area conditioned by a certain collaboration.

Keywords: hybrid war, cybersecurity, the Overton window, Stockholm syndrome, psychotronic war, digital war, information war

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As a result of the study of the specialized literature in Romania, we have found that most of the studies on the hybrid war have a historical-descriptive character, without aiming, using scientific research techniques, the concrete identification of the way in which the activity of the Russian structures of “generating” hybrid aspects is perceived at the level of civilian population and the effectiveness of the military strategies adopted by the institutional actors to counteract it.

Given the insufficiency of the sociological and institutional approach of the new forms of development of a hybrid type of military conflict in the literature, we consider it necessary to explore the epistemological gap between the historical and descriptive approach of the hybrid war and the involvement of the specialized structures in the knowledge, prevention and combat of its effects. Mutations in the international security environment need new approaches to the implementation of educational models in the field of national security appropriate to paradigm shifts. Therefore, the institutional analysis of international and national organizations empowered to counteract the hybrid war, it is necessary to identify that model that can function as a reference for Eastern European states.

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**Defining the concept.** Conflict methods have changed and now involve widespread use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian and other non-military measures. Hybrid war is a military strategy that uses political conflicts and crises combined with conventional wars, irregular warfare, and cyber warfare combined with other methods of influence, such as fake news, diplomacy, and electoral interventions abroad [21]. By combining kinetic operations with subversive efforts, the aggressor intends to avoid attributing or rewarding [9]. Hybrid war can be used to describe flexible and complex dynamics of combat space, which requires a very adaptable and resilient response [1]. There is a variety of terms used to refer to the concept of hybrid war: hybrid warfare, hybrid threats, hybrid influence or hybrid adversary (such as nonlinear war, non-traditional war or special war). American military bodies tend to speak in terms of hybrid threats, while academic literature speaks of a hybrid war.
In 2008, the US Army Chief of Staff defined the hybrid threat as an opponent incorporating “diverse and dynamic combinations of conventional, irregular, terrorist and criminal capabilities” [12]. The United States Joint Force Command defines a hybrid threat as “any adversary who simultaneously uses and adapts a mix of conventional, irregular, terrorist, and crime-related assets or activities in the operational combat space. Rather than a single entity, a hybrid threat or challenge may be a combination of state and / or non-state actors [12]. In 2011, the US Army defined a hybrid threat as the diverse and dynamic combination of regular forces, irregular forces, criminal elements, or a combination of these forces and elements, all unified to obtain mutually beneficial effects [12]. NATO uses this term to describe “opponents with the ability to simultaneously use conventional and unconventional means to achieve their goals” [10]. Former US Army chief General George W. Casey spoke of a new kind of war that will become more and more common in the future: “A hybrid of unregulated war and conventional war”.

In the opinion of the European Center for Excellence for Combating Hybrid Threats, inaugurated in 2017, “hybrid threats are methods and activities that target vulnerabilities of opponents” where “the range of methods and activities is wide”. The term “hybrid war” has been popularized in the lexicon of military theory to describe the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah [14]. In Germany, Virchow Rudolf (Haeckel’s former professor) and Adolf Bastian supported an understanding of the culture opposite to the biology, claiming that such breeds and cultures are hybrids, consisting of various loans with diverse origins and being in a continuous change. By taking this approach, war, as an integral part of a race and a culture, can be hybrid, which is also demonstrated in several historical periods. We are currently discussing hybridization in politics, conflict, energy, and even the hybridization of life forms. It is clear, we are going through another time, but what is very important is the harmful side of this hybridization. If for the environment and man the other forms of hybridization are beneficial, in terms of how conflicts are going, it is - in essence - a harmful one!

At the time when “the nations have already taken the monopoly of violence” (Toffler), in the space of asymmetric conflicts, violence is the main feature of the actions taken. It is worth mentioning that Alvin Toffler, in his Powershift paper, emphasized in the early 1990s: “The capac-
ity for hyper-violence, which once only a few nations concentrate, is now dispersed democratically but dangerously. At the same time, the nature of violence itself undergoes profound changes, becoming increasingly dependent on intensive technologies of knowledge, such as microelectronics, advanced materials, optics, artificial intelligence, satellites, telecommunications and simulations, and evolved software” [22].

According to Carl Builder (Rand Corporation), “The momentum of Change is moving towards enhancing low intensity fighting capabilities with new and improved technologies - sensors, space-based communications, non-lethal and robotic weapons. This suggests that the new form of war, the Third Wave, may prove as powerful against the small-scale guerrillas and opponents, carrying a First Wave war as well as the Iraqi-style armies, owned by the Second Wave [13].

Mahda E. argues that “A hybrid war is a confrontation between states where one of these states tries to subordinate the other through various means: economic, informational, historical memory. That is, it is a war in which military action is not a priority but merely a catalyst” [17].

In Chivvis’s view, hybrid warfare refers to Russia’s use of a diverse range of subversive tools, many of which are non-military. Moscow is acting in favor of its nationalist interests by using hybrid war to divide and weaken NATO, to undermine pro-Western governments, create pretexts for war, to annex territories and to secure in its own terms access to the European economic space [6].

We believe that hybrid war is a multimodal asymmetric conflict. This asymmetry was put into practice in the early 1980s by the Communist leadership of Romania as an atypical form of conflict carried out by military structures in a complex mix of non-military means, generically called “the war of the whole people”. Since then, military and non-military asymmetries have been analyzed by military strategies on both sides of the Iron Curtain, and after the dismantling of the USSR and the dissolution of the communist bloc in the new alliances. But let us get back. An aggressor outside the national territory conducts hybrid war by using a mix of techniques and means specific to military and non-military actions to determine the usage of the military and government forces of the target state. By specific actions, which we will continue to analyze, the aggressor will limit his own losses, but will be successful on open fronts. These fronts are represented by multiple targets (state actors, non-state actors:
EU-NATO, transnational companies, banking institutions, etc.), which will suffer fractures of security strategies, going through destruction.

Classical theories of warfare are increasingly challenged, even though its essence has remained constant. It is very interesting to research what is changing in military strategy and art on the philosophy of military conflict. How do the conflicts of the 21st century differ from classical conflicts, from other historical periods, when the general objectives are the same? In the new international context, driven by the hegemonic rise of global geopolitical actors - state or non-state, the military conflicts of this century are influenced by new processes and paradigm shifts such as globalization, the dynamics of diplomatic relations, information internationalization, high population migration, natural and financial resources management. All these are new challenges and “new weapons” that can be used against an enemy potential. At the same time, we approach military conflicts according to new principles such as CI, 3D, 4G, multidimensional actions, non-linear and circular manifestations and psychological actions in which we will see that classical military resources and non-military capabilities are used, which translates us to the hybrid zone of the current conflict.

The classic war waged in trenches is long gone. Now the frontal is global, and can be a part of the conflict anyway, simply because you become a “tool” manipulated by social networks or fake-news from media networks. The use of this spectrum in the non-military area has the effect of eroding the trust of the population in certain state structures, stating the civil-military separation, challenging the government, condemning the lawfulness and giving high trust to the illegalities committed by different persons, state organizations or static state or non-state actors. Many times, social psychosis is sensitive to hybrid attacks and generates internal instability without the enemy firing a gun. The translation of the “indoctrinated” population from various unstable spaces into highly developed areas with high security, grafted on the information explosion, has the effect of destabilizing host states and ultimately imposing new “traditions, customs and cultural standards, which would not have been accepted by the native population. If traditional conventional fighting forces were represented by national or non-conventional armies (represented by alliances), they were respecting the laws of war, we are currently confronted with “irregular militarized organizations”
that are abstracted from the laws of war and are not subject to state or international authorities.

Thus, NATO military analysts have developed analyses on hybrid conflict developments in 2005, defining hybrid war as a sum of hostile actions with minimal but flexible military components, with different multimodal asymmetric manifestations. These multimodal asymmetries were used by the Russian Federation - which has as a national strategy offensive defense, with military actions going outside the national territory - examples being hybrid actions taken in the territories of frozen conflicts, but also in Ukraine and Syria. In fact, through the strategies applied in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, Russia has demonstrated that it will use any methods and means to achieve the Kremlin objectives.

In the design of the hybrid war, General Gharasimov shows that it goes in all environments and in all contexts initiated by a hostile state of Russia, Moscow making use of military and non-military means that will have repercussions on political, economic, informational, humanitarian and non-military plan. In this sense, the Kremlin is legitimate to use forms of penetration through the corruption of the political environment in the target states, the creation of dictatorships in the states concerned, the organization of social unrest, instability and anarchy - through the use of influence vectors - for the obvious purpose of requiring reallocation of influence and control spheres of the Great Planetary Ocean!

From this point of view, we can state that at the base of the hybrid war we will find the factors, with a decisive role in its development:

**a. Economic factors**

The basis of every war has always been the economic factors. The impossibility of solving contradictions related to the failure to solve their own economic situation has often led to the use of force, which was followed by the conquest of the territory (or part of it), the industrial-economic objectives of rivals (competitors or opponents). At the same time, a paradoxical legality is observed: in an overwhelming majority, the states with unstable economy and a low level of production were the initiators of the military conflicts [19].

**b. Political factors**

History proves that military conflicts often arise as a result of the tendency of certain political circles to change socio-political order, leadership, etc. In connection with this, good understanding in society and good neighborly relations with neighboring states are very important.
c. Social factors

The experience of armed conflicts and local wars makes it possible to talk about increasing the role of social factors related to the relationships of people (groups, parties, movements) in society. They depend largely on the state system and are characterized by the degree of social strain. These factors depend on the level of preparedness for conflict between different social groups, the population of the region, to improve their living conditions.

d. Military factors

Purely military factors, which are defined by the training and endowment of the armed forces of the state, by its ability to solve the problems with the help of force, are of course very important. The essence of the problem is to reveal each of these factors’ degree of influence on a concrete case of worsening the political-military situation. Correct evidence of conflict sources allows for a right view of alleviating contradictions, studying the conflict situation in time and solving it, and then turning it into a peaceful one.

Thus, the military conflict is an exclusive form, as a result of the measures taken for resolution, and a supreme one, according to the level of social tension of an interdepartmental (inter-regional) and international conflict. As any social phenomenon, it is characteristic of certain peculiarities, which must be taken into account when analyzing the content and trying to systematize the structure and the main stages of its evolution.

Hierarchy of the hybrid war. In the hybrid conflict we are dealing with a new hierarchy of the forces involved, determined by:

- independent hierarchical structure, capabilities, subordination and internal organization. In this respect, RAND considers that hybrid forces have specialized subunits (cohesive, trained and adapted to a certain operational area, with a discipline and internal hierarchy, equipped with commando weapons and with conventional capabilities recognized by international law) [4, p.43];

- hybrid forces consisting of military forces with a hierarchical structure of command with those of independent forces. They have limited access to conventional weaponry, dual-purpose technologies and act on the opponent’s territory with specific methods that produce convergent effects to exhaust the enemy, induce an apathetic state in combat forces, political and administrative organizations, state leadership, etc. [13, p. 29];

- actions taken by state armed forces that can adapt their internal
structure and combine conventional army elements with paramilitary, guerrilla, moderate terrorism and even criminal actions:-
- for some actions, mercenaries, fighters and paramilitary fighters and terrorist organizations can be used to support them logistically and financially.

Hybrid war aims at acquiring territories without resorting to military or conventional force; creating a pretext for conventional military action; using hybrid measures to influence the policies of other states; using economic blackmail to gain more economic influence. Depending on the missions performed by the military forces, the following features are predominant for the current development stage of the “global village”:
- they are persistent and long-lasting;
- they focus on the involvement of the population in influencing the political decision of the target state;
- we have to deal with optimized and hyper-specialized troops in conducting actions in the geographic, political-ideological, economic-social, ethno-confessional spectra;
- they have autonomous organization and are not subordinated to the state. They benefit from ultra-sophisticated technologies and are generously funded by the state;
- because hierarchy, command and control networks are variable, they can adapt from conventional to hybrid (terrorism, organized crime, guerrilla, special action);
- they are adapted to switch from conventional operating techniques to asymmetric ones, in relation to the opponent’s action / reaction;
- they take specific actions in the cultural, ethno-confessional and media fields, launching actions to challenge the rule of law by “implanting” a coherent, population-based ideological discourse;
- they use social networks, the Internet and Intelligence services to adapt their actions to maximize results on an “unseen front” that they effectively control.

An important aspect in knowing the secrets of the hybrid war focuses itself on Stockholm Syndrome, described by the following theses: some states become captive of the challenges caused by the evolution of the hybrid war. This captivity can be compared to Stockholm Syndrome, which can be manifested on the following levels:
- Russia threatens a state with nuclear military repression and, more importantly, this is perceived as possible;
These states are captive (Ukraine, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova), so survival depends on the evolution of the frozen conflicts that keep it in captivity;

Russia's strategies in some states involve a very real level of isolation, the only points of view and interpretations of the situation being the aggressor's, and these, irrational ones, may distort judgments about the accuracy of information: (Crimea), the determination of negative messages to the EU or some EU Member States (Romania, Poland, the Baltic States), and against the US-NATO binomial;

the goodwill manifested by the aggressor to divert non-pro-Russian strategies [20].

In hybrid actions, violence is manifested through new forms, such as:
- asymmetric and asynchronous methods of fighting - taken from other conflicts that have been successful in some areas - used with skill;
- the use of top technologies (IT, drones, etc.) that can provide unanticipated circumstantial advantages to established military power actors;
- the use of the initiative, limited targets, special communications, known field objectives, sufficient time for deployment and training of combat positions;
- the use of civilian resources and industrial-technical objectives, weapons of mass destruction and munitions and forces for special operations;
- using subversion and combined terrorism;
- using the advanced command and control potential, training, maintenance, Intelligence resources and research-recognition, to hold supremacy;
- the use of terror and military violence, to destroy the rule of law;
- non-military operations other than war;
- the development of cross-border crime networks with implications for national security;
- Trafficking in human beings (ISIS = sexual slaves, Ukraine = exchange of prisoners);
- Blocking the capital market (setting up BRICS bank, Chinese stick exchange games);
- Encouraging corrupt governments (social and economic effects);
- Cyber Attacks - bank fraud, identity theft, damage to governmental and military structures, population damage;
- Activation and support actions of pro-Russian NGOs and pro-Russian environment in states considered vectors by Russian Intelligence structures;
- Infiltration of ISIS (through controlled migration) and Russian agents (via business);
- Maintaining frozen conflicts;
- Maintaining instability in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine;
- Political and religious fanaticism, obstruction, repression;
- Political diversion, segregation, fragmentation of states.

**Conclusion**

The new asymmetric manifestations affect East European security by:

- Russia’s activation of the Anaconda Strategy as a result of the coordination of the extreme right-wing parties in Europe (Jobyk - Hungary, Attika - Bulgaria, the Golden Dawn - Greece, Patria - the Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Belarus.

- Russian military effort to control the Black Sea’s northern shore and expand its control over the mouths of the Danube and Dobrogea to reach Istanbul for the construction of the 3rd Rome and to stop the Danube Strategy.

- Attracting Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece to the sphere of Russian influence, with the support of Hungary.

- The support given by Moscow to the “Moldovanist” trend and to the federalization plan of the Republic of Moldova.

- In the NATO Secretary General’s report, Europe has invested for defense in 2016 - about 5.2 times more, basically 419% more than Russia. If we add the USA and Canada, NATO has spent $ 921.4 billion - 19.8 times greater than Russia’s expenditure [25].

- The International Institute for Strategic Studies estimates that the Russian military budget has fallen from $ 64.5 billion in 2014 to $ 46.6 billion in 2016 - largely due to a reduction in its weak earnings in the petro-economy and exports of energy [16].

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