

UKRAINIAN CONFLICT – A NEW TYPE OF WARFARE

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Abstract

Currently the rules of warfare have changed, switching from classic war to hybrid war. This new form of warfare is not explicitly incriminated by the international legislation.

The Ukrainian conflict represents a tangible manifestation of hybrid war, after which the state has lost a part of its territory, it being annexed by the Russian Federation through a referendum semblance.

Unfortunately, the required measures have not been taken in order for the Russian Federation to stop its disguised actions that pursue to reunite the former power pole, fact which represents a regional security threat.

Keywords: hybrid warfare, regional security, Ukrainian conflict, international relations, armed force

The outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine held political power after the change of government, which have a pro-western orientation.

The new government began to take some steps towards rapprochement U.E. their position, making declarations under which Ukraine will join NATO. This was the decisive factor that has determined Russian President Vladimir Putin to ensure that Ukraine will not join NATO.

Russia openly declares that resolutely refuses plans to advance its borders to NATO military infrastructure, defining policy and NATO presence as a threat to its own security.²

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² D. Mafei, Evoluții în plan conceptual ale securității colective în arealul Euro-Asiatic și al zonei extinse a Mării Negre, in Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”, Vol. 3, București , 2015, p. 204.

Russian attempts to change this situation have hit the refusal of the new power in Kiev.

Referring to the situation in Ukraine, President Vladimir Putin stated that: „I want to be clear and honest: we were maintaining a dialogue with our partners – the Europeans and Americans – using only peaceful and diplomatic means. But to our attempts to continue this dialogue, they have answered by supporting an anti-constitutional coup in Ukraine.”³

The policy of the Russian Federation to prevent the entry of Ukraine into NATO was to not let the Ukrainian state to fulfill the conditions of the alliance.

One of these conditions meant that the state that wants to join the North Atlantic Alliance should not have territorial disputes with its neighbors.

Following this direction, the Russian Federation, without getting involved in official actions, directly supported separatists in eastern Ukraine, which had a pro Russian orientation, trigger a civil war.

In early 2014, Ukraine has been an obvious target of aggression from the Russian Federation, which carried operations in all environments, namely: land, air, informational, media and psychological. These events led to the occupation of the Crimea peninsula by armed forces that did not have any state mark.⁴

This method used by the Russian Federation is appointed by the specialized doctrine as Hybrid war.

NATO uses the term hybrid war and devotes it for the Russian Federation's actions in Ukraine.⁵

The term hybrid war first appeared in specialty articles in 2006, after the confrontation in Lebanon between Israel and Hezbollah. This type of hybrid war was held as used by Russia for the annexation of Crimea (2014), NATO considering that this annexation is illegal both in terms of international relations, and in terms of the methods used.⁶

This means of warfare does not infringe the principle non-aggression under the international law, but violates another fundamental principle of the international law namely „the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of another state.”

To circumvent international provisions the Russian Federation did not recognize its involvement in the conflict in Ukraine.

³ I. Chiriță, Război clasic vs. Război hibrid – o abordare comparativă, in *Infosfera*, no. 3/2015, p. 7.

⁴ M. Roșu, Cooperarea regională și securitate a regiunii extinse a Mării Negre în contextul global actual, in *Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”*, Vol. 2, București, 2015, p. 180.

⁵ <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2014/Russia-Ukraine-Nato-crisis/Russia-Ukraine-crisisar/RO/index.htm>

⁶ M. D. Ghiba, Noi amenințări la adresa securității globale, in *Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”*, Vol. 3, București, 2015, p. 109-110.

Moscow did not wish to dispel the illusion of non-participation in the war but the escalation of the conflict has reached a level at which the denial of Russia's participation had no sense, but not to recognize the status quo wasn't an option. Although unacknowledged officially, but obvious, Russia's direct military involvement was dictated by political and military conditions in eastern Ukraine, significantly different from those in the Crimea.⁷

Using hybrid warfare is not new for the Russian Federation, it has been also used within the conflict of Afghanistan.

Even if the type of conflict that we designate today as the hybrid war has its roots in history, however, gradually moving the center of gravity from the military means onto the non-military ones regarding force projecting has produced a fundamental difference in relation to classical or conventional war, requiring an inclination closer to the weapons and tools that they appeal to, on its engagement methods and the forces used. Difficult to predict and therefore difficult to prevent, ongoing hybrid conflicts taking place in Ukraine, the Middle East and adjacent areas requires therefore a radical rethinking and reconfiguring of the riposte, even more as their extension in time and cross-border character generates security risks difficult to manage, both regionally and globally.⁸

It is also considered that within the crisis in Ukraine this form of modern warfare is used by Russia through cyber-attacks as well as handling soldiers who use modern weapons and bear no military insignia, which is difficult to identify to what army they belong, errors being able to exist in distinguishing combatants from civilians (therefore being considered guerrilla forces or mercenaries). To these we may add also the manipulation of the Russian minority in Ukraine by Russia, thus increasing the danger of this conflict. Therefore, waging a Hybrid war is unequivocally a serious threat to global security, whereas counteracts such a war are difficult, due to the imminent and unpredictable production of these actions, but also in terms of legality and legitimacy of waging such a war.⁹

Concealing aggression by invoking the will of the people to found a new state was one of directions of activity of the Russian Federation.

Thereby, the Hybrid war incorporates military strategies belonging to conventional and unconventional warfare, which in our opinion integrates features of Blitzkrieg (flash war), asymmetric warfare, dissymmetric war, noncontact war, propaganda, economic and

⁷ L. Ioniță, Dimensiunea hibridă a conflictului ruso - ucrainean, in *Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”*, Vol. 3, București, 2015, p. 20.

⁸ I. Chiriță, Război clasic vs. Război hibrid – o abordare comparativă, in *Infosfera*, no. 3/2015, p. 3.

⁹ M. D. Ghiba, Noi amenințări la adresa securității globale, *Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”*, Vol. 3, București, 2015, p. 109-110.

social measures, community will invocation, cybernetic action, where armed confrontation is the last phase of synergistic actions.¹⁰

Because the Russian Federation has used this form of warfare, it is difficult to prove their involvement.

Hybrid War incorporates features of several types of manifestations of violence involving the use of military action and paramilitary intervention complemented by civilians acting sight or concealed actions in various forms by tactical actions that are integrated by strategic decisions.¹¹

However, the Russians are not the ones who have created the hybrid war.

The concept of hybrid warfare has emerged and developed from within the American military thinking of the last decade, as a theoretical response to the need of adaptation of the US forces to the new realities of an unclear environment of confrontation.¹²

The advantage of using this new type of war lies in the fact that we do not have within the international legislation specific mechanisms to intervene and put an end to this situation.

In the complex combination of hard power type of means (military action itself) and soft power (political pressure, economic sabotage, subversion in socio-cultural and imagological space, exactly what we mean today by the term coercive diplomacy) which are the means of hybrid war, soft power advances into the foreground, being easier to use, costing significantly less and, in addition, taking advantage of the lack of international legislation which can exercise their coercive acts on them (unlike direct military action, condemned not only morally, but also based on a consistent package of international law). Thus, hybrid war brings us to the position of „spectators” on how the deletion, or at least blurring of the boundaries between conventional war and conventional peace status occurs, or the transition from the stage of organized violence into the state of hostile inducement.¹³

To give a touch of legality in Crimea there was a referendum which agreed to the annexation of this region to the Russian Federation.

Under international law, the amendment of the territory is allowed only based on referendum which aims to show the will of the people on this change of territory.

One of the conditions for the referendum to be recognized by the international community is that it's conduct to be done under the supervision of international observers to certify the accuracy of the vote.

¹⁰ L. V. Scipanov, F. Nistor, *Considerații privind acțiunile militare desfășurate în nordul Mării Negre*, in Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”, Vol. 3, București, 2015, p. 99.

¹¹ L.V. Scipanov, F. Nistor, *Considerații privind acțiunile militare desfășurate în nordul Mării Negre*, in Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”, Vol. 3, București, 2015, p. 100.

¹² V. Cruceru, *Despre conceptul de război hibrid în gândirea militară americană*, in Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”, vol. I, nr. 3/2014, p. 30.

¹³ I. Chiriță, *Război clasic vs. Război hibrid – o abordare comparativă*, in Infosfera, no. 3/2015, p. 5.

Crimea did not meet this fundamental requirement because they have not been allowed the participation of the international observers from OSCE.

The OSCE has been involved in control military actions in Ukraine, such missions taking action in March-May 2014 under the Vienna Document of 2011, throughout the OSCE observers and military inspectors from countries members of OSCE, including Romania, having the task of verification of the military aspects relating to safety in the monitored area.¹⁴

It is not the first time this happens, as OSCE observers were repeatedly turned down, denying them access to the conflict area.

OSCE addressed directly to the authorities, who exercised the de facto control of the Crimean Peninsula, which were recommended to give top priority to guaranteeing human rights and minority rights, to act urgently on ensuring minority rights, particularly those belonging to the Tatar and Ukrainian community in the area and personal contacts between family members separated in the territories, to facilitate the right of residence of persons in the Crimea, to eliminate discrimination against residents of Crimea, to allow domestic and international observers to monitor the situation of the minorities in the peninsula.¹⁵

The apparent tinge of legality has not deceived the international community.

From the EU's perspective the intervention in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea are illegitimate and contrary to international law.¹⁶

However, U.E. did not take drastic measures against the Russian Federation, the sanctions having either a diplomatic (suspension of a summit that was to be held in Sochi) or economic nature.

More stringent measures have been taken by U.E. regarding Crimea, these materializing in a ban on import of goods from that region, a ban on the supply of tourist services in Crimea and a ban on investment.

NATO has had a rapid response, asking the Russian Federation to withdraw its forces involved in the conflict and to allow the presence of international observers.

Essentially, the transatlantic strategy of response to the Russian revisionism is very cautious, leading to counterbalancing, almost minimalist measures.¹⁷

¹⁴ A. V. Istrătescu, *Implicarea ONU, NATO, UE și OSCE în asigurarea securității umanității*, in Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”, Vol. 2, București, 2015, p. 206.

¹⁵ A. V. Istrătescu, *Implicarea ONU, NATO, UE și OSCE în asigurarea securității umanității*, in Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”, Vol. 2, București, 2015, p. 206.

¹⁶ A. Cristian, *Rusia și Uniunea Europeană – o dilemă geopolitică și geostrategică*, in Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”, Vol. 2, București, 2015, p. 112.

¹⁷ N. Bălășoiu, *Criza din Ucraina schimbă natura relațiilor internaționale*, Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”, Vol. 2, București, 2015, p. 26.

Attempts for the suspension of the conflict by initiating conversations between U.E. and parties to the dispute have been made.

The Ukrainian crisis has shown us that the lack of effective dialogue between Ukraine and Russia, the EU and Russia may prolong the crisis and increase the number of casualties.¹⁸

In reality the problem is more complicated. Firstly, the EU cannot take drastic measures against the Russian Federation as it is dependent on Russian gas. On the other hand NATO can not intervene directly against the Russian Federation, through military action as this could trigger a new world war.

Russian Federation tried through this measure to prevent the advancement U.E. and NATO to its borders. The Federation's policy in order to prevent this was to create „buffer states” between her and the two organizations. The change in Ukraine surprised the Russian Federation which found itself put in a position to lose this advantage of the buffer states. Moreover, through this change the Federation would lose the Sevastopol military base where the Russian Black Sea Fleet was stationed in.

Russia's revisionism may be motivated, in their view, as a measure to stop the eastwards expansion plans of the European Union and NATO, after the political and economic cooperation between them is about to fail irreversible in a predictable time range.¹⁹

The conflict in Ukraine increases the degree of instability in the Black Sea, with the possibility of even extending it. Russian Federation is trying to increase its own security by stopping the process of eastward expansion of NATO and the EU. Thus, Russia's attempt to obtain increased security induces a state of insecurity in the whole Black Sea region.²⁰

The war in Ukraine has a universal dimension in the sense that the Russian Federation stated itself as an international power pole.

The crisis in Ukraine involved major actors of the system, which also announced their systemic level transformative agenda. Since the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis, Kremlin and experts attached to its policy revealed that Russia intends to replace the current world order, characterized by the hegemonic domination of the US, with another characterized through multipolarism, where one pole is a „Great Europe” from Lisbon to Vladivostok. Considering this systemic anti-status quo attitude of Moscow,

¹⁸ C. Ichimescu, Managementul crizelor în viziunea NATO, Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”, Vol. 3, București, 2015, p. 213.

¹⁹ <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/millman/what-is-a-realistic-response-to-crimea/>

²⁰ M. Roșu, Cooperarea regională și securitate a regiunii extinse a Mării Negre în contextul global actual, Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”, Vol. 2, București, 2015, p. 183.

the response of the West (especially the US and NATO) was that Russia is a regional power – thus incapable of changing the global order – and that they will not recognize the annexation of Crimea (March 2014), which seriously infringes the demands of the current international order.²¹

Russian Federation currently supports the recognition of popular republics Donetsk and Lugansk. Russia acts as a great power which restores its area of influence through an unconventional approach through the use of surrogate actors (artificial state entities supported by Moscow) and putting covered pressure on other countries. In turn, countries like Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia have a long way to go in order to achieve stability and grow on the path of democratic liberalism.²²

The conflict has tragic consequences for Ukraine which finds itself urged to cede part of its territory and the possibility of joining the U.E. and NATO being increasingly more distant. Restoring stability and genuine democracy in Ukraine are main objectives for maintaining the security in the vicinity of the EU and NATO. For this, both organizations support the reforms in Ukraine, respect its right to self-determination and integrity within the internationally recognized borders.²³

In order to settle the conflict a diplomatic approach has been attempted, one which has ended with the two agreements of Minsk that stipulated the ceasefire.

These agreements were frequently violated by both sides.

In the latest period they have witnessed a series of transformations of the global security system.

After 1990, the understanding of the security concept has changed, and consequently, the narratives used were changed. During an international crisis, with visible military dimensions, it is possible to experience, in Romania, a different wording when authorities were addressing the threats. The discourse then might be in line with the new concepts, but the public understanding of the threat, combined with the new membership status in different international security organizations may change the population's expectations map. The concept of security has been both widened and deepened: firstly within the academic arena, and subsequently, in the security strategies developed by countries.²⁴

²¹ C. L. Dorca, Criza din Ucraina: o criză de anvergură sistemică, în Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”, Vol. 4, București, 2014, p. 47.

²² V. Cruceru, *Considerații succinte privind tensiunile actuale din regiunea/zona extinsă a Mării Negre*, Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”, Vol. 2, București, 2016, p. 70.

²³ O. Moșoiu, I. Martin, Riscuri și amenințări cu impact asupra mediului de securitate Euroatlantic, generate de climatul de instabilitate din spațiul est european și zona extinsă a Mării Negre, Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”, Vol. 3, București, 2015, p. 166.

²⁴ V. Mihaila, *Communicating defense and security in Romania during the Ukrainian crisis*, Journal of defense, resources, management, Vol. 5, Issue 2 (9) / 2014, p. 5.

Conclusions

Due to globalization, interstate conflicts weight will decrease, increasing the share of irregular conflicts. Mainly urban environments will be targeted, without taking into account the international law which protects certain groups of people. Thus, the conventional risks are reduced, the unconventional threats from the hybrid war category being amplified. Use of armed force against hybrid threats will not work effectively, which should lead to a restructuring of the national security concept and the means to eliminate this kind of threat.

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