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Hybrid War: Ukraine's Case



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Names for Comprehensive Warfare

Deep Operations and **Active Measures** (USSR old school to weaken enemy)

New Generation Warfare (Gerasimov) / **Non-Linear War** (Surkov)

Hybrid Threat / **Hybrid Warfare** (a term coined by NATO)

Hybrid Warfare Toolbox was widely used by Soviet Russia / USSR / RF:

🚨 **1917-1920 – Russia-Ukraine war** under the guise of puppet Kharkiv soviet government (established by Russian Bolshevik army).

🚨 **1939-1940 – USSR-Finland winter war** (under the guise of fake Finnish Communist government and army).

🚨 **1991 – Russian army backed Transnistrian separatists in Moldova.**

🚨 **2008 – Russia-Georgia war** (provocations by Russian proxy in Abkhazia and South Ossetia + propaganda campaign + direct invasion of Russian troops).

Hybrid Warfare is not a new phenomenon. Novelty is that Non-Military Component modernized in line with tech progress **dominates** over military.

Modernizing the Hybrid Warfare

In 1990s and 2000s Russia analyzed Western advantages and explored how to use modern achievements (esp. in communication) as a warfare:

- ➔ Dozens of dissertations on **information warfare** and **“soft power”**.
- ➔ **1995 – Gen. Makhmut Gareev** in book **“If War Comes Tomorrow? The Contours of Future Armed Conflict”** stated that information warfare is to be used before military actions – to undermine trust in government and armed forces, and destabilize situation in targeted country.
- ➔ **“Manipulation of Consciousness”** (2000) book by Sergey Kara-Murza.
- ➔ **“Information War and Geopolitics”** (2006) book by Ihor Panarin.
- ➔ **2003 – Vladimir Putin** signed **“Russia’s Energy Strategy till 2020”**: **energy resources** are called **“instrument of domestic and foreign policy”**.
- ➔ Since early 2000s – **“schroderization”** of European politicians. Financing **political parties , NGOs, experts.** 2002 – control over UA media space.
- ➔ **2005 – Russia Today** began its broadcasting.

Defining Contemporary Hybrid Warfare

Main features of Hybrid Warfare:

- ✦ Aimed at defeating the target country **without full-scale military attack** – through **decreasing its ability to resist**, applying warfare which is **below the definition of traditional/conventional aggression**.
- ✦ Combined use of Diplomatic, Political, Economic, Social, Media, and other **Non-Military means** with limited use of **Military Force**.
- ✦ Mix of **Conventional** and **Non-Conventional/Irregular** warfare, including **Cyber-attacks**, **Terrorism** and **Criminal** capabilities.
- ✦ **State** and **Non-State** actors, incl. **Militaries**, **Civilians**, **Paramilitaries**.
- ✦ **Special Forces** (security service, intelligence) rather than Armed Forces.
- ✦ Involving **Loyal Locals** / Proxies; focusing on **Internal Vulnerabilities**.
- !!! All the action are directed and **coordinated** within the battle pace **to achieve the synergistic effect**.

Russian Hybrid Warfare in Ukraine (part 1)

Promoting Russian Information and Communication Space

- 💣* **Control over media outlets:** TV channels, press, radio, Internet media.
- 💣* **Dominance of Russian media content:** TV shows, movies, music, celebrities, books. Promotion of **Russian propaganda narratives**.
- 💣* **Aggressive promotion of Russian language** - to keep within RU info space (including non-official ban on Ukrainian music on radio, TV, in cafes).
- 💣* **Russian Orthodox Church:** propaganda of “Russian World”, anti-Western.

Agents of influence: Public service, Politicians, Civil Society

- 💣* **Corruption** to infiltrate **public service, police, security agencies, army**.
- 💣* **Political parties:** from far-left wing to far-right wing, and even fake-liberal.
- 💣* RU-backed **NGOs, analytical centres, experts, scholars, lecturers, cultural** institutions, **quasi-civil initiatives** and movements.

Russian Hybrid Warfare in Ukraine (part 2)

Critical Infrastructure and Sensitive Data

- 💣 Russian control over half of Ukrainian energy supply companies.
- 💣 Almost total RU control over oil and gas supplies till 2014.
- 💣 Major mobile network operators, **Internet** providers.
- 💣 Banks and **finances**: about 1/3 of UA market.
- 💣 **RU software** for state institutions and business, anti-virus, email services.

Organized Crime and Paramilitaries

- 💣 Network of organized crime, linked to Russia.
- 💣 Network of paramilitaries: private security, “patriotic” sport clubs.

Criminals and so-called “titushki” were actively involved in capturing public administration and police buildings in Donbas (failed in Kharkiv and Odesa), later they became a part of Russian proxy military forces in Donbas.

RU Hybrid War: *Preparatory Phase*

Maintaining and strengthening Russia's influence in Ukraine (constantly):

- Media control and **Propaganda**, RU Church, loyal NGOs, education.
- **Bribing** politicians, central and local authorities, experts, civil activists.
- Making UA critical infrastructure, large **business** dependent on RU.
- **Infiltrating** police, security service, armed forces with agents of influence.

Exploring and exploiting vulnerabilities as focal points of pressure to weaken Ukraine, strengthen Russian influence (esp. since early 2000s):

- Studying most **sensitive issues** for different demographic segments - to encourage **anti-government sentiments** and **cross-regional tensions**.
- Russian PR-managers involved in **elections**, as **advisors** to politicians.

Promoting false RU narratives on UA in Russia, Ukraine, in the West:

- “Russian World”, “failed state”, “Nazis”, “violations of minority rights”, etc.

Preparing pro-Russian paramilitaries: criminals, “patriotic” sport clubs.

RU Hybrid War: *Attack* Phase 1

Attempt to take full effective control over Ukraine through pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovych (2010-2013):

- Active **Infiltration** of central and regional authorities, police, security, army.
- Aggressive **Russification** (of education, public service paperwork, etc.).
- Treaty on prolongation for **RU fleet** base in Crimea till 2042 (+25 years).
- **Economic** pressure: RU ban on import of UA goods in Summer of 2013.
- **Political** pressure: meetings with Putin, blackmail by Kremlin's speakers and pro-Russian politicians in Ukraine (incl. from Yanukovych own party).
- Political **Bribing**: proposal of \$15 billion credit without clear conditions.



Nov. 2013 - Government suspended negotiations on Association with EU.

Attempts to violently suppress people's protest in Kyiv resulted in massive pro-European protests all over the country (EuroMaidan Revolution).

RU Hybrid War: *Attack* Phase 2

After victory of pro-Western forces in Ukraine, Russia resorted to use of force supported with strong **propaganda and disinformation** campaign:

- Organizing “**separatists protests**” in Crimea, then in other regions of Eastern and Southern Ukraine + **violence against pro-Ukrainian activists**.
- **Capturing local authorities’ buildings** in Crimea and later in Donbas by Russian special forces without military insignia and local proxies.
- **Blocking the disoriented Ukrainian armed forces** in Crimea by Russian special forces without military insignia (so-called “little green men”).
- **Blackmailing Ukraine with threat of conventional large-scale war:**
1 March 2014 - Russian parliament authorized Putin to use armed forces in Ukraine; about 40,000 Russian troops were built-up along Ukraine’s border).
- **Destroying UA border security forces in Donbas** (incl. shelling from RU).
- Supplying **troops & armament** to Donbas, command & control over proxy.
- **Interventions of regular RU troops** in crucial battles (since Aug. 2014).

RU Hybrid War: *Legitimization* Phase

- **Denying Russian involvement** at official level and in propaganda: RU troops = “volunteers”, “uniform from shops”, “armament lost by UA army”.
- **Self-declared local “authorities” in occupied Crimea and Donbas** (at the very beginning consisting of RU citizens backed by RU special forces) held fake “referendums” and “elections”.
- **Annexing Crimea** “in accordance with Russian laws”. Promoting fake narrative of “illegal” transmit of Crimea to Ukraine in 1954.
- Informational (media isolation) and economic (RU Ruble as currency) **separation of the captured territories** from the rest of Ukraine.
- Atmosphere of fear**, tough anti-Ukrainian and anti-Western **propaganda**.
- Attempts **to force** Ukraine’s government **to directly negotiate** with self-declared local “authorities” actually controlled by Russia.
- Constant **pressure on Ukraine** (hostilities, economic pressure, cyber attacks) – to prevent from successful reforms & make agree on RU demands.

RU Hybrid Threats to the West (basics)

- Propaganda and **disinformation** against EU, NATO, liberal values.
- Supporting **populist**, nationalist and **radical** parties and movement.
- **Corruption** (including political) as a key element of RU penetration.
- **Funding** (and bribing) politicians, experts, NGOs, media, Universities.
- Russian **business close to Kremlin**, especially in critical infrastructure.
- **Cyber** attacks, data theft.

Countering Hybrid Warfare

- Taking it seriously. Allocating **appropriate resources**.
- Cooperating and **coordinating efforts** with Allies. Exchanging **experience**.
- More transparency + **anticorruption** efforts.
- Media literacy and **media education**.
- Strengthening **cyber** security. Improving **counter-intelligence** capabilities.
- Developing **analytical capacities** specialized in Hybrid Warfare.

Thank You for Your Time!

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