

RUSSIA'S HYBRID WAR

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Abstract: The article presents itself an attempt of assessment theory and practice of hybrid warfare exploited by the Russian Federation (RF). It presents the conclusions resulting from the National Security Strategy and the military doctrine. It sums up the methods and solutions of the armed forces RF as well as forecasts their role in reaching future political goals.

Keywords: Russian Federation, Armed Force, National Security Strategy, Military Doctrine, hybrid warfare, threats, security.

1 INTRODUCTION

During the final days of last year, President of the Russian Federation (RF) V. Putin signed the National Security Strategy¹, a strategic planning document expressing national interests and priorities as well as political goals and activities that are supposed to guarantee improvement in security and stable, long-term national development. The National Security Strategy is not the only document which has recently undergone transformation. As a result of rapid changes in the global environment of international security, amendments have been made to the Military Doctrine² that precede the Strategy by one year. The document unambiguously shows that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) poses a threat to the Russian Federation. Additionally, the new Naval Strategy³ of the Russian Federation put in effect in the second half of last year criticises NATO's plans to place military installations toward its border lines. The fact that these activities were undertaken as a consequence of Russian aggression against Ukraine have been, unfortunately, omitted.

Within the last two years, Russia has surprised the West twice. The first time was when Russia, through its actions in Ukraine, contradicted the West's confidence that the Russian armed forces were largely ineffective. It turned out that the international community did not know how to respond to coordinated hybrid operations, the success of which soon led to the strategic advance against not only Ukraine but also the whole Western world. Ukraine alone has become a nation capable of being independent. On top of that, after two years we can observe the continuing powerlessness of international organizations and individual nations against hybrid warfare. The other surprise turned out to be, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, the application of Russian armed force outside the former Soviet Union, in Syria. Undoubtedly, the European Union paying homage to the rule of *soft power* has not resolved both the problems of Ukraine and the migration wave. In this situation the

thesis seems to be true that the main beneficent of foreign policy for the last two years has been Russia. In the opinions of experts, Russia owes its international political success to its military, which has effectively broken an American monopoly on usage of the armed forces for expeditionary interventions.

The main aim of the article is to assess the significance and/or meaning of hybrid warfare and the use of military instruments in order to reach RF strategic objectives. To do so, the following research problems are addressed: 1) What conclusions may be drawn from the National Security Strategy? 2) What is the meaning of hybrid warfare in the implementation of Russian political goals? 3) In what ways does Russia plan to use military force? 4) What will the new generation of wars be characterized by?

2 NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

In the new National Security Strategy, one can see aggression and criticism of the West. Only one paragraph of the Military Doctrine mentions the threats coming from NATO. The Strategy, however, says directly that the USA and its allies negate an independent policy of the RF. Moscow blames NATO and the EU for the immigration crisis. The document further says that Washington and Brussels are responsible for unconstitutional assassinations in Ukraine which have created military conflict at Russian borders⁴.

The Strategy similarly refers to the Islamic State. Russians claim that it is a result of the policy of double standards used in the fight against terrorism. Moscow holds that some nations legitimize terrorism, extremism, and ethnic conflicts by using colour revolutions and hybrid warfare. It accuses the West of using modern technology, especially in the field of information, to reach their own goals by manipulating public opinion and falsifying history⁵. As a result of these irresponsible operations of Western countries, instabilities have appeared in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria, leading to widespread proliferation of organized crime,

¹ Стратегия национальной безопасности Российской Федерации, Москва.

² Военная доктрина Российской Федерации, Москва.

³ Морская доктрина Российской Федерации, Москва.

⁴ Стратегия национальной безопасности Российской Федерации, Москва.

⁵ Стратегия национальной безопасности Российской Федерации...op. cit., p. 5.

violence, drug trafficking, and weapons of mass destruction⁶. It seems, though, that Russian strategists most fear the radical activities of social groups and organizations which use nationalistic and extremist religious ideologies, foreign and international organizations, and private entities that can destabilise political and social situations in the country⁷. In this context one can observe the fear of hybrid warfare entailing non-kinetic operations carried out by non-military agents, mainly in the psychological sphere. This fear is connected to that of discrediting the power of the RF and its standing in the world, as well as the possibility of impact on the conduct of government in the country and abroad⁸.

Threats to military security have remained the same as defined in the National Security Strategy until 2020. It includes the policy of the strongest nations aiming to achieve military dominance, particularly in the realm of nuclear capability, but also in precision-guided weapons development⁹. The document indicates that the role of the armed forces is to continue dominance in international relations; nevertheless, pursuing modernization of offensive weapons only weakens the global security system, the role of the international treaties, and agreements on armament control.

In response to the threats articulated above, the strategic objective is to provide security with the aid of the armed forces of the RF. More attention is paid to issues of mobilization readiness and civil defence. It is stressed that, to protect its national interests, Russia will pursue a foreign policy that excludes costly confrontation and a new arms race. The use of military force is seen as a last resort, possible only after the exhaustion of political, economic, diplomatic, and other means¹⁰. Weapons of mass destruction are only to be used against existential threats.

Interestingly, according to the Strategy, security is defined in a wide context spanning several fields, e.g., economic, social, medical security, and so on. Other non-military threats are related to, for example, weakly developed technologies, weaknesses of the financial system, an unbalanced

budget, grey markets, corruption, criminal activity, and even underdevelopment of specific regions¹¹.

The Kremlin is aware of the changing global context of threat perception and security problem-solving. Currently, instruments of political, financial, and information impact, which are more powerful weapons than conventional ones, take on new meaning in the solution of geopolitical security problems. Individual countries, in the fight for influence in the international arena and to secure their own national interests, mainly use modern methods of economic/financial impact and technology.

Nearly one third of the Strategy is dedicated to health, education, and stability problems. It is believed that weak health negatively affects military conscription, cultural insecurity weakens the effectiveness of propaganda, and economic instability drains the security budget and generates social unrest.

The following conclusions are drawn from the analysis and assessment of the Strategy of the West. Firstly, we should not be taken in by the new language of articulation of the Strategy. In the tone of the statement, we can note antagonisms toward the West, but the Strategy core remains unchanged in comparison to the Strategy of 2009¹². Secondly, the real security fears of the Kremlin are not related to military threats, but rather to political, economic, and technological challenges. Thirdly, the Russian economy may suffer from a serious crisis, and its geopolitical aspirations are disproportionate to its current opportunities¹³. Therefore, the conclusion may be that Russian strategists fully understand the modern spectrum of the political-information-economic competition area, and, on the other hand, are not appreciated by their Western equivalents.

3 SIGNIFICANCE OF HYBRID WARFARE IN THE RUSSIAN STRATEGY

In a geopolitical context, hybrid war is a new concept. Russian strategists understand hybrid war as a concept applied mainly in special operations and combined operations of opposition forces, as well as in fighting state extremism and non-state actors that pose threats to international security¹⁴. Hybrid war can be conducted inside or outside hostile territory in order to overthrow the government. Internal operations consist of supporting the opposition and its operational

⁶ *Russia wants world war - An updated National Security Strategy of the RF*, Live Leak.

⁷ STELMACH, A.: *Nowa rosyjska strategia bezpieczeństwa posiada antyzachodni charakter. Priorytetem Daleki Wschód*.

⁸ БАРТОШ, А.: *Гибридные войны как проявление глобальной критичности современного мира*, Геополитика и Безопасность, No 1 (29) 2015, p. 71 – 78.

⁹ *Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020*, Москва 12 May 2009.

¹⁰ *Russia wants world war - An updated National Security Strategy of the RF*, Live Leak.

¹¹ *Стратегия национальной безопасности Российской Федерации*, op. cit., p. 13.

¹² JANKOWSKI, D.: *Nowa strategia bezpieczeństwa narodowego Federacji Rosyjskiej*, portal Geopolityka. Org.

¹³ GALEOTTI, M.: *Russia's New National Security Strategy: Familiar Themes*, op. cit.

¹⁴ БАРТОШ, А.: *Гибридные войны как проявление глобальной критичности современного оп.* cit., p. 73.

preparation to influence the economy and society in coordination with diplomatic activity as well as conducting hard action. In order to achieve this, the military uses broad reconnaissance, special operations, organized crime, and extensive society-oriented information and psychological campaigns. Structures of state and legal authorities are impacted by, among other things, information and communication technologies¹⁵.

Considered among a wide range of geopolitical goals, it seems to be mistakenly perceived by some theorists of war that the art of hybrid warfare is merely a new form of fighting, or even conflict that includes all known methods of warfare. Also, the understanding of hybrid war as military strategy that implies a combination of conventional, irregular, and cybernetic operations is too narrow. Others perceive hybrid war as more complex: combining nuclear, biological, and chemical weapon strikes; deploying conventional operations as well as improvised explosive devices and information war¹⁶. Ultimately, it has proven to be true that in hybrid war one avoids open, direct, kinetic conflict. Hybrid threats are complex and may include, among other things, cyberspace, low-intensity combat operations below the level of war, global terrorism, piracy, illegal migration, corruption, ethnic and religious conflicts, demographic challenges, transnational organized crime, globalisation challenges, or finally the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Hybrid warfare is defined by NATO in equally broad terms. Given the Ukrainian experience, Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow presented a definition of hybrid war as *a combination of military threats with economic blackmail, diplomatic hypocrisy, media manipulation, and evident disinformation*¹⁷. This definition reflects the operations conducted by Moscow. However, it should be understood in a broader sense, which means that such conduct also poses threats to all allies and aims to destabilise international economics and politics, thus compromising regional security. The use of Russian armed force in Crimea should be considered an element of a consistent strategy of integrating all tools at the state's disposal. However, there have been other targets achieved by armed force in eastern Ukraine. Therefore, armed force has arguably been an effective tool in achieving the strategic objectives of the RF by hybrid warfare.

Certainly, the idea of hybrid warfare is not a new one. The phenomenon consists of high effectiveness due to simultaneous, coordinated use of political, military, special operations, and information

resources¹⁸. The logic of hybrid warfare implies the Chinese concept of an unlimited warfare which assumes an employment of many possibilities of impact on the opposite side at their most sensitive places by means of both military force and a wide spectrum of non-military instruments¹⁹. The boundaries between the state of peace and war are in decline, between the activities with the use of force and without it, kinetic and non-kinetic ones, regular and irregular activities, between what is a battlefield and what is not, between what is a weapon and what is not²⁰. Unrestrictedness of the hybrid war operations likewise the Chinese concept of warfare consists in non-application of the rules of the art of war, international regulations and any rule for the use of those impact instruments. The strategic objectives are met as a part of the spectrum of irregular, unconventional and asymmetric operations as well as the other military and non-military objects' activities²¹.

War aims at persuading the opposite side to behave in accordance with expectations, thus warfare is a kind of influence sphere. In this context, the method of impact seems to be important. In the case of hybrid war, kinetic operations are no less relevant, though they may be replaced by non-kinetic operations with non-military objects, at least in the first stage. In order to reach strategic objectives, diplomatic and economic operations are carried out, and when they fail other, more effective methods are used until the armed forces are included. Therefore, we can speak about the full spectrum of capabilities attributed to various impact instruments, in particular the non-military ones. When it comes to the fiasco of *soft power* in the Russian strategy, if the situation requires, it has been seen to resort to the application of hard power together with weapons of mass destruction. The greatest effects are when all impact instruments at state disposal are applied together, not separately, according to the plan elaborated before.

These days, the classical understanding of war fades into the background and the role of other instruments for achieving political goals increases. Nowadays, the number of strikes or casualties are not the measures of success they were just a couple of years ago. They have been replaced by political effects achieved by specific (untraditional) use of

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 75

¹⁶ KUNGUROV, D.: *Russia prepares for hybrid wars*, Russia and India Report.

¹⁷ TOPYCHKANOV, P.: "Hybrid War"—a Scholarly Term or a Propaganda Cliché?, Russian International Affairs Council.

¹⁸ RÁCZ, A.: *Russia's Hybrid War in Ukraine: Breaking the Enemy's Ability to Resist*, The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Report 43 (2015), 16.6.2015, p. 87.

¹⁹ LIANG, Q., XIANGSUI W.: *Unrestricted Warfare*, Beijing 1999, p. 25.

²⁰ Ibidem, p.180.

²¹ FLEMING, B.: *The Hybrid Threat Concept: Contemporary War, Military Planning and the Advent of Unrestricted Operational Art*, Leavenworth 2011, p. 44.

armed force²². Does strategy rely more on political and economic instruments than on military? Without a doubt, a state that uses hybrid warfare minimizes damage and costs incurred on the state attacked. It also avoids loss of personnel, which in turn leads to avoidance of social protests. Undoubtedly, armed forces are used in a different way than in the past. They essentially provide their relevant capabilities which are closely integrated with political and economic instruments as well as social media, and thanks to this they can achieve their strategic objectives more easily.

The example of Ukraine shows that one of the goals of hybrid warfare is sponsorship of political movements which generate chaos and instability of a state in all possible areas of its function, which reflects the nature of modern-day conflicts. In this respect, the so-called Gerasimov²³ Doctrine is not a military doctrine in the classic sense. The document describes the nature of modern-day conflicts and the methods of their solution rather than only the method of using armed force. The most important conclusion is that non-military measures and the kinetic impact sphere are more effective than military means. On the other hand, one may say that Russian operations are oriented toward the exploitation of weaknesses and sensitivities of the opposing side.

The RF military doctrine proves the conviction of war art theorists who hold that, in the 21st century, the era of high technology, political goals as well as strategic/military wars and armed conflicts are resolved not only with direct operations, but also other forms of fighting. Integral to the general concept of warfare, along with armed force are operations conducted in economics, diplomacy, ideology, and other forms of competition²⁴. Hence, verification of some concepts related to the art of war has become necessary. War in the RF is understood as an *asocial and political phenomenon, a specific social state linked to rapid change of the relations between nation and society, and a transfer to organized use of coercive measure and achievement of political goals. Along with armed force, which is the essence of war, diplomatic, economic, and other forms of war and the corresponding measures are applied*²⁵. Such a

complex, integrated application of various impact instruments may suggest a reflection of the Western concept of a so-called '*comprehensive approach*'²⁶ expressed by coordinated civil and military efforts leading to crisis situation solutions. However, the conclusions drawn from analysis in the 21st century indicate that the views of the RF are aligned with the theories of rebel wars of E. Messner²⁷: that modern conflicts take place in society. Since the boundaries between military and civilian society are blurring, the aim of a military campaign is not only impact on the armed forces of the opposing side, but also on the society in its cultural and physical aspects. This makes it necessary to conduct civil and military operations rather than only military ones as it has been so far²⁸.

Assessments of the theory and practice of waging war indicate an increasing role of non-military and indirect operations. Non-military operations include comprehensive measures—extra or complementary kinetic armed operations applied both in external and internal policy of the state. Throughout history, the scope of non-military measures in international conflicts has continuously been increasing. It is safe to argue that in the future such forms and methods of impact on the opposing side will gain momentum. On the other hand, indirect operations in modern conflicts have found their reflection in the methods of asymmetric, information, and cyberspace battles. They aim at an increased element of surprise, and, as a result, accelerated achievement of war goals. In other words, they are operations that neutralize the opposing side without the use of conventional weapons²⁹ - for example, information that plays an important role in a strategic sense (especially surprising and misleading the opposing side), disorganization of the government and its defence systems, and at last organization of anti-governmental manifestations which ultimately reduce the state's abilities to defend itself³⁰.

V.A. Kiselev and I.N. Vorobyov indicate a geopolitical dimension of hybrid war. They introduce the concept of hybrid operations as a form of conducting military activities. According to them, hybrid operations are conducted in order to separate a part of state territory and annex it to another with

²² MANEA, O.: *Hybrid War as a War on Governance*, Small Wars Journal.

²³ ГЕРАСИМОВ, В.: *Ценность науки в предвидении. Новые вызовы требуют переосмыслить формы и способы ведения боевых действий*, „Военно-промышленный курьер“.

²⁴ ЧЕКИНОВ, С., БОГДАНОВ, С.: *Военное искусство на начальном этапе XXI столетия: проблемы и суждения*, Военная мысль № 1, Москва, 2015, p. 32.

²⁵ ЧЕКИНОВ, С., БОГДАНОВ, С.: *Военное искусство на начальном этапе XXI столетия...* op. cit., p. 33.

²⁶ RINTAKOSKI, K., AUTTI, M.: *Comprehensive Approach. Trends, Challenges and Possibilities for Cooperation in Crisis Prevention and Management*, Helsinki, 2008.

²⁷ МЕССНЕР, Е.: *Хочешь Мира, Победи Мятеевойну!*, Москва, 2005.

²⁸ GRESSEL, G.: *Russia's Quiet Military Revolution, And What It Means For Europe*, CFR/143, Brussels 2015.

²⁹ ЧЕКИНОВ, С., БОГДАНОВ, С.: *Военное искусство на начальном этапе XXI столетия...* op. cit., p. 42.

³⁰ Ibid.

complex political-diplomatic, information-propaganda, financial-economic, and military undertakings. In addition to that, there are no *sensu stricto* military campaigns conducted. Operations in the territory of the opposing side can be supported by special operations and armed structures, earlier organized and prepared for use in the separated territory but, in their opinion, to neutralise the armed forces of the opposite side³¹. Similar to E. Messner and G. Gressel, they consider society the main object of fighting. According to M. Galeotti, people are the centre of gravity in hybrid war, including those who make political decisions and those influenced by the consequences of those decisions. He argues that *we are living in times when rebels take places at the heads of societies*. He concludes that modern campaigns *do not consist in persuading whoever to the Russian way of thinking, but rather to undermine people's faith in anything and to create an environment in which nobody is sure about anything*³². Thus, a central element of hybrid operations is political decision, and in at the optimal time the development of armed groups and special operations targeted at the society dwelling in the territory targeted for separation. Simultaneously, forming and training the opposing armed structures for independent operation destabilises the political, economic, and social situation in the territory controlled³³.

As mentioned before, special forces will play an important role in conducting hybrid operations. They are likely to come into use when diplomatic methods have not brought about expected results and will be oriented toward the achievement of political and economic goals. Special forces operations will divert attention of a certain nation from external problems by creating internal ones, leading to instability of political and social systems. They usually form an opposite front and assign leaders of opposition or revolutionary (insurrectional) movements. This side can also carry out hard actions when, from the political point of view, the use of regular armed force is unfavourable or premature.

Attention should be paid also to the methods of achieving operational goals of separating a specific territory and its annexation to the other state. In the opinion of V.A. Kiselev, the first hidden step of action is about the formation of opposing organisations and their training to conduct armed force operations independently. The next step relates to a violent seizure of power, or a peaceful one backed by the threat of using force³⁴. In this type of

operation, non-state, non-commercial organizations may play a big role. Members of such organizations may be citizens of the isolated territory and their operations targeted at discrediting power, lowering the authority of legal force structures including the military, bribing owners of the means of mass information, and conducting information operations under the pretence of defending democracy, which should lead to local elections and their seizure of power. It seems that in hybrid operations private armed organizations will also play a big part³⁵. This thesis explains the independent battalions effectively taking part in the counter-terrorism campaign conducted in Ukraine in 2014.

4 USE OF RUSSIAN ARMED FORCE

Military doctrine as distinct from strategy defines what wars the armed forces will take part in and how they will fight them. The Russian Military Doctrine reflects, therefore, the official approach of Russian authorities toward the problems of preparation for and waging of an armed struggle. Assessment of the document indicates that Russian theorists have drawn conclusions from colour revolutions, and the conflict in Ukraine proves that the use of armed force will vary considerably from the one described in previous doctrine of 2010³⁶. The nature of conflicts means the war is called a hybrid war or non-linear war, and it points out new differences in the use of the armed forces. Hybrid war gets a new strategic dimension and *it cannot be characterized as a military campaign understood in classical sense of this concept*³⁷. Armed forces are used in the territory of the opposing side without declaration of war and with relatively low intensity of combat operations, making it difficult to discern clear boundaries between war and peace. Future battlefields are prepared beforehand through detailed planning of impact synchronized with masked use of the armed forces. Such a combined impact clearly indicates that a state possesses a collection of tools to achieve its strategic objectives, and hybrid war is one of them³⁸.

In the doctrine it is possible to see the meaning of asymmetry and non-linearity, but, in fact, what is new? Certainly, it is a way in which military tools are combined with others to achieve strategic objectives. One new idea is the consideration of asymmetric operations which clearly shift from direct destruction to indirect impact, from war with

³¹ КИСЕЛЁВ, В., ВОРОБЬЁВ, И.: *Гибридные операции как новый вид военного противоборства*, Военная мысль № 5, Москва 2015, p. 1.

³² MANEA, O.: *Hybrid War as a War on Governance...* op. cit.,

³³ КИСЕЛЁВ, В., ВОРОБЬЁВ, И.: *Гибридные операции как новый вид военного...* op. cit., p. 41.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 35.

³⁵ SABAK, J.: *W Rosji powstają prywatne armie*, Defence 24.

³⁶ *Военная доктрина Российской Федерации*, Москва.

³⁷ BĒRZIŅŠ, J.: *Russia's New Generation Warfare In Ukraine: Implications For Latvian Defense Policy*, Policy Paper no 02/2014.

³⁸ VEN BRUUSGAARD, K.: *Crimea and Russia's Strategic Overhaul*. Parameters Autumn 2014, Vol. 44 No. 3, p. 85.

weapons to new cultural war technologies, and from traditional battlefields to information battles, psychological warfare, and finally to a war of perceptions³⁹. The above philosophy allows states to reach military targets without a direct military confrontation. It means that non-military measures of impact, in particular in the non-kinetic area, constitute a peculiar weapon which enables them to reach their strategic objectives.

The effectiveness of hybrid warfare in achieving political goals was unprecedentedly confirmed during the Crimea annexation by the Russian Federation in 2014, chiefly thanks to blurring borders between war and peace as well as synchronized impact on the adversary in many dimensions, with the use of various tools and methods at their disposal. This type of action in the strategic dimension poses a big challenge to their coordination. Integrated impacts on the adversary require operational control at the state level. In the RF this role is played by the National Defence Management Centre⁴⁰. It is headed by the General Chief of Staff; nonetheless, members of the civilian leadership must be allowed access to confidential matters merely for military purposes. Complex thinking about achieving political goals requires the collective action of military and civilian players.

The engagement of the Russian Federation in Syria under the cover of a fight with the Islamic State aimed, in fact, at reinforcement of the position of Russia in the Middle East and its political power. The propaganda and information dimension was more significant than the physical engagement. The air strikes were, in fact, targeted at rebels in order to reinforce the regime of Bashara Al-Sada. The involvement in the fight against terrorism led to consolidation of the Russian society and diverted its attention from both the economic issues and the situation on the Ukraine, and it also reinforced the image of the military force⁴¹. It was also a great surprise for the West and it was intended to cause Russia to be perceived as a global actor without which the international problems could not be solved. The air strikes had also positive global effect on Kremlin. It brought about a constant, mass wave of refugees which produced problems unsolvable to the European Union. Kremlin, deliberately uses migration as an instrument to overload the European

aid structures and as a result to break down the European determination for admitting refugees⁴².

Through the operations undertaken on the military grounds the Russian Federation attempts to restore its international position. It can be seen, inter alia, in a demonstrational agitation of the activities of the maritime force on the North Atlantic⁴³, in making bases in the Arctic region or in conducting wide-scale airmobile military exercises in the region of the Baltic States. Kremlin has the will and instruments for applying the military factor with more disproportional determination than the democracies on the West are ready for. Therefore, just in the psychological and political area the asymmetry speaks more against the West⁴⁴. Kremlin likewise China treats the military operations as an instrument for making politics.

The Russian Military Doctrine implies the use of the armed force not only in the Russian territory. Moscow claims the right to armed intervention outside the country in the case of threats to Russian interests or citizens. Another characteristic feature is the fact that the RF is not afraid of direct military aggression, but considers the threat in terms of information and internal security, which means fears of national destabilisation not necessarily caused by the activities of the regular armed forces of the opposing side. Destabilisation may be caused by radical groups' activity, private organisations, separatists, and extremists, which proves that hybrid warfare can be also waged within Russian territory. The grounds for this assumption is fear of foreign migration to the Russian Federation as well as infiltration of unwanted people, terrorist organizations, or reconnaissance-diversion network groups interested in the escalation of political tension and creation of radical forces⁴⁵.

As syrian's practice testifies, the Russian military force can be used to support the regimes of the neighboring states. The doctrine stipulates also a fight with the regimes established as a result of deposing a local government which leads the policy counter to the Russian interests. It may also be used in the special service of foreign countries against irregular armed force operations, in this case those applying asymmetric methods, as well as against hostile operations in the information security area, in

³⁹ BĒRZIŅŠ, J.: *Russia's New Generation Warfare In Ukraine: Implications For Latvian Defense Policy*, Policy Paper no 02/2014.

⁴⁰ БАРАНЕЦ, В.: *Что Такое «Национальный Центр Управления Обороной России» И Зачем Он Создан?*

⁴¹ DYNER, A.: *Rosyjskie zaangażowanie wojskowe w Syrii – nowy etap*, Biuletyn PISM nr 23(1373), 18 marca 2016.

⁴² *Dowódca sił NATO: Rosja i Syria destabilizują Europę falą uchodźców.*

⁴³ BEDNARZAK, T.: *Rosyjska flota podwodna coraz bardziej agresywna. Tak źle nie było od czasów zimnej wojny*, Interia.

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ КИСЕЛЁВ, В., ВОРОБЬЁВ, И.: *Гибридные операции как новый вид военного...* op. cit., p. 47 & 48.

particular by the young generation for spiritual destruction and patriotic/historical traditions⁴⁶.

For combating internal hybrid threats, along with the regular Russian armed forces there are paramilitary and non-military forces consisting of about 170,000 citizens who are structured, trained, and ready for action. It is not predicted that the regular armed forces will be used in case of natural disasters and catastrophes, because the Ministry of Emergency Situations has its own subdivisions. The conclusion is that the armed forces are not being prepared for so-called *soft threats*, since there is simply not such a need⁴⁷.

In the opinion of V.K. Belozorov, the armed forces will need to be prepared and used against political threats that include *economic sanctions, ideological pressures, irregular formations operations, extremist religion groups, and even sexual minority organizations*.

For the conclusion, it is worth saying that hybrid defence, like hybrid war, will require integration of intelligence operations with those of politics and the military, as well as the use of other instruments in order to win (as in Crimea) without even a shot being fired⁴⁸. Preparation for this will certainly require the possession of special equipment and well-trained divisions, such as, e.g., police armed force divisions that are able to oppose protesters, a counterintelligence service with a proper budget, and tools for identifying provocateurs/opposition political leaders/agents/etc⁴⁹.

5 A NEW GENERATION OF WAR

S.G. Tchekinov and S.A. Bogdanov predict the evolution of hybrid war. They claim that, in this century of advanced technology, future wars belong to a new generation characterized by non-contact and precision strikes far inside the country under attack⁵⁰. They think that net-centric armed struggle will be dominated by the outer space and electronic dimensions. Propaganda, information, and psychological impact on the society of the attacked nation will not be forgotten in the non-linear war. They hold that war will be waged according to the side's rules which takes the advantage of the technology sphere thanks to a stronger economy. They say war will come in two phases: open and closed. The open phase will be a crucial period of

war. It will be the time when information, space, counter-air, and radio-electronic operations will be conducted. Precision strikes will be conducted with newly gained weapons based on now-unknown rules in the whole territory of the defending side. In this phase of war, destruction of control centres and infrastructure critical to state function will lead to the collapse of the political-economic system and demoralization of the society. Paralysis of the economic sector will not allow military needs to be met, which will lead to failure. On the other side, the enemy will achieve its political goals in a relatively short span of time⁵¹. The closing phase consists of the ultimate removal of the remaining resistance points through the use of special forces, air-power, and advanced technology weapons.

This does not exclude non-military operations that consist of a combination of political, economic, information, and diplomatic instruments in the starting phase of conflict. The use of nuclear weapons is also taken into account when conventional operations do not bring a fast and decisive outcome⁵². The present military doctrine allows the use of nuclear weapons in the case of existential threats; nonetheless, statements by V. Putin in officially published documents reveal that after the annexation of Crimea⁵³ the requirements for a nuclear strike were significantly lower.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The conflict in Ukraine and Syria as well as doctrinal records point to a new way of integrating military and non-military tools to achieve the strategic objectives planned by the Russian Federation. This new space of hybrid struggle includes political, diplomatic, economic, information, and psychological dimensions, among others. Special operations, strategic misdirection, and circumvention combined with activities within the local society conducted in Ukraine misled the authorities there and also masked the true intentions of the Russian Federation. Applying the hybrid war strategy also led to division of the international community and difficulties in achieving consensus. In practice, except sanctions imposed on the RF, consensus does not have a practical dimension. The RF's actions, though below the level of war, evoke fear in its neighbours and raise the possibility of applying Art. 5 of the Washington Treaty. Asymmetric operations conducted in the strategic dimension indicate that the combination of military and non-military capabilities is optimal. Hybrid operations confirm that the border line between civil and military segments of society are fading, and the military campaign aims at influencing not only the

⁴⁶ БЕЛОЗЁРОВ, В.: *Геополитические смыслы Военной доктрины Российской Федерации*, Геополитика и Безопасность, No 1 (29)/2015, p. 13.

⁴⁷ GRESSEL, G.: *Russia's Quiet Military Revolution, And What It Means For Europe...* op. cit., p. 6.

⁴⁸ GALEOTTI, M.: *Time to Think About "Hybrid Defense"*, War on the Rocks.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ ЧЕКИНОВ, С., БОГДАНОВ, С.: *The Nature and Content of a New-Generation War*, Military Thought, No. 4/2013, p. 15 – 18.

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 21.

⁵² Ibid. p. 22.

⁵³ *Ukraine conflict: Putin 'was ready for nuclear alert'*, BBC News.

conduct of the armed forces of the adversary but also of the whole society. This brings the cultural and psychological aspects home to us. The above arguments indicate a new trend of conducting civil-military operations, not merely military ones. Currently, military operations are not undertaken merely to physically destroy the adversary, but to undermine the morale of the armed forces, the government, and the whole society. The impact on the culture of society, the political system, and the media play a bigger part in achieving military goals.

The experience in Ukraine also proves the argument that strategic innovations introduced by the RF characterized by the planned, integrated use of military and non-military instruments as well as synchronized kinetic and non-kinetic effects went far beyond documented policies. The application of all or selected elements of national force using military, paramilitary, political, economic, and information instruments allows much flexibility in achieving political goals. In order to implement a successful, coordinated state strategy, coordination of actions at the state level is very important.

Assessment of the theory and practice of hybrid operations confirm the crucial significance of armed force in achieving strategic objectives. The Ukrainian experience, which showed alternative forms and methods of fighting as well as a focus on influencing the non-military realm of the enemy, confirms the significant role of armed force at each stage of confrontation. The unconventional use of force in asymmetric and paramilitary operations creates a big challenge for the international community in opposing new threats. Recent military reforms have made the present armed forces of the RF better prepared to enact state policies and achieve strategic objectives than predicted by the assessment of Western experts.

There is a perception in the RF that, in developed societies, armed force will play its part in economic security through the short-term achievement of political goals. Russian armed forces will undergo transformation and will be prepared to wage a new generation of warfare by applying indirect and direct forms of impact. An information advantage and preceding operations will be key elements in determining the success of this warfare. There is a high probability that countries whose policies are only directed toward defence will be doomed to fail.

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