**Russian Hybrid Warfare: Not New, Well-Accomplished, and Limited in Scope[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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**Abstract**: Hybrid warfare is actually nothing new, despite the fact that observers were initially surprised at the coordinated and disciplined political-military approach that encompassed Russia’s forays in Crimea in 2014. The year before, General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the Russian General Staff, noted in an article that, “Methods used in struggle are increasingly changing in favor of political, economic, information, humanitarian and other non-military means, including the use of the protest potential of the population.” Russia’s “hybrid” warfare is thus a mixture of unconventional acts (initially) short of war, secret operations backed by military force, and a major information warfare campaign, that also includes a cyber-warfare aspect. This approach will only work well in specific areas of the near abroad where ethnic Russians, or possible proxies, live. It also worked best in specific Ukrainian conditions (a new, paralyzed and confused government without a clear mandate) that will likely not be reproduced elsewhere. The Baltic States and the EU are quite aware of the danger as is NATO, which is constantly exercising in the Baltics. A key issue is how would NATO recognize an ambiguous “hybrid” attack that would require an Article V response? Russia continues to wage a massive propaganda and information warfare campaign with the ultimate goal of undermining NATO and the EU by creating a pro-Russian narrative and even political change. This the part of hybrid warfare that will not easily disappear: it has been part of Russian thinking for over 40 years.

**Keywords**: Russia, hybrid warfare, non-military acts, Ukraine, Baltic states, NATO, ethnic Russians

**Introduction**

The concept of hybrid warfare in general is not new and certainly was not invented by Russia. Russian hybrid warfare, as used in both Crimea and Ukraine, has a number of moving parts, but hybrid warfare has been used throughout the centuries, often combing elements of regular and irregular conflict, including guerrillas, as seen from ancient history through Mao’s victories, Vietnam, and even Hezbollah’s approach to its conflict with Israel.[[2]](#footnote-2) Ancient history and literature has examples of hybrid warfare. After all, what was the Greeks’ use of the Trojan horse but an element of hybrid warfare? Like Russia’s actions in Ukraine, it was as effective and worked. Once. As Heidi Reisinger and Aleksandr Golts have noted in a NATO-sponsored paper, it is not that hybrid warfare is new, but that the combination is new for Russia:[[3]](#footnote-3)

There have been at times an effective and sometimes surprising overlapping mix of military and non-military, conventional and irregular components, such as cyber and information operations. None of the single components is new; it is the combination and orchestration of different actions that achieves a surprise effect and creates ambiguity, making an adequate reaction extremely difficult, especially for multinational organizations that operate on the principle of consensus.

But Reisinger and Golts are writing their paper for NATO and trying to show how NATO could respond to this new combination of some old ideas. Indeed, they note that some of the “Russian strategists seem to have created these [Russian] rapid deployment forces along the lines recommended by …Colin Powell: they must be able to secure a quick victory and them withdraw immediately.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

**1. A Paralyzed Ukraine Was Necessary for Success**

However, a key element of Russia’s success was that its opponent, Ukraine, was, to put it mildly, a political and military mess. President Yanukovich had just fled, the Ukrainian leadership was in disarray, and no one in Kyiv knew whether or not the military would fight for the new, still unelected government as the Russian moved into Crimea. It was increasingly clear that Ukrainian forces, including its military, intelligence services, and police forces were not willing or able to fully support the interim government. Moreover, with not only were there the irregular “little green men, i.e., the Russians in Crimea without identification but with discipline and heavy weapons, but there were also Russian regular forces arrayed along Ukraine’s borders. Ukrainian forces were simply not up to the task in Crimea and only responded when Eastern Ukrainian regions, with Russian military and secret help, started to break off.[[5]](#footnote-5) Reisinger and Golts note that despite its official size (41,000 personnel) on paper of the ground forces, there were actually only 6,000 truly combat-ready forces even at the end of 2014.[[6]](#footnote-6)

**2. Gerasimov’s Views**

One useful definition that encompasses many of the tools that Russia used in 2014 was given a year earlier in 2013 by General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the Russian General Staff:[[7]](#footnote-7)

All this is supplemented by military means of a concealed character, including carrying out actions of informational conflict and the actions of special operations forces. The open use of forces -- often under the guise of peacekeeping and crisis regulation -- is resorted to only at a certain stage, primarily for the achievement of final success in the conflict. Methods used in struggle are increasingly changing in favor of political, economic, information, humanitarian and other non-military means, including the use of the protest potential of the population. This can be complemented with secret military measures, including information wars and secret operations. Often, one resorts to an open use of force under the guise of a peacekeeping or crisis response operation only at some stage, largely to achieve the final success in a conflict.

From this proceed logical questions: What is modern war? ….These days, together with traditional devices, nonstandard ones are being developed. The role of mobile, mixed-type groups of forces, acting in a single intelligence-information space because of the use of the new possibilities of command-and-control systems has been strengthened. Military actions are becoming more dynamic, active, and fruitful. Tactical and operational pauses that the enemy could exploit are disappearing. New information technologies have enabled significant reductions in the spatial, temporal, and informational gaps between forces and control organs. Frontal engagements of large formations of forces at the strategic and operational level are gradually becoming a thing of the past. Long-distance, contactless actions against the enemy are becoming the main means of achieving combat and operational goals.

**3. Russian Military Improvements**

Having learned from its 2008 uncoordinated (in part) but successful foray into Georgia,[[8]](#footnote-8) Russia improved its ability to conduct what has been referred to as hybrid warfare, i.e., a mixture of unconventional acts (seemingly) short of war, secret operations backed by military force, and a major information warfare campaign, that also includes a cyber-warfare aspect. It should be noted that even Russia’s information war, which served to neutralize Ukrainian forces in Crimea is nothing new, since Russia had been working on the ideas of reflexive control for nearly fifty years. As Timothy Thomas notes, “If successfully achieved, reflexive control over the enemy makes it possible to influence his combat plans, his view of the situation, and how he fights. In other words, one side can impose its will on the enemy and cause him to make a decision inappropriate to a given situation.” What was new was how well the military and political information campaigns were coordinated.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Therefore, while the West in general was surprised at how well Russia had improved its capabilities since the military reforms that picked up speed after 2008, hybrid warfare is itself nothing new. What may be new is the coordinated approach of the individual parts that encompass hybrid warfare, but the novelty here is more a matter of quality and the quantity. In this sense the Russians have mastered the whole of government approach that the U.S. has recently talked about.[[10]](#footnote-10)

**4. The Steps in “Hybrid” Warfare**

Observers of what occurred in Crimea and later Ukraine have noted the various steps involved. The Latvians, who are especially concerned with the import of what the Russian have done and could do have identified the following eight phases of the Russian hybrid warfare, as practiced in Ukraine and touted by Russian military thinkers as new: [[11]](#footnote-11)

1. Non-military asymmetric warfare (encompassing information, moral, psychological, ideological, diplomatic, and economic measures as part of a plan to establish a favorable political, economic, and military setup).
2. Special operations to mislead political and military leaders by coordinated measures carried out by diplomatic channels, media, and top government and military agencies by leaking false data, orders, directives, and instructions.
3. Intimidation, deceiving, and bribing government and military officers, with the objective of making them abandon their service duties.
4. Destabilizing propaganda to increase discontent among the population, boosted by the arrival of Russian bands of militants, escalating subversion.
5. Establishment of no-fly zones over the country to be attacked, imposition of blockades, and extensive use of private military companies in close cooperation with armed opposition units.
6. Commencement of military action, immediately preceded by large-scale reconnaissance and subversive missions. All types, forms, methods, and forces, including special operations forces, space, radio, radio engineering, electronic, diplomatic, and secret service intelligence, and industrial espionage.
7. Combination of targeted information operation, electronic warfare operation, aerospace operation, continuous air force harassment, combined with the use of high-precision weapons launched from various platforms (long-range artillery, and weapons based on new physical principles, including microwaves, radiation, non-lethal biological weapons).
8. Roll over the remaining points of resistance and destroy surviving enemy units by special operations conducted by reconnaissance units to spot which enemy units have survived and transmit their coordinates to the attacker's missile and artillery units; fire barrages to annihilate the defender's resisting army units by effective advanced weapons; air-drop operations to surround points of resistance; and territory mopping-up operations by ground troops.

**5. A Necessary Condition: Local Russians (or proxies)**

There are, however, clear limits to what the Russians accomplished in Ukraine, since the specific conditions of a (possibly) disgruntled or influenced-to-be-disgruntled Russian population is not available in most of Europe except for the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The local population’s leanings toward Russia were crucial in Russia’s success in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine (which is still a work in progress for Russia). Thus, points 3 and 4 in Berzins’ list above would have no relevance in the rest of Europe, except for the Baltics. It could work in parts of Central Asia where a Russian diaspora still lives, primarily in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

This is appoint made by Roger McDermott, noting comments made at a Russian roundtable on hybrid warfare. McDermott found the consensus of the Russian analysts was that Russia really did not practice hybrid warfare.[[12]](#footnote-12) One of the main analysts, Ruslan Pukhov, has gone even further, noting that what Russia did was not that new and had really limited applications. It is worth quoting him at length:[[13]](#footnote-13)

The actions attributed to so-called hybrid warfare are fairly standard to any "low intensity" armed conflict of recent decades, if not centuries. It is difficult to imagine any country using military force without providing informational support, using methods of "secret warfare," attempting to erode enemy forces, exploiting internal ethnic, social, economic, political or other divisions in the enemy camp, and without the use of retaliatory economic sanctions. These have been the fundamentals of war since antiquity.

*The widely accepted definition of a hybrid war as using a combination of overt and covert actions, including the deployment in Crimea of "polite men in green" ignores the unique nature of that military operation. In Crimea, Russia relied on the nearly total support of the local population and the resultant complete isolation of the Ukrainian forces there*.

It was this fact that made it possible for soldiers in unmarked uniforms to remain in place as long as necessary. However, that is also specific to the situation in Crimea. *Such polite men in green would not last long if they showed up in, say, Poland or the American Midwest*. In that case, simply concealing their origins would not help them.

It is the presence of forces friendly to the outside power that makes it possible to employ methods that have now become known as "hybrid." *In applying the term hybrid war to the conflict in Ukraine, modern observers use politically biased wording to overstate the importance of external factors in the conflict and to downplay the significance of internal factors.*

**6. The Baltic States are Not Ukraine**

Indeed, the Baltic states and NATO are quite aware of the issues that Russia has raised in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine and will not sit idly by and see their countries undermined or split. For example, Estonia’s most senior officer noted that, “If Russian agents or special forces enter Estonian territory, ‘You should shoot the first one to appear…If somebody without any military insignia commits terrorist acts in your country, you should shoot him…you should not allow him to enter.”[[14]](#footnote-14) This clear and pugnacious attitude is, of course, much different from that of the Ukraine leadership when Russian forces without insignia entered Crimea—the government in Kyiv was paralyzed and unable to come to any decision over what to do, and this gave Russia the advantage.

NATO is now exercising troops regularly in the Baltics,[[15]](#footnote-15) and the Baltic governments clearly understand how the Russians operated last year and are ready. For example, the new Latvian president, Raymond Vejonis, who previously was defense minister, noted that he was “in favor of an increase in NATO troops in the Baltics and the early establishment of the Baltic Battalion. He said that he felt increasing pressure from Russia, but he does not consider ‘hybrid war’ from Moscow successful.”[[16]](#footnote-16)

Some analysts believe that hybrid warfare has already begun, though they take a limited view of what this means. On Polish analyst noted that, “Hybrid war against the Baltic states has already begun. Massive disinformation campaign, propaganda and psychological pressure are all in place.”

However, in terms of conventional war or something like what occurred in Ukraine—specifically for more than a year the Baltic three countries have prepared for a kind of murky conflict or "hybrid war," with exercises against "saboteurs," campaigns against Russian "propaganda" and increased spending on defense and border security.”[[17]](#footnote-17) One threat that does remain is how will exactly NATO recognize a hybrid attack that would require an Article V response?[[18]](#footnote-18)

**7. Limits of “Hybrid Warfare in Europe”**

A corollary of the previous statements is that hybrid warfare will not work well in Western Europe (less the Baltic states). Without supposedly downtrodden or allegedly mistreated Russians, there is no excuse for any Russian intervention, especially by the “green men” seen in Crimea. Even in countries that have been traditionally close to Russia, like Bulgaria (a member of NATO and the EU), nationalism would trump insertions of Russian forces.

The US, as well as A NATO, is well aware of the issues posed by hybrid warfare. *The National Military Strategy of the United States 2015* notes that hybrid warfare can cause problems, especially ambiguity as to intent, but the U.S. is well aware of the issue:[[19]](#footnote-19)

Overlapping state and non-state violence, there exists an area of conflict where actors blend techniques, capabilities, and resources to achieve their objectives. Such “hybrid” conflicts may consist of military forces assuming a non-state identity, as Russia did in the Crimea, or involve a VEO [Violent Extremist Organization] fielding rudimentary combined arms capabilities, as ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant]has demonstrated in Iraq and Syria. Hybrid conflicts also may be comprised of state and non-state actors working together toward shared objectives, employing a wide range of weapons such as we have witnessed in eastern Ukraine. Hybrid conflicts serve to increase ambiguity, complicate decision-making, and slow the coordination of effective responses. Due to these advantages to the aggressor, it is likely that this form of conflict will persist well into the future.

**8. Continuing Concerns**

However, what is a continuing danger, as noted earlier in this paper, is the massive propaganda and information warfare that Russia continues to wage not only in Ukraine but also globally. The goal of this information warfare is to put forward Russian views on Ukraine and ultimately undermine NATO and the EU by creating a pro-Russian narrative and even political change. Thus, Russia has been subsiding anti-EU right wing parties in Europe, bribing officials and governments, when it can, to increase its influence.[[20]](#footnote-20) This the part of the hybrid warfare that will not easily disappear and has been part of Russian military thinking for over 40 years and has become an integral part of the Putin regime.[[21]](#footnote-21) Christopher Donnelly, a former adviser to the NATO secretary general has noted that:[[22]](#footnote-22)

The covert forms of power that Russia is using are not just military,” he says. “Firstly there is money. They buy members of parliament as consultants. They buy companies. They buy the City of London. They buy individuals: bankers who get jobs in Moscow and then find themselves compromised, blackmailed when they return to the west. Secondly there is corruption. A lot of governments in countries around the world do not like that aid comes with strings attached. Russia is happy to bribe and use organised [sic] crime as a tool.

**9. Conclusions**

Hybrid warfare as recently practiced by the Russians, or at least its original non-kinetic elements, will only work well in certain areas of the near abroad where ethnic Russians live. There, Russian speakers of Russian origin can form a fifth column or an excuse. While Russia could also seek other proxies (like the Gagauz in Moldova, the South Ossetians or the Abkhaz in Georgia), in Western Europe, Russian options are limited. Thus, the Baltic states (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia) and parts of Central Asia with significant (and variously undigested) elements of the Russian diaspora are prime candidates for Russian meddling, but the Baltic states will likely be protected from active (vice passive) Russian activities by their current activities and their NATO and EU memberships.

Finally, senior US military officials have recently called Russia an existential danger. In certain ways it always was because of its nuclear arsenal, but the view today is that Russia has ignored, indeed flouted, international norms accepted throughout Europe. It has rejected the international order as the West sees it. Even if we consider the information warfare that this paper just mentioned, this issue, not hybrid warfare, is one of the real dangers from Russia. Western officials are[[23]](#footnote-23)

worried…about the 21st century tactics Mr. Putin is using. Russia’s actions in Ukraine have exploded the nation that expansive commutations technologies and economic interdependence were fostering a kind of grand bargain. Instead, nationalism, genocide, irredentism, and military aggression, which were thought to be in decline are alive and well, finding new and powerful means of being deployed in Ukraine and beyond….The rhetoric out of Moscow is expansive and alarming….”This crisis is about the status quo at the end of the cold war.”

In this context, perhaps a greater danger is the larger issue of the future of Europe and a declining Russia (with nuclear weapons) that does not recognize or perhaps does not care what it is doing to the international order.

1. These views represent those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the National Intelligence University, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. # The literature on this issue is extensive. See , for example, Williamson Murray and Peter R. Mansoor, eds., *Hybrid Warfare: Fighting Complex Opponents from the Ancient World to the Present,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012, and articles by Frank G. Hoffman, e.g., “Hybrid Warfare and Challenges,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 52, 1st Quarter 2009, 34-39, and “Hybrid Threats: Conceptualizing the Evolving Character of Modern Conflict,” *Strategic Forum*, No. 240, April 2009 (Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University). See also, for example, Alex Deep, “Hybrid War: Old Concept, New Techniques,” *Small Wars Journal,* 2 March 2015, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/hybrid-war-old-concept-new-techniques>, accessed 30 June 2015; Andrei Josan and Cristina Voicu, “Hybrid Wars in the Age of Asymmetric Conflicts, *Review of the Air Force Academy*, 1 (298) 2015, 49-52; and Colonel Marinel Mare, “National Security under the Irregular Forms of the Modern War,“ *Romanian Military Thinking*, July-September 2014, Issue 3, <http://smg.mapn.ro/gmr/Engleza/Ultimul_nr/mare-p.154-165.pdf>, accessed 15 June 2015.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. H. Reisinger and A. Golts, “Russia’s Hybrid Warfare: Waging War below the Radar of Traditional Collective Defence,” Research Paper No. 105, November 2014 (NATO Defense College, Rome), 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid., 3. An Estonian analyst notes that Russians used similar tactics in Afghanistan. See Merle Maigre, “Nothing New in Hybrid Warfare: The Estonian Experience and Recommendations for NATO,” *Policy Brief* (February 2015), German Marshall Fund of the United States. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [Dmitry Gorenburg](https://russiamil.wordpress.com/author/gorenbur/), “Ukrainian Military capabilities” *Russian Military Reform*, [December 22, 2014](https://russiamil.wordpress.com/2014/12/22/ukrainian-military-capabilities/), <https://russiamil.wordpress.com/2014/12/22/ukrainian-military-capabilities/>, accessed 5 May 2015, notes the disarray in the Ukrainian military. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Reisinger and Goltz, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Gerasimov noted that, “The operation to force Georgia to peace exposed the absence of unified approaches to the use of formations of the Armed Forces outside of the Russian Federation.” See the partial translation from his Russian article in Robert Coalson, “Top Russian General Lays Bare Putin's Plan for Ukraine,” huffintonpost.com, 2 September 2014, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-coalson/valery-gerasimov-putin-ukraine_b_5748480.html>, accessed 30 May 2015. The original full text is Valerii Gerasimov, “Tsennost’ nauki I predvidennii,” *Voenno-promyshlennyi Kur’er*, 27 February 2015-5 March 2015, <http://vpk-news.ru/sites/default/files/pdf/VPK_08_476.pdf>, accessed 15 June 2015, 1-3. Gerasimov’s article also has an extensive graphic illustrating his point on p. 3. See also Sergei Minasyan, “The Last Post-Soviet War,” in *Russian in Global Affairs*, 18 December 2014, <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/The-Last-Post-Soviet-War-17214>, accessed 6 January 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See Gerasimov’s comments in Coalson. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Timothy L. Thomas, “Russia’s Reflexive Control Theory and the Military,” *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 17: 237–256, 2004. There is now much material on Russia’s information war, which goes beyond Ukraine. See, for example, Jolanta Darcewska, “The Devil is in the Details: Information Warfare in the Light of Russia’s Military Doctrine,” *Point of View* (The Centre for Eastern Studies/Osrodek Studiow Wschodnich), 50 (May 2015), Warsaw. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Jim Garamone, “New National Strategy Takes ‘Whole-of-Government’ Approach,”   
    American Forces Press Service, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=59377>, accessed 1 July 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Janis Berzins, “Russia’s New Generation Warfare in Ukraine: Implications for Latvian Defense Policy,” National Defence Academy of Latvia, Center for Security and Strategic *Research, Policy Paper No. 2* (April 2014). Berzins has expanded on this in Artis Pabriks and Andi Kudors, eds., *The War in Ukraine: Lessons for Europe*, University of Latvia Press, Riga, 2015, in his article, “Russia’s New Generation Warfare is not Hybrid Warfare,” 40-51. An excellent overview of Russia’s action is in Roger McDermott, “Myth and Reality—A Net Assessment of Russia’s Hybrid Warfare Strategy Since the Start of 2014” Part One, *Eurasian Daily Monitor*, 11, issue 184, 17 October 2014), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx\_ttnews[tt\_news]=42966&no\_cache=1#.VbqFV\_k3lSA](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5btt_news%5d=42966&no_cache=1#.VbqFV_k3lSA), and Part Two, *Eurasian Daily Monitor*, 11, issue 185 (20 October 2014), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx\_ttnews[tt\_news]=42972&no\_cache=1#.VbqFk\_k3lSA](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5btt_news%5d=42972&no_cache=1#.VbqFk_k3lSA), accessed 22 November 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Roger McDermott, “Does Russia’s ‘Hybrid War’ Really Exist?” *Eurasian Daily Monitor*,. 12, issue 103, 3 June 2015, [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx\_ttnews[tt\_news]=43989&no\_cache=1#.VbqQLPk3lSA](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5btt_news%5d=43989&no_cache=1#.VbqQLPk3lSA), accessed 12 June 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. ## Ruslan Pukhov, “Nothing 'Hybrid' About Russia's War in Ukraine,” *Moscow Times*, 27 May 2015, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/nothing-hybrid-about-russias-war-in-ukraine/522471.html>, accessed 15 June 2015. *Emphasis added*. Pukhov’s belief that the Crimean population totally supported Russia is open to question, despite Moscow’s claims.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. “Estonia plans to deal with Russia’s ‘little green men,” *Financial Times*, 13 May 2015, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/03c5ebde-f95a-11e4-ae65-00144feab7de.html#axzz3hPj3PIRW>, accessed 2 June 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Christopher S. Chivvis, “The Baltic Balance: How to Reduce the Chances of War in Europe,” *Foreign Affairs*, 1 July 2015, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/baltics/2015-07-01/baltic-balance>, accessed 2 July 2015. See also “NATO braces for Russia’s Hybrid Warfare,” DefenseNews, 16 March 2015, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/europe/2015/03/18/nato-allies-brace-for-russias-hybrid-warfare/24979545/>, accessed 1 July 2015. A Baltic view can be seen in Janis Berzins, *Russia’ New Generation Warfare in Ukraine: Implications for Latvian Defence Policy.* [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. ”Latvian President assured the failure of "hybrid war" 13 June 2015, <http://en.glavnoe.ua/news/n229861>, accessed 27 July 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. “Fearing Repeat of Crimea, Baltic States Prepare for 'Hybrid War' With Russia,” Reuters via *The Moscow Times*, 3 June 2015, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/fearing-repeat-of-crimea-baltic-states-prepare-for-hybrid-war-with-russia/522972.html>, accessed 16 June 2015. For example, “Latvia's security services launched an inquiry this year after Facebook posts appeared promoting separatism in several villages in majority Russian-speaking regions. In May's exercise, some 3,000 Lithuanian troops simulated a response to armed groups seizing local government buildings to declare a separatist government, actions that pro-Russian separatists have carried out in cities across Ukraine since last year. Municipalities on Latvia's border have also held seminars on how to react to "green men." See ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. On the issue of the Baltics, see also Max Boot, “Will Russian Aggression Trigger a New Great War, *Commentary*, 3 July 2015, <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/2015/07/03/russian-aggression-new-war/>, accessed 5 July 2015. The danger of escalation in the Baltic region, by using again all the tools of hybrid warfare the Russian believe they perfected, could be great. A nightmare scenario that could result from a series of miscalculations is in Max Fisher, “How World War III became possible: A nuclear conflict with Russia is likelier than you think” vox.com, 29 June 2015, http://www.vox.com/2015/6/29/8845913/russia-war??ftcamp=crm/email/\_DATEYEARFULLNUM\_\_\_DATEMONTHNUM\_\_\_DATEDAYNUM\_\_/nbe/FirstFTEurope/product, accessed 6 July 2015. On a personal note, the author took part in political-military game on Russia trying to enter the Baltic states on the same kind of pretext (protecting ethnic Russians) that is had used in Ukraine. The players representing the US and NATO cold not quite figure out what was going on and the Russian pushed all the way to Kaliningrad. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *The* *National Military Strategy of the United States 2015,* U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, published on 2 July 2015, 4, <http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Publications/National_Military_Strategy_2015.pdf>, accessed 6 July 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. On supporting extremist parties in Europe, see, for example, [Alina Polyakova](http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/users/alina-polyakova), “Strange Bedfellows: Putin and Europe’s Far Right.,” *World Affairs Journal*, [September/October 2014](http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/issue/septemberoctober-2014), <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/strange-bedfellows-putin-and-europe%E2%80%99s-far-right>, accessed 7 July 2015; [Luke Harding](http://www.theguardian.com/profile/lukeharding), “We should beware Russia’s links with Europe’s right,” *The Guardian*, 8 December 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/08/russia-europe-right-putin-front-national-eu>, accessed 10 July 2015; and [Mitchell A. Orenstein](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/authors/mitchell-orenstein), “Putin's Western Allies: Why Europe's Far Right Is on the Kremlin's Side,” *Foreign Affairs*, 25 March 2014, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-03-25/putins-western-allies>, accessed 31 March 2015. On the problems of changing a national or sub-national narrative, which the Russians seem to understand well, see [John DeRosa](http://smallwarsjournal.com/author/john-derosa), “Revising the Battle of the Narrative” *Small Wars Journal,* 16 July 2015, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/revising-the-battle-of-the-narrative>, accessed 15 July 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See Timothy L. Thomas, “Russia’s Reflexive Control: Theory and the Military” and Maria Snegovaya, P*utin’s Information Warfare in Ukraine: Soviet Origins of Russia’s Hybrid Warfare*, Russia Report 1 (September 2015), Institute for the Study of War. On Russian information efforts worldwide, see Robert Orttung, Elizabeth Nelson and Anthony Livshen, “How Russia Today is using YouTube,” *The Washington Post*, 23 March 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/03/23/how-russia-today-is-using-youtube/>, accessed 23 March 2015. The authors do note the problems of understanding the effects of all this Russian effort: “RT is clearly finding an audience for its Ukraine coverage among Western audiences. Determining whether viewers are coming for the helicopter golf and staying for the Ukraine message, however, will require further research.” The issue of Russian troll farms to influence both Russian and foreign opinion on the Internet is another aspects of Russia’s information warfare—see Shaun Walker, “Salutin' Putin: inside a Russian troll house,” *The Guardian*, 2 April 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/02/putin-kremlin-inside-russian-troll-house>, accessed 2 April 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Sam Jones, “Ukraine: Russia’s new art of war,” *Financial Times*, 28 August 2014, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/2/ea5e82fa-2e0c-11e4-b760-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3hPj3PIRW>, accessed 26 July 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. # Ibid. The U.S. is also planning war games regarding Russia and the Baltics. For an interesting summary, see Julia Ioffe, “[Exclusive: The Pentagon Is Preparing New War Plans for a Baltic Battle Against Russia](http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/09/18/exclusive-the-pentagon-is-preparing-new-war-plans-for-a-baltic-battle-against-russia/),” *Foreign Policy*, 18 September 2015, [http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/09/18/exclusive-the-pentagon-is-preparing-new-war-plans-for-a-baltic-battle-against-russia/?utm\_source=Sailthru&utm\_medium=email&utm\_campaign=New%20Campaign&utm\_term=\*Editors%20Picks](http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/09/18/exclusive-the-pentagon-is-preparing-new-war-plans-for-a-baltic-battle-against-russia/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=New%20Campaign&utm_term=*Editors%20Picks), accessed 21 Sep 2015.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-23)