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## RUSSIAN HYBRID WAR IN UKRAINE: HUMANITARIAN ASPECT

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The article describes emergence and transformation of the historical phenomenon of “hybrid war”, as well as its definitions, which change depending on political and historical contexts. It also describes the ways, in which hybrid war has been utilized by the Russian Federation during 2014–2018 war in Ukraine. Components of the humanitarian aspect of hybrid war, which are the most widely used tool and which have the biggest impact on invasion have been defined and considered.

*Key words:* hybrid war, legitimization, hybrid aggression, military conflict.

A state of war is common for a society. According to historians, mankind saw over ten thousand wars in its history, while “eternal truce”, concluded repeatedly, had lasted for ten years on average [6, p. 10].

In the 5th century B.C., during the Peloponnesus wars, Athens, apart from war actions, provided all kinds of support to Sparta subjugated rebellious Helots. And they succeeded, as, while Sparta’s army could withstand Athens, it could not cope with the risk of loosing Helots and thus jeopardize stability within Sparta. Hence Sparta sought to make peace with Athens (Madga, Hybrid War – to survive and win).

This is perhaps the first mention of the elements of hybrid warfare. It is complex and metaphysical; it is everywhere and nowhere. Hybrid aggression requires hybrid defense – not only conventional response to war-time challenges. It would not be amiss to quote Sun Tzu, prominent eastern warfare theorist who said that “as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions”.

No doubt, there has arisen an enormous interest to studying the concept of hybrid war since the beginning of Russia's active military engagement in Ukraine. The events in Ukraine, in 2014–2017, presented those who study this topic with the facts that are now being used to analyse, in detail, the “hybrid war” phenomenon.

There is a debate as to when exactly the hybrid war notion emerged and to which conflicts it can best be applied. Some researchers claim that the term “hybrid warfare” was first used in the US marines, given the mixed type of tasks performed during military operations. However, the term has started to be generally used after the beginning of Russian aggression in Ukraine, i.e. as an actual fact – *war*, rather than *warfare*, i.e. means of conducting war.

The term itself has many meanings. It will always require clarifications or amendments, as it is not a constant or established notion. It would not be amiss to demonstrate different types of military conflicts and to look at hybrid war from different perspectives. Analysing military conflicts by types, of which 4 generations can be distinguished, it can be noticed that the use of regular armed forces that conduct offensive and defensive activities is peculiar to the first three generations of conflicts. That is we are talking about conventional wars. They have common weapons and machinery, which, due to development, cause transition from one generation of wars to the other. However, the fourth generation of wars is the most interesting one. It was, at first, viewed by scientists as another step forward in weapons modernization, until network-centric

warfare and hybrid wars had emerged [4, p. 24]. At least 4 sub-types can be defined within this type of wars – hybrid, network, regular and irregular – which are characterized by common asymmetry, but also by the fact that other components of war are being used in addition to military one. In particular non-public bodies that are elements of war, information technologies, economy, energy industry, humanitarian aspect etc. Given the above, hybrid war can be considered as an umbrella term, as it may combine different kinds of definitions. Here are some examples:

Researcher	Hybrid War Definition
T. Huber (Hybrid Warfare: Joint Special Operations University Report)	Compound warfare that uses regular army or insurgence against an enemy (1996);
F. Hoffman	a system that combines military activities, irregular tactics and units, criminal disorder, non-selective violence and coercion (2007);
B. Nemetti Marine Corps Lt.Col.	Mixture of modern drafting technologies and techniques;
N. Frier (Center for Strategic and International Studies)	Hybrid war threats: (1) conventional; (2) unconventional; (3) catastrophic terrorism; (4) undermining, when technologies are used to counter military advantages.
J. MacCane, Col. US Army	main method of actions in asymmetric war conducted on three random battlefields: (1) between population in the conflict area; (2) rear-zone population; (3) international community;
D. Kilcullen, 'The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting small wars in the Midst of a Big one'	Combination of guerilla and civil war, insurgency and terrorism components;
Robert O. Work U.S. Deputy-Secretary of Defense	Enemy forces may use "hybrid military officers" who pretend to be civilians.

Джерело: [1].

Hybrid war is also an effort to establish external political control over the object. As Pocheptsov, G. noted, it is a new combination of previously used old elements. Very often, this is an irregular war, in which guerrillas or insurgence are being utilized. Insurgence are civilians with weapon, while "the green men" are professional military with signs of civilians. That is, in the former instance, "transition" from civilian to military takes place and a military to civilian "transition" in the latter [7]. That is where it becomes difficult to conduct war.

Ukraine, as well as Georgia, Moldova, Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, have always been situated in the safety buffer zone. Today, they barricade Europe from Russia, i.e. safety from military aggression. These countries have become territories of increased danger, in the time, when international law guarantees are no longer binding and no international organization – be it UN Security Council, NATO or OSCE – can guarantee that they are adhered to. Obviously, one may consider changing global security system. And it was at that very moment that Russia began aggression against Ukraine, demonstrating unprecedented force and propaganda in the XXI century Europe. Budapest Memorandum, which should have ensured Ukraine's sovereignty and integrity, by Russia among others, did not serve to prevent the aggression from happening. On the contrary, it served as an example of how international treaties can be neglected. Thus, hybrid war replaces cold war as a form of global conflict and becomes a reality. The world can no longer return to bi-polarity, despite Russia's endless efforts to restore pre-1991 global order, when Soviet Union had been an engaging side. Today, there are many ongoing international conflicts, which are complex multi-component chains, with military one being at the core.

The next day after 2014 Sochi Olympics Closing Ceremony, so called "green men" were seen in the Crimea, whom NATO acknowledged as regular Russian army personnel only after

non-legitimate referendum and official annexation of the peninsula in April 2014. In February 2014, Ukraine was still recovering after the shock of over 100 people murder in downtown Kyiv by the then president Yanukovich regime. At the same time, people were celebrating – Yanukovich fled the country, having taken his possessions with him, to Russia. That is how era of one of the most pro-Russia heads of state came to an end, who not only decided to make a U-turn on society's pro-European aspirations, but also allowed himself, the Government and law-enforcement agencies to stand against the people. One can but draw a parallel with Georgia, as Russia invaded Georgia on the first day of 2008 Beijing Olympics, when Vladimir Putin, urgently, returned to Moscow to personally command military invasion. The timing was perfect, as the world community had not had time for conflict, with all eyes on the Olympics.

To discern Russia's interest and danger, one should carefully read books and the press. In 2007, Vytautas Landsbergis, the first head of Lithuanian Parliament, drew right attention to the propaganda sci-fi novel by Russian publicist Yuriev, M. "The Third Empire: Russia that Should", which describes the ideas of a Russian Empire, including Israel, until 2053. Of course, Ukraine and Georgia conflicts were described in it. Still, neither Georgia, nor Ukraine, had been prepared for these plans to come true. This novel is not only a fiction and nostalgia for the mighty empire; it is a plan that can be implemented. Obviously, by invading former Soviet Union republics Putin not only tries to get rid of his inferiority complex against USA, but also, cynically, demonstrates that these are his private self-assertion wars, which international community would rather stay away from, or it may grow into another geopolitical scale.

The war between Ukraine and Russia is a war of meanings; it is also a war of values and resources. Russia has chosen a path of imperial messianism at the expense of selling non-renewable resources, while Ukraine chose a mild and longer path of building national state. During the war of 2014–2018, Russia has been paying special attention to creating a matrix of hostilities against Ukraine, by first applying after the Revolution of Dignity of a "Maidan's distorted mirror" technique for the people of Eastern and Southern Ukraine. To Russia, Maidan was not so much of Ukraine's effort to return its civilization choice or a threat to Russia's domination in the post-Soviet environment, but rather as a favourable environment going through a revolutionary crisis. That is why, in a war of meanings, only those notions and re-integrations of what is happening that fit best for the purpose of war.

Some examples of such phenomenon are as follows:

- "Removing (hiding) military insignia: "green men", "polite people";
- Destroying features of legality: "people's mayor", "people's self-defense", "people's governor", "Crimea reunification" etc.;
- Adding to adversary's negative image: "militants", "punishers", "junta", "self-proclaimed Kyiv authorities" etc.;
- Sacralization of the occupied places: "Crimea is ours", "the town of Russian glory";
- Legitimization of their actions: capturing public administrations was explained as "it belongs to people, and we are the people".

We could say that these methods partially explain why occupation of the Crimea and part of the Eastern Ukraine went so easily. The electorate there has never had a real right of choice, they were turned into slaves and it was easy to impose needed propaganda hence turning them into easy prey [6, p. 63].

Of all the hybrid war components, humanitarian is one of the most technologically advanced and most manipulative. Culture and information space are not just a battlefield, but also a fantastic tool to influence public, their mind-set and perception of the world. Some researches do make a point speaking about 'weaponization of media'.

In Ukraine, for example, information and sense peculiarities have acquired their own peculiar features: 1. Audience coverage intensity and extent; 2. Comprehensive and systematic use of new media; 3. Forming new reality interpretations [4, p. 43].

Let us consider humanitarian aspect components, i.e. books, movies, church and historical messages.

**Books.** Numerous contemporary Russian historical, fiction, publicist and fantasy books, that can easily be found in bookstores in post-Soviet and many European states, are openly propagandistic. By the way, these are not random countries; they are the ones where there is strong Russian community, which is potentially a foundation of Russian World there. These books are aimed at those mass readers that are supposed to cherish new Pavlic Morozov's, which is a well-known Soviet times book character, who betrays his own family for the common communist good. These are nice covers, into which simulacrum and narratives dictated by Kremlin are wrapped. The range of topics is very wide – from the golden communist age in Russian history, the collapse of "independent Ukraine" project to the cross procession of Novorosiya. Russia is generously financing this crap, and wisely uses this tool in its propaganda. It is not difficult to guess that messages of these books are echoed in the Russian media. Luckily, in July 2015, State Commission of Radio and Television of Ukraine officially banned 38 books of the sort from import to and sale in Ukraine. This does not resolve the issue, but, at least, it demonstrates state's stance on it.

**Movies.** Continuing Soviet cinematography traditions, re-thinking, from Russian historians' point of view, and adding subjective view and distortion of Ukrainian insurgence and underground movements that fought for Ukraine's independence, showing outright criminal world and involving in common cultural Russian resistance. The majority of Ukrainian TV channels are lavishly feeding Ukrainian audience with such contents.

**Church.** Today, it is one of the most powerful tools that is so successfully used and so carefully controlled in Ukraine. Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), headed by KGB agent Kyril Gundiaev, is a stand-alone war front and an effort to establish Russian World in Ukraine. The first shouting example of Ukrainian Orthodox Church's (Moscow Patriarchate) – read ROC – attitude towards Ukrainians was an episode in the Ukrainian Parliament when head of the church did not rise for the minute of silence for Ukrainian soldiers killed in the conflict in the east of Ukraine. Their church refuses to mourn and bury those killed in the conflict. These are the moments when, for the first time in the history of independent Ukraine, perishers decide to replace the priest and switch to other Orthodox church wings. Kyiv Rus X-century baptism by Volodymyr remains a sticking point, which Russia keeps on using against Ukraine. Last year, the atmosphere around commemorations of 1100th anniversary of the baptism of Kyiv Rus was very tense, as Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) gathered forces and perishers for the cross procession.

**Historical messages.** Common history, "Russian World", denying Holodomor (the hunger of 1932-33) and supporting Stalin's repressive machine, the great victory of 1945, fraternal nations and that UPA are fascists, artificial nature of Ukraine etc. These are the topics that are central not only in the books and media, but also reiterated by Putin at the press conferences, telling in which direction the Kremlin shall move. For example, in 2014, Putin, twice, mentioned Novorosiya with a centre in Novorosiysk in his public speeches. According to the history, though, Novorosiya should include Kharkiv, Odesa, Luhansk, Donetsk, Mykolaiv and Kherson regions of Ukraine. All these regions are in the "red" danger zone today and must be supported by the state.

Establishing Russian World, by the way, is one of the major tasks that Russia desires to accomplish in every state ready for such influences. To explain this, pro-Putin Russian political analyst Migranyan very nicely characterizes this phenomenon as civilization that is founded on common values, like language and culture, historical memory, orthodox religion, loyalty

to today's Russia [5, p. 177]. Having such definition, there is an understanding why language and church conflict are excellent tools of Russia's presence revenge in Ukraine. For 25 years of independence, there has been active public outreach going on in Ukraine to foster inter-ethnic conflict, and the idea of "fraternity nations" and "the common great victory" are a paradigm of existence of southern and eastern regions of Ukraine.

In a wider sense of the humanitarian aspect of the hybrid war, let me speak about information aspect. As it equally deserves to be considered separately, let me draw your attention to certain issues. There are distinguished such methods of information aggression in Ukraine as disinformation and manipulation, propaganda, diversification and fostering doubt in public opinion, psychological and psychotropic pressure and spreading rumours [5, p. 129]. Russian authorities are trying their best to convince the world to buy Russia's story of what is taking place in Donbas and the Crimea. This is best ensured with the help of such tools as TV, Internet, social media, radio and sms. Let me dwell on some of them, which are actively utilized in Russia.

Professionalism and propaganda of Russian political chat shows that are used not only as TV programs, but also as one of the easiest ways to convey messages to the public using guest speakers. Thus, they explain and justify Russian aggression in Ukraine, explain emotions, use simulacrum, tell about "winning nation" and collaborating nation. Their goal is to explain who is right and who is wrong. All TV programs have a number of preventive mechanisms to keep the show under control. These are: scenarios to be followed, pre-recording (to understand the views of guest experts), provoking speakers' inadequate behaviour, speakers discrediting, "the main character" who is echoing Kremlin's agenda (usually, this is some Russian politician), asking too blunt questions and using manipulative phrases, as well as drafting a scenario that will cry for rating [2, p. 110].

Russian political experts and commentators. They have long ago transformed into forbidden journalist standards and have become the voices of propaganda. I cannot but mention the most famous Russian TV in the world – Russia Today, which, professionally, zombies its audience turning them into Russian World. It was very symbolic that Putin announced about reorganization and change of management in RIA-Novosti in September 2013, and a new TV channel – Russia Today – was launched in March 2014. These can serve as an example of using so called "experts", who change their credentials depending on the program. One person, but with different subtitling. O. Kovalev, ex-Editor-in-Chief, RIA-Novosti, shares an amazing example of Scott Benett, who is presented as a "resigned US Army officer" and "expert on fighting terrorism", who easily says that Putin is the best that happened to Russia in the past 100 years"[5, p.98]. In reality, he is a mentally sick person, who served 3 years in prison. Apparently, this is not a unique example. It is these commentators that provide the "right" comments, smoothing and legitimizing any unevenness.

**SMS.** We may believe that they become outdated, as other messengers replace them in our smart phones, but we are mistaken. During WWI and WWII, leaflets were dropped out of the airplanes, for information or propaganda purposes. Today, short text messages service is being actively used in Donbas, again. Both military and civilians in the conflict zone receive text messages with threats and manipulations. Usually, even timing for those is meticulously chosen – after a fight, in bad weather or during unfavourable political conditions in Ukraine. This is used to have the most profound impact of people's psychology. While military take this with humour, not paying attention to this, civil population, who is often in information isolation, gives this Russian sms a thought.

As we can see, Russia is leading hybrid war, at all fronts, and their goal is not to occupy any territory entirely, but to create conditions that will prevent Ukraine from leaving Russia's political orbit. It is only after losing the largest country in Europe that Russia will cease to be the great

empire. In this hybrid war, Ukraine must prepare strong and professional asymmetric response – in culture, media, church issues, newspapers etc. Such actions must be taken not only by civil society, but also by public institutions that should not only proclaim their stance and prove it with actions. Information web-sites that counter Russian propaganda, such as InformNapalm, Myrotvorets, Information Resistance group, stopfake.org, are resources that counter the aggressor. They are not enough, however, to fight the enormous resources of Russian propaganda. Russia-Ukraine hybrid war of 2014–2017 is not only a territorial war. It is war for the minds of the people of Ukraine and Europe, who believe that Russian World is a comfortable and free place to live that does not bring neither physical, nor mental threats. To sum up, let me quote Shevtsova, L., prominent Russian political analyst, who says that Russia without Ukraine is weak; Ukraine helps not only to protect Russian history, Kremlin's legitimizing, but to prevent from Maidan in Russia. It is also a challenge for Europe and the Western World. "You have shaken up dormant and paralyzed Europe saying: "Hey! Are you asleep there? We are fighting for your values here!" says Shevtsova [5, p. 161]. That is why, what is taking place in the Eastern Ukraine today is not only a challenge for the young state, which Ukraine is, but for entire European security system – physical and ideological.

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## РОСІЙСЬКА ГІБРИДНА ВІЙНА В УКРАЇНІ: ГУМАНІТАРНИЙ АСПЕКТ

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Розглянуто виникнення і трансформацію історичного феномену «гібридна війна», її визначення, які видозмінюються в залежності до політичного та історичного контексту. Досліджено способи застосування гібридної війни РФ під час російсько-української війни 2014–2018 рр. З'ясовано і запропоновано до розгляду складники гуманітарного аспекту, які є найвпливовішими і найбільш застосованими інструментами гібридної війни.

*Ключові слова:* гібридна війна, легітимізація, гібридна агресія, військовий конфлікт.