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THE NEW WARS: THE CHALLENGE OF HYBRID WARFARE

AS NOVAS GUERRAS: O DESAFIO DA GUERRA HÍBRIDA

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Abstract

The last few decades have brought the changes in the nature of contemporary warfare to the forefront of the debate. The aim of this study is to analyse the concept of what many theorists refer to as hybrid warfare.

While the phenomenon of hybrid warfare is not new, as we argue in this analysis, the emergence of this concept has come to pose additional difficulties for the security-based environment, more specifically in the planning and response to future hybrid threats by the Alliance.

This 'new' form of warfare, based on the theory of hybrid warfare, encompasses a unique combination of hybrid threats (failed states and non-state actors supported by states, exploiting a combination of challenges, employing all forms of warfare tactics, often simultaneously. It is crucial that we understand these changes, their nature, their relationship and their history to begin understanding the phenomenon.

Although historically there have been numerous examples of wars that fit this category, we will examine in greater depth the thinking and the hybrid model of warfare employed by Russia in the annexation of Crimea and in the country's intervention in the east of Ukraine in 2014.

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Hybrid warfare is a clear challenge at different levels for the Alliance and for its member states, who will have to respond with clear and comprehensive strategies.

Keywords: Hybrid threats; Cooperation; Challenges; War; Hybrid warfare; NATO.

Resumo

As últimas décadas têm trazido a debate as alterações no caráter da guerra contemporânea. O objetivo deste estudo é efetuar uma análise ao conceito daquilo a que muitos teorizadores designam por guerra híbrida.

Pese embora o fenómeno da guerra híbrida não seja novo, como defendemos nesta análise, a ascensão deste conceito veio representar em si uma dificuldade acrescida para o ambiente securitário, e mais concretamente para o planeamento e resposta a efetuar no combate às ameaças híbridas futuras por parte da Aliança.

Esta "nova" forma de fazer a guerra, assente na teoria da guerra híbrida, engloba uma combinação única de ameaças híbridas (Estados falhados e atores não-estatais, apoiados por Estados), que exploram uma combinação de desafios, empregando todas as formas de guerra e táticas, mais frequentemente em simultâneo. É fundamental que entendamos essas características de mudança, a sua natureza, as suas relações e a sua história para uma compreensão aproximada do fenómeno.

Apesar de existirem, ao longo da história, vários exemplos de guerras que se enquadram nesta caraterização, iremos analisar com maior profundidade o pensamento e modelo de guerra híbrida conduzido pela Rússia na anexação da Crimeia e intervenção no leste da Ucrânia, em 2014.

Esta guerra híbrida representa um claro desafio aos vários níveis para a Aliança e Estados-membros, que terão que responder com estratégias claras e abrangentes.

Keywords: *Ameaças Híbridas; Cooperação; Desafios; Guerra; Guerra Híbrida;* NATO.

Introduction

The analysis of the evolution of the phenomenon of war has always captivated analysts and thinkers because of the possibilities of scientific study that such an examination allows.

Since the end of the Cold War, the discussion on the changing nature of warfare has led to new concepts and stances on the difference between past, present and future wars.

Looking at the evolution of the dynamics of conflict over the last decades allows us to perceive multiple realities and phenomena that have grown progressively more complex.

We are accustomed to thinking of war as something that happens between States; However, current wars involve a State actor confronting or in competition against emerging new actors, within a framework of diffuse and diversified threats, motivated by ethnic, economic, social and religious factors, among others. This occurs in some current conflicts, known as hybrid wars, where potential opponents (States, State-sponsored groups, or self-financed actors) exploit their access to modern military capabilities.

The growing importance of the concept of hybrid warfare and the issues associated with it in recent years does not mean the end of traditional, conventional warfare and classical aggression. It does, however, pose new challenges to the decision-making process and to the coordination of responses, which go beyond exclusively military competencies and attributions.

We believe it crucial that nations and international organisations with security and defence responsibilities develop a consensual interpretation of hybrid warfare, in articulation with their partners, and review and refine the potential components of this phenomenon in order to deal with the transformational and 'hybridization' of war, creating a new mindset that is able to respond effectively to these threats.

In this study, we propose to analyse the theory and mindset behind these 'new wars', focusing on hybrid warfare and attempting to highlight its unique features and the specific challenges that emerge from this new form of warfare, beginning by formulating the following research question: 'What are the specific challenges that the international security environment and the conduct of military operations face when an opponent uses hybrid warfare?' This paper will be elaborated according to the inductive method, combined with a future-oriented approach, and is divided into two parts that summarise the outcomes of the study. In the first part, we will analyse the evolution of war and the concept of 'new wars', and in the second part we will characterise hybrid threats and analyse the hybrid war conducted by Russia in the annexation of Crimea and tits intervention in the east of Ukraine, as well as the challenges posed by this new form of warfare.

1. The Transformation of War

Some international theorists and military thinkers, such as William Lind, John Schmitt, and T. Hammes, compartmentalise the evolution of armed conflicts from the eighteenth century onwards in separate periods that can be divided into four generations (Pinheiro, 2010, p. 67):

- 'First Generation Wars' (1GW), which took place after the 'Peace of Westphalia'[1], where war was characterised by the predominant use of the 'Principle of Mass'[2], and which came to an end with the onset of the Napoleonic campaigns;

[1] Agreement signed in 1648, which enabled the emergence of international relations between sovereign States, as they are defined today.

[2] Large armies organised in rigid mass formations.

- 'Second Generation Wars' (2GW), which relied on intensive 'firepower', especially heavy artillery and machine guns, and on the friction between forces. This second generation of wars culminated in World War I (WWI);
- 'Third Generation Wars' (3GW), which were dominated by 'manoeuvre' and were marked by the German 'blitzkrieg'[3] in World War II (WWII). At this point, States were the main protagonists of these different scenarios;
- 'Fourth Generation Wars' (4GW), which are the result of an evolution that seeks to exploit the political, social, economic and technological changes since World War II.

The wars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had their roots in nationalism, with the nation as an entity occupying a prominent position in the hierarchy of values. The excessive importance attributed to the value of nation states led to the centralisation of power and to the creation of a monopoly of force within States, in which wars were fought according to rigid codes of conduct, which distinguished between combatants and civilians, and where victory implied the surrender of the enemy (Garcia, 2009, 113). These conflicts can be described as wars between professional soldiers. In the Revolution and Empire wars, armies began being raised by conscription (mass warfare) and the annihilation of the enemy became the battle's main objective, to be achieved through a 'careful balancing of means and results, efforts and obstacles' (Smith, 2005: 56). Napoleon understood what could be gained by concentrating the force[4] of the State. 'The continuum and combination of Napoleon's vision, Prussian military reform and Clausewitz's theoretical insights undoubtedly laid the framework for both the new forms of forces and the application of force' (Smith, 2005: 86). At the end of the Franco-Prussian War the paradigm of industrial war between States was almost complete, industry and technology were producing increasingly more destructive weaponry and many aspects of warfare had been completely altered. Industrial war[5] between States was used as an instrument to build and preserve nations, to deliver decisive victories, and proved to be of the utmost utility (Smith, 2005: 139).

With the onset of WWI, technology and the rise of nationalism combined to blur the boundaries between the military and civilian worlds. Strategic objectives were no longer only related to achieving decisive victories on the ground and began to include non-military objectives. There was also an increase in the number of civilian war casualties (Garcia, 2009, p. 114). This was the industrial paradigm of war between States. Belligerents increasingly chose the adversary's ability and willingness to wage war as their main target. As Rupert Smith (2005, p. 180) notes, 'the paradigm of interstate industrial war took the people as its target' and the battlefield was extended to all areas of a State. It was a mass war that was decided by the massive use of power to wear down an opponent.

[3] Tactic used by the German forces in WWII, characterised by extremely fast surprise attacks with air support (lightning war).

[4] Decisive, total and framed within the government-people-military trinity (Smith, 2005, 86).

[5] With its core elements: Mass, industry and force.

After WWII, war changed in terms of geography and technology, marked by the rivalry of a world held in a bipolar balance. Military force began to be used as an instrument of deterrence (Garcia & Saraiva, 2004, p.105). The threat of a devastating nuclear conflict - the Cold War - led to a climate of terror, which was amplified by the increasing technological advances (Nunes, 1996, p.150). The use and development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) have changed the way we think about war and confrontation between developed States. This confrontation provided the framework for a type of conflict that originated in the end of the colonial empires and brought forward a new model of war amongst the people, the most paradigmatic examples being the Emergence of Malaysia (1948-60), the Vietnam War (1955-75) and the Algerian War (1954-62). Decolonisation provided the backdrop for the parallel conflicts that erupted during the Cold War (Smith, 2005: 246 and 267).

Since the end of WWI, Western powers have successfully battled opponents using the same weapons, methods and ways of thinking. The Six Day War (1967) and the Gulf Wars (in 1991 and 2003) were a demonstration of western superiority (Barroso, 2012, p.19). With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the implosion of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, the international environment underwent profound changes and appeared to point to the supremacy of the west (Telo 2002: 222). Subsequent events resulted in the emergence of new insurrectionary movements or actions, different from those that came before, whose use of violence is now permanently asymmetric[6], without a definite origin, and capable of manifesting anywhere in the world. Insurrectionary actions with global reach led to the wars of pacification of the colonial territories and to the insurrections of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Reis, 2012, 39).

T. Hammes (2006, p.2) notes that 4GW use all available networks - political, economic, social, and military - to convince the opposing political decision-makers that their strategic objectives are unattainable or that the costs outweigh the benefits, calling them an 'evolved form of insurgency', the purpose of which is not to defeat an opponent's military forces but to destroy their will to fight. The great changes in the evolution of warfare along the spectrum of human activity resulted from the shift from an industrial society to an information society. Creating the necessary conditions for major changes in war will require a change across the spectrum of society (Hammes, 2006: 31). Today, however, most wars are still fought for traditional causes, such as ethnicity, religion and territorial disputes.

The revolts in Afghanistan (after 2011) and in Iraq (after 2003) and the conflicts in Rwanda (1990), in the Balkans (1991) and in Somalia (2009) added new variables to the problem of war, as the most powerful military forces in the world failed to defeat inferior militias armed with rudimentary weaponry. Soon, many observers concluded that the nature of war had changed and that the western armed forces would have to adapt to the 'new wars' paradigm (Schurman, 2011, p. 47).

[6] Involving a threat to the vulnerabilities detected in a significantly more powerful enemy apparatus. Conflicting parties react to different ways of acting (Português, 2005).

a. The 'New Wars'

There are many criteria to approach and classify the phenomenon of war; however, war is commonly classified as either regular or conventional, or irregular or unconventional. Regular wars are those who obey the Clausewitzian model, while in irregular wars the main actors are no longer States and their Armed Forces (AAFF). Irregular wars are fought by non-state actors, some of whom are either wholly or partially armed (Garcia, 2009, p. 116), that challenge the State, and that can be sub-national (clans, ethnicities, minorities that challenge state authority), transnational (multinational enterprises, humanitarian groups, religious movements) and supranational (international and regional organisations).

Martin Van Creveld tells us in his book *The Transformation of War* (Creveld, 1991) that the way we wage war is being changed because conventional warfare will eventually be replaced by Low Intensity Conflicts[7], which means that the entire force employment strategy must be rethought. Wars of liberation are proof that the weaker side can sometimes impose its will on the stronger (Record, 2007, 131).

Proença Garcia (2010, 84) mentions Mary Kaldor[8] as one of the main theorists of this new concept of war, describing it as 'a mix of war, organised crime and massive Human Rights violence...'

These new conflicts are characterised by the need to contain forces and by the increasingly destructive capacity of weaponry, the low probability of large scale conflicts between major powers, the increase of intrastate[9] conflicts, the tendency towards the fragmentation and dilution of State power, and the growing threat of violent unconventional action. Some of these threats are political-strategic and socio-political in nature (Lousada & Escorrega, 2010: 1203), but the focus of this paper is the hybrid threats formed by regular, irregular and criminal elements working in synergy to achieve the same final State. These threats are not limited to non-state actors, and States can turn their conventional units into irregular formations and adopt new tactics, as is the case with the Iraqi *fedayeen* (paramilitary organization) in 2003, and more recently with Russia's use of troops in unmarked uniforms - the so-called 'little green men' - in the Ukraine campaign in 2014. The difficulty lies in identifying them, understanding them, and fighting them.

In this new form of warfare, conflicts tend to be extraterritorial[10] and interventions multilateral, as in the case of Iraq, where some interventions backed the Government and

[7] Conflicts which include the use of force but which do not resort to conventional warfare with defined battle fronts and sustained commitments (DA, 1990, pp. 1-1).

[8] Mary Kaldor is a professor of Global Governance and director of the Civil Society and Human Security Research Unit of the London School of Economics and one of the most prominent new wars theorists.

[9] Only three conflicts between 2000 and 2009 occurred between States (Eritrea-Ethiopia, India-Pakistan and Iraq against the US and its allies), which confirms that the reason wars are now mainly domestic is due in part to the international community's ability to prevent and manage conflicts between States (Aguirre, 2011-2012, p 56).

[10] Defined by organisations lacking distinctive territorial features getting involved in a specific conflict within the borders of a single State, integrating it into a more general dispute.

others the insurgents. The objectives of these conflicts are multiple and overlapping (and are not limited to taking and maintaining power), the informational domain is vital to the conflict, and public visibility has become the central objective of many operations conducted to influence public opinion. The face of war has taken on some disconcerting expressions. Armed conflicts have undergone a significant transformation.

b. The 'New Wars' Mindset

The 'new wars' increasingly involve non-state actors, rather than States, in a diffuse framework of threats where conflicts often do not have political aims. The State no longer holds the monopoly on the use of force, although it continues to result mainly from political considerations.

When analysing the recent history of war, we encountered a number of examples which demonstrate the supremacy of those with more modern and efficient means, such as the Kosovo War, mainly due to the technological asymmetry between the Alliance forces and the forces of Yugoslavia, and the Gulf War of 1991 (Jerónimo & Álvares, 2003, p.159). Success in today's conflicts no longer rests on the opponent's destructive power but on the ability to take popular support away from opponents, isolating them from the things they need. Only in this way can we understand why conventional military superiority is not effective in civil wars or counterinsurgencies (COIN) (Schurman, 2011, 47).

The principle that the fundamental characteristics of wars are subject to change is prevalent among 'new wars' theorists, in contradiction to the Clausewitzian model. These theorists argue that the combination of the concept of absolute war[11] with the trinitarian concept of war and its use as an instrument of politics is outdated.[12]

Martin Van Creveld (1998, p.251) states that in the future, wars will not be waged by armies, but by groups, terrorists, guerrillas, and criminals and argues that the Clausewitzian trinity is currently outdated. Rupert Smith (2005, p.21) considers that war 'as a massive deciding event in a dispute in international affairs' no longer exists, and that the 'new wars' brought along a paradigm shift from industrial intrastate war to a war amongst the people, with a 'strategic confrontation between a range of combatants'. However, we can see that there are still wars in which both paradigms are present, or at least an evolution of both, as in the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which incorporated industrial war and war amongst the people, of the war in Iraq, which evolved from a classic, industrial, Clausewitzian war in 2003 to a complex conflict typical of the 'new wars', and of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine in 2014, which can be described as a hybrid war. In the wars of today, and in contrast

[11] From his definition, which states that 'war is an act of violence to compel our opponent to fulfil our will', Clausewitz deduces that war consists in a series of reciprocal actions between two opponents, taken to extremes, that is, to assume its absolute form as a consequence of the dialectics of the struggle (Couto 1988: 148).

[12] Clausewitz states that: war is a mere continuation of politics; it is also a wonderful primary trinity: violence, chance and purpose. The first of these three aspects is particularly relevant to the people, the second to the commander and his army, and the third to the government (Clausewitz 1976: 65-89).

to the previous paradigm, the individual fights the nation-State outside its framework (for example, terrorism) (Smith, 2005, p.353).

Although the reality of war has undergone constant changes, those changes have more to do with contextual factors rather than fundamental ones, that is, the parties waging war, their objectives, and the weapons they employ (Freurman cited in Schurman, 2011, p. 49). Schurmann also notes that 'no actor in armed conflicts, past or present, has been able to escape the influences of chance and luck' described by Clausewitz, and that all wars, regardless of their form, are shaped by the interaction between the timeless elements of the paradoxical trinity (Schurman, 2011, 54). The very nature of war is the strongest element of continuity.

Some of the changes in war occurred in a continuum; for example, war can be seen as a political act, whose expression as a process (why men fight) is very dynamic. The change in the conduct of war tends to fall into two main categories: the first is the way that wars are fought (ways), and the second, what they are waged with (means). As stated by Barroso (2012, 25), 'in the end, the new wars are the "old wars" and are fought according to the factors and circumstances that characterise societies, to which the contenders adapt in order to impose their will'.

2. Hybrid Warfare

The concept of hybrid warfare emerged at the onset of the twenty-first century, in a time when the western military powers were engaged in complex and challenging operational environments, such as Afghanistan and Iraq, and military theorists were attempting to better understand their development, including the nature of the conduct of war in these conflicts. However, the issue became more relevant with the annexation of Crimea and the Russian military intervention in the east of Ukraine, which led NATO to classify it as a hybrid approach to war and to prioritise it when preparing to fight future threats to the Alliance. The term appeared in the Wales Summit Declaration, in 2014, where the Heads of State and Government reiterated the need for the Alliance to be effectively prepared to address 'the specific challenges posed by hybrid warfare threats, where a wide range of overt and covert military, paramilitary and civilian measures are employed in a highly integrated design' (NATO, 2014).

The term hybrid warfare was mentioned at least as early as 2005 and was later used to describe Hezbollah's strategy in the 2006 Lebanon War, which combined conventional war tactics and capabilities with guerrilla operations and criminal activities, and succeeded in nullifying the technological superiority of the Israeli Defence Forces. Since 2013, this type of action has been attributed to the so-called Islamic State, which uses conventional military operations combined with terrorism, organized crime, cyber warfare, etc.

Generally speaking, in the context of war studies, the term 'hybrid' can be defined as a combination of conventional and unconventional (or irregular) means. Hybrid warfare is still commonly understood as the combination of both conventional and unconventional methods through the use of both regular and irregular components (Figure 1).

Although there is some consensus on the characteristics of hybrid warfare, the same cannot be said regarding how new of this form of conflict actually is. Many theorists argue that it is not a new phenomenon because several past wars used strategies that characterise this type of warfare: the American Revolutionary War (1775-83), with the participation and involvement of both popular militias and the Continental Army; and the Vietnam War, with the synchronisation of operations between the regular North Vietnamese Army (with more conventional capabilities) and the irregular Vietcong force (irregular tactics), the aim of which was to sustain a long-term conflict against the superior conventional forces of France and the United States. The fusion of regular and irregular means was also prevalent in the Iraq war in 2003 and is another indicator of the adaptive nature of this threat.

However, the term 'hybrid warfare' and its study are both still recent, having emerged with 9/11 and the war between Israel and Lebanon in 2006, contributing to the development of studies on the topic that focused on the asymmetric dimension of the phenomenon.

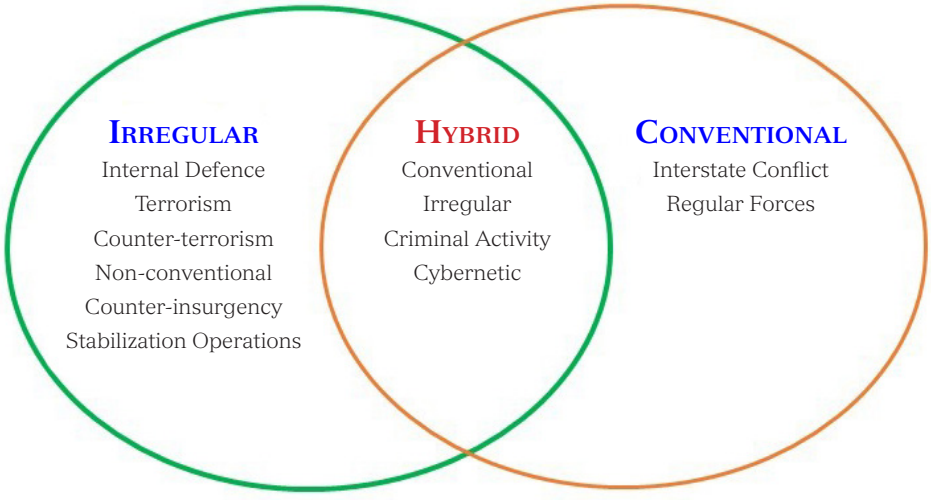

Figure 1 – Conceptual Model of Hybrid Warfare

Source: Adapted from (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2010, p.16)

American military officer and analyst Frank Hoffman played an important role in the development of the theories of hybrid warfare. In his famous paper, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars* (2007: 14), Hoffman reports that hybrid wars incorporate a range of different modes of warfare, including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder. Whereas in the past the regular and irregular components of conflicts occurred in different theatres and different formations, in the case of hybrid wars these forces are now indistinguishably integrated on the same force and on the same battlefield, and the irregular component often proves operationally decisive.

One of the main objectives of hybrid wars is to destabilise opposing governments and their institutions, generating chaos and creating a power vacuum (Blum et al., 2015).

In a document issued by the European External Action Service *(Countering hybrid threats, food-for-though paper*) in May 2015, the EU characterised hybrid warfare as the 'centrally designed and controlled use of various covert and overt tactics enacted by Military and non-military means, ranging from intelligence and cyber operations through economic pressure to the use of conventional forces' (European External Action Service, 2015, p.2).

Although the concept is neither consensual nor new, and although there has not been an increase in the number of distinct challenges, these are, however, converging into a new way of waging war. These hybrid wars mix the lethality of State conflicts with the fanatical and prolonged fervour of irregular warfare.

a. Hybrid threats

The term hybrid has been used to highlight the apparently greater complexity of warfare, the multiplicity of actors involved, and the lack of definition between the traditional categories of conflict. NATO defines a hybrid threat[13] as 'one that is posed by any current or potential adversary, including state, non-state and terrorists, with the ability, whether demonstrated or likely, to simultaneously employ conventional and non-conventional means adaptively, in pursuit of their objectives' (US Government Accountability Office, 2010, p.15).

In NATO's assessment, and in compliance with the capstone concept[14] *Military Contribution to Countering Hybrid Threats* of August 2010, the Alliance defines a general approach to address hybrid threats as well as a framework that allows the organization to develop effective responses to this challenge. 'Hybrid threats involve adversaries (including states, rogue states[15], non-state actors, or terrorist organizations) who may employ a combination of actions in an increasingly unconstrained operating environment in order to achieve their aims' (NATO, 2010, p. 2).

Also according to the framework provided by the Alliance, hybrid threats are characterised by involving 'interconnected individuals and groups' with the following characteristics:

- They use new communication technologies effectively for information exchange and collaboration;
- They recognise the value of the strategic importance of the global media cycle and exploit it to achieve their specific aims;
- They employ diverse means and tactics, using a fusion of non-lethal and lethal means and criminal modes of operation, supported by information operations and legitimate business organisations;

[13] This definition was endorsed by the NATO Military Working Group (Strategic Planning & Concepts) in February 2010.

[14] A capstone concept is a comprehensive concept devised to direct the development and employment of forces, which provides a broad description of how to operate on a significant portion of the spectrum of operations and describes what must be done to achieve strategic objectives.

[15] It is a controversial term used by some theorists to designate states that pose a threat to global peace.

- They skilfully exploit the different interpretations and national restrictions of international law and the laws of warfare, seeking to put opponents at a strategic and tactical disadvantage (NATO, 2010, p.3).

US Army Training Circular (TC) 7-100 (US Army, 2010, pp. 15-16) defines hybrid threats as a dynamic combination of regular and irregular forces[16] that may also include criminal elements working with these forces to achieve common goals.

This threat is thus capable of using different forms of warfare, often employing only irregular tactics, contrary to what happened in past wars, when these tactics complemented the conventional component. These hybrid threats may involve adversaries such as nation-States, who employ protracted forms of warfare, possibly using proxy forces[17] to coerce and intimidate, or non-state actors who use operational concepts and all the resources at their disposal, which used to be exclusively associated with nation-states (US Army, 2011, p.4).

These elements are visible in the conflict between Israel and the paramilitary political organisation Hezbollah, in the second Lebanon war in 2006, in the annexation of Crimea by Russia and in the conflict in the east of Ukraine in 2014 and, more recently, in the actions of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)[18] in Syria and Iraq, where conventional operations, weaponry and tactics were used in combination with terrorism, organized crime, propaganda, cyber-attacks, etc.

In 2006, the Israel Defence Forces were in the midst of an organizational and doctrinal transition from a symmetric form of warfare to an asymmetric form focused on low-intensity conflicts and terrorism. As the second Lebanon war began, the Israel Defence Forces were faced with the challenges of a difficult terrain in Lebanon and a well-armed and well-trained Hezbollah force employing an arsenal of conventional weaponry such as anti-tank missiles, sophisticated air defence capabilities, surface-to-surface missiles, and short- and medium-range missiles. Hezbollah's forces received extensive training in Lebanon, Syria and Iran, formed units to conduct decentralised operations and learned to combine guerrilla tactics with conventional military tactics, psychological warfare, terrorism, criminal activities and weapons to create an innovative concept and defend the south of Lebanon from Israeli incursion (Rogers, 2012, p. 46). Hezbollah has proven to have a set of State-like military capabilities and is the perfect example of a hybrid force, as described by Frank Hoffman, providing us with a first look at how hybrid warfare can shake the foundations of a superior power and exploit its vulnerabilities. Hezbollah was able to exploit the political effects of its limited tactical actions, which were amplified by

[16] Irregular forces are considered paramilitary forces which are different from regular forces but similar to them in organization, equipment, training or mission, and are composed of insurgents, terrorists, guerrillas, mercenaries, etc.

[17] The concept of proxy forces, also known as 'surrogate' forces, refers to the indirect commitment of one State, using a third element/actor to act on another State and to conduct subversive operations to its advantage. The use of proxies is not new; during the Cold War the superpowers employed such forces to achieve their strategic objectives without being directly involved.

[18] Also known as the Arabic acronym Daesh.

the media. Israel often underestimated Hezbollah's ability to fight and adapt to a changing operational environment, and consequently lost the strategic battle of perceptions. Once it became aware of its size, Hezbollah put a coercive strategy into practice that employed an operational approach combining conventional and irregular tactics, using its forces to shape the operational environment and to prevent a clear and decisive victory by Israel (Davis Jr., 2013, pp. 22-24).

Likewise, ISIL is considered a powerful non-state actor capable of conquering territory and using conventional and unconventional means, therefore fitting into the definition of a hybrid threat. This threat has the ability to employ a wide range of activities from terrorism, irregular tactics, and information warfare to the generation, projection, conduct and sustainment of conventional means and actions typical of regular forces in order to exploit the vulnerabilities of their opponents. ISIL has already proved it has this capability in its operations in Iraq, where it used manoeuvres and weaponry characterised by robust conventional firepower that allowed it to conquer ground and achieve its objectives (NATO, 2015a, pp. 7-8).

These actions are typical of hybrid threats, which seek to combine the best capabilities of regular and irregular forces to their advantage and are able to rapidly transition between operations and tactics that encompass the whole spectrum of operations. As John Davis points out in his monograph on the hybrid mindset (2014, p. 68), one of the most significant features of hybrid threats is how they constantly adapt to the changing operating environment by using the means and different ways of waging war simultaneously and with versatility.

This threat is innovative, adaptive, globally interconnected and operates locally within the operational environment where population and chaos meet. It also has access to a wide range of advanced technologies, including the possibility of weapons of mass destruction (U.S. Army, 2010, pp. 1-1). The lethality and sophistication of non-state actors, coupled with their resilience and ability to prolong conflicts and to challenge modern States is a new feature of our time.

This analysis allows us to infer that hybrid warfare combines conventional, irregular and asymmetric means, including the persistent political and ideological manipulation of the conflict, as in the conflict between Russia and Georgia in 2008, and in the conflict in the east of Ukraine, in 2014, and can ultimately combine special operations and conventional forces, information agents, political agitators, media manipulation and information warfare, economic pressure, cyber-attacks, use of proxies, paramilitary forces, terrorists and criminal groups (Figure 2). Modern hybrid warfare no longer applies regular and irregular forces in different areas of the conflict as separate efforts, but now combines them in a single domain. On the contrary, hybrid opponents seek victory through the fusion of irregular tactics and the most lethal means at their disposal in order to attack and achieve their political goals (Hoffman, 2007, pp. 29-30).

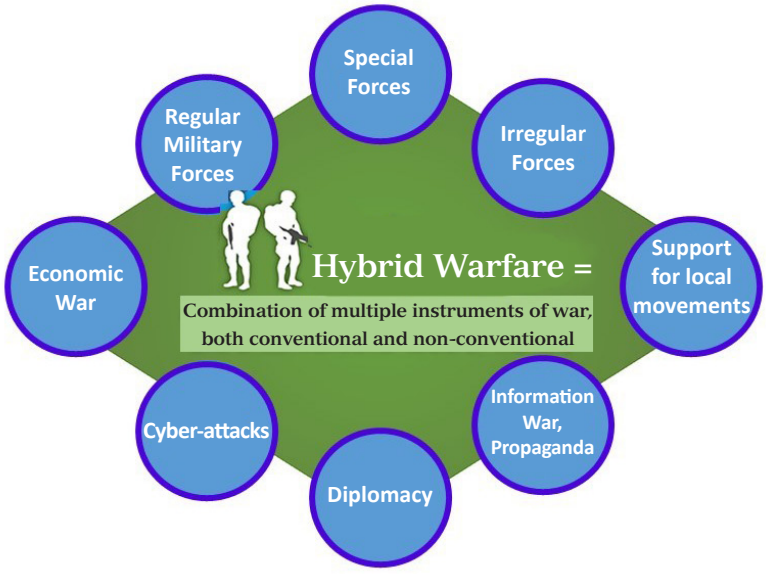

Figure 2 – Hybrid Warfare

Source: Adapted from (Government of Singapore, 2015).

The current operational environment's complexity is not only visible in the importance of controlling urban areas, but also in the importance of controlling new non-geographic areas such as cyberspace. This was evidenced by Russia's cyber-attacks against the Estonian[19] government and the country's banking system in 2008, against Georgia in 2008, and against Ukraine in 2014 (Huovinen, 2011, p.37).

The advantages that hybrid threats seek to obtain over their conventional opponent does not stop with the instrument of military power, as they seek to strike all other elements of power simultaneously: diplomatic, informational and economic. These threats seek to exploit and saturate the operational environment by creating a series of effects that suit their intentions and force their opponent to react on several fronts and along several lines of operations, thereby paralysing them (US Army, 2010, Pp. 1-2).

A campaign against such an adversary requires patience and, possibly, population control. There are numerous examples in the past of technologically superior actors who failed to achieve clear and decisive victories. Frank Hoffman (2009, pp. 34-37) states that the evolutionary nature of the current conflict is characterized by a 'convergence' of ways of waging war, which in turn includes physical and psychological warfare, kinetic and non-kinetic warfare, and combatants and non-combatants. We are not facing a greater number of different challenges; we are witnessing their convergence in hybrid wars.

[19] These events coincided with disagreements between Russia and Estonia over the relocation of a Soviet war memorial.

b. The Russian Hybrid War

After the 2014 crisis between Russia and Ukraine, the issue of hybrid warfare became a central issue at the forefront of the security debate in the west, especially for NATO. This concern was highlighted at the Welsh summit held during the crisis, where heads of state condemned Russia's escalation of hostilities and the country's illegal intervention in Ukraine as a violation of international law and a challenge to Euro-Atlantic security (NATO, 2014).

In early 2014, as the 'Maidan'[20] revolt unfolded, Russia refused to recognize Ukraine's new interim government, which had signed an association agreement with the EU, and began to intervene more directly in the east of Ukraine, leading a series of incursions into Ukrainian territory and exploiting the support of pro-Russian and anti-government separatist movements in the Donbass[21] region, which resulted in the invasion of the Crimean peninsula and in a war with the Ukrainian government. In February 2014, Russia conducted an important military readiness exercise along its west border, which was effectively a military diversionary manoeuvre, drawing attention to what was happening in Crimea, using special forces in unmarked uniforms outfitted with military weaponry and equipment, who became known as 'little green men', operating as local security forces to conquer and control vital government institutions and subsequently secure the region with regular units, formally annexing the peninsula. Russia also used special forces units (Spetsnaz[22]) to carry out special operations tasks in the region's cities and provinces, establishing and controlling insurgent units acting on Russia's behalf. These actions in Crimea mainly used irregular warfare, one of the components of hybrid war, which can be defined as 'a violent struggle waged between a state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over a population and territory. This type of conflict is characterised by subversion and counter-subversion and by the existence of an environment that is known as unconventional war'. It was a war conducted amongst the people, using an indirect strategy, the purpose of which was to deplete the adversary and his will to fight, and to provoke chaos and create a state of insecurity to exploit the situation (Exército Português, 2012, pp. 2-8: 2-9).

Ukrainian government forces have acted to retake control and counter the pro-Russian insurgent movements and actions in the provinces of the Donbas region, but on 25 August an insurgent counter-offensive paralysed the government forces in the cities of Donetsk and Luhansk. During the conflict, Russia launched a military offensive in Crimea, conducting intensive movements of equipment and regular forces in a discreet and covert way and even sending what it alleged was a 'humanitarian convoy' to the Luhansk region in August 2014, without the consent of Ukraine (Figure 3). The Minsk Protocol[23] was signed on 5 September and a ceasefire was discussed on 6 September between Russian President Vladimir Putin and

[20] Also called the Ukrainian Revolution, it was a wave of demonstrations and civil unrest in Ukraine demanding greater European integration, with anti- and pro-Maidan demonstrations, which led to the removal of then-President Viktor Yanukovych, who had won the presidential election in 2010.

[21] Also referred to as Donets Basin, Ukraine's easternmost region.

[22] Designation assigned to special forces.

[23] Protocol signed between the warring parties in Minsk, Belarus, under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the aim of which was to end the war.

Ukrainian President Poroshenko, which has been broken several times. A second package of peacekeeping measures (Minsk II) was signed on 11 February 2015, but both parties would continue to take action (NATO, 2015a, pp. 5-6).

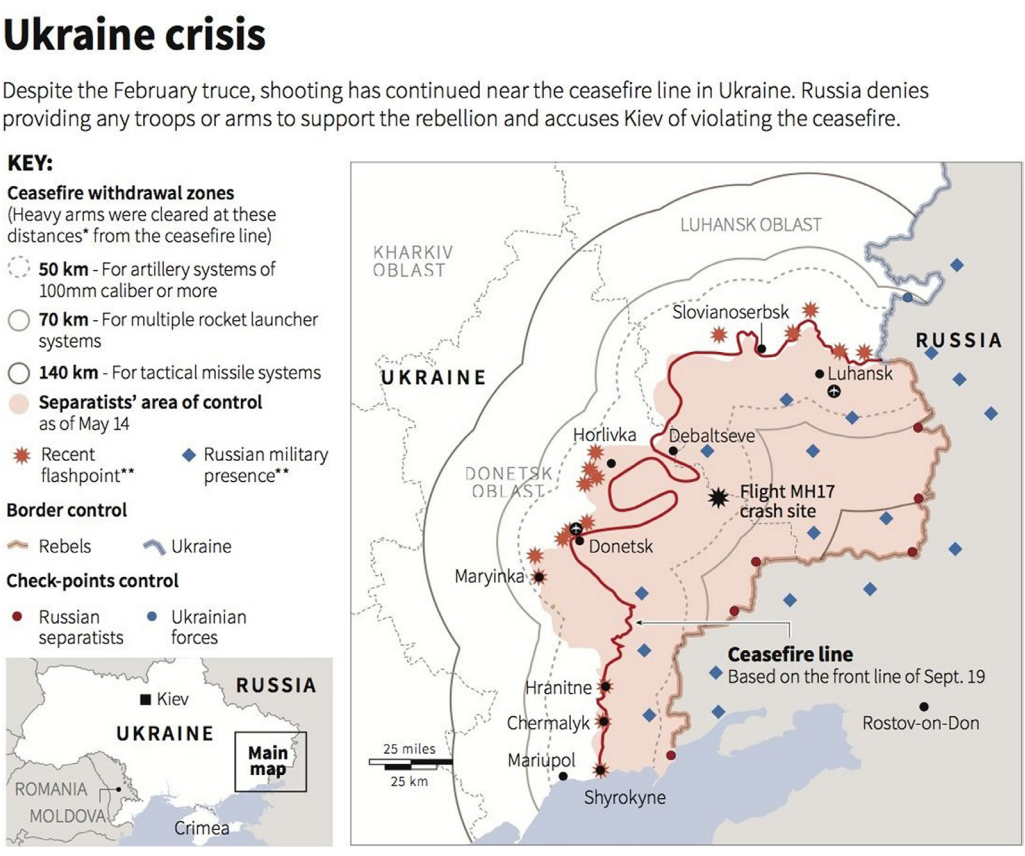

Figure 3 – Crisis in Ukraine - Retreat and ceasefire zones

Source: (Baczynska, 2015).

It was this intervention that led many theorists to point out that Russia's use of a series of hybrid tactics to achieve its objectives, such as political and economic coercion, propaganda and disinformation, cyber-attacks and covert and overt military actions represented a new and effective way of waging war. However, Russia had already used such tactics in the past, as evidenced by the development of the Russian military deception doctrine, 'Maskirovka', in the 1920s, which included active and passive measures designed to deceive the adversary and influence the decision-making process of public opinion in the west. This doctrine was put into practice in the attempt to overthrow the independent government of Estonia in 1924, and in Bulgaria and Germany in 1923. During the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Russia deployed about 700 troops wearing Afghan uniforms to control military and administrative infrastructures in Kabul (Maigre, 2015, p.2). These same techniques and tactics

of hybrid warfare had been used successfully in the Chechnya and Georgia campaigns, and the latter included reinforcements of voluntary combatants by Russia, the participation of regular forces in incursions and in the main attacks, violations of cease-fire agreements and the denial of participation by military forces.

Aware of the importance of the media, Moscow successfully used modern technologies, exploiting the informational dimension of the conflict and pursuing a propaganda campaign both domestically and internationally (Blum, et al., 2015, P.4). By using a propaganda campaign, Russia sought to create narratives and realities that served as a force multiplier in the conflict, reinforcing its message domestically and abroad in an attempt to legitimise its actions, maintain ambiguity and cast doubt over what was actually happening and what their real intentions were (NATO, 2015a, 6). An analysis of the Russian information campaign against Ukraine concluded: that Russia was prepared to conduct a new form of warfare in Ukraine, in which the information campaign played a vital role; that its narrative was based on historical memory; that the crisis in Ukraine was the result of Russia's long-term strategy; that deception was used as a tactic to distract and delay; and that campaigns of misinformation erode over time, as the facts are revealed (NATO StratCom COE, 2015, pp. 4-5).

Henrik Praks (2015, pp. 1-2) points out that Russia continues to refuse to recognise the Baltic States[24] as sovereign countries and, as such, as legitimate targets of its expansionist policy. Russia uses its ethnic dimension and the presence of the Russian ethnic group in these States, claiming that it is acting for their protection in order to justify, domestically and abroad, any interventions in those States. Likewise, the author considers that Russia could use this strategy to demonstrate the uselessness and ineffectiveness of the United States, and therefore of NATO, looking for opportunities to test the obligations set down in Article 5 and to weaken the Alliance. Loureiro dos Santos (2015, p.735) argues that 'it is likely that Moscow will claim that it is protecting these significant Russian minorities in order to intervene in neighbour states, such as the Baltic countries and Moldova'. Russia enjoys some military superiority in the Baltic, both in relation to the local nations and to the NATO forces in the region.

Keeping its actions ambiguous is in Russia's best interest, as it prevents the Alliance from understanding the situation and responding in a timely manner. Many theorists argue that these tactics could be the main tools that Russia will use in the future to destabilise the Alliance and the western world as they attempt to counter its expansion to the east and as it seeks to maintain those bordering countries inside its sphere of influence (NATO, 2014, p.4).

Russia saw the intervention in Ukraine as an attempt to halt US and NATO interference by disrupting the regions along their borders (NATO, 2015a, p. 6).

The Russian intervention in Ukraine involved all areas of the operational environment: political, military, economic, social, informational, and infrastructures, demonstrating Russia's ability to coordinate its instruments of power to achieve its objectives. This operation included

[24] Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania.

the successful use of subversion, of the cybernetic element, of proxies, of conventional military interventions, and of military manoeuvres to deter and coerce. Moscow obviously exploited its geographical proximity to the opponent, as well as its vulnerabilities. This was not the case in Estonia, where the State controlled the entire territory and had the capabilities to react to a scenario similar to the events in Ukraine (Charap, 2015-2016, p.53).

This analysis allows us to state that the Russian hybrid threat model is a fusion of diverse capabilities on several levels, tactical, operational and strategic. At the tactical level, Russia employed regular, irregular, special operations and tactical forces with modern conventional weaponry, covertly supporting pro-Russian paramilitary groups, encouraging them to carry out guerrilla operations in an unconventional campaign using cybernetic means to erode Ukraine's power and influence, creating chaos and then taking advantage of that lack of control. At the operational level, Russia was able to coordinate these actions with an effective information and psychological warfare campaign, while mobilising and deploying conventional military formations in demonstrations and deception manoeuvres. On the other hand, it was covertly infiltrating means and forces into the territory, supporting the rebel cause and conducting the campaign. At the strategic level, Russia used its instruments of military, diplomatic, economic and informational power in a coordinated and synchronised way in order to achieve its objectives (Davis Jr., 2015, pp. 21-23). Russia cultivates a culture of strategic thought and its hybrid warfare is a unique form of warfare through which its military system is able to accentuate strengths and minimize weaknesses while maintaining a 'conventional and nuclear posturing in peacetime' that allows it to dispose of all the elements to generate combat power in order to impose its will. This Russian understanding of hybrid warfare reflects its 'conventional and nuclear contingency thinking', which combines 'ambiguous and non-ambiguous' means in a single strategy to achieve its objectives, which 'actually encompass the full spectrum of means and weapons available' (Covington, 2016, pp. 11-12).

Richard Weitz (2014) states that 'due to recent reforms and enlarged budgets, the Russian military is now a stronger force with improved capabilities, equipment, and tactics. Yet, the Ukraine conflict shows that the most notable manifestation of Russia's increased military strength has been less the augmentation of Russia's conventional or nuclear capabilities and more Russia's improved operational procedures - its strategy and tactics'[25].

Although there is no Russian doctrine of hybrid warfare, the term is now widely used by the media and by strategists, including NATO, and has become a new trend and a new form of military thinking in the Russian way of waging war. However, the term had already been used in the past, notably in an article on Russian military thinking published in February 2013[26] by General Valery Gerasimov, the Chief of General Staff of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces, where he describes how armed conflicts have adopted new methods and

[25] It should be noted that, since 2009, Russia has been undertaking a military reform to reorganise its structure at all levels, including the army chain of command, which will be completed by 2020.

[26] Written for the Russian defence magazine *Military Industrial Kurier*.

how the conventional geopolitical paradigm is outdated, and where he reveals Russia's vision on the new modern warfare strategies known as 'non-linear warfare'[27]. Gerasimov further argues that the rules of war have changed, and that the methods of conflict now involve the widespread use of all instruments of power at the disposal of a State - a wide variety of capabilities and non-military means to achieve objectives (Kasapoglu, 2015, p.3).

c. The challenges of Hybrid Warfare

This is not a new concept for NATO, as the Alliance has successfully dealt with threats of this kind before, notably in the Balkans, in the mid-1990s, by adopting 'a multidimensional approach to conflict resolution that involved some novel command and control arrangements', such as the implementation of the Bosnia Training and Equip Programme under US leadership (Lamb & Stipanovich, 2016, p. 93).

Although this concept or 'new way of waging war' is not new, the concepts of hybrid warfare and hybrid threats now characterise the operational environment, having become an integral part of the security concerns of many western nations and global organisations, especially NATO. In May 2011, a document elaborated by the Allied Command Transformation (ACT) tested and discussed the viability of the concepts of 'hybrid warfare' and 'comprehensive approach'. This document acknowledged that the 'comprehensive approach' is an emerging concept which aims to 'contain the multinational nature of hybrid threats', promoting the coordinated application of the wide range of collective resources available, including diplomatic, military, informational and economic resources, among others' (NATO ACT, 2011).

The strategic challenges posed recently by Russia's actions in Georgia and the Ukraine, and ISIL's operations using hybrid tactics and a typical hybrid philosophy have highlighted vulnerabilities, as well as the need for a strategy that takes into account the challenges posed by these hybrid threats . The activities carried out by these hybrid actors do not become short-term actions with limited goals, but are protracted and proactive, resulting in a change in the new form of warfare and in the Alliance's political and military response capacity. One of the measures taken is the adoption of the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) endorsed at the Wales Summit in September 2014, which aims to 'respond swiftly and firmly to the new security challenges' by implementing measures of assurance and adaptation[28]. Among other adaptation measures, NATO created the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF)[29]

[27] Understood as a renewed Russian military thinking and not a strategy or concept, which incorporates the legacy of 'Deep Operation Theory' (penetrating the adversary's operational depth) and 'Reflextive Control Theory' (systematic methods of shaping the adversary's perceptions and decision-making process, and 'force' him to act voluntarily on our behalf) (Kasapoglu, 2015, p.2).

[28] Assurance measures focus on collective defence and crisis management along the Alliance's eastern flank and include land, sea and air activities. Adaptation measures are long-term changes to NATO's command structure and forces to make the Alliance better able to react swiftly and decisively to new crises (NATO, 2016).

[29] Considered a reinforcement and enhancement of the existing NATO Response Force, which was never committed, except in isolated occasions such as the Athens Olympics in 2004, or to provide humanitarian aid after Hurricane Katrina and the earthquake in Pakistan in 2005.

(Figure 4) as part of the NATO Response Force (NRF), at a high degree of readiness so that the Alliance can respond to threats swiftly, and established eight NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs)[30] to improve cooperation and coordination with the forces of those countries and to prepare and support possible deployments of forces to the region (NATO, 2016). However, this military response will require a force capable of operating across all areas of hybrid warfare, as well as deterrence, collective defence and resilience capabilities.

The east flank, formerly considered a minor threat, has become the main cause for concern aside from the south flank, with protracted instability caused by non-state armed groups, especially ISIL, from the Middle East to North Africa, and the threat of conflict spillover to other border regions (Zapfe, 2015, p.2).

We believe that these hybrid challenges will obviously require the Alliance to develop different strategies, or at least define a strategy to counter hybrid warfare (as it is dealing with different strategic actors), as well as improved strategic awareness and closer cooperation between NATO and its Member States in order to ensure greater commitment and political will to tackle these new threats. This constitutes another challenge.

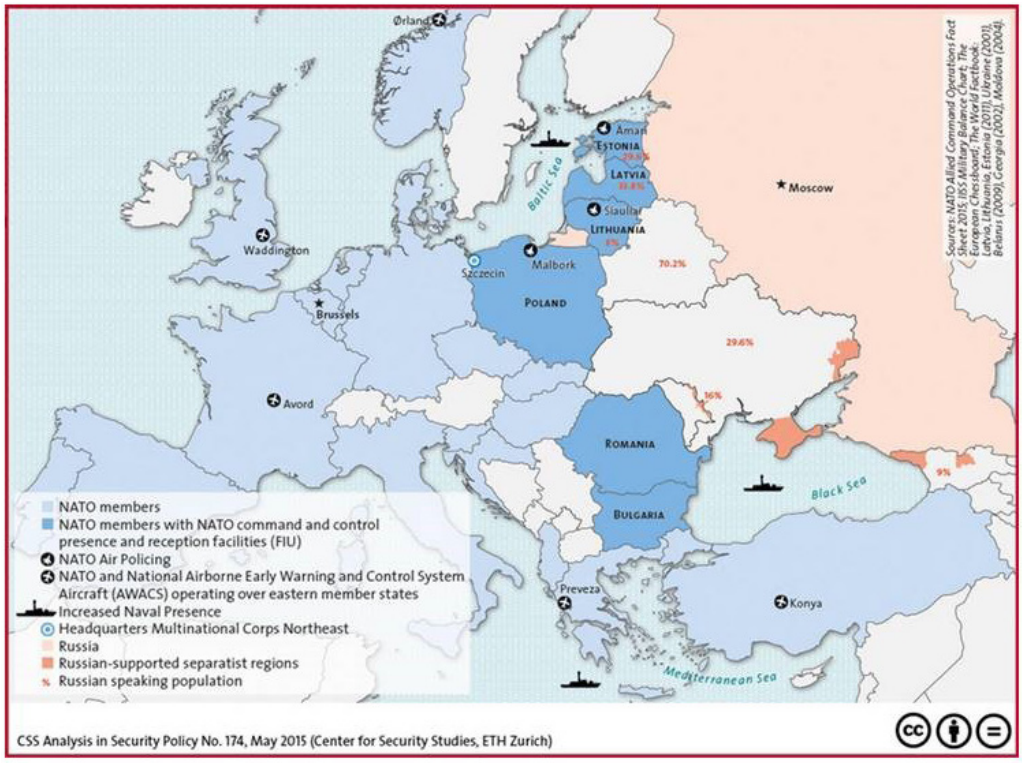

Figure 4 – VJTF and NATO planning

Source: (Zapfe, 2015, p. 3).

[30] In Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia.

The Alliance must be able to bring power to any area where it is needed and to identify and track the evolution of these threats, strengthening its response capabilities to address crises that threaten its borders, spread to other regions and infiltrate them (i.e. terrorism), and improving strategic communication and intelligence sharing among its members (NATO, 2015a, p.2). The challenge of intelligence sharing has tested and will continue to test the ability of the intelligence services of Member States and of the Alliance to control and combat the actions of ISIL jihadists, domestically and abroad.

The NATO Defence and Security Committee's policy to deal with these threats is 'adopt, adapt and know', and the Committee believes that the Alliance will need to adapt its structure[31] and readiness. For the Committee, responding in a timely manner to any strategic actions that may occur, as in the case of Ukraine, will require greater situational awareness.

To this end, it calls for enhanced intelligence-sharing through a strengthening of the ties between the internal agencies of Member States, to be achieved by creating knowledge sharing bodies based on centres of excellence which will facilitate cooperation and enhance the awareness of the operational environment where these threats occur. It also argues that the Alliance's special operations forces should play a more active role in military assistance missions to Member States and partners to help improve situational awareness and strategic anticipation when adapting to these hybrid threats. It is crucial that the implementation of these measures translates into a stronger political will and greater authority on the part of Member States and of the North Atlantic Council (NAC), which will allow them to rapidly mobilise forces, especially the VJTF, in coordination with member countries, and into investment in the common pool of funds so that the measures and forces can be successfully implemented. The Alliance's political decision-making process is dependent on the will of its Member States, as well as on their readiness and response capabilities. Another challenge is the need for the Alliance to have a set of mechanisms that will allow it to internally strengthen its strategic communication skills (as well as that of its Member States) and the sensitivity of its internal audience, in order to enhance resilience and situational awareness, thereby countering the opponent's propaganda. The Alliance also lists the development of its cyber defence capabilities[32] as a challenge, and proposes a comprehensive approach that will allow it to deal with cyber-attacks (NATO, 2015a, pp. 9-11).

Thus, the Alliance will have to take a more active role to strengthen the capabilities and response mechanisms of the States most likely to be targeted by hybrid threats, to provide support to reduce their vulnerabilities, to increase their determination, and to develop their ability to control territory and their defence and security capabilities. In addition to the creation of NFIUs and other initiatives, in 2014, NATO implemented an air policing mission in the airspace of Baltic States, which do not possess air defence facilities. In 2015, the Alliance carried out its most visible post-Cold War exercise - Trident Juncture 2015[33] - with the objective

[31] It should be noted that the Alliance reformed its military command structure after the 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon.

[32] NATO adopted the NATO Policy on Cyber Defence, and its respective Action Plan, in 2011.

[33] This exercise involved about 36,000 military personnel from more than 30 allied and partner nations.

of ensuring NATO's ability to plan, generate, ready, and sustain forces and means and face future challenges, giving a clear response to the threats from its eastern and southern flanks (NATO, 2015b).

Henrik Praks (2015, pp. 10-11), referring to NATO's defence and deterrence posture in the Baltic region, states that the Alliance must have a role in 'establishing situational awareness to understand what is happening, identify hybrid tactics, recognize the threat and quickly identify who is behind it'. The Alliance must understand the new challenges of hybrid warfare posed by these actors and ready itself for a protracted confrontation that involves the military, unconventional, informational and other dimensions, and that looks for new forms of deterrence. Thus, it can, and should, employ cyber countermeasures to prevent attacks, provide paramilitary forces (i.e. Multinational Specialized Units) to combat the use of proxies and their actions, and conduct counter-information campaigns to promote the Alliance's goals and interests.

Kasapoglu (2015, pp. 11-12) argues that the hybrid war conducted by Russia poses challenges 'not only to the Alliance's military capabilities but also to its strategic culture, operational art and military thought' and that it needs 'new intelligence analysis and strategic forecasting capabilities' to address this threat, as well as 'adequate military strategies, concepts, and [..] hard-power capacity'. The author points out that NATO should 'build on its material and conceptual structure and develop a thorough understanding of hybrid warfare', and recommends that a new Centre of Excellence be established that focuses on this threat. The planning of a campaign as the use of operational art and operational design to resolve that campaign is no longer based only on conventional and counterinsurgency warfare, and will have to be adapted, incorporating these concepts, threats, and ways of acting (Hoffman, 2009 , Pp. 38).

The lack of a single military threat common to all Member States, as was the case with the Warsaw Pact, and the consolidation in the previous decade of a certain mindset based on the hegemony of state actors and the decrease of intrastate conflicts, is a challenge to the NATO's coherence in and of itself due to the lack of a common commitment and vision in the way different crises are addressed and resolved. This lack of commitment was evidenced by the decision-making process and participation in the Afghanistan and Libya missions. Member States may exercise their voting power in the decision-making process for military actions but are not obliged to take part in such actions. This is even more difficult when the threat acts at the threshold of the definition of collective defence (Blum, et al., 2015, pp. 12-13).

It is crucial that the Alliance anticipates events and becomes more proactive, rather than reactive, by maintaining a common operational framework among its Member States to strengthen its action in combating these threats in synergy and cooperation with other international organizations with security and defence responsibilities, especially the EU. Both the Alliance and the military instruments must prepare for the unexpected and adapt their capabilities to the adversaries they must face. A more flexible response policy must be devised using a wide range of instruments to combat these threats. The partnership

with the EU is an opportunity and an added value to the common fight against hybrid non-military techniques and threats, for example by promoting energy independence and political reform, thereby enabling a broad use of political and military power instruments and leading to more effective cooperation in matters outside NATO's capabilities and attributions. NATO and the EU share strategic interests and cooperate on common issues in crisis management, as we have seen in recent years in the articulation on the ground of operations in the Western Balkans, Afghanistan, Darfur or Somalia. Prevention is crucial to combat these hybrid threats, combined with measures to strengthen the resilience of the security sectors[34] of those States which are most vulnerable to destabilising threats (Pindjak, 2014).

Davis Jr. (2015, p.20) argues that this culture of innovation should be based on the development of new approaches to problems by military leaders in the preparation for future wars, supported by the institutional development of 'learning organizations' within the Alliance and by the development of a 'hybrid mindset' or 'hybrid way of thinking'. The author argues that this 'hybrid mindset' must be based on the conceptual interaction 'understanding the strategic concept, a holistic approach to operations, a focus on potential opportunities and embracing the natural complexity of the operational environment'. Recent operational challenges have forced NATO and its Member States to learn and to adapt intelligently to combat evolving threats and to achieve their objectives.

Thus, we believe that fostering a mission command philosophy [35] in the learning organizations of Member States and of the Alliance and effectively implementing it in the conduct of operations is of vital importance. These forces must have solid professional military training, as well as the necessary skills to combat unknown threats. Only in this way can we contribute to greater operational adaptability, incorporating risk-sharing at all levels in order to react, adapt and create opportunities.

Conclusions

The evolution of warfare has been marked by multiple causes that dynamically relate to and condition one another. Current conflicts where a strong side faces a weaker side are easier to begin than to finish, as we have seen in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Threats are now varied and fight for multiple, overlapping objectives. These 'new wars' develop in subversive operational environments and, while their nature remains the same and some continuity exists, their character has changed and they adapt to each concrete scenario, involve new actors and evolve more quickly, taking new forms and developing at levels that may be more disturbing than those in the past. Although the nature of

[34] In line with the United Nations Security Sector Reform (SSR) concept, which reflects the need for States to have effective and accountable security structures and institutions capable of providing public security and guaranteeing the rule of law.

[35] Conduct of operations through decentralised execution based on mission-type orders, geared towards the purpose of the operation, rather than the details of the tasks (Exército Português, 2012, p.17).

warfare remained constant, its conduct and character have changed. War is never a static, predictable process. Warfare has different characteristics in every era.

After the annexation of Crimea and the Russian military intervention in Ukraine, both theorists and the Alliance argued that it was necessary to combat the new phenomenon of hybrid warfare. However, as we have seen in this analysis, this phenomenon is not new, and the strategies and tactics that characterise it have been used in past conflicts, as in the one that opposed Hezbollah to the Israeli Defence Forces. The rise of hybrid warfare does not mean the end of conventional or traditional conflicts, but presents in and of itself an added difficulty for the defence planning to be carried out in the fight against future threats to the Alliance.

The leading role in this new form of warfare is not limited to state actors, and the actors involved in hybrid war are willing to use all the means at their disposal to impose their will. In this new form of operation, hybrid threats use conventional, unconventional or irregular military actions, terrorist actions, criminal groups, cyber warfare, proxies, etc. synergistically to influence the physical and psychological domains of conflicts, mixing lethality with the fanatical, prolonged fervour of irregular warfare. The regular and irregular components are no longer deployed in different areas of the conflict, as separate efforts, and are instead combined in a single domain simultaneously. We are no longer fighting a larger number of isolated challenges, but have begun to combat them in convergent ways in hybrid wars. Hybrid threats seek to gain an advantage over all the elements of an opponent's power: political, diplomatic, informational and economic.

We have found that the form of warfare conducted by Russia in the Ukraine campaign is characterised by the existence of a set of actions and strategies typical of hybrid war, and that NATO believes it is of vital importance, as it sees this action as one of the greatest threats and challenges to the Alliance's security and defence in the future. These threats use a wide variety of tactics and tools, and target the vulnerabilities of the most fragile States, and while they do not use military means directly they conduct disruptive actions to foment domestic social unrest and territorial disputes, backed by strong information campaigns conveying an effective narrative.

These hybrid threats, as demonstrated in the intervention in Ukraine, will continue to operate at the threshold of legality and legitimacy, as well as to act across all domains of the operational environment: political, military, economic, social, informational and infrastructures. An ever-increasing compression of the levels of warfare will be a trend in these hybrid conflicts, as threats have access to conventional means and weaponry that used to be exclusive to conventional actors, including the effective use of technology, special operations forces, and all capabilities at their disposal at the various levels of operations: tactical, operational and strategic. Although a common doctrine does not exist at this time, the concept has become a new trend in military thinking, forming the basis for the definition of a model of response for the Alliance and its Member States, and is now an integral part of security concerns.

The Alliance and its members must be prepared for the challenges posed by these threats and their implications. The NATO Wales Summit set a clear course to implement a set of assurance and adaptation measures in response to the new security environment. It is crucial that the Alliance improves its response mechanisms by implementing different integrated strategies, improving its strategic awareness and fostering closer cooperation between Member States. To this end, it should adopt a posture of proactive deterrence, which enhances its action in combating these threats, acting synergistically and in cooperation with other international organizations, especially the EU.

These challenges also involve the development of a culture of human innovation and sustained strength that includes sound professional military training, the institutional development of learning organizations, and the development of a hybrid mindset that prepares the human component to combat the unknown.

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