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TERRORISM AS A ‘HYBRID METHOD’ IN RUSSIA’S TOOLKIT OF WAGING WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

In 2014, the war in Ukraine began. In the same year, the largest number of terrorist attacks have been committed in Ukraine since 1991. A similar increase in terrorist activity was recorded twenty years earlier, in 1994, during the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, caused by the partition of the Black Sea Fleet, which these two countries had inherited after the Soviet Union collapsed. As in 1994, the wave of terrorist attacks in 2014-2015 swept on the backdrop of a new conflict with Russia, now involving regular army units and irregular armed groups on both sides. This article explores the hypothesis that Russia is using terrorism as an instrument when confronting other states in pursuit of its geopolitical goals. In the case of Ukraine, terrorism was used as an instrument to weaken the military and political potential of Ukraine during the preparation of a large-scale military operation by regular Russian forces. To test this hypothesis, the author uses open data sources, especially the Global Terrorism Database of the University of Maryland, as well as reports of the Ukrainian General Staff, and international organizations.

Keywords: hybrid warfare, terrorism, Ukraine, Russia, Donbass.

Introduction

In an article for *Foreign Policy*, titled ‘*The New Face of Terrorism in 2019*,¹ Vera Mironova argues that the United States and the West should work more closely with Russia if they want to combat terrorism effectively. The author states that *The United States and its allies need to recognize that future attacks are more likely to come from the East than the Middle East and that there is no other option than to cooperate with Russia and its neighbors to stop them*.² Such a conclusion is, however, justified only if one can be sure that Russia itself does not use terrorism as a tool for putting pressure on the West and its partners. The ongoing conflict in the Ukraine indicates that Russia is prepared to use all available means to achieve its goals. The person who has clearly expressed this is the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation, Valeryi Gerasimov. According to him *the rules of the war have changed... the role of non-military means has been increased in pursuit of political and strategic goals, which in several cases, in their effectiveness, significantly exceeded the strength of weapons*.^{3,4} One of the most effective tools in this war is the information resource. In combination with *hidden military means, including extremist and terrorist organizations*, these weapons can blow up the country from inside and deprive the enemy of *actual sovereignty without seizing the territory of the state*.⁵

¹ Mironova, V. (2019). *The New Face of Terrorism in 2019*, *Foreign Policy*.

<<https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/01/01/the-new-face-of-terrorism-in-2019>>. (2019, September, 02).

² Генеральний штаб ЗСУ (2015). *Аналіз бойових дій в районі Іловайська після вторгнення російських військ 24-29 серпня 2014 року* <<http://www.mil.gov.ua/news/2015/10/19/analiz-illovausk-14354>>. (2019, September, 10).

³ Генеральний штаб ЗСУ (2015). *Аналіз Генерального штабу ЗСУ щодо бойових дій на Дебальцевському плацдармі з 27 січня до 18 лютого 2015 року* <<http://www.mil.gov.ua/analitichni-materiali/analiz-generalnogo-shtabu-zsu-shhodo-bojovih-dij-na-debalcezevskomu-placzdarmi-z-27-sichnya-do-18-lyutogo-2015-roku.html>>. (2019, September, 10).

⁴ Герасимов, В. (2013). *Ценность науки в предвидении. Военно-промышленный курьер*. <<https://vpk-news.ru/articles/14632>>. (2019, September, 02).

⁵ Герасимов, В. (2016). *По опыту Сирии. Военно-промышленный курьер*. <<https://vpk-news.ru/articles/29579>>. (2019, September, 02).

The authors of the report *Chaos as a Strategy: Putin's 'Promethean' Gamble* (published by the Center for European Policy Analysis¹) claim that the Russian military and political leaders consider the current political situation both in the region and the world as a confrontation with the United States and Europe. In this confrontation, Russia recognizes its weaker position as an actor in conventional terms. In order to rebalance its position, Kremlin consciously takes risky steps to create a 'chaos' environment, where the winner is the one who manages instability in a better way.

It is argued here that Russia uses asymmetric means to implement such a chaos strategy which is "a set of methods aimed at spreading disorder beyond their borders for strategic effect"². Disinformation operations, subversion and "political warfare" are among the instruments used. Since 2014, Ukraine has become the largest testing ground for Russia's chaos strategy. Key tools in Russian toolkit are the support of proxy forces, the so-called *Donetsk People's Republic* and *Luhansk People's Republic*, the use of regular armed forces in direct interventions, as well as support of the political opposition and terrorism. This article explores the hypothesis that terrorism is one of the tools in Russian hybrid strategy directed against the Ukraine. To test this, information about terrorist activity in Ukraine during 1991-2017, as collected in *the Global Terrorism Database*, will be utilized.

For my analysis, I use the definition of the terrorism from the *GTD Codebook* where terrorism defined as the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation. The GTD provides additional criteria to clarify the definition and exclude questionable incidents from research. In order to avoid mistaken identified military incidents as terrorism, I use three criteria from *Additional Filtering Mechanism*. All requested information filtered through these criteria:

- The act must be aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal.
- There must be evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) than the immediate victims.
- The action must be outside the context of legitimate warfare activities, i.e. the act must be outside the parameters permitted by international humanitarian law (particularly the admonition against deliberately targeting civilians or non-combatants)³.

I also excluded all unsuccessful attacks from the analysis. Although the GTD has an option to exclude all incidents that don't *meet all of the criteria for inclusion as a GTD terrorist incident*, I deliberately refused to apply this filter because of it is insignificant in terms of outcome. Only 6% (46 attacks) all incidents in Ukraine according to the GTD are considered as ambiguous. On that basis I define the terrorist incident as *successful attack by non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation, outside the context of legitimate warfare activities and targeted a larger audience than the immediate victims*.

The following study consists of three parts: a general description of terrorism in the Ukraine, the comparison of the peaks of terrorism with large-scale military operations during 2014-2015, and a comparison of the dynamics of terrorism with the major political events in Ukraine during 1991-2014.

General Characteristics of Terrorism in the Ukraine since 1991

809 acts of terrorism have been committed in the Ukraine over the last 27 years. 85% of all attacks took place in 2014-2015. In total, 1124 people were killed, and 1246 people were injured due to terrorist attacks. 91% of all wounded and 95% of all deaths occurred in the peak period 2014-2015.

¹ Там само; Герасимов, В. (2013). Ценность науки в предвидении. *Военно-промышленный курьер*.

<<https://vpk-news.ru/articles/14632>> (2019, September, 02); Jensen, D. N. Doran, P. B. (2018). *Chaos as a Strategy: Putin's 'Promethean' Gamble*". *Center for European Policy Analysis* <<https://www.cepa.org/chaos-as-a-strategy>> (2019, September, 02); YouTube (2019). *СБУ. Офіційний канал*. <https://youtu.be/xEBs_cX7zD4> (2019, September, 02).

² Jensen, D. N. Doran, P. B. (2018). *Chaos as a Strategy: Putin's 'Promethean' Gamble*". *Center for European Policy Analysis* <<https://www.cepa.org/chaos-as-a-strategy>> (2019, September, 02).

³ University of Maryland (2018). *Global Terrorism Database Codebook* <<https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf>>. (2019, September, 02).



Fig. 1. Terrorist incidents in Ukraine (1991-2017)

42% (336 incidents) attacks were directed against citizens and private property. Infrastructure (utilities, transport, airports etc.) was the second most frequently attacked target (14% all attacks since 1991). Government and business were attacked in 11% all incidents each one. 6% of all terrorist attacks targeted the police.

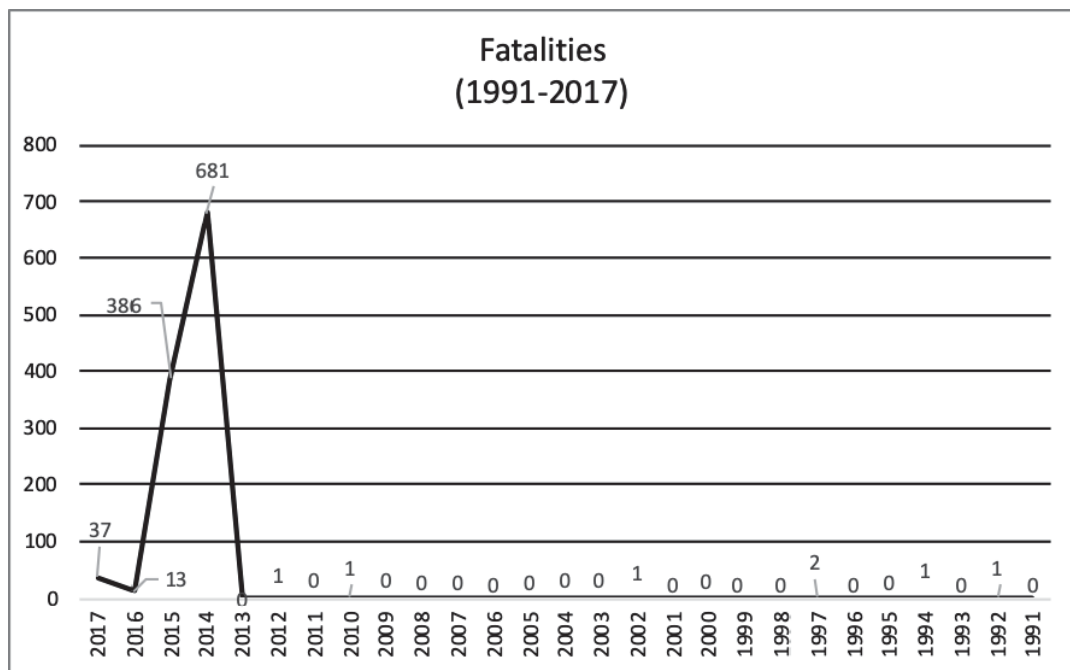


Fig. 2. Fatalities (1991-2017)

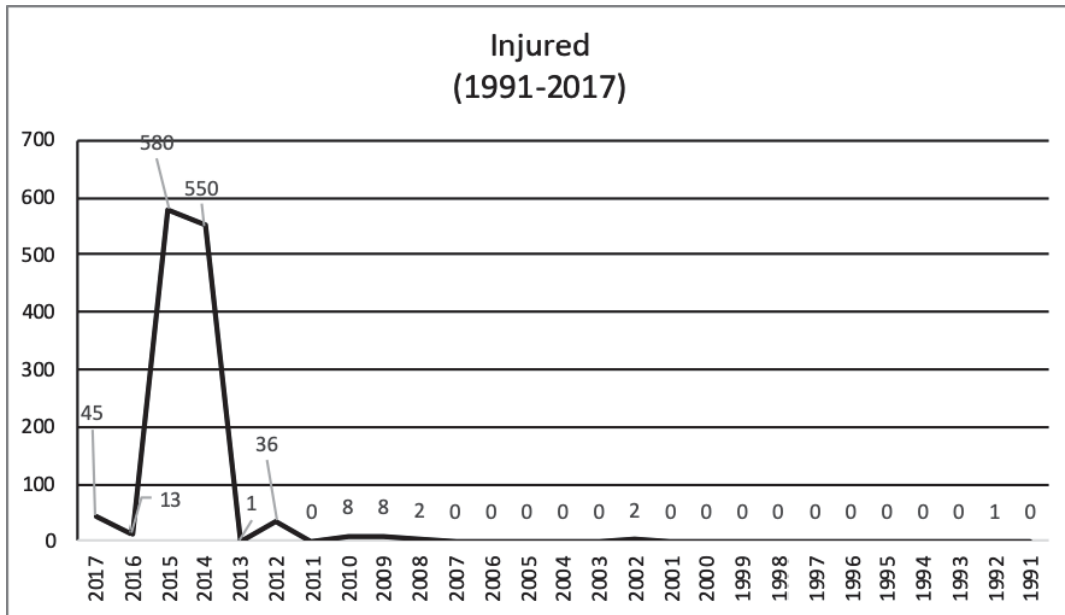


Fig. 3. Injured (1991-2017)

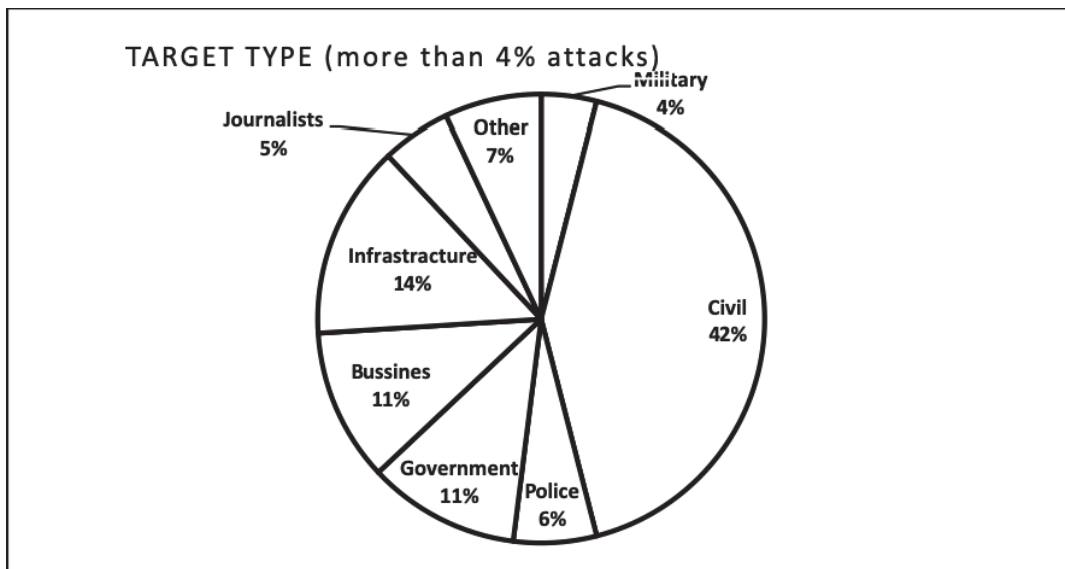


Fig. 4. Target type (more than 4% attacks)

The highest number of terrorist attacks in the Ukraine were organized and committed by the members of the so-called *Donetsk People’s Republic*: 248 attacks (31%). 107 (13%) terrorist attacks were conducted by members of the *Luhansk People’s Republic*. Other pro-Russian organizations and groups, including the so-called *Odessa underground*, *Kharkiv partisans*, *Army of Don* and others are held responsible for 19 attacks. Far-rights radical groups and activists committed 14 attacks, including one of the largest terrorist acts in the history of Ukraine – the attack with a hand grenade near the national parliament in the summer of 2015.

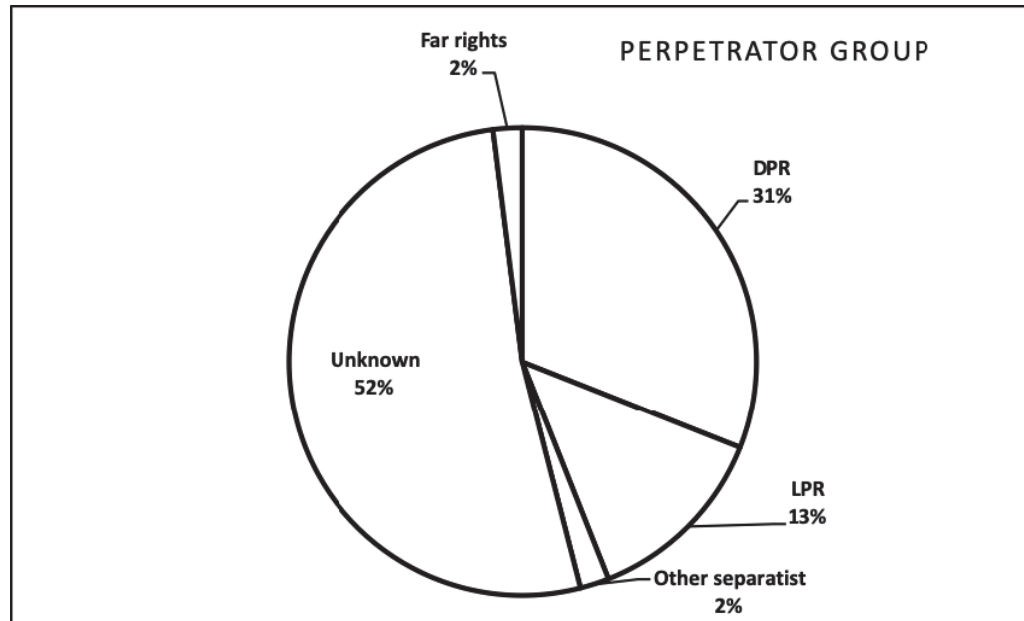


Fig. 5. Perpetrator group

According to the GTD data set, terrorism was almost unknown as a systematic phenomenon but after the beginning of the conflict in the east of the country, the occupation of Crimea and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the situation changed. 2014 can be considered the starting point of the deadliest terrorism wave in the Ukrainian history.

Table 1

The Deadliest Terrorist and Non-Terrorist Attacks in the History of Ukraine

Date	Description	Damaged	Responsibility
January 29, 2017 – February 1, 2017.	Shelling of residential area of Avdiivka. The city was left without water supply, electricity and heating (air temperature was - 20°C)	16 people were killed (3 civilians, 13 soldiers) and more than 100 people were injured	DPR
August 31, 2015.	A grenade blast during protests near the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Ukrainian parliament)	4 people were killed, 141 were injured.	Ukrainian nationalists
February 22, 2015	Anti-personnel mine blew up during meeting in support of the unity of Ukraine.	4 people were killed, 9 were injured.	<i>Kharkiv partisans.</i>
February 10, 2015	Shelling of the residential area of Kramatorsk.	17 people were killed; 64 injured.	DPR
January 24, 2015	Shelling of residential districts of Mariupol.	30 people were killed; 128 injured.	DPR (suspected)
January 22, 2015)	Mortar shelling of residential neighborhoods of occupied Donetsk.	8 people were killed; 13 injured.	DPR (suspected)

Continuation of the table 1

January 13, 2015	Artillery shelling of the Ukrainian border crossing point on the highway near the Volnovakha.	12 people were killed; 18 injured.	DPR
July 17, 2014.	Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 was shot down near the Torez, Donetsk oblast. The airliner was downed by a Buk surface-to-air missile launched from the separatist-controlled area. It is noteworthy that this incident listed in GTD as an unambiguous terrorist attack.	298 civilians were killed.	DPR (suspected)
May 2, 2014.	Trade Unions House fire	42 people were killed.	Right Sector suspected. As in the MH17 case, GTD listed this incident as unambiguous terrorist attacks. Despite that official investigation in MH17 case assigns responsibility to Russian regular military stuff, and in case of an incident with the House of Trade Unions in Odesa responsible was Pro-Russian separatists, not Right sector (according to the Ukrainian official investigation), GTD's analytics have opposite attitudes towards these cases.
April 27, 2012	A series of explosions in public places in Dnipropetrovsk.	27 persons injured.	Unknown
July 28, 2010.	An explosion in the church in Zaporizhia	1 person was killed; 9 injured.	Unknown
August 20, 2004.	Two explosions of IEDs on the market in Kyiv.	9 people were injured. The organizers were arrested (this attack is not listed in the Global Terrorism Database).	No information
October 2, 1999	Attack on presidential candidate during a meeting with voters in Kryvyi Rih.	44 people were injured.	Unknown

The deadliest terrorist attacks in the Ukrainian history were committed between May 2014 and February 2017, targeting civilians, not military personnel.

Terrorist Activity during Active Military Operations in eastern Ukraine

In the following section of this article the focus is on the correlation between terrorist attacks and the (para-) military offensives in the East of Ukraine. The two most intense battles in the Ukrainian conflict are taken as reference points for comparison with peaks in terrorist activity. Detailed information about the battles was published on the official website of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine. The first example was the Battle of Ilovaisk. According to the Ukrainian General Staff report the most intense fighting took place between August 24- and 29, 2014¹. During this period, according to the *Global Terrorism Database*, there were 21 (18 unambiguous cases) terrorist attacks or 45% of the total number terrorist attacks in August (47 attacks) and 5% of the total number of attacks in 2014 in Ukraine. Most of these attacks were recorded in the Donetsk region.

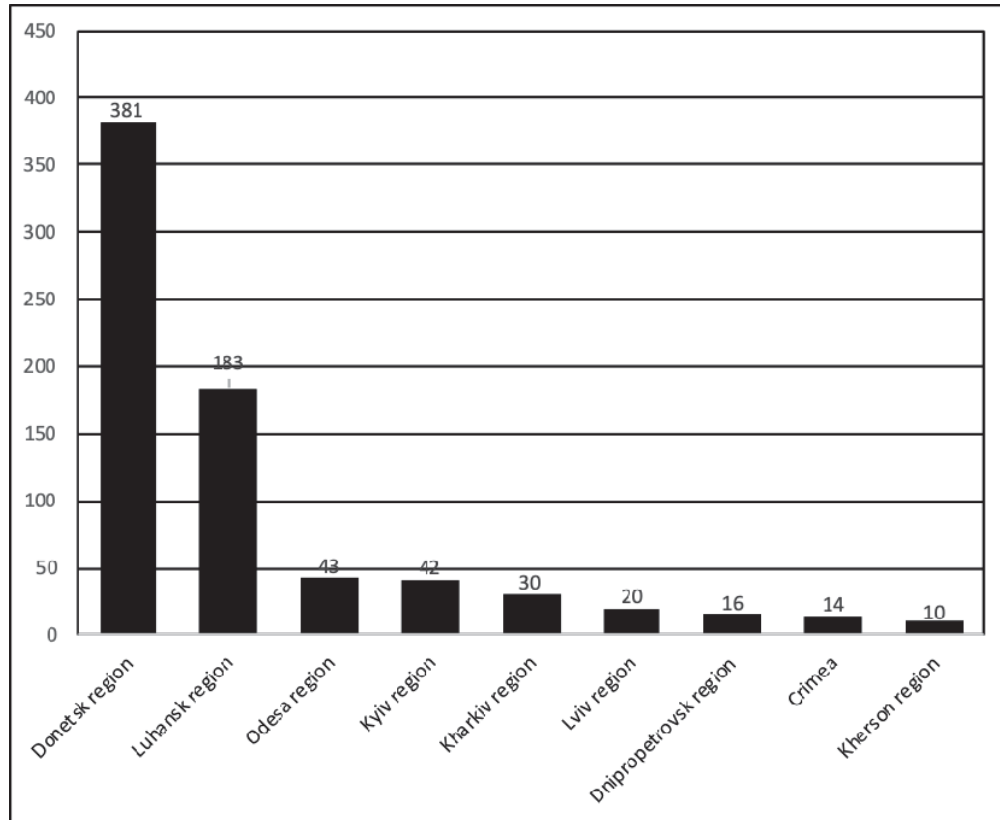


Fig. 6. Region (more than 10 attacks)

According to the GTD data set, between August 24 and 29, 2014, there was no big increase in terrorist activity in Ukraine. But a rapid increase of terrorist attacks was registered in the month before the Ilovaisk battle peak. In July 2014, the Ukraine experienced 85 terrorist attacks (25% of all attacks in 2014). The overwhelming majority took place in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions. In addition, terrorist attacks took place in Kharkiv, Kremenchuk, Lviv, and Odesa. Citizens and infrastructures were targeted in 54% of these cases. Another 11% of the attacks targeted government. In July the largest number of civilian casualties resulted from an anti-aircraft missile attack hitting a Malaysian passenger airplane (MN17 flight) which was mistaken for a Ukrainian military aircraft by Russian forces².

¹ Генеральний штаб ЗСУ (2015). *Аналіз бойових дій в районі Іловайська після вторгнення російських військ 24-29 серпня 2014 року* <<http://www.mil.gov.ua/news/2015/10/19/analiz-illovausk--14354>> (2019, September, 02).

² Toler, A. (2017). British Intelligence Report Confirms Russian Military Origin of MH17 Murder Weapon. *Bellingcat*. <<https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2017/12/20/british-intelligence-report-confirms-russian-military-origin-mh17-murder-weapon>> (2019, September, 02).

According to the GTD data, the increase of terrorist attacks coincided with the preparation and beginning of the large-scale Russian military offensive. Separatists and their backers were held responsible for 52% of these attacks. There is no information in GTD about the organizers of the other 48% of terrorist attacks in July 2014. The second period of comparison relates to the battle for Debaltsevo. The timeline is January 27 to February 18, 2015¹. During this period, according to the Global Terrorism Database, there were 47 terrorist attacks (16% all attacks in 2015) in the Ukraine. 62% of these attacks targeted private individuals and private property.

As in the case of the battle for Ilovaisk in 2014, the peak in terrorist activity in 2015 was registered on the eve of the Debaltsevo offensive. Between January 1 and 26, 2015, 71 terrorist attacks were registered (25% of all attacks in 2015). 49% of these attacks targeted private individuals. The 3 worst attacks on civilians took place in this period, near Volnovakha (12 killed, 18 wounded), in Donetsk (8 killed, 13 injured) and Mariupol (30 killed, 128 injured). "DPR" and "LPR" are responsible for 68% attacks.

From the above one can conclude that a wave the terrorist attacks in the Ukraine in 2015 coincides with the preparation and beginning of the large-scale Russian military offensive.

Correlation between Terrorist Attacks in the Ukraine and Political Protests and Campaigns

In order to check is there any correlation between terrorist attacks in the Ukraine and political protests we compare the GTD data and data on the most prominent political protest campaigns in the Ukrainian history.

Table 2

The most Prominent Political Protests in Ukraine (1994-2017)

Date	Description	Number and period of terrorist attacks
October 1993 – March 1995	Adoption by the Ukrainian Parliament of the Crimea of the Constitution and the establishment of the post of the President of the Crimea. Pro-Russian protests in Crimea. Conflict between Russia and Ukraine on the issue of the division of the Black Sea Fleet.	4. This was the highest number of terrorist attacks from 1991 to 2010
December 2000 – March 2001.	"Ukraine without Kuchma" campaign – a protest campaign in Ukraine in 2000-2001, organized by a political opposition movement demanding the resignation of the President Leonid Kuchma	0
November 22, 2004 – December 26, 2004.	The Orange Revolution – a campaign of protests, strikes and other acts of civil disobedience in Ukraine, organized and conducted by supporters of Viktor Yushchenko, the main opposition candidate in the presidential elections in November-December 2004.	0
November 16 – December 3, 2010.	Tax Maidan protests – mass protests in Ukraine against the adoption by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the draft new Tax Code	0
November 21, 2013 – February 22, 2014	The Revolution of Dignity is a campaign of protests, strikes and other acts of civil disobedience triggered by the rejection of president Victor Yanukovich to sign a political association and free trade agreement with the European Union and as a reaction to violent dispersal of protesters on 30 November	10 (the very first incident was registered in January 6, 2014)

¹ Генеральний штаб ЗСУ (2015). *Аналіз Генерального штабу ЗСУ щодо бойових дій на Дебальцевському плацдармі з 27 січня до 18 лютого 2015 року* <<http://www.mil.gov.ua/news/2015/10/19/analiz-illovausk-14354>>. (2019, September, 10).

According to the data in Table 2, there were only two years in the Ukrainian history when terrorist attacks accompanied political protests – 1994 and 2014. The terrorist activity increase at the beginning of 2014 might be used to incite a confrontation between protesters, mercenary agents (titushki) and police. However, this interpretation is in need of better empirical justification. In any case, terrorist attacks in January 2014 covered only 2,5% of the total number of terrorist attacks in 2014.

Twenty years earlier, the increase of terrorist attacks in 1994 rooted in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine on the peninsula around USSR Black Sea Fleet legacy. Three of the four terrorist attacks occurred on the territory of the Crimean Peninsula. Despite the armed clashes during this conflict between soldiers of both countries¹, after around 60,000 the Ukrainian National Guard soldiers were deployed to the Crimea and an agreement between two countries on the Black Sea Fleet partition was reached, whereupon terrorist attacks sharply decreased.

OSINT and Russian military involvement in terrorist activity in Ukraine

Using Open source intelligence tools such as social media analyses, YouTube video analyses, etc., we found the proves of participation of Russian military officers in preparation, coordination and conduction terrorists' attacks in Ukraine.

According to the testimonies of arrested terrorists who were responsible for attacks in Kharkiv and Odesa from 2014 to 2017, Russian officers provided the special terrorist's courses for the volunteers from Ukraine in the special military camps in Rostov and Belgorod regions in Russia.

The arrested member of the terrorist group *Kharkiv partisans* told² in the video published on official YouTube channel of Security Service of Ukraine that he with the five members of *Antimaydan* movement from the Kharkiv region attended the terrorist's courses in a military camp in Belgorod region, Russia. The men in Russian military uniform without military insignia taught them how to prepare an improvised explosive device (IED) and use them to commit the terrorist's attacks. After the graduate the courses, they were sent to Ukraine with the orders to attack military and civil targets in Kharkiv region.

The terrorist group *Kharkiv partisans* is responsible for at least 7 terrorist attacks from 2014 to 2015 in Ukraine. They attacked railways, cafes, conscription offices, etc. The deadliest attack took place in Kharkiv on 22 February 2015 when a soviet anti-personnel mine MON-100 was blown up amongst a peaceful demonstration. Four people were killed and 11 injured.

Another example is a terrorist arrested on July 2017 in Odesa. He was responsible for the terrorist attack in Odesa. The car bomb was blown in the center of the city in 24 July 2017. Fortunately, no one was hurt. After the attack SSU arrested a man who confessed that he with the friend was ordered to buy a car and blow it in Odesa³. Both of them are Ukrainian citizens from Donetsk. They have graduated special military and terrorists' operations courses in the camp in the Rostov region, Russia.

Russian militaries not only prepare the terrorists but personally involve in terrorists' attacks as advisers for terrorists' organizations and groups.

Ukrainian special services (the SSU and the Defence Intelligence of Ukraine) have intercepted communication the Russian military officers who served in Donbas as military advisers with the local separatists who were responsible for conducting deadliest terrorists' attacks in 2015.

13 January 2015 at 14:25 bus with civilians was attacked by the separatist artillery (BM-21 *Grad*) near the town Volnovaha, Donetsk region. The target was chosen intentionally to provoke more casualties among civilians. In the result of the terrorist attack, 12 people were killed and 19 injured.

Responsible for organization and coordination of this terrorist attack was Russian officer, a former military commissar in Penza region Anatoly Sinelnikov⁴. In 2015 he served as a military adviser in the 5th brigade *DPR*. It was he who gave the order to bombard the road near Volnovaha. Yuriy Shpakov, Ukrainian citizen from Dokuchaevsk was a field commander of the attack.

¹ Мезенцев, Я. (2011). Холодна війна за Крим. Як ділили флот у 1990-х. *Історична правда* <<http://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/2011/05/10/38319>> (2019, September, 10).

² YouTube (2015). «Харківський партизан» добровільно здався СБУ та виказав схрон зі зброєю <<https://youtu.be/AWhZCpYTTaE>> (2019, September, 02).

³ YouTube (2017). СБУ затримала організаторів диверсії в Одесі <https://youtu.be/xEBs_cX7zD4> (2019, September, 02).

⁴ YouTube (2017). SBU establishes details of shelling civilians near Volnovakha, <https://youtu.be/_b7132GPE3w> (2019, September, 02).

Another example is the terrorist attack on Mariupol. On 24 January 2015 two self-propelled artillery batteries (BM-21 *Grad*) from the Russian 5th Separate Motorized Infantry Brigade (now – the 2d Separate Motorized Infantry Division) and the Russian 200th Separate Motorized Infantry Brigade (Russian Northern Fleet) bombarded Mariupol's residential neighborhoods. 30 people were killed and 118 injured. More than 200 buildings were destroyed.

Responsible for organization and coordination terrorist attack on Mariupol was Russian officer Maksim Vlasov from the 275th self-propelled Artillery Regiment 4th Tank Division (1st Tank Army).

The head of the operation was Russian colonel (now – general-major) Aleksandr Tsaplyuk. Ukrainian special service intercepted communication between Tsaplyuk and general-major Yaroshuk, chief of the Rocket Forces and artillery (Southern Military District)¹.

Conclusion

President V. Putin is trying to preserve the current political system in Russia at any cost. According to numerous official statements and publications emanating from members of the Russian establishment, a broad-based 'color revolution' is regarded as the biggest threat for the survival of the system. In the words of Vladimir Putin:

*"In the modern world extremism is being used as a geopolitical instrument and for remaking spheres of influence. We see what tragic consequences the wave of so-called color revolutions led to. For us this is a lesson and a warning. We should do everything necessary so that nothing similar ever happens in Russia"*².

His worries about a popular uprising are echoed by the Chief of Staff, Valeryi Gerasimov:

*"Their substance is to achieve political goals with minimum armed influence on the enemy. In accordance with the principles of the "color revolution", which should lead to a non-violent change of power in the opponent's camp. In essence, any "color revolution" is a coup organized outside"*³.

Self-isolation from the outside world and its political challenges on the one hand and creation of so-called instability zones outside its own borders are apparently two main elements of the Kremlin's self-preservation strategy. As part of this chaos strategy the ruler in the Kremlin uses military force in order to destabilize the enemy and to protect its own position. In this context, terrorism can be regarded as a crucial tool in a complex of measures for achieving political goals with minimal armed intervention. The main goal of Russia's *military covert measure* is to deprive enemies – in this case the Ukraine – of actual sovereignty, without seizing the territory of the entire enemy state.

In the case of Ukraine, Russia has, in our opinion, used – and continues to use – even acts of terrorism as a tool to put pressure on the Ukrainian government. Comparing the information in the Global Terrorism Database about terrorist activity in Ukraine with information about peaks at war in the East it was found out that:

- the highest increase in terrorist activity in Ukraine occurred on the eve of large-scale Russian military interventions;
- Terrorist activity predominantly concentrated in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions;
- Pro-Russian separatists groups, acting as Russian proxies, such as *DPR* and *LPR* were responsible for the majority of terrorist attacks in the Ukraine, including the deadliest ones.

Although the perpetrators of the majority of these terrorist attack were members of *DPR* and *LPR* it can be argued that the real operative control (and thereby also the responsibility) is held by the Russian military command. This fact has been repeatedly pointed out by the Ukrainian military command⁴,

¹ YouTube (2018). *Evidence of Russian militaries involvement in shooting in Mariupol* <https://youtu.be/K5qS9m5_QTE> (2019, September, 02).

² Korsunskaya, D. (2014). Putin says Russia must prevent color revolution. *Reuters* <<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-putin-security-idUSKCN0J41J620141120>> (2019, September, 02).

³ Герасимов, В. (2013). По опыту Сирии. *Военно-промышленный курьер* <<https://vpk-news.ru/articles/29579>>. (2019, September, 02)

⁴ Наев, С. (2018). *Армійські корпуси "ДНР" та "ЛНР" – це класичні підрозділи ЗС РФ*. Укрінформ <<https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/2452326-naev-armijski-korpusi-dnr-ta-lnr-ce-klasicni-pidrozdzili-zs-rf.html>> (2019, September, 02).

but also emerges from statements of Russian prisoners of war (for example Volodymyr Starkov¹) and accounts from NGOs².

The Russian government of President Putin has, if our analysis is correct, deliberately used acts of terrorism in the Ukraine before 2014. There was sharp increase in 1994-1995 during the conflict around the Crimea. Moreover, the same pattern of Russian conflict behavior in could be seen in its confrontations with Georgia and Moldova. According to the GTD since 1991, there have been 171 terrorist attacks in Georgia. The peak (30 attacks) of this activity was registered in 2008 during, the Russian military intervention in 2008. 24 attacks were conducted before August 8 – the beginning of the Russian aggression. Significantly, 12 terrorist attacks took place just within a month before the Russian military entered Georgia. Abkhaz-Ossetian separatists are responsible for 10 attacks. In the other 14 cases, the organizers of these attacks could not be identified.

According to the GTD Moldova has experienced 18 terrorist attacks since 1991. 11 attacks occurred in 1992, during the Transnistrian conflict, in which Russia supported the separatists. 11 terrorist attacks were committed in the period of the escalation of the situation in Transnistria – between March and July 1992. According to the Global Terrorism Database, 6 of the 11 attacks were committed by pro-Russian separatists. In half of the attacks, the victims were police officers. As in the case of Georgia in 2008 and the Ukraine in 1994 and 2014/15, most of the terrorist attacks in Moldova occurred during the preparation of a large-scale military operation, involving the direct participation of the regular army of the Russian Federation. In Moldova, Georgia and in the Crimean conflict of 1994 between Russia and Ukraine, after Russia, the number of terrorist acts was sharply reduced after Russia had achieved its goal.

To be sure, the findings above are tentative and need to be further tested with more fine-grained data, differentiating more clearly between government targets, police and military security forces on the one hand and civilians on the other. Better data on para-military separatist attacks, with or without Russian support are also needed before final conclusions can be made. In other words, the hypothesis that terrorism might indeed be among the *hybrid methods* mentioned by Gerasimov's articles requires further testing.

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