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Iryna Onishchenko, ScD in Political Science

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0009-0590>

European University, Kyiv, Ukraine

Serhii Shadrin

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0548-1435>

European University, Kyiv, Ukraine

HYBRID WAR: WESTERN AND UKRAINIAN APPROACHES TO DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT

The article deals with the reference to the definition of the concept of "hybrid war", compares approaches to its definition by Western and Ukrainian researchers and experts on the subject, classifies the type of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. By "western" the article considers English-speaking experts from the EU (mostly the UK) and the US, as well as Australia and Canada, whose approach to research is based on classical theories of international relations. The features of the hybrid war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine are considered on the example of the annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the armed conflict in Donbass. An attempt was made to find the reasons for Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Keywords: hybrid war, Russian aggression, information war, conflict, international relations system.

The problem of research. The current system of international relations, under the influence of globalization and the constant growth of new technologies, the impact of informational events on politics and finance, the emergence of new methods of transmission of information and communications, is becoming increasingly open to the threats posed by the phenomenon of the "hybrid war". The article covers the concept of "hybrid war", approaches to its interpretation in the West and in Ukraine, and the facts of the active hybrid war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

The relevance of the study is that for the sixth year the Russian Federation has been waging a hybrid war against Ukraine, so this problem has become not only a topic for analysis by individual researchers, but also a mandatory working link of the state apparatus in the field of security of all spheres of the state and maintaining information security.

The purpose of the study is to provide a definition of the term "hybrid war", to compare approaches to its definition by Western and Ukrainian researchers and experts on the subject, classification of the type of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. By "western" in my article I refer to English-speaking experts from the EU (mostly the UK) and the US, as well as Australia and Canada, whose approach to research is based on classical theories of international relations.

The end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century became a period of many challenges and, above all, changes that take place in strategic thinking. Modern military theorists, led by William Nemeth and Frank Hoffman, regularly refer to the concept of "hybrid war". Contrary to popular opinion, the concept of hybridity of modern wars was born not in Russia but in the USA. Its creation was mainly related to the experience of a mission in Iraq and Afghanistan, where military operations, waged traditionally and with usage of modern equipment, did not guarantee the victory of the enemy by conducting operations using non-traditional asymmetric means and methods of combat. The founder of the "hybrid war" term was Thomas Mocaits, who used the term in his publications relating to the British expeditionary campaigns of 1990 and 1995. In 1991, Officer William Nemeth described the hybrid wars as one of the major

problems of the Western world in the 21st century, following the example of the wars in Chechnya. However, is there a difference in understanding of the concept of "hybrid war" in the West and in Ukraine? In this article I will try to find this difference.

US Department of Defense researcher Frank G. Hoffman, who is widely regarded as the author of the concept of "hybrid war" in the West, said that military action in the future may largely be a hybrid of traditional and irregular strategies and tactics, including standard weapons, irregular attacks, terrorism and criminal disorder¹. So, according to Hoffman's definition, hybrid warfare is a conflict in which one of the opponents simultaneously and plannedly uses the ratio of conventional weapons, irregular strategies, terrorism and criminal behavior in the war zone to achieve their own political goals². A similar definition is given by the authoritative British Collins Dictionary, according to which hybrid war is "a military strategy in which ordinary war is combined with the tactics of using covert operations and cyber attacks"³. This is, by the way, the dictionary that named the term "fake news" in 2017 as the most commonly used English term of the year.

Many Western experts today agree that hybrid warfare occupies an ambiguous position between classical and non-traditional warfare, in the process of implementation combining elements of both. Hybrid wars, in a broad sense, mean conflicts involving one or more non-state actors, which, however, have the attributes of traditional defense forces. Often, hybrid combatants receive the support of a foreign country, which supplies them with money, equipment and, in some cases, training. Such a combination provides combat forces capable of fighting in the modern field of battle, but existing outside the laws restricting the military operations of the classical armies.

Today, conflict with the signs of a hybrid war can exist on two levels. The first is the territorial level that identifies with the state or traditional ethnic, clan or tribal communities that inhabit the territory. The second is a virtual space that is transboundary and trans-territorial. Cross-border hybrid war is related to the possibility of conflict not only between countries using irregular troops, but mainly between a state and a non-state entity that takes place in another country. An important feature of hybrid conflicts is their psychological nature, as well as the use of cyberspace to destroy opponents' information systems, disseminate propaganda content or spread threats. However, the non-state side of the conflict often uses criminal methods of action to support irregular troops or destabilize the internal situation of the state, including through the proliferation of weapons of all kinds, drug trafficking, or cooperation with non-governmental mafia organizations.

Unfortunately for us, a study example of a hybrid war is the conflict in Ukraine, which began in March 2014. According to Western media, as well as to analysts from the think tanks of NATO member states, the methods used by Russia during the crisis in the Crimean Peninsula and during the Donbass conflict make it possible to attribute the Russo-Ukrainian conflict to the hybrid war. These include:

- asymmetry, which manifests itself in the differences between the military and economic potential of both countries, from which the potential of the Russian side many times exceeds Ukraine's capabilities;
- the involvement of irregular troops consisting of the local population and mercenaries (whom the Russian Federation calls "rebels") for liberation actions, whose activities were planned and coordinated by Russia. Irregularity, as one way of waging a hybrid war, involves waging war through intermediaries – in this case mercenaries from the North Caucasus;
- an information war aimed at justifying Russian actions in the Crimean peninsula and concealing the actual involvement of Russians in the conflict. And here it is important to add that, unlike the simultaneous digital and military attacks in Georgia in 2008, cyberattacks against the Ukrainian Crimea shot the telecommunications infrastructure down: they deactivated major Ukrainian websites and "intercepted" mobile phones of key Ukrainian officials before Russian troops entered the peninsula. In contrast to Russia's aggressive invasion of Georgia, the operation in Crimea was rather an information takeover of the latter. In the seeming absence of a direct threat, Putin relied on non-military tools such as propaganda, misinformation and deception to influence local, regional, and even global audiences. The success of this approach to the control of space and people in Crimea explains the Kremlin's confidence in reusing the approach as a continuation of their information and psychological attacks already in mainland Ukraine;
- psychological warfare, which involves maneuvering and the fact that regular troops of the Russian army are gathered near the Russian-Ukrainian border;
- the economic war, which was manifested by stopping gas supplies and increasing its price;

¹ The origins of the concept of a hybrid war (2015). *The Bell*. <<http://www.thebellforum.com/showthread.php?t=130013>>.

² The origins of the concept of a hybrid war (2015). *The Bell*. <<http://www.thebellforum.com/showthread.php?t=130013>>.

³ Definition of «hybrid warfare» (2019). *Collins*. <<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/hybrid-warfare>>.

– ambiguity, which is determined by the frequent change in Russia's attitude to the conflict in Ukraine. The Russian side initially categorically denied direct intervention on the territory of the Ukrainian state. However, later President of Russia Vladimir Putin personally confirmed the Russian origin of the so-called "green men" in Crimea. The change of approach occurred at the moment when it appeared that the position confirming the presence of Russian soldiers in the territory of Ukraine is advantageous for the achievement of tactical goals in the domestic policy of the Russian Federation.

The information war is called asymmetric weapon, and the incidents in Georgia and Crimea certainly confirm this categorization. Following the "color revolutions" that have contributed to the successful change of regimes, both Georgian and Crimean incidents have reinforced the belief that the construction, control and dissemination of information effectively and significantly affects the outcome of geopolitical events. A number of Western scholars have undoubtedly classified Russian actions on the territory of Ukraine as manifestations of a hybrid war. Although Russian ideologists refrain from using "hybridity" to describe their activities abroad, numerous facts of the use of information warfare in Ukraine suggest that it is fully fought in conjunction with other conventional and unconventional actions to maximize effectiveness in large-scale campaigns, and not as a separate strategy¹.

In Ukrainian sources, namely the Political Science Encyclopedic Dictionary, hybrid warfare becomes the "War, the main instrument of which is the creation by an aggressor state in a state chosen for aggression, of internal contradictions and conflicts with their subsequent manipulation to achieve the political goals of aggression that are usually achieved by waging conventional war"². Therefore, Ukrainian scholars largely agree with Western definitions of the concept of "hybrid war", supporting the idea that the very essence of traditional methods of military threat has taken a new look, because warring parties and potential adversaries today are progressively referring to the use of non-military means to achieve strategic and strategic means. operational goals previously only achieved by military capability.

Interestingly enough, in the article by P. Popovich on the measurement of the existence of hybrid wars in the scientific journal of Uzhgorod University, the author points out that some Ukrainian researchers still disagree with the "hybrid war" definition of events in Ukraine and state that the use of such a term actually means support for the Russian Federation's concept of "civil war", which it imposes towards Ukraine. With its narratives that the Russian Federation's actions in Ukraine are "assistance to the local population, the citizens of Ukraine who fight for their survival," the Kremlin is trying to convince the world that a civil war is taking place in Ukraine. Moscow calls the events in eastern Ukraine a civil war, as such an approach removes the blame. Thus, there is a change of concepts, a distortion of reality, in order to shift responsibility for events in Ukraine (especially for hostilities in our territory) to Ukraine itself, its leadership³.

And researchers G. Iavorska and O. Yizhak in "World Hybrid War: Ukrainian Front", edited by V. Horbulin for the National Institute for Strategic Studies, generally say that "the specificity of Russian hybrid aggression against Ukraine lies not so much in the general methods and goals of the hybrid war (which have been generally described and partially predicted by theorists on examples of other hybrid conflicts). According to the authors, although the definition of "hybrid war" in Ukrainian sources does not differ from the definitions of Western experts, such a phenomenon in Ukraine acquires new features. A new aspect for waging a modern hybrid war was the role of engaging the international community. A common stance on condemning Russia's actions by the US, NATO and the EU, together with the system of sanctions against Moscow, have become a significant deterrent to Russia. At the same time, the hybrid conflict in Ukraine has shown that, despite a comprehensive system of inclusion in the architecture of international security, Ukraine has found itself beyond reliable security guarantees in the face of military aggression⁴. The authors continue: "The understanding and content of international security guarantees has now undergone dramatic changes, and the guarantees themselves have lost much weight in the new security environment. At the time of the signing of the Budapest Memorandum, the guarantees of Ukraine's sovereignty proclaimed by it were quite

¹ Bachmann, S.D. (2015). Hybrid Wars: The 21st-Century's New Threats to Global Peace and Security. *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies*, 43, 1, 77-98. <http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2506063>.

² Требін, М.П. (ред.) (2015). Війна «гібридна». *Політологічний енциклопедичний словник*. Харків: Право.

³ Тодоров, І. (2016). Внутрішні витоки та зовнішні чинники російської агресії на Донбасі. *Російська окупація і деокупація України: історія, сучасні загрози та виклики сьогодення: матеріали Всеукраїнської науково-практичної конференції*. Київ, 250-256.

⁴ Яворська, Г., Їжак, О. (2017). Гібридна війна як новітній конфлікт і як форма глобального протистояння. Горбулін, В. (ред.) *Світова гібридна війна: український фронт*. Харків, 15-18.

reasonable, but today, not only statements such as this document give absolute guarantees of protection – even the credibility of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty on the collective defense of NATO members is being discussed. That is why NATO is developing and implementing a set of measures aimed at deterring an aggressive Russian Federation and restoring full confidence in the Alliance's reliability among its member and partner countries"¹.

According to the Director of the Institute of Foreign Policy of the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine Hryhorii Perepelytsia, the tendency of the global system of international relations towards multipolarity has created favorable conditions for the Kremlin leaders to use the means of "hybrid war" to regain the status of a global political actor, without which they do not imagine the future of their country. The first steps along this path were the reintegration of the post-Soviet space and its full absorption by Russia. With Ukraine abandoning reintegration projects and expressing its intention to sign the Association Agreement with the EU in 2013, a hybrid war in Ukraine has become a major way of achieving this strategic objective. The seizure of Ukraine and the elimination of its statehood would give Russia the green light to absorb the entire post-Soviet space².

Beginning with hybrid aggression, the Putin regime pursued a two-pronged global goal: to geo-strategically destroy the current world order of domination of the West and restore the status of "great power" for Russia; and geo-historically turn the world into a political reality of the last century, including the dominance of "spheres of influence", "systemic struggle", "balance of power", "balance of interests" and others. In addition to Professor Perepelytsia, such assumptions are made by his colleague Mykola Kapitonenko, as well as Volodymyr Fesenko, Ievhen Magda and others. The armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine as a logical end to the geostrategy of revenge, which has long been developed by Kremlin strategists, has witnessed a crisis in the current international security system. According to Hryhorii Perepelytsia, Russia cannot conduct global competition by economic, political and diplomatic means, so Moscow, having developed the doctrine of the "Russian world", began to destroy the existing world order. According to Ukrainian scientists, this is evidenced by the discredit of most international security institutions and the neglect of the agreements that underlie the post-bipolar world. This includes the rejection of the principles of the Final Act signed in Helsinki in 1975 by 35 States; changing the continent's border; the rejection of the Belovezh Agreement by the leaders of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and Belarus in 1991, which can only be regarded as a refusal to recognize the state sovereignty of the post-Soviet countries; rejection of NATO and EU enlargement to the East, propaganda of radical pro-Russian parties in Central and Western Europe; neutralizing the Visegrad Four by forming a group of pro-Russian countries; gross violation of more than 300 international treaties and conventions, and in particular the UN Charter and the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, etc.

The main purpose of today's Russian online misinformation is almost indistinguishable from the Soviet propaganda machine, and is a consistent and corrective measure to weaken the West, spread conflicting opinions in their society, spread disharmony among allies, discredit the institutions of the US and EU in Europe, Africa, Latin America, and most importantly for us, in Ukraine, and to show them all Ukraine and its authorities as untrue, unpredictable and weak actor in its relations with partners. Fortunately, even after successful information operations at first in Georgia and then in Crimea, the Kremlin still failed to implement a plan to capture the southeast of Ukraine. Putin lost opportunities in Luhansk and Donetsk regions when his troops proved powerless to fully penetrate the regions. Unfortunately, Kyiv has not yet learned from the mistakes of Russia and, I suppose, remains poorly prepared for a full response to the aggressive Russian cyber, media and information attacks. Until recently, Ukraine was characterized by passive advocacy, weak public relations and lobbying tools, and was not keen on changing them. President Volodymyr Zelensky mentioned a few times after his inauguration that his team was working on a strategy to counter the information war, but neither he nor the newly appointed ministers concerned had provided more specific information since then.

Hybrid wars are increasingly dominant in today's security space, both in frequency and in the threat they pose. The increased activity of the Islamic State, as well as the Russian aggression against Ukraine, which began in 2014, contributed to the intensive use of the term "hybrid war". Modern technologies from drones to social media and the internet offer participants in hybrid conflicts many new weapons in their

¹ Яворська, Г., Їжак, О. (2017). Гібридна війна як новітній конфлікт і як форма глобального протистояння. Горбулін, В. (ред.) *Світова гібридна війна: український фронт*. Харків, 15-18.

² Перепелиця, Г. (2015). Віра і фетиш дипломатії як виклик національній безпеці України. *Україна дипломатична*, 16, 303.

arsenal. In the past, enemies were predominantly symmetrical: static, predictable, homogeneous, hierarchical, cruel, and resistant to change. Modern enemies are asymmetrical: they are dynamic, unpredictable, fluid, self-organized, and they are constantly adapting and evolving. However, for all its divergence and minor differences in its interpretation by different experts, hybrid warfare does not change the nature of the war itself. The war remains essentially the use of violence, which is largely used for political ends. Hybridization, however, profoundly alters the rules of modern warfare, requiring states to consider the need for both conventional and non-conventional means and tactics.

Do the approaches to understanding the concept of “hybrid war” of Ukrainian experts differ from the Western ones? Different methodological approaches to defining hybrid warfare indicate a different level of decision-making and the difference between relevant policy decisions to the use of specific tools directly in combat. But even such a difference can only be talked about on a conditional basis, since hostilities do not start without proper preconditions and political decisions. However, if we still draw a line of distinction, then we bring symmetrical and asymmetric conflicts, guerrilla warfare, combined warfare closer to direct combat, while political decisions are ancillary instrument. But by gaining intensity, armed confrontation and methods of guerrilla warfare become a hybrid war. While researchers in Ukraine agree with the definition of their British and American counterparts, they now say that the meaning of the term “hybrid war” is being updated compared to the original version. The five years of war in Ukraine have clearly demonstrated the dynamics of change in the hybrid war, both in the methods of attack and in the methods of defense and resistance to aggression.

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