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Defining Hybrid Warfare

Definitions and terminology are important. They help us explain and understand phenomena and convey ideas relevant to those phenomena. Conversely, once they have been determined, they tend to restrict the way we interpret reality as it occurs around us. A wrong, inaccurate or imprecise definition or term may prevent us from understanding events and steer us to choose the wrong action or reaction. Therefore, though the choice of definitions and terminology is important in all fields of human endeavour, because of the extremely high price of mistakes in the conduct of war, the choice of definitions and terminology relevant to war is especially important. The term hybrid warfare was chosen to describe a conceptual military problem facing the U.S. and NATO in understanding a particular aspect in the conduct of war. Therefore, before defining hybrid warfare, it is necessary to understand its context. The term warfare is generally defined as the act of waging war against an enemy, or, in a narrower sense, as a specific manner of conducting war. This requires the addition of a term describing that unique manner as distinct from other different manners of warfare, thus for example, hybrid warfare.

Defining war

So what is war? According to the Prussian General and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz: “War is nothing more than large-scale duel [...] an act of violence to force our will upon our opponent [...] the objective of the war is not part of the war itself [...]. War is the continuation of the political intercourse with the addition of other means.”² Chinese Communist leader Mao Dze Dong provided a variation such as “politics is war without bloodshed, while war is politics with bloodshed”.³ Whereas most people assume that Clausewitz was referring only to states or at least nations, and Mao was referring to the socio-economic strata within a state or nation, British historian John Keegan argued that any group of

¹ Bar-Ilan University and Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.

² CLAUSEWITZ 1832: 8.

³ DONG 1938: paragraph 64.

people can and do conduct Wars; “war antedates the state, diplomacy and strategy by many millennia. Warfare is almost as old as man himself”.⁴ As history shows, individuals sometimes employ violence as a tool to achieve various goals. Groups of individuals, not just states, do the same – the difference being that they do so in concert and to gain an accepted common goal that benefits the group as a whole, though not necessarily every individual in that group. The process of agreeing on the common goal, the process of working to achieve it are an act of politics and the relationship with other groups are the political intercourse referred to by Clausewitz.⁵ However, one-sided violence motivated by a political purpose is not yet war – to become war the violence must be mutual. The reciprocity of violence is a point stressed repeatedly by Clausewitz as an inherent part of the essence of war – if one side attacks and the other side is passive, neither defends nor attacks, it is not war. So war is violence employed as a tool to achieve a political goal against a rival reciprocating with violence to deny that achievement while achieving his own political goals.⁶ Thus the definition of war reads as follows. War is purposeful reciprocal violence between groups of people. When groups of people are in conflict they each have a number of tools they can employ to compel, induce, entice or convince their rivals to give in to their opposing demands: direct or indirect negotiations, economic pressure or inducements, overt or covert psychological and information influence operations, third-party arbitrators and violence. The conduct of war does not necessarily preclude or even reduce the continuation of efforts to simultaneously achieve the group’s goal also by the other available tools. War might be chosen as the main effort, supported by the other tools, or only as a supporting effort to the other tools.⁷ Hybrid warfare is therefore a specific method of conducting violence by a group in order to compel a rival group to agree to its political demands. However, as in many other aspects of military theory, there is no one generally accepted definition for what violent actions or modes of action are included in the specific phenomenon termed hybrid warfare. Furthermore, as will be described below, even the terminology used for defining this phenomenon varies.

⁴ KEEGAN 1994: 3.

⁵ CLAUSEWITZ 1832.

⁶ CLAUSEWITZ 1832.

⁷ CLAUSEWITZ 1832.

Evolution of the term Hybrid Warfare

In 1993, Captain Eric F. McMillin, published an MA thesis on the First Lebanon War (1982). In that war Israeli military forces fought both the military forces of the Palestine Liberation Organization and those of Syria. McMillin focused his study on the confrontation between the Israelis and the Palestinians and found a problem defining the type of warfare conducted in that confrontation: “A new ‘middle way’ of warfare emerged, though through no design of the antagonists. It was not guerrilla warfare with an elusive foe refusing decisive engagement with a superior conventional foe. Neither was it a contest between the armies of two states on the open battlefield as, ironically, both the PLO and the Israelis would have preferred. Rather a low technology, relatively untrained and unseasoned, largely militia force was able to preclude a powerful state army, stripped of its technological edge and limited in the freedom to use its overwhelming firepower, from achieving its war aims.”⁸ Not having a term to define this form of warfare he declared it to be a “new ‘middle way’ of warfare”. However, he was mistaken – it was not new. Three years later, in 1996, Dr. Thomas Huber of the U.S. Army Combat Studies Institute, published a study on Napoleon’s attempt to conquer Spain (1808–1814) and highlighted the combined use of regular and irregular forces in regular and irregular modes of operation by Napoleon’s enemies. He termed this combination compound warfare.⁹ This study became the basis for an anthology of case studies published in 2002 analysing a variety of compound warfare campaigns (including two earlier than Napoleon’s war in Spain) but neither the article nor the anthology generated enough interest to create a general debate on the concept.¹⁰ One of the first, if not the first, use of the term hybrid warfare was in a book published by historian Thomas R. Mockaitis on British counterinsurgency wars from the 1960s till the mid-1990s. He dubbed the war between Indonesia and Malaysia, the latter assisted by Britain, a “hybrid war, combining low-intensity conventional engagements with insurgency”.¹¹ The hybridity was not only in the purely military issues. Indonesian strategy was “a combination of subversion, diplomatic pressure and military incursions [...]”. While [Indonesia] could never hope to defeat the British militarily, [it] might

⁸ McMILLIN 1993: iii.

⁹ HUBER 1996.

¹⁰ HUBER 2002.

¹¹ MOCKAITIS 1995: 14–15.

use their presence to portray Malaya as a puppet state and Rahman [Prime Minister of Malaya] as a ‘colonial stooge’. He might also provoke the British into a retaliatory attack across the border that would create a favourable international incident”.¹² Indonesian military actions combined the use of irregular forces and regular forces to conduct irregular warfare operations and actions – small to medium – sized harassment raids, with regular warfare operations in which they attempted by those same forces to grab and hold small pieces of Malayan territory. The British responded in kind as they too employed regular and irregular forces, adapted strategies, operations and tactics developed during the 19th century and first half of the 20th century to defeat insurgencies inside the British Empire and tribal plunder raids entering British Empire territory from beyond its borders to what was in fact an inter-state conflict (Malaysia–Indonesia) combined with an insurgency (communist and ethnic inside Malaysia), generally conducted at low intensity with occasional brief escalations, but never crossing the threshold to all-out high-intensity warfare. In 1998, in an MA thesis written at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, a United States Marine Corps officer, Robert G. Walker, described the U.S. Marine Corps as “a hybrid force, capable of conducting operations within both the conventional and unconventional realms of warfare”.¹³ He defined hybrid warfare as “that which lies in the interstices between special and conventional warfare. This type of warfare possesses characteristics of both the special and conventional realms, and requires an extreme amount of flexibility in order to transition operationally and tactically between the special and conventional arenas”.¹⁴ Walker conflated Unconventional Warfare and Special Operations, even though the latter are only one type of the former.¹⁵ In 2002, the same year that the anthology on compound warfare was published, another U.S. Marine, William J. Nemeth, wrote an MA thesis entitled *Future War and Chechnya: A Case for Hybrid Warfare*. Nemeth’s discussion focused on the societal changes that were occurring in a variety of non-Western states in which the modern state was devolving into something different, a hybrid society that still included the trappings of the modern state organisation, but in which older, tribal organisations were returning to the fore of political organisation and conduct. These societal and political transformations, were, argued Nemeth,

¹² MOCKAITIS 1995: 16.

¹³ WALKER 1998: v.

¹⁴ WALKER 1998: 4–5.

¹⁵ WALKER 1998; *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* 1989.

creating a new paradigm of war, one which was different and incomprehensible to Western cultures.¹⁶ So, whereas Walker used the term Hybrid Warfare to describe a variation in tactics and operations amalgamating different methods emanating from a purely military decision, Nemeth's approach was political. Changes in social organisation created changes in the manner societies organised and employed war "hybrid societies are a mixture of the modern and the traditional. Hybrid societies in turn have organized hybrid military forces, and it is these forces that will challenge military and diplomatic planners in the future [...]. The intention of this thesis is to establish the links between hybrid societies, hybrid warfare and pre-state societies and warfare".¹⁷ As a modern case study Nemeth chose the Russo–Chechen conflict of 1994–2002. The Chechen forces combined an indigenous martial culture of irregular warfare with Soviet military training in regular warfare and experience in Soviet army ranks in the Soviet–Afghan War (1979–1989) as well as various conflicts in the Caucasus as the Soviet Union collapsed. This, argued Nemeth, enabled them to merge the advantages of each in order to defeat the Russians in 1995–1996. The thesis was written before the end of the second round of war between Russia and Chechnya which was won by Russia and therefore does not describe why Russia ultimately succeeded in re-conquering Chechnya. Three years later, in a 2005 professional lecture and article by U.S. Marines General James A. Mattis and Frank G. Hoffman, they adopted fellow Marine Walker's purely military term hybrid warfare with a slightly expanded definition.¹⁸ The expansion encompassed the entirety of what the American military regarded as unconventional warfare, and is more commonly known as irregular warfare or guerrilla warfare. Hoffman continued to develop the term over the following years in a series of studies and articles, however, the best known of his papers, the paper that made this term popular among military theorists and practitioners, was *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*, which, in addition to describing his understanding of the occurring transformations in the conduct of war included a case study of the recent 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah. That war that had seen the highly touted Israel Defense Forces apparently fail to defeat what was considered to be a weak guerrilla-style military force. The sensation caused by that war led to a deluge of writing trying to explain the unexpected results,

¹⁶ NEMETH 2002.

¹⁷ NEMETH 2002: 3–4.

¹⁸ MATTIS–HOFFMAN 2005: 18–19.

and Hoffman's monograph rode that wave of interest in providing a theoretical framework for understanding it and publicising the concept of hybrid warfare. Ostensibly, Hezbollah's success was achieved by merging regular and irregular modes of combat – a combination the Israeli military failed to cope with, i.e. hybrid warfare.¹⁹

Blurring of war forms

The goal of the discussion on compound or hybrid warfare was not to develop a general military theory. It was focused on the context of threats potentially facing the U.S. The heart of the argument was that whereas in the past the U.S. had faced different types of enemies separately, whether states employing “conventional capabilities” or non-states employing “asymmetric or irregular tactics”, in the future “these may no longer be separate threats or modes of war”. Instead there would be “an increased merging or blurring of conflict and war forms” and therefore, “future contingencies will more likely present unique combinational or *hybrid* threats that are specifically designed to target U.S. vulnerabilities [...] There are a broadening number of challenges facing the United States [...]. These include traditional, irregular, terrorist and disruptive threats or challengers. [Planners must choose] between preparing for states instead of separate challengers with fundamentally different approaches (conventional, irregular or terrorist) we can expect to face competitors who employ *all* forms of war and tactics, perhaps simultaneously. Criminal activity may also be considered part of this problem as well, as it either further destabilizes local government or abets the insurgent or irregular warrior by providing resources, or by undermining the host state and its legitimacy”.²⁰ None of these forms of action was new in itself – the novelty was in the amalgamation as “at the strategic level, many wars have regular and irregular components. However, in most conflicts, these components occurred in different theaters or in distinctly different formations.”²¹ In Hybrid Wars, these forces become blurred into the same force

¹⁹ HOFFMAN 2007.

²⁰ HOFFMAN 2007: 7.

²¹ Hoffman adopted Huber's term, ‘Compound Warfare’ for these strategically coordinated but geographically and organisationally separate operations, arguing that all the examples studied in the anthology were not hybrid – i.e. combined units conducting combined operations in the same

in the same battlespace. While they are operationally integrated and tactically fused, the irregular component of the force attempts to become operationally decisive rather than just protract the conflict, provoke overreactions or extend the costs of security for the defender”.²² Though Hoffman stated that “Hybrid Wars can be waged by states or political groups, and 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”.²³ The focus of his discussion and choice of the Second Lebanon War case study was on the hybrid threat posed by non-state actors, because, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, they were deemed to be the more likely enemy of the U.S. and were the challenge cited repeatedly as examples for hybrid forms of action. And, in fact, the U.S. and its allies were at that time fighting non-state rivals in Asia and Africa (various Moslem Jihadi organisations). State on State War seemed to be a thing of the past.²⁴ However, at the same time, the political and strategic situation in Europe was changing with the resurgence of an active Russia. Russia was actively engaging in a variety of activities perceived by NATO members to be confrontational but problematic to define. Though Hoffman and most U.S. theorists discussing the subject till 2014 mentioned that part of the essence of hybridity was also the blurring of the boundary between war and peace, they focused on the operational and tactical hybridity within a war.²⁵ Writers focusing on the evolving political situation in Europe, especially following Russian actions in Ukraine, were more concerned with political and strategic hybridity – the merging of hostile activities, some non-violent and yet disruptive politically, such as the use of covert operations,

space and time. This article also addressed the problem of having more than one definition of Hybrid Warfare (see HOFFMAN 2009).

²² HOFFMAN 2007: 8.

²³ HOFFMAN 2007: 28.

²⁴ This opinion was promoted first by a variety of academic researchers whose ideas were adopted by some military commanders. Typical examples are CREVELD 1991: 33–62; KALDOR 1999: 15–31, 71–93; KALDOR 2005: 2–3; KALDOR 2013; SMITH 2005: 3–30; GAT 2012: 149–157; HECHT–SHAMIR 2016: 124–127. Smith’s book was translated by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to Hebrew in 2013 and declared required reading for all IDF officers.

²⁵ Note that all the writers quoted above, including those in the anthology published by Huber, discussed only the operational and tactical aspects of hybrid warfare. This is true also of all the articles in the anthology edited by MURRAY–MANSOOR 2012. Nemeth ascribed the source of the Chechens’ ability to conduct warfare to be cultural and societal, but he too focused on the operational and tactical levels (see NEMETH 2002).

psychological and information operations, disruptive economic actions and cyber operations to destabilise states, with a sprinkling of semi-covert violent acts of extremely low intensity such as assassinations or destruction of property and occasionally a more powerful but still very limited overt military action, sometimes using proxies and sometimes not, all this without officially declaring war.²⁶ Given the West European cultural preference to clearly delineate a separation between war and not-war, participants and non-participants, this fuzzy area which merged the two situations was the main dilemma facing European governments and military establishments – for them hybrid warfare was the deliberate conduct of hostile operations of this nature. Thus in an official NATO website the hybrid threat is defined as: “Hybrid threats combine military and non-military as well as covert and overt means, including disinformation, cyber attacks, economic pressure, deployment of irregular armed groups and use of regular forces. Hybrid methods are used to blur the lines between war and peace, and attempt to sow doubt in the minds of target populations. They aim to destabilise and undermine societies. The speed, scale and intensity of hybrid threats have increased in recent years. Being prepared to prevent, counter and respond to hybrid attacks, whether by state or non-state actors, is a top priority for NATO.”²⁷ The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Warfare defines hybrid warfare as: “An action conducted by state or non-state actors, whose goal is to undermine or harm a target by influencing its decision-making at the local, regional, state or institutional level. Such actions are coordinated and synchronized and deliberately target democratic states’ and institutions’ vulnerabilities. Activities can take place, for example, in the political, economic, military, civil or information domains. They are conducted using a wide range of means and designed to remain below the threshold of detection and attribution. Hybrid action is characterized by ambiguity as hybrid actors blur the usual borders of international politics and operate in the interfaces between external and internal, legal and illegal, and peace and war. The ambiguity is created by combining conventional and unconventional means – disinformation and

²⁶ Note the official definitions by NATO and the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Warfare below and see a long list of essays on the threat posed by Russia. Typical examples are BĒRZIŅŠ 2014; HOFFMAN 2014; NATO 2015; KOFMAN 2016; HUGHES 2016; MURPHY 2016; FEDYK 2017; FOX 2017; PRONK 2018a; FRIDMAN 2018; JONSSON 2019; RUMER 2019; BĒRZIŅŠ 2020: 355–380; BOWEN 2020; KÄIHKÖ 2021: 115–127.

²⁷ NATO 2021; NATO 2015; PRONK 2018b.

interference in political debate or elections, critical infrastructure disturbances or attacks, cyber operations, different forms of criminal activities and, finally, an asymmetric use of military means and warfare.”²⁸ This definition adds a nuance absent from previous definitions. Only covert actions, those below the threshold of detection and attribution, are included. However, this requirement in the first paragraph contradicts the use also of “conventional” means and warfare mentioned in the second paragraph. A similar, previous and separate development occurred in the U.S. Army under the heading Full Spectrum Operations. This concept, which was not adopted outside the U.S. Army, was first described in that army’s *Field Manual 3-0: Operations* in 2001 and further developed in the later 2008 update of that manual: “This edition of FM 3-0 reflects Army thinking in a complex period of prolonged conflicts and opportunities. The doctrine recognizes that current conflicts defy solution by military means alone and that landpower, while critical, is only part of each campaign. Success in future conflicts will require the protracted application of all the instruments of national power—diplomatic, informational, military, and economic. Because of this, Army doctrine now equally weights tasks dealing with the population—stability or civil support—with those related to offensive and defensive operations. This parity is critical; it recognizes that 21st century conflict involves more than combat between armed opponents. While defeating the enemy with offensive and defensive operations, Army forces simultaneously shape the broader situation through nonlethal actions to restore security and normalcy to the local populace.”²⁹ However, later versions of the manual, though mentioning the need to maintain the capability to operate in all the above-mentioned fields, dropped the term Full Spectrum Operations. The U.S. Army has not officially adopted the term hybrid warfare in its doctrine.

Changing the culture of war

What is clear is that the issue that most distresses NATO members is the blurring of the boundary between war and not-war. This is a cultural issue. A school of thought that developed gradually in Western culture and became prevalent in the second half of the 20th century, sought to create a distinct boundary

²⁸ Hybrid CoE s. a.

²⁹ The Pentagon 2008: vii.

between the two situations. A clear distinction between what behaviour is war and what is not; who may conduct war and who may not; what actions are acceptable or not-acceptable in war, what actions are acceptable or not-acceptable in conflicts that are not-war. These distinctions were codified as the Laws of War, thus converting the discussion from a focus on best practice to a focus on legality of practice. This created two world views – NATO members and others accepting this strict delineation as opposed to other entities that do not. It also created a problem for those accepting the boundaries and laws to understand the behaviour of those who do not – how can an action be not-war yet look and behave as war? Existing terminology and concepts, sharply separating the two, prevented the ability to discuss what was happening. The term hybrid warfare was adopted to solve this problem. War and not-war are separate political and military phenomena, hybrid warfare is a conceptual patch covering the gap between the two and slightly overlapping each. In 2013, Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov, lectured on the topic of hybrid warfare as a political and military phenomenon.³⁰ Though often described as the Gerasimov doctrine, this lecture actually described Gerasimov’s interpretation of Western doctrine of modern warfare and the need for Russia to learn to cope with it.³¹ He too focused first on the “tendency toward blurring the lines between the states of war and peace”. But after stating that “wars are no longer declared”, he added, “and having begun, [they] proceed according to an unfamiliar template”.³² This new template includes “the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian and other non-military measures – applied in coordination with the protest potential of the population. All this is supplemented by military means of a concealed character, including carrying out actions of informational conflict and the actions of special-operations forces. The open use of forces – often under the guise of peacekeeping and crisis regulation – is resorted to only at a certain stage, primarily for the achievement of final success in the conflict [...]. Long-distance, contactless actions against the enemy are becoming the main means of achieving combat and operational goals. The defeat of the enemy’s objects is conducted throughout the entire depth of his territory. The differences between strategic, operational, and tactical levels, as well as between offensive and defensive operations, are being erased. The application

³⁰ GERASIMOV 2013.

³¹ ADAMSKY 2015; GALEOTTI 2018; GALEOTTI 2020.

³² GERASIMOV 2013.

of high-precision weaponry is taking on a mass character. Weapons based on new physical principals and automatized systems are being actively incorporated into military activity [...]. Asymmetrical actions have come into widespread use, enabling the nullification of an enemy's advantages in armed conflict. Among such actions are the use of special-operations forces and internal opposition to create a permanently operating front through the entire territory of the enemy state, as well as informational actions, devices, and means that are constantly being perfected".³³ However, though these new forms of action were more and more prominent, and the focus of that particular lecture, they did not completely erase the use of older forms of action – the employment of massed mechanised formations, as was made clear in the graphs that accompanied the lecture and in later lectures, various articles published in Russian professional journals and Russian military exercises, and in the invasions of Ukraine in 2014 and 2022.³⁴ Analysts studying the Russian debate attempted to separate the Russian concepts from the Western concepts, or from the Russian understanding of Western concepts as they were described in the Russian professional journals, by using the Russian term New Generation Warfare for the Russian concept and Hybrid Warfare for the Western concept. However, though there are differences in the details, in principle these two concepts are indeed similar as far as the separation of War and Not-War are concerned and the general internal composition of the military operational and tactical methods, including the exploitation of new technologies by those methods, are concerned.³⁵ To summarise it, the term hybrid warfare came to refer to two separate phenomena – first, a style of purely military operational and tactical actions and second, a style of aggressive political behaviour combining military and non-military actions. Unfortunately, as the term hybrid warfare gained popularity it lost clarity. The various concepts, definitions and terms represent a professional debate on the topic. Some of the debaters merely sought to improve previous ideas and definitions as they understood them, some sought to adapt them to the specific contexts they were facing, others tried to delineate the boundaries of the concept back to a form of

³³ GERASIMOV 2013.

³⁴ GERASIMOV 2013; SUTYAGIN 2015; BARTLES 2016: 30–38; KOFMAN 2016; McDERMOTT 2019: 345–378; BĒRZIŅŠ 2020: 355–380; CLARK 2020; POLYAKOVA–BOULÈGUE 2021; ZAREMBO–SOLODKYY 2021.

³⁵ JONSSON–SEELY 2015: 1–22; THOMAS 2016: 554–575; SCHNAUFER 2017: 17–31; BĒRZIŅŠ 2019: 157–184; SUCHKOV 2021: 415–440; BAQUÉS 2021.

behaviour in war rather than between war and not-war and others argued that the concepts and terminology were wrong and harmful.³⁶ Evolving with each new paper written about it, the term became a slogan covering a plethora of hostile behaviours, activities and organisations in a wide variety of military and non-military contexts, some of which had existed before under different names, while others, lacking violence, were not truly war. When a term comes to mean many different things, it becomes useless as a tool for communication. Another problem is that while defining Hybrid Warfare the various authors were not and still are not precise in their use of terminology, thus, for example, conventional, traditional and regular warfare are used interchangeably though there are subtle differences in meaning as are unconventional, guerrilla, asymmetric and irregular warfare. Terrorism, itself lacking an agreed definition,³⁷ is now a separate category of actions. For state armies there are War, Military Operations Other than War and Operations Below the Threshold of War. The terms war and warfare themselves lost coherence – one experienced General even wrote that war no longer exists – though the various violent activities that make-up a war such as confrontation, conflict and combat still do,³⁸ whereas an academic specialising in political science claimed that war existed but had changed drastically into something new. New War was characterised by what she claimed to be new political goals and new forms of violence.³⁹ Furthermore, a plethora of new terms were invented, some preceded the term hybrid warfare, others were alternatives suggested by various authors such as Fourth Generation Warfare, Fourth Epoch Warfare, New Warfare, Post Modern Warfare, Degenerate Warfare and Compound Warfare, which preceded the term hybrid warfare while others sought to focus on a particular aspect for example the Grey Zone emphasising the use of violence without officially declaring war, or Political Warfare that focus on all hostile actions that do not include violence.⁴⁰ Some of the discussions

³⁶ STOKER–WHITESIDE 2020; SCHADLOW 2015.

³⁷ NATO Counter-Terrorism Reference Curriculum 2020.

³⁸ SMITH 2005.

³⁹ KALDOR 1999. New, slightly revised editions, responding to various criticisms were published later but the essential argument remained the same. The criticisms focused on the historical inaccuracy of her claims that the political goals and forms of violence were new.

⁴⁰ The term ‘Political Warfare’ (defined as “the employment of all the means at a nation’s command, short of war, to achieve its national objectives”) was originally invented by U.S. State Department Policy Planning Director George Kennan in a Top Secret memorandum entitled *The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare*, written on 30 April 1948. Kennan explained the necessity for the

approached the topic from a purely military aspect – tactics, operations and strategy and their effect on the conduct of wars, whereas others approached the topic from the opposite direction, the cultural and political developments that preceded, initiated and directed wars and the forces established to conduct them to achieve the ideological and political objectives set by the societies and their leaders. Many of the terms used actually define more the cultural or strategic tunnel through which the user was observing the world than the general reality of war as a practical phenomenon. Many of the criticisms published against each author's work were against that tunnel vision misleading him/her. Proponents of theories claiming a break from past experience to a new reality were often criticised for exhibiting insufficient knowledge of the history of warfare.⁴¹

Conclusion

None of the arguments are completely wrong and none are completely right. War is one of the most complex of human activities. It exists and is fought on all the physical, the emotional, the spiritual and the mental planes of human existence, it invokes both rational and irrational behaviour. It is therefore difficult to define it and the phenomena that compose it with mathematical precision. Many phenomena that in theory are distinct do not have precise borders with adjacent phenomena in practice, the transition from one to the other is often gradual with a considerable overlap – there are many shades of grey, but where each shade specifically ends and another specifically begins is usually very difficult to discern. Given that the very essence of hybrid warfare is the merging of phenomena, it is especially difficult to define, to characterise and to create a distinct theory as to how to conduct it successfully. However, if we are to conduct a meaningful discussion and come away with the common understanding necessary for coordinated actions, it is necessary to provide definitions useful to practitioners while accepting the blurry edges of each phenomenon. As noted

term because: “We have been handicapped however by a popular attachment to the concept of a basic difference between peace and war, by a tendency to view war as a sort of sporting contest outside of all political context.” It was suggested as a more intuitively more understandable replacement for the term Hybrid Warfare when discussing hostile non-violent actions. However, the term elicited a negative response (ROBINSON et al. 2018: xix–xx).

⁴¹ BERDAL 2003: 477–502; BERDAL 2011: 109–133; COHEN 2007; MELLO 2010: 297–309; NEWMAN 2004: 173–189; ROBERTS 2005.

above, the term hybrid warfare as it is most commonly used today refers to two separate phenomena:

- On the political-strategic continuum the concept termed hybrid warfare refers to the combined use of all the tools available to the belligerents to force their rival to accept their political demands – all forms of aggressive diplomacy, economic actions, psychological and information actions and violent actions. All these may include a mix of overt and covert actions. As regards the acts of violence, these may be official (declared war) or unofficial (undeclared war).
- Within the internal continuum of conducting war (methods of conducting violent operations) hybrid warfare refers to the combined use of the different manners of military action, both regular warfare and irregular warfare.

Therefore, when using the term hybrid warfare, the user must make clear to which of the two phenomena he/she is referring to. Both phenomena of hybrid warfare affect the chosen military strategy for a particular war and its implementation; however, each does so differently. They are not conditional to each other, they can co-exist or one may be chosen and implemented while the other is not.

Questions

1. What conflicting definitions of Hybrid Warfare do you know?
2. What other terms are used as equivalents to the term Hybrid Warfare?
3. What are the main obstacles to the adoption of a single universally accepted term and definition for Hybrid Warfare?
4. What are the similarities and differences in the definition of Hybrid Warfare?
5. What common elements exist within the various definitions of Hybrid Warfare?
6. Is having a precise single definition of Hybrid Warfare necessary for conducting Hybrid Warfare operations?
7. How could differences in definitions affect the implementation of the Hybrid Warfare concept?
8. How should the use of the same term for two separate phenomena be resolved?

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