

# Hybrid warfare

## ***Introduction***

There is no consensus in the hybrid warfare literature regarding what the term actually refers to. Instead, hybrid war has become a catchall phrase. The theory of hybrid warfare can be categorized into three branches. We will make the categorization using the different levels of strategy to comprehend each definition's essence better.

Why did this confusion arise?

Hybrid: Thing made combining several different elements.

We usually give names to things made by a combination of other things- we do not say a hybrid of x and y but z, for example, to recognize what we are talking about. Blue+yellow= green. Every possible combination of yellow and blue will have its name; none is called a hybrid of blue and green.

Therefore, the issue is that when the first definition of hybrid warfare was born, we did not give it a name resulting in other definitions of, sometimes much different things, to fit under the notion of hybrid warfare as well. It is like saying "new warfare", but that term may involve many diverse "new warfare" ways.

Simultaneously, we broke up some earlier hybrid terms, which already had a distinguished name, for example, grand strategy (which involves both actions of violence and peaceful ones to achieve its goal) and tactics (which involved both conventional and unconventional ways of fighting).

Analysts have not agreed upon whether the hybrid warfare concept is something new or not or whether it is useful or not. That is because all wars in the past have contained elements of 'hybridity', and most have been characterized by episodes of illegality and 'unconventional' methods.

## ***Tactics definition***

Frank Hoffman originally addressed the concept of hybrid warfare as purely something in the military realm (clearly in the operational and tactical level of military strategy), which, therefore, should be dealt with by the military.

Hoffman's definition: an adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs a fused mix of conventional weapons, irregular tactics, terrorism, and criminal behaviour in the battlespace to obtain its political objectives.

He described asymmetrical tactics (a combination of new technologies and fanatical fighting) of non-state or sub-state forces (irregulars, guerrillas, insurgents, and terrorists) without state structures, uniforms of obedience to the laws of armed conflict. The Israel-Hezbollah Conflict of 2006 offered an inspiration.

At the same time, hybrid warfare can utilize its features to produce vagueness in times of peace by offering the ability to pursue strategic ends with a degree of force, but not such an overt use of coercion that it would cross the threshold of conventional justifications for war.

Concentrating on the tactical level, David Kilcullen described hybrid warfare as the combination of state and irregular forces that employ any variety of weapons and tactics to minimize detection and retaliation. Therefore, hybrid warfare does also blur the distinction between war and peace and combatants and non-combatants.

Conclusively, this definition of hybrid warfare is anything but new since 1) even in classical conventional wars, there was plenty of unconventional activity along with the combination of regular and irregular forces on the battlefield, and 2) there are historical examples of actors that used violence at the tactical level to pursue their goals without crossing the threshold where their enemy would be justified to proceed to war.

### ***Grand strategy definition***

The second definition of hybrid warfare is was born in 2010 from NATO-Brussels-> first broader definition -> grand strategy level.

2015 International institute for strategic studies ISS -> hybrid threats include military and non-military tools in an integrated campaign designed to achieve surprise, cease the initiative, and gain psychological as well as physical advantages utilizing diplomatic means, sophisticated and rapid information, electronic and cyber operations covered and occasionally overt military and intelligence actions and economic pressure.

They also involve protracted forms of warfare, use of proxy forces for coercion and intimidation, terrorism and criminality to manipulate the information environment, target energy resources, attack economic vulnerabilities and exploit diplomatic leverage.

This interpretation falls under the grand strategy level because it refers to a combination of peaceful and violent means to realize the actor's end. Grand strategy encompasses both military strategy (war) and political means (political branch of grand strategy).

In fact, this concept refers to the complimentary use of selective violence along with political means (political disturbance, social mobilization, political or economic assault, immigration and culture), causing ordinary people and military alike to be greatly astonished at the fact that commonplace things that are close to them can also become weapons with which to engage in war.

Conclusively, neither this definition offers anything new because war objectives are always political, and the use of force is not restricted to conventional warfighting. In that sense, all wars are hybrid since the way they are fought (grand strategy) contains the military plus all the other available political means during the war.

## ***Political warfare definition***

In 2015, a new term entered the discussion after the Crimea crisis. It is largely a Russian term, which was, among others, developed in Gerasimov Doctrine. We will call it "magnifying glass" hybrid warfare. This definition exists in the dimension of political warfare.

It implies bloodless, contactless warfare that removes hard military power (strategic level), utilizing cyberspace and "information blitzkrieg" to break the enemy's resistance without fighting.

This interpretation of hybrid warfare involves:

- 1) Activities that exploit the thresholds of detection and attribution, as well as the different interfaces (war-peace, internal-external security, local-state, and national-international)
- 2) Activities aimed at influencing different forms of decision-making of the target and fulfil the actor's strategic goals
- 3) Corrupting and undermining the enemy's authority legitimacy from inside to achieve certain political goals without escalating to direct confrontation
- 4) Coordinated and synchronized actions that deliberately target institutions' systemic vulnerabilities through a wide range of means
- 5) Infiltration of subversive, destructive concepts to disrupt the ability of societies to function, essentially sharp power
- 6) Crushing the spirit of the enemy public by destroying objects of physiological value, seizing objects of material value, and creating an impression of order.
- 7) Destroying military capacity, security system and economy, essentially the opposite of regular conventional war.
- 8) Military power only in extreme cases and as a secondary tool only to support political, economic, and physiological dimension

The "magnifying glass" hybrid warfare theory has the below implications for the victim of such an attack:

The attacker sets the dimension in which the "fighting" will occur, while the defender is not legitimized using another toolkit or taking the confrontation to another level. Still, they have to respond in kind, given that they possess the capabilities to do so.

They can never be sure about the blow's origins, and therefore, they have no target to hit. But, even if they did, they lack the legitimization to do so because 1) seemingly peaceful actions do

not justify a military response against an enemy and 2) they cannot prove it and persuade other states.

This theory of hybrid warfare falls within the peaceful branch of grand strategy (since it does not involve any violence) or, put differently, political warfare or, according to Clausewitz, confrontation.

Although political warfare and the attempts to further national interests without triggering armed conflict, and circumventing international norms, have always been a part of states rivalry, this is the only hybrid warfare theory that offers a new concept. That is because the advance in technology and its products (for example, information warfare and cyber-attacks) allow us to synchronize the effects of political warfare actions in such a way that they have a decisive impact. This synchronization effect makes them far more effective than previously, offering a decisive result and achieving the actor's interests by themselves, without the use of force. It works the same way as a magnifying glass, which concentrates sun rays into a specific point in a paper, causing it to catch fire. The sun rays were always there (political warfare tools), but the magnifying glass was not (the means to concentrate/synchronize the rays to achieve one's goal). The development in technology is offering exactly that.

### ***Information warfare***

Information warfare is the use of information in a digital or information age for warfare purposes. It targets the infrastructure, capabilities, and processes by which a state or non-state gathers, analyses, distributes, and exploits information.

While the use of information as part of war is as old as war itself—for deception, persuasion, and battlefield communication—the near-universal use of modern, digitized information systems for military decision-making has increased the importance of information's fidelity in the battlespace.

Information operations: the integrated employment during military operations of information-related capabilities, in concert with other lines of operation to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision-making of adversaries and potential adversaries with the goal of affecting their perception and will.

Their impact can be compared to fire support coordination, in which a targeting methodology synchronizes and employs various capabilities to generate desired effects.

Information warfare's effect on the state and the morale of the population can be sometimes comparable with the damage resulting from the effect of weapons of mass destruction.

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