Hybrid Warfare in Ukraine
Lessons Learned

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1. Agitation & propaganda (including “the big lie”) are Russian strengths; Western “truth will prevail” journalism is ineffective on publics dominated by Russian media. Mixed ethnic societies are particularly susceptible to mass and social media manipulation.

2. Prior to conflict, Russia uses subtle economic influence and corruption to establish leverage as well as compromise key politicians & security organs.

3. Russian political agents, Spetsnaz, “little green men,” volunteers & mercenaries provide a variety of low visibility insertion, sabotage, training & advisory options – for which the West has neither appetite nor aptitude for creating, supporting, disciplining & directing political cadres for local control of occupied populations.

4. Terrorist type techniques include building seizures, infrastructure attack, intimidation of police, cyber disruption, political assassination, kidnapping of children, hostage taking, torture & mutilation.

5. Low-intensity conflict can rapidly escalate to High-intensity warfare for which police, border guards, security units & even SOF teams are unprepared to deal with -- this is particularly true for Urban fighting, key terrain strong points & critical road junctions.
RUSSIAN view of Hybrid War

General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff, Russian Federation

In the 21st century we have seen a tendency toward blurring the lines between the states of war and peace. Wars are no longer declared and, having begun, proceed according to an unfamiliar template.

The experience of military conflicts ... confirm that a perfectly thriving state can, in a matter of months and even days, be transformed into an arena of fierce armed conflict, become a victim of foreign intervention, and sink into a web of chaos, humanitarian catastrophe, and civil war....

In terms of the scale of the casualties and destruction -- the catastrophic social, economic, and political consequences -- such new-type conflicts are comparable with the consequences of any real war.

The very "rules of war" have changed. The role of non-military means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness.

The focus of applied methods of conflict has altered in the direction of 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.

RUSSIAN view of Hybrid War – General Gerasimov continued

These days, together with traditional devices, nonstandard ones are being developed. The role of mobile, mixed-type groups of forces, acting in a single intelligence-information space because of the use of the new possibilities of command-and-control systems has been strengthened. Military actions are becoming more dynamic, active, and fruitful. Tactical and operational pauses that the enemy could exploit are disappearing. New information technologies have enabled significant reductions in the spatial, temporal, and informational gaps between forces and control organs. Frontal engagements of large formations of forces at the strategic and operational level are gradually becoming a thing of the past. 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 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 ....

Another factor influencing the essence of modern means of armed conflict is the use of modern automated complexes of military equipment and research in the area of artificial intelligence. While today we have flying drones, tomorrow's battlefields will be filled with walking, crawling, jumping, and flying robots. In the near future it is possible a fully robotized unit will be created, capable of independently conducting military operations.
Nature & Content of New Generation of War

9 Elements of Hybrid Combat

1. Non-military asymmetric warfare to establish favorable socio-economic and political environment;
2. Special operations to misdirect elites;
3. Intimidation, fraud, and bribery;
4. Destabilization operations and organization of militant opposition;
5. Introduction of armed insurgents and support thereof;
6. Clandestine military intervention;
7. Use of EW and high-tech reconnaissance to facilitate the destruction of resisting forces;
8. Overt intervention to occupy territory and suppress any remaining resistance;
9. Threats to use nuclear weapons and to use precision weapons to destroy nuclear power plants, chemical industry facilities, and large hydro-electric power plants

Hybrid Lesson from Ukraine (continued)

6. Russia has introduced superior body armor and body armor piercing ammunition, which can defeat normal infantry when combined with night vision and snipers.

7. Russian artillery and multiple-rocket launchers utilize advanced (DPICM, Scatterable Mine, Top Attack & Fuel Air) munitions, which in combination with RPV/UAV target acquisition, cause 85% of all casualties and can make Battalion size units combat ineffective in one strike – notable because the US & NATO nations are withdrawing those munitions from their own forces under the Princes Di Convention.

8. The main battle tank, protected by reactive armor, remains central to High-intensity combat; deep armored raids are prevalent on the dispersed modern battlefield.

9. Light infantry fighting vehicles, whether wheeled or tracked are vulnerable to disproportionate and catastrophic loss rates – mounted infantry need tank equivalent protection and mobility for the high-intensity battlefield;

10. Reactive armor defeats most direct fire single warhead infantry fired Anti-tank weapons – notable for NATO because few countries have tandem AT warhead missiles capable of penetrating Russian reactive armor and in their absence, infantry are vulnerable to overrun or being out flanked.
T-90 Tank Column near Luhansk
Luhansk
- Airport Siege (Sep ‘14) photos confirmed
- Battle of Pocket (Sep ‘14) reports - unconfirmed

Debal’tseve
- Battle of Pocket (Feb ‘15) report - unconfirmed

Donetsk
- Airport Siege (Jan ‘15) reports confirmed
- Airport Siege (Mar ‘15) reports confirmed
- Breakout Battle (Mar ‘15) reports confirmed

Mariupol
- Novoazvs’k & Sjedove (Sep ‘14) reports confirmed
- Novoazvs’k (Feb ‘15) report unconfirmed
- Novoazvs’k (Mar ‘15) reports confirmed

Ternove
- Gunnery Range (Mar ‘15) report unconfirmed
Russian supplied MLRS Canister munitions & Themobaric warheads create catastrophic injuries & have destroyed entire Battalions
Russian supplied Artillery and MLRS Strikes cause most casualties

Since its invasion of August, Russia has sent over 1,000 artillery and MLRS systems into the Donbas causing 85% of Ukrainian casualties; without long-range Western counter-battery radar the imbalance will only get worse.
Hybrid Lesson from Ukraine (continued)

11. The “hybrid” battlefield is non-linear, with forces interpenetrated and the opportunity for decisive maneuver – prepared “dug-in” defensive strong points, supported by artillery, can inflict heavy losses on the attacker. However, in static positions they are vulnerable to massed they are also vulnerable to being outflanked and surrounded;

12. Modern overlapping dense air defense drove the Ukrainian Air Force Close Air Support and Attack Helicopters off the battlefield without availability of sophisticated ECM and air defense suppression – notable because many NATO Air Forces are not prepared for this density or level of sophistication.

13. Armies dependent on vulnerable national communication networks and without digital encrypted radios are vulnerable to jamming, interception and real-time targeting. Electronic Warfare has entered a new era in Ukraine and its effects can be both unexpected and significant.

14. UAVs, drones & RPVs are indispensible for operational intelligence and tactical targeting and becoming ubiquitous on the modern battlefield. Russia has now fielded a reconnaissance strike complex at the tactical-operational level. While at the strategic level Ukraine is effectively blind in anticipating major offensives and given lag times in receiving warning will continue to be victimized by surprise.

15. As a result of high-intensity combat with concomitant force exhaustion, coupled with political intervention by the international community, there are multiple pressures to accept a ceasefire independent of political settlement.
Value of UAV Drones in Monitoring Ceasefire
Finding where Russian’s & Proxies Hide their Weaponry

Adjacent to Civilian housing in Villages & Urban Areas so it can’t be targeted
Ukrainian Strongpoint on Debaltseve Perimeter
targeted by UAV, suppressed by artillery/MLRS strikes, overrun by armor
Hybrid Lesson from Ukraine (continued)

16. Coordinated and targeted Western economic sanctions can seriously impact the Russian economy and hurt its people; but they are a crude instrument and have had minimal inhibition on Russian leadership and produce little confidence they can enforce the ceasefire or inhibit further aggression.

17. A ceasefire without effective monitoring and sanction for violation is highly unstable. The OSCE is not structurally able to effective monitor a ceasefire.

18. Russia has employed a variety of subtle and direct nuclear threats, including nuclear alerts, “snap checks,” and “fly-bys” which appear to have self-deterred Western leaders and intimidated Ukrainian politicians.

19. Modern decision-makers in West democracies are neither prepared for Russian disguised operations, denial, duplicity and deception on the “low-end” of conflict, nor, steeled against brazen nuclear posturing and direct threats at the high-end.” This Hybrid combination often leads to “decidophobia” and fear of “escalating” even when that only means reciprocal matching of behavior the Russians are already practicing.

20. The victim of Hybrid Aggression is also victimized by Western caution and prevarication. While Russia has introduced thousands of weapons into the conflict, European and American political hesitation in helping Ukraine acquire replacements for its losses (and the political message it sends to other who would like to help) serves as a virtual military embargo on Ukraine. **Ironically, the most successful Western sanction has been in preventing a friendly country from defending itself.**
Ukraine’s Failed Ceasefire
2,801 Attacks on Ukrainian Forces
(5 Sep. 2014 thru 8 Feb. 2015)

- Minsk Ceasefire Agreed
- Massive RUS Offensive (high losses)
- Renewed Ceasefire Vow
- OSCE with Monitor UAV for Ceasefire
- Russian Winter Offensive
“Russia Targets NATO With Military Exercises”
Hybrid Military Options produce Diplomatic Coercion

When asked recently about the possibility of “SWIFT” sanctions, which would bar Russia from the international payment system, Prime Minister Medvedev warned that Moscow’s response would be “without limits.”

“I don’t think the Danes fully understand the consequences of what will happen if Denmark joins the American-led missile defence. If this happens, Danish war ships will become targets for Russian atomic missiles. ...I want to simply remind you that it will cost you both money and security.”

Jyllands-Posten, March 2015
Putin’s aim to “Protect” Russians could Destabilize Eur-Asia for Decades -- if he is not stopped in Ukraine ... Where?
Which Option Makes Europe Safer?