

Досвід проведення військових місій та операцій з врегулювання кризових ситуацій

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IS IT POSSIBLE TO DETER AN OPPONENT WHO USES 'HYBRID TACTICS'?

Outdated laws and customs of war together with an inadequate system of international security actually cause a temptation for many actors to use hybrid instruments to achieve their goals whilst minimizing consequences of aggressive actions. Nevertheless, when an adequate rethinking of contemporary security environment, existing challenges and threats to it, as well as appropriate adaptation of security policies and doctrines takes place, the trend of hybridization of military conflicts will not impose such a significant threat to national and international security (although it will still not be trivial). Deterrence is still an efficient and useful tool to keep stability and peace in international relations but it requires expansion beyond the traditional (nuclear or conventional-oriented) framework and transformation into an art of Comprehensive Deterrence.

Keywords: *deterrence, hybrid warfare, conflict, military aggression.*

'We are not going to swing our swords and bring in [Ukraine] the troops. That is simply nonsense' [13]. 'Those [people in Russian uniform in Crimea] were local self-defence units' [14]. 'We've never said there are no [Russian] people there [in Ukraine] who deal with certain matters, including in the military area' [15].

Introduction

Formulation of the problem in general. The annexation of Crimea and the subsequent Russian hybrid aggression against Ukraine became the flagrant violations of international law and undermined the fundamental values, norms and rules of the post-WWII world order. These events led to the tectonic shifts in international relations, including military sphere, and such terms as 'non-linear tactic' and 'hybrid warfare' were included in political and military lexicon. Although the hybrid warfare concept was developed in detail in the middle of the last decade and its origins can be traced back to the Napoleonic Wars, mainly the events in Ukraine have actualized this idea and transformed it from the theoretical research category into the practice (surprisingly for many experts) [5].

Lightning speed, hypocrisy and insolence, with which Russia has implemented its aggressive plans with regard to Ukraine, have plunged Western leaders into shock and confusion. In the minds of some analysts the Russian hybrid strategy has begun to be considered as a kind of 'silver bullet' that could undermine the power and dominance of the Western civilization. Moreover,

some military experts have started to consider hybrid warfare as a new stage in the development of military science or a revolution in military affairs [1].

Consequently, opinion has appeared that there are no effective tools to counter and deter the hybrid aggression, which would allow a proportional response without further escalation of conflict. Nevertheless, even if hybrid warfare has some innovative ideas, it does not change the nature of war. The essence of hybrid warfare mainly implies more comprehensive and flexible use of existing tools supported by a brinkmanship approach and does not introduce or require new instruments of confrontation. **Thus, the purpose of the article** is to show, that despite the existing opinion that deterrence and hybrid warfare are incompatible, in fact an opponent who uses 'hybrid tactics' can be deterred by applying a more comprehensive approach towards deterrence with expanding it into the 'Gray Zone' of conflict. The strategy of deterrence does not seem obsolete in new security environment, but it requires more flexible and cross-domain application of existing tools.

Statement of Materials Research

Hybrid bullets on the modern battlefield. Russian aggression against Ukraine has started debates regarding the changes in the nature of war, as well as the role and effectiveness of hybrid warfare in modern conflicts. This new type of warfare, which can be 'widely understood to blend conventional/unconventional, regular/irregular, and information and cyber warfare' [16],

has seemingly created a new revolution in military affairs [1]. Meanwhile, the hybridization of military conflicts has not changed the essence and core principles of war. It mainly increases the level of complexity of the operational environment, but warfare has always been complex since the ancient times [16]. Thus, regardless of the type conflict, traditional or irregular, hybrid or not, all the rules, customs and practices of wars are still relevant (although with some adaptation in implementation for hybrid wars). In modern wars, it is largely irrelevant who occupies the territories (rebels, ‘green men’, or regular units), or how propaganda spreads (by leaflets, via radio/TV or through social networks) or how infrastructure is destroyed (by rockets, bombs or hacker attacks). Bullets, which kill soldiers on the battlefield, are just bullets and cannot be a hybrid, but only mortal. Hybrid wars are still wars and rather than developing strategies on how to counter or deter particular ‘hybrid’ bullets (threats), military experts and political leaders should stay away from it and consider contemporary security environment as it has always been: as a set of interconnected threats with wars as a tool to achieve political objectives in this complex environment [16].

Although some experts consider hybrid warfare as a kind of new thing in the art of war, this concept is not a new or independent entity in the military science. Moreover, there is not a strict definition of Hybrid War (or Warfare), but only a general idea that ‘Hybrid Wars can be conducted by both states and a variety of non-state actors [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’[5]. Very often, this description is also complemented by cyberspace warfare. In other words, the concept of Hybrid Warfare (or whatever we call it) implies the rebalance of all instruments of national power (military, diplomatic, informational or economic) and their application in modern conflicts in a symbiotic way with a shift towards an ambiguity at the left side of operational continuum into the Gray Zone of conflict [19]. Such essence of Hybrid Warfare (fig. 1) is closely related to the concept of Fourth Generation Warfare [9] and can be seen as one of possible ways to implement this concept in practice rather than a new independent theoretical model in the military science [10].

Using of a variety of the non-military instruments of national power, as well as waging of warfare under the threshold of full-scale war, complicates operational environment and impedes defence planning [5], but still does not change the nature of military conflict. All the tools, forms and methods of warfare, except perhaps for those in the cyber domain, have been widely used since the dawn of civilization. Sanctions, economic blockades, political pressure and propaganda, mass resistance movements and guerrilla warfare were inherent to many

conflicts long before the appearance of the hybrid warfare concept.

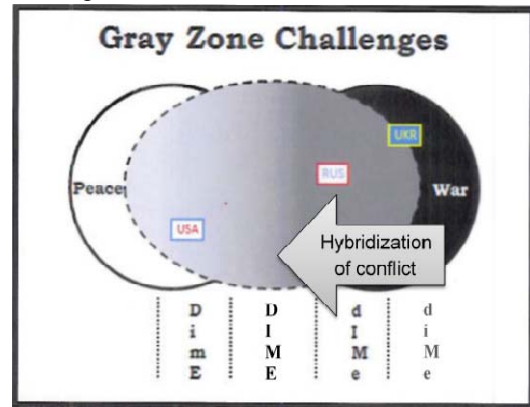


Fig. 1. Operational continuum and the Gray Zone of conflict [18]

Even in the cyber domain, basic laws and rules of war can also be applied, and the NATO Warsaw Summit confirmed this [11]. In other words, ‘the rise of Hybrid Warfare does not represent the end of traditional or conventional warfare’ [5] but rather its expansion over the commonly accepted boundaries into the Gray Zone between peace and war with a more comprehensive use of non-military means.

Parties can choose intentional hybridization of the conflict according to their own considerations but mainly in order to exploit an enemy’s weakness and unpreparedness rather than to exploit their own strength. The weaker opponent can use hybrid tools against a stronger one when he has no chance of winning a traditional armed confrontation. Alternatively, a stronger opponent can use the hybrid tactic against a weaker one when he does not want or cannot afford the open aggression and, therefore, is forced to go on a veiled attack. When a hybrid approach is applied to an unprepared opponent (as in Ukraine), it can prove to be the most efficient tool that provides success. However, this efficiency is largely caused not by genius or progressiveness of one party but rather by the inability of its opponent to act in the complex security environment. In any conflict, the best strategy is to avoid enemy’s strengths, but to exploit his weaknesses [17]. From this point of view, the hybrid approach is just a way to be more effective.

To conclude, the hybridization of conflict implies acting in the Gray Zone of conflict under the threshold of open full-scale war. This requires reducing the level of engagement of traditional military instruments. At the same time, in order to keep pressure on opponent at an appropriate level, decreasing effectiveness of traditional military tools should be compensated by the simultaneous rebalancing of other tools of national power (fig. 2). The non-military instruments of national power, applied comprehensively to a wider extent, allow maintaining effectiveness in achieving desired political goals. This complicates the operational environment but does not

change the nature of war. The essence of hybrid conflict should be taken into account adequately in order to develop effective countermeasures and deterrent mechanisms. Hybrid conflict does not use any silver or hybrid bullets, but it only exploits inability of opponent to act in the Gray Zone and in complex security environment. The concept of conflict prevention, as well as the notion of the aggression itself, must be radically revised within the framework of national legislation, doctrines and regulations in order to adequately reflect the actual challenges and threats to the security. To do this, society and decision makers have to accept that military aggression is still military aggression, regardless of its forms.

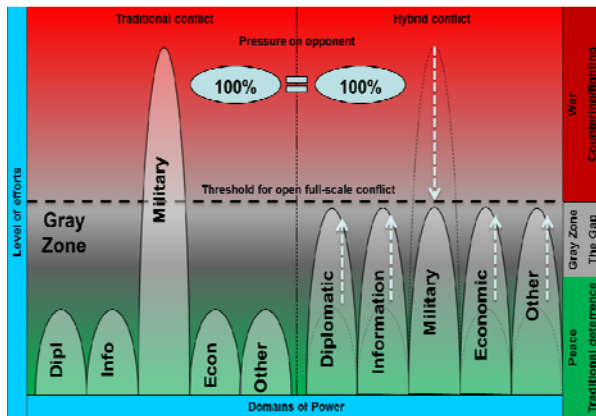


Fig. 2. Changings in the role of different instruments of national power as the main difference between traditional and hybrid conflicts

Comprehensive deterrence vs Gray Zone of conflict. With regard to its historical background, the traditional deterrence theory is often considered as a concept of nuclear deterrence complemented by conventional deterrence. Both are based on the idea of inevitability of retaliation (by punishment or denial) in case of achieving clearly defined criteria. Thus, the opinion has appeared that state or non-state actors that act in the Gray Zone in order to avoid retaliation when predefined criteria are not achieved yet cannot be deterred and consequently the deterrence strategy is obsolete in the Post-Cold War period. Proponents of such statements provide examples of Russia, ISIS, Iran or China, which are striving to achieve their political objectives without crossing the threshold of an open conflict with the West by applying irregular and hybrid tactics [20], and emphasize that Western Powers are nearly powerless to counter or deter them in Syria, Ukraine or at the South China Sea. Yet, the concept of deterrence as an approach to maintain peace and stability by preventing enemy aggression is much broader and flexible and is not limited to any instruments or ways of its implementing. Similarly like nuclear deterrence was complemented by conventional deterrence at the dawn of the Cold War in order to embrace new threats to security, this traditional deterrence concept should be extended again to cover all threats in

contemporary security environment including those at the left side of operational continuum [20]. Comprehensive Deterrence based on flexible and cross-domain use of all instruments of power (from military to political or economic) should propose for decision makers a wider set of strategic options in terms of time, decision space and available means in order to manage the escalation of all spectrum of challenges to security environment, from those we have faced in the past to those we anticipate in the near future [20].

Although deterrence during last 70 years has been mainly associated with a threat of using nuclear or conventional forces to intimidate an opponent, its definition as well as historical background shows its versatility and adaptability regardless of the specific kind of weapon systems or tactical implementation. In accordance with the Dictionary of Modern Strategy and Tactics by Michael Keane deterrence is ‘the prevention or inhibition of action brought about by fear of the consequences. Deterrence is a state of mind brought about by the existence of a credible threat of unacceptable counteraction’ [6]. This general definition, as well as many others, mainly emphasises mental aspects of decision making process and does not rely on any particular tools of deterrence (nuclear, conventional or whatever they are). Therefore, the logic of deterrence is wider than it is customary perceived and it can be interpreted in more comprehensive and cross-domain way. Similarly, evolution and practical implementation of deterrence strategy during the Cold War shows that particular instruments or ways of implementation do not limit deterrence logic itself, but mainly reflect existing threats and challenges to which it should be addressed. In the mid-50s, there was a strong belief that the next ‘world war may be prevented by the deterrent power of nuclear weapons’ [2]. However, just a few decades later it became clear that overreliance on nuclear weapon as well as its destructive power could not prevent conventional wars (especially after taking into account superiority of Communist Block in conventional troops in Europe and development of Soviet nuclear power). As a result, in order to counter rebalanced threats NATO allies complemented their nuclear deterrence strategy by conventional deterrence. This shows that deterrence strategy itself is not a static entity and can be updated in an appropriate way in order to meet new challenges and threats to security.

If the last decades were a time to complement the nuclear deterrence strategy by conventional deterrence [12], now it is a time to go further and to expand the deterrence concept again so that it will be turned into the Comprehensive Deterrence. While traditional deterrence (both nuclear and conventional) prevents full-scale nuclear or conventional conflicts between the states, it is really incapable to prevent the use of the hybrid scenario in the Gray Zone of conflict. The strategy of brinkmanship and the use of hybrid (non-

military) instruments often do not allow launching retaliation mechanisms by traditional military means, but it does not necessarily lead to the undermining of the whole concept of deterrence. Traditional deterrence strategy should be expanded to cover the whole spectrum of threats we face in the 21st Century security environment especially on the left side of the operational continuum. To do this, new deterrence approach should focus not only on preventing the crisis, but also offer the way how to manage its development if preventing fails and to do not allow it to escalate beyond the strategic depth and capability to respond [20]. Application of all available instruments of power (military, informational, political or economic) in order to deter opponents from hybrid or any other type of aggression should focus on developing complex cross-domain response rather than on military retaliation only [8]. Leaders of rogue states considering the use of force against their opponents must be warned with a clear deterrence message. If they consider using a nuclear weapon, they will be deterred by punishment associated with proportional nuclear retaliation. If they consider using conventional forces, they will be deterred by the prospect of denial by a proportional conventional answer. If they want to rely on a hybrid scenario, they must get a warning in form of comprehensive and cross-domain answer (in form of both punishment and/or denial).

To conclude, military and national leaders have to relook deterrence concept and to revise how to apply this in the Gray Zone [20]. The concept of deterrence is still relevant, but requires changes in attitudes and a switch from the craft of nuclear or conventional deterrence to the art of Comprehensive (flexible and all-embracing) Deterrence. Comprehensive Deterrence as a complex response to the contemporary security threats 'is defined as the prevention of adversary action through the existence or proactive use of credible physical, cognitive and moral capabilities that raise an adversary's perceived cost to an unacceptable level of risk relative to the perceived benefit' [20]. The concept of Comprehensive Deterrence generally implies expanding understanding of strategic risks, challenges and threats, shift of the Strategic Starting Point for launching of retaliation mechanism in the Gray Zone, rebalancing of Strategic Power domains and shifting focus to the non-military means. It also means establishment of cross-domain (asymmetric) approaches to retaliation, increased focus on human domain as a target audience in retaliation, and the use of new (especially social-oriented) technologies for achieving desired effects [20].

Practical aspects of comprehensive deterrence. The Baltic case. On the one hand, implementation of hybrid principles in international relations by Russia became an evidence of the innovative thinking of Russian leadership, its flexibility and willingness to adapt in defending their national interests. On the other hand, it

showed unreadiness and inability of the Western world to effectively counter and deter a hybrid (nonlinear) aggression, the ideas of which originated initially in the minds of Western analysts. Russia has not made a breakthrough in military science, but it only became a capable disciple of Western military thought. Russia surprised its teachers with success in Ukraine, but this fact is not a sign of genius of Russian leadership. It is simply the result of its underestimation by opponents. Nevertheless, Western allies, concerned about Russian policy of revisionism, have started to develop some countermeasures after the annexation of Crimea in order to restore balance in the European region and to deter Russia from potential spreading of its aggression against NATO Eastern flank. These measures, which can be described as Comprehensive Deterrence approach, are quite effective and can prove that it is possible to deter an opponent who uses 'hybrid tactics'.

Analysis of Russian hybrid conflicts concept can show that this concept is nothing more than an adaptation of well-known ideas of Western analysts and experts, dating back to William S. Lind in the late 80's [9] and subsequently developed by a number of other military analysts, including Frank G. Hoffman [5]. Author of the Russian hybrid conflicts concept General Valery Gerasimov, the Chief of Russian General Staff, has claimed in his article 'The Value of Science in anticipation' published in the 'Military-Industrial Courier' in February 2013 that 'in the XXI century there is a tendency of erasing of distinctions between a state of war and peace. Wars are no longer declared, as well as after the beginning they are not on our usual pattern' [4]. Gerasimov on the example of 'Arab Spring' insisted that despite the misperception that it 'is not war, and for us, the military, there is nothing to learn, in reality these events are typical warfare of the XXI century'. He noted that 'laws, rules and customs of war changed significantly' and focus in waging wars 'shifts toward widespread use of political, economic, information, humanitarian and other non-military measures, implemented with the involvement of public protest potential'. At the same time, military means mainly play supporting role 'under the guise of peacekeeping and crisis management' to fix the ultimate success in the conflict (fig. 3). All together these aspects of using national power in modern conflict are deeply familiar for western powers [7].

With an idea that Russian hybrid concept is not a breakthrough in military science, similarly like the hybridisation of conflicts itself does not change the essence of military conflict but only implies broadening of its interpretation, it can be then shown that implementation of Comprehensive Deterrence approach can be an effective way to deter Russia from spreading its aggression against NATO Eastern flank. In order to do this Western Allies had to respond to the following challenges:

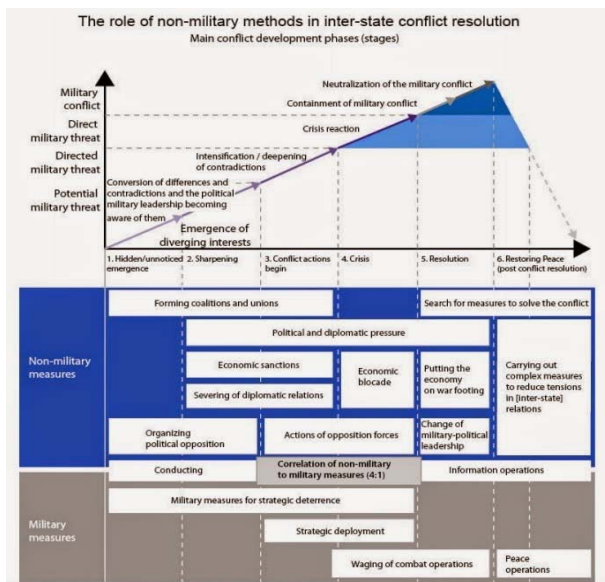


Fig. 3. “Gerasimov hybrid doctrine”. The role of instruments of national power in waging modern war

1. Expansion of the notion of aggression (into the Gray Zone of conflict), which goes beyond the traditional interpretation of Article 5 of the NATO Charter.

2. Comprehensive and cross-domain use of all instruments of power to deter and counter the opponent, in accordance with the principles of proportionality and reciprocity.

3. Development and deployment of the deterrent capacity to implement the principle of credibility.

Expansion of the notion of aggression has become one of the cornerstones in implementation of the new comprehensive deterrence strategy for NATO. It requires rethinking of existing security challenges and threats, as well as shifting of the Strategic Starting Point for launching of the retaliation mechanism into the Gray Zone. As an example, Wales Summit considered threats to the security in cyberspace as threats of the military nature, and cyberspace itself was defined as one of the domains of warfare. Although cyber-attacks do not cause the automatic invocation of Article 5 of the NATO Charter, the very possibility of it is a powerful deterrent measure to prevent such attacks in the future and to contain aggressor’s freedom of action. Warsaw Summit also showed readiness of NATO to counteract hybrid scenario: ‘The Alliance and Allies will be prepared to counter hybrid warfare as part of collective defence [and NATO] Council could decide to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty’ [11]. The possibility of using NATO forces to counter hybrid threats (like insurgent movement provoked by the third party), blurred definition of retaliation and unpredictable level of retaliation serve as powerful deterrent factor.

Comprehensive and cross-domain use of all instruments of power to deter and counter the opponent was also one of the challenges that NATO faced. Since

Russia considers its military potential to be a supporting tool in the resolution of conflicts, the Alliance also necessarily had to develop a more comprehensive deterrent toolkit beyond the traditional military approach. To do this and to build capabilities in other than purely military domain, NATO improves its cooperation and coordination with other political and economic organizations, like the EU, UN, etc. As an examples, currently imposed sanctions and the voiced threat of their reinforcement or even possible exclusion of Russia from the SWIFT system in case of aggression against Allies (both conventional or hybrid) are perceived by Russian leadership as a real danger now. Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev noted that ‘if these decisions are made [SWIFT off], I would like to note that our economic reaction as with any other reaction will be unlimited’ [3]. Aggressive rhetoric from the Russian leadership proves that the chance of comprehensive and cross-domain response to the possible Russian aggression is a powerful deterrent factor. By imposing a hybrid agenda to the West, Russia itself has faced with the possibility of the comprehensive and non-conventional answer to its actions.

Developing and enhancing the credible deterrent capacity was also a fundamental step towards the implementation of comprehensive deterrence. Declarations themselves are not a sufficient deterrent factor and then must be supported by the presence of the necessary instruments (from conventional to non-military) and mental readiness to act. To do this, NATO countries have increased the level of defence spending and complemented their capabilities by the reinforced NATO Response Force structure.

Decision to deploy the battalion-size combat teams sent by Western partners in the Baltic countries and Poland has also become one of the evidences of mental readiness to respond to the possible threat from the East. These modest forces are not able to change the balance of forces in the region but their mission is not in countering the opponent. These forces play the role of mental assurance that the Baltic States will not be alone in case of aggression and contributing nations will demand immediate retaliation for deaths of their nationals. This has become one of the most effective instruments to increase the level of confidence and credibility in the deterrent strategy pursued by NATO.

To conclude, despite the inability of NATO to counter Russian hybrid aggression in the Eastern Europe in the beginning of 2014, Allies quickly recovered from the initial shock and developed a concept of countering and deterring Russia from expanding its aggression. NATO leadership has taken a number of steps to implement a comprehensive strategy of deterrence and to set up the appropriate instruments. Although these steps are small and do not seem as sufficient separately, all together they create a new comprehensive security

picture that is qualitatively different from the one that existed in 2014. Nevertheless, deterrence in any form is not a static construction and it requires flexibility and permanent adaptation to the current environment. Russia still considers itself to be at war and has not yet achieved its political goals in the region similarly as it has not accepted its defeat. There is a chance that even with all undertaken measures, Russia will try to test the unity, cohesion and mental readiness of the Alliance to launch the declared retaliation instruments. Thus, at this stage the efforts of the Alliance must be aimed at consolidation of the NATO position and increased confidence and credibility of deterrence strategy.

Conclusions

Outdated laws and customs of war together with an inadequate system of international security actually cause a temptation for many actors to use hybrid instruments to achieve their goals whilst minimizing consequences of aggressive actions. However, it has become a trend that instead of developing solutions for new security environment, decision-makers started to politicize this concept. Any unclear Russian or other rogue states actions that frighten the speaker are now

labelled as 'hybrid'. The danger is that many military experts and politicians are convinced that the Russian hybrid war doctrine is a reality, and believing this, they tend to see signs of hybrid conflict everywhere - especially where they are not.

Nevertheless, when an adequate rethinking of contemporary security environment, existing challenges and threats to it, as well as appropriate adaptation of security policies and doctrines takes place, the trend of hybridization of military conflicts will not impose such a significant threat to national and international security (although it will still not be trivial). Deterrence is an efficient and useful tool to keep stability and peace in international relations but it requires expansion beyond the traditional (nuclear or conventional-oriented) framework and transformation into an integrated and comprehensive art. Understanding the essence of hybrid threats, shifting the Strategic Starting Point for launching of retaliation mechanism into the Gray Zone of conflict, comprehensive and cross-domain use of the all instruments of power (from military to economic), all of that taken together enables effective ways to counter and deter opponents who use hybrid tactics.

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ЧИ МОЖНА СТРИМУВАТИ СУПЕРНИКА, ЯКИЙ ВИКОРИСТОВУЄ "ГІБРИДНУ ТАКТИКУ"?

А.В. Антонов, В.Б. Бзот, І.Є. Кужель

Застарілі закони та звичаї війни разом з неадекватною системою міжнародної безпеки фактично викликають спокусу багатьох суб'єктів використовувати гібридні інструменти для досягнення своїх цілей, мінімізуючи наслідки агресивних дій. Проте, коли відбувається адекватне переосмислення сучасного середовища безпеки, існуючих викликів та загроз для нього, а також відповідна адаптація політик і доктрин безпеки, тенденція гібридизації військових конфліктів не призведе до такої значної загрози національній та міжнародній безпеці (хоча це все одно не буде тривіальним). Запобігання все ще є ефективним та корисним інструментом для збереження стабільності та миру в міжнародних відносинах, але вимагає розширення за рамки традиційної (ядерної або звичайної) структури та трансформації в мистецтво всеосяжного стримування.

Ключові слова: стримування, гібридна війна, конфлікт, військова агресія.

МОЖНО ЛИ СДЕРЖИВАТЬ СОПЕРНИКА, КОТОРЫЙ ИСПОЛЬЗУЕТ "ГИБРИДНУЮ ТАКТИКУ"?

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Устаревшие законы и обычаи войны вместе с неадекватной системой международной безопасности фактически вызывают соблазн многих субъектов использовать гибридные инструменты для достижения своих целей, минимизируя последствия агрессивных действий. Однако, когда происходит адекватное переосмысление современной среды безопасности, существующих вызовов и угроз для него, а также соответствующая адаптация политик и доктрин безопасности, тенденция гибридизации военных конфликтов не приведет к столь значительной угрозы национальной и международной безопасности (хотя это все равно не будет тривиальным). Предотвращение все еще является эффективным и полезным инструментом для сохранения стабильности и мира в международных отношениях, но требует расширения за рамки традиционной (ядерной или обычной) структуры и трансформации в искусство всеобъемлющего сдерживания.

Ключевые слова: сдерживание, гибридная война, конфликт, военная агрессия.