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The Generation Context and Relevant Hybrid Operational Aspects

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Abstract: As it is well known, the hybrid form is not exactly an absolute novelty. In fact, it constitutes an adaptation, a cosmeticization, we could say, of the effort to promote the interests of world powers on the world map, carried out in a particular way, so as to serve the interests of the aggressor, of the hegemonic power. Thus, deceiving the vigilance of the media, the public opinion, and opinion leaders is entirely desired and turns up as evident, there being possible to use existing loopholes in the principles of international law to simply justify belligerence. The multiple nonkinetic and kinetic effort is skilfully disguised under different explanations (humanitarian aid, support of one's own ethnicity, eradication of terrorism or elimination of fascism, etc.). Therefore, the grounds of disagreement in relations between states will be exploited for the purpose of making justifications in the laboratories of powerful states, with the selection of hybrid patterns customized for each targeted action. Prior to initiating the action of multiple damage to the international victim actor, there will be carefully evaluated the possibilities of achieving the objectives, the desired aims, the critical elements, the centers of gravity and the adversary's vulnerabilities, the success factors—the whole effort being analyzed on several probable scenarios. The quantification of each sequence in the chain of belligerence events makes it possible to produce additions and interventions in the future development of actions, towards the achievement of the strategic goals planned by the decision-making political level.

Keywords: generation; context; action pattern; political approach; duplicitous approach; operational framework; disagreement; affect; trigger; deliberate; critical elements; success factors

1. Introduction

A polemological reality generated at the beginning of the 21st century, hybrid war is a veritable “Trojan horse” of current belligerence. The statement refers to the relative “justification”, that is, deception, undertaken in relation to the actions carried out by the aggressor state, regarding the projection of its own interests to the detriment of states with reduced potential in critical areas. Thus, the powerful state will use multiple forms and procedures to achieve the surprise of the target state, under the conditions in which the press, the security organizations will demonstrate that no act of aggression has been produced. The explanation of the regional power strongly claims that it is an “innocent”, “normal” operation in support of peace or for the support of one's own ethnicity and the rescue of fellow citizens from an abominable genocide carried out by the adversary. The aggressor power will use piles of easy,

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even childish justifications, the target state being prevented from expressing its official position (Bogdan, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, pp. 60-61).

2. Reasons for Disagreement

The security environment of the future can generate multiple causes of misunderstanding. We list only a few of the relevant ones (Mihalcea, Sirbu & Bogdan, 2023, pp. 47-48).

Strategic and energy resources are growing in importance and weight as the consumption of critical resources becomes higher. Ownership, exploitation and distribution being highly contested, ownership and control become causes of tension. In addition to strategic and energy resources, there must be also mentioned the requirements on securing water and food (Potîrniche & Petrescu, 2019, p. 70).

Geopolitical hegemony includes the involvement of contemporary powers in maintaining influence or resizing influence in areas of interest. As a result, there are needs to change the state borders, imposed by causes in different fields (economic, financial, religious, ideological) (Bogdan, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, pp. 60-61).

Explosive population growth intensifies the demand for energy resources, water, food and fertile soil. Along with the increased consumption of resources, there are tendencies to divide society for religious, ethnic or ideological reasons (Potîrniche & Petrescu, 2019, pp. 69-70).

Climate changes involve weather disruption, with dire implications for social stability (producing hunger). Large areas become arid, desert or experience extreme climatic events (Mihalcea, Sirbu & Bogdan, 2023, pp. 47-48).

The phenomenon of globalization includes reasons for disagreement, simultaneously with the increase in the well-being of some segments of the population, potentially accentuating the pauperization of extensive areas. Facilities, infrastructure elements, possibilities for the production of consumer goods can be established or there can be negative aspects regarding the existence and the benefits that could arise (Bogdan, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, pp. 60-61).

Failed states, international actors benefiting from governance marked by incapacity, are unstable entities, easy to manipulate in the development of acts of domestic violence. They constantly provide reasons and possibilities for interventions by international actors with interests in that space.

Ideological beliefs generated by religious or identity reasons can transmit influences across borders, fuel reverberations, amplify tensions, support kidnappings disguised as “democratic decisions” and produce hybrid aggressions (Mihalcea, Sirbu & Bogdan, 2023, p. 47).

Economic imbalance and *technological advance* are two opposite sides of the illustrative picture of the current world, generating instability. The difficult economic situation produces dissatisfaction and social tensions, while the technological advance allows the imposition of lasting and large-scale dominance over countries with mediocre economic and technological potential (Potîrniche & Petrescu, 2019, pp. 70-74).

There can be many other reasons for disagreement, yet for the disadvantaged state, the most important aspect is provided by identifying ways to counter.

2. Trigger and Affect

The frequent appearance of post-Cold War hybrid confrontations does not imply the elimination of conventional war from polemological practice, but points out at the coexistence of these forms of confrontation (Hoffman, 2007, p. 38).

The triggering context of hybrid warfare involves the fulfillment of a set of conditions:

- the geopolitical space of the location of the victim state contains social or state entities hostile to the central leadership, and the weak state has no strong allies;
- the aggressor benefits by a consolidated international position and enjoys a recognized prestige on a global or regional level; opinions expressed have credibility on a diplomatic and media level;
- the state with modest possibilities lacks good governance, there are serious deficiencies in the development of basic administrative requirements (Bogdan, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, pp. 60-61);
- the target state does not have effective border management, cannot control migration, arms trafficking, trade in prohibited substances, human and capital trafficking;
- the weak state contains historic inter-ethnic tensions and social divisions chronicled over time;
- citizens of the target state have essential material shortages, there is social insecurity, there are riots against acts of corruption, malfunctioning of institutions is manifested and the low standard of living is unanimously recognized (Mihalcea, Sirbu & Bogdan, 2023, pp. 47-48);
- the aggressor state has multiple soft power means for influencing public opinion; it has expertise, methods and techniques to conceal its intentions, interests and actions on the target state;
- the international political environment includes social events capable of distracting the public's attention and the media's interest from the situation of the target state, there being promoted other events in the foreground (Zdeněk, Zinaida & Peter, 2016, p. 16).

3. Innovative Action Patterns

In the 21st century, the changes in hybrid belligerence can be attributed to some action patterns: concealment of actions, unconventional procedures, asymmetry and disinformation, priority political approach, non-kinetic approach, overcoming the opponent's infrastructure and capacity, duplicitous approach, detailed prior preparation, diabolical scenarios etc (Nate, 2021, pp. 48-50).

Non-standard procedures involve planning, organizing and carrying out actions in absolutely innovative ways. Those forms are different from the generally accepted ways and customs of war. Well-disguised strategies will be used to ensure the surprise of the adversary, the deception of observers and public opinion outside the hybrid outbreak (Bogdan, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, pp. 59-60). In the foreground, there is the production of the armed effort triggered by non-state formations, in order to avoid the use of armed forces. Thus, the confusion in the belligerent zone will be generalized and perpetuated (Manolea, 2019, p. 45).

Asymmetry and disinformation derive from the fact that the aggressor produces deployments that compel a disproportionate response, actions that are carried out in the situation of multiple, permanent and highly dynamic disinformation.

The priority political approach consists in the reality that the reason for launching the hybrid effort is a well-guarded secret. The reality itself is clearly different from the justifications for the aggressive action,

intervened in political-diplomatic, media and informational terms (Mihalcea, Sirbu & Bogdan, 2023, pp. 47-48).

The non-kinetic approach foregrounds the use of soft power at the onset as well as during major subsequent engagements.

Overcoming the infrastructure and capacity of the target actor implies that the aggressor state will develop advanced forms of involvement, towards surpassing the adversary's infrastructure capabilities to counter and limit their response (Bogdan, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, p. 61).

A flexible and duplicitous approach assumes that the aggressor can change the line of effort, the approach, the geometry of actions, demanding the recognition of their involvements as legitimate.

Careful preliminary preparation means that the aggressor state will analyze in detail the adverse possibilities, the resources at its disposal, the force of the external reaction, the involvement of the global security organization, all of which are found in the intervention plans (Mihalcea, Sirbu & Bogdan, 2023, p. 48).

Diabolical scenarios mean the activation of incredible or hard-to-imagine action options, deeply damaging to the opponent, having the desire to produce maximum damage in all plans (economic-social, political, military, financial, technological, etc.).

Distinctive, novel, and unpredictable approaches will be developed synchronously, adaptively, and in continuous procedure, with accents and additions produced during hybrid actions (Bogdan, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, pp. 60-61).

4. Hybrid Desiderata

The hybrid threat presents an atypical construction of the confrontation, which satisfies the priority of achieving specific desires belonging to the aggressors, such as:

- mutations favorable to the powers of the current moment, induced in the physiognomy of the modern conflict;
- surprising changes in the paradigm of the confrontation, which would maximally advantage the powers of the moment and disadvantage the weak states;
- outlining novel, complex, fluid, overlapping and synergistic perspectives in generating and developing threats across meridians (Mihalcea, Sirbu & Bogdan, 2023, pp. 59-60);
- the identification of procedures, methods, means and instruments that make the action and organizational potential of power compatible with the requirements of the international security framework and the international law;
- disclosure of current and emerging risks, specific to the security environment (Potîrniche & Petrescu, 2019, p. 22).

Used skillfully, constructively and coherently, desiderata can effectively support the need for success in confrontation.

5. Critical Elements

Cruceru—citing Bowers—believes that hybrid impact factors will have three critical elements. Details in Table 1.

Table 1. Critical Elements of the Hybrid Threat (Bowlers, 2012; Cruceru, 2015, pp. 51-53)

Element Definition	Details
Multiple advanced capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - highly equipped with state-of-the-art technologies, with destructive impact on the target; - thorough training favorable to efficient use; - self-sustaining capacity in operation.
Organizational maturity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ending the long chain of training, sedimentation of abilities and skills, realization of automatisms; - modular organization, high cohesion; - efficient, rigorous management; - extended social support; - effective strategy for action, setting the organizational limit on objectives.
Manifestation in complex terrains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the possibility of operation in any type of land; - action capacity in any space (desert, jungle, forest, heavy terrain, arctic zone); - notification, analysis and countermeasure possibilities, induced on target areas (population, traditions, resources, informational aspects, etc.); - reporting, determining the optimal course of action for defeating the power of local organizations, based on specific cohesion criteria (race, ethnicity, religion, ideology, etc.)
Essential	Sensing capacity, preemption and the ability to catch the adversary off guard, lacking training and critical equipment, the enemy developing actions in unfavorable ways.

As the population is accepted as the gravity center of the hybrid confrontation, the latter's space necessarily overlaps areas with heterogeneous populations or hostile to the central power in the target state (Bogdan, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, pp. 60-61).

6. Success Factors

Cruceru Valerică, citing Lasica, considers it as mandatory to notice three success factors in hybrid scenarios. Details in table 2.

Table 2. Success Factors in Hybrid Confrontations (Lasica, 2009; Cruceru, 2015, pp. 71-73)

Defining Factor	Details
Rigorous cognitive and moral communication implications	<p>Influencing the will of the opposing personnel and isolating (protecting) the own population to reduce the possibilities of influence by the opponent.</p> <p>The enemy must be approached directly, the adversary's will must be engaged indirectly (through the population).</p>
Communication manifestations should be fluid and flexible	Constant efforts to inform, control, protect resources, and develop ways to optimize survivability.
Operational capabilities, in the full spectrum of commitment	Realization of expanded and varied capabilities, in all sectors of impact (economy, natural environment, cyber environment, information). Combining physical effects with cognitive and moral effects.

According to the previously stated, the level of impairment is situated at the collapse of state institutions and the disintegration of governance, resulting from the overturning of social equilibrium and the destruction of institutional functionality, with the rule of law failing. In this line of thought, the insidious aspect of hybrid aggression is a certainty. It is absolutely necessary to prevent surprise, neutralize the

undermining of government institutions and the collapsing of structures responsible for national security (Bogdan, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, pp. 67-68).

7. Conclusions

The hybrid confrontation, being typically non-linear, is a condition of belligerence undeclared by the states involved. The participation of the hard component is not explicitly assumed by the decision-makers of the involved states. It should be emphasized that not only military vulnerabilities will be essential. In the foreground, there will be societal weaknesses and fragmentations, social fault lines and vulnerabilities that will be skilfully exploited by the aggressor (weak institutions, endemic corruption, ethnic tensions, energy dependence, economic underdevelopment, alienation of resources, bad governance). There are utterly necessary the thorough and realistic analysis of possible effects, an impact estimation together with eliminating non-rational opinions regarding the minimization of consequences.

Hybrid war is the complex form of belligerence, which mainly activates non-kinetic ways of military and non-military involvement. We reiterate what has been specified i.e. the predilected operations of the hybrid confrontation can be found in the range of psychological, informational, media-related and intelligence operations as well as in the propaganda effort.

It must be acknowledged that there may be stages of hybrid confrontation taking on classic forms of belligerence, with hard power reaching paroxysmal heights. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine, triggered on February 24th 2022 is a clear example in support of the present statement. In this confrontation, the aim is for hard power to become the decisive element in securing success.

The success of the effort to counter the intervening hybrid aggression will depend on the resilience of society as well as on maintaining the efficiency of the activity of structures with competences in ensuring national security.

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