Comparative Analysis of Russian Hybrid Methods in Ukraine and Syria Crisis

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Abstract

Hybrid Warfare represents a new and the most effective military strategy in 21th Century. Although it is the most common strategy, it is very difficult to conceptualize. National warfare understandings of each state seem to be the main reason of emerging diversity in hybrid warfare definitions. Russia is one of the states which use hybrid warfare as a military strategy. Ukraine and Syria Crisis are the cases that Russia demonstrate its hybrid warfare understandings effectively. This article mainly explores Russian hybrid warfare capabilities by comparing Russian hybrid methods used in both crises. This article also aims to contribute to the literature of hybrid warfare theories.

Keywords: Hybrid Warfare; Russian Hybrid Methods; Ukraine Crisis; Syria Crisis.

1. Introduction

As a modern warfare in 21th century, hybrid warfare covers various methods which are highly changeable according to its users' objectives and strategies. Russia, as one of the most important users of hybrid methods, reflects its own hybrid methods to its warfare strategies in the crisis which Russia involved militarily. Within this context, in this article, first, we will deal with some conceptual and theoretical discussions in relation with historical background of the hybrid concept. Then, we will try to understand what kind of Russian hybrid understanding has been developed.

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122

Afterward, we will explore Russian hybrid methods used in Ukraine and Syria Crisis and explore main differences and similarities in a comparative style. Finally, we will try to reach the conclusion regarding not only Russian hybrid understanding but also relevant hybrid warfare theories.

2. What is Hybrid Warfare?

Nowadays, the terms such as hybrid, hybrid threats and hybrid warfare are very popular and mostly used to describe the new warfare types in the 21st century. In particular, "hybrid", as a term which means "something having two kinds of components" in many dictionaries, is mostly used to demonstrate two different aspects of today's warfare. But it is widely pointed out that there are very blurry borders between these two aspects. In similar way, the term "the hybrid warfare" is defined as a combination of different types of warfare which contain conventional, irregular, and political informative tools. It also means a complex mixture of conventional and unconventional warfare techniques, combined with firepower, deception, misinformation and cyber-attacks [1].

Although hybrid warfare is being widely used in nowadays, the concept itself is not new. In particular, according to some scholars, hybrid warfare strategies date back to ancient times. For instance, approximately two thousand years ago, Sun Tzu, prominent Chinese general, military strategist, and philosopher, stressed on indirect warfare as one of the most efficient ways of fighting an enemy and according to him, "Supreme excellence consists of breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting" [2].

It is possible to find some additional historical examples of hybrid type warfare. Peloponnesian War in the fifth century BC with seven different conflicts can be regarded as a war in which its irregular methods and tactics were used [3]. In similar way, it is known that Roman Empire had used hybrid war tactics (a hybrid force of criminal bandits, regular soldiers, and unregulated fighters) against Vespasian's Roman Legions during the Jewish Rebellion of 66 AD. In the Peninsular War of 1806, the role of Spanish guerillas in the fighting against Napoleon's Grand Army, irregular forces in the Soviet Army during World War II, irregular force of Viet Cong's role in the conflict against US during Vietnam War should be considered within this context[4]. The last two decades have also experienced the modern version of hybrid warfare examples. One of them is 1994-1996 Chechen war in which guerrilla tactics (that included psychological and informational operations) and modern communications technology to closely coordinate themselves in real-time were used [5]. September 9/11 attacks can be regarded as modern hybrid warfare.

In the last decade, the theoretical discussions regarding how to define hybrid warfare have been highly intensified. In the official use, it is possible to find numerous documents using and defining the terms of hybrid threat or hybrid warfare such as US Marine Planning Document, US Navy strategies, US Army Doctrine, US National Intelligence Council's Assessment of Global Trends [6], British Assessments of Strategic Trends of Contemporary Conflict [7], and NATO documents. In particular, the term hybrid warfare was used in a NATO Review video on July 3 2014 after Ukraine Crisis [8]. Besides, the term was used to describe annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation in Wales Summit in September 2014. After this Summit, although there has been no Alliance consensus on one definition of the term and no official NATO doctrine or Strategic Concept on

hybrid warfare, NATO has continued to use the following definition several times in various documents and statements:

"Hybrid warfare is where a wide range of overt and covert military, paramilitary and civilian measures are employed in a highly integrated design. The adversary tries to influence influential policy-makers and key decision makers by combining kinetic operations with subversive effort. The aggressor often resorts to clandestine actions, to avoid attribution or retribution" [9].

From Russian perspective, it is possible to find some different points of view regarding hybrid warfare. General Gerasimov, who was a very famous general in Russian Army, published an essay dealing with hybrid warfare as a concept of "non-linear warfare" in 2013. According to Gerasimov, "non-military means (diplomatic, political, economic and other nonviolent means) may be more effective than military means to achieve political goals and Russia must strengthen his non-military means." This concept which has received very significant attention is later named as Gerasimov Doctrine. The doctrine, in particular, was used to predict Russia's future military planning and doctrine by Western Governments official's academics [10].

On the other hand, main discussions on how to define hybrid warfare/threats happen among the theorists or academicians working on this issue. The most popular hybrid threat description belongs to Frank Hoffman who is a retired Reserve Marine officer and a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Strategic Research at the National Defense University. He defines the "hybrid threat" term as, "any adversary that simultaneously employs a tailored mix of conventional weapons, irregular tactics, terrorism, and criminal behavior at the same time and in the same battle space to obtain their political objectives" [6]. In his different definition which is currently the most widely accepted, he said that "hybrid threats incorporate a full range of different mode of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscrimination of violence and coercion, and criminal disorder. According to him, hybrid wars can be conducted by both states and a variety of non-state actors. These multi-modal activities can be conducted by separate units, or even by the same unit, but are generally operationally and tactically directed and coordinated within the main battle space to achieve synergistic effects in the physical and psychological dimensions of the conflict. These effects can be gained at all levels of war" [11].

In general, Hoffman's work demonstrates that hybrid warfare concepts which combines "regular and irregular components are different from compound warfare concepts. The issue of difference between them is also highly debated among academics. Normally, irregular forces are usually used to support to regular forces and they can be separated from each other in a battlefield. However, from Hoffman's perspective, hybrid warfare activities can be conducted by regular and irregular forces together by creating a layering of threats. Another difference between compound wars and hybrid wars are related to how they are used. While the former uses violent means, hybrid warfare significantly contains not only violent means but also non-violent and civilian means in order to achieve its goals [11].

In addition to Hoffman's studies, William Nemeth improved his own perspective and explained the term hybrid warfare in the context of the 1994-1996 Chechen war. According to him, Chechen war is a hybrid warfare in

which it was used guerrilla tactics (that included psychological and informational operations) and modern communications technology to closely coordinate them in real-time [5]. Another specialist Nathan Frier is also very important scholar and contributed greatly in the evolution of hybrid warfare theories. Frier, as a writer of 2005 National Defence Strategy, introduced the term 'quad chart' by stressing four threats or challenges including traditional, irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive [12]. According to him, hybrid warfare is a combination of two or more of these threats and irregular warfare may be one component of hybrid warfare [13].

Jack Mc Cuen is another theorist who contributed to Nemeth's theory and developed own hybrid warfare concept. He defined the term hybrid warfare as "full spectrum wars with both physical and conceptual dimensions: the former, a struggle against an armed enemy and the latter, a wider struggle for, control and support of the combat zone's indigenous population, the support of the home fronts of the intervening nations, and the support of the international community" [14]. According to him, hybrid warfare has three decisive battlegrounds which constitute combat zone. Those are population, home front population, and international community. Winning war requires being successful in all these fronts.

Consequently, it is difficult to say that there is unique definition or theory of hybrid warfare. It can be argued that there is various form of hybrid warfare which cover multi-modal activities and used by state or non-state actors. It is possible to find various hybrid warfare methods including simultaneous and unprecedented fusion of a variety of means such as political, military, economic/financial, social and informational using conventional, irregular, catastrophic, terrorist and disruptive/criminal methods to achieve political objectives [15]. However, it is possible to argue that that those hybrid warfare methods are peculiar to a state which prefers to use them.

3. Hybrid Warfare in Russian Understanding

The place of hybrid warfare in Russian military understanding has been debated for long time. Two questions which are highly related to each other are mostly asked: Is the Hybrid warfare new for Russian military understanding and is it possible to label the latest Russian operations as Hybrid warfare?

The supporter of the argument that hybrid warfare is not new concept for Russia often referenced to Soviet Union's covered operations doctrine developed in 1920s. This concept mostly aimed to affect decision making process in Western countries with the tools such as evasion, sabotage, guerrilla warfare. It was argued that this doctrine firstly applied in Estonia in 1924 in order to fall the Estonian Government by supporting some opposition groups. Even if these Soviet initiatives failed, this is shown as examples of Russian hybrid warfare understanding. As the other examples, it was argued that Soviet hybrid warfare tactics was widely used in Afghanistan Warfare in 1979. In particular, some Russian soldiers wearing Afghan uniforms captured many Afghan military installations. Russian cyber-attack to Estonia in 2007 and its intervention into Georgia in 2008 also poses example of Russian hybrid warfare understanding [16].

From this perspective, we can say that Russia has a kind of hybrid warfare understanding conceptualized by mostly NATO. Russia has also been implementing it successfully. However, some opposite ideas have been

expressed by some scholars, According to them, labeling Russian operation as hybrid warfare is not always true. Because the term of hybrid is produced to frame the operations which are not fit into NATO Operations concepts. The officers often categorize Russian Operation in Ukraine with this logic. From this point of view, it has been expressed some objections to the use of hybrid terminology to describe Russian operations. These objections are mainly based on the argument that hybrid Warfare term does not reflect Russian thinking on the nature of war, thus not providing the range of options that Russia could use [17].

Within this context, instead of limiting Russian warfare thinking within hybrid warfare term produced by NATO, we need to understand modern Russian warfare logic and its applications in operations area. This also provides us more comprehensive hybrid warfare definitions.

When we look at some evidence of Russian military thinking in the last decade, Russia's 2010 Military Doctrine is important. It has distinctive discourse stressing on integration of military forces and resource of a nonmilitary character and periodization of measures of information warfare to realize Russian political objectives over militarization [18]. Over time, General Gerasimov's ideas are very compatible with this understanding. His famous article provides an insight for Russian doctrinal thinking. According to him, the rules of war have cardinally changed, and that the effectiveness of non-military tools in achieving strategic or political goals in a conflict has exceeded that of weapons [19]. General Gerasimov, with this understanding, conceptualizes Russian modern warfare strategy as non-liner warfare. He underlined importance of seeing the border battlefield beyond the territorial lines as a change in conventional geopolitical paradigms [20]. In General Russian military thinking demonstrated an inclination to shift from traditional military methods covering strategic deployment and declaration of the war to non-contact clashes between highly maneuverable units [21]. Russia's newly published 2014 Military doctrine presents similar approach by pointing the importance of non-linear or nontraditional warfare as realities of modern war [18].

In Russian non-linear warfare understanding, Reflective Control concept which covers an activity of presenting necessary reasons and motives have been used to affect decision making process and perception in target system. The concept rooted back Soviet concepts evolved in last three decades. Today it has numerous tools such as means of hard power, disinformation and manipulations and also used for strategic, operational and tactical purposes. The most important aspect of reflective control is its ability to drag the adversary towards a pre-determined decision. Within this context, it aims to manipulate adversaries' awareness of the outside World with disinformation activities [21].

In order to provide effective reflective control, information warfare can be thought as the most comprehensive warfare methods in Russian thinking, It is possible to link it to many hybrid tactics such as supporting political movements, cyber-attacks, espionage, attacks on some energy and communication infrastructures and proxy warfare and cyber infiltration. Mainly information warfare is divided into two areas: information technical and information-psychological. Information-technical covers electronic warfare and cyber warfare and information-psychological is defined as strategic communications activities and psychological operations [22].

Within this context, Russia strategists mainly aim to manipulate news and other public data during war or peace.

They also conduct some operations in the target countries information sphere such as cyber-attack or espionage [22]. These disinformation campaigns serve the objective of causing confusion and doubt and obscure the truth. Cyber activities such as using social media to plant disseminate and lend credibility to disinformation also play key role in disinformation campaign [17].

4. Russian Hybrid Methods in Ukraine Crisis

Ukraine Crisis is one of the most important event in which Russia has used hybrid warfare in addition to the Chechnya War and Georgia crisis. In particular, Russian hybrid methods and tactics which is developed in these two events have constituted the main body of Russia hybrid warfare approach and concepts used in the Ukraine and Syria. It is possible to observe wide diversity in Russian hybrid warfare activities and means used in Ukraine Crisis. As a whole, these activities or means can be divided into six sub-categories: Those are regular/irregular warfare, show of force, information warfare, cyber warfare and economic warfare, and terrorism.

Regular/Irregular Warfare: Overt and covert military activities are the most important component of Russia's hybrid warfare strategy in Ukraine. At the beginning of Crimean annexation, some unmarked military units having Russian uniforms, equipment and guns suddenly emerged and they took over Ukrainian strategic and operative targets (administration and government buildings, airfields, army bases, naval bases, police stations etc.) with significant success and mostly without a single shot fired [23]. This plan was very wisely developed and implemented by Russian forces in a very short time. During implementation of the plan, Russia took advantage of connected pro-Russian support and then tried to undermine Ukrainian influence and power by trusting this support and also attacking on strategic and operative targets. One of the factors pressuring and limiting Ukrainian Government was attackers' using civilian clothing with no rank [24]. Afterward, Russia withdrew self-defense positions and its force started to support separated forces. This hybrid warfare method contributed to the success of the Russian offensive warfare.

Show of Force: The other Russian hybrid warfare method was show of force before and during Ukraine Crisis. In particular, the snap exercises were periodically used to show the muscles of conventional capabilities. For instance, the snap exercise which took place on the Ukrainian border with participations of 150.000 troops in the end of the February 2014 aimed to this. In similar way, the exercise which took place near the Ukrainian border with 65.000 troops, 177 planes, 56 helicopters, 1.500 paratroopers, 8.500 pieces of artillery, rocket launchers, howitzers, anti-tank guns and other weapons on 13 March was the same purpose. They were carried out different scale navy, air, and ground troop exercises inside Russia. After these exercises, Russian troops stayed on the Ukrainian border until the end of the annexation of Crimea [20].

Information Warfare: The information warfare was used effectively in Russia's hybrid warfare strategy in Ukrainian crisis. In particular, the tools such as propaganda, disinformation, diplomatic duplicity, media manipulation were intensely utilized in order to affect national/international public [25]. During that process, the manipulated information was released via media tools such television, newspapers and the internet, so they propagated with their confirmed narratives. Especially, television was used as the most effective information

warfare tool. For instance, in the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis, after replacing Ukrainian news channels in Crimea with Russian state-owned broadcasts [26]. Many people in Crimea were obliged to watch only Russian's channels (Channel One, Russia One, and NTV). These channels broadcasted the news implying Russian military intervention as very legitimate [27]. Internet also used very effective during crisis, It was disseminated the fake information and stories such as "NATO troops embedded in Ukraine", "the majority of Germans support Putin's policies and dislike German Chancellor Merkel" [15].

Cyber Warfare: The other important method was cyber warfare in hybrid warfare tactics in Ukraine. In order to influence Ukraine's critical infrastructure, intense cyber-attacks was materialize and collected information about Ukrainian officials' intentions and actions. For instance, in November 2013, Distributed Denial of Service attacks (DdoS- "In computing, a denial-of-service (DoS) attack is an attempt to make a machine or network resource unavailable to its intended users, such as to temporarily or indefinitely interrupt or suspend services of a host connected to the Internet"[28], occurred against critical Ukrainian government websites [29].

In similar way, February 2014, The Ukrtelecom and the telecoms firms stated that Ukrainian telecommunications facilities in Crimea were collapsed. With this two cyber-attacks, It was obstructed all communications between Ukrainian government and the people in Crimea. It was also replaced Ukrainian television with Russian ones and shut down local telephone services, Internet systems, and vital communication services as tampering with fiber optic cables etc [15]. Third example was Russian hacker's attacks to Ukraine's largest airport in January 2016, after these attacks the most systems in the airport became inoperable [30]. As another example, Russia intervened in the Central Election Commission computer systems during the Ukrainian elections and collected data regarding with results of the election. This also demonstrated Russian ability to sabotage the election results with hackers [31].

Economic Warfare: Russia used its economic power in Ukrainian crisis. Those are mostly economic sanctions, the destabilization of energy prices, the barring of physical access to energy resources, actions of transnational criminal organizations, and cuts in other vital commercial ties and trade in Ukraine as hybrid warfare method. With these tools, it was destabilized Ukrainian economy and increased the public pressure on Ukraine government. For instance, Russian with economic tools such cut Russian natural gas supply, financial attack caused Ukrainian economy deteriorated and its GDP reduced approximately %16 [32]. Finally, terrorism was one of the components of Russia's hybrid warfare strategy in Ukraine. Some terror tactics such as pressure, discouragement, threats, and killings to suppress the pro-Ukraine population was effectively applied in Crimea and Crimean Tatars were one of the main targets of this method [20].

Terrorism: Finally, terrorism was one of the components of Russia's hybrid warfare strategy in Ukraine. Some terror tactics such as pressure, discouragement, threats, and killings to suppress the pro-Ukraine population was effectively applied in Crimea and Crimean Tatars were one of the main targets of this method [20].

All in all, it was observable that Russia was used all this sub-categories simultaneously in a supportive style each other. With these applications, Russia also demonstrates that hybrid warfare strategies were not only used by non-state actors in order to challenge stronger states but also states can be used as modern warfare methods.

5. Russian Hybrid Methods in Syria

Since its intervention in Syria Crisis in 2015, it is clearly observable that Russia has been used various hybrid warfare methods. In particular, its ability to combine military, diplomatic and media capabilities in order to achieve its goals in Syria has been highly debated. It is possible to assess Russian hybrid methods in Syria with sub-categories.

Regular/Irregular warfare: It was well known that Russian armed engagements in Syria have been very limited and covered support operations. This limited usage of military forces did hinder Russian plan to reach meaningful gains serving its national interests. Even if it has some extent of success in battlefield, but it cannot be said that Russia has attained real success enough to make it a real power broker in the region. However, Russia has achieved to become a player in the game [33]. That achievement is mostly explained with its ability to efficient use of hybrid warfare methods.

Russia, with its intervention into Syrian conflict, seems to build up very strong military capability in Middle East. Its military activities such deploying fighters and unmanned vehicles, improved electronic warfare devices, air defense systems, other military equipment and improving Russian port facilities in Tartus harbor and Air Base in Latakia grasped the world attention in very short time. However, both activities regarding naval base in Tartus and transferring Russian arms to Syrian to support Syrian Regime were not new. These kinds of activities had had historical background. Russia had been using Naval Base in Tartus since 1971 and also supporting Syrian Regime since at the beginning of Syria Crisis. However, the only thing that Russia does in this time is to change the qualities and quantities of its military deployment activities. This provided an opportunity to Russian for exploiting its military forces as political weapons in hybrid or asymmetric political warfare understanding. In fact, Russia did not use its forces effectively and limits them to the direct support of Assad. But its increasing military deployment activities made it possible for Russia to assert its role in Middle East, pressure to US to limits its military activities and to force them to negotiate with Syrian Regime [34].

In relation with Russian new warfare understanding which stressing the importance of non-conventional forces, Russian Special Operations Forces (SOF) has played in key role in Russian support to Syrian Regime at the operational level. According to some information published in open source, Russia has deployed some SOF units but their activities are more ambiguous and less overt than other deployments activities. Some of them were assigned to guard sensitive Russian equipment, personnel, and information [35]. These deployments were compatible with Russian view of point regarding importance of non-conventional forces in operation environment.

*Information Warfare***:** Russia's main objective at the strategic level was to prevent Syrian Regime from falling. It succeeded. During that process, it was clearly observable that Russian strategy was based on its deception operations. Russia proclaimed that eliminating of terrorism and ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) as primer Russian objective in Syria and disguised its real aim. This proclamation not only increases the legitimacy of Russian intervention but also decreased the effect of international pressure on Russia politicians experiencing because of Russian intervention in Ukraine. Russian media have continuously released the news advocating

cooperation with West against terrorists [36].

Russia, as its strategic objective, provided a vital support Syrian Regime in the disguise of combating terrorism. In addition to this, it also aimed to achieve four fundamental goals; consolidating domestic support, shifting domestic and international attention from Ukraine to Syria, and convincing the western countries to form an anti-terrorism coalition where Russia and the US jointly lead. This also would make the west to accept the de facto situation in Ukraine. Those goals somewhat seem to be achieved [36].

In the context of information war at strategic level, regaining the ancient city of Palmyra from ISIL poses another example for Russian information war. Russia became very successful at demonstrating regaining the ancient city of Palmyra as victory through its international media outlets (Sputnik and RT). However, in fact, the regaining Palmyra was a result of an agreement between Syrian Regime and ISIL. Russian success in battle grounds was also very limited. In political front, Russia, with support of Syrian Regime, draw an image of success by stressing the importance of Russian support to Syrian forces during operations in Russian media outlets. This so-called achievement was perceived positively domestically and internationally [33].

*Show of Force***:** Deployment of electronic warfare systems and launching long-range cruise missiles aims to reach goals at the strategic level beyond a requirement at the operational and tactical level. The information that Russia deployed very sophisticated electronic Warfare systems in Syria was often released in the Russian media outlets. Many pictures showing the deployment of Krasukha-4 advanced EW system were also disseminated via social media tools. With information about exaggerated technical capabilities of this system, this deployment activity, beyond making operational contribution into Russian forces, was used to prove Russian capabilities against advanced U.S. and NATO platforms [35].

Russia's military campaign in Syria has also offered Russian to show its weapons and missile technology, Tu-95 and Tu-160 strategic bombers have destruct its ISIL targets with long range cruise missile and sea-launched Kalibr cruise missiles was used to strike ISIL targets in Syria. In particular, the Kalibr engagements from Russian navy ships in Caspian and Russian submarine in Mediterranean were beyond operational needs, aimed to demonstrate Russian technological capacity and carried strategic message towards West [37].

6. Comparison Analysis

When we compare the Russian hybrid methods used in two different operational areas, it is possible to see similarities and differences. In particular, while the hybrid methods such as regular/irregular warfare, information warfare and show of force have been widely used in both operational areas, it is observed that the hybrid methods such as cyber warfare, economic warfare, and terrorism have been intensely used in only Ukraine Crisis. At that point, it is important to figure out reason behind these differentiations. The most important tool of the hybrid warfare was definitely the regular/irregular warfare for Russia in two crises. Firstly, Russia utilized its powerful military presence to achieve its goals and built up its military capabilities on the border of Ukraine and in Syria. However, in Ukraine, Russia had geographical advantages; it has easily deployed its troops on the Ukraine border and assigned its irregular forces to interior zone of Ukraine. In Syria,

Russia did not have same geographical advantages and for this reason its military deployment in Syria was very limited. This situation also brought about some economical challenges. At that point, it can be argued that geographical proximity is one key factor for hybrid methods which covers usage of the regular/irregular forces. Secondly, in Ukraine, there were many pro-Russians who support Russian military forces. This situation increased the effectiveness of the regular/irregular operations. However, it could not be mentioned same situation for Syria. Russia did not have public supporter and this situation directly affected operational capabilities of Russian forces in Syria. Within this context, the internal supporters (state or public) are important to achieve the goals. Information warfare was the most effective hybrid methods in both operational areas. Even so, there have been differences in related with target mass of the method. First, in Ukraine, primary target was Russians and Ukrainians. Russia forced that target groups to adopt its policies and applications by using media outlets effectively. However, in Syria, the target groups were international public. Second, in Ukraine, Russian gave the message that annexation of Crimean was the legitimate demand of the people and the conflicts in Eastern Ukraine were Ukraine's internal problem that it did not involve. However, in Syria, the Russian's massage was cooperation with West against terrorism and ISIL to eliminate them. Show of force was effectively used in order to affect the target groups in both operational areas. While some snap exercises in Russia-Ukraine border aims to scare Ukraine public, some military deployment activities in Syria represented a show of force towards international public. In similar way, other hybrid methods such as economic warfare, cyber warfare and terrorism were widely used in Ukraine. However, it is observable that these methods have not been applied in Syria. It is possible to argue that the main reason behind Russia's preference not to use economical and cyber methods in Syria Crisis was the existing strong cooperation between Russian government and Syrian Regime. It is also important to point out that the level of economic relationship between Russia and Syria was not strong like the ones between Russia and Ukraine. This situation suggested that Russian hybrid methods are very changeable according to Russian prioritized objectives in operational areas and the geographic proximity.

7. Conclusion

This article reached the conclusion that hybrid warfare is very important warfare type and used effectively Russia in its operational areas. In particular, Ukraine and Syria Crisis are cases that Russia used different hybrid methods. It is observable that there have been some differences between not only hybrid methods but also how to use in these two operational areas. This situation is direct result of different Russian objectives and different geographical distances. In spite of non-existing an academic concept which clearly defines hybrid warfare; the most of hybrid methods which are explained in literature were implemented successfully by Russia. This article deals with these hybrid methods in six different categories (Regular/Irregular warfare, Information Warfare, Show of Force, Economic Warfare, Cyber Warfare, Terrorism) Even if it is essential for Russia to use these methods in complementary way, it is observable that Russia does not need to use all hybrid methods for each crisis. When we compare the importance level of hybrid methods in Russian military understandings, we can claim that regular/irregular warfare and information warfare are more important than the others. However, this can be very changeable according to characteristics of crisis in which Russia may involve. In sum, a future crisis which Russia will involve, it is highly likely that Russia prioritize to use hybrid warfare methods. This possibility also paves the way for increasing decisive NATO/West activities such as conceptualizing the Hybrid Warfare and identifying necessary precautions against hybrid methods.

8. Limitations

The limitations in the research process could be explained as followings.

(a)   In litareture, the studies on issues related to hybrid warfare are very limited.

(b) This article dealt with only hybrid methods that had been used by Russian till September 2016. However, It is likely that Russia may use additional different hybrid methods in the ongoing Ukraine and Syria Crisis

9. Recommendations

Hybrid warefare is increasingly gaining importance in defense sciences. This requires comprehensive analysis on which hybrid methods have been used by different countries. Thus, this article should be improved by adding hybrid methods used by other countries such as United States of America and Republic of People's China.

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