The Pursuit of Hybrid Warfare: Muddling Towards Clarity and Implementation

by

Brigadier General Nadeem Ashraf
Pakistan Army

Under the Direction of:
Professor Edward J. Filiberti

United States Army War College
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Abstract

Global dynamics have increased the number, variety and lethality of potential adversaries to include enabling powerful non-state entities. A wide range of non-state actors are acting in consonance with and opposition to traditional nation states in disrupting commerce, seizing resources, threatening security and coercing and undermining governments. Correspondingly, traditional nation states are conducting subversive activities, attempting to avoid attribution and potential retribution, while expanding territory and influence through coercion and provocations short of war. This so-called "Hybrid Warfare" context is emerging with on-going conflicts in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the South China Sea and South Asia. This paper examines the key aspects of hybrid warfare, assesses the various uses of the term and arrives at a definition applicable to its whole-of-government context. Next, it assesses the projected vision of the future strategic environment using the US Joint Chiefs Staff's 'Joint Operating Environment 2035' that projects the future conditions relevant to the changing character of war. The paper then proposes a conceptual framework for both analyzing "hybrid war" and for formulating effective stratagems to prevail in those conflicts. It concludes by identifying some essential measures needed to successfully implement hybrid war stratagems.

The Pursuit of Hybrid Warfare: Muddling Towards Clarity and Implementation

Supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.

—Sun Tzu[1]

There is a famous anecdote applicable to the difficult challenge of formulating wartime strategies. Albert Einstein was visited by one of his students: "The questions on this year's exam are the same as last year's!" the young man exclaimed. "Yes," Einstein replied, "But this year all the answers are different."[2] The anecdote aptly describes the challenge of developing strategies intended to prevail in the war when the character of war and its context is subject to the increased volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA) of the dynamic operational and strategic environment. What worked before will likely not work now, or in the future. Despite these dynamics, nations and other stakeholder entities must still devise and implement new and potentially perilous strategies to ensure their security and pursue interests. Importantly, changes in the lethality of the instruments of war have raised the consequences of misjudgment and increased the risk of failure. Also, concurrent with the increase in diffusion and lethality of a host of malicious non-state actors, are the growing constraints on the use of force by traditional nation-state actors.

Increased globalization is creating stronger interdependencies and increasing the costs associated with nation-state conflicts and the employment of conventional capabilities.[3] However, at the same time the threat of conventional or nuclear retaliation from near peer competitors deters major operations, limits attainable objectives and diminishes the potential benefits of conflict.[4] Recent provocations and gains made by Russia and China serve to illustrate that even conventional nation state deterrence has

its boundaries and limits.[5] Under such circumstances, indirect warfare acquires a heightened value in strategic planning, and its application can take on a variety of forms. If one follows the footprints of "hybrid warfare" in the Crimea-Ukraine and the Arab spring in Syria; the indirect battle is marked by imitation "protesters" and conditional "insurgents."[6] Fifth columnists may be manifested less by secret agents and clandestine saboteurs and more by overt non-state actors and private security operators that may also masquerade as citizens. Social media and associated information technologies are likely to replace precision-guided munitions as the "surgical strike" capability of the belligerent.[7] Chat rooms and Facebook pages and blogs may become the new "rioters" and "protesters" hideouts.[8] Instead of directly confronting the rival on their home turf, proxy conflicts may appear in the near vicinity to destabilize the periphery and then gradually seep inward. Traditional forcible occupations may increasingly be replaced by internal upheavals and indirect operations that are more cost efficient to provoke and less politically sensitive if they appear to be homegrown and hence non-attributable.

These indirect threats are complemented by global dynamics that have increased the number, variety, and lethality of potential adversaries to include enabling powerful non-state entities. A wide range of antagonists are acting in consonance and in opposition with traditional nation states in disrupting commerce, seizing resources, threatening security and coercing and undermining governments.[9] Correspondingly, traditional state actors are conducting subversive activities, attempting to avoid attribution and potential international sanctions and retribution, while seizing territory and resources through coercion and provocations short of war.[10] This so-called "Hybrid

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Warfare" is emerging as the nexus of a diverse range of on-going stakeholder conflicts surfacing in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, South China Sea and South Asia. Many of these areas of hybrid conflicts involve nuclear capable nations, with large inventories of capable conventional forces juxtaposed across disputed boundaries, and possessing a malevolence of intent. These regions also harbor a varied range of terrorist activity, state-sponsored insurgencies, religious extremism, and powerful external stakeholders that contribute to instability and themselves attempt coercion. These modern conflicts embody what is termed "hybrid conflict" portending a risk of war that jeopardizes regional and even global stability. It is critically important that the national security regime not only grasps the multidimensional aspects of this emerging type of conflict but that it develops clearly understandable terminology to define its context and communicate related issues. Additionally, national security professionals should adopt useful analytical methods that enable the development of effective hybrid war stratagems and employ related effective implementation measures to better manage these conflicts.

This paper examines the key aspects of hybrid warfare, assesses the various uses of the term and arrives at a definition applicable to the emerging context. Next the paper assesses the projected vision of the future and strategic environment capitalizing primarily on the *Joint Operating Environment 2035* produced by the US Joint Chiefs Staff that highlights the future conditions relevant to the conduct of hybrid warfare as a response to the changing character of war. The paper then proposes a conceptual framework for both analyzing "hybrid war" and for formulating effective stratagems to

prevail in those conflicts. It concludes by identifying some key measures needed to successfully implement hybrid war stratagems.

The Origins and Definition of Hybrid Warfare (HW)

The concept of Hybrid Warfare (HW) originates from the policy sphere rather than an academic one, and it has retained a strong policy orientation throughout its existence. The term "hybrid war" was first used in 2003 by Tatiana Carayannis to describe contemporary wars in Africa. She termed the complex nature of the African conflict as "hybrid wars combining civil war, inter-state war, and cross-border insurgencies."[11] It is instructive to examine these origins of hybrid warfare in that it provides insights into its applicability to subsequent and projected future conflicts.

In her article, Carayannis opined the dearth of scholarship examining the African Wars in particular and on "transboundary networks of conflict" in general.[12] The African wars she examined "involved at least nine African Countries as direct combatants, and many more as military, financial, and political supporters of those fighting, as well as a number of internal rebellions, in complex and often shifting, military, political, and economic networks."[13] Although war included localized conflicts conducted by indigenous militias, external insurgency groups, and competing ethnic groups all fighting over resources and influence, there was no discernible dividing line "between the external and internal dimensions of this conflict, because while they may be discrete systems of conflict, they contained financial, political, and ideological factors that cut across conflict boundaries and link them together in *global* [emphasis added] networks of war."[14] Importantly, her key finding was that analyzing the competing "networks" was the most appropriate conceptual means of explaining the behaviors of the participants and thus informing intervention strategies.[15]

From this complex beginning the concept of hybrid warfare was further refined in a 2005 article "Future Warfare: The Rise of Hybrid Wars" written by General James Mattis and Lieutenant Colonel Frank G. Hoffman. The article primarily focused on the changing character of war which the US might confront in future. It also identified the emerging challenges that included traditional, irregular, catastrophic and disruptive influences and warned that the US would likely face "a merger of different modes and means of war" that they termed as "Hybrid War."

The later years witnessed a reasoned and incisive debate on hybrid warfare. Frank G. Hoffman went on to author *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars* that remains the authoritative source on HW. The paper offers a detailed description of hybrid threats that help constitute hybrid wars:

> Hybrid threats incorporate a full range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder. 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.[16]

Hoffman's perspective on hybrid wars appears to be evolving with the strategic environment. His 2014 article posted on web site "War on the Rocks" criticizes the use of "Political Warfare" as a term describing mainly political activities with little connection to "war" that he argues constitutes an oxymoron. But Hoffman also uses his critique to recognize the increased use of "all means" short of war that continues "when war officially begins" and recognizes the limits imposed by his own definition of hybrid threats as addressing only "combinations of tactics associated with violence and warfare (except for criminal acts) but completely fails to capture other non-violent

actions."[17] He goes on to lament that limiting the perspective may prevent addressing, and by inference, synchronizing other "instruments including economic and financial acts, subversive political acts like creating or covertly exploiting trade unions and NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] as fronts, or information operations using false websites and planted newspaper articles."[18] In other words, coordinating activities across all the potential domains of conflict including cyber. He goes on to consider including these types of activities under an expanded definition of "hybrid threats" and also offers that a different and updated term could be adopted and possibly defined as "unconventional conflict."[19] He argues that "unconventional conflict" could subsume the full range of "subversion and counter-subversion" activities without specific reference to "war" and its associated violence.[20] This would ostensibly avoid the "oxymoron" denunciation he levied at "political warfare."[21] However, one of the limiting factors is that his use of "unconventional" is already a term applied to a particular form of war and, by its use with "conflict," would imply that "conventional" warfare was being excluded from the previously inclusive "hybrid warfare" context.[22] Other key members of the international community recognize the need to consider a wider range of instruments when countering non-violent yet covert and subversive activities by antagonistic actors.

Perhaps the driving force behind increasing the scope of the term "hybrid war" to include a greater range of "instruments" is the coordinated employment of these instruments in several modern conflicts and, more recently, by Russia in Europe. Significantly, Russia has been a leader in both the development of a more comprehensive concept of "hybrid war" and its practical application. In 2013, General Valery Gerasimov, the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation, proposed a

new doctrinal concept he termed as "non-linear warfare."[23] As described in the essay, Gerasimov's use of "non-linear warfare" is synonymous with the western use of "Hybrid Warfare," and is now referred to as the "Gerasimov Doctrine."[24] The doctrine emphasizes non-military means such as political, economic, diplomatic, and other assorted non-violent means and touts them as being "far more effective than military means, and thus Russia must now look to and emphasize these non-military means."[25] Furthermore, General Gerasimov predicts increased reliance on the covert employment of insurgents and paramilitary elements who will rely on indirect and asymmetrical means of warfare that would be synchronized within the information battlespace. These measures would be complemented by the increased "use of drones, targeted attacks on critical infrastructure, and the coordination of civilian insurgents in real-time."[26] In his essay, Gerasimov sees a role for regular forces but limits them to "action during later phases of the conflict and done so under the disguise of peacekeeping or humanitarian aid."[27]

Not surprisingly, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) recognized the apparent implementation of the Gerasimov Doctrine by Russia in the Ukraine. Correspondingly in 2014, NATO began referring to "hybrid warfare" in their posted videos, news releases and summits. Although no official NATO definition of Hybrid Warfare has been approved, NATO uses the following definition in exercises and public pronouncements:[28]

> 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.[29]

Similarly, the EU announced the adoption of a "Joint Framework on Countering Hybrid Threats - a European Union Response."[30] In the press release they refer to hybrid threats as:

> Threats refer to a mixture of activities often combining conventional and unconventional methods that can be used in a coordinated manner by state and non-state actors while remaining below the threshold of formally declared warfare. The objective is not only to cause direct damage and exploit vulnerabilities, but also to destabilize societies and create ambiguity to hinder decision- making.[31]

These references indicate NATO's and EU's recognition of the changing character of warfare by capturing within their definitions the coordinated activity of non-state and nation state actors employing kinetic and subversive measures while attempting to remain below the threshold of war.

Finally, and also reacting to emerging trends challenging world order and disrupting regional stability, the US Department of Defense also has begun expanding the scope of their related references to hybrid warfare. In the recently released *Joint Operating Environment 2035*, they describe future threats by potential regional actors that are seeking regional primacy using "hybrid stratagems" that:

> …employ a range of coercive activities to advance their national interests through combinations of direct and indirect approaches designed to slow, misdirect, and blunt successful responses by targeted states. These hybrid stratagems will be designed to spread confusion and chaos while simultaneously avoiding attribution and potentially retribution. [32]

Towards an Inclusive Definition

The use of the word "hybrid" within the term "hybrid warfare" creates its own challenges. The challenges arise from its inherently generic verbiage, its broad and varied use, and its dynamic application. The term "Hybrid" by definition consists of two or more parts that, in turn, can describe any number of widely different combinations of

the various forms of war. So most any combination of similar and even distinctly different forms of war across the entire spectrum of conflict can be described generically as "hybrid." Moreover, nearly every conflict involves more than one "form" of war regardless of whether one or another constitutes a preponderance of activity. So hybrid warfare in-and-of-itself is inclusive of almost every instance of "war." Fundamentally, if it can define *every* war, it really has limited utility within "national security" discourse. Moreover, its varied application to widely different combinations of conflict creates more confusion than clarity…unless it is further defined *and* limited. As the definitions above reflect, not unexpectedly hybrid warfare is being applied to many activities "short of war" including conflict across all the political, informational, social, economic, and military domains. These same interactions would then be continued during war, should the resultant dialectics evolve into the use of force and violence (actual war).

In some respects, the definition of hybrid war has moved back to its roots where Tatiana Carayannis used it to frame her network analyses of the various layers of participants contributing to the wars in Africa.[33] Interestingly, NATO, the EU and the US have modified their definition of hybrid warfare to subsume a similar range of activities. These activities cover covert and overt, civilian, economic, political, informational, cyber, social and military activities that deter, compel and coerce entities *including* the deliberate intent to avoid *attribution* and associated *retribution*.

The use of the term "hybrid warfare" has thus evolved into an inclusive term that includes determining the "intent" of the antagonist(s). Presumably, it is acceptable to have coercion, improved access and influence or even hegemony as a by-product of the various interacting entities as long as it is consistent with international and national

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norms[34] and with "innocence of intent." Conversely, stratagems pursued to deliberately

undermine fair competition through illicit, illegal or illegitimate means would constitute

"malice of intent," especially as it pertains to deliberately attempting to avoid attribution

and potential retribution. Ascertaining the avoidance of both would be "sine qua non" of

determining "malice of intent" and could be the rationale to re-categorize legitimate

"competition" as a "conflict" waged across the domains of stakeholder and network

interactions. Since war (use of force/violence) is also a form of conflict, it would logically

be within the conceptual rubric of "hybrid conflict." A more expanded definition would

allow a whole-of-government approach using a cohesive and comprehensive cross-

dominion stratagem to prevent the illegitimate coercion of the various stakeholders and

ensure stability of the international order.

A solution to a more appropriate term for what is currently referred to as "hybrid

warfare" may lie in US joint and service doctrines. The US military joint doctrine (Joint

Publication 1*: Doctrine for the Joint Forces of the United States*) uses the term "Unified

Action" to describe a whole-of-government *and* non-government approach to conflict. It

defines "unified action" as: "The synchronization, coordination, and/or integration of the

activities of governmental and nongovernmental entities with military operations to

achieve unity of effort."[35] Similarly, the US Army capstone doctrine addresses an

inclusive operational context using the term "unified land operation" defined as:

> How the Army seizes, retains, and exploits the initiative to gain and
> maintain a position of relative advantage in sustained land operations
> through simultaneous offensive, defensive, and stability operations in
> order to prevent or deter conflict, prevail in war, and create the conditions
> for favorable conflict resolution.[36]

The joint use of "unified action" directly addresses both governmental and non-

governmental entities orchestrated to achieve a combined "unity of effort." The US Army

definition is focused on the "land" context referring to positional "advantage" and

comparative outcomes such as the seizure of "initiative" and "favorable conflict

resolution." The whole-of-government and participation of non-government entities have

to be inferred from the Army's reference to "stability operations."[37] In either case, the

use of "unified" to capture a whole-of-government and non-government approach to

security challenges has precedence within the US military and, by association, across

other governmental and non-governmental organizations that participated in past

"unified actions."

Correspondingly, an arguably more descriptive and pertinent replacement term to

use when addressing what is broadly described above as the context for "hybrid

warfare" could be "*unified conflict.*" A proposed definition *unified conflict* could include:

> The synchronization, coordination, and/or integration of the activities of
> military forces, governmental, nongovernmental and social
> organizations, and elements of the private sector employing
> conventional and unconventional means across all domains, to achieve
> unity of effort and preventing or deterring illicit coercion and conflict,
> prevailing in war, and creating the conditions for favorable conflict
> resolution.[38]

Despite the above argued relevance of the proposed definition, this paper will

continue to use *Hybrid Warfare* as it is a widely accepted term describing the above

conditions within current literature.

The Future Strategic Security Environment

As previously mentioned, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff recently published a

comprehensive and useful projection of the future by capturing and operationalizing

emerging trends and projecting their effect into a cohesive description of the future

security environment almost 20 years hence.[39] The document, *Joint Operating*

Environment 2035 or JOE 2035, bifurcates the future security environment into two

major challenges categorized as "Contested Norms" and "Persistent Disorder." Although

the two challenges can frequently occur concurrently within a single conflict, the JOE

2035 differentiates between the two challenges to better clarify the full range of strategic

threats. Contested norms "feature adversaries that credibly challenge the rules and

agreements that define the international order."[40] These "challenges" would primarily

include the more traditional nation-state conflicts. Conversely, persistent disorder

"involve certain adversaries exploiting the inability of societies to provide functioning,

stable, and legitimate governance."[41] In other words, just about everything other than

conventional conflict. These two related challenges are correspondingly shaped by a

range of conditions and trends that, when taken together, define the changing character

of war and the related implications for the US joint force.[42] Figure 1 summarizes the JOE

2035 framework describing the future security environment. The range of conditions

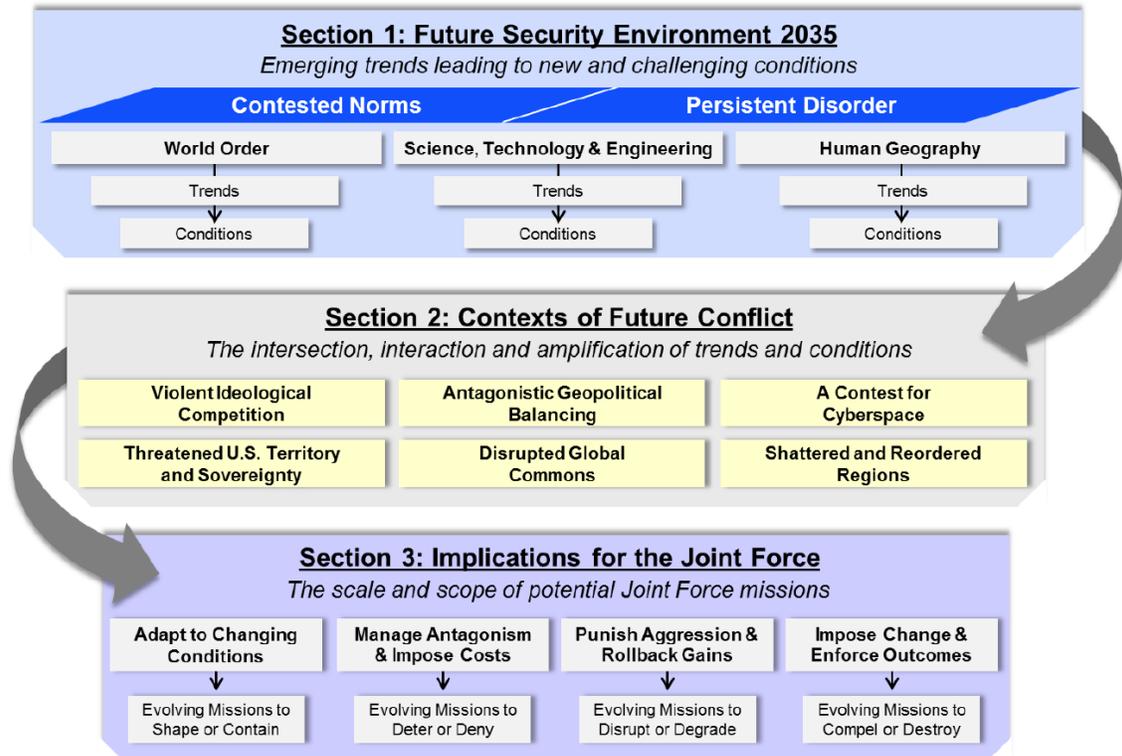described in the JOE 2035 has important implications for the emerging context of

"hybrid warfare."

Figure 1. The Organization of JOE 2035[43]

Perhaps the strength of the JOE 2035 analysis is its fairly inclusive treatment of emerging trends projected to influence the strategic environment.[44] The JOE classifies a number of both trends and conditions under three areas: "World Order," "Human Geography," and "Science, Technology, and Engineering." World Order outlines projected changes in "state behavior, interstate relationships, and the network of rules, norms and agreements (both tacit and explicit) that govern these relationships."[45]

Some "World Order" related trends are particularly relevant to hybrid warfare. Specifically, it describes the possible strategic actors that will seek to "insulate themselves from international norms and rules in order to create the political space necessary to threaten and coerce neighbors."[46] This could be accomplished by disguising covert actions to destabilize and weaken neighbor states and avoiding possible penalties enforced by international organizations. Or the antagonist could

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move to undermine the associated international organization that would act to punish their coercive actions. Differently, entities with similar interests could form a multipolar agreement[47] that facilitates the open coercion of target nations across diplomatic, informational, military and economic domains. Similarly, many nations could resort to "nontraditional" partners "to include self-governing ethnic groups, non-governmental organizations, multi-national corporations, and perhaps even friendly local militia groups" to resist coercion by external actors.[48]

Conversely, powers pursuing regional primacy could employ a wide range of coercive measures to gain hegemony. This could include employing hybrid stratagems that combine "direct and indirect approaches designed to slow, misdirect, and blunt successful responses by targeted states" and that are "designed to spread confusion and chaos while simultaneously *avoiding attribution and potentially retribution* [italics added]."[49] The JOE 2015 warns that hybrid stratagems could include the intensification of proxy warfare and the possible deterrence of external actors by the increased proliferation and acquisition of nuclear capability by provocative actors. "A hybrid mix of conventional deterrence and proxy warfare will challenge the ability of the Joint Force [external actors] to intervene successfully."[50] Finally, world order would be disrupted by the consequences of fragile and failing states that could create a wide range of "dangerous, transregional ripples with other, long term global consequences."[51] Some examples include aggression by opportunistic regional actors, loss of control of weapons of mass destruction, and the possible spread of infectious diseases. All these conditions provide opportunities and context for the emergence and conduct of hybrid

warfare and, in many ways, are aggravated by the trends and possible conditions of the future of Human Geography.

The JOE 2035 describes Human Geography as "the quantity, characteristics, and distribution of human populations around the world and how changing demographics and culture may affect the future security environment." Perhaps some of the most ominous trends affecting hybrid warfare are those associated with Human Geography. Similar to Tatiana Carayannis complex overlay of multiple networks of antagonists and protagonists in the African wars, the future strategic environment will likely be awash with "large, culturally unassimilated urban enclaves and physically isolated refugee camps in many regions of the world, where immigrants often have profound cultural, religious, and economic differences from the indigenous populations."[52] Concurrently, information technologies will continue to enable the solicitation and radicalization of groups of similar religious, ethnic, race, language, gender, tribe, economic class, occupation, geographic affiliation, nationality, or just sympathetic individuals who identity with the cause or plight, to act to destabilize governments and threaten security.[53] Hybrid warfare stratagems will likely be able to focus on many aspects of an increasingly fragile human geography, fomenting unrest, mobilizing ideological-based opposition, fueling conflict, and even instigating refugee migrations to accomplish their objectives. At the same time that human geography trends can mobilize and empower private and non-state groups to further social, political, economic and ideological aims, the advancement and diffusion of science and technology will increase the lethality and threat from both state-based on non-state entities.

The JOE 2035 describes the third thematic (Science, Technology and

Engineering) as a "set of likely technological advances and other scientific capabilities

that may emerge over the next 20 years to impact the future security environment."[54]

Like the previous two thematic areas, advances in "Science, Technology and

Engineering" could significantly impact hybrid warfare. In one respect, the world's

greatest powers conventional military superiority forced many adversaries towards

asymmetric means to avoid confronting the conventional military strengths of those

powers. Nuclear proliferation also deterred the outbreak of major conventional wars and

drove even nuclear capable powers towards employing more unconventional means of

resolving conflicts. This logically led to weaker nations' adopting more hybrid war

stratagems that would avoid "attribution" and "retribution." Compounding this trend, was

the superior technological conventional capability that enabled major powers to place

most any potential provocateur at risk with global strike capabilities and technological-

enabled assured access. These superior offensive capabilities together with advances

in information and sensor capabilities that expanded data collection, analysis and the

fusion of multiple intelligence sources, allowed for a high level of both *attribution* and

retribution that likely served to deter a wide range of potential antagonists.

Differently, JOE 2035 postulates that many technological advances will actually

enable increased competition between non-state and state actors and between both

"hiders" and "finders" within the Hybrid War dialectic.[55] More entities will be able to

acquire greater technologically enabled capabilities, mask their participation, or be able

to act alone or in concert with others to challenge and place at risk most strategic

actors. Adversaries will be enabled by "advanced C3/ISR and information technologies,

lethal precision strike and area effect weapons, and the capability to field first-rate technological innovations."[56] The net effect will likely be that hybrid warfare will emerge as the most common form of war and become increasingly competitive and lethal across a wider range of state and non-state actors. Faced with the projected inevitability frequency of future hybrid wars, it is imperative to glean possibly useful insights from past and on-going hybrid wars.

<div align="center">Development of Hybrid Warfare Stratagems</div>

The fairly widespread emergence of Hybrid Warfare provides fertile ground for developing a sound analytical approach for the formulation and employment of associated Hybrid War stratagems. Hybrid conflicts in South Asia (India-Pakistan), Europe (Russia-Ukraine), China (South China Sea), and others can inform the development of hybrid planning constructs. Relatedly, the concept of Hybrid Warfare is only relevant if serves to aid in the analysis of a conflict and help inform the formulation of effective strategies designed to prevail in the conflict. Generally, the concept outlines an inclusive and integrated whole-of-government approach within a whole-of-society and global context. Within the increasingly connected global context, the combination of the various forms of war and activities short of war is becoming increasingly complex; blurring the boundaries between internal and external actors, between direct combatants and their supporters, and between *shifting* political, economic, military and social (including religious, ethnic, tribal, and ideological) influences. The challenge for strategists is to develop a methodological approach to make sense of this complex and dynamic form of conflict to aid in the formulation of effective strategies. In this regard, Carayannis may again provide some insight with her advocacy of a "network" analysis that would "explore what motivates the interests of both state and non-state actors in

these conflicts and their interactions."[57] Carayannis argues that Hybrid Wars are

"organized around social networks, which link a wide range of actors and that are

themselves embedded in the international system."[58] Network analysis allows the

examination of a wide range of influencers, not just limited to individuals and their

attributes, but rather their linkages with other actors and the associated network

interactions that may better describe what drives network activity. "Actors, therefore, are

not seen as acting in isolation, but within complex linkages with other actors that

influence decision-making."[59] Correspondingly, the strategic practitioner faced with a

Hybrid War would logically begin with a strategic assessment of emergent actors,

assess their strengths and vulnerabilities, and postulate their possible activities across

the likely hybrid conflict domains.

Table 1. Factors Driving the Strategic Assessment of and Emergent Hybrid Conflict[60]

Key Actor Strategic Assets/Vulnerabilities	Conflict Domains of Hybrid Warfare
• Conventional/irregular warfare capabilities • Geographical position and natural resources • Economic viability/external dependencies • International & regional influence/relevance • Responsible/integrated local, provincial & national governments • Fragmented/cohesive population • Equitable rule-of-law and human rights observance • Fidelity of civil-military relationship • Public-government trust: social contract • Justness of cause/support of populace • Credible/responsible media • Cyber infrastructure and security	• Military aggression • Contested access to resources and global commons • Territorial disputes • Illicit economic/political coercion • Regime corruption/instability • Disruptive political and social reforms and related movements • Ideology, religious, separatist, ethnic-based strife & insurgencies • Civil-mil split/discord • Civil disorder/lawlessness • Information operations • Cyber warfare

Table 1, lists the strategic assets and potential vulnerabilities empirically derived

from existing literature and case studies of Hybrid War and provides a useful framework

for assessing the complex range of factors related to a specific Hybrid Conflict. The

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relative strengths and weaknesses within and across the listed areas, when taken

together with associated domains of conflict, allows for a comprehensive means to

identify the key participants and compile related networks.

From the strategic assessment, the analyst should compile a list of the various

major antagonists and protagonists and postulate their interests/goals, objectives, and

likely activities. These are the *why* (purpose or goals), *what* (achievement of enabling

objectives) and *how* (resources and influence employed in time, space and purpose to

achieve objectives) that logically explain actor behavior. Many of these characteristics

will have to be inferred from secondary sources and the key actors' actual or likely

activities. From this beginning, analyses expands to include other interested entities and

supporting actors, with connected existing or likely interaction and interdependencies

with the key actors. Here again, the complexity of the operational and strategic

environment makes the identification and virtual construction of operative networks

problematic.

> These conflict networks cross territorial boundaries, monetary and trade
> zones; link diasporic, transnational, nongovernmental, and ethnic
> communities; include international and regional organizations; and have a
> global reach. Some, like the illicit small arms trade networks, are violent
> and clandestine, while others, such as the transnational network of human
> rights activists, are more benign and more transparent. But all are social
> structures with interdependent components.[61]

The analysis should result in a conceptual layering of interconnected networks,

representing areas of common or contrasting interests/goals, objectives and activities.[62]

Paradoxically, some networks may possess both coincident interests/goals yet

divergent objectives or vice versa. Generally, the higher the order of commonality, the

greater it will affect behavior in the long term. So coincident goals will usually trump

conflicting objectives over the long haul. Notwithstanding, political expediency may force

the actor into pursing near term objectives that are inconsistent with its interests/goals. The resultant analyses are not an ends in itself but rather a means to sculpt a viable stratagem to pursue stakeholder interests within a dynamic Hybrid War context.

The network analyses should lead to the identification of potential synergy (capitalizing on actors/networks with coincident interests, goals and objectives) and critical vulnerabilities (exploiting areas of discontinuity between opposing actors and networks). Stratagems would then be developed to "achieve unity of effort and preventing or deterring illicit coercion and conflict, prevailing in war, and creating the conditions for favorable conflict resolution."[63] Importantly, the hybrid warfare stratagem would necessarily involve the integration and synchronization of the efforts of a diverse set of *willing and cooperative* government agencies and departments, non-governmental organizations, social entities, and allies. The implementation challenges are profound.

<center>Implementing the Hybrid Warfare Stratagem</center>

By design, hybrid warfare requires national organizations beyond the military to employ their respective instruments of power (diplomatic, informational, military and economic) towards the achievement of common goals and objectives.[64] The inherent VUCA of hybrid conflict environments virtually guarantee that associated stratagems will not be executed as designed. To remain useful stratagems should be deliberately designed allowing for flexible execution by the diverse and loosely organized actors. Moreover, resultant alterations made to a security environment during execution may also have a broader long-term impact on the stability of the international order and affect global power shifts.[65] The short, mid, and long-term implications of strategic decisions on the global environment should be made, not only in the initial formulation

of the stratagem, but also in-stride with the critical events during execution. The global

precedence's established through the iterative conduct of hybrid conflicts may in-and-of-

themselves deter future conflict or, conversely, encourage more provocations.[66] Inaction

should not reward unlawful conduct by strategic actors to coerce or take by force.

Rather, the protagonists should employ a broad range of instruments and responses to

achieve a better peace.

Some key areas of implementation include: effective strategic communication,

embedding hybrid principles across the interagency, inculcating mission command,

redesigning training regimens, exploiting information technologies, close and contiguous

engagement with the civilian sector, and near real time intelligence sharing.

Strategic Communication

In the wake of the growing impact of globalized communications, strategic

communication and messaging, the conflict narrative will be an essential aspect of

successful hybrid warfare operations. Therefore, to maximize effectiveness, information

campaign messaging should be cross-walked across the range of both supportive and

opposition networks and their related actors to provide a compelling narrative that

resonates with both and filters down through organizational hierarchies. The information

campaign messaging is important for both domestic and international audiences.

Imbedding Hybrid Principles in Interagency Policies

The hybrid threat construct represents the evolution and expansion of military

operational art that subsumes the whole-of-government integration at the operational

and tactical levels of implementation. While stability operations, irregular and

unconventional war have always included many of the interagency, multinational and

non-governmental actors, hybrid warfare demands their integration and employment

pre-, during and post-conflict. The frequency and increasing scope of hybrid warfare may result in a doctrinal and organizational revolution with major implications for interagency strategy, planning, policy and resource investment priorities.[67] Hybrid warfare may become the primary context in most instances of future warfare.

Mission Command

Mission Command is an essential enabler of the successful conduct of hybrid warfare. The complexity of layered interacting diverse networks within the Hybrid Warfare context makes reliance on Mission Command imperative. Forecasts of actor motivation, activities and responses are highly uncertain. Leaders at all levels will have to adapt to the changing circumstances and volatile behaviors of a wide range of unpredictable actors and adjust their activities and self-synchronize with other diverse actors through the exercise of disciplined initiative. The Army must train leaders who have the breadth of perspective to understand and adapt in stride with a wide range of HW actor behaviors.

The Challenge of Training

The purpose of employing HW entails neither simple control of a piece of territory nor the destruction of an opponent's military force.[68] Instead, hybrid warfare will require multi-faceted training with most aspects differing from the conventional military operations and requiring an appreciation of the cultures and operational doctrines and protocols of various foreign military and non-military actors.

Exploitation of Info Technology

The adoption of modern information technology will also enhance the adaptability of potential asymmetrical adversaries, improving their ability to transfer lessons learned and techniques from one theater to another.[69] Information techonology (IT) enabled

accelerated learning frequently occurred in Iraq and Afghanistan where insurgents acquired and employed improvised explosive devices adapting detonation devices found on the Internet and widely disseminated other effective tactics, techniques, and procedures.

It is increasingly evident that the world is now in a continuous state of cyber conflict using overt and covert means to penetrate networks, interfere, disrupt, coerce and, in some cases, destroy. Consequently, any future hybrid war will likely be a continuation of the existing cyber conflict, albeit with greater intensity, and possibly as a leading force multiplier.

Participation of the Civilian Sector

Whereas treating symptoms are about preventing actions in the short term, addressing root causes of instability is about changing conditions in the long run. Many perceived threats including violent extremism and transnational crime, are symptoms or consequences of other underlying root causes, i.e., poverty, ethnic strife, illiteracy, etc. that are normally not resolvable with the military instrument of power.[70] Also, long-term solutions aimed at resolving many of the underlying causes require political consensus and unified action at the national governmental and likely regional or international levels.[71] Notwithstanding, these efforts also need to be integrated into the hybrid warfare stratagem and will likely only be possible if close and continuous relationships are established across the interagency and with key civilian sector actors and non-governmental organizations.

Effective Intelligence Sharing

The complex nature of this kind of warfare requires the seamless fusion of intelligence from all major participants without any inhibitions. This requires establishing

new levels of interoperability and transparency with domestic agencies (especially law enforcement agencies), non-government organizations, coalition partners and perhaps even certain key social entities. The hyper-velocity of IT enabled actions will require near-real time dissemination of acquired intelligence across an increasingly diverse collection of protagonists. Overly restrictive compartmentalization, excessively bureaucratic release authorities and even insightful but untimely analyses will likely severely impair effective operational responses.

<center>Conclusion</center>

The future portends new and difficult challenges. As a response to future threats, war serves as both an agent and a product of change. Notwithstanding, the fundamental "nature of war" has not changed over the course of history and it is not expected to change, even with the involvement of a wider range of cross-domain adversaries. Since war is inherently a human endeavor of violence--its nature relies on the political dialectic of the competing antagonists. However, the character and conduct of war is in a continuous state of change based the dynamic strategic environment.

Increased globalization and inter-dependency, greater lethality, dispersion and access to lethal instruments of war by non-state actors, and the broadening of the sources of conflict have dramatically changed the modern character of war and fundamentally altered the ways and means that nation states and non-state actors use to further their interests. The term Hybrid Warfare was first coined and definitively described by Tatiana Carayannis in her analysis of the complex conflicts in Africa and further refined by Frank Hoffman and others. Although Hoffman's initial framework focused primarily on the wide range of combatants, the application has continued to evolve to include whole-of-government activities to coerce and deter adversaries short

of war, during war and post conflict. Correspondingly, the paper proposes the term

"Hybrid Warfare" be replaced by the more descriptive term "Unified Conflict."

The modern application of hybrid war simultaneously combines conventional,

irregular and terrorist components and the cross functional whole-of-government

response synchronizing an expanded range of strategic stakeholders to achieve

objectives short of war and to also prevail in war. These developments have expanded

and transformed the character of war. As Clausewitz stated, "Every age has its own

kind of war, its own limiting conditions, and its own peculiar preconceptions."[72] This kind

of "hybrid warfare," requires a different analytical approach, a more comprehensive

method for developing effective stratagems, and improved implementation measures.

This paper proposes using a comprehensive network analysis initially employed by

Carayannis as a means to divine the key actors, their coincident and discordant

interests, related vulnerabilities and opportunities for unified action, and the

synchronization of the cross domain activities towards a common purpose. This

proposed analytical framework could also serve as the basis for the further development

of analytical methods and related whole-of-government planning regimens.[73]

Endnotes

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[73] Hoffman, "On Not-So-New Warfare." Hoffman writes: "The shortfall is not just within the U.S. military's conception of conflict: our entire national security community is chasing its tail on vague transnational challenges and climate change. We are too narrowly focused on more traditional but increasingly rare modes of warfare, and overlooking the unconventional approaches used by our Russian and Chinese competitors. They do not delude themselves with neat orthodoxies about categories and Clausewitzian models about how "real wars" are fought and won. Neither should we."