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THE REACTION OF THE ARMED FORCES TO HYBRID THREATS - THE GREEK CASE

Abstract: *We know that the strategy must create the basic knowledge that links both the ways and the means to achieve the desired political goals and strategic results. This logical method is a continuous thought process that provides strategic intent and informs ways, creating links to strategic planning that lead to the use of means, in military operations. This factor is the element that includes calculating, sleight and creating a logic or chain of results in strategy. In this paper, after considering a strategy distillation, we will analyze the context of hybrid warfare in strategic planning, which is of particular concern to us in Greek-Turkish relations.*

Keywords: *Armed force, hybrid threats, Greece, Turkey, relations, strategy*

Introduction

Our main adversary is tried in preparing for the war of the future, while we seem to call the need for a high strategy into question. Others argue that in Greece we do not have the culture of developing one high strategy since Greece's national security and defense strategy was based only on containing the Turkish threat¹. The truth is that there are difficulties in formulating a credible national strategy, with continuity and consistency. The Greek governments point to an acute

¹ Panagiōtēs K. Iōakeimidēs, *Greece in the European Union: The New Role and the New Agenda*, Ministry of Press and Mass Media, 2002, p.254

strategic deficit. There is much evidence over the past three decades at least to suggest that the lack of conception and conduct of a national strategy has affected Hellenism. I strongly suspect that if we continue in the same rhythm, we will see the end of the story long before the eclipse of the value of the right strategy. Since we do not believe in the spirit of war, which Thucydides pass on us in the monumental essay "The Peloponnesian War", as a lasting human function, eternally connected to human nature². Some, fortunately, the strategy will retain its usefulness, as long as the security communities try to safeguard national interests, and policymakers with the armed forces address the challenges and align national resources to achieve the desired goals.

Basic Principles of Strategy - New Thoughts on a Modern Strategy

The first and main thinking for those who draw up a strategy is a firm understanding of the strategic environment and the context in which our strategy should be conducted. The sources of our framework are referred to, as, political, military, sociocultural, geographical, technological, and historical. Our understanding of the strategic framework is about our understanding of the adversary and the specific environment in which the strategy will operate. It is clear that the shortcomings in the strategic performance of Hellenism in the Greek-Turkish case, are due to shortcomings in our understanding of the specific context and culture that Hellenism and our allies have strived to change. The strategic culture is neither stable nor decisive, but it shapes the recognition of problems and frames an initial lens for solutions. Good strategy requires an understanding of the "opponent" and must include an understanding of the relevant history, geography, sociology, and anthropology.

There is a tendency in Greek strategy-making circles to insist on linear and rational processes as if politics can be isolated. As Clausewitz argued, a national strategy is being developed to support the achievement of "policy as defined by

² See more: Thucydides, Steven Lattimore, *The Peloponnesian War*, Hackett Publishing, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1998.

policy"³. This is the best definition, as policy affects or guides policy and therefore has an impact on the formulation of the strategy, which must be competitive. Being competitive means we recognize that any strategy works in an interactive and hostile environment in which other members seek to promote their interests. A competitive strategy respects the choices that the opponent can set. It reflects the reality that war is a mutual duel, an interactive exercise in action, response, and confrontation. This thinking is the part of strategy-making, where one takes into account the relative strengths and weaknesses of oneself and his opponent.

The strategy is designed and executed in the real world, in an environment that ultimately deals with limitations. The most obvious limitations are time, information, and resources. War in general and business, in particular, are competitive and decisions must be taken in a context that rewards timely action. By predicting, making a decision, and acting with time as the most valuable resource, one can create and maintain an advantage of the action. The same be in effect for information. The strategy is based on the collection of information and the knowledge of the other side. We do not fight inanimate objects, but real soldiers with their ideas and of their own free will. The concept of friction of Clausewitz exists at the operational and tactical levels. It exists at all levels, and so there is a need for prudence in risk-taking and adaptability to strategic thinking that cannot be overstated.

The whole war is based on deception (Sun Tzu)

The increasingly and more sophisticated hybrid warfare, the advanced military capabilities, smart weapons, and diffused power competition are expected to reshape future crises and conflicts, provoking traditional ways of thinking about escalation and efforts to maintain stability. This emerging security environment will require new ideas and tools to manage the risk of accidental escalation to reduce conflict situations in our living space in both the Aegean and the Mediterranean areas.

By contrast with traditional concepts of escalation, which indicated linear and somewhat predictable patterns from the low-level crisis to the totalitarian war (to

³ See more: Tiha von Ghyczy, Bolko von Oetinger, Christopher Bassford, *Clausewitz on Strategy: Inspiration and Insight from a Master Strategist*, John Wiley & Sons, Boston, US.2021.

which we never reached after the Treaty of Lausanne), the escalating interactions in this new era of the strategic competition will be less predictable⁴. Indeed, increasingly sophisticated operational tactics at the hybrid warfare level, such as misinformation and ongoing regional revisionism, add new challenges with additional complexity to the management of Greek-Turkish crises in a more competitive and controversial security environment, sparking greater risk-taking among our countries.

Turkey's increasing use of regular hybrid operations and the continued creation of grey zones reflects the view that their strategic goals are best achieved by other means of coercion without the use of direct conventional military interaction. Of course, these methods are not closed book to power competition. Espionage, propaganda, and deception, or even the use of mediation by the Turkish lobby abroad and the unrelenting war of the secret services as tools of strategic competition are primordial practices. But in recent years Erdogan's Turkey has felt compelled to challenge institutional structures and avoid direct traditional military competition, while taking asymmetric approaches to competition outside of traditional permanence in the conventional military field, through broad, conventional campaigns of influence and commitment of digital proxy servers. Turkey thus hopes to advance its interests without clear accountability or risk of military escalation.

These strategies in the conventional field may not be entirely new, but the modern tools allow the Turks to have transformed the strategic importance of unconventional battlefield and force coercion with hybrid warfare. It is feeding by technological innovation and the management of the soft power of Islamism. Especially with technology based on digital media, cyberspace, and artificial intelligence (AI) in a more complex and dynamic competitive landscape than before.

The upward trend in the online sector is more like online soldiers roaming freely through the digital homeland of the adversary, with the help of advanced cyber tools. Disinformation and armed social media are used instead of armed insurgents fighting on the battlefields with black market weapons in remote areas. Moreover, these new forms of influence and information are not the exclusive domain of modern and great powers. On the contrary, the accessibility of information technology

⁴ Treaty of Peace with Turkey: And Other Instruments Signed at Lausanne on July 24, 1923, Together with Agreements Between Greece and Turkey Signed on January 30, 1923, and Subsidiary Documents Forming Part of the Turkish Peace Settlement

suggests a level playing field not only for states but also for non-state actors and non-governmental entities.

Such grey zones of competition can exist without risking a war, as long as the ability to deal with each country remains safe and the risks of miscalculation remain controlled. What happens, however, if political beheading can be achieved through the arming of social media combined with information-based cyberattacks? What if, by undermining and manipulating institutions of government and political leaders, states can use grey-zone tactics to separate peoples from their leaders and institutions, provoke internal conflict and prevent decision-makers from taking decisions?

Successful and resilient deterrence in our days requires us to think in a new way about reliability and compliance in the face of an increasingly armed information environment. Increasing accessibility, maturation, and dissemination of online platforms and digital tools have both democratized information but have also contributed to easy manipulation and abuse, which undermines reliable and authoritative sources of information. Deeply fake, armed social media will be used to discredit the app and verify deterrence.

This new era will require new thinking about the tools and concepts of deterrence and escalation, an adaptation of older ideas, and the development of new ones. The linear escalation path between a low-level crisis and a total conflict was based on potentially problematic expectations of proportionality and globally common perceptions of deterrence. The modern blurred field of conflict, as well as the proliferation of factors in this landscape, challenge this concept of escalation and call into question its usefulness.

Instead of proceeding gradually, with clear boundaries between behavior that would trigger a conventional response, the crisis or conflict between opponents in this new environment is much more complex and unpredictable. This is the main reason why policymakers should not question the representative value of this strategic view of misdirection and strengthen information-counter-information mechanisms.

Hybrid threats require the national strategy to be geared towards the war of the future and the rapidly modifying relationship between strategy and technology in

contemporary war⁵. Hybrid attacks are a war waged with autonomous systems, which if extended to a totalitarian war could be a forerunner of a regional disaster. The main questions that arise are how we will defend ourselves, against such a threat, and how the Armed Forces will fight to win such a war?

Answering that question, I think it is urgent and necessary to consider the interaction of the Armed Forces strategy with the rapidly emerging technologies and the extent to which they must be adopted if we want to gain a collective deterrence and the defense system of states to gain credibility, in the current situation to confront the challenges of the potential future war.

Our main enemy is preparing for the war of the future, what about us?

It is urgent to search our high strategy for this kind of war as a case study in the evolving strategic threat. Our goal must be the response of our state and the new balance of forces with power multipliers in our region, to successfully protect our vulnerable, open societies, and to plan the future structure of military forces that will be vital to maintaining reliable deterrence and defense. In addition to the quantitative and qualitative increase of the challenges from Turkey, the large migration flow that has appeared since 2014 towards our country is the biggest challenge for the Greek security architecture. Some Greek security professionals believe that Turkey is using illegal immigration as weapon of asymmetric warfare⁶.

The activities of hybrid threats found us, unprepared and surprised. Over the past two decades, in addition to the Turkish threat, the National Strategy has focused on peacekeeping operations by international organizations and tackling international sea piracy. Today, Greece is forced to return to its original basic task of national defense, because of the deployment and modernization of Turkish aeronautical forces which have been actively challenged by the balance of power and the exploitation of hybrid threats with a prominent theme -the uncontrolled issue of migration, and the

⁵ See more: Williamson Murray; Peter R Mansoor, *Hybrid warfare : fighting complex opponents from the ancient world to the present*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2012

⁶ Maria O'Neill, Ken Swinton, *Challenges and Critiques of the EU Internal Security Strategy: Rights, Power and Security*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017.p.95

demarcation of maritime zones. However, on both mentioned issues it is revealed that our state had to do much more than it did.

Greece had to take the phenomenon of "hybrid threats and attacks" more seriously

Hybrid is a type of threat, which combines self-evident and converted military and non-military means thus creating ambiguities that can seriously complicate a single response. The concept of "hybrid threat" is not new. What is new, however, is the seamless orchestration of the Turkish strategy using military and civilian tools, as demonstrated in the Aegean, but also in the southeastern Mediterranean, where there are sovereign rights of our state, which are disputed.

Turkey, in recent years, has built an impressive military force, overturning the balance of power in its favor. This has the effect of sharply increasing violations in air and sea zones, launching a cyber-war against Greece, blocking gas exploration in the southeastern Mediterranean, and supporting the departure of migrants to the Greek islands and continental borders with modern equipment. All these acts were accompanied by a massive campaign of disinformation at home and abroad with a dual purpose. First, to create doubts against the Greek sovereign rights, deriving from international law, to gain external legitimacy. Secondly, they try to create the impression that Turkey had nothing to do with the illegal movement of migrants and that they are even trying to stem the wave by asking the EU for compensation to deal with the migration issue.

The very idea of the future war is controversial and must be recognized as such.

The idea is that societies and their associated military systems could be understood as complex systems which encouraging the view reflected in the complex investigations into enemy centers of gravity that we would be offended in exactly the right place and at the right time. But if this offense endures, then it will affect all interconnected parties. In almost all the circumstances under consideration, Greece will not collapse and will respond forcefully. However, evidence from the Turkish

strategy and military stance suggests that Turkey's leadership truly believes that a combination of Turkish forces and the vulnerabilities of Greece could provide Ankara with such a "decisive moment". Or, at the very least, they believe that some strategic benefits could arise for Turkey since this thinking is now central to Turkey's long military strategy.

Three-dimensional ethics in Hybrid Attacks

In our daily lives, hybrid attacks are designed in light of three dimensions: intentions, means, and consequences. Intentions include both stated values and personal motivations. Most leaders publicly express goals that sound noble and worthy, although their motives, such as their ego and interest, may accurately distort those goals. Moreover, good goals must not only satisfy an individual's values but also undergo a feasibility test. Otherwise, better intentions can have devastating moral consequences, likening them to the road to hell. Greece's political and state system in 1920 may have had good intentions when it sent Greek troops to the Ottoman Empire in the Anatolian hinterland, but the good intentions of the leaders are not proof of what is sometimes misleadingly called "moral clarity".

The second important dimension is available means. The means must be modern and capable to achieve our objectives. I mean, that the available means depend on their quality as well as their effectiveness. A moral leader will first consider the soft power and the importance of developing the trust of other countries. For example, by invoking international law although it tramples on it. When it comes to using the means, leaders are asked to decide how to combine the hard power of urgings and threats with the soft power of values, culture, diplomacy, and policies that attract people to their goals. The use of hard power when soft power is not necessary to protect values raises serious ethical questions about the means.

In terms of consequences, efficiency is vital and presupposes the achievement of the country's goals, but the moral consequences must also be good not only for our state but also for others. In practice, effectiveness and ethical instruments are often closely linked. A leader who pursues moral but unrealistic goals or uses the means ineffectively can cause terrible moral consequences at home and abroad. Leaders with

good intentions, but with an inability to monitor reality with realism and reckless control of reality sometimes produce bad consequences and lead to moral failure.

The strategy for dealing with hybrid threats can be divided into three stages

Preparation: This is based on the assumption that the defense against hybrid threats needs to become a permanent mission of all the structures of our state with the task of dealing with them. Therefore, the primary objective is to better understand the phenomenon of hybrid attacks and to create appropriate services. These services are required to continuously collect and evaluate information to identify seemingly unrelated events as hybrid campaigns and to identify perpetrators. As hybrid attacks are directed mainly against states and governments, the responsibility for dealing with such attacks lies mainly with the states themselves. The EU, in this case, can help to identify national vulnerabilities and thus strengthen their resilience. A response strategy also underlines the EU's supporting role in areas such as emergency planning in border areas and the protection of critical infrastructure. NATO can also help us by supporting strategic communications, cyberspace, energy security, and the fight against terrorism.

Deterrence: The prevention of hybrid threats is mainly to convince potential opponents that the cost of their actions will exceed any reasonable profit. This can be achieved by measures taken by the wider international community (e.g. sanctions), but also by "pointing out" to deprive the opponent of anonymity and put him under political and moral pressure. On migration, for example, the EU itself needs to focus its efforts on further increasing the response of Port and Coast Guard law enforcement authorities by adapting decision-making processes and new command structures to shorten the time to send migrants back.

Support: In the initial phase, defense against a hybrid attack may be limited to the instruments used by the attacker, for example using cyberwar. The primary goal is to avoid a hybrid conflict to escalate to the military level. But in the event of such an escalation, states are required to respond militarily. This is the main reason why

military exercises are required to adapt to the challenge of hybrid threats. By introducing hybrid elements into the scenarios, political and military decision-makers are now forced to address the dilemmas that hybrid threats can pose, such as setting limits on possible collective action in cases where opponent attacks exceed the level of tolerance.

Conclusions

Our approach to dealing with hybrid threats has led to a consistent expansion of anti-hybrid tools, including our relations with other actors, in particular with the European Union. However, there are several areas where much more needs to be done. First of all, the role of military means in preventing or defending hybrid attacks is not yet fully understood. In some hybrid actions, such as cyberattacks and "fake news," the role of military deterrence is likely to remain poor. Military means are mainly used to ensure that a hybrid conflict does not turn into a military campaign. If, on the other hand, hybrid attacks are only precursors to a military attack, as happened at our borders, our defense may need to deploy its military assets sooner, as it did.

Defense against hybrid threats is a long-term strategic challenge for National Defence, requiring profound changes in planning and decision-making processes. At a time when Turkey is trying to involve us in war games, crisis management and decision-making processes are successive actions -i.e. one problem could follow after another. In the age of hybrid threats, a more dynamic approach is needed. Based on a continuously updated assessment of the strategic environment, our choices are that collective action must be developed, exercised and when appropriate, be taken. For the Armed Forces, which for decades have focused only on military responses to military provocations, this adjustment can be painful. However, when opponents increasingly operate in the gray zone, the National Strategy can no longer afford to think only with the logic of black-and-white.

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Demetrios Tsailas, Kontra-Admiral u penziji Više Komande Severne Grčke i bivši direktor departmana Vrhovnog zajedničkog vojne akademije za bezbednost i strategiju

REAKCIJA VOJNIH SNAGA NA HIBRIDNE PRETNJE – SLUČAJ GRČKE

Rezime:

Znamo da strategija mora stvoriti osnovno znanje koje povezuje načine i sredstva za postizanje željenih političkih ciljeva i strateških rezultata. Ova logična metoda je kontinuirani misaoni proces koji pruža strateške namere i informiše načine, stvarajući veze sa strateškim planiranjem koje dovode do upotrebe sredstava u vojnim operacijama. Ovaj faktor je element koji uključuje proračun, spretnost i stvaranje logike ili lanca rezultata u strategiji. U ovom radu, nakon razmatranja ključnih elemenata strategije, analiziraćemo kontekst hibridnog ratovanja u strateškom planiranju, što posebno zabrinjava u slučaju grčko-turskih komplikovanih odnosa.

Ključne reči: Vojska, hibridne pretnje, Grčka, Turska, uzajamni odnosi, strategija