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# CENTER ON IRREGULAR WARFARE AND ARMED GROUPS READING LIST 2017

## Gray Zones

*The Gray Zones reading list is a collaborative project between the Center on Irregular Warfare and Armed Groups (CIWAG), the China Maritime Studies Institute (CMSI) and the Russia Maritime Studies Institute (RMSI). The combined expertise of these three institutions allows for a thorough collection of open source research conducted on gray zones operations.*

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# Gray Zones

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*“The Cold War was a 45-year-long Gray Zone Struggle.”*<sup>1</sup> – General Joseph L. Votel

## I. What is the Gray Zone?

### **WHAT IS THE GRAY ZONE?**

Votel, General Joseph L. USA, Lieutenant General Charles T. Cleveland, USA (Ret.) and Will Irwin. “Unconventional Warfare in the Gray Zone.” JFQ 80, (1st Quarter, 2016). *National Defense University Press* <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/643108/unconventional-warfare-in-the-gray-zone/>

General Votel provides an analytical look at what gray zones are and the primary role of SOF in gray zone operations. Considering that gray zone operations are meant to be low-profile, limited footprint and typically avoid direct, conventional conflict they are a fertile ground for SOF operations. Gray zones are not limited to precision strikes or fighting through proxies, but employ influence operations and “political warfare.” General Votel continues to discuss the doctrine behind Unconventional Warfare (UW) operations, providing examples from WWII to current times, and looks at what would be considered a victory in a gray zone operation.

SSI “Outplayed-Regaining Strategic Initiative in the Gray Zone.” *U.S. Army War College*, June 7, 2016. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1325>

“In-short, threats emerging from the gray zone have a decidedly disruptive effect on strategic risk calculations. Often, the risk associated with action and inaction appears to be equally high and unpalatable. “

This report seeks to describe what the gray zone is and evaluate the United States’ capabilities of operating in the gray zone and countering other nations that excel in gray zone actions. Conventional and traditional strategy means and methods cannot be applied to gray zone challenges. The report predicts that the U.S. will continue to face constant resistance and that it will mainly occur within the parameters of the gray zone. In order to properly counter these actions, the report recommends changes in policy, strategy, capabilities, operational plans and adaptation.

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<sup>1</sup> General Joseph L. Votel, USA, Lieutenant General Charles T. Cleveland, USA (Ret.) and Will Irwin. “Unconventional Warfare in the Gray Zone.” JFQ 80, (1st Quarter, 2016). *National Defense University Press*, 102. <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/643108/unconventional-warfare-in-the-gray-zone/>

Kapusta, CAPT. Philip. "The Gray Zone" *Special Warfare* 28 no. 4 (October-December 2015), 19-25.

<http://www.soc.mil/swcs/SWmag/archive/SW2804/October%202015%20Special%20Warfare.pdf>

Gray zone challenges are not a new occurrence. They may have had different terminology previously, but the actions are the same with the added benefit of modern, easily available, technology. The author argues that conventional warfare has become a rarity whereas gray zone conflicts are the norm. The pressing concern is that being the strongest military conventionally no longer guarantees victory or control over particular situations. The U.S. spends close to \$600 billion a year on defense but states with less-robust spending abilities and non-state actors can successfully conduct operations in the gray zone. While other states have more ambiguity of operations, the U.S. need not become frustrated with gray zone operations. While the tools and abilities are already present for the U.S. to operate better in the gray zone, the author recommends that improvements be made in the "organizational, intellectual and institutional models" in order to succeed.

Brands, Hal. "Paradoxes of the Gray Zone." *FPRI*, February 5, 2016.

<http://www.fpri.org/article/2016/02/paradoxes-gray-zone/>

Gray zones in a sense encompass the activities that a state or non-state actor will conduct in order to reap the most benefit from without having enough blatant or flagrant clear-cut violation of an international standard resulting in them being held accountable and being punished militarily. However, the all-encompassing everything between peace and war definition of the gray zone can lead to misclassification of conflict. The author advises not to put China's island building program and the Islamic State's terror campaign under the same heading. Furthermore, he examines the slippery nature of Gray Zone conflicts and how they can simultaneously in many ways be detrimental and beneficial.

### **HYBRID WARFARE**

Hoffman, Frank. *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, Virginia 2007.

[http://www.potomac institute.org/images/stories/publications/potomac\\_hybridwar\\_0108.pdf](http://www.potomac institute.org/images/stories/publications/potomac_hybridwar_0108.pdf)

Frank Hoffman describes hybrid warfare (a part of Gray Zone warfare in itself) as 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.” Hoffman provides an overview of what Hybrid warfare is, along with its origins and development and its potential impact. Hybrid warfare is not solely the province of state actors nor is it relegated to non-state groups. Hezbollah is used in Hoffman’s writing as an example of hybrid warfare in that it uses a multitude of conventional, irregular, and terror tactics together in a dangerous mixture.

Wither, James K. “Making Sense of Hybrid Warfare.” *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 15, no. 2 (Spring 2016): 73-87, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1784582336?accountid=322>.

This article covers the increasing focus on and analysis of hybrid warfare. It came more into the public eye after the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014 and entered into general policy discussions after that. Pre-2014 occurrences of hybrid war are evaluated and a return to the Russian invasion of Crimea is made. The concept of hybrid war itself is dissected, in that the terminology used is different outside of western countries but the concept itself is the same. In conclusion, the author cautions that labels and theories are not as important as adaptive strategy and planning that can more effectively counter modern warfare.

#### **COUNTERMEASURES**

Freier, Nathan P., et. al. “Outplayed: Regaining Strategic Initiative in the Gray Zone, A Report Sponsored by the Army Capabilities Integration Center in Coordination with Joint Staff J-39/Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment Branch.” U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute. June 7, 2016. <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1325>

U.S. competitors pursuing meaningful revision or rejection of the current U.S.-led status quo are employing a host of hybrid methods to advance and secure interests contrary to those of the United States. These challenges employ unique combinations of influence, intimidation, coercion, and aggression to incrementally crowd out effective resistance, establish local or regional advantage, and manipulate risk perceptions in their favor. So far, the United States has not come up with a coherent countervailing approach. It is in this gray zone where the United States and its defense enterprise face systemic challenges to U.S. position and authority. Gray zone competition and conflict present fundamental challenges to U.S. and partner security and, consequently, should be important pacers for U.S. defense strategy.



Coffman, MAJ Sean, MAJ Rob Shumaker, and MAJ Jeff Givens. "Perception is Reality: SOF in the Gray Zone." *Small Wars Journal / Naval Postgraduate School*. June 2016.

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/perception-is-reality-sof-in-the-gray-zone>

This thesis examines two case studies of special operations forces (SOF) use in the gray zone -- in Somalia in 1992-1993 and the Philippines in 2000-2015. Using the bureaucratic politics model as a framework and evaluating players, decision games, and outcomes, the choice to employ SOF is replayed and outcomes are evaluated in an empirical light.

Kay, Larry. "Managing the Gray Zone is a Gray Matter Challenge." *Small Wars Journal*. July 27, 2016. <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/managing-the-gray-zone-is-a-gray-matter-challenge>

This paper promotes an alternative approach to address problems in the gray zone, which is to adopt a generative or systemic solution to ways in which to develop strategies to manage gray zone competition by adapting officer career and education tracks to create a more operationally and intellectually excellent officer corps. The gray zone is a competition of ideas, and managing the gray zone requires intelligent management of our intellectual capital, our gray matter.

"SOF Support to Political Warfare." *United States Army Special Operations Command*. March 10, 2015.

[http://www.soc.mil/swcs/ProjectGray/Support%20to%20Political%20Warfare%20White%20Paper%20v2.3-RMT%20\(10MAR2015\)%20%20%20.pdf](http://www.soc.mil/swcs/ProjectGray/Support%20to%20Political%20Warfare%20White%20Paper%20v2.3-RMT%20(10MAR2015)%20%20%20.pdf)

By fully leveraging civilian power while embracing a small-footprint yet enduring forward military presence, political warfare is politically, economically, and diplomatically sustainable. The synchronized whole-of-government application of forms of Unconventional Warfare, in support of Security Sector Assistance, diplomatic engagement, economic measures, and cyber considerations, constitutes the twenty-first-century "employment of all the means at a nation's command, short of war, to achieve its national objectives. Various solutions to leverage political warfare in response to gray zone conflicts include developing doctrine, developing strategies, and embracing the human domain. By establishing political warfare strategies, designating a lead organization to coordinate and synchronize efforts at the national and deployed echelons, and leveraging SOF Special Warfare and Surgical Strike capabilities, this blend of a civilian-led Political Warfare campaign with SOF elements will lead to a fully integrated response to gray zone conflicts.

Echevarria II, Dr. Antulio J. "Operating in the Gray Zone: An Alternative Paradigm for U.S. Military Strategy." *U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute*. April 4, 2016. <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1318>

So-called gray zone wars are not new, but they have highlighted shortcomings in the way the West thinks about war and strategy. This monograph proposes an alternative to the U.S. military's current campaign-planning framework, one oriented on achieving positional advantages over rival powers and built around the use of a coercion-deterrence dynamic germane to almost all wars as well as to conflicts short of war. The aim is to provide military strategists with a vehicle for thinking about out-positioning rival parties rather than merely subduing them through kinetic force. By re-orienting our thinking in terms of positioning, the author argues that we will find ourselves better prepared to coerce or deter our competitors, two essential competencies for operating in the gray zone.

## II. Proxy Warfare

### **IRAN: LEBANON AND SYRIA**

Nadimi, Farzin. "Iran's Afghan and Pakistani Proxies: In Syria and Beyond?" *Washington Institute For Near East Policy*. Policywatch 2677. August 22, 2016. <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/irans-afghan-and-pakistani-proxies-in-syria-and-beyond>

As part of its renewed effort to export the Islamic Revolution through armed proxies, Tehran has been recruiting and training Afghan and Pakistani fighters for Syria's battlefields, thereby giving them invaluable experience for potential future campaigns in other regional countries.

Pollak, Nadav. "The Transformation of Hezbollah by Its Involvement in Syria." *Washington Institute For Near East Policy*. No. 35. August 2016. <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/ResearchNote35-Pollak-2.pdf>

The reasoning behind Hezbollah's Syrian involvement is detailed as well as its scope and the characteristics of the group's activity since then. Hezbollah's domestic support, regional ambitions, and future prospects are explored in depth.

Cragin, R. Kim. "Semi-Proxy Wars and U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38 no. 5 (March 25, 2015). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2015.1018024>

Syria has served as a proxy battleground for a number of different groups, both state actors and irregular. What was once Jabhat al-Nusra was fighting for Al-Qaeda Central, whereas Hezbollah, various Shiite militias, and the Quds forces are all fighting on behalf of Iran.

## **CHINA:**

### *MARITIME MILITIAS OVERVIEW*

Erickson, Andrew S., and Conor M. Kennedy. "Irregular Forces at Sea: Not 'Merely Fishermen' - Shedding Light on China's Maritime Militia." *CIMSEC*, November 2, 2015.

<http://cimsec.org/new-cimsec-series-on-irregular-forces-at-sea-not-merely-fishermen-shedding-light-on-chinas-maritime-militia/19624>

This article describes China's use of merchant and fishing vessels to disrupt and impede naval traffic in the South China Sea. The "maritime militia" as it is referred to consists of workers from the maritime industry and fishermen that are specifically trained by the Chinese government and deployed in situations where overt naval action would have to high of a risk for backlash. These militia groups have been trained to fulfil multi-role operations all with the assumed protection of still being classified as a civilian vessel.

### *SANYA CITY*

-----"China's Daring Vanguard: Introducing Sanya City's Maritime Militia." *CIMSEC*, November 5, 2015. <http://cimsec.org/chinas-daring-vanguard-introducing-sanya-citys-maritime-militia/19753>

The opening part of a multi-part series, this article looks at one particular maritime militia, that of Hainan Province. This particular group has been an integral part of China's maritime arsenal and with a more aggressive posture being undertaken as of late, they have the potential to play an even greater role. It is strongly advised not to underestimate these irregular forces and China's will to use them as a tool to circumvent existing FONOPS. The official name of this militia is the Sanya Fugang Fisheries Co., Ltd. It is comprised mostly of local fishermen and has been at the fore of China's area denial and fleet harassment activities around the Spratly Islands. The article continues on to describe several incidents in which this maritime militia was deployed for the aforementioned purposes.

### *BAIMAJING PORT*

-----"Trailblazers in Warfighting: The Maritime Militia of Danzhou." *CIMSEC*, February 1, 2016. <http://cimsec.org/trailblazers-warfighting-maritime-militia-danzhou/21475>

This article continues the report on the Hainan Island maritime militia's, this time with a focus on the Baimajing Fishing Port on the northwestern shore of the island. This particular group has served as the basis in military usage of civilian fishing fleets and is a model for other maritime militias. The origins, activities, current and future role of the militia out of the Baimajing port is detailed along with how they are striving to work even closer with their militia counterparts.

#### TANMENHARBOR

----- "Model Maritime Militia: Tanmen's Leading Role in the April 2012 Scarborough Shoal Incident. *CIMSEC*, April 21, 2016. <http://cimsec.org/model-maritime-militia-tanmens-leading-role-april-2012-scarborough-shoal-incident/24573>

The Tanmen Fishing Harbor and its militia is featured in this article. The Tanmen militia often received a higher level attention due to its frequent encounters with foreign vessels. It has been a premier unit since its founding and has received encouragement by Chinese President, Xi Jinping to expand and improve its equipment and areas of operation. The article continues with a timeline of incidents featuring the Tanmen militia, starting in 1985. One particular incident, Scarborough Shoal, between the Tanmen militia and the Philippine Navy is presented in detail. The article concludes by showing the increasing level of government support for the Tanmen militia based on the multiple visits to the group from government officials.

-----"From Frontier Frontline: Tanmen Maritime Militia's Leading Role Pt .2" *CIMSEC*, May 17, 2016. <http://cimsec.org/frontier-frontline-tanmen-maritime-militias-leading-role-pt-2/25260>

The second article focusing on the Tanmen maritime militia offers two more incidents in which this force was utilized to accomplish military and political goals. In addition to the activities of the group, its leadership and organizational structure are also presented.

#### COMMAND STRUCTURE

Erickson, Andrew S., and Conor M. Kennedy. "Directing China's 'Little Blue Men': Uncovering the Maritime Militia Command Structure." *AMTI*, September 11, 2015. <https://amti.csis.org/directing-chinas-little-blue-men-uncovering-the-maritime-militia-command-structure/>

The Chinese maritime militias, mainly composed of fishing fleets, have become serious impediments to foreign vessels and a frequent tool of the Chinese government. They have served as an elite force in a wide set of supportive, defensive and to some degree, offensive actions. Their command structure falls simultaneously within the local military and the corresponding government partner. The mission goals are decided higher up

while direct leadership occurs in the local People's Armed Forces Departments (PAFD), however, their direct command structure can change from mission to mission.

#### COUNTERMEASURES

----- "Countering China's Third Sea Force: Unmask Maritime Militia before They're Used Again." *National Interest*, July 6, 2016. <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/countering-chinas-third-sea-force-unmask-maritime-militia-16860>

The Maritime Militia fulfills a variety of roles spanning the spectrum of peacetime coercion and wartime confrontation. This includes providing first-hand and the most up-to-date intelligence to the navy during peacetime and providing the best logistical tasks such as supplying food and water during wartime. Maritime Militia capabilities are poised to expand further as Beijing's desire to "win without fighting" through calibrated South China Sea operations growth.

#### USE OF KURDS AND SYRIAN GROUPS IN PROXY WARFARE

Thornton, Rod. "The Kurds as Proxies in Iraq and Syria: A Problematic Relationship for Western Powers." *Sustainable Security*, April 20, 2016. <https://sustainablesecurity.org/2016/04/20/the-kurds-as-proxies-in-iraq-and-syria-a-problematic-relationship-for-western-powers/>

Native to the region, the Kurds are an ideal candidate in the fight against ISIL as a Western proxy as they are numerous, of a warrior-caste, and politically acceptable to Western audiences. The Kurds have proven themselves to be the most effective against ISIL in both Syria and Iraq and therefore, both groups have gained support from the United States. The caveat here is that the KDP in Iraq and the YPD in Syria are on conflicting sides ideologically and are both also fighting for what is in their individual best interests. Factor in Turkey's vested interest in keeping their local Kurdish group, the PKK, at bay, the use of Kurds as proxies in Syria and Iraq makes for an increasingly complex situation.

#### UNITED STATES USE OF PROXIES

Ford, Robert S. "U.S. Policy Toward Syria." *U.S. Department of State*. October 31, 2013. <http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rm/216163.htm>

U.S. Ambassador to Syria Robert Ford provided testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 2013 regarding the U.S. policy towards Syria. The U.S. policy is to support the moderates in the opposition and to push forward on a political solution.

Heras, Nicholas A. "From the Bottom, Up: A Strategy for U.S. Military Support to Syria's Armed Opposition." *Center for a New American Security*. April 2016.

<http://www.cnas.org/sites/default/files/publications-pdf/CNASReport-SyrianOpposition-160505.pdf>

This policy recommendation suggests that the United States' effort to arm the moderate Syrian rebels should be accompanied by working with the rebels to join forces with other moderate fighters to build a cohesive, moderate armed opposition institutions. These institutions will become the center of gravity in their respective regions as they marginalize or defeat ideological extremist organizations, ultimately being brought together to form larger civil-military structures and govern the predominantly Sunni rebel-ruled areas inside of Syria. These regional structures can then interact with the remnants of the Assad regime and its loyalist forces to work toward achieving a long-term political solution to the Syrian civil war, such as a federalized Syria. While this approach may seem complex and difficult to execute, there are already examples inside Syria, especially in the south near the Jordanian border, where American strategy to support the armed opposition has had the most success.

#### TURKEY'S CONCERN OVER USE OF KURDISH FORCES

Issa, Philip. "Syria's Kurds: An embattled US Ally in a Complex Civil War." *AP*. August 25, 2016. <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/1c6682e6682d4f809d67b1bcdfcec20e/syrias-kurds-embattled-us-ally-complex-civil-war>

Turkey, displeased with the recent successes of Syrian Kurds, has entered the Syrian conflict, sending tanks across the border to fight ISIL and demand the Kurds retreat from their recently seized territory. The tensions between Turkey and the Kurds pit a NATO ally against the most effective U.S. military proxy in Syria. The article further outlines how the Syrian Kurds battled in the early stages of the conflict with competing forces and ultimately made the correct political move to align with the group of U.S.-backed Arab fighters known as the Syria Democratic Forces, putting themselves on the good side of the United States.

#### TURKEY AND RUSSIA

Bacik, Gökhan. "Turkey and Russia's Proxy War and the Kurds." *The German Marshall Fund of the United States*, January 21, 2016. <http://www.gmfus.org/publications/turkey-and-russias-proxy-war-and-kurds>

The policies of Turkey and Russia in the Middle East are mutually detrimental, especially in Syria, where the dynamics of confrontation has almost generated a proxy war between the two states, while the Kurds are becoming the critical third actor indicative of a proxy war. Turkey's ultimate goal of the Syrian conflict is to prevent the creation of an autonomous Kurdish region along its border and Russia has propped up the Kurds in

Syria as partners against radical groups and to confront and punish Turkey for shooting down the Russian jet.

### **THE UNRELIABLE NATURE OF PROXY WARFARE**

Weiss, Caleb. "Two U.S.-Backed Groups Clash in Northern Syria." *Long War Journal*, August 29, 2016. [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/08/2-us-backed-groups-clash-in-northern-syria.php?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+LongWarJournalSiteWide+%28The+Long+War+Journal+%28Site-Wide%29%29](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/08/2-us-backed-groups-clash-in-northern-syria.php?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+LongWarJournalSiteWide+%28The+Long+War+Journal+%28Site-Wide%29%29)

Proxy warfare is not always the most reliable means to an end, but it does provide the opportunity for a state to advance its political goals without having to directly commit its armed forces, which can have a much larger backlash or even lead to all out war. However, these individual groups being utilized still have their own agendas and are willing to cooperate only as long as it further advances their own cause. Jaysh al Tahrir, a group falling under the political umbrella of the Free Syrian Army (which receives material support from the U.S.) and the Kurdish People's Protection Unit (YPG) which is the lead group of the Syrian Democratic Forces, which is also receiving U.S. support have clashed regarding territory. Jaysh al Tahrir is closely tied to several Turkish-backed Islamist groups and has taken two towns from the YPG (which captured them back from ISIS) in order to prevent them from gaining any more ground nearer to the Turkish border. The YPG is of particular concern to Turkey due to it being the Syrian branch of the PKK.

Chulov, Martin. "Turkey's Syria Offensive Shows how Each Party is Fighting its Own War." *The Guardian*, September 2, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/02/turkey-syria-offensive-each-party-is-fighting-its-own-war-kurds-us-isis>

Turkey sent tanks and troops into Syria at the end of August with a stated goal of going after ISIL in the border town of Jarabulus; however its primary, unspoken goal was to stop the Kurds - supported by the United States - from gaining any more territory in northern Syria. While all three parties public primary objective is to stop ISIL, each party involved is fighting its own war with incompatible goals.

### III. State Actors

#### Russia

##### RUSSIAN MARITIME

###### COERCION AND PROVOCATIONS

Hicks, Kathleen., Andrew Metrick, Lisa Sawyer Samp and Kathleen Weinberger. "Undersea Warfare in Northern Europe." *CSIS International Security Program*. July 2016.

[https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/160721\\_Hicks\\_UnderseaWarfare\\_Web.pdf](https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/160721_Hicks_UnderseaWarfare_Web.pdf)

Russian undersea activity has reached a level it has not been at since the end of the Cold War. A more aggressive Russia has utilized submarine deployments in other nations' territorial waters, particularly in those of Scandinavian countries that are on the fence regarding NATO, as a form of intimidation, coercion and area denial. This tactic allows Russia to increase its theoretical area of control and accomplish its political goals without escalating to direct conflict. In addition, it announces that Russia is willing to advance its will while other nations are required to be cautious and defensive. The report continues after its initial look into Russia's goals by then evaluating its equipment and capabilities followed by suggestions on how NATO nations can counter a resurgent Russia.

###### MEDITERRANEAN

Altman, Jonathan. "Russian A2/AD In the Eastern Mediterranean: A Growing Risk." *Naval War College Review* 69 no. 1. (Winter, 2016).

<https://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/4ac8b59c-4634-44b3-af06-dee0203d6c67/Russian-A2-AD-in-the-Eastern-Mediterranean---A-Gro.aspx>

This report looks at the potential for Russia to utilize similar anti-access and area-denial techniques in the Mediterranean as it does in the Baltic and North Sea. The Russian Black Sea Fleet is one of Russia's larger fleets and it outnumbers the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the region. The presence of Russian forces in the Mediterranean strengthens Moscow's end game of pushing the U.S. from the region. This added military support could allow Russia to present themselves as the dominant power especially if backed by appropriate political maneuvers. A "decoupling" of allies could be achieved if Russia exploited Greece's economic crisis, gave additional arms to Egypt and pushed closer ties with



Turkey's increasingly authoritarian government. With Russia adding its fleet into the mix, it can potentially box the U.S. out of the Middle East on land, sea and politically.

## **RUSSIA IN UKRAINE**

### HYBRID WAR AND MEDIA

Koffman, Michael and Matthew Rojansky. "A Closer look at Russia's 'Hybrid War.'" *Kennan Cable* no.7, April 2015. Kennan Institute.

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/kennan-cable-no7-closer-look-russias-hybrid-war>

This article closer analyzes the common view of Hybrid Warfare and Russia's actions during the Crimean invasion and the invasion of Eastern Ukraine. Russia extensively utilized destabilizing media broadcasts and propaganda to prepare for and solidify their gains in each offensive. Russia's media campaigns are set on a larger goal or removing what it sees as Western dominance of the media and to question those perspectives, information is used as a form of national power. The authors argue that the focus should not be on trying to classify such events but in learning how to counter a state like Russia using a wide range of abilities to implement its will.

### GREEN MEN TACTICS

Altman, Dan. "The Long History of 'Green Men' Tactics - And How They Were Defeated." *War On The Rocks*. March 17, 2016. <http://warontherocks.com/2016/03/the-long-history-of-green-men-tactics-and-how-they-were-defeated/>

In both Crimea and eastern Ukraine, Russia's signature tactic has been the use of "Green Men," or deniable forces, which has in turn become a central part of gray zone conflicts. Although highlighted by Russian conflicts in the last two years, deploying deniable forces is a recurring tactics throughout history.

### NON-LINEAR WARFARE

Kasapoglu, Can. "Russia's Renewed Military Thinking: Non-Linear Warfare and Reflexive Control." *NATO Defense College, Research Division*. No. 121, November 2015.

<http://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/Articles/russia's%20renewed%20Military%20Thinking.pdf>

Western view of hybrid warfare focuses on any occurrence being "multi-modality" whereas the Russian strategy concurring with this heading is more fluid and focusing on achieving an end goal as opposed to fitting into specific parameters.

DESTABILIZING WITH CIVIL UNREST

Whitmore, Brian. "How To Manufacture A War." *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*. August 26, 2016. <http://www.rferl.org/content/how-to-manufacture-a-war/27947359.html>

Recordings of conversations between Kremlin aide Sergei Glazyev and proxies in Ukraine highlight the specific instructions he gave them to instigate unrest in Donetsk, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhya, and Odessa as early as February 2014 -- before Russia had even annexed Crimea. In turn, Russia had managed to stir up enough unrest in certain pockets of eastern Ukraine to justify its state and non-state military support for separatists.

CULTURE WARFARE/COERCION

Krekó, Péter., Lóránt Gyóri, Jakub Janda, Ondřej Kundra, Grigorij Mesežnikov, Juraj Mesík, Maciej Szylar and Anton Shekhovtsov. "The Weaponization of Culture: Kremlin's Traditional Agenda and the Export of Values to Central Europe." Political Capital Institute, August 4, 2016. [http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/PC\\_reactionary\\_values\\_CEE\\_20160727.pdf](http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/PC_reactionary_values_CEE_20160727.pdf)

Russian "culture warfare" has been and is being utilized not only to promote itself as the champion of traditional values and demonize the West but to export these pro-Russian/"traditional" values to neighboring countries. These values campaigns, if successful will spark a desire in ethnic Russian abroad and their Slavic counterparts to embrace Russian political ideals and guidance. These values more importantly serve to bolster the growth of political groups within these neighboring countries that espouse illiberal, anti-democratic and authoritarian views that are more in line with the Russian government's initiatives. A combination of outside events, organizations, Russian language and foreign language media, and the availability of Russian cultural and pro-Kremlin materials are utilized to spread this cultural coercion. A particularly effective impact of this campaign is increased support for Russia in far-right political parties active in Baltic and Eastern European governments.

PROPAGANDA

Paul, Christopher., and Miriam Matthews. "The Russian 'Firehose of Falsehood' Propaganda Model: Why It Might Work and Options to Counter It." *RAND Corporation*. 2016. <http://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE198.html>

The Russian propaganda model is high-volume and multichannel, and it disseminates messages without regard for truth. It is also rapid, continuous, and repetitive, and it lacks commitment to consistency. Traditional counter-propaganda approaches will likely be inadequate in this context. More effective solutions can be found in the same psychology literature that explains the surprising success of the Russian propaganda model and its messages.

Chen, Adrian. "The Agency." *New York Times Magazine*. June 2, 2015.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/07/magazine/the-agency.html>

From a nondescript office building in St. Petersburg, Russia, an army of well-paid "trolls" has tried to wreak havoc all around the Internet -- and in real-life American communities.

Walker, Shaun. "Salutin' Putin: inside a Russian troll house." *Guardian*. April 2, 2015.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/02/putin-kremlin-inside-russian-troll-house>

Former workers tell how hundreds of bloggers are paid to flood forums and social networks at home and abroad with anti-Western and pro-Kremlin comments.

#### PROXY POLITICAL GROUPS

Lutsevych, Orysia. "Agents of the Russian World: Proxy Groups in the Contested Neighbourhood." *Chatham House*. Russian and Eurasia Programme. April 2016.

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/research/2016-04-14-agents-russian-world-lutsevych.pdf>

Anxious about losing ground to Western influence in the post-Soviet space and the ousting of many pro-Russia elites by popular electoral uprisings, the Kremlin has developed a wide range of proxy groups in support of its foreign policy objectives. Russia employs a vocabulary of 'soft power' to disguise its 'soft coercion' efforts aimed at retaining regional supremacy. This network of pro-Kremlin groups establish alternative discourses to confuse decision-making where it is required, and act as destabilizing forces by uniting paramilitary groups and spreading aggressive propaganda.

Vojtiskova, Vladislava., Vit Novotny, Hubertus Schmid-Schmidsfelden, and Kristina Potapova.

"The Bear in Sheep's Clothing: Russia's Government-Funded Organisations in the EU." *Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies*. July 2016.

<http://www.martenscentre.eu/sites/default/files/publication-files/russia-gongos.pdf>

This paper sheds light on organizations operating in Europe that are funded by the Russian government, whether officially or unofficially. These include government-organized nongovernmental organizations (GONGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and think tanks. Their goal is to shift European public opinion towards a positive view of Russian politics and policies, and towards respect for its great power ambitions. These organizations use soft power as a vehicle to rely more on coercion than attraction. This paper reveals the broad range of methods and institutions that the Russian government is using to influence decision-makers and public opinion in the EU.

#### COUNTERMEASURES

De Liedekerke, Arthur. "The rise of paramilitary groups in Central and Eastern Europe." *New Eastern Europe*. January 18, 2016. <http://neweasterneurope.eu/articles-and-commentary/1862-the-rise-of-paramilitary-groups-in-central-and-eastern-europe>

Europe has seen a surge in popularity of paramilitary units in countries directly affected or alarmed by the violence in Ukraine and the large influx of refugees. While some groups operate in parallel with regular military units, others have strikingly different motives and far-right ideologies.

Lucas, Edward and Peter Pomeranzev. "Winning the Information War: Techniques and Counter-strategies to Russian Propaganda in Central and Eastern Europe." *Center for European Policy Analysis / Legatum Institute*. August 2, 2016. [https://cepa.ecms.pl/files/?id\\_plik=2715](https://cepa.ecms.pl/files/?id_plik=2715)

This report analyzes the impact of Russian disinformation by drawing on dozens of case studies seeing the employment of Russian information warfare tools as well as the political forces, civil society actors, businesses, and public figures who use them. It also looks at several examples of Russian policies which have been enacted using disinformation: interventions in decision-making in Lithuania; fomenting insurrection in eastern Ukraine; general denigration of Latvia's international reputation; developing native pro-Kremlin media outlets in the Czech Republic and Estonia; and supporting far-right and ultranationalist movements and sentiments in Poland. The report concludes with a 13-point recommendation plan to target Kremlin disinformation, strengthen media in democracies, and educate audiences.

#### RUSSIA IN SYRIA

McDermott, Roger. "Russia's Application of Military Power in Syria." *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 13 no. 41. March 1, 2016. Jamestown Foundation [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=45149&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=e541e940817a6e05fd3be42885792206](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=45149&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=e541e940817a6e05fd3be42885792206)

Russia's military operations in Syria are, in essence, about applying asymmetric warfare approaches through testing and rehearsing the use of limited military power to alter the balance of power into Bashar al-Assad's favor. Information warfare, escalation dominance, anti-access/area denial, air defense protection, and training and equipping the Syrian army are some of the operations to achieve limited war aims by asymmetric means.

## Iran

### IRAN MARITIME

Ryan, Missy., and Thomas Gibbons-Neff. "Navy Patrol Ship Fires Warning Shots at Iranian Vessel in one of Several Confrontations." *Washington Post*, August 25, 2016.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/08/25/u-s-navy-calls-high-speed-approach-by-iranian-ships-dangerous-harassment/>

Iranian small boats have utilized swarming tactics to harass and impede U.S. Navy vessels. Several additional recent Iranian provocation/area denial actions have occurred.

### IRAN DURING THE IRAQI INSURGENCY

#### OVERVIEW

Beehner, Lionel., and Greg Bruno. "Iran's Involvement in Iraq." *Council on Foreign Relations*, March 3, 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/iran/irans-involvement-iraq/p12521>

This report by the Council on Foreign Relations breaks down how Iran is involved in Iraq and it provides a concise and inclusive overview of the situation. The report covers Iran's military, religious, economic, and social involvement in Iraq as well as addressing Iran's motivations for getting involved in Iraq.

#### FUNDS AND MONETARY SUPPORT

"Military Official: Iranian Millions Funding Insurgency." *CNN*, September 28, 2006.

<http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/09/28/iraq.iran/>

A senior U.S. military official is quoted saying a Shiite militia involved in the warfare between Sunni and Shiites in Iraq has received millions of dollars and an assortment of weaponry from Iran in order to retain some influence with the victorious group in Iraq.

#### WEAPONS AND MATERIAL

Roggio, Bill. "Evidence of Iran Supplying Weapons, Expertise to Iraqi Insurgents." *Long War Journal*, February 11, 2007.

[http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/02/evidence\\_of\\_iran\\_sup.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/02/evidence_of_iran_sup.php)

Captured Iranians confirmed that Iran had been smuggling sophisticated explosive devices and weaponry to multiple Iraqi insurgent groups. Markings on the explosively formed projectiles and mortars made U.S. suspicious of Iranian involvement but the capture of Iranians in Irbil possessing documents confirmed suspicions. The article also quotes an unnamed defense official that the activities must be coming from the senior levels of the Iranian government as the operational commander of the Al-Qods brigade, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps specialized force that reports to Iran's Supreme Leader, was among those captured.

O'Keefe, Ed., and Joby Warrick. "Weapons Prove Iranian Role in Iraq, U.S. says." *Washington Post*, July 5, 2011. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/war-zones/weapons-prove-iranian-role-in-iraq-us-says/2011/07/05/gHQAUnkmzH\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/war-zones/weapons-prove-iranian-role-in-iraq-us-says/2011/07/05/gHQAUnkmzH_story.html)

Senior U.S. officials are quoted saying that Iranian backed militias in Iraq are using more sophisticated weapons than in the past to target U.S. troops and military installations in Iraq. Forensic testing performed on weapons used in deadly attacks on U.S. troops proved that the weapons are coming from Iran as insurgents are making no effort to remove the weapons identification numbers proving their Iranian origin.

#### TRAINING

Gourley, Scott R. "MNF-I outlines Iranian Support for Iraqi 'Special Groups'." *Jane's Defence Weekly*, March 20, 2008. <https://janes.ihs.com/Janes/Display/1176536>

Spokesperson for the Multi-National Force - Iraq (MNF-I) indicated that there was evidence that proves Iraqi operatives are being trained inside of Iran and sent back into Iraq and form small cells that are carrying out much of the violence against Coalition and Iraqi security forces. He notes that the intention of these special groups is to keep Iraq just destabilized enough that Iraq would not pose a military threat to Iran.

"Iran Training Iraqi Insurgent Groups, General Says: Quds Force Provides Training, Funds and Arms." *Federal Information & News Dispatch, Inc*, July 3, 2007. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/190021082?pq-origsite=summon>

This article outlines the extent of Iranian support to Iraqi insurgents including the involvement of Hezbollah officials. The article further highlights that the Quds Force, an elite unit of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, provides up to \$3 million per month to fund insurgent operations.

#### ASSERTING INFLUENCE

Cochrane, Marisa. "Special Groups Regenerate." *The Institute for the Study of War*, August 29, 2008. <http://understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/reports/IraqReport11.pdf>

This report examines the patterns and trends of the Iranian-backed militias known as Special Groups. The Coalition and Iraqi Forces were able to force the leaders of these groups back into Iran, it is likely that they will return to Iraq to rebuild their networks and adopt new tactics.

Felter, Joseph and Brian Fishman. "Iranian Strategy in Iraq: Politics and "Other Means"." Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, October 13, 2008.

<https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Iranian-Strategy-in-Iraq.pdf>

This paper details the objectives, methods, and expansiveness of the Iranian attempts to affect policy and politics in Iraq through both historical context and strategic motivation for Iranian actions.

## China

### **CHINA'S ISLAND BUILDING**

"Island Tracker." Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI) <https://amti.csis.org/island-tracker/>

The Island Tracker, developed and maintained by the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, provides a database of satellite imagery and brief summaries regarding the reclamation and development of reefs and by China and Vietnam.

### **REASONS FOR ISLAND DEVELOPMENT**

Dutton, Peter. "A Maritime or Continental Order for Southeast Asia and the South China Sea?" From an Address at Chatham House, London, U.K. February 16, 2016. Featured in *Naval War College Review* 69, no. 3. (Summer, 2016), 5-13.

<https://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/b3e85931-7139-49f9-8d93-6d5b53826a37/A-MARITIME-OR-CONTINENTAL-ORDER-FOR-SOUTHEAST-ASIA.aspx>

Peter Dutton, director of the U.S. Naval War College China Maritime Studies Institute, presents potential reasons behind and the ramifications of China's Island building in the South China Sea.

### **THE THREE WARFARES**

Kania, Elsa. "The PIA's Latest Strategic Thinking on the Three Warfares." *China Brief* 16, no. 13 (August 22, 2016). Jamestown Foundation.

[http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=45723&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=229badbe854a0bdac91aaf401e3f9744](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=45723&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=229badbe854a0bdac91aaf401e3f9744)

China is attempting to portray the U.S. as the aggressor in what is being called the “militarization” of the South China Sea. China claims that it is the one upholding maritime law whereas the U.S. is using an aggressive policy. The author describes how China is conducting this campaign through the “Three Warfares,” which are: Public Opinion Warfare, Psychological Warfare, and Legal Warfare.

## IV. Cyber

### **CYBER TARGETING**

Schmitt, Michael N. “The Law of Cyber Targeting.” *Naval War College Review* 68 no. 2(Spring, 2015). <https://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/05986280-7072-4038-a253-560105093fbe/The-Law-of-Cyber-Targeting.aspx>

Cyber-based attacks were not a revolutionary occurrence when they entered the public eye during the 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia. Cyber operations are not restricted to professional, state-sponsored groups, but are widely utilized by irregular groups and individuals. While these actors are not necessarily answerable to any authority, legitimate state actors are. This piece evaluates the application of international law in terms of cyber-targeting by state actors. Major aspects that are taken into effect include what the target is, the weapon (or software) used, and any collateral damage.

See also the : the *Tallinn Manual on the International Law Applicable to Cyber Warfare* from the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE), Tallinn, Estonia. <https://ccdcoe.org/research.html>

### **ATTACKS ON FINANCIAL SYSTEMS**

Groll, Elias. “Spear Phishing In Tehran.” *Foreign Policy*. August 9, 2016. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/08/09/spear-phishing-in-tehran/>

Researchers have found evidence that Iranian hackers, responsible for the cyber attacks on Saudi Aramco computers and American banks in retaliation for cyber attacks on Iranian nuclear centrifuges, are now using those same tools against the more defenseless human rights groups and civil societies as a key tool in the regime’s attempt to maintain power.

### **THEFT OF GOV. EMPLOYEE DATA**

Adams, Michael. “Why the OPM Hack IS Far Worse Than You Imagine.” *Lawfare*. March 11, 2016. <https://www.lawfareblog.com/why-opm-hack-far-worse-you-imagine>



The U.S. Office of Personnel Management data breach was exposed in June 2015 and involves the greatest theft of sensitive personal data in history. But, to date, neither the scope nor the scale of the breach has been fully aired.

#### **POLITICAL SYSTEM ATTACKS**

Rojansky, Matthew. "Tinker Tailor Soldier Hacker: The Russian Factor in the DNC Email Scandal." *Kennan Institute*. July 27, 2016. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/tinker-tailor-soldier-hacker-the-russian-factor-the-dnc-email-scandal>

This article looks at the motives behind the Russian hacking of the DNC emails. The author speculates that the end goal was to show the vulnerability of the American political system. Russia suspected that the U.S. influenced events in Russian elections, so Putin wants to show that it can return the favor.

"Internet Trolling as a hybrid warfare tool: the case of Latvia." *NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence*. February 2016. <http://www.stratcomcoe.org/internet-trolling-hybrid-warfare-tool-case-latvia-0>

Russia is deploying social media trolls in an attempt to affect political change across Europe. They are often identified by their poor grammar, repetition of content, and IP addresses. These paid Russian bloggers flood the Internet with comments favorable to Russian interests, paranoid conspiracy theories against the West and destabilizing messages aimed at Russian speaking members of Baltic countries. This study provides an in-depth look at Russia's online political and cultural coercion campaign. Latvia is a frequent target and therefore is the focus of this study.

#### **AGAINST OPPOSITION**

Hulcoop, Adam., Bahr Abdul Razzak, John Scott-Railton, Katie Kleemola, and Matt Brooks. "Group5: Syria and the Iranian Connection." *Citizen Lab*. August 2, 2016. <https://citizenlab.org/2016/08/group5-syria/>

This report describes an elaborately staged malware operation with targets in the Syrian opposition. The operators use a range of techniques to target Windows computers and Android phones with the apparent goal of penetrating the computers of well-connected individuals in the Syrian opposition. The operators seem comfortable with Iranian Persian dialect tools and appear to have run elements of the operation from Iranian IP addresses

### **DRONE USAGE**

Blanford, Nicholas. "How off-the-shelf drones are changing war in Syria and Lebanon." *Christian Science Monitor*. August 16, 2016. <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2016/0816/How-off-the-shelf-drones-are-changing-war-in-Syria-and-Lebanon>

A recent video purportedly shows a mini-drone operated by Hezbollah dropping munitions on Syrian rebels in northern Syria, highlighting the ease with which militants can turn a mini-drone into a weapon.

### **ONLINE PROPAGANDA AND RECRUITMENT**

Koerner, Brendan I. "Why ISIS is Winning the Social Media War." *Wired*. April 2016. <http://www.wired.com/2016/03/isis-winning-social-media-war-heres-beat>

ISIL is as much a media conglomerate as a fighting force. ISIL innovates its branding across social media platforms to crowdsource its distribution, inspire real-world action, and steer conversations on- and off-line.

Frenkel, Sheera. "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About How ISIS Uses The Internet." *Buzzfeed*. May 12, 2016. <https://www.buzzfeed.com/sheerafrenkel/everything-you-ever-wanted-to-know-about-how-isis-uses-the-i>

As ISIL continues to attract supporters from around the globe, the group has found a way to exploit any online platform that exists, from launching cyber attacks to publishing encryption advice to luring recruits through dating sites.

Berger, J.M. "Tailored Online Interventions: The Islamic State's Recruitment Strategy." *CTC Sentinel* 8, No. 10. October 23, 2015. <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CTCSentinel-Vol8Iss1036.pdf>

This article examines the methodical approach ISIL takes to target and recruit its prospects online.

### **CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS**

Kruihof, Kristy, Judith Aldridge, David Decary Hetu, Megan Sim, Elma Dujso, and Stijn Hoorens. "Internet-Facilitated Drug Trade." *RAND Corporation*. August 2016. [http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1607.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1607.html)

The Internet's potential role in facilitating the drug trade first gained mass attention with the rise and fall of the Silk Road in October 2013. Today, there are around 50 so-

called cryptomarkets and vendor shops where anonymous sellers and buyers find each other to exchange illicit contraband.