

COMBATING HYBRID THREATS: A HOLISTIC STRATEGY

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Open war is fighting at the place and time indicated; creating fright, sudden assault, striking when there is error or calamity, giving way and striking in one place are types of concealed warfare; that which concerns secret practices and instigations through secret agents is the mark of silent war.

— Chanakya, *Arthashastra*¹

INTRODUCTORY LANDSCAPE

Globalisation has changed the way wars are fought. Today's emerging paradigm is reflected by the experiences in Afghanistan, Iraq and most recently in Ukraine. The Russian actions in Crimea have brought the subject of hybrid war into sharp focus. It has generated an intense debate around the world about what constitutes a hybrid war, since there have been varied versions proposed by various actors. One could possibly argue that the Russian "New Generation Warfare" (NGW) which Russia tested and perfected in Crimea, is a continuation of its

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1. Chanakya, *Arthashastra*, 7.6, 40-41:p. 342.

In fact, it is the unprecedented level of connectivity afforded by today's information age that gives so much power to the hybrid methods of warfare. The authors of the Pentagon's 2006 Quadrennial Defence Review recognised the shift, concluding, "In the post-September 11 world, irregular warfare has emerged as the dominant form of warfare confronting the United States."

very own *Maskirovka* (Russian military deception). However, this NGW may already be termed as an evolved version of the present Western views of hybrid conflict in which low-end hidden state involvement is combined with high-end, direct superpower intervention.

One of the most widely accepted definitions of hybrid war has been proposed by a noted expert, Frank G. Hoffman. He defined hybrid war as a conflict in which states or non-state actors (with or without state sponsorship) exploit all modes of war simultaneously by using advanced conventional weapons, irregular tactics, terrorism, and disruptive technologies or criminality to destabilise an existing order. 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.² In fact, it is the unprecedented level of connectivity afforded by today's information age that gives so much power to the hybrid methods of warfare. The authors of the Pentagon's 2006 Quadrennial Defence Review recognised the shift, concluding, "In the post-September 11 world, irregular warfare has emerged as the dominant form of warfare confronting the United States."³ This shift is significant as it begins to broaden the scope to sharpen our focus on this increasingly likely form of warfare. The blurring of modes of war, the blurring of who

2.. Frank G. Hoffman, "Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars", Naval Institute Proceedings, November 2005.

3. Quadrennial Defence Review, Washington DC, March 2006. p. 36. Accessed at <<http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/pdf/QDR20060203.pdf>> on 10 July 10, 2016.

fight, and what technologies are brought to bear, produces a wide range of variety and complexity that we call hybrid warfare⁴.

Apart from attempting to analyse the evolution and characteristics of hybrid threats, along with their implications in the Indian context, this article seeks to offer ideas to address the dilemma of understanding and building capability to combat hybrid threats primarily from an Indian perspective. Detailed analysis of hybrid threats would clearly bring out that there is hardly any original and extensive research on its characteristics and attendant consequences from an Indian perspective. Hybrid war puts a premium on strategic outcomes and not on the tactical results. This also goes on to show that a hybrid adversary is always victorious unless he is decisively defeated. Defeating a hybrid adversary essentially entails alienating him from the support structure that he enjoys amongst the local populace, without which it is very difficult to defeat him on a permanent basis. This explains the strategic aspect of defeating a hybrid adversary.

In this context, evolved joint structures to tackle 21st century threats are of utmost importance. This would ensure that the Indian armed and security forces would be able to deal with a spectrum of challenges with trademark professionalism. However, this would be possible only after the necessary structural reorganisation at an appropriate level. It may be of interest to note that on April 16, 2016, the European Commission too adopted a joint framework to counter hybrid threats and foster the resilience of the European Union (EU) and its member states. This framework would pave the way for setting up an EU Hybrid Fusion Cell that would focus on analysis of hybrid threats.

HYBRID SECURITY IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA

If there has ever been a time in history when military strategist Frank Hoffman's statement that "the incentives for states to exploit non-traditional modes of war are on the rise"⁵ was true, then today is that time. India has long

4. Lt Gen James N. Mattis USMC, Naval Institute and Marine Corps Association, September 2005. Accessed at <<http://milnewstbay.pbworks.com/f/MattisFourBlockWarUSNINov2005.pdf>> on December 11, 2016.

5. Frank G. Hoffman, "Hybrid Warfare and Challenges", March 2009, p.38. Accessed at <<http://www.smallwarsjournal.com/documents/jfqhoffman.pdf>> on July 24, 2016.

The long-standing proxy war waged by Pakistan against India in J&K is a classic example of hybrid war. The conflict has brought to the forefront the ability of proxy actors to study and deconstruct the vulnerabilities of conventional military forces.

standing territorial disputes with Pakistan and China – both nuclear weapons armed states. Indian held territories opposite Pakistan and China have peculiarities that can be exploited by an adversary desirous of fighting a hybrid war. The long-standing proxy war waged by Pakistan against India in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) is a classic example of hybrid war. The conflict has brought to the forefront the ability of proxy actors to study and deconstruct the vulnerabilities of conventional military forces. Mixing an organised political movement with decentralised cells employing adaptive tactics in ungoverned zones, outfits like the Lashkar-

e-Tayebba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) have shown that they can inflict, as well as take, punishment. Though not as potent or well trained as the Hezbollah are known to be, they compensate with greater fanatic zeal and irrationality. Taking the J&K proxy war as a case study, some hybrid warfare scenarios involving multiple domains that might unfold in the future are highlighted below. India would need to be prepared with flexible and suitable response mechanisms to counter them.

As far as China is concerned, a futuristic hybrid war could well begin with economic underpinnings. Sustained and deliberate dumping in traditional markets in neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Myanmar could well mark the commencement of tension. While the consolidation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the string of bases in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) may not be considered direct military threats, they certainly offer a ‘spring board’ for calibrated escalation. Oblique pressure on Indian investments as in the case of ONGC Videsh, would, however, constitute a direct threat to Indian security interests and must be factored into any security matrix.

In the near and medium term, however, the hybrid threat from the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) supported proxy and terror networks emanating

from Pakistani soil will remain a grave concern for India's national security planners. Escalation control in the backdrop of the nuclear conundrum, rather than decisive and sustained coercion, will continue to trouble India as it seeks to offer calibrated responses to irrational acts of cross-border terrorism. There are, however, increasing signs from both India's military and strategic leadership that the costs for waging a proxy war against India will rise significantly in the near and medium terms.

An interesting proposition is a collusive scenario between China and Pakistan, which is most likely in the hybrid domain and could revolve around simultaneous pressure being applied across the maritime, land and economic domains and non-traditional areas like 'water wars', with adequate ambiguity. When this is combined with efforts to undermine public perception in troubled spots like J&K, accompanied by a 'virtual and cyber' offensive, it has the potential to severely impact national security. The possibility of a Hezbollah-like modern hybrid challenger emerging from a mix of *jihadis* and Taliban fighters ranged against India cannot be ruled out. Such an entity would demonstrate state-like military capabilities, including the creation of highly disciplined and well trained cadres who would be capable of contesting ground and wills against a modern conventional force. The semi-urban terrain will be meticulously exploited to create ambushes, evade detection and build strong defensive fortifications close to non-combatants, much like the Hezbollah did in 2006.⁶

LEARNING FROM THE HEZBOLLAH-ISRAEL CONFLICT

In this realm, analysing the challenges posed by Hezbollah against the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) may accrue out of proportion benefits to Indian military analysts as far as outthinking a hybrid adversary is concerned. Hezbollah, a best suited example of a modern hybrid challenger, demonstrated several state-like military capabilities. This brings to fore the ability of non-state actors to study and deconstruct the vulnerabilities of conventional military forces.

6. Andrew Exum, "Hizballah at War: A Military Assessment," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, December 2006, pp. 9-11.

In the field, Israeli troops grudgingly admitted that the Hezbollah defenders were tenacious and skilled. Hezbollah proved skilfully elusive and deliberately blended into the civilian population and infrastructure. The organised resistance was experienced to be several orders of magnitude more difficult than the counter-terrorism operations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Hezbollah showed that it could inflict, as well as take, punishment. Its highly disciplined, well trained, distributed cells contested ground and wills against a modern conventional force. The urban terrain was meticulously exploited to create ambushes, evade detection and build strong defensive fortifications near non-combatants.⁷ In the field, Israeli troops grudgingly admitted that the Hezbollah defenders were tenacious and skilled⁸. Hezbollah proved skilfully elusive and deliberately blended into the civilian population and infrastructure. The organised resistance was experienced to be several orders of magnitude more difficult than the counter terrorism operations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Hezbollah's use of C-802 anti-ship cruise missiles and volleys of rockets represented a sample of what hybrid warfare might look like.⁹ Noteworthy tactical combinations and novel technology applications were resorted to by the defenders. The anti-armour weapons employed against the IDF tanks and defensive positions brought in an element of surprise, specially when coupled with decentralised tactics. To Hezbollah's credit, the IDF was even required to adapt and apply itself innovatively to detect a few armed Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) that were launched against them. These included either the Iranian Mirsad-1 or Ababil-3 Swallow¹⁰.

Despite the severe force asymmetry to its disadvantage, Hezbollah arguably came out of the conflict stronger in ideological appeal as Israel

7. Ibid., pp. 9-11.

8. Jonathan Finer, "Israeli Soldiers Find a Tenacious Foe in Hezbollah," *Washington Post*, August 8, 2006, p. 1.

9. Matt Hilburn, "Hezbollah's Surprise," *Seapower*, September 2006, pp. 10-12.

10. Anthony Cordesman, *Preliminary Lesson of Israeli-Hezbollah War* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 17, 2006), p. 16.

possibly lost the strategic battle of perceptions. Hezbollah exploited the political effects of its limited tactical successes which were further magnified by the media. Hezbollah's combat cells which comprised a hybrid of guerrillas and regular troops also inspired organisations like Hamas in Palestine.

In spite of being tactically defeated on multiple occasions throughout the conflict, Hezbollah was able to take advantage of several critical factors in order to gain an operational and strategic victory. The court of public opinion in Israel, Lebanon and the rest of the world saw Israel as losing the conflict. In this sense, a hybrid force gained clear advantage through synergistic effects over its conventional opponent and achieved a surprise victory. However, it must be noted here that a hybrid force will need to have an abundant "will to sacrifice" as it will inevitably suffer very heavy casualties against a determined and modern military state e.g. the fate of terrorist insurgents in J&K against the Indian Army. To be fair to the IDF though, a thorough restructuring of doctrine and operational processes after the 2006 conflict has resulted in the inability or reluctance of Hezbollah to attempt a 'repeat performance.' In effect, therefore, Hezbollah's success was a one-off event that is unlikely to be repeated against Israel. India would do well to learn from the Israeli experience and stay vigilant for similar trends emerging within the ranks of the *jehadi* forces involved in the proxy war.

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TRANSFORMATIONAL RESPONSES

Transformation of organisational structures, training, equipping, evolution of doctrines and tactics comprise a time consuming and continuous process. But what is important is that the threats are dynamic and so should be the preparation to deal with them. Therefore, in this muddled and foggy environment, what should be the way ahead in the Indian context? A

An all-pervasive role in this domain is played by the intelligence agencies, which should forewarn, prepare the state security forces for the impending threat, guide them till the target, and give inputs for a change in strategy or stance. Ultimately, what is significant is the preparation and response to an undefined threat.

multi-layered security mechanism is needed to build a comprehensive security strategy against an ambiguous or undefined threat. For example, counter-terrorism levers are intelligence, military, law enforcement, diplomacy and financial sanctions to deal simultaneously against those operating from within the country or having cross-border linkages. Strategy and doctrine must form the edifice of any conceptual framework to combat hybrid wars, and this must be a joint and multi-disciplinary approach. It must precede any force restructuring. In fact, the first tool of deterrence is defining

and declaring a strategy and doctrine. This is a weak area as far as our own strategic and military work ethos is concerned. Research and capability based strategy and doctrine are required to be defined. This, in fact, lays down what one can broadly expect from the strategic and security establishment.

Success or failure will be dictated by the response mechanism. An all-pervasive role in this domain is played by the intelligence agencies, which should forewarn, prepare the state security forces for the impending threat, guide them till the target, and give inputs for a change in strategy or stance. Ultimately, what is significant is the preparation and response to an undefined threat. A rapid response also means the capability to reach, the capability to operate in an information vacuum, and the capability to handle various contingencies, ranging from conventional to sub-conventional threats.

Understanding the enemy's theory of victory and culture is paramount. This is extremely difficult in a hybrid scenario because the enemy system is complex and adaptive. Additionally, because of the emphasis on the cognitive and moral domains in hybrid war, defining victory in the minds of many different audiences will be a complex and a challenging task. As noted earlier, perceptions matter. Even determining whose perceptions matter is a difficult prospect. "Public Perception" is now the strategic centre of gravity in the

Clausewitzian sense. Russian hybrid methodologies clearly demonstrate an impeccable understanding of this aspect which Russia leveraged so effectively in Crimea. Any serious attempt by a nation-state to counter a hybrid adversary would have to cater to the fact that the practitioners of hybrid warfare always operate within the Observe, Orient, Decide, Act (OODA) loop of the response mechanism of a nation-state. The concept of 'weaponised information'¹¹ has put it into even sharper focus. Applying this to the Indian context, the first and foremost aim for the Indian armed forces must be to put in place a 'preventive' and 'offensive' mechanism which is capable of responding at a pace faster than the pace at which a hybrid adversary evolves.

BROAD OPERATIONAL RESPONSES

Building joint and combined arms capabilities comprises an inescapable necessity. Cyber war, information war, out of area contingencies and hybrid threats are some of the areas wherein the integration of resources is imperative and must be handled by a domain commander. The inherent nature of hybrid threats requires detailed Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (ISR) integration. Intelligence, fires and manoeuvre need to be fused because of the fleeting nature of targets, complex operating environment, dispersed nature of the adversary and the need to limit collateral damage.

The manoeuvre approach merits serious consideration. Manoeuvre in this case is not in the classical manner that revolves around tanks and aircraft, but in the mind. Pitching strength against strength is an outdated concept. Therefore, prudence lies in investing in special forces, with precise capabilities for wide ranging contingencies. Capabilities should be linked to the emerging hybrid threats and challenges. India cannot afford a special force for each domain; therefore, all terrain forces are a must with the future in mind. Special forces should be able to operate within, and beyond the territorial boundaries of India in all three dimensions. They should be lighter, lethal, manoeuvrable, survivable and more readily deployed and employed in an integrated manner. They should also be able to operate seamlessly with

11. James K. Wither, "Making Sense of Hybrid Warfare, 2016". Accessed at <http://connections-qj.org/system/files/15.2.06_wither_hybrid_warfare.pdf> on December 29, 2016.

Success in hybrid wars requires small unit leaders with decision-making skills and tactical cunning to respond to the unknown and the equipment sets to react or adapt faster than tomorrow's foe.

Organisational learning and adaptation would be at a premium, as would extensive investment in diverse educational experiences.

other civilian agencies during the course of military operations and what are commonly termed as Operations Other than War (OOTW). Combat training centres should incorporate hybrid operations and hybrid opposing forces into training exercises and experiments. Any force prepared to address hybrid threats would place a premium on cognitive skills to recognise or quickly adapt to the unknown.¹² Success in hybrid wars requires small unit leaders with decision-making skills and tactical cunning to respond to the unknown, and the equipment sets to react or adapt faster than tomorrow's foe. Organisational learning

and adaptation would be at a premium, as would extensive investment in diverse educational experiences.¹³

Fighting a hybrid adversary during a conventional war entails employment of modular units and a modular headquarters. Modular headquarters themselves should be more robust and staffed to minimise the requirement for augmentation. They should employ separable and deployable command posts for rapid response.

Air power will retain relevance in hybrid scenarios in both offensive and enabling roles. Precision strikes offer solutions that obviate the necessity for boots on the ground, but that is not to say that air power alone will be the sole response mechanism. Offensive air power assets in conjunction with special forces and robust enabling platforms like Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPAs), tactical airlift assets for speedy mobility and Combat Search and

12. David C. Gompert, "Heads We Win: The Cognitive Side of Counterinsurgency, 2007", p. 39. Accessed at <www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/2007/RAND_OP168.pdf> on November 1, 2016.

13. David Betz, "A Real Revolution in Military Affairs: Online Continuous Learning for the Operational War-Fighter, October 2007", pp. 5-6. Accessed at <www.mccdc.maine.mil/Portals/172/Docs> on November 19, 2016.

Rescue (CSAR) platforms would form part of a tightly knit response force. Armoured forces based on armoured personnel carriers are key elements of any force that will fight hybrid enemies in semi-built up and urban terrain with a modicum of training, organisation, effective standoff weapons, Improvised Explosives Devices (IEDs) and mines. Light and medium forces can complement armoured forces, particularly in urban and other complex terrain. Fast attack naval craft, along with seaborne special forces, would add significant punch in coastal and riverine battlegrounds. Finally, it has to be acknowledged by two airmen writing this paper that the well-trained and situationally aware infantryman remains the lynchpin in hybrid warfare and needs to be well-clothed, well-armed and capable of switching from operating in large platoon and company strength dispositions, to operating in small teams that somewhat replicate the capabilities of the special forces, albeit with lesser expertise.

While all this discourse about building hybrid capability is fine, India does not have the luxury of debating the diminishing prospects of conventional wars in the future. It is this multi-spectral variety of warfare that hangs like a proverbial dead-weight around the neck of India's doctrinal pundits and strategic planners. Considering the tremendous costs of sophisticated weapons and equipment, the dilemma of equipping for conventional warfare and then adapting oneself to tackle hybrid threats makes great demands on leadership, training and synergy.

Hybrid war offers no such luxury, particularly when conducting offensive operations against hybrid actors who are embedded among citizens of your own country. These would invariably be based on verified intelligence in the case of preemptive operations and on visible hybrid symptoms in the case of a reactive scenario. The dilemmas, however, are immense.

FOCUSSED STRATEGIES

Based on current trends and possibilities, the geographical spaces for the conduct of hybrid warfare against India are largely likely to be restricted

to J&K, semi-urban areas along the Line of Control (LOC), limited areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and rapidly changing areas in the northeastern states of Manipur and Nagaland. Historical pointers also suggest that the probability of getting embroiled in an Indian Peace-keeping Force (IPKF) kind of a situation that would warrant a hybrid Out-of-Area-Contingency (OOAC) scenario in support of national interests does exist. In order to simplify the strategies, it is felt that they merely be looked at as offensive and defensive strategies, the targets being both the physical and moral components of an adversary's hybrid capabilities.

What would a broad defensive strategy within the confines of India's physical frontiers look like? This would comprise steps taken to prevent infiltration, regular community searches to identify Anti-National Elements (ANEs), monitoring social media networks and other cyber traffic for suspicious activity, monitoring the flow of illegal and counterfeit currency, cracking down on criminal networks, preventing drug trafficking, investigating cases of missing locals to rule out the possibility of them having joined foreign terrorist organisations, communication intelligence, signal intelligence, perception management, societal awareness and ensuring the presence of multi-tiered physical security for our Vital Assets (VAs)/ Vital Points (VPs). Effectively, these are the operations aimed at creating an environment wherein a hybrid adversary is denied any space or opportunity to wage hybrid war against India.

Offensive strategies in the same space demand speed, discrimination, precision and immense situational awareness to distinguish between friend or foe, or even the ability to discriminate between right and wrong. Traditional military soldiering was not meant to demonstrate the above discriminatory abilities, particularly among the rank and file. As long as the senior leadership was endowed with this ability, operations would go, more or less, according to plan. Hybrid war offers no such luxury, particularly when conducting offensive operations against hybrid actors who are embedded among citizens of your own country. These would invariably be based on verified intelligence in the case of preemptive operations, and on visible hybrid symptoms in the case of a reactive scenario. The dilemmas, however, are immense.

OOAC operations demand competencies and capabilities that are significantly different. Forces would have to switch between defensive and offensive operations within the OODA cycle of the adversary. These would demand joint war-fighting capabilities of the highest order and, hence, this would be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs that deal with command and control structures.

THOUGHTS ON JOINT STRUCTURES

Having seen the strategies which are best suited for combating hybrid threats in three distinct categories, let us look at the command and control structures that might prove to be optimal in implementing these strategies.

The challenges faced by our security forces in combating the hybrid threat in J&K require no further emphasis. To deal with this challenge in an exhaustive manner, a novel attempt was made in 1993 by constituting a 'Unified Command in Jammu and Kashmir'. The same structure, with minor modifications continues till date. It comprises the Indian Army, Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and the State Police, along with senior bureaucrats of the state. The state chief minister is the chairman of the Unified Command with the General Officers Commanding (GOCs) of 15 and 16 Corps of the Indian Army as his security advisors. However, this structure has had its share of challenges in combating the hybrid threats in J&K in the last three decades. Hence, there is a need to look at the pitfalls in the present Unified Headquarters structure in J&K, which would enable us to correct these faults and evolve this structure to relevance in the present situation.

While there is still a debate within the strategic establishment on the efficacy of Theatre Commands, there would be a fair amount of consensus when it comes to formalising joint structures under the Headquarters

Weapons and technology for special forces are scarce and expensive, and must be sourced continuously, but in small quantities, as technologies keep changing. Selection of an unconventional cyber force for such operations could be an inescapable necessity through the employment of ad hoc teams that are put together from the environment.

Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS) to combat hybrid threats in an OOAC contingency. Since speed of reaction would be critical, a lean and all arms force which is specifically trained and exercised for hybrid warfare, would fit the bill in putting in place an effective and immediate response mechanism.

Command and control of response mechanisms to hybrid threats within the hinterland and periphery pose far greater challenges to the national security establishment. The key here is to look at prescriptive and preemptive structures, rather than reactive ones like the ones that exist today. Decentralised decision-making and quick transfer of operational responsibility among the local civilian leadership, CAPFs, police forces and Indian Army holds the key to an effective response to the prevailing kind of threats that switch between direct terrorism, insurgency and proxy war. The integration of air power into this structure is an area that merits greater attention in both its offensive and enabling capabilities. Offensive and coercive capability in this domain demands speed and surprise as key ingredients and this can be ensured only with adequate decentralisation to execute operations well within the OODA loop of the adversary. Such structures would necessarily have to be placed under the seniormost military commander commanding the military formations in the concerned area of operations. An addition to existing structures is the necessity for a dedicated hybrid warfare commander who would orchestrate the logistics, equipment training, intelligence requirements and tasking of the force. While special forces would be the main surface force element, the hybrid warfare commander would necessarily have to possess a sound understanding of both offensive and enabling air operations as he would have to requisition assets like the C-130 J Hercules aircraft or Chinook/Mi-17 helicopters as well as RPAs for ISR and strike aircraft, should the need arise. Should the situation involve the maritime domain, it would demand a much greater awareness of naval matters. Such cross-over domain awareness is in short supply in our present system and needs immediate attention. Cyber capability at the operational level is an element that has been neglected and needs immediate attention.

WAY AHEAD

Doctrinal work in the areas of hybrid warfare within the national security structures and the armed forces is the crying need of the hour. Bernard Fall's famous maxim on counter-insurgency, *"if it works, it's obsolete"*, holds good for the current flavour of hybrid warfare too. Hence, development of defensive and offensive strategies must be constant and ongoing. Equipping forces to counter hybrid threats poses great challenges to logistics as they differ in many ways from weapons and systems that are employed in conventional conflicts. Weapons and technology for special forces are scarce and expensive, and must be sourced continuously, but in small quantities, as technologies keep changing. Selection of an unconventional cyber force for such operations could be an inescapable necessity through the employment of ad hoc teams that are put together from the environment.

While intelligence coordination for such operations are being continuously refined, there is room for much improvement, particularly in the realm of inter-agency intelligence sharing through agencies like the existing Multi-Agency Coordination Centre (MAC). The effectiveness of Subsidiary MACs (SMACs) in various states and prospective trouble spots holds the key to last mile intelligence connectivity which is so important for dynamic targeting.

While lethal special forces operating in small multi-skilled teams with state-of-the-art equipment and weapons would be the vanguard of hybrid forces, light armoured forces would have to be trained for hybrid situations in semi-desert or flat terrain that affords cross-country mobility. It is also critical to integrate air and naval platforms at all levels to be able to switch between conventional and hybrid roles with ease. The flexibility

Regardless of how the threat is labelled, strategists must decide how best to address the methods employed by their adversaries, whether state or non-state actors.

More complex threats require a whole of government or comprehensive approach.

Usually, the best strategies involve the coordination and direction of all the effective instruments of state power, no matter how the threat is defined.

Keeping the current realities in mind, it is time that a dedicated military structure is evolved which is specifically trained and equipped to combat hybrid threats in the shortest possible timeframe. There is need for urgent transformation because the limits are expanding while the terrorist tactics are diversifying.

of existing aerial platforms and fast attack craft only needs to be matched with the correct training and leadership. Holistically speaking, the aim of the above structures would be to ensure availability of a highly-trained hybrid warfare force capable of undertaking conventional and sub-conventional operations with an inherent flexibility of switching from one form to the other in a seamless way.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Hybrid warfare does not change the nature of war. Violence remains at the core of hybrid warfare as it does any other form of war, and its aim is the same as any other act of war. Although the term “hybrid” is currently the most popular, it is by no means the only one to describe these wars. The fact that many armed conflicts blur the lines between war and peace and involve the use of instruments that were not traditionally part of war-fighting further complicates the problem. It is undoubtedly a challenge for traditional security establishments to address the wide range of threats identified by analysts and scholars of hybrid warfare. Cast the definitional net too wide, and a term like hybrid warfare becomes too all-encompassing to be of any practical use to policy-makers. Define warfare too narrowly, and policy-makers may fail to appreciate the significance of many non-traditional techniques of warfare that are being employed by an adversary as a prelude or adjunct to the use of military force.¹⁴

Regardless of how the threat is labelled, strategists must decide how best to address the methods employed by their adversaries, whether state or non-state actors. More complex threats require a whole of government or comprehensive approach. Usually, the best strategies involve the coordination

14. James K. Wither, *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 15, no. 2, 2016, p.86.

and direction of all the effective instruments of state power, no matter how the threat is defined.¹⁵ Hybrid war is not only hybrid in its capabilities and its effects, but in its theory and logic as well. Aspects of classical theorists such as Clausewitz, Sun Tzu and proponents of unrestricted warfare and fourth generation warfare can be used to describe hybrid war¹⁶, which shows that this is not new phenomenon.

Keeping the current realities in mind, it is time that a dedicated military structure is evolved which is specifically trained and equipped to combat hybrid threats in the shortest possible timeframe. There is need for urgent transformation because the limits are expanding while the terrorist tactics are diversifying. For example, in J&K, connections are being established among terrorist organisations, insurgent groups and international organised crime, “home grown” and “lone wolf” type terrorist acts are being financed by complex mechanisms, social networks are being increasingly used to target public sentiments as was evident in the Burhan Wani case (July 2016), fake currency is being pumped in across the border to destabilise the existing economic set-up and also to finance the stone pelters along with psychological terrorist operations which are being aimed at creating tensions between civilians and the military. In addition, all these activities are supported in logistical terms by the provision of launch pads, terrorist training camps and extreme high altitude clothing by the Pakistani military establishment. This is accompanied by cross-border firing using mortars and other heavy calibre weapons by the conventional Pakistani military forces on the LoC to facilitate terrorist infiltration across the border. Thus, an integrated application of conventional and sub-conventional capabilities by the state and non-state actors of an adversary demands an integrated response by conventional specially trained forces

Given the patterns of the past decade in India, the hybrid threat is expected to continue its diversification and increase in scale, increased stone pelting and agitation dynamics being a case in point.

15. Ibid.

16. Daniel T. Lasica, *Strategic Implications of Hybrid War: A Theory of Victory* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2009), p. 11.

Given the patterns of the past decade in India, the hybrid threat is expected to continue its diversification and increase in scale, increased stone pelting and agitation dynamics being a case in point. After the evaluation of the pattern of action, it is evident that hybrid threats are likely to pursue important and vulnerable goals: military camps, public institutions like schools, urban infrastructure and communications networks. It is precisely in such a scenario that the proposed joint structure under HQ IDS will have a telling effect. By its inherent capability, a dedicated structure to combat such threats will be able to act decisively in the shortest possible timeframe, thereby depriving the potential adversary of any easy operating environment. In addition, the same force would be able to apply itself seamlessly in geographically dispersed sectors, thus, validating the universal applicability of this force, both within the country and in the case of OOAC, should the need arise.