

ROOTS OF THE CONCEPT OF HYBRID WAR IN RUSSIAN POLITICAL AND MILITARY THOUGHT

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Abstract

This paper examines the roots in Russian and Soviet political and military thought of what is called today “hybrid war”. It is argued that Gerasimov’s doctrine is not an innovation, but just brings together components already existing much earlier than his publications in 2013-2017. The paper can be divided into two parts. The first one concerns theories developed by Russian researchers and practitioners until the beginning of the World War II (WWII), and the second - the views of authors after 1991, when the collapse of the USSR caused a number of scientists to focus on this subject. Finally, the impact of above mentioned authors on Gerasimov’s doctrine is identified and evaluated.

Key words: *Hybrid war, Russian military thought, Gerasimov, Messner, Myatezh-Voina*

What is Gerasimov’s doctrine?

The so-called Gerasimov’s doctrine is retrieved from the 2000-word article “The Value of Science Is in the Foresight,” which was published in the weekly Russian newspaper *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* on 26 February 2013. (Gerasimov V. , 2013) What is important to mention is that Gerasimov never uses “hybrid war” in it. Instead, he applies the term “indirect and asymmetric methods”, which was interpreted by Western scholars as hybrid war. In the article gen. Gerasimov searches answer to several questions: What is the modern war? For what the army has to be prepared? How it should be armed? What forms and methods should be employed for the development of the armed forces?

The text begins with a claim that in XXI century the differences between war and peace are blurred and that even stable and flourishing countries can succumb in few months or weeks to enemy aggression and become arena of chaos, humanitarian catastrophe and civil war. According to Gerasimov’s opinion, the Color Revolutions are example of such a modern war – they have different rules; non-military means are used to achieve political and strategic

goals; those non-military means have proven to be extremely effective. The change of rules consists in the wide application of political, economic, information, humanitarian and other similar measures, used together with the rebelling potential of the local population. Even when military measures, including peacekeeping and crisis regulation are applied, they are disguised.

Gerasimov is quite aware about the connection between the technological advancement and the way the wars are carried out. According to him: “New information technologies have enabled significant reductions in the spatial, temporal, and informational gaps between forces and control organs. Frontal engagements of large formations of forces at the strategic and operational level are gradually becoming a thing of the past. Long-distance, contactless actions against the enemy are becoming the main means of achieving combat and operational goals. The defeat of the enemy’s objects is conducted throughout the entire depth of his territory. The differences between strategic, operational, and tactical levels, as well as between offensive and defensive operations, are being erased. The application of high-precision weaponry is taking on a mass character. Weapons based on new physical principles and automatized systems are being actively incorporated into military activity” (Balzacq, Dombrowski, & Reich, 2019). Gerasimov also focuses on the importance and the role of the asymmetric activities (the use of Special Forces, the actions of the internal opposition and the information activities) in the modern war, which allow to achieve superiority over stronger enemy.

Gerasimov himself presents his ideas in the next scheme:

Scheme 1:

The change of the characters of the armed fight
Achievement of political goals
(Translation made by the author)

Traditional Military Methods	New Military Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military action starts after strategic deployment (Declaration of War). • Frontal clashes between large units consisting mostly of ground units. • Defeat of manpower, firepower, taking control of regions and borders to gain territorial control. • Destruction of economic power and territorial annexation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military action starts by groups of troops during Peacetime (war is not declared at all). • Non-contact clashes between highly maneuverable interspecific fighting groups. • Annihilation of the enemy’s military and economic power by short-time precise strikes in strategic military and civilian infrastructure.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Combat operations on land, air and sea• Management of troops by rigid hierarchy and governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Massive use of high-precision weapons and special operations, robotics, and weapons that use new physical principles (direct-energy weapons — lasers, shortwave radiation, etc).• Use of armed civilians (4 civilians to 1 military).• Simultaneous strike on the enemy's units and facilities in all of the territory.• Simultaneous battle on land, air, sea, and in the informational space.• Use of asymmetric and indirect methods.• Management of troops in a unified informational sphere
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Source: Gerasimov, V. Ценность науки в предвидении. Новые вызовы требуют переосмыслить формы и способы ведения боевых действий, 2013, accessed June 20, 2019, <https://www.vpk-news.ru/articles/14632>

In 2016 Gerasimov published his second article called “The hybrid war requires high tech weapon and scientific argumentation” (Gerasimov V. , По опыту Сирии, 2016). This is the first time the term “hybrid war” is used by him. Taking into consideration technology advances and development of communications, as well as the consequences of globalization, Gerasimov defines the term in the next way: “In the modern conflicts it has become more important to apply a complex array of political, economic, information and other non-military means, made with strong back up of military means. This is the so-called hybrid wars”.

Gerasimov presents a developed description of their nature, underlining that “their essence is not simply achieving political objectives with minimal use of military means against the enemy”, but achieving it through undermining enemy's military and economic potential, informational-psychological manipulation, active support for the internal opposition and partisan groups – all that, according to his opinion, happened during the Color revolutions. Gerasimov considered any of them a form of coup d'état staged from outside, based on information technologies and manipulations on the protest potential of the local population, combined with other non-military means. Returning to modern hybrid wars, he advises to make use of force only if the situation requires it as a last resort, under the form of peacekeeping missions or similar.

The conclusion is that “the indirect and asymmetric actions of the hybrid war will deprive the enemy of sovereignty without occupying its territory”. Gerasimov is quite aware that if the methods of the classic wars are well-known, the methods of the indirect war can only be guessed: “the state, victim of the hybrid war quickly falls into chaos, internal political crisis and economic collapse.” Gerasimov believes that hybrid war is not a “future” war, it is already conducted – in reality; in every military conflict of today there is a combination of military and non-military means: the internal conflicts are transformed into violent or military actions of the opposition; these actions, with the help of foreign instructors, become organized; later on, terroristic organizations appear with help from outside; a giant falsification of events and usage of the mass-media is observed. The effect of the mass-media is equal with the effect of large scale use of military force.

The third article of Gerasimov appeared in March 2017 and was published under the title “Peace on the edge of the war”, again in the same newspaper (Gerasimov V. , Мир на гранях войны, 2019). This time he starts with the fact that hybrid war does not fit in any existing classification just because it is waged during period, which can’t be classified neither as peace, nor as war. He notes that today neither in international agreements, nor in Russian official documents we can see clear definition of war. In the military doctrine of the Russian Federation, it can read that “war is a form of solution of inter-state or inner-state conflicts with the application of military force”. This is a serious point of discussion – if “military force” should be indispensable criterion for war. In XXI century the transformation of the military conflicts is a fact; the border between war and peace is blurred; even in peace time, when there is no open military aggression against a country, its national security and sovereignty are threatened and can be destroyed. In the same time the spectrum of reasons for use of military (but not kinetic) force is being expanded. Today wars are being fought for economic interests of specific country or countries, but under the disguise of “defense of democracy” or democratic values. The non-military forms of war, through the technological advancement, become formidable and very dangerous means. Their use can lead to collapse of the bank system, economy, information, electricity or other systems, which are essential for any country.

Summarizing, we can say that main ideas of the Gerasimov’s doctrine are as follows: 1. The differences between war and peace are blurred; 2. Wars are no longer declared and once they happen, they proceed in unfamiliar template; 3. Even stable and flourishing countries are vulnerable and can succumb quickly to enemy aggression and become arena of chaos, humanitarian catastrophe and civil war; 4. New war has new set of rules – sometimes non-military means are used to achieve political and strategic goals and they have proven to be very effective; 5. The aggressor in new war makes

use of political, economic, information, humanitarian and other similar measures, implemented together with the rebelling potential of the local population to achieve its goals; 6. The new technologies profoundly changed the nature of the war reducing the spatial, temporal, and informational gaps between forces and control organs; 7. Frontal engagements of large formations of forces at the strategic and operational level are gradually becoming a thing of the past. Long-distance, contactless actions against the enemy are becoming the main means of achieving combat and operational goals; 8. The differences between strategic, operational, and tactical levels, as well as between offensive and defensive operations, are being erased; 9. The application of high-precision weaponry is taking on a mass character. Weapons based on new physical principals and automatized systems are being actively incorporated into military activity; 10. The increased importance of asymmetric activities in the modern war, which allow to achieve superiority over stronger enemy in the modern war. These include Special Forces, the actions of the internal opposition and the information activities; 11. The political objectives of the new war are not simply achieved by the minimal use of military means against the enemy. It happens mostly through undermining enemy's military and economic potential, informational-psychological manipulation, active support for the internal opposition and partisan groups. Military means often should be used only as last resort.

Ideas and theories until the beginning of WWII

There are quite good reasons to believe that the theory of hybrid warfare, taken up by the President Putin, was first developed by the Colonel of the General Staff of the Russian Imperial Army and military professor Evgeny Messner (1891 - 1974). He was brilliant scholar and a furious anti-Communist, German-born Russian officer, who after having a glorious military career, emigrated to Yugoslavia in 1917 and then to Argentina, where he died in 1974. His ideas are systematized in the books *Mutiny, or the Name of the Third World War*, *The Modern Officers*, and *The World mutiny-war* published in Buenos Aires and in New York in the period 1960-1971 (Messner, 1999). "Mutiny war" is the translated version of the term he uses in Russian – "myatezh voina". The non-translated version is used as well in some sources. Both terms will be used interchangeably in this paper.

According to Messner, the "myatezh voina" is not well known, as far as its laws are "as invisible as the sun in a foggy morning"¹ It seems that the

¹ All of Messner's quotes are from the selection of his works made by Igor Domnin and published here: http://nvo.ng.ru/history/1999-11-05/7_rebelwar.html. Since the original quotes are in Russian, the translations are done by me

military genius of Messner allowed him to identify some of them and to draw a few differences between "the war of the past and the war of the future", which are now considered to be fundamental to the concept of the hybrid war.

A starting point in Messner's theory is the observation that in the two world wars the mutinies happen together with the wars, and the wars, with the mutinies, resulted in a new form of warfare, which he called *myatezh voina* which is translated as mutiny-war or rebel war in some sources. The term *myatezh*, which he begins to use after 1945, refers to "a mixture of confused ideology, sloppy malice, protests guided by principles, and violence without principles." According to him, the Third World War will be a *myatezh voina*, although its features can be noticed even now, making reference to the anti-colonial wars of the 1960s.

The main actors in the *myatezh voina* are not so much military troops as popular movements, "guerrillas, volunteers, illegals, terrorists, diversionist, saboteurs, propagandists in the enemy camp, radio programmers ...", an array of elements ranging from "capable and valiant military units to timid gangs, from fanatical revolutionaries to messy crowds, sometimes like a herd." Governments have developed a growing understanding of this and realize that the "fifth column" (it's a metaphor born in the Spanish Civil War, meaning group of people who undermine a nation or another group from within) should be maintained in both enemy and neutral and even friendly territories.

In the *myatezh voina*, the role of psychology and weapons is different than in the classic war. In the latter, psychology is an appendix to the weapons. In the revolutionary wars, the psychology of the popular movements coexists with the psychology of the army; in the *myatezh voina*, psychology becomes the main asset, with the weapons moving to second place. In doing so, psychology is applied not only to the enemy army, but most of all to the enemy population. That is why, if the most important thing in the past was the conquest of territory, today the primary task is the conquest of the hearts and the souls of the people in the enemy country.

Messner draws attention to another difference, the character of the dividing line between troops of warring states. According to him, in the past the dividing line in the wars disappeared where the partisan forces established their control. In the future wars however, there would be no such line as the war would be fought on the whole territory of the countries involved; the front is defined not only in terms of the military political, also in economic and social terms. There will be fighting in four dimensions; the fourth one is the psychology of the population. In the *myatezh voina* there is no administrative-organizational or psychological boundary between the country and the theater of the war; between the people and the army. The nation-wide nature of the

myatezh voina also gives rise to a sense of national responsibility for its outcome.

The most important task in myatezh voina is to bring together the one's own people and to attract part of the enemy people, although both, according to the author, are highly relative by nature. Myatezh voina is a war of all against all, where compatriots can be enemies, while residents of different countries can be allies. "Everyone must have a quiver with psychological arrows and a psychological shield."

The goals of the myatezh voina are as follows: destroying the morale of the enemy people; defeat of the county's active elements, the army, the partisans, and the fighting popular movements; conquest or destruction of objects of psychological value; conquest or destruction of objects of material value; external effects for acquiring new allies or destroying the morale of the allies of the enemy. Within these goals, each party must strive to keep up the morale of one's own people; preserve their active power, such as army and partisans; protect psychological or vital objects; avoid any action that can give an unfavorable response in third (neutral) countries to the actions of the aggressor, which could undermine the support of the international community.

Ideas will be the most valuable asset in the future war. The permanent task of the myatezh voina is to "take the enemy people into captivity," referring not to the physical captivity, but to the psychical captivity. This means "to weaken his positions, to bring doubt and hesitation in his heart; to convince him that our ideas are victorious, and of course, to attract him to these ideas". This can be achieved through propaganda.

The resources and their use are another difference between the past and the future war. In the traditional wars, the required resource was "money, money and more money", while for the future war the required resource will be "nerves, nerves and more nerves" Messner also points out that the modern wars were not stopped because of lack of money, but because lack of the morale.

In the modern war, military discipline and regulations will have another role. In the old wars a given objective was achieved through an order, while in the future wars the objectives will be achieved through suggestions which have to be as sophisticated as the nature of the war and the militants themselves.

The nature of the military virtues will also change. Courage, valor and bravery are no longer sufficient to win a war. Many more qualities and above all, many more activities, unrelated to the traditional army are needed. Before the task is set, informational campaign must be conducted. The more irregular the warring force is and the more unpopular the task appears to be, the more intensive the campaign should be. The whole array of means to set the task is needed, ranging from military order to propaganda manifested speech. One should be careful in one's demands to the population. It is not possible to demand more psychological efforts than they can give. Finally, training in

psychological stability becomes more important than training in physical and military skills, since, if psychological stability is broken there is a “catastrophe, morale collapse and refusal to continue fighting”.

In the myatezh voyna, the role of the officers drastically changes. They should be leaders, not just commanders. Messner points out that this transition would be difficult for individuals educated in the spirit of military virtues. In case they need to lead non-military force, they should attempt to restrict the brutality, sadism and villainy, which is typical for such paramilitary forces which do not belong to the traditional army. Under the new conditions, personal security of officers sharply declines. In the wars of the past, military hospitals and headquarters were considered safe places for the command structure to be located. In the wars of the future this will be no longer the case. Officers will be in danger anywhere, due to the invisible enemy, who can strike them down in terrorist attack or assassination. One will need to “fight the enemy not only on enemy territory, but also on our own”.

Messner also focuses on the impact of technology and politics on the war. According to his opinion, the world is currently has not sufficiently adopted to them. “The nuclear bomb changed a lot in warfare. But politics changed all in it”.

Under the hybrid war, military objectives and prestige of a country enter into a new kind of relation “It will not always be a mistake if the strategist puts the military objectives in second place and the prestige on first”. According to Messner, the myatezh voyna relies more on the strategy of prestige than on achievement of military goals. “This is a deviation of the classic military theories. It is a heresy. But myatezh voyna is heretic and this will be its way, until war is not separated from mutiny, until the re-revolution does not fix the problems of the revolution, until the life in the revolution and the re-revolutionary period does not come back to its own, classical way, the way of evolution”.

- If we compare Messner’s ideas with the ideas of the contemporary theorists of the hybrid war, we will see that he was able to guess all of its features, tasks, goals, traits and manifestations. With his military genius, he came to the conclusions which much later, in the 2010s, were reconfirmed by both Russian and Western scholars. Conclusions such as the idea that in the hybrid war coordinated use of multiple unconventional and irregular actors to achieve strategic objectives will be needed; development of comprehensive defensive strategy based on whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach will be implemented; psychological and information factors in warfare will have “critical role”. (Klus, 2016)
- Another scholar, who contributed to the development of the military science and in particular, to the development of the concept of hybrid war,

is General Alexander Svechin. Most contemporary Russian scholars think that he is “one of those people who gave Russians sense of pride, and who is a real example, not a part of propaganda, of the Russian smartness, consciousness and honor” (Geller, 1998). His brilliant philosophical and military thought together with his experience as soldier and officer gave him the nickname “the Russian Clausewitz”.

Svechin thought that the future war would have multiple fronts, political, diplomatic, and economic. To certain extend he developed the ideas of Gen. Andrey Snesev according to who “the periods free from armed fighting should be filled with non-military operations”. In them the strategy works “not with sword, but with other means, although alien [to the military practice]: propaganda, shutting down enemy economy, etc.”. (Geller, 1998)

- Another Russian military theorist is Georgy Samoilovich Isserson. He began his career in the Red Army. In his 1940 book, *New Forms of Combat*, he analyzed the experience of the civil war in Spain, and as well the Wehrmacht campaign against Poland in September 1939. At that time, Isserson was a professor at the Academy of the General Staff. His ideas, however, were not accepted, a decision that cost the Soviet Union a multitude of casualties and defeats. It is claimed that during WWII, Isserson, observing to what extent the reality confirmed his ideas, stated, "If they [the Russians] had listened to my advice, the Germans would not gotten beyond Minsk". This remarkable military scholar spent the entire war in GULAG camps. He was pardoned of all charges after Stalin's death, but never restored to his rank as general. He died in 1976. Although his theoretical contribution to modern warfare is neither as large nor as deep as that of Messner, it must be acknowledged that he is the first to point out that the “[Modern] War in general is not declared. It simply begins with already developed military forces” (Isserson, 1940) and is not guided by the classical theory of war, which states that before a major state clash there must be frontier battles to mark its beginning.

Ideas and theories after the fall of USSR

After the fall of the USSR, several researchers looked back to the period of perestroika and the end of the Cold War in an attempt to explain the defeat of the communist system and the causes of the collapse of the seemingly powerful Soviet Union. Many of these researchers were psychologists. Excluding the stories of psychotronic weapons and other "secret" ways of influencing human mind, which have little to do with science and more to do with science fiction, they launched a number of ideas that later became fertile soil for the Gerasimov's doctrine.

Vladislav Surkov, a close follower of President Putin and author of the "Concept of Sovereign Democracy", considered to be the main developer of the

hybrid war against Ukraine, uses the term "first non-linear war" as one of the terms for hybrid war. He believes that "sovereign democracy" is "a society's political life where the political powers, their authorities and decisions are decided and controlled by a diverse Russian nation for the purpose of reaching material welfare, freedom and fairness by all citizens, social groups and nationalities, by the people that formed it" (Surkov, 2006). According to him, the non-linear war cannot be analyzed with old tools and methods. In his opinion, the winner is the one who has mastered the future. Manipulation is that part of the technology of power, a type of hidden spiritual and psychological influence that should not be noticed by the object of the manipulation. This is an influence that requires considerable mastery and knowledge. "People who are being manipulated should be regarded not as individuals but as objects". A sign of this influence is considered to be the double coordinated effect when, together with the information provided to the recipient, the sender has specific expectations for the actions of the recipient. The latter is provided exactly as much knowledge as the manipulator wants, and the recipient builds his ideas and actions around this knowledge provided in a biased way.

Igor Kozyrev introduces the term "мрежоцентрична война", which is the Russian equivalent of the English term "net-centric war". According to him, this war is being waged all the time by peaceful means. "Which means it is always late to prepare for it. It is already late" (Kozyrev, 2013). Its form is technical and informational-psychological; its content is metaphysical, dealing with the "very nature of man". The war is led in the same area as culture, ideology and religion, and even without substituting them, it seizes their territory. Because of this, the net-centric war can be waged constantly. It is a concentrated expression of its age, post-industrialism, and because of this, it cannot be reduced only to its military aspect. "Man cannot hide from this war without becoming a passive or active participant, and even then passivity and activity remain very relative terms. One can consider himself to be an active participant, for example a leader of some movement, and at the same time to be a pawn in somebody's plan without even realizing it. It is also possible to be passive, but because of the sustainable way of life, to be able to resist it in active way. It is not possible to choose whether to participate or not; the only choice is how to participate. This is a war of ways of life. Its output, as well as a precondition for its triumph, is that of personal choice, which everybody of us will make. The winner will be that belligerent, whose way of life is accepted by most people". (Kozyrev, 2013)

Summing up, the main characteristics of the net-centric war according to Kozyrev, are:

1. Asymmetry: Every other types of war so far have been more or less symmetric – both sides were equipped with similar technology, the advantage came from numbers,

power, tactics and so on. Net-centric war is one between opponents with different civilizational development, and the advantage comes from civilizational supremacy

2. Because of this reason, the net-centric war is not fought so much on the battlefields with military means, but with peaceful means in peaceful time, which makes it very hard to resist. The war is fought with democracy, culture, media, and education. All of them are part of every day's life of everybody and therefore – excellent tools for manipulation
3. The net-centric war is fought non-stop against everybody, enemies and friends alike. It is a form of total war.
4. In the previous wars victory was achieved through fighting and defeating enemy. In the net-centric war it is not necessary to fight to defeat the enemy, because the main idea to program the behavior of the enemy's population in such way, so the enemy can collapse from inside, having its country, power and ability to resist – destroyed.
5. Virtualization – this war is like radiation, it easily penetrates every structure and creates misbalance between chaos and order. And since it is net-centric, things happen not because of the structure, but because of the distribution of the impulse in the structure
6. In this war we observe the effect of the “ghost subject”. We do not see who the subject is, but we know it is acting and together with other “ghost subjects” they create ghost networks (Pochepstov, Российския аналитичные контексты гибридной войны, 2016)

A. Denisov developed the concept of the so-called "controlled confrontation" (Denisov & Denisova, 2014), where the new methods of influence are of the same importance as the weapons. His idea for creating artificial psychological epidemics is quite illustrative: "The artificial psychological epidemics are deliberately initiated by simultaneously defeating parts of or all of the human population living within a given territory through general psychogenic trauma. ... The so-called 'syndrome of re-experience of the birth trauma,' which is a trigger mechanism for collective and individual psychotic states, inevitably leading to war or revolution."(Idem)

Denisov also introduced the term "ghost subject" (Denisov, 2011), defined as follows: "Specialists in the management of modern military and political conflicts are well aware of so-called hidden subjects of government. Typically, under this name they mean sources of influences that are impossible to identify at the moment, but that exercise influence on the conflict. The main

task in identifying the traits of this hidden subject is to “decode” it, to determine what its goals are, what its values are, what power and means it has”

The definition of the objectives of the information war is quite specific. “The aim of the information war is the complete or partial de-socialization of the targeted subject. De-socialization occurs, in particular, in total or partially, temporarily reversible or irreversible, ostracism of the target subject by his or her immediate environment or society as a whole. In a developed version, such ostracism or de-socialization is a politically acceptable option, for example, for its future physical elimination or for the use of lawful forms of violence or terror with the full approval from the society” (Idem)

In the paradigm of such thinking that pays attention to people's psychology, Denisov also explains the ineffectiveness of external influences on Chinese society. “A radical distinction of the Chinese worldview ... to a significant degree explains why neither the US, nor Russia, nor the EU, nor the Islamic world can apply efficiently modern technology to control the behavior of the Chinese state, military or economic agents. Chinese consciousness simply does not accept the procedure of hidden management of the choice, as the Chinese are not guided by good and evil in making that choice. Their choice is based on the logic of a completely different ethical system”. (Idem)

In the Russian language literature there is also the concept of a “wars of meanings” (Pocheptsov, 2014) defined as a war in which new notions are being developed. It is fought in the virtual space. A more complicated version of the meaning war is the so-called complex meaning war, understood as a “complex or complicated meaning wars, based on the use of multiple channels of influence and not intended to achieve an immediate result, but to achieve many objectives in long term after years of interaction” (Pocheptsov, 2013). Informational, virtual and the physical channels are included. The term is introduced by the Ukrainian Gregory Pocheptsov in various articles, written between 2013 and 2016. Pocheptsov starts his analysis with a definition of the sphere of action of the meaning war. According to him every war has its own space in which it acts. The regular war acts in the physical space, the information war in information space, and meaning war in cognitive space (Pocheptsov, 2015). Essential for the understanding of the nature of such war is the term “meaning”. The image should be understood as a symbol, translated on the emotional dimension, where there is no place for rational behavior. The meanings are capable of breaking the consciousness, thus creating new reality (Pocheptsov, *Новые смыслы, ломающие страны*, 2015). The old meanings gradually ritualize and step back to give space to the new meanings. The meanings guide humanity, as they form their view of the world. Depending on the image of the world, people get motivation for one thing or another. Meanings determine our goals, and people move in the direction pointed by meanings. (Pocheptsov, *Управление смыслами*, 2013)

The meaning war is characterized by reconsidering the facts in favor of the interpreter and has the following characteristics:

1. Basic instrument – interpretation, not information
2. Range – tries to cover not part of the population, but everybody
3. Main interests – not the facts, but their interpretation
4. Goal – rejection of “wrong” interpretations (Рочептсов, СМЫСЛОВЫЕ ВОЙНЫ В ПОЛИТИКЕ И БИЗНЕСЕ, 2013)

At the same time meaning war differs from the other types of “new” wars. It differs from the information war, which changes only specific elements of the world model. The meaning war changes the whole model and works with the whole population, meanwhile the information war works with only part of the population. The meaning war is planned to work on the long term, while the information war tries to get objectives done in the short term. Information war attempts to keep the existing mental structures while meaning war tries to construct new ones. The meaning war deals with conceptual interpretation and therefore its fighters are people, such as writers, who work with the strategic communications of the society, which is different from the information war, in which the main fighters are journalists. The meaning war can be fought through the means of mass-culture, literature and the goods for wide consumption. When the population is treated in this way, it starts censoring on its own the meaning streams deciding what is “true” and what is “lie” according to this matrix. The information war puts the information streams in the center, while the meaning war puts the cognitive processes in the center. Due to all these differences, the strategy for defense and protection has to be different. The information war does not change the conviction of the people, unlike the meaning war. In the first case what is changed is information, in the second is knowledge. The facts might change, but the framework used to interpret them remains the same. On the other hand, it is possible to have the same facts, but the change of the framework we use to interpret them can lead to different behavior. „The meaning war operates on the frames, the mental structures on which we build our thinking. The use of frames happens outside of our consciousness; the frames determine what we call “solid meaning”; if something is repeated, this can lead to consolidation of the frames in the brain; the activation connects the superficial frames with the deep frames thus obstructs the penetration of opposite frames; the existing deep frames cannot be changed fast; the facts do not make us free, since facts have no meaning outside the frames; the simple denial of the frames by the opponent just makes them stronger” (Lakoff, 2006). In this aspect the meaning war resembles a lot the marketing. The brand sells meaning, not physical characteristics. The meaning war is made easier by the fact that humanity moves more and more towards unified models of behavior (Рочептсов, СМЫСЛОВЫЕ ВОЙНЫ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ МИРЕ, 2013).

- Pocheptsov illustrates his conclusions concerning the annexation of Crimea in the following way: “The expansion of Russia was maintained by old, not new for the population meanings, by the activation of the old soviet mental constructions”. As a result, the annexation of Crimea happened without a single shot: “foreign people did whatever they wanted”, without being perceived as foreigners, but as “our people” as the old soviet meanings required.
- The Russian-Ukrainian meaning war is fought in condition of continuous reinterpretation of the events. Between two alternative sources of information on what is actually happening, one is chosen in accordance with the planned military targets. The author gives few examples which are presented in the following table:

Table 1:
Goals and used concepts in the meaning war of Russia against Ukraine

Goals	Used concept
Eliminating the military nature of the annexation	“little green men”, “little gentlemen”
Eliminating the illegal nature of the annexation	“people’s mayor”, “people’s governor” “people’s self-defense”, “unification of Crimea”
Emphasizing the negative character of the enemy	“Stormers”, “punish squad”, “punishing operation”, “junta”, “self-declared Kiev government”, “self-declared president”
Increasing the positive aspect and sacralization of our own actions	“Crimea is ours”, “Crimea is Russian”, “Crimea is place for Russian navy”
Description of the events for its legitimization	Capture of the administrative buildings is explained with “This is ours, people’s, and we are the people”

The meanings manipulate not only the mind of the enemy, but the meanings have to be defined for the home population too, in order to ensure their support. The Russian propaganda has chosen for this task the meaning group of “Fascist-neo-nazi-banderites (followers of Stepan Bandera)” which provoke a negative reaction in the Russian population and generate hostile attitude towards Ukrainians.

The meanings are not permanent, they come and go. The author uses again the annexation of Crimea pointing out that Ukraine is trying to part with the old Soviet meanings and change them with new modern Ukrainian ones. The conclusion of Pocheptsov is that the meaning war conquers first the minds and later on – the territories. According to him the victory will belong to whoever manages to give new meanings to the world, in the way Christianity managed to do, changing the old cruel gods with one new God, a God of love and compassion.

Without any doubt, the most prominent Russian military and civilian researcher in the field of hybrid wars is Aleksandr Alexandrovich Bartosh. He is a member of the Russian Military Academy of Sciences, Director of the International Security Information Center at Moscow State Linguistic University, and the author of a number of books on the topic. His views are characterized by a few basic features: a specific interpretation of the cold war as a hybrid war; globalization as a prerequisite for chaoticisation; the new type of conflicts; the relation between color revolutions and hybrid war; and finally, the hybrid war as a new form of inter-state confrontation

According to Bartosh, the humanity has already passed through a long conflict, the Cold War, which is now coming back to life. He argues that until now there has been no single opinion as to whether the Cold War was an actual war or not. The doubts arise from the fact that it did not demonstrate the main principle of war, armed warfare. Nevertheless, according to Bartosh, the West has won the Cold War without engaging in a single military battle. This is compatible with Sun Tzu's idea that "The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting" (Bartosh, 2015) or as Clausewitz' claims, "War as a political act is a contention with force between political entities in which each has the object of restoring peace under favorable conditions" (Coats, 1986). According to Bartosh the hybrid war of Russia and its allies has never been interrupted even during the 1990s when there were better relations with the West. As for now, the hybrid war has intensified since "Russia has adopted independent foreign policy in accordance with its national interests" (Bartosh, Гибридная война - новый вызов национальной безопасности России, 2018)

As Bartosh points out in his article, "the weakening of the contemporary system for global security and its deformation and fragmentation lead to increased chaoticisation of international relations. [...] The colorful revolutions in the Middle East and in North Africa and, not too long ago, also in Ukraine have greatly contributed to this process. The international conflicts are intensifying and so are the new networks of international terrorism funded by Afghan drug trafficking and organized crime. The USA, trying to achieve hegemony, use any opportunity to weaken its strategic competitors, mainly China and EU". (Bartosh, 2014).

As a result, the world is entering into a state of chaos of the big and small wars, ethnic and religious conflicts. In the system of the international relations there is growing criticism capable of undermining the fundamentals of the existing world order. The conflicting nature in the processes of globalization shows serious defects in the international security system. In the circumstances of increasing problems and confrontation caused by globalization, the latter becomes out of control and leads to the chaoticisation of the international relations. The anarchic nature of the international system determines the foreign policy strategies of the countries. One such strategy is the USA's "Strategy of Manageable Chaos". It should allow the real goals of the attacking countries to be covered under the disguise of apparently unrelated foreign actions, leading to chaoticisation of the situation in entire regions or separate countries. The USA considers the chaos to be manageable and sees in it a new instrument for their national interests covered as "democratization" of the world. The other states, including Russia, consider this to be catastrophe which can lead to global disaster. From this point of view, the chaoticisation of the economy, military security, the cultural sphere and other areas are the domain of the hybrid war, which aims at exhausting the victim country through multiple actions, done by military and non-military actors

Conventional military means are used in traditional conflicts, typical until the 1950s. The initiators of the modern conflicts try to avoid this scenario in order not to sustain losses in their standing armies, to save the resources and the infrastructure of the victim state, which through soft means can be accessed and used by the other country. In this way, the traditional war becomes an anachronism which is replaced by new forms of war, for which new types of violence are more typical, a mixture of war, organized crime, terrorist activity and influence through information media. The hybrid wars allow one country to achieve political goal in a conflict with minimal use of military force. (Bartosh, 2018)

According to Bartosh, the hybrid war has several stages: „forming of the array of hybrid threats with consideration of the specific local situation, in order to exercise influence; exercising influence on the key spheres of the society – politics, culture, economy. In the sphere of politics, the most crucial one is the military security; evaluation of the exercised influence and improvement of the strategy. In each of these stages, the aggressor attacks state structures, economic, cultural and socio-political spheres and the armed forces with the help of local mercenaries and/or separatists, supplying them with arms from outside. Private military companies are supported by the intelligence. The "Fifth column" can be used as a "ramming force" against the legitimate government during one or more colorful revolutions. In the final stages there is a request for complete capitulation of the victim state". (ibid) It is Bartosh's opinion that „hybrid war and colorful revolutions rely on the strategy of

annihilation and attrition. [...] The strategy of the latter is a particular case of a strategy based on indirect actions; it includes a system of political, socio-economical, informational and psychological measures to influence the population of the victim country and the military and other order enforcement structures in order to undermine the authority of the government. [...] The strategy is based on the technology of coup d'état made through the use of actions for civil disobedience, which aim at overthrowing the government under foreign influence. [...] It is the first stage of the destabilization of the country victim and paves the road for future capture of it from inside by foreign powers“. The destabilization is part of the hybrid war“ (Bartosh, 2016)

In Bartosh's opinion, the colorful revolutions and the hybrid war are connected by the so-called adaptive approach, which is based on the “peculiarities of the system characteristics of the colorful revolutions and the hybrid war, for which is typical continuity, mutual interdependence and possibility to remain unchanged during the transformation of the conflicts”. (Bartosh, 2016). This means that even during the transition from one form to another, the means and the strategies remain versatile enough to be adapted in both cases.

The increased dynamics of the stages of realization and the relatively short time allow it to be considered a strategy of annihilation. On the preparation stage of the colorful revolutions a lot of information is gathered, and the preparations for the actions of civil insubordination are carried out. This includes creation of auxiliary materials (flags, slogans, etc.), taking control of the media of communication, preparation of the new leaders, selection of places which have to be captured, establishment of a system for information of the participants for the planned activities.

During the final stages the authorities should be hit, aiming at capturing the power from outside. This can happen with foreign funds, pseudo-religious organizations and bribed media. When the direct hit is unsuccessful, the strategy of annihilation is combined with the strategy of attrition.

Bartosh is convinced that the hybrid war is a new form of inter-state confrontation. It is easier to start than to finish. Without being declared officially, it develops inside its own paradigm. It can easily grow and transform from a local to a regional or even global conflict. Ending a hybrid war is difficult, because the mutual mistrust which stems from it is hard to recover from. Besides that, people who took part in the hybrid war have the war as their only profession and continue to exercise their influence over the civilian life. In the hybrid war there is no capitulation. If the government is not strong enough, then peace will be decided by foreign powers. Secondly, it is very hard to predict the outcomes of the conflicts of the new generation. The connection between cause and consequence is broken. The resulting situation is out of control even for the perpetrator. As a result, a new indeterminate zone is

created. This zone contains different actors with different goals and interests, that often do not coordinate with each other. This provokes unpredictable turns in the political situation, which cannot be predicted. The hybrid war is not legitimate. International law has a clear description of what war is. With regards to traditional war, in 1974 the UN introduced the definition of aggression, that includes conventions that protect the rights of the militants and the civil population, with specific types of weapons being forbidden. This creates a framework for political decisions. Nothing like this happens in hybrid war, where the aggressor is often impossible to identify. There can be no peace-making process and the intelligence has new role in it.

Conclusions

From the analysis above it would seem that the majority of the characteristics of Gen. Gerasimov which he uses to support his vision for the future war are, in fact, already present in the works of different authors, older than Gerasimov. The findings are summarized in the next table:

Table 2:

Gerasimov's idea	Origin
The differences between war and peace are blurred	Messner
Wars are no longer declared and once they happen, they proceed in unfamiliar template	Isserson, Svechin
Even stable and flourishing countries are vulnerable and can succumb quickly to enemy aggression and become arena of chaos, humanitarian catastrophe and civil war	Bartosh
The new war has new set of rules – sometimes non-military means are used to achieve political and strategic goals and they have proven to be very effective	Messner, Bartosh
The aggressor in the new war makes use of political, economic, information, humanitarian and other similar measures, used together with the rebelling potential of the local population to achieve its goals	Messner, Kozyrev, Pocheptsov, Surkov

<p>The new technologies profoundly changed the nature of the war reducing the spatial, temporal, and informational gaps between forces and control organs</p>	<p>Messner, Bartosh</p>
<p>Frontal engagements of large formations of forces at the strategic and operational level are gradually becoming a thing of the past. Long-distance, contactless actions against the enemy are becoming the main means of achieving combat and operational goals</p>	<p>Kozyrev, Pocheptsov, Denisov</p>
<p>The differences between strategic, operational, and tactical levels, as well as between offensive and defensive operations, are being erased</p>	<p>Messner</p>
<p>The application of high-precision weaponry is taking on a mass character. Weapons based on new physical principals and automatized systems are being actively incorporated into military activity</p>	<p>Gerasimov</p>
<p>The increased importance of asymmetric activities in the modern war, which allow to achieve superiority over stronger enemy in the modern war. These include special forces, the actions of the internal opposition and the information activities</p>	<p>Kozyrev</p>
<p>The political objectives of the new war are not simply achieved by the minimal use of military means against the enemy. It happens mostly through undermining enemy's military and economic potential, informational-psychological manipulation, active support for the internal opposition and partisan</p>	<p>Bartosh, Surkov, Kozyrev, Denisov</p>

groups. Military means often should be used only as last resort	
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Stating that most of the ideas of Gerasimov come from other authors is not intended to diminish his contribution in any way. After all, he comes from an army with specific culture and traditions and there is no surprise other authors have reached the same conclusions before him. Careful reading of these authors, Gerasimov included, reveals that they merely attempt to warn about the new nature of the war, not advising that Russia has to adopt specific universal strategy. All of them underline the changing nature of the war, which would require adaptive custom-tailored approaches for every single case. Finally, the Russian military authors keep the tradition of giving concrete examples in order to draw lessons to be learned. These examples vary from the Red Revolution and the Second World War to the Color Revolutions. The contribution of Gerasimov, while not at all original, demonstrates again a certain trend, specific way of perceiving the reality.

Discussion

This research has its limitations. First of all, it was outside of the scope of this paper to analyze in depth the Western authors such as Hoffman, McCuen, Freier, Nemeth and others, in order to position the current findings with the findings of other contemporary military authors from other countries. This would also allow us to determine whether the hybrid war is an exclusive product of the Russian military thinking or is a product of specific period or a universally observed phenomenon.

If it turns out to be mainly Russian invention, a possible future research could try to explain what specific circumstances in Russia made its invention possible. Alternatively, if it is not, it is possible to attempt to research what triggered different military thinkers from different countries to reach similar conclusions. The role of the military, political, social and others culture and traditions were not evaluated in this article as they were not considered of importance for the research objectives.

This article does not analyze official Russian military documents which define the Russian military doctrine. Another possible research could attempt to verify to what degree the findings of the current authors entered in the official Russian military doctrine and whether or not they have been applied in real life situations. In my knowledge, in the case of Ukraine and the Crimean annexation for example, such researches have been done.

It is worth considering the possibility that there is no Gerasimov Doctrine. Rather than a doctrine to follow, Gerasimov simply attempted to explain the existing situation of the world, using the existing framework in Russia, developed by the authors in this article. Should this is the case, it still

wouldn't contradict to the findings of the research that the majority of the ideas of Gerasimov are not original

Another point could be made regarding the analysis of the origin of the ideas. While I have used explicit mentioning by the authors as marker to whether or not they meant specific argument, one could argue that other arguments are implied by the meaning of their work. Such in-depth analysis could expand the study but it wouldn't invalidate the results, because it would find that some of the ideas of Gerasimov were, in fact, present in more authors than stated by me.

The greatest question unanswered in this article, as far as it goes beyond its scope, is why Russian and Soviet authors belonging to different epochs and with different political beliefs, have almost identical views on the hybrid wars and why their concepts are so different from Western ones? A future comparative study of strategic and security culture of the West and East can probably give the answer.

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