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## THE MAIN STAGES OF DEPLOYMENT OF HYBRID AGGRESSION BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AGAINST UKRAINE

A historical analysis of the hybrid aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which became the most dramatic event in the recent history of Ukraine, at the beginning of the third decade of independence, was conducted. The open armed actions of the Russian Federation against Ukraine caused new challenges not only to the national security of Ukraine, but also to the security of the world in general. Currently, the term "hybrid war" best characterizes the actions of the Russian Federation in relation to Ukraine. It is this type of warfare that combines not only military means, but also informational, economic, political, diplomatic, and humanitarian means. At the same time, the «hybrid wars» of the Russian Federation use many tools, starting from the spread of panic rumors to the mobilization of the potential of the church, agents of influence in the economy, political bodies or the use of so-called soft power.

The article analyzes the step-by-step process of the military conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, starting with the occupation of the Crimean Peninsula, the open Russian-Ukrainian armed confrontation in the east of the Ukrainian state, and ending with a large-scale invasion of Ukraine. Within each of the stages, separate periods are distinguished, the evolution of which determined and changed the motives of the behavior of the Russian Federation and led to the beginning of hostilities. The Russian-Ukrainian war requires a complex scientific understanding, study and generalization of the experience of conducting military operations in the largest armed conflict in Europe since the end of the Second World War. Conclusions were made regarding the need to consolidate the efforts of the EU, the USA and other democratic states as a guarantee of preventing hybrid aggression by states that act from the position of force, rather than the force of law.

Keywords: *war, hybrid war, hybrid conflict, hybridthreat, armed conflict, Russian-Ukrainian war, armed aggression.*

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The theoretical aspect of the concept of «hybrid war» was found to be redefined the most accurate and almost the most common for determining the nature of Russian aggression against of Ukraine. All spheres of public life were under threat: political, economic, cultural, informational. Each of these aspects is important to investigate both individually and comprehensively, at the same time the political and legal dimension in relation to others, it often has a determining, end-to-end character of

influence. By the functioning or inactivity of certain government and civil institutions society's collective ability to resist aggression is revealed. Established political and legal norms restore or, on the contrary, impress foundations of shaky socio-political stability in the conditions of hybrid war. Not only the tactics and strategy of military capture, but also demoralization citizens, the so-called «occupation» of consciousness, the spread of disinformation, and others components of hybrid warfare are also related to existing infrastructure political institutions and the

political and legal field that enables such destructive processes.

In the spring of 2014, the Russian Federation (RF) demonstrated a new form of warfare by annexing the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC) and invading the eastern regions of Ukraine. This resulted in Ukraine losing control over parts of Donetsk and Luhansk. The Russian Federation's actions escalated into open armed aggression and a large-scale invasion of Ukraine. In order to resist and deter the aggressor, Ukraine and its international partners must gain a clear understanding of the nature and character of this conflict. This understanding will enable the development of a comprehensive strategy for the future.

**Analysis of current research.** The topic of hybrid warfare is highlighted in works of scientists of the National Institute of Strategic Studies (V. Begma, V. Horbulin, O. Yizhak, B. Parakhonsky, O. Reznikova, G. Yavorska and others), Institute of Political and Ethnonational Studies named after I.F. Curacao National Academy of Sciences (O. Zorych, O. Kalakuri, N. Kochan, O. Rafalsky and others), Institute state and rights named after V.M. Koretsky NASU (V. Horbatenko, I. Kresina, O. Sosnina, Yu. Shemshuchenko etc.). A significant contribution to the study of hybrid warfare made by: T. Andrievsky, M. Antonovych, Yu. Kudryachenko., E. Magda, A. Onofriychuk, T. Obolenska, O. Stoyko, S.Pirozhkov, V. Shemaev and others scientists. This is also an important problem for world science, and interpreting the central concepts associated with hybrid warfare are already traditional we turn to Western researchers (F. Hoffman, Jon Mc. Cuen, M. Bond, Brian J. Donlon, Brian P. Fleming, J. Stowell, R. Killebrew). The mentioned authors devoted themselves to working out the essence, strategy, and threats of hybrid warfare, but each subsequent one an attempt to conduct an objective study of its various aspects, taking into account the fact that the Russian aggression caused unprecedented human, territorial, economic losses, destruction and material damage to Ukraine, is of actual character.

**The objective of this article** is to conduct a historical analysis of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in order to outline the key phases of the Russian Federation's hybrid aggression towards Ukraine.

**Research methods.** The work uses the dialectical method of cognition and methods of the system approach; functional, structural, historical legal and logical methods; the method

of political comparativism and comparative legal analysis, forecasting method and others.

**The results.** The armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine unfolded within the framework certain stages, among which one can single out: the Russian armed invasion of Crimea with the subsequent occupation of the peninsula; Russian-Ukrainian armed forces confrontation in the east of Ukraine; the large-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine with February 24, 2022, which continues to the present time.

Let's consider in more detail the specifics of the occupation of Crimea peninsula, open Russian-Ukrainian armed confrontation on the east of the Ukrainian state and a large-scale invasion of Ukraine.

**Occupation of Crimea.** On February 20, 2014, Russia began the military phase. Since that day, there has been an increase in Russian troops in the ARC. The same date indicated on the medal «For the return of Crimea» of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation.

On February 23, 2014, pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian rallies began (in the latter, led by Mejlis leader Refat Chubarov, had a large participation the number of Crimean Tatars).

On February 27, unknown armed men, without insignia on their uniforms, seized and blocked the Verkhovna Rada of Crimea and other administrative buildings, airports in Simferopol and Sevastopol, communication institutions, etc. To Some of the deputies who voted for came to the Crimean Parliament holding a referendum on expanding the autonomy of Crimea on May 25, 2014 (ЗМІ: Рада АРК не може розглянути питання про всекримський референдум 2014).

Simultaneously with the political coup in Simferopol, Russian troops began blocking Ukrainian military units and transport routes from mainland Ukraine to ARC.

On February 28, the Crimean State Broadcasting Company was captured, afterwhich caused the disconnection of Ukrainian TV channels.

Ukraine did not recognize the illegitimate change of power in Simferopol and Sevastopol. However, the order to use force against the invaders was not given. This decision was made at a meeting of the National Security Council and Defense of Ukraine on February 28, 2014 (Штогрін 2019).

On March 1, 2014, the Federation Council of the Russian Federation supported the president's appeal of Russia V. Putin on permission to use the Armed Forces of Russia Federations on the territory of Ukraine (Росія

оголосила Україні війну 2014). National Security and Defense Council Ukraine, in connection with aggression from Russia, decided to bring the Armed Forces forces of Ukraine in full combat readiness and developed a «detailed plan of action on a case of direct military aggression by the Russian Federation» (Турчинов доручив привести ЗСУ у повну бойову готовність 2014).

A «referendum» was held on March 16. According to Russian officials according to the data, the annexation was supported: in Crimea – 96.77% (and 2.51% – «for» restoration of the Constitution in 1992), in Sevastopol – 95.6% of the population.

On March 17, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Law of Ukraine "On approval Decree of the President of Ukraine «On partial mobilization» (Про затвердження Указу Президента України «Про часткову мобілізацію» 2014). The same day V. Putin together with the self-proclaimed Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the ARC Serhiy Aksyonov, Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada of ARC Volodymyr Kostantinov and Oleksiy Chaly, head of the Sevastopol City State Administration, signed the Agreement on the Adoption of the Republic Crimea is part of Russia. On March 21, the law on the ratification of the Treaty of March 18 was adopted by the Council of the Russian Federation and the legislation concerning the establishment of additional bodies within the Federation - the Republic of Crimea and the federal city of Sevastopol., confirming the annexation of these regions by Russia (Задорожній 2015: 533).

On March 24, the decree of the executor of duties President of Ukraine O. Turchynov was published on the redeployment of troops. parts, institutions and organizations of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, etc. troops formations and law enforcement agencies from the temporarily occupied territory of AR Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, among others. regions of Ukraine (Про передислокацію військових частин 2014).

In May 2014, there was a representation of the President of Ukraine in Crimea moved to the city of Kherson. In January 2016, a decree of the President of Ukraine was issued, which improved its work, the Service for Issues was formed reintegration and de-occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. July 17, 2014 Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine created the State Service of Ukraine on issues of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, cities of Sevastopol and temporarily displaced persons (Деякі питання Державної служби України

2015). It was merged on April 20, 2016 with the State Agency of Ukraine for Donbas Restoration in within the Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories and internally displaced persons of Ukraine (Деякі питання Міністерства з питань реінтеграції тимчасово окупованих територій 2016).

During 2017-2021, Ukraine's efforts were directed mainly to ensuring non-recognition of the occupation of Crimea by the international community, continuation of the introduction of sanctions against the Russian Federation and restoration of information impact on the population of the Republic of Crimea.

**The conflict in eastern Ukraine** commenced with the involvement of Russian special services in Ukraine were focused on destabilizing the situation in Eastern region, including mass creation of non-prescribed by law armed formations, use of weapons and terrorist methods and methods opposition to legitimate authority. The Russian Federation sent mixed forces to the East of Ukraine, which consisted of personnel military «leavers» and «retirees», Russian nationalists, the so-called «soldiers of fortune», veterans of the Caucasus and of the Balkan wars, soldiers from other «hot spots» and just criminals who mixed with recruited local residents (The White Book of the Anti-Terrorist Operation 2017 : 20).

On April 7, controlled by the Russian special services, armed groups announced the creation of the so-called «Donetsk People's Republic» - DPR, as well as the so-called «Declaration on the sovereignty of the DPR» was adopted. April 27 in the same way, the «Luhansk People's Republic» – LPR was created.

The beginning of these actions was a raid by a group of militants led by an officer of the Federal Security Service of Russia by Colonel I. Girkin (pseudonym - Strelkov), who first captured Sloviansk, then Kramatorsk, and then more a number of settlements and established control over the entire region (Левченко 2017: 14).

On April 14, 2014, by decree of the Acting President of Ukraine Oleksandr Turchynov, the decision of the National Security Council was put into effect and Defense of Ukraine on conducting an anti-terrorist operation (АТО) (Про рішення Ради національної безпеки і оборони України 2014). That is, legally, the anti-terrorist operation has started in the east of Ukraine operation that lasted from 2014 to 2018 (У Генштабі пояснили 2017).

In turn, in the format of Ukraine, the USA, the EU, the Russian Federation, April 17, 2014

in Geneva The Russian Federation started a diplomatic game, the purpose of which was not to find ways settlement, and denial of their participation in aggression, destruction of the unity of politics Western countries in the issue of the introduction and expansion of sanctions, legalization yes called «DPR» and «LPR». It was a combination of the Russian Federation as a dictatorship from the beginning of the special services, which allowed them to stabilize the front line in Donbas, freeze the conflict and bring the confrontation with Ukraine to a level, which is more comfortable for them. That is, to transfer it to the political plane war and behind-the-scenes struggle.

The creation of the «Novorossiya» project and the beginning of the armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine, during which active destabilization took place in the 9th Eastern and southern regions of Ukraine by organizing mass anti-government protests («anti-Maidan») protests, clashes with law enforcement agencies and supporters of the unity of Ukraine, as well as the capture of administrative buildings An attempt to implement the «Crimean scenario» on the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk region. Gaining control over certain regions, the formation of «militia units» consisting of members from the Russian special services, criminalized law enforcement factions, and local pro-Russian groups, the holding of «Referendums» and the creation of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics republics All this with Russia's full support of the separatists in financial and military spheres. Furthermore, Russia's imposition of political and economic pressure on Ukraine, along with the escalating presence of the Russian Armed Forces near the Ukrainian border, has undermined the credibility of Ukraine's military operations against Russian-backed extremist organizations and fueled the country's ongoing fragmentation.(Алімпієв, Певцов 2017: 21-:22).

September 2016 Russian-Ukrainian confrontation in the east of Ukraine underwent significant changes, mainly in connection with the signing in Minsk on September 21 Decision of the Trilateral Contact Group on the withdrawal of troops in Donbas from 2016 and means of opposing parties. The document provided for the removal of the parties from took positions in both directions, forming districts 2 km wide and 2 km long depth (Марко 2016: 139-140).

The occupying forces in Donbas switched to the tactics of «disturbing» actions, purpose which consisted in the exhaustion and

demoralization of the ATO forces. The enemy tried to provoke servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to an active reaction in response, to accuse Ukraine of violating the Minsk agreements (Воєнні аспекти протидії «гібридній» агресії 2020: 37).

From April 30, 2018 to February 24, 2022, the operation continued in the east of Ukraine of the United Forces. The mission was intended to be executed in compliance with the legislation of Ukraine titled «On the specificities of state policy in ensuring the sovereignty of Ukraine in temporarily occupied territories in Donetsk and Luhansk regions» (Про особливості державної політики із забезпечення державного суверенітету України 2018). The operation of the Joint Forces (JOF), in fact, became by reformatting the ATO with the introduction of martial law or a state of emergency, the transfer of control from the SBU, which formally managed the ATO, to the United operational headquarters of the Armed Forces (Рада ухвалила закон про реінтеграцію Донбасу 2018).

On February 24, 2022, after a large-scale invasion of the Russian Federation, the military parts and units participating in the JOF formed groups United forces, which includes operational-tactical groups «East» and «North», parts of direct subordination. OS groups together with other forces directly involved in the current hostilities in the east and south of the country, are subordinated Commander of the Defense Forces of Ukraine. In June 2022, the group rebuilt into several immediate operational and tactical groups submission.

Large-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine from February 24, 2022, which continues to the present time. In the early morning of February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation struck missile strikes on the territory of Ukraine and launched a ground offensive in the South, East and North.

Since February 24, when the Russian Federation attacked Ukraine, at least 8,000 have died civilians, of which 487 are children – such are the data of the office of the U.N.O High Commissioner for human rights.

The U.N.O emphasizes that these figures are only verified and documented confirmed deaths, and that the actual death toll is much higher. The largest number of victims among civilians – more than 3.2 thousand people - occurs for March 2022. For comparison: according to the U.N.O, after the Russian Federation annexed in 2014 Crimea, and a conflict began in Donbas with the participation of those supported by Russia separatist

militants, and by the end of 2021, about 14.4 have died in Ukraine thousands of people, of which about 3.4 thousand are civilians.

Figures regarding losses among the military are regularly cited by both Ukraine and Russia, however, each talks about the enemy's victims, avoiding to name them number of own dead. There is currently no independent confirmation of these figures.

In January 2023, the Minister of Defense of Ukraine Oleksiy Reznikov in an interview The BBC said that Russian military personnel are on the hot spots of the front every day lose «about 500» killed soldiers, and Ukraine – «tenth of of this amount».

The Ukrainian General Staff officially released the figures of casualties in August 2022, when Commander-in-Chief Valery Zaluzhnyi announced the death of approx 9 thousand soldiers.

In September, President Volodymyr Zelenskyi said that we losses of the Armed Forces are five less than the losses of the Russian army. He also talked about 50 dead Ukrainian soldiers every day.

In December 2022, the adviser to the head of the OP Mykhailo Podolyak with reference to data of the General Staff spoke about the number of dead from 10 to 13 thousand, noting that «we have more losses due to injuries» (Пік великої війни Росії проти України 2023).

At the same time, the Armed Forces repulsed the enemy: as of May 16, 2023, 199 980 were destroyed occupiers, thousands of units of military equipment (308planes, 294 helicopters, 3762 tanks, 7348 armored vehicles, 3150 artillery systems and 562 self-propelled guns) (Війна. Зеленський везе пакети допомоги з Європи 2023).

In both 2014 and 2023, the Russian Federation will suffer heavy defeats in the confrontation with the Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian state.

**Conclusions.** The beginning of the Ukrainian-Russian confrontation, the moment when the Ukrainian people lost their peace, can be considered within the framework of the following stages:

1. Russian armed invasion of Crimea and its aftermath occupation of the Russian peninsula on February 20, 2014.
2. The war in eastern Ukraine since April 2014, which began with creating under the cover of «people's» performances by the special services of the Russian Federation terrorist so-called Donetsk and Luhansk "people's republics" and lasted until the beginning of a large-scale invasion. first period, of the specified stage

consisted in overcoming the hybrid aggression of the Russian Federation and active actions in the liberation of the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk regions from the Russians terrorist groups, the beginning of bilateral agreements (beginning April - September 19, 2014). The second period – localization of the conflict, management stabilization operation in the East and South of Ukraine (since September 19, 2014).

3. Large-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine from February 24, 2022, which continues to the present time. If we evaluate the attempts of the Russian Federation to disintegrate and divide Ukraine, which were carried out from 2014 to 2023, you can see how each time the military the component increased: from limited use in 2014, to a full-scale invasion. The military component was auxiliary, although big The authorities of the Russian Federation actively waged and are waging an information war uses chauvinistic propaganda that allows consideration of armed aggression, as a component of the consistent strategy of the Russian Federation aimed at returning Ukraine to spheres of Russian influence.

The aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which began with the occupation and illegal annexation Crimea, the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict in the east of our country, full-scale invasion, set a dangerous precedent for which contradictions can be resolved not based on justice and law, but based on distorted legal norms and force.

Only in the case of consolidation of the efforts of the states of the European Union, the United States of America and of other democratic states of the world can be a guarantee of non-admission hybrid aggression of states for which the main thing is the right of force, not the force of law.

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## ОСНОВНІ ЕТАПИ РОЗГОРТАННЯ ГІБРИДНОЇ АГРЕСІЇ РОСІЙСЬКОЇ ФЕДЕРАЦІЇ ПРОТИ УКРАЇНИ

Проведено історичний аналіз гібридної агресії російської федерації проти України, яка стала найдраматичнішою подією в новітній історії України, на початку третього десятиліття

незалежності. Відкриті збройні дії російської федерації проти України спричинила нові виклики не лише національній безпеці України, а й безпеці у світі загалом. На часі саме термін «гібридна війна» найкраще характеризує дії російської федерації щодо України. Саме цей тип ведення війни об'єднує в собі не лише військові засоби, а й інформаційні, економічні, політичні, дипломатичні, гуманітарні. При цьому, «гібридні війни» російської федерації використовують багато інструментів, починаючи від поширення панічних чуток до мобілізації потенціалу церкви, агентів впливу в економіці, політичних органах чи застосування так званої м'якої сили.

Здійснено аналіз поетапного проходження воєнного конфлікту між російською федерацією та Україною, починаючи з окупації Кримського півострова, відкритого російсько-українського збройного протистояння на сході української держави до широкомасштабного вторгнення в Україну. У межах кожного з етапів виділено окремі періоди, еволюція яких обумовила та видозмінила мотиви поведінки російської федерації та призвела до початку бойових дій. Російсько-українська війна, потребує комплексного наукового осмислення, вивчення й узагальнення досвіду ведення воєнних дій у найбільшому з часу завершення Другої світової війни збройному конфлікті в Європі. Зроблено висновки щодо необхідності консолідації зусиль держав ЄС, США та інших демократичних держав, як запоруки недопущення гібридної агресії держав, які діють з позиції сили, а не сили закону.

Ключові слова: *війна, гібридна війна, гібридний конфлікт, гібридна загроза, збройний конфлікт, російсько-українська війна, збройна агресія.*

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