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Theoretical and methodological bases of modern hybrid conflicts

Курбан О. В. Теоретико-методологічні основи сучасних гібридних конфліктів. Представлене в статті дослідження розкриває проблематику гібридних конфліктів, із якими пов'язують найбільш важливі сучасні міждержавні протистояння. Дається короткий ретроспективний огляд проблематики застосування та вивчення технологій ведення гібридних конфліктів, що в різні часи знаходило відображення в роботах таких теоретиків, як Сунь-Цзи, Геродот, Йосип Флавій, Плутарх, Аміан Марцелін, Тит Лівій, Корнелій Тацит (Давній Світ); Макіавелі (епоха Відродження); Карл фон Клаузевіц (Новий час); В. Немет, Ф. Хоффман, Д. Кілаллен, Н. Фрейер, Д. Маккуен (Європа та США, ХХ-ХХІ ст.); Л. Левашова, А. Дугіна, І. Панарина, А. Манойло (РФ, ХХ-ХХІ ст.). Визначається поняття «гібридний конфлікт» як загальне, базове поняття, що в свою чергу сегментується на поняття «гібридна агресія» та «гібридна війна». За авторським визначенням, гібридний конфлікт є поняттям геополітичного рівня, в той час як гібридна війна та гібрида агресія відносяться до категорії локальних, міжнародних та внутрішньополітичних конфліктів. Теоретико-методологічна структура порушеної теми передбачає проведення досліджень у двох контекстах – напрямки розвитку суспільства (економічне, політичне,

військове, інформаційне, міжнародне, культура, державне) та інструменти (доктрини, концепції, теорії, стратегії). Виділяються такі основні інструменти, як концепція асиметричної війни (Е. Мак), теорія керованого хаосу (С. Манн), доктрина «м'якої сили» (Дж. Най), доктрина «кольорових революцій» (Дж. Шарп), теорія рефлексивного управління (В. Лефевр), доктрина необмеженої війни (Цяо Лян), доктрина мятежів (С. Месснер), доктрина мережево-центричної війни, теорія інформаційної війни в соціальних онлайн-мережах (О. Курбан). Також, важлива частина дослідження проблематики представлена у форматі трьох ключових етапів – прихованого (латентного), напіввідкритого та відкритого.

Ключові слова: *гібридна війна, гібридна агресія, гібридний конфлікт, інформаційна війна, кібервійна, асиметрична війна, доктрина «м'якої сили», стратегія керованого хаосу, доктрина «кольорових революцій», теорія рефлексивного управління, доктрина необмеженої війни, доктрина мережево-центричної війни, теорія інформаційної війни у соціальних онлайн мережах.*

Курбан А. В. Теоретико-методологические основы современных гибридных конфликтов. Представленное в статье исследование раскрывает проблематику гибридных конфликтов, с которыми связывают наиболее важные современные межгосударственные противостояния. Дается краткий ретроспективный обзор проблематики использования и изучения технологий ведения гибридных конфликтов. В разные времена эта проблематика находила отражение в работах таких теоретиков, как Сунь-Цзы, Геродот, Иосиф Флавий, Плутарх, Амиан Марцелина, Тит Ливий, Корнелий Тацит (Древний Мир); Макиавелли (эпоха Возрождения); Карл фон Клаузевиц (Новое время); В. Немец, Ф. Хоффман, Д. Килкаллен, Н. Фрейер, Д. Маккуэн (Европа и США, XX-XXI вв.); Л. Левашова, А. Дугина, И. Панарина, А. Манойло (РФ, XX-XXI вв.). По авторскому определению, гибридный конфликт является понятием геополитического уровня, в то время как гибридная война и гибридная агрессия относятся к категории локальных, международных и внутривнутриполитических конфликтов. Теоретическая и методологическая структура рассматриваемой темы предусматривает проведение исследований в двух контекстах – направлениях развития общества (экономическое, политическое, военное, информационное, международное, культура, государственное) и инструменты (доктрини, концепции, теории, стратегии). Выделяются, такие основные инструменты как: концепция асимметричной войны (Э. Мак), теория управляемого хаоса (С. Манн), доктрина «мягкой силы» (Дж. Най), доктрина «цветных революций» (Дж. Шарп), теория рефлексивного управления (В. Лефевр), доктрина неограниченной войны (Цяо Лян), доктрина мятежевой войны (Е. Месснер), доктрина сетцентричной войны, теория информационной войны в социальных онлайн-сетях (А. Курбан). Также важна часть исследования проблем в формате трех ключевых этапов – скрытого (латентного), полуоткрытого и открытого.

Ключевые слова: *гибридная война, гибридная агрессия, гибридный конфликт, информационная война, кибервойна, ассиметричная война, доктрина «мягкой силы», стратегия управляемого хаоса, доктрина «цветных революций», теория рефлексивного управления, доктрина неограниченной войны, доктрина сетцентричной войны, теория информационной войны в социальных онлайн-сетях*

Kurban O. Theoretical and methodological bases of modern hybrid conflicts. The study presented in the paper reveals the problems of hybrid conflicts with which the most important modern interstate confrontations are connected. The concept of “hybrid conflict” is defined as a general, basic concept, which, in turn, is segmented into the concepts of “hybrid aggression” and “hybrid war”. According to the author’s definition, a hybrid conflict is a concept of a geopolitical level, while hybrid war and hybrid aggression belong to the category of local, international and domestic political conflicts. The theoretical and methodological structure of the studied subject envisages conducting research in two contexts – directions (economic, political, military, informational, international, cultural, state) and tools (doctrines, concepts, theories). The basic tools are enclosed: the concept of asymmetric warfare (E. Mac), the theory of controlled chaos (S. Mann), the doctrine of “soft power” (J. Ney), the doctrine of “colour revolutions” (G. Sharp), the theory of reflexive control (V. A. Lefebvre), the doctrine of unrestricted war (Qiao Liang), the doctrine of rebellion war (Ye. Messner), the doctrine of network-centric war, the theory of network information warfare (O. Kurban). Also, an important part of the research focuses on problems in the format of three key stages – hidden (latent), half-open and open.

Keywords: *hybrid war, hybrid aggression, hybrid conflict, information war, cyber war, asymmetric war, the doctrine of “soft power”, the strategy of controlled chaos, the doctrine of “colour revolutions”, the theory of reflexive control, the doctrine of unrestricted war, the doctrine of network-centric war, the theory of information wars in social online networks*

In recent years, Ukraine has been in the open state of a hybrid war, unleashed by the Russian Federation, which has covered almost all aspects of the life of Ukrainian society. This is an innovative war that has not yet been studied scientifically and has not been sufficiently studied in practical aspects.

In specialized dictionaries a hybrid warfare, as a rule, is defined as “a purposeful process of establishing external control of an alpha subject over a control object, establishing total control in the field of public administration, in which formation methods play a determining role” [5, p. 69].

In various studies, synonyms or specific aspects of a hybrid war stand out such concepts as: information and psychological war, non-conventional war, sixth generation war, asymmetric, proxy war, non-linear, non-contact / indirect, network, etc.

The practice of the beginning of the XXth century introduced some changes in the principles of the formation of the conceptual and terminological apparatus of the studied problems. Enough controversial terms and definitions began to appear. Such as, for example, “hybrid peace”, which is defined as “the continuation of a hybrid war, the state of conditional rest and virtual

harmony between the preparation of the next stages of hybrid war” [5, p.70].

Unfortunately, the concepts presented above do not fully reflect the whole picture and do not provide an opportunity to analyze the situation systematically.

This circumstance creates a lot of problems that do not allow the relevant state structures and Ukrainian society as a whole successfully repel Russian attacks and respond to key challenges.

Based on the above relevance, the main purpose of the paper is a theoretical and methodological analysis of the main elements and technologies of modern hybrid wars and the clarification of key terms and concepts. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to solve a number of key tasks, in particular such:

- consider the main aspects of the history of the birth and development of hybrid wars technology
- formulate basic theoretical concepts
- identify the main directions of development of modern hybrid conflicts
- systematize the main theories, concepts and doctrines used in the strategic and tactical planning of hybrid conflicts

The history of the study of theoretical and methodological foundations of hybrid conflicts has rather deep roots. For the first time, as part of a comprehensive study, individual tools of hybrid conflicts were considered in the 5th B.C. by a Chinese military and political strategist Sun Tzu in his treatise «The Art of War» [12]. An Ancient Greek explorer, Herodotus, in his book “The Histories” described some hybrid methods of warfare, using the example of Scythian and Persian (6th B.C.) and the Greco-Persian wars (499-449 B.C.) [1]. In the context of individual events in the history of the Ancient World, historians, Plutarch, Amian Marcellinus, Titus Livius, Cornelius Tacitus, described military techniques used by such generals as Alexander the Great, Guy Julius Caesar, Hannibal, Pierre, Marcus Aurelius, etc.

In the Middle Ages, the subject under study was, in general, not seriously worked out, but the work of Nicolo Machiavelli “The Sovereign” should be noted, in which, among other things, by systematizing previous experience, he proposed a number of hybrid tools that the ruler can use to achieve military and political goals [6].

Among the subsequent theoretical and methodological developments there is the work of Prussian general von Clausewitz, “On War”, in which he outlined the basic principles of preparing for a successful war, in particular mentioning the

tools that are now defined as hybrid, should be highlighted [2]. In particular, it should be noted that the strategic and tactical plans of the General Headquarters of the German Army, during the First and Second World Wars, were based his designs.

The XX century has brought a lot of new ideas to the theory and practice of hybrid wars. First of all, it made it possible to systematize practical tools and derive basic categorical concepts. For the first time, the concept of «hybrid war», as an officially recognized term, has been used since 2001.

Among Western experts, this topic was considered in works by V. Nemeth, F. Hoffman, D. Kilkallen, N. Freyer, D. McQueen. The experts understand the hybrid war as an integrated technology that combines economic, political and military aspects.

A significant role in the development and study of hybrid war technologies was made by Russian practitioners and researchers. One of the key developments was the so-called “Gerasimov Doctrine”, in which the conceptual principles of the conduct of the Russian Federation of modern wars were outlined. Among the scientific researches in this direction are L. Levashov, A. Dugin, I. Panarin, A. Manoylo. In particular, they systematized and analyzed the experience of the participation of the USSR and post-Soviet Russia in hybrid conflicts of the 20th – early 21th centuries.

Analyzing the main points and events of the hybrid confrontation of 2014-2018 between the Russian Federation and its allies, on the one hand, and Ukraine and its Western allies, on the other hand, the author came to the conclusion that it is necessary to clarify and expand the theoretical and methodological basis of the subject matter.

In our opinion, the concept of a strategic level, as a hybrid conflict is, should be highlighted. And at the tactical (interstate or domestic political) level, a hybrid conflict can be presented in two versions – a hybrid aggression and a hybrid war.

As a hybrid conflict, we propose to consider the confrontation of geopolitical subjects, which is manifested in the confrontation of the parties, alongside using integrated strategies and tactical decisions of a political, economic, ideological, cultural, military nature. This concept can be attributed to the geopolitical sphere and is determined by the vectorial nature of international politics, in terms of confronting military-political alliances, economic alliances of countries and transnational corporations. For most of the XXth century, such a hybrid conflict took place through

the Warsaw Pact – NATO (military), the CMEA (Countries of mutual economic assistance) – the alliance of the United States and Western Europe. The same kind of conflicts took place in other historical epochs.

At the level of intrastate or regional interstate confrontations, a hybrid conflict can be presented in two forms – a hybrid aggression and a hybrid war. In this case, we are talking about such phenomena as civil conflicts within a single state, which can be both centripetal (the war of 1965–1975, in Vietnam) and centrifugal (the war of 1991–2008, in Yugoslavia). And also, we speak about the confrontation of the two states, without attracting a wide range of allies (Russian-Georgian war of 2008).

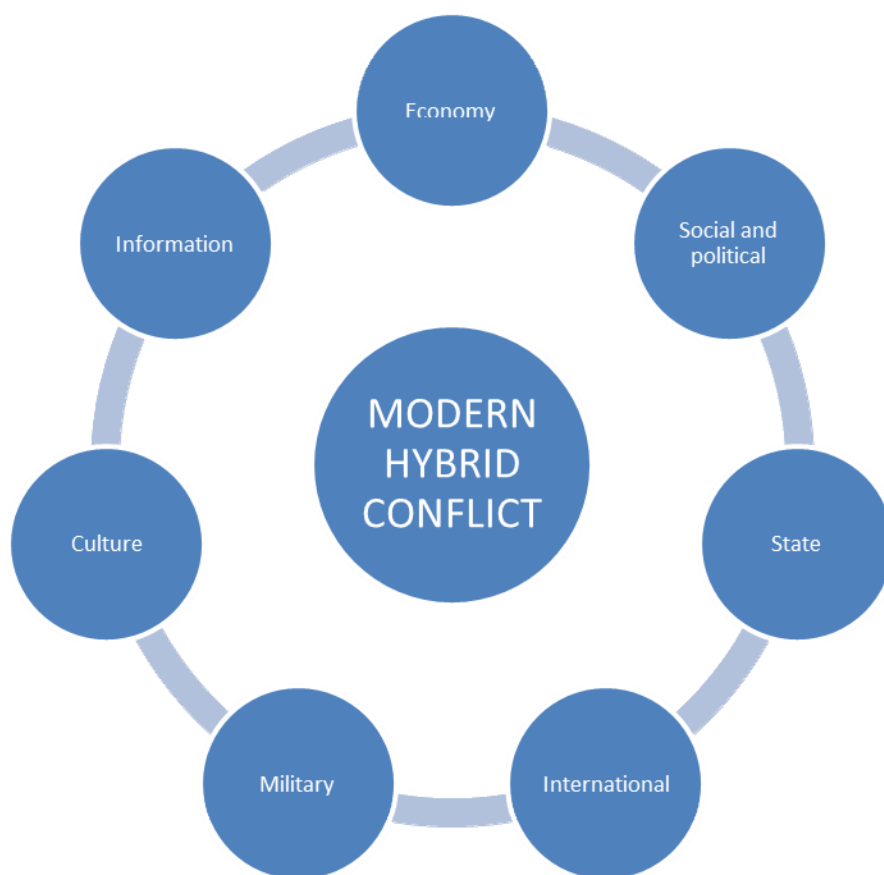
In this case, we claim it is necessary to consider a hybrid aggression as an integrated

impact of a destructive nature, which the attacker applies to his victim, without a different response.

In this case, a hybrid warfare is an open confrontation between individual subjects, alongside using integrated tools of direct and indirect influence. At the same time, the parties to the conflict, consciously and adequately, make efforts to obtain a decisive advantage.

In most cases, within the framework of hybrid conflicts, a hybrid aggression goes into a hybrid war, which can go into a phase of an open military confrontation through international institutions, or can go into a frozen format.

Traditionally, the main areas, in which hybrid conflicts are carried out, are highlighted: economic, social and political, domestic, international, informational, cultural, military (pic. 1.).



Picture. 1. The main directions of hybrid conflicts

The *Economic direction* involves destructive actions in relation to the financial system (weakening the national monetary unit and blocking financial flows, withdrawing capital), economic sanctions (personal or sectoral), restricting or blocking the supply of strategic raw materials (hydrocarbons, agricultural products, etc.), closing / removal of enterprises (belonging to business representatives of the attacking side),

blocking trade routes (hubs, sea, land, air routes). The main goal of actions in this direction is the weakening of the economic potential and the transformation of the attacked country into a raw materials appendage and the sales market of the attacking side.

Social and political direction, it constitutes actions aimed at the organization of inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts of an open format,

artificially created political conflicts, acts of civil disobedience, as well as artificially stimulated growth of criminal activity. The main goal of the actions of the attacking side is the atomization of society, the creation / strengthening of a social split.

The *State direction* involves the destructive actions of the attacking side on the state institutions by blocking the activities of all levels of government, undermining the authority of key representatives of the state apparatus, encouraging separatism and violent changes in the constitutional order, as well as encouraging corrupt actions by the officials. The main goal of the enemy's actions is to weaken, block or destroy the state power system.

The *Information direction*, as a rule, is represented by actions aimed at active promotion of alien political ideas and moral and ethical principles, capturing the national information field (promoting foreign media, taking control of national ones), saturating the national information field with negative information (fakes). The continuation of the information direction is a cyber war, which involves the deployment of confrontations on the Internet. Key elements include dDos and Phishing Attacks, the use of OSINT technologies (gathering information from open sources) and HUMINT (forming insider networks). The main task of actions in this direction is to get an opportunity to control the emotional state of key people (opinion leaders) or of the society as a whole.

The *Cultural direction* is represented by humanitarian aggression, which aims to destroy the national heritage (architecture, artifacts), direct or indirect actions aimed at restricting the language of the titular nation, negativizing the national culture and traditions, imposing foreign mass culture (cinema, literature, theater, visual arts and etc.), as well as the negativization of the moral authorities of the nation (culture, art, science). The main goal of the attacks is to show the failure of the nation, the lack of historical past and prospects for the future.

International direction implies destructive actions detrimental to the international image of the attacked side in the form of refusal from direct interstate contacts, non-recognition of the official leadership of the country and its representatives in the negotiations, breaking or ignoring interstate treaties and agreements, and also refusal to recognize international conventions, pressure through international organizations or mediation structures, closing of diplomatic missions,

recalling of ambassadors and consuls. The main goal of such actions is to deprive the enemy of the status of subjectness in international processes.

The *Military direction* is traditionally represented by such actions as the involvement of private military companies, terrorist acts, the organization of guerrilla and insurgent movements, supply of weapons, ammunition and the conduct of such operations as peace enforcement or peacekeeping. The main goal of actions in this direction is weakening or elimination of the national security system.

The typology and classification of the main tools, used in the framework of hybrid conflicts, are represented by a wide range of doctrines, concepts and strategies, among which the most popular are: the strategy of controlled chaos; the doctrine of "soft power", the doctrine of colour revolutions, the theory of reflexive control, the doctrine of unlimited war, the doctrine of network-centric war, the concept of asymmetric war, the rebel war doctrine.

The *CONCEPT OF ASYMMETRIC WARFARE* (proposed by Andrew J. R. Mac in 1975) implies a concentration of resources and the efforts of the attacking side to attack the enemy in an unexpected way and in an unexpected place [15].

One of the basic concepts here is the "asymmetric threat", which is defined as "a variety of internal and external, objective and subjective contradictions of social development in the environment of the functioning of an object that is not adequate to the level of the subject's readiness to manage threats" [5, p.34].

Typical signs of asymmetric confrontation are: opposition of technological advantages to quantitative, attacks on the infrastructure of the enemy, strikes in poorly protected places, non-standard tactics, unexpected decisions (going against international conventions and humanitarian principles). In hostilities, this concept involves the use of mobile war tactics, the use of special operations forces or private military companies.

The *STRATEGY OF CONTROLLED CHAOS* (proposed by Stephen Mann in 1992) implies a set of actions aimed at introducing the attacked party's society to a state of "political criticality" that blocks or destroys its key institutions [16].

One of the conceptual provisions of the theory of chaos, which is the basis of the strategy under consideration, is the fact that «the theory of chaos will determine that it is very difficult to make long-range predictions» [16, p. 64].

Among the typical signs that are peculiar markers of using this strategy are: attacks on

national cultural identity, the formation of a state of hopelessness in society, the creation of totalitarian ideologies and cults, atomization of society, concentration of public attention exclusively on material problems, stimulation of corruption, activation of ideological faults of society, the negative authority of the government, the formation of conditions for the emergence of civil won or imposed public opinion, stimulating economic problems.

The *DOCTRINE OF "SOFT POWER"* (proposed by Joseph Nye in 1990), involves the attacker to carry out a set of actions that demonstrate their own advantages to the enemy [9]. Such demonstration actions are intended to affect the emotional state of the key personnel of the opponent or his society as a whole. In this case, the attacking side has an opportunity to control or have a significant impact on public life, the economy, foreign and domestic policies of the attacked side.

According to some researchers, in the doctrine of "soft power", the actions of international organizations, which "are a good platform for realizing the "soft power" of the country, are important. The state has the right to disseminate its ideas, values and policies within the organization, among other member states, and through this organization to non-member states" [8, p. 38].

The *DOCTRINE OF COLOUR REVOLUTIONS* (proposed by Gene Sharp in 1993) involves the organization and implementation of mass social movements whose goal is a non-violent change of the political system or the management elite of a society [14].

According to G. Sharp, "Nonviolent struggle is much more complicated and diverse than violence. Both the people and public institutions use psychological, social, economic and political weapons, known as protests, strikes, boycotts, refusal to cooperate, express discontent, and people's self-government. As mentioned above, any government can rule insofar as the sources of its strength are replenished by the cooperation, subordination and obedience of individuals and public institutions. Unlike violence, political disobedience has a unique ability: it blocks such sources of power" [14, p. 34].

As a rule, innovators become the initiators of colour revolutions (10-15% of the total population), and the middle class (50-60% of the total population) becomes the driving force that penetrates innovative ideas and brings about changes in society. Typical examples of such revolutions are: "Velvet Revolution" in

Czechoslovakia (1989), "Bulldozer Revolution" in Yugoslavia (2000), "Rose Revolution" in Georgia (2003), "Tulip Revolution" in Kyrgyzstan (2005), "Brick Revolution" in Moldova (2009), "Jasmine Revolution" in Tunisia (2011), etc.

The *THEORY OF REFLEXIVE CONTROL* (proposed in the late 1960s, based on the development of V. A. Lefebvre) involves the use of integrated tools that allow influence the decisions of the adversary, beneficial to the attacking side, as a consequence of creating certain situations or demonstrating potential threats [10].

According to the profile researchers, "the concept of "the reflexive control" reflects the general approach to managing a person using various methods of covert psychological coercion and using reflection as the leading system-forming psychological mechanism of this management process [3].

The main methods of achieving the above objectives are: distraction, the formation of a dense information flow, the processing of which requires significant resources, the introduction of cognitive dissonance into the state of blocking the decision-making function, the depletion of the enemy's resources to solve few significant problems or fake threats, allies, putting vigilance to sleep (reducing stress or transferring processes to a hidden format), provoking rash decisions and actions, psychological pressure and intimidation.

The *DOCTRINE OF UNRESTRICTED WAR* (developed in the 1990s, by Qiao Liang, based on the principles of unrestricted submarine war), involves the implementation of aggressive actions that are not governed by time frames (cyclical processes) or constraining principles (moral and ethical standards or international conventions) [17].

The *DOCTRINE OF REBEL WAR* (proposed by Yevgeny Messner in the 1960s) suggests the formation and support of active legal protest movements and underground groups that operate through aggressive agitation and propaganda campaigns and demonstrative terrorist acts [7]. The action of these subjects is aimed at the elimination of moral values, moral (scandals, slander, compromising evidence) and physical (demonstrative attempts) destruction of opinion leaders. In a more rigid form, terrorist acts can be carried out aimed at seizing or destroying objects of national historical heritage (historical and natural reserves, architectural objects) and symbolic objects (monuments to heroes, events, objects of worship).

The founder of the Doctrine of Rebellious Ye. Messner, justifying this term, notes that “In two world wars and many local wars, a world revolution was born and developed, wars intertwined with revolts, revolts with wars, a new form of armed conflict was created, which we will REBEL WAR” [7, p.15].

The *DOCTRINE OF THE NETWORK-CENTRIC WAR* (presented in the American military doctrines of “Join Vision 2010” and “Join Vision 2010”) is a set of measures aimed at concentrating the information resources of the attacking side necessary to ensure the operational and effective management of military operations (automated control systems) [10]. Also, the key task of the actions of the attacking side is blocking and destruction of information potential.

The *THEORY OF NETWORK INFORMATION WARFARE* (presented by the author of this paper in 2016) involves the integrated use of digital, humanitarian (managerial) and psy-technologies to coordinate information processes (creation, distribution, search for content) in social online networks [3].

Chronologically, hybrid conflict is traditionally divided into three stages: preparatory, active, and final [11]. Based on the characteristics and specifics of the latest, most resonant hybrid conflicts (Russian-Georgian, Russian-Ukrainian), we offer some adjustments to the names of the stages and their content. The most adequate will be the segmentation into hidden (latent), half-open and open stages.

The *Hidden (latent) Stage*, in its essence, more closely matches the parameters of the concept of hybrid aggression proposed by us. Within this period, the attacking side exercises, in relation to his victim, the impact of an economic, external and domestic political nature, information pressure, active pressure in the field of culture. The side of the aggressor, through the tools of «soft power», imposes on the object of aggression, its vision of its role and place in the geopolitical alignments, forms profitable social settings, and carries out the correction of the state strategy.

The *Half-open Stage* is a confrontation in the format corresponding to the concept of hybrid war as presented by us. At this stage, the attacking side moves to demonstrative methods of pressure, using the whole range of methods and directions of destructive influence, excluding open armed conflict. The attacked side answers to aggression, because of its capabilities and in accordance with the actions of the enemy. At this stage, first attacking, and then the responding side, the tools of

such hybrid doctrines as colour revolutions, the strategy of controlled chaos, reflexive control, and rebellion war used.

The *Open Stage* of the hybrid conflict involves the direct use of the armed forces. In the event that the attacking side does not have an overwhelming advantage, armed clashes are local in nature. They are carried out, mainly, in the form of mobile combat, using special operations forces (SOF) or point military operations with limited use of aircraft and artillery. Quite often, such forms of armed confrontation take the form of peace enforcement operations or peacekeeping operations. At the same time, the most popular form of tactical decisions is the concept of network-centric warfare and asymmetric warfare. In addition to purely military methods, the tools of the doctrine of unrestricted war and the theory of reflexive control are used. Also, they continue to actively, but selectively (to save resources), use hybrid technologies inherent in the latent stage – controlled chaos, muddling, and reflexive control.

Summing up the research, presented in the paper, we note rather deep historical roots of the study of hybrid conflicts, which, in our opinion, have sources in the works of researchers of the 1st millennium B.C. (Sun Tzu, Herodotus, Thucydides, etc.). It should also be noted that to a large extent the applied nature of such studies, which were in great demand in all historical epochs, despite the fact that the term itself, a hybrid war appeared only in the beginning of the 21st century.

Considering the theoretical and methodological aspects of the core topic, in our opinion, a certain coordinate system should be set to determine the nature and specificity of the hybrid conflict in two planes – directions (economic, military, cultural, international, social and political, domestic, informational), as well as tools (strategy of controlled chaos, the doctrine of “soft power”, the doctrine of colour revolutions, the theory of reflexive control, the doctrine of unrestricted war, the doctrine of rebel war, the doctrine of net-centric war, the concept of asymmetrical warfare). Also, referring to applied research, one should take into account the chronological features and specificity of hybrid conflicts, which are segmented within the framework of three stages – latent (latent), half-open and open.

Summarizing, it should be noted the need for further consideration and scientific discussion in this direction with segmentation in individual areas using application aspects.

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