

Hybrid Warfare

Challenges, Hazards, Vulnerabilities

Russia has little time to develop its own vision of the future

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In the modern situation, when the U.S. hegemony is weakening and Russia and China are gaining power in world developments, the character of challenges and hazards is being changed. In order to retain its hegemony, the USA have to hinder development of all other countries – including use of force, economic, military and political pressure and also provocation of conflicts.

In fact, now the world is existing – and, unfortunately, will exist for a long time – in a pre-war state. And, particularly, the USA are putting the world into this state.

In this situation, it is hard to overestimate the role of nuclear deterrence. Due to the fact that Russia can inflict unacceptable damage, the Western countries headed by the USA avoid direct confrontation with Russia. But the main hegemon has somehow to meet the challenge of deterrence, weakening and, in the ideal case, elimination of its competitors.

For some reason, we are literally the eyewitnesses of confrontation strategy change. The 'hot war', as it is understood in the Western countries, will be preceded by a so called 'proxy war' or a hybrid war. The Prompt Global Strike concept and the National Defense Strategy of the U.S. are frankly speaking about that.

The purpose of such proxy-hybrid war is to overextend, overstress a particular country at every possible way: to wreck its economy and political stability, to affect morale of its citizens, to destroy the will to resist and, at the end of the day, to compel the political and economic elite of the country and then the country itself to capitulate. In order to provide effectiveness of hybrid attacks, the attacker is looking for vulnerabilities, which will be affected with the cutting edge of the strike.

The war of this type, proxy war or information and hybrid war is already in progress between the Western countries and Russia. Its purpose is to dismount the Russian state and turn it into a failstate in the fashion of Ukraine.

The phrase 'War is on' – is definitely not a metaphor. Below we shall analyze the fundamental report published in April 2019 and containing evidence of this point. We are talking about the RAND Corporation report under the title 'Overextending and Unbalancing Russia. Assessing the impact of cost-imposing options'. -

In this paper the Americans from the RAND Corporation have provided their version of our vulnerabilities and weaknesses. Moreover, they have described the measures which can be taken by the Western countries in order to overextend Russia, confuse it, hinder its

development and finally to lead it to its breakup, just as it was made with the USSR in the time of Ronald Reagan.

This report is impressive by frankness and cynicism of its conclusions and proposals.

'For whom the bell tolls? It tolls for thee,' – Ernest Hemingway has written.

Why do we have to analyze thoroughly this report? First of all, I would like to remind you, what the RAND Corporation is. It is the main expert group which develops the foreign and security policy of the USA. It is a think-tank of the United States Department of Defense working also for other U.S. security and defense agencies. It is the RAND Corporation which specifies the strategic direction for the U.S. policy in the area of defense, as well as in international relations. We have to know and understand their intentions. In fact, the Americans have done our work, describing precisely their version of our weaknesses and vulnerabilities. And, actually, the risks proceeding from them.

And, if we rely on the RAND Corporation, the USA are ready to declare hybrid war against Russia on all fronts, including economic, information and ideological, geopolitical and military measures.

Let us consider some of them more specifically (RAND's Reports: A) [Extending Russia. Competing from Advantageous Ground](#); B) [Overextending and Unbalancing Russia. Assessing the Impact of Cost-Imposing Options](#), 2019 – www.rand.org)



One of the maps depicting breakdown of Russia. Such maps are a popular subject for drawing not only in Washington, but also in the groups of Russian fifth column.

MILITARY MEASURES

The particular chapter of the report is dedicated to the military measures with the purpose to 'overextend Russia' along its borders and to achieve technological supremacy in the air and space, informational and cybernetic fields, and also in the area of artificial intelligence – that means, in the areas where Russia has vulnerabilities.

Let us specify these measures:

- Investments in ballistic missile defense systems and space-based weapons.
- Investments in electronic warfare and artificial intelligence technologies.
- Development of autonomous remotely piloted strike aircraft.
- Reposturing bombers within easy striking range of key Russian strategic targets.
- Reposturing fighters so that they are closer to their targets.
- Deploying additional tactical nuclear weapons to locations in Europe and Asia.
- Repositioning U.S. and allied ballistic missile defense systems to better engage Russian ballistic missiles.
- Increasing U.S. and allied naval force posture and presence in the Arctic Region, the Baltic and Black Seas. • Shifting nuclear posture toward SSBNs.
- Increasing naval R&D efforts would focus on developing new weapons that allow U.S. SSBNs to threaten a broader set of targets.
- Increasing U.S. forces in Europe, increasing European NATO member ground capabilities, and deploying a large number of NATO forces on the Russian border.
- Increasing the size and frequency of NATO exercises in Europe.
- Incremental investments in new technologies to counter Russian air defenses and increase the range of U.S. air defense systems.

Quotation: 'Investments in more-revolutionary, next-generation technologies (e.g. weapons based on “new physical principles” including directed energy, electromagnetic, geophysical, genetic and radiological weapons, artificial intelligence) could have even greater effects by threatening the Russian regime and leadership security in a crisis'. It is told quite straightforwardly.



Undermining development of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline is one of the elements of hybrid war against Russia.

GEOPOLITICAL MEASURES

In the fourth chapter of the report is describing six possible steps of the U.S. in the area of Russian geopolitical interests.

1. Providing lethal aid to Ukraine.
2. Increasing support to the Syrian rebels.
3. Promoting democracy and providing regime change in Belarus.
4. Expanding ties in Caucasus, use of tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
5. Increasing the U.S. presence in Central Asia and reducing Russian influence there.
6. Isolation of Transnistria.

The measures proposed are so ingeniously insidious, cynical and direct and so different in comparison with the measures proclaimed by the U.S. Department of State that it is worth to analyze them in more detail.

Below we shall introduce some information from the RAND report.

On Ukraine: Ukraine, without doubt, is more effective and reliable partner than other countries for which the U.S. provided lethal aid, e.g. Afghan mujahids in 1980s.

That means, that the American strategists from RAND cast Ukraine in the role of an 'anti-Russian club'. They need Ukraine only for geopolitical terror. Comparison of their Ukrainian dependents with mujahids is symbolic.

On Syria: Increasing of moderate opposition support by the U.S. can extend for a long time and intensify the fading civil war, hereby imposing costs on Russia as well as on Iran. This course of action could be effective some years ago when the armed opposition was stronger. In modern circumstances, the best result which can be achieved through increasing of the U.S. support is extending the conflict destabilizing the entire region for decades.

On Belarus: From the viewpoint of the U.S. policy, riots in Belarus can provide opportunities to overextend Russia. If the U.S. removes the dictator allied with Russia for a long time and support liberalization through the aid provided for opposition, it will be a doubtless victory of the U.S. The aid for the Belarus opposition can be provided in different forms: from public announcements about support made by the U.S. leaders up to more direct financial and organizational support giving for opposition parties the opportunity to achieve the final state of free and democratic Belarus.



The cutting edge of U.S. information attacks is directed against Vladimir Putin, the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Army.

On Caucasus: The U.S. can overextend Russian on Causasus in two ways.

Firstly: The U.S. could push NATO to closer cooperation with Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Secondly: As an alternative, the U.S. could try to make Armenia break off relations with Russia. As an old partner of Russia, Armenia has also developed relations with the Western countries: it provides troops for NATO-lead operations in Afghanistan and is the member of the 'Partnership for Peace' NATO program. Recently it also agreed to strengthen its political connections with the EU. Azerbaijan is an authoritarian country frequently blamed by non-government organizations for poor political and civil rights, it has no interest to closer relations neither with the Western countries, nor with Russia. It will be challenging to move Azerbaijan from this neutral position. Taking into account the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, all efforts concerning development of connections with one of them will most likely cause antagonism with the other. If one of these counties turned to the West for its safety, the other would most likely turn to Moscow.

On Central Asia: More active cooperation with Central Asia would bring small benefits. Expansion of contacts between Central Asia and the rest of the world would cause decrease of trade of this region with Russia.

On Moldova and Transnistria: The takeover in Transnistria and expulsion of the Russian troops will be an impact over Russia's image.

Reading this in the RAND report that is fully written in this manner, we want to yell after Julius Fučík: 'People, be careful!'

ECONOMIC MEASURES

The RAND experts propose a wide range of economic measures. Let us introduce some of them:

- Expanding U.S. energy production.
- Imposing deeper trade and financial sanctions against Russia.
- Increasing Europe's ability to import gas from suppliers other than Russia.
- Encouraging the emigration from Russia of skilled labor and well-educated youth.

Some more information from the report itself: The maxim that "Russia is never so strong nor so weak as it appears" remains as true in the current century as it was in the 19th and 20th.

Today's Russia suffers from many vulnerabilities—oil and gas prices well below peak that have caused a drop in living standards, economic sanctions that have furthered that decline, an aging and soon-to-be-declining population...



Project of the Russian Armed Forces Main Church. 'Dramatic' reborn of the the Russian Orthodox Church after 1991 extremely concerns Washington.

Expanding U.S. energy production would stress Russia's economy, potentially constraining its government budget and, by extension, its defense spending. By adopting policies that expand world supply and depress global prices, the United States can limit Russian revenue. Doing so entails little cost or risk, produces second-order benefits for the U.S. economy, and does not need multilateral endorsement.

Imposing deeper trade and financial sanctions would also likely degrade the Russian economy, especially if such sanctions are comprehensive and multilateral. Thus, their effectiveness will depend on the willingness of other countries to join in such a process.

Increasing Europe's ability to import gas from suppliers other than Russia could economically extend Russia and buffer Europe against Russian energy coercion. Europe is slowly moving in this direction by building regasification plants for liquefied natural gas (LNG). But to be truly effective, this option would need global LNG markets to become more flexible than they already are and would need LNG to become more price-competitive with Russian gas.

Encouraging the emigration from Russia of skilled labor and well-educated youth has few costs or risks and could help the United States and other receiving countries and hurt Russia. But any effects—both positive for receiving countries and negative for Russia—would be difficult to notice except over a very long period.

Cynical, isn't it? But the most sorrowful fact is that the American definition of our vulnerabilities contains considerable element of truth. Our vulnerabilities lie in us own, and we have created them.



Inducement of a part of the political elite to betrayal is a reliable method of hybrid war, which was also tried in the USSR.

IDEOLOGICAL AND INFORMATIONAL MEASURES

A considerable part of the RAND report is dedicated to the ideology. And this is quite semiotic and demonstrative. Let us discuss more widely, why it is so. But before that, let us introduce the measures proposed by the authors of the report in this context:

- Diminishing faith in the Russian electoral system.
- Creating the perception that the regime is not pursuing the public interest.
- Encouraging domestic protests and other nonviolent resistance.
- Undermining Russia's image abroad.

Through set teeth, Americans have to recognize solidarity and power of the Russian society, our traditions based on our history. They say: Facing the existential threat, Russia is likely to begin struggle against the high people's will. The key element of the Russian will nowadays is social recognizing of authoritarian, centralized state with high degree of military involvement. These close ties between civilian and military structures, public support and environment of half-force government provide a strong basis for national will to struggle and have an affect on anticipation of victory on the national level.

What are they going to hit in order to weaken us? Our vulnerable points: first of all, corruptness of the elites and our power factors, the 'ties' defining the strength of the Russian state – the institution of the president, or to be more exact, Vladimir Putin, the Russian Army and the Russian Orthodox Church. Some more information from the report:

Widespread, large-scale corruption is a great political problem in Russia which can stimulate a substantive part of the Russian society to action and increase the perception that the present regime is illegitimate and is not pursuing the public interest.

Absence of official ideology has created vacuum that many institutions tried to fill. Dramatic (what a word! – remark from the author) reborn of the Russian Orthodox Church as a power in Russian political and cultural life after 1991 proposed one of the essential value systems alternative to the Western one.

The expanding agreement between the Russian Orthodox Church and the government, the example of which is transfer of valuable property nationalized in the Soviet period has demonstrated that Kremlin prioritize this religion.



Overextending of the economy thrusted by the armament race and oil prices drop were one of the most important factors for USSR dissolution, and the U.S. keep that in mind.

THERE IS NO STRATEGY WITHOUT IDEOLOGY. THERE IS NO FUTURE WITHOUT STRATEGY.

Now let's discuss closer why ideology is so essential.

The hart of every nation is its culture, history, language, traditions, values and objectives. And, moreover, the complex of opinions reflecting interests of all social groups, i.e. ideology. In order to undermine survivability and destroy the nation without direct military confrontation, it is necessary to destroy its ethic and ideological core – the factors defining existence sense and destiny of millions of Russian people on the same territory for many centuries.

Ernest Renan has written: 'The existence of a nation is a daily plebiscite'. And José Ortega y Gasset continued: 'Yes, it's a plebiscite, but on what issue? This plebiscite decides on a future'.

The vision of the future creates the nation. Not an abstract future which will reach us with a fatal certitude, but the future as a reachable goal, as a project or a national narrative.

If a nation does not have any vision of the future, then you will not have neither a nation, nor a state. If a nation has an ideology and definition of objectives supported by culture, science and system of values, this nation has the future.

It is impossible to win a war in defensive positions – including a hybrid war. It is essential to stay focused and attack. Attack in order to conquer the future.

The Russian President Vladimir Putin has assigned the task of technological breakthrough: 'If we do not make this breakthrough, we will be hopelessly left behind'. Ideological support of the technological breakthrough and economic growth is essential, it includes rethinking of collective identity, choice of the way from yesterday to tomorrow – in order to remain true to yourself, changing in the same time. Our American opponents from the RAND understand this, that is why they pay so many attention to informational and ideological struggle against Russia in their documents. They keep in mind how the USSR was desintegrated without a single shot: the oil prices were dropped, the economy was overextended by constrained armament race, a part of the national elites was corrupted, the Soviet ideology was destroyed by fake fetishes like a 'socialism with the human face'. And, in the end of the day, the Soviet Union was desintegrated!

Strategy (translated from the Greek language, 'art of troop leader') is possible only if there is a definition of objectives. Strategy of company development, state, family – doesn't matter! In any way, strategy is possible only if the objectives are clear. Objectives are defined by ideology.



The RAND specialists are sure that corruption is a great political problem in Russia which can stimulate a substantive part of the Russian society to action.

Many people are afraid of this word, escape it because they think that it is a reminder of the past, of the ingrained Soviet mentality. Nonsense! Ideology is an idea, i.e. intention defining content of something.

Ideology is a knowledge about how to build a state, how to rule a society, how to overcome an enemy. Ideology is the way of the nation from yesterday to tomorrow.

The great Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu has written: 'The best war is, firstly, disruption enemy's plans, secondly, frustrating his unions and, thirdly, crushing his troops'.

In fact, the entire RAND report is dedicated particularly to disruption of Russia's plans by means of hybrid war. The sense of the doctrine proposed for the U.S. is, to deprive us of understanding and sense of the future, to deprive Russia of its ideology. Americans want to disrupt our independent narrative, involve us into geopolitical game with their rules, overextend, exhaust and confuse Russia with the use of the vulnerabilities that we unfortunately have. That is why the large chapter of the RAND report is dedicated to ideology.

And the major conclusion of the report is not surprising. It is following: 'In that regard, Russia's greatest vulnerability, in any competition with the United States, is its economy, which is comparatively small and highly dependent on energy exports. The Russian economic policy is poor and weak.'

We only have to thank the American strategists from the RAND who have done for us a 'gap analysis' and clearly defined threats, because forewarned is forearmed. Let us draw some conclusions.

ASSERTIONS, QUESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Assertions

Thuswise, a wide-range hybrid and informational war (or a proxy war) is being initiated against Russia. U.S. are the initiator of this war.

In this war, people's consciousness, mental foundations and conceptual areas are under attack.

We can indicate coordinated political and informational pressure upon Russia, from the outside as well as from the inside, directed to unbalancing of the social and political situation.

The fifth column is becoming active with the support of the Western countries, the threat of radicalization of liberal and nationalist opposition still exists.

The purpose of this hybrid and informational proxy war is, to affect morale and unity of the nation, undermine, overextend the economy, political stability and will to development, to weaken the Russian state.

The cutting edge of U.S. information attacks is directed against the leader of the nation Vladimir Putin, as well as against the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Army.

Questions

The question is the following: Does the social and political basis structure, the ruling class of Russia, its political elites follow this geopolitical state? Do they follow the challenges facing Russia and its leader Vladimir Putin?

The answer is – no!

The political elites have lost ground, they are unenterprising and weak in spirit. The elites have not presented any ideological basis, development strategy or vision of the future for the society.

Corruption, capital outflow and withdrawal of the part of the elites from the country development common goal is nowadays similar to betrayal which can lead to catastrophe and chaos, as it was in the beginning of the 1990's and in 1917.

The class bearing the new Russian nationhood of the XXI century is not defined. The basic social group which would be ready to devote themselves to the service of the Motherland is not moulded. Nowadays, there is no such a social group like the noble class earlier in our history. The present Russian bureaucracy fails to carry out this task.

CONCLUSIONS

High internal tension related to control of giant and nonhomogenous territories, constant participation of Russia in the heaviest geopolitical struggle make the tasks of social consolidation, provision of national security and development of the country the most essential and crucial nowadays.

Absence of objective and the vision of the future complicates our breakthrough to the world leadership. It is critical to understand, comprehend and describe the Russian governing system created in the time of Vladimir Putin, the entire set of ideas and dimensions as an ideological basis for the future decades.

Russia has little time to develop its own vision of the future, to stop being a source of raw materials and marketing area for foreign manufacturers and become a world-class intellectual and technological center in the new technological pattern of life. The state arms program until 2027 is planned for ten years. It will guarantee the security of the country and our technological leadership in the military area nearly until 2035.

Right now, it is necessary to create the strategy of ideological rearmament, the value policy based on releasing of the society internal energy. Without this strategy, without an active ideological policy the modern war, the informational and hybrid war, the war of ideologies cannot be won.

A comprehensive ideological work is ahead. Its sense consists in strategic choice of the Russia's way from yesterday to tomorrow – the way which will make us change, remaining true to yourselves.

And, the main thing: Our power is in truth. If we follow the truth, we will overcome all difficulties and challenges on our way to the goals we have set, despite any attempts of the RAND strategists and their European dependents to mislead us.

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