Hybrid War, Russia and Strategic Implications to Turkey

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This report is prepared on the purpose of presenting an assessment on Russian hybrid war against Turkey.

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CONTENT

Introduction | 1

1. Concept of Hybrid Threats and Hybrid War | 2

2. Strategic Implications of Hybrid Threats and War to Turkey | 6

3. In Lieu of Conclusions: Recommendations for Turkey Decision Makers | 11
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Introduction

Discussions on the hybrid threats and hybrid wars have begun to gain interest in security among the communities around the world, including the United States (US), Britain, Israel and NATO since 2000s. Several scholars and analysts have argued that hybrid war would become more dominant in the twenty first century. Michael Evans, for instance, has claimed at the beginning of 2000s that the reality of war in the first decade of the twenty-first century was likely to transcend a neat division into distinct categories, symmetry and asymmetry.1 Similarly, Colin Gray has noted that there was going to be a blurring, a further blurring, of war categories.2

In historical evaluations of war, it is expressed that warring parties have employed irregular forces as well as regular forces, used indirect tactics to create surprise and deception together with direct application of force, and applied newly produced weapons and barrier systems. Hybrid war goes back as far as the Peloponnesian Wars in the fifth century BC. In that war, the Spartans used the insurgencies against the Athenians to bring them to terms.3 Throughout the history of war, many perfect examples of hybrid war can be seen. In the Western Front of the First World War which had turned into trench warfare at the outset, for instance, the armies of both sides had used various tactics for four years and hybridized the war which started as a conventional one.4 The German Army on the Eastern Front during the Second World War suffered continual disruptions to its lines of communication as a result of the activities of tens of thousands of Soviet partisans and other irregulars, many remnants of conventional forces bypassed during the opening phases of Operation Barbarossa.5 During the Cold War, several conflicts including French and American Vietnam Wars, French-Algeria War, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan hold some features of hybrid war. After the Cold War, many interstate conflicts in Eastern Europe and Caucasus are so hybrid in nature that nearly all of them have been fought with proxies.

The discussions on hybrid war have increased after Israel-Hezbollah War in 2006, Russian intervention in Georgia in 2008 and lastly Russian-Ukraine conflict in 2014. Yet, hybrid war has not been conceptualized. The US Department of Defense is not using hybrid war concept officially.6 In NATO, although the term “hybrid” is used there is no formal concept agreed by nations.7 Instead, comprehensive approach is referred to include hybrid war.

The political and military conflict between Russia and Turkey since November 2015 has carried the discussion to Turkey. Now it is believed that Turkey is in fact in a multi-front hybrid war with some of its neighbors but not just Russia. However, Turkish-Russian hybrid conflict has dominated the debates on the subject since it produces significant political, military and economic consequences in terms of internal stability and foreign security of Turkey.

In this article it is aimed to fully explore hybrid war concept and its strategic implications to Turkey. The definitions of hybrid threat, hybrid conflict and hybrid war will be considered in the first section. This discussion will lead to an examination of several related concepts. Next, features and consequences of hybrid war will apply to Turkey in order to identify the strategic implications. In this
regard, Russian hybrid war concept will be discussed. Finally, recommendations will then be made as to a way ahead for Turkish decision makers with respect to fighting hybrid war.

1. Concept of Hybrid Threats and Hybrid War

Although theoretical studies on the hybrid threats and war are relatively new, there are some definitions to mention about. The meaning of the term “hybrid” can be found at various sources. It is used as noun and adjective. Hybrid is something of mixed origin or composition. It refers to something of mixed character and composed of different elements. In Turkish, it is used as noun to refer to something of mongrel, mixed blood and state of being together of two different power sources. From these meanings, it is deduced that the terms “hybrid war” and “hybrid threat” refer to a war and a threat with mixed character.

This is of course a simple definition. In fact, there are some differences between the terms “hybrid threat”, “hybrid conflict” and “hybrid war” although they are often used interchangeably to refer to the interconnected nature of challenges such as ethnic conflict, terrorism, migration and weak institutions; multiplicity of actors involved such as regular and irregular forces, criminal groups; and diversity of conventional and unconventional means used including military, diplomatic, technological. However, these terms could be distinguished by taking into account different levels of intensity of a threat and intentionality of actors involved.

In this context, the hybrid threat is at the lowest level of intensity of threat and results from convergence and interconnection of different elements, which together form a more complex and multidimensional threat. In NATO sources, hybrid threats are defined as those posed by adversaries, with the ability to simultaneously employ conventional and non-conventional means adaptively in pursuit of their objectives. NATO accepts that cyber war, asymmetric conflict scenarios, global terrorism, piracy, transnational organized crime, demographic challenges, resources security, retrenchment from globalization and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are multimodal, low-intensity, kinetic as well as non-kinetic threats. They pose threat to the international peace and security, and have become known as hybrid threats. EU, on the other hand, add maritime disputes among various states, exploit of resource dependency between countries, covert operations by for instance Russia in Ukraine, and constraints on use of orbital space by regional powers like China to the list of hybrid threats.

Before moving to hybrid war, hybrid conflict needs to be discussed. Hybrid conflict is a situation in which parties refrain from the overt use of armed forces against each other, instead, relying on a combination of military intimidation falling short of an attack, exploitation of economic and political vulnerabilities, and diplomatic or technological means to pursue their objectives. Such a conflict currently exists between Russian Federation and NATO, US and EU not only on Ukraine and Crimea, but also on various issues ranging from energy supply routes to Arctic politics. The conflict between Russian Federation and Turkey since November 2015 perfectly fits this definition on the ground that parties have harmed each other although they have not used violence so far. There are of course some objections on this definition. First of all, there is nothing new in such an environment to be called as
hybrid conflict. In a high intensity or conventional armed conflict, means, tactics and actors listed above also exist. Thus a question arises: what is really new in the idea of hybrid conflict. The answer can be given as use of cyber power and exploitation of the International Humanitarian Law (IHL)/Law of Armed Conflict (LAC). Cyber threats are so new that they are not included in IHL/LAC and domestic laws in most cases. The adversaries exploit this weakness. The second area to mention is the fact that hybrid conflict takes place at strategic level of war and especially cognitive and moral domain. This will be further elaborated in the following paragraphs.

With respect to hybrid war, some see mixed character simply as a blurring of capabilities at the tactical level, such as a Hezbollah guerilla fighter using a high-tech anti-tank weapon, or PKK shooting Turkish helicopters with (Man Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPAD). Moreover, in the western world and particularly in the US, the recent discussions about hybrid war have been primarily focused at the tactical and to a lesser degree at the operational level, not at the strategic level. Tactical examples are only a very small portion of the hybrid aspect of challenges, however many analysts and scholars focus on as Colin Gray who maintains that these changes are tactical or operational which does not change the nature of war.

If the nature of war is accepted as an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will, thus it is primarily political activity as argued by Clausewitz, there is no doubt that Colin Gray is right. However, there are some reasons to disagree with the argument that the nature of war is constant if the war is thought as a system with political, economic, military and psychological components and an interaction between states. First of all, emerging information technologies in recent decades enhance the ability of entities such as terrorist organizations, national liberation movements, insurgencies, criminal groups and other non-state actors as well as states. Any actor among these can easily impose its will on a powerful adversary provided that critical vulnerabilities are determined and right strategies are applied. In fact, it is the ability of a belligerent to impose its will, not the amount of violence achieved, that will decide the winner of any given conflict. The role of force or violence is also changing. The recent wars and conflicts between states raised an important question of whether or not violence remains a necessary component of war. The most striking example of a victory by a party without using violence/armed force is the Cold War. Soviet Union was defeated and collapsed without any armed conflict with the US. Its defeat resulted mainly from the weaknesses in cognitive, moral and economic domains. In 1998, Turkey forced Syria to end the support given to PKK by the ways short of violence. In 2004, EU, US and UN imposed Turkey to accept Annan Plan and disappearance of a twenty years-state, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, by mainly leveraging EU membership and support to Turkish ruling party to subdue the military in domestic power struggle. These are typical examples of hybrid offensive warfare and hybrid victories without employing armed forces. Nevertheless, violence absolutely remains a necessary component of war, but it does not hold a monopoly in war and warfare as it once did. Thus it is noteworthy that the power of the cognitive and moral domains and the significance of influencing people to be so great that it is influencing the nature of war.
Clausewitz expresses that war is a remarkable trio composed of violence and hatred, chance and probability, and political considerations. These are three elements that play out the interaction of people, military forces and governments. These elements have been part of war since the beginning of recorded history. Nevertheless, as war in the twenty-first century morphs into seemingly unfamiliar forms that combine regular and irregular forces on the same battlefields, some defense analysts have posited the emergence of a new type of war—hybrid war. What are more important to examine is the different modes of warfare combined to achieve strategic effects and increase the complexity of the situation.

Hybrid wars combine a range of different modes of warfare, including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder. Hybrid war is a situation in which a country resorts to overt use of armed forces against another country or a non-state actor, in addition to a mix of other means such as economic, political, and diplomatic as well as covert operations such as supporting terrorist acts.

Hybrid war combines elements of regular and irregular warfares, cyber warfare and criminality. It is asymmetric in most cases (Figure-1).

Figure- 1: Concept of Hybrid War
Hybrid war exhibits several of Sun Tzu's concepts. One important aspect of Sun Tzu's concepts evident in a hybrid war is the importance of changing form, appropriately adapting to conflict situations by the employment of different types and size of forces. Sun Tzu espouses the use of both regular and irregular actions to defeat the enemy. Sun Tzu also suggests weakening the enemy through both asymmetric and unconventional means that exploit weaknesses by targeting vulnerabilities, all key pillars of the hybrid war approach. Fluidity and flexibility, not only of forces, but of strategy, also appear to be key aspects of Sun Tzu's teachings that emerge in hybrid war.

Regarding the principles of war, commonly accepted nine principles including mass, objective, offensive, surprise, economy of force, maneuver, unity of command, security and simplicity generally apply to hybrid war. There are of course some differences such as surprise taking priority and decentralized unity of command due to mixing characters of actors and tactics. Moreover, hybrid war is adding two new principles: speed and perception management.

Another concept of war is the levels of war. In conventional understanding, three levels of war are accepted: strategic, operational and tactical levels. Hybrid warfare also plays out all levels of war, from the tactical, to the operational and strategic. In particular, military organizations must not ignore the political framework and its narrative within which all wars occur. At the strategic level, nations might choose to support insurgent movements with conventional forces to weaken an adversary. At the operational level, a commander might use guerilla forces to harass enemy lines of communication or prevent the enemy from massing forces. Finally, regular and irregular forces might occasionally join tactically. However, the actions at the tactical level fast produce strategic effects due to speed of communication.

When it comes to domains of war such as cognitive, moral and physical, hybrid war is mainly fought at the first and second domains. Physical domain is rather symbolic producing consequences for the first two. The center of gravity of hybrid strategies is placed on population. By bringing the population into conflict, hybrid war magnifies the importance of perceptions. Modern communications systems amplify the transmission rates of propaganda and public information. The battle to shape perceptions plays out among three audiences: local population, the home front of the opponent and wider regional and international community.

In terms of actors, hybrid wars include regular forces, irregular forces such as guerilla groups, militia, insurgents, terrorist groups, criminal organizations and even civilian groups. The state and not-state actors play out simultaneously in hybrid war. Hybrid wars have given ways to emerge various types of warriors over the centuries. Currently there are several types of warriors on different battlefields fighting hybrid wars. Some of them include, but not limited to, modern mercenaries, private military companies' soldiers, hired veterans, proxy warriors, national freedom fighters, terrorist and foreign terrorist fighters, warlords and their militia, drug lords and their militias, digital warriors like hackers and "trolls", and child and woman soldier in addition to the combatants of a state/states defined by IHL/LAC.
Hybrid war is often confused with the compound war and the Fourth generation war. In fact there is a clear distinction between hybrid and compound wars. The latter involves regular and irregular forces fighting under unified strategic direction, whereas the former is a special case in which regular and irregular capabilities are fused into a single force. On the other hand, the Fourth generation warfare (4GW) is an evolved form of insurgency when an adversary uses all available networks, political, economic, social, and military, to target the enemy’s decision makers that their objectives are either unattainable or too costly. While there are elements of 4GW in hybrid war, hybrid war is a much broader concept that focuses on external threats vice the internal threats 4GW describes.

2. Strategic Implications of Hybrid Threats and War to Turkey

Although the studies in Turkey on hybrid war are limited, Turkey is not exempt from it. On the contrary, it has been in a hybrid conflict context for long years, intensifying in the last decade, especially after a Russian aircraft was shot down by Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) at Syrian border on 24 November 2015. On this event, Russia has initiated temporally coordinated attacks against Turkey in physical, moral, economic and cognitive domains to exploit Turkey’s vulnerabilities. The battle in the cognitive and moral domains is especially intense. Russia seeks to gain regional and international legitimacy in its struggle against Turkey and they target Turkish public will. Russian hybrid war is becoming effective and creating strategic implications as a result of interaction of several internal, regional and international dynamics influencing Turkey. The aim of this section is to analyze Russian hybrid strategies, discuss the vulnerabilities of Turkey, and explore the strategic implications of Hybrid war to Turkey.

Russian hybrid war experiences go back as far as 1920s when the Unions of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) adopted a covert war concept aiming to shape decision making process in the western countries and deceive the opponents. A special task force of Soviet intelligence agency KGB had established broad network in the western countries and the USA and competed with CIA and NATO’s stay behind forces. The USSR had initiated hybrid warfare against Estonia in December 1924 by supporting an insurgency, and implemented similar strategies in Bulgaria and Germany.

The USSR invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 shortly turned to a high intensity conflict with hybrid tactics at all levels and domain of war. For instance, 700 Russian soldiers wearing Afghan army uniforms seized the government buildings in Kabul. Russia gained experiences and learned lessons from Chechnya wars in 1990 and early 2000s. While Russian cyber attacks against Estonia in 2007 indicates non kinetic dimension, Russian offensive against Georgia in 2008 is an example of kinetic aspect of Russian hybrid war. The intervention in Ukraine and annexation of Crimea in 2014 sets a turning point in Russian hybrid war. Some of critical features of Russian hybrid strategies and tactics are discussed below.

Russian Federation has implemented a complex strategy against Ukraine including use of regular and irregular forces, economic sanctions, financial pressure, energy blockade, political destabilization, information operations and cyber attacks. Russia has coordinated and synchronized available hybrid
tools in time and space to create desired effects and reach determined end states. Russia has leveraged Russian speaking people and dissident groups to divide Ukraine people and weaken Ukraine government. Russian Special Forces in civilian and local clothes without insignia were infiltrated in Crimea and Donbas. These Special Forces seized the government buildings with the support of local collaborators. Russia also resorted to terror tactics to suppress the pro-Ukraine population in Crimea. Pro-Maidan protests in Crimea, especially in Simferopol and Sevastopol, disappeared in one day because of threats and intimidation by the pro-Russian population and especially Russian irregular forces.42

Russian army had started military preparation for annexation of Crimea in 2013. Between 2013 and March 2014, eight big exercises were conducted.43 A largest exercise was conducted in the Central Military District in April 2013, comprising 65,000 soldiers, 177 aircraft, 56 helicopter, and 5,500 vehicles.44 In March-April 2014, a joint exercise of the Western and Southern Military Districts was executed in Baltic and Nordic areas. While 150,000 Russian soldiers had participated in this exercise, a NATO exercise was joined by 6,000 soldiers in the same areas.45

Hybrid war discourse has recently drawn attention in Russia. For instance, military counselor to Putin, Surkov has described Russian recent operations as non-linear war.46 Similarly Chief of Staff Gerasimov has mentioned about new methods of war by emphasizing non linear nature of conflict. The military operations are started by well trained small special groups without declaration of war, and they are aimed to defeat the adversary with fierce attacks against strategic, economic and military targets.47

The aim of Russian hybrid attacks is to destabilize, shape and subdue the adversary without invasion and annexation of any territory. Among the strategies and tactics Russia employs are diplomacy, information operations, economic sanctions, covert and overt military actions targeting to shape the perceptions of decision makers, and public opinion. It also uses covert operations, bribery and blackmail to corrupt the officials.48

Russian army has implemented a series of programs covering 2008-2020 to gain hybrid war capabilities.49 Russia has made significant adjustments on the force structure since 2013, in this context, airborne, marine and Special Forces have taken priority. In this regard, Russia has restructured an airborne force consisting four divisions and five brigades (total 20 battalions), and a marine force of four brigade and eight regiment, and reinforced special forces.50

Russian hybrid strategies against Turkey perfectly fit some of the strategies and tactics discussed above. Russia has been implementing several economic sanctions on Turkey including ban on tourism, agricultural product, suitcase trading, international contracts, and direct investments.51 Russia endangered Turkish foreign policy in Syria by targeting Turkey supported rebels and Syrian Turks (Turkomans), and by supporting Esad regime and PYD/YPG which is accepted as a terrorist organization by Turkey. The deployments of Russian S-300/400 missile systems to Syria established a no-fly zone for Turkey.52 Thus Russia closed Syrian airspace to Turkey which cannot fly its aircrafts to target PYD/YPG and ISIL even if it is attacked by them. After the shot down of Russian aircraft, PKK
terrorist activities inside Turkey dramatically increased. PKK now uses Russian made man-portable air-defense system MANPADS which is a big threat to Turkish aircrafts and particularly helicopters although the weapon used by PKK to hit Turkish helicopter on 14 May 2016 does not prove Russian direct involvement. While Russian direct military support to PKK is questionable, diplomatic and moral support to PKK, PYD/YPG and affiliated political organizations is clear. Moreover, Russian hybrid concept has focused on indicating Turkey’s supports to ISIL. Overall, Russia fights in cognitive and moral domains and aims to shape perceptions of Turkish public opinion, regional and international community.

The conceptual discussion in the first section and Russian strategies above suggest that hybrid war will promise success if the adversary’s vulnerabilities offer exploitable windows of opportunity to the hybrid aggressor who is willing to apply hybrid strategies and tactics. The weaknesses and vulnerabilities to be exploited by a hybrid adversary may include the followings.

- Weakness and fragility of the state in terms of domestic peace and internal stability in economic, societal, military and political spheres,
- Dependency in critical sectors including energy and defense industries,
- Regional and international isolatedness.
- Break up of common identity, lack of national consciousness, social polarization, segmentation and being vulnerable for information warfare at cognitive and moral domains,
- Decline in domestic public confidence to the target state’s institutions and political elites,
- Lack of compromise among political elites on the national security and foreign policy issues,
- Internal security problems,
- Corrupt civilian and military leadership, problematical civil-military relations and mutual distrust,
- Incompetence, degeneration, corruption of formal security sector; mistrust among security actors,
- Lack of strategic vision and crisis management capability,
- Polarisation of media and intellectuals.

Turkey has significant weaknesses and vulnerabilities similar to listed above. Some of them need to be elaborated. Turkey is becoming weaker and fragile in some areas in recent years. It is for instance among the countries giving warning of the Failed State Index 2015. Its rank is 90th out of 188 countries, and some of Turkey’s group members including Saudi Arabia, Serbia, and Ghana have scored better. On the other hand Greece holds 44 steps higher position. In terms of indicators, Turkey has got worse scores on group grievances, insecurity and factionalized elites. These indicators point out the high level of polarization, marginalization, radicalization and multi dimensional conflicts. In fact, one of the most challenging problems for Turkey in the first decade of the twenty first century is polarization and radicalization. This is a continuation of dynamics that emerged in previous decades but has deteriorated recently. Many warn of the dangers of polarization in Turkey. According to one researcher, Turkey faces problems and serious challenges, of which the most critical and pressing is the ongoing and unprecedented level of polarization in the country’s political sociology. A columnist for
the New York Times claims that Turkey is on a dangerous course of hate-filled polarization, and that things will only get worse unless our leaders stop entrenching themselves to win the next political war and start thinking about winning the peace.  

Regarding Human Development Index (HDI) 2015, Turkey ranks 72 among 188 countries, and is classified as having high human development. However, HDI takes three indicators such as average life expectancy at birth, schooling for adults and expected schooling years for children, and standard of living measured by gross national income per capita into account. Thus it does not explain the strengths and weaknesses of a country. While the World Freedom Report 2015 classifies Turkey’s political system as partial democracy, the World Press Freedom Index argues that there are serious restrictions on press freedom. Turkey ranks 149 out of 180 countries.

Lastly, the Global Peace Index 2015 describes Turkey as a country in a conflict environment and assigns 135th rank among 162 countries. Such a description fits Turkey’s present security challenges. In the twenty first century, Turkey has to deal with reemerging leftist terrorism, protracted and trans-border PKK conflict, radical Islamic movements, foreign terrorist fighters, several side effects of the civil wars and instabilities beyond its borders. Such a challenging environment clearly requires a comprehensive and robust strategy agreed by all domestic actors in a democratic system. Unfortunately, Turkey lacks such a strategy and remains vulnerable to the consequences of a hybrid war.

On the other hand Turkey has many difficulties devising the right policy towards the PKK threat. There is neither a comprehensive national counter insurgency strategy nor the institutional structure to implement it. The political parties are polarized on significant issues, even on the terms of “peace” and “process”. Holding initiative, the PKK has easily employed hybrid strategies and tactics such as advocate of ceasefire and peace process when it deemed beneficial to its strategic purposes, urban warfare in the towns and cities that it selected, coordinated attacks to military barracks, massacre of civilians, attacks to helicopters and armored vehicles with highly developed weapons and so on.

For Turkey, the spillover effects of the instability and conflicts in Iraq and Syria are devastating. Existing sectarian and ethnic fault lines have been disrupted and many terrorist organizations have gained opportunities to stage terrorist acts. The most pressing problem seems to be foreign terrorist fighters going to Syria and Iraq, using Turkey as a source or transit country. The estimated number of Turkish foreign fighters in Syria varies. It is believed that 2,000-2,500, to Jihadist organizations such as ISIS and Al-Nusra, and 8,000 to PYD/YPG have participated from Turkey. There is no information about participation in the Free Syrian Army and its affiliated groups.

Based on above facts, it could not be argued that Turkey is too close to the failure. Nevertheless, societal polarization, radicalization of politics, existing security challenges and uncompromised politics have given alarms and increased Turkey’s fragility. Such fragility creates significant vulnerabilities and exposes Turkey to hybrid war.

Hybrid adversaries work to exploit the critical dependencies of their rivals to gain strategic advantages. In this respect, Turkey has several dependencies in economic, political-diplomatic, military, technological and research and development spheres. The first area is energy dependency,
particularly natural gas. Turkey imports 99 percent of natural gas, mostly from possible hybrid opponents: 57 percent from Russian Federation and 20 percent from Iran. Most is supplied by pipelines which is vulnerable against hybrid attacks. Regarding oil, Turkey imports 87 percent from international markets. More than half of supply comes from potential hybrid adversaries; 26 percent from Iran, 27 percent from Iraq. While such a dependency on critical raw materials shows the lack of strategic vision of Turkish political leaderships over past long years, it puts Turkey’s national security at risk in conflict hybrid scenarios.

Secondly, Turkey is technologically dependent of the west on many areas including defense technologies. Turkey’s critical land, air and naval systems have long been dependent on the western technology. Although the efforts have been made to produce national systems for long years, they have given little fruit so far. This puts Turkey at risk when a hybrid war is fought. Turkey still has to import critical equipment and military systems such as aircrafts, ships and intelligence systems although there is relatively increased national production. Turkey defense industry is among the third league of defense industries owned states while its requirements match the first and second league countries such as UK, China, Russia, France and Israel. Turkey’s annual defense budget that is below NATO required level of two percent of Gross Domestic Product is not sufficient when considering its modernization needs in the context of hybrid capacities and the size of its army.

Thirdly, Turkey has an information and research dependency especially in social sciences and security studies. In this regard, military doctrinal dependency is striking. Most of Turkish military doctrines, field and tactical manuals are translated from the western sources, particularly from the US. There is no internationally accepted national journal on terrorism in Turkey which is one of most terrorism affected countries in the world. Security issues including terrorism and military subjects are seen an explicitly confidential area and are not studied in universities and/or research centers. There is no military and/or armed forces studies journal.

In addition to the dependencies, the foreign relations pose serious risks to Turkey’s political and military capability to deter hybrid adversaries and fight them when necessary. First area is the fact that Turkey has been encircled by troubled neighbors. Turkey is at hybrid war with the regime, ISIL, PYD and others in Syria, Iran, Iraq, Russian Federation and Armenia. The foreign relations with Greece, Southern Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, EU an even with US are fragile. Turkey’s isolated position particularly in the Middle East does not provide her with acceptable opportunities to establish alliances and balance potential adversaries. This is a significant weakness in emerging hybrid strategic environment. When Turkey approaches Sunni Monarchies of the Gulf to overcome such a weakness, fragile domestic fault lines activate.

The western states and organizations have long endeavored to formulate suitable policies to deter hybrid threats. EU and NATO efforts led to the emergence of a comprehensive approach blending all actors and available instruments: military forces, diplomacy, humanitarian aid, political processes, economic development, and technology. While NATO has developed Comprehensive Approach in 2008 The EU’s own comprehensive approach was adopted in December 2013. In these approaches, government-led actions have increasingly been complemented by whole-of-society strategies aimed at managing risks and building resilient societies by believing that the focus on
resilience helps to mitigate risks that might lead to hybrid conflicts in the future and improves associated resource-management practices. The western governments have recently taken concrete steps to increase and modernize their civilian and military capabilities. EU is aware of the fact that some of the present legal concepts and frameworks are anachronistic and do not always address hybrid threats adequately. It initiated new legal measures to overcome the weaknesses. Lastly many countries have adjusted to hybrid threats by expanding the missions of existing institutions or creating new organizations.74

Turkey obviously needs such a comprehensive approach which requires a cooperative and constructive internal and external atmosphere, and a transformed security sector. Yet it is unfortunate that Turkey, being trapped to polarization and conflict, does have many difficulties to overcome.

3. **In Lieu of Conclusions: Recommendations for Turkey Decision Makers**

Defeating hybrid threats and winning a hybrid war requires, first of all, to understand what is hybrid war and make preparation in terms of civil military relations, suitable theory and adjusted policies, strategies, concepts and doctrines, structures, education of civilian and military leaders, equipment, training and readiness of forces.

The most important measure is clearly building a resilience society. This means that Turkish society should be freed from further polarization and marginalization of various sub groups. Identities should not be exploited by politicians to consolidate their electoral bases. However, this requires a radical change in mentality, not only of the ruling party and ruling elites but also opposition parties and the media, to develop a more positive approach.

Turkish strategic paradigm must reorient to give more emphasis to the cognitive and moral domains, just as potential enemies’ paradigms have changed. It may be time to learn and adapt to the enemy’s way of war with an increase in the effective use of the cognitive and moral domains. The use of the media in hybrid war is a force multiplier to complement hybrid war asymmetric advantages.

Turkey’s’ response to hybrid war will require a whole of government approach that is very difficult for Turkey to coordinate, plan, and de-conflict. This actually requires inter-agency planning and implementation mechanism which Turkey is clearly lacking.

Effective political and military leadership is significant for the success of hybrid war. Political leaders set national objectives, work to bolster national will, and build and keep intact international coalitions to share resource burdens. They develop and explain strategic narrative that maintains popular support for the war effort. Above all, they must understand the nature of their opponent as well as the extent of the commitment necessary to win the war. Military leaders must adjust existing doctrine to take into account the kind of war in which their forces engage, as well as to counter enemy strengths and exploit enemy weaknesses. Senior leaders must create viable operational concepts that link the strategy to tactical actions. Leaders at all levels must gather lessons from ongoing military operations and alter doctrines, operational concepts, and strategy to meet unexpected challenges and opportunities, In a nutshell, leadership matters.75
The most significant building block for being ready for hybrid war is to establish a suitable civilian military relations model. This model is radically different than classical Civil Military Relations (CMR) which sees civilian and military spheres two distinct areas. The academicians studying Turkish CMR have so far focused on the hierarchial link between the military and the civilian government and searched for an answer to the question of whether Chief of Gen.Staff (COGS) should be under Prime minister and/or Minister of Natl.Defence (MOND), and they have mainly ignored the operational aspects and changing strategic environment and warfare strategies and tactics including hybrid threat and warfare. The solution to Turkey’s long lasting problems seems to be a Civil Military Integration (CMI) rather than classical CMR as discussed and proposed in a study. In this regard, the military’s changing roles in new wars including hybrid war should be taken into consideration. Therefore, the military should be given the opportunity to acquire soft capabilities and to cooperate and interact with civilians, rather than isolating it from the civilian sphere. In an integrated approach, the military should work with civilian institutions, and civilians from relevant state institutions should be incorporated into appropriate branches of military headquarters, such as personnel, intelligence, logistics, defense planning, civil military cooperation, budgeting and finance, as well as operational aspects of related institutions like General Command of Gendarmerie, Directorate General of Security, or National Intelligence Organization. The degree of cooperation would vary according to the level of the headquarters: strategic political military, operational and tactical. At the first level, appropriate parliamentary oversight should be in conformity with western models and Turkey’s multi-party political system; deeper amalgamation in the offices of MOND and COGS should be arranged, with appropriate high level positions being filled by civilian experts. In addition, this level calls for an interagency cooperation between various ministries and departments such as internal affairs, justice, energy, communication, health, intelligence, civil affairs, science and technology. Turkey is actually lacking appropriate interagency cooperation mechanisms, producers and processes. At the operational level, the single force headquarters can also involve civilians, whether as deputies or chiefs, based on feasibility studies. The tactical military units may only involve civilian liaison teams in certain areas, such as intelligence and logistics. Such an approach should also be considered for civilian institutions in the security sector, such as the police, intelligence, public order and security or customs, as deemed appropriate. Military personnel (active and/or retired) could be inserted in relevant departments of these institutions. There are many advantages to this approach. It will improve mission effectiveness, help close the gap between the two groups, thereby increasing mutual trust, and provide opportunities to train civilian capacity in security and defense related issues.

Another area is developing a theory of hybrid war that threatens Turkey. Turkey must find appropriate methods and capabilities to deter adversaries from conducting hybrid war against its national security. In order to efficiently and effectively develop a hybrid war concept, regarding the National Security, National Defense, and National Military Strategies, if there is any, must explicitly address hybrid war. For this endeavor to be effective however, a commonly accepted understanding of the concept must be established. Currently, there are no comprehensive definitions and understandings of hybrid war in Turkey. Additionally and more importantly further intellectual research on the hybrid
war concept such as journal articles, books, symposiums, seminars and conferences must be conducted. Yet there is limited effort in this area.

Knowledge of high ranking civilians as well as military including the members of cabinet and parliament, bureaucrats and media is a key prerequisite for a successful endeavor to defend against hybrid war. Yet there is no appropriate high level educational institution offering courses to Turkish decision and policy makers. To do this, an advanced security and strategy academy needs to be established to educate senior elected and appointed national security decision makers and general officers.

Turkey’s military focus is traditionally on the physical domain. The structure of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) is a conventional and hierarchical one, reflecting the Cold War approaches. The headquarters at operational and tactical levels are dominated by single service officers. Moreover, Turkish General Staff (TGS) Headquarters has limited jointness and is lacking interagency staff. TAF does not have sufficient planning and implementation capacity in critical areas such as joint effects teams, strategic communication, public affairs, civil military cooperation, psychological operations and information operations. It also lacks political advisers at strategic and operational levels, and legal advisers at especially tactical-operational levels. As hybrid adversaries mainly use cognitive and moral domains, this will challenge Turkey. These capabilities must be owned and fully integrated from the outset. The use of information operations must be an overarching theme in any inter-agency approach in a hybrid war. TAF’s strategic, operational and tactical level doctrines also need to be adjusted to the requirements of hybrid war. The military could make significant modifications to be able to meet the hybrid threats and hybrid tactics to be employed by potential adversaries.

In terms of equipment, it is quite clear that combat power in hybrid war consists of more than just the tank, artillery, infantry, aircraft, ships, and other weapons that a military force possesses. Intelligence, civil affairs, psychological operations, and interagency civilian capabilities are necessary to fight hybrid wars.
NOTES

6 “Briefing to the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives”, United States Government Accountability Office, Washington, DC 20548, 10 September 2010.
12 “At a glance: Understanding Hyber Threats”,
14 Bachmann, Gunneriusson, Ibid p. 78.
15 “At a glance: Understanding Hyber Threats”,
16 Ibid.
18 Gray, Ibid.
21 Syria had given significant support to PKK in 1990s including the bases in Syria and Lebanon. Turkey allied with Israel and signed a military cooperation agreement in 1996, then coerced Syria by threatening military incursion in 1998. This military move was supported by diplomatic, political and psychological measures by Turkish government. Syria stepped back. Turkey and Syria signed the Adana Agreement, which stipulated that Syria wouldn’t allow “any activity that emanates from its territory aimed at jeopardizing the security and stability of Turkey. Syria recognized the PKK as a terrorist organization, proscribed the group and its affiliates, banned the “supply of weapons, logistical material and financial support to and the propaganda activities of the PKK on its territory,” and expelled Abdullah Ocalan, the group’s founder, who had been hosted in Damascus for a decade. He was captured in Kenya in 1999 and extradited to Turkey. Michael Weiss, “Turkey Strikes Back”, World Affairs Journal, http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/turkey-strikes-back(18.03.2016); Christopher Phillips, “Turkey and Syria”, http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR007/syria.pdf (32.04.2016)
22 Clausewitz, Ibid. p.89
26 Ibid, 58, 67-68.
27 Mass is concentration of combat power at the decisive place and time. Objective means that every military operation must be directed towards a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objective. Offensive implies that military force must seize, retain, and exploit the initiative whnever and wherever possible. Suprise means striking the enemy at a time, at a place, or in a
manner for which he is unprepared. Economy of force is allocation of minimum essential combat power to secondary efforts. Maneuver aims to place the enemy in a position of disadvantage through the flexible application of combat power. Unity of command is a necessity for every objective in order to ensure unity of effort under one responsible commander. Security is to never permit the enemy to acquire an unexpected advantage. Simplicity refers to preparation of clear, uncomplicated plans and clear, concise orders to ensure thorough understanding. US Army Field Manual FM 3-0: Operations, AppendixA.  

28 Mansoor, Ibid. p.3. 


40 Maigre, Ibid. p.2. 


44 Reisinger, Golts, Ibid. p.3. 


46 Hoffman (2009), Ibid. 


49 McDermott, Ibid.. 

50 Reisinger, Golts, Ibid. p.8. 

"Is the deployment of S300 and S400 a non-flying zone for Turkey airforce in Syria?”, https://www.quora.com/Is-the-deployment-of-S300-and-S400-a-non-flying-zone-for-Turkey-airforce-in-Syria(18.05.2016)


Such weapons have been used Syria and Iraq armies, and could also be procured from conflict environment.


Ibid. p.9


“At a glance: Understanding Hyber Threats”

Mansoor, Ibid.p.17.


In TGS HQ, there are almost ten high level generals/admirals (4 and 3 stars) positions including COGs, his deputy and heads of J directorates. In 2016, there are one air force general and seven army generals, no admiral at heads of J’s level. Air force general is the Head of Logistics which is considered “non-operational”. This information is taken from Turkish official gazettes published in 2014/15. Official Gazettes: 29437 (6 August 2015); 29438 (7 August 2015), 29081(7 August 2014). http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/default.aspx#(03.06.2016)
A limited capacity in psychological operations was lost in the period between 2007-2012, namely “Ergenekon” and other cases.

Mansoor, Ibid. p.16.