



## Migration – A New Form of “Hybrid Warfare”?

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### Abstract

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Beginning his presentation with a definition of migration and hybrid warfare, the author continues to give two current examples thereof: Russia’s campaign against Ukraine and the so called “Islamic State’s” campaign in Syria and Iraq, together with the effects of migration.

Any analysis of migration also provides a detail account of the so-called “Islamic State’s” infiltration of European countries by including terrorists among the mass of migrants.

He concludes his presentation with five recommendations.

### About ISPSW

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The Institute for Strategic, Political, Security and Economic Consultancy (ISPSW) is a private institute for research and consultancy. The ISPSW is objective and task oriented and is above party politics.

In an ever more complex international environment of globalized economic processes and worldwide political, ecological, social and cultural change, bringing major opportunities but also risks, decision-makers in enterprises and politics depend more than ever before on the advice of highly qualified experts.

ISPSW offers a range of services, including strategic analyses, security consultancy, executive coaching and intercultural competency. ISPSW publications examine a wide range of topics connected with politics, economy, international relations, and security/ defense. ISPSW network experts have worked – in some cases for decades – in executive positions and possess a wide range of experience in their respective specialist areas.



## Analysis

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### Preliminary Remarks

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies,  
Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and honor for me to attend, now for the sixth consecutive occasion, the strategic dialogue organized by the Research Institute for National Security Affairs (RINSA), the Korea National Defense University (KNDU), and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, in Seoul.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the representative of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in South Korea, Stefan Samse, for inviting our German team to this high-level conference.

While migration has many facets I shall focus here on its utilization as an instrument of “hybrid warfare”.

### Analysis

Let me begin by giving two definitions. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in Germany defines migration thus:

“Migration occurs when a person changes the location of their usual place of residence. International migration occurs when this movement crosses national boundaries”.

Hybrid warfare is defined by the European Parliament as follows:

Hybrid war is a situation in which a country resorts to the overt use of armed forces against another country or a non-state actor, in addition to a mix of other means (i.e. economic, political, and diplomatic).

I personally find the following, in-depth definition more persuasive:

“Hybrid Warfare is a combination of conventional, irregular and asymmetric means, including the persistent manipulation of political and ideological conflict, and can include the combination of special operations and conventional military forces, intelligence agents, political provocateurs, media representatives, economic intimidation, cyber attacks, and proxies and surrogates, paramilitaries, terrorists, and criminal elements”.

‘Hybrid threats’, Ladies and Gentlemen, are often involved, for example, in the ongoing conflict in the Ukraine and the campaign by the so-called “Islamic State” in Iraq and Syria.

I would like to turn to Russia’s hybrid warfare in the Ukraine. In his analysis *Crisis in the Ukraine – The Emergence of Hybrid Warfare*, Colonel Thiele – who regrets that he will be unable to join us this year in Seoul – makes reference to the speech held by General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation, at the annual meeting of the Russian Academy of Military Science in January 2013.

His speech is, indeed, significant and very helpful for an understanding of Russia’s approaches to hybrid warfare. I restrict myself here to citing three short passages from the above lecture:

“The very “rules of war” have changed. The role of non-military means of achieving political strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, has exceeded the power of the armed forces with respect to effectiveness....



The focus on applied methods of conflict has altered, and shifted towards a broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other non-military measures – as used in coordination with the protest potential of the population.

Asymmetrical action has become widespread, enabling the nullification of an enemy’s advantages in armed conflict. Among such actions is the use of special operations forces and internal opposition to create a permanently operating front through the entire territory of the enemy state, as well informational action, devices, and means that are constantly being perfected...”

In short, three stages of Russia’s hybrid warfare have been identified:

- Destabilizing a country by way of inciting domestic conflict;
- Causing the collapse of the state by way of ruining an economy and destroying its infrastructure;
- Replacing local political leadership with one’s own operatives as “invited saviour”.

At one point during the Ukrainian crisis, Russia had more than 55,000 troops positioned along the Ukrainian border. When it came to sowing instability in Ukraine, it was not conventional forces that were used but a range of unorthodox methods.

While the rebels directly engaged the Ukrainian army in the Donbass, the Russian military conducted training manoeuvres just across the border within Russian territory. These exercises included the use of space, missile and nuclear forces, special forces and conventional military units, as well as psychological operational teams and political operatives. All branches of the Russian military and security services were pulled in, as well as civilian leadership.

Closer analysis of Russia’s hybrid warfare strategies requires prior knowledge of President Putin’s objectives in the Ukraine, in Europe and in international politics. The President of the Federal Academy of Security Policy (BAKS), Dr Karl-Heinz Kamp, succinctly expressed the matter in a BAKS publication, in April 2016:

“Russia has undergone a fundamental transformation in its foreign policy. Putin understands his country as an anti-Western power. He thinks in Cold War categories, namely, in spheres of influence, and thus along expansionist lines. In so doing, he does not shrink from occupying sovereign states. This is demonstrated by the annexation of the Crimea and armed conflict in the eastern Ukraine.

For Putin, the USA is the root of all evil. From his point of view, the USA was the reason for the fall of the Soviet Union – a situation he continues to deplore to the present day. His goal is to divide the USA and Europe, to question the legitimacy of their institutions, such as NATO and the UN, and to weaken the EU as a political and economic union. To this end, almost any means is justified”.

Roderich Kiesewetter, foreign and security policy expert for the CDU in the German parliament, also shares Dr Kamp’s view. In an interview with *Deutschlandfunk* in February 2016, Kiesewetter observed that Russia’s strategic objective is the destabilization of the EU. Furthermore, Putin finances extremist rightwing networks in Europe.

He also accused Putin of exacerbating the crisis in Syria, and seeking to intensify the refugee crisis. A further refugee scenario is imminent in the Ukraine should agreements for a ceasefire in the East of the country fail.

A fact sheet issued by the German Bertelsmann Foundation in January 2016, entitled *Facts on the European Dimension of Displacement and Asylum: Ukraine*, shows that 1.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs)



were registered by UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, in December 2015. According to UNHCR, at least 800,000 IDPs live in areas under the Ukraine government control alone. Ukraine also has:

- a substantial number of non-registered IDPs
- some 600,000 people living in IDP-like conditions
- 7,100 displaced persons and asylum seekers from other countries.

According to UNHCR, another 1.1 million refugees fled the Ukraine. The main destinations were Russia (858,000 disputed), Belarus (127,000 disputed) Germany 6,540.

The chief reasons for Ukraine’s migration flows are as follows:

1. Forced migration as IDPs and refugees from the war in Donetsk and Luhansk, and the annexation of Crimea;
2. Emigrating as a means to avoid the military draft and
3. Leaving to find work and/or for educational purposes.

The Russian government continues to blame the Ukrainian government for causing the migration crisis. This is not the whole story, however. In my estimation, Putin’s hybrid warfare campaign – the provision of weapons to Ukrainian rebels, the use of mercenaries for destroying regional infrastructure, the weakening of local economy, blocking state functions, causing a refugee crisis, exploiting social media and information warfare etc. – has already proved successful. He has destabilized the Ukraine and will continue to do so. This is closely aligned with his concept of combined foreign and security policy and hybrid warfare.

### **The so-called “Islamic State” – Migration and “Hybrid Warfare”**

Let us now take a brief glance at Bakr’s “Master Plan” for the so-called Islamic State.

Samir Abd Muhammad al-Khlifawi, known by his nom de guerre as Haji Bakr, was the strategic head of the rebel group “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and was former colonel in Saddam Hussein’s Intelligence Services. He later joined the rebel group al-Qaida in Iraq and took part in the Iraqi insurgency.

In late 2012, he relocated to the small Syrian town of Tell Rifaat, north of Aleppo. From there he helped organize the capture of parts of Syria by the IS, which would, in turn, be used as a base for invading Iraq.

Under the guise of Islamic missionary centers, the IS opened bases and recruited informers by using hybrid warfare tactics. Khlifawi’s plans aimed at gathering information on:

- The leading families and individuals in villages or towns
- The sources of the latter’s income, weaknesses and secrets which would make them susceptible to blackmail.
- The rebel groups in villages or towns, their leaders and ideological orientation

All such information was very helpful for expanding IS influence in Syria and Iraq.

Haji Bakr was killed by rival rebels on January 6, 2014.

The civil war in Syria has been responsible for the deaths of over 250,000 people over the past five years. More than half the population, approximately 13.5 million people, are on the move – 8.7 million of whom within



Syria, and 4.7 million within the neighboring countries Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and Libya. More than 900,000 Syrians have filed an asylum request in Europe.

The Assad regime, in particular, along with the so-called “Islamic State” is chiefly responsible for this humanitarian catastrophe. Their war strategy includes the deliberate killing and starving of the civilian population, the widespread destruction of residential areas, and the systemic displacement of ethnic and religious groups considered potential trouble-makers or adversaries, namely, the use of hybrid warfare tactics. But what we are also witnessing here is a proxy war among such contestants as Saudi-Arabia, Qatar, Iran, Turkey, the US, Russia and others.

The above-mentioned figures also demonstrate why so many migrants have been forced to leave their homes and their country.

Last month (April 2016), the President of the German domestic intelligence agency (BfV), Dr Hans-Georg Maaßen, admitted in an interview that security authorities wrongly evaluated the so called “Islamic State” strategies to infiltrate Germany. Security officials initially believed it was unlikely that “Islamic State” terrorist would use the recent influx of refugees to enter the country and that the risk was too high. Although they did not need to covertly insert their people among the refugees, they did, in fact, do this”, referring to the strategy as “a show of force”.

Among the one million refugees entering Germany last year, around 70 percent of them held no valid passport and were registered on the basis of information they provided.

Maaßen also claimed that the BfV and partner agencies may, in fact, have information about dangerous individuals in their databases, but may well fail to notice their presence here due to their entry with false identity papers.

Radical Islamists in Germany are also actively trying to win over newly arrived refugees. Maaßen said the BfV was aware of around 300 attempts from conservative Salafists and other Islamists to recruit refugees.

When asked how many Islamists in Germany were considered “highly dangerous”, he said around 1,100 individuals have been classified as possible terrorists. In the interview he went on to point out that he is particularly concerned about the many unaccompanied minors, and that this group is being deliberately targeted.

There have also been several cases where Germans returning from Syria were connected to recently disclosed attack plans, and that the danger of German jihadists remains “virulent”.

Here are three examples showing how the IS sends terrorists to Europe in the guise of refugees.

**On Friday, November 13, 2015** the IS tasked a killer-commando to the streets of Paris. Three suicide bombers struck near the *Stade de France*, followed by suicide bombings and mass shootings at cafés, restaurants and a music venue. One hundred and thirty people were killed, and a further 368 injured. Prior to their attack in Paris, two of the suicide bombers had been registered on the Greek island of Leros, where they registered as Syrian refugees. The IS claimed responsibility for the attacks.

**On January 12, 2016** a suicide attack occurred near the Blue Mosque in Istanbul. Turkish authorities identified the attacker as Nabil Fadli. Coming from Syria, he entered Turkey on January 5, 2016, where he had been registered and fingerprinted as a refugee. In Istanbul he then furtively mingled among a group of tourists before then detonating his explosives. Thirteen people were killed, including eleven Germans, with a further nine injured tourists. Fadli was a Syrian member of the IS and the IS claimed responsibility for the attack.



**Mid-December 2015:** Austrian media reported that police had arrested two people suspected of involvement in the terror attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015. The two people in question arrived on the Greek Island of Leros in October 2015, at about the same time as the two men who launched the November attacks in Paris. The twenty-eight-year-old Algerian and thirty-four-year-old Pakistani applied for asylum in Austria and had their fingerprints taken. They had purportedly been in contact with Abdelhamid Abaaoud, one of the ring-leaders of the Paris attacks who had been subsequently killed in a shootout.

### Recommendations

Ladies and Gentlemen, as you will note, I have placed a question mark behind the title of my presentation *Migration – A New Form of “Hybrid Warfare”?*. I am now convinced of the facts and no question now remains. To conclude, I would like to present five recommendations:

1. Although the EU and NATO have identified Russia’s hybrid warfare activities, its capabilities and the threats, double-track policies seem to be the best way forward. These include:
  - a) continued dialogue with Moscow by way of various channels, such as the NATO Russia Council, the OSCE and several other open and secret channels;
  - b) a strong political and military signal, which should be given at the NATO Summit in Warsaw on July 8-9, 2016.
2. NATO and EU Member States should increase their situational awareness, covering political, economic and social influence of hybrid actors which could threaten NATO and the EU.
3. The European Union should increase the staff of its EU East STRATCOM Task Force and provide an appropriate budget as soon as possible.
4. NATO should strengthen its Center of Excellence in the Latvian capital Riga, where strategies in the propaganda war are analyzed and countermeasures developed.
5. When planning combat strategies against the hybrid warfare campaigns of Russia and the so-called “Islamic State”, the words of NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg are instructive: “Our goal is to bring the truth to light. We believe that critical journalism and an open political debate are the best ways to counteract propaganda.”

I thank you for your attention.

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**Remarks:** Opinions expressed in this contribution are those of the author.

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**See also:**

Kelly M. Greenhill: Massenmigration als Waffe – Vertreibung, Erpressung und Außenpolitik  
Kopp Verlag, Januar 2016, ISBN 978-3-86445-271-0

Markus Wehner: Putins Kalter Krieg – Wie Russland den Westen vor sich hertreibt  
Droemer Knauer Verlag, Mai 2016, ISBN 978-3-426-78814-1

Boris Reitschuster: Putins verdeckter Krieg – Wie Moskau den Westen destabilisiert  
Econ Verlag, April 2016, ISBN 978-3-430-20207-7

Christoph Reuter: Die schwarze Macht – Der «Islamische Staat» und die Strategen des Terrors,  
Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, April 2015, ISBN 978-3-421-04694-9

**About the Author of this Issue**

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Dr Peter Roell has been President of the Institute for Strategic, Political, Security and Economic Consultancy (ISPSW) in Berlin since January 2006. His former post was Senior Advisor for Foreign and Security Policy at the Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany to the EU in Brussels. While in Germany, Dr Roell served the German Government as Director of the Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Africa (Sub-Sahara) Department and at German embassies in the Near and Middle East, and in Asia.

Dr Roell studied sinology and political sciences at the universities of Bonn, Taipei and Heidelberg. He gained his Ph.D. from the Ruprecht-Karls-University in Heidelberg.

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