

HYBRID THREATS – GLOBAL CHALLENGE OF MODERN TIMES

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SUMMARY

Hybrid threats are increasingly replacing conventional threats in the global security environment. In recent decades, the world has been increasingly challenged by these threats. Kosovo is exposed to hybrid risks as from its northern neighbor Serbia as well as other global actors, such as; various extremist and terrorist organizations. Delays in the consolidation of the Kosovo Armed Forces, the lack of full control of the territory, the initial stage of development in which is currently the Kosovo Intelligence Agency (KIA) and many other problems make Kosovo relatively vulnerable to this risk. This paper aims to analyze and describe hybrid threats based on NATO and especially on the United States military doctrine, the case studies of Ukraine and Georgia, the origins of these risks for Kosovo and the current capabilities of the Republic of Kosovo. Moreover, through analyze this paper identifies the needs that Kosovo should fulfill in order to face effectively with this types of threats as well as means and methods which institutions in Kosovo should use to deal with these threats. Dealing with hybrid threats requires good consolidated security and defense institutions, full control of the territory and continuous and consolidated cooperation with partner countries and international organizations.

Keywords: Kosovo, security, hybrid threats, terrorism, US, NATO, Ukraine.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the XXI century, the global security began to be challenged by threats that were little-known until that time; threats that in the new defense and security doctrine are now known as hybrid threats.

The roots of these threats have been present in some cases even during the twentieth century but the culmination and emerge of these threats came after the attacks of September 11, 2001, and these threats came up and upgraded to the present day.

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Hybrid threats are a dynamic and diverse combination of regular armed forces, paramilitary forces and / or united criminal elements that aim to achieve the desired and common effect. The term “hybrid” according to the military doctrine of the United States has begun to be used in order to place particular emphasis on the complexity of modern wars, the involvement of multiple actors and the distinction from traditional categories of conflict. Hybrid threats are characterized by involvement under a central organization such as regular forces as well as irregular military forces. Regular forces include conventional forces while irregular forces include insurgent forces and criminal organizations.

The most recent cases of the application of hybrid threats by state and non-state actors are the conflicts in Georgia, Ukraine and the war and conflicts in Syria and Iraq.

Kosovo located at an important strategic crossroad connecting the east with the west and also considering the many problems in the diplomatic and security spheres that has with its northern neighbor Serbia is constantly exposed to these threats. Part of these threats are undoubtedly the Middle East terrorist organizations, that despite the ongoing war on them by the security and judiciary institutions still pose a significant risk to Kosovo.

Delays in the consolidation of the Kosovo Armed Forces (KAF), the lack of complete control of the country’s territory, the initial phase of development in which the country’s intelligence capabilities are in place, as well as many other internal challenges make Kosovo vulnerable to hybrid threats.

The normal function of the legislature, the building of the armed forces, the further development and further professionalization of the Kosovo Intelligence Agency (KIA) and cooperation with both regional and global partners are and will remain the necessary actions that the Republic of Kosovo must take in order to facilitate facing these threats.

THE CONCEPT OF HYBRID THREATS AND THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBAL SECURITY

In order to understand hybrid threats, it is essential to understand the concept of the functioning of these threats. Hybrid threats in themselves are innovative, adaptable, globally interconnected, networked and embedded in the culture of the local population (TC 7-100, 1-1). Actors, who apply hybrid threats to achieve their intentions, operate with conventional and non-conventional forces, develop asymmetric and adaptable combination of regular, irregular tactics and criminal tactics, and use regular military capabilities in new and old ways.

The prominent US Defense Counsel Frank Hoffman defines the hybrid threat as; A combination of tactics that opponents apply through the simultaneous and intertwined engagement of conventional weapons, non-conventional tactics, terrorism and criminal behaviors at the same time and space in order to achieve their political objectives (Hoffman 2014).

Threats to a country can be direct and indirect. These threats can affect national and political interests through sophisticated information campaigns (propaganda) or by developing direct physical attacks within a country's territory. Concerns about hybrid threats for the first time have been raised in NATO during NATO's 2010 strategic concept building. NATO's key concept emerging from the 2010 strategic concept, hybrid threats define it as 'abilities of opponents who at the same time, to engage conventional and non-conventional adaptive tools in order to achieve their objectives' (Pawlak 2015). Russian actions against Ukraine as well as the ISIS campaign in Iraq have revived the concept of hybrid threats in NATO, which during the informal meeting of EU defense ministers held in Riga in February 2015, uniquely emphasized the need for Building a strategy to counteract these threats.

Considering the different degrees of intensity of the threat and intent of involved actors, it is important to understand the difference between hybrid threat, hybrid conflict, and hybrid warfare.

Hybrid threat is the phenomenon that comes as a result of the convergence and interconnection of various elements, which together form a complex and multi-dimensional threat. Hybrid conflict and hybrid warfare are two specific categories, by which, sovereign states utilize hybrid tactics in order to achieve their strategic objectives.

Hybrid conflict is a situation in which parties refrain from using military force against each other (with the exception of a brief incidents), relying mainly on the combination between military intimidation, the exploitation of economic and political weaknesses and exploitation technology and diplomatic means to achieve their goals. Hybrid war is a situation in which a state, alongside the use of diplomatic, economic and political means, openly uses its armed forces against another country (Pawlak 2015).

During the past century there have been some examples where different countries are faced with hybrid threats. One example is the Vietnam War during which Viet Cong and the People's Army of Vietnam combined the regular and paramilitary forces to fight the US and French forces (TC 7-100, 1-1).

In recent times there is a clear increase in the trend of using hybrid threats to achieve certain goals. Among the freshest examples are:

- Operation of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the territories of several states and its use of various economic, technological and military means to achieve political goals.
- Cyber warfare of Russia and China by using state-sponsored hackers to impede certain states in their cyber-space programs.
- Terror and impact war between criminal groups and drug cartels in Mexico, which has had a serious negative impact on both security and economic terms.
- Russia's secret operations against Ukraine. Russia exploited its Special Forces and information operations against Ukraine.
- Dependency on resources in order to achieve political objectives. In 2010,

China blocked the export of raw materials to Japan in response to the arrest of a Chinese fishing boat crew by the Japanese. In 2011, India rejected the implementation of the water-sharing agreement with Bangladesh in order to put pressure on the latter over bilateral agreements.

Besides achieving strategic objectives and goals, different states and actors applying these kinds of threats also seek operational benefit. Through the use of hybrid threats these actors aim to achieve the desired effect on the operational environment by forcing the opponent to find different ways and engage tools in several areas and lines during the course of the operations. An action or military attack will not be enough to turn the situation on the ground in his favor, but will need to engage in a multitude with different means and methods to facilitate the achievement of the ultimate goal.

Actors through the application of hybrid threats at the same time can cause economic destabilization, weakening of credibility in existing governance, attacks on the information network, humanitarian crises and physical endangering of opponents. A special feature of hybrid threats is the involvement of criminals and criminal groups in co-operation with regular or paramilitary forces. A clear example of this involvement is the Russian-Georgian conflict of 2008, during which Russia engaged many criminal elements in South Ossetia with the purpose of ethnic cleansing of that territory by the Georgian population. In addition to the aforementioned actions, various criminal organizations have the potential to provide finance for operations and also have the potential to illegally purchase weapons and equipment (TC 7-100, 1-2).

Also in the case of Ukraine, the Russian Federation continuously and co-ordinately coerces non-regular forces and tactics with the Russian Special Forces (Spetsnaz) and the advanced weapon systems in synchrony to achieve the common goal (Weitz 2014). Through the application of these threats, the Russian Federation intends to extend the space and time conflict so that this non-conventional campaign places the conditions for ethnic Russians in Ukraine to take control of disputed geographic areas in Ukraine (Davis 2015).

In the case of Ukraine the Russian Federation continuously links the tactical level with the operational level as well as the operational level with the strategic level. In order to reach the deception in the operational level, Russia is constantly positioning and repositioning its military formations and capabilities at the border with Ukraine. After positioning these armor and mechanized forces develop force demonstration and training exercises to distract from other operations. At the same time, Russia supplies weapons and materials to its paramilitary forces in Ukraine, covering this supply on behalf of sending humanitarian aid to crisis areas (Weitz 2014: 4).

In the strategic aspect, the Russian Federation for Foreigners engages diplomatic means of "peace in crisis" while for the internal audience promotes nationalism in order to retain the domestic enthusiasm in the country (Davis 2015). At the strategic level, Russia through diplomatic struggles, energy supply constraints, and electricity

price destabilization forces other European states to stay out of concrete support for Ukraine. States exposed to these threats are very difficult to isolate specific challenges individually and will therefore have to engage in many directions and with many means to overcome these threats. Coping with hybrid threats requires detailed and well-planned planning; this confrontation requires comprehensive engagement of all government sectors and constructive regional and global cooperation.

In order to cope with this challenging phenomenon for contemporary society, NATO in May 2011 in Estonia has successfully conducted an experiment named "Counter-Response to Hybrid Threats", an experiment that has been followed by many such activities in the years to come. During that experiment, the complex hybrid threat environment was examined through three "lenses". First "Lens" was to confront economic, technological and cyber threats. The second "Lens" was dealing with stability, conflict prevention and partnership. The final "Lense" was the security of global resources.

The widespread involvement of NATO member states as well as partners in this experiment as well as in other activities attests to the threat posed by these threats as well as the commitment of allies to face these threats (Successful 'Countering Hybrid Threats', 2011).

KOSOVO AND HYBRID THREATS

Kosovo is among the most exposed countries to the hybrid threats in Europe. This is partly due to the geographic position and the global trend, mainly due to the recent past and relations with its northern neighbor Serbia. The beginnings of Kosovo's dispute with hybrid threats have roots, both before and during the 1998-1999 Kosovo War, when Serbia, in addition to using regular armed forces against the Kosovo Liberation Army and the civilian population, used paramilitary forces and other criminal elements. Moreover, the Serbian regime, through the firing of Albanian workers from work and economic and political pressure, succeeded for many years to bring Kosovo and its inhabitants into a humanitarian crisis. The propaganda machinery of the Serbian regime had a key role in disinformation of the Serbian and Albanian population, but also of the international opinion. The closure of schools and the physical violence against the Albanian population by both Serbian security bodies and criminal elements aimed ethnic cleaning of Kosovo by the Albanian population that brought massive displacement of this population towards European countries. Serbia applied this strategy of engaging hybrid threats within the territory of Kosovo until the end of the war in June 1999.

After the end of the war, the international presence prevented Serbia from applying this strategy to a degree, however, the ability of the Serbian government to adapt to the new circumstances, international and local negligence and other factors enabled the Serbian state to continue engaging hybrid threats against Kosovo. These threats grew and became much more noticeable after the declaration of Kosovo's independence on February 17, 2008.

The Serbian state consolidated and interconnected the hybrid threats among themselves, managed to adapt to the new circumstances, and managed to combine the diplomatic struggle with these threats. Examples of hybrid threats that Serbia applies today against Kosovo are:

- The geographical positioning of three Serbian military brigades along the border with the Republic of Kosovo in order to intimidate, the population and the government of Kosovo.
- Supporting Serbian parallel structures in the northern part of Kosovo with the aim to prevent Kosovo government of institutionalizing the state of Kosovo in the north.
- Strengthening the criminal elements in the north of the country in order to create uncertainty.
- Encouraging and tolerating smuggling of goods in northern border areas with the aim of financial and economic damage to Kosovo.
- Obstructing the normal functioning of the legislature through Serbian minority members of parliament in order to block the constitutional and legal changes that relate to the country's security and economic development.
- Coordination of activities between Serbian parallel structures and Serbian extremist and criminal organizations as; "Guard of Car Lazar", Organization "Obraz", SNP "1389" etc.
- Diplomatic threat to the West through strengthening of cooperation with the Russian Federation.
- Uninterrupted diplomatic engagement against Kosovo's independence and obstruction of recognitions in order to de-legitimize Kosovo's independence.
- Diplomatic engagement of Serbian authorities against the membership of Kosovo in UNESCO.
- Inspiration and support of various incidents in order to keep Kosovo under pressure (such as wall, train, road blocking etc.).

All of the above actions are typical actions that appear within the concept of hybrid threats, moreover these threats have been overcome by evolving into the dimensions of a biased conflict. Much of the actions Serbia is undertaking in Kosovo have been taken and adapted from the Russian strategy of applying hybrid threats to South Ossetia in Georgia. Some of the actions that Serbia are taken and adapted from the Russian strategy of engaging hybrid threats include the engagement of criminal groups, parallel structures and intelligence service elements in northern part of Kosovo and the support of these structures by central government of Serbia. Threats, not less dangerous coming to Kosovo is the hybrid threats of ISIS and other organizations posing a global threat. Radical Islamic groups inspired by extremist religious ideologies are a danger that Kosovo can pursue for a relatively long time. The combination of religious propaganda with the funding and recruitment of terrorist elements classifies the activity of these groups within the concept of hybrid

threats. Examples of hybrid threats that radical Islamist groups apply against the interests and security of Kosovo are:

- Recruiting terrorist elements in order to participate in Middle East wars and their preparation for the development of terrorist acts within the territory of Kosovo.
- Radical religious propaganda in certain mosques to indoctrinate the population.
- “Humanitarian” activities of various Islamic organizations in order to raise the image of the population and cover the financing of radical groups.
- Verbal and physical attacks on national figures and symbols in order to strip citizens from national sentiments and their orientation towards religious radicalism.
- Obstructing the functioning and maintenance of traditional Kosovar Islam.
- Trying to get involved in the institutions and political life of the country.

The hybrid threats that come to Kosovo from the radical Islamic elements and groups being camouflaged under the umbrella of religion are threats that Kosovo will have to face for a relatively long time, given the relatively large number of “Warriors” fighting alongside ISIS in proportion to the general population of Kosovo. The threat from these threats is compounded by the growing probability of defeating ISIS in the Middle East and the ability of “warriors” to be commanded by ISIS leadership to return to their homeland and to continue “holy war” in Europe. One of the reasons why these “warriors” may be ordered to operate in Kosovo and around it may be because through this action, ISIS will try to dissolve conflict squads in order to reduce international military pressure over territories that Controls in Syria and Iraq.

KOSOVO RESPONSE TO HYBRID THREATS

Kosovo as a newly formed and not-recognized state in key international organizations such as the UN, EU, NATO, has continuously faced challenges and difficulties of various kinds over the years. Among the key challenges has been and remains the security issue, especially when we consider the threats outlined above. The obstacles that Serbia and its allies are making to Kosovo in the diplomatic sphere continue to have an impact on the overall development of the country, particularly in the development of the security and economic sector. Within the obstacles Serbia is making to Kosovo in terms of security, is the use of constitutional right of Serbian deputies to prevent constitutional changes that would open the way for Kosovo to establish and build armed forces. Limited capacities in the field of defense and security, the numerous problems that arise in the international arena, the initial phase of development in which security and intelligence structures are housed, internal problems and external factors make it difficult to successfully confront of Kosovo with hybrid threats. These limitations of Kosovo are being exploited to the utmost by both Serbia and radical groups to the detriment of Kosovo’s interests. For

a successful confrontation with the hybrid threats, the executive and the legislature of the country should undertake some legal and organizational actions.

Transformation of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) into the Kosovo Armed Forces is one of the immediate actions that the Kosovo legislature should undertake. The next mandate of the Armed Forces would create sufficient legal space to work on preventing and dealing with this kind of threats.

Capacity building for territorial defense would enable the Kosovo government to engage these forces in all those cases where the country and the population are at risk of armed acts of both regular and paramilitary forces. The new mandate of the armed forces would also enable the enhancement of the intelligence capacities at the country level, thus also alleviating the burden and pressure that the Kosovo Intelligence Agency and Kosovo Police are currently carrying.

The new mandate armed forces will also have the necessary space and capacity to participate in combat forces in Peace Support Operations around the world, contributing to global peace but also preventing partners and partners from expanding and empowering organizations terrorist (United States Department of State, 2015).

Preventing increasing and strengthening of terrorist organizations in the world would have a positive impact on Kosovo's internal security by mitigating the risk of possible attacks in Kosovo. Participating in Peace Support Operations in the world and being an active part of the global warfare against terrorism, in addition to security benefits, would have a positive impact on the diplomatic and recognition aspects as well as to enhance the image of Kosovo in the world. The transformation of the Kosovo Security Forces (KSF) into the Kosovo Armed Forces would complete the security architecture of the country and thus create the Kosovo government a space and real opportunity for drafting the National Security Strategy, a strategy that would guide all Security sectors to a professional planning to deal with, among other things, hybrid threats. Without completing the security architecture of the country, more specifically without changing the mandate of the Kosovo Security Force, it will be very difficult for the country's institutions to draft a genuine national security strategy.

The extent and functioning of Kosovo institutions throughout the country is another important step in preventing hybrid threats. The extent of the institutions would reduce the scope for the functioning of parallel structures, criminal groups and smuggling as important elements of hybrid threats. The current situation does not allow a stretch without international support, so the Kosovo government should intensify diplomatic activity in the function of this issue. Apart from diplomatic activities, it is also required to increase internal pressure in the economic aspect, namely the conditionality of investments and financial support of municipalities, where the extension of state sovereignty is impeded in exchange for supporting this extension. The overall security environment both in the country and in the region and also the short time since the establishment has limited the ability of the Kosovo Intelligence Agency but also of Kosovo's intelligence capacity to develop, develop and stretched enough operationally.

Since the first steps of the establishment Kosovo Intelligence Agency has faced major security challenges such as; the security situation in the north of the country and the activities of radical Islamic individuals and groups. These challenges have hampered a normal construction and development of this agency with special interest for the country's security. Dealing with hybrid threats requires greater support from this institution both financially and in terms of increasing the number of staff. Intelligence capabilities are key elements for successful confrontation with hybrid threats. Information gathering is one of the most effective ways of preventing actions that may come from hybrid threats. Based on the current security environment and the need for synchronization and coordination of intelligence structures for Kosovo it is important to establish a National Intelligence Council as a permanent central body next to the president or prime minister of the country, a council which would serve as a bridge Between the KIA, the intelligence capacities of the Kosovo Police and the intelligence structure of the KSF. Not having the burden of operational engagement, this council could, among other things, serve as a center of intelligence structures for long-term strategic analysis.

In addition to the above three actions, coping with hybrid threats requires the engagement of many other state power instruments as well; Political processes, humanitarian aid, diplomacy and economic development. Dealing with hybrid threats requires resources, more precisely the growth and modernization of logistics and military capabilities as well as civilian ones. Special importance for a successful confrontation with hybrid threats is the awareness of citizens about the importance each individual has in the common effort against these threats. The functioning of government-intuition-citizen trinomial is vital to an effective counter-response to hybrid threats (**Analysis of the Strategic, 2014: 31).

CONCLUSION

The global security environment is becoming much more complex than in the past decades. Modernization of weapon systems, change of strategies, global political developments, adaptation of new tactics, the emergence of new global actors and many other factors are increasing the complexity of the global security environment. Hybrid threats every day are tackling conventional threats by further increasing this complexity. Dealing with hybrid threats requires constructive international engagement. First of all, it requires the creation of a hybrid mentality that implies the conceptual interaction of understanding in the strategic context of the complexity of today's operational environment. Creating a hybrid mentality helps find new ways to link and synchronize military actions with diplomatic, economic and information engagement.

Kosovo is in an unfavorable situation within the complexity of the current global security environment. Challenges faced by the international diplomatic level due to the obstacles that are being made by Serbia and its allies, the internal obstacles to the development of the security sector and not the internal political stability are

some of the factors that continue to affect Kosovo's exposure to hybrid threats. Institutions and society in the Republic of Kosovo should contribute to the construction and implementation of a common and comprehensive strategy for dealing with hybrid threats. Legislative and organizational actions such as; The transformation of the KSF, the strengthening of the intelligence capacities, the increase of diplomatic engagement and the increase of regional cooperation should be the main lines of effort to achieve the ultimate goal for a Kosovo with stable stability and security.

The achievement of this ultimate goal and, in particular, successful coping with hybrid threats requires constant synchronization and coordination of the actions of all domestic state sectors, including in particular the security, diplomacy, economy and finance sectors. In addition to internal synchronization and coordination, increased attention should be paid to synchronizing and coordinating with international and regional strategic partners. Coordination of actions with allies and partners in dealing with hybrid threats, Kosovo, besides the legitimacy of dealing with these threats, will also provide opportunities for the budget saving aspect as well as the growth, development and modernization of resources. The success of dealing with hybrid threats depends on the actions that are taking place against these threats while actions depend on used time and space.

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HIBRIDNE PRIJETNJE – GLOBALNI IZAZOV SUVREMENOG DOBA

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SAŽETAK

Hibridne prijetnje u globalnom sigurnosnom okruženju sve više zamjenjuju konvencionalne prijetnje. Posljednjih desetljeća svijet je sve više izložen tim prijetnjama. Kosovo je izloženo hibridnim rizicima kako od strane svog sjevernog susjeda Srbije, tako i od drugih globalnih aktera, kao što su na primjer razne ekstremističke i terorističke organizacije. Kašnjenja u konsolidaciji Kosovskih oružanih snaga, nedostatak potpune kontrole teritorija, početna faza razvoja u kojoj je trenutačno Kosovska obavještajna agencija i mnogi drugi problemi čine Kosovo relativno ranjivim u odnosu na ovaj rizik. Ovaj rad ima za cilj analizirati i opisati hibridne prijetnje temeljem vojne doktrine NATO-a te posebno SAD-a, studija slučaja Ukrajine i Gruzije, te utvrditi ishodišta tih rizika za Kosovo i trenutne mogućnosti Republike Kosovo. Analizom se u ovom radu utvrđuju potrebe koje Kosovo treba ispuniti kako bi se učinkovito suočilo s ovim vrstama prijetnji, kao i sredstva i metode koje bi institucije na Kosovu trebale koristiti za suočavanje s tim prijetnjama. Suočavanje s hibridnim prijetnjama zahtijeva konsolidirane sigurnosne i obrambene institucije, potpunu kontrolu teritorija te kontinuiranu i konsolidiranu suradnju s partnerskim državama i međunarodnim organizacijama.

Ključne riječi: Kosovo, sigurnost, hibridne prijetnje, terorizam, SAD, NATO.