

Throughout the history of mankind means of warfare have constantly evolved. The 21st century is no exception to that. The very nature of military environment has significantly changed. In order to secure the victory nations utilize more and more unconventional maneuvers. Primarily, they rely more on the usage of non-military and paramilitary measures in order to achieve political goals. This trend has been noted and acknowledged long time ago. However, rapidly developing technologies and multilateral world system backed up by intricate international alliances has given rise to a new approach to warfare. [1]. This new approach has been given many names such as “new generation warfare,” “asymmetric warfare,” “compound warfare,” but mostly recognized as “hybrid warfare.”

Hybrid Warfare can be categorized as a combination of military and nonmilitary means in peacetime to achieve traditional military objectives like territorial control or conquest without having an actual conflict. [1] As you can see the definition is rather vague. So let's clarify what hybrid warfare actually is: “Hybrid warfare is a term that sought to capture the blurring and blending of previously separate categories of conflict. It uses a blend of military, economic, diplomatic, criminal, and informational means to achieve desired political goals” (Schadlow, 2015). [2] The following tactics and maneuvers categorize hybrid warfare:

- Diversions
- Cyber-warfare – usage of IT in order to suppress the opponent
- Proxy- warfare – meaning use of third-party, non state actors
- Economic pressure
- Political pressure

The main difference between conventional warfare and hybrid warfare is that hybrid warfare actively seeks to avoid direct open military conflict or tries to reduce it in scale. Furthermore, the structure of hybrid warfare is more intricate.

Objectives include: influencing policy of target countries using a combination of different tactics.

Seizing new territory via hybrid warfare can lay the foundation for future military operations, shall the need for actual conflict arise.

Cyber warfare, propaganda, and a conventional invasion backed by political subversion are included. [1], [2], [3]

There are a quite large number of examples of hybrid warfare in recent history. Western researchers often cite Ukrainian crisis as a great example. [4]

The paper mainly focuses on China, since it is one of the most influential actors in the world and Asia Pacific region. In fact PRC's military doctrine calls for usage of “traditional and nontraditional methods of warfare”. China has succeeded in integrating hybrid warfare in its politics. [1]

China's hybrid warfare strategy uses coast guard, or militia organizations while keeping regular military forces over the horizon; and combines all instruments of national power, including sophisticated cyber operations, economic incentives and sanctions, and legal and political warfare (“law fare”). China utilizes hybrid warfare in order to expand its territory. A great example of that are China's actions in South China Sea. [1], [5], [6]

	Spratly Islands	Paracel Islands
Claimants	PRC, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines, Brunei	PRC, Taiwan, Vietnam
Chinese Name	Nansha Islands	Xisha Islands
Geopolitical Significance	Oil, natural gas, fisheries, shipping links, Strait of Malacca, potential for military bases.	Oil, natural gas, Fisheries, Shipping Links, Strait of Malacca.
Current Administration	PRC, Taiwan, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam.	PRC's Hainan Province
Notable Conflicts	1974: PRC and Vietnam 1988: PRC and Vietnam (Johnson Reef) 1992: PRC and Vietnam (Da Lac Reef) 1995: PRC and Philippines (Mischief Reef) 2002: ASEAN Declaration of Conduct	1974: PRC and Vietnam (Battle of the Paracels) 2002: ASEAN Declaration of Conduct

Coast guard, oil drilling platforms, fishing boats and island construction – all serve the same purpose China's political agenda. More specific example would be the usage of a large number of fishing ships in 1990s against Taiwan when swarms of fishing boats were blocking the access to outer islands of Taiwan during the political dispute. Similar tactics was used again and again against Japan or US Navy. [1], [6]