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**HYBRID WARFARE – CONTEMPORARY CONCEPT IN  
GEORGIA'S EXTERNAL SECURITY**

Masters' thesis

Program of International Relations and European–Asian Studies

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I declare I have written the master's thesis independently.

All works and major viewpoints of the other authors, data from other sources of literature and elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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# **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

BREXIT- Withdrawal of Great Britain from European union

CIS –Commonwealth of independent states

CCU- Cyber Consequence Unit

CED – Commercial Electronic Data

DDoS- A Distributed denial of service

EU – European Union

EUMM – European Union Monitoring mission

GAERC – General Affairs and External Relations Council

IRI- International republican institution

NATO- North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NDI – National democratic institute

OSCE- The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

RF – Russian federation

SNG-(SodruzhestvoNezavisimyykhGosudarstv), Commonwealth of Independent States- CIS

The KGB - (KomitetGosudarstvennoyBezopasnosti), Committee for State Security

UN- United Nations

USAID - The United States Agency for International Development

USSR- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

## ABSTRACT

Hybrid warfare is predominant tendency in the 21st century, therefore all states should take into consideration the possible threats and results caused by hybrid warfare strategies and tactics. This research paper highlights the analysis of Georgia's current external affairs with Northern neighbor-Russian Federation through the lens of hybrid warfare approach. Likewise, the elements of hybrid warfare are discussed from the recent history of Georgia. With all ensuing consequences, the paper analyzes all possible evidence to detect future expansion of untraditional warfare.

Consequently, the usage of mixture qualitative and quantitative research method through data analyses, on the one hand, will exposure what kind of hybrid warfare elements are observed in Georgia and on the other hand, how far it has developed. Further, for collecting qualitative data, in-depth interviews will be applied to the representative of NATO information center representative, journalist of Georgian Economics and head of analyzing and forecasting center. Interviewing process was important to make the research more objective and close to the real practice implemented in the policy of Georgia's internal and external affairs. Hence, according to the current situation, "soft power" theory and perceptions and misperceptions issue will be applied to analyze hybrid threats in cognitive means. A literature review of several scholars is introduced to summarize the formulated perception of hybrid warfare definition. Wherein, understanding of general schools of thought is helpful to answer the research questions. However, the research gap is significant in terms of lack of the appropriate international relations theory.

**Keywords:** Hybrid warfare, External security, Non-military challenges, Informational warfare, Cyber warfare.

## INTRODUCTION

“It is the strong will of the citizens of Georgia to establish democratic order, economic freedom, a social state governed by the rule of law, to ensure universal human rights and freedoms and to strengthen state independence and peaceful co-existence with other nations...”

### The Constitution of Georgia

History of humanity is a history of battles. In parallel of classical wars, Human being has been conducting psychological wars since the time of its existence. In such condition, the opponent’s target could be governments, organizations, religious and financial groups, certain individuals, or all of them together. In the modern world, along with the development of technologies, new methods of war and warfare have been introduced. Nowadays, in the 21st century, hybrid warfare is inconceivable without powerful means of information. Georgian political reality has faced the concept of hybrid warfare elements, therefore, hybrid warfare and possible implications for Georgian policy in regards with defining the future direction of country’s policy will be discussed during the research. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of this concept has reviewed to understand certain parameters of hybrid warfare.

In addition, for historical study, it is interesting to explain the combination of military and non-military mechanisms of the contemporary era that has been used to achieve the target, which appeared to be the responsibility of military forces. Nowadays, such type of conflict known as a Hybrid warfare is able to misuse the weaknesses of Georgia’s security framework, because non-military conflicts are getting as important as military interference. What is hybrid warfare and how it has perceived in post-modern geopolitics? From the most common beliefs about hybrid warfare definition, following idea is dominating: this is the war through manageable chaos, from

where one of the main component is an information war, for the purpose of fully demoralizing the opponent. Other important elements are terrorist attacks, threatening, religion issues, cyber-attacks, criminal, rebels, suicide, weapon, extremism, hostages etc. More parted the society is, there are more chances that hybrid war achieves successful results. From the targeted state, there are chosen reliable groups to cause internal chaos and at the end of the process turn it to specific actions that were meant to implement. Generally, main objectives of information and psychological wars and operations are to influence on decision-makers and development of scenarios of events, during the decision making process. On the tactical level, information war can be reflected in the behaviour of the different social groups of the population, as well as, the aim is to create favourable perception attitudes for the population, including the misguiding of the media. There will be discussed the wars at different times in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region. In any crisis, the scenario is individual. In the modern information environment, there is a decisive role in social networks, where the adversary tries to improve their skills each and every day. It is obvious that the nature of the war has not been changed for centuries and people are fighting for the same fundamental reasons, which were on various subjects in thousands of years ago, these reasons are defined by Greek historian Thucydides as the fear, dignity and interest, merely the character of the war has been changed.

In the age of informational era, it is very important to have awareness about not only military weapons and forces or about chemical agents and nuclear bombs, but about the tools, which are used to control global or local media for a specific purpose. For example; to change the attitude towards any issue through the position of opinion makers in given country. Furthermore, it can be apprehended as a propagation and disinformation towards civil society or military servants. It is very important to understand informational warfare in a wider context and explain Georgian political picture into more details, therefore, it should be discussed due to its essence in the framework of a "Soft power" theory. In opposite to "hard power" theory that uses the levers of compelling and pressure, the "soft power" is based on coherence and attraction mechanisms to achieve goals through using intellectual resources. The classical "soft power" consists of three components: values, culture and Diplomacy. Accordance with these components it is possible to explain Georgia's current internal and foreign policy in relations to northern neighbor - Russia.



Although, to discuss perceptions and misperceptions appeared to be a comprehensible tool to understand hybrid warfare in Georgia. How do decision makers sum up conclusions from information that could be countered to their own views or what kind of sources cause misperception in the society? Such kind of issues has not been properly debated by scholars and specialists in psychology and international relations. Furthermore, informational wars are densely interlinked to the psychological warfare, which is targeted to influence on conviction and values of population, as well as, to the emotions and confer through different kinds of weaponry and mechanisms. Thus, in this study, there will be discussed informational-psychological warfare as an additional component of traditional wars in post-modern geopolitics.

Nowadays, western countries are more concerned about the future victim of Hybrid warfare. There are scholars who conceptualize these threats to Moldova, Georgia or Baltic states. Reviewing recent history from near past can have affirmation for those countries to be discussed under the risk zone. The national security advisor of US, Polish origin diplomat Brzezinski has called to USA and NATO government to dispose the troops in the Baltic States, otherwise defending the countries might appear difficult. Furthermore, former NATO Secretary General Rasmussen (Rasmussen, 2014) announced that there is probability to be abolished the borders of the Baltic region, to experiment the existence of the military alliance. Rasmussen goes further and adds that after financial crisis European countries decreased military expenses and they almost cannot depend on themselves without USA assistance. However, he considers that Russia will avoid the obvious military aggression and will address to the hybrid warfare as it happened in Ukrainian case.

Furthermore, while speaking about national security issues, the term Hybrid warfare has become an integral part of the terminology of politicians or field experts at various conferences and meetings. Nevertheless, there will be a few people who can accurately explain the term itself and get rid of those theoretical opinions that exist today around this term. Nowadays, there is an impression that we are dealing with a completely new, unprecedented event of war, or any special novelty of warfare, which it is difficult to deal. Below in this work there will be shown the complexity of this issue. First of all to clarify the

term and discuss the nature of the warfare. Of course, the "Hybrid Warfare" is a prior matter of interest for Georgia's defense representatives.

## **Outline of the study**

A theoretical framework of the research is attached to the first part of this master thesis. There are analyzed the opinions of several scholars, who have dedicated their work to the explanation of "Soft power" theory and perceptions and misperceptions in contemporary politics. Moreover, there is discussed the importance of informational and psychological warfare through the lens of "soft power" theory in connection with perceptions and misperception issues.

The second part of the thesis consists of the chronological reviewing of the Georgian political picture since the Rose revolution (2003) in terms of influence by hybrid warfare. Followed by Russo-Georgian war and concomitant processes that changed the ruling party in the country. Furthermore, in this part of the topic, there is discussed Russian policy and new concepts towards Georgia. The issue about frozen conflicts has transformed into mechanisms that are driven to achieve hybrid goals. Analyzing above-mentioned issues will help to understand the current situation and causative mechanisms that endangered Georgian society by hybrid threats. For more deep perception, there should be analyzed Chapter 5 regarding collective security, from the arrangement of Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Chapter 5 assumes that the participants of the treaty are sharing such kind of value that, attack towards any member country is considered as an aggression towards to all member country. Therefore, in case of any kind military or non-military action, countries are using the right of collective security.

In the third part of the thesis, there is discussed the different tactics and strategies of hybrid warfare in terms of comparing to Ukrainian case. Furthermore, the positions of the European Union and NATO have presented to set up the future image of international politics. EU and NATO perspectives are also important to find out rather they support Georgian territorial

integrity and the idea of accepting new members in short-term period. In the third chapter, there is also highlighted the importance of the region and is brought the expert opinions and recommendations how to avoid the hybrid threats.

## **The aim of the study**

The aim of the study is to analyze the hybrid threats and possible profound effect on Georgian society that defines the future direction of Georgian politics. The number of frozen conflicts are burdensome issues for turning aware to become an attractive country for western institutions. Therefore, it should be prior to clarifying the possible causes of long-term frozen conflicts and input techniques. More disadvantages generated by internal chaos in the country is that it is not aware of the further economic development. The population is facing a different kind of problems concerning to healthcare, social benefits, education level, criminal and even terrorist attacks. Recent accident, in November 2017, was evaluated as a terrorist act and sacrificed the lives of three-person during the disarmament operation in the ordinary residence block of Tbilisi district. For preclusion such kind of events, it is crucial to explore deeply the topic about hybrid threats not to obstruct the regional development in South Caucasus. Little attention has paid not only to the topic of frozen conflicts and possible threats in Georgia but also to the Hybrid threats all over the world. Researchers are mostly interested in traditional warfare and eventuated gap is sufficiently large.

It is obvious that the issue about Hybrid warfare should be researched actually and comprehensively. Peace and security of the country are dependent not only on the government but to the perception of the population to the certain issues. Therefore, the importance of the study must be proved by a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, more concretely, by web-based surveys, face-to-face in-depth interviews, as well as, by case study methods through comparison case study analysis from Ukrainian example. The overall research questions that are answered at the end of the thesis, are: *What is the public attitude in Georgia, regarding the foreign policy of the country? What kind of conditions should occur to conduct the*

*propaganda of another state in society? What sort of Political responses might be fruitful to defend from hybrid threats?*

In conclusion, research clarifies the impact of perception in society to the general direction of country's politics. With analyzing the surveys, it was also evident to see how far hybrid tools have influenced to the local community. Comparison case study analyzes helped to calculate possible risks that are followed by the specific events in planning informational warfare strategies.

## **Methodology**

In the Master thesis, there is used the combination of the quantitative and qualitative method of data analysis. Submitted research methods give us a proper understanding of the perception of Georgian society towards the idea of European integration and ongoing hybrid processes in the country. Definitively, at the end of the study there is pointed out following techniques of research method: web-based survey, analyzing quantitative data from international institutions, face-to-face interview, content analysis and case study analysis comparing to Ukrainian occasion.

Starting with quantitative research method of the web-based survey, it shows the awareness of Hybrid trends in the society. Thus, it appeared to be the fastest and optimal information collecting method. In the same way, low-costs and automation in data input and handling promote to collect data from the targeted population, as much as possible. As well, quantitative survey's data analysis, conducted by the international institutions, illustrates optimal percentage about the support of Georgian population to the pro-European ideas, likewise, quantitative

method helped to understand the attitude level towards Russian policy in Georgia, with the error of maximum 2 percent.

Moreover, to gain underlying motivation and opinions regarding hybrid warfare, there is applied the qualitative method of data analyses. During carrying out research about hybrid warfare, this method provided new ideas and developed new insights regarding the above-mentioned quantitative research method. Face-to-face interviews and content study methods are sent in pursuit to generate a report of findings concerning hybrid trends in Georgia. Thus, evaluating interviews with three different representatives of society is very useful to obtain their personal opinions, perceptions and gain detailed information about the mechanisms that are used for achieving the planned strategies. All three candidates' interpretation of the issue was further stepped forward, to sum up, evident events and facts that illustrated real picture and faced problems.

In more details, content analysis of different work of scholars, journal articles and books about hybrid concepts helped to get the central aspects of social integration from different groups. For a broader understanding of the topic, it is necessary to identify what kind of theoretical framework is suitable for Hybrid strategies and what kind of general tactics are implemented to achieve the goal. Furthermore, case study method is used to discover new trends and possibilities based on the analyzing data from experience of the country. Comparison the example of Ukrainian case to the Georgian reality demonstrates new suggestions and opinions, which can be used for drawing up plans in order to prevent future security questions.

Despite the fact that, there is carried out various of research methods, still there remains a research gap. However, there has been published lots of articles and scholarly works, but exact approach concerning this topic endures unsolvable. Especially, the theoretical framework of the Hybrid warfare and possible premeditated tactics that usually are foreseen via the specific theoretical approaches. Nowadays, hybrid warfare is characterized as an unpredictable and still new trend in the politics of international relations.

## **1. Theoretical framework**

*“If the opponent is stronger than you, your actions must go beyond his comprehension”*

Bernard Werber

Generally, hybrid warfare lacks the theory that well demonstrates the framework of the phenomenon. Therefore, differentiation and comprehension from another kind of warfare appear to be complex. However, it is important to set proximate approach to understand the impact of hybrid warfare to acknowledge the contemporary concepts of Georgia’s external security. Therefore, it is useful to analyze this topic through the lens of soft power theory, (Joseph Nye, combining hard and soft power, 2009) who pioneered this theory, also known as “smart power”, has provided the elements of irregular warfare approach. It helps to find out what kind of soft tools are implemented during the hybrid warfare. Furthermore, Robert Jervis (2015) introduces the conception of perceptions and misperceptions in international politics. This is the approach to examine the abilities and consequences of policymakers, to choose appropriate strategy against the opponent from the limited resources and information. Although, there are two general schools of thoughts, who gives precise ideas about the characteristics of hybrid warfare. Basically, the combination of irregular and regular components of warfare was introduced since the Rose revolution and represents the continuation process. However, it is important to highlight the research gap in the theory of hybrid warfare that turned out to be significant, which complicates to set straightforward findings with the relations of Georgia’s neighbourhood policy.

### **1.1. Soft power approach**

In this part of the research, there will be discussed “soft power” theory as a more distinct approach in international relations in order to describe Georgian-Russian relationships from the perspectives of Hybrid warfare. “Soft power” was introduced in the end of twenty century, as a new direction in the international politics. The founder of this concept is considered American thinker Joseph Nye. From the following books, it is possible to learn deeply the concept of “Soft power”. “Bound to lead: the Changing Nature of American power” (New York, 1990, Basic Books), “Soft power: The means of success in world politics” (Public affairs. 2004). The components of classical “soft power” consist of values, culture and diplomacy, therefore, Joseph Nye's ideas quickly gained popularity, and soon it was introduced in the foreign policy of the United States and other leading countries from the West. The classical "soft power" provided important conditions for the popularization of democratic values and principles in the post-soviet countries and made great changes in the roots of the post-communist countries' society.

Georgia, as a one of the former Soviet republics, had to pass the way of changes in democratic principles and values. Since March 1991, the country faced several political and social barriers to achieve the democracy, preserve independence and recover territorial integrity. The chronological development of events will be discussed in more details from the second chapter of the research. To get back to the “Soft power” theory, Joseph Nye brings the recent example of “soft power” from the Cold war. He says that it was not artillery of hard power that destroyed the “Berlin wall”, it was the result of persuasion of the population that communism is harming their minds and values, it is time to take hammers and bulldozers to free from the former regime. We can have the same picture on the border of Abkhazian region, there is no wall structure, but barbed-wire defences. These wires are separating neighbours, relatives, family members and so on.

Generally, Nye agrees to the idea that hybrid warfare has covered most of the society's network including economics, military and of course political network. But it requires different techniques to achieve the object and is time-consuming. Though, the nature of the war will never change.

## 1.2. Perceptions and misperceptions in Georgian government

In this part of the research, attention has been emphasized on the Soft power theory, perceptions and misperceptions in contemporary thinking of state governors. According to the book of Robert Jarvis (2017), “Perception and misperception in international politics”, there is stated why scholars and decision makers should train and pay more attention to perception and misperception issue. The importance of perception can be shown in 5 reasons: 1. More attention is paid to the emotional factors comparing to the cognitive factors when policymakers are able to think in “cold” condition, more accurate worldviews are produced at this time. 2. The second factor is the data that supports to theories, which are mostly experimented in the laboratory and there is no guarantee that it will work in a real political environment. 3. Moreover, strong political influence spreads most of the analysis that is used in international politics most frequently, because this is the part of “soft power” and results are reached successfully. 4. The fourth reason is in connection to the third point to the means that the systems in international politics and possible threats are not overlooked properly or often misunderstood. So, a further political analysis shows those decision makers or society is “over-psychologized” and rational decisions are not taken. Georgian government’s current position towards Russia is compassionate, despite the creeping occupation and other hybrid threats that cause alarming results. 5. Above mentioned four reasons are less harmful comparing to fifth reason. Most theories that are applied in international relations politics, do not represent the real way of thinking as intelligent people think about the problems. So the best way to deal with existing threats is to create the theory of complex thinking that will be first stages of developing a new theory that can apply to hybrid threats.

Below indicated table shows the conclusion of five reasons that causes the perception and misperception in Georgian government. (Jarvis. 2015)

Reasons of perception and misperception in Georgian government				
1. Emotional	2. Non-	3. Spread of	4.	5. Lack of



factors are paid more attention than “cold” thinking	experienced data in real political relationships	strong political influence to specific issues	Misunderstanding and lack of proper examination of events	complex thinking to develop proper theory for hybrid warfare
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Table prepared by the author of the thesis

Moreover, following to Robert Jervis (2015) book, there are some theories at the level of analysis- a variation for decision-making effects on domestic determinations, such as geopolitical location, traditions, national values and local conflicts. Further, all these domestic determinants summarise the foreign policy of the country. Though, some scholars doubt that foreign policy is determined by both domestic and international politics. In case of the Georgian government, the second statement is more likely to discuss, reasons are following: Georgia has its unique geopolitical position on the crossroads of Turkey and Russia, black and Caspian sea. More attention was paid to the importance of Georgian domestic policy after it becomes a westward-looking country. In addition, some pro-Russian political parties assume that Georgian traditions contradict the western values, therefore the European Union and the USA never can become appropriate allies such as the northern neighbour. Especially, the issue of domestic conflicts determinates the west-ward political direction. Frozen conflicts in Abkhazia and Samachablo region established the image of the enemy. Actually, society follows to the general perception that is dominated in the country. What is more important that misperception of the information raises the tension between the countries and damages the friendly relations.

**1.3. Case study: A new understanding of Russo-Georgian war in context of perceptions and misperception**

To understand Russo- Georgian war into cognitive means, the main requisite is to analyze the socialization of leaders that participated in this war. In the perception, there is such kind of approach called “psychological milieu” (the world as the actor see it), that helps to understand the level of intention and perception of the leader. In this case, Saakashvili, Medvedev and Putin are the subject of analysis to perceive their national interests.

Former Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili was brought in the Soviet Union and lived with the idea of Cold war, that west was the paradise and the place he lived was opposite of it. Generally, it was the identity of whole society. Therefore, he was motivated to change the authoritative regime and perceived that he had two choices: first to strike Tskhinvali first, or wait for the attack and stay in the position of surrender. Saakashvili announced that the war was in own territory, therefore it is the position of self-defence, the northern neighbour is so mighty and strong that Georgian forces are not comparable at all. Georgia was perceived as a victim, but the behaviour of the country was evaluated as a violation. Hereby, the justifying reason is that Georgian government acted on the position of self-defence.

#### **1.4. General schools of thoughts**

Although, scholars who find hybrid warfare as the priority issue in contemporary international politics and put an effort on shaping the theory of this concept, founded two schools of thinking. The first category of thinkers assumes that hybrid warfare is the combination of the classical and unusual type of warfare on the battleground. There are participants in the process of non-standard warfare with representatives of police, partisans, rebels, terrorists and from the side of classical warfare military forces and border guards are involved as well. Overview of recent history of Georgia since 2005 is the confirming process itself.

As concerns to the second general school of thinkers, they provide a various understanding of hybrid warfare. Generally, most of the definitions are concentrated on the unusual, irregular type of warfare complement with terrorism, cyber-attacks, a weaker-attacking-stronger conception, etc. More interpretation is stated as informational warfare approach, to influence the population

through changing the ideology and the way of thinking. Especially, this tendency is successful in the area of conflict zones, where more or less chaos is contributed and the level of misperception is significantly high.

In addition, it is worth to summarize the understanding of Hybrid warfare by Frank Hofmann, who is one of the establisher of general schools of thoughts. He has combined the term of hybrid warfare in six different terms: “modern wars”, “new wars”, “combinational wars”, “open source wars”, “fourth generation warfare”, and “polymorphic conflicts”. as it can be seen, the word hybridity itself means to compound several different things that give the variety of activities as traditional and non-traditional actor. But definitely, it is controlled by the centralized system to involve in society without a trace. Hence, it follows that there are blurry lines between the imaginary peace and reality.

## **1.5. Example of Ukrainian case**

A clear example of the hybrid conflict is the Russian Ukrainian case. The appearance of Russian militaries in Crimea without the identification signs ("camouflaged faces, concealed command and controls") directly means the secretive use of Special Forces that is an evident element of hybrid warfare. The use of such kind of forces in military operations that do not have any identification signs, allows Moscow to carry out an active campaign of rejection, aiming to mask its military intervention. Furthermore, Russian television is actively using militarist propaganda to mitigate and justify the intervention.

In addition, it is worth for mentioning the cyber-attacks on Ukrainian websites. Hence, these actions towards Ukraine are a good example of how cyber-operations can be integrated into conventional military actions. The cyber-espionage and anti-state propaganda campaigns of the Russian-Ukraine conflict have been conducted by the DDOS (A Distributed denial of service) attacks against Ukrainian media and government organizations, as well as against NGOs and NATO's sites. Moreover, manipulation through information and video materials is oriented campaign to falsify the elections, as well, publication of confidential electronic correspondence,

wiretapping, spreading misinformation in forums and social networks, accessing information systems—exactly these elements developed cyber conflict in Ukraine. In addition, Russian communications intelligence service used the data from the Internet to determine the location of the Ukrainian military units in eastern Ukraine.

Former NATO advisor on security issues, General Frank Van Kappen (2014), was one of the first Western analysts who described the Russian-Ukrainian conflict as a "hybrid war" on 26 April 2014. It is possible to say that the "hybrid warfare" theory of the Russian-Ukraine conflict has been established to its final image. This type of war has been already recognized as one of the major challenges in international politics, confirming that NATO has adopted a new strategy in December 2015 against the threats of "hybrid warfare". As NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg reported at a meeting with the NATO Foreign Ministers in Brussels, the Alliance will agree with the EU in implementing a new strategy, as the hybrid war contains both military and civilian elements. The emergence of a hybrid warfare as a new form of conflict fundamentally changes the existing security landscape and arises a lot of questions about the possibilities of existing systems.

To prevent and deterrence these threats, it is essential to create a united stratified approach in different directions by the States and, of course, coordinate actions with various institutions.

The classical example of information warfare has turned to be the complex of operations against Ukraine by Russian Federation. In spite of that, it was perilous to involve armed forces and military power to achieve the objects, although the ground was prepared for years in terms of financial, economic, informative-psychological aspects, as well as, by usage of weak, corrupted government. Recently, there are questions with regards the purposefulness of operation the idea about Hybrid warfare and its capacity to describe Russia's military activities in Ukraine. With the increased tension between Russia-sponsored groups and Ukrainian military forces, some scholars from western states consider that it might not be Hybrid warfare strategies at all, which are reinforced by the facts that, the Soviet Union has many historical examples regarding the invasions of other countries or manipulating by political, economic or other social issues. Intrusions into Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan and Georgia are corroborating it.

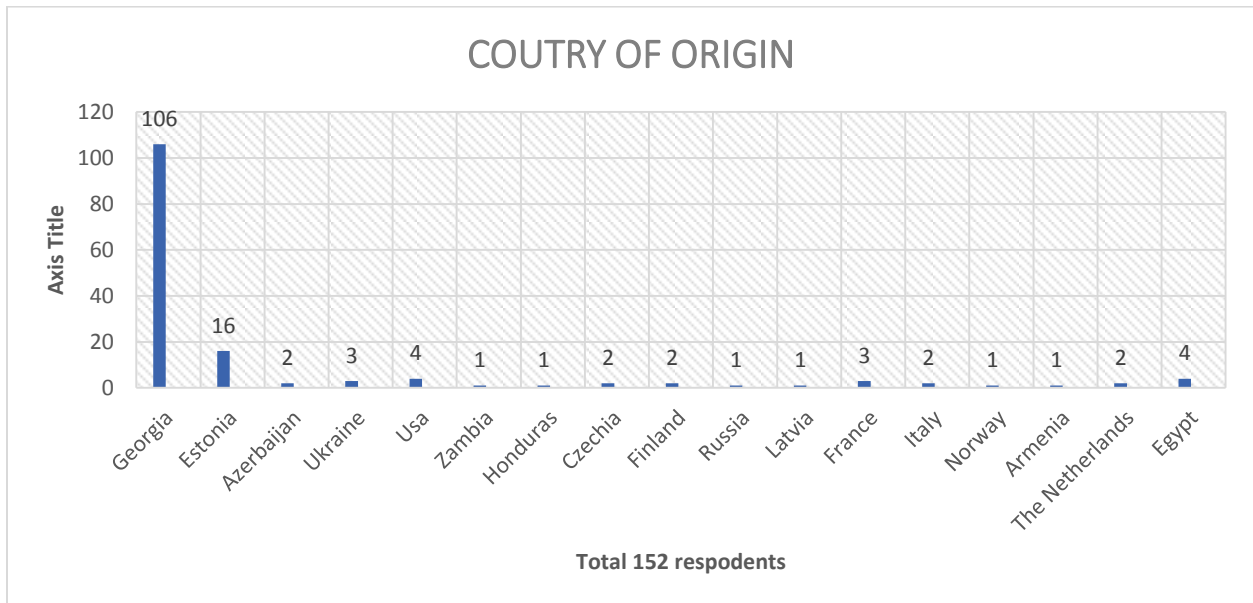
Definitively, the significant majority of politicians and scholars assume that Russian-Ukrainian case is an evident example of hybrid warfare.

## Survey method

### Part 1

This part of the paper represents the data of the quantitative research method of questionnaires based on web survey, which was carried during the working process of Hybrid warfare. The total number of interviewed individuals compiled to 152 respondents. From the first graph, the results of the questionnaire show the country of origin of the respondents. Out of 152 individuals, 106 interviewees are from Georgia, 16 individuals from Estonia, 8 in total from US and Egypt; other respondents are varying from different countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa. This data can give distinct perspective to summarize the attitude regarding Hybrid warfare especially, in Georgia. Of course, here appears coverage error, considering the fact that, in the survey, there is not involved all members of society.

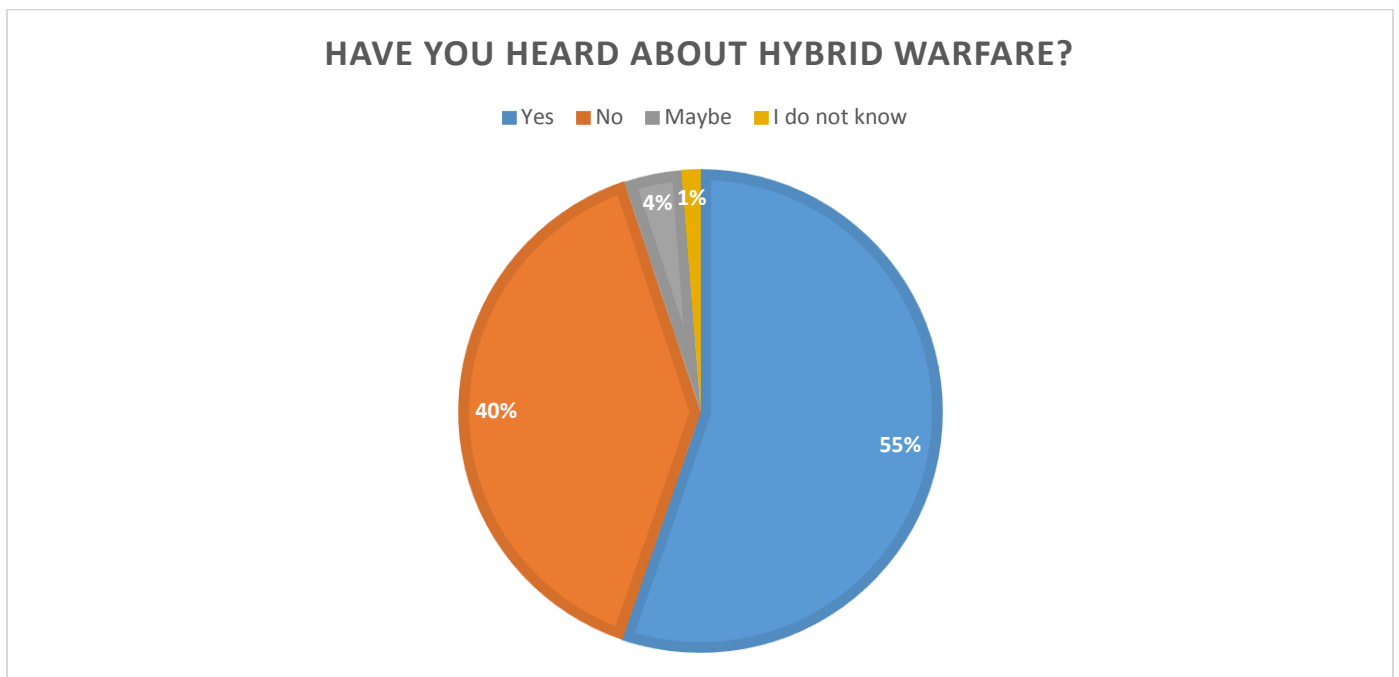
First chart:



Source: prepared by author of the thesis based on survey results

In spite of the small coverage area, given quantitative research still can discover how people felt regarding this specific issue. The second chart shows, to what extent are aware the society to realize the ongoing political and non-political processes. Only, 55% of respondents have heard about Hybrid warfare, where 40% have not heard anything about this trend, other 5% of interviewed individuals cannot elucidate whether they know anything about Hybrid warfare or not.

Second chart:

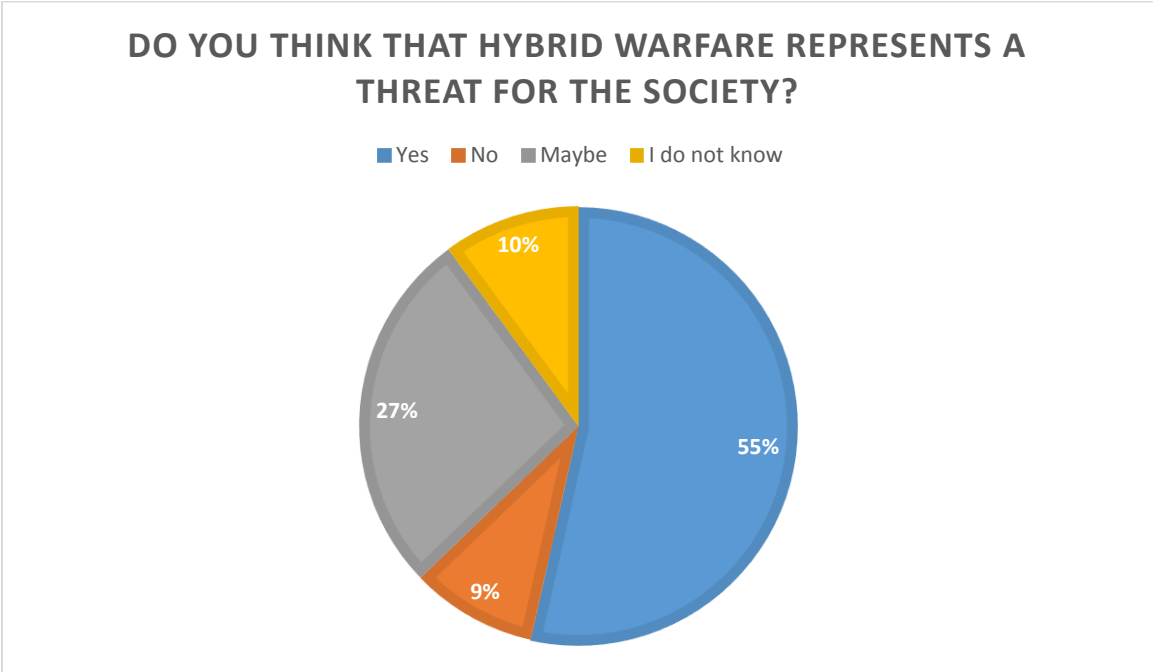


Source: prepared by author of the thesis based on survey results

Third chart:

This chart figures possible illustration of the opinions that turn out to have to the respondents regarding the perilous of the Hybrid warfare. It can be seen that only 54% of respondents consider Hybrid warfare as a threat, while 9% deems the opposite of it. Only one percent increases the percentage of respondents who underestimates to express, rather the answer is positive or negative. The percentage of individuals who do not have a formulated answer to this specific question, speaks for to be around 27 percent of respondents.

In conclusion, since a significant majority of society is aware for current ongoing processes and realize the threats of hybrid warfare, we can assume that the local society cannot be easily gained over by propaganda machines and people is ready to adopt corresponding measures.



Source: prepared by author of the thesis based on survey results

**Part 2.**

The second part of the survey report section is conferred to the foreign institutions, who collected data regarding the topics about the perspectives of Georgian population in the different field.

NDI (National democratic institute), IRI (International Republican institution) and Delegation of the European Union to Georgia conduct further, almost full coverage surveys of Georgian citizens. The overall aim of the specific survey was to detect the level of constructive knowledge about Hybrid warfare meaning, as well as, Georgian society support to the European institutions.

June-2017 survey, Public attitudes in Georgia, by National democratic institute (NDI)

The methodology of this survey is the combination of two survey methods: Stratification and clustering, the population was divided into subgroups and later there was chosen randomly specific geographic areas. Interviewing process was conducted by face-to-face communication, through visiting respondents at home and questioning them in three different languages: Georgian, Azerbaijani and Armenian.

The results of the survey illustrate that a significant majority of Georgian population (77%) supports to the idea to join the European Union established by western European countries. Only a small minority of 23% agrees to the idea that, Georgia should join the Eurasian Union, which was established by Russia, Republic of Belarus and Kazakhstan. To the question applied to respondents regarding whether they feel they had enough information about the procedures and political processes in the country, a large proportion, nearly 63% stated the positive answer. One more statement as concerning to Georgian government's stated goal to join NATO alliance gathered 67 % of approvals from local society.

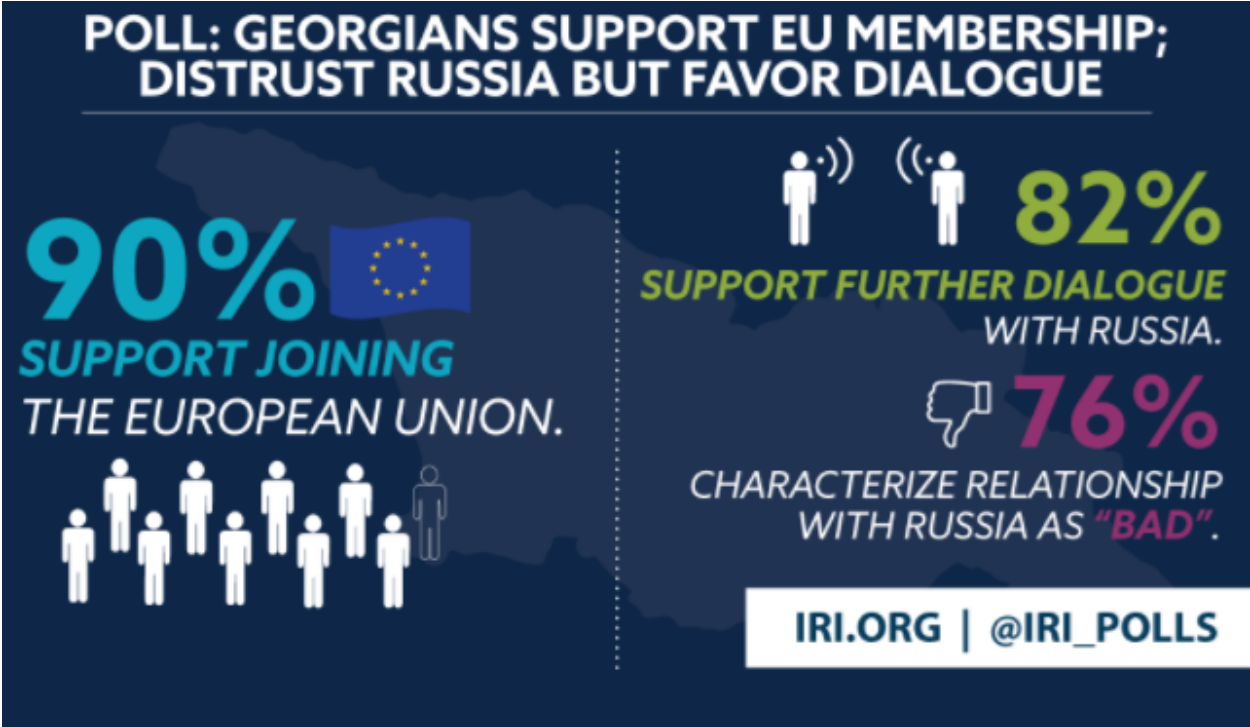
In conclusion, despite the informative warfare process in Georgia, society still has taken the direction of future development with western countries. Majority of the population considers that they get benefits from European countries and Georgia will not sacrifice its tradition and culture in case of EU-NATO integration.

April 2017 survey, Poll: Georgians Support EU Membership; Distrust Russia but Favor Dialogue by International Republican institute (IRI)



This part of the study shows the results of the survey conducted by the Gallup organizations and Baltic surveys, which helped IRI to develop new insights. As the report says, there is no data from the occupied territory of Georgia, Abkhazia and Samachablo region. This survey was held by face-to-face interviews through visiting the respondents at home at the period of February-March, 2017. Residents were eligible voters of Georgia. Institute of polling and marketing conducted the fieldwork around Georgia.

This image illustrates the results of three main questions from the poll. A significant majority of the population (90%) supports the idea of joining the European Union, 82% supports to the idea to have further dialogue with Russia, but the relationship with Russia is characterized as “bad” by the 76% of the population.



Source: This illustration is prepared by organizing International Republican Institute

<http://www.iri.org/resource/poll-georgians-support-eu-membership-distrust-russia-favor-dialogue>

## **Interview**

In this qualitative research, there is used the in-depth interviewing method to generate empirical data. The advantage of the flexibility and the possibility to change the direction of interviewing process according to the respondents answer appeared to be very interesting because some points from respondent's answers were unexpected and new ideas capitalized for developing new insights. The respondents for the interviewing process were chosen from the different field of public work. Although, the approach of the general interviewing guide was intended to collect some general information from participants regarding Hybrid warfare; Data was collected form journalist of Georgian economics journal, expert and analyst from Tbilisi State University and Director of NATO and European info centre. Questions were structured and semi-structured according to interview participant answers.

Main questions were following:

1. Introduction of the respondent.
2. Do you think that currently, Georgia faces the threat of Hybrid warfare? If yes, state why?
3. Do you consider that Georgia is prepared for this threat?
4. What kind of security tools should Georgian government implement to avoid Hybrid warfare?
5. Why does hybrid warfare matter for the European Union and the U.S?

### **1<sup>st</sup> respondent**

1. Nino Bolkvadze, director of NATO&EU Info center

2. Georgia currently faces the threat of hybrid warfare and our country has carried over the disobedient force of northern neighbor. Recently, the most rigid occasion was declared in the August war of 2008, subsequently, Georgia has lost 20% of the territory. Apart of such kind of forced methods, Northern neighbor is using different techniques, such as informative propaganda to impact on Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration, development and future of the country. This is done in such manner that, Russian propaganda is not revealed and becomes apparent that self-beneficial job is done by the local society of Georgia. Our country is not only example of being under the pressure of informative warfare. There is number of countries, whose domestic policy is interfered by Russian policy. It is known fact that in the presidential election of 2016 in USA, was observed the interference of Russia with the evidential statements. Another example is considered the case of Brexit, where is formed Russian trace. To say shortly, Hybrid warfare is the most common method that is been used by the Russian government and in the list of targeted country, Georgia takes prior positions.

3. The threat of informative propaganda is so comprehensive and universal, that can be found in different kind of media productions, which can be found even in entertainment children shows and you cannot make rapid measures to eradicate this incident. To find out such broadcastings, which have adverse interest of country policy, is real dilemma not only for Georgia, but also for the rest of the civilized world. Western courtiers, European Union, NATO representatives are thinking about the solutions of how to detect the threats form hybrid warfare, if you check the NATO webpage, there you will find lots of publications and articles regarding the hybrid threats and possible impacts for each region. Russian propaganda machine is using different kind of institutions, like non-governmental organizations, political parties, different political actors, public movements and so forth. For example: recently in Georgia was popular such kind of movement, so-called Georgian March, the name itself is copied from Russkiy marsh (русский марш). Frequently is seen the Kremlin politics influence on hyper-patriotic movements, which aims to intensify the nihilism towards to the western values, as though, west is against to Georgian traditions and values, somehow represents the threat for preserving Georgian identity. Human subconscious is programmed by these ideas in a concealed manner. On the example of Georgia, there is an illustration in point that, Russia propaganda rarely reveals

on patently Russian product. If we remember the events from ninety's, or 2008, or recently become more dense the Creeping occupation tendency, there will not be much followers on evident parties from Russian government. Although, there are such parties but they are more marginalized. Parties who declare that they are nor pro-Russian nor pro-Western but pro-Georgian, are getting much attention and trying to demonstrate that, Russia and the west appears same threat for Georgian future and only Georgians can defend themselves from rest of the world. Of course, in this statement, there is hidden Kremlin narrative and represents very distinguishable feature.

4. We agree unanimously with our western partners, that only way to fight against the informative warfare and propaganda from northern country is to raise awareness and level of education among the every part of the society. We do not possess any other mechanism to put in a motion. If we block some kind of information sources or social media, and forbid the expression of low, definitely, there will be sacrificed another democratic achievement and benefits of human rights. If we start the closure of TV broadcasters, which we assume that serves to Russian narratives, we will demolish the right of free media. We can collapse democratic values by ourselves, therefore only way to be secured from such kind of threats are people, who are educated and acknowledged with truthful information, they will know the real meaning of each message sent from another country, for example: People will know that, European integration do not contradicts to the Georgian traditions and values. On the contrary, under the support of European Union, it was possible to preserve old cultural monuments; also, EU contributed a lot to reserve all human rights. European countries are so diverse, that they try every person could remain the identity and small ethnic groups were not excluded from the society. Ethnical minorities receive funds to care about their distinctive character and traditions. No one from European Union is antagonizing Georgian identity.

Another example can be brought about North Atlantic treaty organization. There is such kind of fear in the society, if we will have the opportunity to be the member of the military alliance, Georgia will be involved in the inevitable war with Russia, in reality, if Georgia becomes the member of NATO, will have equal rights in accordance with the member states. The concurring

of all member state will make the final decision and it is impossible to involve a country in the war without the permission of given state. NATO is the alliance, which is established on the democratic values, where all decisions are made consentaneity and under the regulations of international law.

5. Recently, in the Guardian, there was published an article about George Soros, who announces that, nowadays, Russia appears to be more dangerous force than Islamic states. Because the usage of informative warfare helps to rise confrontations even in the democratic western states. When you see your enemy's image clearly outside of your state, it is much easier to meet force with force, then struggling to discover what caused the chaos in your country and who is standing behind the disarrangement of the society. Brexit is the result of mistrust towards the European Union because society did not think that EU could bring any kind of prosperity to Great Britain. A lot of people felt very deceived because of the lack of information they supposed to know. Populistic ideas were leading way for Britons. Nowadays it comes apparent that there was spent millions of dollars to conduct a campaign in social Medias such as Facebook or Twitter, which promoted the advantages of Brexit. Having a very old tradition of democratic values did not appear to be the weapon against informative warfare. This is why governments should take into consideration the fatal results caused by Hybrid threats. One of the most well-known publications "Sputnik" and "Russia today" are a powerful weapon and plays a great role in spreading information. "Sputnik" is broadcasting in 30 languages and "Russia today" broadcasts in 7 languages, so it is not hard to imagine the possible impact on the civilized world. Herewith, the final products created by the publications are made on the professional level, with high quality. France president Emmanuel Macron, who was standing next to Russian president Vladimir Putin, called to the "Russia today's" journalist – "You are The Propaganda Machine, you and your colleges desire to change the political situation in my country usefully of Russian aims". The west did not talk much before about the issue, they need time to ensure that, most of the disarrangements in European countries is governable process by someone. Especially, in last two or three years, the leaders of western countries started to talk about the threat, because we live in the age of the internet, where the information can spread rapidly over the world. Coverage of the problem is unprecedented because Information is the strongest tool, which can affect humans

behaviour. Is someone is eager to persuade people into doing something, you can imagine the dimensions of the objection that can demolish established the system. Therefore, this is the dilemma faced by western countries - to fight against the hybrid warfare without abrogating other democratic achievements. This is the same method of approach Georgian government should guideline with.

6. Do you think that except our northern neighbour; any other neighbour countries are using informational warfare towards Georgian interests?

To be honest, I have not heard information about this issue. For me, it is so unnoticed that did not pay much attention. On this current moment, I am much more interested in the Russian propaganda consequent to its results and dimensions.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> redpodent**

1. Giorgi Elizbarashvili. Journalist at Georgian Economics journal.

2. Not only faces Hybrid threats, but also it is in progress since the period of 26 years of independence, which transformed into a classical understanding of warfare. In 1991, before howitzers were taken up into positions and then Russian origin tanks were used to fight against the legitimate government of Georgia, there was prepared a ground by so-called “Red intelligence”. Actors, writers and other important people, who used to have big authority among the society, started to call fascist to the president, who was elected by 87percent of the nation, proclaimed starvation, during international visits with different political institutions asked not to acknowledge the independence of Georgia. They even did not look aside to calumniate to the newly elected government. MerabMamardashvili, who is taking advantage of being a big thinker, reported to the French journal “Le Monde”, that President Gamsakhurdia interdicted to the ethical Ossetian’s having more than one child. Of course, it turned not to be close to reality. In follow-up, months cleared up that, majority members in the leading coalition “ Round Table”, proved to be the agents of the Committee for State Security (KGB-KomitetGosudarstvennoyBezopasnosti). At this time Georgia refused to be the part of the

Commonwealth of Independent States (SNG-SodruzhestvoNezavisimyykhGosudarstv), which was an unpleasant decision for some states. Thereby, if the economics of Germany decreased for 50 percent in the period of 1939-1945, Georgian economics has decreased by 70 percent during the period of 1991-1994. After the expulsion of the first president, there was no need to use other tools of Hybrid warfare, because the situation was under control under Russian government.

After the “Rose Revolution” in 2003, the situation totally changed, Georgian government clearly announced the will to be the part of the military institution – North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Growth of sabotage become noticeable in Samachablo and surrounding regions. (By the way, the term “South Ossetia” is one of the demonstrations of Russian provocation. In fact, this territory has been Georgian land; it was called “Samachablo” or “NorthenKartli”. Ethnical Osetians were settled during the period of Russian empire and later in Soviet Union. Real Ossetia is situated to the current Russian territory, which is called as a “Northern Ossetia”, East and West Germany was one divided republic, as well as North and South Korea. In Kremlin such kind of attitude is welcome to be approached). After the war of 2008, the tactics was changed. It is obvious that, the incursion of administrative borders is continuing process for nowadays, shepherds and peasants are kidnapped for the purpose of abolishing “borders”. Although, the essence of “soft power” become more active. In electronic press, as well as, in printed media regularly replicated pseudo-patriotic, anti-western and pro-Russian publications. In Georgia, people are mindset to homosexuals. In the above-mentioned publications the western countries are stated from the point that, neglects Georgian traditions and mentality. But there are not stated the fact that western countries are having explicitly better living conditions not only comparing to Georgia, but also comparing to Russia. Also, much is not said about the average salaries or about the pensions, social protection, ecological environment, technological efforts, transportation or about the infrastructure. Because in this way, the myth of “Loosing Georgian nationality” will not work properly. Recently, it become more frequent not only distorting the facts, but also totally falsification of them. As if, in 1801, Georgia addressed a request to Russia to accept under its patronage, which appears not to be true, in the same way, absurdity is that Germany played a big role in losing one third of territory of Georgia, can say vice versus, that Germany’s active involvement was resulted to obtain the independence in 1918. Group of

people gets financial aids for intensifying Post Soviet nostalgic, as if there were better living conditions in post-soviet Georgia comparing to contemporary Georgia, even better than western European living standards. Real jester subject is the independence of Georgia; their own country is called as the 51st state of United States of America. All above-named facts serve to one particular aim – to make think that it is impossible for Georgian nation to live without Russian protection. Without Russian supervision, Georgian nation will lose its identity and faith, as well as, the nation becomes debauchery and cannot shirk from the poverty.

The issue of co-religionist is a separate topic to discuss. Actually, it was Russian government, who forbid divine service, also abolished the autocephaly in 1811, which was procured in the 5th century, whitewashed temples and unique frescos were robbed gilded icons, priests become agents in betraying sealing confession. In Soviet time, churches used to be bakeries and bathhouses.

One of the showings of Hybrid warfare is articles in foreign media, with negative content concerning to Georgia. Pointing out that the situation in the country is not stable and it is valueless to make any kind of investments.

3. The Georgian government is not ready for facing such kind of threats. It is true that in last two elections pro-Russian parties got not more than 7-8 percent of votes, communist parties less than 0.5 percent, but the real reason for this was the incredulity to a specific person. Actually, Soviet nostalgia and sympathy towards Russian government are represented by more than 20 percent of Georgian population, which is already alarming news.

4. Generally, it is very difficult to control the spread of information. Hence, under the umbrella of “liberty of speech”, there was written many anti-Georgian publications. Way out of the situation is highlighting European welfare through informative consultations in society. There is also logical doubt about non-governmental organizations, which are funded by European institutions but acting against European will in return for additional Russian funds. On the name of “Human rights” are actively supporting to the homosexual parades, gay marriages and connects to the European values. It is no secret that such actions work against to Europe and



strengthens Russian authority. First, Europe should be shown place with high economic welfare, because in Georgia one of the main problems are poverty and per capita incomes, as well as, in the ranking of purchasing power parity (PPP) is yonder of the 100th country.

5. Even in western countries, hybrid warfare has achieved success in some extent. Most of the countries are being learnt in the context of what kind of problems discompose to the local society and according to these problems are switched the machine of propaganda. In some countries, people require to forbid the fund of Open society foundation, known as a SOROS fund, to reduce working hours from 8 to 6 hours, or to increase minimum wages and etc. Although, it should be mentioned that, some facts are evaluated with an exaggeration. Election of Trump was a subject of worry because according to some information, Trump was going to acknowledge Crimea region under the composition of Russian territory, whereas recognition of Abkhazia region would be inevitable. Opposite to this, appointed sanctions where broaden. The European Union is overfed with the bureaucracy and regulations; it is time for Brussel to think about it before Great Britain was imitated by other European countries.

In 2012, the coalition “Georgian Dream” took the place of a ruler party. Frequently, it is mentioned that this party has a pro-Russian vision, but Georgia signed to the association agreement with EU, as well as, signed the agreement of visa-free regime, Georgia has not declined the will of NATO membership and has not made a withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan.

To sum up, there can be named some other countries that use the tools of Hybrid warfare towards Georgia, but it is so imperceptible comparing to Russian propaganda that, another time can be found to discuss this issue.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> respondent**

1. Prof. Vakhtang Charaia, Head of Tbilisi State University Center for Analysis and forecasting
2. Yes. Georgia is facing Hybrid Warfare for many years already. A good example of it could be the Georgian-Russian war of the 2008 year when Georgian was under Russian attack not only militarily by ground, sea and air troops, but it was also under cyber-attack, which partially

paralyzed the most important governmental institutions, including the Ministries of Interior Affairs and Foreign Affairs.

3. Unfortunately not. Georgia can't stand against the hybrid war alone, as well as most nations in the world. Only united with the closest allies, such problems could be solved.

4. The greatest security tool for Georgia would be the NATO membership, which could bring new technologies and the modest equipment, together with the united power against any enemy. Of course, even NATO membership does not guarantee the total security, but until we do not have even such opportunity, there is almost no chance to stand against hybrid warfare for Georgia alone.

5. This is a complex problem where you have limited opportunities and limited power, even if you are one of the greatest military powers in the world you might face a problem where aircraft, tanks and machine-guns will be useless and/or your enemy will be invisible. Sometimes hybrid warfare is a good resource in hands of special forces to unite the nation (for different reasons) or to concentrate all the anger against someone, I am sure that some countries today are taking care about the hybrid warfare not only for their security reasons but also for manipulations.

## **Conclusion**

To summarize the main points of the interviewing process, it is possible to get the following picture; All participants of in-depth interview indicates that there is a real ongoing process of Hybrid warfare, which has transformed into different stages through the different political regimes. The initial purpose of the study was to find out whether Georgia has experienced the implications of Hybrid warfare and what kind of security issues it faces. Recent political events were named, which assumed to be part of the Hybrid mechanism. One of the main direction in

hybrid warfare is acknowledged informational propaganda among the Georgian society. Different pro-Russian movements and political parties are working with proficiency.

The analysis of the respondent's answer also shows that they see this threat only from the Northern neighbour. Because the propaganda from different countries is so unnoticed that it appeared difficult even for experts to name another source of the Hybrid threat. The purpose of the interview has been achieved in order to comprehend the possible tools that are meant to be the weapon against Hybrid threats. One of the mechanisms to resist against Hybrid warfare turned to be raising educational level and provide truth-based information to local society.

## **2. Overview of Hybrid warfare mechanisms in the territory of Georgia.**

Further analysis of recent historical events will be helpful to understand Russian hybrid warfare mechanisms in Georgia. All below-stated concepts prove that Russia is using different strategies to spread the power and influence over the region. Especially in Georgia, Russian hybrid tactics has grown noticeably. The advantages of hybrid warfare are economizing military forces and making less noticeable the image of interference in the country. What is more important that the process is persistent; it can be less actual or on the contrary much intensified. There is no specific condition of war or peace because the delineation shows somewhere in the middle. The key characteristics and main tools are discussed in order to abstract possible threats and elements that help to eradicate possible harmful consequences.

In the initial period of the Soviet Union revolution, it was clear that Russia and North Atlantic alliance faced interest of conflicts in Caucasus region. Especially it was undesirable to establish NATO infrastructure expansion. Since the 90's, Moscow's aspiration was to banish "Non-regional actors" from the Caucasus, but it was not enough to utilize "positive" lever or ideology.

Therefore, it appeared inevitable to use “negative” advantage of provoking a confrontation with ethnic groups living in this area. Particularly armed conflicts raised several times in Georgia.

Despite the military-political factors, the subject of interest of conflicts are energy sources and controlling transit routes. It is evident that Russian economy is mainly depended on energy efficiency, though energy resources play much more role in Moscow than just an element of the economy. This factor has strategic importance in relation with international actors as well. Therefore, the issue of energy resources decided the relationship of Russian policy towards Georgia, as it was expected. It is discretionary that Russia has problems in North Caucasus. From the middle of the 90s, federal forces and rebels have not cosseted the hostilities, more or less positive attitude remains in the region of the so-called North Ossetian Autonomous Republic. Despite the brutal violence especially in the Republic of Chechnya, western countries are not loyal towards North Caucasian fighters, because obviously local organizations are linked to the radical Islamism movements and use the methods of terrorism. Thus, Russia is motivated not only to prevent the approaching of Northern alliance near its borders or control the alternative corridor of transiting the energy resources, but the principal importance is conferred to control the ongoing military activities in the neighbourhood.

### **2.1. Diplomatic activities of the Russian Federation towards Georgia;**

After the 2008 August war, for the Russian Federation foreign policy, it appeared to be extremely important to establish as persuasive claim as possible to justify the need of military interference in Georgia. Furthermore, to legalize the “assimilation” of the territories, as well as, to procure the international recognition of Abkhazian and South Ossetia region and to establish the image of Georgia as an aggressor and unstable country. Above all, Moscow has started “assimilation” of occupied territories on the creation legal base. On 26th of August, 2008 Russia acknowledged the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, thereby has abolished international obligation, including Six Point Peace plan by the agreement of Saakashvili-Medvedev-Sarkozy. Moreover, Moscow established “diplomatic relations” with Tskhinvali and

Sokhumi followed by the conclusion of agreements in “Friendship and cooperation”. Afterwards, there was signed the documents regarding the protection of state borders and military cooperation. Official Russia claimed that it was called upon to for strengthening the security of republics, as well as the whole region. Generally, during the years 2008 and 2010, there was formed nearly 30 “intergovernmental, interstate and interagency” document. The essence, of these documents, was to justify the colonization of Abkhazian and South Ossetia regions. There are Russian embassy’s in occupied territories and on the contrary, “Abkhazian and South Ossetian embassies’ are located in Moscow. Frequent meetings are held with the participation of so-called presidents in the ministry of foreign affairs, in the presidential administration, in the ministry cabinet and in the different governmental institutions, as well as, in the Institute of Moscow foreign affairs and in the Patriarchate of Russia. In addition, visits of Russian high and supreme delegations in the occupied territories is remarkable. For international recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia independence Moscow has made a big effort. Although, international society took strong and principal positions with regards of Georgian occupied territories. Besides the western countries, the same position has stated the members of Commonwealth of independent states. Thus, “great diplomatic victory” was the fact of recognition occupied territories independency by Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nauru and Transnistria. It is obvious that above-mentioned examples represent the image of Russian diplomacy and real aims of Kremlin politics towards Georgia. Therefore, the missions of The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and United Nations was suspended in the region of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

The relationship between Russia and the European Union is a very broad topic. Although, there are several issues to discuss in the context of conflicts with Georgia. Flowing the fact that, Russia is not a member state of EU and do not have the right of voting on organization forums, can influence from the outside. On the summit, where was discussed Georgian-Russian war issue, European Union did not or could not resist Russia, because no specific paces were implemented against Russia. Concerning to European Union monitoring mission (EUMM). It started four important mission in Georgia: the process of stabilization, normalization, recovering trust and correspondences with Brussel to provide objective information regarding the local

political environment in Georgia. Thus, EUMM could not operate in Abkhazia and South Ossetia region, therefore stabilization and normalization processes decelerated. General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) published the final document that described the post-war processes in Georgia and stated strong support of European Union towards Georgia.

## **2.2. Policy of "Compatriots protection"**

Traditionally, in the territory of Georgia, there have been lived representatives of different nations and ethnicity, therefore the culture of respecting dissimilar ethnic groups and religion is established. Despite the conflict zones and Russo-Georgian war, without any discomfort and persecution, there are living ethnical Russians, Abkhazs and Ossetians. Russian diaspora established centuries ago and their existence have never been the issue of threat. Concerning to Russian contemporary policy of protecting the interests of compatriots in Georgia, comprising the idea to protect not only ethnical Russians and Russian speaking population, but also Georgian speaking population that lives in the occupied territories and most of them were enforced to take Russian passports to be Russian citizens. From the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation, if the rights of any Russian citizen is abolished, the government has entitlement and duty to protect the citizen even with the application of armed forces.

## **2.3. Introducing a Passport System**

The process of spreading Russian passports to the population of occupied territories should be the subject of active discussion because this is the obvious expression of hybrid warfare processes in Georgia. Later, the same strategies were implemented in Moldova and Ukraine, to the regions of Transnistria and Crimea. After the Rose revolution in 2003, representatives of three regions: Adjarian, Abkhazian and South Ossetian so-called presidents discussed accelerating the process of introducing passports to Georgian citizens. Furthermore, individuals who would take Russian passports, higher pensions comparing to the local pensions and other

bonuses will be provided. Issuing institutions of Russian passports do not represent any legal entity, despite this it was a well-organized process and nearly 45 thousand ethnical Georgian in the Abkhazia region and 32 thousand in Tskhinvali region took these passports.

Regarding the issue of illegally introducing passports in occupied territories, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), made an announcement to express the worry concerning the current situation in Gali region. Residents of the region are facing the threat to lose the identity, language and culture. Alarming news is coming from Akhgori region as well, the population is bumping to the dilemma of taking Russian passports or abandon the territory. Such kind of practice from Russian government has condemned by other international organizations as well. As concerns to the European Union emphasized that this is the challenge of Georgian territorial integrity and sovereignty, which is considered as annexing of the country. Introducing passports to the local community is the previous step of hybrid occupation. Because after the process is completed, Russia has right to announce that every action implemented in the region is on behalf of protecting compatriot society.

It can be concluded that introducing passports to the local community is an important part of creeping occupation. Exactly this is one of the most alarming issues in the Georgian internal and foreign policy. Well-planned and organized strategies are targeted to the local society to change their perception and status. Furthermore, it is possible to interfere in internal affairs of the country and cover more territories through the tactic of creeping occupation.

#### **2.4. Creeping occupation**

After the August war in 2008, the term of “creeping occupation” acquired the importance of mass discussion. Recent accident reported by European parliament commission was published in July 2017. The incident’s content was following: Russian Federation guards have allocated new border infrastructure 500 hundred meters further into the territory of Georgia. Moreover,

alarming fact is that it is 400 meters close to Georgia's main highway. If the creeping occupation will continue, Georgia faces losing the main bypass from west to east side of Georgia. In addition, Georgian citizens are disabled to use the harvest and relocate in the village.

So-called administrative borders are changing month by month, though the reaction is not appropriate. It is obvious that small country such is Georgia can not solve the issue of frozen conflicts with northern neighbours, so, the European Union is able to play a role of mediator and suppress the extension between two neighbour country.

## **2.5. Russian media in Georgia**

It is widely known that there do not exist constant friends or enemies in international politics, there are constant interests only. Nowadays, media is rejecting its main function to play the role of mediator between society and government, through creating the image of enemy or friend. Hence, one of the classical hybrid warfare element starts operation: if in reality country does not face the enemy or friend, it is being created. Since the World War I, in the newspapers, there were published the facts of torturing, robbery, and violation of soldiers, thus, sometimes the reality was not matching to the news that the society started to picture the wrong perception towards to specific countries. Of course, the technology has been improved time by time but the effect is identical. The pre-determined attitude of society reached unprecedented dimension in contemporary media. Georgian internal and external politics is arranged by the principle of the enemy or friend image. On the background of developing media technologies, a human brain is less secure from the harmful influence of the information.

The Media Development Foundation published a study on the issue of Russian propaganda in Georgian society - researchers were observing the media, society and politicians during one year. The results were following - the main source of anti-western sentiment is provoked by the media in the country, followed by the public representatives, only then politicians and ecclesiastics. Recently, the NDI survey revealed that most of the population watching to the foreign TV channels gives preference to Russian TV channels. The fundamental weapon of the hybrid war is



the spread of false information about the West - in Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia and Azerbaijan, the same attitude is utilized to show the news of how the Western world fights the traditions, religion and family institution. In addition, the news is regarding the western ideology, how are embracing homosexuality, fighting against Orthodoxy, their values are unacceptable; such kind of information is distributed among the citizens of our country with the help of various means.

## **2.6. Cyber warfare**

Over the past years, cyberspace became the means of the influence of political activities and situations. Manipulating with democratic values created a new reality in cyberspace. There does not exist the criteria of evaluation for this reality so far, thus, it can be assumed that cyberwars are the consequence of political decisions carried by big states. Sometimes it is implemented through the utilization of small states. Therefore, cybersecurity is the primary issue to discuss on the national and international level. The proper solution to this problem is impossible without further analysis and studies of international relations. Nowadays, there are many states who face the problem in cyberspace. Attacking to computer systems seriously effects on the working process of state structure and allows managing different kind of elements, such as the infrastructure of military and satellite systems, communication channels, water, gas and nuclear energy, oil extraction etc.

### **2.6.1. 2008-2009 Cyber war in Georgia**

Cyber-attacks implemented in 2008-2009 in Georgia is a good example of how the cyberspace has been used for geopolitical interests as a weapon of hybrid warfare. Analysts of the cyberspace security assume that on the one hand, the polarization of the hackers has been detected and on the other hand, the civil disobedience was transferred in the cyberspace. To

establish the causative connection, it is important to observe what was the hacker's goal during the attack. It is obvious that hackers can act or act on behalf of a hostile state under the influence of any country. It is also recognized that DDoS attacks are controlled by the state, so the assumption that Russia utilized this tool as an element of hybrid warfare is absolute patent. Furthermore, it is also confirmed that the cyber mechanisms used against Georgia are controlled by the state, not by a separate hacker. Strategic partners could not prevent the threat as well, on the contrary, their interference caused new sources of attacks on websites. It was obvious that Russia considered the United States as a second subject of the conflict and cyber-attack in Georgia was confronting to the US as well. The hackers carried out the attacks from different countries through the latest technological achievements that have never been introduced or observed before. It is clear that because of the geopolitical clash between Russia and US, Georgian society became the polygon for examining latest weaponry in 2008 and 2009. Although, foreign media often published that Georgia won the informational warfare against Russia, but the results are examined due to the size of the damage. Georgia remained with a huge loss of territories, informative vacuum, and psychological pressure on the population.

Given the above, it is important to be created a political mechanism by the European Union. For example prohibition of cyber-attacks is one of the defensive mechanism. Especially, when the EU is depended on the US in terms of military support, as well as, the EU is depended on Russian federation on energy consumption. Therefore, European Union has its intellectual and potential to play the role of mediator. Furthermore, European capacities in Cybersecurity is not exhausted yet. It is very interesting what did Georgia do to stop the cyber attack? As the experts reported the first step was a protection of data to limit the use of cyberspace consumption. Providers prohibited their users to access Russian information websites by the decision of the Georgian government. This was a decision of local character and is possible that it had expedient results, though, regarding the modern technologies, such prohibitions do not represent a barrier to find new access to foreign sites.

Correspondingly, Georgia received first aid from Estonia to save the backup data. As the president of Estonia, Thomas KhandriIves announced in the general assembly of United Nation:

Georgia was a target of cyber-attacks before it would be involved in military warfare, besides the government websites, different news agencies and banking systems were damaged as well. After cyberwar, Estonia has achieved complex organizational and technical steps in the cybersecurity field. Such as opening Cyber-service operation center since 2010.

To sum up, implemented defense activities in cyber warfare was not enough effective, because the problem is global and big countries are working intensively to improve the cyber weapon that gives the superiority to these countries. For example newest cyber technologies are developed in China, which allows to Chinese hacker's to control the infrastructure of the United States institutions, such as Commercial electronic data. In such conditions, the role of European Union in Cyber disarmament is fundamental for the security of the new world.

### **2.6.2. Estonia – example of cyber warfare**

Tension raised between Estonia and Russia After removing world war Soviet Union memorial from city center. Moreover, on 26 April 2007, cyber-attack was targeted to the Estonian governmental websites. The culmination of this attack was to suspend internet service. Firstly, Estonia's prime minister's website was attacked, followed by president's site, as well as, several departments were soon down. Later, schools, television channels and newspaper agencies were paralyzed. In addition, banking system has been attacked and caused the fear of economic breakdown in the society.

Since 2005, Estonia is pioneered in e-voting and e-citizenship program, despite the advantages of promoting in technologies, there is high risk of total switch of state structure in case of cyber-attacks. Given the above, Estonian government has been learned a good lesson and after ten year Some analysts assume that Estonian case was first cyber warfare against to a specific government. Suspected country was Russia, who rejected the involvement in this warfare. It can be concluded that, whoever initiated the cyber-attack, according to the resources and coordination it is acknowledged as one of the element of hybrid warfare.

## **2.7. Possible mechanisms to avoid the threat of hybrid warfare**

Considering the fact that, hybrid warfare contains the elements of military and civic activities, the detailed strategy elaborated by NATO representatives is unknown yet. It is based on the fundamentals of “preparation, deterrence, and self-defence” policy. Moreover, there are some strategies from the European Union practice that is important to be taken into account by the Georgian government. Supporting the centres opened in Finland, Latvia and Estonia have attempted detecting hybrid threats. Firstly, it is important to strengthen coordination with the international institutions, with the Ministry of Defense, state institutions and with the secret services. Secondly, to support the transparency and anti-corruption events. The level of corruption strongly affects the implementation process. It is essential to support financially to the European anti-corruption measures with the help of USAID as well. Thirdly, to control the foreign media broadcasting appears to be very complex, because it is possible to abolish the human rights. More likely, spreading the information decides the perceptions and misperceptions of society. Thou, it is the issue of justification which opinion seems realistic to defend Georgian external security.

## CONCLUSION

The importance of analyzing the threats and possible impacts of Hybrid warfare should be the top priority for state authorities. Though, it appears that Georgian government is less likely to see and examine the threats that country faces nowadays. There is no agenda how to deal with the issue of non-traditional warfare. The hybrid warfare is successful when state institutions are weak in the country. As well as, the postulates of state arrangements are unstable. That is why government plays a fundamental role in strengthening the security of the country. It is true that Hybrid warfare is attributed to all manner of state and non-state actors, though, the state is responsible to raise awareness of society in such issues. In the condition of hybrid warfare, non-military mechanisms are gaining much importance as military forces.

Based on the observations during working on the research paper, the following hypothesis was formulated: In a condition of total war, a state would implement every instrument of its national power toward achieving its strategic goal, though, the determinative instrument would be the state's military forces.

In this master thesis, there was analyzed international relation theory in the context of hybrid warfare elements. "Soft power" theory and Perceptions and misperceptions in the international politics were main approaches for understanding the idea of non-traditional warfare. Further, general schools of thoughts were discussed to have more detailed apprehension in the issue. Moreover, the elements stated by the feeder of the general school of thoughts, are indicated in the overview of hybrid warfare mechanisms in Georgia. It appeared that main tools were implemented on the diplomatic activities of the Russian Federation towards Georgia, on the policy of "Compatriots protection", on introducing a Passport System, on the creeping occupation, on the Russian media in Georgia, on the Cyber warfare, and in the end of the chapter there is analyzed Estonian example of cyber security development during the past ten years.

Regard to methodological approach of this research is described with the combination of qualitative and quantitative research method of data analysis.

Regard to methodological approach of this research is described with the combination of qualitative and quantitative research method of data analysis. In particular, following research

techniques were implemented: web-based survey, analyzing quantitative data from international institutions, face-to-face interview, content analysis and case study analysis comparing to Ukrainian occasion. Consequently, the conclusions have been summarized.

Altogether, the majority of Georgian society is aware about the meaning of hybrid warfare and they see the issue as a threat for the future. Contrary, after receiving visa-free regime in the European Union, some anti-western movements announced that it is the way to lose national tradition and values. From the co-religionist neighbour, Georgia will benefit more in terms of peace and security, as well as, in terms of economic development. Thus, this is the result of informational warfare as an instrument of pressure implemented by the Russian Federation. Generally, pro-Russian forces are operating through the non-traditional, informative and cultural institutions.

The issue of the new generation warfare, represents a real threat not for only small states, such as Georgia, Moldova, or Baltic states, but also, for big countries as the United States of America. Further, the examples of Chinese hackers, who invented the program of deactivating US electronic database. For instance, Germany is expressing proper caution to the issue of pro-Russian actions. Thus, in most cases, for Europeans, it appears difficult to distinguish where comes to end the cultural and educational part and where the informational operations start. The establishment of the bound is very difficult.

In conclusion, this master thesis has analyzed the possible defence mechanisms to avoid potential future threats from Russia. It is true that small countries have limited choice to deal with big policy-maker states. Thus, following recommendations can be successful: Strong coordination with different international institutions, exchange the intelligence data with allies in the European Union, supporting the programs of transparency and anti-corruption, control foreign media through the international laws, supporting the European model of defending from hybrid warfare. These considerations will contribute significantly in the field of Georgian external security context. But firstly, it is under question if Georgian government puts in the agenda any of these options, and secondly, in case of implementing any of these defensive mechanisms, which one will be given more realistic perspectives.

## **Recommendation for further research**

The master thesis answered the research questions and found out the perception of Georgian society, thus, for more objectivity the coverage of the survey should be at least 80 percent of the population. Therefore, it would be important to conduct surveys and raise the awareness of the population. Further research should be done with the combination of the qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

As it was mentioned in the theoretical part of the research, the topic of Hybrid warfare lacks proper international relations theory. Further, the research gap is significant. More attention should be paid to the developing defensive mechanisms against the hybrid warfare. It is also interesting to develop some mechanisms for foreseeing and detecting possible implications on specific countries. It is obvious that in the condition of total war, a state would implement every instrument of its national power toward achieving its strategic goal.

Also, the difficulties are raised to distinguish the bound of soft power and international warfare. Big players are always stepping forward and the external security of small states are significantly unpredictable.

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## **Appendixes**

Audio version of interview is possible to see at:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/12MmBIJFMapohIipzYHMD\\_-xQaxnlKXFp/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/12MmBIJFMapohIipzYHMD_-xQaxnlKXFp/view)