POLICY BRIEF

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THE HYBRID PROJECT:
INTERDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON HYBRID WARFARE
PROJECT ID: 2021-1-HU01-KA220-HED-000032179

PROJECT RATIONALE

The military education and training of personnel at all levels is a prerequisite of a professional military fighting force. This equally applies to continuing education and training. The creation of a holistic education and training environment is therefore an essential component of modern military policy.

Equally important is the content of such education and training and in today's security context, there is arguably no more important issue than Hybrid Conflict. Not only is Hybrid Warfare in and by itself acutely relevant but equally so are the many component parts of Hybrid Conflict, ranging from the prosecution of terrorism and counter-terrorism activities to the evolution of emerging technologies and its impact on conflict. Critically, such developments must be seen in the context of a fast-changing global geo-political, economic and social changes.

In recognition of these changes and in keeping with the need to appreciate the strategic developments likely to impact on European security and defence policies, the project stakeholders have decided to focus on the contribution to the education and training backdrop to military policy, as it seeks to understand and respond to the Hybrid Conflict challenge. In essence, this project fully recognises the importance of Hybrid Conflict to the safety and security of European citizens and wider domestic and international interests and seeks to provide a comprehensive knowledge base and training platform to support the endeavour of those charged with developing appropriate policies in preparation for responses.

The project does not and cannot find every solution to the challenges inherent in Hybrid Conflict and Warfare but rather aspires to contribute to a more informed understanding of the risks and challenges and help the wider security education and training community coalesce around potential education and training objectives.

KEY PROJECT ELEMENTS

This project has several key components, including:

- The development of a comprehensive, multi-volume student handbook on Hybrid Warfare, which will accompany the development of bespoke

education and training certification, in particular Masters-level courses which will be taught at appropriate military and civilian educational institutions.

- The development of a hybrid conflict teaching methodology and simulation architecture for the support of future simulation training opportunities.
- The creation of an innovative Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) to support the education and training of military personnel at various levels, both within an educational establishment and beyond for society generally.
- A support mechanism through the establishment of a dedicated web presence, which will facilitate the cascading of additional knowledge-based products, contributions to ongoing and evolving educational and training developments in the Hybrid Conflict context and
- The development and exploitation of the unique educational and training resources of the subject matter experts – both military officials and educationalists – currently residing within the project development stakeholders.

IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

The importance and relevance of the subject has been and continues to be underlined by the nature of the conflict in Ukraine. It has undoubtedly shaped and formed some of the thinking and analysis regarding the subject and in particular, the content of the Student Handbook and individual MOOC modules.

This impact has been challenging at times; it has led to changes in emphasis or nuance in some contributions to the handbook, provided some insights into aspects of how Hybrid Warfare is conducted, with both regional and international examples and encouraged further thinking as to how such developments can best be represented within an educational and training architecture. Additionally, the opportunity to witness policy options, responses and decisions being developed and made in real time and under the glare of media coverage has undoubtedly added a sense of urgency to the project aims and objectives and the suitability of the education and training response. It has been equally important to try and avoid responding to all singular events as somehow evidence of trends or representative of hybrid doctrine, when often

such events are evidence of 'workaround' solutions or improvisation in response to specific circumstances at that time.

As the conflict develops and widens, in terms of application and form, the features of Hybrid Conflict will undoubtedly evolve. The conflict in Ukraine will contribute to our knowledge and understanding but the project equally encourages the ongoing importance of 'horizon scanning' in order to be prepared for the future evolution of conflict in the age of artificial intelligence.

THE UTILITY OF PROJECT OUTPUTS

Clearly, the project stakeholders envisage the outputs of the project as being a valuable contribution to the understanding and deepening appreciation of Hybrid Conflict and Hybrid Warfare.

An obvious contribution to the education and training of military officers will be the development of suitably tailored Masters-level courses on Hybrid Conflict. Such educational courses, including core and elective modules, would fit seamlessly into current military studies programmes.

The material contained in the Handbook will provide adequate supporting information and analysis on a wide range of aspects of Hybrid conflict and warfare and lend itself to both student and lecturer as a handy reference tool. Similarly, the handbook will support the use of the MOOC, the latter not only being an on-line educational tool but also a platform and vehicle for wider dissemination of awareness raising information and ideas around the concept of Hybrid Conflict and Warfare Studies.

Consideration of the potential interest of senior school students has also resulted in the development of material that might be applicable to a less informed audience thus expanding the footprint of the subject.

It is also anticipated that as well as the military education and training establishments associated with the development of the material and courses, the project will lend itself to supporting similar such establishments throughout the EU security sector, including not only military stakeholders but also interested parties in border security, homeland security, national resilience

structures, law enforcement and importantly, more traditional academic bodies focusing on security studies and international relations.

Finally, in addressing the concept of simulation training – at this juncture at the tactical level – the project acknowledges that such forms of training have tremendous utility and are likely to become even more sophisticated as developments in Artificial Intelligence impacts all forms of educational simulation methods.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAINTAINING THE RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT OUTPUTS

It is anticipated that all and any education and training establishments utilising the project outputs will need to maintain the quality of the material, in terms of continued relevance, time sensitive nature, especially as regards case studies and crucially trends in the field of Hybrid Conflict and Warfare.

It is clearly the case that the project stakeholders will maintain their experience and corpus of knowledge which will be regularly augmented through the publication of new data, research and analysis. Additionally, the benefits of such regular updating of knowledge will result in new presentations, lectures and the integration of the above into the design of simulation exercises.

However, it is to be expected that recipients of the material outputs of the project will undertake to build upon the baseline data provided though the project and create their own data collection plans as they shape their own establishment hybrid studies profiles.

Furthermore, two additional recommendations should, if accepted should also lead to an enhancement of a solid appreciation of Hybrid Conflict and Warfare. The first is the facilitation of an annual Hybrid Conflict Workshop or Symposium, where EU specialists and educationalists can come together to exchange ideas on the subject as it evolves and to analyse strategic and operational trends in this field.

The second recommendation is the staging of an annual Hybrid Conflict Simulation Exercise aimed at examining specific or evolving features of such

conflict and reviewing EU decision-making structures and systems associated with the impact of such new features.