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U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

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## Thinking Forward

### Mastering the Gray Zone: Understanding a Changing Era of Conflict

by Michael J. Mazzarr

Gray zone strategies are defined as forms of conflict that pursue political objectives through integrated campaigns along three factors: employment of mostly nonmilitary or non-kinetic tools; remaining under the thresholds that avoid outright conventional conflict; and moving gradually toward its objectives rather than seeking conclusive results in a relatively limited period of time.

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1303>

### What Crimea Tells Us About Asia's Future Wars

by Van Jackson

The implications of gray zone conflict in Crimea may pose significant security challenges for Asia. <http://thediplomat.com/2015/08/what-crimea-tells-us-about-asias-future-wars/>

### The Changing Nature of Modern War

by Rob Thornton

While Western militaries recognize the logic and necessity of 'irregular warfare' in their military operations, the manifold aspects of irregular fighting have yet to be mastered fully. Information warfare, for example, appears to be a tool more capably employed by Russia, to the detriment of NATO. Rod Thornton explains how and why Russia has 'won' in Crimea by affording subversive information campaigns primacy in its military operations. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03071847.2015.1079047>

## about projectgray

Project Gray is an initiative to promote dialogue and discussions on gray zone challenges through events and publications bringing together academic scholars, research institutes and practitioners.

### Upcoming

Georgetown Strategic Studies Program  
 January 21, 2016  
 Washington D.C.

Distinguished Lecture Series  
 January 22, 2016  
 Fort Bragg, NC

NDU Joint Special Operations Master of Arts thesis Symposium  
 May 18-20, 2016  
 Fort Bragg, NC

For details email:  
[admin@projectgray.org](mailto:admin@projectgray.org)

**Training Humans for the Human Domain** by Dr. Steve Tatham and Keir Giles

The human domain has become increasingly important in recent conflicts. Future conflicts will be defined by the participants' understanding of the cultural, behavioral and linguistic aspects of technology.

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1294>

**Hybrid Warfare and the Lower End of Conflict Spectrum****A Closer look at Russia's Hybrid War** by Michael Kofman and Matthew Rojansky

Hybrid war has become the catchall phrase for the elements of national power Russia is employing directly in Ukraine, but it is a poor descriptor, and has already led Western analysts and policymakers down an unhelpful path.

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/7-KENNAN%20CABLE-ROJANSKY%20KOFMAN.pdf>

**Destabilizing Social Media Influence****Cyber Propaganda – From how to start a revolution to how to beat ISIS** by the Legatum Institute

Three short case studies on the question of how far social media can enable future mass movements will depend on the capabilities and objectives of their governments. Authoritarian states are increasingly demonstrating that social media can be exploited as a tool of harassment, surveillance, and disinformation; exaggeration, distortion, and outright falsification are routine; and the ability to decisively prove the truth becomes increasingly difficult.

<http://www.soc.mil/swcs/ProjectGray/cyber-propaganda-2015.pdf>

**Event Updates****Daesh Beyond the Levant Symposium**

Top notch academic and practitioners within the U.S. government engaged in thoughtful discussions on gray zone challenges. Over 220 participants attended the Daesh Beyond the Levant Symposium held at the National Defense University Nov. 30, 2015. The audience was comprised of nine different universities including NDU's College of International Security Affairs graduate students, the Joint Special Operations Master of Arts students from Fort Bragg, West Point, Georgetown, and Towson. Also in attendance were foreign students from 33 different countries and interagency representatives interested in the topic from Department of Defense, Department of State, Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, and the National Counterterrorism Center.

Topics and potential research questions developed during the symposium are posted on [www.projectgray.org](http://www.projectgray.org) — visit the forums page to continue the conversation.

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