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U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

NOVEMBER 2015

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Thinking Forward

Fighting and Winning in the Gray Zone

The United States military must have a coordinated interagency response to achieve success in the gray zone. Special operations will continue to remain an essential component of national defense as non-state actors deftly challenge the conventional instruments of military power.

<http://warontherocks.com/2015/05/fighting-and-winning-in-the-gray-zone/>

Defining the Gray Zone Challenge by Dave Maxwell

Retired Special Forces Colonel Dave Maxwell delves into the definition of the gray zone.

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/defining-the-gray-zone-challenge>

China's Strategy to Undermine the U.S. in Asia: Win in the 'Gray Zone'

China is beating the United States in the "gray zone," where a state attempts to make gains at the expense of a strategic competitor by using tactics that, while aggressive, remain below the level that usually triggers conventional military retaliation.

<http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/chinas-strategy-undermine-the-us-asia-win-the-gray-zone-13874>

Nations Increasingly Having to Grapple With Response to Gray Zone Incidents

When Russia took control of Crimea earlier this year, it didn't just openly march its army into the Ukrainian territory. Instead, it sent personnel in unmarked uniforms to take control of key facilities ahead of a referendum that led to annexation of the strategic peninsula. *continued on page 2*

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

Daesh Beyond the Levant Symposium

November 30, 2015

For details email:

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Likewise, Chinese fishermen, not the People's Liberation Army, instigated clashes with the Philippines over disputed islands in the South China Sea in 2012. These sorts of incidents, along with cyber attacks, are in what's called the "gray zone." Eiichi Katahara, an academic at Japan's National Institute for Defense Studies, says such situations can't be defined as either purely peacetime events or military contingencies and therefore create quandaries on how — or whether — to respond.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/nations-increasingly-having-to-grapple-with-response-to-gray-zone-incidents-1.306350>

Hybrid Warfare and the Lower end of conflict spectrum

The National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2015

The increasing global security challenges that the United States faces are exacerbated by the complexity of the contemporary security environment. The current international order may be in jeopardy because of increased uncertainty caused by challenges from state, non-state, and hybrid threats. The United States military must use an integrated approach to deter and defeat these growing threats.

http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Publications/2015_National_Military_Strategy.pdf

Is the World Getting Safer — or Not?

The assertion that the world is more violent than at any other time in history is in question. American and British perspectives are discussed in terms of forecasting international security trends amidst increasing global uncertainty. Historical perspectives of conflict are necessary for the United States to remember as it seeks to maintain a global military advantage.

<http://www.fpri.org/articles/2015/06/world-getting-safer-or-not>

Wake up, West! The Era of Hybrid Warfare Is Upon Us

Russia's employment of hybrid military tactics poses challenges for the west, particularly European nations. Hybrid warfare threatens to erode governance within civil society by stressing the diplomatic and economic responses of democratic nations while often remaining below the threshold for military response.

<http://www.overtaction.org/2015/08/wake-up-west-the-era-of-hybrid-warfare-is-upon-us/>

Destabilizing social media influence

Media Savvy Islamic State Grave Concern for U.S. at Home

The Islamic State has become an adept global radicalization threat using social media; the United States is unable to counter the global recruitment by ISIS.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/10/08/us-usa-security-islamic-state-idUSKCN0S203S20151008>

Putin's Information Warfare in Ukraine

Russia's prolific implement of hybrid warfare is an adaptation of past tactics. The United States should reexamine historical Cold War disinformation campaigns to counter Russian aggression.

<http://understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Report%201%20Putin's%20Information%20Warfare%20in%20Ukraine-%20Soviet%20Origins%20of%20Russias%20Hybrid%20Warfare.pdf>

The Agency

From a nondescript office building in St. Petersburg, Russia, an army of well-paid "trolls" has tried to wreak havoc all around the Internet — and in real-life American communities.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/07/magazine/the-agency.html>