

THE FEATURES OF HYBRID WARFARE IN GERMAN ACTIONS TOWARDS POLAND IN 1930s

Ivan FEDYK

Ivan Franko National University of Lviv
Department of Local History
Universytetska str, 1, 79000. Lviv, Ukraine
e-mail: ivan.fedyk@lnu.edu.ua

Hybrid warfare as part of one country's policy of expansive aggression against another one is not an invention of the 21st century. Over the last hundred years, the features of such hostilities have been used in many interethnic conflicts. Numerous wars and confrontations bore some signs of hybrid warfare, but the integrated use of all its parts and methods is quite rare and requires a separate study. Very often, the use of measures called hybrid warfare is associated with the actions of major dictatorial regimes aimed at expansion and conquest.

The wars of the XX–XXI centuries gave the newest aggressors the opportunity to use the previous experience of this type of hostile action, to form an integrated approach and to ensure the comprehensive application of the system of actions against other countries, called hybrid warfare. In general, a detailed study of previous methods and ways of waging such a war will provide an opportunity to assess and understand its use now and in the future.

Keywords: war, Poland, Germany, Ukraine, border.

More and more analysts are trying to draw analogies between modern Russian politics and German activities in the second half of the 1930s. Moreover, many scholars point to the inadmissibility of repeating the mistakes made by the international community in relation to Hitler and his actions in the internal and external spheres. However, almost no one is trying to find common ground between modern Ukraine and pre-war Poland, although both countries have fallen victims to their neighbor's military aggression in circumstances that allow historians, politicians, political scientists and journalists from around the world to draw many parallels. However, in Poland in the pre-war period you can find things that resemble the events taking place in Ukraine, because the Poles experienced a real *mixta belli* (or as it is called today – a hybrid war, or a mixed strategy). Moreover, the understanding of the policies of the Polish governments at that time could not only provide a useful example of preparation for a possible large-scale defense, but also suggest what mistakes should be avoided in such a situation.

Information war

It is known that in the 1930s the Second Polish Republic became the target of two unprecedented information wars organized against it by neighboring countries – the

Soviet Union and Germany. If Germany launched this campaign first covertly after the signing of the non-aggression treaty in 1934, and then openly after the denunciation of the treaty on April 28, 1939, the Soviet Union waged this war openly since the mid-1920s, using terms, which are familiar to modern Ukrainian governments such as “fascism”, “imperialism”, and “bourgeois nationalism”¹. The ideological aggression of the USSR against Poland was significantly expanded after the creation of pro-Soviet (or, as it was customary to write at those times, Soviet-ophile) political organizations in Polish society. This is especially true of the communist parties, which, in modern terminology, played the role of the fifth information column, constantly accusing the Polish government and politicians of fascism, committing election *démarches*, sabotage and information falsifications². Such pro-Soviet and pro-Russian parties were headed by the Communist Party of Poland and the Communist Party of Western Ukraine³. Other features of the anti-Polish campaign were international “exposing speeches by Soviet diplomats, open accusations against Polish governments of fascist treatment of national minorities (in the absence of Russian-speaking population) and the spread of the idea of protecting and saving Western Ukraine and Western Belarus by separating them from Poland and joining to the USSR⁴.

In the spring and summer of 1939, Germany openly demanded that Poland grant Danzig extraterritorial status in order to ensure the rights of the German-speaking population, and in diplomatic circles, representatives of the 3rd Reich openly declared that Danzig would sooner or later be German. Germany has launched a campaign of disinformation, diplomatic pressure and harsh propaganda, both in Europe and in Poland, to convince the international community and, above all, Britain of the need to resolve the Danzig issue⁵. These events were called the War of the Nerves, which is certainly analogous to the current information war.

Warsaw’s response to these challenges was twofold: on the one hand, throughout the interwar twentieth century, Polish security forces fought fiercely against pro-Soviet parties and organizations, accusing them of anti-government activities, banning and even sending their members to concentration camps⁶. Polish diplomacy has launched a very active and successful work to protect the interests of their country and find allies, the first of which was England. On the other hand, the Polish government had such high hopes for a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the Gdańsk issue that the state’s defense plan was delayed and the technical support of the army, which by

¹ “Wojna obronna Polski w 1939,” *Sciaga*, отримано доступ 25 червня 2021, https://sciaga.pl/tekst/19018-20-wojna_obronna_polski_w_1939

² “Перед виборами,” *Сель-Роб*, № 201, (7 вересня 1930).

³ “40-річчя створення КПП і КПЗУ,” *Наша культура*, № 7, (1958).

⁴ М. Вальтер, “Західно-Українські справи в світлі загальнопольської ситуації,” *Наша правда*, № 1–3, (1929): 22-31.

⁵ Peter Chen, “The Danzig Crisis,” *World War II Database*, травень 2007, отримано доступ 26 червня 2021, https://ww2db.com/battle_spec.php?battle_id=162

⁶ Степан Макарчук, *Этносоциальное развитие и национальные отношения на Западно-Украинских землях в период империализма*. (Львов, 1983), 208–244.

the way, amounted to more than a quarter of a million well-trained soldiers and officers, was slow and inefficient⁷.

Provocations and Sabotages

Using Moscow-controlled political parties, the Soviet Union constantly confronted Polish intelligence with a possible armed uprising and indirectly accused the Polish government of fascism and preparing aggression against the USSR, provoking Polish diplomats into constant disputes⁸. However, the most aggressive information provocation of Moscow against Poland was the statement of Vladimir Potemkin, Molotov's deputy, dated September 17, 1939, which stated that Poland, as a state, did fail and went bankrupt, so the inhabitants of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus need protection from the side of the Red Army⁹. Poland's response to this was again twofold: a strong position on the diplomatic front and fierce pressure from security forces on the internal enemy and a serious underestimation of the Soviet Union's aggression.

But it was Hitler's Germany that used a series of sabotages and provocations against Poland in order to discredit the Polish government and create an excuse for the next step in the *mixta belli* – invasion. Initially, the provocations were informative including statements by some German politicians about the importance of Gdańsk's return to Germany, backstage shouts, as well as provocative publications and the organization of street clashes.

Poland's response was not proportionate, but its government wanted to openly show both Germany and its people that the country would defend itself and defend itself stubbornly: a special state defense plan had been created. However, its implementation was postponed and began only after the occupation of the Sudetenland¹⁰. Again, delays with an adequate response did not allow Poland to properly repel a future attack.

The second phase of the provocative campaign included actions aimed at starting armed clashes. They were mainly conducted on the Silesian border and around Gdańsk; here were used such types of sabotage as terrorist attacks, arson, the creation of DRG, which under the guise of Polish militants attacked the German population, and chaotic shooting¹¹. On July 22, 1939, blood was already shed on the Polish-German

⁷ S. Sikorsky. "Wojsko Polskie w przededniu wybuchu wojny niemiecko-polskiej 1939 roku. Zarys sytuacji politycznej i wojskowej," *Konflikty*, 28 серпня 2008, отримано доступ 25 червня 2021, <https://www.konflikty.pl/historia/1918-1939/wojsko-polskie-w-przededniu-wybuchu-wojny-niemiecko-polskiej-1939-roku-zarys-sytuacji-politycznej-i-wojskowej/>

⁸ М. Вальтер, "Західно-Українські справи в світлі загальнопольської ситуації," *Наша правда*, № 1–3, (1929): 21–38

⁹ "Sowiecka agresja na Polskę," *Dzieje*, 29 березня 2010, отримано доступ 26 червня 2021, <https://dzieje.pl/aktualnosci/sowiecka-agresja-na-polske>

¹⁰ Marek Gałczowski, "Polski Wrzesień," *Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, отримано доступ 26 червня 2021, <https://1wrzesnia39.pl/39p/wstep/8788,Polski-Wrzesien.html>

¹¹ John Radzilowski, "Invasion of Poland," *World War II Database*, отримано доступ 27 червня 2021, https://ww2db.com/battle_spec.php?battle_id=28

border, and in August 1939, in connection with the fighting, Poland began a secret mobilization¹². And, of course, the most significant provocation against Poland is the well-known arson of the radio station in Gliwice.

Despite the fact that Poland's response, both military and diplomatic, was decisive, the matter of updating the technical support and proper structuring of the army did not go beyond the first phase, and excessive hope for a diplomatic solution remained¹³. The international community has constantly urged the Polish government to resolve the problems peacefully and called on it not to provoke Hitler.

Intrusion

September 1, 1939 at 4:45 all parts of the mixed strategy are combined and the final phase is launched. The Polish people met the aggressor with dignity. Not only did active mobilization begin (which provided 2.5 million soldiers in the first days of the war), but the formation of territorial defense battalions (50,000 riflemen), new army groups, guerrilla units, underground structures, and so on¹⁴. By the way, the weakness of the Polish army was a very mythologized German propaganda, already aimed at the domestic consumer, because we know that creating the right image of the enemy among its own population is also an active part of a mixed strategy. On the other hand, the Polish headquarters underestimated the aggressiveness of the USSR, and this underestimation took place even after the Red Army's invasion of Poland. To a large extent, the result is the Katyn tragedy. In addition, experts stress on inadequate cooperation between the headquarters and units of the Polish army, and the imperfection of the Polish defense structure¹⁵. However, many things were rapidly changed right after the beginning of the invasion.

Thus, pre-war Poland in many cases adequately responded to the challenges of a mixed strategy. In particular, the structures of the internal front worked properly, diplomacy was very active, patriotic education and personal training of the army were at a high level. However, the Polish governments overestimated the support of the Western Allies and underestimated the aggression of the USSR, which prevented the proper structuring of the Polish army and the completion of the renewal of its technical equipment.

¹² John Radzilowski, "Invasion of Poland," *World War II Database*, отримано доступ 27 червня 2021, https://ww2db.com/battle_spec.php?battle_id=28

¹³ "Найближчі дні вирішать: мир чи війна," *Діло*, 23 серпня, (1939).

¹⁴ S. Sikorsky. "Wojsko Polskie w przededniu wybuchu wojny niemiecko-polskiej 1939 roku. Zarys sytuacji politycznej i wojskowej," *Konflikty*, 28 серпня 2008, отримано доступ 25 червня 2021, <https://www.konflikty.pl/historia/1918-1939/wojsko-polskie-w-przededniu-wybuchu-wojny-niemiecko-polskiej-1939-roku-zarys-sytuacji-politycznej-i-wojskowej/>

¹⁵ P. Sierechan, "Agresja ZSRR na Polskę 17 września 1939 roku," *Polskie Dzeje*, 17 листопада 2010, отримано доступ 28 червня 2021, <https://polskiedzieje.pl/ii-wojna-swiatowa/agresja-zsrr-na-polske-17-wrzesnia-1939-roku.html>

РИСИ ГІБРИДНОЇ ВІЙНИ У ДІЯХ НІМЕЧЧИНИ, СПРЯМОВАНИХ ПРОТИ ПОЛЬЩІ У 30-х роках ХХ століття

Іван ФЕДИК

Львівський національний університет імені Івана Франка
катедра історичного краєзнавства
вул. Университетська, 1, 79000, Львів, Україна
e-mail: ivan.fedyk@lnu.edu.ua

Гібридна війна як частина політики експансивної агресії однієї країни проти іншої не є винаходом ХХІ століття. Протягом останньої сотні років риси таких воєнних дій були використані у багатьох міжнаціональних конфліктах.

Численні війни та протистояння несли у собі деякі ознаки гібридної війни, однак комплексне використання усіх її частин і методів є достатньо рідкісним і потребує окремого дослідження. Дуже часто використання заходів, що отримали назву гібридна війна, пов'язані із діями великих диктаторських режимів, спрямованими на експансію та завоювання.

Війни ХХ–ХХІ століть дали можливість новітнім агресорам використати попередній досвід такого типу ворожих дій, сформувавши комплексний підхід та забезпечити усестороннє застосування системи акцій проти інших країн, що отримала назву гібридна війна.

Загалом, детальне вивчення попередніх методів та способів ведення такої війни дасть можливість оцінити та зрозуміти її використання тепер та у майбутньому.

Ключові слова: Війна, Польща, Україна, Німеччина, кордони.

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