

# UNCLASSIFIED

## Executive Summary

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1. **Purpose/Problem Statement.** The purpose of this wargame was to answer the question of how NATO SOF can deter adversary actions that may lead to conflict such as a scenario where Article V is invoked. The game is focused on identifying how NATO SOF can assist in the characterization and attribution of hybrid actions. It also looks at NATO SOF's options to thwart political and ethical influence. Finally, it explores how NATO SOF can foster a host nation's resilience to malign influence.
2. **Scenario and Background.** In this scenario, there is an upcoming referendum of a potential new NATO member-state. NATO is in support of such an addition. In response, Russia begins to undermine this effort through propaganda and by subsidizing local extremists through proxy forces. The member state requests NATO SOF advise, assist, and accompany its police force to help thwart Russia's actions and thereby secure its addition to NATO.
3. **Study methodology & MMTs:**
  - a. **Wargame Design.** This game is a hybrid game. It is a partially closed board game that could further include injects provided by the game facilitator. There are two boards, one played on by the proxy and Red forces, the other is played on by the blue/green forces. The proxy player is able to see the Blue/Green board, and this is one of the hybrid elements of the game. It adopts irregular warfare principles as described by military scholars Gordan McCormick and Chris Paul to counter a hybrid threat. The winner of this game will account for informational, economic, security, and governance factors to win the competition for political influence and control.
  - b. **Key Player Roles.** This game is agnostic of any specific actor other than Russia and NATO SOF. The scenario focuses on four actors: Russia, NATO SOF, an eastern European host nation that is interested in becoming a NATO member, and a Russian diaspora in the host nation that is a proxy of Russia.
  - c. **Methods, Models, and Tools (MMTs).** The game is played on two board games in two separate areas, with Russia and their proxies on one side and NATO SOF and the host nation security forces on the other. It includes seven districts that have various degrees of host nation supporters and Russian diaspora that are pro-secession. Players build institutional capability and/or deploy and maneuver units of action to shape local security, governance, and economic conditions to achieve their objectives. It is sequenced linearly so that each player gets a turn. During each turn, the player will receive resources, pay sustainment costs, train forces and/or build facilities, employ new units, task units, amplify effects through IO or propaganda, and then monitor the actions of the other players and any changes in the environment. At the end of each turn, white cell members will evaluate player actions and adjudicate how they effected physical control, political control, international support, and domestic support. This is done through spread sheets that account for security, governance, popular support and economic development.
4. **Constraints, Limitations, and Assumptions.**
  - a. **Constraints:**
    - i. The wargaming team had 85 hours (55 classroom hours and 30 'other' hours) to research, design, develop, conduct and analyze the game.
    - ii. Due to security constraints, the wargame had to be played at an unclassified level, so no classified concepts could be integrated into the wargame.

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- b. **Limitations.** The designers were limited in their experience with NATO, NATO SOF, Russia, and the Eastern European geo-political climate and therefore relied on unclassified NATO SOF documentation and consultations with SMEs from NSA.
- c. **Assumptions.** There are two key assumptions for this wargame.
  - i. The designers of this wargame assumed that NATO was a homogenous entity and therefore did not account for distinctions in member-state political agendas or military capabilities.
  - ii. Assumed that the operational approvals and legal authorities existed for the operational employment of NATO SOF elements as portrayed in the game.

5. **Study findings and recommendations.** There were three major findings from this wargame.
- a. First, because the game was played only by military members, most players applied strategies that prioritized gaining resources, massing forces, and providing security. The governance aspect of this game was consistently under-addressed. Future iterations of this game should include non-military members like professionals from the diplomatic and intelligence communities.
  - b. Second, the game was intentionally designed to represent the complexity of the hybrid threat. Consequently, a good proportion of the time allotted for the wargame was taken up by players learning the mechanics of the game and the adjudication of each turn. This game should be played multiple times to tease out the trends that could inform how NATO SOF should organize, train, and equip its forces.
  - c. Finally, this study found that success in countering the hybrid threat is largely contingent upon the relationship between NATO SOF and the host nation it is supporting. Despite the potential disparity in political objectives, the center of gravity in hybrid warfare is the population of the nation in contention.

6. **Team members and Sponsor POC:** Members of the wargaming team are:

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