

Abstract

Russian assertive actions over the last decade have led some observers to think that Kremlin is employing fundamentally new concepts of armed conflict. Subsequently, scholars came up with a number of buzzwords and ill-defined concepts such as ‘hybrid warfare’ and ‘Gerasimov Doctrine’. This paper believes that novelty of Russian actions is not in terms of its military, but rather the specific nature of operations employed by Kremlin had to do more with the way military was integrated with other instruments, mostly state-run and coordinated information operations. Thus, the project puts a whole new emphasis on information operations and claims that while in certain cases Moscow still uses conventional military, Kremlin’s new plan is to achieve goals through information online in the first place, rather than fight the enemy on the battlefield. As paper intends to analyse how Russian information strategy has evolved, it employs quantitative and qualitative content analysis to examine narratives built by RIA Novosti and Russia Today/RT during Russo-Georgian War of 2008 and annexation of Crimea in 2014. The results show that Russia has learnt its mistakes from Georgian case as in 2014 pro-Kremlin media was more sophisticated and relied on using contested areas of international law to depict Russian actions to be in accordance with the democratic procedures and standards of international law.