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Internal Conflicts in Works of Thucydides and Machiavelli

Vnitřní konflikty v dílech Thúkydida a Machiavelliho

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Abstract: Hybrid threats are considered among the most serious risks that Western societies currently face. The aim of actors using such threats is to influence decision-making processes, and in order to do so they use a rich spectrum of methods to instigate conflict in society, seeking to undermine trust in institutions, abet radicalisation, and so on. Activities aimed at creating internal conflict, and the prevention of such activities, are not, of course, a new phenomenon; they differ only in their extent, intensity and the techniques used. The aim of this paper is to investigate how classic strategists – Thucydides and Machiavelli – described in their works how internal conflict is fomented among the enemy and how it can be prevented. The paper describes and analyses various ways of instigating and mitigating internal conflict as noted in their works, and assesses their relevance for the current debate.

Abstrakt: Hybridní hrozby jsou považovány za jedno z nejdůležitějších rizik, se kterými se potýkají společnosti Západu. Cílem aktérů užívajících těchto postupů je ovlivnit rozhodovací procesy, k čemuž jim mj. slouží pestrá škála postupů, kterými podněcují konflikty ve společnosti (podrývání důvěry v instituce, podpora radikalizace společnosti atd.). Aktivity, jejichž cílem je podnítit vnitřní konflikty a na straně druhé prevence proti těmto aktivitám ale nejsou novým fenoménem, liší se pouze svým rozsahem, intenzitou a použitými technikami. Cílem textu je zaměřit se na podněcování vnitřních konfliktů u nepřítele a obrana proti těmto aktivitám v dílech klasických stratégů (Thúkydidés a Machiavelli). V textu jsou popisovány a analyzovány různé způsoby podněcování či zmírňování vnitřních konfliktů v jejich dílech a posouzena jejich relevance pro současnou diskusi.

Keywords: Internal Conflicts; Machiavelli; Thucydides; Hybrid Threats.

Klíčová slova: Vnitřní konflikty; Machiavelli; Thúkydidés; hybridní hrozby.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, developments in the fields of internal security and military affairs have been strongly influenced by the phenomenon of hybrid warfare, as well as related phenomena (hybrid threats, hybrid combat, etc.). The use of hybrid threats is often identified or commented especially linked with activities seeking to weaken the West; but various hybrid techniques can essentially be used by any actor in contemporary international politics. In summary, the aim of these procedures is to influence the decision-making processes of the target state. This process is than either directly in agreement with the interests of the actor (state) that employs the hybrid strategies, or at least the discrepancy between the steps planned by the attacked state and the interests of the attacker is mitigated. One sub-objective of the attacker is to support conflict within the country. Calling decision-making processes into question, undermining trust in institutions, supporting radical opinions in various ways (including those that are not in agreement with the interests and objectives of the attackers),[1] or even direct support for radical groups: that is a line which can be very beneficial to the actor using hybrid threats. The aim is by no means to maximise gains (neither to take control over the country, nor even to establish a friendly regime). A simple weakening of politicians taking a hard line against the actor, or busying the internal politics of the target state so that it ceases to be active in some areas of foreign policy or loses some of its credibility among its allies, might be enough.[2] This could be written about hybrid threats, if one of very basic and limited definitions and descriptions of this concept is used. Since it is based only on the production of one of the institutions involved in fighting the hybrid threats, it is obviously useful to extend this discussion and add views of other authors, institutions etc. Hoffman defined hybrid threats as „a mix of conventional weapons, irregular tactics, terrorism and criminal behaviour to obtain political objectives."[3] His definition was based on the actions of Hizbollah against Israel in Lebanon 2006, so it is connected with non-state actors. McCuen's definition of hybrid conflict is broader, he understood them as "full spectrum wars with both physical and conceptual dimensions: the former a struggle against an armed enemy and the latter, a wider struggle for control and support of the combat zone's indigenous population, the support of the home fronts of the intervening nations, and the support of the international community"[4] Cilluffo and Clark stress that hybrid threats should weaken the defender's power and position rather than to strengthen the

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[1] An example is provided by analyses according to which before the 2016 US presidential election Russian hackers supported opposed groups of white and black American radicals.

[2] THE EUROPEAN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR COUNTERING HYBRID THREATS. Countering Hybrid Threats [on-line]. © 2019 [cit. 2019-04-26]. Dostupné z: https://www.hybridcoe.fi/hybrid-threats/.

[3] HOFFMAN, Frank. „Hybrid vs. Compound War, The Janus choice: Defining Today's Multifaceted Conflict." *Armed Forces Journal International* [online]. 1. 10. 2009, 9 [cit. 2019-10-25]. Dostupné z: http://armedforcesjournal.com/hybrid-vs-compound-war/.

[4] MCCUEN, John. „Hybrid wars." *Military review*[online]. 2008, 2 [cit. 2019-10-30]. Dostupné z: https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20080430_art017.pdf.

attacker. According to them there are three main distinctions between hybrid threats and other concepts (such as irregular warfare or unconventional tactics). The objective of the actor (both state and non-state actor) who use the hybrid threats lies beyond his endogenous capabilities. Therefore he is forced to find exogenous entities, agents supplying skills, materials etc. The hybrid threat is a product of this principal-agent relationship and their disparate capabilities.[5] Crucial role in discussion about hybrid threats had a crisis in Ukraine and occupation of Crimea by Russian forces. Among others because it was connected with operations which should undermine the cohesion of the NATO countries. Monov and Karev sum up definitions of hybrid threats made by different Western institutions. In comparison with older definitions they are more involved in non-military activities, being very complex and multidimensional, based on tools provided by globalisation and modern communication.[6] Generally authors turn their attention more on cyber-attacks, undermining public trust in government institutions or social cohesion.[7] According to Thiele, hybrid warfare simultaneously involves both state and non-state actors using both conventional and unconventional techniques. It is defined by three characteristics: „(1.) The decision of the war/conflict is searched for primarily at a non-military centres of gravity. (2.) Traditional lines of order and responsibilities are being challenged through operations against specific vulnerabilities of the opponent in the shadow of interfaces. (3.) Through combination of different concepts, methods and means „new" forms of warfare and fighting evolve."[8] Fägersten describes hybrid threats as a „coordinated mixture of military and non-military and covert and overt means in order to reach specified objectives".[9] Generally definitions based originally on effective using of different (mostly violent) operations of non-state actor, turned to understanding hybrid threats as a very complex phenomenon. In contrast with older definitions authors in last ten years switch their attention more to non-violent techniques, which could be used by all actors (including states). They have no strict limits. Their aim is to weaken the attacked state (its government, cohesion of society etc.) through different activities which could be very effective especially in the globalised world. On the other hand all

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[5]   CILLUFFO, Frank, CLARK, Joseph. „Thinking About Strategic Hybrid Threats—In Theory and in Practice." *PRISM* [online]. 2012, 4, 1, [cit. 2019-11-30]. Dostupné z: https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract & did=727928.

[6]   MONOV. Lyubomir, KAREV, Maksim. „Hot to counter hybrid threats?" *Information & Security* [online]. 2018, [cit. 2020-1-10]. Dostupné z: https://doi.org/10.11610/isij.3909.

[7]   Cf. MONOV. Lyubomir, KAREV, Maksim. „Hot to counter hybrid threats?" *Information & Security* [online]. 2018, [cit. 2020-1-10]. Dostupné z: https://doi.org/10.11610/isij.3909 and THIELE, Ralph. „Hybrid Threats – And how to counter them." *IPSPW Publications* [online]. 2016, 448 [cit. 2020-1-10]. Dostupné z: https://css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/publications/publication.html/eeb48a96-91d3-4d69-8992-576e25cf53d9.

[8]   THIELE, Ralph. „Hybrid Threats – And how to counter them." *IPSPW Publications* [online]. 2016, 448 [cit. 2020-1-11]. Dostupné z: https://css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/publications/publication.html/eeb48a96-91d3-4d69-8992-576e25cf53d9.

[9]   FÄGERSTEN, Björn. „Forward Resilience in the Age of Hybrid Threats: The Role of European Intelligence." In: HAMILTON, Daniel (ed.). *Forward Resilience. Protecting Society in and Interconnected World*. Washington: Center for Tharsatlantic Relations, 2016. Very similar is the characteristics of hybrid threats by NATO, cited by Monov and Karev. See MONOV. Lyubomir, KAREV, Maksim. „Hot to counter hybrid threats?" *Information & Security* [online]. 2018, [cit. 2020-1-10]. Dostupné z: https://doi.org/10.11610/isij.3909.

authors agree that threats (warfare...) are not the new phenomena. Some of their forms were present in many conflicts. Their efficiency is only increasing due to new technologies of the modern globalised world.

Although the phenomenon of hybrid threat might seem relatively young, the instigation, use and abuse of internal conflict can be observed in many historical examples, from the distant past to recent history. It has always been easier to take action against an adversary mired in internal disputes, or where one could rely on a clandestine or openly operating 'fifth column', than to face an adversary potentially as strong as oneself, one which is united in its action.

The topicality or obsoleteness of works by the classic strategists in various fields of military affairs and security is often discussed. Some authors consider them antiquated, but others consistently defend their relevance today. Be that as it may, more or less justified references to their thinking are being made. It is possible to add many authors and texts to support the relevance of classic strategies for different topics connected with contemporary warfare, strategy and security analysis etc. Let leave out all works but some of those dealing with Thucydides or Machiavelli.[10] For example Lebow analysed Thucydides' History of Peloponnesian war in the context of failed deterrence, deterrence and its paradoxes in Machiavelli's works are research topic of McCanles analysis.[11] Walling discussed the correct understanding of real war termination based on Thucydides,[12] Chance shows the examples of amoralism and realpolitik in international politics in Thucydides' work, and it would be very hard to sum up works using Machiavelli (and alleged lack of ethical values in his works) as basic readings for strategy of political leadership, business etc.[13] Well known is also the analysis of Allison comparing the relationship between US and China and positions of Athens and Sparta at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war.[14] Žilinčík for example stressed the relevance of the theoretical frameworks elaborated by classic strategists (Thucydides and von Clausewitz) for contemporary civil wars, and observed that they are relevant because contemporary and historic civil wars

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[10] Omitting numerous texts based of other classic strategists.

[11] LEBOW, Richard. „Thucydides and Detterence." *Security Studies* [online]. 2007, 16, 2: 163-188 [cit. 2020-1-12]. Dostupné z: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09636410701399440 and MCCANLES, Michael. „Machiavelli and the Paradoxes of Deterrence." *Diacritics* [online]. 1984, 14, 2: 11-19 [cit. 2020-1-16]. Dostupné z: https://www.jstor.org/stable/464755.

[12] WALLING, Karl. „Thucydides on Policy, Strategy, and War Termination." *Naval War College Review* [online]. 2013, 66, 4: 47-86 [cit. 2020-1-12]. Dostupné z: https://www.jstor.org/stable/26397417?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

[13] CHANCE, Alek. „Realpolitik, Punishment and Control: Thucydides on the Moralization of conflict." *Journal of Military Ethics* [online]. 2013, 12, 3: 263-277 [cit. 2020-1-15]. Dostupné z: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15027570.2013.848092, HARRIS, Phil. „Machiavelli and the Global Compass: Ends and Means in Ethics and Leadership." *Journal of Business ethics* [online]. 2013, 93: 263-277 [cit. 2020-1-16]. Dostupné z: https://www.jstor.org/stable/27919158?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents or MACAULAY, Michael, LAWTON, Alan. „Misunderstanding Machiavelli in Management: Metaphor, Analogy and Historical Method." *Philosophy of Management* [online]. 2003, 3, 3: 17-30 [cit. 2020-1-16]. Dostupné z: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282480327_Misunderstanding_Machiavelli_in_Management.

[14] See e.g. ALLISON, Graham T. *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017. 384 s. ISBN 978-0544935273.

are similar in some of the dimensions analysed. To sum up, there are many spheres and topics connected with strategy, conflicts and warfare, where Thucydides and/or Machiavelli are cited, analysed or used to comment contemporary affairs. But are works by classic strategists also relevant to the discussion about hybrid threats?[15]

This paper examines a two of classic strategists: Thucydides and Machiavelli.[16] Of course it is possible to think about numerous classic strategists who could be also included in this paper. On the other hand there is only limited space for an article. Therefore it is more useful to focus on limited number of strategists with some details. Moreover Thucydides and Machiavelli lived in periods of great political instability and conflicts. Hence, it is to be expected, that their works include many examples of internal conflicts including description of ways how these conflicts were instigated, mitigated or solved.

Thucydides and Machiavelli wrote their books in very different periods, remote from each other not just by the centuries in which they lived and worked, but also by the social conditions they faced and to which they responded. The paper first briefly introduces the conditions under which the authors lived and worked and from which they drew material for their writings, and then examines how they describe or comment on: (a) the instigation of internal conflict; (b) the exploitation of the internal disposition of the adversary; and (c) the employment of instruments which ought to strengthen one's own unity, or mitigate internal conflict. Instigation of internal conflict could be seen as one of strategies at least similar to hybrid threats (attacking trust in institutions and cohesion of society). Strengthening of unity and cohesion or mitigating of internal conflict is therefore similar to measures against hybrid attacks of adversaries. Therefore it could be possible to observe some general tools, sources or strategies in books of classic strategists which (adapted to modern technologies) are important in contemporary discussion about hybrid threats.

1   INTERNAL CONFLICTS DURING THE LIFETIME OF THE CLASSIC STRATEGISTS

His *History* and other information we have about Greece in his time show that internal conflict was an integral part of the politics of Greek city states. The main clashes in the second half of the fifth century were between the advocates of democracy and oligarchy (the former supported by Athens and its allies, the latter by Sparta and its alliance), or

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[15] ŽILINČÍK, Samuel. *Relevantnosť Klasických Stratégov pre Občianske Vojny Súčasnosti*. Brno, 29. 5. 2018. Magisterská diplomová práce. Fakulta sociálních studií Masarykovy univerzity. Vedoucí práce prof. JUDr. PhDr. Miroslav Mareš, Ph.D.

[16] Machiavelli wrote multiple works more or less relevant to our topic. Beyond his *The Art of War* (*Dell'arte della guerra*), which is the most relevant for understanding his views on military affairs, internal conflict and its resolution is a topic that is addressed in virtually all of Machiavelli's works. Beyond *The Art of War* are relevant also other two key pieces by Machiavelli: *Discourses on Livy* (*Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*), *The Prince* (*Il Principe*), *Florentine Histories (Istorie Fiorentine)* as well as shorter pieces (such as *Life of Castruccio Castracani [La vita di Castruccio Castracani da Lucca]*).

advocates of cooperation with one side or the other in the conflict. There were serious disputes within Athens too. Internal disputes were extremely risky for their participants, and occasionally would erupt into violence or civil war. Members of the warring sides risked death – they could be executed or murdered by their opponents – exile or damage to property, even if they were merely suspected of having designs against the regime. Clandestine or open alliances with a foreign power were often used to obtain influence or support for one's own side, and, vice-versa, in order to achieve one's own objectives one could use one's supporters or exiles to influence or even to achieve a measure of control over other states (in the sense of establishing an allied regime, rather than establishing direct control).

It was not just Florence, but also other states of the Apennine peninsula that underwent radical change. Small states frequently lost or regained their sovereignty. The convoluted developments in the states were made more confusing yet by the fact that though many cities were dominated by their stronger neighbours, they had their own institutions and attempts were made to declare independence.[17] Within the Papal States in particular, the governors in various cities were often in autocratic positions; and there were also many ambitious individuals – especially among the *Condottieri* – seeking to establish or enlarge their dominions. In the stronger republics, Venice excepted, there were regime changes; and Italian monarchies also witnessed dynastic changes or short-lived attempts at establishing republics. This system, already highly unstable, was from the late fifteenth century interfered with by neighbouring powers, especially France and Spain.

As suggested above, the states in Italy at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were internally divided. What is more, even if one of the warring sides managed to win, there would be further divisions within the victorious group. Violent unrest, including clashes among armed groups and various conspiracies, successful or otherwise, were common. As in ancient Greece, these were accompanied by or resulted in executions, murders, exiles, jailing of opponents or plundering of their property.[18]

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[17] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *Florentine Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. ISBN 0691008639.

[18] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *Florentine Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. ISBN 0691008639. MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *A Description of the methods adopted by the Duke Valentino when murdering Vitellozzo Vitelli, Oliverotto da Fermo, the Signor Pagolo, and the Duke di Gravina Orsini*. In: *The Prince - Special Edition with Machiavelli's Description of the Methods of Murder Adopted by Duke Valentino & the Life of Castruccio Castracani*. Rockville: Arc Manor, 2007. ISBN 978-0978653668.

2   INSTIGATION AND EXPLOITATION OF INTERNAL CONFLICT AND THE PROTECTION OF UNITY AS DESCRIBED BY THUCYDIDES AND MACHIAVELLI

2.1   Thucydides

Most internal conflicts as described by Thucydides lacked direct initiation by another state; rather, other states tended to intervene in conflicts already underway. In themselves, internal conflicts were often sufficient for very destructive fighting. Instead of initiations of internal conflict, one encounters more often in Thucydides descriptions of attempts to mitigate tensions, or situations where the intervening power treated its opponents in a more humane way than their own fellow citizens did. For instance, once the pro-Athens side in Kerkyra (Corfu) definitively won, the local leaders undertook multiple measures that caused their opponents, captured by the Athenians, to be murdered by their fellow citizens, rather than transported to Athens (with the proviso that their fate had not yet been decided by the Athenians).[19] More often one encounters in Thucydides situations where existing conflict was exploited and external instigation was not necessary, or it was due to objective facts – tensions escalated due to current (actual or assumed) weakening of the state with which the governing faction cooperated, or because it seemed to the opposition that the situation was conducive to undertaking a coup.

The most carefully thought-out operation was the Corinthians' attempt to destabilise Kerkyra. Even before the Peloponnesian war broke out, there was a dispute between Corinth and Kerkyra over influence in Epidamnos. During the fighting, the Corinthians took more than a thousand prisoners, selling most of them into slavery, but keeping about 250 in captivity, while it was evident from the outset that their aim was to use them later against Kerkyra.[20] It seems that this intention informed the selection of those who would not be sold into slavery, as well as the decent treatment of the captives. In 427 B.C., it was precisely these former captives, who, as they themselves claimed, were released in exchange for a substantial financial guarantee, who sought to unbind Kerkyra from this alliance with Athens and, if possible, make it go over to the side of the Corinthians, or the Lacedaemonians and their alliance. Ultimately, however, their attempt was unsuccessful: they only managed to unleash a very bloody civil war in Kerkyra.[21]

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[19] THUCYDIDES. *The Peloponnesian War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. IV, 46-48. KAGAN, Donald. The Peloponnesian War. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. ISBN 978-0-14-200437-1. s. 154.

[20] THUCYDIDES. *The Peloponnesian War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. I, 55.

[21] Ibid. I, 69-85. KAGAN, Donald. The Peloponnesian War. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. ISBN 978-0-14-200437-1. s. 114-118.

A common measure to disrupt the existing balance of power was to send military aid or money, both to support the opposition who sought to carry out a coup,[22] or to existing allies in order for them to supress renegade tendencies or insurgencies.[23] Both of the interested parties, of course, could also send out armed forces. For instance, in 432 B.C., Corinthians intervened in Potidaea, Chalkidiki, with the aim of having the city end its alliance with Athens, and Athens intervened to keep the city on their side.[24] Similarly, in 427 B.C., during the first phase of the civil war in Kerkyra, both Athenians and Lacedaemonians and their Corinthian allies were directly involved in combat.[25] Two years later, the Athenians made an essential contribution to the final defeat of their opponents on the island.[26] Very often the primary initiator of military or diplomatic intervention was not the intervening power, but one of the expellees. Overall, rather than attempt to instigate a conflict, they tended to make efforts to escalate existing conflicts, aiming for a complete reorientation of the given state's foreign policy as the optimal outcome.

Besides providing aid to one of the parties involved in an internal conflict, sometimes mere promises of armed support were sufficient to instigate, increase or maintain the activity of the supported side - for example, when the Lacedaemonians promised to support the anti-Athens rebellion in Thasos in 465 B.C. The city, under siege, was supposed to be aided by an attack into Attica, ultimately not undertaken. This did not save the rebels, but at least it delayed their capitulation.[27]

In addition to sending out armed forces or financial support, other benefits would be offered to secure the favour of the crucial figures. An example of this is as follows: when Athenians sought to win to their side the hitherto-neutral Odrysians of Thrace, they gave their king's son Athenian citizenship, which later facilitated Athenian interventions against cities in northern Greece, which sought to disengage themselves from the alliance with Athens.[28]

Diplomacy played an important role in disrupting, or, by contrast, maintaining the *status quo*. Appropriately chosen envoys, often selected from people considered the friends of the city to which they were posted, and/or capable orators, were able substantially to influence public opinion.[29] These relations were also important informally,

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[22] THUCYDIDES. *The Peloponnesian War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. II, 33; III, 76-80; IV, 66-68; VIII, 45-46.

[23] Ibid. IV, 45-47.

[24] Ibid. I, 58-61. KAGAN, Donald. The Peloponnesian War. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. ISBN 978-0-14-200437-1. s. 36-42.

[25] THUCYDIDES. *The Peloponnesian War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. III, 75-81. KAGAN, Donald. The Peloponnesian War. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. ISBN 978-0-14-200437-1. s. 114-118.

[26] THUCYDIDES. *The Peloponnesian War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. IV, 45-47. KAGAN, Donald. The Peloponnesian War. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. ISBN 978-0-14-200437-1. s. 154.

[27] THUCYDIDES. *The Peloponnesian War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. I, 101. KAGAN, Donald. The Peloponnesian War. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. ISBN 978-0-14-200437-1. s. 14.

[28] THUCYDIDES. *The Peloponnesian War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. II, 29.

[29] THUCYDIDES. *The Peloponnesian War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. IV, 84-87; V, 27-30, 37.

with many confidential or forged messages[30] communicated by the friends of those to whom they were addressed.[31] The so-called proxenoi were importantly involved in the relations between envoys and the cities that received them. Their (honorary) function was to host envoys from specific cities at their own expense, which meant that the proxenoi were often personal friends of leading politicians from foreign cities. They often defended opinions close to the cities whose envoy they hosted; or at least they sought to mitigate the resistance of their fellow citizens to that city. Overall, all of these formal and informal relations can be thought of both as a potential source for creating tensions, and as a measure to strengthen the existing regime.

In order to maintain stability, from a position of strength one could command the surrender of hostages.[32] If a harsher punishment (slaughter or enslavement of inhabitants) was not inflicted on renegade cities, they had to give up hostages as well as tear down their own city walls.[33] This made them more vulnerable to the offensive power, and the influence of politicians seeking a new reneging was diminished. The demand to raze the city walls might also be used as a preventive measure, for instance, as Athenians demanded of the city of Mytilene in 428 B.C.. In this case, the outcome is hard to judge. Athens's demand did not quell the situation, because Mytilene declared war against them. It seems, however, that Athens only accelerated the course of events, and Mytilene had to start fighting unprepared, rather than completing necessary war preparations.[34]

In sum, Thucydides does not provide a generally valid method for instigating or, by contrast, quelling internal conflict. Among the main instruments that aimed to change the orientation of specific states (or to prevent such a change) noted by Thucydides are military pressures including direct intervention, formal and informal diplomacy and support for 'fifth columns' as represented particularly by expellees and others who were invested in regime change. Compared to modern tools and methods used by state and non-state actors using hybrid threats, the aim of operations in Thucydides' History of Peloponnesian war was directly regime change connected with switching sides in ongoing war. Military interventions were also carried often rather direct than hybrid operations. On the other hand it is useful to highlight the role of 'fifth columns'. They were formed by „friends" of intervening states, ambitious persons who either see easier to make their way to the leading positions through a regime change or be grateful for help provided to them when they were in troubles, expelled or even imprisoned (such as 250 well-treated Kerkyrians). They were easy to be misused against their native country in both direct and (using contemporary terminology) hybrid operations. Such „friends" of

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30 Thucydides mentions a number of cases where various more-or-less substantiated slanders were used in internal conflicts, there were intentional leaks of confidential information, or, by contrast, entirely false information was provided.

31 THUCYDIDES. *The Peloponnesian War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. VII, 63.

32 Ibid. I, 57.

33 Ibid. I, 117.

34 Ibid. III, 2-5. KAGAN, Donald. The Peloponnesian War. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. ISBN 978-0-14-200437-1. s. 100-102.

foreign power, disappointed by contemporary regime which can not or does not want to fulfil their demands and dreams, could be easily those, who would support (including active participation in them) hybrid operations against government institutions and social cohesion in their country.

2.2 Machiavelli

In his numerous works, Machiavelli cited examples from both late mediaeval Italy and antiquity. However, his thoughts about antiquity were coloured by his personal experience. E.g. there are sometimes gaps between information based on knowledge taken from modern history studies and terminology which is well known for modern scholars and information and terminology used by Machiavelli. Generally, some of his notes about antiquity are not precise sources for a historian but still very useful source for political conflicts analysis.

Machiavelli recommended restraint when attempting to exploit discord among enemies. If a stronger army is sent against a city in strife, albeit in support of one of the parties, the warring parties might reconcile, fearing the loss of their independence. He derived this from the failure of the Florentines when they deployed a substantial force against Sienna, and, by contrast, the disappointment encountered by the Milanese Duke Filippo Maria Visconti when he came out with considerable forces against a disunited Florence. Machiavelli recommended granting support to the weaker side and only to a limited extent, or alternately in smaller measures to both sides, so that they become exhausted. Then there is a substantial chance, either of regime change or of a voluntary transition of the city affected under the sovereignty of the intervening state. He again gave examples: revolts in Sienna benefitting Florence occurred at times when support for Florence in the city was insubstantial, and the city of Pistoia surrendered to Florence directly.[35] Machiavelli also described a very specific method used by Castruccio Castracani in his successful conquest of Pistoia. Castruccio promised support to both warring sides in the city, including that on the date specified parts of his army would support both sides. Then he only had to eliminate the leaders and the most active supporters of both sides at a predetermined moment, and the city was his.[36] Machiavelli generally thought that the elimination of the leaders of the occupied territory, while preserving the existing law to maintain the population at peace, was a way of sustaining control over conquered territories.[37]

A common method of instigating or exploiting internal discord was by a clandestine infiltration of armed men into the city, often with the participation of the expellees, who

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[35] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *The Discourses*. London: Penguin Books, 1970. ISBN 0-14-044428-9.

[36] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *The life of Castruccio Castracani of Lucca*. London: Hesperus Press, 2003. ISBN 978-1843910640.

[37] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *The Prince*. London: Penguin Books, 1999. ISBN 0-14-044752-0.

initiated or at least participated in the attack.[38] It was not necessarily just expellees who were ready to create problems for their home city, but often also members of the local elite who felt unappreciated, people who feared punishment or those who had a grievance.[39] For example, an attempt at the secession of the city of Volterra from Florence was initiated by a man who had once been held prisoner in Florence.[40] Particularly successful were revolts where the conspirators would rally under various pretexts, kill the city leaders and, with the support of their armed entourage, seize control of the city.[41] By contrast, envoys of another state could take preventive measures against such events. An example is provided by the partially successful attempt to overthrow the House of Bentivoglio in Bologna, where the conspirators managed to remove the ruler of the city, but at the decisive moment the opponents of the conspirators were supported by soldiers accompanying the Venetian and Florentine commissioners.[42] In the *Art of War*, Machiavelli described diplomacy as an instrument for seeding discord in the ranks of the enemy: Metellus asked every ambassador of King Jugurtha to give the king as a prisoner, thus managing to create enmity between him and some of the Numidian elite.[43]

Machiavelli was aware of the dangers entailed in manipulating the crowd. One example is connected with the attempt to establish the rule of Walter of Brienne (also known as Gaultier), the duke of Athens, in Florence in 1342 AD. Gaultier was sent by Robert, the king of Naples, to aid Florence, but instead he started to establish an autocracy. He first obtained substantial popular support by executing or expelling the leaders of an unsuccessful war with Lucca. Once he was sure that the mob was behind him, he had himself proclaimed the ruler of Florence for life, even though he had agreed with the Signoria that for the moment he would be satisfied with a one-year term.[44]

The Church, in particular the Pope, had a specific position and options for intervening in the internal affairs of states. Its authority, however, had its limits; Church penalties were often ignored, and the involvement of Archbishop Salviati in a conspiracy to murder Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici (only the latter was killed), for example, led to Salviati's execution in Florence.[45] Machiavelli gave considerable attention to conspiracies in general, whether they be supported by external forces, or emanating solely from within; he also provided 'instructions' to conspirators as to what they ought to avoid.[46]

Machiavelli did not consider unity, or the efforts at achieving it, as absolutely necessary. Indeed, in the *Discourses*, he explicitly notes disunity as one of the elements that

[38] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *Florentine Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. ISBN 0691008639.
      MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *The Discourses*. London: Penguin Books, 1970. ISBN 0-14-044428-9.

[39] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *The Discourses*. London: Penguin Books, 1970. ISBN 0-14-044428-9.

[40] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *Florentine Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. ISBN 0691008639.

[41] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *The Prince*. London: Penguin Books, 1999. ISBN 0-14-044752-0.

[42] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *Florentine Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. ISBN 0691008639.

[43] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *Art of War*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005. ISBN 978-0226500461.

[44] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *Florentine Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. ISBN 0691008639.

[45] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *Florentine Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. ISBN 0691008639.

[46] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *The Discourses*. London: Penguin Books, 1970. ISBN 0-14-044428-9.

contributed to the growth in Rome's size and successes.[47] He developed this idea further in *Florentine Histories*, in which he distinguished two types of internal conflict, depending on the ways in which success can be achieved. If merits and related benefits are linked with successes in public offices (victories in wars or other successes), then competition among factions leads to the benefit of all. If, by contrast, successes are achieved through personal services or favouritism in obtaining office, the result is partisanship that is destructive of the state in question.[48] Machiavelli considered good laws and morals as crucial for the stability of the city – not directly in the sense of providing unity, but rather in preventing disunity. First of all, laws must allow those who would threaten the state to be charged. If such laws are not in place, then everything happens only at the level of slander, and one cannot defend oneself in a court of law. By contrast, if there are real grounds for the slander, the perpetrators cannot be legally prosecuted. Good morals were particularly important, because in his often sceptical view Machiavelli was aware that laws on their own cannot resolve the issues of a city in which there is rampant corruption, nepotism and a pernicious form of partisanship generally.[49] In order to maintain laws and morals, he recommended that once in about every ten years the laws be 'renewed', in the sense of meting out harsh punishment (including the possibility of execution) to those who disturb the peace.[50]

A certain measure of internal order is, however, necessary, as otherwise there is a risk of easy regime change or even the collapse of government in the city that is at loggerheads.[51] If there is violent disorder, Machiavelli recommended the appearance of a representative of state power or holder of another important office (for example, a Church office) with all the attributes of his power.[52] Suppression of internal disputes, or the establishment of internal unity, can be done in three ways, according to Machiavelli: (a) killing all the originators of the disorder, or (b) expelling them from the city, or (c) forcing them to make peace and promise they will no longer insult each other. He considered the last method the least effective, because the grievances that have been caused will sooner or later lead to new conflicts.[53]

In addition to exile, a specific, but often abused instrument for maintaining unity in Florence was the system of so-called cautions. Originally, this was an instrument used against Florence's Ghibellines,[54] who were forbidden to hold public office, under pain of punishment. A citizen who was suspect was cautioned that he must not seek office,

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[47] Ibid.

[48] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *Florentine Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. ISBN 0691008639.

[49] Ibid.

[50] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *The Discourses*. London: Penguin Books, 1970. ISBN 0-14-044428-9.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ghibellines were the supporters of the emperor, their opponents were the Guelphs, the supporters of the pope. Though Florence was traditionally a Guelph city, some of its most important families were Ghibellines. This ancient division persisted even at times when the disputes between the pope and the emperor were no longer topical.

as he could be punished for that on the basis of the law. However, the cautions were abused, because the side in power would issue cautions to their opponents, irrespective of whether they were guilty or not in the sense of the original law.[55] On the one hand, this stabilised the regime; but on the other the opposition became more radicalised, as its leaders could not legally pursue their careers in public office. It is worth noting that pernicious forms of partisanship, according to Machiavelli, ultimately never lead to stabilisation, because the winning side, having completely vanquished their adversaries, will split into two warring factions and there will be further disorder or unrest among the former political allies. Indeed, the only exceptions to this are the cases where the number of the vanquished – whether in exile or politically passive for the time being – is so large that, fearing them, the victorious side remains united and will be moderate in their actions. This is how Machiavelli documented the relative stability in Florence under the rule of Cosimo de' Medici.[56]

Beyond fleeing from Florence to a territory outside Florentine control, the exile could also take the form of being enjoined to stay in a particular place. Testifying to Cosimo de' Medici's outstanding position in the diplomacy of his time is the fact that two such exiles, who fled to Venice from the place they were enjoined to stay, were extradited to Florence and executed.[57]

Other measures aiming to stabilise cities and to prevent unrest noted by Machiavelli include a particular law of the city of Lucca against the indocile; the council could vote to exile a citizen for three years, and this moderated the unrest created by young noblemen.

Machiavelli's works cited many cases of internal conflicts being stirred up, as well as attempts at quelling them. Machiavelli was a realist, in that he did not believe that total unity can be achieved, and also in his evaluation of the practical impacts of various measures. He describes a very colourful spectrum of the manners in which internal division among the enemy can be instigated or exploited, ranging from direct military intervention to support for exiles or opposition, to the use of the instruments of diplomacy, to various ways of manipulating the mob. In many cases, it is the domestic opposition which pursues these activities, without the need of external aid or support. Machiavelli believed that possible defence against these activities consists in a well-functioning political system, which allows the influential individuals to realise their potential positively, and also to take harsh measures against the instigators of the disorder. In the context of hybrid threats discussion, there are similarities with Thucydides – the role of exiled persons and principal opposition which could be misused in direct or (in modern term) hybrid actions against the actual government or regime. Machiavelli also stressed the negative role of manipulated mob. The combination of dissatisfied leading domestic opponent(s) supported (in various ways including those typical for hybrid operations) by foreign power, who is able to attract mob could be deadly for all regimes. Machiavelli also shows one of ways how to prevent or at least mitigate danger of success of direct or hybrid operations. Well-functioning and inclusive system (in sense that the group of

[55] MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò. *Florentine Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. ISBN 0691008639.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

governing political elite is not strictly closed) is less vulnerable to subversive actions of an (external or internal) adversary.

3   CLASSIC STRATEGISTS AND THE PRESENT

The conditions under which the classic strategists wrote their works are very different from those prevailing today. Thucydides and Machiavelli in particular considered internal conflicts that could be very brutal, involving murder and pillage. Extreme measures (executions, exile) are taken against the instigators of disorder. In a situation where one's own life is at stake in a political struggle, it is often unnecessary for conflict to be initiated or fuelled by foreign actors.

Of the procedures for stirring internal conflict, various forms of military support are mentioned most often. In this sense, Machiavelli's mention of limited support as the most advantageous way to escalate a situation of conflict is interesting. Excessive engagement can provoke an undesired reaction, which will not occur if support in terms of materiel and personnel remains limited. A group of dissatisfied inhabitants (rather than exiles) will serve as an appropriate means, which can be radicalised and, for example, armed in order further to destabilise the target state. Pandering to the mob and vigorous steps against unpopular leaders of the incumbent government can bring popularity to the people who promote or carry out these steps, and help them to take over power or change the foreign-policy orientation. One's own diplomats or people who maintain friendly relations with the representatives of the offensive power can be used to stir up conflict further. The provision of seemingly unexpected or disproportionate advantage might bind the receiver towards supporting a solution that is convenient to the state that granted the advantage, and essentially a mere promise of such aid might suffice.

If an internal conflict is supported, an extreme way of exploiting the situation is overall regime change, to the benefit of the power pursuing the intrigue. Classic strategists describe partial corrections to the existing orientation less often, and this is largely due to the extreme consequences of most of the conflicts they describe. Once these conflicts are escalated, they tend to end up with harsh intervention being taken against the defeated side.

Compared to the contemporary concept of hybrid threats strategies described by Thucydides and Machiavelli are often more direct and violent, similar rather to original understanding of hybrid threats than their modifications. But it is important to see, that the aiming on trust in government institutions and (social) cohesion as general tendency is present both in works of classic strategists and definitions of hybrid threats. There are only important changes in the tools and technologies that are available. Similarities could be identified also when the conditions are favourable for the attacker. Dissatisfied (potential) political leaders and their sympathizers could serve, consciously or unconsciously, as a tool misused for (hybrid) attacks which should undermine the existing government. This dissatisfaction could be a product of real or purported grievances done to them. They could feel to be forced to act somehow against the ruling regime. Only their actions could be mostly different, rather violent at times of the analysed classic

strategists, rather non-violent today. A foreign actor who wants to use hybrid threats it is only important to find and adequately support these dissatisfied groups. This could be much easier done when the trust in government (or political system generally) is from the beginning low.

In terms of the preventive steps aimed at maintaining the necessary degree of unity, most of the measures mentioned or recommended by the authors are more appropriate to a civil war than to ordinary politics. The idea of a unifying element that would bind citizens together is one that can be transferred to the present, though it is not easy to find what such an element could be, without being forced on people in excess. What Machiavelli described generally as good laws – though, of course, much adjusted from a late medieval society to today – also seem appropriate. The awareness that one can pursue one's rights legally (even in cases when there is a clash with the interests of the elite) is one of the ways that ought to contribute to peace in society. Generally, it is impossible to satisfy all demands of people and fulfil ambitions of all leaders of opposition. It is unimaginable in Western democracies to force all of them to unconditional and unlimited support of the existing government or regime. But on the other hand, it is still possible to try to reduce the upset of opposing groups and make them less vulnerable to the offers provided by hybrid threats using foreign actors.

The measures noted in the works by the classic strategists include prevention. The physical elimination or exile of people seeking to create discord would be hard to imagine today. Here one can also note that excessive or abused repressive measures can radicalise those affected by them, if they see resistance as the only way to pursue their interest, or simply to save themselves in the given situation. Rather, matters can be shifted towards a general distrust on the part of the state of those who are too welcoming to the interests of other than allied powers, have close links with their elites (especially if these contacts are personal as well), or receive some form of direct or indirect material support from them. If such people not only radicalise but also militarise, they become extremely dangerous. This is why it is appropriate to accept moderate opposition, which gives the broader spectrum of opposition elites the chance to realise themselves, without feeling *a priori* excluded and hence radicalising their demands; but, by contrast, to prevent manifestations of excessive radicalisation.

CONCLUSION

Of the classic strategists observed, the topics of instigating internal conflict, exploiting the internal disposition of the enemy and strengthening one's own unity were addressed in greatest detail by Machiavelli and by Thucydides only slightly less so. However, Thucydides was the author of only one of the works studied, whereas Machiavelli's oeuvre that is relevant to the topic is larger, both in the number of works and their length.

Thucydides's and Machiavelli's understanding of the instigation of internal conflict by external actors is the closest to operations that in today's hybrid warfare are considered extreme measures: to direct military support for opposition consisting of exiles or consistent dissenters with the existing regime. This is due to the profundity of the conflicts;

often, partial steps leading to preceding escalation of dissatisfaction were not even needed in the divided city states. When discussing support for one side in an internal conflict, Machiavelli in particular suggests that limited interventions can be advantageous, leading not necessarily to a decisive outcome, but to maintaining or escalating a conflict situation. The state thus affected becomes exhausted, without the intervening power taking disproportionate risks. As instigators of conflicts, both strategists cited expellees and also friendly members of the local elite, who can be appropriately used as a 'fifth column'. Even though today such support would be less in providing weapons and more in other means, especially permitting the pursuit of effective propaganda leading to the questioning of the existing regime and helping to radicalise the population further. By contrast, he saw the strengthening of unity in the employment of a unifying idea. Thucydides and especially Machiavelli in their works directly or indirectly showed from which circles one might expect collaboration with a foreign power against the interests of the given state. Machiavelli in particular described prevention, whether this be intervening against the opposition (difficult to transfer into today's situation), or recommending good laws, and ultimately a well-functioning political system, in order to minimise the effect of the activities undertaken by radical opponents.

At the level of specific recommendations, the works of the classic strategists observed are transferrable only to a very limited extent; but if generalised, many ideas can be found that continue to be relevant even in the era of contemporary hybrid threats. The most important of them are sources of internal supporters of foreign actor who could be easily misused for hybrid operations (dissatisfied leaders, their sympathizers, people who already got some form of benefit from the adversary state or organisations connected with this state). Therefore, it seems to be useful to observe their activities in case of increasing hybrid threats' pressure. In case of other preventive steps against hybrid threats, the harsh measures against those who try to incite public disorder are hardly transferrable to the modern democracies. More useful and relevant for contemporary debate are more generally formulated notes about importance of well-functioning system and full acceptance of moderate opposition. They could not bring complete unity of the society, after all, which is not even possible. However, they could reduce the number of citizens who could be effectively misused as a tool for hybrid threats used by foreign actors.

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