

# FIFTH GENERATION WARFARE

## THE ART OF WAR

### COGNITIVE EFFECT

War is undertaken to maintain a position of advantage, establish a more advantageous situation, or influence the attitudes or behaviour of another party.

Defence Capstone Doctrine



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# INTRODUCTION

## THE FIFTH GENERATION ENVIRONMENT

The fifth generation mission space will be cognitive in nature: success will reside with the side that wins the cognitive space. In support of this shift away from the third and fourth generation environments, the way in which we operate in the 5G mission space will have to shift. This will lead us towards the central strand that *cognitive effect* is critical to success.

The way in which cognitive effect is achieved, the tools that are used, will become the armoury of the fifth generation actor. In this section, we explore the phases of a potential fifth generation conflict. In the scenario laid out in the document we see the manipulation of a narrative, but in other scenarios the early stages of a fifth generation conflict could be a military exercise or an economic campaign. Arguably the Belt and Roads initiative is an economic and political campaign to affect a change in trading routes. These new routes through the road of the South China Sea 'need' to be defended argue the Chinese. This has led to the construction of military outposts on artificial islands around strategically important locations.

In General Gerasimov's doctrine of 'the value of science in prediction', he discusses the evolution in Russian tactics learning from "Russia's 'guerrilla geopolitics,'" and an appreciation that new tactics were needed which focus on the enemy's weaknesses and avoid direct and overt confrontations. This doctrine was practiced in the recent Crimea 'conflict'.

There are many paths to conflict in the 5GW mission space but all are leading toward having cognitive effect on the opponent.





5GW will see the growing realisation that, changing attitudes and behaviors are the central core of the operational purpose and that this will be achieved through cooperative actions in the virtual and physical domains in order to have effects in the cognitive domain.

“We are no longer fighting a defined adversary in a defined battlespace for a defined period of time. Instead the 5th generation mission space is a continuous global battle of narratives that will play out over both virtual and physical space and encompass a range of violent and non-violent actions and effects.”

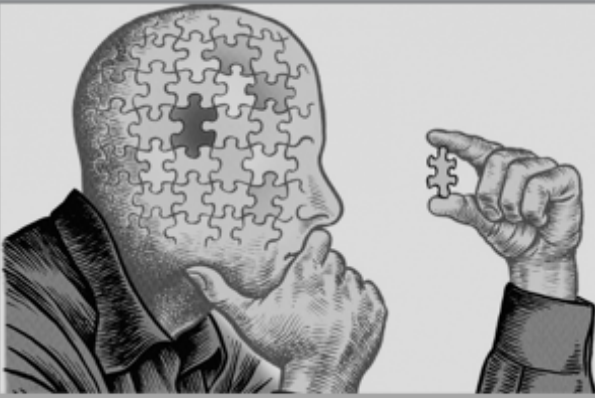
## 5GW: THE ACTORS

Although we have long been taught that the purpose of warfare is to impose one's will on the adversary, little was done to ensure that this was true. Whereas before, actors often attempted to manipulate the will and understanding of the opponent through messaging to reinforce physical military operations, now we will see the realisation that *cognitive effect* is the main effort. 5GW will see the growing realisation that, changing attitudes and behaviors are the central core of the operational purpose and that this will be achieved through cooperative actions in the virtual and physical domains in order to have effects in the cognitive domain.

At the operational level, 'grey zone' activities, such as inciting civil disobedience, and increasing dissonance and disharmony in civil society are tools that will be used by adversaries to undermine from within and to disorientate, disrupt and ultimately, degrade a Nations ability or will to retaliate.

The operational level will also see rise to the networked adversary that are less structured and hierarchical. The traditional military 'manoeuvrist approach' of striking command a control nodes and 'cutting off the head' will no longer work as a network, is likely to be to a degree, self-healing. In order to be successful against a hierarchy all that is required is to cut one or two chains of command, in a network the chains of command will be myriad.

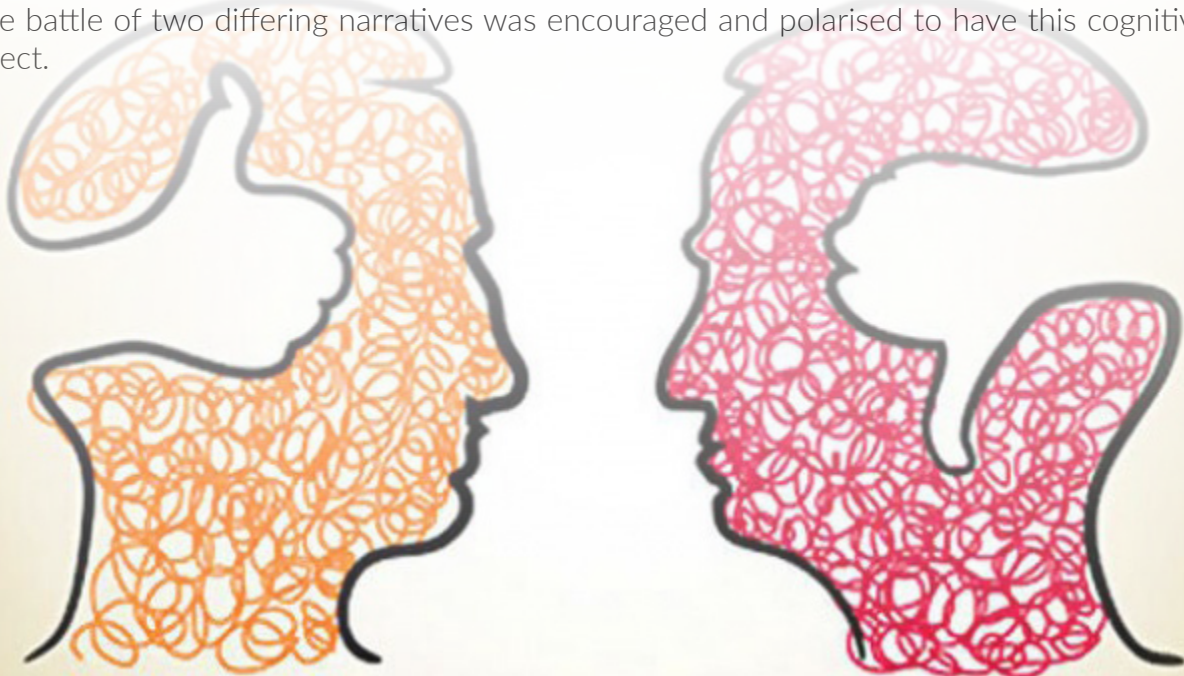
Finally, the participants in a 5G conflict will be diverse with proxy forces, 'useful idiots' and empowered citizens voicing concerns and gaining followers. We have seen the birth of the uncontrolled influencer that can cause cognitive effect either for or against a cause.



## Phase 1

Within the 5G mission space these actors will usher in a new way in which conflict will develop. During the initial stages before the escalation to the threshold of lethal military intervention, there will be evidence of non-military activity that endeavors to capture the narrative. The sole purpose of the narrative is to have cognitive effect. In this way a well scripted narrative will enable an actor to develop, direct or even control the moral, social, economic, political and even military agenda. If this sounds extreme, it is not. In Vietnam it was the understanding from the Hanoi Government that the war would not be won on the battlefields of the Central Highlands, but instead on a political battlefield in the minds of the South Vietnamese Agrarian farmers and in the living rooms of the American public. As historian Jeffery Record's phrases it "Ho Chi Minh had a superior strategic grasp of the political and social dimensions of the struggle."

The inability of the US military to decisively defeat the Vietcong and NVA and the continued requirement for the US administrations to change their narrative fueled the growing counter-culture by ensuring that the American civil population, embroiled in a domestic civil confusion, were fed images and stories of atrocities and social injustices. More recently the recently the nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the US Supreme Court has been controlled by 2 opposing narratives each narrative seeking cognitive effect: both sides wanting to control the supreme court and have control over legislation. However, this contest between the 2 major political structures in America had far larger cognitive effect both within the US and outside: it polarized and created instability and mistrust in the both parties and the legal system itself. The psyche of the American public has been affected by this contest. The winner are those actors who seek to undermine the United States as a whole, that wanted to see an American public angry, confused and distrustful of critical American institutions. The battle of two differing narratives was encouraged and polarised to have this cognitive effect.





## Phase 2

The second phase will see direct action to reinforce the cognitive change initiated by the narrative constructed in phase 1. For example, if a belligerent wanted to subvert another country it is likely to pick on social weaknesses such as racial inequality, the growing poverty gap or any other perceived grievances that course deep in the veins of society. This phase will see a higher tolerance of the adversary for risk and will employ 'active measures' by physical agents on the ground. They could be direct agents of the state like Colonel Anatoliy Vladimirovich Chepiga and Dr. Alexander Mishkin, who are believed to have carried out the Novichok attack in Salisbury, UK earlier in the year. Or proxy agents, either locally employed or those unwittingly working toward the ends of a foreign government, this latter category are often referred to a 'useful idiots'.

There will continue to be coordinated operations to mislead and/or coerce political and military leaders through diplomatic channels, the media and through the leaking false information. The objective, more often than not, will not be to convince us of a particular narrative, but to create doubt, mistrust and disloyalty. This was demonstrated neatly by Russian attempts to obfuscate the truth about the shooting down of Malaysian Airline Flight MH-17. They did this by creating a cacophony of alternatives from the credible to the downright bizarre.

When done well, some of the alternative stories will play into the ongoing narrative of one side of an already polarized and enraged population and they will adopt the and repeat the narrative often on the Internet chat rooms in the form of memes and comments that will magnify the message and see it spread.



### Phase 3

This will essentially be a step change from covert subversive action by the adversary to outright support for political opposition and other disenfranchised actors. This will be supported by continued information activities designed to weaken the will to oppose the now prevailing dissenting narrative. In the physical domain military forces are likely to move to a war footing and to conduct ever more aggressive shows of force. As tensions escalate the risk tolerance of the adversary will again increase. 'Active measures' are now likely to include the direct action, intimidation, deception, bribery abduction and assassination of key leaders and key influencers in the mission space. Military armed incursion including Special Forces operations will increase in both volume and audacity. With tactical miscalculations being denied, disowned or disregarded.

Following these 3 phases the mission space has been destabilised and shaped for follow on activity.

### Phase 4

This will see the start of hard activity focused at the tactical level. Destabilising propaganda will exponentially increase in use against targeted populations to shape the tactical conditions and further enforce the narrative. Sponsored actors may arrive to physically enforce the narrative either through public engagement, speeches and rallies or by the emergence of proxy forces such as sponsored militia, private military contractors or criminal gangs used to bully and coerce those who are in opposition and encourage those who are supportive. The end state to phase 4 is physical action by the civilian population, either riots, rallies, demonstrations, or protests. Once the populous is acting physically it will be easier to adjust those actions in phase 5.





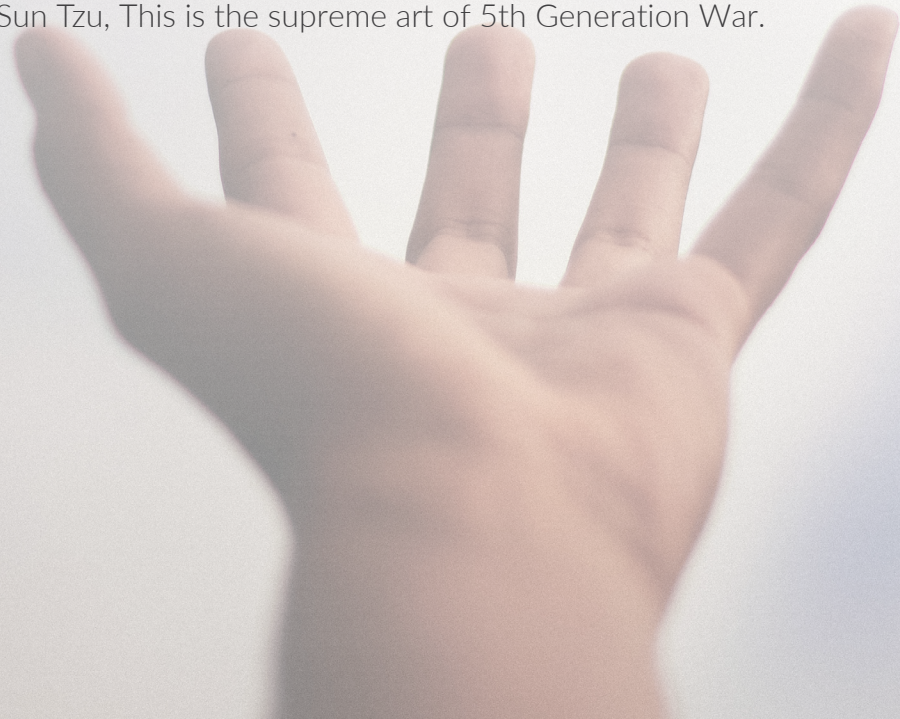
## Phase 5

Once the conditions are met, Phase 5 will be the point at which conventional military force is brought to bear to meet the strategic aim of the aggressor. This will be under the pretext of protecting national interest, self-defense or upholding some international norm. This may be the annexation of disputed territory, the occupation of strategic assets or the prevention of rival capability, military or other, being brought to bear. Where necessary, now control has been established, access will be restricted, the influx of non-attributable, yet proxy forces will increase.

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### And so to war...

The slow escalation through the phases towards the open commitment of military forces in phase 5 will be achieved with subtlety and ambiguity to such an extent that it will be difficult to know at which point the phase of conflict has changed. It will be extremely difficult to set 'Red Lines' and threshold for when to act. We may well find ourselves way past the point of intervention without having realized we were even in a contest, akin to the fable of the boiling frog. In this event the adversaries setting of the narrative will have achieved, at least partially, the desired outcome, without the commitment of forces to the lethal fight. To paraphrase Sun Tzu, This is the supreme art of 5th Generation War.



# Summary

We have seen the revolution of global reach and understanding empowered by social media and 24/7 news channels. Most people in the world will have knowledge of other countries, people and opportunities. This shift combined with the willingness (desperation) of influencer to be recognised has resulted in sensationalism becoming the norm.

The embedded reporter really came to the fore in the Vietnam war and since that time, the development of global communication has generated the 24/7 news channel and news websites reporting from the front line. The result is that the population are brutally aware when errors are made. Political careers will crumble without public support, and support is driven by being seen to do the right thing. Politicians and Military leaders are now, more than ever, aware of the impact of mistakes on their career and are becoming more risk averse.

The evolution of our warfare tools has always been driven by the fear that an adversary will achieve and asymmetric advantage through the development of new technology. Each side will always look for the technological upper hand ever since the first battle was fought. But there are other factors that drive the evolution of warfare, the main one being the accountability of the military and the lack of acceptance by the general population of military errors.

The purpose of war is to ultimately impose one set of values on another. In those immortal words, "Warfare is a continuation of politics by other means." It is the last resort, when all other options of diplomacy have failed, to resolve and argument or dispute. However, in 5GW, the state of war will never be declared as the adversary will seek to impose its values on another through the cognitive effect.

**The next conflict, be it between a state, a non-state or a combination of the two, will certainly be an economic and a social contest, whether or not it becomes a lethal military fight:**

**it will be a contest over the cognitive mission space.**

In this sense was the recent use of data to influence significant votes a means to influence the perception and will of the population? Was it an act of imposing an external set of values? Was it 5GW?

In the next section of this series on fifth generation warfare, we look at how we can measure the cognitive mission space through application of Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance techniques.







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