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Title: Modern War and Gray Zones: Guidelines for Small States

Abstract

The armed conflicts witnessed in the two decades of the 21st century have compelled us to adopt a new perspective on modern warfare and state security. The nature of conflict has undergone a noticeable transformation, wherein a wide range of actors employ both conventional and unconventional tactics to exploit vulnerabilities within states. These actors operate below the threshold of armed conflict, giving rise to the concept of the gray zone - an intermediate space between stable peace and open warfare. It is crucial to acknowledge that modern wars encompass both violent conflicts and the complexities of the gray zone. Consequently, this form of conflict presents significant challenges to the security of states.

This article focuses on presenting the outcomes of a research project conducted within ISMS War Studies Group, developed by a team of international experts, resulting in the book "Modern War and Gray Zones: Guidelines for Small States." The research findings indicate that specific problems deserve particular attention, including (i) concepts and context of modern war and gray zone conflicts faced by small countries; (ii) defense policies, strategies, and operations; (iii) deterring and managing violence that poses a threat to small states; (iv) security for societies and peoples. Furthermore, the aim of this research is to familiarize mid-career professionals with new and emerging challenges threatening state security, offering them an opportunity to design strategies and develop solutions for navigating the complexities of the gray zone and contemporary conflicts.

Keywords: modern war, gray zones, state security, small states

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