

From Hybrid Warfare to Open Conflict: The Illusion of Peace and the Prelude to Ruin

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A necessary lesson by Paolo Mieli in Corriere della Sera, interpreted through Gastone Breccia's lens, to awaken consciences from their naivety

> ***A beacon in the fog of naivety:*** *The article by* ***Paolo Mieli*** *in the pages of* ***Corriere della Sera*** *performs an act of fundamental cultural and political importance:* ***it tears away the veil of illusion and forces even the most skeptical or distracted observers to "open their eyes"****.At a time in history when many mistake the absence of imminent explosions for true peace,* ***Mieli reminds us that blindness to subtle threats is the first step toward disaster****.*

Drawing on the soon-to-be-published volume by **Gastone Breccia** (professor of Military History at the University of Pavia), entitled ***Neither war nor peace.The era of hybrid conflicts*** (il

Mulino), the article highlights how the different phases of modern conflict are not random episodes, but **closely interconnected links in a single strategy of domination**.

The Hybrid Attrition Phase: The Ecosystem of Disorientation

As highlighted in the article published in *Corriere della Sera*, **Europe is under attack every day** through an invisible yet devastating offensive: **cyberattacks, economic pressure, and AI-amplified disinformation campaigns**.
The analysis by **Gastone Breccia** and the scholars cited identifies three crucial aspects of this first phase:

- **Erosion of truth and cognitive void:** Contemporary disinformation does not merely seek to lie, but to **create a genuine "cognitive void"** in which established facts lose weight in favor of **emotions, prejudices, and subjective perceptions**.
- **Paralysis of collective responses:** The constant underlying friction polarizes public opinion."**Citizens, seeing no tanks at the borders, refuse to grasp the seriousness of the danger** and become reluctant to contribute to the common defense.
- **The trap of denial: The most insidious weapon is the disavowal or denial of the conflict by those waging it**, a veritable trap that lulls democracies into the false dream of being safe from existential threats.

The Historical Precedent: The Megarian Decree

To demonstrate the historical continuity of these dynamics, **Paolo Mieli** cites the account that **Gastone Breccia** gives of the famous **Megarian Decree of 432 B.C.**.
Athens did not directly attack the city of Megara (an ally of Sparta) so as not to openly violate the peace treaty, but **imposed economic and coercive sanctions within its own sphere of hegemony**.That “hybrid” maneuver conceived by Pericles served to **test Sparta’s resolve and undermine enemy cohesion**, ultimately **accelerating the inexorable outbreak of the Peloponnesian War**.

The Shift to Open War: “The Flash of the Sword”

The central thesis of the essay by **Gastone Breccia**, highlighted by **Paolo Mieli**, reinterprets the thought of military theorist Carl von Clausewitz: **the hybrid phase is not a harmless chronic condition**, but the **necessary prelude to the “flash of the avenging sword”**, that is, the shift to the overt use of military force.

- **Preparatory attrition:** In the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, **the conventional offensive of 2022 came after eight years of hybrid warfare and invisible attrition** that began in 2014.
- **Protracted hybrid warfare:** In scenarios such as Taiwan, **the hybrid phase can be prolonged over time to alter the balance**, until the disparity in forces becomes so great as to **eliminate any capacity for resistance even before an overt attack**.

Conclusion: The Value of a Necessary Awakening

The article by **Paolo Mieli** in the **Corriere della Sera** deserves praise for its rare analytical CLARITY and its civic value.By explaining the thinking of **Gastone Breccia**, Mieli provides an essential tool to **open the eyes of those who live under the illusion that the absence of bombs equates to peace**.**Treating the constant hybrid friction as a mere "nuisance" is the irresponsible attitude of sleepwalkers**; recognizing it for what it is represents the only chance of avoiding being caught unprepared by disaster.

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