

# RE-THINKING SOCIETAL RESILIENCE

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A Snapshot from Ukraine

NATO CIMIC Center of Excellence

Nicholas Krohley, Ph.D.

[nkrohley@frontlineadvisory.com](mailto:nkrohley@frontlineadvisory.com)

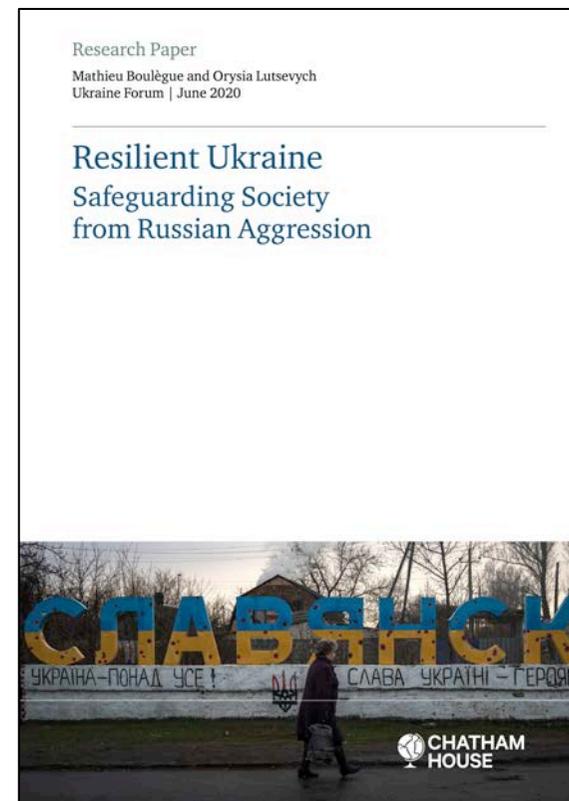
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# The Standard Narrative of Resilience

Civilians are prospective “victims” who must be “inoculated” against malign external forces.

- Societal resiliency and counter-mis/disinformation campaigns focus on the threats posed by our foes...



# The Standard Narrative of Resilience

Ukraine is cited as the poster-child of a “society under siege”...

- Putin is touted as “master of the cracks”...
- Ukrainians “see him in their breakfast cereal”.



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# We Are Making a Mistake

We make **two fatal errors** when we treat civil society as a collective of victims, and a *recipient of action*.

## 1. Empowering the Enemy

- Our focus on external “meddling” overstates and intensifies the agency of foreign actors.

## 2. Missing the Point

- We are neglecting the civil dynamics and societal fault lines that have created vulnerabilities (and thus opportunities for our foes) in the first place.

**It's a self-fulfilling prophecy...**

# Reality-Check: “Hybrid War” in Donbas

## ***A different 2014 narrative...***

- ✓ Comprehensive, generational propaganda immersion.
- ✓ “It would be hard for them to identify what the *Rusky Mir* is—because they are a part of it”.
- ✓ Legacy of political “outsourcing” to overtly pro-Russian elements.
- ✓ Soft power expectations in Donbas.
- ✓ “I never expected that I could not find 1,000 volunteers”.
- ✓ The Odesa Fire: National Anthem & “Burn, Colorados, burn”
- ✓ How did Russia finally secure Donbas?
- ✓ What of Russian efforts in Kharkiv and Odesa?
- ✓ How were they stopped in Dnipro and Mariupol?



# A Different View of Resiliency

We need to reclaim **ownership** and **responsibility**.

- Our biggest problems are *our own problems*.
- Societal resilience campaigns should focus *on our societies*, and build resiliency from the bottom-upwards.
- This is diametrically opposed to the current top-down, opponent-centric paradigm.



## The Way Ahead...

1. Own our problems.
2. Get our houses in order.
3. Put our foes in their places.
4. Kill our “DMMI” programs.

# Reality-Check: Lessons From Ukraine

## *Lessons to be Learned...*

Ukraine's problems are *Ukrainian problems*

- Governance, civic spirit, corruption, nation-building in a *deeply diverse* young country.

Putin ≠ all-purpose Scapegoat/Boogeyman

- His fingerprints are seen on *everything* (incl. Trump/Brexit), and it's an impediment to action.

Embrace the messiness of our own societies

- Granular and localized contextual understanding is paramount—not “grand narratives” at the strategic level.

If we are defining “truth”, we've already lost

- The DMMI discipline is inherently totalitarian, and this is the (good) reason why we have struggled so badly to be effective.

See the Russian threat for what it is

- “The Russians are stupid, but they are dangerous”...

# What about CIMIC?

*If the real issue is **our issues**...*

- *Who* develops the requisite understanding of the civil environment?
- *How* do they do it?
- CIMIC has an essential role to play as an intermediary between the military and civil society.
  - But how comfortable are we operating domestically?
- **Bottom Line:** Someone needs to be conducting civil assessments and civil engagements within NATO borders.
  - **CIMIC value proposition:** collaborative assessment of features & fault lines in the human terrain.
  - To be effective, we will need robust, detail-oriented investigative frameworks—not ASCOPE/PMESII grids.



# A Piece of the Puzzle...

[www.civilreconnaissance.com](http://www.civilreconnaissance.com)



Dr. Nicholas Krohley



[nkrohley@frontlineadvisory.com](mailto:nkrohley@frontlineadvisory.com)

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