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CHINA'S GREY ZONE WARFARE

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DISTINGUISHED FELLOW VIF & CLAWS

ORGANISED BY CENJOWS
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In the 21st century we have seen a tendency towards blurring the lines between the states of war and peace. Wars are no longer declared and, having begun, proceed according to an unfamiliar template. The recent global state portrays that nations can suddenly be engulfed and deteriorate into never-ending war zones, with utter chaos. There are no given rules of war of the 21st century. In fact, customary definition of war that imagined violence, armed hostility and active military operations between nations (or with non-state actors), has been immensely enlarged and transformed. Surreptitious, non-contact or non-kinetic means of achieving political goals have found acceptance, and exceed the power of military means. The applied methods of conflict have altered in the direction of the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other non-military measures — applied with the power of protest of the population. These can be supplemented by espionage, subversion or use of Special Forces, like the "little green men" - the masked soldiers of the Russian Federation in unmarked green army uniforms and carrying modern Russian military weapons and equipment, who appeared during the Ukrainian crisis of 2014.

The 'grey-zone' in Indian context can be taken as state of being between war and peace, where adversaries aim to achieve geopolitical or territorial ends without overt military aggression and crossing the threshold of open warfare. Contextually today, the toolkit for coercion below the level of direct warfare includes information operations, political coercion, economic coercion, cyber operations, proxy support, and provocation by state-controlled Forces. From fake news and online troll farms, to terrorist financing and provoking the disillusioned, the inimical approaches often lie in the contested arena somewhere between routine statecraft and open warfare—the 'grey zone.' The concept of grey zone is taken as between war and peace, from routine state craft to short of conventional war. With two adversarial neighbours, India may well be in the throes of grey zone warfare in many manifestations. There is an optimal necessity to create capabilities to fathom the subtleties of the character of this type of warfare and plan to combat it with vigour.