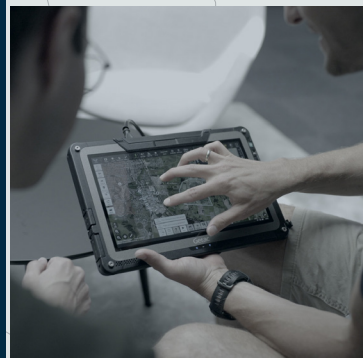
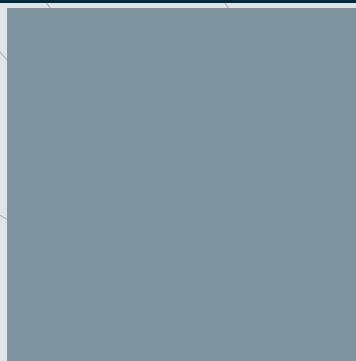


THE ASYMMETRY OF HYBRID WARFARE



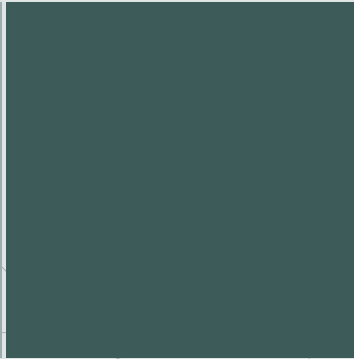
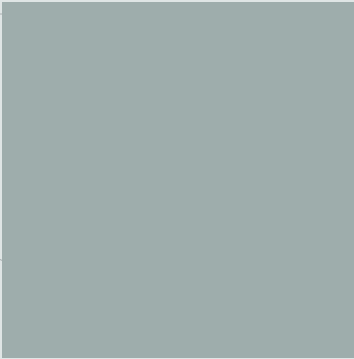
Drones are no longer a niche threat or a curiosity on the battlefield, and they now sit at the heart of hybrid warfare. This reality demands not only better defense technology, but also more agile doctrines and faster coordination between military, government, and private actors.

In this conversation with analyst and PhD fellow Johan Grøne Christensen, we examine how drones have become a crucial component in hybrid conflicts. And how they operate effectively in the grey zones between war and peace.



**KNOW
WHAT
MATTERS**

Article
October 2025
sky-watch.com



THE ANONYMOUS THREAT

When most people think of war, they imagine tanks, missiles, or boots on the ground. But today, conflict increasingly unfolds without any of these.

Today's hybrid warfare takes place in the shadows, as strategic interactions between states or actors that aim to achieve military or political objectives, but through means that fall below what is conventionally recognized as war.

In this legal grey area and below traditional thresholds of armed conflict, drones have quickly become one of the most potent tools. The hybrid goal is not a full-scale invasion, but rather to test a state's responses, expose vulnerabilities, and generate confusion.

Without flags or insignias, drones contribute to this ambiguity. As Gröne Christensen puts it:

"Hybrid warfare increasingly blurs the line between war and peace. It's not always clear when one ends and the other begins."

This raises a critical question: how do you respond when the aggressor or their intent cannot clearly be identified?

DRONES IN THE GREY ZONES

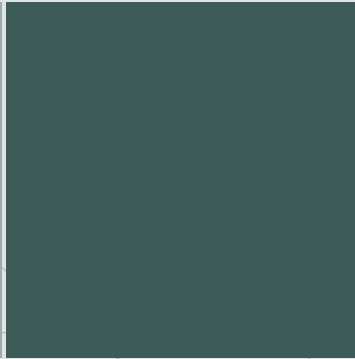
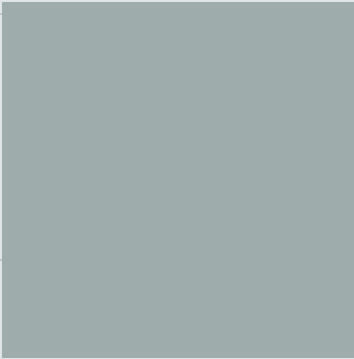
Drones are particularly well-suited for hybrid tactics. They are relatively cheap, mobile, and hard to attribute. Whether deployed by state or non-state actors, commercial or military-grade, the result is the same: disruption.



Take the recent drone incidents over Copenhagen and other European airports. No confirmed damage was done, but the uncertainty triggered panic, halted air traffic, and diverted both civil and military resources.

"Hybrid warfare is not about taking territory. It's about creating friction," says Gröne Christensen. *"A drone isn't just a flying machine. It's a message."*

In this sense, drones deliver exactly what hybrid actors seek: a high return on investment through ambiguity and the risk of escalation.



YOU DON'T NEED TO SHOOT TO WIN

Hybrid drone operations are rarely about firepower. They are primarily concerned with distraction, deterrence, and delay. Imagine drones crossing a border during an international summit. Even unarmed, they will demand a response. Intelligence must be gathered, leaders briefed, and public narratives shaped.

Responding to this type of threat is a complex process. In wartime, rules of engagement are clear. In peacetime, they are not.

A DEFENSIVE HEADACHE

Here lies the asymmetry. Offense is cheap and creative. Defense is expensive and constrained by law, politics, and public pressure. That imbalance places states at a disadvantage, especially if they are slow to adapt.

"Yes, you can jam a drone. You can intercept. But doing so in a civilian area, under tight rules of engagement, is not easy," says Gröne Christensen. "And every time you respond, you expose your own capabilities or lack of them."

Ironically, drones are also part of the solution. They are not just the aggressors in hybrid warfare. They can also form part of the defense. Field-proven ISR drones can support border patrols, monitor infrastructure, and give decision-makers greater situational awareness.

Interceptor drones offer another layer of flexibility, enabling the tracking and neutralization of rogue drones in real-time, even in urban environments. However, the future does not lie solely in hardware. It lies in data.

Yes, drones can enable persistent ISR. They can monitor troop movements, watch critical infrastructure, or map terrain for future operations. And in hybrid warfare, information can be more valuable than a kinetic strike. This is why drones must be integrated into broader systems and feed intelligence into real-time analytics, AI models, and national security platforms. That ability is what turns isolated assets into a networked response. And that is what gives defenders a fighting chance in this evolving domain of silent skirmishes.

ABOUT JOHAN GRÖNE CHRISTENSEN

Johan holds a master's degree in political science and has worked at the Danish Centre for Military Studies for several years. His research focuses primarily on the strategic and operational implications of drone warfare in the Russo-Ukrainian war, military defense cooperation among smaller states, and the integration and use of drones in modern armed forces.



SKY-WATCH

Østre Allé 6F
DK-9530 Støvring
Denmark

+45 9686 7666
sales@sky-watch.com

www.sky-watch.com

**KNOW
WHAT
MATTERS**