

Plausible Deniability: Proxy Actors and the Hybrid Threat Ecosystem

Description

Episode 126 examines the evolution of proxy warfare and hybrid threats in the current security environment. Our guests explore how states increasingly delegate conflict to non-state actors and leverage hybrid approaches to achieve strategic objectives below the threshold of conventional war.

Our guests begin by exploring the conceptual foundations of proxy warfare and how it has evolved from historical conflicts to modern battlefields in Ukraine, Syria, and beyond. They then discuss the integration of hybrid threat tactics—spanning military, political, economic, and information domains—within proxy relationships. Finally, our guests analyze the implications for defense policy, offering insights into how both NATO and EU countries are adapting to counter these complex security challenges.

[Dr. Vladimir Rauta](#) is an Associate Professor of International Security with the School of Philosophy, Politics and Economics at the University of Reading. He was a 2023 Non-Resident Fellow with the Irregular Warfare Initiative. Vladimir's research examines the delegation of war from states to armed non-state actors in the contemporary security environment. He has published extensively in journals such as *International Security* and is one of the editors of the recently published *Routledge Handbook of Proxy Wars*.

[Dr. Teija Tiilikainen](#) is the Director of the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats. Previously, she was the Director of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs and has served as Secretary of State at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Her extensive policy experience and research on European integration and security policy provide valuable insights into countering hybrid threats in the modern security landscape.

[Don Edwards](#) and [Neilesh Shelat](#) are the hosts for Episode 126. Please reach out to them with any questions about this episode or the [Irregular Warfare Podcast](#).

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