



STRATEGIC EVALUATION 2024 DECLINE AND VIOLENCE IN THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

As a result of scientific research conducted by our researcher collective, the monograph *'STRATEGIC EVALUATION 2024. Decline and Violence in the International Security Environment'* was published under the auspices of the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies (CDSSS), by the the 'Carol I' National Defence University Publishing House.

The monograph provides a comprehensive analysis of the key strategic dynamics shaping the international system in a period characterised by overlapping crises, increasing instability, and profound systemic transformation.

To encourage engagement with the volume, the contents of the chapters are presented as follows.

The first chapter of the monograph, authored by Senior Researcher Alexandra Sarcinschi, PhD, examines the possible trends and connections between the phenomenon of mixed migration and the decline of liberal democracy, as highlighted in the analyses conducted by specialised research institutes. The chapter follows two central lines of analysis, approached in a logical sequence. The first addresses the evolution of the mixed migration flows in European countries during 2024, while the second explores a potential relationship between this evolution and the decline in the liberal democracy indicator identified in recent years in several of the main European destination countries.

Considering several factors – including the decline of illegal migration in some of the analysed countries, the simultaneous increase in legal migration, and the significant changes introduced in policies for managing mixed migration over the past two years - one conclusion is that both the EU and the European countries have tightened their policy frameworks for managing the phenomenon of mixed migration. These measures aim not only to address to domestic socio-economic needs determined by demographic ageing and labour shortages, but also to counter the growing influence of far-right political parties that capitalise on public concerns regarding the potential risks posed by this phenomenon. Thus, developments during 2024 more clearly marked the transition toward a stage in which the instrumentalisation of migration is no longer interpreted exclusively in negative terms, but may also be understood in a positive sense, namely as a tool for advancing the national interests of destination countries.



The second chapter, authored by Brigadier General (Ret.) Researcher Crăișor-Constantin Ioniță, PhD, examines the Russian-Ukrainian war, an armed conflict that has demonstrated the characteristics of a total and attritional war, particularly given that the end of 2023 did not bring any indication of a possible ceasefire or the initiation of peace negotiations. Both belligerents have repeatedly stated that they possess the necessary resources to sustain military operations until their strategic objectives are achieved. Moreover, the third year of the conflict was also marked by the emergence of unexpected conventional actions undertaken by both belligerents. These developments occurred against the backdrop of a deepening security crisis in the Middle East and the temporary suspension, during the first half of 2024, of U.S. military support to Ukraine. As a result, the regional nature of this conflict has gradually evolved into one with a pronounced international dimension, generating major implications for European, Euro-Atlantic, and even global security.

The consequences of the prolonged military actions in Ukraine are visible both at the European and Euro-Atlantic levels, as well as at the global level. Furthermore, the assumption of power in Washington by Donald Trump in early 2025 may further complicate the security environment in Europe, deepen divisions within the Euro-Atlantic community, and potentially contribute to a reconfiguration of the world order.

Chapter 3, authored by Researcher Mihai Zodian, PhD, examines the security environment in an important region for world politics, namely the Asia-Pacific. The analysis focuses on Sino-American relations, studied using a combination of power transition theory and a Braudelian perspective on historical change. This approach seeks to evaluate the potential for conflict by considering both the distribution of power and the representations held by political elites. This conceptual framework is subsequently applied to the interpretation of the main political, economic and military events of 2024, at the regional level. Particular attention is given to the United States elections, considering that the actions of the new Trump administration will have important consequences for security in the area of interest. From a methodological perspective, the research employs a correlative theoretical case study approach throughout the analysis.

The economic analysis presented in chapter 4, conducted by Senior Researcher Cristian Băhnăreanu, PhD, indicates that although 2024 marks a phase of recovery for the global economy, the development process and the distribution of its benefits will face major challenges, especially in regions affected by wars, geopolitical tensions and the effects of climate change. The ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Gaza Strip, both marked by the lack of clear prospects for peace, and, above all, the trade war between the U.S. and other major economic powers, are likely to replace the pandemic as the main stress factor and will continue to fuel a series of vulnerabilities and risks to the European and global economy. In this context, the direct effects on the economic evolution of Ukraine and Russia, the state of critical mineral resources on



Ukrainian territory, and the increase in military spending are analysed. The process of economic recovery and consolidation in the U.S., the European Union, and China, following the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, galloping inflation, and growing fiscal deficits, has been further complicated by a series of indirect effects generated by the intensification of geopolitical tensions and the triggering of new crises and conflicts. The global economic outlook is still marked by considerable uncertainty and risk, which require significant efforts to reorder political priorities, strengthen international cooperation, and promote a stable economic environment.

Chapter 5, authored by Senior Researcher Mirela Atanasiu, PhD, builds on the research premise identified in the trend of increasing profiles and diversifying roles of non-state actors on the global stage. Within this framework, the resurgence of violent non-state actors (VNSA) in the Middle East and Africa is analysed in terms of geopolitical importance reflected in the diversification of roles played at local, national and regional levels. These actors demonstrate an increasingly complex typology and pursue political objectives that, in many cases, mirror those of state actors.

The analysis indicates that non-state actors are increasingly operating in domains traditionally under state authority, including peace and security, infrastructure, energy security/natural resources, governance, etc. It further highlights that the regional unrest triggered by the Arab Spring in 2011 across the Middle East and Africa has accentuated both the diversity of subtypes, as well as the roles of violent non-state actors, especially terrorist organizations. These actors have become not only critical instruments but also decisive elements in shaping political landscapes and influencing interstate competition among regional powers.

Chapter 6 of the monograph, authored by Researcher Daniela Lică, PhD, advances an analysis of both external and internal influences, in the context of electoral processes in Romania, as well as in other states in Europe and the world during the period under consideration. The topic is particularly relevant in the current context, as disinformation and its effects constitute of the most important threats to security worldwide. To provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, the chapter adopts both a theoretical and a practical perspective, taking as a case study the recent national presidential elections in Romania. Drawing on press monitoring and reports on the Romanian media landscape, the analysis aims to present in an equidistant manner some controversial aspects regarding the mechanisms of influence that may affect state. Thus, the study serves as a valuable tool for both decision-makers and the general public, contributing to awareness and resilience in the face of disinformation and, ultimately, to the development of a security culture.

The study concludes that the year 2024 represents a critical juncture in global affairs, characterised by the erosion of liberal democratic norms, the resurgence of interstate warfare, the deepening of economic uncertainty, and the increasing relevance of violent non-state actors. The international order appears increasingly



fragmented and volatile, with centrifugal forces undermining the post-Cold War institutional architecture. Europe faces mounting challenges, including the pressure of complex migration flows and the regression of liberal democracy governance. The ongoing war in Ukraine – now entering its third year – reshapes the continent’s security landscape and contributes to a broader reconfiguration of global power balances. Economically, the world is experiencing sustained turbulence, with inflation, supply chains disruption, and fiscal vulnerabilities affecting both developed and developing regions, including Romania. In the Asia-Pacific region, strategic rivalry between the United States and China intensifies, with regional tensions escalating across political, military and economic domains. Meanwhile, in the Middle East and Africa, violent non-state actors have evolved into geopolitical players, capable of controlling territories, projecting ideological narratives, and influencing regional security dynamics.

Through the interdisciplinary approach, grounded in international relations, strategic studies, geopolitics, communication studies and political economy, this volume provides a coherent analytical framework for understanding the nature and implications of international environment stigmatised by decline and violence.

As with previous editions, the analysis conducted by CDSSS researchers within the annual “Strategic Evaluation” series represents a valuable contribution to area studies. Its fundamental objective is to enhance the understanding of the dynamics of the international security environment, marked by decline and violence, as well as the processes of transformation of the global order, while providing a robust analytical framework to support the formulation of political, strategic and institutional responses adapted to contemporary geopolitical realities. Simultaneously, the monograph contributes to current academic and policy debates by identifying structural trends, mapping emerging risks, and outlining the evolving architecture of global insecurity.

The study is accessible (in Romanian) at the following link:

https://revista.unap.ro/index.php/Evaluare_strategica/issue/view/176/30

May you find the lecture insightful!

*Mirela ATANASIU, PhD**

** Mirela ATANASIU, PhD, is Senior Researcher within the Center for Defence and Security Strategic Studies, “Carol I” National Defence University, an Associate member of the Academy of Romanian Scientists, Bucharest, Romania, and Associate Researcher at the Doctoral School of Safety and Security Sciences, Obuda University, Budapest, Hungary. Email: atanasiu.mirela@yahoo.com*