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EDITOR'S NOTE

The second issue of 2022, number 83, comprises a collection of six articles covering a wide range of topics, beginning with the role of PESCO in developing defence capabilities, continuing with elements on the European defence industrial and technological base, the information on the representation of the Kurdish population in the Turkish legislature, as well as presenting aspects on QAnon conspiracy theories and the expansion of the phenomenon today.

Firstly, the heading *NATO and EU: policies, strategies, actions* includes two articles by Mr. Dragoş Ilinca, PhD, who presents the decisive role of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) as a platform for cooperation between Member States for the development of defence capabilities. The second article, by the same author, highlights the role of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB), which, through its accelerated maturation in recent years, provides consistent prospects for supporting the EU's security and defence objectives. To this end, practical projects on defence capabilities and research have been developed through EDTIB, in accordance with the Common Security and Defence Policy agenda, strengthening the financial potential associated with EDTIB to support cooperation projects and initiatives. The column also includes a study by Mrs. Ecaterina Maţoi, which shows that while the EU's approach on oil and gas adopted by the US and the Russian Federation, a still relevant UK, combined with the rise of China as economic leader, leave little room for the EU to gain control over its energy supplies, and unless the energy paradigm will shift significantly, EU's chances to become energy independent are minimal.

In the second rubric, *Geopolitics and geostrategies – trends and perspectives*, Mr. Mihai Tatomir analyses the Kurdish political movements in Turkey, focusing on the evolution of parties whose main purpose is to support the rights of this minority, with special attention to the People's Democratic Party that has become the main political force advocating for the affirmation of the Kurdish identity in Turkey. Also, Mr. András Málnássy shows that while Turkey aspires to become a global player in the future, in terms of relative power, it can be described as a major military-equipment producer and exporter in the international arena.

The series of articles in this edition continues with a piece signed by Mr. Iulian Dinulescu, PhD, who, under the heading *Terrorist threat*, aims to highlight the appropriation of QAnon conspiracy theories by members of some Christian churches or congregations, beliefs viewed with concern by the pastors of the respective religious communities, who sound the alarm about the development of religious feelings based on biblical precepts combined with QAnon conspiracy theories.



In this edition, we have included the *Scientific Event* section, which highlights the fact that *STRATEGIES XXI* International Scientific Conference was held between June 28-30, in a hybrid format, under the joint patronage of the Centre for Defence and Strategic Security Studies (CDSSS), the Faculty of Security and Defence, the Faculty of Command and Staff and the Doctoral School, within the “Carol I” National Defence University.

Also, the edition includes the *Guide for Authors*, a recommended reading for those who wish to disseminate research results in the *Strategic Impact* journal.

For those discovering *Strategic Impact* for the first time, the publication is an open-access peer reviewed journal, edited by the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies and published with the support of “Carol I” National Defence University Publishing House, and, also, a prestigious scientific journal in the field of military sciences, information and public order, according to the National Council for Titles, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU).

Strategic Impact journal has been published for twenty-two years in Romanian and for seventeen years in English, and approaches a complex thematic area: political-military topicality; security and military strategy; NATO and EU policies, strategies and actions; geopolitics and geostrategies; the information society and intelligence, military history issues. Readers will find in the pages of the publication analyses, syntheses and evaluations of strategic level, views which explore the impact of national, regional and global dynamics.

In terms of international visibility – the primary objective of the publication – the recognition of the scientific quality of the journal is confirmed by its indexing in the international databases CEEOL (Central and Eastern European Online Library, Germany), EBSCO (USA), Index Copernicus (Poland), ProQuest (USA), and WorldCat and ROAD ISSN, as well as its presence in the virtual catalogues of the libraries of prestigious institutions abroad, such as NATO and military universities in Bulgaria, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia etc.

Strategic Impact is printed in two distinct editions, in Romanian and English. The journal is distributed free of charge in main institutions in the field of security and defence, in the academia and abroad – in Europe, Asia and America.

In the end, we encourage those interested in publishing in our journal to rigorously survey and assess the dynamics of the security environment and, at the same time, we invite students, master students and doctoral candidates to submit articles for publication in the monthly supplement of the journal, *Strategic Colloquium*, available on the Internet at <http://cssas.unap.ro/ro/cs.htm>, indexed in the international database CEEOL, Google scholar and ROAD ISSN.

Editor-in-Chief, Colonel Florian CÎRCIUMARU, PhD
Director of the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies



THE ROLE OF PERMANENT STRUCTURED COOPERATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEFENCE CAPABILITIES

*Dragoş ILINCA, PhD**

European cooperation in the field of defence has registered significant progress in the last years, both from an operational perspective as well as in terms of developing security and defence capabilities. Against this background, several initiatives have been launched to address the issue of capabilities development by gearing multinational cooperation formulas towards filling the gaps identified in the defence planning under the aegis of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), an initiative launched on November 13, 2017, through the Joint Notification signed by the ministers of foreign affairs and defence from 25 EU Member States, plays a decisive role in the success of this endeavor.

As an expression of the intergovernmental nature of the security and defence dimension at EU level, PESCO has rapidly evolved into a platform for cooperation between Member States in the development of defence capabilities, covering a wide range of areas. Thus, in less than five years, PESCO encompassed 60 cooperation projects. Moreover, at the end of February 2022, the first capability developed under this initiative was activated in an operational context. These aspects were meant to highlight the potential that the Permanent Structured Cooperation can employ in supporting the process of developing the EU's security and defence profile and contribution.

Keywords: *capabilities; PESCO; CSDP; Lisbon Treaty; European Defence Agency; Military Committee; EU Military Staff.*

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Introduction

Entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon (December 1, 2009) has significantly strengthened the normative support of European cooperation in the field of defence, especially by diversifying the options for development options of this dimension within the European Union. The new elements concerned both institutional aspects as well as practical initiatives meant to ensure the flexible approach between Member States in operations and capabilities development. Without altering the intergovernmental of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), the innovations introduced by Treaty of European Union focused on creating the necessary normative framework for additional opportunities to deepen the cooperation against in the critical areas for EU commitment in crisis management.

In this context, the Lisbon Treaty brought Permanent Structured Cooperation as an initiative¹ designed to ensure a superior level of ambition in the field of defence for interested countries. Nevertheless, full use of its potential was never achieved in the coming years, mostly because of global economic crisis that induced severe cuts on defence resources, especially in Europe. This evolution changed significantly following the European Council of 19-20 December 2013. The European leaders asked the High Representative for Security Policy and Foreign Affairs (HR/VP), Federica Mogherini, to initiate, together with Member States and the European Commission, a comprehensive analysis on the implications and opportunities posed by evolutions of security environment (European Conclusions, 19-20 December 2013).

The rationale for this approach must be seen in the particular context of the Common Security and Defence Policy development. The context was marked by the crisis situations erupted in various areas (Iraq, Lybia, Afghanistan), and culminating with Russia's aggression in Ukraine (2014), followed by the annexation of Crimea. Against this background, there were overall pressure exerted on defence budgets, the quest for optimizing the way in which defence resources. Under these auspices, general interests of the Euro-Atlantic community aimed at preserving the adequate capacity of NATO and EU Member States for managing security challenges. Simultaneously with the reflection process that was materialized into EU Global Strategy, the European Council initiated, during 2012, a thorough debate focused on managing the implications of the complex context of this period at the level of capabilities development. The main direction of action which could overcome

¹ The particular context generated by the failure of Constitutional Treaty ratification in France (20 March 2005) and Netherlands (1 June 2005) affected deeply the substance of Lisbon Treaty. It took over almost all new initiative promoted by Constitutional Treaty, thus maintaining the parameters of flexible approach for development of cooperation in the field of defence. It is the case of Permanent Structured Cooperation which will be fully included in the new Treaty (for exemplification see the text related to Permanent Structured Cooperation within Constitutional Treaty in Official Journal of European Union C310, vol.47, 16 December 2004, p. 140-141 and pp. 364-365).



financial difficulties was to optimize the generation and maintenance of defence capabilities by concentrating on priorities, remedying deficiencies and avoiding redundancies in terms of EU-NATO complementarity.

On these coordinates, the priorities established for the development of European cooperation was focused on strengthening the efficiency, visibility and impact of CSDP, and consolidation of the capability development process and European defence industry. The main ways to achieve these objectives targeted two components namely pooling and sharing the required capabilities for sustaining the operational potential of EU, and develop the collaborative approach through which the interested countries could generate a specific type of capabilities. At the same time, these approaches could potentially bring financial savings.

Preliminary elements of these reflection processes were presented by the High Representative to the European Council in May 2015, the most important aspects being focused on the EU Treaty provisions regarding the development of European cooperation in the field of security and defence. The patterns endorsed in this context were taken within EU Global Strategy of European Union (EUGS), adopted by the European Council, in 28 June 2016. Starting from the results of the rapid reaction capabilities (EU Battle Groups) which became operational in 2007, the EUGS indicated the need for deepening cooperation between Member States by employing the full potential of Lisbon Treaty with a special note on structured cooperation.

By embarking on this approach, the way was opened for the activation of EU Treaty provisions regarding the Permanent Structured Cooperation. Moreover, adopting, through EUGS, a new EU Security and Defence Ambition Level (response to crisis situation, strengthen the capacity of partner states, protecting the EU and its citizens) further contributed to this trend. The EUGS implementation plan forwarded by High Representative in November 2016 underlined the potential use of the EU Treaty provisions regarding Permanent Structured Cooperation, known as PESCO.

Within this framework, the potential of this instrument for development of modular approach as regards Member States cooperation on various topics, especially defence spending, capability development and operational commitments. The proposed approach was approved by the European Council on December 15, 2016, with a special note of interest on acceleration the PESCO operationalization based on the inclusivity principle and through a modular typology in projects development. Thus, on November 13, 2017, a number of 25 Member States² formalized the joint decision to initiate cooperation under PESCO aegis. The procedural framing of this approach was made through a notification of these Member States, addressed to the

² States that signed the Notification for PESCO activation were: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.



High Representative, which includes 20 commitments regarding the investments for defence, capability development, operational capacity, which are the very substance of this initiative being legally binding for PESCO participating countries.

1. Principles and Criteria of Operation

The debate which accompanied the activation of PESCO was endorsed by high expectations regarding the potential impact of this initiative for the development of the EU's role in security and defence. As is known, the problem of EU consistency in this domain was a recurrent theme for the entire evolution of European cooperation. The polls³ conducted in the last decades indicate consistent support of public opinion for developing the role of EU in defence. As mentioned, The Treaty of Lisbon brought certain improvements on the CSDP development framework, which evolved towards a more ambitious platform in which PESCO was one of the most important elements⁴.

The EU Treaty provisions for PESCO functioning included various aspects with general character regarding the participation in this form of cooperation, which is open to all Member States based on their contribution within CSDP (e.g. cooperation programs in the field of capability development; participation in operations and establishment of rapid reaction capabilities – Battle Groups (Art. 1, Protocol on Permanent Structured Cooperation – EU Treaty). The exceptional nature of PESCO was consolidated through concrete commitments to which Member States subscribed being the main outcomes of this initiatives. Basically, these commitments were focused on deepening the integration in the field of defence between participating Member States. This approach was most visible through the common approach and institutional symmetry on capabilities development and decision-making process for associated budgetary aspects (Art. 2(a) and (b) - Protocol).

The potential harmonization of national approaches in the field of defence was the one of the main features of cooperation in the PESCO context. Thus, EU

³ For exemplification, the polls conducted in the context of The Treaty of Maastricht adoption and, subsequently, creation of the European Union, indicate the significant support (77% for comparing with only 13% against) for development of a “common defence policy” (Eurobarometer 39, 1993 available at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_93_387). This approach was maintained in the coming years reaching significant peaks during various crisis situations that occurred in the decades following the EU establishment. In this sense, there were favorable trends in 2014 (75-81%) for the development of an EU role in defence. This perception was influenced by the conflict in Ukraine, especially annexation of Crimean Peninsula by Russia (Standard Eurobarometer 89).

⁴ Besides PESCO, The Treaty of Lisbon brought relevant provisions in the field of security and defence such as: mutual defence clause (Art.42.7); optimization of institutional cooperation between European Defence Agency and European Commission; flexibility mechanism for operations (Art.44); solidarity clause (Art.222); defining the armaments policy and defence capabilities in the European context.



Treaty provisions indicate the ways in which Member States could pool relevant capabilities, simultaneously with the identification of specialization/niche options in order to use more efficiently existing resources. The PESCO priorities in the field of capabilities aimed at overcoming the gaps identified within defence planning process in connection of the Global Headlines⁵ adopted by EU between 1999-2004. From this perspective, the focus was placed on advancing the collaborative formulas under PESCO in the field of logistics and training. This approach was to be fully integrated in the modular profile of cooperation that was to be developed under this initiative. At the same time, it was underlined the significance of synergy consolidation between Member States, especially on financing aspects related with capabilities development. The level of defence resources was approached in particular as being one of the most important criteria which participating Member States have to fulfill. At the same time, the interest for consolidation of European profile of cooperation in the PESCO context was also visible especially by the obligation of participating states in the collaborative projects in the CSDP context and under the coordination of EDA.

Operational aspects in the PESCO context were approached from the same perspective on development the cooperation in support of common objectives with a focus on interoperability, availability and deployment capacity (Art.2 (c) – Protocol, EU Treaty). At this point, it is worth to mention additional details on the relation between PESCO and CSDP operational component. The activation of specific clauses of EU Treaty on defence structured cooperation corresponded with a certain maturization of institutional and procedural of EU profile in this area, which allowed the generation and sustainment of multiple operational commitments. Practically, between 2000 and 2017, EU conducted 35 civil and military operations in different geographical perimeters. More than in the case of capabilities development, the approach used on operational aspects benefited from the significant achievements made by EU in the previous years. From this perspective, the main course of action aimed to refining the way in which operational generation process worked in the sense of development the EU potential to generate full spectrum forces, concurrently with deepening of political convergence on how the EU operational role will evolve.

Obviously, the framework provided by EU Treaty for the operation of PESCO had a general character meant to provide the strategic benchmarks of this cooperation format, while the technical procedural aspects were to be approved through the decisions of the Council. This procedure will be used in the context created by PESCO activation involving adoption of subsequent documents that will complete the overall procedural framework, including the functional parameters and dynamic of cooperation projects. In this perspective, the notification adopted in November 2017 brought more clarity as regards applicability of PESCO. Based

⁵ Headline Goal 1999 – creation of Rapid Reaction Force and Headline Goal 2004 – establishment of EU Battle Groups.



on the overall guidelines provided by the Treaty, there were developed 20 detailed commitments that increased the granularity of PESCO implementation in the above-mentioned domains. At the same time, the adoption of these commitments must be seen also from the perspective of a much better integration of PESCO within the overall context of CSDP development, especially as regards other initiatives that were launched in the same period (Coordinated Annual Review on Defence/CARD, launched in November 2016 and European Defence Fund/EDF, June 2017). In the same logic, detailing the cooperation procedural framework was meant to coordinate PESCO with the achievements made in the field of EU rapid reaction capabilities (Battle Groups). Moreover, it was taken into account the increase the utility of the new initiative in exploiting the lessons learned from the various crisis management operations. Thus, a particular interest was placed on the way in which Member States contribution will improve the force generation process as well as the deployment ability, with a special focus on military mobility within European Union (PESCO Notification, p. 4).

2. Governance

The model agreed by the Member States for defining the type of governance that will be used for the operation of PESCO initiative was inspired by the typology used by European cooperation under the aegis of CSDP. Selecting this option was dictated by the Member States interest to avoid additional bureaucracy and financial burden. At the same time, it was taken into consideration the need to comply with the intergovernmental profile of security and defence component as it was regulated by the EU Treaty. According to this, at the center of decision-making process were Member States which will decide independently on the way in which various cooperation projects are financed. At the same time, the PESCO functioning patterns were to be matched in synergy with the CSDP institutional setup allowing full integration in the general design.

However, it could not be made on the expense of the specific character of PESCO and, above all, of the variable geometry regarding the participation of states that was not necessary to include all EU members. The participation in PESCO was a matter of individual choice. Setting-up the governance involved a particular role of High Representative for Security Policy and Foreign Affairs in PESCO activities. Through its central role in the coordination of CSDP, the cooptation of the HARP ensures the conditions for harmonizing the political and practical aspects of PESCO with the ongoing processes with the participation of all Member States. At the same time, the HRVP contribution has to be seen from the perspective of ensuring the necessary transparency of the activities developed in PESCO format towards the other Member States that choose not to participate in this initiative. In support of HRVP activities in the context of PESCO, the participating states agreed the creation



of a Secretariat consisting of European Defence Agency (EDA), European External Action Service (EEAS) and the EU Military Staff (EUMS). Within the Secretariat the responsibilities to manage the PESCO activities were assumed by EDA, as regards capabilities development in compliance with specific provisions of the EU Treaty (Art.42(3) and Art.45(2)). At the same time, operational aspects associated with HRVP involvement were placed under the joint coordination of EEAS and EUMS.

From the perspective of internal dynamics of PESCO, the governance system was structured on two levels, in order to preserve the practical coherence with other strands of work and to use the existing EU institutional setup. Thus, the higher level is centered on EU Council, in defence format (with participating states only), which was responsible for adopting decisions and formulate recommendations for strategic guidance of PESCO, governance of subsequent levels and adopt cooperation projects (COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2017/2315, Art.4). It also includes the unanimous approval of participation of other Member States in PESCO (with QMV procedures). In the same vein, the Council is responsible to suspend the participation of Member States that did not fulfil the obligation steemed from biding commitments. Within this context, the common normative framework related to the cooperation projects included the observer status for Member States, while third countries could participate according the PESCO criterias and the full consent of EU Member States.

The second level was related to the governance for cooperation projects, regulated through specific set of norms and principles that allow a coherent approach, while reflecting the multinational character across the areas of PESCO applicability. Thus, the governance of projects was based on the participating Member States. According to the cluster typology, PESCO provides the platform for development of cooperation formulas having a flexible geometry. The practical reflection of this approach can be seen in formation of groups of Member States interested in forwarding the specific projects and, subsequently, assumed the implementation process based on the EU Council approval.

Participation in the projects involves certain obligations for the involved countries in termes of resources (human and financial), equipment, expertise a.s.o. The way in which these requirements were formalized aim at the conclusion of cooperation arrangements according to the typology of memorandum of understanding between participating Member States. It is worth to underline at this point of discussion that PESCO is an initiative based exclusively on the Member States s contributions without benefiting from the support of the EU budget. At the same time, the autonomy in the project's management is the basic principle for their operation, with the participating countries retain the right to frame the internal decision-making process or to decide the way in which responsibilities are shared. This approach should be seen as another modality to harmonize the intergovernmental nature of CSDP with the flexible nature of PESCO, including the binding commitments. Practically,



the high degree of autonomy of which cooperation within the projects benefited corresponds to a similar degree of responsibility which participating states subscribe to. In the same vein, one must pay specific attention to the harmonization between PESCO projects with the other similar undertakings made under other institutional auspices (COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2018/909, Art. 4 (6)).

Also, the interaction between the project's internal dynamic and decision-making level of EU Council is comprised in the perimeter of a periodic information mechanism which provides updates on the development in implementation process. The main interface is provided by the cooperation between project coordinator and the PESCO Secretariat, which is the main framework for exchanging relevant data and information. To an equal extent, this cooperation is the platform of evaluation mechanism on the progresses achieved by PESCO. Considering the binding character of the commitment assumed by participating countries, the review process is equally relevant from the perspective of quantifying national contributions and overall progress.

These are the major differences between PESCO and other initiatives⁶ in the field of capabilities development launched before the Lisbon Treaty. The particular relevance of PESCO lays in providing a comprehensive evaluation mechanism focused both on national contributions, as well as the general progress. In this scope, the evaluation mechanism is conducted regularly on those two levels, corresponding to the central role of participating countries as well as the specific character of PESCO. At national level, the evaluation process is implemented through several National Implementation Plans made by Member States and concentrated on the implementation of PESCO binding commitments (COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2017/2315, Art. 3(2)). The national perspective is augmented with the regular report drafted by the High Representative on the progress achieved in the evolution of PESCO. The report focuses also on the coherence between PESCO and the other initiatives and process conducted in UE on defence and security. (Council Recommendation 2019, (PESCO) (2019/C 166/01), p. 2).

3. Capability Projects

In structuring PESCO a special focus was placed on the implementation of a staged approach for the development of cooperation projects. As in the case of the other levels previously analyzed, the principle of flexibility oversights the development of PESCO functional matrix, as to ensure a pragmatic connection of the cooperation projects with the specifics of each commitment. Practically, each of the commitments assumed that underpinned PESCO has a particular character in terms of timeframe, comprehensiveness, level of resources involved a.s.o. In this sense, it becomes necessary to adopt a phased approach needed for the implementation of

⁶ European Capabilities Action Plan / ECAP in 2002 and Capability Action Plan /CDP in 2008.



thresholds and to ensure the realistic character in assuming the level of ambition of PESCO.

For a proper correlation, it was taken into account the integration of the implementation process related to the bidding commitments as part of the general framework of fulfilling the level of ambition advanced through Eu Global Strategy. Not in the least, the development of PESCO had to be correlated with the process of drafting the Multianual Financial Framework (2021-2027), in order to ensure an adequate synchronization with the financial effort, especially at the level of Member States. Within this context, PESCO was structured in two stages/phases, 2018-2021, respectively 2021-2025. Almost simultaneously with the PESCO Notification in 2017, participating Member States adopted a Declaration which included the first batch of 17 projects that will be launched starting from the following year. This approach on designing first projects reflected the sustainability of political consensus on Member States support for PESCO, even from this initial stages (Blockmans, Steven & Crosson, Dylan Macchiarini, p. 93). The main feature of the first wave of PESCO projects was the multidisciplinary character by approaching an extended list of topics in capabilities development and operational sustainment fields (Declaration on PESCO Projects). Subsequently, the projects assumed by the participating Member States will be approved by the EU Council. This procedure will be used constantly for approval of the next batches of projects.

As regards the substance of the first projects, there are some aspects that need to be highlighted. As previously mentioned, the creation of PESCO was placed in support of the overall development of European cooperation under CSDP, without creating duplications. Based on this principle, the guidance for developing projects were to be found within strategic framework associated with CSDP, namely EU Global Strategy and the priorities forwarded through the Capability Development Plan (CDP). The latter is a planning document for capabilities development which is updated every four years by the European Defence Agency. The main purpose of CDP is to provide the guiding targets for defence requirements in European context for short and medium term. The first CDP was endorsed by the EDA Steering Board, in defence ministers' format that took place in July 2008. Consequently, the first projects adopted under PESCO answered to priorities advanced through CDP (Fiott, Daniel, p. 2). Nevertheless, there was a gap between those processes generated by the fact that the revision of CDP was finalised only in mid-2018, including the adopting of new priorities for capability development in EU.

These basically represent a comprehensive platform, which includes 11 domains associated with both the specific capabilities for force categories as well as those necessary for managing the asymmetric threats (cyber, hybrid), informational superiority, space communication a.s.o. (EU Capability Priorities, pp.6-7). The batches of PESCO projects adopted by the EU Council in November 2018 (17),



November 2019 (13), and November 2021 (14) were much better connected to the priorities agreed through CDP. At the same time, the profile of the cooperation projects gradually acquired more and more distinct contours in terms of the operational dimension, thus, responding to the options assumed by participating Member States within the PESCO Strategic Review. This process was conducted in the scope of a better capitalization of the lessons learned from PESCO first phase (2018-2021) and to guide the activities for the second one. The Council adopted the conclusions of this reflection process in November 20, 2000, revealing the Member States interest for obtaining practical results in PESCO and for optimizing the operational effectiveness, including development of the required capabilities for implementation. Another component addressed with priority in the revision process was focused on consolidating the connection between cooperation projects and investment dimension in the field of defence, including on the industrial output for cooperative undertakings in capabilities development (Council Conclusions on the PESCO Strategic Review 2020).

Also, it is important to underline that the cooperation projects benefited from multiple sources of inspiration, which answer to the CDP priorities and correspond with the areas indicated by Member States interest for cooperation. The discussion on the guidelines for projects development process in PESCO should be deepened by taking into account the role of interaction between Member States under CSDP. It includes the perceptions and national approaches as regards the implementation of CDP with a special focus on potential cooperation formulas between Member States, which can generate the expected results against agreed priorities. This could not be seen as a very new element, not even in the context of PESCO activation. In fact, it was one of the themes constantly addressed during the development process of European cooperation in the field of security and defence, since its initial stages in December 1999. The interest in the development of cooperative approaches in the capability areas has been resumed with more intensity in the context of EU Global Strategy being considered an option with significant potential to contribute to the elimination of capability deficits, and to optimize the use of available resources. The first guidelines for the level of ambition regarding collaborative programs in the European context were adopted by EDA Steering Board meeting in November 19, 2007. In this context there were adopted four benchmarks related to the defence spending at national level as regards individual acquisition (20%) and collaborative (35%). In the same vein, there were agreed targets for defence expenditures related to research (2%) and technology (20%). They are voluntary in nature, and translation into internal defence plans being a sovereign decision (Defence Data 2007, p. 1).

However, the achievements of next years failed to meet the expectations on increasing the share of collaborative projects and multinational approaches at EU level. EU Global Strategy addressed this situation by launching the idea to develop



a cooperation mechanism between Member States in the shape of a Coordinated Review on Defence that could stimulate the interaction between Member States. The anticipated benefits of this approach should have been reflected in increasing the coherence between national endowment plans, and on the harmonization of defence planning process (EU Global Strategy, p. 46). In May 2017, the EU Council approved the implementation of this approach through a new instrument called the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD). The first cycle of this initiative took place between 2019-2020, after which some potential areas of interest for Member States in the development capabilities were identified, such as: Main Battle Tanks; Soldier Systems; Patrol Class Surface Ships; Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems (Counter-UAS); Defence applications in Space; Military Mobility. As for operational effectiveness, CARD conclusions underlined the importance of several domains, such as force projection, non-kinetic future support capabilities and force projection (2020 CARD Report, pp. 6-7). The relevance of these areas is even more important in analyzing the projects profile. Practically, the first CARD Cycle was, together with CDP and EUGS, the third inspiration area for defining the PESCO cooperation projects. Consequently, the connection between cooperation opportunities identified through CARD and PESCO is most visible in the last tranche of projects adopted in November 2021, especially on military mobility⁷, maritime surveillance, space based capabilities.

Conclusions

As can be seen, the implementation of EU Treaty provisions on Permanent Structured Cooperation was conducted in an efficient and pragmatic manner. In a very short period of time, significant progress was registered, especially through the consistent package advanced by participating Member States in the four waves of projects approved in recent years. This certifies, primarily, the attractiveness of PESCO for Member States, which contributed extensively to the political support of the initiative. Equally, the achievements should be also looked at from the functional perspective in a larger framework of the processes and initiatives developed under CSDP. Practically, the interaction between PESCO and CDP or CARD has become a reality, which is generating concrete results while ensuring the adequate premises for avoiding duplications and ensure coherence.

However, the specific character of PESCO that represents the practical manifestation of flexibility in the field of defence should not be omitted. The main objective of this approach was to develop a new instrument meant to stimulate the European cooperation. Ever since the launch of PESCO, expectations regarding

⁷ It is noticeable that Military Mobility is by far the most attractive PESCO project. It includes participation of 24 Member States and 3 third countries (US, Canada and Norway).



its impact for the overall dynamic of defence cooperation were on a higher level, even exceeding the potential and scope of the initiative. Obviously, this approach is common to the initial stages of every process and initiative that involves certain complexity such is the case for capabilities development and sustainment of operational commitments.

Assessment of the first PESCO phase indicates several clear conclusions regarding the consolidation of the initiative profile as an integratory framework of the efforts for improving the efficiency of EU in capabilities development. The interest of the Member States in addressing the capabilities shortfalls in PESCO context is on an upward trend, both in terms of quantitative perspective (number of projects), and their complexity. Obviously, it can be eluded from this discussion the evolutionary character of the security environment and its implications for capabilities. From this perspective, the next years will have a particular importance on the way in which PESCO agenda will be adapted in the sense of generating relevant cooperation projects.

The sustainability of PESCO initiative is the main challenge for the next period, especially from the perspective of financial sustainment of cooperation projects. This also includes the participating Member States, especially by taking into account the maturity phase reached by cooperation projects and the consistent perspective of industrial outcome. In this sense, certain opportunities were to be grasped in the context of the operation of the European Defence Fund (2021-2027), which could contribute to the financial sustainment of PESCO projects.

In addition to these aspects related to the internal dynamic, PESCO should be seen from the perspective of its role in ensuring the complementarity with other processes and initiatives developed within other organisations, especially NATO. The synergic approach is a requirement generated both by the shared membership of the majority of the member states, as well as by the need for an efficient management of defence resources.

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A CONTEXTUAL ASSESSMENT OF EUROPEAN UNION'S ENERGY SUPPLIES IN MID 2022

*Ecaterina MAȚOI, PhD**

Following the pandemic, European Union's decisions that backfire on its economy appear to be controversial. Bruxelles politicians oscillate between renewable energies and possible new hydrocarbon sources in a bid to eliminate Russian supplies. The study reveals that the EU has actually had problems with energy independence ever since the oil age began. The historical superpower approach on oil and gas adopted by USA and Russian Federation, a still relevant UK, combined with the rise of China as economic leader, leave little room for the EU to gain control over its energy supplies. The study identifies a sinuous relation between USA and the former USSR in terms of energy trade, but not only: while the two countries collaborated on different issues in recent history, their interests were both convergent and divergent and their approaches to international relations as well. Among others, the study identifies France as the single country with a company in top 10 world oil and gas companies by revenue, and the only EU country with a company in top 4 manufacturers of nuclear fuel at global level. The study concludes that unless the energy paradigm will shift significantly, EU's chances to become energy independent are minimal.

Keywords: *European Union; energy supply; geopolitics of energy resources in/around EU; energy security; global power projection through oil companies; Russian Federation; the United States.*

Introduction

While most countries around the globe, including the largest industries, agree on swift action related to curbing hydrocarbon consumption and heavy pollution

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from burning coal, the fight for domination in hydrocarbon markets has probably never been more acute. However, the European Union, a relatively scarce territory in terms of oil and gas reserves, has not introduced any articulated plan to curb energy vulnerability on short and medium term. Political leaders of countries that have been presented either as high-income, or as high ranking in terms of Human Development Index or Happiness Index, asked populations to reduce shower time in order to cope with the “energy crisis” or “dependency on Russian gas” (Paulsson and Buttler 2022) (Radio Free Europe 2022) (Newslogic.in 2022). This happens while superpowers, such as the USA (Crawford 2019), the Russian Federation and China invest in military technology whose production and operation still requires important energy amounts (especially jet fuel), export fighter jets. France (Seibt 2021) is also among the mentioned powers. Not only does this trend deepens, but aspirants to global military leadership, such as Türkiye, India, South Korea, also develop new platforms for fighter jets. In the commercial sector, emerging economies, such as India, Brazil, and Türkiye, increase their overall energy consumption significantly. Companies, including Airbus (Bryan 2021) and Boeing (Asian Aviation Staff 2021), expect significant sales of aircraft in the next two decades, especially from the Asia-Pacific region.

Does the European Union represent a case of energy mismanagement or is it caught in the fight for dominance between USA and a fading UK on one side, and Russian Federation and China on the other? Or has it aimed too high in terms of transition to clean energies and, in doing so, endangered its hard-won and already fragile security?

This study is limited to European Union due to several considerations: Europe itself encompasses a part of the Russian Federation, Norway carries out an energy and economic policy relatively independent from the EU, the UK decided for Brexit and probably aims for a sustained global push in order to compensate slower parts of its economy, the Balkans are an unpredictable area, among others.

1. Energy Consumption in Context

There are more possibilities to estimate energy consumption at international and national levels, which generally produce comparable results for similar definitions. At global level, energy consumption for 2021 was estimated to come from: 29% oil, 27% coal, 24% gas, 10% biomass, 10% electricity (includes hydro, geothermal, nuclear and wind electricity), and a very small portion from heat (Enerdata 2022). Hence, coal remains an important energy source at global level.

Figure no. 1 is based on data from 2022 BP report on world energy, and indicates total consumption of primary energy by continent/region measured in Exajoules [EJ] (BP 2022). Asia Pacific includes Australia, New Zealand, China and India, CIS



includes the Russian Federation, while the Middle East includes Iran and Europe includes Türkiye.

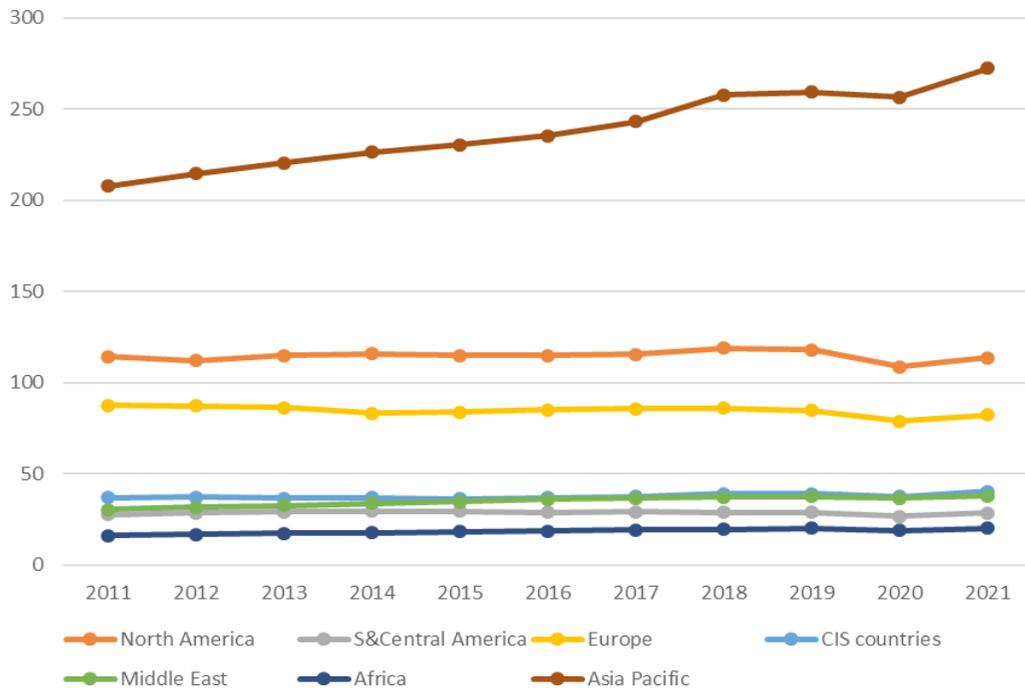


Figure no. 1: Primary energy consumption by continent/region in 2011-2021 expressed in EJ (BP 2022)

The data indicates that:

- starting with 2002, when Asia Pacific overtook other regions, its consumption has increased from 207.66 EJ to 272.45 EJ;

- Asia Pacific, Middle East and CIS regions managed to surpass pre-pandemic 2019 consumption. The fastest growing consumption was Asia Pacific with 259.51 EJ in 2019 and 272.45 EJ in 2021. All other regions registered in 2021 consumptions lower than in 2019, and Africa reached the 2019 again in 2021;

- although the population of Africa surpasses by far that of North America, Africa's primary energy consumption is at least five times less than that of North America;

- although energy consumption is driven by economic development and other factors, a faster rise in consumption in the Middle East when compared to CIS suggests that a study should be carried out in order to verify whether global warming has the potential to determine increased energy consumption for cooling building in overheated regions when compared to the energy increase necessary to heat buildings in colder regions during harsher winters;

- Europe, the main region analyzed, decreased its primary energy consumption with 5.86% from 2011 to 2021, and North America also decreased it with 0.55 % for the same period. While the pre-pandemic consumption level of North America (117.87 EJ) is higher than that from 2011 (114.33 EJ), Europe remains the only region that has actually decreased energy consumption from 2011 to 2019 or from 2011 to 2021. This occurred despite the fact that Europe began to host many refugees in 2011 and the factors driving this tendency can be multiple: increased energy efficiency, externalization of energy-intensive industries to emerging regions, such as Asia Pacific, among others;

- as of 2021, North America's primary energy consumption (USA, Mexico, Canada) was over 38% higher than that of Europe, whose population is actually larger. This determination requires a per capita primary energy consumption assessment.

Despite Croatia's accession to the European Union in 2013, EU's energy consumption decreased steadily from 63.87 EJ in 2011, to 61.77 EJ in 2019 and 60.11 EJ in 2021 (BP 2022, 8).

Figure no. 2 presents the primary energy consumption in 2021, by country. Although this graph does not reflect trends (for example, in the UK and Japan the consumption is decreasing), it indicates the largest consumer and may hint in the case of which countries can make a significant difference if energy saving is being accelerated.

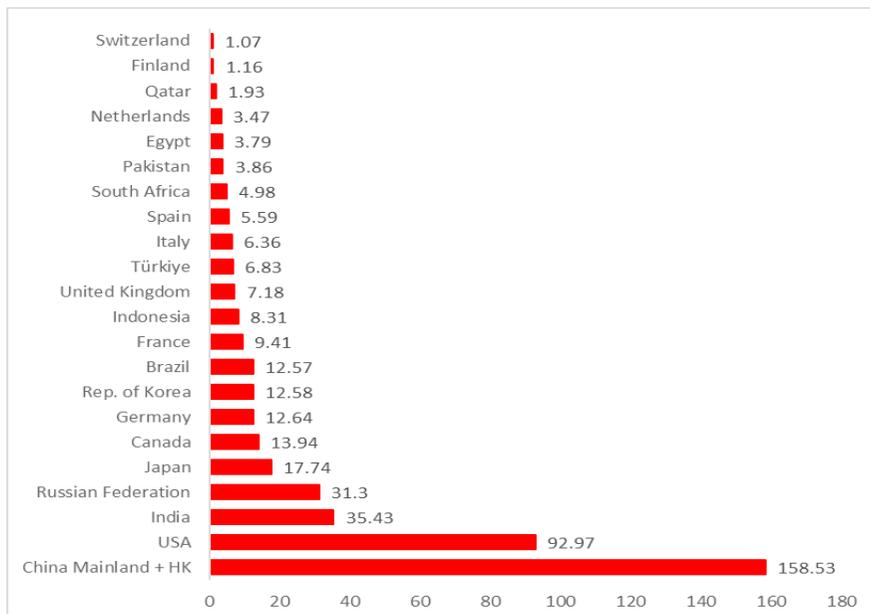


Figure no. 2: Primary energy consumption by country, in 2021, expressed in EJ (BP 2022, 8)



China's increasing energy consumption has led to a significant difference between it and second occupant in this chart, the USA.

In order to obtain an even more accurate indication of energy consumption patterns, the total primary energy consumption in 2021 has been related to the number of inhabitants per country in 2021 (The World Bank 2022). The per capita consumption will be computed in gigajoules (GJ), one billionth part of an exajoule (1 exajoule = 1'000 petajoules = 1'000'000 terajoules = 1'000'000'000 gigajoules).

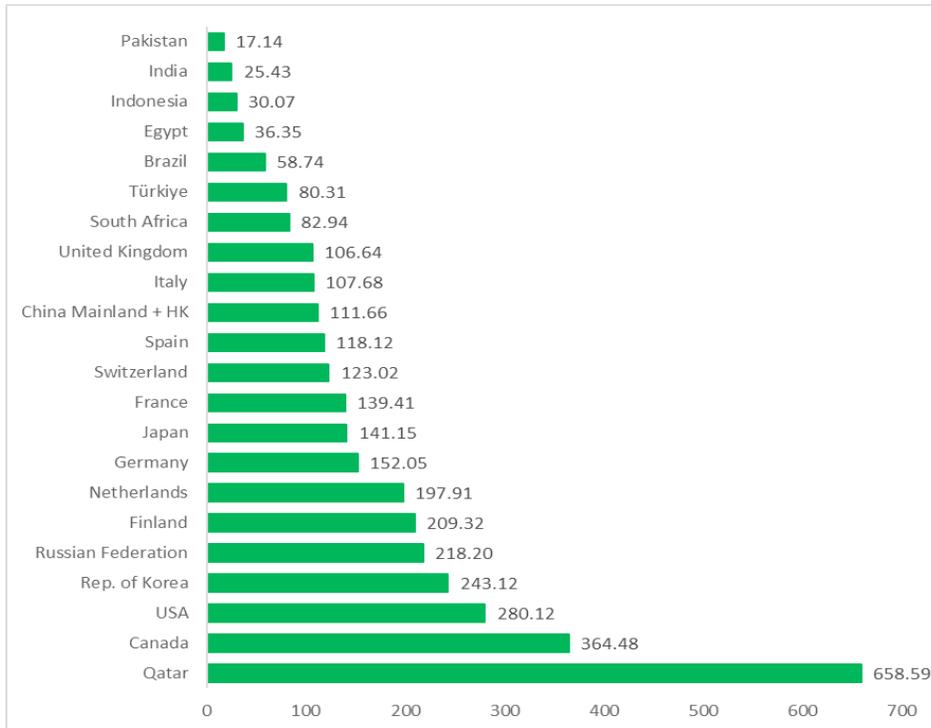


Figure no. 3: Primary energy consumption per capita, in 2021, expressed in Gigajoules (BP 2022)

According to Figure no. 3, the USA consumes 84.22% more than Germany (related to Germany's consumption), and 162.68% more than the United Kingdom (related to UK's consumption) on a per capita basis. The Republic of Korea is getting close to the level of the USA of per capita primary energy consumption, surpassing significantly traditional industrial countries, such as France, Germany and Japan.

As a partial conclusion, one can notice that Asia Pacific is becoming the center of energy consumption. While this region has employed manufacturing and industrialization in recent decades, it continues to develop energy supply systems and expand industries. With an accelerated decarbonization policy in place or not,



this region is creating an energy market that will probably become dominant and will manage to impose political directions in the future. In terms of per capita consumption of primary energy, there is a big gap between the USA and large economies in Europe, such as Germany, France, Italy and Spain. This may be determined by energy efficiency, case in which EU is generally more efficient than heavy consumers, or by the overall international system that determines quantities and prices.

Influence of large markets on the global stage should not be underestimated. For example, while the percentage of population in urban areas has increased significantly across the board in large economies, and transportation should have become less resources-intensive as a consequence, the sales of larger vehicles, such as SUVs (Carlier 2022) (and Pickup trucks), continued to thrive actually. One step ahead, this trend spread across the world and determined consumers from other countries to buy more SUVs. At the same time, average area of houses appears to decrease (Hunters Estate Agents & Letting Agents 2019), meaning that the construction industry already adjusted to smaller, lower costs buildings.

While the EU is struggling to impose its own standards in trade with the USA, or develop its neighborhood through ambitious policy directions, energy supply is clearly EU's Achilles' heel should it try to pursue a path more independent from superpowers that control energy supplies. But who controls hydrocarbon energy supplies nowadays?

2. Energy Supply – a Short History and Facts

This section will not focus on the geographical location of oil and natural, which is mentioned very often when energy supply is discussed. The reason is that neither Venezuela nor Iraq or Canada, among holders of top largest deposits, determine energy supplies across the world, but energy extraction and processing giants USA, Russian Federation and to a certain extent Saudi Arabia. However, Figure no. 4 indicates that, in terms of oil reserves, Europe is one of the poorest continents (Russian Federation excluded), and the European Union, without the reserves of the UK and Norway, even poorer.

Considering that despite advances in energy production with nuclear or renewable technologies, we are still living in an oil/gas age, historical lessons might provide insights to nowadays international developments related to energy supplies and their political significance.

While the British Empire had been utilizing large amounts of coal since the 17th/18th centuries, Germany's boom in coal extraction from the Ruhr Area at the beginning of 20th century, outpacing the UK, threatened to change the international power balance. According to literature, UK's coal trade surpassed 52 billion GBP in



later Mobil, which eventually merged with Exxon), the Standard Oil Company of California (Socal, later renamed Chevron), the Texas Oil Company (later renamed Texaco), Gulf Oil (which later merged with Chevron), Anglo-Persian (later British Petroleum), and Royal Dutch/Shell” (Department of State, USA n.d.), and that different approaches to oil of the British and Germans resulted in “implications for WWII”.

The Russian Empire allowed foreign companies to start the oil production in the second part of 19th century, and before the nationalization from 1918, the Nobel Brothers competed with the Rothschilds for dominance (Siegel 2012-2013). In order to underline the struggle for maintaining control over European oil/gas supplies, that probably remained acute to this day, following the statement issued by Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, in a 1927 article, might reveal a long-standing pattern: “Newspaper dispatches, undoubtedly emanating from Russian sources, report negotiations by which a quantity of Russian oil is being purchased by the Standard Oil Company. As a result, the impression has been created, both in Europe and in this country, that the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, in the face of the present overproduction in the United States, is buying Russian oil to displace products of American origin in the European markets supplied in part by its foreign subsidiaries. The impression that the Standard Oil of New Jersey has any trade relationship with the Soviet Government is incorrect. The Soviet Government seized all the producing oil wells and refineries and assumed full proprietary rights over the private property represented by the oil industry in Russia, without any pretense or compensation. Subsequently, the Soviet Government tried to raise capital abroad by selling oil which it had thus confiscated. Efforts were made to open a regular market for Russian oil products with various interests, including European subsidiary companies of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey” (Darling 1927). The article is revealing many aspects that even today may be considered stunning: information, misinformation, competition and most important the struggle to dominate Europe’s energy supplies. The sensible relations between private entities and state organizations, especially in international affairs, were brilliantly captured in this declaration as well.

The 1924-established Amtorg – American Trading Corporation – reinvigorated collaboration between the USSR and the USA. It was situated initially in New York and acted as a representative of Russian economic interests, especially industrialization, in the USA. Contributions from leaders such as chairman Saul Bron (1927-1930) led to the development of sectors such as automotive, tractor and tank industries (Melnikova-Raich 2011). Although some of its managers either died in suspect circumstances or were executed by Stalin under what was called “the Great Purge”, this organization was instrumental in arranging transfer of goods, weapons and oil products to USSR during WWII, as part of the program “Lend-Lease”.

The Russian oil industry that developed during the interwar period and afterwards was not similar in scope and dimension with that from the West. Sources mention



that oil exports amounted to 3.9 million tons in 1929, 6.1 million tons in 1932, almost disappeared during the war and then rebounded to 57 million tons in 1964, 111 million tons in 1970 and 216 million tons in 1989 (Ermolaev 2017). The cited study suggests that, unlike international players from the West, USSR did not manage to make the most out of its exports and during this period tried to continue growing exports of resource to pay for industrialization. Even in period of low prices, it continued to export as much oil and gas as it could, besides other commodities. Nowadays Gazprom, a state monopoly on natural gas, became in 1989 the successor of former Soviet Ministry of Gas Industry, Rosneft overtook assets from the former Soviet Ministry of Oil and Gas (Ford 2011). Lukoil, another state-controlled company, was founded by decree in 1991 and overtook assets of several oil exploration, refining and distribution entities. Hence, the American, British and Russian oil industries had many intersection points and all these former and/or present superpowers saw today's EU's countries rather as a (peaceful) big market, not as a competitor.

3. Q&A about EU Energy Supply

After 100 years, the questions are whether the European Union has managed to achieve a certain degree of independence in terms of energy supply, whether the competition to control oil and gas supplies is targeting only EU as a market, or whether there is a global supremacy dispute between the USA and the Russian Federation and their respective allies, and whether this is limited to oil/gas or it has additional facets as well.

Table no. 1 presents revenues of the largest oil and gas companies at global level (as of 2020), for the period 2016-2020. While 2020 is not representative due to the pandemic and its effects on economies and fuel consumption, the 2016-2019 may be considered a relatively reliable pattern.

Table no. 1: Revenue of 10 largest (as of 2020)
oil and gas companies (Farmer 2022)

No	Company	2016 \$ bln.	2017 \$ bln.	2018 \$ bln.	2019 \$ bln.	2020 \$ bln.
1	Sinopec [CN]	277.858	362.762	420.088	425.945	322.637
2	PetroChina [CN]	232.672	309.842	341.976	361.414	296.264
3	Saudi Aramco [KSA]	134.475	264.110	355.718	329.603	229.747
4	Shell [UK]	233.591	305.179	388.379	344.877	180.543
5	BP [UK]	183.008	240.208	298.756	278.397	180.366
6	ExxonMobil [US]	218.608	237.162	279.332	255.583	178.574
7	TotalEnergies [FR]	127.925	149.099	184.106	176.249	119.704
8	Chevron [US]	110.215	134.674	158.902	139.865	94.471
9	Gazprom [RU]	99.610	113.510	117.935	123.626	85.151
10	Marathon Oil [US]	63.339	74.733	96.504	123.949	69.779



In 2022, Royal Dutch Shell headquartered in the Netherlands, was renamed to Shell plc and moved its headquarters to London, UK. This certainly decreased EU's ability to secure its oil and gas supplies. Only Sinopec, PetroChina, Gazprom and Marathon managed to increase sales between 2018 and 2019, but all other top companies actually experienced decreasing oil and gas production one year before the general decrease in production determined by the pandemic. This includes British, American (except Marathon, which is essentially focused on the US market) and French companies from Table no. 1.

Related to the EU-based companies in top 10 largest oil and gas companies, the revenue of TotalEnergies with headquarters in Paris, the only representative in this list, represents 6.97% from the total revenue of all top 10 companies combined for the year 2018 (a good year for most companies). For the same year, the revenue of Chinese companies represents 28.85% from the total of top 10 companies, that of now British companies 26.01%, that of American companies 20.24% and that of Russian Gazprom 4.46%. Since these percentages are calculated only based on the total revenue of 10 largest companies, it is only partially indicative related to which jurisdictions register the highest revenues from oil and gas industries. Not only does France occupy the single EU position in this top, but it is also producing much of its electricity with nuclear power plants, hence less dependent on oil and gas, its company Areva is a major player in nuclear power plant building and a top manufacturer of nuclear fuel from uranium, along Global Nuclear Fuel (GNF) and Westinghouse from the USA and TVEL from the Russian Federation (World Nuclear Association 2021).

The primary answer to the first question, i.e. whether EU has managed to achieve a certain degree of independence with respect to its energy supply after WWII, is definitely: no. Traditional powers and a strong-emerging China are in another league in terms of controlling their own energy supplies, and France, the only EU member that is also represented in the Security Council, has a good grip on its own energy supplies, but might not be in the position to help very much other large EU economies, in case of need. France's use of nuclear industry is exemplary at global level.

Recent developments are also suggesting that at least on short and medium term, the EU has a low chance to gain control over its energy supplies. Internally, Germany's questionable decision to shut down nuclear power plants was either a huge miscalculation, or the result of external pressure.

Externally, Norway conducts its energy business with EU on a relatively sovereign basis and even a large increase in output does not have the potential to cope with the entire EU demand. Shell's relocation to London is also indicative with respect to control of some of its output for the EU. BP's influence in Azerbaijan, whose Baku fields were considered by Winston Churchill a diamond in oil industry, is another indication that EU is not in control. BP's recent announcement (Bagirova and Blair 2022) that it will redirect oil from Baku – Supsa (Georgia) pipeline to Baku – Tblisi (Georgia) – Ceyhan (Türkiye) pipeline is yet another



Related to the second question, i.e. if competition for controlling oil and gas supplies is targeting only EU or global markets, is relatively simple. While the competition for resources and ideology between the USA and the USSR was carried out on more global fronts, their superpower approach appears to be holistic. Global might be an understatement, as the discussion for resources on the Moon and other planets is already emerging.

Related to domination of oil sources, a paradoxical behavior of classical superpowers that rely on this on winning wars, this appears to remain a priority of superpower policy. Recent attempts by the US to repair ties with Saudi Arabia, the failed attempt to approach Venezuela after it kept it under harsh sanctions for decades and floating ideas that Iran can sell oil and gas despite sanctions, clearly indicates that oil and gas are still considered central in “defence” strategies. From this perspective, the EU would need a miracle to enable it to increase control over its energy supplies. Rosneft’s decision to elect former German chancellor Schroeder as chairman in 2017 (Astakhova 2017) did not represent a basis on which to build political capital needed to increase energy dependency, on the contrary: it might have raised the attention of British and American partners on the potential of EU to secure more energy supplies from competitors.

Finally, the competition for dominance over EU as a market may encompass other elements besides control of energy supply, although the latter remains a very strategic power instrument. As examples, the dominance of search engine markets, operating systems, online retail and cloud computing by US/UK companies is becoming a classical characteristic of dominance. Recently, Tesla has aimed to disrupt sales of vehicles with its electric vehicles offer in Europe, while Amazon partners to Stellantis to include its software in future Opel, Fiat and Peugeot vehicles (SASATIMES NEWS and anp / 2022) (and will allegedly supply vehicles for Amazon logistics), while Volkswagen appears to oscillate between a Google Android environment and VW.OS, apparently also based on Google Android (Jens 2022).

Conclusions

The data analyzed in this study indicates that EU’s reliance on foreign gas and oil reserves, and on foreign companies to provide it with energy is relatively high, and determined by a broader competition for dominance among superpowers. Due to recent dynamics and an apparent renewed appetite for competition of traditional superpowers, and the displacement created by the rise of China, EU might experience two main scenarios with respect to energy supplies: one in which the US and the UK will continue to dominate EU supplies of energy and the Russian Federation will not be able to supply energy at same levels until now, or one in which the American/British influence of EU’s hydrocarbon resources will diminish. Should the EU try to



pursue a third path, i.e. aggressive development of renewable energy systems, the outcome is unclear as in parallel, EU is striving to secure hydrocarbon supplies from new sources such as Azerbaijan, the Persian Gulf countries, and probably Egypt and Israel.

Although Europe appears to have already started to increase its energy efficiency, historical patterns present inside or outside the EU continue to influence the speed of transition to an even more efficient energy usage. Furthermore, when distinguishing between CO₂ emissions and pollution with poisoning substances and plastics, restarting to burn coal in large economies such as Germany, and continuing the same in Poland, appears a paradoxical approach to tackling pollution.

In comparison to other regions, EU states may consume relatively lower amounts of energy per unit of economic output. However, such a pattern may be influenced by a series of factors that require further analysis: predominating sectors of economy (countries such as France, Spain run an important tourism sector), the output of industrial goods (some manufacturing activities have been externalized to China and other Asian countries) and efficiency of infrastructure.

While EU countries are consuming less energy per capita than, for example, the USA, they will be compelled by the context to further reduce their energy consumption. While the environmental constraint is a good argument to motivate population to comply with restrictions, this development fits perfectly in the Cold War pattern. The USA has been striving since the 1950s to contain USSR and in 1990s it partially succeeded. However, a strengthened Russian Federation that signaled its readiness to contain the expansion of NATO eastward initially in 2014, along with various measures taken by the Russian Federation and China to isolate themselves from American influence in global affairs, place the EU in the difficult position of accepting restrictions on energy without asking its economic and security partners to do the same. The crisis is certainly not determined by EU's mismanagement of energy, but by external geopolitical and historical factors.

In all cases, the European Union has to prevail with a significant vulnerability related to its energy supplies, which are significantly controlled from outside, no matter how much more efficient it will become. This situation does not appear to have a short-term or medium-term solution, it would take a miracle for the EU to be able to assert energy independence in the next decade.

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EUROPEAN DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRIAL BASE – SUPPORTING ELEMENT OF COOPERATION UNDER EU COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

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The development of the EU's security and defence profile has been a constant over the last two decades and one of the most dynamic projects of European integration. In this sense, last few years have recorded significant progress, illustrated both by the conduct of a significant number of civilian and military operations in different geographical perimeters, as well as by the launch of cooperation initiatives in the field of defence capabilities and defence research. The reporting framework of these developments has also undergone major changes, integrated into the process of establishment the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB). After an initial stage of conceptual structuring, carried out between 2007-2013, the profile of this construct has matured rapidly in recent years, offering consistent prospects in terms of supporting EU security and defence objectives. To this end, practical projects on defence capabilities and research have been developed through EDTIB in line with the Common Security and Defence Policy agenda. An extremely important role is represented by the consolidation of the financial potential associated with EDTIB to support cooperation projects and initiatives. The use of EU budget resources, stimulated in the context of EDTIB, represents a strategic paradigm shift in which European cooperation has evolved. The results recorded so far indicate the viability of the approach, supported by Member States' interest in deepening this trend, including by consolidating investment in defence and industrial purposes.

Keywords: EDTIB; PESCO; EDF; PADR; EDAP; Common Security and Defence Policy; EDA; EDIDP; EU Global Strategy.

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Introduction

Recent years have seen a significant increase in the European defence and security cooperation, as one of the key projects of the EU integration process. In addition to strengthening the EU's operational footprint in the field of crisis management, this evolution was reflected mainly in the defence capability development. This perspective encompassed the launching of several initiatives in defence area, such as the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) and the European Defence Fund (EDF). Their main functions are based on a multidisciplinary approach on the issue of capabilities, aiming at involving the European industrial segment to support the level of ambition assumed by the Member States under the aegis of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Another objective was to enhance the interaction and continuity between research and industrial components. In this sense, the EDTIB establishment is a constant in the evolution of European cooperation in the field of security and defence, much more visible after the signing of the Lisbon Treaty and development of this area of interaction between Member States. Equally, concerns about the creation of the EDTIB have had a meandering path, often with asymmetric developments between it and the CSDP processes. Recent years have seen significant changes in the sense of consolidating this connection, especially through the development of the above-mentioned initiatives.

1. Conceptual and Normative Landmarks

The creation of the PESCO, EDF and CARD initiatives cannot be analyzed without taking into account the specific nature of the last five years in which European defence cooperation evolved significantly, the main stimulus for which has been the adoption of the EU's Global Strategy (28 June 2016). Although it may appear to be a circumstantial development, the creation of the initiatives represents, in fact, milestones of a path initiated at EU level since the years prior to the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty (1 December 2009). Basically, it is about a reference period in which EU evolution was positively influenced by the existing convergence between Member States on enhancing the profile of defence cooperation in the European context. To a similar extent, it is about a substantial evolution centered on developing the conceptual and doctrinaire inventory of European cooperation, which made possible the current stage. This approach was significantly valued in the context of the European Convention (2002-2003), which facilitated the adoption by the European Council in 18 June 2004 of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe.



Its provisions aimed at implementing a comprehensive approach by integrating industrial and technological aspects into the overall defence context. The main feature was the establishment of the European Agency for Military Capabilities, Research and Armaments, whose functions would be, in addition to supporting the capability development process, to facilitate defence research segments and to strengthen the defence industrial and technological base at European level (Constitution for Europe, Art. III-212, d), e)). As is well known, the Constitutional Treaty, failed to be adopted at EU level, following the negative votes expressed in referenda conducted in France (29 May 2005) and the Netherlands (2 June 2005). On the results in the two countries, subsequent analyses have largely indicated that citizen's options were not about expressing reluctance to deepen defence cooperation, but rather related to different aspects of the European integration and different national political agendas (Hobolt and Brouard 2011, 7). Within this context, the European Defence Agency (EDA), an intergovernmental body responsible for capability development, research, procurement and armaments was created on 12 July 2004. The EDA parameters were closely related with the efforts of consolidating the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) based on cooperation with the relevant structures of the European Commission and the European defence industry. The outcome was meant to be a balanced development of EDTIB, based on practical realities and potential of defence industry at Member States level (COUNCIL JOINT ACTION 2004/551/CFSP, Art.3-4).

Despite the failure of the ratification process that caused the abandonment of the project to adopt the Constitution for Europe, the defence aspects were transferred in the Lisbon Treaty, thus formalizing the creation of the EDA and its attribution in the field of research and defence industry (Art.28 d, e), TEU). Based on these provisions, the EDA has a supporting role as regards:

- Support defence technology research by coordinating and planning joint research activities and development of technical solutions for future operational needs;
- Contributing to the identification and, if necessary, implementation of any useful measures to strengthen the defence industrial and technological base and optimize of military spending.

From an institutional perspective, these provisions have special relevance since EDA was the first entity under CSDP, responsible for integrated management of the capability generation process. At the same time, there is a certain degree of meaning by employing for the very first time concepts that were never applicable at European context. There must be mentioned that signing of the Lisbon Treaty marked an important stage in the development of the EU's security and defence profile. This is the time when the EU is launching military and civilian operational



commitments, the most important of which is taking responsibility¹ for managing the security situation in the Western Balkans. The operational dynamics of this period have been reflected primarily in the consolidation of Member States' interest in developing the capabilities required for EU operations, which could be successfully addressed outside of connecting the industrial and research segment.

From this perspective, the EDA Governing Board, on 14 May 2007, adopted the framework for the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB), which was intended to clarify the European objectives in these areas and the practical modalities in which they could be fulfilled. The main premise in this undertaking was to match the development of European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)² by generating EDTIB support for operational aspects of crisis management through the required capabilities for deployment and delivery of EU commitments. These aspects were approached from the perspective of the sustainability of CSDP political agenda and as a way to ensure “freedom of action”. This option was in line with the general profile of the early stages of development the of European cooperation in the field of crisis management, focused on autonomous EU operational action (Joint Declaration, pp. 8-9).

The EDTIB was also designed in the context of the major disparity between Europe and the United States regarding the level of defence expenditures being explored, thus, additional options for closing this gap. For implementing this approach, there were highlighted potential economic opportunities that EDTIB can offer through job creation, stimulate exports and technological progress. The sustainability aspects were approached in the sense of reducing the fragmentation in the defence industry, and stimulate more collaborative approach in developing research and procurement systems. Although not a recent issue, the implications of this situation become much more difficult to manage given the limited defence resources. One of the solutions anticipated was to align national requirements within an integrated EDTIB-type framework. Without being merely a sum of national industries, the EDA's projected vision of the EDTIB profile followed, basically, three lines of action. Firstly, it is about the central role of capabilities in guiding the EDTIB activities (capability – driven process) especially on meeting the operational needs, from a multidisciplinary perspective that did not exclude the prioritization

¹ The first operational commitment was made by launching, in 2003, of the EU Police Mission (EUPM) in Bosnia and Herzegovina followed, in less than a year, by military mission EUFOR Althea that largely took over the NATO SFOR mandate. Afterwards, EU operational commitment increased by launching other commitments in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (from 2009, North Macedonia) like military mission CONCORDIA and civil PROXIMA and EUPAT. At the same time, EU operational inventory in the aftermath of Lisbon Treaty included missions in Africa, Middle East and Central Asia.

² After the adoption of Lisbon Treaty (December 2009) became Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).



of capability requirements (Strategy for the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base, p. 2).

Secondly, the EDTIB had to be “competent” in timely and efficient capitalization of technological and industrial potential of the Member States. Adopting this priority presumed a laborious process of defining European priorities in defence technologies development. This undertaking also required a similar approach to identifying the appropriate industrial capabilities that could deliver concrete results. In this sense, the Member States’ contributions were essential given the absence of an integrated industrial complex in EU. Furthermore, the integrated nature of EDTIB was more justified taking into account the major fragmentation at EU level in this domain. Thus, the strategic framework promoted through this strategy focused on avoiding duplication and increasing interdependencies, while deepening specialization, especially on the logistic supply chain. The possibility of developing Centers of Excellence reflected the interest on specialization as a potential stimulus for consolidating the European defence market, based on inclusivity and with a balanced geographical focus.

Thirdly, EDTIB had to be competitive in a global context in which European industrial entities faced significant competition. The geographical perspective included both Europe as well as external markets requiring, thus, an appropriate level of integration of other domains beyond defence and decrease of dependencies from technological sources outside EU. This component induced the idea of a relatively protectionist approach, which could involve reducing the imports and consolidation of the European alternative for capabilities requirements.

2. New Course

The ambitions which led to the adoption of the EDTIB Strategy suffered a serious setback in the context of economic crisis (2007-2008), which was to affect the level of defence and military expenditures globally. In this context, the attractiveness of the EDTIB for EU Member States decreased, in direct connection with the general tendency to decrease the national budgets, slowing down the pace of development of some major procurement programs (Flanagan 2011, 22-24). Under these circumstances, the framework promoted through the Strategy remained at the level of orientation without practical follow-ups. The change happened in 2013, when the effects of economic crisis faded helping the reorientation of Member States’ interest towards EDTIB. This approach will happen in 2013 when the effects of economic crisis started to fade. These evolutions benefited from the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty which counterbalanced the failure on ratifying the Constitutional Treaty and, subsequently, gave a new impetus of European cooperation in the field of defence.



Under these favorable auspices, a first structured debate on the priorities in European context took place at the level of European Council (November 2013). A special attention was placed on the way in which EDTIB could support the CSDP objectives. The main reason of this approach was that the structural fragmentation of the European market on defence is affecting the competitiveness of the security and defence industry (European Council 2013, 1). To note that this perspective introduced in this debate the topic of EDTIB sustainability with a new perspective on defence industry role in sustainable development, especially on increase the job opportunities, innovation and economic development in European Union. From this perspective, the European Council reconfirmed the validity of the conceptual framework promoted by EDTIB Strategy, while seeking to stimulate de implementation process by adopting a more practical agenda including:

- defence research and capitalization of the security research programs developed in EU that could be applicable for generating defence capabilities;
- development of certification standards based on efficiency and optimization of expenses;
- expanding the access of small and medium-sized enterprises to defence markets and their participation in EU-funded programs;
- development of the relevant parameters of supply chain assurance at EU level, considering the global character of the defence industry.

The relevance of the new course that the EDTIB issue has taken since the aftermath of economic crisis could be seen from the perspective of European Commission growing participation in this area. Practically, the European Council decisions of December 2013 were based on a substantial contribution of the Commission structured around four components, namely: the development of the European defence market, the development of an industrial defence policy, the exploitation the civil-military synergies and the potential of dual-use capabilities. Last but not least, it was forwarded the idea of launching a Preparatory Action in the field of research for relevant capabilities (European Commission 2013, 5). Based on the parameters governing the EU's institutional interaction, the Commission's contribution has been reflected in the development of a distinct level of activities related to EDTIB. Within this the practical and pragmatism features of this institution will be decisive in achieving tangible progresses for the coming years.

At the same time, one can speak of the development of a new typology for division of labor between European structures. In this new paradigm, the role of the EU Council, through the EDA, was mainly focused on the aria of political-military management of capability development, while the European Commission becomes the main actor in implementing-financing (economic area) and regulating the normative framework for EDTIB aspects. This interaction could be seen as a



decisive moment in approaching EDTIB more structurally, and even as a way to rewrite EU Strategy adopted in 2013, in order to connect the conceptual framework with the economic development and existing potential in the EU.

Within this context, the Commission assessment indicated that defence in the European context was one of the areas with major economic potential, with more than 400.000 people indirectly generating over 960.000 jobs (European Commission 2013, 3). It is of outmost importance that in spite of the significant cuts in defence budgets in the wake of economic crisis, the potential for EDTIB development was substantial. This was at a time when, immediately after the economic crisis effects started to fade away, the cumulated defence expenses of Member States exceeded those of China, Russia and Japan. Therefore, the potential was relevant and could be stimulated by dedicated measures for increasing the competitiveness and Intereuropean cooperation to overcome fragmentation.

Along these lines, the Global Strategy reaffirmed its support for EDTIB development in order to ensure the credibility of EU undertakings in CSDP context. The structuring of the EUGS Implementation Plan was centered on the above-mentioned division of labor. Thus, the political criteria to which EU Commission had to answer were aimed at ensuring a functional connectivity between EDTIB and security needs (current and prospective), as well as in terms of meeting the level of ambition assumed through the EUGS (crisis response, support to partners in internal construction, protection of the Union and its citizens).

Furthermore, another distinct point of interest concerned the research and technology (R&T) dimension from the perspective of ensuring the complementarity between different processes and initiatives developed in the EU and Member States level. The aim was to eliminate the redundancies and duplications generated by fragmentation in EU affecting the applicability of R&T in the field of defence. At the same time, it was followed the connection of this level with the process of fulfilling the priorities assumed by the Member States for capabilities development in the CSDP institutional set-up. Specifically, the EUGS implementation process forwarded the need to connect collaborative projects with the priorities of Capabilities Development Plan (CDP)³, including on innovation and disruptive technologies (European External Action Service, 2007, 23). As regards the industrial dimension, the Implementation Plan reiterated the objective of taking stock of the EU's potential, including production capacities. It thus sought to generate an integrated research-capabilities-industry matrix which was to form the basis of the EDTIB.

³ Document drafted by the European Defence Agency and adopted by the EU defence ministers. It includes the priorities agreed for capability development at EU level being periodically revised (every 4 years). The first CDP was adopted in 2008.



3. Investments

What was missing from this complex process was mainly the financial support for EDTIB-related processes. So far, financing sources for research projects or defence capabilities development were extremely limited and only indirectly related to security programs. This was also meant to reduce the interest in developing cooperative formulas in the field of defence. Traditionally, for the entire period of the integration process conducted in EU, defence capability generation and R&T associated aspects were nationally financed, a situation which proved its vulnerabilities in the context of the economic crisis, following which the individual potential of Member States reached its limits. At the same time, the sustainability of single-source financing of capability development was to be seriously questioned from the perspective of states' ability to keep up with technological and innovation progress.

As regards the possibilities to access the European funds for development projects in defence, the only way was to seek opportunities in different projects on dual-use applicability developed under Framework Programs for Research and Technology Development (Framework Programs - FP) coordinated by the European Commission. This limitation was induced by the distinct provisions of the EU Treaty for defence area.

FPs was initiated in 1984 for four years, corresponding, at that time with, to a multianual budgeting system used in EU. Thus, for the 2014-2020 period, the eight sequence of framework programs, known under the name "Horizon 2020", with a budget of EUR 77 billion, was in operation, including a distinct segment on security research (Security Research). Within the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027, it started to work the "Horizon Europe" program with a budget of 100 billion. In the quest of developing the research area within EDTIB framework it was decided to initiate the first pilot project for defence research which will function under EDA coordination as a delegated agent⁴ of the Commission. It will run from 2015-2016 with a rather modest budget (EUR 1.4 million) provided from the Horizon 2020 program that managed to attract the interest of more than 80 research entities from 20 Member States. The main conclusion was that the interest of research community on using the financial opportunities coming from EU budget was a clear reality that could increase the European competitiveness.

The test carried out through the pilot program also validated expectations of concrete results that could not arise in the absence of predictable funding. From

⁴ This model was based on the fact that the funds from the EU budget could be used only by the European Commission, directly or by delegating implementing functions towards other actors. This typology will be used in the next years as the financial resources for defence collaborative programs will develop.



this perspective, after the completion of the pilot program, the discussions on the continuation of this approach entered a straight line, leading to the adoption by the European Commission of the decision on the financing of the Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR), which was the first multi-annual funding program for collaborative research programs at European level. PADR covered the 2017-2019 period and was conceived as the antechamber of a distinct defence program. The budget approved for funding projects through the PADR amounted to EUR 90 million. This amount was distributed from a direct funding line of the EU budget, in relatively equal proportions for the three years of operation. The dynamics identified in the context of the call for projects for the Pilot Program have intensified in the context of the PADR, with a year-to-year increase in the number of projects as well as in the number of the private and state entities participating in the competition for funding. Similarly, the range of areas addressed in the PADR included various capability-related research proposals covering: troop transport, communication systems, counter improvised explosive devices, interoperability standards, including the applicability of disruptive technologies at their level. It should be noted that the parameters for the evaluation of the projects submitted to the competition were placed on coordinates of geographical inclusiveness by making it compulsory to create consortia bringing together entities from Member States. For example, one of the consortia⁵ that obtained the largest funding through the PADR, incorporated 43 entities from 15 Member States which is a relevant indicator for the degree of inclusion of the collaborative approach in the context of EDTIB-CSDP.

The obvious success of the research dimension has led to an acceleration in the expansion of the possibilities in which EDTIB-related processes are funded by addressing the capability issue. On 14 September 2016, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, in his annual State of the Union address, placed the issue of financing capabilities on new coordinates, stressing that the low level of cooperation generates major losses for Europe which exceeded EUR 25 billion annually (Juncker 2016, 17). The European official's plea aimed at moving towards a creative approach aimed at jointly acquiring capabilities, announcing the launch of a new initiative to stimulate this option. Two months later, the European Commission adopted a new communication on the European Defence Action Plan (EDAP), which focused on the capabilities dimension in a technology and production-based perspective. The main strands of the initiative were: the launch of a European Defence Fund (EDF); strengthening investment in the defence-related logistics chain; the revitalization of the single market for defence products.

Clearly, the main attraction of the package promoted by the Commission was the EDF, designed as an integrated formula for financial support to cooperation processes between Member States, both on the research and capability development

⁵ OCEAN2020 consortium.



dimensions. Structurally, the EDF was to include two distinct “windows” (research and capabilities), but which would operate in a complementary way through a coordination structure, bringing together EU entities (High Representative, Commission and EDA) and representatives of the defence industry. This approach was an absolute first in terms of strengthening the interaction between concrete projects financed from the European Union budget and the European industrial potential. Such a solution was likely to generate added credibility to cooperation in the field of capabilities, while offering a concrete/tangible purpose and based on coordinates of economic viability.

The entry into operation of the new instrument has been set for January 1, 2021, so that it capitalizes on the progress made on the research dimension through the implementation of the PADR 2017-2019. It also envisaged the operation of EDF for the period 2021-2027, covering the multiannual financial cycle 2021-2027, so as to allow provision of funding sources under the EU budget. The benchmarks of the financial envelope advanced by the European Commission, at the time of the launch of the EDAP-EDF for the two components, aimed at financing at least EUR 500 million/year for the research window. For the capability, the Commission’s estimates were around 5 billion per year, which would represent 2.5% of defence spending at Member State level. However, the incipient nature of the ceilings put forward by the Commission should be stressed, their degree of relativity being influenced by the political negotiations between Member States to determine the overall level of the EU budget for the period 2021-2027.

The period that followed saw intense debate on the financial perspective for 2021-2027 financial framework, the complexity of this process being accentuated by United Kingdom’s decision to leave the EU, an option with direct implications for the reduction of the overall budget. Even under these circumstances, the resulting compromise was another step in increasing the visibility of defence at EU level. Thus, for the first time since the creation of the European Union, the budget of this organization included distinct components, directly associated with the field of defence, targeting the European Defence Fund (EUR 7.95 billion) and Military Mobility (EUR 1.5 billion) (Multiannual Financial Framework, 2021-2027). Within this allocation, the research window has EUR 2.65 billion while the capability window has EUR 5.3 billion covering the entire period 2021-2027. At the same time, at the level of funding sources, priority was given to disruptive technologies, by allocating a percentage of 4-8% to projects with applicability in this field (Official Journal of European Union 2021).

With regard to the development of projects which could be funded by EDF, the method in which they were structured and the criteria to which they had to respond would be developed by taking into account the experience of the PADR preparation stages. Practically, the entire procedural framework developed in this



context has been incorporated into the typology of operation of the research window. For the capabilities component, given the lack of relevant experience, it was decided to carry out a preliminary process to prepare EDF way of operation. The way to operationalize this approach has materialized in the launch of the European Program for Industrial Development in the field of Defence – EDIDP (2019-2020), which has been allocated a total budget of EUR 500 million to fund capability projects derived from EU priorities as established through the CDP. The main eligibility criterion of the new instrument was that cooperation projects had to be promoted through a consortium of at least three entities from at least three Member States.

The importance of the EDIDP is also given by the predictability and continuity at the level of the cooperation projects launched since 2019, which can be found, later, in different forms within EDF context. Also, given that most capability development processes require a longer period for completion, the EDIDP has been the platform for launching strands of action that will be continued in the context of EDF. Following the development of the two EDIDP cycles, approximately 30 calls for projects were launched, including capabilities on cyber, CBRN, command-control, applications of artificial intelligence in the field of defence, improvement of air combat capacity, maritime surveillance capabilities, air superiority, precision ammunition, space situational awareness, etc.

Also, the interest in seizing the opportunities generated by this instrument has strengthened significantly. Following the competition under the EDIDP 2019, 16 projects involving 233 entities from 24 Member States were selected. The European industry response has significantly improved in the case of EDIDP 2020, with the selection process validating 26 projects involving 420 entities (out of 717 participating entities) from 25 Member States (Defence Industry and Space–European Commission). This trend was maintained even after the European Defence Fund started to operate, with the results after the evaluation of the first year of operation (EDF 2021) aiming at selecting 61 projects with a budget of EUR 1.2 billion. The winning projects will be implemented by consortia bringing together 700 entities from 26 Member States.

Conclusions

As can be seen, the creation of the European Defence Industrial and Technological Base is a comprehensive process that targets a wide range of processes and initiatives. The progress made in recent years towards the creation of a distinct European potential in capability development and the funding of this process are elements that favor the development of the EDTIB. Obviously, the level of financial resources is still low, but developments so far indicates an attractive potential for capitalization of resources, which will lead to an increase in the possibilities of financing projects developed in the European context.



Beyond the procedural aspects, the progress made since the adoption of the EDTIB Strategy is relevant in this direction, being mainly determined by the involvement of the European Commission, which has allowed to overcome the conceptual stage and enter an area with practical industrial purpose. At the same time, the creation of the EDTIB has become the main benchmark to which European cooperation under the aegis of the CSDP now relates. Whether it is the European Defence Fund or the other initiatives launched in recent years at the level of European cooperation, the EDTIB is used as the framework within which they evolve. There is not yet full conceptual and practical clarity on what EDTIB means. Developments to date point to a comprehensive approach to achieve a mechanism at European level to enable the generation of the different types of capabilities needed to carry out the EU's operational commitments. At the same time, the creation of EDTIB provides a solution for the economic adaptation of the different industrial segments in the field of defence, both from an internal perspective and in terms of access to foreign markets of European products. The basic condition is the creation of a coherent system, at the level of which the industrial potential of the Member States can be used by eliminating redundancies and duplications.

Creating the European profile is therefore the main challenge, both in terms of the political aspects as well as on the way in which geographical inclusiveness and balanced representation of the interests of all Member States are ensured. Clearly, the competitiveness of EDTIB is another dimension that poses challenges for the sustainability of the project itself. In the absence of a high level of competitiveness of production generated under the auspices of EDTIB, its viability is seriously questioned. Thus, the ability to secure adequate funding becomes essential. In the absence of substantial investment in both components (research - capabilities), no significant progress can be made. The decision to launch the EDF indicates that this reality is aware and the assumed course of action is clearly oriented towards strengthening the European financial contribution as a way of supplementing national support.

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THE REPRESENTATION OF THE KURDISH POPULATION IN THE TURKISH LEGISLATURE: AN OVERVIEW ON THE RESULTS OF THE KURDISH PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS FROM 1965-2018

*Mihai TATOMIR**

The paper represents an analysis of the Kurdish political movements on the territory of Turkey, focusing on the evolution of the parties which main purpose is to support the rights of the minority. In terms of time, the study covers the entire period of manifestation of Kurdish political formations in the parliamentary elections in the Turkish state, from 1965 to 2018. Special attention was given to the Peoples' Democratic Party, which became the main political force that militates for the affirmation of Kurdish identity in Turkey, after 2015 elections. Also, in order to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the topic, the paper identified the major impediments to the political representation of the Kurdish minority that appeared during the political and social developments in the Republic of Turkey.

Keywords: Turkey; Kurds; political parties; parliamentary elections; Peoples' Democratic Party.

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Introduction

The formation of the Republic of Turkey meant the end of the possibility of the Kurds to establish their own state in the territories mostly populated by them. Moreover, due to the fact that in the period 1924-1946, the Turkish system of government was of a single-party type, and the political formation in power (the People's Republican Party) had promoted the Kemalist ideology (Glazer 1988, 52), the Kurds were not guaranteed any political rights.

Even after new political formations began to appear on the Turkish legislature scene, pro-Kurdish parties have not had the opportunity to consolidate a strong position in the parliament for a long time. However, gradually, some representatives of the minority have managed to take seats in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, starting with the '60s. The number of Kurdish political parties, as well as the influence of this minority in Parliament, have increased considerably during the '90s. Moreover, in 2002, the rise of Justice and Development Party (AKP) to power marked a moment of openness of the Turkish government towards the manifestation of Kurdish identity at the social and political level. However, impediments to Kurdish political representation persisted, especially following the failed coup in 2016.

The purpose of this paper is to present the evolution of the Kurdish political movements in Turkey, beginning with 1965. Also, this study aims to demonstrate that, despite the democratic regression recorded by the Turkish state in recent years, the Kurds have managed to consolidate their position in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. In this regard, special attention was paid to the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), which, as will be seen, became the main promoter of the Kurdish rights after the 2015 elections.

1. The Emergence and Evolution of Pro-Kurdish Parties

Political representation in the Turkish legislature has been an elusive ideal for the Kurds. This was caused by a political reality within Turkey, described by researcher Walter J. Fend as the antagonism between the idea of a multi-ethnic nation and the nationalist concept of one nation - one country (Fend 2018, 52). Also, another impediment for the Kurdish cause was the fact that immediately after the implementation of the multi-party system in 1946, the political scene was dominated by right-wing movements that rejected the idea of a Kurdish nation, distinct from the Turkish one. Precisely for this reason, starting with the '60s, the Kurdish emancipation movement was closely linked to the admission of the leftist ideology in Turkey (Fend 2018, 53).

The Turkish Workers' Party (Türkiye İşçi Partisi - TIP), based on the Marxist-Leninist ideology, was the first to recognize the existence of a Kurdish identity.



Although the status of the Kurds within the republic was not a main point on its political agenda, the party played an extremely important role for the minority, as four Kurdish representatives joined the parliament through it (Fend 2018, 55). Five years after the formation of the Turkish Workers' Party, the Kurds manage to form the first political organization that militates for the autonomy of the areas that are part of Turkish Kurdistan, namely the Democratic Party of Kurdistan - Turkey (Türkiye Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi - TKDP). In the '70s, however, because of the extreme left-wing orientations of the members, as well as accusations related to the violation of the principle of territorial indivisibility, both parties were banned following a coup d'état organised by the armed forces. An important thing needs to be mentioned: some of the members of these leftist organizations were the ones who formed the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan - PKK) together with Abdullah Öcalan, in 1978. As will be seen next, many pro-Kurdish organisations were disbanded on allegations of cooperation with the PKK. Sometimes, these accusations were founded, but there were several times when, under the guise of fighting terrorism, the government tried to prosecute Kurdish political parties (Insel 2018, 80).

In addition to those already presented, the Kurds have also faced another major impediment in terms of their political representation: after the 1980 coup d'état, a new constitution was adopted, which raised the electoral threshold to 10% and significantly reduced the chances of the newly formed parties to occupy seats in the parliament. However, during the 1990s, the first political groups of the Kurdish minority emerged, some of them managing to get directly involved in the government.

The People's Labour Party (Halkın Emek Partisi - HEP) is a worth mentioning organisation, despite its short existence (1990-1993), as it was the first legally recognized pro-Kurdish party. In the parliamentary elections of 1991, it had a considerable electoral success, obtaining 22 seats in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Fend 2018, 57). Later, because of the promotion of cultural rights for the Kurds (such as expanding language rights and allowing education in the Kurdish language), and its ties to PKK, it was disbanded in 1993. Several former members joined a newly formed organization, the Democracy Party (Demokrasi Partisi - DEP), which, however, had the same fate as HEP, being banned in 1994, while a large part of the representatives were arrested.

The predecessor of the two organizations, the People's Democracy Party (Halkın Demokrasi Partisi – HADEP) had a political program focused on human rights and strengthening democracy in the state. However, it did not enjoy any electoral success, as it failed to reach the threshold in either of the two parliamentary elections in the '90s. Also, just like the other pro-Kurdish parties, the formation was banned in 2003 based on accusations of collaboration with the PKK.



However, it can be stated that the Kurdish population benefited from the elections of 1995. The Prosperity Party had obtained the highest percentage of votes (over 21%), acquiring a considerable influence on the Turkish political sphere. Despite the Islamist orientation, the organization proved to be open to find solutions for the problems regarding national minorities, as the party's young members were trying to fill the void left by the inability of modernizing movements to embrace Kurdish identity claims (Insel 2018, 81). However, the hope of a possible solution to the Kurdish issue was quickly dashed. As Turkish politics expert William Hale observed, during the 1990s, the biggest problem within the Turkish legislature was the fragmentation and instability of the party system, which predictably resulted in weak and fragile coalition governments (Hale 1999, 27). Such issue could only lead to major political crises, which culminated in another coup d'état in 1997, as a result of which the Prosperity Party was dissolved, while its leader, Necmettin Erbakan, was forced to step down as prime minister.

In the same year that Erbakan's formation was disband, a new pro-Kurdish political party appears, namely the Democratic People's Party (Demokratik Halk Partisi - DEHAP), successor to the People's Democracy Party. The organization enjoyed a high level of notoriety in the provinces of Southeast Anatolia, with 40% of the region's electoral votes won in the 2002 elections. Moreover, the party obtained 3 million votes, which would have meant the right to have 30 representatives in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Fend 2018, 58). However, the party's result equalled 6% of the total votes, the electoral threshold once again proving to be an impediment to the Kurdish cause.

Thus, it can be stated that despite the visibility acquired by the Kurdish formations in the period 1990-2002, the consolidation of a strong political position of the minority in the Turkish state was not possible.

2. Kurdish Political Formations after 2002

In 2002, the party that has been dominating the Turkish political scene to this day was established, namely: The Justice and Development Party (AKP). Initially, the party stood out for its pragmatic pro-European politics and for finding a balance between Islamist tendencies and the secular interests of the Turkish state (Yildiz and Muller 2009, 23). The AKP government was the first to openly and officially recognize the existence of a distinct Kurdish identity and language, distinct from the Turkish one. Recep Tayyip Erdogan became the party's man figure right from the beginning, having been appointed prime minister in 2003. Erdogan has also arguably gone further than his predecessors in trying to resolve the Kurdish conflict in his country (Pitel, 2019). Despite some escalations of Turkish-Kurdish tensions in the periods 2005-2009 and 2009-2013, an improvement at the level of Kurdish



situation on the territory of Turkey could be observed, which was also reflected in the elections for the Grand National Assembly.

The Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi – DTP), formed in November 2005, thus managed to achieve a high degree of political performance, obtaining 22 seats in the legislature, after a period of 16 years in which the Kurds had no representative of their cause in parliament. Four years after its formation, however, given the fact that during the period 1984-2009 the dissolution of pro-Kurdish parties on the grounds of cooperation with the PKK was a recurring issue (Insel 2018, 81), the formation had the same fate as its predecessors.

A year before the dissolution of the Democratic Society Party, the Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi - BDP) had been formed. The new political organization, like many of its predecessors, focused strictly on the Kurdish issue during the elections (Grigoriadis and Dilek 2018, 289). However, its strategy was an innovative one, being focused on two directions of action: the formation of a left-wing front alongside the parties with the same political orientation and the support of independent candidates in the parliamentary race. On the one hand, most of the speeches of these candidates focused mainly on the Kurds' right to self-determination, calls for the recognition of the political status of the minority and the issue of the autonomy of the predominantly Kurdish areas in the southeast of the country (Grigoriadis and Dilek 2018, 293). On the other hand, despite the party's left-wing orientation, there were also representatives from conservative backgrounds who built their political discourse around the theme of the religious rights of the Kurds (Grigoriadis and Dilek 2018, 293). In any case, the result obtained by the political formation was a victory for the Kurdish cause. As expected, the BDP dominated the predominantly Kurdish regions of the country during the elections, obtaining 53% of the electoral votes from the south-east area of the country (Aksakalli, Mogulkoc and Koc 2011, 192). This ensured the presence of 36 minority representatives in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the highest number reached by a Kurdish party since the formation of the Republic of Turkey until that time.

One year after the 2011 elections, the political organization that will be the main subject of the following parts of the paper is formed, namely the Peoples' Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi - HDP). Before analysing the political formation and its influence over the Kurdish situation in Turkey, one last organization should be mentioned: HÜDA-PAR – Free Cause Party (Hür Dava Partisi). This can be seen as the successor of the Kurdish Hezbollah, an Islamist organization that was active in Turkey in the '90s (without having any historical connection with the Hezbollah movement in Lebanon). Two things differentiate HÜDA-PAR from the other Kurdish formations in the country. First, the promotion of religious rights of the Kurds and the Islamist ideology, issues that prove the right-wing orientation of the party. Second, it is the only Kurdish organization whose



relations with the Justice and Development Party of Turkey continued to be positive after the 2016 coup, so as HÜDA-PAR can be considered the *de facto* ally of the AKP (Fend 2018, 65).

The party's results in the 2015 and 2018 parliamentary elections were modest, with the percentage of votes obtained being below 1%. However, as could be seen throughout Turkey's contemporary history, many voters have repeatedly expressed their preference for Islamist parties. This fact, together with the good relations that the organization has with the political formation that dominates the Turkish legislature, prove that the Free Cause Party could become a political force in the future.

3. The Peoples' Democratic Party and the 2015-2018 Elections

The Peoples' Democratic Party was formed in 2012, being a political formation whose main goal is to represent the Kurdish minority in Turkey. However, its agenda is not limited to this. In terms of political orientation, it is a left-wing party, the values promoted being participative democracy, youth rights, feminism, protection of the environment and protection of minorities (HDP 2015). At the organizational level, its leadership consists of two presidents, always one male and the other female. In 2014, it gained more prominence after the delegates of the Peace and Democracy Party decided to join (Grigoriadis 2016, 40).

The party's prestige was also increased by one of its presidents, Selahattin Demirtaş, who became a charismatic personality in Turkey, obtaining 9.76% of the votes (Grigoriadis 2016, 40) in the presidential elections. He also managed to increase the number of HDP supporters through his conciliatory policies and promotion of peaceful resolution of inter-ethnic disputes. His most important achievement is the framing of Kurdish rights in a wider spectrum of democratic policies. More precisely, the party leader built his political campaign around the Kurdish issue, presented as a key element in Turkey's democratization process, which can be best seen in what he reported in a 2014 article: "Without settlement of the Kurdish problem, developments in other areas necessary for the democratization of Turkey, such as work, identity, culture and environment, become impossible. Considering the tension caused by the Turkish political atmosphere, we can say that the Kurdish issue is still one of the most important determinants of the state's politics" (Demirtas 2014).

Thus, the HDP managed to deliver a pluralistic and inclusive electoral manifesto in which Kurdish demands for political and cultural rights were embedded in a broader program for radical democracy and the empowerment of women and marginalized social groups (Kamaran 2015, 4). In the parliamentary elections of June 2015, the Peoples' Democratic Party dominated the competition for votes in the eastern and south-eastern parts of Turkey, except for the cities of Urfa, Ardahan and Bigol. The election result was beneficial for the Kurds but negative for Erdogan's



leadership. AKP remained the dominant party with 258 seats in parliament, but lost 68 compared to the 2011 elections (Hassan 2015). HDP had the most spectacular success, obtaining 13.12% of the vote, thus having 80 representatives in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Hassan 2015). Unfortunately for the party members, the heyday of Kurdish political representation was not a long-lasting one.

On July 20, 2015, a suicide attack by a member of the Islamic State terrorist organization killed 33 pro-Kurdish activists in the city of Suruc, in south-eastern Turkey. The Kurds accused the Turkish authorities, claiming that they did not take the necessary measures to prevent such an event. On the same day, near Adiyaman province, a PKK attack resulted in the death of a Turkish corporal, leading to the collapse of the two-and-a-half-year ceasefire agreement between the PKK [...] and Turkey (Madiraci 2019).

Immediately after the outbreak, Erdogan undertook a series of measures aimed at restricting the rights of the Kurds, as well as their political representation. Through a parliamentary decision taken within the Grand National Assembly, 50 HDP representatives were left without political immunity (Institute for Security and Development Policy 2016), and several members of the party were placed under judicial investigation without good reason.

On November 1st, 2015, the president called for early parliamentary elections during which there were numerous attacks on HDP headquarters, which were ignored by the Turkish media and political leaders. On November 1st, the Peoples' Democratic Party managed to cross the electoral threshold again, but lost 21 seats in the parliament. Party leaders attributed the failure to the violent atmosphere that made pro-HDP demonstrations impossible during political campaigns (Gunter 2016, 78).

On July 15, 2016, a coup was organized by the Peace Council, a military group that was part of the Turkish armed forces. The coup was easily suppressed and ultimately proved to be a beneficial event for Erdogan who imposed a state of emergency, used as a pretext to eliminate any form of political opposition. He had long dreamed of such a purge, initially impossible because of the laws guaranteeing fundamental human rights (Insel 2018, 13). The main target of his actions was represented by the Kurdish politicians, in almost half of the 102 town halls run by pro-Kurdish parties, the elected mayors being left without mandates and put into prison (Insel 2018, 13). Also, the two HDP leaders are arrested along with nine other members, while five party representatives in parliament are left without diplomatic immunity.

All these non-democratic movements culminated in the 2017 referendum which established a presidential republic political system. Erdogan has taken several measures to concentrate as much power as possible in the hands of the president, the most controversial one being the imposition of a greater control over

the media. This, along with the intimidation of political opponents, made the 2018 parliamentary elections, held under a state of emergency, among the most unfair in Turkey's modern history (Taş 2018, 1). However, in these extremely unfavourable conditions, the political opposition proved its ability to attract a significant part of the electorate's votes to its side (Taş 2018, 1). The HDP managed to obtain 67 seats in the Turkish parliament, thus having eight more representatives at the legislative level compared to the 2015 elections.

In order to understand the major political impact that the Peoples' Democratic Party has had on the legislative representation of the Kurds in the Republic of Turkey, an overview of the electoral performance of Kurdish parties from the 1990s to the present is necessary, as well as the periods in which they carried out their activity.

Table no. 3.1: List of Kurdish parties from 1990-2022 (Grigoriadis 2016)

Party	Period	Representatives in parliament
People's Labour Party (HEP)	1990-1993	22
Democracy Party (DEP)	1993-1994	-
People's Democracy Party (HADEP)	1994-2003	-
Democratic People's Party (DEHAP)	1997-2005	-
Democratic Society Party (DTP)	2005-2009	22
Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)	2008-2014	36
Free Cause Party (HÜDA-PAR)	2012 - present	-

By analysing the data in the table, the first thing that can be observed is that, except for the Freedom Cause Party, there has been no Kurdish organization as long-lived as the Peoples' Democratic Party. Moreover, the party achieved much better results in the parliamentary elections compared to the previously mentioned formations, the number of representatives in the Turkish legislature never being less than 59. Therefore, the HDP can be considered the most important element for promoting the rights of the Kurds and democracy at the level of the Turkish state.



Conclusions

With the ideology that stood at the basis of the Turkey's state construction, among other things, characterized by populism, and the parties in power in the period between the 50'-70' that promoted a conservative policy, the emergence of Kurdish parties was closely related to the penetration of leftist orientations in the republic. However, there were numerous moments when various Kurdish formations were disbanded at the decision of the Ankara authorities, on the grounds that they represented a threat to the territorial integrity of the state.

Since 1990, Kurdish activism has experienced a new stage of development, characterized by the intensification of movements aimed at creating and consolidating the position of the minority in the Turkish legislature. However, this desired could not be achieved. As presented in the first part of this paper, the constitution introduced in 1982 that raised the electoral threshold to 10%, constituted a constant obstacle for the representatives of the Kurdish cause. Added to this are the (more or less unfounded) accusations of the Turkish authorities regarding the collaboration of certain Kurdish organizations with the PKK, which have repeatedly led to the dissolution of the parties of this minority.

After the AKP had become the main political force in Turkey, the Kurdish situation improved considerably. After 15 years in which no Kurdish formation managed to exceed the previously mentioned electoral threshold, the Democratic Society Party obtained 22 seats in the parliament. Despite its ban in 2009, the Kurds continued to enjoy representation in the legislature due to the Peace and Democracy Party.

The elections of July 2015 represented one of the most important moments in terms of the struggle for the Kurdish cause. The HDP, the party that managed to integrate the rights of the Kurdish minority into a larger program of democratization of Turkey, became the third force in the Turkish legislature. Moreover, despite the previously mentioned unfavourable factors, the party managed to consolidate a considerable position in the Turkish legislature, being at the same time the longest-lived political formation in the recent history of Turkey.

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TURKISH MILITARY TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENTS AND MILITARY INDUSTRY CAPABILITIES OF FORCE PROJECTION IN THE LIGHT OF GEOPOLITICAL GOALS

*András MÁLNÁSSY**

The study examines a specific segment of the Turkish military industry capabilities in the light of the country's geopolitical aims. In the transformation of the international system, we can simultaneously see the change in the distribution of military capabilities. While U.S. hegemony and the Western liberal order are increasingly challenged, superpowers' realism based on politicization of interests is gaining ground on the international political arena. As for Ankara's place in the international system, Turkey is not a global power in terms of its relative power, but more like one of the regional powers while it wants to become a global player in the future. However, Turkey can be described as a major military producer and exporter in the international arena. Turkish-made military equipment, such as drones, is already being used in many parts of the world, which supports Ankara's geopolitical interests and force projection capabilities.

Keywords: *military technology; defence industry; geopolitics; foreign policy; force projection; Turkey.*

Introduction

In accordance with its geopolitical conception, Turkey looks at the world in a realistic paradigm characterized by a constant struggle for power and survival. Therefore, it is present in the strategic culture of Ankara, which does not shy away from the use of military force. In the background, lies the Ottoman imperial heritage

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as difficult to process experiences even nowadays. The revival of the former imperial greatness as a goal goes hand in hand with the revival of political rivalry and interest-based foreign policy.

1. Theoretical Background

Ankara has always viewed the world in a realistic paradigm. In realism it may also be possible to reduce the hegemonic influence of a given region (in the sphere of interest), one of the possibilities of which is to emphasize the principle of *regional ownership* (National Security Council Convenes at the Presidential Complex 2017). The main point of this approach is to find regional solutions to regional problems; the regional actors directly involved need to work together and address the challenges internally, and not externally. In recent years, the term “regional ownership” has become recurrent in Turkish foreign policy thinking. Ahmet Davutoğlu has used it several times in his activity as Foreign Minister, and the regional ownership approach has been the basis for a number of Turkish initiatives in the Black Sea, the Caucasus and Central Asia’s common neighborhood, North Africa (Besenyő 2021, 70-89), and especially in the Middle East. In particular, these initiatives are: The Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), established in 1992, the Black Sea Forum for Partnership and Dialogue, created in 2006, the Black Sea Harmony, established in 2004, and the Turkish proposal to create a Stability and Cooperation Instrument for the Caucasus, in 2008 (Frappi 2018, 45-71). The implementation of regional ownership and geopolitical thinking is well demonstrated by the Astana process in the case of the Syrian civil war and Turkey’s mediation efforts in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

A realistic approach to theories of international relations is perhaps closest to the theory and practice of Turkish foreign policy-making, as for Turkey, the national interest (*raison d’état*) plays a central role, where war can be a political tool. According to neoclassical realism, the areas and ambitions of a country’s foreign policy are first and foremost driven by its place in the international system and, in particular, its capabilities in power (Şener 2013, 3-21). Neoclassical realism seems to be the proper theoretical framework of the study because, in my opinion, this theory is best suited to present recent Turkish foreign policy and geopolitical goals.

The neoclassical realist approach highlights that a country’s foreign policy behavior is not always in straight relationship with one another. Foreign policy decisions are made by the political leaders in power, thus their perception of power and the context of decisions within the state are more important than the capabilities of the state. Intra-state factors appear as important variables in the foreign policy-making process (Gideon 1998, 144-172).

According to one group of neo-classical realists, in most cases, a balancing policy that meets the expectations of neorealism is automatic; only exceptional



circumstances, erroneous perceptions, or domestic political factors may distract rational national security responses. The other type of neoclassical realism allows for a more general approach to foreign policy that can predict the strategic decisions of states. This means that when there is no immediate threat in the international system, states can often choose from among a wider range of options or there is not a single optimal policy that international conditions allow. Actual decisions in such circumstances are more influenced by the worldview of leaders, power structure, strategic culture, domestic political processes, and factors influencing actors in the defence industry (Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell 2016, 20-155).

2. Defence Industry – the Basis of Turkish Power Potential

Defence industry has basically three roles in every state, namely, military, political, and economic ones. A military role refers to arming the state with weapons systems and military equipment that enable it to achieve military policy goals. The development of military techniques is a complex process, including research and development, in terms of development of new technologies, end products, production of platforms and systems, and construction of disarmament capabilities. Companies operating within the defence industry play a strategic role while maintaining and developing national military capabilities (Wiśniewski 2015, 215-228).

For Turkey, *the military role* of the defence industry is determined by three specific conditions. The first condition points to the support of the Turkish armed forces, and the second condition refers to Turkey's competition with some neighboring countries. The current Turkish military doctrine of advanced defence and growing aspirations for regional power status place force projection capabilities at the forefront. According to the Turkish defence doctrine, threats to national security must be stopped before they reach national borders. This third condition can be achieved with an advanced defence industry and military equipment (Karaosmanoglu 2003, 1-30).

As far as the Turkish security environment is concerned, the MENA region is referred to as *unstable* in terms of regional neighborhood, with conflicts in, for example, Iraq, Syria, and Libya. Also, Iran's nuclear ambitions and regional policy objectives create an insecure security environment that requires Turkey to maintain effective and capable military force, as well as military potential for deterrence.

The political role of the defence industry is primarily engaged with the role of the state in international politics. Arm exports are not only economically profitable for a state, but can also be used to exert political influence. Therefore, in its foreign and defence policy, a sovereign country seeks a level of independence and capabilities that will enable it to equip and operate armed forces on its own. Exports of military equipment can strengthen political alliances and gain political influence in importing states. In the case of Turkey, the development of the defence

industry can also be seen as a kind of prestige. The ability of the defence industry to develop and manufacture advanced, high-tech weapons systems is a symbol of technological and industrial capabilities and superpower status. According to the Turkish government’s geostrategic approach, the development of a national defence industry could help lay the foundations for a more independent foreign policy (Besenyő and Málnássy, 2022, 10-21).



Figure no. 1: Fields of Turkey’s military enforcement in recent years¹

*From an economic point of view, the defence industry is an important sector of the national economy. The revenue provided by the defence industry makes a significant contribution to the national economy. Companies operating in this sector produce significant profits, invest significant sums in, *inter alia*, the development of advanced technologies and various researches, and employ a large number of skilled workers. In doing so, the defence industry also boosts practically the economic growth, industrial and technological development and social well-being (Ilchenko, Brusakova, Burchenko, Yaroshenko and Bagan, 2021, 438-454).*

¹ ***, “Turkey’s Active Military Involvement and Military Presence in the Region”, *Foreign Policy*, URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/08/turkey-military-overstretched-nagorno-karabakh-turkish-military-presence/>, accessed on 15.06.2022.

3. Overlapping Spheres of Interest, Conflicting Regional Interests between Russia and Turkey

Russia is pursuing an increasingly active foreign policy globally, both through military and non-military means. The withdrawal of the United States in certain geopolitical areas has provided an opportunity to activate Russian foreign policy and also to fill power gaps. For Turkey, this could be a challenge especially where the interests of the two countries overlap and conflict with one another. The geographical proximity of Russia and Turkey has a significant impact on their foreign policy relations. Geographical proximity also means that two states can increase their influence only at the expense of each other. Their conflicts of interest are typically strategic, and their goals are mostly incompatible, which entails conflicts of power. Russia and Turkey have traditionally had overlapping interests in the Caucasus and the wider Black Sea region (including part of Ukraine’s maritime territories), the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, Central Asia and the Balkans.

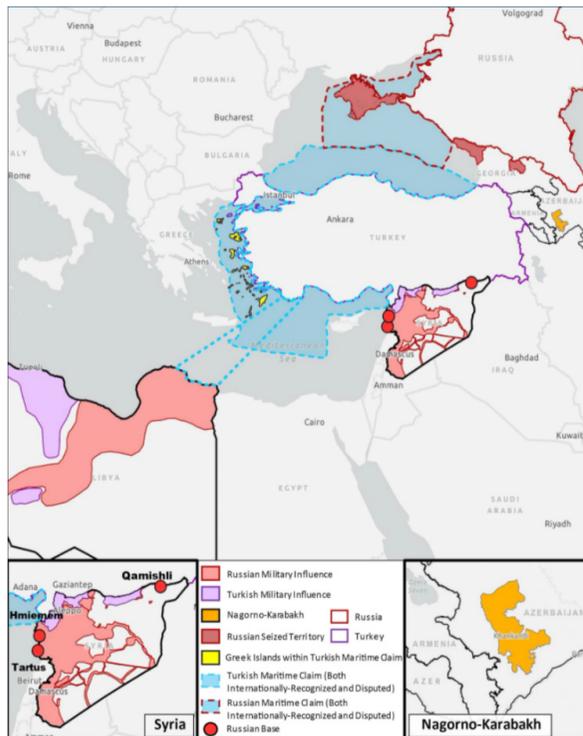


Figure no. 2: Turkey’s maritime and continental spheres of influence in the region²

² ***, “Russia-Turkey Competition Escalates across Theaters”, *Institute for the Study of War*, URL: <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/russia-turkey-competition-escalates-across-theaters>, accessed on 15.06.2022.



The “frozen conflicts” in the Caucasus and the wider Black Sea region are already a more serious and acute source of instability. These areas also serve as a kind of buffer zone between Turkey and Russia. The events in Georgia and Ukraine, as well as the conflict in Karabakh, certainly deserve special attention. The situation of the various Turkish-speaking peoples living in the region can also be a source of tension. However, these areas have traditionally been part of Russia’s near abroad, where Ankara has not openly questioned Russian influence so far.

The Russians sought to have a warm-sea exit, and the Turks have sought to roll back Russian influence in the South and Eastern Mediterranean ever since the Ottoman Empire. However, Russian policy in the Middle East, beyond the Eastern Mediterranean, is in many respects contrary to Ankara’s interests. Moscow and Ankara support definitely different forces, preferring different outcomes in the surrounding regional conflicts (Nagorno-Karabakh, Libya and Syria) (Torbakov 2010, 31-39). Moscow’s re-emergence in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean, Ankara’s sphere of interest, led to a conflict in the recent relationship between the two states.

4. The Conflict between Russia and Ukraine and Turkish-Ukrainian Ties

In 2011, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu laid the foundations of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council between Turkey and Ukraine, including joint government meetings. Following the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, a serious rapprochement can be observed between the two countries. Turkey saw the annexation as a strategic threat, as Russia had strengthened its position in the Black Sea, which seemed to be a more significant problem, especially at the time of the deterioration of relations between the two countries at the end of 2015 (Celikpala and Ersen, 2018, 72-92). In this context, Erdoğan condemned the Russian move, while reassuring the Crimean Tatars – who were in an increasingly difficult position – of Turkey’s support.

The shooting down of the Russian Su-24, which violated Turkish airspace, could be seen as a breakthrough in Ukrainian-Turkish relations, as a result of which Ankara had to reconsider its economic dependence on Russia and the military-political dangers of a deteriorating relationship. As a result, high-level meetings between Ukrainian and Turkish leaders began in early 2016. Turkey’s approach was well received by the Ukrainians, and Petro Poroshenko, then the Ukrainian head of state, briefly had visited Turkey several times. Due to the political rapprochement, joint government meetings also became more frequent, with the tenth one held in February 2022, as a result of which the free trade agreement was also signed. This can also be seen as beneficial for Kyiv, as Turkey is Ukraine’s fourth most important trading partner (Karasova and Mishchenko, 2021, 210-218).



In parallel with the revival of political cooperation, major Turkish corporations have been commissioned in Ukraine, such as metro and mobile network construction. In addition, a mass visit of Ukrainian tourists to Turkey has begun, and by 2021 they had already made up the largest group after the Russians and Germans. In addition to political and economic cooperation, military cooperation including that of the military industry also started to develop rapidly, and this continued into the mid-2016 settlement of Russian-Turkish relations. The most important part of the military and military industrial cooperation was the sale of Turkish drones, with Turkey agreeing to sell dozens of Bayraktar TB-2 drones from 2019 and deciding to manufacture them in Ukraine since Erdoğan's visit in February 2022. The Bayraktar TB-2s were also deployed in the conflict-stricken eastern part of Ukraine in October 2021, to demonstrate its technical superiority over separatist forces using Soviet military technology (Stein 2022, 2-16).

5. Ankara's Security Perception and Attitude to the 2022 Conflict between Russia and Ukraine

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan repeatedly indicated in the fall of 2021 that he would mediate between the opposing Russian and Ukrainian sides. The Turkish head of state also offered to mediate between the Ukrainian and Russian presidents, during his visit to Ukraine, in February 2022. However, after the end of the Chinese Winter Olympics, events began to escalate rapidly and thus Turkish diplomacy remained reactive. The recognition of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics was condemned by the Turkish Foreign Ministry, which also stood for Ukraine's political unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty, but, like other countries, had no real impact on what has happened (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, 2022).

With the attack of February 24, 2022, Ankara had little room for maneuver. On the first day of the war outbreak, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan condemned the Russian military operation and acknowledged Ukraine's territorial integrity. At the same time, he stressed that Turkey's relations with both countries are friendly and have close political, economic and social ties. The Ukrainian ambassador asked the Turkish government to close the Turkish Straits and the country's airspace for Russian aircraft. Turkey has activated Article 19 of the Montreux Conventions on War and shut down the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus from warships in war-torn states, acknowledging that war is taking place in the Black Sea region. This move was welcomed by the United States (Kraska 2022).

However, Ankara has not complied with Ukraine's request to close its airspace in front of Russian aircraft, just as it did not adopt sanctions against Russia, as it did in 2014. Moreover, in the first month of war, Turkey received more than ten thousand Russian citizens, and the number of Russians and Ukrainians buying homes in Turkey



increased. According to the decision of the Turkish National Security Council at the end of March 2022, the straits continue to be closed and mediation activities will continue. In the meantime, Turkish diplomacy will do its utmost to facilitate the end of the war, or at least the signing of a ceasefire, in which the country has made some progress due to its geopolitical weight (Tapia 2022, 15-17).

The first major development took place in front of the Diplomatic Forum in Antalya on March 10, 2022, when Sergei Lavrov, Russia, and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba sat down to negotiate. The Turkish Foreign Ministry has made serious efforts to get the two foreign ministers to sit down in order to negotiate. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu consulted with them separately, but no significant results were achieved. A more successful day was March 29, 2022, when the Ukrainian and Russian negotiating delegations met again in Istanbul for a few hours, and the Russian side indicated that it was reducing its military activities in the vicinity of Kyiv and Chernihiv. Erdoğan, on the way home from Uzbekistan in late March, also signaled the country's willingness to be one of Ukraine's security countries and reaffirmed its mediation between Zelensky and Putin (Tapia 2022, 10-18).

For the Ukrainian side, Turkey's most significant contribution to the conflict was the Turkish drones. At the outbreak of the war, the number of Turkish drones on the territory of Ukraine was raised to many dozens. Some of these were destroyed by the attackers but most of the Bayraktar TB-2s were left to be used by the Ukrainian army. Thus, in the first days of the war, several successful attacks were carried out against Russian military targets. The limited numbers and capabilities of the Bayraktars prevented it from reversing the war, but their well-digitized deployments, such as videos of the shooting of Russian targets, provided excellent propaganda material to boost Ukrainian fighting morale (Egeresi 2022, 2-10). It is not known exactly how many working Turkish drones are currently in the hands of the Ukrainians, but it can be said that the Turkish military technology is well tested and therefore, the Turkish drone manufacturers can expect additional orders. After war outbreak, Turkey has continued to transport drones, but as it did in the fall of 2021, it relied on business relations and did not present it to the world as military aid (Can 2022).

6. Breakthrough Development of Turkish Drone Capabilities (UAVs) in the Light of Geopolitics

Bayraktar TB-2 is the best known drone in the Turkish military industry. Medium-altitude, long-flight (MALE) drones can stay in the air for up to 24 hours. Bayraktar has a wingspan of 12 meters, a length of 6.5 meters and a maximum take-off weight of 650 kilograms and 5-8 thousand meters, respectively. Bayraktar completed its first mission in southeastern Turkey in 2016, against targets of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Unmanned aerial vehicles were initially used primarily as part of



Turkey's operations in northern Iraq and Syria. However, Turkish drones appeared on the international arms market as well: in 2018, Qatar and, then, Ukraine signed agreements to procure Turkish drones. In doing so, Turkey has caught up with the United States, Israel, China and Iran, as an exporter of combat drones (Besenyő and Málnássy 2022, 15-16).

In the early 2020s, Turkish drones appeared in more and more battlefields. In Syria, the drones played a key role and caused significant casualties in the ranks of the Assad regime. Regarding Libya, Turkish Bayraktars sent in support of the Government of National Accord (GNA) made headlines by destroying a Russian-made Pancir-Sz1 air defence system. In the Eastern Mediterranean, some of the patrols and reconnaissance tasks were taken over by Turkish drones, further bolstering the maritime border dispute off the coasts of Greece, Cyprus and Turkey. Finally, a significant number of Turkish combat drones also arrived in Azerbaijan, which contributed greatly to Baku's military success in Karabakh (Can 2022, 2-4).

There are several benefits to using drones in the battlefield. Perhaps the most important of these is cost-effectiveness. Although Bayraktar drones are far from cheap construction (the price of a Bayraktar TB-2 is estimated at about \$ 5 million), they are still much cheaper than fighter jets; especially if one adds the cost of training of the fighter pilot. Due to the use of UAVs, there is no need to risk human lives on the battlefield, so decision-makers do not have to account for the casualties in front of their constituents. The Turkish drones were indeed remarkably effective, destroying many targets in the battlefields mentioned above. However, several other aspects are worth considering. First, the aircrafts are not valuable in themselves; in many cases, they have more of an executive role in an integrated system. Effective reconnaissance, a communication system, and electronic jamming are all essential elements of a successful drone operation, as are well-trained personnel (Düz 2022, 4-31).

However, drones are far from invulnerable. Turkey, for example, had lost at least 20 drones in Syria and Libya in the first six months of 2020. Bayraktar TB-2 has no active or passive defence system against attack from either the ground or the air. In addition, the enemy's effective electronic warfare can force them to the ground. Turkish combat drones were highly effective against opponents who were surprised by the large-scale use of drones and did not have proper air defence and strong electronic interference. Therefore, it is advisable for the 21st century forces to prepare for war against UAVs.

Conclusions

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict that started on 24 February, 2022, brought about many important geopolitical changes for the surrounding regions. Turkey is in a special situation, as recently, Ankara has tried to build good relationship both with



Ukraine and Russia. Turkey became a mediator during the conflict and will probably try to maintain this position in the future. The most important result of Turkish diplomacy so far is that it facilitated the “peace talks”, in Turkey, with the parties involved in the conflict. Despite not joining the sanctions against Russia, Ankara has sent aid supplies and drones to Ukraine to present the country’s geopolitical relevance. Turkish drones have been involved in several armed conflicts and have been successfully tested in several cases and battlefields. Drone technology will most likely improve rapidly, and there are also new technologies on the horizon that could make UAVs more effective.

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MOTIVATION OF QANON CONSPIRACY THEORIES APPROPRIATION BY CHRISTIANS AND THE EXPANSION OF THE PHENOMENON IN 2022

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Although the QAnon movement is regarded as an extreme right-wing movement whose members have exposed conspiracy theories apparently unrelated to the Christian religion, scientific research and journalistic investigations of the phenomenon have revealed that some of the movement's adherents are religious people, members of Christian parishes or congregations in the United States of America or in other countries where the phenomenon has spread.

This article will highlight the appropriation of QAnon conspiracy theories by members of some Christian churches or congregations, beliefs viewed with concern by the pastors of the respective religious communities, who are sounding the alarm regarding the development of religious feelings based on biblical precepts combined with QAnon conspiracy theories.

The use of scientific tools, such as conducting opinion polls in highlighting the trend of the phenomenon, has revealed that the number of those who adopt the QAnon conspiracy theories is increasing, in just four months, from February to June 2022, the number of Americans who believe in these theories has increased by over three million.

Keywords: *QAnon; right-wing extremism; conspiracies; Christianity; churches; faith; religion.*

Introduction

In recent years, some followers of Christianity have embraced QAnon conspiracy theories, interpreting them through the religious precepts

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recorded in the Bible, respectively connecting the biblical precepts to QAnon conspiracy theories to establish an apocalyptic causal relationship.

QAnon theories began to be present in Christian churches in the United States of America (U.S.), with conspiracy ideas being amalgamated with elements of Christian doctrine. As a result, members of such religious congregations have interpreted these theories with the help of biblical precepts, but also conversely, they have found and highlighted many biblical ideas that they consider to be a justification or divine revelation of things found in QAnon theories.

Ari Shapiro, a journalist with National Public Radio, and investigative journalist Katelyn Beaty¹, in an appearance on that station, examined “the spread of the QAnon conspiracy theory in Christian communities in the United States” (Shapiro 2020).

In an article published in Religion News Service about QAnon, Katelyn Beaty stated that the ideas promoted by this group are taking hold in some Christian churches because some people who attend them are prone to adopt conspiracy theories, as “these Christians thrive on a narrative of media cover-up” (Beaty 2020b).

Another expert on the phenomenon is Marc-André Argentino, a researcher at Concordia University who, in an article called “The Church of QAnon: Will conspiracy theories form the basis of a new religious movement?”, says that followers of QAnon movement are moving towards a Christian religious transformation. Argentino stated that a group of QAnon followers began to interpret the movement’s own ideology in relation to Christian doctrine, interpreting the Bible through QAnon conspiracy theories (Argentino 2020). For the purpose of his scientific approach to establish the degree of religiosity of followers of the QAnon movement, for a period of three months beginning on February 23, 2020, Argentino participated online in the public religious services of a QAnon church affiliated with a Christian-evangelical congregation called Omega Kingdom Ministry (OKM). The conclusion reached by the respective researcher of the phenomenon was that in the said church, QAnon conspiracy theories are on the one hand “reinterpreted through the Bible” and on the other hand “serve as a lens to interpret the Bible itself” (Argentino 2020).

Likewise, Adrienne LaFrance describes the QAnon movement in an article in *The Atlantic*, entitled “The Prophecies of Q - American conspiracy theories enter a dangerous new phase”, as one “united in a mass rejection of reason, objectivity, and other Enlightenment values”. She also stated in June 2020 that the expansion of the movement is only just beginning and places a strong emphasis on “a deep sense of belonging”, meaning that the emergence of the QAnon movement represents “the birth of a new religion” and “not just a conspiracy theory” (LaFrance 2020).

In this context, it should be noted that the trigger factor for the emergence of QAnon movement is considered to be “Edgar Maddison Welch, a deeply religious individual and father of two”, who, armed with several assault rifles loaded with

¹ Ex-managing editor of Christianity Today.



lethal ammunition, entered the Comet Ping Pong pizzeria in Washington, D.C., on December 4, 2016, where he suspected satanic child sacrifice rituals were taken place (LaFrance 2020). That pizzeria was mentioned in several emails of former White House Chief of Staff John Podesta, made public by WikiLeaks in October 2016. Thus, Edgar Maddison Welch considered the information about Pizzagate to be true and legitimized his violent approach to people he suspected of meeting that food-establishment legitimate (LaFrance 2020).

So, members of some Christian congregations in the U.S. have appropriated QAnon conspiracy theories as they have interpreted them from the perspective of Christian teachings as divine revelations on the one hand and used them to supplement biblical precepts on the other. The development of such distorted religiosity in relation to the official dogmas of the Christian churches determines a behavior prone to violence.

1. QAnon, Christian Churches, and the Internet

The connection between Christianity and QAnon conspiracy theories is highlighted even by Christian clergy, leaders of some congregations in the U.S., who identify the problems generated by this phenomenon within their own religious communities.

Thus, Pastor Mark Fugitt of Round Grove Baptist Church in Miller, Missouri, has released an analysis of conspiracy theories appropriated by followers of his own congregation. Among them, the pastor listed: mind control via fifth generation telecommunications technology known as 5G; the death of people wearing Covid-19 masks, as it is false that they save their lives; Bill Gates – the owner of Microsoft is related to Satan; the germ theory is false, but the Pizzagate theory is true; the existence of a location where a cabal of the world’s elite ritually sacrifices children; the death of African-American George Floyd was just a simple strategy to achieve hidden goals (Beaty 2020b).

Similarly, Pastor Jeb Barr of the First Baptist Church of Elm Mott Waco in Texas stated about the appropriation of QAnon’s theories by Christians that the phenomenon is “extremely widespread” because it is transmitted through its “online church networks”. The pastor also said of his parishioners that they believe “communists are taking over America and operating a pedophile ring out of a pizza parlor” (Beaty 2020b). The theories that QAnon followers expound and propagate are amalgamated with doctrinal precepts about Jesus Christ, thus becoming very attractive to co-religionists: “QAnon has features akin to syncretism — the practice of blending traditional Christian beliefs with other spiritual systems, such as Santeria². Q explicitly uses Bible verses to urge adherents to stand firm

² “Santería - or “the worship of saints” - is gaining ground as a popular religious practice in Cuba. Developed in the African slave communities of the island’s 18th-century sugar plantations, it’s a syncretic religion adopting elements of Spanish-imposed Catholicism while maintaining the central beliefs of Africa’s kidnapped natives, primarily Nigeria’s Yoruba tribe.” (Phil Clarke Hill, n.d.).



against evil elites. One charismatic church based in Indiana hosts two-hour Sunday services that show how Bible prophecies confirm Q’s messages. Its leaders tell the congregation to stop watching mainstream media (even conservative media) in favor of QAnon YouTube channels and the Qmap website.” (Beaty 2020b).

Thus, it is worth noting that QAnon has the features of a syncretistic movement as it amalgamates elements of Christian doctrine and rituals, i.e. “explicitly uses Bible verses to urge adherents to stand firm against evil elites” (Beaty 2020b) and “proliferates in white evangelical circles”, although many of the Christians who pass them on do not know what the QAnon movement stands for (Posner 2020).

Many messages posted online by QAnon followers invoke biblical precepts. One of these found in the Old Testament, in the Second Book of Chronicles, chapter 7, says: “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (Holy Bible, 2 Chronicles 7:14). This Bible verse is interpreted by QAnon religious followers in the U.S. as a promise of divine intervention to reform American society: “God will free America of the satanic denizens of the ‘deep state’³ who run a global child sex trafficking network” (Posner 2020).

The transformation of the QAnon movement is made possible by branches of Protestant Christianity, also emerging in the U.S., that emphasize a charismatic leader. “The neo-charismatic movement is a branch of evangelical Protestant Christianity,” says Marc-André Argentino, which includes “thousands of independent organizations” (Argentino 2020).

Leaders of the QAnon movement, such as David Hayes, post a number of materials on media platforms such as YouTube, watched by hundreds of thousands of people. David Hayes describes himself as a convert from atheism, becoming a person of faith. He started posting messages on December 12, 2017, about his calling by divinity: “God wants me to keep my attention focused on politics and current events. After a few prayers, I decided to do a regular presentation of news and current events on Periscope. I try to do one broadcast a day” (LaFrance 2020).

David Hayes has been followed on social media by a large number of people. He had on 391,000 followers on his YouTube channel “prayingmedic” as of 15 October 2020, whose motto was: “A virtual classroom about the kingdom of God” and on which there were links to other Twitter and Facebook accounts (Youtube channel “prayingmedic” n.d.) as well as to a website called Mobile Intensive Prayer Unit - The personal blog of Praying Medic (Blog Mobile Intensive Prayer Unit n.d.). David Hayes was also followed by 411,246 people on his Twitter account Praying Medic (@prayingmedic) on 15 October 2020 (Praying Medic (@prayingmedic) - Twitter account, n.d.).

³ According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the “deep state” is “an alleged secret network of especially nonelected government officials and sometimes private entities (as in the financial services and defense industries) operating extralegally to influence and enact government policy” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.).



Dave Hayes has set out his ideas through several books he has published in recent years, the titles of some of which are instructive in this regard: “The Great Awakening”, “Calm Before the Storm – Q Chronicles”, “Divine Healing Made Simple” (via indicating how exorcisms should be performed), “My Craziest Adventures With God – Volume 1” and “My Craziest Adventures With God – Volume 2” (recounting “miracles he witnessed”) and “Seeing in the Spirit Made Simple” (dedicated to those who wish to learn to see “the realms of angels and demons”), “Operating in the Court of Angels” (dedicated to those who want “to meet and co-labor with angels”), “Hearing God’s Voice Made Simple” (dedicated to “those who want to hear God’s voice more clearly”) (Blog Mobile Intensive Prayer Unit n.d.).

Another example of a promoter of this movement is Omega Kingdom Ministry (OKM), part of a large religious congregation called Home Congregations Worldwide (HCW), which has as its “spiritual adviser” one Mark Taylor (Argentino 2020), an individual convinced that “the same deep state that controls the world has also infiltrated traditional churches”, which is why his organization has a “responsibility” to cleanse the “church” of these intrusive elements (Pandemic spreads conspiracies far and wide among a range of believers n.d.). The website owned by Omega Kingdom Ministry promotes ideas in which “QAnon theories and biblical references” are intertwined. Thus, a series of ten materials posted on the YouTube platform by HCW formed the basis of the “weekly Bible study” at services of the mentioned QAnon church, according to what Marc-André Argentino observed during his attendance at services (Argentino 2020). The services were officiated by Russ Wagner, OKM leader from Indiana, beginning with prayers for the protection of the camera from Satan, followed by an hour of Bible study in which the “Fall Cabal video”⁴ was explained and commented on through “the lens of the Bible and QAnon narratives”, and a prayer and fellowship of followers at the end of the service (Argentino 2020).

OKM propagates the political ideology influenced by Christianity known as the “Seven Mountains of Societal Influence” aimed at “socio-political and economic transformation through the Gospel of Jesus” through seven components of the respective societies, namely: “religion, family, education, government, media, entertainment and business”. Such theology fits perfectly into the ideology propagated by the QAnon movement and “blends QAnon’s apocalyptic desire to destroy society “controlled” by the deep state with the need for the Kingdom of God on Earth” (Argentino 2020).

There are other cases of Christian churches in the U.S. involved in propagation of QAnon conspiracy ideas, such as Rock Urban Church in Grandville, Michigan,

⁴ “Fall Cabal” is actually a 10-part documentary created by a Dutch conspiracy theorist named Janet Ossebaard, a documentary widely used to indoctrinate members of Christian congregations into QAnon followers, being used as material in weekly Bible studies (Argentino 2020).



or religious leaders such as Danny Silk –pastor of Bethel Church⁵ and John MacArthur –an evangelical pastor in California (Burke 2020). These cases are not unique, with Paul Anleitner⁶ warning that there are more and more “conservative Christians” who read from a so-called QAnon Bible, clerics who talk about the “deep state”, QAnon conspiracy theories debated in Bible studies, or Christians being indoctrinated with QAnon theories by influential religious leaders (Burke 2020). Moreover, evangelical Christians in the U.S. “are natural targets for QAnon”, as they are the ones who have been warning for the last 40 years that internal imbalances will be created because of the amplification of doubts towards society and towards the elites. These feelings are generated by the abandonment of the absolute truth found only in the word of God, recorded in the Bible (Beaty 2020b).

The objective of Omega Kingdom Ministry as presented on the organization’s website “is to restore the principles and practice of Christianity from the first century to the 21st century by training, equipping, and releasing Christian leaders” (Omega Kingdom Ministry website n.d.). For this purpose, training of followers is sought, and the Home Congregations Worldwide website has the necessary information resources, the organization having as its motto: “Discipling a Nation by Training and Coaching Leaders to Begin Home Congregations - One Community at a Time” (Website Home Congregations Worldwide n.d.).

Jared Stacy, pastor of Spotswood Baptist Church in Fredericksburg, Virginia, says that QAnon conspiracy theories are especially appropriated by members of his church who share and distribute on Facebook theories about the Coronavirus, the conspiracy involving Jeffrey Epstein or the actions of pedophiles (Beatty 2020b). For his part, John van Sloten, pastor at Marda Loop Church in Calgary, Canada, believes that behind the protests against measures ordered by the authorities to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infections, including those related to the mandatory wearing of masks, is a developed “theology” (Dryden 2020). That’s why the leaders of the QAnon church ask their followers “to stop listening to any media” because they are Satanists, instead pointing them to YouTube channels that propagate QAnon content to watch daily as a dose of therapy. At the same time, the same clerics tell parishioners to follow the Qmap website or influencers of the QAnon movement, who distribute material and post messages on social media (Argentino 2020).

The appropriation of QAnon conspiracy theories by Christians is evidenced by their stance during the January 6, 2021 assault on the U.S. Congress. Thus, Jacob Anthony Angeli Chansley, known as Jake Angeli and the QAnon Shaman, asked his companions to pray together in the U.S. Senate chamber: “Thank you Heavenly Father for gracing us with this opportunity... to send a message to all tyrants, communists and globalists that this is our nation, not theirs. Thank you for filling this chamber with

⁵ A Pentecostal megachurch in Redding, California.

⁶ An evangelical pastor in Minneapolis.



patriots that love you and that love Christ. Thank you for allowing the United States of America to be reborn,” was the prayer uttered by the QAnon Shaman (Joyce 2022b).

“So there is this kind of holy trinity,” Kathryn Joyce says of QAnon believers, “freedom for us, order for everyone else. And when that order is violated, they get violence” (Joyce 2022a). Also, in the context, at a 2022 event in the U.S. called “Patriots Arise”, which began with the presentation of conspiracy theories, a former colonel in the U.S. Armed Forces named Doug Mastriano gave a lecture on the occasion of the event and at the end of it he received a sword inscribed with the phrase: “For God and country” (Dias 2022). Francine Fosdick, an organizer of political and social events through a website that also promoted QAnon slogans, and who promoted that event, told Mastriano that she got the sword because “you’ve been cutting a lot of heads off”, also conveying to them that “You fight for our religious rights in the name of Christ Jesus, and so we wanted to bless you with that sword of David.” (Dias 2022).

What is striking is that QAnon is not considered a mere political ideology, but is viewed by Katelyn Beaty as “a spiritual worldview that co-opts many Christian-sounding ideas to promote false claims about actual human beings.” (Beatty 2020b).

The language used by the QAnon movement is a spiritual-Christian one, and the constant focus on the Manichean dichotomy⁷ creates the real premises of a great awakening of Christians through prophecies that come more recently from the Q messenger. As a result, “it is easy for many white evangelicals to read their Bibles and connect the dots between what they read there and what they hear from QAnon sources” (Beatty 2020a).

Thus, QAnon conspiracy theories have spread and continue to spread through religious congregations, including through the virtual environment, with clergy sermons adapted to these theories and promoted as absolute truth as they have been mixed with religious and biblical precepts to point to the divine character of the message transmitted. The propagation of the message of conspiracy theories and Christian teachings has generated a strong religiosity that has led some followers to become violent, as is the case of the people who stormed the U.S. Congress on January 6, 2022.

2. Trends in the Evolution of the QAnon Phenomenon

Following studies conducted in 2021 by the Public Religion Research Institute in Washington DC, the U.S., through several opinion polls whose results were published on February 24, 2022, it was concluded that approximately 41 million Americans, i.e. 16 % of the U.S. adult population, were “QAnon believers” (Jenkins 2022). Of the total survey participants, respondents strongly agreed with three fundamental statements of the QAnon movement in the following percentages:

⁷ Manichaeism dichotomy is a religious doctrine developed in the third century AD. de Mani, a Persian philosopher and theologian, “its fundamental principle was the existence of, and eternal conflict between, absolute good and absolute evil” (Petsko 2008, 1).



“1. The U.S. government, media and financial world are controlled by a group of Satan-worshipping pedophiles who run a global child sex-trafficking operation – 16%;

2. There is a storm coming soon that will sweep away the elites in power and restore the rightful leaders–22%;

3. Because things have gotten so far off track, true American patriots may have to resort to violence in order to save our country – 18%.” (PRRI Staff 2022b).

Natalie Jackson, director of research at the institute, stated based on poll results, that “QAnon conspiracy theories are not losing popularity over time, despite their championed leader being no longer in power” (n.a. former President Donald Trump). It also states that despite the fact that “these believers are racially, religiously, and politically diverse, the unifying beliefs are that their way of life is under attack and that they might be willing to resort to violence to defend their vision of the country.” (PRRI Staff 2022a).

Polling found that 22% of the American adult population “mostly or completely agree that there an upheaval in American politics is coming”, 18% of the surveyed public believe that “violence might be necessary to save our country”, and 16% of Americans believe that “the government, the media, and the financial world are controlled by Satan-worshipping pedophiles” (PRRI Staff 2022b).

The same polls also revealed that 59% of Americans surveyed believe that the perpetrators of the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Congress are members and sympathizers of far-right groups and organizations. Also, 56% of those interviewed believe Donald Trump, former U.S. president, is to blame for the attack, but also “conservative media platforms that spread conspiracy theories and misinformation” (PRRI Staff 2022b).

At the same time, polls have shown that 9% of Americans agree to commit violence, believing that this way the country will be saved. Juxtaposing this percentage with that of QAnon believers who believe that “God has granted America a special role in human history”, a fairly high percentage of 68% of QAnon adherents hold this belief (PRRI Staff 2022b), reveals a skewed attitude to their extreme violence.

Ian Huff published an article on June 24, 2022, on the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) website, called “QAnon Beliefs Have Increased Since 2021 as Americans Are Less Likely to Reject Conspiracies”, in which he also highlighted the results of other surveys, following the same three questions as in the one whose results were published on February 24, 2022 (Huff 2022). Thus, the results revealed that “27% of Americans agree that a storm is coming that will sweep away elites in power, 19% agree that violence may be necessary to save the country, and 18% agree that the government, media, and financial world are controlled by Satan-worshipping pedophiles” (Huff 2022). It can thus be observed that in the four months between the publication dates of the two results, February



24, 2022 and June 24, 2022, the percentage of those who believe in QAnon conspiracy theories increased slightly. More precisely, in four months, the number of Americans who believe in QAnon conspiracy theories increased by approximately 3.35 million, which is 1% of the U.S. population (United States Population n.d.).

If in February 2022, 22% of Americans believed that “a storm is coming that will sweep away elites in power”, in June 2022, 27% of Americans held this belief. Similarly, if in February 2022, 18% of Americans believed that “violence may be necessary to save the country”, in June 2022, 19% held the same belief. If in February 2022, 16% of Americans believed that “the government, the media, and the financial world are controlled by Satan-worshipping pedophiles”, by June 2022, 18% held the same belief (Jenkins 2022; PRRI Staff 2022b). The 18% of the U.S. population represents 60 million Americans (United States Population n.d.).

At the end of June 2022, the mysterious leader of the QAnon movement, namely Q, posted via the 8Kun platform a message to Americans in the context of the hearings of the U.S. Congress regarding the assault of January 6, 2021 on the headquarters of the U.S. legislative building. This message was a simple one, but with strong reverberations on the belief and values system of QAnon followers (Murphy 2022). After more than a year of not posting, Q relayed the following: “Shall we play a game once more?” and “Are you ready to serve your country again? Remember your oath.” (Thompson 2022).

Joseph E. Uscinski, a University of Miami political science associate professor and researcher who has studied the QAnon movement, stated that “most QAnon believers were not there on January 6,” in the sense that they did not participate in the assault on the U.S. Congress. According to the same researcher, this fact discloses that the phenomenon reveals major problems in society and not a cause, “Q is a symptom of a larger issue, not the cause” (Murphy 2022).

Regardless of whether the foundation of QAnon conspiracy theories is focused on the person behind the pseudonym Q, or other such theories, “Americans should be worried about the prevalence of conspiracy theories in modern life” (Murphy 2022).

Therefore, by applying in 2021 and between February and June 2022 some sets of questionnaires subsumed by opinion polls, it was highlighted that QAnon Movement is growing in scope, the number of conspiracy theorists increased in four months by several million followers in the U.S. alone.

Conclusions

To this day, the QAnon movement is manifesting itself primarily in the space where American Christian culture and spirituality manifests itself. This conclusion is based on the fact that QAnon conspiracy theories have been appropriated by a number of Christian churches and congregations in the U.S., which have amalgamated Christian precepts, especially Bible verses, with conspiracy theories.



QAnon theories have come to be justified by biblical precepts, being described as extensions of biblical prophecies, but conversely, conspiracy theories have led to the highlighting the contemporary reality of ideas or teachings recorded in the Bible.

These religious preaching of QAnon theories, including treating them as sacred writings and studying them during religious services held on feast days, highlight the deeply religious nature of the direction in which the beliefs or faiths of the believers who form the QAnon movement are directed, namely towards the emergence of new rites or religious confessions, or even new religions of Christian origin.

Members of some Christian congregations have appropriated QAnon conspiracy theories on the basis of beliefs related to the idea of a global cover-up of the existence of a satanic cabal, as well as interpreting these theories from the perspective of implementing biblical precepts and the divine right to protect humanity against Satan. In such a context, violence committed in the name of religious beliefs becomes not only acceptable, but appears as mandatory for the defence of the holy precepts, as they are developed and viewed by believers. Although Q has not posted a single message in the past year, the QAnon movement has not contracted, it has not disappeared, but has remained in a dormant state following the attack on the U.S. Congress, and its followers are likely to spring into action at the next click.

The extent of the phenomenon is highlighted by a method of scientific research, the interview, a tool that ensures the application of opinion polls and which indicates the increasing trend of appropriating QAnon conspiracy theories.

Combining QAnon conspiracy theories with biblical precepts and Christian teachings has led to the emergence of a movement with strong convictions against a section of the population consisting of people they consider to be the messengers of Satan and whom they must fight, including with weapons, on behalf of Christian communities, a creed in the name of which they are willing to kill, not only to be very violent. So if only 0.01% of the American followers of the QAnon movement, 6,000 people to be precise, adopt violence-prone behavior in the name of religious beliefs and conspiracy theories, there will be more violence in the next period or the next years in the U.S.

The amalgamation of Christian precepts with those of QAnon conspiracy theories has been done by followers in Europe as well, not only in the U.S., and these beliefs will influence ideas in society, choices and actions of some social groups. On an individual level, some people will become violent and even willing to kill their fellow man to send a message to the rest of the population.

Since it has a religious foundation, the adoption of QAnon conspiracy theories will generate social dichotomy and the rejection of the arguments of others, and the occurrence of violence generated by QAnon followers is not subject to the condition of “if it will take place”, but only refers to the moment “when it will take place”.



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STRATEGIES XXI INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

“Security and Defence Studies” Panel

28-30 June 2022

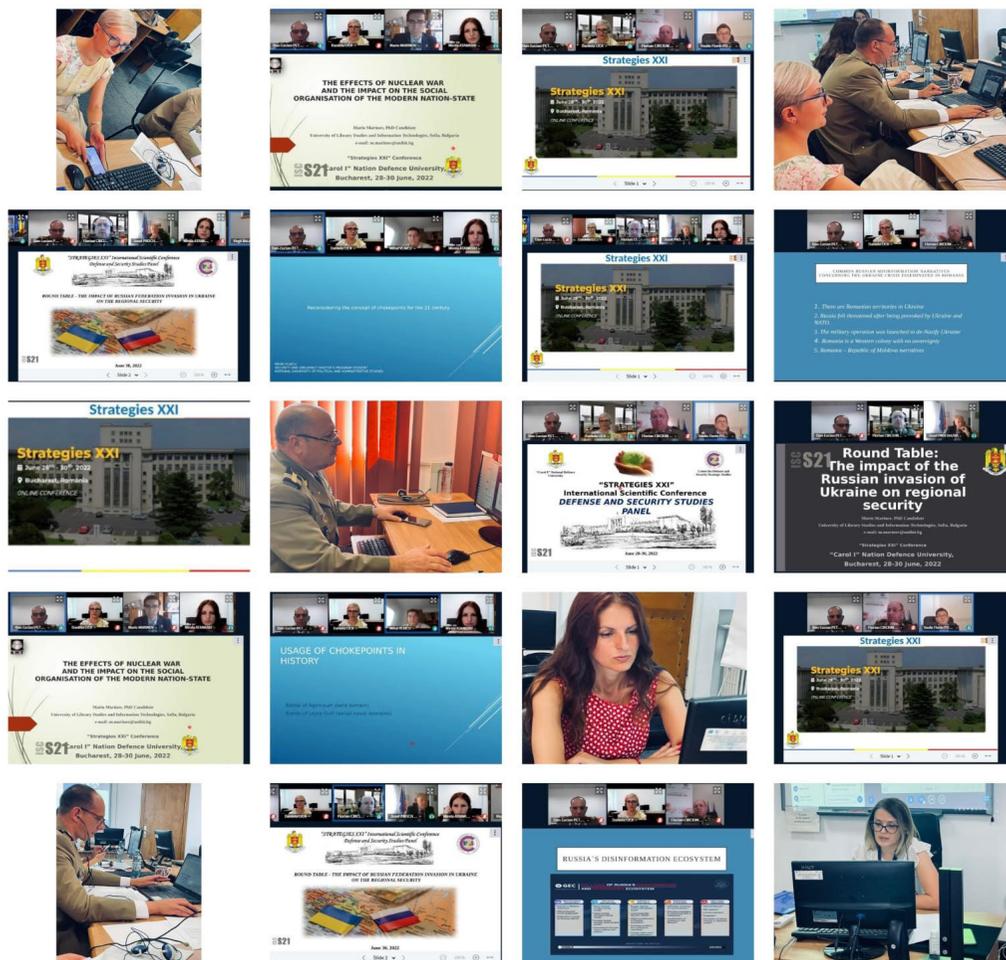
In the academic year 2021-2022, the *STRATEGIES XXI* International Scientific Conference was held between 28-30 June, in a hybrid format, under the joint patronage of the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies (CDSSS), the Faculty of Security and Defence, the Faculty of Command and Staff, and the Doctoral School of the “Carol I” National University of Defence.

The scientific event was conducted entirely in English and comprised four panels, each assigned to organisational structures, aimed at providing a forum for the academic exchange of ideas, opinions and communication of the latest results of scientific research in the field of security and defence.

This year’s edition of the CDSSS-led panel held on 30 June 2022, entitled *Security and Defence Studies*, encompassed four thematic frameworks for debate, as follows:

- *Concepts and Theories in Security and Defence Studies;*
- *Resilience and good governance;*
- *Areas of strategic interest – global trends;*
- *Armed Forces and Society.*

The conference panel was divided into two debate sessions. The first session featured papers focusing on topics such as: civilian-military cooperation, multi-domain military operations, strategic aerospace approach, space industry, the Ukrainian refugee wave, Romania’s resilience in the current security context, “chokepoints” concept for the 21st century, cohesion crisis, strategic compass, strategic concept, strategic autonomy, the Russian-Ukrainian war, nuclear weapons, nuclear conflict, social organisation, societal collapse, strategic migration, European public opinion, economic sanctions, Russian economy, European economy, etc.



Event photo: *STRATEGIES XXI International Scientific Conference*
CDSSS Panel – *Security and Defence Studies* -

The second session was marked by the organization of the Round Table “*The impact of Russian Federation invasion in Ukraine on the regional security*”, during which the events generated by the new geopolitical and geostrategic reality in the Eastern neighbourhood were objectively debated and analysed, focusing on several of its dimensions, political, military, legal, economic, social and informational. The event focused on open discussions between the Romanian participants, but also with foreign representatives from corresponding institutions, namely: Mr. Pavel Pavel Anastasov, Programme Manager, Defence Institution and Capacity Building, NATO Headquarters, Belgium; Lecturer János Besenyő, PhD, Óbuda University, Hungary; Research Scientist Tamás Csiki Varga, PhD, Institute for Strategic and Defence Studies of the National University of Public Service, Budapest, Hungary; Associate



Professor Josef Procházka, PhD, Brno Defence University, Czech Republic; Colonel Andrzej Lis, Director of the Doctrine and Training Centre of the Polish Armed Forces, and Research Scientist Mario Marinov, University of Library Studies and Information Technologies, Bulgaria.



"STRATEGIES XXI" International Scientific Conference
Defense and Security Studies Panel



ROUND TABLE - THE IMPACT OF RUSSIAN FEDERATION INVASION IN UKRAINE
ON THE REGIONAL SECURITY



ISS21

June 30, 2022

Event photo: STRATEGIES XXI International Scientific Conference CDSSS Panel
– Round Table: *The impact of Russian Federation invasion in Ukraine on the regional security*

The large-scale activity was honoured this time by the large attendance, scientific contribution and valuable involvement of the participants. Thus, the scientific event achieved its main objectives by expressing views and communicating the latest research results in the field of security and defence, crisis management and conflict prevention, information systems and cyber security, military history, public international law, contemporary military phenomena, and related fields.

Information about forthcoming events organized by the CDSSS can be found on the website, under scientific events, at <https://cssas.unap.ro/ro/manifestari.htm>

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GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

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Smith, Zadie. 2016. *Swing Time*. New York: Penguin Press.

In-text citation

(Grazer and Fishman 2015, 12)

(Smith 2016, 315–16)

¹ URL: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html



CHAPTER OF AN EDITED BOOK

In the reference list, include the page range for the chapter. In the text, cite specific pages.

Reference list entry

Thoreau, Henry David. 2016. "Walking." *In The Making of the American Essay*, edited by John D'Agata, 167–95. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press.

In-text citation

(Thoreau 2016, 177–78)

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Keng, Shao-Hsun, Chun-Hung Lin, and Peter F. Orazem. 2017. "Expanding College Access in Taiwan, 1978–2014: Effects on Graduate Quality and Income Inequality." *Journal of Human Capital* 11, no. 1 (Spring): 1–34. <https://doi.org/10.1086/690235>.

LaSalle, Peter. 2017. "Conundrum: A Story about Reading." *New England Review* 38 (1): 95–109. Project MUSE.

In-text citation

(Keng, Lin, and Orazem 2017, 9–10)

(LaSalle 2017, 95)

WEBSITE CONTENT

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Bouman, Katie. 2016. "How to Take a Picture of a Black Hole." Filmed November 2016 at TEDxBeaconStreet, Brookline, MA. Video, 12:51. https://www.ted.com/talks/katie_bouman_what_does_a_black_hole_look_like

Google. 2017. "Privacy Policy." Privacy & Terms. Last modified April 17, 2017. <https://www.google.com/policies/privacy/>

Yale University. n.d. "About Yale: Yale Facts." Accessed May 1, 2017. <https://www.yale.edu/about-yale/yale-facts>

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(Bouman 2016)

(Google 2017)

(Yale University, n.d.)



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Manjoo, Farhad. 2017. "Snap Makes a Bet on the Cultural Supremacy of the Camera." *New York Times*, March 8, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/08/technology/snap-makes-a-bet-on-the-cultural-supremacy-of-the-camera.html>

Mead, Rebecca. 2017. "The Prophet of Dystopia." *New Yorker*, April 17, 2017.

Pai, Tanya. 2017. "The Squishy, Sugary History of Peeps." *Vox*, April 11, 2017. <http://www.vox.com/culture/2017/4/11/15209084/peeps-easter>

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(Manjoo 2017)

(Mead 2017, 43)

(Pai 2017)

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