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Content

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Jeremy Black is a prolific lecturer and writer, the author of over 100 books. Many concern aspects of eighteenth century British, European and American political, diplomatic and military history but he has also published on the history of the press, cartography, warfare, culture and on the nature and uses of history itself.

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These and other related activities have ensured that Jeremy Black is one of the leading figures in the world of archives and history.

Maritime Security – Naval Strategy in the Twenty-First Century

Jeremy BLACK, Ph.D.

The historical context is not the only one to consider when assessing maritime security today, but it is a context that offers an ability to assess long-term significance. This context can be approached in a number of ways, not least the rise and fall of maritime empires and its analytical value when considering China and America.

The linkage of power and technology is also a key element. It is now over a century since the meeting in London of the Royal Geographical Society in 1904 heard Halford Mackinder propose his new geopolitics of world power. Basing his argument explicitly on the transformative consequences of railways, Mackinder, both influential geographer and politician of empire, argued that what he termed the capabilities of land power had been greatly enhanced and that the always threatening Eurasian 'Heartland' would be able to redefine power relations in a way that threatened the leading naval power, Britain.

A questioner, the future, would-be, statesman of the British empire, Leo Amery, however proposed, instead at the meeting, a different geopolitics based on a newer technology, that of air power. In light of this grasping of the future, naval power, the basis of British imperial and military strength, appeared weak, if not redundant. Indeed, from the 1900s and, far more 1920s, those looking to the future placed great weight on the new and different in the shape of what air power would apparently be able to do in an undated and unverifiable future, rather than the more limited argument they could actually do in the present. And so those looking to the future have continued to do. The world was literally reconceptualised as new map projections and perspectives, for example centred on the North Pole, focused on the potential and exigencies of the aerial dimension, first with aircraft and then, even more dramatically, with intercontinental rockets.

In contrast, the map projections and perspectives, and linked assumptions, associated with the great age of naval power in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came to appear as redundant as the global trans-oceanic empires it had sustained and displayed. To survive, navies apparently had to adapt. This was an argument that was to be pursued over the following century, first with an emphasis on aircraft

carriers and, subsequently, with submarine-based rocket launchers. Moreover, as a further erosion of naval distinctiveness, 'jointness' came to the fore in the late twentieth century, as both doctrine and, less successfully, practice. Irrespective of this adaptability, the idea of aerial self-sufficiency was taken forward further in the 1990s and early 2000s as a key aspect of what was termed by its American originators and advocates the Revolution in Military Affairs. Air power appeared best to provide the speed and responsiveness that would give force to what was proclaimed to be a revolution in information technology. Mid-air refuelling apparently provided a power-projection for aircraft that made carriers, however dramatic a display of naval power, less relevant.

From a very different direction, the sea also appeared more marginal. Unprecedented and continuing population growth, combined with the breakdown of pre-existing patterns of social and political deference, increased the complexity of government. This contributed to what was termed, from the 1990s, 'wars among the people'. These wars or, at least, serious unrest led, in conflict and in planning and procurement for conflict, to a focus both on major urban centres and on marginal regions that were also difficult to control. Again, this scarcely corresponded to an emphasis on the sea. 'Wars among the people' was very much a doctrine that suited armies, which propounded it, and left navies apparently redundant, their ships as one with the heavy tanks now deemed superfluous. Air power and rapidly-deployed ground troops appeared to provide the speed, precision and force required.

Moreover, this shift appeared demonstrated in the 1990s by a series of developments. These included the continued decline of the once great naval power, Britain, as well as the extent to which America and Russia, the leading naval powers of the 1980s, no longer focused on this branch of their military. In particular, there was a major run down in the American navy, while much of its Russian counterpart literally rusted away. The disastrous loss of the Russian submarine *Kursk* in 2000 suggested that Russia lacked the capacity to maintain its ships effectively. Moreover, the degree to which, in the 1990s, the navy and the oceans were not the prime commitment, military, political and cultural, of the rising economic powers, China and India, appeared striking.

These indications however, were, and are, misleading, and trends in the 2010s pointed in other directions. In practice, naval power remains both very important and with highly significant potential for the future. In addition, a reading of the recent past and of the present, that minimises the role of this power, both neglects the place of naval power in power projection and risks extrapolating a misleading impression into the future.

Geography, as ever, is a key element. Here the prime factor is the location of population growth and the related economic activities of production and consumption. Most of this growth has occurred in coastal and littoral regions, and,

more generally, within 150 miles of the coast. There was been significant inland expansion of the area of settlement in some countries, notably Brazil, as well as population growth in already heavily-settled inland areas of the world, particularly in northern India. Nevertheless, the growth of coastal and littoral regions is more notable. In part, this growth has been linked to the move from the land that has been so conspicuous as petrol-powered machinery became more common in agriculture from the mid-twentieth century. As a result, rural areas lost people: in America (notably the Great Plains) and Western Europe from mid-century, and in Eastern Europe and China from the 1990s. The process is incomplete, particularly in India and Japan, but it is an aspect of the greater significance of cities, most of which are situated on navigable waterways, principally the coast or relevant estuaries. Shanghai is the centre of Chinese economic activity, and Mumbai its Indian counterpart.

The economic growth of these cities is linked to their position in the global trading system. This is one where maritime trade remains foremost. The geopolitical implications of the economic value of seaborne trade require emphasis. In large part, this value is due to the flexibility of this trade and related transport and storage systems. Containerisation from the 1950s proved a key development, as it permitted the ready movement and transhipment of large quantities of goods without high labour needs or costs, and with a low rate of pilfering and damage. Air transport lacked these characteristics, and the fuel cost implications of bulk transport by air made it not viable other than for high value, perishable products, such as cut flowers. The significance of containerisation was enhanced by the ability and willingness of the shipbuilding industry to respond to and shape the new opportunity.

As a result, the character and infrastructure of global trade by sea has been transformed since the 1950s. Moreover, this transformation continues and is readily apparent round the world. A good example is provided by the massed cranes in the new container facilities at Colombo, as well as the new harbour being built with Chinese help further along the Sri Lankan coast, and the numerous container ships off the southern coast of the island. Politics played key roles in this transformation. The development of the global economy after the end of the Cold War focused on the integration into the Western-dominated maritime trading system of states that had been, or still were, Communist, for example China and Vietnam, or that had adopted a Communist (or at least Socialist)-influenced preference for planning, for example India.

Moreover, in the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s, the general trend was toward free market liberalism and against autarky, protectionism, and barter or controlled trading systems. This trend encouraged a major growth in trade, notably of Chinese exports to America and Western Europe. This trend remained significant in the 2000s and early 2010s despite political tensions, particularly between America and China, as well as the consequences of the serious global economic crisis that began in 2008. Crucially, that did not lead to a protectionism comparable to what was seen in the

1930s. Both prior to the crisis and during it, the focus on trade between East Asia and America ensured that maritime trade expanded greatly. The situation changed, however, in the 2020s in a developing international crisis.

Speculation about developing trade from East Asia overland to Western Europe was not brought to fruition at any scale. Only the Trans-Siberian Railway was in a position to provide a link. To that extent, Mackinder's analysis proved flawed. The ambitious railway construction plans of China notwithstanding, there is no sign that this will change. The Chinese railway boom is much to do with high-speed lines to carry passengers and troops. It is driven by politics rather than economics, as in the building of a line to Lhasa in Tibet. Overland trade from the Far East has not prospered for economic as well as political reasons. Railway transport costs remain stubbornly higher than shipping; indeed, containers have widened the gap. Chinese railways, old and new, provide no links to Europe.

The growth in trade after World War Two, much of it maritime trade, was linked to the enhanced specialisation and integration of production and supply networks that was a consequence of economic liberalism, as well as of the economies of scale and the attraction of locating particular parts of the networks near raw material sources, transhipment points, or the centres of consumption. This growth was further fuelled by the opportunities and needs linked to population increases. The latter helped ensure that regions hitherto able to produce what they required were obliged now to import goods, not only food and fuel, but also manufactured products. Trade links that would have caused amazement in the nineteenth century, or even the 1950s, such as the export of food from Zambia to the Middle East and from Canada to Japan, or of oil from Equatorial Guinea to China, became significant. Most, although not all, of the resulting trade was by sea. According to the *Financial Times* of 10 July 2014, $5,300 billion worth of goods crossed the South China Sea by sea each year, which made control over it of particular significance.

Naval power was the key guarantor of this trade and played the role of providing the security of what was termed the 'global commons'. This concept presented sea power in a far more benign fashion than had been the case when it had been seen as an expression of imperial power. Instead, there was an emphasis on shared value. This emphasis was greatly enhanced from the late 2000s in response to a major increase in piracy, notably in the Indian Ocean, a topic covered in the chapter by Martin Murphy. This increase exposed the broader implications for maritime trade of specific sites of instability. It was not only that pirates from Somalia proved capable of operating at a considerable distance into the Indian Ocean, but also that their range of operations affected shipping and maritime trade from distant waters. This was not new. Muscat raiders in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had operated from Oman to the west coast of India and the Swahili coast of Africa, challenging European trade to India. However, in the 2000s, the challenge appeared greater, both because piracy had largely been stamped out in the nineteenth century

and because the scale of international maritime trade, and the number of states directly involved, were far larger.

If the operations against Somali piracy, operations that reduced its extent and enabled states such as China and India to display their naval power and train their crew, proved a clear demonstration of the importance of naval power and its ability to counter failure on land, its potential significance was further demonstrated by the expansion of piracy elsewhere, notably off Nigeria. This threat suggested a multi-layered need for naval power. For most of the twentieth century, this had very much been a form of power dominated by the major states, while most states, instead, focused on their armies, not least for internal control and policing. In the early twenty-first century, such control and policing increasingly also encompassed maritime tasks. Control over refugee flows, the maintenance of fishing rights, and the prevention of drug smuggling, proved prime instances.

As a consequence, naval power became as much a matter of the patrol boat as of the guided missile destroyer. Drug money is a threat to the stability of Caribbean states which, however, have tiny navies. As a result, it is the navies of major powers that have a Caribbean presence, America, Britain and France, each of which also have colonies there, that play a key role, one that is greatly facilitated by aerial surveillance and interception capabilities.

Naval action against pirates, drug smugglers and people traffickers, the last a major task for the navies of Australia, Greece, Italy and Spain, but not only for them, is reminiscent of the moral agenda of nineteenth-century naval power. Such action is also an implementation of sovereignty as well as of specific governmental and political agendas.

Moreover, the utility of naval power in the early twenty-first century in part reflected the extent to which the 'end of history' that had been signposted in 1989 with the close of the Cold War proved a premature sighting. Instead, there was a recurrence in international tension focused on traditional interests. Territorial waters proved a particular source of dispute, not least when linked to hopes over oil and other resources. Indeed, by 2014, there were key disputes over competing claims in the East and South China Seas, disputes that drove a major regional naval race, particularly between China and Japan. These disputes were characterised by aggressive Chinese steps, as in 2012 when China took over the Scarborough Shoal west of the Philippines.

Moreover, control over the naval base of Sevastopol and over maritime and drilling rights in the Black Sea were important in the crisis over Crimea and, more generally, Ukraine in early 2014. Once the Russians gained control, they announced an expansion and modernisation of their Black Sea fleet, with new warships and submarines. In turn, in the war that began in 2022, Russia used its navy to blockade and bombard Ukraine.

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Concern about coastal waters encouraged a drive to ensure the necessary naval power. The disputes over the East and South China Seas and the Black Sea, and the prospect of their becoming more serious, or of other disputes following, led to a determination, on the part of regional powers, to step up naval strength and preparedness. In the case of Japan, there was a major strategic shift in focus from the defence of Hokkaido to concern about the southwest part of the archipelago and in particular the offshore islands in the East China Sea. This led to a greater emphasis on the navy and on a more mobile, flexible and versatile power-profile. Moreover, military exercises were increasingly geared to maritime concerns and naval power.

Regional disputes also directed attention to the situation as far as other powers, principally America, were concerned. These powers were concerned both about these regions and about the possibility that disputes over sovereignty would become more serious in other regions, for example the Arctic. As a result, the nature and effectiveness of naval power came to the fore as a topic in the mid-2010s. So also did the extent to which governments and societies identified with this power. This was of particular significance in East and South Asia, as, with the exception of Japan, there was little recent history of naval power. Moreover, the relevant Japanese history was complicated by the legacy of World War Two and the provisions of the subsequent peace treaty.

However, the situation was transformed from the 2000s. In China, there was an emphasis on past naval activity, notably the early fifteenth century voyages of Zheng He into the Indian Ocean. Indeed, the *Zheng He* was the name of the Chinese officer-training ship. Inaccurately linked to these voyages, the *China Daily* claimed in July 2004 that the Chinese circumnavigated the world in 1421, well before Columbus and Magellan. The voyages of Zheng He were highlighted in the 2008 Beijing Olympics. There was also a presentation of naval strength as a product of government initiative, an aspect of great power status, and a sign of modernity.

Both elements were seen in the treatment of history. In particular, *Da Guo Jue Qi* (*The Rise of Great Powers*), a Chinese government study finished in 2006, attempted to determine the reasons why Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Russia and the USA became great powers. This study was apparently inspired by a directive from Hu Jintao, the Chinese President, to determine which factors enabled great powers to grow most rapidly. The study drew together government, academic methods, as many scholars were consulted, some reportedly briefing the Politburo, and popular interest. A twelve-part programme was twice broadcast on the state-owned television channel in 2006, and an eight-volume book series was produced and sold rapidly. The president of the television channel made the utilitarian purpose of the series clear. The book project argued the value of naval power, but also the need for a dynamic economy with international trade linking the two, a factor seen as suggesting a lesson about the value of international cooperation.

Chinese naval strategy, however, focuses not on the history of other states, but on that of Chinese history. The traditional land-based focus on 'interior strategies' – the development of expanding rings of security around a state's territory – has been applied to the maritime domain in part in response to a reading of Chinese history in which it is argued that, from the 1830s, the ability of foreign powers to apply pressure from the sea has greatly compromised Chinese interests and integrity. Near China has therefore been extended as a concept to cover the nearby seas. This provides both an enhancement of security and a sense of historical validity, one that provides purpose to the Communist Party.

However, the definition and implementation of the relevant attitudes and policies ensure both considerable problems and mission creep, as the security of what may seem to be the near seas apparently requires regional hegemony and an ability to repel any potential oceanic-based power, which means at present America. The Chinese desire may be motivated by security, but it challenges that of all others and, crucially, does not adopt or advance a definition of security that is readily capable to compromise or, indeed, negotiation. In part, this is a reflection of the Chinese focus on 'hard power', a power very much presented by naval strength as a support for non-militarised coercion in the shape of maritime law enforcement. The Chinese navy offers force to support the application of psychological and political pressure. A willingness to resort to force creates for others a key element of uncertainty.

The Chinese emphasis on naval strength as a key aspect of national destiny, and the rapid buildup of the Chinese navy, has helped drive the pace for other states, leading Japan and India, in particular, to put greater emphasis on a naval buildup, while also ensuring that America focuses more of its attention on the region. Repeated talk from 2014, that conflict over the East China Sea might lead to a broader international struggle, with America backing Japan, underlined the significance of maritime issues and power. The previous October, the USA agreed to base surveillance drones and reconnaissance planes in Japan so as to patrol waters in the region. The development of anti-ship missiles by China able to challenge American carriers, notably the BF-21F intermediate-range ballistic missile fitted with a manoeuvring re-entry head containing an anti-ship seeker, poses a major problem. As a result, the carriers may have to operate well to the east of Taiwan, in other words beyond the range of the Navy's F-35s.

The ready willingness of Chinese Internet users to identify with these issues reflected their salience in terms of national identity and interests. Moreover, this willingness suggested a pattern that would also be adopted in other conflicts over maritime rights. They proved readily graspable. The Chinese government is struggling to ride the tiger of popular xenophobia. In China, as earlier with Tirpitz and the *Flottenverein* in Germany, popular support for naval expansion has proved easier to arouse than to calm.

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Thus, the utility of naval power was symbolic, ideological and cultural as much as it was based on 'realist' criteria of military, political and economic party. It has been ever thus, but became more so in an age of democratisation when ideas of national interest and identity had to be reconceptualised for domestic and international publics. The ability to deploy and demonstrate power was important in this equation, and navies proved particularly well suited to it, not least as they lacked the ambiguous record associated with armies and air forces after the interventionist wars of the 2000s and as a consequence of the role of some armies in civil control. 120 years later, Mackinder's lecture appears not prescient but an instance of the weakness of theory when confronted by economic, technological and military realities. China, not Russia, is the key power in Mackinder's 'Heartland', but this is a China with global trading interests and oceanic power aspirations, and not, as Russia seemed to be, the successor to the interior power controlling some supposed 'pivot', centred in West Siberia.

The likely future trajectory of Chinese naval ambitions and power is currently a, if not the, foremost question for commentators focused on power politics and that itself is a clear instance of the continuing relevance of naval strength. It has proved far more successful than either armies or air forces in combining the cutting-edge, apocalyptic lethality of nuclear weaponry with the ability to wield power successfully at the sub-nuclear level. Moreover, this ability is underlined by the range, scale and persistence of naval power, all of which provide, alongside tactical and operational advantages, a strategic capability not matched by the other branches. Despite aerial refuelling, air power lacks the continuous presence, and thus persistence and durability, that warships can convey. Moreover, warships offer a firepower and visual presence that is more impressive than that of many armies.

The significance of coastal regions underlines the value of amphibious power projection. In 2014, in an exercise in Hawaii, the American Marine Corps displayed the prototype of the Ultra Heavy-lift Amphibious Connector, a vehicle designed to cut through the waves in order to carry vehicles to the coast. The tracks are made from captured-air foam blocks that stick out like flippers. The full-size version is designed to be 84 foot long and 34 foot high and should be able to transport at least four vehicles. Also in 2014, the building by France for Russia of Mistral-class warships intended to support amphibious operations created a serious issue when an arms embargo of Russia was proposed. Such warships were seen as a particular threat in the Black Sea.

At the same time, the ability of land-based power to challenge navies is much greater than was the situation when Mackinder was writing. Indeed, his view both of the relationship between land and sea and of the capacity of technological change did not really comprehend this challenge. It had begun as soon as cannon greatly enhanced the capacity of coastal defences to resist naval attack. The major improvement in artillery in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries greatly

increased this capacity, and the surviving sites of coastal defence, for example off Auckland, remain formidably impressive. In the twentieth the range and nature of such defence was increased first by aircraft and then by missiles. Both are now central to the equations of naval power projection, and not least in the key choke-points, such as the Taiwan Strait and the Strait of Hormuz. Although longer-range weapons allow ships to project power far inshore at the same time that they permit coastal defences to project power far offshore, the smaller number of naval targets and greater vulnerability of warships mean that this range factor does not balance out capabilities.

Indeed, this capability has led to the suggestion that the very nature of naval power has changed with consequent implications for the ranking of the major powers. In particular, whereas air power is dominated by the major powers, and notably America, the possibility of lesser powers using new technologies to counteract existing advantages is significant. This reflects a longstanding aspiration and practice, for example as seen with the ideas of the French *jeune école* in the 1880s and of Soviet naval planners in the 1920s. The extent to which small and/or unconventional forces may be as effective in their chosen spheres as major navies therefore raises the question whether this sphere can extent in order to deny the latter advantage in large areas or, more plausibly, to make that advantage very costly not least at a time of rising costs for cutting-edge warships.

That is the doctrine that Iran, with its doctrine of asymmetrical swarm attacks, appears to be pursuing. The assertion of naval power in this fashion is frequently linked to territorial assertion, and complicates the traditional military hierarchy and legacy. In most states, navies have far less political clout than armies and play a smaller role in national self-image. This is the case, for example, of Turkey, Iran, India, Israel and Pakistan. Yet issues of military need and power politics complicate such situations, as with Iran. For example, the quest for a regional political role judged commensurate to its population size, economic development, resource concerns and political pretensions will continue to ensure that India seeks naval strength. Warships provide the ability to act at a distance, notably in establishing blockades, as with Israel and Sri Lanka.

There is an important contrast between the extension of national jurisdiction over the seas, a jurisdiction that covered more than a third of their extent in 2008, and the fact that many states cannot ensure their own maritime security. This is the case for Oceania, the Caribbean, and Indian Ocean states such as Mauritius, the Maldives, and the Seychelles. These weaknesses encourage the major powers to maintain naval strength and intervene, but also led to initiatives for regional solutions, such as that supported by India from 2007.

There are therefore a number of levels of naval asymmetry. The possibility of making advantages in naval capability, notably, but not only, those enjoyed the leading naval

powers, too costly is enhanced by the extent to which the procurement structure of naval power has driven leading navies toward fewer, more expensive vessels. For example, each of the new British D class Type 45 destroyers, the first of which was launched in 2006 has more firepower than the combined fleet of eight Type 42 destroyers they replaced, destroyers which came into service in 1978. This is because the missile system of the D class can track and attack multiple incoming aircraft and missiles. The maintenance in service of each of such vessels thus becomes more significant, and this enhances vulnerability, irrespective of the specific weapons characteristics of these vessels and their likely opponents. The availability of fewer, larger and more expensive warships reduces their individual vulnerability, but makes them harder to risk. A similar process has affected aircraft.

The cost element helped drive American military retrenchment in the 2010s. American military spending fell with the end of the American military commitment in Iraq and its run-down in Afghanistan. The size of the accumulated debt and of the annual deficit had an impact as did the political preference, notably under the Obama administration (2009-17) for welfare expenditure. While the army and marines were scheduled for significant cuts in the 2010s, there were even more substantial ones in the navy. Partly as a result, the ability of America to inflict a rapid defeat on Iran was called into question in 2013. Moreover, the reduction in American naval strength created concern among regional allies worried about Chinese naval plans and expansionism, which has a far larger naval shipbuilding industry than America.

The net effect is to introduce a volatility to naval power that is greater than the situation during the Cold War, a volatility that challenges maritime security at the level of state power. This volatility is not indicated if the emphasis is on the strength of the leading navy and its new weapon systems, for example the American Aegis BMD defence system intended to engage missiles in flight and the projected electromagnetic rail gun capable of projecting projectiles at six or seven times the speed of sound.

Instead, it is appropriate to think of naval power as broader ranging and multi-purpose. This range will be enhanced by competition over resources as many of these untapped are offshore and linked to territorial claims. At sea, therefore, we are moving rapidly from the apparent unipolarity of the 1990s, the supposed 'end of history', to a situation in which the capacity to display, use and contest strength is significant to a large number of powers and to their rivals. That spread of capacity does not automatically lead to conflict for the processes of international relations will be employed to seek to lessen tension. However, insecurity in the sense of an absence of confidence that deterrence will be successfully employed has become more apparent, a process that will continue. Moreover, this insecurity will probably provide more opportunities for non-state actors keen to use the seas in order to pursue particular interests that create another level of insecurity.

Conclusion

The nature of naval power is by its inherent character dependent on a combination of geopolitics, technology, resources and the unexpected. Thus, in 2022-23, the failure of Russia to overcome Ukraine rapidly, as planned, ensured that the conflict came to involve a major naval dimension, with Ukrainian anti-ship tactics thwarting or lessening attempts at bombardment, amphibious landings and blockade. The possibility of a Chinese landing n Taiwan underlines the continuing uncertainty. That is the appropriate conclusion.

Female Mob Encounters and Boko-Haram in the North-East of Nigeria, 2009-2019

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Abstract

As African states grapple with the challenges of democratic governance, there are postcolonial experiences of mob-related violence. Such is manifest in the extrajudicial reaction of citizens across North-East Nigeria to suspected attacks by agents of the Boko Haram insurgency. Scholarly contributions have established various dimensions of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. However, little attention is given to the nuances of gender and mob-induced violence and their implications for the security and development of women. Thus, this work examines the contexts of mob justice meted out to women webbed in Boko Haram-instigated suicide bombing. Findings from the study reveal that female suicide terrorism and the resultant social sanctions have further positioned women as vulnerable instruments of terror and subsequently as bearers of the security burdens that accompany mob justice perpetration within contexts of the Boko Haram insurgency.

Keywords:
women; mob encounters; female suicide terrorism;
Boko Haram; North-East Nigeria.

The frequency of mob justice across Africa has necessitated broadening the discourse on violence and human (women) security. Mob justice is perpetrated by faceless angry crowds who engage in extrajudicial actions, which include accusing a crime suspect, acting as jury and judge and violently attacking an alleged criminal on the spot (Adu-Gyamfi 2014; Bello 2018). Mob justice is prominent in developing countries characterised by the latent potential for initiating widespread civil disobedience as a reaction to state failure or fragility (Momboisse 1967). It is an insurgent mode of social control or securitisation as well as a contextual expression of disdain for the state's unwillingness/incapacity to contain dangerous forms of violent crimes (Orock 2014). Scholars attribute the incidences of mob justice to the weakness of state structures as citizens find satisfaction in administering mob justice to act fast against the ineptitude of the state (Yeboah-Assiamah and Kyeremeh 2014; Ilori 2020). "Most people are not opposed to them on principle; (as it is their way of) expressing the pain that many feel about the violent crimes, and their desire for instant restitution" (Cole 2012). As problems of development differ across spaces, the variants of mob actions are influenced by specific situational factors such as witchcraft, kidnapping, blasphemy, theft and, more recently, suicide bombing. One of the reasons for the resurgence of mob attacks against females in northern Nigeria is their link with the activities of Boko Haram. Despite the established legal and judicial structures that are seemingly more impactful in urban and sub-urban settlements (Feld 1991), the recurrence of mob attacks against women in the north is still evident in the metropolitan areas.

With the intensified involvement of women in the violent activities of the Boko Haram insurgency from 2009 to 2019, this work presents women's experiences of mob justice as induced by the precedence of suicide bombing in selected northeastern states of Nigeria. By interrogating the connection between Female Suicide Terrorism (FST) and women's encounters with mob justice in North-East Nigeria, the work builds on previous narratives that explain issues as well as socioeconomic and cultural contexts that surround or define the vulnerability of women as perpetrators and victims of extreme violence within the discourses of gender violence and human insecurity (Rush and Schafluetzel-Iles 2007; Jacques and Taylor 2008; Pearson 2015a; (Bloom and Matfess 2016; Koziel 2017; Sigsworth and Kumalo 2016). On mob attacks occasioned by suicide bombings, two possible scenarios are explored. The first is that of women as victims; seen in instances of mistaken identity, particularly for veiled women (women wearing hijab) suspected to be hiding bombs under their garments. The second is that of women as co-perpetrators of mob justice, wherein women join the mob which mete out punishments to female suspects for crimes against humanity. This affirms that aside from the role of men, women may also play 'neo-patriarchal' agents to reinforce existing male-defined hegemony, sustaining gender hierarchy and power arrangement by protecting attackers and/or fuelling violent attacks (Hunnicutt 2009; Habiba, Ali and Ashfaq 2016; Anonymous 2017).

The Boko Haram crisis complicates life in the northeast of Nigeria as daily living is carried on with fear invariably heightening the vulnerability of women to mob

attacks. While sustaining the argument that feminised violence is informed by certain socio-cultural and religious contexts, a critical examination of this less-discussed evolving challenge to Africa's development is expedient. The work examines why FST provokes women-encountered mob justice in some areas of terrorism-ridden North-eastern Nigeria but does not provoke a similar response in others. Hence, this article provides insights into feminised violence, analyses Female Suicide Terrorism (FST) and mob justice, examines manifestations of FST in North East Nigeria; and causative factors in the incidences and non-incidences of mob justice in both urban and rural centres; explains how FST perpetration and/or victimhood may be explained within rural and urban spaces; including the security implications of FST and mob justice on women and girls in North-East Nigeria.

Boko Haram: A Historical Basis

Nigeria has – since independence in 1960 – experienced some series of developmental fallouts (Forrest 1993), resulting in unequal access to infrastructure and social protection. Directly linked to this is the menace of child begging on the streets of northern Nigeria. Such children, lacking basic social welfare grew into disgruntled young adults. In such categories were the followers of Muhammad Yusuf, the founder of Boko Haram, who was extra-judicially killed by the police in 2009. Although there had been similar movements since the 1940s, they were rarely violent (Buchanan-Clarke and Knoope 2017). The name, Boko Haram, means 'Western education is sin'. Boko Haram condemns the socio-political and economic structure of the society with a key focus on deconstructing developments that evolved from the West.

The aggregate membership of the insurgency group comprises underprivileged and neglected youth, discontented politicians, school drop-outs, out-of-school girls, neglected widows, and jobless graduates (Allotey-Pappoe and Lamptey 2019). The state's insensitive handling of the issues led to the consolidation of the group, which allied with some international terrorist networks (Mustapha, Boko Haram: Killing in the God's Name 2012; Mustapha and Meagher 2020; International Crisis Group 2017) in the bid for self-determination and independence from a supposedly failed state. Having argued that the state had turned the citizens into victims, Boko Haram continues to attack the Nigerian state, using mass kidnapping, mass killings and, more recently, suicide bombing (Ladbury, et al. 2016). For a while, the masses affected by their attacks have been left helpless and susceptible amidst the government's delayed responses to the insurgencies. Over time, mob attacks became one of the tactics deployed by citizens to deal with suspected Boko Haram suicide bombers who frequently unleash violence on communities. Beyond the popular male-centric perception of Boko-Haram attacks, research has shown newer dimensions, involving women and girls (Bloom 2010; Horowitz 2015; Bawa 2017). Here, the women and girls are not necessarily featured as victims; rather, they either volunteer or are co-opted to perpetrate terrorist attacks. Invariably, the incorporation and utilisation

of women for the nihilistic objectives of the Boko Haram insurgency engendered the phenomenon of Female Suicide Terrorism (FST).

Understanding Feminised Violence

Within the existing broad structural inequality and patriarchal framework, women are entangled in the web of violence as sufferers of physical, mental and psychological attacks (Okech 2016; Sigsworth and Kumalo 2016). The Boko Haram-instigated gendered violence has suddenly transcended capturing women for sexual gratification and other domestic purposes (Zenn and Pearson 2014) including using young girls as arms and foodstuff carriers to recruiting women as suicide bombers (Conley 2004; Bloom 2010; Marks 2014; Chotia 2014; Bawa 2017). The increased deployment of females as suicide bombers by Boko Haram is referred to as the 'feminisation of terror' in Nigeria (Onuoha and George 2015; Bawa 2017). Allotey-Pappoe and Lamptey's (2019) study, reveals how women are made to see terrorism in Nigeria as a noble cause, as girls are used in suicide bombings. Based on assumptions of females' (especially young girls') innocence and the stereotype that women are less risk-takers, female suicide bombers catch people unaware and penetrate places where male bombers are suspiciously questioned.

Therefore, a new and gendered dimension to the Boko Haram insurgency is bifocal-the perpetration of insurgency acts by females and the victimisation of women suspected to be working with the insurgents. Many fatal cases show the rate at which Boko Haram is recruiting young girls as suicide bombers and devastating the society (Oduah 2016). Having "deployed 469 female suicide bombers in 240 total incidents from June 2014 to the end of February 2018, killing an estimated 1,259 people (bombers excluded), 1,673 people (bombers included), and injuring 2,967 more people" (Pearson 2018, 34), the recruitment/instrumentalisation of female terrorists does not solely result from coercion (by men) (Horowitz 2015). Feminised violence is a combination of complex circumstances (Utas 2005) which could be framed within feminine profiling, familial, irrational and ideological contexts (Ursu 2016). Therefore, female suicide bombers emerge from those kidnapped or abducted, cajoled, induced, forced, threatened, intimidated or indoctrinated to be disenchanted with the Nigerian system (Oduah 2016; Anyadike 2016).

Following research on masculine hegemonic structures that foster the domination and subordination of women (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Robert 1992; Hunnicutt 2009), the root of violence involving women cannot be discussed without reference to patriarchy (Sultana 2011). In any circumstance where female bombers are indoctrinated and used, the prevalence of patriarchal culture explains the 'commodification of the female body' (Olaniyan 2017), largely culminating in some dire social, political and economic implications (Amalu 2015; Eseoghene and Efanodor 2016; Chuku, Abang and Isip 2019). Indeed, one cannot overlook the interplay of feminised poverty, both material and intellectual, as evident in the

poor capacity to meet basic needs and, the low quality or lack of education and exposure (Omotoso and Fajimbola 2017; Omotoso 2020). The increased awareness of the emergence and proliferation of women as participants in terrorism has spurred varied responses from society. One such social response is the mob attacks, described by Samah (2006) and Salihu and Gholami (2018) as street crime, aimed at dispensing extrajudicial punishments to terror suspects. Indiscriminate and illegitimate accusations, trials and punishments of female suspects by angry crowds are the manifestations of a gendered perception in which women, among other demographic groups, are the major targets of informal and crude prosecutions (Chowdhury 2014). Consequently, young women often face the double jeopardy of working as suicide bombers as well as becoming victims of angry mobs that are seeking justice. Stemming from the perceptions of young women as agents of terrorism, mob justice is publicly portrayed and branded as street vigilantism, especially in the cities (World Bank 2011). This necessitates probing into the dynamics of feminised violence by interrogating socio-cultural disparities of mob justice against females in selected communities of North-Eastern Nigeria.

Methodology

The work adopts phenomenological and historical analyses to account for feminised violence from the perspective of women who encountered mob justice in North Eastern, Nigeria. Boko Haram was taken as a security phenomenon to construct the basis of suicide bombing. Secondary data sources, such as newspapers, videos and journals were consulted to articulate the historicity of Boko Haram in Nigeria. Oral interviews on the phenomenon of suicide bombing were conducted in areas ravaged by the Boko Haram insurgency, in the North-East of Nigeria. The interviews were unstructured and open to participants, also the questions and discussions about mob encounters snowballed into other questions. The selected areas are; Muna, Bale Galtimari, Alau, Dala Kafe and Mulai. These were selected as the study area because, before 2016, each of the aforementioned locations had experienced Boko Haram-sponsored suicide bombing at least three times in two weeks (Nigeria Watch 2019). The communities are ideal targets for suicide bombing because they are all located close to forests- these forests serve as safe havens where Boko Haram reside and from where they conveniently launch attacks. News reports of everyday occurrence of the Boko Haram situation is used to explain the case studies and it is corroborated by books and journals.

Some of the communities identified (for example, Muna), are also settings that the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have now converted to markets. This for Boko Haram is another favourite location to cart away market wares under the cover of every suicide bomb attack, which usually throws the community into pandemonium. The study population of this work is tripartite, comprising people mostly recruited by Boko Haram for suicide missions, the direct and indirect victims of the attacks and the group committed to forestalling further attacks in the areas involved.

Therefore, the research targeted women, youths, parents, security personnel, journalists and community leaders in rural and urban areas. Deviance and social control theories are engaged in this study. Deviance is essentially perceived as threatening because it undermines predictability and the foundation of social life. Deviant acts are not determined by their being socially evaluated as criminal or illegal; they are defined by social reactions to them (Sherman 1993). Behaviour is unacceptable, when it violates social rules and norms. Thus, social contexts determine what qualifies as deviant acts (Stuart and Craig 1999). To address deviance, human groups develop a system of social control as a means of enforcing established norms. Violation and sanction are linked in such a way that where there is deviant behaviour, there are also social controls (Wood 1974). Likewise, individuals found engaging in counter-normative behaviour are often sanctioned by other members of the group or society because their behaviour is interpreted as threatening to the collective survival (Nupier, et al. 2007). Inferentially, social control is conceived specifically in relation to crime and deviance (Oliverio and Lauderdale 2005).

Female Suicide Terrorism (FST) and Mob Justice

Within the FST framework, Boko Haram takes advantage of two social constructs: the masculinisation of war and the feminisation of peace, thereby negating the idea that women are pacifists in the context of terrorism (Anonymous 2018). This surreptitious shift from the social norm informs the deployment of women as suicide bombers. Bloom and Matfess (2016) described FST as a global trend of using women to perpetrate violence in war and crisis. Thus, FST is a component of Boko Haram's overall strategy, claimed to counter the essence of Westernisation as a whole. Furthermore, Zedalis (2004) explains that the decision of women to perpetrate terrorist acts, create disorder and FST is one of the acts that lead to mob attack. However, the connection between FST and mob justice in the context of Boko Haram's terrorist activities in Nigeria appears problematic. FST compounds perceptions about security as Boko Haram-sponsored female suicide bombings challenge the prevalent social norm that women genetically fit into domestic roles. Alakoc (2018) conceives FST as a means of increasing propaganda and exposing the message of aggression, as girls are used as bargaining chips with the government and it provides examples of how women are victimised to victimise others (Bloom and Matfess 2016). Thus, the male actors are the principal while the women are the peripheral entities. As Slavicek's (2008) historicises suicide bombing, the motivation for engaging in suicide bombing goes beyond the popular political analysis, inferring that the contemporary use of girls in suicide bombing is both politically and religiously motivated.

Terrorism and suicide bombing, irrespective of geographical scope also portray political, economic and social forms of violence that make them classifiable as deviant behaviour and a crime against humanity. In an opposing perspective, Black

(2002) notes that terrorism is a form of social control where actors (also known as freedom fighters) aggressively display grievances against the state. However, Becker (1963) adds that there is a public near-unanimity that an act of mass violence, characterised as consensus crime, is deviant behaviour.

One may then surmise that social adversity of the violence in the terrorised communities qualifies terrorism and other related activities as deviant behaviours. Women's participation in terrorist suicide bombings sociologically qualifies them as deviants on two grounds. First, the overwhelming understanding of terrorism as criminal and deviant and second, that terrorism is a manifestation of a larger societal structure of dominance and patriarchy. On this, Oliverio and Lauderdale (2005) note that, from the women's viewpoints, using patriarchal strategies of dominance cannot produce the desired positive social change. Therefore, women who deviate from this status quo to perpetrate terrorism are tagged deviants not only because they are engaging in terrorism but because they are doing so as women. Mob justice against FST acts is a holistic manifestation of the developmental gaps that engulf impoverished Nigerian societies. Social disillusionment permeates Nigerian society and a large number of citizens are disconnected from the state and its institutions (Maiangwa, et al. 2012). This allows citizens to become recruits of ethnic, political and religious irredentists who resist the state by causing chaos and disorder at any opportunity. With this, women are vulnerable to being the perpetrators of suicide bombing when they act in sympathy for the Boko Haram causes (Weinstein 2007; Anonymous 2017). To this end, mob justice initiated by suicide bombing is a form of counter-reaction to the way the state initially handled the Boko Haram group; it embeds anarchy that is reactive to the vengeance the Boko Haram exhibits.

Manifestation of Female Suicide Terrorism (FST) in North-East Nigeria

Female Suicide Terrorism (FST) entails engaging women to carry out suicide attacks as the bombers kill the targeted people along with themselves. FST emerged as a terrorist strategy in the 1980s (Bloom 2011; Brunner 2016) and scholars have advanced tactical reasons, strategic reasons and cost-effectiveness (Speckhard 2008) as the major factors responsible for the deployment of FST by terrorist groups. Notwithstanding their active roles, Ness (2005) advances that the use of women as terrorists rarely liberates them; rather, it negates and relegates them to traditional roles. Records exist of women playing overt and covert terrorist roles as sympathisers, mobilisers, conciliators and perpetrators. This aligns with the assertion that 'African women are capable players within all the spheres, transcending natural and cultural confines to which they have been restricted' (Omotoso 2018, 63).

By implication, women have transcended their supposed vulnerabilities and are now actively involved in terrorist acts (Anonymous 2017). This negates the view that

men are the sole and habitual perpetrators of terrorist acts (Goldstein 2001) and establishes that the attitude of women towards violence is shaped by their experiences of the larger socio-economic problems. Since Boko Haram evolved, FST has become a major strategy for communicating its aggressive posture against the Nigerian state. Reports of the Boko Haram activities by the media show that the identities of female suicide members are rarely known. However, about 60% of them are teenagers between 13 and 19 years of age (Pearson 2018). The young girls are raised with the ideology of Islamic fundamentalism which states that suicide bombers would be rewarded bountifully in the hereafter (Gonzalez-Perez 2011). This high level of ideological indoctrination benefits from the abysmal level of girl-child education in the northern region. Keeping girls out of schools in Northern Nigeria is often regarded as the cultural norm which perpetually requires the state's interventions to reverse. Furthermore, women's action as perpetrators of suicide bombing is linked, in a deeply complicated manner, to their traditionally prescribed gender roles. MacDonald (1991) posits that women's participation in terrorism results from frustration and repression. Nacos (2005) explains that the stereotypes that frame women as excluded from terrorism are false and that women are complicit, especially, as perpetrators of suicide bombing. This corresponds with Bloom (2010) that the use of women as suicide bombers makes it easier to avoid detection. However, the tact of detection, often including mistaken identities complicates the question of gender and security.

Women's involvement in Boko Haram-sponsored female terrorism assists to secure and sustain Boko Haram's army and structure, particularly in Michika, the most terrorised local government area in Adamawa State. According to a respondent: Most of them (women) were forced into insurgency to serve as shields and work for the terrorists. By the time they (insurgents) abduct their (members of the communities') daughters from them, they have women in their midst who will hinder the conventional military from attacking their bases, paving the way for negotiations and ransom payment so that they can achieve their goals (Focus Group Discussion, January 17, 2020). Therefore, as women were used to carry out easy target operations through suicide bombing, more casualties were found among women across the local communities of North-East Nigeria. Women's higher vulnerability in the face of suicide bombing is attributed to several reasons. Since suicide bombers aim at concentrated spots, women's tendency to stick together and be amongst themselves predisposes them to easy targets in situations of conflict (Fisker-Nelsen 2012). Also, rural women become victims of FST because of their domestic roles as housekeepers and protectors of children. Below are specific encounters of women as victims of FST in a rural community of North-East Nigeria:

Bale Galtimari Community

Narrated Encounter 1
…women, they can't run and leave their children and that of their neighbours. It is at this point that the suicide bombers take advantage of them. As for the men, the moment

they hear the sound of a gunshot, they just run leaving everybody behind, including their family members sometimes. Also, in the course of running, some of these women run into their fellow women, thinking they are together in the same danger, unknown to them that the person they are hiding with is a suicide bomber on a mission (Personal Communication, July 18, 2019).

A survivor in the Galtimari community described her encounter thus:
Narrated Encounter 2
It was on a Sunday evening in 2014 when Boko Haram laid siege on our town. We all ran for our dear lives. We ran into a house with many women and children. Unknown to us, a female suicide bomber was right there with us, she detonated the explosive. As you can see, I lost my left arm in the incident. This is the most terrible thing that has ever happened in my life (Personal Communication, July 16, 2019).
The narratives here affirm that FST perpetrators are aware of the psychology of chaos and panic, which they exploit to strike.

FST Encounters and Mob Justice
Using selected narrative encounters across the studied communities, this section discusses the incidences and non-incidences of mob justice, its causative factors and how it plays out across rural and urban communities.

Non-incidences of Mob Justice

Narrated Encounter 3
In 2016, a woman on a bombing mission was caught. Immediately she saw us, she began to cry for help. She raised her hands, assuring us that she would not detonate the bomb. We asked her to remove it and she complied with us. The army came and took her up for rehabilitation (Personal Communication, July 23, 2019).

Narrated Encounter 4
We know the girls are not in control of their senses when they do these things. A female suicide bomber came into this community and reported herself to us. She said that she was carrying a bomb. We called on the CJTF and the military to continue her interrogation. She told them that she was kidnapped on her way to Dikwa from Maiduguri to attend a wedding ceremony in 2015. After spending six months in captivity, she was sent on a suicide mission (Personal Communication, July 23, 2019).

Incidences of Mob Justice

Mob Encounter 1
Muda Lawal Market, Bauchi, March 1, 2015 At 11 a.m. at the entrance of the Muda Lawal Market in Bauchi, northeast Nigeria, a young girl refused to allow the security operatives to check her. This aroused the suspicion that she was a suicide bomber, she was beaten and burnt to death. A police officer, Haruna Mohammed, explained that she

had died before they arrived at the scene and the mob had dispersed. At the bus station in the market, the lady was alleged to have refused to be checked by the metal detector. On checking her body, two bottles were strapped around her waist (PMNews 2015).

The incident at the Muda Lawal market shows the tenseness of the people relative to any form of insecurity. According to The Guardian (2015), though it is possible that the girl was on a test mission to determine the possibility of perpetrating FST, the police deputy superintendent, Mohammad Haruna, doubted whether the girl was a bomber, as she did not detonate any explosives when she was attacked. Haruna described her as a victim of a mob action carried out by an irate crowd. Relatives of the killed suspect (Thabita) claimed she used to work as a trader until 2007 when she became mentally ill and that she was never a Boko Haram member (The Guardian 2015).

Mob Encounter 2
Inability to detonate a bomb in cattle Market, Maiduguri
Perhaps, on the 26th of December, 2016, at 8.40 a.m., a suicide bomber at the Cattle Market in the Maiduguri Market could not detonate the bomb on her body swiftly. This brewed a suspicion and she was lynched. The caption of her lifeless body depicts the typical atmosphere of the post-mob situation, where no one can be pointed at (Haruna 2016).

Mob Encounter 3
The Yobe Experience
A female suicide bomber has killed at least seven people and injured 30 others at a crowded bus station in the city of Damaturu, capital of Yobe State. The female suicide bomber arrived in a vehicle and walked into a crowd outside a grocery store at the end of the terminal where she detonated her explosives. …an angry mob stopped emergency workers from retrieving the remains of the bomber and instead set them on fire (BBC News 2015).

Causative Factors of Non-incidence and Incidence of Mob Justice

1. Fear
As the instances of Boko Haram-sponsored FST increase in both rural and urban communities of North-East Nigeria (The Irish Times 2018; VOA 2014), community responses have been either confrontation or avoidance. The manifestations of fear in these communities are evident in their varied responses which Tappolet (2009) describes as either fight or flight. The accounts from the rural communities reveal the vital roles of Boko Haram and FST-induced intimidation as bases for the non-occurrence of mob justice. One such is the fact that no one wants to be blown up while attacking a suicide bomber. This, according to Moore and Trojanowicz (1998), explains why fear is often interpreted as the most enduring legacy and the contagious agent of victimisation during or after any criminal deviance. After the

execution of the Boko Haram leaders, many of the group's members fled to the rural areas where they remobilised and began to engage in counter-attacks and guerrilla attacks (International Crisis Group 2016). Consequently, the rural communities were rendered more vulnerable to highly unpredictable insurgent attacks. One of the community heads in the Bulama community expresses the reason people do not attack any suspected female suicide bomber:

> We cannot handle such cases because we are not security…
> even the soldiers cannot come close to them [because they are
> strapped with bombs]. So, what they do is shoot them either
> in the leg or the hand and then call the Anti-bomb Unit of the
> Army to handle them (Personal Communication July 17, 2019).

A similar reason was given by the women in the Mulai community (FDG, 23 July 2019) that even when some of these female suspects are caught with explosives, 'nobody dares to touch them or is allowed to come close to them'. A government official adds thus:

> …when the girl was dropped to go and detonate a bomb in a
> mosque at the University of Maiduguri, the residents ran away
> and the military was able to apprehend the car and the people.
> It was them the community was after, not the perpetrators (the
> female bomber) (Personal Communication January 16, 2020).

Despite the series of intimidation, some rural communities express their fears by being hostile to Boko Haram female terrorists who are caught in the act. Through the communal efforts of vigilantism that has gradually metamorphosed into the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), occasionally adamant and 'stubborn' FSTs receive aggressive sanctions such as public shaming, beating, maiming and burning for violating social norms. A member of the CJTF expressed this thus:

> We, the CJTF, are in charge of all these issues and, as soon as
> we get them, we hand them over to the military. It is when they
> refuse to comply with our directives that we now beat them before
> handing them over to the soldiers (Personal Communication
> July 23, 2019).

A similar mob justice situation is described by a group of women in the Bulama community where the "community catch them and normally beat them before the CJTF arrives to hand them over to the soldiers". Here, they are treated not as Boko Haram's victims but as terror perpetrators. This incidence of mob justice in the cities could be traced to the community's consciousness to protect lives irrespective of the fear of terror instigated by the Boko Haram insurgents. They have seen women who are commanders in the Boko Haram camps (Field Interview, 2019). According to the Senior Administrative Officer of ADSEMA and camp manager in one of the IDP camps:

> If you go to Maiduguri, it is like you are in a situation where
> you have nothing to lose. They (members of the community)

> see the suicide bombers as ordinary human beings who can be fought back…because the only road access to Maiduguri is now something else…some people have hardened their hearts; they make sure they follow the perpetrators of violence, apprehend them and give them jungle justice. Some are handed over to the military (Personal Communication January 16, 2020).

With the regular occurrences of FST attacks in the region, the city inhabitants' fears manifest as a 'productive' force that, according to Moore and Trojanowicz (1998), motivates the members of these communities to engage in crime control activities. Therefore, through the physical, verbal and psychological attacks of the suspected female suicide bombers, the community members have devised some informal social control systems that protect people from those forms of deviance (like being engaged as suicide bombers) that harm them and/or others.

2. Communal Spirit and Empathy

Communities have different ways of enhancing the communal spirit and expressing social empathy, and these determine their responses to FST. This is because the rural and the urban community populations of the Boko Haram-ridden North-East Nigeria have created some opposing descriptions of homogeneity and heterogeneity that largely define the non-incidences and occurrences of mob attacks on suspected female suicide bombers. Crowder and Copper (2002) state that spiritual bond, friendship, kinship and commonality of interest are homogenising factors associated with a community with a relatively small population. Heterogeneous societies that have been largely influenced by urbanisation and industrialisation have resulted in not only the influxes of different people but also dislocating modernity (Crowther and Copper 2002). Communities have therefore exhibited different responses to FST. The sense of community in the rural areas discourages mob justice as the communities retain the consciousness of not wanting to hurt their children who have been forcefully recruited by the insurgents. They regard them as victims of the Boko Haram indoctrination who have been weaponised for destruction. The pre-existing social structure of Islam that perceives women as occupiers of private spaces is more evident in the rural communities and it is on this basis that FST successfully thrives. Thus, it is surprising that women from these communities display a willingness to blow themselves up in the public arena. An NGO worker in an IDP camp in Yola gave his perspective on this, thus:

> Sometimes, these young girls who are used as suicide bombers are not in their right senses. It is believed that they (the Boko Haram) use some charms on them. No normal human being will want to go and bomb himself or herself like that. Some people had been in contact with them before they detonated their bomb and they discovered that they were not in their right senses… Sometimes, they are teleguided; somebody somewhere says 'Move to this place' (Focus Group Discussion January 16, 2020).

One of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) members in the Alau community stresses that while "men [suicide bombers] are not trustworthy and are sometimes very stubborn", women and girls usually cooperate when they are caught. Another member of the CJTF in the Alau community clearly states their perceptions of deviant women who engage in terrorism:

> Women, on their own, can never take the decision of taking their own lives and that of anyone else. These suicide bombers are not just forced into what they do; the Boko Haram insurgents even use some charms on them. That is why once they are arrested; they try as much as possible to remove those bombs without getting blown up (Personal Communication, July 23, 2019).

Although more women were recruited or forced to join Boko Haram from the villages (International Crisis Group 2016), mob attacks on perpetrators of FST remain largely peculiar to the cities which are characterised by the concentration of diverse people than in rural areas. As the highly heterogeneous population permits women and girls to move around low-profile places, sighting young women in the city in crowded business clusters allows for people to regard them as potential suspects of FST. This explains the frequency of mob actions in the cities such that FST suspects become the targets of mob attacks which state security infrastructures and personnel can rarely manage effectively.

3. Security Presence
The pattern of journeying in (Narrative Encounter 4) shows a movement from the city to a rural area and this depicts the efficiency of the CJFF and the intervention of the military personnel to neutralise Boko Haram in the rural communities. The rural nature of the communities and the involvement of the locals in the security system through the CJTF have helped in preventing the frequency of mob attacks. For instance, the Alau community created an order that advocates a culture of respect despite the incidence of FST. As an alliance initiated to be a self-help strategy among the citizens for the identification of crime spots and for making the necessary interventions to maintain order, under the auspices/supervision of the constituted military authority, the CJTF in the Alau community emphasises stopping any mob justice that is induced by FST. The CJTF's intervention in curbing mob attacks on the FST perpetrators is tucked in the ideology that women are weaker beings and are often brainwashed to become deviants. Contrarily, within the urban spaces, mob actions on FST perpetrators became a marker of vigilantism and self-determined communal action towards protection. Rather than relying on legal authorities, groups of people informally sanction lawbreakers, justifying this by affirming that there are inadequate legal mechanisms to properly punish them.

Vigilante groups use various degrees of violence (from verbal, and physical assaults and lynching) because the actions of the suspects are adjudged to be counter-normative as well as criminal (Monday and Okpanuchi 2019). The vigilantes, under

the different nomenclatures, justify their actions as a fulfilment of communal or societal wishes. From ad hoc group security formations to the well-known CJTF, organised extrajudicial actions (Weisburd 1988), acting in lieu of the regular justice system in the northeast of Nigeria, have emerged to control FST. The position of Pratten (2008) that there is an irreducible ambiguity of vigilantism in Nigeria situates the operation of the CJTF, in particular, as multifaceted especially when the constituted military authorities are inadequate. It is therefore understandable that a different societal response to deviance, particularly under vigilantism, is plausible where the presence of security personnel in urban and clustered communities is not so manifest to deal with it. In North-Eastern communities outside Borno State, particularly in Adamawa, the ongoing post-conflict efforts also deter the perpetration of mob justice on FST suspects. One of the NGO workers attests to this:

> I have never heard of women bombers being beaten by the community because, generally, awareness is being created in, most especially, this part of the North-East. You know there are so many gender-focused radio programmes to educate the populace about what these people are doing and how they are forcefully initiating people. These are the things that help (Focus Group Discussion January 16, 2020).

FST, Mob Justice and the Perpetrator/Victimhood Nexus

With the overall goal of altering the immediate and the future behaviour of deviants, both verbal and non-verbal communication modes that depict the total disapproval of their acts are carried out by persons or groups other than law enforcement agents. This approach of dealing with counter-normative activities, prior to or independent of the involvement of the relevant authoritative third parties, and enforced by the highly decentralised local social forces like vigilantes, is described as informal social control (Emerson 2006; Nupier, et al. 2007). Informal sanction comes with some level of flexibility which means that the more serious a society takes a norm, the harsher the penalty for breaking it. This explains why most negative sanctions are informal (Pfohl 2009). Women's involvement in counter-normative acts like suicide bombing is more prone to informal sanctions that manifest in a series of aggressive or violent social rejections and norm enforcement. This link between deviance and social control from the gender perspective is expounded by Hagan, Simpson and Gillis (1979). They hold that there is a sexually stratified inverse relationship between structurally differentiated processes of social control such that women are frequently the instruments and objects of such informal social controls while men are frequently the instruments and objects of formal sanctions. Regarding the female suicide bombers as perpetrators or victims in the context of mob justice is intertwined with the deviant and social control theories.

The engagement of women as suicide bombers is seen particularly by the respondents, from the studied communities, as being beyond the criminal acts of terrorism. This

is borne out of the dominant position that the decision to 'perpetrate' terror is not made solely by the women or girls who are Boko Haram suicide bombers. Rather, these women or girls deviate from their socially assigned roles as caregivers not out of their volition but as a result of their forceful recruitment and indoctrination. While they consistently perpetrate terror by successfully 'hiding explosives under their hijabs for detonation in open places', they are victims in the hands of Boko Haram who take advantage of their high-level poverty, low educational level and helplessness (Field Interview 2019). The subjection of the suspected female bombers to more informal sanctions like verbal abuse and social rejections by community members, including members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), in line with Hagan, Simpson and Gillis' (1979) argument, is another perspective from which one is to view FST as deviance. Irrespective of the extent of empathy for women and the atmosphere of fear in the afflicted communities, potential bombers, are seen as terrorists. According to the interviewed NGO workers and journalists in Adamawa and Bauchi States, these women or girls are "being sent to detonate bombs in the (host) communities but are not indigenes of these communities" (Focus Group Discussion January 16, 2020). After their abductions, "they are most often taken to a different community where they are not known" to carry out the act of suicide bombing. It is "therefore very difficult for one to identify that they were kidnapped" or for members of the host community to show any expected empathy. Meanwhile, in the urban communities of Borno and Bauchi States, the less concentration of security workers, explains the late responses of the military personnel to reported suicide bombing scenes. Moreover, the poor state of preparedness of some CJTF members informs the mishandling of suspected female bombers and contributes to considering suspected female suicide bombers as perpetrators rather than victims, leading to resulting mob attacks (Focus Group Discussion January 16, 2020).

In addition to the conversation with some respondents from the traditional media, it was revealed that some of CJTF members carry out their activities 'under the influence of drugs'. This dynamic further contributes to the difficulty in distinguishing between the perception of female bombers as victims and the portraiture as perpetrators (Focus Group Discussion January 16, 2020).

FST, Mob Justice and Security Implications

Negative vigilantism, as manifested through mob actions, complicates the lives of women in public and private spaces. On one hand, in the public space, the sight of teenage girls has become a misnomer. Their fundamental human rights to free movement and life are now being impeded. On the other hand, seclusion in private spaces has increased Boko Haram's access to recruiting females for domestic and nursing services. Apart from the migrants from the other regions in Nigeria (mostly Igbo, Yoruba, Tiv, and Igala women), indigenous women in North-East Nigeria are not culturally expected to operate in public spaces (Robson 2006) or work at the

market centres. The control of women's mobility through seclusion further triggers the suspicion of them being on a suicide mission when sighted in densely populated public spaces. These contestations and entanglements of public and private spaces matter in intertwining contexts of FST and mob justice. From the abduction and the indoctrination of women and girls, and their recruitment as suicide bombers to the aftermath of successful or attempted suicide bombings, the dynamics of FST and their security consequences are evident. One significant offshoot of FST and mob justice across Boko Haram-afflicted North-Eastern Nigeria is the community rejection of female returnees from the camps of the Boko Haram insurgents. First, community members who have encountered or learnt about cases of attempted female suicide bombing fear or lose trust in these returnees. Also, verbal and physical condemnations of female suicide bombing suspects deprive returnees of the courage to return to their communities. An NGO worker interviewed in Adamawa State buttresses this observation thus:

> Sometimes, they (women and girls) willingly give themselves to the insurgents because when they came back, their communities rejected them and they were forced to go back to the insurgent camps. I have interacted with someone who escaped from the camp. They were used as cooks, they have seen blood… and how people are being killed (Focus Group Discussion January 16, 2020).

Another respondent, a journalist adds:

> The funniest thing is that few of the women who escaped from the insurgents' camps have no intention of bombing any public space but even their family members are running away from them; they reject them (Focus Group Discussion, January 17, 2020).

On the one hand, there are reported instances of some returnees, who, upon a long period of relationship with the Boko Haram members (before being sent on any mission as suicide bombers) still maintain concrete communication channels with the Boko Haram members (Field Investigation 2019 and 2020), and this makes the community members label them as conspirators, as far as national security is concerned. On the other hand, abducted and potential female suicide bombers who have stayed in the Boko Haram camps for an appreciable period come back home with permanent reminders (pregnancies and children) that bring about stigmatisation and societal rejection. This security implication is described by some respondents, thus:

> …And the major challenge now, some of them who were rescued by the military or who ran away from the hideout of the insurgents come out from the insurgency bases with children; they face rejection; the society calls the children they had with the terrorists the children of the devil and to integrate them into the society becomes a great challenge (Focus Group Discussions January 16, 2020).

Conclusion

Women's and girl's encounters with Boko Haram in North-East, Nigeria, have exposed them to the different dimensions of security threats. In rural communities, the instrumentalisation of women as agents of terror has negated their perception as caregivers and domestic/informal productive workforce. Despite the rarity of the occurrence of mob justice in the studied rural communities, the negative consequences of the communities' postures against FST manifest in the everyday living of the average women and in the lives of the female returnees from Boko Haram's enclaves. Urban centres, with clusters of heterogeneous people, are more prone to the typical vigilantism against terrorism therefore, such communities increasingly resort to some dangerous alternatives, in place of the formal criminal justice system, to curb female suicide bombing. Mob justice is not only an aftermath of terrorist attacks or their reactions to terrorism; rather, it is also a cause and manifestation of violence against women, as female suspects who survive mob justice are permanently stigmatised and rejected. Along with the constant reminders of their interaction with terror, many of them remain social deviants. Boko Haram-afflicted states of North-East Nigeria are battling the challenges of community reintegration for the girls and women who have been exposed to FST. The reintegration of women and girls affected by Boko Haram insurgencies is a continuous process among state and non-state actors in Nigeria, which opens up new frontiers of research and action.

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A European Military Balance Organization and Dynamic Conventional Arms Control

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Abstract

The Russo-Ukraine War has capped the decay of conventional arms control (CAC) agreements and security institutions designed and evolved in large part to prevent this type of conflict. At its root is the rivalry between Russia and NATO, and Russian concerns over the military balance. The Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty was the cornerstone agreement to stabilize the military balance, but the treaty and other security institutions such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) failed to adapt to NATO expansion. This article explores the role of various organizations in Europe in CAC and proposes a unique approach to future CAC agreements, dynamic CAC, implemented by a dedicated organization called the European Military Balance Organization (EMBO) which would continuously assess the military balance between NATO and Russia.

What may have been the cause of conventional arms control (CAC) agreement failures in Europe, and how might these be mitigated? Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 capped the decay of adversarial arms control agreements in Europe since the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) entered into force in 1992, if not earlier with the establishment in 1975 of the Conference Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which later became the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)[1]. While most of the treaties and organizations still exist, they failed to prevent the war in Ukraine. The Russo-Ukraine War's revelation of CAC failures offers an opportunity for scholars and practitioners to identify ways to improve upon previous CAC weaknesses, alter existing institutions and agreements, and create new ones to, hopefully, prevent another major European conflict in the future. This article proposes several approaches to resolving the issue of alterations in the military balance between NATO and Russia – one of the key causes of the Russo-Ukraine War.

This article proposes that greater adaptation can be built into a CAC agreement in Europe which involves the continuous quantitative assessment of the military balance in order to maintain and update a NATO-Russia CAC agreement based on an agreed military capabilities balance, preventing the need to make major treaty changes or draft a new treaty altogether with the commensurate problems of renegotiation and ratification[2]. This assessment would be done through a proposed European Military Balance Organization (EMBO) and would recommend adjustments to the military balance through alterations of treaty-limited equipment (TLE), personnel, and other military capability reductions and ceilings based upon a treaty-agreed baseline military balance. As discussed further below, an EMBO institution could be a single concrete international organization, an office or department within an existing international organization, or a network of national representatives with or without a standing body.

The decay of CAC

One of the Russo-Ukraine War's principal causes was Russia's perception of an unacceptable conventional military balance[3] that was not addressed by existing or Russia-proposed CAC agreements (Lippert, Forthcoming). The Cold War ended relatively "gently" in part because the CFE Treaty established a system of transparency and confidence. However, within a decade the agreement which had been founded upon military parity between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) was irrelevant due to the WTO's dissolution, NATO expansion, and Russia's inability to match NATO's military strength.

[1] See Graef (2021) and Kühn (2020). Though Kühn's book predates the war, his assessment of decay was only further reinforced with other arms control agreement failures up until the invasion. Adversarial CAC agreements are between states or groups of states that have a competitive relationship. These agreements are different from universal arms control agreements which usually aim to address a humanitarian concern rather than deal with potential conflict.

[2] One reason to avoid renegotiating treaties is to avoid the US Senate ratification process which can result in a treaty's failure. See, for example, Kühn (2019).

[3] This article will hereafter refer to the "conventional military balance" as the "military balance." The military balance does not necessarily imply an equal distribution of military capabilities between two or more states, but refers to the net difference in (conventional) military capabilities between two or more states. Conventional weapons and armed forces refer to any military system that is not nuclear, chemical, or biological. Any system or capability that is dual use is discussed and considered as necessary in one or all categories.

The 1999 Adapted CFE (A/CFE) Treaty was an attempt to address Russia's dissatisfaction by incorporating new limits on equipment, but the treaty did not enter into force. However, NATO expansion followed by NATO deployments, especially following the 2014 annexation of Crimea and Russia's support for eastern Ukraine separatists convinced Moscow that their "indivisible security" was not being respected, despite agreements and statements committing the US, NATO, and other European states (including Russia) to do so (Kühn 2020; Kvartalnov 2021).

Most peacetime adversarial CAC agreements reflect the military balance at the time of signature and the desired military balance, which themselves are largely based on the overall geopolitical situation. The problem occurs when the geopolitical or military situation on which a CAC agreement is based significantly changes. The geopolitical situation could be something as dramatic as the WTO's dissolution and NATO expansion, and the military situation could be the general collapse of one state's military capabilities or significant changes in technology that affect the military balance on which the agreement is based. Confronted with realities that clash with CAC agreements, states are compelled to revise the treaty, draft a new one, violate it, or withdraw from it. As Maurer stated, states will only remain in an arms control agreement as long as it benefits their security (Maurer 2018). However, these four options are rife with disadvantages, including the level of effort required, reopening negotiations and arguments between states, potentially sharpening diplomatic disputes, and returning to arms racing.

The Role of Intergovernmental Organizations and European CAC

There is no singular international organization that is primarily responsible for CAC in Europe that is comparable to the IAEA's mandate of ensuring the peaceful use of nuclear energy and preventing nuclear weapons proliferation (IAEA n.d.) or the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)'s mandate to prevent the production and use of chemical weapons (OPCW n.d.). There may be several reasons why there is no single organization for broad CAC in Europe. First, some CAC agreements are either bilateral or multilateral among a small number of countries in contrast to the IAEA and CWC which have global mandates. For example, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which included prohibitions of conventional land-based shorter and intermediate-range missiles, was a bilateral agreement between the US and USSR. The CFE Treaty covered all NATO and Warsaw Pact members, but its management was multilateral through the JCG and occasional high-level meetings with inspections conducted by state parties[4]. The Minsk Agreements (OSCE 2015), which dealt with ceasefires and the

4 Article XXI of the CFE Treaty states that "the Depository shall convene a conference of the States Parties to conduct a review of the operation of this Treaty."

removal of certain types of weapons along the line of contact in eastern Ukraine, were signed by the OSCE, Ukraine, and Russia. The OSCE had an important direct role in monitoring the conflict with representatives on the ground, as well as serving as a forum for discussing the conflict and promoting stabilization and peace in the region (OSCE n.d.; OSCE 2021a).

At the international level, the primary organization concerned with CAC in Europe is the OSCE. Van Ham summarizes the OSCE's role in arms control as: "1) Work towards a consensus on the basic principles underlying arms control; 2) Create a shared appreciation of the facts and figures in the broad area of arms control; and 3) Generate the requisite political will to work towards a new, formal arms control regime," (Ham 2018). The OSCE has a broad mandate to deal with peace and security issues in Europe, and Russia has continuously pushed for the organization to have greater authority (Kühn 2010) but its effectiveness is hampered by the organization's requirement to reach a consensus on major decisions and policies (Schlager 2020). The OSCE has extensive experience with monitoring ceasefires and peace agreements (Meier 2017; Tanner 2021) and the organization serves as a host and organizer for the CFE's JCG and the related Open Skies Treaty's Consultative Commission ("OSCE-Related Bodies" n.d.).

While the OSCE may not have extensive monitoring, verification, and inspection experience outside of the Minsk agreements (OSCE 2021a) and the Balkans Agreement Sub-Regional Arms Control (OSCE 1996; OSCE 2021b), it is the most qualified, existing international organization to assume such tasks.[5] Among the many capabilities the OSCE has to offer are its international staff; its established host country agreements; field offices with experienced field officers; various existing governing and discussion bodies such as the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) and the Permanent Council, and the Parliamentary Assembly composed of member country representatives; subject matter experts; and institutional acceptance by member countries. The tasks required to adopt the tasks of an EOMB would require the organization's expansion, but this would not be unrealistic especially if most of the OSCE's work is in assessment, receiving reports from member countries, adjudicating disputes, and open-source research with the more labor and resource-intensive tasks of inspections and verification left to member countries and alliances.

There are several obstacles, however, to the OSCE taking on the EMBO's tasks. As Zagorski notes, "the Organization has been a hostage to the relations among its participating States. Each time, complications and rising tensions led to stagnation and failures in its work," (Zagorski 2014). An EMBO that is under the OSCE may struggle to deliver impartial judgments and recommendations on military balancing without fear of dissolution or sanctions by member states.[6]

[5] Govan (2015), for example, assesses that the OSCE has experience and expertise to carry out various CAC and CSBM tasks.

[6] For example, Russia voted to end OSCE field missions in Georgia and Ukraine (Reuters 2009; U.S. Department of State 2022).

The UN Conference on Disarmament (UNCD) is a global forum focused on arms control issues, although it currently focuses on universal disarmament and nuclear, biological, and chemical arms restrictions (UNODA n.d.; UNODA 2019). The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) focuses on humanitarian issues related to arms and universal arms control rather than adversarial balancing. Nonetheless, the UNCD and UNODA have a political role in promoting and supporting arms control institutions. The UN General Assembly can have a significant role in managing the UN, including arms control-related activities; and resolutions can play an important role in supporting arms control institutions and practices. The UN Security Council (UNSC) can lend its weight to CAC by affirming agreements and supporting implementation. Presumably, any major CAC agreement in Europe will be approved by four out of the five permanent UNSC members if they have already made an agreement multilaterally, thus all but ensuring UNSC support. While the UN and its bodies have an ancillary role in supporting CAC measures in Europe due to the primacy of member countries and the OSCE, the UN could play an important role if so delegated by member countries, especially if implementation is politically or operationally supported by non-European states. Among the established roles that the UN could fulfill are use of its peacekeepers to ensure compliance with cease-fires, including limitations of troops and weapon systems. Alternatively, the UN has the capability and authority to establish an EMBO, whether within existing UN agencies or an entirely new agency.

The Role of NATO and the EU

NATO and the EU have essential CAC roles in Europe because of their size, scope, and mandate. Unlike the OSCE or UN, neither would strive or be expected to be neutral or impartial. They would advocate their members' interests and represent their perspectives with a single voice, consolidate information, and coordinate policies and activities. NATO has a much stronger historical foundation of arms control work based on Cold War experience; in particular the organization's role in drafting, negotiating, and implementing the CFE Treaty.[7] NATO has several roles in treaty implementation. Two of its most relevant bodies are the Verification Coordinating Committee (VCC) which is "responsible for coordinating and making recommendations on all activities in arms control verification, which have been agreed by countries as being appropriate for handling on a cooperative basis within the Alliance," (NATO 2022b) and the High-Level Task Force on Conventional Arms Control (HLTF) which is "the consultative and advisory body that brings together government experts to channel advice on conventional arms control issues to ministers of foreign affairs and defence," (NATO 2022a).

[7] Houser (1990), for example, compared and contrasted NATO and WTO CFE Treaty proposals.

NATO could contribute to an EMBO by providing information, contributing to policies, contesting findings as necessary, and lending institutional support. Inspections could be organized and executed by NATO rather than by individual state parties. Intelligence units might contribute to assessments of Russian compliance primarily by pooling together national intelligence reporting. NATO's senior leadership might contribute to formulating CAC policy and lead diplomatic discussions with Russia concerning implementation and disputes.

Currently, the EU has a minimal role in adversarial CAC as it is neither a party to the CFE nor it likely accepts NATO and member country primacy on the issue. However, there are several factors and trends which may elevate the EU's role in CAC in Europe. In 2008 when Russia invaded Georgia, the EU led negotiations to end the hostilities, with the agreement including a CAC element in the form of the removal of forces to pre-conflict positions (Sarkozy 2008). The EU is substantially supporting Ukraine during the present conflict with measures including coordinating military aid, sanctioning Russia, and supporting war crimes investigations of Russian officials (EEAS 2022; European Council 2023a).

There are several reasons why the EU may have a major role in a future CAC agreement. The EU might work with and through an EMBO as several EU members are not NATO members, and this might be especially relevant if the EU itself is a signatory to any CAC agreement or all of its members are signatories. Second, some EU-supported and EU-led initiatives such as military transportation infrastructure (European Commission 2022) and military procurement (PESCO n.d.) might fall under the purview of a CAC agreement, especially as these capabilities would likely affect the military balance. The EU is likely to be able to advocate member positions more strongly than if they attempt to do so on a bilateral basis with Russia; and an increased EU role would be in line with the general trend of increased delegation of policy from member states to the EU (Drewski 2022; Kühnhardt 2009).

The Role of Transnational Actors

A final category of CAC-concerned organizations would be NGOs, think tanks, government contractors, and businesses – collectively referred to as transnational actors (TNAs) (Tallberg et al. 2013). Lacking any direct authority, they may nonetheless have an indirect role in CAC and an EMBO. Some think tanks, such as RAND Corporation and Brookings, write reports on arms control issues, offering proposals and providing assessments with some reports written with direct input or data from official government representatives and databases. These reports may have the advantage of being drafted by subject matter experts, made available to the public, and not necessarily biased for any particular institution, country, or view of CAC. For an EMBO, these organizations can complement, affirm, or criticize EMBO findings and activities.

Military-industrial companies, generally distinct from think tanks in that they have a hardware rather than intellectual focus, have competing interests in CAC. On the one hand, limits can decrease government purchases; but on the other, implementation of a CAC agreement might require companies to provide tools and equipment for inspections and equipment destruction, and possibly staff to support or even conduct inspections.[8]

Dynamic Conventional Arms Control

This article proposes a new approach to CAC called dynamic conventional arms control because, unlike past agreements, this method would not be based on fixed quantitative equipment or personnel limits, but would incorporate the ability for treaty implementers to determine and implement changes to EU/NATO and Russia's treaty-authorized equipment and personnel ceilings to maintain an agreed-upon, fixed ratio of military capability.

The need, if not the feasibility, for a new CAC is clear. A CAC agreement will provide a legal and transparent basis for NATO and Russia to reduce the likelihood of arms racing which itself can become a contributor to deteriorating relations (Glaser 2004). A CAC agreement can serve as an important avenue of diplomacy, maintaining and even improving upon diplomatic relations (Freedman 1991). Ideally, a CAC agreement will stabilize the military competition between NATO and Russia by preserving mutual deterrence through the reduction of offensive weapons and the threat of a surprise attack, thereby mitigating the security dilemma. Even in a situation in which the balance is very uneven, for example in a scenario in which Russia's military has been largely decimated while NATO's has grown, an agreement can lock in an imbalance which can reduce the sources of friction and misunderstanding.[9] Any future agreement will need to reflect important changes since 1990, including a much larger NATO which shares a long border with Russia, and Russia which is dwarfed by its neighbors but enjoys significant time-distance advantages.

Examples of fixed, ratio-based CAC include the CFE and A/CFE Treaties discussed above, and the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty which set an unequal ratio of capital ships based on tonnage between Britain, the United States, Japan, France, and Italy as well as a suspension of capital ship construction ("The Washington Treaty" 1922). The fundamental problem with static TLE-focused treaties is that any number of factors can change the fundamental military balance. In the case of the CFE Treaty, the change was dramatic and rapid, occurring between the treaty's signature (1990) and entry into force (1992). A short-term measure to address the changes was to retain the distribution between the groups of state parties (NATO and the

[8] Two examples of contractor companies being used in arms control verification are discussed in Harahan and Kuhn (1996) and Russel (2001). For a general article on high expenditures for a large number of services provided by US Defense Department contractors see Hartung (2021).

[9] While the post-World War One agreements largely failed in keeping the defeated Axis military capabilities at 1919 levels, the post-World War 2 Finnish-Soviet agreement which set limits on Finland's armed forces can be considered a success.

former WTO); with former Soviet states allocating TLE between themselves (nuke.fas.org 1990). The military balance might have remained stable had the former WTO members maintained a close security relationship. Instead, many former WTO members joined NATO and by the early 2000s Russia was confronted with an extremely unfavorable military balance.

Another challenge with the fixed TLE approach is that weapons systems advance over time, and not necessarily at equal rates between states. While some efforts can be made to lock in capabilities within CAC agreements, such as with the London Naval Treaties of 1930 and 1936 which restricted the tonnage and firepower of different ship classes, anticipating specific evolutions and military technology within treaties can be difficult. For example, while the CFE Treaty limited the number of combat aircraft, it did not account for the performance jump that stealth and precision weapons offered.[10] Similarly, advances in thermal imagery increased tank performance.[11] Basic infantry soldiers can improve in quality due to their equipment, such as night vision devices, body armor, and radios.[12]

Measuring military capabilities, however, is difficult, and comparing the various methods of doing so is beyond the scope of this article (Rohn 1990). This article assumes that various methods to measure the military balance would be used, each offering advantages and disadvantages; and that some level of disputes would likely result between state parties and organizations. The proposed EMBO would have a central role in adjudicating differing assessments of the military balance including provision of its own assessment.

The EMBO

An effective EMBO would likely need to be a stand-alone international organization with formal links to the OSCE and UN. The organization's function at a minimum would be to continuously assess the military balance between groups of state parties, generally defined as NATO and Russia and its allies within the Area of Application (AoA). The international staff, including its head, would need to be as independent as possible in order to offer an impartial, unbiased assessment of the military balance. The IAEA and OPCW are examples of international organizations involved in security that can serve as models for an EMBO. If the EMBO's sole responsibility is to assess the military balance based on member state contributions and open-source research,[13] this work could be done with under a dozen staff.

However, a truly effective organization would have inspection functions. Depending on the rules and number of inspectors and inspections, an EMBO could become quite large with significant autonomy. While existing

[10] Deptula (2001) discusses the impact on stealth and precision on warfare; Some reports recommend that stealth aircraft in particular should be subject to CAC measures in Europe by keeping them a certain distance from the common Russia-NATO border; see Charap et al (2020) and Williams and Lunn (2020).
[11] The advantages of thermal imagery in armored vehicles became clear in the 1991 Gulf War. See, for example, Zaloga and Laurier (2009).
[12] For an overview of current or upcoming infantry technologies, see Turner (2020).
[13] Open-source information could provide significant insights and information for the EMBO. Open sources can provide information about technology changes, acquisition plans, military system capabilities, and quantities. Depending on resources, the EMBO could use resources such as commercial imagery, social media, and news reporting from specialist companies such as Jane's to complement and even contradict state reports. Large military items such as ships and strategic bombers may be especially difficult to conceal from open sources.

arms treaties such as the CFE and nuclear arms control agreements between the US and Russia rely on national inspection teams, the EMBO could complement national teams or replace them entirely, replicating the IAEA and OPCW. The number of inspections should be determined by what state parties and the EMBO assess may be militarily significant violations or the baseline sampling necessary for an accurate assessment of military capabilities (Dunn 1990).

Staff expertise and independence will be critical to the EMBO's credibility. This should generally preclude officials seconded to the organization from member countries (although liaison officers or other national representatives may be necessary, but pose no threat to the organization's independence). The organization could employ non-state party nationals who may be less biased than nationals of state parties.[14] However, funding challenges might create a gulf between the organization's capabilities and goals. This might be partly addressed by permitting secondment by non-state party officials – especially if the secondments are approved by the member states. Another advantage of third-country staff (salaried or seconded) would be the reduced threat of intelligence collection during inspection activities as state parties are more likely to engage in non-treaty related intelligence collection compared to a third party.[15] Taking UN peacekeeping operations as an example, third-party national contingents may even be assigned responsibility for inspections and verifications.

As with many international organizations, an EMBO might have a governing body composed of member country representatives[16] and might have a parliamentary assembly of state parties to vote on major issues such as the selection of leadership, the budget, and mandate changes.[17] Summits attended by heads of state and government could take place periodically to deal with major organizational and treaty revisions or otherwise merely as an opportunity to discuss a range of security issues.

How and When to Balance

The EMBO's mandate would be closely linked to the need to balance the blocs based on an agreed framework and ratio. Taking, for example, a treaty in which Russia and EU/NATO have agreed upon a 2:3 ratio of military capability within a certain AoA and based on a certain set of military systems such as CFE TLE and personnel, plus weapon systems such as surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), drones, radar systems, and naval vessels (nuclear weapons[18] and internal security forces would likely be excluded), the EMBO might begin its calculations based on specific inventories of current or intended (agreed) military forces. One challenge for the CAC agreement and EMBO

[14] Some international organizations such as INTERPOL and OSCE require staff to be nationals of their member countries, while some international organizations such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) do not.
[15] One example of an inspected party being concerned about intelligence collection not related to an arms control agreement was Iraq between 1991 and 2003. Iraq feared that inspectors concerned with WMD would collect intelligence on Saddam's personal security (Coe and Vaynman 2020). Sweden and Finland were concerned about military secrets being revealed if they became parties to the CFE Treaty (Dalsjö 2002; Olin 2000).
[16] For example, the OSCE has the Permanent Council for its working-level governing board which meets weekly, and INTERPOL has an executive committee approximately quarterly.
[17] OSCE has its Ministerial Council which meets annually and "is the central decision-making and governing body of the Organization" while the INTERPOL General Assembly also meets annually and is the "supreme governing body, comprising representatives from each of our member countries" (OSCE 2017; INTERPOL n.d.).
[18] This is not a given, as tactical nuclear weapons were under consideration in the MBFR discussions, with the possibility of NATO exchanging tactical nuclear weapons for WTO armored divisions; Jozef Goldblat, Arms Control: The New Guide to Negotiations and Agreements (Los Angeles, CA; London: SAGE, 2002); p. 221. The CFE Treaty specifically exempted interior security forces.

is determining which systems to control, which partly comes down to the question of which systems are more offensive than defensive (Biddle 2001). The Russo-Ukraine War has not yet revealed if the five categories of TLE (main battle tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, attack helicopters, and combat aircraft) should still be considered as primarily offensive, if additional weapons systems such as drones should be added, or weapon systems which had previously been considered in US/NATO-Soviet/Russian negotiations but ultimately not included such as naval systems should now be part of a CAC agreement. Dual use and emergent capabilities, including private military contractors, cyber warfare capabilities, and unmanned ground and sea systems, hypersonic missiles might also be considered.

Then, during the life of the treaty, the EMBO would need to continuously assess and reassess the military balance based on state party declarations to the organization, open sources, and other information. First, the EMBO would likely establish that state parties have met their intended and stated military capability goals as stated in the treaty. If, as with the CFE Treaty, the military capabilities at signature or entry-into-force are above the agreed-upon capabilities, then signatories will need to reduce their inventories by agreed-upon methods such as destruction or relocation.

Again, using the 2:3 Russia-NATO ratio as an example, during the course of the treaty a number of military significant changes could occur. These include: 1) Russia or NATO's military capability significantly decreases while the other's remains the same; 2) Russia or NATO's military capability significantly increases while the other's remains the same; 3) One significantly increases while the other significantly decreases; and 4) both increase or decrease at approximately the same rate. During the post-Cold War period's first decade, NATO expansion and Russian military stagnation are an example of point 3.[18]

[19] Russia's decline in military power from the end of the Cold War to approximately 2008, including in comparison to NATO, is discussed by Boston et al. (2018) Graphs of Russian military expenditures in total USD and as a percentage and GDP are available at (The World Bank | Data. n.d.).

The EMBO's primary task would be to assess if the 2:3 ratio is being maintained; and if not, for what reasons and by how much. The EMBO might recommend measures to re-establish the agreed balance, and discussions on the matter could take place within EMBO-related decision-making processes. In general, the resolutions include: 1) if one side's military capability has decreased or increased, the other side can similarly decrease or increase, respectively; 2) If one side has increased, it could – once the extent to which the increase was agreed (due in part to the EMBO's assessment) – restructure its forces so that the increase was only temporary; or 3) renegotiate the ratio of military capabilities.

Problems Solved

A dynamic CAC agreement with an EMBO would make a significant contribution to resolving a number of CAC agreement problems. One of the most significant roles of the EMBO would be to provide an objective measurement of the military balance, reducing disputes between blocs about the level of threat each poses to another. While the threat, especially the likelihood of a successful surprise attack,[20] is defined by more than quantitative force counts (Biddle 2006; 2001), an objective assessment of the military balance can facilitate dialogue between blocs and make the path toward resolution easier.[21]

As previously stated, a dynamic CAC agreement augmented by an EMBO will assist in addressing changes in alliances by calculating the impact of alliance member additions[22] or departures and then facilitating negotiations about how to address the proportional changes, if any. This would be a significant accomplishment because the current, static approach to adversarial CAC in Europe is more likely to lead to disputes and frustration when bloc memberships change or when one bloc significantly alters its force posture, as demonstrated by recent NATO-Russia disputes about the military balance.[23]

Another advantage of this approach is that it increases the capacity to deal with extraordinary situations such as internal security challenges and local conflicts. An EMBO can first ascertain to what extent any surge of forces results in a military significant imbalance, such as NATO deployments to the Balkans during the Balkan wars, particularly the 1999 Kosovo-Serbia conflict (McCausland 2011), or the Chechen conflicts in southwest Russia (Clinton 1997; Falkenrath 1995). In these situations, the EMBO can objectively assess the impact on the military balance of these deployments and facilitate resolutions such as an agreement that the opposing side could proportionately increase their forces.[24]

A Balancing Act

This article makes two interlinked proposals: first, a dynamic CAC agreement that focuses on the military balance between NATO and Russia can make a significant contribution to long-term peace and stability in Europe; and second, an EMBO would be instrumental in effectively implementing a dynamic CAC agreement. An EMBO's most important task would be to objectively identify changes to the military balance, creating a common picture for adversaries to negotiate and address.

The EMBO would become a new focus of a CAC community in Europe composed of international organizations, national agencies, NGOs, and

[20] A core objective of the CFE Treaty is to "eliminating, as a matter of high priority, the capability for launching surprise attack and for initiating large-scale offensive action in Europe" (OSCE 1990).
[21] An objective assessment of the military balance might also reduce the risk of war, as one cause of war is disagreements about relative power and bargaining strength (Reiter 2009).
[22] Moscow specifically noted NATO expansion as one reason for its suspension of the CFE Treaty in 2007; (President of Russia 2007).
[23] NATO itself summarized its various military and geopolitical disputes with Russia in (NATO 2023).
[24] Peters discusses the impact on CFE of local and regional conflicts, noting that some did not exceed TLE limits. Nonetheless, a surge of forces could still result in an adversary's concern, and an EMBO can assist an alleviating this (Peters 2000).

other experts. The construction of a new CAC institution would assist in informal dispute resolution through the "fashioning of consensual norms and procedures for resolving disputes" (Kupchan 1991). This new CAC institution would promote peace and security by establishing a new mechanism by which states will need to consider the shadow of the future.

A new CAC agreement and an EMBO are not guaranteed to resolve underlying problems and disputes, but are merely one among many means to do so. CAC's collapse over the past two decades was not due to a lack of institutions, organizations, and forums. On the one hand, an agreement that satisfied Russia's desire for a better and guaranteed military balance might have improved relations NATO-Russian relations; yet other areas of disagreement such as US/UK sanctions against Russia related to human rights, Russian election interference in the West, and Russian attacks against dissidents, including with the use of chemical weapons;[25] as well as general geopolitical competition in the Middle East and elsewhere, would probably still strain relations.

[25] For US and UK sanctions against Russia prior to the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine and their reasons see Rennack and Welt (2019) and Mills (2022).

Moreover, even a well-designed and conceived CAC agreement with an EMBO leaves open two major areas of disagreement. The first is that assessing military capabilities is subjective in the best of circumstances. Well-intentioned, objective experts may disagree. Self-interested treaty parties are even more likely to disagree when their own security is at stake, with the likelihood that they will underestimate their own capabilities while overestimating that of their adversary. EMBO experts will have the necessary but difficult task of developing estimative and calculative methodologies to assess military capabilities and convince state parties of their assessment's accuracy. The likelihood of state parties disagreeing over an EMBO's findings, however, is not an obstacle to its creation or functioning. State parties regularly disagree with IAEA and OPCW reports (Associated Press 2008; Masterson 2020).

As with other adversarial, peace-time CAC agreements, another challenge will be their enforcement. An EMBO is unlikely to have the means or mandate to enforce any agreement, leaving state parties to do so.

This article suggests several areas for further research. First, it is unclear what the impact of differing degrees of delegation to treaty implementation bodies is on CAC agreement success. The extent of delegation may reflect a CAC implementing body's capabilities and effectiveness, as well as the trust that state parties have in the organization. Thus, the question is whether or not agreements whose treaty implementers have higher levels of delegation are more effective than implementers with lower levels. Second, it is unclear what impact an international organization's placement within the universe of international organizations affects its impact. How much does it matter if an EMBO is part of the UN system, falls under the OSCE's work and mandate,

or is wholly independent like INTERPOL? Or would it be sufficient to be a semi-independent office within an international organization such as the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) or even function without any secretariat such as the Group of Eight (G8)?

Lastly, under what conditions is the creation of an EMBO more or less likely? Is it more or less likely if one side is a clear victor, or if there is a stalemate? To what extent would its creation be linked to other issues arising from the war, including war crimes accusations, reparations, territorial disputes, and sanctions? And what are the tradeoffs, in detail, of creating a new organization versus embedding the EMBO in the OSCE or UN? The history of CAC implementation bodies since World War One may provide some insights.

Not all wars end with a peace agreement, but many do.[26] Yet the Russo-Ukraine War is not only a war between Ukraine and Russia, but a conflict caused by the overall imbalance of the military-geopolitical order from, to use the CFE Treaty's AoA, the Atlantic to the Urals (ATTU).[27] Thus, a bilateral agreement between Kyiv and Moscow will not address the continental-wide security disagreements. A larger, continental security agreement that is focused on or at least includes a CAC component may be essential to preventing another, major war in Europe.

While a dedicated CAC organization such as the proposed EMBO formed around a CAC treaty may not succeed in preventing another war, the outbreak of the Russo-Ukraine War following almost twenty years of CAC agreement decay occurred without a dedicated international organization with a central mandate to manage the CFE Treaty. This might suggest that the lack of a dedicated CAC treaty organization significantly increases the chances of failure. Moreover, the CFE Treaty approach may demonstrate what does not work. In the search for success, this article not only proposes an international organization, but it also recommends incorporating third-party states and experts into the international organization's operations, unlike the CFE Treaty approach.

Creating and operating a new international organization is not without costs in time, effort, or funds; and depending on its mandate and activities, there could be costs to sovereignty. However, a large organization with field activities such as the OSCE has an annual budget of almost 140 million Euros (OSCE 2021c), a paltry figure compared to the costs of war wherein, for example, as of March 2023 the World Bank estimated reconstruction costs would be over 400 billion USD, and the US and European Union (the EU and its members) have contributed at least 70 billion USD each (Masters and Merrow 2023; European Council 2023b), while Russian costs are likely

[26] Fortna (2004), for example, assesses peace agreements and ceasefires from 1948-1994.
[27] See for example President Putin's speech (2022) immediately following the invasion of Ukraine which repeatedly accuses of the US and NATO of provoking and necessitating the "special military operation".

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at least 75 billion USD (Rosen 2023). On top of these continuing expenditures and financial losses are the costs in lives and livelihoods. No less worrisome is the increased threat of nuclear conflict and a broader war.[28]

[28] Three scenarios of nuclear weapon use in Ukraine are discussed by Gannon (2022). Another concern, in the author's opinion, is that an unrelated accident might lead the US or Russia to believe that an attack might be underway or imminent, compelling them to launch in perceived self-defense. A detailed discussion of such accidents can be found in Schlosser and Brick (2013).

Reasonable but bold measures need to be taken to prevent another major conflict in Europe. If, as Maurer believes (2018), states remain in an arms control agreement only as long as it serves their security interests, then an agreement needs to be crafted and institutions created or refined to increase the likelihood that all state parties' security interests are preserved. A broad, dynamic CAC agreement in Europe with an EMBO focused on military balancing which covers in the least the ATTU area may be an essential approach. A new NATO-Russia CAC agreement and the establishment of an EMBO may be difficult, but the need to prevent another, and possibly broader war compels us to consider rebirthing a revised CAC regime.

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BULLETIN
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From conflict to catastrophe: Russia-Ukraine tensions ripple across

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Abstract

This paper is an analysis of the Ukraine crisis in 2014 evolving to 2022 as the prelude to the Russia-Ukraine full-fledged war that started in February 2022. The escalating conflict between Russia and Ukraine has reverberated beyond their borders, with the active involvement of key international actors such as the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the United States (US) in the conflict zone. Notably, the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, visited the Kherson and Luhansk regions, further exacerbating tensions in the area. Preceding these events, Russia organized a referendum on 20 September in Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson, wherein enthusiasm for joining the Russian Federation was expressed. These developments are perceived as manifestations of Russia's dissatisfaction with Ukraine's political decisions. The conflict's initiation in 2022 can be attributed to Ukraine's aspirations to align itself with NATO and the EU, which sparked Russia's aggressive actions. Despite Ukraine's efforts to regain control of Crimea and restore its sovereignty, exemplified by the formation of the Crimea Platform at its first Summit in 2021 with the backing of the EU and NATO, the situation has escalated into a full-scale war. By examining the sequence of events and the underlying geopolitical dynamics, this paper aims to shed light on the complexities of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and its shift into a catastrophic war. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the interplay between political decisions, regional ambitions, and the global ramifications of military aggression in contemporary international conflicts.

Keywords:
Russia; Ukraine; EU; NATO.

On 24 February 2022, Russia's military aggression began in Luhansk Oblast. The geopolitical tensions and unrest between Russia and Ukraine can be traced back to the Ukraine crisis that erupted in 2014. The military forces from Ukraine and Russia deployed on their frontiers as part of the initial state of war in the Donbas region. Thus, military acceleration and competition between both countries eventually fell into bombardment, bloodshed, and massive displacement of people. Donbas region has been the center of the Russia-Ukraine military aggression for the last ten years.

On 8 June 2019, the Ukraine parliament developed a corresponding amendment (2017) related to membership in NATO. Thus, it became part of Ukraine's strategic foreign and security policy objective. However, the discussions on NATO membership continued, in September 2020, and on 14 September 2021, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky approved a new national security strategy for Ukraine to seek membership in NATO. Consequently, NATO reinforced its combatants in the Black Sea and advanced its cooperation with Ukraine and Georgia. Accordingly, Ukraine's military forces were receiving training and drills from NATO.

On 21 January 2022, the Russian Duma (Federal Assembly) passed a motion recognizing the independence of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic. Meanwhile, Russia intensified its military presence in Crimea and the borders of Ukraine, the same as Ukraine deployed its troops on the frontiers. However, it culminated in the Donbas separatist forces and the Ukraine nation's security forces waging fights in the region. On 21 February 2022, Russia conducted a joint military exercise with Belarus. Thus, these circumstances show the defensive preparedness and precariousness among both countries, as it can be taken as evidenced by their efforts to form alliances and increase in military strategy. However, these actions have significantly eroded the stability in the region and attempted to have two separate groups among the Russian and Ukrainian support in the international system. This eco-system of high tension has generated pervasive apprehension about a military conflict that could jeopardize the security of the states, thus ultimately resulting in the escalation of a concrete conflict zone between Russia and Ukraine.

Russia called the intervention of Russian troops in Ukraine an act of peacekeeping operation in the region by the Kremlin. Russia's involvement in Ukraine and the Donbas region has mainly been addressed as a special military operation to "denazify", demilitarise and defend the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republic. At the same time, Zelensky accused Russia of genocide in Ukraine; Russia denied its forces were killing civilians in Bucha, whereas Zelensky accused Moscow of trying to eliminate the whole nation. Moreover, it was not an unexpected war, as the West claims; it was inevitable in the Russia-Ukraine conflict frontiers, where the other international actors made their stand clear by imposing sanctions and isolating Russia. As it accused Putin of earlier moves against Ukraine, the US, the United Kingdom, and the European Union announced multiple sanctions against Russia.

Security – the Theoretical Framework

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, a new international order was constituted on the grounds of unipolarity, neoliberalism, and democracy. Russia appeared as the successor of the Soviet Union.

Many pieces of literature analyze war and security threat perceptions in international politics. War is connected to human behavior, state, and institutions in international society. Traditionally, war was a solution to dissolve the security dilemma and establish peace. Hedley Bull argues war is organized violence carried out by political units against each other. The development of the modern concept of war as organized violence among sovereign states resulted from a process of limitation or confinement of violence (Bull 1977, 184). As it suggests, war is a social institution and a mechanism for order. War delivers problems in the order of the international system. Kenneth Waltz said wars occur because there is nothing to prevent them (Waltz 1959, 232). The conventional belief is 'If you want peace, prepare for war.' Clausewitz's (1943) definition of war is a continuation of politics by other means, as it is an act of violence pushed to its utmost bounds. However, realists and neo-realists believe that 'whatever order exists in this endless state of war results from the state's attempts to organize an ever-shifting balance of power' (Bull 2002, 24).

In many cases, if two or more states are antagonistic, then war is the tool for conflict resolution. War was considered an instrument of state policy (Holsti 1996, 31). However, this war intensified political tension, security concerns, economic downfall, and diplomatic pressures in Russia, Ukraine, and the Baltic states.

The idea of security is related to national security, the safety of the state, and lessening vulnerability. Walter Lippman (1944) observes security as the capability of the country to protect its core values, both in terms that a state need not sacrifice core values in avoiding war and can maintain them by winning the war. Normally, national or international security concentrates on the state's military potential to reduce the threat level. Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen (2009) pointed to the study of international security as more than a study of threats. Under the preview of the realist view, war and the threat of war are significant puzzles in explaining Russia and Ukraine's military aggression. It is more related to material competition and resource management, as it has an uncertain environment where armed activities may lead to deadly damage in the region.

As important players in international politics, Russia and Ukraine simultaneously reciprocate over security dilemmas and threats. The security dilemma is a comprehensive theoretical background delivered by the school of defensive realism. Security dilemma circumvoluted with war and peace interactions. John Herz introduced the concept of the security dilemma in international relations in 1950. According to him (241), "Whether a man is by nature peaceful and cooperative, or aggressive and domineering, is not the question. His uncertainty and anxiety about his neighbor's intention place man in this basic security dilemma, making the

'*homo homini lupus*' a primary fact of man's social life. It is the mere instinct of self – preservation which, in the vicious circle, leads to competition for ever more power" (Herz 1951, 157). Herbert Butterfield enumerated certain premises on security dilemma: firstly, it is ultimately rooted in fear, which is based on the "universal sin of humanity," secondly, it depends upon uncertainty over others intentions, thirdly, it is unintentional in origin, fourthly, it generates a catastrophic outcome, fifthly, it can be hysterical by psychological determinant, sixthly, it is the fundamental cause of all human conflicts (Butterfield 1951, 18-22). Glenn Snyder describes this theory, 'when no state has any desire to attack others; none can be sure that others' intentions are peaceful, or will remain so each must accumulate power for defense (Snyder 1984, 461). Military proliferation and alliance formations pose security threats not only at the regional level but also at the global level.

Methodological Notes

The analysis adheres to a blend of qualitative methods and content analysis of reports and official documents. This study used the official websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia and Ukraine. This study stands for an inquiry into the decisive incident of the 2014 Ukraine crisis, in which the study referred to the third EU's Eastern Partnership Agreement and the Russian Parliament's municipal law, which was crucial to the realignment of Crimea in the same year. Distinguishably, the idea of Novorossiya developed as a germane analytical tool, deliberating multiple scholarly literatures to elucidate Russian views. The study attempts to conceptualize the pertinent Russia-Ukraine conflict. The strategic discharge of official documents, including the Minsk agreements and the other relevant documents on Russia and Ukraine, were utilized in this study. Moreover, the antagonistic previews and discussions on the sham referendum are critical in exemplifying the refined intricacies directed in this research aim. The analysis draws from the political history of conflict in Ukraine from 2014 onwards and the Minsk peace treaty's role till Russia's sham referendum in Eastern Ukraine. The Ukraine crisis in 2014 began the rivalry, followed by the 2022 Ukraine-Russia war, which turned into a full-fledged war.

Ukraine Crisis 2014 to 2022 War Zone: An Overview

Russia-Ukraine rivalry has turned into a hot topic in international politics since 2014. The 2013 Maidan protest, Crimea annexation in 2014, followed by the Donetsk and Luhansk unrest, self-declaration of Donbas Republics' independence, and domestic instability and frontier challenges severely impacted Russia-Ukraine relations. A series of events caused the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis in 2014; perhaps the situation that led to the wild-fired Ukraine crisis can be traced back to the third EU's Eastern Partnership Agreement. The EU Eastern Partnership Summit was conducted on 28-29 November 2013 in Vilnius, Lithuania, and was focused

on economic integration and political involvement with East European countries. Ukraine was offered an Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) as part of the EU's Eastern Partnership deal. (Ash 2017, 4) pointed out that "it has sealed a landmark Association Agreement with the EU, opening up economic opportunity and making it clear that it sees itself as a fundamentally 'European' country rather than a Russian satellite or tributary."

In November 2013, Ukraine's President Viktor Yanukovych suspended trade and association talks with the EU and chose to revive economic ties with Russia. This has resulted in massive political fragmentation and civil unrest within Ukraine. David Cadier viewed "The rivalry between two economic integration regimes led to an escalation in coercive diplomacy, political revolution, military intervention, and territorial seizure Cadier (2018, 71)." On 21 November 2013, people who favored the EU's offer gathered in Kyiv's Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti) and protested against the government. This protest was known as the Maidan protest (Euro-Maidan).

On 21 February 2014, President Yanukovych and opposition leaders signed an EU-mediated peace pact. On 22 February 2014, the Ukrainian Parliament voted to impeach President Yanukovych, and he fled to another country. John Mearsheimer says that "the United States and its European allies share most of the responsibility for the crisis. The taproot of the trouble is NATO enlargement, the central element of a larger strategy to move Ukraine out of Russia's orbit and integrate it into the West" (Mearsheimer 2014, 77). Notably, Dmitry V. Trenin (2014) observed "the Maidan protests were supported, funded and exploited by Ukraine's oligarchic clan, which were unhappy with Yanukovych and his Donetsk allies wielding too much power and aggressively expanding their business interests at other oligarch's expense. To them, the Maidan was a means to force an early presidential election and unseat Yanukovych."

Re-mapping Crimea with Russia

Crimea is an important geopolitical and strategic location and a significant cause of the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war. On 27 February 2014, a large section of pro-Russians seized government buildings in Crimea and raised the Russian flag. On 1 March 2014, Russia's Parliament approved the Municipal Law Act, culminating in the Crimea annexation. According to municipal law, Russia demarcated the split of Crimea from Ukraine. On 6 March 2014, the local legislative organ in Crimea adopted a decree on the all-Crimean referendum. The resolution presented two choices: "Firstly, do you support the reunification of Crimea with Russia as a subject of the Russian Federation? Secondly, do you support the restoration of the 1992 Crimea Republic Constitution and the status of Crimea as a part of Ukraine?".

Crimea's Parliament announced its independence from Ukraine after the referendum. Russia officially declared that: "An agreement was formed on the grounds of free and

voluntary expression of the will by the people of Crimea at a nationwide referendum, conducted in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol on 16 March 2014, during which the people of Crimea decided to reunite with Russia." (The President of Russia 2014)

After the referendum, on 17 March 2014, President Putin signed an executive order recognizing the Republic of Crimea. The next day on 18 March 2014, the President of the Russian Federation pointed out to the government of the Russian Federation, the state Duma, and the Federation Council that local Crimean institutions had proposed joining the Russian Federation. The same day, Russian and local institutions signed an agreement on the admission of the Republic of Crimea into the Russian Federation. On 21 March 2014, President Putin signed a law formalizing Russia's takeover of Crimea from Ukraine. Thus, this reunification of Crimea with Russia shifted the political map of both countries. Sergey Saluschev argues that "the misguided attempts at 'Ukrainization' of the ethnic Russian community in the country, impatience of the Ukrainian opposition, and the inept support of the United States and the European Union of the protests that gripped the country's capital precipitated Crimea's secession" (Saluschev 2014, 38).

Roy Allison argues that "Russia's annexation of Crimea and attempts to dismember further the Ukraine state pose a challenge for Russian neighbors and potentially for the wider European security order of a greater magnitude than anything since the end of the Cold War" (Allison 2014, 1255). Anne Marie Le Gloannec (2015) explains that "a solution to the conflict is beyond reach because the conflict concerns two opposing worlds. If the war is eventually a means for Vladimir Putin to stifle democracy in Ukraine and to strengthen his hold over Russia, there is no room for compromise".

However, Ukraine focuses on installing a Western democratic model through the Crimea Platform Summit. On 23 August 2021, the President of Ukraine arranged the Crimea Platform Summit, forming a resourceful structure to reunite Crimea with Ukraine. This venture collected support from powerful international actors, including NATO, the EU, and the USA, emphasizing a concerted aim to restore and reintegrate Crimea into Ukraine. The Crimea Platform functions as a manifold international consultation and coordination forum, encompassing Heads of State and Governments, Foreign Affairs Ministers, parliamentary bodies, civil society, and expert circles (Crimea Platform 2022). The Crimea Platform refers to further coordination and international consultation. Elon Musk, the founder of SpaceX, stated that "whether one likes it or not, Crimea is absolutely seen as a core part of Russia by Russia. Crimea is also of critical national security importance to Russia, as it is their southern navy base. From their standpoint, losing Crimea is like the USA losing Hawaii and Pearl Harbor" (TASS 2022).

Novorossiya in Donbas: A Junction of Russia and Ukraine

Novorossiya is a terminology traced back from the imperial Russian era of the 18th century. Donbas is an energy resources center for Ukraine and is frequently tagged as pro-Russian (Mykhnenko 2020). In 2014, a separatist movement arose in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions against the government in Ukraine. On 12 May 2014, pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine's eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk charged definitive victory in a referendum upheld for "self-rule" within Ukraine. In the realm of the international system, many actors, including Western countries, criticized this political act committed by the separatists (Kasianenko 2019).

By the Donbas insurgency swift on 24 May, the Donetsk and Luhansk entities formed a *de jure* union called the 'Novorossiya Republic' (New Russia). On 07 June 2014, Petro Poroshenko became the President of Ukraine. Simultaneously, the Donbas region fell into insurrection and civil riots. When the Donbas region declared self-determination from Kyiv, they attempted to form the Novorossiya Union (New Russia) against the Ukraine regime. Thus, it disclosed the fidelity of pro-Russian and Russian speakers in the Donbas region towards the Soviet Union and Russia. Moreover, this could have been viewed as a potential act of resistance and disagreement on the political transition of Ukraine.

Novorossiya is a socio-cultural and historic construct deeply grounded on Russophiles as they believe in Eurasianism or Pan-Slavic ethnic composition. The Donbas majority admire the Eurasian economic integration of their region. Religion, language, government form, and economic-political orientations differed among the Russophiles and Europhiles in Ukraine. In general, Russophiles are referred to as Russian speakers and ethnic Russians and have a geographical link with Russia, whereas Europhiles are oriented towards Western political belief and economic development.

On 14 June 2014, pro-Russian separatists shot down a military jet in eastern Ukraine, killing approximately 49 Ukrainian service personnel. Meanwhile, President Petro Poroshenko agreed and signed the EU Association Agreement on 27 June 2014. One of the purposes of the EU Association Agreement was "To promote gradual rapprochement between the parties based on common values and close and privileged links and increase Ukraine's association with the EU policies and participation in programs and agencies. To establish conditions for enhanced economic and trade relations leading towards Ukraine's gradual integration in the EU market" (Government of Ukraine 2014).

Ilmari Käihkö (2021) states that "The war in Donbas was rather conventional; conventional refers to norms or expectations about appropriate conduct which serve as common guidelines for social action." (Käihkö 2021) Mark Galeotti points out that "the full panoply of Russian propaganda was deployed to muddy the waters

in the West, especially by presenting the new Ukrainian regime as comprising or depending on 'fascists' (Galeotti 2015, 153)." Many have brought the international civil war perspective on the Donbas War. Mearsheimer has the same point of view. Richard Sakwa stated: "Moscow was not ready to see the insurgent state defeated, but neither was it supportive of earlier aspirations to create a broad 'Novorossiya' entity, envisaged initially to encompass not only the two Donbas breakaway region (small Novorossiya) but also some of the neighboring south-eastern region as well as Kharkov, Kherson, Zaporozhia, Nikolaev, and Odessa region (greater Novorossiya)" (Sakwa 2014, 279-280). Ivan Katchanovski views that "the Donbas war is not only a major political development that affects the future of Ukraine. It is significantly beyond Ukraine. The conflict became a major international conflict and the biggest conflict between Russia and the West since the end of the Cold War" (Katchanovski 2017, 2).

The elements listed below embellish the background narrative depicted in the official statements of The Russian Federation.
President Vladimir Putin stated that "In accordance with Article 51 (Chapter VII) of the UN Charter, with permission of Russia's Federation Council, and in the execution of the treaties of friendship and mutual assistance with the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic, ratified by the Federal Assembly on 22 February, I decided to carry out a special military operation" (Putin 2022).

Russia thus launched a special military campaign to protect the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics as it accelerates its militarization and nazification of Ukraine. This is apparent in the official statement of President Putin given above. At the same time, the Russian official narratives are that likewise, the United States and its allies are organizing a major cyber-attack against Russia, The Western powers, using sophisticated information and communication technologies, aim to attack Russia's government institutions, media outlets, critical infrastructure, and essential facilities on a daily basis. The Kyiv regime has publicly announced its efforts to recruit anti-Russian IT experts to form an "offensive cyber force" and has steadily documented daily malicious attacks against Russia (The ministry of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation 2022).

Minsk Protocol

The serious civilian grief in Donbas determined international organizations and other external actors to mediate in the Ukraine-Donbas conflict. Thus, on 05 September 2014, Ukraine, Russia, the Organization for Security and Operation in Europe (OSCE), and the separatists in the Donbas region signed the Minsk I agreement. Minsk I was a protocol focused on implementing peace in Ukraine with a joint effort of the trilateral group. The major step put forward in the Minsk protocol was: "Ensure the immediate bilateral cessation of the use of weapons;

ensure monitoring and verification by OSCE of the regime of non-use of weapons; implement decentralization of power, including by enacting the Law of Ukraine on the interim status of local self-government in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk (Law on Special Status) (Minisk Agreement 2014)."

The Verkhovna Rada approved a temporary law on special status on 16 September, signed by President Poroshenko, for three years. As it gives liberty to form their police forces, to appoint judges and prosecutors, and 'language self -determination', the law includes the prevention of the central authorities from adjournment of the local council (Parliament) (Allan 2022).
The Normandy format was a diplomatic arrangement formed in June 2014 by the Ukraine, Russia, Germany, and France leaders to cease military aggression in Donbas. It was focused on a peaceful resolution to resolve the military aggression in the Donbas region.

Subsequently, the conflict intensified in January 2015 in Debaltseve, even after the Minsk protocol implementation. As a result, another ceasefire agreement came to deal with the issues of Donetsk and Luhansk region uncertainties on 15 February 2015. On 12 February, the Normandy format came up with a package of measures called Minsk II. Russia, Ukraine, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the leaders of the separatist group agreed on thirteen points in this Minsk Agreement II to de-escalate aggression. The thirteen points included immediate enforcement of a ceasefire, retraction of heavy artillery, OSCE observation, discussion with the Donetsk and Luhansk interim government, and acknowledgment of the special status by Parliament as per Ukrainian law, election in the areas of Donetsk and Luhansk (Kostanyan and Meister 2016).
Taras Kuzio argues that "President Volodymyr Zelensky has promised to continue reforms, fight corruption, continue Ukraine's European integration, and bring peace to the Donbas. He could be successful in the first three goals, but the latter will elude him (Kuzio 2019)."

"The EU stood in silence while the population of Donbas was being exterminated and the Russian language was being strangled in Ukraine. It disregarded our endless calls to take notice of the predominance of Nazis in the Ukrainian authorities and the socioeconomic blockade and murder of innocent civilians in the southeast of Ukraine" (Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the European Union 2022)

Giovanna De Maio says, "There are three major issues of concern for the Russian government that involve Ukraine; 1. It is important to contain Western expansion eastwards as a buffer state, 2. Russia's responsibility to protect the Russian-speaking population living in Ukraine, and 3. As a danger in terms of spillover effects near abroad (Maio 2016, 6)." David J. Kramer (2015,9) stated, "Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine posed the most serious challenge to European security in decades (Kramer 2015, 9)." Miron Lakomy viewed "the war in Ukraine as an

outcome of multi-layered rivalry combined with unintentional mistakes committed by all possible sides (Lakomy 2016, 279)."

Military Escalation and the Sham Referendum

On 24 February 2021, the military escalation in the Donbas region resulted from the failure to implement the Minsk Accords and the political agenda of President Vladimir Zelensky. In addition, the existence of the Crimea platform summit and the vision of Ukraine to de-occupy Crimea were deliberate moves from the Ukraine side that posed severe challenges in this region as a whole. More importantly, military drills in Ukraine by NATO and Ukraine's adherence to becoming a member of NATO and the EU culminated in warfare in the next year. President Vladimir Zelensky's political campaign during the election was the reintegration of Crimea into Ukraine. However, the USA blamed Russia's military intervention in Ukraine, at the same time, Russia alleged the US for provocative involvement in Ukraine to begin the war (Chotiner 2022).

Sam Cranny-Evans of the Royal United Service Institute states (2022 cited from BBC News), "The key is that the Kremlin has identified it as a Russian-speaking part of Ukraine that is more Russian than Ukraine."

The referendum was conducted in the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions regarding their accession to the Russian Federation. The Foreign Ministry's statement on the referendums in the DPR, LPR, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions results in the voting was tabulated with the overwhelming majority of voters supporting unification with Russia: 99.23 percent in the DPR, 98.42 percent in the LPR, 93.11 percent in the Zaporizhzhia region and 87.05 percent in the Kherson region (The ministry of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation 2022). On 4 October 2022, formal laws were enacted to recognize the incorporation of the Donetsk People's Republic, Luhansk People's Republic, Zaporozhye Region, and Kherson Region into the Russian Federation. As per this law, these newly integrated territories were established as part of the Russian Federation (President of Russia 2022). On 19 October 2022, Vladimir Putin signed an executive order for implementation in the Constituent Entities of Russia in connection with the Presidential Executive Order. On territorial integrity, the President of Russia announced Martial Law on the territory of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions on 20 October 2022.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the military aggression between Russia and Ukraine in recent years has had profound consequences across various dimensions, including geopolitics, economy, socio-cultural fabric, and security. The theoretical framework employed in

this article, encompassing concepts such as war, security dilemma, and geopolitics, has provided valuable insights into understanding the complexities of the conflict. This article analyzes key developments that have influenced the Russia-Ukraine conflict since the 2014 Ukraine crisis, the EU-Partnership Summit, the Maidan protests, the annexation of Crimea, unrest in the Donbas, the election of President Zelensky, and the subsequent emergence of the Crimea Platform Summit. These events have significantly influenced the dynamics of the conflict, further exacerbating tensions between the two nations.

Amidst the conflict, several attempts at resolving the crisis have been made, including the Minsk Agreement and the formation of a Crimea Platform Summit. The military aggression between Russia and Ukraine is a complex and multifaceted issue, requiring a comprehensive and inclusive approach to find a lasting resolution. Diplomatic negotiations, international cooperation, and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity principles are crucial in resolving the conflict and restoring regional stability.

The findings presented in this article underscore the need for continued scholarly research, policy deliberation, and diplomatic initiatives to address the underlying causes of the conflict and seek a sustainable path forward. The region can move beyond the current crisis and strive for a more secure and prosperous future through concerted efforts and a commitment to peaceful dialogue.

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The Bulgarian Land Forces in the Cold War

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Abstract

During the Cold War, information in Western open sources about Bulgarian Land Forces' war plans, organisation, and order of battle was absent or very general, until the last years of the 1980s. Yet there is much more information now available after 30 years, and this is a very valid topic for research. Bulgaria was drawn into Soviet war planning for the elimination of capitalism. Bulgaria's planned part in this was helping to seize the Turkish Straits, either with or without the use of tactical nuclear weapons. It now appears that there would have been two Fronts advancing in this area, one predominantly Soviet Odessa Military District forces to seize the Turkish Straits, and the other more heavily Bulgarian in composition attacking towards central Greece. Both would have been supported by tactical air forces and, if the circumstances dictated, nuclear weapons. Later, with the commitment of strategic reserves, it was hoped to develop the offensive in depth towards the Syrian border. The forces formed to carry this mission out were reorganized repeatedly from 1945-55, as the Communist Party tightened its control over the country. The organisation of the Land Forces was much more settled after the early 1960s. Bulgarian history will be better served by more open debate over these issues.

Keywords:

Bulgarian Land Forces; Warsaw Pact; Southwestern Theatre of Military Operations; Soviet Ground Forces; offensive plans; war plans; motor rifle division; military historiography.

Throughout and to the very end of the Cold War, there was little reliable and open information available in the West on the organisation, order of battle, and war plans of the Bulgarian Land Forces (BLF, but strictly Сухопътни войски (СВ)). Eastern Bloc military secrecy prevented anything but meaninglessly general data from being released, and what information was available in the West was often incorrect.

The end of the Cold War changed all that. The Cold War International History Project, perhaps most prominently, has unearthed vast amounts of at least the political history of the East Bloc. Yet little has been done in the last 10-15 years to gather the newly arriving data into a more concise, comprehensive and accurate picture of the BLF from 1945-1990. The issue is past, politics is turbulent; Bulgaria eventually joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO); and the Bulgarian military history community and armed forces veterans retain a strong focus on the Royalist period of their history. Bulgaria's struggle for independence is a much happier subject than the Communist period. The fourth volume of the Almanac of Bulgarian Land Forces, part of an enormous popular history of the Bulgarian Army's infantry divisions and regiments, published in 2018, describes the "Immortal Divisions of Bulgaria" as the divisions which fought the Balkan Wars and First World War, sworn to the service of the Knyaz (prince) and later Tsar of Bulgaria (Tsvetkov and al. 2018).

In stark contrast, this author had to sift through scattered references to uncover the initial formation details of the 21st Motor Rifle Division of the Communist-era Bulgaria People's Army. The resentment in some cases is palpable. There is no problem with such an emphasis, especially when coupled with rigorous historical analysis. Yet the Cold War Bulgarian Land Forces are more recent and deserve attention as well. There can be both pride and sadness when those involved in the Land Forces of 1945-1990 look back on the Cold War. But allowing more light onto the period, and honest debate, should allow Bulgaria to better fulfil its ample potential.

To address this gap, this historical article will first, sketch Bulgaria's grand strategic position and anticipated place in Warsaw Pact war plans, drawing on declassified U.S. documents and published sources since 1990; then, second, contrast the picture available in Western open sources up until the late 1980s with, third, the information which has become available in the last decades, to sketch the BLF's evolution and order of battle. Open debate on contemporary military history will always have value.

Strategic Setting

At the start of the Cold War, Bulgaria had always been one of the Soviet Union's most loyal allies. This dated back to hundreds of years of Ottoman domination

"during which tsarist Russia represented the only hope of liberation" (Curtis 1993, 229). Russia then played a leading role in creating the modern Bulgarian state in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. Bulgaria built a strong and effective military tradition during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, but even if it won several significant victories, it was defeated in the First World War. Revanchist former officers became a significant political faction in the fifteen years that followed, helping to stage coups.

British diplomats in the 1960s wrote that the Soviets "…we must assume, regard Bulgaria as the most reliable of their European satellites" (D. Dimitrov, Soviet Bulgaria. From the Foreign Office Records, Book 1, 1956-1963 (London, BBC World Service, 1994), 67, cited in Baev 2008, 195-196). Thirty years later, nothing substantial had changed: "In contrast to the other Communist states in the Balkans, the [People's Republic of Bulgaria] has never sought to follow an independent foreign or defence policy. In the 43 years since its formation, it has been the one permanent supporter of the USSR in the region, never openly disagreeing with Moscow over any major policy decision" (Ashley 1989, 109). The Socialist worldview and system were heavily militarised. This militarization extended to the point that Military Economic Science required Communist societies to provide all the resources that the Armed Forces deemed necessary to protect and spread the Revolution internationally (Young 2017, 19,51) In some later years, the military budget reached 12% of GDP. In contrast, NATO today argues that member states should spend 2% of GDP on defence. Control of the armed forces was a matter of loyalty to the Bulgarian Communist Party, ensured through extensive political control and indoctrination networks (Kramer 1984, 46).

This posture led to the whole-hearted adoption of Soviet military practices, including a predilection for the offensive. At the very beginning of the 1980s, "public pronouncements by Bulgarian leaders repeatedly affirm[ed] a determination to perform their Pact mission wholeheartedly if called upon" (Lewis 1982, 132). Research since 1990 supports the previous common belief that Bulgaria, in the event of a general NATO-Warsaw Pact war, would have joined with its Soviet overlord to launch attacks against Greece and Turkey (Saychuk 2021).

Organisation and War Plans

The Bulgarian People's Army included Land Forces, Air and Air Defence Forces, the Navy, and the Construction Troops (Lewis 1982, 135; Belcheva 2014; Velikov 2022). In addition to the BPA, there were an additional set of armed forces, many without direct counterparts in Western Europe. Closely associated but under the Ministry of the Interior were the Border Troops and Interior Troops. There were also static-support Troops of the Ministry of Transport, mostly railway troops, though including a pontoon brigade, and Troops of the Committee for Posts and Telecommunications (Комитет за поща и далекосъобщения) which fell respectively under the Ministry

of Transport and the Committee for Posts and Telecommunications. In wartime, the post & telecommunications troops would have fallen under the Ministry of People's Defence. This author has scanned the available 1980s open sources without finding mention of either the Troops of the Ministry of Transport or the Troops of the Committee of Posts and Telecommunications.

To start discussing Bulgarian war plans, the best place to start is Soviet war planning, as Bulgaria was so closely aligned with the Soviet Union. At its deeper levels, Marxism-Leninism is a significant factor in explaining the shape of the Soviet Armed Forces and the kinds of war plans they formulated (Odom 1998, 11); (Donnelly 1988, 106-108). The same is true more generally; liberal philosophies shape Anglo-American views on war (Howard 2008). Based on a class analysis, the General Staff in Moscow potentially had to consider war with all countries where private ownership of the means of production existed. A world war could break out; if it did, the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc would confront the entire capitalist world. Since Mikhail Frunze in the 1920s, Soviet military philosophy had also been almost entirely offensive. Soviet and Soviet-inspired forces would aim to seize the initiative and attack first at the very beginning of the war. Swift, large, highly mechanised combined arms forces were built to accomplish this aim.

From 1945 and 1990, the General Staff in Moscow carried out all planning to militarily liberate Bulgaria's potential target countries from the clutches of capitalism. By philosophy and a few years of Soviet military presence after 1945, Bulgaria was drawn into this approach to war. This was significantly removed from 21st-century Western European concepts of defence and force development planning. These plans and instructions were not really discussed with Bulgarian authorities for amendment; instead, they were communicated to Bulgaria for implementation – and Bulgaria was required to find the necessary resources.

Piecing Bulgarian war plans has been difficult until very recently. There is little published, specific, discussion and the most authoritative sources, such as General William Odom's *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (1998) focus on the view from Moscow, with few details. The General Staff archives in Moscow remain tightly closed. However, since the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency began to upload large numbers of Cold War-era documents to the Internet in 2016 (Kivimäki 2017), it is possible to fashion an overview. Better still, credible material from the headquarters of the Odessa Military District, long tasked with orchestrating the Warsaw Pact advance to the Turkish Straits, is now available (Saychuk 2021).

As always with considering a NATO-Warsaw Pact war, a large number of assumptions are required. Plans changed over the decades; the role of nuclear weapons developed; and war is as always subject to chance and Clausewitzian friction. The overall picture is however outlined by Soviet documents obtained by U.S. espionage. One classified article from March 1962 on "Some Questions in the Preparation and Conduct of

Initial Offensive Operations by Colonel-General A. Babadzhanyan," in the Soviet military-theoretical journal Military Thought wrote (Babadzhanyan 1962):

> …the goals of a strategic offensive on the European continent can be defined as the destruction of the armed forces of the aggressor countries located there and reaching the seacoasts of the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. In terms of depth, this consists of various strategic axes from 600 to 800 km (Southwester Theatre of Military Operations--TVD) and from 1200 to 2000 km (Western TVD). …the offensive operations of formations must follow one after the other without operational pauses.

As Babadzhanyan wrote, the Soviet Armed Forces divided Europe into two theatres, the Western – the primary focus – and the Southwestern, where Bulgaria was. In 1984, two Main or High Commands of Forces were created, for the Western and Southwestern Theatres (Odom 1998, 78, V.I.; Feskov, et al. 2013, 88-93).[1] The Western TVD would launch land and air forces, Soviet and Warsaw Pact, from East Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic westward as far as France and the English Channel. Soviet and Warsaw Pact staff training was focused on preparing for a high-speed offensive (Odom, 1998, 278). The Главное Командование Войск Юго-Западного Направления - Southwestern Theatre of Military Operations – had lower priority, but the seizure of the Turkish Straits was crucial. Significant Soviet and Bulgarian forces were assigned this task. Seizing the Straits would allow Warsaw Pact naval forces, Soviet, Bulgarian, and Romanian, to enter the Mediterranean and block NATO from using the area (National Intelligence Council 1979, IV-24). However, U.S. intelligence organs were not clear on "what role Romanian forces would have" because of Romania's wavering allegiance to the Soviets (National Intelligence Council 1983, 9). Further advances would depend upon the fortunes of war, but planning foresaw advances at least to the Turkish-Syrian border.

Warsaw Pact planning to seize the Turkish Straits appears to date from the 1962 exercise "Hemus." Both the CIA and Soviet documents obtained by Saychuk, emphasize two separate axes of advance, towards the Turkish Straits and towards Greece. The 1st and 2nd Balkan Fronts were named to attack in these two directions in May 1964, though they were often named during exercises as the 1st and 2nd Southern Fronts (Saychuk 2021, 376). The Chief of Staff of the Odessa Military District (MD), General Lieutenant Vladimir Meretskov, envisaged each as numbering three combined-arms armies (общевойсковая армия) during discussions in 1978. Also, part of the overall effort would have been naval forces; Airborne Troops; and elements of Long-Range Aviation (Saychuk 2021, 376-378). A third Front would have been deployed in Romania as a reserve. A standing headquarters for the 1st Balkan Front was established by the BPA in 1959. The 2nd Balkan

[1] The remainder of this paragraph largely draws on the quoted U.S. National Intelligence Estimates. Before 1984, it appears that the General Staff in Moscow probably would have followed their Second World War practice of supervising all the fronts and fleets (with Warsaw Pact forces included in each) directly, probably using Supreme High Command representatives and liaison parties with dedicated communications. This is an inference from Soviet practice after the beginning of Operation Barbarossa, July 1941; the wording of V.I. Feskov et al 2013, 88; and National Intelligence Council, 1979, III-7.

² From 1982 two new army corps were created in the Soviet Ground Forces to carry on attacks deep into the enemy's rear once enemy lines had been broken. They comprised four larger-than-usual brigades instead of divisions. See r/warno description, 2022; Holm 2016a; Holm 2016b; CIA 1983; and Feskov et al 2013, 125-126. On mobilisation, it was planned to expand a division in the Odessa MD to form such an exploitation army corps.
³ This paragraph is based on General Dimitrov's notes. General Dimitrov served as a senior assistant in the Operational Department of the General Staff from 1982-86. In 1980, he defended a dissertation on "Fundamentals, preparation and conduct of the offensive operation to central Greece" at the Military Academy in Sofia.

Front was to be established by mobilizing the Odessa MD. In the course of numerous exercises in the 1960s-80s, it was named the Maritime Front. It was to include three combined arms armies, one being Bulgarian; a multi-brigade army corps of the new type to be made ready upon mobilization (Saychuk correspondence 2023)[2]; and three to four other divisions, including one airborne division. The 98th Guards Airborne Division had been based at Bolgrad in Odessa Oblast and earmarked for this task since 1969. Two divisions were earmarked for amphibious operations. The Front took in two Soviet armies, one to be formed on mobilization (quite possibly 14th Guards and 25th Armies (Feskov 2013, 124), and the 3rd Army of the BLF (Saychuk 2021, 380).

While the Soviet data from Odessa MD headquarters is the most credible, the unanimous Bulgarian view is different. Instead of two fronts, Bulgarian sources speak of only one Front, with both Soviet and Bulgarian troops. From General Stefan Dimitrov's time within the General Staff's Operations Directorate from 1982, the Balkan Front was anticipated to have been made up of Bulgarian troops (up to three combined-arms armies); a Soviet army from the Odessa MD; and a Romanian combined-arms army (Dimitrov 2023).[3] In common with previously released Warsaw Pact plans and exercise data from Central Europe, planning started with an initial defensive phase, for which the last defence line would be the Balkan Mountains (Stara Planina), which divide Northern and Southern Bulgaria. The counteroffensive would then seize the Turkish Straits, and after the commitment of strategic reserves, would develop in depth towards Syria. By this time many of the first echelon divisions would have been badly degraded by continuous fighting. It is not possible to be clear as of yet why Soviet sources consistently speak of two or more Fronts, while Bulgarian sources only mention one.

War plans were developed with two variants: without the use of nuclear weapons and with the use of nuclear weapons. At the Front level, this would have included R-11 Zemlya surface-to-surface missiles with 10, 20, or 40 kiloton (kT) warheads and a range of about 300 kilometres, later superseded by R-17 Elbrus SSMs. For comparison, the two atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were about 15 and 20 kT, respectively. During exercises, the forces of the Odessa Military District simulated the use of up to 700 nuclear weapons, 70% to be delivered by aircraft (Saychuk 2021, 482-483).

During the Warsaw Pact Exercise "Shield 82" (Щит-82), the Front Headquarters was provided by the Soviet Union and the Soviet Ground Forces; Bulgarian troops were subordinated to it; a group from the Headquarters of the 14th Guards Army from the Odessa MD took part; and parts of the 59th Guards Motor Rifle Division also from the Odessa MD, three aviation regiments, and a number of other forces (Saychuk 2021, 468).

A group made up of Bulgarian troops from the 1st Army, plus Soviet troops, was also intended to launch an offensive towards Greece, as well (Dimitrov 2023).

Movement of Soviet forces from the Odessa MD up to attack the Turkish Straits might give NATO advance warning of an attack (National Intelligence Council 1979). Amphibious and airborne operations would support the advance. Soviet Naval Infantry were expected to be landed, possibly east of Istanbul, followed by a Soviet motor rifle regiment 'probably' to be landed from merchant ships after initial assault landings (Central Intelligence Agency 1979, 12/47; Saychuk 2017). Behind the Odessa MD were the forces of the Kiev MD, originally intended to attack Austria and Bavaria. But from 1970 the Kiev MD's focus was increasingly shifted, to sending second-echelon forces to ensure the final defeat of Turkey by advancing on Ankara (Saychuk 2021, 393-394). A corridor for the passage of the Kiev MD forces south through Romania was created annually during staff training exercises in 1975-89.

It may be worth clarifying here the West and East Bloc understandings of what Fronts and Armies consist of. The Western concept of an Army Group is often the starting point for understanding what a Soviet Front comprised. Such Army Groups reached their pinnacle in the Second World War, being made up of armies, each of multiple corps, each of multiple divisions. A division is very roughly 10,000 strong.[4] But, the Soviets had often relied heavily on smaller groupings, placing the emphasis on a multi-divisional force without intervening corps headquarters. This dates back to the groupings of the Russian Civil War and even the famed Конáрмия, the First Cavalry Army, which did not usually employ intermediate corps HQs to supervise its divisions. Shortages of either fighting personnel to fill out required *штат*, *shtat*, Tables of Organisation, or formation headquarters also contributed. Fifteen years later, as the Soviet Ground Forces were being switched to an all-mechanised model, combined arms or tank armies were reduced to 4-5 divisions, a mix of tank and motor rifle divisions (Glantz 2010; Feskov 2013, 123). Fronts and armies would have their subordinate manoeuvre formations adjusted depending upon the circumstances (Dimitrov 2023). Bulgarian armies could include four to six major manoeuvre formations – three to four motor rifle divisions, one to two tank brigades, plus artillery and other forces. As the war went on, new combat formations plus combat support formations such as artillery and engineers could be added or subtracted. In peacetime, Bulgarian first echelon divisions were at 70-90% of strength; second echelon, up to 50%; and reserve divisions less than 10%.

An oddity from a Western viewpoint in a front is a tactical air grouping, usually an Air Army, of several air divisions (roughly 150 combat aircraft per air division) (Lewis 1982, 67). These were directly under the control of the Front commander. Western reporting of the 1980s regarding the largest and most important Soviet air army, the 16th, in Germany, described a split

[4] Contemporary personnel figures for Soviet motor rifle divisions can be found at Lewis 1982, 32-39; and Carey Schofield, Inside the Soviet Army, 117.

into a northern and southern tactical air corps, totalling five ground attack divisions between them (Jane's Defence Weekly c1991; (Lewis 1982, 186). East German forces might have added two more regiments of aircraft. But there was always a strong possibility that during a transition to war, each tactical air corps might end up on a different Front – and end up being elevated to the status of an Air Army. Further back, no Soviet air army in the interior had anything more than four divisions of combat aircraft during the 1980s, and some much less.[5] So, despite the use of the term 'Army' implying multiple corps to a Westerner, the air forces had also reduced in size. So, Fronts would maybe have up to 12-14 divisions, in up to three or four armies, and hundreds of tactical aircraft.

[5] V.I. Feskov et al 2004, corrected, checked and amended by Holm 2013 for air forces, which draws on "Военная авиация отечества - Организация, вооружение, дислокация (1991/2000 г.г.)" by A.G. Lenskiy and M.M. Tsybin, Saint Petersburg 2004, the Air Forces' order of battle in 1990 and 2000 sourced from the CFE treaty data exchange; myriad earlier personal notes.
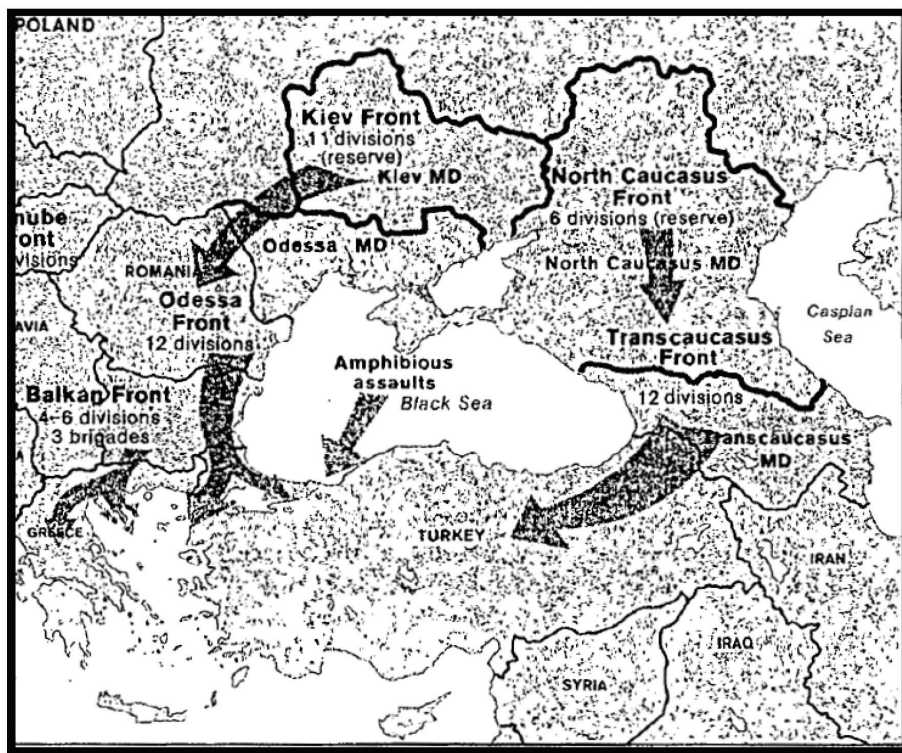
Figure 1: Soviet and NSWP Planned Lines of Advance estimated by U.S. National Intelligence Council, early 1979. It appears according to Saychuk's research the two Fronts west of the Black Sea would have been larger than estimated here. (Source: National Intelligence Council 1979)

Western Knowledge in the 1980s

So much for the larger strategic picture, as far as it can be perceived from the vantage point of 30 to 40 years later. But what of the evolution of the Bulgarian Land Forces? What kind of information was available in the West during the Cold War itself? What were the information gaps?

By August 1966, the Institute for Strategic Studies in London was reporting that Bulgaria had a total of eight motorized infantry divisions (Institute for

Strategic Studies, 1966, 6). By the early 1980s, sources usually repeated the bare details, that the Bulgarian Land Forces included eight motor rifle divisions (three cadre, Category 3) and five tank brigades, with little amplifying data (Keefe 1974, 290; Keegan 1982; Lewis 1982, 133; Foss 1986). Only the *Military Balance* consistently listed other units.[6] To explain the general lack of modern equipment, much was made of Bulgaria's "lack of skilled manpower," "geographical isolation from potential conflict with NATO," and the "austerity of the armed forces" (Lewis 1982, 131,133). It was only towards the end of the 1980s that additional data on the Land Forces slowly became available, with sources such as Rottman & Volstad 1987, Isby 1990's *Armies of the Warsaw Pact*, Ashley in Eyal 1989, and Curtis 1993. The earliest data on the Land Forces' order of battle appears to have been published by Rottman & Volstad in 1987: a number of formation details were incorrect. There were also two articles by Daniel Nelson, plus his chapter in *NATO-Warsaw Pact Force Mobilization*, RAND, 1988, presenting a more general view. Amid the tumultuous events of 1988 onwards, these sources did however tend to give snapshots that rapidly become incorrect.

A Better Picture

Thirty years have now passed, and a host of further information, in much more detail, has become available.

Plans, organisation and structure are a reasonable scaffold to start to understand an army, but essentially and vitally, armies are about people too (Goldstone 2000, 31-32). They are social organisms. So this paper is about one aspect, rather than the whole story. Within the grand strategic framework described above, there was considerable scope for variation. Individual people (all men, in this case, at least as regards formal power) can have a significant and lasting impact on an organisation. A change in senior generals, or a change in politicians, can result in fundamental changes to what the organisation does and the way it does it. Here there was a considerable difference between NATO and the Eastern Bloc. Few chiefs of staff spend anything more than about four years in post in the developed West. As a result, a Western army or defence chief can both (a) inject fresh "blood", new ideas and methods, and stimulate creativity, change and development[7], but also (b) implement ideas that his successor reverses, causing turbulence. In the Eastern Bloc, time in office could be much longer. General Atanas Semerdzhiev was Chief of the General Staff from 1962 to 1989, for example. There was very significant turbulence in the force structure from 1945 to the late 1950s, but this was more a product of the infant People's Republic of Bulgaria and its growing pains, plus trying to adapt to rapid technological and strategic change. Perhaps the only significant example of a senior official's effect on the force structure was Lieutenant General Petar Panchevski, the

[6] For most of the 1980s the Military Balance listed three MDs; the eight MRDs (3 cadre) and five tank brigades; plus three SSM brigades (with Scud SSMs); four artillery regiments; three anti-aircraft artillery regiments; two surface-to-air missile regiments; a mountain battalion and two recce battalion which first changed to a parachute regiment in the 1983-84 edition; and special commando companies (MB 1983-84). This picture continued unchanged until the 1988-89 edition, in which the number of MRDs and tank brigades per MD were detailed.

[7] My thanks go to Vladimir Milenski for emphasising this point. Generally, this author would argue that military innovation and lessons implementation works best with both regular command and staff rotations.

Minister of People's Defence (1950-1958) and later Ambassador to China, advocating for tank manoeuvre forces of the largest possible size. Panchevski had an outsize degree of influence partially due to his prior service in the Red Army. He may also have been involved in the attempted coup against then-BCP leader Todor Zhivkov in March-April 1965 (Plovdivnow.bg 2023). At the other end of the spectrum, Ivaylo Grouev described the "depersonalizing" 1974 conscript service experience for an English-speaking audience in an article published in 2007 (Grouev 2007).

Another crucial point about the material below, tracing the structural history of the Land Forces from the 1950s to the late 1980s, regards authorship and sourcing. Almost all of it is based upon repeated and extensive discussions with Borislav Velikov, on his extensive personal research, and a number of Bulgarian published works.[8] I have selected, rejigged, paraphrased, pruned, interpreted and often verified the information, but Mr. Velikov made most of it available to me. After the initial versions of the manuscript were almost finished, Mykola Saychuk allowed me to quote extensively from his 2021 book on operational-strategic planning for nuclear war in southern Europe (Saychuk 2021).

The Bulgarian Land Forces of the Cold War had their origins in the Second World War. Bulgaria allied itself with the Axis powers in April 1941. But it limited its active involvement to the Balkans, sending troops to Yugoslavia to fight the partisans. At the same time, a Communist-partisan movement arose within Bulgaria itself, thought in purely military terms it was not very successful (Curtis 1993, 231-232). Then the Soviets declared war just before the Red Army entered the country. The new First Bulgarian Army, of 99,000 men in five divisions, then fought with the Soviets against the Germans until the end of the war. The First Army included the 3rd and 4th Corps and army troops. The other four armies returned to Bulgaria and even before V-E Day, army HQs, divisions, brigades, and some regiments began to be disbanded. By May 15, 1945, the army's peacetime structure included three armies; their army troops; 12 infantry divisions; 35 infantry regiments; two armoured brigades (one seemingly with German Second World War vehicles); and one horse (cavalry) division.[9]

As the war was unfolding, Turkey stood aloof, trying to remain outside the war and minimizing its economic effects. Turkey suffered greatly during the First World War, and its army was little changed from that conflict (Deringil 2004; Humbaraci 1958, 37-38). "In 1948 the [Turkish] army was still horse-drawn, equipped with World War I weapons, ill-trained, poorly fed, and inadequately clothed. The military hierarchy froze and went into suspended animation... so steeped in tradition that any change was difficult to introduce without reorganizing and remanning the officer corps. Rarely were men assigned to

[8] Among the most helpful works regarding Bulgaria are the memoirs of the former commander of the 3rd Army, General Iordan Mufatchiev, На главното направлние; Izdatelstvo "Propeller," [ISBN 978-954-392-242-0]; Voennoto razuznavane na Bălgarija i studenata vojna; Izdat. Bălgarska Knižnica/Zikulov, Vasil S./2007; Voennijat flot na Bălgarija; v godinite na Studenata vojna; (1947 - 1990 g.); istoričesko četivo/Jotov, Joto I./2004, ISBN 9546075191.

[9] ДВИА, ф 9, оп.1, а.е 75, Схема на мирновременната дислокация на българската войска към 15 май 1945г. (CMHA, Fund 9, Opis 1, Archive Unit 75 - Peacetime Location Scheme of the Bulgarian Army by May 15, 1945.)

tasks on the basis of ability" (Lerner and Robinson 1960, 27-28). In February 1945 Turkey entered the Second World War at almost the last moment, in order to gain favour from the Allies as the post-war order took shape (VanderLippe 2001, 80). But while Bulgaria became a Soviet client regime, it was also a defeated country. Sensing some vulnerability, Bulgaria established the Covering Front along the Turkish border and army divisions were cycled through it until the end of 1945. The tension gradually settled, but the reinforcement of the Turkish border remained a major priority (Velikov 2022).

There was constant turbulence in the Bulgarian Land Forces' order of battle for the next decade. Stalinist purges, with the prominent involvement of Andrey Vishinsky, Soviet jurist and Deputy People's Commissioner of Foreign Affairs, began to destroy and reshape the army's leadership.

The discovery of imaginary plots and purges of politically undesirable personnel were accompanied by accelerated training of men the Communists found acceptable, to fill the gaps. Saychuk writes that "special 8-month courses were organised for officers from among former partisans and anti-fascists. After these courses, they were appointed to armed forces command positions, and some were sent to Moscow to study at the Frunze Military Academy. After their return in 1950 back to Bulgaria, they were appointed to senior positions in the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff. At the end of 1948, another 350 officers from all branches of the army, including commanders of most battalions and regiments, went to the USSR for training. A total of 160 Bulgarian generals and senior officers studied at Soviet military academies between 1945 and 1955, and more than 2,000 officers had short-term training in the USSR." (Saychuk 2021, 226-227).

A decisive purge against the precommunist military took place in 1947, and from 1949 the Communist Party dominated the armed forces (Curtis 1993, 233). There were structural changes made, then reversed; decisions taken, but not implemented, and then superseded due to other developments; manpower shortages; equipment shortages, and constant attention to what the Soviets were doing. Communist Party leader Georgi Dimitrov wanted the armed forces to be exactly like those of the Soviet Union (Curtis 1993, 229). Sometimes the Soviets made changes which were almost immediately copied by their Bulgarian "fellow Slavs." In the late 1940s, the traditional Bulgarian designation 'войска' was changed to 'армия' to match 'Красная армия' (the Red Army), and thus the title Bulgarian People's Army appeared.

There were little if any traditions and continuity between the Bulgarian units and formations of the Second World War and beforehand, and those of the reshaped Communist army.[10] After 1944, city monuments dedicated to military units and distinguished commanders were demolished. In the smaller

[10] Paragraph written by Borislav Velikov.

towns, monuments dedicated to local men killed in battle were left, but so-called "combatants against fascism" were added to them, and later they were demolished, to be replaced by bigger Communist monuments. Infrastructure projects were deliberately planned on the grounds of military installations, and monuments of the Bulgarian Kingdom as an excuse for their demolition, so the memories about them could be erased. These demolitions were done hastily, attracting as little attention as possible. One such example was the monument to the 1st and 6th Infantry Regiments in Sofia. It was torn down overnight without notice and instead, a large sculpture, commemorating the 1300th anniversary of the Bulgarian state, was put up.

Reshaping the armed forces into a Communist form was reinforced by large numbers of returning emigre Bulgarians who had left for the Soviet Union in the 1920s (Saychuk 2021, 226-227).[11] Those who survived until 1944 returned to Bulgaria and took up leading state and armed forces positions. Saychuk writes that "for example, a graduate of the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow, a member of the Comintern, Georgi Damyanov in 1946-1950 was Minister of Defence and then Chairman of the Presidium of the Bulgarian People's Assembly (Parliament)." As noted above, former Soviet General Petar Panchevski served as Minister of Defence from 1950 to 1958. Saychuk writes that following Panchevski "the next Minister of Defence was Soviet Colonel Ivan Mikhailov. He then became deputy head of the Bulgarian government for 20 years. A lecturer at the Soviet Naval School in Baku, Branimir Ormanov commanded the Bulgarian Navy in 1950-1960" (Saychuk 2021, 226-227). Ormanov was eventually promoted to the rank of full Admiral."

In addition to the Bulgarian returning emigres, there were several dozen Soviet military advisers. Saychuk writes that "they were attached to all the heads of departments and divisions of the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff, to all troop headquarters and military schools, to army commanders and division commanders. In 1961 the institute of military advisers was abolished, and in its place the institute of permanent military representations in Bulgaria was established. These were the Representation of the High Command of the United Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact States to the BPA and Soviet representatives of units that were to move forward to Bulgaria in the event of war" (Saychuk 2021, 226-227).

Saychuk goes on to say that "At the same time, Bulgarian officers of the Border and Internal Troops, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and State Security studied in the USSR. This practice would continue until 1990. For example, in 1985-1990, 350 Bulgarian officers studied at Soviet military academies (Saychuk 2021, 226-227).

[11] These three following paragraphs translated by Mykola Saychuk from his 2021 book with my minor reedits.

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In February 1947 Bulgaria signed the Paris Peace Treaty ending the Second World War and on September 15, 1947, the restrictions took effect. The armed forces were limited to a strength of 65,500. Velikov writes that the Land Forces and the Interior Ministry's Border Troops, together, numbered 55,300 at the time. But within three months, in accordance with Decree № 25 of December 4, 1947, of the Presidium of the National Assembly, the limitations were broken (Dinov and Mikhailov 2020). The Ministry of War became the Ministry of People's Defence; preparations to form the 1st Tank Division at Kazanlak began; and two infantry divisions and five infantry regiments were restored to full strength.

There was a large-scale redesignation of the infantry in May 1950 to follow the Soviet convention of "Rifle" [стрелкови] rather than "Infantry" [пехотна]. The infantry divisions were renumbered and given new honorific titles. The 1st Guards Division in Sofia, heavily made up of Communist-aligned personnel, gained the name "J.V. Stalin" after the Soviet leader, and the 2nd Division was named for the Bulgarian Communist leader Giorgi Dimitrov. The renumbered 7th Division was named after the marshal that had led the Red Army into Bulgaria, Fyodor Tolbukhin.

From December 4-5, 1947 two tank divisions were established within the Land Forces. Initially, the 1st Tank Division was at Kazanlak, but this formation was redesignated the 5th Tank Division some months later. Parts of the 1st Tank Division were moved to Sofia in 1950 and became the basis for the 9th Tank Division, while the Kazanlak formation became the 5th Tank Division. In June 1950 Lieutenant General Petar Panchevski, the Minister of People's Defence, officially proposed that the 5th Tank Division be transformed into the 10th Mechanised Corps "Yosif Visarionovich Stalin". The move was later reversed before being fully implemented and the 5th TD was itself disbanded, used to expand the 4th, 11th and 13th Tank Brigades and the formation of a new tank brigade in Sofia reporting to the General Staff. Now declassified CIA documents show that the United States had reports of a tank division at Kazanluk and what they assessed as a tank brigade at Sofia, plus the remaining cavalry ("Horse") division in Dobrich, in the first months of 1951 (Central Intelligence Agency 1951, 3-4).

Due to Panchevski's insistence, the previous decision to split armoured forces into smaller and more nimble formations was reversed, and the 5th (in Kazanlak) and 9th (in Sofia) Tank Divisions were formed again in 1952. Yet, technical advancement was constant and the weight of tanks increased. Therefore, it was decided in the mid-1950s that operating tanks in divisional strength was not the best option. Rivers and mountains restrict the terrain to the point that tank divisions could not have been used effectively, especially in southern Bulgaria. Thus in 1955, the 5th and 9th Tank Divisions were reduced to brigades. Unique among the Warsaw Pact, BLF tank forces remained at brigade and regimental strength until almost the very end of the Cold War (Velikov 2023; Tsvetkov, et al. 2019, 85-86).

By 1953 the total strength of the BPA numbered 180,287 people. About another 80,000 people were military personnel under other ministries, so the total number of Bulgarian armed services exceeded 260,000. Supporting this force size was an enormous strain on the country's economy.

With the signing of the Warsaw Pact Treaty on May 14, 1955, a new stage in the build-up of the Bulgarian Land Forces began. 1954 and 1955 saw intense reorganisation. Bulgaria pledged the 2nd, 7th and 17th Rifle Divisions to the Warsaw Pact Joint Armed Forces and therefore they had priority in receiving modern weaponry and promising officers.[12] Each of the three high-readiness divisions established an airborne battalion.[13] In addition, parachute reconnaissance companies were formed for each of the three armies. The creation of these units shows the emphasis on the advance seizure of objectives, ahead of the main manoeuvre force. In 1956-58, following the Soviet example, the three army corps became armies. When the three armies mobilized for war, the three army districts (''армейски военни окръзи'' (ABO) were to split from the field army commands and fall under the General Staff of the BPA. They would take over garrison duties in the army rear areas and provide replacement personnel for the frontline units. In mid-1958 the locations and designations of the 2nd and 17th Rifle Division were switched.[14]

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 changed matters again. In early 1957 the Minister of People's Defence requested that the Council of Ministers approve an increase in the size of the armed forces. This would bring the total BPA personnel to 136,400 personnel. But numbers were reduced in 1958. Peacetime numbers came down to about 100,000 and wartime strength to 440,000. This meant a decrease of 10,500 in peacetime and 40,000 in the wartime BLF personnel figures.

From 1954 Marshal of the Soviet Union Giorgi Zhukov set in motion the mechanisation of the whole Soviet Ground Forces (Glantz 2010, 42; Feskov 2013, 138-139). In May 1957 rifle and mechanised divisions were retitled "motor rifle" divisions. Within three years the same process was set in motion for Bulgaria. In February 1960, an agreement to partially mechanise the BPA was signed in Moscow between the Bulgarian Ministry of People's Defence and the Commander of the Joint Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact. This led to Council of Ministers' Resolution 862/1960, which called for the re-classification of the first-line rifle formations to motor rifles. The planned force structure included seven motor rifle divisions, five rifle divisions, the 3rd Separate Rifle Brigade, and the 16th Separate Mountain Rifle Brigade. In February 1961, the 16th Separate Mountain Brigade was expanded into the 16th Motor Rifle Division with headquarters in Burgas (Tsvetkov, et al. 2018). Three months later the 3rd Mountain Brigade became the 3rd Motor

[12] Tsvetkov, Andreev, et al, 2019, 38. At the end of 1955 the BLF "had a peacetime structure of two armies and two independent rifle corps, made up of a total of nine rifle divisions and 14 other formations. In war 5 more rifle divisions and 9 other formations would mobilize." Tsvetkov July 19, 2013.

[13] Tsvetkov, Andreev, et al, 2019, 109. In 2nd Rifle Division (RD) the airborne rifle battalion was part of 38th Rifle Regiment in Kardzhali (later moved to Stara Zagora); in 7th RD the airborne battalion was part of 33rd Rifle Regiment in Yambol; and in 17th RD the airborne battalion was part of the 31st Rifle Regiment in Haskovo. All three battalions reverted to regular rifle units in 1958.

[14] In accordance with Ministry of People's Defence Order 00250 issued on August 7, 1958, Headquarters 2nd Rifle Division was moved to Stara Zagora, and Headquarters 17th Rifle Division to Haskovo, both remaining in Second Army. Three regiments were moved. The redesignation took place on August 14, 1958, a week after the order was signed. Both divisions became motor rifle divisions in March 1960. Tsvetkov et al 2018, 43-44, 137-138.

Rifle Division.[15] In 1968, the 21st Motor Rifle Division, with its headquarters at Pazardzhik, was established.[16]

After a Soviet decision of June 1961, R-11M "Zemlya" surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs) were delivered to the smaller Warsaw Pact armies.[17] Thus in the next two years, three Bulgarian SSM brigades were established (Tsvetkov, et al 2019). The 46th Rocket Brigade in Samokov under the 1st Army; the 56th Rocket Brigade in Marino Pole near Karlovo under the 2nd Army and the 66th Rocket Brigade in Kabile near Yambol under the 3rd Army were all established. In addition to the Army-level rocket brigade, each division had a rocket battalion (division (дивизион)). The 76th Rocket Regiment (was a Reserve of the High Command formation (Резерв на Главното Командване (РГК)), armed with the R-400 Oka missile system and based in Telish near Pleven. It was upgraded to a brigade in 1980.

From April 1, 1963, a stable Land Forces structure was put into place.[18] Overall BPA peacetime strength was set at no less than 100,000 men. The Land Forces had four motor rifle divisions, five tank brigades at full strength and three more motor rifle divisions at reduced strength. During wartime, the BPA was to reach over 400,000 men with 18 Land Forces tactical formations. Some anti-tank artillery units were redesignated as anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) units. The 3M6 and 9M14 Malyutka (US designation AT-1 and AT-3, NATO reporting names Snapper and Sagger) entered service with the Soviet Ground Forces from 1960. The AT-3 "Sagger" was to gain considerable prominence when Israeli tank forces encountered them and initially suffered large losses against Egypt during the October War of 1973. There were also a number of "second complement" counterpart formations to all the tank brigades and motor rifle divisions, which would be activated upon mobilization. If and when mobilization orders were issued, the divisions and brigades active in peacetime would ready themselves for operations. Meanwhile, their shadow second complement counterparts would have been activated. Key commanders and staff would have been transferred from the active division to the second complement formation, and remained in the barracks areas to supervise the arrival of thousands of recalled reservists (Robinson 2017, 399-402; Donnelly 1988). Data from 1962 appears to indicate that six additional "second complement" divisions would be available after full mobilization, often "parented" by training regiments or schools.[19]

In 1963 a permanent nucleus for a wartime Bulgarian Front was established – the Main Directorate for Training of the Troops. In wartime, this Directorate would have become the Balkan Front and commanded multiple armies and supporting air forces. However, two years later, it was disestablished. Instead, a Front HQ was supposed to be formed in the lead-up to war by personnel from the General Staff and Ministry of Defence. Exercise experience showed

[15] See also Central Military Historical Archive, Archive Funds (Files) 67 1949-1987 3-та отделна планинска стрелкова бригада – под. (40550) 26400; Archive Fund 536a 1950 – 1992 21-ва планинска стрелкова бригада – под. 60020; Archive Fund 2254 1951-1987 16-а отделна планинска стрелкова бригада – под. 70120. https://www.archives.government.bg/288-Списък_на_фондовете
[16] General Dimitrov writes the division was established in 1968. Information supplied by Borislav Velikov implies that it was established in accordance with Ministry of People's Defence Order 00264 of August 31, 1961.
[17] Record Group (RG) 218, Geographical File 1958, Box 12; RG 263, Entry 29, Box 11; RG 319, Boxes 1155-1156, File 951 871, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC., cited in Baev 2017, 135.
[18] In accordance with Order of the Ministry of People's Defence No. 00101. Tsvetkov July 19, 2013; Velikov 2023; K. Tsvetkov, B. Andreev et al 2019.
[19] 8th MRD Vratsa; 10th MRD Stanke Dmitrov; 15th MRD at Pleven; 52nd MRD; 68th MRD Veliko Tarnovo; and 72nd MRD at Pazardzhik. Velikov 2022; Velkov 2023; K. Tsvetkov, B. Andreev et al 2019.

this to be unwise (Saychuk 2021). Instead, in accordance with Decision No. 553 of the Politburo of the Bulgarian Communist Party on 18 September 1973, the Land Forces Command was established, with more organisational powers, which would play the same role in wartime. In peacetime, it was in charge of combat, operational, and mobilization training.

Bulgarian Involvement in the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia

The available data on Bulgarian involvement in "Operation Danube," the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, is a little sparse. However, it is clear that two Bulgarian regiments were dispatched to take part in to help crush the "Prague Spring" uprising against orthodox Soviet socialism.

The 12th Motor Rifle Regiment at Elhovo, 7th Motor Rifle Division, was transported by ship from Varna to Odessa and then deployed to Zhnyatino in Zakarpattia Oblast, Ukraine (Tsvetkov, et al. 2019) (Saychuk 2021, 424). There it came under command of the 128th Guards Motor Rifle Division, 38th Army, Carpathian Front. After a 20-hour-long advance, the regiment received an order to take the towns of Zvolen and Banská Bystrica in Slovakia. The regiment had 26 old T-34 tanks, and 43 wheeled armoured personnel carriers and reconnaissance vehicles (Saychuk 2021, 424). The regiment's peacetime location was on the frontline against any confrontation with Turkey, its garrison being no more than about 25 kilometres from the border. Senior officers must have been relatively confident of little to no danger from Turkey to dispatch a regiment stationed in such a crucial location for service abroad.

The 22nd Motor Rifle Regiment (2 MRD, 2 Army, Harmanli), at a reduced strength of 967, with 37 wheeled armoured personnel carriers and reconnaissance vehicles, was moved by air through a Soviet airbase near Kolomiya (Western Ukraine). It then came under the control of the 20th Combined Arms Army (from the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany) on the Central Front (Tsvetkov, et al. 2018, 44). It set up a circular defence of Rozine and Vodohodi airports near Prague and was warned that it might have to reinforce the Soviet 7th Guards Air Assault Division [7-й гвардейской воздушно-десантной дивизии] in Prague.

Until October 22, the Bulgarian units [performed] *tasks for the protection and defence of their designated areas.* [However]... *for some actions the staff was not prepared - closing of a printing house, prosecution of illegal illegal radio stations and others without the use of weapons"* (Tsvetkov, et al. 2018, 44). There was little or no provision in normal training norms for such tasks.

The two regiments had 2164 personnel in total at the time of the incursion and 2177 at the time of the departure from Czechoslovakia, most likely due to the officers embedded within the various Soviet headquarters (Central Military Archive of the Republic of Bulgaria, Archive Fund. 24; Velikov 2023). One soldier was killed by the Czechs while trying to defect.

The 1970s Onwards

The BLF's structure remained mostly unchanged for 25 years after 1963. Constant reshuffles of the motor rifle and tank troops ended. The Land Forces Command was established in 1973. However, two Training Parachute Reconnaissance Bases, focused on Greece and Turkey, respectively, were merged into the 68th Separate Parachute-Reconnaissance Regiment on 1 October 1975. In the late 1970s, the Warsaw Pact staff recommended the creation of a BLF tank division.[20]

By the late 1980s with the constant growth of the Bulgarian People's Army, and new formations and units, personnel shortages may have grown to over 10,000. In addition, the state was growing more and more insolvent. So as a cost-cutting measure, several motor rifle divisions were reduced to Territorial Training Centres (TTCs; ТУЦ, териториален учебен център) (Tsvetkov, et al. 2019). These TTCs were in essence motor rifle divisions with their personnel reduced by about 70-80%, to the strength of a single regiment. Some of the units were reduced to zero strength in peacetime, such as the air defence artillery, with their equipment in store. Their main purpose was to train wartime mobilization personnel. In the Soviet Union mobilization divisions were being renamed Territorial Training Centres from 1987.

The political upheavals of 1989 led to sharp and deep changes, which will only be briefly sketched here. In 1988 the strength of the whole Bulgarian Peoples' Army – Land Forces, air forces, navy, Construction Troops etc. - stood at about 152,000 (Curtis 1993). In the next three years, the Socialist system shrivelled and effectively disappeared from Europe. Instead, Bulgaria began to move towards the genuine expression of the people's will through the ballot box – with much attendant disruption and some sharp pain. By 1991 the Armed Forces were 107,000 strong in total. A new "defence in all directions" concept was adopted in 1991, and significant reductions in force size began, as well as a transition from a front-army-division-regiment system to a corps and brigade-focused organisation. Then-Colonel Eng. Dr. S. Dimitrov, whose notes I have drawn on for the above Cold War period, was transferred to President Zhelyu Zhelev's office as Chief of the Military Cabinet in order for the President and Supreme Commander to control these reforms.

Conclusions

When the Bulgarian Communist Party came to power after the Second World War Bulgaria was drawn into Soviet military thinking. That foresaw a military confrontation to eliminate world capitalism. To make this possible, Socialist societies were heavily militarized. Society was required to provide the Armed

[20] Velikov 2023; information from Velikov and K. Tsvetkov, B. Andreev et al 2019, 85, 86. I have removed more extensive notes on this division's brief establishment in 1989 because General Dimitrov writes that it did not occur.

Forces with the resources necessary to destroy world capitalism if the moment came. The gap in thinking between West and East is thus stark. Military Economic Science advocated a much larger force structure and burden on the economy that Western Europeans or this author as a liberal social democrat would see as appropriate.

As part of the Warsaw Pact, planning envisaged the seizure of the Turkish Straits, probably large parts of Greece, and an eventual advance across the entirely of Turkey all the way to the Syrian border. It is not at all clear how such an advance would have worked in reality. For example, no one can fully judge how the use of nuclear weapons would have altered such a war. A large mechanised and combined arms force was created to make these offensives possible. The Land Forces' structure saw considerable turbulence from the late 1940s to the late 1950s, in large part to remove some of the imprints of pre-Communist Bulgarian military history. From the early 1960s force structures started to settle down, with none of the constant reshuffles that had reached their heights in the mid-1950s.

After 1989 the strategic situation changed enormously. The growing wars in the former Yugoslavia and the divide in Moldova emerged as the only nearby conflicts. These wars and their ethnic divides could not be "won" or altered in Bulgaria's favour by a large-scale tank-heavy mechanised invasion, supported by air forces. Neither would there be any ideological reason to do so. So slowly the Land Forces' force structure changed out of all recognition. Early official concerns about significant numbers of Turkish forces in Thrace and western Anatolia (Curtis 1993) did not lead to war. Turkish military *capabilities* did not mean that Turkey had any *intention* to invade Bulgaria. Bulgaria joined NATO in 2004 and the European Union in 2007. As with the remainder of NATO, and indeed Russia (Whisler 2021; Robinson 2005), Bulgaria moved towards smaller, higher-readiness, higher-quality forces. These have been reoriented for crisis reaction or peace support operations. Bulgaria no longer needed to defend itself on its own – that is what the NATO Article V guarantee is for. Many of the most expensive and capable weapon systems are maintained by the Alliance as a whole, such as airborne early warning aircraft, or almost exclusively by the United States.

During the Second World War Bulgaria had maintained significant land forces in Yugoslavia and had been making its own strategic plans, decisions, and force structures. After 1945 the Soviet General Staff's importance in these matters quickly grew to the point that virtually all planning and programmes for the socialist liberation of Bulgaria's target countries were being formulated in Moscow. Milenski argues that the disappearance of any indigenous *Bulgarian* responsibility for such matters "explains to a large extent why the Bulgarian military and political establishment of today finds so difficult to do realistic and achievable defence and force planning" (Milenski 2023). In addition, Eastern Bloc generals had received great operational and staff training, but in political terms, they had learned an ideology, rather than a wide understanding of international affairs (Orr 2003, 2-3).

The new situation often confounded them. The last months of 1989 led to a sharp and permanent reversion to Bulgaria having to make more and more of its own defence decisions, in a totally transformed ideological environment.

History, arguably, does not repeat itself, but historical situations reoccur. To properly understand and draw from history, what happened in the past should be well understood. To do this in the military field for Bulgaria, debate over its plans and forces from 1945 to 1990 should always be encouraged. Ample archives have been opened in other former Warsaw Pact states; the Bulgarian military archives, after 30 years, should be opened as well (Dimitrov 2023).

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The use of radar for object detection in vegetated regions

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Abstract

The FOPEN radar uses frequencies at VHF and UHF to penetrate the foliage of trees or buildings and detect bodies and people hiding under their cover. FOPEN is an important technology, being located on airborne and ground-based platforms and designed to aid surveillance of very large areas, especially those areas rich in vegetation, which are unsuitable for detection and identification using other sensors. The information the FOPEN radar provides ensures the necessary support for civil or military activities. The civilian use of FOPEN ensures the fulfillment of surveillance and monitoring missions of the Earth's surface. The data provided will ensure the study of biodiversity, forests, land surface, etc. through the potential of this radar to detect bodies under the canopy of trees.

The military use of FOPEN ensures the detection of enemy forces and assets concealed under foliage, whether they are moving or not. The images generated by FOPEN ensure the detection of targets by electromagnetic waves penetrating foliage or buildings, countering adversary camouflage, concealment, or deception techniques. The data provided by FOPEN ensures the necessary information support for decision-making processes during mission planning and execution.

Keywords:
air surveillance; FOPEN; active sensors; air surveillance systems;
ultra-wide sensors.

Acquaintance with the situation on the battlefield has been a permanent concern of commanders throughout the history of armed confrontations that have accompanied the evolution of human society. The aim was to know in advance the movements of the adversary in order to take the necessary measures to counter his actions and to ensure through one's own forces tactical superiority in order to achieve victory.

At the same time, they sought to conceal the actions and presence of their own forces in the battle area through the intelligent use of the physical characteristics of the terrain and vegetation (especially forests). Thus, the actions taken by the commanders were aimed at taking concrete measures for the permanent research and observation of the actions of the adversary, on the one hand, and for concealing or hiding the forces, means, or action intentions of the own forces against the opponent, on the other hand. If before the 20th century, the tasks of observing and analyzing the adversary were accomplished by people specially trained to collect information about it, the beginning of the century brought to the fore technological achievements that offered the possibility of surveillance and detection of enemy forces and military assets. In this regard, we can mention the radar, as well as a wide range of passive sensors (thermal, optical, acoustic, etc.) with superior detection capabilities, capable of locating and identifying the forces and military assets placed in an area of interest.

The evolution of science and technology has led, in the last five decades, to the creation of passive and active sensor systems capable of detecting a varied range of threats to self-defense forces. The deployment of sensors on a wide range of platforms (space, air, land, and sea) has contributed to increasing their potential to respond to commanders' requests to provide the necessary information support for the military decision-making process. The information support requirements requested by the commanders, and the concrete needs for surveillance of the military space operations during armed conflicts contributed to the identification of new theoretical principles for the design and development of revolutionary active or passive sensor systems, capable of detecting the forces and the military assets of the adversary in conditions, places, environments, etc. in which they could not be discovered before their appearance. One example of this is the US military's request to find technological solutions capable of detecting the armed forces and military assets of Vietnamese guerrillas operating under the cover of the tropical jungle. The characteristic of electromagnetic waves with frequencies below 1 GHz to propagate effectively through vegetation, especially through forests, was known prior to requests from the US Army, but these did not materialize through scientific research to provide a radar system capable of detecting the armed forces and the military that used vegetation to hide their presence and intentions of action. The studies launched in the middle of the seventies ended, after almost a decade of research and experimental verifications, in obtaining a radar capable of penetrating the vegetation and discovering living things or moving objects. This radar is mentioned in the

specialized literature as FOliage PENetration-FOPEN or Foliage Penetration Radar-FPR (Amato, et al. 2013).

The ability of sensors to detect and determine the movements of people and objects under the cover of vegetation is of high importance both for military and civilian applications, their contribution to increasing the security level of a state being relevant. FOPEN represents, from this perspective, a qualitative leap, with major contributions in ensuring a stable security environment through the information provided to the structures with responsibility in this field. This technology can detect and monitor discreetly, without being able to be detected, the presence of people acting under the cover of vegetation or buildings from large distances, on the order of tens of kilometers, constituting a powerful tool in combating or neutralizing threats to the security of a state. Military personnel operating in conflict zones, as well as law enforcement personnel, face dangers and threats generated by the possibility of the existence, on the one hand, of adversary combatant structures or, on the other hand, of criminals hidden in buildings, behind the walls, trees, or bushes. Their detection and location with the help of FOPEN provides the information needed to plan and carry out effective actions to neutralize both military and civilian threats.

In this study, I will present the importance of FOPEN in providing information support, the theoretical principles underlying the development of this radar, the importance of the data provided for an effective decision-making process, as well as increasing the safety level of the forces during the performance of missions, both in the military and civilian fields.

Brief History

The military confrontation imposed the surveillance of the battlefield, being considered a necessity of utmost importance. Knowledge of the existing situation during military actions always constituted a pressing and permanent need for every commander. Using the balloon in battlefield surveillance missions allowed them to know the enemy's situation at much greater distances and with much better precision than any ground observer. Due to the technical and scientific evolution of the beginning of the 20th century, aircraft were used as a means of combat and surveillance, as well as the RADAR, as a specialized means of detection, capable of detecting the adversary attack on the sea or in the air.

Compared to the aircraft that successfully took over the surveillance missions carried out with the help of balloons, increasing the surveillance distance, and increasing the accuracy of the information about the adversary, the radar did not generate much interest from either the scientific community or the army, due to the fact that the existing technology did not allow the creation of a detection system considered to be relevant from the military perspective.

The increase in aerial surveillance possibilities with the help of aerostats or aircraft had the effect of diversifying the actions carried out by the belligerents to counter the existing surveillance capacity. Therefore, there were adopted measures in order to conceal the armed forces and military assets or the maneuvers carried out in the tactical field, with the aim of preventing the adversary from knowing their intentions and the objectives of the missions. Decreasing the effect of the air attack was achieved by moving in conditions of low visibility, creating smoke screens or artificial fog to cover the combat device, using the relief or vegetation to cover the troops, etc., with the aim of reducing the possibility of being discovered from long distances.

Research undertaken in the interwar period demonstrated the possibility of detecting maritime vessels and aircraft using electromagnetic waves. The Daventry experiment, carried out in 1935, was the culmination of several decades of research, and consisted in demonstrating in practice the radar's ability to detect air attack means. Until World War II, RADAR technology had advanced enough, being able to detect and locate aviation and naval assets at long enough distances in order to combat them. In this regard, when the war broke out, both belligerent powers, Great Britain, and Germany, had well-organized airspace surveillance systems capable of carrying out specific missions and providing the information necessary for the conduct of air operations.

However, technological development did not allow the creation of radars that would allow the detection of ground targets and the permanent surveillance of the ground battlefield, the methods used in the First World War for the concealment, masking, and protection of ground forces under the cover of relief or vegetation remained the effective ways to counter aerial surveillance of ground combat equipment. The reasons behind the impossibility of the radars built during this period to detect land targets or the military assets covered by the vegetation were of a technical nature, generated by the lack of a stable waveform and a rudimentary technology for processing the signal reflected by the objects in their path.

At the beginning of the seventh decade of the last century, the US Army developed the first battlefield surveillance radar system, namely the side-looking radar AN/ APS-94 (Side-Looking Airborne Radar-SLAR), located on an aerial platform OV-1 Mohawk (Rosenfeld and Kimerling 1977, 1519-1522). The radar was placed on the OV-1B Mohawk variant, developed by Grumman Aircraft as an aircraft intended for radar surveillance missions of the land surface, video, and photo observation (FAS n.d.) in order to obtain information regarding the location of military camps, mechanized artillery units. The Vietnam War marked the deployment of the first tactical battlefield surveillance missions using radar, where the US military sought to obtain a clear picture of the movement of enemy forces and assets. The data provided by this type of radar did not ensure the detection and identification of guerrilla forces hiding in rural areas, in the tropical jungle, or in complex underground gallery networks, from where they managed to launch surprise assaults. As a result of these

actions, following the reports and requests of the commanders in the field, research was initiated on the development of radar systems capable of detecting the armed forces and military means of the adversary that were moving under the cover of the jungle. Coincidentally, in September 1964, two students of the University of Rochester, USA, Louis V. Surgent Jr., and G. M. Foster, were studying the possibility of using some fundamental concepts of theoretical physics in making the distinction between civilians and combatants. Their research was focused on the possibility of detecting combatants under the cover of the jungle and identifying those people who possess weapons. The results of the research demonstrated that there was the possibility of electromagnetic field penetration through foliage and detection of armed or unarmed individuals hidden in the jungle or areas rich in vegetation. Based on the results obtained, the two students presented to the US Army, in October 1965, a proposal for a project entitled "ORCRIST, An Anti-Guerrilla Detection System", marking the beginning of the development of the radar capable of detecting military forces and assets acting under the cover of vegetation. The program started within the US Army Land Warfare Laboratory, in Aberdeen, Maryland, and took place between May 1966 and June 1974, having as the final goal the appearance and development of new radar systems such as battlefield surveillance radar, penetration radar of foliage disposed on aerial platforms, surveillance of military objectives, etc. (Surgent 1974)

The FOPEN radar realized during this research stage was functionally limited due to the impossibility of detecting and locating static objects under the cover of vegetation. As a result, concealed combat equipment, engineering works, buildings, camps, personnel, and protection equipment structures, etc. could not be detected and neutralized. This variant constituted a technology used for the detection and indication of moving ground targets, known in the literature as GMTI (Ground Moving Target Indication) radars. The GMTI radar was used by the US military in operations conducted in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, but the impact of this detection system on the conduct of military actions was reduced due to the tactics adopted by the Vietnamese guerrilla forces. Considering the characteristics of the military actions carried out by the Vietnamese troops, there was a request from the leadership of the US army to identify a technological solution that would allow the detection of the enemy's military assets, engineering works, camps, etc. set in the tropical jungle. A suggested solution was to use a synthetic aperture radar operating in the VHF and UHF frequency bands used for FOPEN. The radar thus obtained, known in the literature as FOPEN SAR (Davis 2011, 4), would have eliminated the technological limitation of the FOPEN radar, namely the impossibility of detecting bodies and static objects, ensuring the provision of the necessary information to identify and neutralize the Vietnamese combat ground forces hidden in the jungle. However, the existence of several technical impediments, namely the high resolution of some tens of meters as well as the dimensions of the SAR FPR that required the use of a large aerial platform with minimal chances of survival in the conflict zone, the difficulties encountered in data processing and obtaining imprecise images led the military leadership to abandon the development and use of the FPR SAR.

The second stage of FOPEN development took place in the period between the end of the 9th decade and the middle of the last decade of the last century and was achieved through the involvement of the MIT Lincoln Laboratory in this project, under the technical leadership of Dr. Serpil Ayasil (Davis 2011, 9), as well as through the testing of these radar systems in two independent programs, respectively FOLPEN of the Stanford Research Institute under the leadership of Roger Vickers and CARABAS of the Swedish Defense Research Establishment under the leadership of Hans Hellsten (Davis 2011, 9). Around the same time, several test programs were initiated and financed for the potential of FOPEN, which aimed to achieve complementary objectives of scientific and military research. The results of these tests provided an understanding of the importance of the choice of frequency, polarization of the wave, elimination of interference, and the characteristics of the signal distortion caused by tree foliage (Davis 2011, 9), having the cumulative effect of increasing the efficiency of the detection of objects or living beings in motion or at rest under the cover of vegetation. It should be noted, that during this stage of development and testing of FOPEN, the scientific contribution and financial support provided by the Defense Advanced Agency of the research projects within the development program of this technology, carried out over a long period, under the guidance of some prestigious personalities in the field of scientific research such as Dom Giglio, as coordinator from 1988-1995, Mark Davis, as coordinator from 1995-1998 and Lee Moyer, as coordinator from 1999-2005 (Davis 2011, 9).

Another stage in the development of FOPEN occurred at the beginning of the 21st century, characterized by the influence of information and communication technologies on the evolution of this radar system. Technological developments in the field of digital signal processing have allowed increasing the radar's ability to discover objects under the cover of vegetation, by reducing the impact of the signal distortion caused by tree foliage on the detection of bodies or objects. These technological developments brought FOPEN technology to the attention of military leaders, noting the immense potential of this radar in providing information from an environment that until a century ago was impenetrable. The technical possibilities provided by the research results obtained in the last two development stages of the radar ensure the provision of specific information that will contribute to the realization of a real, accurate, and complete operational image of the terrestrial battlefield, eliminating the uncertainty generated by the existence of forests and rich vegetation regarding the manner of deploying armed forces and conducting military actions.

Physical Phenomenon Description

Given the above on the history of FOPEN development, an increase in interest in this technology can be identified, starting from 1990. The implementation of achievements in the field of information and communication technology have contributed to increasing the potential of this type of radar to provide the data

necessary to carry out scientific research on the Earth's surface (biodiversity study, land surface, forest areas, ecology, etc.). At the same time, the development of the FOPEN radar ensured the obtaining of higher quality data compared to those of the 70s-80s, thus contributing to the increase of the military's interest in using this type of radar in surveillance and research missions of areas of interest. Therefore, several tests were funded and carried out to collect data from different areas of the Earth in order to increase the reliability of the FOPEN radar. Extensive research was conducted to determine the effects of foliage on the radar's ability to detect and track people or objects in forests or areas rich in vegetation. Tests carried out in various areas of the globe to determine the influence of jungle, arctic forests, or various types of vegetation have helped to identify the effects that occur during the interaction between electromagnetic waves and vegetation (Gallone 2011, 173-175).

The first effect identified as a result of this interaction is the attenuation of the radar signal. The attenuation of this signal is produced both by the phenomenon of absorption of electromagnetic waves and by the phenomenon of scattering that occurs when electromagnetic waves propagate through the forest foliage. The studies undertaken revealed that the high density of the forest foliage generates a greater attenuation of the signal. Therefore, higher values of the attenuation of the electromagnetic wave were recorded in the jungle area compared to the attenuation produced by the forests in the northern areas. Another conclusion that emerged from these studies was that signal attenuation had different values depending on the frequency of the electromagnetic waves, with minimum values for the VHF frequency range (Amato, et al. 2013, 194).

Another effect identified was that of the polarization of electromagnetic waves. This effect arises due to the reflection of electromagnetic waves by trees and is associated with the scattering phenomenon. The tests showed a dependence of the attenuation phenomenon from that of the polarization, namely the horizontal polarization adds more attenuation compared to the vertical polarization (Amato, et al. 2013, 194).

Another effect identified was the phase shift of the radar signal. The propagation of electromagnetic waves through the tree canopy is assimilated to the propagation through a non-uniformly distributed medium that generates a random variation in the signal. This phenomenon of random phase variation affects the radar's ability to detect a target located on the ground surface under the cover of the forest (Amato, et al. 2013, 194).

Another important effect influencing the radar signal is that of diffuse reflection of the radar signal back to the sensor. This diffuse reflection is generated by the scattering phenomenon that occurs when waves propagate through compact and large foliage. It should be considered that the resolution cell of the FOPEN radar is generated by the limits of the spatial resolution and the angular resolution, where there are wind blow trees, both fixed elements (rocks, tree trunks, ground)

and mobile elements (leaves, branches) that will generate the phenomenon of scattering of electromagnetic waves and their diffuse reflection towards the sensor. Consequently, the radar signal reflected to the sensor will contain a static component and a variable component of the diffuse reflection phenomenon (backscatter) which, together with the phenomenon of attenuation, phase shift, and polarization, reduce the efficiency of normal processing techniques based on the Doppler phenomenon, with impact on the radar's detection capability (Amato, et al. 2013, 194). The reflection of the radar signal by an object is a complex phenomenon that depends on the electromagnetic properties of the object and its geometry. Within the resolution cell we find, therefore, the signal reflected by the object and the phenomenon of diffuse reflection of the radar signal coming from the foliage of the trees, whether the wind blows through them or not, the combination of which results in a statistical variability that contributes to the reduction of the detection capability of the radar (Ulander 2004).

Given the above, the impact of the aforementioned effects must be taken into account in order to improve the detection capacity of the FOPEN of the objects disposed in the foliage or under the canopy of the trees. The clutter phenomenon, created by electromagnetic wave scattering upon contact with vegetation, can make it difficult to detect personnel and vehicles that reflect small values of radar pulse power. The elimination of the shortcomings generated by the radar scanning of areas rich in vegetation has known several stages that were based on many experiments carried out in the field, in order to understand the interaction between dense foliage and electromagnetic waves, aiming at increasing the efficiency of the FOPEN radar. A first step was achieved in the first phase of FOPEN radar development when two innovations were identified to be necessary in increasing the radar's detection capacity, namely the creation of transmitters to generate coherent electromagnetic waves, related signal processing systems as well as the arrangement of the radar on dominant elevations in the terrain, masts, or high towers in order to correct the attenuation effect of the radar signal generated by the tree foliage (Davis 2011, 4). Another relevant aspect in the development of FOPEN was the identification of the optimal frequency band to ensure a minimum attenuation of the radar signal, namely the VHF band (Ulander 2004, 19-20).

The Use of FOPEN Radar

The progress in sensor technology and information and communication technologies in the 21st century will ensure a qualitative leap in the development of information, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems. The development of these technologies will enable the implementation of active and passive sensors with improved technical parameters that will allow the detection of low-reflective targets.
The use of camouflage techniques and vegetation, particularly dense foliage on

the battlefield by the combatant, has highlighted the deficiencies of the current ISR systems in detecting and locating targets. The increase in the performance of the sensors, and the quality of the data provided, will be achieved through a much wider use of the electromagnetic spectrum. In this sense, ultra-wideband (UWB) technology ensures a much more efficient use of the electromagnetic spectrum for various applications, such as video transmissions, voice, and data transfer or for locating objects. Ultra-wideband systems are made with different architectures and can operate with continuous or pulsed emission, depending on the applications where they are used. Among the applications where this technology is used, we may mention:

> *„UWB can be used to quickly send large amounts of data between devices. For example, UWB can be used in conjunction with 5G networks to offer faster speeds and greater bandwidth.*

> *low latency communication: UWB is suitable for low latency communication due to its short transmission period and small packet size. This makes UWB ideal for applications such as gaming, where low latency is critical to maintaining a smooth gaming experience.*

> *UWBPS: UWB can also be used for positioning and tracking purposes. UWBPS uses ultra-wideband to calculate the location of objects in real-time. This makes UWB an attractive option for applications such as automotive safety and collision avoidance. UWBPS can also be used for security applications such as tracking people or objects."* (Isak 2022)

From the above-mentioned information, it results that the following advantages of broadband technology are: low latency, high precision positioning, high data transmission rate, low energy consumption, multiband support, low risk of interference, and security in data transmission.

Due to the high data transmission capacity, ultra-wideband technology will be able to be used in the future for a variety of purposes, including:

> *„connecting wireless devices;*
> *delivering high-quality videos;*
> *improving data security;*
> *facilitating communication between vehicles and the infrastructure around them;*
> *motion detection in congested areas."* (Isak 2022)

Ultra-wideband sensor systems will provide an obvious operational advantage because it will be difficult to take measures to protect a target using a very wide bandwidth. Within this sensor category, ultra-wideband radar represents a new stage in radar development by upgrading to the generation of broadband or ultra-wideband pulses. This aspect allows the use of much lower pulse power which makes the radar emitter difficult to detect. A specific feature is the signal bandwidth, which is at least 25% of the value of the carrier frequency, compared to previous narrowband radars whose signal is 10% of the value of the carrier frequency. Ultra-broadband radars will constitute the next qualitative leap of FOPEN, ensuring

the obtaining of the most accurate information about objects or people hidden in areas rich in vegetation. Another method of obtaining high-quality, comprehensive information about an area of interest is to dispose of long-range sensors on ground-borne, airborne, and space-borne platforms in order to carry out the surveillance of the area of interest.

The collection of data by sensors depends on the way they are processed. The developments in the field of information and communication technologies have allowed the implementation of new data processing algorithms, contributing to the diversification of sensor types but also to the implementation of new threat detection ways. In this sense, the design of the sensors aims to satisfy the future requirements of the processing systems on the fusion between the data and the operational requirements on the knowledge of the battlefield environment. The fusion of data obtained from surveillance and reconnaissance missions of an area of interest, and their integration into a precise operational picture must ensure the detection and identification of threats against own or allied forces. One such example is the integration of the FOPEN radar with GMTI in a system that offers the possibility of locating, under conditions of fog, rain, and dust storms, almost any land target, even if it is under the cover of vegetation, providing high-resolution images to be used by military decision makers (Lockheed Martin 2012).

An important aspect is the correlation of data provided by several types of sensors, disposed on different types of ground-borne, airborne, and space-borne platforms. The data provided by the FOPEN radar placed on airborne or ground-borne platforms will be correlated with the data provided by the other categories of sensors with the aim of generating a final product needed for the commander in decision-making and mission planning. The correlation of the data provided by the sensors requires their integration in an increasingly complex architecture, supported by the sensor network, whose purpose consists of a better knowledge of the existing battlefield environment (Ackerman 2010).

Another field of applicability of the FOPEN radar is that of perimeter surveillance, critical infrastructure protection, national borders protection (against illegal immigration, drug trafficking, cross-border crime, etc.), providing information on the activity of people involved in actions that bring prejudices to the state, carried out in complex environments, under the cover of the forest, jungle, or other types of vegetation.

The civilian missions carried out by the FOPEN radar are multiple, combined with the surveillance actions carried out with other categories of sensors. It includes:
- *disaster preparedness and response;*
- *emergency rescue;*
- *wildlife monitoring and tracking;*
- *military surveillance;*

- *border security;*
- *search and rescue operations;*
- *operations to combat drug trafficking;*
- *forest fire monitoring."* (IMSAR n.d.)

The use of several categories of sensors, active or passive, ensures a high level of precision because these systems complement each other, providing the necessary data for the generation of a real-time image of the monitored area. From the military perspective, the data provided will contribute to the knowledge of the battlefield environment, providing information about moving targets, vehicles, and people, as well as about fixed assets of the adversary's equipment that are located and act under the cover of vegetation, ensuring their detection through the dense foliage of the jungle or temperate and boreal forests. Detection capabilities through high-density foliage will provide commanders with the information needed to identify and hit targets located in areas that were considered secure. From a civilian perspective, this radar's ability to detect ground objects through high-density foliage makes it ideal for scientific missions to research, study, and monitor the Earth's surface. FOPEN radar can be also used in the areas of border security, cross-border crime, and harbor activities or can support the activity of law enforcement agencies in identifying and apprehending criminals hidden in buildings or under the cover of vegetation.

From the above-mentioned information, it results that FOPEN radar is a technical system with multiple uses that will contribute, through the data provided, to ensure a secure climate suitable for human activities.

Conclusions

The FOPEN radar is a relatively new sensor in surveillance and research activity, with relatively modern detection capabilities, able to perform a wide range of missions, both military and civilian. It is an innovative radar with unique capabilities that provides continuous surveillance through high-density foliage and tracking targets in the areas of interest in big areas. The FOPEN SAR radar operating in the VHF band will ensure the detection of targets hidden beneath foliage, such as a truck, artillery pieces, etc., which are difficult to detect in the absence of this technical system.

Operationally, the use of this radar by military structures or other structures with responsibilities in the field of national security ensures the permanent detection and tracking of all fixed or mobile targets in the area of interest, such as people or vehicles in motion.

Militarily, the FOPEN radar will provide real-time knowledge of the battlefield, ensuring the detection of enemy assets and military forces hidden in the forest or jungle, providing the information necessary to attack the enemy's objectives and

detect moving targets, especially those hiding under the cover of high-density foliage. The data provided will ensure the necessary informational support for the military decision-making process during mission execution. At the same time, the ability of this radar to detect static or moving objects through the dense foliage of the forest allows its use in monitoring missions and studying the land surface, providing information regarding biodiversity, land surface, forested areas (dimensions, location, arboretum, etc.), in ecology, environmental sciences, etc.

The FOPEN radar, used simultaneously with other types of active and passive sensors, will timely ensure, through the data provided, the identification of events or phenomena with an impact on human activity, contributing to obtaining and maintaining an optimal climate of security for the development of social life.

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Security culture in the context of populist ideologies and the post-truth society

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Abstract

The accelerated development of media technologies in the last decade has not received an adequate response from society as a whole regarding the implementation of a set of ethical norms and legal regulations. This suggests that the environment in which information is created and disseminated has become distorted, allowing for the proliferation of fake news and the multiplication of populist messages.

This article highlights how populist ideologies, amplified by the cultural paradigm of post-truth and fact-free societies, impact security culture by altering the Overton Window. This manipulation of public opinion changes the priorities and directions of security policy. Simultaneously, the article proposes a series of measures to counter fake news and the manipulation of public opinion through populist messages.

Keywords:

fake news; manipulation; post-truth society; society without facts; populist ideologies; the Overton window; security culture.

In a world deeply focused on the ideas of knowledge and progress, in a world where more than half of us have an image of ourselves that is almost totally opposed to our image as seen by others, in a world where unlimited credit is given to the idea of communication, suggesting and proclaiming through scientific works that the human need for communication is exceeded only by the need for safety, for security, in this slightly confused, slightly phased out world (in the sense that almost no one resonates with anyone anymore) and which has remained blocked in what Alvin Tofler called "the third wave"[1], I will try to present the risks to which we are exposed every day, from reading fiction books or scientific treatises to reading the news on the websites of different news agencies or press trusts or the labels on the various products from supermarkets, namely, *the risk of losing landmarks* and, with it, *the risk of losing contact with reality*.

However, the loss of contact with reality is produced not only by the infinite avalanche of *information* impossible to process, so that it becomes equally impossible to make a decision rationally, but also by the way of *propagating information*, the way in which social determinism meets technological determinism, embedded, of course, in the great sociocultural paradigm of cultural determinism.[2]

The shift of paradigm inaugurated at the end of the 20th century consisted, in fact, of changing the way we "collect" information, but also the way we process the collected information.

My research will start, first of all, from the premise of such a society, an information society, intrinsically linked to the third industrial revolution or *the third wave*, although the dawn of the fourth industrial revolution, the fourth wave, is here: artificial intelligence (A.I.).

Our resistance to reality, our resistance to truth (*It is obvious that there is a resistance to truth, as long as we accept that we live in a post-truth era!*) went all the way from simple technical image (reproduction with or without technical support) to symbolic language and vice versa (up to the recognition/acceptance of one's self), from accepting the suffering of the road through the *duplicitous, and sometimes incongruous or illusory brushes of knowledge*, up to the acceptance of suffering given by ignorance.

Security culture. Implications of populist ideologies

The topic I will debate in this article refers to the nature of the information, knowledge, and news that help us make the leap from ignorance to knowledge, but also to what extent all these are adequate to objective reality. (As long as objective reality still represents a horizon and/or a foundation of knowledge). The consciousness of a subjective self was a triumph

[1] The well-known American futurologist Alvin Toffler, in his book The Third Wave, states and supports the fact that the third industrial revolution took place at the end of the last century, through the transition from an industrial-type society to an information-type society.

[2] The theory of cultural determinism affirms and supports the fact that what makes us who we are is culture, the sociocultural environment, as a whole. Thus, individuals raised and educated in different cultures will manifest themselves differently in similar contexts, their behaviors being influenced by the values and ideas specific to the culture they come from. In conclusion, we are deeply influenced by what we assimilate/ learn within society, from habits, feeding and clothing to the way we communicate and the way we relate to life.

of epistemology, just as the consciousness of an originary intentionality represented the leap from the noetic to the noematic.[3]

Basically, what I will present is nothing but how populist ideologies, amplified by the cultural paradigm of post-truth and fact-free[4] societies, affect the security culture by manipulating public opinion and altering the Overton Window[5], in the sense of changing priorities and directions of security policy, with significant consequences at the level of security culture understood as "the result of social interactions that take place in groups, organizations, communities concerned with aspects of social security, of processes of learning and accumulating knowledge, in agreement with the human needs for protection, safety and shelter." (Lungu, Buluc and Deac 2018, 5)

As for how communication, in general, and communication through mass media, in particular, may be and are affected by the amplification of the fake news phenomenon, through *disinformation* and *manipulation* of public opinion, several studies and research have been carried out. However, what we are interested in is highlighting the harmful implications of populist ideologies, amplified by the post-truth paradigm and in the distorted context of fact-free societies.

The phenomenon of fake news, disinformation[6] (European Commission 2018) and manipulation are terms that are frequently used in media and communication studies. These concepts are essential for understanding how information is transmitted and interpreted in society. In this sense, it must be stated that their impact on public opinion, democracy and security culture is a major one. In the post-truth society, the decay of truth has as a premise the lack of relevance of facts, of what we generically call the sphere of the real. "*Societies where facts are irrelevant become vulnerable to manipulation and control.*" (Snyder 2017, 72)

If the sources of information are no longer trustworthy (including official sources), and the criteria for critical analysis of the evaluation of the validity/invalidity of the discourse of any type are no longer based on facts, societies turn into what we call fact-free societies, with the effect of putting emotion instead of objective truth (correspondence truth[7]). "*Societies where this*

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[3] The method of phenomenological reduction establishes two directions of approach. The first direction concerns acts of consciousness (or noetic in Husserlian language), and the second concerns intentional objects (or noematic in Husserlian language). The concept of intentionality starts from the idea that everything we think at the level of consciousness aims at or is directed towards a content of our own consciousness. Thus, Husserl corrects the Cartesian principle of "I think. So, I exist" in the following principle "I think about something/something. So I exist."

[4] Fact free society represents those theoretical constructs for which truth no longer represents a condition of knowledge and/or development of society as a whole. Basically, the cultural paradigm of the fact-free society believes that the truth becomes irrelevant in the analysis of the society in question.

[5] The Overtonian Window or Overton Window represents the range of policies that are politically acceptable for the masses of population at a given time. It is also known as the speech window. The term is named after the American philosopher Joseph P. Overton, who stated that the political viability of an idea depends mainly on the condition of inclusion in this field, rather than on the individual preferences of politicians. According to Overton, the window frames the range of policies a politician can recommend without seeming too extreme, in order to obtain or retain public office, given the climate of public opinion at the time. Basically, the Overton Window is nothing but a window of opportunities, in the sense that any idea or problem can be treated on a two-way axis: from unacceptable to desirable, from illegal to legal, from something absolutely unthinkable to something that can materialize in current policies and even in law and vice versa, that is, what is legal or desirable can reach something illegal or unacceptable in six steps. Those who hold power can manipulate public opinion by using this window of opportunity to impose their ideas in the sphere of society.

[6] The European Commission has launched an initiative regarding the design of a Code of Good Practice at the EU level on combating online disinformation, and where disinformation is defined as representing "a series of information whose false or misleading nature can be verified, which is created, presented and disseminated to obtain an economic gain or to deliberately mislead the public and which may cause public harm."

happens are transformed into de facto free societies, and the criterion of truth is replaced by emotional impact. What matters is being able to impose a version of the truth based on wish fulfilment and emotional satisfaction rather than one based on facts. Replacing the truth with the former lies at the basis of understanding the dynamics and ideological distortions of public discourse." (Dan 2022)

In this context, we mention that populist ideologies and manifestations[8] amplify the impact of information manipulation on truth and credibility, including the impact of traditional media (mainstream media). Through the use of technology and social networks, false information and disinformation can be spread quickly and widely, and people can be exposed to a variety of distorted or completely fabricated perspectives (truth is relativized or even denied). The consequences of this decay of truth are profound, affecting the processes of political decision-making, increasing social polarization and undermining trust in key societal institutions.

Populism as a political and ideological movement can be characterized by the direct appeal to the people, especially to the socially and economically disadvantaged or marginalized strata, but also by promoting an anti-elite and anti-establishment rhetoric. Populists claim to represent "the voice of the people" and present themselves as fighters against corruption and social injustice. They promise simple solutions to complex problems and use, in most cases, emotional speech to promote their interests and gain new followers.

In the context of the increase in communication speed and, in particular, the increase in direct access of independent users to media platforms, populist ideologies penetrate more quickly, and the "solutions" they offer find followers much more easily. This has direct consequences on the overtone window by altering the general perception of what is allowed or not allowed.

In this sense, "*Populism changes the collective memory, using memes to alter the belief systems and the stereotypes that underlie the shared value system, using our strong innate need for self-validation and the desire to avoid cognitive dissonance. The criterion for success is not the value of the truth, but the creation of an alternative version of reality, the persuasion of supporters to adopt it, and the forcing of others to accept it.*" (Dan 2023)

A society in which facts have no epistemological and praxeological relevance reflects a tendency towards relativism[9] and subjectivism[10] in the interpretation and acceptance of facts. This phenomenon can have profound implications for our collective understanding and for the way

[7] The truth of a judgment is established if there is a concordance between what the statement expresses and the state of facts in reality. Aristotle formulated this idea in the expression "to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true and to say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false."

[8] Populism, in many of its forms, tends to manipulate and distort the facts in favor of its own political agenda. Some populist leaders adopt a simplistic and polarizing rhetoric, ignoring or denying objective information and evidence that contradict their discourse. This creates a climate where truth becomes relative and contested, and trust in institutions and traditional media is deeply undermined.

[9] Relativism is based on the idea that the truth or the value of a statement is relative depending on the perspective or context in which they are evaluated. Thus, it can be argued that there is no objective reality or set of absolute facts, only subjective and variable interpretations of the world around us. This can lead to situations where people interpret facts according to their own beliefs, opinions or interests, at the expense of a common base of information and a consensus on reality.

[10] Subjectivism in the interpretation and acceptance of facts refers to the tendency to privilege individual perspective and experience over empirical evidence or expertise. In a society where subjectivism dominates, facts may be disputed or neglected in favor of personal narratives or pre-existing beliefs. This can lead to a decrease in trust in scientific authority and expertise, as individual interpretations or subjective opinions may be considered as valid as or even superior compared to the scientific knowledge basis or expertise in a specific field.

we construct knowledge and make decisions (Rorty 1989). Based on these premises, a series of political actors politicize science and challenge scientific facts to promote their own interests or group interests (Oreskes and Conway 2010).

The post-truth phenomenon, which develops in such a society, implies that emotions, beliefs and personal narratives become more important than objective facts in the formation of public opinion and in the decision-making process. This obviously has negative consequences, as I said before, in terms of making informed and evidence-based decisions, especially in critical areas such as politics, health, environment or security. "*When we can no longer agree on the basic facts of reality, democracy itself is at risk.*" (McIntyre 2018) - The paper explores the spread of the post-truth phenomenon in contemporary society and analyzes how it affects the process of forming opinions and decisions based on evidence. The book was published by MIT Press Cambridge.
McIntyre approaches the post-truth concept from multiple perspectives, highlighting its consequences on society and democracy. He explores how the spread of disinformation and the rejection of objective evidence affects people's ability to make informed decisions and form fact-based opinions.

Moreover, the spread of disinformation can have a significant impact on the perception of threats and vulnerabilities in a society. When facts and evidence are neglected or distorted in favor of false or conspiratorial narratives, it can create confusion and a lack of trust in authorities and experts. This can lead to underestimating or neglecting real threats and overusing resources on imaginary or exaggerated threats. Thus, national security may be compromised and protection measures may be ineffective or inadequate.

Populist ideologies can also use manipulation through the Overton window as a tactic to influence public opinion and advance their agenda. The Overton window, also called the "*window of what is acceptable*" or "*the window of what is debatable*", refers to the range of ideas or policies considered acceptable or possible in a given society at a given time. Basically, manipulation through the Overton window involves pushing the limit of this window, by presenting extreme or radical ideas gradually and repetitively, so that they gradually become acceptable and debatable in the public debate. Thus, populist ideologies can exploit this tactic to advance their own agenda, bringing into discussion ideas or policies initially considered extreme or inappropriate.

This approach can help create polarization in society and change public discourse, giving legitimacy to ideas or proposals that would otherwise be rejected or criticized. Manipulation through the Overton window can be used to influence public opinion and gain support for policies or measures that would not normally be accepted within a social consensus.

It is especially important to be aware of these tactics and carefully evaluate the ideas and proposals presented in political discourse, ensuring that we are informed and think critically in order to understand their implications and consequences.

Summarizing, we note that populist ideologies amplify the state of decay of the truth through manipulations and disinformation of a classic nature, but also through the manipulation of public opinion and the alteration of the Overton Window, so that the priorities and directions of the security policy can change, having significant consequences on addressing threats and vulnerabilities and, as a consequence, on the decision-making process in security matters.

It thus becomes obvious that the manipulation of public discourse and information in society by populist ideologies influences the Overton Window, i.e. the acceptable limits of public debate. These distortions of public opinion will, in turn, influence the perception of security issues, which will no longer be correlated with the actual state of society, but with one induced by a false image of the real, culminating in the loss of existential meaning, because the copy becomes more real than the real. "The analysis of the relationship between meaning or the possibility of meaning and what, in a broad sense, we call the Real made the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, see the real as being dissolved in the incongruous multiplicity of difference and copies so that it appears rarefied, spectralized. The consistency of the world becomes vague, diffuse because the world has been emptied of substance, becoming inconsistent." (Constantin 2018, 150)

In this reality of incongruous differences, lacking or emptied of meaning, the security policy and the decision-making processes that it entails, require not only an extensive process of verification and analysis of data, of the information from the public space by communication professionals from the public authorities, but, perhaps, first of all, a periodic and constant x-ray of the society as a whole, in order to "photograph" the balance of powers in the state (whether or not they are in balance), the level of democratization of state institutions, as well as the way in which the citizen relates to all this information, following the major directions of influence.

All this is to understand, decode and decrypt the hundreds of thousands of messages, to sort the truth from fake or error, the fake or manipulated image from the real standard image, essential things in creating a database and correct information on which to build the security policy. In order to be able to carry out these activities within the parameters of efficiency, the public institutions with attributions in the development of the security policy must have or recruit among them expert analysts in internal and external politics, social policies, logicians, psychologists, linguists and ITists, with a high moral and professional attitude, who will examine how the truth is distorted and the polarization of discourse affects security policy and decision-making processes.

Possible measures to prevent and combat the manipulation of public opinion through populist ideologies

Therefore, fostering a security culture based on verifiable information and facts, where analysis and decision-making processes are based on solid evidence and objective threat assessments becomes more important than ever. In this context, combating disinformation and promoting information literacy are key elements to counteract the effects of truth decay within the security culture.

Also, strengthening collaboration between security institutions, civil society and the academic sector can contribute to more rigorous threat assessment and to the development of more effective security policies.

DiResta, examining how disinformation spreads in the digital age and analyzing the influence of social media and algorithms on this phenomenon, highlights several tactics and strategies that should be used in disseminating false information (DiResta 2018).

The same direction is taken by Claire Wardle, who explores the phenomenon of disinformation and offers an interdisciplinary approach to research and policy-making in the field of disinformation. Wardle examines issues related to the production and spread of disinformation, its impact on society, and the implications for democracy and information security (Wardle 2017).

In my opinion, the development of possible solutions for countering disinformation should include *fact-checking and transparency of information* (promoting verified sources of information, ensuring consistency between information and objective reality and transparency of the news production process to counter the spread of disinformation), collaboration between stakeholders (cooperation between governments, media, online platforms, non-governmental organizations and civil society in order to identify and combat disinformation in a coordinated and consistent way), accountability of online platforms (direct involvement of online platforms in combating disinformation by developing and implementing clear content moderation policies, but also the regulation of this field by imposing sanctions, respecting, at the same time, the right to opinion and the right to information), the development of proactive policies and a system of laws that is coherent and appropriate to the real situation.

These are just a few examples of possible solutions, but only the study of society in the concreteness of the facts and of the practical reality can provide the decision-makers in the security sphere with a more accurate assessment and a deeper perspective on these aspects, which, in the last instance, also belong to the sphere of security culture. That is why, as we specified in the previous point, the training of specialists inside the security systems, as well as the recruitment of some from outside the system, are essential in increasing the capacity to collect, detect and make better use of the information obtained through different techniques. Basically, it is about the efficient use of all categories of information resources.

As for the improvement of the security culture in the context of the propagation of populist ideologies, we consider that this is a complex and particularly important process that requires extensive analysis at the level of decision-makers. However, we believe that some of the most important measures that can be taken into account when considering improving the security culture should focus on the following dimensions:

1. **Media education and literacy**: Promoting media education and literacy can support both specialists and independent users, in the sense that they will manage to understand and critically evaluate the information or data they receive from different media platforms. This education includes developing fact-checking skills, recognizing the signs of manipulation or disinformation, and understanding how they can be influenced by populist discourses.

2. **Promoting critical and rational thinking**: Cultivating critical thinking skills can help individuals analyze and evaluate arguments and ideas presented in populist discourses. This involves developing skills in evaluating information, analyzing evidence-based arguments, and recognizing rhetorical manipulations. This objective can only be achieved through a solid education for security, including at the level of educational programs in the pre-university and academic environment.

3. **Unrestricted access to reliable public information**: It is important to promote access to those sources of verified and maximum reliable information. Governments, intelligence structures, media organizations and online platforms can and must play a more active role in facilitating access to verified information, ensuring, at the same time, the diversity of opinions, of arguments for and against, promoting different perspectives relevant to issues of interest put into public debate.

4. **Civic engagement and open dialogue**: Promoting civic engagement and an open dialogue, based on respect, would certainly contribute to countering the effects of populist propaganda and the social polarization promoted by it. Debates must be encouraged, regardless of the environment in which they take place (radio, TV or online platforms), based on arguments, without resorting to insults or verbal violence, thus ensuring the creation of an environment beneficial for information and decision-making.

5. **Continued strengthening of democratic institutions**: Strengthening democratic institutions, in the sense of ensuring independent justice, a free and responsible media, as well as check and balance institutions that can provide protection against abuses of power and populist manipulations.

Moreover, I believe that, ultimately, the responsibility for everything that appears and is transmitted in the public space/public sphere as a political message or news rests with the government and the institutions with specific attributions in the audiovisual field. "*The public sphere*, by all that this concept implies, (*free market of ideas* in which the opinions of the minority/academic public – experts, specialists,

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philosophers, theorists, etc. – have no social relevance, being poorly represented) negatively influences communication at the social level, so, the ideal of the direct/undistorted communication is practically impossible to achieve. Or, the social sphere as a concrete element of the socio-cultural paradigm, in the sense that this paradigm is realized and acts *in and through* the social sphere, also bears the moral responsibility for how artistic and non-artistic products are thought, created and disseminated at a given moment." (Constantin 2023, 117)

Conclusions

At the same time, we need to emphasize that it is important that this issue be approached holistically, involving both governments and civil society, academia and any other interested parties and, last but not least, the fact that the moral responsibility for what is happening or is communicated in the social sphere must be "shared" between the government, state institutions and administrators of media trusts and platforms.

It is important to promote a culture of rationality and critical analysis of information, to counter the phenomenon of society where facts no longer have relevance. Educating and promoting critical thinking, information literacy and fostering respect for science and expertise can help combat relativism and subjectivism in the interpretation of facts, as well as strengthen the common knowledge base and the scientific authority.

Truth decay can seriously affect security processes and political decision-making. When facts are no longer a priority and relativism dominates, it creates a climate where disinformation and informational manipulation can be used to manipulate the perception of threats and vulnerabilities. This can undermine the processes of threat analysis and assessment, leading to incorrect or inappropriate decisions related to national security.

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BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

Drones or uncrewed aircraft – acronyms, definitions, and gender equality

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Abstract

Unmanned aircraft/drones are increasingly present in everyday life, from flight demonstrations, event filming, mapping, and agricultural use to delivering goods or, in the future, transporting people. Uncrewed aircraft systems have also been deployed throughout the military services, from handheld micro-UA (Unmanned Aircraft) to medium-sized tactical systems and to large uncrewed aircraft. The multitude of terms used to identify a particular type of aircraft can be confusing and therefore clarification is needed on how to use them, while at the same time considering gender equality and fairness in language.

Keywords:
drone; UA; UAS; unmanned aircraft; uncrewed aircraft; gender equality.

In recent decades, the development and use of unmanned aircraft/drones have captured the world's attention. Although they appear to be a modern innovation, their history spans more than a century. Initial attempts to design unmanned aircraft took place during the First World War when the first prototypes of radio-controlled aircraft appeared. Although the initial results were promising, these early experimental aircraft were not used in military operations. However, they represented the beginning of a technological evolution that has continued to develop over the years. Unmanned aircraft have become an integral part of all military, civil, and commercial domains around the world.

First unmanned aircraft were developed in Britain and the U.S.A. during the First World War. The British Aerial Target, a small radio-controlled aircraft, was first tested in March 1917, while the American aerial torpedo known as the Kettering Bug first flew in October 1918 (IWM 2023). Although these first flight tests were promising, none of these aircraft were used in air operations or conflicts. The development and testing of unmanned aircraft continued between the World Wars period, so in the mid-1930s, the D.H. Queen Bee was modified and used as an aerial target during training missions for air defence structures and is known as the first returnable and reusable unmanned aircraft. It was the time that they used for the first time the term „drone" and is still in common use today (IWM 2023). UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) for reconnaissance and false targeting to uncover enemy positions or deplete air defence resources were used by Israel in 1973 in the Yom Kippur War against Egypt, but caught worldwide attention in operations executed during the 1982 Lebanon War, in which drones played a substantial role in the destruction of Lebanon's integrated air defence system (Kreis 1990, 46).

The end of 2001 marked the beginning of a new era in military technology and the use of unmanned aircraft for military purposes. The development of armed drones had advanced at an accelerating pace, and they had become an increasing presence in various theatres of war and conflicts around the world. During this period, armed drones were mainly used by Israel, the United Kingdom and the United States. The USA and the Israeli governments were the first major users of armed unmanned aircraft, known as UCAVs (Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles). They were used mainly to carry out short-range air strikes in nearby territories. The use of armed drones in this context has aroused the interest and concern of the international community. The non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch has investigated and documented Israel's use of armed drones and raised concerns about possible human rights violations (Human Rights Watch 2009). This has been a significant moment in the evolution and technical development of armed drones and has raised questions and debates about their ethics and impact on conflict and civil rights. The British government, using US-made unmanned aircraft, has carried out strikes inside Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria (BBC News 2014). Also, the US government, with its global network of military drone bases has been able to deploy its drones in these places, too, as well as in Libya, Pakistan, Somalia and

Yemen (Fuller 2017). Over approximately fourteen years, a select group of states has maintained a monopoly on the possession and utilization of armed unmanned aircraft. This exclusive access has provided them with a significant advantage in terms of military capabilities and strategic operations. Then, in 2015, what has since been described as a „second drone era" began, characterized by the emergence of new drone manufacturers and the widespread proliferation of armed drone technology (Farooq 2019).

The accessibility of unmanned aircraft technology has become more widespread and affordable, enabling a wide range of actors to acquire them with relative ease. This ease of access, coupled with their affordability, has facilitated the proliferation of drones among non-state entities. Furthermore, the potential for modifications allows for the customization of drones to carry out dangerous missions, such as the delivery of explosive devices or conducting illicit surveillance. These entities encompass terrorist groups, criminal organizations, or individuals with malicious intentions. The utilization of drones by non-state entities poses a significant challenge to international security, as it introduces new risks and threats.

Unmanned aircraft have indeed become ubiquitous in modern conflicts and have revolutionized military operations. They provide several advantages in warfare, including reconnaissance, surveillance, and the ability to carry out precise targeting with guided missiles or bombs. They can operate in dangerous environments, gather real-time intelligence, and execute missions without risking human lives directly.

Beyond military applications, unmanned aircraft have found extensive use in the civilian sector as well. In areas affected by natural disasters, drones can assist in search and rescue operations by providing aerial views and locating survivors. They are also valuable tools for monitoring and assessing the impact of climate change, as they can collect data from remote or hazardous locations more efficiently and at a lower cost compared to traditional methods. Unmanned aircraft have also revolutionized industries such as mapping and aerial photography. They can capture high-resolution images and videos from unique perspectives, aiding in land surveys, urban planning, and artistic endeavours. Additionally, companies like Amazon (Amazon 2022) and other logistics providers are exploring the use of drones/ unmanned aircraft for goods delivery, potentially enabling faster and more efficient transportation of packages.

Terms and definitions

To be able to properly investigate the impact and importance of unmanned aircraft on civil or NATO operations, it is important to identify and clarify the main terms that define these technologies. The terms „unmanned aircraft" and „drone", as well as various other variants such as „unmanned aerial vehicle" (UAV), „unmanned combat

aerial vehicle" (UCAV), „remotely piloted aircraft" (RPA) or „unmanned aircraft system" (UAS) are often used randomly but are, in fact, terms defined differently to reflect certain classes, capabilities or certifications of unmanned aircraft.

The term „Unmanned Aerial Vehicle" (UAV), as it has been used over time, has undergone many changes in form, content and meaning because of technological developments and mode of operation, and the need for standardization and regulation in this area has become increasingly apparent. While the term is no longer used by NATO (NATOterm, #4414), is still often used in the civil and public domain.

Thus, the term „Unmanned Aircraft System" (UAS) was developed by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO 2011) to better describe and encompass all the elements that constitute the system, including the aircraft itself, with the name „unmanned aircraft" (UA). The term „unmanned aircraft" is also used in all European Union documents referring to rules and operating procedures (European Commission 2019). UA encompasses all categories of aircraft (aeroplanes, helicopters, balloons, gliders, etc.) that are operated without a human pilot on board, and this designation makes the transition from the notion of vehicle to that of aircraft. The term UA/UAS has been taken up and further used in documents produced by JAPCC (Joint Air Power Competence Centre), NATO (NATOterm, #6475), the DoD (Department of Defence–USA) and others.

NATO currently defines UA as an aircraft that does not carry a human operator and is operated remotely using varying levels of automated functions. Unmanned aircraft can be expendable or recoverable and may carry lethal or non-lethal payloads (NATOterm, #7915). Cruise missiles are excluded from this NATO definition. Since this definition is very broad, it is necessary to describe the term aircraft for better understanding. ICAO defines an aircraft as any vehicle that can sustain itself in the atmosphere by reactions of the air other than reactions of the air to the earth's surface (ICAO Store 2018). By this description alone, all projectiles that have only initial propulsion and then follow only a ballistic trajectory (e.g., bullets, artillery shells, ordinary bombs or ballistic missiles) can be excluded from the category of aircraft. Ammunition using aerodynamic lift or other interaction with the atmosphere solely to extend the ballistic flight path will also be excluded from the UA category. So, threats such as hover bombs or hypersonic glide vehicles are excluded from the UA category, although they could be operated remotely and certainly have automation features.

NATO classifies these systems into 3 classes according to the weight of the airborne platform at take-off and the operational flight altitude: Class I, referring to small, portable, self-contained systems that are easy for UAS operators to carry and operate within LOS (line-of-sight); Class II UAS which are complex systems weighing between 150 kg and 600 kg and can operate on a LOS or BLOS (beyond line of sight) link via communications relays, additional ground control stations or satellite data links; and Class III UAS which include systems that consist of high endurance

aircraft flying at medium and high altitude and which may have strike capabilities. These are large systems and the missions can be executed via satellite data links and use higher-performance sensors (NATO 2019).

If we refer to the NATO classification, we will henceforth use the term "unmanned aircraft" when referring to military systems that fall into NATO Class II and III categories. These UA are usually part of a complex system that may include dedicated ground control stations, mission control elements, multiple crews, military-grade communications systems, GPS, and dedicated logistics and maintenance infrastructure. UAs are usually operated by well-trained personnel, often qualified as pilots, to operate safely alongside other airspace users. When referring not only to the aircraft, but other elements of the system or the system as a whole, we will use the term „unmanned aircraft system" or „UAS".

More recently the term „RPA/RPAS" (Remotely Piloted Aircraft/ Remotely Piloted Aircraft System) has been used to emphasize that a UA is controlled by an operator who has been trained and certified to the same standards as the pilot of a manned aircraft (NATOterm, #25557). Usually, this term is used for UA from Class III, specifically to differentiate between the level of training of their operators. The concept of „drone" is generally used and widely accepted in the civil domain for all varieties of unmanned systems. In general, the term "drone" will be used to describe all classes of commercial systems, which are typically smaller and less sophisticated compared to their military counterparts.

The term „drone" implies that the system is usually operated by a single person, not necessarily qualified, from a hand-held remote control, in direct line-of-sight (LOS) conditions. Thus, we will also use the term „drone" for most military systems that fall into the NATO Class I category, as their size and complexity are quite comparable to commercially available consumer models and therefore require a similar approach when it comes to countermeasures.

Gender equality

Gender equality and equity in language have been widely discussed for many years and have already been implemented in many areas and the use of everyday language. As a result, some civil and military aviation terminology has changed/adapted to the new requirements, often at a discrete level. Gender inclusive language involves the practice of communication in a manner that neither excludes, nor discriminates based on gender, nor reinforces or encourages gender stereotypes. The consistent and proactive application of such language is crucial in advancing gender equality within the workplace, fostering a working environment that is inclusive and welcoming to all staff members (NATO 2020, 6).

It is important to differentiate „grammatical gender" from the concept of gender as a

societal construct. The latter pertains to the roles, expectations, and social attributes tied to identifying as male or female. These gender roles outline what is considered acceptable or expected in different situations and can change depending on the cultural context or era. It is vital to understand that "gender" is not synonymous with „women", and it is distinct from the concept of biological sex (NATO 2020, 7).

What is the connection with unmanned aircraft? The problem arises with the use of the English term „unmanned" and more specifically, the generic masculine form „man" when referring to a task that can be performed by both men and women. The use of the masculine was often seen as the general form, while the feminine was perceived as referring exclusively to women and therefore the new norm becomes the inclusive (neutral) gender which no longer differentiates between people.
That is why many states and larger companies have changed the terminology from „unmanned" to „uncrewed". The best example appears in the DoD budget document for the US Air Force for fiscal year 2023, where they began using the term „uncrewed" to describe remotely piloted or unmanned aircraft systems (Defense.gov 2022). The Washington Times writes that the Pentagon is dropping the use of the term „unmanned" as a gesture of political correctness and will henceforth refer to „uncrewed" drones (Gertz 2022).

Another example is the Global Trade Association for the Autonomy, Robotics and Automated Air, Land and Sea Vehicle Industries AUVSI (Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International) which has announced a name change to reflect ongoing efforts to promote gender inclusivity. In addition to dropping the word „unmanned" and other gender-specific terms from its name, operating documents and association language, it announced the launch of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group (AUVSI 2022).
Also, Canada's Joint Terminology Panel (JTP) has proposed to the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces (DND/CAF) to drop gender-based terminology and therefore the word „unmanned" has been replaced by „uncrewed" in relation to autonomous and remotely operated vehicles (Government of Canada 2021).

UK publication Unmanned Systems Technology has changed its name to Uncrewed Systems Technology from issue 44 in June/July 2022 to promote gender inclusion as essential for continued development (Moss 2022, 4).
Also, to be noted is the press release of the Ministry of National Defence on the prior request to the Romanian Parliament to initiate the procedure for awarding contracts for the procurement of Bayraktar TB2 uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) (MApN.ro 2022).
NATO agreed terminology can only be changed at the request of the NATO Standardisation Office and is subject to approval by all member states. Changing NATO agreed terminology can influence the meaning of some terms and therefore the optimal replacement solution must be found. For example, replacing UA with RPA would seem the closest option to consider, but even though RPA may seem a

gender-neutral synonym for UA and does not contain the word „man", it does not refer to the same concept.

Conclusions

Unmanned aircraft are at the forefront of all current conflicts and are certainly the future of how military operations will be conducted. In the civilian domain, drones are starting to be used in a wide range of areas, from agriculture and construction to filming and security. The continued development of this technology, together with improvements in sensors, batteries and navigation systems, will open new possibilities for use and improved performance. Continuous development and technological evolution go hand in hand with the constant change of terminology.

With increasing social acceptance and awareness, new terms have emerged to better reflect social and cultural reality. For example, terms that were accepted and used in the past may now be considered insensitive, offensive or inappropriate. Thus, new terms are emerging to describe experiences or identities that were previously unrecognized and need to adapt and take account of gender identity inclusivity to help create a safer and more appropriate environment for all people.

Constantly changing terminology is a natural phenomenon in a constantly evolving world. In every field, new words appear, and others become obsolete or are replaced by terms that are more precise or more appropriate to the current context.
These changes in terminology are being adopted at the NATO level in all areas and proposals to change the name from „unmanned aircraft" to „uncrewed aircraft" are already underway and will most likely be reflected in future regulations. So, the term „unmanned aircraft" will become „uncrewed aircraft".

In conclusion, the permanent change of terminology is an important aspect of cultural and social evolution. It can help to create a more accurate and appropriate language to describe the reality in which we live and to better reflect the diversity and complexity of human experiences.

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BULLETIN
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A short analysis of security culture from the perspective of postmodern society

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Abstract

This article explores new dimensions of security in the context of postmodernity. The article highlights the influence of postmodernism and postmodernity on security culture and presents necessary measures to mitigate the risks associated with this paradigm. In a society characterized by plurality, relativism, and diversity, security culture must evolve to address new digital challenges. It presents how the concept of the relativization of truth from the perspective of postmodernism can affect the approach to security, highlighting both benefits and challenges. It also examines the impact of globalization and digitization on security, highlighting the need for international cooperation and interdisciplinary strategies. The article emphasizes that promoting digital education, raising awareness, developing collaboration, and implementing technology are crucial in building an adaptable and effective security culture in the face of the challenges of postmodernity.

Keywords:

security culture; postmodernism; postmodernity; relativization of truth; diversity; international cooperation; digital education; strategic cultures.

Current studies and research regarding the analysis of security culture, from the perspective of postmodern society, highlight new dimensions, focusing mainly on the identity dimension, on the dimensions of the discourse and the narrative, accepting, at the same time, alongside older studies and analyses, the prevalence of the importance of non-state actors "from individuals, ethnic and/or religious groups to regional blocks, non-governmental organizations, including multinational corporations, the security of individuals being considered clearly superior in importance to that of the state." (Sarcinschi 2005, 11).

It is also obvious that postmodern society faces a number of complex and fluctuating challenges, one of the most important being the phenomenon of disinformation and virtual threats. In this context, the *security culture* (Presidential Administration 2020) plays a crucial role in protecting the individual and the community against information manipulation and digital risks. From a sociological perspective, analyzing the security culture within postmodern society becomes essential for understanding how individuals and communities adapt and relate to the new digital challenges.

Digital technologies and social media platforms have changed the communication paradigm, offering immense opportunities for connection and access to information. However, technological evolution has also brought significant risks, such as the proliferation of misinformation and fake news.

One of the defining aspects of the *security culture*[1] in postmodern society is the increased awareness of virtual threats and of the importance of protecting personal data. People are increasingly aware of their vulnerability online and of the negative impact that misinformation and information manipulation can have on their choices and behaviours. Thus, security culture encourages the development of strategies and skills to critically evaluate information and identify unsafe sources. Recent studies and research[2] have highlighted the fact that postmodern society is characterized by increased diversity and a variety of perspectives on reality. This pluralism brings with it an additional challenge in managing information and trusted sources. Security culture, in this context, aims to promote digital and media literacy, providing the individual with the necessary tools to navigate responsibly through the sea of information available on the Internet.

At the same time, the security culture in postmodern society is closely related to the notion of collective responsibility. In an interconnected world, individual actions and choices can have a significant impact on others. Thus, promoting a security culture also involves a call for involvement and solidarity from all members of society, in order to protect and support the community as a whole.

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[1] *"A component of the organizational culture, the security culture represents the values, norms, attitudes, knowledge and actions assumed and shared by the members of the organization regarding the safety of the internal and external environment."* http://www.arecs.ro/despre-organizatia-arecs/cultura-de-securitate/

[2] The studies provide theoretical insights and a complex analysis on the societal and cultural changes produced in the postmodern era and on how they affect the way individuals and communities perceive and manage information security.

Thus, in a first and partial conclusion, the development of the security culture in the postmodern society is an essential component for facing the increasingly complex digital challenges. Becoming aware of the risks and developing the skills for responsibly navigating online are fundamental for protecting the individual and the community, and adapting and strengthening the security culture is an ongoing and necessary process for a society resilient to misinformation and virtual threats. By promoting the values of responsibility, solidarity, and digital literacy, postmodern society can build a solid foundation for information security and for protecting its fundamental interests and values.

1. Delimitations of a conceptual nature

One can observe, both in common and in academic environments, the erroneous use of the notions of postmodernism and postmodernity. I specify that these are two concepts that refer to distinct aspects of culture, philosophy, and society. Here below I will try to define and analyze these two notions:

Postmodernism[3] (Harvey 1991, 182-184) is an intellectual and cultural movement that emerged in the 20th century and continues to influence contemporary thought and art. It represents a rejection of the values and principles of modernity and linear and rational thinking. Characteristics of postmodernism include:

• *Plurality and relativism:* Postmodernism rejects the idea of a single grand narrative or an absolute and stable reality. Instead, it promotes the plurality of perspectives and recognizes that truth and knowledge can be relative, and dependent on context and interpretation.
• *Fragmentation and eclecticism:* Postmodernism is characterized by borrowing and combining different artistic, philosophical and cultural styles, genres and techniques. There is no defined set of norms or values, but an eclectic and open approach.
• *Irony and self-reflexivity:* Postmodernism often uses irony and self-reflexivity to critique and dismantle cultural and social discourses and conventions.

Postmodernity[4] is a historic state or period characterized by the predominance of values, culture and way of life specific to postmodernism. This term refers to postmodern society and culture, which are influenced by the principles and characteristics of postmodernism (Giddens 2000). Characteristics of a postmodern society include:
• *Openness to diversity*: In postmodern society, cultural, ethnic, religious, and sexual diversity is recognized and valued.

[3] Postmodernism is an intellectual current that rejects modern premises of objective certainty, universality, and metanarratives, instead advocating for relativism, fragmentation, intertextuality, and cultural diversity. Postmodernism explores the critique of large power structures and conventional norms, often taking an ironic stance and playfulness in the way it relates to knowledge, reality, and artistic expression. It is important to understand that postmodernism is not a unitary theory or paradigm, but rather a collection of perspectives, concepts, and attitudes that may vary depending on the cultural or intellectual domain in which they are applied. The definition and interpretation of postmodernism may differ depending on the author or researcher who approaches it, but at its core, it is a critical exploration of the modern framework and conventional concepts of truth, identity, and knowledge.

[4] Postmodernity is a complex and often controversial concept in the field of philosophy, culture and sociology. The exact definition may vary depending on the perspectives and theories of each researcher. In a general definition, postmodernity refers to a cultural and philosophical period or stage that follows modernity. This term is used to describe the profound changes in thought, values, and social structures that occurred after the modern period.

• *Globalization and digitalization*: It is marked by globalization, facilitated by digital technology, which enables rapid communication and worldwide accessibility to information and culture.

• *Fragmentation of identities*: In postmodern society, individual and collective identities are more fluid and complex. People construct their identity from a variety of cultural and social aspects.

• *Excessive propensity for novelty and consumption*: Postmodernity is characterized by excessive consumption and a search for novelty, often at the expense of traditional or established values.

In conclusion, *postmodernism* represents the intellectual and cultural movement, while postmodernity refers to the specific historical state or period influenced by the principles and characteristics of postmodernism. Also, postmodernity is characterized by plurality, relativism, openness to diversity, and globalization, with implications in various fields, including security culture and the way individuals perceive and approach the phenomenon of disinformation through social media (Jameson 2021).

The security culture has experienced a continuous evolution, but, in principle, its elements have stayed the same. Thus, the security culture would represent "*the set of collective norms, values, and practices that frame the perceptions and actions of actors in the security sphere. It determines what is considered a threat, how risks should be assessed, and how responses to those threats should be designed and implemented.*" (Buzan, Waever and De Wilde 1998). For most researchers and specialists in the field, security culture refers to "*the set of values, shared by everyone in an organization, that determine how people should think and address security. Getting the right security culture will help develop a security-aware workforce and promote desired security behaviors.*" (National Protective Security Authority 2023).

In this context, an analysis of the concept of **strategic security** becomes relevant and necessary; about this concept, Colin Gray claimed that it "*represents the set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and understandings that guide the decisions and actions of leaders and decision-makers in terms of national security. It influences how strategic objectives are identified, strategic options are evaluated and resources are managed to achieve these objectives.*" (Gray 1999).

All of the above emphasizes the importance of non-technical aspects in security and strategy, such as the perceptions, values, understanding, and norms that influence decision-making and security policy formulation. A strong security culture and a coherent strategic culture can have a significant impact on how a state or organization approaches security threats and challenges. The definitions I have provided above are summaries of the concepts of security culture and strategic culture as understood in the academic literature and in the field of security and strategy studies.

Security culture and strategic culture are fundamental concepts in the field of security and strategy studies. They are ways of understanding the attitudes, behaviours,

knowledge, and values that underlie individual and collective approaches to national and international security.

2. The influences of postmodernism and postmodernity on security culture

Both postmodernism and postmodernity can and do influence security culture, but in different ways.

A. *The influence of postmodernism*

Postmodernism promotes plurality and relativism, which can lead to a more open and diversified approach to security. Thus, different views and interpretations can be taken into account when developing security strategies.

The excessive relativization of truth is a concept associated with postmodernism, which brings into question the subjective and context-dependent nature of knowledge and truth. Essentially, this means that in the postmodern perspective, truth is not considered an absolute and objective concept, but rather is influenced by each person's perspective, experience, and individual or cultural context.

This concept gained ground in a context where critical and deconstructionist theories began to analyze how social discourses and representations influence knowledge and truth. In this perspective, the idea of a *meta-narrative* or *universal truth* is questioned, and the diversity of perspectives is recognized and accepted. (Baudrillard 2008, 57-59). Therefore, the excessive relativization of truth from the perspective of postmodernism may have some implications and challenges:

• Postmodernism can lead to an *undermining of certainty* and trust in absolute truth. This can lead to confusion and uncertainty about fundamental aspects of knowledge and communication.
• The postmodern perspective recognizes the existence of *multiple and subjective interpretations* of truth. This can bring a more diverse perspective and pave the way for a deeper understanding of human complexity and cultural contexts.
• Excessive relativization of truth can be exploited to *manipulate* information and *propagate disinformation*. The fact that any perspective or interpretation can be supported under the guise of subjectivity can facilitate the propagation of false narratives.
• Too much relativization can *fragment public discourse* and lead to situations where no consensus or common point of view can be reached. This can affect society's ability to respond to complex and global issues.
• However, the relativization of truth can emphasize the importance of *openness to dialogue and constructive criticism*. Addressing subjectivity and multiple perspectives can contribute to a better understanding of human diversity and the search for more complete and just solutions.

In conclusion, the concept of *excessive relativization of truth* from the perspective of postmodernism is a complex and controversial one. Although it can bring challenges and risks, it can also contribute to the development of critical thinking and a more empathetic approach to human diversity and social complexity.

We should also emphasize that postmodernism brings into focus the subject of *self-reflexivity*, which can encourage a critical approach to existing security culture and current practices. This can lead to greater attention towards the implications and effects of security decisions.

B. The influence of postmodern societies

As mentioned, postmodernity is marked by globalization and digitalization, and this can lead to an increase in transnational threats and to the need for a global approach to security. Based on this premise, the security culture strategy must become more oriented towards international cooperation and information sharing.

By the circular causality relationship between postmodernism (cause) and postmodern society (effect), we can state that at the social level too, the relationship between society and truth becomes more fluid and contextual, with an emphasis on subjectivity and diversity of perspectives. What must be emphasized, beyond the relativization, fragmentation, and diversity of the discourses, is the *Criticism of the dominant discourses*, as in postmodern societies there is an amplification of the critical attitude towards them or the institutional ones. The truths that are imposed or considered *official* are often subject to critical analysis and deconstruction in order to understand how they are constructed and to expose their potential limits.

At the same time, postmodernity brings cultural and ethnic diversity to the fore. This influences how the security culture approaches internal threats, such as those related to terrorism or inter-ethnic conflicts.

From here, it can be concluded that there are a variety of factors and theories (Lyotard 2003, 11) that influence security culture and that postmodernism and postmodernity can play different roles depending on the context and specifics of each society. Also, the intersection with digital media and social networks has amplified the diversity of perspectives and allowed the free expression of opinion, leading to a complex mix of *truths, misinformation, and subjective interpretations*.

3. The need to develop security culture and strategic cultures

Knowledge of the security culture and strategic subcultures in a state is essential for students and researchers in security studies for several reasons:

Understanding the basis of security decisions: Knowledge of security culture allows understanding the depth and nature of a state's security decisions. The attitudes,

values, and norms that underlie security culture influence national priorities, identify threats, and formulate responses. This helps researchers develop more informed insights into a state's motivations and actions in the field of security.

Designing security policies: Knowledge of security culture and strategic subcultures can help develop and adapt security policies in a way that corresponds to a country's specific values and mentality. Identifying strategic subcultures allows for understanding the diversity of opinions and approaches among decision-makers and finding a balance between diverse perspectives.

Preventing internal conflicts: Understanding strategic subcultures can help identify internal dissensions within a state related to strategic and security approaches. By understanding the differences in opinions and values, strategies can be developed to manage these tensions, thereby helping to maintain stability and prevent internal conflicts. Knowledge of security culture provides an essential context for analyzing and interpreting security events. Without understanding the specific values and perceptions of a state, it is difficult to make a comprehensive and accurate analysis of how it reacts to security challenges.

Diplomacy and international relations: Knowledge of strategic subcultures can support diplomacy and international relations-building efforts. Understanding how different states perceive security and formulate their strategies can facilitate dialogue and collaboration between countries.
Overall, the knowledge of security culture and strategic subcultures significantly contributes to the development of a comprehensive and informed approach to security studies and ensures the preparation of future leaders and security experts for addressing the complex challenges of the contemporary world.

In order to achieve its purpose and objectives, the security culture can adopt the following approaches:

The pluralist approach can be supported by the influences of postmodernism through promoting the diversity of perspectives and opinions. In this direction, the security culture can be open to including the multiple voices and interests of different groups and communities. This involves consulting and involving the public in the process of defining security threats and strategies.

Security culture can adopt a *reflexive approach* influenced by postmodernism, whereby it constantly and critically self-assesses. This involves periodically analysing and reviewing security policies and practices in order to identify potential deficiencies and make improvements.

Since postmodernity brings with it global interconnectedness and an increased degree of complexity of problems, an *interdisciplinary approach* is imperative,

involving collaboration between different fields and experts to address threats in a comprehensive and holistic way.

Security culture can promote *trust and transparency in dealing with the public* and with other institutions. This can help increase the level of cooperation and support from the community in order to implement security measures. Postmodernity also brings a high degree of uncertainty and change, which implies an *adaptive approach* on the part of the security culture, that is an increased ability to respond quickly to new threats and to adapt security strategies according to the context and evolution of the situation.

And, last but not least, security culture can invest in education and awareness to develop a responsible and informed citizenry. This involves promoting education about online risks and threats and developing digital skills and critical skills to evaluate information and news.
All of these above-mentioned approaches can contribute to a more effective and adaptable security culture, in order to achieve society's protection and safety objectives.

4. Measures to reduce the risks of postmodernity in the construction of a security culture

In order to reduce the growing risks in the construction of a security culture, which manifests at the level of postmodern societies, it is important to consider the following measures and/or strategies:

Promoting digital education and literacy: People should be educated about the risks and threats associated with postmodernity, such as disinformation, the spread of false information, and media manipulation. Developing digital competencies and critical skills can help assess and manage information in a responsible and informed way.

Raising awareness: The public and the security institutions should be aware of the challenges of postmodernity and understand their impact on security culture. This involves organizing information and awareness campaigns to emphasize the importance of adopting responsible and adaptive approaches to new threats.

Development of collaboration and cooperation: In the complex context of postmodernity, cooperation between different institutions and security agencies is essential. Communication and information sharing can help develop integrated security strategies and identify threats more effectively.

Implementing technology and security solutions: Using advanced technology and security solutions can help more effectively identify and counter disinformation and

online threats. For example, artificial intelligence algorithms can be developed for filtering fake content and identifying manipulation schemes.

Supporting research and innovation: As postmodernity brings with it rapid and unpredictable changes, research and innovation are essential to stay abreast of new threats. Governments, academic institutions and the private sector should support security research and the development of innovative technologies.

Promoting ethics and democratic values: Security culture should be guided by ethical principles and democratic values. Transparency, accountability, and respect for individual rights are essential to counter the risks of postmodernity and build a sustainable security culture.

Community and citizen involvement: Communities and citizens should be involved in the process of security culture building. Public participation can increase awareness and support for security measures and help identify and address specific problems in local communities.

In conclusion, reducing the risks of postmodernity in the construction of the security culture involves a comprehensive and integrated approach, which includes both theoretical aspects and practical measures adapted to the specifics of the social and political context of each society.

5. The research strategy for carrying out an analysis of the security culture

In order to carry out an analysis of the security culture, I believe that, in principle, the following objectives and work steps should be pursued:

Objectives of the Research:
  • *Understanding the attitudes and values that underlie a state's security policies.*
  • *Identifying the main perceived threats and setting security priorities.*
  • *Analyzing how security culture influences security-related decisions and public discourse.*

Research Methods:
  a) Document analysis:
  • *Studying national security strategies, official documents, and speeches of political leaders to identify security priorities and keywords used.*
  • *Reviewing past policies and the evolution of security priorities in order to identify significant changes.*

b) In-depth interviews:
• *Conducting interviews with government security officials, security experts and academics to gain inside insights on attitudes, values, and priorities.*

c) Speech analysis:
• *Monitoring the official speech of political leaders, press releases, and public statements to identify keywords and arguments related to security.*
• *Rhetorical analysis of how security is presented in the media and public discourse.*

d) Case studies:
• *Analyzing past security decisions, such as reactions to major events or specific threats, in order to highlight the influence of security culture on state responses.*

e) Questionnaires and surveys:
• *Conducting anonymous surveys to collect citizen opinions and perceptions related to security threats and government priorities.*

f) Analysis of the social environment:
• *Monitoring security-related discussions on social media platforms to observe how citizens discuss and perceive the topic.*

Stages of the research:

Data collection: Data will be collected from official documents, speeches, articles, public statements and other relevant resources.

Interviews and surveys: Planned interviews and surveys are conducted to gain diverse perspectives.

Data analysis: The collected data will be analysed by identifying patterns, keywords, and trends in the discourses and documents studied.

Interpretation: The collected data are interpreted in the context of the state's security culture, highlighting the links between attitudes, values, and security policies.

Concluding: Conclusions are drawn based on data analysis and interpretation, highlighting key findings related to security culture.

Report writing: A detailed report is written, which presents the methods used, key findings, and implications for the security policies of the respective state.

Presentation of results: this report, as well as other relevant documents, are presented at conferences, and seminars, and/or are published in academic journals to share the knowledge gained.

This research strategy combines multiple methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of a state's security culture. The entire process involves a multidisciplinary approach and attention to detail to capture the subtleties and dynamics of this field.

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The modernization of the human resources management system as a determining factor of national security

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Abstract

Modernization and development are the main factors that contribute to national security, and people are those who bring about change through various methods and techniques. Among the primary systems ensuring national security, the human resources management system plays a decisive role in this process, and its modernization contributes to ensuring and enhancing national security. Modernization necessitates digitalization through the implementation of new informatics systems and processes. To ensure the efficient development of this modernization process, the enhancement of the human resources management system also implies the cultivation of leadership and leaders within organizations. Investing in people is highly beneficial because they are one of the most valuable resources within an organization. By improving human resources activities, an organization can reduce long-term costs. The use of digital human resources management poses a new challenge for every organization.

Keywords:

national security; human security; digitalization;
human resources management system.

In order for the modernization of the human resources management system to contribute to the development of national security, it is necessary for all the institutions involved in ensuring national security to establish clear objectives for modernizing the human resources management system. To conduct research in this area, it is relevant to identify the main institutions involved in ensuring national security and the primary steps they must follow to modernize the human resources management system.

Military institutions and institutions of the Romanian Intelligence Service are the main ones which are responsible for accomplishing Romania's obligations as a NATO and EU member state. Those institutions should get involved in security activities both nationally and internationally and they need a performant human resources management system to develop national security strategies and policies in order to adhere to the international security standards.

Technological threats emerge daily as artificial intelligence constantly evolves at the speed of light and professionals must keep pace with these developments through continuous professional development and specialized training.
Even if human resources regularly participate in various courses and specialized training missions, it is not enough because the institutions must also provide them with an adequate working environment to develop and apply the knowledge acquired. This is one of the methods of modernizing the human resources system within an organization by investing in people and equipment.

1. Human security and digitalization

Marty Kaldor believes that security and development are two concepts that encompass freedom from fear and freedom from want (Kaldor 2010, 39-40). In light of these ideas, it has been concluded that development is not only about a rising standard of living, but also about the sense of psychological comfort that is related to the spiritual development of the individual and his or her relationship with the world in which he or she is embedded (how safe he or she is on the street, how much he or she is involved in decision-making, etc.).
Based on these principles, it has been concluded that the state is responsible for ensuring human security through organizations and over time certain motivational theories have been developed in the field of human resources that support career development policies, helping to align individual needs with organizational needs.

It is necessary that the principles of human security policy be applied continuously, gradually because human security depends on economic security, information security, and environmental security (*Figure 1.1.*), being, in fact, a sum of those components, since we cannot talk about a healthy individual with a sick body or a wandering mind, poorly fed and uncared for (Universitatea Spiru Haret 2015).
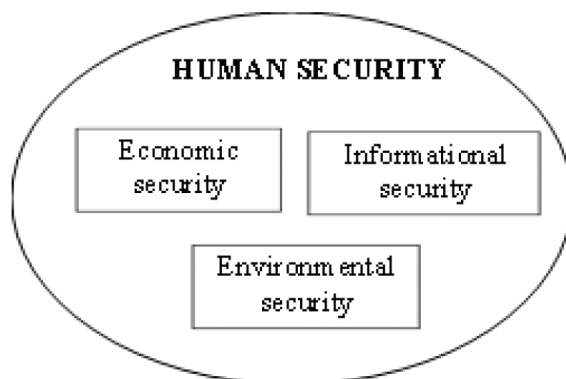
Figure 1.1. **Principles of human security policy**

Thus, a well-balanced person with comprehensive and complex training and resources at hand will be able to perform, innovate, and provide stability for others, including the military. These areas are intertwined and connected with common goals, developments, and motives. In trying to find the common factor, there are approaches such as neoliberalism, which sees the individual, as the fundamental element of society, as the link between all dimensions of security. It is thus argued that we are now in a new security paradigm, that "security at all levels is about people, who transcend all borders" (Sarcinschi 2005, 21-23).

According to the World 2009 authors' criteria, the global system involves "...a juxtaposition of five major subsystems: political, economic, social, cultural and ecological" (Frunzeti and Zodian 2011, 37-45). These, together with the military, make up the six dimensions of state security. States establish a series of strategies for managing their security, usually grouped under the following headings: national security strategy, national defence strategy, and military strategy.

In November 2020, the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance held a conference on the connection between the human resources management system and the financial management system to identify opportunities for establishing human resources strategies with a security impact (ISSAT n.d.). Emphasis was placed on ensuring a transparent and fair pay system, transparency in recruitment, promotion and performance appraisal processes. In order to mitigate the effects of corruption at the institutional level and in HR departments, clear and transparent procedures for the conduct of HR processes need to be established.

According to Prof. Mihail Dumitrescu, the three vectors of success of an organization are management, technology, and intelligent use of human resources and these are based on the contribution of staff (Nicolescu 2004, 145-146). An organization's strategy must take these factors into account and regularly invest in the development of these three vectors so as to enhance organizational performance.
Over the years, it has been demonstrated that it is not enough to invest only in the modernization of equipment and in the specialization of personnel, but it is also

necessary to emphasize the development of partnerships between countries because the principle of "two heads are better than one" is true. The European Union is based on this principle and has regulated this principle in 2022 by launching an official document, namely the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence.

The strategic compass is organized taking into account four factors - action, security, investment, and partnerships, which relate to four dimensions, crisis management, resilience, capability development and partnerships. Regarding national and international security, the strategic compass brings into discussion the development of two new security instruments that might be implemented by every country from the European Union, EU Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity and EU Hybrid Toolbox. EU Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity is like a security connection point for all the countries from the European Union, which is sharing the security risks that appear regarding armed conflicts, and cyberattacks. In this way, a common intelligence culture is developed among European countries and member state intelligence services are becoming stronger and more efficient, the EU becoming a strategic player.

More and more often, the security of the EU is becoming threatened by different hybrid tactics that are used by state and non-state actors. Another solution adopted by the Strategic Compass for protecting the security of the EU was the development of an EU Hybrid Toolbox. This toolbox is desired to develop different strategies for detecting hybrid campaigns at their early stages and this way EU Member States and partners will create a coordinated response in front of the hybrid threats and attacks (Council of the European Union 2022). Developing a common understanding and analysis of hybrid threats and campaigns will create a powerful EU and Hybrid Risk Survey is the main tool used in this process of developing an EU Hybrid Toolbox. It is recommended to develop and update periodically a UE spatial strategy for security and defence because complex threats appear daily.

Another objective of the strategic compass is the development of a Defence Innovation Hub (Centru de inovare în domeniul apărării) inside of the European Agency for Defence. Through this HUB, cooperation on defence innovation among Member states is developed, serving as a catalyst and amplifier in order to be better prepared for the future battlefield and the next-generation technologies (European Defence Agency 2022). Regarding the partnership between ONU and UE, the strategic compass considers that more peace and crisis management missions should be organized for the period 2022-2024.

Starting with 2021 a new program was launched in order to support the digitalization of public administrations from all the countries of the European Union. The Digital Europe program was structured to be developed from 2021 to 2027 and the main objective of this program is to make Europe more digital, especially for public sector organizations.

According to this program, it is relevant to create different digital innovation hubs in different regions from Romania in order to facilitate and accelerate digitalization in the respective region. For example, a digital innovation hub (called DIH4S) located in the North-West Region of Romania was created in 2015 in order to gather professionals in digitalization and digital transformation, more exactly around 80 IT companies which should contribute to these processes, academia, and administration, being the first Romanian Digital Innovation Hub.

For example, those digital innovation hubs that offer audit services on digital innovation opportunities are evaluating digital innovation readiness and establishing an implementation plan. They bring digital transformation to the public sector covering a wide range of technological areas, such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence, or cyber security.

To achieve success and increase national security, it is necessary to establish clear objectives for modernization of the human resources management system correlated with the national strategic defense goals. Air, land, and naval forces are involved to contribute to ensuring the nation's territorial integrity using land warfare and maritime capabilities (Leonard 2017).

2. Tools of modernization of the human resources management system

The first step in the process of modernization of the human resources management system of an organization should be the assessment of the human resources practices that are implemented inside that organization. The most frequently used tools in the process of assessment are examination, case studies, and questionnaires applied in the respective organization. Human resources specialists need to have a clear mirror of the current human resources policies and practices applied which are the modernization objectives established by the general manager, in order to develop a customized modernization plan of the human resources management system.

The general manager and the team management should thoroughly understand the respective plan and outline the primary steps of modernization to gain commitment from human resources specialists for its implementation. In this process of modernizing the human resources management system, it is also necessary to consider the national human resources legal framework, such as the labor code, the tax code, and the laws regarding salaries and pensions. Human resources specialists should also assess the capacity of leaders and managers to drive change at the outset. Additionally, it is important to establish a cooperative engagement.
Human resources specialists should recognize that no two organizations are alike in their procedures and goals. Therefore, they must adapt their approaches while being mindful of the specific aspects of the organization.

Thereafter, during the course of the human resources modernization process, it is important to conduct informal evaluations on an ongoing basis throughout the engagement, although it may also be useful to conduct more formal evaluations periodically. Strategic human resources management should be "aligned to the goals of the nation's national security and military strategies" (Leonard 2017). From the beginning it is necessary to align the organizational goals with the human resources management system goals and one important tool for doing this might be the Talent management strategic human resources system. One solution might be for the human resources management processes to be developed according to the national strategic goals, taking into consideration that workforce requirements are the foundation for the human resource strategy. Specialists should identify the functional connections between the development of national defense requirements and the strategic objectives of human resources.

The process of modernization cannot be started and deployed at the same time for all the institutions that are involved in ensuring national security. A modernization plan should be established after there were identified the main institutions, which are involved in ensuring national security and it should be customized depending on the workforce and the financial resources available to every institution.

What do you think about the use of a professional skills assessment matrix as a tool for modernizing the human resources management system?
The professional skills assessment matrix is a very useful management tool that helps to make the best use of internal human resources, providing a much clearer view of employees' professional competencies. It can also be used in the training process, both in determining exact training needs and in using your own employees as in-house trainers.

At the same time, it can be used very well in the recruitment process because it makes it much easier to identify the need for manpower, helps to define the criteria used in the recruitment process, and also helps to define the criteria used in the performance evaluation process.
With this tool, you can create a balance in terms of work teams and align employees' skills more easily with organizational objectives. It is possible to create this matrix at the departmental level, but also at the project level, making it much easier to create a working group.

Creating such a job skills matrix involves two main steps, determining the job skills that are needed for a particular job or project and analyzing the job skills of existing employees at the time.
Depending on the results of this skills matrix, internal training can be established, mixed teams can be set up, mentors can be established to teach those who have less experience in certain areas, other people specialized in certain areas can be hired, or retraining can be proposed for other types of employees.

There are situations where managers are pleasantly surprised to discover talent within the organization that they did not know about and thus they can also use these resources in the process of developing internal training programs using internal trainers.

The following figure is a matrix of professional competencies carried out, for example, at the level of a department, called Assembly and Installation, in a company that manufactures and markets medical equipment (*Table 2.1.*). Through the assembly and installation department, the company provides the assembly part of the equipment marketed at the customer's premises, mainly in public and private hospitals and clinics.

TABLE 2.1. Matrix of Professional Competencies

No.	Name and surname	Function	DOOR FITTING	INSTALLATION OF VENTILATION SYSTEMS	ELECTRICAL TEST	INSTALLATION ALARM PANEL	STGM ASSEMBLY	CONSOLE ASSEMBLY	RAMP ASSEMBLY	INSTALLATION BRAZING	INSTALLATION + COMMISSIONING TMA	INSTALLATION + COMMISSIONING TMV	ASSEMBLING THE WASHING MACHIN
1	POPESCU A.	MECHANICAL LATCH	4	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	2	2	3
2	POPESCU B.	MECHANICAL LATCH	1	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	2	2	4
3	POPESCU C.	ELECTRICIAN	2	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	5
4	POPESCU D.	INSTALLATOR	3	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	4
5	POPESCU E.	ASSEMBLY MECHANIC	1	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	2	2	4
6	POPESCU F.	MECHANICAL LATCH	2	2	2	2	4	3	4	1	1	1	3
7	POPESCU G.	ELECTRICIAN	1	1	5	5	3	3	4	1	2	2	4
8	POPESCU S.	INSTALLATOR	4	4	3	2	4	4	4	4	3	3	4
9	POPESCU T.	INSTALLATOR	3	2	3	1	2	2	3	1	1	1	3
10	POPESCU R.	ELECTROMECHANICAL TECHNICIAN	1	1	2	2	3	1	3	1	1	1	1

Data interpretation

From the skills matrix carried out in the Assembly and Installation department, it appears that the door fitting and ventilation system fitting skills require specialization of employees, which can be achieved with the help of two or three workers who have experience in this niche and can be mentors at the beginning for those who have been assessed at level 2 and 3 in these skills (*Figure 2.1.*).

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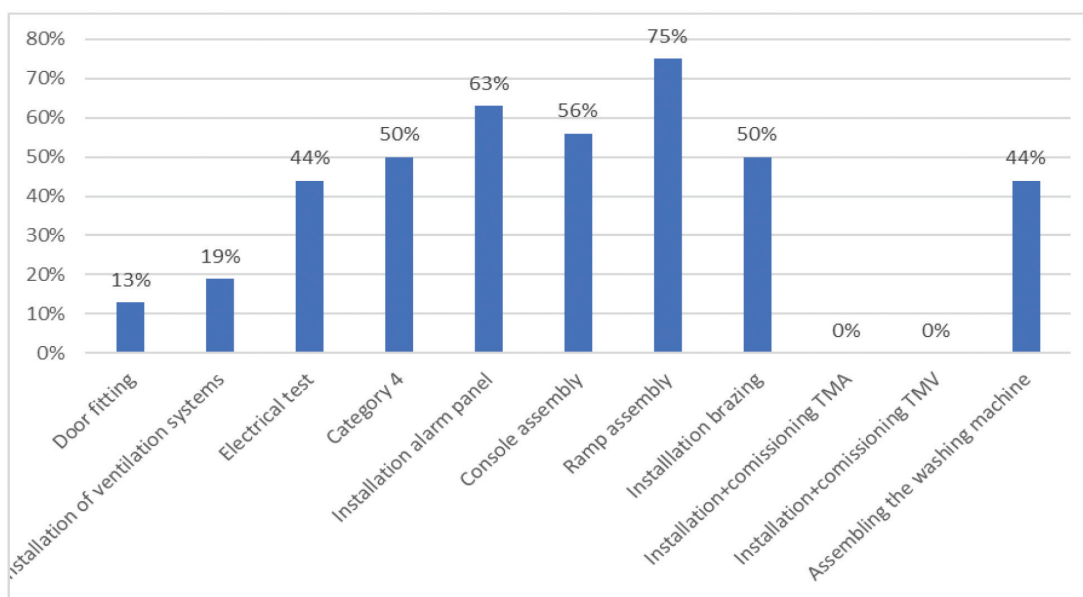
Figure 2.1. Percentage of people with high skills (≥ 4, from *Table 2.1.*)

It is advisable to employ skilled personnel with experience in the installation and commissioning of medical compressed air stations, who will then train the other members of the team. The aim of the installation and assembly department should be to have 50% competent staff for each qualification within one year. At the same time, it can be seen that 6 employees have been assessed with competence 5 for the same activities. Some of these employees can be appointed as mentors for the others and some can specialize in other branches where they have been assessed with competence 2 or 3 (*Table 2.1.*).

Table 2.2. shows how many employees are qualified for each skill. For example, on the door fitting side, we have 9 people who have been assessed with competence 1. This table can help us to have a much clearer view of how we can form work teams.

TABLE 2.2. Number of employees qualified on each skill

	Competence				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Operation	Number of persons				
Door fitting	9	3	2	2	0
Installation of ventilation systems	6	6	1	1	2
Electrical test	0	3	6	0	7
Category 4	1	5	2	1	7
Installation alarm panel	0	1	5	4	6
Console assembly	1	2	4	3	6
Ramp assembly	0	0	4	6	6
Installlation brazing	7	0	0	2	7
Installation+comissioning TMA	8	4	4	0	0
Installation+comissioning TMV	8	5	3	0	0
Assembling the washing machine	1	0	8	5	2

Another important role in the digitization of HR departments is the implementation of qualified electronic signatures, which is very useful especially in this period when due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, physical interactions have been limited in particular. Through the remote e-signature service, company processes are streamlined, with 100% legal value, because the qualified electronic signature is the only type of signature legally equivalent to the holographic one, according to the European eIDAS 910/2014 Regulation. Moreover, the time to generate, sign, and send documents is reduced, which means a gain in the decision-making process regarding the contracting of new resources or the extension of existing collaborations.

Digitization solutions offer benefits on several levels, one of which is environmental, in terms of not using resources such as paper or printing ink. This ultimately translates into a more environmentally responsible behavior, but also a considerable reduction in costs.

Archiving is also one of the great advantages of using electronic signatures, as documents signed in this way must be kept exclusively in a digital environment. Traditional archiving involves high costs for storing and keeping documents in special conditions, taking up physical space and making it more difficult to consult the archive.

However, electronic archiving means a 67% reduction in costs compared to physical archiving, which is extremely important given that the human resources department is one of the biggest consumers of paper and archiving here means keeping documents for very long periods, up to 75 years, as in the case of employment contracts.

Conclusion

The human resources management system has an important role in ensuring national security and even if technology evolves daily, people are those who implement digitalization and produce change inside organizations. Globalization brings different challenges regarding national security and modernization is the key to success and to face all those changes. Effective management of human resources is necessary to provide transparency and equity by developing leadership inside organizations and a modern system of training and of evaluating performance.

To ensure national security, it is necessary for people to feel comfortable and protected also with their professional lives and the human resources management system is one of the contributors to these aspects by implementing different social policies and working conditions, prioritizing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Human resources departments establish different objectives of creating more effective and efficient hiring, recruitment, retention, and talent development

practices, supporting professional development opportunities at all levels of the workforce.

Moreover, it is desired to create opportunities for the national security workforce to move among institutions and prioritize human resources capabilities and personnel to drive these initiatives.

To keep account of all the threats that appear, it is necessary for human resources to be continuously updated, to resort to digitalization in order to create a secure work environment. Modernization implies digitalization, continuous training activities, and complex career management.

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BULLETIN

The Russian Federation's Aggression against Ukraine – an attack against the international law-based security system

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Abstract

In the realistic paradigm within the discipline of international relations in which states act based on a lucid and rational analysis of their own interests, the actions of the Russian Federation at the international level can be given justifications located in a gray area characterized by imprecision par excellence, between the necessity of ensuring its own security and the desire to dominate the space adjacent to its imperial center. In this context, the boundary between the prevalence of the conceptions specific to the natural law that determine the specified actions and the manifest justification of real interests based on these conceptions blurs in turn. What persists is Russia's refusal to accept a rules-based international order, seen as a conceptual framework of America in particular and Western origin in general. In this context, Russia takes, at least on a superficial level, the desideratum of such an international order, but interprets it through its own filter, based in particular on natural law.

Keywords:

We are living moments[1] that we never wanted to witness. More than a year and a half ago, invoking historical reasons and pretexts of public international law, the president of the Russian Federation decided to turn into reality what many of us did not think would happen again, despite numerous warnings. He decided, specifically, to launch a military aggression against a sovereign state, so that it could not freely exercise the attributes of national sovereignty, as defined in international agreements.

Of course, even simply stating these reasons might seem absurd. In the year 2023, we claim the fact that international relations work based on international law. This is because, after the devastating experience of the Second World War, the representatives of the world's states realized that, in the absence of international law, the only basis on which interactions between states are carried out is force. However, resorting to force in the context of the 20th and the 21st centuries' technological advances leads to such a scale of loss of life and material destruction that it becomes simply unacceptable.

Yet not all international actors accept the preeminence of international law over force, when it comes to the pursuit of their interests or, if they accept it at a theoretical level, they give it such valences that its primary purpose – that of contributing to building a climate of peace and global security – is undermined to the point of dissolution. The most often used reason for this rejection is the assumption that the law-based international order concept is used as an instrument for promoting "*the application of uniform juridical solutions to different social and cultural contexts*" (Popa 2016, 61), and even for imposing a world order in which "*the 'market' values and criteria such as efficiency and utility tend to obscure and even to replace non-market values like social solidarity, equity or civic engagement, changing the allocation of resources within society*" (Popa 2021, 81). For example, in one of his speeches, delivered during the conflict[2], the president of the Russian Federation challenged the very rules-based international order and, implicitly, expressed his preference or support for an international order based on force (as the only alternative to the rules-based international order). Such behavior is, in of itself, a source of threats to the security of states and the system but, when it originates from one of the most powerful states in the system, it becomes a threat, directly or indirectly, to almost all other actors.

International law is, however, governed by a series of fundamental principles. Among these, the principle of sovereign equality of states is so important that it was enshrined in Article 2 of the United Nations Charter, which can be considered the "constitution" of the international community. Also, in the same article, another defining principle of international law is

[1] At the time of writing these lines.

[2] For further relevant aspects from the speech, see Gabriel Glickman, Putin rejecting the rules-based global order makes the world more dangerous, https://www.washingtonpost.com/made-by-history/2022/10/16/putin-rejecting-rules-based-global-order-makes-world-more-dangerous/, 16.10.2022, accessed 04.09.2023.

enshrined, namely that of not resorting to force or the threat of force. Both principles are being violated in a blatant and inconceivable way these days.

Thus, what we have now is a confrontation between two paradigms of international law, namely the positivist one – expressed by the Western side – confronted with a naturalistic paradigm portrayed by Russia. Moreover, this cleavage has much deeper roots, with the positivist paradigm originating around warfare law and being used by the Western states. On the other hand, Russia has always expressed a leaning towards the area of natural law, the most obvious being through the leitmotifs used over time. From the concept of the Third Rome to the pan-Slavism of the 19th century, Russia used various concepts that were established around the "divine rule" concept and the ideas expressed within natural law. Of course, these two forms – positivist and, respectively, naturalist – are not the only ones under which the divergences, at the perceptual and conceptual level, between Russia and the Western states can be shown, but it is a significant and quite recurring one, especially at the historiographical level.

Positive law and natural law, as conceptual foundations of the international order based on norms, respectively of the one based on force

In this sense, we have chosen to illustrate the two paradigms by referring to the theoretical foundation of each of their leading representatives. Thus, for the part of positive law, Cornelius van Bynkershoek was elected, and for natural law, Moses Maimonides. Considered to be one of the important jurists of the 18th century, Cornelius van Bynkershoek contributed to the development of international law. Van Bynkershoek's influences can be found in the areas of public law, maritime law, and positive law (Aksashi 1998, passim). Also, the 18th century was the period in which the foundations of the school of legal positivism were laid – another important point that would influence the activity of jurists from that period.

Moses ben Maimon – known as Maimonides – is most often identified with his works in theology, philosophy, or astronomy, but he also made important contributions to law. Among these lay his ideas regarding natural law. Working in the twelfth century, Maimonides already had a complex and rich material regarding natural law, in that the study – and the incipient ideas that had founded it – originated in Ancient Greece.

Through the representativeness that both van Bynkershoek and Maimonides bring to positive law, respectively natural law, the theoretical foundation of the two highlighted paradigms is provided. The representativeness derives from considerations of importance in the field as well as from their contributions in the respective areas. Thus, van Bynkershoek tried to clarify certain concepts and visions

of positivism, using a methodology that allowed him to have an overall perspective on positivism and, above all, a highly developed critical apparatus – hence the elements of subtlety in the understanding of international law in his vision, such as the usage or importance of reason and the customary norm. On the other hand, Maimonides was able to understand, assimilate and use the elements of natural law described by his predecessors to formulate his own vision on this issue. From Plato and Aristotle to Zeno and Chrysippus and up to the patristic works, elements within them can be found – in different forms – in the works and ideas of Maimonides dealing with natural law; a vision that incorporates an incipient utilitarianism, generalities and particularities of laws, society's morality, political context and interdependent relationships (Miller 2019, passim).

The Russian Federation and behavior based on the law of force in international relations. Russia and natural law

If, under the principle of sovereign equality, each state enjoys exactly the same capacity to acquire rights and assume international obligations as other states, if each state is permitted any conduct that does not contravene international law, and if, in the same idea, no state can be prohibited from taking any action consistent with this set of rules, under what principle can Russia arrogate its claim to censor another state's elections according to its own interests? The absurdity of such a claim might seem obvious, if we did not consider the fact that, for Russia, *all states are equal, but some are more equal than others,* a situation that can only occur in a force-based international order, in which a state's ability to realize its interests is directly proportional to its ability to impose constraints on the will of another state, compared to the rules-based international order, in which international law imposes constraints on the actions of states, and the latter act to influence the will of other participants in international relations in order to enact norms of international law[3] consistent with their interests or to interpret the existing ones in this way.

Although the pursuit of one's interests is present in both situations, it can be observed that the second paradigm leads to the pursuit of them in a peaceful manner, in the absence of the use of force, which significantly reduces the number and intensity of threats to the security of international actors and the system as a whole, by comparison with the first situation.

The problem that the West encounters in the desired (and absolutely natural) transformation of Russia into an international actor that no longer represents a threat to its immediate neighbors and even to the most distant ones is that Russia perceives its ancient (but especially since the Napoleonic invasion of

[3] Because, after all, states are the creators of international law.

the early 19th century) security interests as necessarily contrary to those of most other states (or at least of those who do not accept its dominance).

More precisely, Russia perceives its security as being in direct relation to its ability to threaten states from which it perceives any threat, including the use of its full military capability (which also includes „strategic deterrence forces" – to be read as *nuclear weapons*) against the respective states. In other words, Russia feels safe when it can threaten other international actors with the use of force. Any move by them to strengthen their ability to resist Russian threats is seen by Russia as a threat to their security. In simple, non-academic but eloquent wording, Russia sends the following message: *strengthening your defense ability threatens me because it reduces my ability to threaten you.*

Hence the insistence with which Russia rejects the accession to NATO of its neighboring states. Claiming that the NATO accession of these states would be a political-military maneuver preceding an armed attack against Russia is nothing more than a manipulative speech so obvious that only die-hard followers of Putinist Eurasianism could be influenced by such claims[4]. The provisions of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty are formulated clearly enough to exclude the application of the provision in question with a view to offensive action by the Alliance against any enemy. Instead, the provisions of the same article include the obligation of common defensive actions, in the event of an armed attack directed against any member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

[4] But we are not concerned with them, as their Putinism is so aggressive that they would be willing to support any nonsense promoted by Moscow.

Moreover, in Article 5 of the NATO Treaty[5], the references to the defensive nature of the actions that can be initiated under the rule of the article in question are all the clearer, as they are supplemented with the explicit mention of the fact that the respective actions fall within the set of individual or collective *self-defence* measures allowed under the rule of article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

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[5] Which, for more clarity, we reproduce below:

"The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them, in Europe or North America, shall be considered an attack against all of them, and accordingly agree that, if such armed attack occurs, each of them, in the exercise of the right to individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, shall support the Party or Parties attacked by taking immediately, individually or jointly with the other Parties, any action it deems necessary, including the use of force armies, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.
Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall be immediately reported to the Security Council. These measures will cease after the Security Council adopts the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security."

The provisions of this article[6] similarly allow Art. 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, the member states of the United Nations Organization to carry out defensive military actions only in the situation in which an armed attack is executed against them, and under the condition of their immediate cessation if the UN Security Council orders measures to combating the armed aggression in question.

We see, in the cited provisions, only references to the notion of self-defense. In this case, why is Russia so concerned about the accession of its neighboring states to NATO? Why is it so vehemently opposing this? Why does it view the accession in question as a threat to its security?

Obviously, it is not to be found by installing US offensive nuclear weapons on the territory of these states. The experience of the more than 30 years that have passed since the breakup of the Soviet Union has not revealed any example of the installation of nuclear weapons on the territory of the former communist or ex-Soviet states that have acquired the status of NATO members. Moreover, we wonder why Russia is so concerned about this possibility but does not perceive, as a similar threat, the presence of American nuclear weapons in Turkey which, although not bordering Russia, is at a short distance, in strategic terms, of the Russian state.

It is known that, since the 1950s, Turkey has hosted various types of American nuclear weapons, from ballistic missiles to bombs that remain today in the warehouses of the American base at Incirlik. However, a relatively simple analysis of documents published by, for example, the website "nsarchive.gwu.edu" shows how, after the end of the Cold War, the number and power of US nuclear weapons deployed in Turkey and Western Europe were only reduced from the nuclear-tipped ballistic missile systems present in Turkey until the breakup of the USSR, to an estimated 20 aircraft-launched nuclear-tipped bombs. Moreover, a similar trend followed the American nuclear weapons deployed in Germany, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands. So, from Russia's perspective, despite the accession of Eastern European states to NATO, the intensity of the nuclear threat coming from the United States of America not only *did not increase* after the collapse of the USSR, *but actually decreased!*

In addition to this idea, in the period after the breakup of the Soviet Union, the United States and the other NATO member nuclear powers did not use the nuclear threat and did not make interpretable public references related to the use of this weaponry. According to (online) open sources (Blume 2022), the last American nuclear test took place almost 30 years ago, on September 23, 1992. Since then, the

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[6] Which, similarly, we reproduce below:

"Nothing in this Charter shall affect the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense in the event of an armed attack against a Member of the United Nations, until such time as the Security Council shall have taken the necessary measures for the maintenance of international peace and security. The measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defense shall be immediately brought to the attention of the Security Council and shall in no way affect the power and duty of the Security Council under this Charter to take such action as it may deem necessary at any time for maintaining or restoring international peace and security."

United States has not tested a new nuclear device, thus demonstrating the departure from the logic of the nuclear threat. As for Russia, the state's opacity and reluctance to provide such information make it difficult to identify nuclear tests, but several open sources (Sanger and Kramer 2019; Petrescu 2019), tend to place the latest Russian nuclear test no earlier than 2019, assuming that the so-called *Nenoska Incident* was generated by such an action.

As for the threat of using nuclear weapons, this, too, seems to be a monopoly of the Russian Federation, a monopoly unchallenged by the states of the Western world. Incidentally, to locate the most recent (for, unfortunately, we do not expect it to be the last) threats by Russia to use nuclear weapons, we need not go back in time earlier than at the time of writing these lines. For example, in a televised speech broadcast on Russian state television, Vladimir Putin, the President of the Russian Federation, expressed himself as follows: "Order to the Minister of Defense and the Chief of the General Staff to put the deterrent forces of the Russian army on special combat alert" (Sârbu 2022). Later, Sergei Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Minister, issued a similar threat when he specified that "if a third world war were to occur, it would involve nuclear weapons and be destructive" (Stan 2022).

Analyzing these aspects, we cannot help but notice the conclusion that emerges almost automatically; that is, Russia feels threatened by possible deployments of NATO nuclear weapons in the vicinity of its borders only because it itself would use, in similar situations, the threat with the use of nuclear weapons.
Also, Russia's true interests may, in our opinion, be even more closely related to the security of the regime than to the security of the state. Thus, the threat that the Putin regime perceives as coming from the proliferation of the so-called "colorful revolutions" may be one of the main factors prompting the Kremlin to consider of particular importance the existence of states with a political orientation close to its own, both internally and externally, in the proximity of its borders. The existence of such states is seen by decision makers in Moscow as a barrier against possible contagion of a possible "colorful revolution" supported and influenced by Western powers.

We recall, at this stage, the statements of the theorist of international relations, Alexander Wendt. In this sense, he does not deny the claims of the "father" of the post-war theory of international relations, Hans Morgenthau, according to which states act using their elements of power to achieve their own interests (Morgenthau 2007, passim) but he nuanced them, stating that interests are not objective realities, empirically ascertainable, but socio-cultural constructs. The way a state perceives its interests varies according to the cultural background, ideal, etc., of its representatives, and may vary significantly, under the influence of historical events (Wendt 2011, passim).

This may be true in the case of Russia if we accept the possibility of an increased influence of Russian exceptionalism on the formation of the perception of the interests of the Russian state internationally.

The main components of the corpus of ideas that make up Russian exceptionalism can be identified as gravitating around Russia's imperial and messianic destiny. More precisely, it is about the fact that perceiving itself as the strongest international representative of the Christian religion of the Orthodox denomination[7] and, in the same vein, perpetuating the myth of the "Third Rome", Russia has over time articulated its own vision of international law. Regarding this vision[8], which almost invariably comes to support Russia's aggressive actions, it can be said that it shows certain similarities with Rabbi Maimonides' conception of natural law.

At this point, the natural law paradigm intervenes, which underpins what Russia has tried to apply over time. Thus, in the natural paradigm, the laws must be based on reason, and not be a result of frivolous actions from which an arbitrary character emerges. It also attributes the characteristic of rationality to the law of nations. Maimonides claims that, in the absence of rational laws and societal morality, it suffers (Jacobs 2012, passim). He based some of his natural law arguments on theological foundations. The first examples of references to natural law appear in the *Epistle to the Romans* of the Apostle Paul, most visibly in chapter 2 of the *Epistle*. From here will begin the works of Barnabas, the disciple of the Apostle Paul, Pope Clement I (Clement the Roman), Polycarp of Smyrna, Hermas – the brother of Pope Pius I – and Ignatius of Antioch, who will interweave natural law with morality and theology (Crowe 1977, 52-57). Attempts in this sense existed even before the writing of the *Epistle to the Romans*, by Philo of Alexandria, and some lines from the Gnostics will continue in parallel, such as Valentinus (2nd century AD) or Basilides (2nd century AD) (Crowe 1977, 52-58).

Irenaeus of Lyon (2nd-3rd centuries AD) will also continue along the lines of the morality of natural law, through theological visions. In the same timeframe, Clement of Alexandria will carry forward the attempts of Philo of Alexandria, about law and right reason, a concept that also appeared in Cicero. Tertullian identified natural law as a means of pacification, through the naturalist-egalitarian perspective, and discussed its theological dimension. Origen, the disciple of Clement of Alexandria, also inspired by the stoic Cleanthes of Assos, will also discuss the primacy of nature – implicitly natural law – over other laws (Ramelli 2009, passim; Crowe 1977, 52-62).

Another interesting point that Maimonides brings up is about the utilitarian character of laws – in the paradigm of natural law. He believed the generalities of a law constituted the utilitarian character, being formulated precisely for the fulfillment of such a purpose. On the other hand, the particularities of a law did not share the same utilitarian character, but rather a moralizing one. However, Maimonides did not consider that the particularities of

[7] See, in this sense, the role of protector of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire, most of them of the Orthodox rite, imposed on the latter by the treaties that followed the successive Russo-Turkish wars, starting with the one at Kuciuk-Kainarci, later the war between the years 1768-1774.
[8] Which, for this reason, we believe can only be considered a narrative with a legal appearance intended to give an acceptable form (internally and partially externally - among one's own allies, moreover an increasingly narrow circle -) to a policy which, in its essence, remains one of power.

a law should be studied from a causal point of view, these being rather inherent and individualized at the level of society. Thus, while the cause of generalities was represented by utilitarian reasons, particularities did not – in Maimonides' view – have a specific causal character. Moreover, the function of legislative regulations was to support social and political norms (Jacobs 2012, passim).

Maimonides – through the lens of his vision of natural law – raises some dilemmas on this issue. Thus, some opinions claim because of the dual nature of the law – the utilitarian and the moralizing – society can rather choose an antinomian type of direction, as a result of a perception of duplicity. From here can derive the idea that norming can have a dispensable character because, without utilitarianism and the moral dimension, it loses its original purpose.

In other words, Russia tried – and still does – to promote certain policies and ideas based on a moral foundation, of natural inspiration with accents of divine influence (Valliere and Poole 2022, passim). The entire panoply of phrases, leitmotifs, and creeds propagated by Moscow over time, through both direct and indirect means aimed at building a narrative that would support Russia's imperialist aspirations and goals. Whether it was about laws, wars, diplomatic actions, all these – and not only – came under a specific umbrella that tries to implement the suggestion that these things are nothing but a natural consequence of the rights that Russia, by its very existence, has had (Cucciolla 2019, passim). Contesting or questioning any of these premises, regardless of whether it was internal or external, triggered repressive actions that none of the regimes that came to power – be they imperialist, communist dictatorial, or illiberal authoritarian – felt some reluctance to apply. Of course, along the way the narrative underwent changes in order to be able to fit the temporal goals of the actors who represented the leadership (Laruelle 2019, passim).

However, the foundation remained the same – precisely because it was quite simplistic and malleable – namely that a natural right, divinely created, conferred immense prerogatives on Russia, something that the decadent West, and essentially any opponent of the regime from at that moment, they could not accept them for various reasons that often did nothing but feed an invisible enemy type theory (Hill and Cappelli 2010, passim). These messages found an echo not only on the internal level of Russia, from Moscow and Saint Petersburg to Siberia and Vladivostok, but also outside Russian space.

The narrative was taken over and was even adapted according to the needs of other actors who were, in one form or another, in the sphere of Russian influence. Russia encouraged, and even supported, this propagation precisely to induce, in the end, the ideas supported by pan-Slavism, and behind which there would have been nothing other than Russian domination for a large part of Eastern Europe and the Balkans (Suslov 2012, 575-595; Black 2019, passim). The natural paradigm, and its moral character, were very well connected to the nationalist and conservative

strands, insisting that it comes as a saving answer to the current ideologies which, in the paradigmatic opinion, have done nothing but contribute the majority to the current *status quo*, under the influence of various crises. Such a narrative worked very well for this segment of the population, and finally, for the electorate in Eastern Europe, in some cases even catching on in Western countries (Martinelli 2018, passim). But what this narrative lacks is exactly what it accuses others of not doing, namely the part of seeking and providing solutions. Apart from a speech intended to be mobilizing, this version of the narrative offers nothing but a wide spectrum of illusions.

In this sense, Russia opposes the positivist paradigm by putting the natural version of international law in contrast. What the positivist paradigm brings is exactly the rule of law which is established based on agreements at the community level, and by extension at the state level. In fact, it is Russia that is trying to exploit the area of law versus morality, arguing that many of the international norms are made with bad intentions, to the detriment of states that have other visions than those of the West (Samokhvalov 2017, passim). The entire foundation is concretized by Russia's wishes – expressed in a very visible way – to create a new paradigm at the world level. Of course, such a new order may have no other way than directed and directed by Moscow. Moreover, the propaganda apparatus strives to mask these things by painting an image in which the Russian state is oppressed and misunderstood by the decadent West (Schulze 2018, 57-85).

One of the ideas behind positive law was that a court of law does not apply rules in a general way, but rather applies a set of rules – in a particular way – which are agreed upon or, as the case may be, imposed – by the authorities in a community. On the other hand, the same voices believed that even in the situation where the particular set of rules/laws was applied by a court, this did not mean that the respective law – by applying it – could equate to the concept of justice; otherwise said, it was very likely that the application of a law could not meet the criterion of justice (MacCormick and Weinberger 1986, passim; Murphy 2005, 4-24). Even if a law could still equate to justice, it could not have equated to the rules of morality. While a moral norm defines, in general terms, the actions and characteristics of moral behavior, the law was obliged to exemplify and specify the conditions necessary for its observance. Finally, it was found that, without cooperation and harmonization of the conditions described, in a society, the criterion of interdependence – of the members of the society in relation to the individual – could not have been fulfilled, because the members of a society were based on a status quo which required the observance of some norms of moral-legal conduct (MacCormick and Weinberger 1986, passim; Murphy 2005, 10-19).

Therefore, a law belonging to positive law had to have a determining clarity, a specific character – leading from general definitions to particular examples – and, in this way, be able to ensure an appropriate norm of conduct at the level of society. Of course,

through these types of laws (including procedural elements), positive law maintains a close connection with the moral dimension. There is, therefore, the risk that in the case of a potential imbalance of the two areas – legal and moral – the positive right is sometimes characterized as being rather of an arbitrary value (Murphy 2005, 10-19; George 1996, passim).

This results in a duality of positive law, namely that on the one hand, in its perception – at a descriptive and empirical level – the law originates from a deliberate imposition, and therefore it is rather promulgated or postulated, without having an arbitrary character. On the other hand, at the normative level, positive law sometimes shows that, regarding content, a legal norm can be devoid of morality at an intrinsic level – or even at a universal level – or supported by a moralizing force; therefore, the character is arbitrary (Murphy 2005, passim).

This positivist view – of the primacy of sovereign authority – is best reflected in van Bynkershoek's ideas about war. It describes both individuals and state entities as in the form of independent actors, eliminating the specificity of war, be it public or private, and assuming a framework based on universality. Elaborating on the ideas of Hugo Grotius, van Bynkershoek saw war not as an action, but as a condition of the state – referring to sovereign authority. Also, war could only take place between state entities – or individuals, for that matter – that had no sovereign authority to control them; thus, only sovereign authority could trigger the condition of war. Van Bynkershoek's positivist perspective held that the outbreak of war could fulfill the entire legal framework, even when there was no formal declaration announcing the start of war – at this point contradicting the naturalistic ideas of Grotius, who had a much more restrictive view of the need for an official declaration of war (Ballis 1937, 137-138). But van Bynkershoek's view was supported by practicality: he provided several examples of wars that had started without official declarations, which were not framed as illegal due to the lack of declaration documents. On the other hand, van Bynkershoek argued that the absence of the condition of war can only be caused by the observance of rights and freedoms codified by laws and treaties – thus, again, showing the independence of the relationship from sovereign authority, societal order, and reason. Regarding the idea of neutrality, van Bynkershoek accepted it from a rather customary point of view, but which could be achieved in the absence of obligations – written in treaties – towards one of the belligerent parties, in conjunction with the lack of direct participation (Ballis 1937, passim).

Russia fits perfectly into the examples given by van Bynkershoek regarding the outbreak of wars without a prior declaration. Moreover, in the current case – the Ukrainian one – Russia goes even further and denies the fact that it is waging a war, and disguises everything under the idea of direct support of oppressed minorities; that is, the Russian population in the separatist republics. The same reason was used by Russia in 2014, and it was perpetuated in most of the conflicts after the 1990s in which it was involved (Friedman 2018, passim). This pretext manages, on the one

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hand, to fit into the naturalistic paradigm, that of morality and the need to help one's neighbor, as well as to violate the principles of positive law regarding declarations of war and the justice and justification of the act of warfare. It is neither the first, nor the last time that Russia will resort to such means to support its actions, but it seems that these remnants of the naturalist bastion are starting to shake more and more (Laruelle 2019, passim).

Russia's perception of international relations – changing constancy or just constancy? From the "security perimeters" created after the Second World War to Vladimir Putin's Russia

Three times in the chronology of less than a century, Germany (Prussia) and France each considered that the achievement of their interests could be yielded through means that include armed confrontation. This led to the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), World War I and World War II[9].

After the Second World War, however, under the influence of the Soviet threat and American foreign policy orientations, both France and Germany realized that their interests were no longer centered on territorial expansion achieved by military means, but on the maintenance of peace and the achievement of socio-economic prosperity. This realization led to the replacement of confrontation with integration, giving birth to the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Economic Community. In roughly the same span, Russia came into conflict with virtually all of its neighbors (from the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman Empires, to Iran, China, Japan, Germany again, Romania, Finland, Japan again, and China again, Afghanistan, Georgia or Ukraine, in the hope that no example has been omitted from this extensive enumeration) and continues to do so as we write these lines.

Therefore, a change of perception at the level of leadership of the two states determined a similar change in the matter of representing the national interest. In Russia, however, such a change in perception, at least a lasting one, has never occurred. As we have demonstrated in a previous approach (Bantaș and Bălănică 2013, 105-119) and as numerous other doctrinaires have shown, Russia's geopolitics has remained, in its fundamental lines, the same from the 15th century, from Ivan III to the present day. This kind of geopolitics was based on several fundamental coordinates, such as Russia's need to get out of a perceived strategic encirclement by maritime civilizations, the need to secure access to warm seas, and the need to create successive "security perimeters" from neighboring states, to protect the center of Russian imperial power.

The problem with this trend is that we do not know where it stops and if it ever stops. By creating a security perimeter around the imperial center (of Russia

[9] Of course, the causes of the last two are more complex, but both involve, among the main episodes, the Franco-German confrontation.

in today's borders, for example), a perimeter consisting of ex-Soviet states (such as Ukraine), Russia can be considered to have achieved its own security aspirations. But what prevents Russia, after some time, from considering that Ukraine and Belarus, through their connections with the Russian state,[10] have become part of the imperial center and, therefore, a new security perimeter is needed to protect them, formed by states such as Romania, Poland, etc.?

Incidentally, history reminds us that this happened during the Second World War, at the end of which the whole of Eastern Europe came to be occupied by the Red Army. After this occupation, the USSR was not satisfied with the security perimeter created but began to pressure Turkey for territorial concessions regarding the regime of the Straits (which precipitated the integration of Greece and Turkey into NATO) and even claimed rights related to the former Italian colony of Libya.

Also, if the interests of the Putin regime are more related to the creation of a protective barrier against „color revolutions", then it seems unlikely to us that they will undergo any review process in the foreseeable future since such a process would mean that the said regime no longer regards its own survival as its primary interest, which goes against not only the conclusions of analyzes of the past behavior of Russia and its regimes, internally and externally, but also human nature itself. In the absence of internal control mechanisms that can limit or restrict the possibility of a regime to perpetuate its exercise of power, the regime in question will not hesitate to consider this perpetuation as its main interest; or, as far as Russia is concerned, we do not notice the existence of any such constitutional, political, or social constraints. Therefore, we cannot foresee the basis for future cooperation between Russia and the states that it sees as potential targets. Moreover, such a basis can only be achieved starting from a gradual integration process, concomitantly with economic and political developments at the national and international level (Salomia and Mihalache 2016, 166), following the example offered by the European Union, which proves that links that go beyond the limits of nation-states, taking into account voluntary adhesion and peaceful transformation (Dumitrașcu 2006, 174) are the most sustainable.

Conclusions: What to do?

Essentially, what we are asserting is that Russia perceives its state and security interests in a deeply flawed way that is motivated not by empirical reality, but by its self-induced conviction of its own imperial destiny. In this vein, we reiterate the fact that the security of a state cannot be sought by affecting the security of another state, by interfering with its right to conclude international agreements that, based on the principle of sovereign equality of states, it

[10] Of which the followers of the Putinist Eurasianism are convinced, also justifying the disappearance of their statehood and their dissolution in the Russian state, as explained by Vladimir Putin himself in the speech that preceded the recognition of the Donetsk and Luhansk republics.

wishes to conclude or, even more so, by denying the right to exist of a state based on biased historical arguments. If relations between states were based on historical arguments, the world would be a theater of perpetual war, as each state can choose a favorite period in history to which it wishes to return, a period that would certainly be incompatible with the expectations of another state.

The only durable basis on which relations between states can rest is international law, whose fundamental norms and principles include the prohibition of the use of force and the threat of force. Until Russia understands this, it will only be a perpetual threat to the security of the entire world and, therefore, the entire world is forced to respond to this threat by isolating and impoverishing Russia at all costs, so that it realizes, through a shock similar to those suffered by Germany and Japan at the end of the Second World War, that the war of aggression is not and cannot be a tool to achieve the goals of states.

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BULLETIN

The evolution of the relationship between NATO and Russia and future perspectives

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Abstract

The moment of February 24, 2022, was the one that closed even the last gate of dialogue between Russia and NATO. Although major security organizations had made huge efforts to prevent these actions of Russia, the state did not heed, continuing with its ambitious plans. After the end of the Cold War, the relations between Russia and NATO seemed to be stabilizing, and there was even collaboration in some areas. Even so, there was always a trace of mistrust, each side fearing the other's intentions. Russia, on the one hand, sees NATO as a threat to its own security as a result of the bloc's expansion, and NATO considers the Russian state the main danger to its member states, given the conflict Russia has triggered and is carrying on, despite all the naysayers and the accusations against it.

Keywords:
NATO; Russia; conflict; aggression; security; collaboration; Cold War.

Not only NATO, but the whole world is currently facing several factors of instability that mark the security situation. The brief period of calmness after the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s was interrupted by the Arab Spring and continued by the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the crisis in the Sea of Azov, the war in Syria, the crisis generated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression against Ukraine that began on 24 February 2022. In addition, phenomena such as organized crime, migration, the issue of autonomy in some provinces or regions, traditional rivalries, or the inequitable ratio between massive demographic growth in some areas of North Africa and the Middle East and insufficient economic growth further compound these major economic events.

Looked at in detail, the situation on NATO's eastern flank is far from stable, given the problems caused by Russia in Ukraine. If in the past this flank seemed safer compared to the southern one, from 2014 the situation began to change, the main focus of the Alliance being on Russia's actions. Even if in the south NATO still has to deal with the collaborative policies that Turkey maintains in some places with Russia or the Arab world, the conflict in the east is currently at the forefront of the work agenda of NATO leaders (Fix and Kimmage 2023).

Presentation of the evolution of relations between NATO and Russia

The outbreak of the conflict brought to the attention of all citizens the role of NATO and, in fact, the main tasks of this organization: to maintain a climate of peace and ensure collective security. There were various opinions within the Alliance, at times contradictions, but the whole world is interested in the evolution that this organization will undergo in the coming years.

The main threat to NATO, as it emerged after the Vilnius Summit in 2023, is Russia. In this sense, the Allies have decided to adopt major measures so that the military bloc is prepared for the challenges of the future. Also, NATO's defense plans were strengthened, and member states agreed on the need to commit to increasing defense investments. NATO maintains its interest in enhancing the deterrence of any hostile actions by a potential enemy and is constantly strengthening its collective defense posture. This military component of deterrence is based on the response and mobility of the force package with a high level of readiness and the semi-permanent presence of forces deployed on the territory of the states on NATO's eastern border with Russia. The main purpose of these forces is deterrence, but in the event of an attack from Russia, they will respond quickly. Although NATO's war plans had not been updated since the Cold War, the organization was forced to develop new ones as post-Soviet Russia, which until this point had not been considered an existential threat, became the organization's main adversary (Chifu 2022).

In the southern part of the organization, there are other types of challenges, which are determined by the fragility of states and their inability to prevent and combat problems related to transnational terrorism. What is worse is that the southern states cannot allow their own citizens to stay and prosper in their countries, because there is a huge gap between the level of economic growth and the birth rate.

In addition to problems within the organization, NATO must also deal with sources of instability from outside the Alliance and should effectively use the measures at its disposal to impose itself and to minimize or eliminate security risks.

Within the organization, some member states express a behavior that undermines the independence of their own legal system, tend to obstruct independent media, or are not in solidarity with other member states facing certain problems. These attitudes are contrary to the principles that led to the founding of the Alliance in April 1949.

Currently, NATO is making significant efforts to ensure the security of the eastern flank and to provide a rapid and credible response to new challenges, especially in the case of military, cyber, and hybrid threats. In contrast to the organization, Russia shows an attitude marked by aggression, and ideas such as common prosperity, regional stability, and peace are far from reality; therefore, it is hard to believe that NATO and Russia will be able to unite in the near future. Russia has been and, as it can be seen, continues to be the biggest threat to the independence and sovereignty of European states, and its course of action is an obstacle to the common values that bind the West.

Russia has been ruled by President Vladimir Putin for almost 24 years, and his provocative attitude is not unknown to its neighbors, or even to more distant states. Several times, Russia wanted to impose its own vision on the evolution of other states by getting involved in internal elections, sabotaging the activity of financial institutions, attacking civil infrastructure, and cyber-attacks. For example, Russia has repeatedly used malicious cyber activity to target international organizations such as the World Anti-Doping Agency or the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in order to impose its will (Ionașcu 2016). Russia also defied international rules in 2018, in the notorious case of its citizen killed on British soil by Kremlin-backed assassins with a military-grade neurotoxin (European Parliament 2020). But, in addition to these examples, the invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, is the greatest atrocity committed by Russia and has led to the exclusion of any possibility of keeping open any window of cooperation between the Russian state and NATO or other security organizations or democratic states in the world.

Past experiences, but especially Russia's decision to invade Ukraine, have demonstrated to the whole world that this state does not deserve trust. NATO has decided to end all collaboration with Russia and the image of building a positive relationship, dominated by cooperation and the development of mutual trust,

transparency and respect no longer exists and most likely will not exist for a long time. Despite the current situation, NATO does not seek a confrontation with Russia and even insists on ending the aggression against Ukraine and returning to dialogue. The organization does not compromise on the principles underlying the operation of the Alliance and does not want to jeopardize the security of the citizens of the Euro-Atlantic space.

Before the time of February 24, 2022, the Cold War was the most intense and suspenseful period regarding the outbreak of a new conflict between two great powers: NATO and Russia. Since then and until Russia's aggression against Ukraine, NATO made considerable efforts to establish peaceful relations with Russia, and even to conclude some partnerships, including through the mechanism of the NATO-Russia Council (CNR), based on the NATO-Russia Founding Act and of the Rome Declaration. The Founding Act was signed in 1997 by the American and Russian presidents and aimed at establishing mutual relations based on cooperation and maintaining security between Russia and NATO. Through this act, NATO aimed to expand, by accepting some states from the former Soviet bloc, but committed itself not to place nuclear weapons, including warehouses, on the territory of future member states and not to strengthen its permanent troops on their territory. However, after coming to power, Vladimir Putin considered this act a betrayal on the part of the states of the former Soviet bloc and a humiliation for Russia, and it still represents one of the main reasons for the dispute between Russia and NATO. The finality of these efforts was always a negative one, because of Russia, which violated most of the agreements and commitments it undertook to respect. Over time, NATO began to lose confidence in Russia (Srîmbovschi 2011).

The NATO-Russia relationship is a significant part of European security policy. The first contact between the two blocs was after 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed and the Warsaw Pact was dissolved. After these events, NATO changed its policy regarding its relationship with former irreconcilable enemies.
In 2002, in an attempt to create a closer link between the two forces, the NATO-Russia Council was born, in which they were equal partners. Thus, at the beginning of this initiative, it was aimed to start discussions regarding security issues and cooperation in areas of common interest. Things worked relatively well until 2014 when Russia violated its commitments by annexing Crimea. Even so, the CNR continued to exist until 2022, and a work schedule was established annually. Although significant efforts were made to prevent a conflict between Russia and Ukraine through discussions within the CNR, they were not sufficient to prevent further Russian action. Officially, this council did not dissolve, but considering the actions of the Russian state, it is more than obvious that it remained only a document with a symbolic meaning.

Although they were evolving somewhat favorably, relations between the two blocs were interrupted in 2008, when Russian troops invaded Georgia. From that point on, things continued to deteriorate (Trenin 2009).

Another turning point in the relationship between NATO and Russia was the beginning of the occupation of Crimea by the Russian state in 2014. At that time, all the leaders of NATO and the rest of the civilized countries condemned this attitude and asked Russia to withdraw its forces from Ukraine. This attitude was disrespectful to the norms of international law, but also to the obligations and responsibilities assumed at the international level. Russia's actions that ultimately led to the annexation of Crimea made it clear to both NATO and other democratic states that the Russian state could no longer be trusted and, despite the sanctions it was subjected to, continued its plan, appropriating, unfairly, a territory (Kolesnikov 2023).

What strengthened the belief that the relationship between NATO and Russia is difficult to stabilize was the state's decision to attack Ukraine and, more than that, to maintain troops on Ukrainian territory even today. Wanting to annihilate the danger on its borders, but also to provide substantial support to face the fighting, NATO decided to establish five multinational battle groups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania, expanded its air policing capabilities in the Baltic Sea, and Eastern Europe so that any Russian aircraft entering the airspace of member states is intercepted and continued the process of equipping its troops with state-of-the-art equipment and technologies. Despite Russia's desire to receive more assurances from the West, this is no longer possible, as relations at all levels are damaged.

Even if there were moments of collaboration, the relationship between the two powers is almost non-existent at this point. NATO vehemently condemns Russia's internal policy, the aggression unleashed against a sovereign state, and Russia, on the other hand, considers NATO guilty for expanding its borders and getting closer to its territories, for the problem of the South Caucasus and the future status of the province of Kosovo. The Russian president believes that the "red line" he established was violated by NATO. He criticizes and accuses the organization of supplying equipment and weapons to Ukraine. On the other hand, NATO judges Russia for violating the principles of international law and requests the withdrawal of troops. Since the outbreak of the war until now, NATO has strongly strengthened its position on the western flank, deploying troops from various member states to prepare to act quickly in the event of a possible Russian attack on the territory of any member state (Clapp 2022).

Even before the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine, NATO accused Russia of using the energy at its disposal to control the Western states. The Nord Stream 2 pipeline highlighted Russia's role as a major energy supplier. At that time, several European deputies requested the cessation of work on the gas pipeline connecting Germany to Russia, citing the fact that the Russian state could no longer be considered a strategic partner. After the conflict began, it became clear that the Russians were using their energy advantage to manipulate NATO member states to their own wishes. They threatened to stop the delivery of gas, thus slowing down the production of European states (Clapp 2022).

Although they currently have opposing goals, there are also areas where the two forces can work together to achieve better results in terms of ensuring a climate of security for their own citizens: the fight against terrorism, defense reform, counter-piracy, crisis management, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. For example, after September 11, 2001, when the terrorist attacks in the United States of America (USA) took place, Russia and NATO made joint efforts to effectively respond to terrorist threats. At that time, Russia carried on the fight against terrorism in its own style by allowing Alliance aircraft to use Russian airspace in the Afghanistan campaign. Over time, there have been several exchanges of information between NATO and Russia on the issue of terrorism.

Russia's relations with NATO are going through a frozen period after the Russian state invaded Ukraine in an operation called by Moscow a "special military operation" and by the West and Ukraine as an unjustified and unprovoked aggression against a sovereign and independent state. Russia accuses the West of unjustly expanding eastward, towards its borders, and does not accept the fact that more and more states, including its neighbors, want to join NATO. In fact, Russian leaders state that the reason for the invasion of Ukraine is the very fear that NATO will expand so much that it could attack Russia, and they believe that they are not waging a war against Ukraine, but against the West (Hamilton 2016).

At this moment, there is also the issue of Ukraine's accession to NATO, so that this state receives protection from the Alliance, considering the huge losses it has suffered. Although it has faced brutal attacks received by Russia for a year and a half, Ukraine still does not fully meet the conditions to become a NATO member state. On the other hand, the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine opened a quick access gate to NATO for Sweden and Finland, given the concerns of the two states about their own security after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Finland has already been accepted into NATO in April 2023. Sweden is following the same path, even if there are and have been some differences of opinion on what it stands for Turkey, which does not fully support the idea of accepting this state into NATO. This idea infuriates Russia even more, and the declaratory war on both sides becomes stronger.

NATO is the security organization that aims to promote peace, security, and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region. The crisis in Ukraine was an opportunity to demonstrate how prepared it is to defend its citizens, assess its capabilities, evaluate the level of training of the force package, gauge the technical and technological equipment of the troops, and determine whether states can set aside individual differences in favor of cooperation to eliminate the common enemy. The supply of weapons and ammunition to Ukraine has significantly reduced the stocks available to NATO member states, and this is a challenge for the Alliance, since, in the event of a possible attack by Russia, some member states' armies do not have enough ammunition and weapons to use against the invasion. Russia, too, is dealing with a conflict of its own making. As early as February 2022, many states of the world

reacted against this attitude and withdrew the support they had previously offered to Russia. This state is on the verge of becoming an outcast in the civilized world, its actions being judged more and more harshly. The measures taken so far at the state level or by major international security organizations have weakened Russia's power to act. Many important companies have withdrawn their branches from Russia, and the effects are felt economically, the life of ordinary citizens is not an easy one at all. In addition, the embargoes imposed seem to further weaken Russia. These measures, also supported by NATO, aim to end a war that brought losses not only to Russia or Ukraine but to the whole world.

Although in some places there are states that still maintain relations with Russia, such as, for example, Belarus, China, and, in some places, Turkey, the Russian state has lost a lot of its credibility and no longer enjoys the trust that it hardly won. Currently, the Russian president is looking for allies in African states, fearing the actions that NATO could take, given the package of forces and equipment that the organization has allocated on the eastern side of its borders.

The future of relations between the two forces no longer seems to be one based on collaboration. Although at times NATO and Russia have cooperated, it seems that those times will not return anytime soon. Each side stands for its own truth and refuses to give up the principles it has established. Neither NATO nor Russia rules out the outbreak of a conflict between the two forces. At the declarative level, both sides issue warnings and support their own points of view. In the field, NATO is conducting training on the entire eastern strip that delimits it from Russia, whether we are talking about training on the ground, in the air, or on land, and Russia is fighting directly with Ukrainian troops. These images are difficult to understand in the year 2023, as no one expected this situation after humanity went through two world wars in which the losses were huge (NATO 2022).

Conclusions

The relationship between NATO and Russia has always been complicated. The two entities accused each other of undue expansion and saw each other as a threat, even though there was sometimes space for dialogue and, at times, even cooperation. However, the actions taken by Russia in recent years have stopped any common path it could have had with NATO. If in 2014 international organizations responded promptly to the annexation of Crimea, but the results were not as expected, and Russia was still invited to talks, today this state is excluded from any activity involving international security and is considered an aggressor state, which can no longer be part of a society where international rights, integrity and national sovereignty are respected.

NATO troops are currently preparing on the Alliance's eastern flank. The number of troops deployed in this part is higher than ever, and the joint training of the

militaries of the member states proves that NATO is prepared to respond with the greatest force to any attempt by Russia to destabilize it. Given the fact that Russia does not give up the conflict in Ukraine and seems to respond with more forces and technology to the defense of the Ukrainian military, NATO expects anything in the future, including a direct confrontation with Russia. This emerges from the plans adopted by NATO following the last summit in Vilnius.

Its actions are not befitting of a state that holds an important role on the international stage, is a member of security organizations, and possesses power from economic, military, or energy perspectives. Even if Russia were to cease aggression in the near future, it would take a long time for this state to regain international trust.

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BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

A plea for a unified and compatible national security terminology

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Abstract

Security terminology is a contentious and unclear topic in Romania. By analyzing the public speeches of politicians or national strategy texts, we often notice the presence of confusion regarding the correct use of the terms: security, defence, and safety. This confusion gives rise to both theoretical and practical problems, manifested in misunderstandings at the institutional level regarding their respective roles, society's misconceptions about the functions of certain organizations, and the failure to harness the collaborative potential between society and the military sector. The appropriate solution to address these issues is the cultivation of a security culture that fosters a grasp of fundamental concepts in this field. To achieve this objective, it is considered essential to have adequate knowledge and usage of the main concepts related to security terminology. This will bring order and enhance understanding of the processes involved in achieving security, defence, and safety.

Keywords:

security; defense; safety; terminology; strategy; law; information; intelligence.

Article objectives

This article advocates for the correct and appropriate use of terms and concepts specific to the field of national security terminology. Accurately employing, comprehending, and working with these concepts is crucial, both for practical activities in the information field and for the analysis and comprehension of the theoretical aspects of security culture within both civilian and political environments. Furthermore, considering that the field of intelligence studies is relatively young on a global scale, the Romanian academic community needs to learn how to effectively use security terminology. This is essential for both integration into the international academic sphere and for ensuring the relevance of research produced by the Romanian academic community in the context of national and international security culture.

Given its extensive scope encompassing a multitude of terms, this article will terminologically and conceptually analyze the notion of *security*, which is a complex concept often used erroneously in Romania.

Terminology. Concept. Term – Linguistic Importance

Terminology is represented by all the specialized terms used in a discipline or a branch of activity (Dexonline 2023).

Making the transition from the general to the specific framework, it is noticed that the central element constituted by this domain is represented by the element "term", which can be expressed through means of a word, phrase, expression, or figure of speech.

Because the linguistic field is a fluid one, it can be observed how over time certain terms have lost their original meaning. By analyzing the causes underlying the change in the meaning of certain terms, it can be seen that said change derives either from reasons of a lexical-grammatical nature (most often being the result of an academic consensus, the change appearing as a result of certain linguistic norms being introduced to the language), on the grounds of cultural and linguistic adoptions from other languages (from which a significant number of neologisms that enrich the terminological sphere derive), on the grounds of the linguistic crossbreeding of two/or more languages from distinct ethno-linguistic groups (synthesis which results in the emergence of a new language which has in its composition elements from several linguistic groups) or on political-ideological grounds (where the use of certain terms/terminology is part of a certain trend).

Changes of a terminological nature that took place through a political-ideological basis are often the most profound level of changes in the field of terminology. These changes are emotionally charged, which sometimes puts the terms into two categories: positive and negative. In this sense, terms such as freedom, equality, and democracy acquire a positive connotation, they are part of the terminology used in

the area of liberal democracy. While terminology in the negative sphere is composed of derogatory and offensive terms for certain people, these terms are negative by the nature of the historical events based on which they were formed, or the terms themselves are created with the purpose of denigrating. Also, at the terminology level from the political-ideological sphere, high volatility can be observed between the positive/negative nature, as accepted by the population, throughout history certain terms have experienced such a transition. As a suggestive example, we can use the term "nationalism", a term that was found in both spectrums.

Referring back to the 19th century, the Century of Nations, "nationalism" was a word that, due to the positive conceptual load that it had been attributed with, fell into the terminology of a positive and heroic nature, nationalism constituting the main method of birthing a nation and new states, being the main ideology that was constituted in the birth of new nations and the main weapon against imperialism (which at a conceptual level was beginning to acquire more and more negative connotations). Making the transition to the 21st century, we notice that the term nationalism is a term from the negative sphere, being associated with terms such as racism and the far-right, with nationalists being the opponents of the current values promoted in society.

Thus, we can observe that terms can undergo certain changes over time in terms of the connotations that are attributed to them, based on grounds of emotional, social, and political nature, being able to become either positive or negative terms, the connotations being decided by social norms, culture, and customs.

"Our everyday security" (Leahu 2021, 123)

Based on the above example, the following questions arise: "What is the moment when the terminology begins to take on nuances opposite to the connotation with which it had been assigned?", "How slowly or fast is this change occurring?" and "How consistent is this change at a societal level?"

For these questions, we can identify an answer that implies both a general applicability (being, for example, the same for states with a similar political and social system) and a differentiated applicability, being determined by the cultural and historical specifics of each society/region/country.

Thus, to all of the above questions, the answer is constituted by *variation*, the change, the modification of the terminological connotation being determined by factors such as the emotion caused by the use of the term (spoken or written), the connotation that the term has had over time, the major events with which that term, consciously or unconsciously, was and is associated, and the opacity and conservatism of the society in question towards the cultural changes that took place within it.

While most of the time, connotative changes occur gradually over generations, resulting in something that appears somewhat natural, there are certain sensitive

areas, such as security, where the change should be accelerated.

In this sense, the most notable example regarding security is the case of Romania and its security culture. Paradoxically, although the term "security" is often associated with a state of safety, trust, or caution, within Romanian society, it carries a pejorative connotation, provoking emotions and feelings of fear, anxiety, or even unease.

Why is the term security a pejorative term in Romanian society?

The negative connotations associated with the word *security* have deep roots in Romania's history, originating in the second half of the 20th century, during the communist regime.

"The Security" ("Securitatea", the usual name of the Department of State Security) was the Romanian intelligence service under the communist regime. Officially founded by the no. 221 decree of the Great National Assembly of August 28, 1948, the Security had the role of the political police, being a tool used by the single party in power. Unofficially, the Security began to operate on the Romanian territory after the coup d'état of August 23, 1944, it being created after the NKVD model by SMERȘ (Leahu 2021, 125).

As such, the Security operated on the Romanian territory for more than 40 years, it being abolished following the Revolution of 1989, following the decision of the National Salvation Front on December 30, 1989.

Having the role of political police, the Security during the communist regime was tasked with removing and arresting critics and dissidents who were against the regime. The methods used in the exercise of its powers were different, ranging from interrogations to the physical elimination of people deemed not to be compliant with the social, ethical, and moral norms imposed by the party. Thus, through the techniques and methods used, it managed to penetrate deeply into the collective mind of the population, with the belief that the Security is omnipresent and omnipotent, any citizen possibly being a collaborator of the Security or even a member within it.

That is why, for a period spanning over 40 years, Romanian society lived with the deep fear and belief that it was under constant surveillance, with any deviation from social norms equating to interrogation, searches, or even physical harm, with Security being the primary factor associated with these consequences. Therefore, the dominant emotion and connotation assigned to it during the communist regime was fear, firmly placing it within the realm of words with negative connotations in everyday language. Consequently, it can be observed that in the sphere of emotional connotation related to the assignment of terms, cognitive dissonance can sometimes emerge. Paradoxically, terms like "security," despite their inherent association with safety and trust (originally intended to convey these concepts), end up evoking feelings of anxiety and fear due to

their connection with negative events from the past.

Thus, at the level of Romanian society, the term "security" still carries a negative connotation, resulting in a terminological framework with negative connotations at the social level as well.

What are the factors that have contributed to the transformation of the term security into a term with negative connotations?

As previously mentioned, the Security, as a *sui generis* institution, has been active for a long time on Romanian territory, its actions having very negative consequences on the collective mind.

And yet, more than 30 years have passed since the Security as an institution was abolished. Why does the term security continue to be a pejorative one?

Here it can be said that the answers are based on a triple causality.

First of all, it can be assumed that a significant fault lies with the media which constantly propagates news about the old institution of Security and constantly associates it with the Romanian Intelligence Service (an institution that has no continuity and connection with the old Department of State Security), inducing thus the idea that the SRI would actually be its *de facto* heir and that the same people who were active in the old Security are active in the SRI.

Another factor that has substantially contributed to the distortion of the concept is represented by the political class, which constantly accuses each other of links with the former Security, either at the level of collaboration or integration within the structures, or through the so-called interventions of the SRI in politics, a fact that again associates SRI to a politicized institution (like the old Security) and not an institution dealing with intelligence.

Last but not least, another factor that has a significant weight in creating this confusion is constituted by poor communication, since unfortunately there are still no campaigns carried out in this sense, that would exemplify and create the association of security to a process and not an institution.

What are the main consequences of not understanding the connotation of the concept of security?

According to the 51/1991 Law on the National Security of Romania, the national security of Romania represents the state of legality, balance, and social, economic and political stability, and the development of the Romanian national state as a sovereign, unitary, independent and indivisible state, the maintenance of the rule

of law, as well as the climate of unrestricted exercise of the rights, freedoms and fundamental duties of citizens, according to the democratic principles and norms established by the Constitution (Parlamentul României 1991).

Thus, we can observe that security is currently a process of ensuring and strengthening the life and fundamental freedom of citizens, and by no means a limitation of it.

However, the continuous and constant association of the concept of security in the form of a pejorative term has negative effects on this field, the effects being of a professional, administrative and academic nature.

At the professional level, the first consequence of the term security being associated with negative connotations is represented by the mistrust it generates among the population regarding intelligence institutions. Thus, many citizens will feel fearful and suspicious about the potential actions of the SRI, sometimes exhibiting a certain reluctance to report certain dangers that could have negative repercussions on national security, and being hesitant to engage in potential collaboration with the relevant authorities in this domain.

Also, another consequence resulting from the inadequate use of the term *security* is the fact that the concrete field of activity of the SRI is not known to the general public and is not understood. This can also be seen from the name of the service, which is considered to be one based on *information*, and not on security. This marks a serious deficiency in terms of the security culture of the Romanian society, since the field of information is only one of the SRI's branches of activity, its activities being much more numerous and complex in the pursuit of achieving internal security. Reading Law no. 14 from February 24, 1992 (Parlamentul României 1992) on the organization and operation of the Romanian Intelligence Service, it is clear that the SRI is one of the institutions of the country's defense system, its attributions being much broader than the simple collection of information, including the implementation of counter-terrorism operations, counter-espionage, analysis, the purpose of the operations being the implementation of security.

Also, intelligence services at the global level are security services, the SRI association having a slightly atypical name for the terminology in this field.

At the administrative level, the problems end up becoming more and more numerous, knowing different effects and forms. In this sense, we can note that, first of all, Romania is one of the few member states of NATO and the EU that does not have a clear delimitation of the notions of security, safety and defense at the administrative level. This is worrying, as the notions and concepts listed above, even if they are part of the specific security terminology, cannot be a substitute for each other, as they are specific terms, which have a very well-regulated field of activity.

Thus, in the case of Romania, while there is a strategy in the field of defense, through the document National Defense Strategy 2020-2024, Romania does not currently

possess a National Security Strategy that contains a strategy for each field, which represents a security factor, it currently only having a Strategy for Cyber Security (Parlamentul României 2022). This is worrying, since the last strategy that addressed security at the level of all its branches of interest was Romania's National Security Strategy from 2006 (AFAS 2016).

Currently, within the institutional planning framework of Romania, the terms 'defense' and 'security' are still used in a symmetrical and congruential relationship. As such, the simultaneous use of these two concepts and their constant association can be found in multiple bills, laws, and strategies intended to ensure security and defense. Illustrative in this regard is the 203/2015 Law regarding defense planning, which, according to Article 1, Paragraph 1, mentions that "Defense planning, an attribute and essential component of the defense policy, represents a complex of activities and measures aimed at protecting and promoting national interests, *defining and achieving Romania's national security objectives* in the defense domain." This demonstrates that the realms of security and defense continue to be approached in a deeply congruent relationship by Romanian state institutions (Parlamentul României 2015).

Thus, according to the 203/2015 Law, the relationship of congruence between security and defense is stated most profoundly through the phrase "defining and achieving Romania's national security objectives in the defense domain", which highlights that for the field of security, it represents an essential component for the planning of national defense, having components from the security sphere included in it (such as information, as well as elements from the European Union's Security Strategy (Legrand 2023). Additionally, also based on the 203/2015 Law, the relationship of congruence between defense and security is reiterated in Article 1, Paragraph 2, letters b and c, which address the obligations that Romania must fulfill in terms of common security and defense as a member of NATO and the European Union. Therefore, based on the aforementioned law, a unified approach to the two concepts and their congruent relationship is evident. Unfortunately, however, there is no precise delimitation for separately addressing security objectives and addressing objectives in the defense domain.

As far as Romania's National Defense Strategy is concerned, it is noticeable that the main directions of action and methods for ensuring security are addressed within it, as a part of defense, and are not addressed separately. This creates inefficiency in terms of defense and security due to a lack of understanding of the concepts and specific responsibilities of each institution.

By making an external analysis, it can be seen how most NATO and EU countries update their strategies annually, and not once every 4 years, as defense and security issues are constantly changing. At the same time, analyzing the strategies of other states, we can see that the field of security and defense are approached separately,

each having a clear field of activity established, the attributions and competencies in the field of security and defense not being in a substitution type of relationship, but in a working relationship. Suggestive examples in this regard are the Defense Strategy (US Department of Defense 2022) and the Security Strategy of the United States (National Security Strategy 2022), the Defense Strategy and the Security Strategy of France, or the Defense Strategy and the Security Strategy of Germany.

Furthermore, at the level of utilizing the concepts of defense and security in an equivalent and congruent relationship, a model of theoretical and practical approaches to these two concepts can be found in the European Union's Common Security and Defense Policy. Within the terminology used in the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), we notice right from the title that the two domains are addressed separately, and their relationship is subsequently presented. As such, there is no confusion in terms of terminology or attributions. The presence of the coordinating conjunction 'and' in its name indicates that there is a cooperative relationship between the notions of security and defense, while also signifying that the two domains have distinct attributes and connotations (Legrand 2023).

Continuing to analyze the specific field of international security, it is noticed that even at an academic, theoretical, and practical level, there is a substantial distinction between concepts within the realm of political/governmental intelligence and those specific to economic intelligence terminology.
In the realm of international security relations and security studies terminology, it is evident that even at the international level, the field of security is approached in a multisectoral and multilevel manner, spanning across several domains of study.

International security, understood as security between different states, first emerged as a concept in the 20th century. In this context, threats no longer solely originate from states, existing in various levels and forms. Alongside classical threats posed by hostile states, new security threats emerged, encompassing ethnic groups driven by hyper-nationalism, criminal gangs, mafia organizations, epidemics, terrorism, toxic foods, poverty and the mismanagement of their effects, overpopulation, failed states, refugee flows, pollution and its effects, and the destruction of fauna and flora, as well as new threats emerging in the cyber realm. At the international level, international security takes a multilevel approach, encompassing individual security, societal security, and global security (Bertel and Kristensen 2019, 26).
Furthermore, starting from the 1980s, a significant portion of state responsibilities has been transferred to the private sector, including the realm of security. Thus, the field of economic intelligence emerged, focusing exclusively on corporate espionage and counterespionage. Conceptually, the most relevant terms in this field are *security science* and *security governance*.

Security science represents a field that brings together several concepts and principles. It is a newly emerging domain, not a traditional branch of security,

integrating concepts from security management, security principles, information, and security risk management (Smith and Brooks 2013, 19).

Security governance is a relatively new field within economic intelligence, both in practice and academia, emerging around the 1980s. Security governance is presently aimed at the corporate realm, primarily focusing on the areas of business and IT. Security governance comprises the responsibilities and practices exercised by the executive leadership to provide strategic direction, ensure objectives are met, manage risks appropriately, and ensure responsible use of enterprise resources. The research done for this paper indicates that, through their emerging capabilities in security governance and risk management, many organizations take proactive measures to ensure their security control investments directly support their business objectives. A consistent organizational-wide view of security risks, integrating both physical and IT security, is essential to this strategy. By combining superior security governance and risk management with an integrated approach to logical and physical security, organizations gain a competitive edge in the global economy with optimized IT infrastructure and enhanced protection of their digital, physical, and human assets (Fay and Patterson 2018, 56).

Unfortunately, in Romania, there is currently inadequate terminology used for the field of economic intelligence as the research in theoretical and practical subjects is in its early stages. However, considering the intense competitiveness in the economic and entrepreneurial sphere, the introduction of ideas and terminology from the field of economic intelligence will be necessary for Romanian society, this domain undoubtedly holding substantial importance in the future.

Why is such a precise distinction important at the strategy level?

The answer is because, first of all, defense, security, and safety are different concepts. Previously, the concept of security with all the attributions that its realization implies was defined. In the following, a definition of the concept of defense and safety will be provided.

According to Law No. 45 of July 1, 1994, national defense includes the set of political, diplomatic, economic, military, legal, psychological measures and actions carried out by the Romanian state, to guarantee national sovereignty, independence and unity of the state, territorial integrity of the country and constitutional democracy (Parlamentul României 1994).

It can also be observed within the terminology used in the sphere of intelligence services that there is significant confusion regarding the distinction between the concepts of security and safety, with both terms often being assigned the same meaning.

According to the National Security Law no. 51/1991, national security is defined as a state of social, economic and political legality, balance and stability necessary for the development of the Romanian national state as a sovereign, unitary, independent and indivisible state, the maintenance of the rule of law, as well as of the climate and the unrestricted exercise of the rights, freedoms and fundamental duties of citizens, according to the democratic principles and norms established by the Constitution (Parlamentul României 1991).

Thus, a clear understanding of the definitions and concepts in the field of security to describe its exact field of activity is imperative for the proper realization of the security and defense of the country, to create institutions that have a well-defined role and that perfectly understand the attributions that they have within them, so that they may channel all their resources in order to fulfill them.

At an academic level, the security-specific terminology is currently studied and analyzed in Romania only at specialized institutions, within programs intended for civilians and military personnel. This paper proposes that in order to achieve a security culture at the national level, security terminology must go beyond only being studied within specialized institutions and begin to be addressed in the spectrum of political sciences, study programs in the field of international relations and European studies, in the framework of international economic relations and even in the framework of informatics and cybernetics programs, since, in a complex world, with constant changes, which produces a significant number of hybrid threats, security will be an area which will not be able to have a monopoly owned by government institutions, thus requiring the transfer of certain responsibilities to private institutions or the country's citizens, as is the case in Switzerland (Federal Intelligence Service 2022).

Therefore, at the academic level, it is necessary to also include students, who are not enrolled at studies in specialized institutions, in the study and understanding of the notions and terminology in the field of security, since the increase in the number of hybrid threats, of state and non-state origin, will require some minimal knowledge in the area of the security spectrum.

How can the terminology of security be better presented in the civil environment and how can citizens acquire and accurately understand the notions of this spectrum?

As previously specified, a first measure would be to de-monopolize security notions currently being taught only in specialized or adjacent institutions. Just as a student from the Faculty of Letters must have some elementary notions of mathematics, informatics, biology, or chemistry, it is important that the university (or even the high school) environment be able to teach citizens some elementary notions in the field of security.

At the same time, in order to achieve a culture of security at the public level, the main institutions that carry out this process must be more transparent towards the citizens (such as the intelligence institutions in the West) and communicate much more openly with the citizens. In this sense, it would be essential for civilians to have access to certain publications that have as their subject of interest the security culture, so that they can acquire these notions precisely from experts in the field. Also, a change or improvement in the communication made on social networks is needed, so that the constant idea of secrecy and mystery that surrounds the activity of the services may no longer seem to be related to the field of the occult and mysticism. Even if this attractiveness towards the intelligence services initially consisted precisely in the existence of the mystery factor, in the 21st century, the century of speed, social media, and transparency, the attractiveness for young people lies in the simplicity and transparency of the activity.

Last but not least, a public communication campaign must be undertaken in order to emphasize the fact that the field of security has no connection with the Security of the communist era, and that the institutions that carry out national security are doing it for the benefit of the citizens, not their detriment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a correct mastery of the terminology in the field of security is essential, since the creation of a security culture at the military, political, institutional, and civil levels is vital for the challenges of the current decade.
At the same time, the existence of an active security culture among citizens also creates a strong partnership between society and the institutions engaged in the production of security, thus increasing the level of trust towards them and thus reducing the index of distance from the governance with regards to public institutions, citizens becoming aware that such institutions work for them and not against them.

A strong security culture also indicates the existence of an increased level of development and trust of citizens in the state, in countries that possess such a culture such as Israel, Switzerland, or the United States, where the standard of living is high and citizens have a high respect for defense institutions.

From a practical point of view, the current study is important because the identification and definition of the terms: security, defense, and safety, from a legislative point of view, are elementary, because starting a process of creating a security culture is founded on a legal basis. Thus, the idea of creating a strong security culture at the civil society level is feasible, benefiting from the existence of legal support.

Also, by analyzing the Defense Strategy of Romania and the Security Strategy of Romania, it was shown that there are still certain limitations regarding the correct operation of concepts from the security sphere, these limitations can go from the stage of errors of a technical nature to serious repercussions for society (which can be calculated, unfortunately, in the number of deaths).

At the same time, the study shows that Romania currently does not have a National Security Strategy, a fact that places our country among very few NATO and EU members that do not have such a strategy. In the context of the current war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, but also of the existence of more and more hybrid threats such as terrorism, cyberterrorism, hacking, climate change, and potential food crises, it is imperative for our country to have such a strategy, as such threats are found in all sectors of interest of a country (political, military, sanitary, economic, financial, cultural, energetic), surpassing the boundaries of classic threats.

Regarding the limitations of this paper, the main issue is the lack of a recently conducted study, on a sample of citizens representative of society, so that an estimate of the possible degree of trust/distrust regarding the institutions engaged in carrying out the security process or defense can be made.

Another limitation was constituted by the fact that currently, at a country level, there has not been a study made to measure the true level of security culture in Romania, lacking both quantitative and qualitative measurement data.

The study contains only information obtained from open sources, of the OSINT type, no interactions with politicians, government officials, or personnel from the sphere of military institutions were made for its inception, the opinions presented in its pages being only the opinions of the authors regarding the current security culture in the territory Romania. Therefore, it was not known if there are currently any discussions about improving security terminology in the environments listed above.

From a novelty perspective, the present study is one of the first to present the correlation between the need to improve and understand the terminology specific to the field of security and the creation of a strong security culture at the institutional and civil levels. This study demonstrates the need to remove from the pejorative sphere the concept of "security" perceived negatively in public opinion and its transformation into a positive concept, which is associated with the idea of safety, defense, and tranquility.

In conclusion, it can be said that this study brings into discussion the need to create a National Security Strategy, a step that will be necessary for the future confrontations and threats that the Romanian state will have to solve in the future.

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The relationship between China and security-generating organizations

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Abstract

Currently, the international environment is characterized by complexity. Global security is threatened by numerous factors, and specific organizations like NATO, OSCE, or the UN strive to eliminate or minimize these challenges. In this regard, an important element is the economic evolution of states. Economic supremacy is accompanied by advantages in other areas of development such as the political, social, or military. China is the state that has surprised the whole world with its ability to evolve economically, becoming an important actor in the field in a relatively short time. This status brings both benefits and numerous obligations, including the need to cooperate with security organizations to develop a climate of peace at the international level. That is precisely why the Chinese state must maintain good relationships with these organizations and make efforts to generate its own collective security, ensuring a climate of peace and setting an example for other structures.

Keywords:
China; NATO; OSCE; UN; cooperation; challenges; security.

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In recent decades, China has abandoned the image of an isolated state, separated from the rest of the international community, and has emerged as one of the most developed states in the world. Especially in recent years, the state has evolved significantly from an economic point of view, quickly moving towards the top of the most important states from an economic point of view. This is also the reason why international organizations and the world's most influential countries started to pay attention to China's foreign policy, its objectives and behaviors. Yet, in the case of this atypical state for the Occident, it is necessary to understand the decision-making process and the factors that influence its politics and motivations.

Compared with other states, most of China's foreign policy decisions are made by an expert council, which acts under supervision but does not include members of the government as parts. All official decisions are made by this council and everything discussed between Chinese diplomats and their counterparts in other states, if not recorded in the discussions of this council, is considered free, unofficial discussions. In order to avoid sending the wrong message regarding its foreign policy, China has established a strategic group for the analysis and guidance of international relations (Xue 2014).

China's economic position gives it the advantage of influencing other states, especially those it borders, but also states with which it collaborates economically. China's foreign policy expresses the state's willingness to establish and maintain peace at the international level, with the purpose of securing its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. China also wants to support the creation of a healthy international framework in order to impose its reforms and seek solutions for its opening to construction and reform and to achieve economic supremacy, but also in other domains, if that were possible.

China stood out for its willingness to learn from past experiences. Through its foreign policy, China states that it wants to maintain the lead at the same time as other states, being interested in obtaining some benefits that could only be obtained by working together. On the other side, China still maintains cold relations with some states of the world. For example, the Chinese state has diplomatic relations with only 178 of the 193 member states of the United Nations (UN). Also, relations with Western states are not very good either, because the Chinese state considers, in some aspects, that it is not equally and fairly treated in relation to the position it occupies. The biggest conflict that still keeps China in a position of insecurity and for which it does not receive a vote of confidence from the Western states is the one related to the sovereignty of Taiwan, but also smaller ones, related to border disputes with Japan or India (Dotson 2014).

The beginning of this century was a successful one, as China emerged as the state with the highest economic growth in the entire world. Its influence spilled over, especially in some states on the Asian and African continents and less in Europe or America.

China began to be interested in establishing relations with the rest of the international community in the 1990s and intensified this connection a decade later, when it expanded its relations with numerous states around the globe, collaborating in multiple fields, such as economic, socio-cultural, or even in the military field. The beginning of the third millennium also brought significant changes in Sino-American relations. The two states returned to better relations, and the world's major powers strengthened their relations with the Asian state.

2008 was the year full of significance for China, as it was the year in which the state gained its role as a main power on regional and global plan, as it achieved the highest economic growth for several years in the queue. Although there have been difficult years for Westerners since 2008, when the crisis started, triggering shortages and citizens' dissatisfaction, China was gaining a considerable advance, a fact that facilitated the increase in confidence and the adoption of an increasingly aggressive position on the international level. But, surprisingly for the state, the effect was the opposite, and China began to lose its credibility. After the moment of crisis was overcome by the entire global community, since 2011 China has sought to regain the trust of other states and convince them that it is not a threat, but rather a state that seeks to grow economically in a peaceful and responsible manner.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping came up with a new vision of the image that China should display and imposed an active foreign policy that expressed the desire to modernize the state, to create a peaceful external environment in which China could develop, especially from an economic point of view.

Regarding the military field, China has a modern and large army, which can, at any moment, become a valuable tool for Chinese leaders in case of regional or even global disagreements. However, the Chinese army has been tested very little in the last four decades, and only after the outbreak of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine did military leaders begin to raise the issue of training the military forces by performing demonstration exercises, participating in joint exercises with allied forces or with neighbors with whom the state has harmonious relations (Beslin 2013).

The relationship between China and the United Nations

Internationally, the UN continues to be one of the most important actors in global governance policy. When it comes to issues related to world peace and security, the UN Security Council is the competent body for resolving these differences. Whatever problem the nations faced, the main task of the UN was to intervene quickly and effectively so that the situation returned to normal. The UN aims to maintain a climate of peace worldwide and has condemned every time the violent exits of some state actors.

The UN Security Council consists of five permanent members: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America (USA). These members exercise their right to vote, which allows any of these five members to prevent the adoption of any type of resolution. By 2019, China had only used its right to vote 14 times. By comparison, the US has voted on 80 resolutions since 1971. What is striking is that China's latest votes have aligned with Russia's, particularly on the issue of the conflict in Ukraine. It was not until March 2023 that China voted for a different resolution regarding Russia, this one in which China recognized Russia's aggression towards Ukraine and Russia's aggressor status. Also, the two actors have positioned themselves on the same side regarding the conflict in Syria. In 2018, China did not vote for the resolution that would have established the mechanism to investigate the use of chemical weapons in Syria. But, 4 days after the voting of this resolution, China voted another resolution that aimed to condemn the actions of the US on the territory of Syria. Later, the two partner states, China and Russia, voted on a resolution for a ceasefire in Syria, but this allowed Russia to continue its military operations in the country (Ropot 2018, 115-119).

As mentioned before, China is a privileged member of the UN, but also one of the five permanent members of the Security Council, and has been part of this organization since its establishment in 1945. In general, China has stood out as a pragmatic member, since, during the deliberation process within the Security Council, it judged, repeatedly, according to an apparently practical utility of the debated issue and positioned itself neutrally or even contrary to the other member states, making the decision-making process very difficult. On the other hand, there have also been situations in which China has taken a stand on its own initiative in issues related to global peace and security.

Lately, China has offered special attention to peacekeeping operations, as a member of the UN. The state became actively involved, especially through the lens of re-evaluating its own national interests and its position as an economically developed state. China has adjusted its own policy according to that of the UN, giving special interest to the role of this organization. The past few years have been remarkable for the China-UN relationship, with the state even adapting its diplomacy to the principles of cooperation, dialogue, and non-confrontation, and showing greater flexibility towards issues affecting the international community. However, although in some issues China approaches the situation according to the other member states of the Council and condemns, through resolutions, the attitude and activity of this state, in other cases, such as Russia's aggression towards Ukraine, it has avoided taking a position against Russia. This has raised new questions about China's intentions, with major powers once again becoming wary and condemning the Chinese state for the stance it has taken. China has carefully avoided condemning Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine, and this attitude has reduced the chances of a negotiated end to this war. China's attitude has brought it to the position of a double player, which maintains the partnership with the Russian state, but also pursues collaboration with the Western states.

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The UN is an organization that seeks for the peaceful resolution of conflicts through diplomatic measures and its authority must be maintained and recognized. After 2000, China worked intensively to integrate into the international community by promoting the same measures as the UN. China's support towards the UN regarding international conflicts has grown progressively, the only turning point, moreover, a very important one, being the one related to Russia's aggression towards Ukraine. Even as it supports the organization in other conflicts around the globe, China still raises questions about the trust the organization and other states can have in it because it has positioned itself against them (Spakowshi 2009).

On the other hand, if in the past China was reluctant to assume an active role within the organization, at the present moment the state is one of the largest contributors to the organization's budget. The state also strongly supports the peacekeeping operations carried out under the auspices of the UN, being the second largest contributor to the organization's budget and one of the states that contributes significantly with human resources to these peacekeeping operations. Through these actions, China has gained the ability to exert diplomatic and political influence worldwide. Even though China has been opposed to peacekeeping operations for decades, in 1990 having only 5 soldiers sent to peacekeeping operations, their number has increased greatly, exceeding 3000 soldiers in 2015 and over 2000 soldiers today (EPP 2020).

As for China, this state seems to have other material and economic interests in mind and continues a double game. This emerges from its intentions to maintain the relationship with states threatened with sanctions from the UN. Another example is the one regarding the voting of a draft in 2019 that China voted for and which referred to the political and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, a state in which China has political and economic interests. Also, China's position as a permanent member of the UN is an important asset to prevent it from supporting states that have officially recognized Taiwan as a country.

Further, the relationship between China and the UN seems to have some gaps and there are misunderstandings on topics very important to global security. Although it tries to maintain a reassuring tone, China's periodic outings raise questions for world leaders and leave doubt about its intentions and its role as a major regional and global actor.

The relationship between China and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

PUntil the beginning of this millennium, the relationship between China and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was almost non-existent. However, after the Chinese state began to develop and change its foreign policy strategy, the

political dialogue with NATO began to evolve, and in 2010, the two entities were also collaborating on the military level.

In principle, NATO's commitment to China is predominantly political. After 2010, they began to collaborate in the military field, to get involved in the issue of North Korea, the South China Sea, counter-piracy, or in terms of China's military defense reforms. Over time, it was also discussed about participating in specific NATO courses or planning joint exercises (Ropot 2018, 115-119).

Even though these discussions have taken place, there is no actual cooperation between the two entities, which is somewhat neglected. Rather, China prefers to collaborate individually with NATO allied states, as it avoids direct discussion and active involvement in the issue of international security, terrorism, and other similar issues. NATO member states avoid direct collaboration with China because of the economic power that this state possesses, but especially because of the authoritarian leadership style, territorial expansion ambitions, and unpredictability in the decision-making process.

Although it has positioned itself differently from Western countries in the issue of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, China does not represent, for the moment, a threat to the Euro-Atlantic area. China pursues military expansion towards the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Arctic areas and seeks to establish defense ties with Russia, with which it collaborates on the development of long-range missile technology, aircraft, aircraft carriers, or submarines with nuclear attack capability. Several NATO allies and members feel China's influence and involvement in several areas and blame it for several problems that have emerged and developed in recent years. Some of them consider China guilty of cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, or the development of the Covid-19 pandemic. On the other hand, China has its own ambitions and aims to occupy the position of world leader in the field of economics or artificial intelligence.

The current relations between China and NATO are rather strained, especially due to the increasing cooperation between China and Russia. Some NATO states see China as a rival for influence, while others view it as a trading partner.
NATO, as an organization, does not consider China an adversary and does not seek to start a cold war with the Asian power. In contrast, the Alliance is a democratic community that seeks to maintain regional and international peace and strives to ensure collective security.

In the future, it would be most appropriate for NATO to be willing to offer a position of power and security to international actors, thus increasing the collaboration of allies and members with China and being able to protect them, in the event of possible pressures from Beijing. Another precaution for NATO in the face of possible bellicose intentions of China consists of understanding the capabilities, activities, and intentions of the Asian state so that they do not affect Euro-Atlantic security and

do not give rise to risks, threats, or opportunities (Beslin 2013).
Regardless of the differences that exist between NATO and China, it is necessary to have collaboration between the two, as they can achieve very good results in areas such as cyber, hybrid, arms control, or non-proliferation of weapons.

The relationship between China and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The first cooperation between China and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) began in 2003, with the request sent by the Chinese ambassador to Vienna to initiate a meeting with the secretary general of the organization. Later, Chinese representatives participated in OSCE conferences held in Thailand, Mongolia, or Korea.

This connection could not be avoided, especially in light of China's common border with four OSCE member states: Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Given China's position, it has established strong economic relations with its neighbors, especially due to its interest in the energy resources of Russia and Central Asia. In addition to economic interest, China has also shown its regional influence on security, providing its neighbors with the necessary resources so that they feel protected.

Diplomatically, the OSCE does not understand China's intentions, as it is not familiar with the way of leadership and the existing command and control system. For the organization, China represents both an opportunity and a great challenge. At the moment, the OSCE maintains collaborative relations with China, but they are not very developed. It was only 10 years later from the first interaction with the OSCE that China began to assert itself within the organization through investments in port infrastructure in Western Europe, investments in various regions of Central Asia, Eastern Europe or the Western Balkans or in other areas such as IT infrastructure development or education.

The relationship between the two entities has been affected by debates over China's double game, especially in the Xinjiang region. China does not want to accept the idea of opening a dialogue on human and minority rights, and the OSCE insists on this issue. Also, another aspect that prevents a very good relationship between China and the OSCE is the existing competition for power between China, the US, and Russia. Through the prism of this continuous struggle, there has been a decline in the appreciation of multilateralism and cooperative solutions. The OSCE is based on principles such as consensus and compromise, and this competition affects its role, as relations between the main world actors suffer a lot.

An organization was created in Shanghai that cooperates in the political, military, economic, energy, or cultural fields. It is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

(SCO), made up of states from Europe, the Near East, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia. The OSCE pursues a collaboration with the OCS, especially with China, due to its geographical position, and common activities, but above all due to its role as an active player in international security (Eremia 2020).

A first solution that could help strengthen the relationship between China and the OSCE could be a constructive engagement between them in areas of common interest such as the fight against corruption, management of environmental issues, improvement of economic cooperation after the Covid-19 pandemic, and the conflict in Ukraine. China is acting in the direction of good collaboration by investing billions of dollars to create economic corridors between Europe and Central Asia through which they connect with the Near East, Africa, Southeast Asia, or India (Xue 2014).

Conclusions

China is the surprise state of the 21st century, which has evolved a lot, especially on the economic side. This position increased its importance in other areas as well and attracted the attention of all the major actors, whether it was admiration or caution. China's foreign policy promotes a state that strives for a harmonious world where there are mutual advantages and common benefits, and adopts a tolerant and open attitude in supporting multilateral trade, also promoting the integration of different civilizations and assuming the role of an important international actor.

At present, China has the ability to wield international power and can chart a clear direction for its future course of action in the economic, military, information, and social fields. This superpower role cannot be disputed for China, as the state has consistently engaged in international issues and is an active member in most organizations. Regardless of the nature of the conflict, China has been a significant player with a voice that carries weight, and its position has consistently been taken into account and has influenced other states in decision-making.

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BULLETIN

In defense of a forgotten territory. The fight against ethno-nationalist/separatist terrorism at the border of South Dobrogea (1922-1926) II

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Abstract

The support received by the Bulgarian komitadjis from the civil and military authorities in the attacks, robberies, and murders they committed on the southern border of Romania confirmed the suspicion of the authorities in Bucharest that their actions against border guards and Romanian citizens had political connotations and could not be characterized as acts of banditry. Although significant efforts were made by the Romanian government to halt them, both at the diplomatic and military levels, the decision-making factors in Bulgaria during the period investigated in this article did not take any measures to prevent the occurrence of these border incidents.

Keywords:

Robberies and murders on the southern
border of Romania

This support received by Bulgarian komitadjis had strong roots in Bulgarian society. After the signing on July 28 / August 10, 1913, of the Bucharest Peace Treaty between Romania, Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire, ending the Second Balkan War, in the autumn of the same year, Bulgarian refugees from South Dobrogea (*Quadrilateral*), a territory received by Romania, laid the foundations of an organization whose name and activity, *The society of culture and charity of Bulgarian refugees in Dobrogea* was declarative, contrary to its motto, *Neither Dobrogea without blood, nor blood without Dobrogea*. In the first half of February 1914, the first congress was held in Sofia at which the statutes of the organization were proposed and voted, and in March 1914, the Central Executive Committee was elected which voted on the political tactic. Dobrogea Society was based in Sofia, and published a newspaper under the auspices of this society entitled „Dobrogea". *Dobrogea* cultural society consisted of two sections: a cultural one, which was legally active, and another secret, revolutionary one, called the Dobrogean Revolutionary Committee (Negoiţă 2009, 19).

The propaganda activity of the first section was complemented by the mission received by the second, whose main task was the preparation of Bulgarian komitadjis. This mission facilitated the purchase of weapons and ammunition for them to carry out terrorist actions against the Romanian authorities in South Dobrogea.

Until the occupation of South Dobrogea by Bulgarian, German, and Turkish troops in the autumn of 1916, as well as during the occupation, the mood of the Bulgarian population was similar to the moment of 1913 when Romanian troops entered, during the Second Balkan War, on Bulgarian territory. Therefore, until the winter of 1918, South Dobrogea was administered by the members of the *Dobrogea* society.

During this period, from the fall of 1916 – to the winter of 1918, the Romanian localities in South Dobrogea were subjected to a continuous robbery, the inhabitants of Bulgaria, about whom the leaders of this terrorist group had data that helped the Romanians, were also affected.

The presence of the troops of the 9th Infantry Division in 1919 in South Dobrogea had the effect of diminishing the attacks coordinated by the secret, revolutionary section of *Dobrogea* Society, being reported, amid this period of immediate transition after the end of World War I, attacks by Bulgarian komitadjis organized into gangs of robbers, without political directives, who were not interested in the effects of their actions on Romanian-Bulgarian relations. Such terrorist behavior was also influenced by the accession of many Bulgarians from South Dobrogea to the Bolshevik ideas of the Comintern[1]

[1] It was an international communist organization founded in 1919.

which were very well received in this region, where the Revolutionary Committee of Dobrogea was established which had revolutionary committees in Balchik, Silistra, Varna, Bazargic, Ruse, Shumla, Cavarna, Turtucaia and 38 other communes (Cătănuș 2001, 66). The Leninist thesis „*on the right to self-determination of peoples came as an unexpected help in the struggle to detach the Quadrilateral from the Romanian state, the communist ideology came as a glove, at that time to the Bulgarian irredentists. Communist ideas caught on in Bulgaria not only because of linguistic, cultural, and religious affinities with Russia but especially because of the disastrous political situation at the end of the First World War* " (Negoiță 2009, 37).

In 1919-1923, the Aleksander Stamboliiski government did not support terrorist organizations and actions, although they were supported by political and military leaders in the Bulgarian-Romanian border towns.

On the night of 8 to 9 June 1923, a coup was held in Bulgaria organized by the forces of an alliance of the old political parties, *The Officers' League* and *The Macedonian Revolutionary Internal Organization – V.M.R.O* – following which the Stamboliiski government was replaced by the new government led by Alexandăr Ţankov, a political leader who discreetly funded irredentist organizations. In this context, in 1923, the revolutionary section of the *„Dobrogea"* Society was reorganized, creating *the Dobrogean Internal Revolutionary Organization – V.D.R.O.* In the autumn of 1925, the Dobrogean Revolutionary Internal Organization – V.D.R.O, amid the intervention of the Bulgarian authorities, informed that the leaders of this group influenced by the Bulgarian communists planned to start a revolt, a new organization called the Dobrogean Revolutionary Organization – D.R.O.- under communist coordination was split. From this moment, internally, a strong rivalry began between these terrorist organizations, V.D.R.O and D.R.O (Negoiță 2009, 39-46).

Therefore, between 1922 and 1925, the irredentist activity of the Bulgarian komitadjis was reflected in numerous border incidents, signaling exchanges of fire between Romanian and Bulgarian border guards, mainly caused by fraudulent crossings of Bulgarian komitadjis, who robbed the Romanian peasants of the villages near the Romanian-Bulgarian border and killed the Romanian border guards who surprised them as they tried to cross the border.

Such an incident was reported on July 22, 1923. The Border Guard Corps submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the report of the 1st Border Guard Regiment and the Commander of the 2nd Calafat Border Sector on the attacks of Bulgarian soldiers on the southern border, at the same time requesting diplomatic intervention to stop them, because the bodily integrity of Romanian officers, soldiers, and citizens was affected by these incidents.

According to address no. *4031, "our patrols and fishermen are regularly attacked with gunfire from Bulgaria at the Gura Olt border crossing, between the Islaz picket and Turnu Măgurele. On June 3, 1923, while the commander of Sector 2 was under inspection, two gunshots were fired from him from Bulgaria near the village of Filarentin. On June 14, 1923, with the "Porumbita" boat on the Danube, it*

was summoned with gunfire near km 722, close to the Bistreț picket to shoot at the Bulgarian shore. Zimnicea platoon patrols are frequently attacked with fire. Several gunshots were fired at the port of Bechet, some falling right near the buildings, which led the commander of the Bulgarian border guards in Rahova to come to Bechet and apologize" (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

The investigation carried out by the commander of the Bulgarian Sector 8, following the interrogation of the Bulgarian officers and soldiers in Sector 22, established that none of them fired a gun. Gunfire was fired during regular exercises on the banks of the Danube near the village of Novo-Selo to the village of Filarentin. Shots might have been fired at the Romanian boat but they were not fired by Bulgarian soldiers. On-site research established that the inhabitants of Nicopolis had fired from neighboring vineyards at targets located on the opposite bank. It was also found that two Bulgarian soldiers under the influence of alcohol in the Oregon garrison fired two shots from a boat. Sanctions have been ordered for those found guilty (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

On March 26, 1924, the Border Guard Corps reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with address no. 4059 new incidents at the southern border. According to this address, *"border companies in Quadrilater report various attempts to cross Bulgaria to us and even attacks by the komitadjis on patrols and pickets. In order to give a more open field of view to the soldiers doing the security service, this command intervened at the Ministry of Domains for the approval of the deforestation of the forests near the border, being given the necessary provisions by the ministry. Forests are also found on Bulgarian territory, with honor please intervene in the Bulgarian Legation so that these forests are cleared to facilitate the security service and contribute to the safety of the soldiers of both states* (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

On this issue, on 31 December 1924, the Romanian Legation in Sofia was informed with address 2834 by the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry that, Bulgarian forests near the border were cleared at a depth of 1000 meters in the forest districts Rusciuc, Razgrad, Șumla, Provadia and at a depth of 200 meters in the Varna forest district (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

In the summer of 1925, the Border Guard Corps reported several attacks by Bulgarian soldiers on Romanian pickets on the southern border. As a result of these incidents, a joint commission was set up which met on December 4, 1925, composed of Colonel Stănescu Nicolae, commander of the 1st Border Guard Regiment, and from the Bulgarians, Colonel Penev Alexander. The case of the attack of the Romanian picket no. 98 by the Bulgarian pickets no. 16 and no. 17 on the night of July 16 to 17, 1925, an incident that took place following a threat from the Romanian sentry by the Bulgarian sentry that was located on Bulgarian territory in front of our sentry. The research highlighted three unfavorable issues for Bulgarian border guards reported in the minutes concluded on this occasion. The first refers to the threat made by

the Bulgarian sentry to the Romanian border guard for the release of an individual detained by him. The Bulgarian delegation claimed that the threat of the Bulgarian soldier was due to a weak mentality on the part of this soldier who was a deserter from the Romanian army who fled to Bulgaria and was used by Bulgarian border guards in their service (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

The second problem investigated had as an object the gunfire fired on the Romanian picket no. 98. The Bulgarian delegation said the first gunfire was aimed at two alleged individuals who appeared in front of the Bulgarian picket at a distance of 50 m, and the 17 fires whose traces are found in the wall of our picket are due to the bewilders of Bulgarian soldiers. During the research, it was found that, in the service of the Bulgarian picket no.16 (in front of the Romanian one no.98), an individual named Jordan, a refugee from Romania, was found. The Bulgarian delegate said that this individual had been moved to another Bulgarian picket. This fact proved that the Bulgarians have in their service, on the border, Romanian refugees whom they used to give information and to evade the surveillance of Romanian patrols, the komitadjis crossing the border on our territory, this being the conclusion of the third hypothesis investigated (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

Due to the strong blizzard, no investigation was made into the other incidents that were still to be investigated, which was postponed for spring. At the meeting of this Joint Committee of Inquiry, which did not in any way lead to any positive results, other than the research carried out as a secondary fact, the following issues were also agreed on: 1) Our refugee deserters were no longer used in the service of the border by the Bulgarian authorities; 2) officers from both border guards were allowed to pass in uniform at the nearest picket of the neighboring state for service relations; 3) the military commanders of both states enjoyed the external signs of respect from the Romanian and Bulgarian border guards (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

Support from the Bulgarian civilian and military authorities in the actions of the komitadjis

In the spring of 1926, the Romanian-Bulgarian Joint Committee was asked to investigate the killing of three Romanian soldiers by Bulgarian komitadjis established in the communes of Geovegea, Nastradin and Brășlea. Delegates from both sides were due to meet on March 22, 1926, at 09.00 in Turkșmil. To better cooperate, Bulgarian officers had to be accompanied by a translator who knew French and another who knew Romanian and Bulgarian (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

On March 20, 1926, at 10.30 pm, picket patrol no. 119, Company 8th Curtbunar Border was summoned by words and gunfire by the komitadjis to give up their weapons. The patrol engaged in battle, pursuing the bandits to the Docilar forest

where, due to the darkness, it lost track of them (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

On March 22, 1926, at 09.00, the Romanian-Bulgarian joint commission having the same composition being signaled as a novelty, the presence of a representative of the Rusciuc Prefecture, met at picket no.98 - Turksmil to continue research started in December 1925. Before the resumption of work, the Romanian delegation asked whether the mandate of the Bulgarian delegation also included the investigation into the deaths of the two Romanian soldiers shot on March 6, 1926, by refugee komitadjis in Bulgaria. Although he did not have express permission to do so, members of the Bulgarian delegation said they would discuss the case as well. Discussions on the case in committee called into question the statements of the 3/19th Kiutuklia platoon commander who stated that the 4 suspects, researched and identified by the Romanian side as the authors of the events spent on the Romanian territory on March 4, 5.6, and 7, 1926, were during that period, in their villages in Bulgaria. From the statements of parents, relatives, and hosts, previously taken by Romanian officers, it was very clear that they were on the Romanian territory where they committed the robberies and the crime. The Bulgarian delegation replied that Captain Ovcearov Ivan's statement was above the statements of relatives, individuals who had no responsibility for not taking an oath, this being possible only before the courts. At the proposal of a confrontation between bandits and relatives, the Bulgarian side opposed it (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

Moreover, the Bulgarian delegates stated that the investigation was made by a non-commissioned officer who was the aid of the subsector commander who was on leave, for which he will be accountable to the judiciary for those recorded in his investigation. Wanting to support his comrades, Colonel Penev Alexander asked why Romanian officers did not notify the officers in time because it was possible for the bandits to be caught. Colonel Stănescu Nicolae answered that the Romanian authorities had to establish the culprits first and only based on the documents concluded to intervene with the Bulgarian officials (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

This was the case with the robbery on the night of March 4/5, 1926, in the case of the murder of soldiers on March 6, 1926, and in respect of the events of March 7, 1926, knowing precisely that the culprits were in Bulgaria, he intervened to catch them. When it was possible to identify the bandits and find out their home address, the Bulgarian authorities hesitated to intervene, which required a confrontation by the Romanian side, a procedure rejected by the Bulgarian committee which, on the ground, argued that it was not empowered to answer the matter. The statement of the Bulgarian delegations was false. An agreement had been signed in 1922 stating that the Bulgarian border authorities had to hand over refugee criminals on one side or the other of the border, whatever their origin. Following this argument, the Bulgarian Commission stated that those identified by the Romanian side were

sent to the Rusciuc Prefecture to be investigated there and to benefit from all legal proceedings. The Bulgarian side requested the names of the culprits, although they were mentioned in the minutes concluded on 7 March 1926 at the border (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

During the bilateral talks, the Bulgarian government delegate, Colonel Penev Alexandru, the commander of the Border Rusciuc sector, declared to Colonel Stănescu Nicolae, commander of the 1st Border Guard Regiment, the Romanian government delegate, and Major Mladin Dumitru, commander of Sector 3 Guard Border Guards, that the Romanian performer, Anghel Nebuleanu, said on March 7, 1926 that, if the Bulgarian authorities do not support the Romanian authorities and do not take action against the criminals, the Romanian side would follow the example of the Greeks who protested in similar situations. On this statement, Colonel Stănescu reminded the Bulgarian delegation that Anghel Nebuleanu came to the Bulgarian picket no. 16 on March 7, 1926, at 15.00 accompanied by Major Mladin Dumitru, Captain Manoliu B. Ilie, commander of the 7th Border Guard Company, Captain Popescu, Mr. Constantinescu Pretor and Mr. Petrescu Ovidiu, the head of the Turtucaia Security Brigade with the mission to translate to Captain Ovcearov Ivan the circumstances of the crime by the Romanian refugees living on Bulgarian territory. During these discussions, Captain Stănescu reiterated the fact that the Romanian translator explained that it would have been better to take measures against the guilty party in advance because the hesitation of the Bulgarian authorities allowed the authors to hide possible evidence (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

In fact, the Romanian officer was confused about the grievances expressed by the Bulgarian colonel, asking him how he would have acted instead of the Romanian government which, after the efforts to identify and establish the address of the guilty party, located only 2 km from the common border, they continued to cross in Romania, to rob the villages and mischievously kill the Romanian soldiers, while the Bulgarian authorities did not react according to the facts reported. How can it be interpreted that, after their recognition and sending the signals to the Bulgarian authorities in order to take the necessary legal measures, the culprits were not arrested, they were not removed from the border and the Bulgarian government was not implementing the commitment made in 1922 to mutual competition in border incident investigations. Moreover, the Bulgarian commission did not allow witnesses to be confronted with suspects, for which the Romanian side could interpret that there was no desire to improve bilateral relations (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

In this atmosphere, on March 22, 1926, the discussions within the Romanian-Bulgarian Joint Committee were completed, and the works on the other cases submitted to the research were postponed for May 12, 1926, whereas the rains and the blizzard did not stop for 5 days, making it difficult for the committee to move on the

spot, which was also recorded in the minutes concluded on that date. This document was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for diplomatic efforts to the Bulgarian government to support the joint commission's investigations and to stop the attacks of the komitadjis and the Ministry of Interior for establishing the damage caused to the victims by the guilty party (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

On July 6, 1926, the Romanian Legation in Sofia was notified by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I.M. Mitilineu, in connection with the investigation carried out in respect of the border incident on the night of July 16 to 17, 1925 spent at the border of South Dobrogea. From the analysis of the report sent by the Border Guard Corps, the Romanian Minister noticed that *"according to the sketch annexed, on the border stretch is a single Romanian picket no.98 and three Bulgarian pickets (no. 15, 16, 17). If this is the case across the border of the Quadrilateral, we understand why in all our incidents they are not able to do anything, being sure victims. The forest through which the border line passes between the villages of Kiutuclia (Bulgaria) and Turkşmil (Romania) was not crossed on the border area either on our side or on the Bulgarian side. And yet we asked in 1922 and Bulgaria undertook to do this"* (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

On the same day, July 6, 1926, the Sofia Legation also transmitted the result of the investigation into the killing of the two Romanian soldiers on March 6, 1926, to the Romanian Minister, I.M. Mitilineu, by which he proposed the extradition of those who committed the crime, based on the evidence from the report of the Border Guard Corps no. 97/1926 respectively, Petcu Miuţu, Stanciu Atanase Stancev, Petru Dumitru Dasiliev, and Nicola Tudor Cocev settled in the village of Ghiovegea, Nastradin, and Brăşlea, which, on the night of March 5/6, attacked and robbed the commune of Satu Vechi, and the next day at 10.00, they killed the border guards Buga Gheorghe from the 1st Border Guards Regiment and Corporal Radu Ioan from the 7th Rosiori Regiment near the Masimal platoon. At the same time, Captain Ovcearov, commander of the subsector 3/18 Kituclia, was requested to move, because since his arrival at the command of this border sector, the attacks intensified and the evidence gathered showed bad intention from this officer in all his investigations (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

The Romanian Minister from Sofia, Grigore Bilciurescu, appreciated that, in support of the proposal of the extradition procedure, the clauses of the 1922 arrangement concluded between the two governments could be invoked, especially since the Romanian delegate, Colonel Stănescu, asked to hand over the culprits who were on the Romanian territory at the time of committing the assassinations (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

On July 28, 1926, the Romanian minister in Sofia received the agreement regarding the extradition request. In this regard, Grigore Bilciurescu wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I.M. Mitilineu, that *" I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that,*

as I would like to leave to me the work to be done by the Bulgarian Government, I would also like to take advantage of the first meeting with the Foreign Minister to ask him to declare to me categorically if he understands to respect the commitment made by Stambuliiski in 1922 regarding the surrender of the bandits" (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

The investigated documents did not show the fact that they were extradited; however, on March 15, 1926, the Commander of the Border Guard Corps, the division general Broșteanu, submitted to the Romanian Ministry of Interior with address no.97, the secret report with no. 87 from the same date, of Regiment I Border guards accompanied by all the documents relating to the investigation into the murder committed against the two border guards on 6 March 1926, which showed a clear agreement between bandits and Bulgarian military bodies at the border (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

According to this secret report, incidents, robberies, and murders committed in South Dobrogea „*were reported in full knowledge and agreement of Bulgarian border guard officers. In this investigation, we have established that they give their aid to the komitadjis and cover for them. Our refugees are settled, in full knowledge of the Bulgarian authorities in the nearest border villages. When they commit crimes, they are covered by Bulgarian officers who say they were present with them while their relatives were with us, through statements given to the investigation, they deny the statements of the Bulgarian officers and say that they were on our territory. From here there is a clear agreement between the bandits and the Bulgarian military bodies at the border. Consequently, in this typical case with obvious evidence we should and even must, because of so much bloodshed and so many sacrifices made under the shield of Bulgarian good neighborly hypocrisy, to urgently and very vigorously demand full satisfaction through diplomatic means, namely: the immediate arrest of the alleged bandits and their extradition in order to be given to the Romanian authorities for trial, and for their relatives, 26 people arrested today, who fed the komitadjis to be prosecuted after their crime against State Security. On this occasion, we also need to notify you that in Balbunar commune where Colonel Ghenov, the commander of the border guard sector, is staying, there is a branch of these komitadjis – and that this colonel cannot be unaware of it – against which he has not taken any action so far"* (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

In support of the above, the report stated that "on 9 February 1926, Lieutenant-Colonel Ghenov's brother-in-law voluntarily surrendered, stating that he was aware of the organization of gangs of komitadjis located on Bulgarian territory in communes located near the border in the constituency of the Kemanlar net, namely: Kemanlar, the headquarters of the gang headquarters under the direction of Petre Enceff, a refugee from us from Afatler commune, Durostor county and where the residence of the Bulgarian border company is also located, and the rest of the komitadjis are scattered in the communes: Zavet, Dikilitaş, Kara-Aci, Geferler,

Gheovegea, Nastradin, Balbunar, Juper, Kiutuklia, the residence of Captain Ovcearov who is the commander of the 3/19 border platoon and Brâșlea" (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

In conclusion, the report proposed *"in order to ensure the lives of our border guards, for state officials to declare throughout the Quadrilateral the state of siege in compliance with Ordinance no.1 of the 5th Army Corps since 1921, with the following modifications: a) to remove from the state of siege the capitals of counties, urban communes and net residences; b) the press to be free; c) the rest of the territory to be under a state of military siege under whose command it will be decided. The intervention for the move of Captain Ovcearov from the border for which we have the following reasons: a) attack of the Romanian picket no.98 as found in the December 1925 investigation that this attack was carried out with knowledge of and even leadership of Captain Ovcearov. Since the arrival of this officer in the service of the border, the attacks in the border area have been repeated very often, facts that did not exist when Captain Obretinov was in that subsector. Confiscation and sale of those refugees – not as it is today, that the lands are worked by their relatives – and the cash products are sent to these komitadjis for their supply and support on Bulgarian territory against us. Due to the results obtained by selling their properties, the families of the victims should be compensated. In the recent case of the shooting of these two soldiers, please intervene to establish that at least 200,000 lei are paid to each victim. If it is not reached from the properties of these refugee komitadjis, this amount should be supplemented by the distribution on the heads of the inhabitants of the territory of the communes where the crime took place, whereas none signaled the appearance of money nor did it help to discover and capture them"*.

The conclusion of the Border Guard Corps at the end of this secret report was that the measures shown above should be legislated, if they were not at the date of the report, in this case, complementary measures are proposed regarding *"the confiscation and sale by public auction of the entire mobile and immovable property of all those who have been proven and caught red-handed of assassination or concealment, and the proceeds of the sale form a compensation fund for victims robbed or killed by bandits, as is the case with our soldiers. To legislate the removal of all relatives and hosts from proven bandits or those who have relatives fled to Bulgaria and enlisted in the gangs of komitadjis. To witness these robberies and murders without taking action against them, I think it is a crime on the part of the state"* (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

Conclusion

Amid the general discontent that existed in Bulgaria after the loss of the First World War, communist ideas imported from Bolshevik Russia merged with the irredentist policy promoted by Bulgarian political and military leaders who allowed and

supported terrorist organizations and actions against neighbors, especially Romania. During the period before the magazine's readers, the Bolshevik threat floated on the European continent.

This article is written in memory of the Romanian border guards who fell on duty in defense of the state border. In 1924, the Bulgarian communists planned to start a revolt that would cover the entire territory of Bulgaria and the occupation by the gangs of komitadjis of the strategic points on the border with Romania. The intervention of the Bulgarian authorities thwarted the intentions of the irredentist organizations, many of their leaders being detained by Romanian soldiers while trying to cross the border fraudulently.

With all the diplomatic efforts made by the Romanian Government and the military authorities of the Border Guard Corps who by setting up the Romanian-Bulgarian joint commissions for investigating border incidents tried to find a mutually agreed solution to end the attacks of Bulgarian komitadjis, they continued and intensified, calling into question Bulgaria's good neighborly policy.

The author intended to bring to the attention of readers the names of Romanian officers and soldiers who were killed by Bulgarian komitadjis so as not to remain anonymous. Eternal gratitude!

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AI-Centric secure outer space operations

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Abstract

This article critically assesses the transformative role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in military operations, focusing on terrestrial warfare and outer space security. It offers four main points of discussion: 1) An evaluation of AI applications in terrestrial warfare, using real-world technologies such as Project Maven and BAE Systems' Taranis; 2) an examination of AI's contributions and risks in the field of cybersecurity; 3) an in-depth look at AI's growing influence in space security, including technical aspects of systems like the U.S. Space-Based Infrared and the European Data Relay System; 4) an analysis of the ethical and policy challenges associated with AI deployment, informed by the author's viewpoints on the necessity of international regulation. Drawing from various case studies and expert consultations, the article highlights AI's capabilities in enhancing decision-making and operational efficiency while discussing the ethical and technical complexities it introduces. The study concludes by offering nuanced recommendations for responsibly integrating AI into military strategies and policies, especially those concerning space security. The aim is to inform and guide military professionals and policymakers by providing actionable insights for responsible decision-making in AI-augmented conflict scenarios on Earth and in space.

Keywords:
Artificial Intelligence (AI); Outer space; Space security; Conflict in outer space; Dynamics of warfare; Strategic decisions.

1. Introduction

In the current technological era, the armed conflict has transcended conventional terrestrial operational theatres, extending into the vastness of outer space. Noteworthy innovations in artificial intelligence (AI) act as catalysts for this evolution, forecasting essential transformations both in terrestrial and space military operations. This article aims to offer a comprehensive overview of AI's role in modern military settings, with a special focus on its growing significance in outer space security. Unlike previous literature that generally centers on AI's technical or ethical aspects, this article seeks to bridge these perspectives by incorporating personal viewpoints and nuanced technical analysis.

The adoption of AI in combat domains brings forth a plethora of potential advantages. The use of autonomous mechanisms, unmanned aerial units, and advanced decision-support modules can enhance situational awareness, refine decision-making skills, and boost operational productivity. AI tools provide technical autonomy and facilitate swift and precise decisions, thereby elevating operational efficiency and reducing risks associated with human presence in high-risk areas. Concurrently, these instances underscore the secondary benefits related to safeguarding vital resources and ensuring the smooth operation of space services. To further illustrate this, the article will delve into the technical merits and drawbacks of current AI systems in warfare.

To highlight the revolutionary capacity of AI in military settings, this paper will reference empirical case studies and pertinent literature that delineates AI's roles in previous military endeavors and technological advancements in the field. Examples such as Project Maven, BAE Systems Taranis, the U.S. Space-Based Infrared System, and the European Data Relay System, will elucidate AI's potential to redefine armed conflict strategies. Additionally, the paper will scrutinize the application of AI in these mentioned systems.

However, the integration of AI in current military operations is not without significant challenges and moral dilemmas. The argument of this paper brings to the forefront aspects like the repercussions on human cognitive processes, vulnerabilities introduced by AI systems, and the evolving contours of warfare. Embracing a judicious perspective, underpinned by a rigorous regulatory and implementation framework, is essential to curtail latent threats and harness the advantages of AI in combat environments.

In conclusion, by weaving together technical details, real-world applications, and personal viewpoints, this paper strives to provide comprehensive insights into AI's implications on military operational theaters, emphasizing space-related innovations. By merging empirical case studies with relevant literary works, the goal is to offer valuable perspectives and actionable recommendations for adeptly navigating this

crucial technological transformation and capitalizing on AI's potential in a judicious and strategic manner.

2. AI applications in armed conflict

The paper begins by exploring the evolving role of AI in military contexts, specifically focusing on its application in autonomous vehicles, drones, and advanced decision-support tools. AI-driven vehicles are a groundbreaking advancement in modern military logistics and transportation. AI-driven vehicles have demonstrated their efficacy in improving battlefield logistics and transportation. With the aid of AI-driven systems, these vehicles can cross challenging environments, adjust to unforeseen changes, and increase the safety of troops involved in transport roles (Wavell Room 2023; Maxwell 2020).

Additionally, the employment of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) augmented with artificial intelligence features has profoundly transformed contemporary military tactics and strategies. Such AI-enhanced UAS facilitate superior surveillance, reconnaissance, and precision engagement capabilities, affording armed forces an elevated level of situational cognizance while simultaneously mitigating the perils encountered by human operators in mission scenarios. Leveraging their intrinsic capability for autonomous data acquisition and analysis, these apparatuses adeptly discern and address potential adversaries, thereby amplifying tactical efficacy in combat (Bistron and Zbigniew 2021, 871-890; Szabadföldi 2021, 157-165).

In addition, intelligent decision-support systems driven by AI algorithms have demonstrated their potential in improving decision-making processes for military commanders. By processing vast amounts of data in real-time and providing comprehensive analyses, these systems can assist in identifying patterns, detecting anomalies, and providing valuable insights to support effective decision-making. From tactical to strategic scenarios, AI-powered decision-support systems enable military personnel to make informed choices and optimize resource allocation in dynamic and complex operational environments (Scharre and Horowitz 2018).

The incorporation of artificial intelligence within these domains represents a profound transformation in military strategy and tactics. Through the integration of AI-centric modalities in combat operations, defense forces can harness cutting-edge technological innovations to secure a strategic advantage, bolster operational efficacy, and minimize vulnerabilities in multifaceted and dynamic theaters of conflict.

However, while these advancements offer notable improvements, they also introduce novel challenges, including the risk of over-reliance on automated systems, the potential for algorithmic bias, and the ethical implications of delegating life-or-death decisions to machines. As AI continues to evolve, it is imperative for military

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strategic decision-makers to consider these factors and advocate for comprehensive governance frameworks that define responsible AI use, ensuring alignment with international law and humanitarian principles (Bistron and Zbigniew 2021, 871-890; Horowitz 2018).

AI tools not only provide technical autonomy but also facilitate swift and precise decisions, thereby elevating operational efficiency and reducing risks associated with human presence in high-risk areas. From my viewpoint, the transformative capabilities of these technologies are groundbreaking. They have the potential to revolutionize military strategy and operations, impacting society on multiple levels. However, their remarkable capabilities should not overshadow the ethical responsibilities that come with them.

2.1. Artificial Intelligence in the Evolution of Traditional Warfare Domains

The ascendance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) heralds a new epoch in the annals of technological progression, substantially influencing multifarious spheres of human existence. Particularly within the ambit of military engagements, AI's prominence is escalating, given its capacity to redefine battlefronts of the future. This scholarly discourse delves into AI's ramifications within the classical theatres of warfare, encompassing land, sea, air, and cyberspace, elucidating seminal advancements, attendant challenges, and broader connotations. This analysis is fortified by insights extracted from seminal academic sources.

AI is ushering in a reconfiguration of military strategies, operational paradigms, and tactical doctrines within the traditional arenas of conflict: land, sea, and air, complemented by the emergent realms of space and cyber. While the promise of AI looms large with enhanced operational efficiencies and augmented capabilities, it concurrently poses dilemmas pertaining to ethical deliberations, policy governance, and the broader spectrum of security repercussions (Russell 2022, 74-90).

On terrestrial fronts, AI's infusion in land-based combats is profound. AI-fueled Unmanned Ground Vehicles (UGVs) are adept at undertaking multifarious roles, spanning combat, reconnaissance, and logistical assignments, thereby diminishing human peril (Hester, et al. 2012). Notwithstanding, conundrums emerge, encompassing the moral and juridical facets of autonomous combat apparatuses, intricacies in topographical navigation, and susceptibility to adversarial subversions (Johansson 2018).

Maritime confrontations are undergoing a metamorphosis catalyzed by AI. Autonomous marine craft and AI-centric systems are recalibrating naval tactics, enhancing fleet orchestration, facilitating subaquatic reconnaissance, and impeding adversary communication frameworks (Munim, et al. 2020; Pedrozo 2023). Yet, the operational fidelity of these constructs in capricious marine milieus, their vulnerability to cyber onslaughts, and the ramifications of autonomy in global waters necessitate rigorous analysis (Scharre and Horowitz 2018).

Aerial warfare is not impervious to this transformation. AI-empowered Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and autonomous aviators augment reconnaissance, target discernment, and force execution faculties. Herein, discourses on the extent of autonomy in lethal determinations and resilience against cyber and tangible threats warrant assiduous consideration (Gargalakos 2021).

With space and cyberspace gaining recognition as novel military dimensions, AI's imprint is indelible. Tasks like satellite-driven imagery interpretation, cyber offensives and defensives, and extraterrestrial vehicular navigation lean heavily on AI (Buchanan 2017). Predicaments in these spheres encompass the accelerated tempo of tech innovation, legal vagaries, escalation perils, and system vulnerabilities to advanced cyber invasions (Bistron and Zbigniew 2021).

As we grapple with the inexorable integration of AI across both conventional and avant-garde conflict arenas, an astute comprehension of its multifaceted implications becomes paramount. Such an understanding will be instrumental in shaping policy norms, ethical canons, and impregnable security protocols, aiming to optimally leverage AI's potential while concurrently addressing its inherent challenges (Forrest, et al. 2020).

In sum, AI's integration into established military spheres possesses the transformative potential to reshape military doctrine and praxis. The academic elucidations referenced herein shed light on the myriad ways AI is influencing land, sea, air, and cyberspace engagements, underscoring the paramount advancements and associated conundrums, with a clarion call for sagacious deployment, cognizant of the ethical, juridical, and societal ramifications. Future endeavors in research, innovation, and international solidarity are imperative.

2.2. AI and the new domains of warfare: cyber, space and cognitive

Beyond the tangible boundaries of traditional battlegrounds, warfare has evolved into diverse spheres, specifically cyberspace, the vastness of outer space, and the intricate cognitive milieu. Spearheading this evolution is the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence which, while being an enabler, also introduces complex challenges (Horowitz 2018).

The intrusion of AI within the realm of cyber warfare has been both profound and multifarious. It acts as a force multiplier, enhancing offensive prowess while concurrently fortifying defensive bulwarks (Buchanan 2017). Through AI, there's an augmentation in the capacity for predictive analytics, enriched threat discernment, accelerated response rates, and the streamlining of various cybersecurity processes. Simultaneously, this integration unveils a potential Pandora's Box: the specter of advanced AI-fueled cyber onslaughts, characterized by their complexity and unpredictability (Shakarian, Shakarian and Ruef 2013).

The vast void of outer space, once a frontier of exploration and curiosity, is gradually being sequestered for militaristic endeavors. AI's imprint in this domain

is indisputable, orchestrating precise satellite navigation, enhancing remote sensing capabilities, and proffering meticulous space-based surveillance (Johnson-Freese and Handberg 2018). Yet, the infusion of AI in space-centric conflict is not devoid of quandaries (Fourati and Alouini 2021, 213-243).). There emerges a plethora of concerns ranging from the peril of space debris proliferation, the potential for satellite mishaps, and the looming danger of inadvertent, escalatory confrontations (Kessler and Cour-Palais 1978, 2637-2646).

The cognitive theater, often intangible yet profoundly impactful, witnesses AI's burgeoning role in sculpting information warfare strategies, orchestrating psychological campaigns, and modulating propaganda dissemination. Through AI-driven algorithms, these operations attain unparalleled precision and impact. However, this very precision begets its own set of dilemmas – the avenues for manipulation, the potential to perpetrate deceit, and the threat to the very fabric of democratic institutions and processes (Bradshaw and Howard 2019).

The inextricable weave of AI across diversified warfare domains signals a future replete with both unprecedented possibilities and formidable challenges. Recognizing this duality is imperative. As such, this scholarly treatise underscores the necessity of an integrative, cross-disciplinary modus operandi to dissect and navigate the intricacies associated with AI-driven warfare. It is an endeavor that mandates a harmonious confluence of technological advancements and sagacious policy-making, all aimed at ensuring global security, upholding ethical standards, and fostering international equilibrium.

3. AI Implementation in Military Operations and Implications for Outer Space Security

This section aims to delve into some notable real-world examples, examining the intricate integration of AI within military operations and the subsequent ramifications for outer space security.

3.1. Project Maven

Project Maven, also known as the Algorithmic Warfare Cross-Function Team (Strout 2022), was initiated by the United States Department of Defense (DoD) and launched in April 2017. The primary goal was to implement AI technologies to interpret vast amounts of video data. Using machine learning, the project aimed to assist human analysts by sifting through the considerable amounts of data gathered daily, thereby allowing for quicker identification of potential threats and actionable intelligence.

The data-handling capabilities demonstrated by Project Maven highlight the potential for AI in managing and analyzing data from satellite constellations in

real-time. This could facilitate more efficient monitoring of outer space and timely identification of threats, such as space debris or hostile satellites (Strout 2022).

Drawing on methodologies from Project Maven, AI can be used to process satellite data, identify potential threats, monitor celestial bodies, and even detect signs of adversary activities in space. Moreover, the capabilities demonstrated by Project Maven can be adapted to predict and detect activities like adversarial satellite maneuvers, potential collisions, or identifying stealth space assets. This becomes especially crucial as nations develop anti-satellite capabilities and other offensive space assets.

Finally, the high-speed analysis capabilities of systems like Project Maven, when combined with relay satellites, can ensure that ground forces receive real-time intelligence from space-based assets. This means faster response times to emerging threats and more efficient use of resources in theater.
In terms of the implications for security and defense on the ground, Project Maven contributed to enhanced missile defence, improved battlefield awareness, and assisted in infrastructure and asset monitoring (Strout 2022).

Project Maven stands as a testament to the synergistic power of AI and space-based capabilities. As AI continues to progress and integrate further into defense infrastructures, the boundaries it can push in terms of outer space security and ground defense are vast. Properly harnessed, this synergy can reshape the strategic landscapes of defense, both in space and on the ground, providing military decision-makers with advanced tools for maintaining national and global security.

3.2. BAE Systems Taranis
Developed by BAE Systems, the Taranis is an advanced stealth drone prototype designed to push the boundaries of unmanned combat air vehicle (UCAV) capabilities (BAE Systems n.d.). Rooted in advanced AI, this drone is adeptly crafted to autonomously execute sophisticated missions, which include precision targeting, intelligence collection, and evasion of enemy detection systems.

As technologies like Taranis advance, the potential for their adaptation to outer space missions becomes apparent. AI-driven systems, inspired by Taranis, could handle satellite maintenance autonomously (Fourati and Alouini 2021). Such systems might detect issues, repair components, and assist in refueling tasks, thereby extending the lifespan of orbiting satellites and optimizing their utility. Moreover, leveraging Taranis's intelligent evasion capabilities, future AI-backed systems might autonomously track, categorize, and safely manage potentially hazardous space debris, thereby safeguarding vital space-based assets.

In an increasingly contested space domain, where the potential for conflicts to extend beyond Earth is becoming a reality, autonomous systems modeled after

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the Taranis could be instrumental in rapid defensive actions. These actions could include shielding assets from anti-satellite missiles or counteracting electronic warfare attempts.

Space-based assets, inspired by the Taranis's autonomy, could play a pivotal role in real-time data relay. Ground forces, dependent on a constant stream of intelligence from space, would benefit significantly from such enhanced communication channels, thereby improving mission coordination and threat response. Similar to Taranis's stealth and reconnaissance capabilities, its space counterparts could be used for persistent surveillance of potential ground threats. These systems could leverage AI to analyze and predict enemy movements, serving as early warning systems that alert ground defenses to incoming attacks or adversarial advancements.

By extrapolating the capabilities of systems like Taranis into the vastness of outer space, defense strategies can be redefined, creating a seamless integration between aerial and spatial domains. This synergy, powered by AI, holds the potential to significantly reshape the strategic defense landscape in the years ahead, offering a new level of readiness and responsiveness to military operations on a global scale.

3.3. U.S. Space-Based Infrared System (SBIRS)

The Space-Based Infrared System (SBIRS) is a critical component of the U.S. defense strategy, designed to maintain constant surveillance and provide early warning against missile threats (Lockheedmartin, n.d.). It consists of satellites in geosynchronous earth orbit (GEO) and sensors hosted on satellites in highly elliptical orbit (HEO).

SBIRS plays a significant role in missile warning, missile defense, and battlespace awareness. By leveraging the expansive vantage points provided by space orbits, SBIRS enhances terrestrial defense mechanisms and offers commanders and policymakers real-time insights into enemy movements and strategic deployments.

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into SBIRS amplifies its potential by ensuring rapid and accurate data processing, which is indispensable for contemporary defense systems. AI aids in threat assessment, sifting through a multitude of infrared events to detect missile launches or other potential threats promptly and reliably.

With the fusion of AI and SBIRS, ground-based missile defense systems can be activated immediately upon the detection of a threat, thereby ensuring a heightened state of readiness. This early warning capability is vital for safeguarding critical infrastructures and populations from potential missile strikes.

Moreover, the presence of a high-capability system like SBIRS, bolstered by AI, serves as a deterrence against potential adversaries. The knowledge that missile launches and other aggressive acts can be detected almost instantaneously can

dissuade hostile actions. Additionally, it provides a strategic advantage in diplomatic negotiations, as nations equipped with such advanced systems can advocate from a position of strength.

In summary, the synergy of SBIRS and AI showcases a future-forward approach to defense, epitomizing the benefits of integrating space-based capabilities with advanced computational technologies. As potential threats become increasingly sophisticated, systems like SBIRS, backed by the power of AI, remain pivotal in maintaining a strategic advantage and safeguarding terrestrial assets.

3.4. European Data Relay System (EDRS)
EDRS, often referred to as the "SpaceDataHighway" (European Space Agency (ESA), n.d.), represents a pioneering European constellation of geostationary satellites designed to facilitate the rapid relay of information between satellites, spacecraft, UAVs, and ground stations.

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with EDRS's real-time data relay capabilities significantly optimizes the flow of critical data. This integration ensures seamless communication and enhances the speed and efficiency of data processing and analysis. EDRS, augmented by AI, emerges as a fundamental component for real-time threat analysis. It ensures swift, reliable communication between various space assets and augments collaborative defense mechanisms in space.

A notable capability of EDRS is its inherent ability to continuously transmit substantial volumes of data. The integration of this feature with AI technologies enables smarter data routing, efficient priority assignment, and accelerated processing. Consequently, critical information can reach decision-makers expeditiously, thereby facilitating timely and data-driven decisions (European Space Agency (ESA), n.d.).
A salient advantage of EDRS lies in the seamless communication it facilitates among space assets. The integration of AI introduces an advanced layer of intelligent communication management. For example, in situations where potential satellite interference or congestion may occur, AI can assist in channel optimization, significantly reducing the risk of communication failures.

For Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) engaged in reconnaissance missions, the AI-enhanced EDRS can dramatically accelerate the flow of essential data. Advanced algorithms are capable of processing incoming data streams, isolating and emphasizing potential threats or points of interest. This technology ensures that ground forces receive timely and precise information, thereby boosting their operational efficiency.

As AI integration into documented military operations and technological advancements persists, its transformative potential becomes increasingly clear. These real-world applications are not only redefining current military paradigms

but are also illuminating the imminent opportunities and challenges associated with outer space security. The harmonious integration of AI with these technological advancements marks a significant stride towards a more secure and vigilant outer space ecosystem.

This section aimed to offer strategic military decision-makers a comprehensive understanding of the EDRS system's capabilities, especially when enhanced by AI technologies. It underscored the potential of such a combination to significantly improve outer space security by enabling more efficient and effective decision-making processes.

3.5. Comparative Analysis

To provide a more in-depth understanding of the transformative power of AI in military and space operations, it is vital to critically examine key initiatives in the field. This entails a comparative analysis of four major projects: Project Maven, BAE Systems' Taranis, the U.S. Space-Based Infrared System, and the European Data Relay System. The criteria for this evaluation include examining the strategic aims, the technological infrastructure, the operational outcomes, and the ethical conundrums associated with each project.

Project Maven focuses on automating the object recognition process in enormous data sets. It leverages machine learning algorithms to sift through visual data, significantly enhancing data analysis speed. However, its effectiveness in real-world combat scenarios is still a subject of debate. A significant ethical issue arising from Project Maven is its potential misuse in civilian surveillance, alongside concerns about automating aspects of warfare.

In contrast, BAE Systems' Taranis aims to revolutionize aerial combat through an autonomous combat drone capable of both reconnaissance and attack. Utilizing advanced AI-driven flight and targeting systems, Taranis has successfully demonstrated its autonomous flight capabilities. However, it has not yet been operationalized in real combat. The drone's capability to make life-or-death decisions raises critical ethical questions, particularly concerning the role of human oversight in automated warfare.

Turning to space applications, the U.S. Space-Based Infrared System primarily serves as an early-warning system for missile defense. It relies on infrared sensors to detect the heat signatures generated by missile launches. While it has enhanced missile detection capabilities, it may encounter limitations against new forms of stealth technology. Moreover, this system raises ethical questions concerning unauthorized global surveillance and the growing militarization of space.

The European Data Relay System offers another facet of space technology, focusing on enabling rapid data relay between Earth and orbiting satellites. Although designed for civilian use, its laser communication technology could be co-opted

for military surveillance. It has successfully bolstered real-time communication but remains vulnerable to potential hacking, presenting an ethical challenge in terms of data security and the intended purpose of the technology.

In conclusion, this comparative analysis reveals that while each project contributes uniquely to the landscape of AI-enabled military and space operations, they all introduce new ethical challenges. My viewpoint aligns with the notion that these projects are groundbreaking in their potential to revolutionize military strategy and space operations. However, this excitement must be balanced with ethical considerations. As these technologies continue to evolve, they pose unprecedented questions about warfare and surveillance ethics, questions that we must address proactively to harness their full potential responsibly.

4. The Integration of Artificial Intelligence into Institutional Dialogues Regulating the Military Domain

As Artificial Intelligence technologies penetrate various sectors, the military domain is not an exception. The speed, accuracy, and potential capabilities of AI undoubtedly bring about benefits. However, the amalgamation of such technology with military strategy and tactics introduces multifaceted challenges. This section delves into the necessity of dialogue around the integration of AI, strategies for its incorporation, and the pivotal role of institutional dialogues in shaping AI's future in the military (Davis 2022, 74-90). The section focuses on the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into institutional dialogues regulating the military domain. The content provides a comprehensive examination of the ethical and security concerns associated with incorporating AI technologies into military strategies and tactics. It emphasizes the need for international collaboration and discourse among various stakeholders to address these challenges effectively.

In the early developmental phases of AI, the technology manifests significant ethical and security considerations. The capability of AI systems to function autonomously, especially within combat contexts, introduces profound ethical quandaries, chiefly regarding accountability during potential breaches of warfare principles (Forrest E., et al. 2020). Compounding this challenge is the 'black box' nature of certain AI technologies, where the decision-making processes remain obscured, raising concerns, especially in contexts where the deployment of lethal force is in play. Moreover, as AI's boundaries expand, they may inadvertently transgress the foundational principles of international humanitarian conventions. Given these multifaceted intricacies, sustained discourse, rooted in both technical expertise and policy-driven insights, emerges as indispensable.

To foster a well-informed discourse on the intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and military operations, a multidimensional approach grounded in diverse expertise

is imperative. An enriched understanding of this domain emerges when there's a harmonious interplay between computational scientists, ethicists, legal professionals, defense strategists, and policy architects. Regular engagements, exemplified by structured workshops, symposia, and expert exchange initiatives, serve as pivotal avenues, ensuring that key stakeholders remain abreast of the evolving dynamics and ethical intricacies of AI's role in defense (Forrest, et al. 2020).

In addressing the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within military operations, there is a pressing need to transition from insular perspectives to more comprehensive, global deliberations. Constructing a cohesive set of standards for the deployment of AI in armed contexts demands an unwavering commitment to international collaboration. This sentiment is exemplified by endeavors such as those undertaken by the United Nations Group of Experts on Autonomous Lethal Weapons Systems. Moreover, to remain abreast of the dynamic nature of AI advancements, it is imperative that these technological developments become staple topics in recurrent institutional discussions. Such proactive measures ensure that global norms remain attuned to the most recent challenges and innovations related to AI in the military sphere (Davis 2022).

While the revolutionary potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in military and extra-atmospheric security is compelling, seamless integration into institutional frameworks becomes crucial when considering the specific projects previously mentioned in this paper: Project Maven, BAE Systems' Taranis, the U.S. Space-Based Infrared System, and the European Data Relay System.

Taking Project Maven as a case study, this project serves as an illuminating example of the necessity for a multidisciplinary approach. It calls for the involvement of ethicists in AI, software developers, and military officials to construct an ethical framework for automated reconnaissance. This is not merely a technical challenge but also an ethical and legal one, demanding collaborative efforts.

The BAE Systems' Taranis project underscores the immediate need for stringent regulations surrounding the deployment of autonomous drones in combat scenarios. Institutional dialogue should actively involve technology developers, experts in international humanitarian law, and security policymakers. This dialogue aims to create strict guidelines that govern the authentic usage of such disruptive technologies.

For systems like the U.S. Space-Based Infrared System and the European Data Relay System, the stakes in extra-atmospheric security are markedly high. Here too, international institutional dialogue is necessary to address issues such as cybersecurity risks and the weaponization of space. These dialogues should include a diverse array of stakeholders to establish norms and regulatory frameworks.

Incorporating Artificial Intelligence within the military sphere presents an undeniable evolution that demands careful attention. Navigating this emergent terrain mandates an amalgamation of diverse knowledge, sustained cooperative efforts, and regularized discourses. Institutional engagements, through their facilitation of these vital conversations and alliances, critically influence the trajectory of AI's role in warfare, with a profound commitment to maintaining global stability, upholding ethical standards, and respecting humanitarian tenets.

From my viewpoint, while these technologies are groundbreaking, they also demand a thoughtful ethical perspective. Humanity may not yet possess the wisdom required for their ethical application. Further research and perhaps more time are needed to adequately address the ethical considerations surrounding AI in military and space security settings.

Furthermore, as AI technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, policies and regulations governing its use in the military context must be continually reviewed and updated. This necessitates that institutional dialogues are not static but are adaptive and responsive to the changing landscape of AI technology. Regular reviews of these policies, led by experts in AI, ethics, law, and military strategy, will ensure that they remain effective and relevant (Davis 2022).

In addition, the education of decision-makers is paramount. Military strategists, policymakers, and commanders must be not only informed about the current capabilities and limitations of AI but also educated on the ethical, legal, and operational implications of its use. This may be facilitated through dedicated educational programs, training sessions, and strategic war games that incorporate AI scenarios. These initiatives will equip those in positions of authority with the knowledge and tools they need to make informed, responsible decisions about the integration of AI into military operations (Forrest E., et al. 2020).

Finally, it is worth emphasizing the importance of collaborative learning between nations. The challenges posed by the integration of AI into military operations are global in nature, and solutions can be most effectively identified and implemented through international cooperation. Sharing insights, strategies, and best practices among nations—via formal agreements, multinational working groups, or international conferences—can significantly contribute to the establishment of robust, globally recognized standards for the use of AI in a military context. Such international cooperation should not only be among allies but should extend to include a broader array of nations, fostering a more comprehensive and globally aligned approach to the challenges and opportunities that AI presents in the realm of defense and security.

While the potential of AI in military applications is immense, integrating these technologies into current operations comes with its own set of challenges and moral

dilemmas. The issues raised by AI—ranging from impacts on human cognition to new vulnerabilities—cannot be overlooked. In my perspective, while these technologies are undoubtedly revolutionary, humanity may not yet possess the wisdom required for their ethical application. More research and perhaps more time are needed to adequately address the ethical considerations surrounding AI in military and space security settings.

Conclusions

The evolution of warfare is intrinsically tied to technological advancements, with Artificial Intelligence (AI) emerging as a particularly transformative force, as underscored throughout this article. Our exploration has illuminated the multifaceted nature of AI's influence across both traditional and emerging domains of warfare, with case studies illustrating its profound implications for terrestrial and outer space security.

Several key insights can be derived from our discourse:

1. Interdisciplinary Collaboration: The intricate nature of AI technologies necessitates a collaborative approach, intertwining expertise from computer science, ethics, law, military strategy, and policy-making. Such an interdisciplinary synergy ensures a comprehensive understanding and responsible deployment of AI in military settings.

2. Regulatory Imperatives: The integration of AI into warfare highlights the need for international norms and standards. Institutions, particularly those at the forefront of military regulations, must proactively foster dialogues to establish these frameworks, taking cues from initiatives such as the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems.

3. Ethical and Security Concerns: The inherent challenges associated with AI, including the 'black box' dilemma, autonomous decision-making capabilities, and compatibility with international humanitarian laws, accentuate the importance of ethical considerations. Balancing technological prowess with ethical obligations is paramount.

4. Future Preparedness: The rapid pace of AI development demands that military professionals and policymakers remain abreast of technological trends. Strategies must be both adaptive and forward-looking. This proactive approach aids in maximizing AI's potential benefits while mitigating its associated risks.

5. Outer Space Security: With outer space emerging as a critical domain of modern warfare, the confluence of AI with space technologies, such as the European Data Relay System (EDRS), holds significant implications for terrestrial defense and security. Ensuring the responsible deployment of AI in this realm is vital for global stability.

Considering the transformative potential and challenges of AI, it is recommended that nations invest in interdisciplinary research initiatives that bridge technology, law, ethics, and military strategy. This research should inform the creation of comprehensive, internationally harmonized regulations and standards. Furthermore, military strategists and policymakers should engage in regular consultations with AI experts, ethicists, and international peers to refine and adapt strategies as the technology evolves.

In closing, this article has aimed to provide a comprehensive yet nuanced understanding of AI's transformative role in modern warfare, especially concerning space security. As someone deeply invested in this field, I believe these technologies hold unprecedented potential. However, it is crucial to approach them with caution and ethical rigor. The balance between innovation and ethical application is delicate and will require further study and international cooperation to maintain.

In summary, while AI offers transformative potential, its integration into the military domain must be approached with caution, clarity, and an unwavering commitment to ethical principles. As we stand at the crossroads of technological innovation and its profound impact on warfare, the role of institutions in guiding this trajectory becomes ever more crucial. Only through informed, collective action can we ensure that the future of warfare, shaped by AI, aligns with our global security objectives, ethical norms, and humanitarian values.

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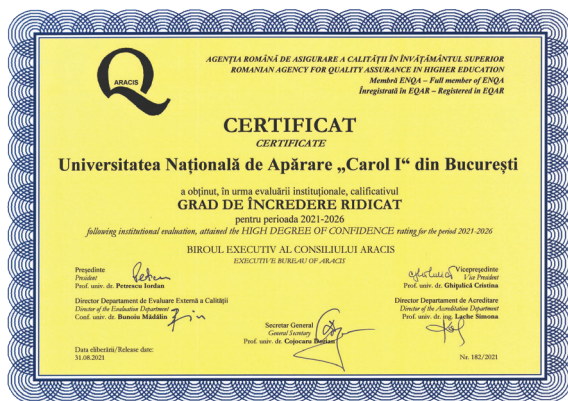
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