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SPECIAL GUEST

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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.

Public Roles

Editor of Archives, the journal of the British Records Association, and the leading archives journal in the world (1989-2005).

Member of the Council of the British Records Association 1989-2005, and of associated sub-committees, for example General Purposes Committee, Publication Committee.

Member of the Council of the Royal Historical Society 1993-1996 and 1997-2000, and of associated sub-committees, for example Membership Committee, Research Support Committee.

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Editorial board of History Today, International History Review, Journal of Military History, Media History.

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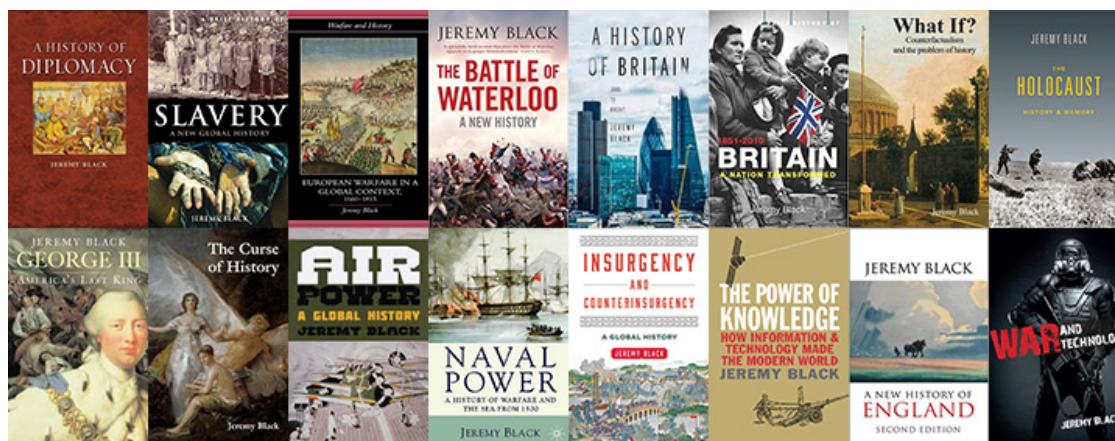
Cold War Geopolitics

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Swiftly following World War Two, the Cold War between a Soviet-led alliance and an American-led one might appear to be a clearcut case of a continuity with Mackinder's 1904 perspective. In practice, there was the significant intervening stage of the earlier ideological-political contest of 1918-41 between the Soviet Union and a British anti-Communist system.

There was certainly concern about many of the same regions. Thus, from 1944, the British Chiefs of Staff were actively considering post-war threats to the British world. This included concern about the Soviet Union and Chinese Nationalist pressure on British India. For example, the Post-Hostilities Planning Staff produced a map in 1944 about projected Soviet lines of advance against India, a map that looked back to nineteenth-century anxieties. More specifically, this map was consistent with the view in British India that Baluchistan (and the Herat-Kandahar-Khojak-Bolan route) formed India's "front porch", as opposed to the route via Kabul and the Khyber Pass. To the British in 1944, western Afghanistan also formed a kind of pivot on which a Soviet force might turn toward southern Iran and, more particularly, the Straits of Hormuz bottleneck to the entrance to the Persian Gulf (Brobst 2005, 48, 79-83, 95-98), an area that remains of geopolitical significance to this day. So also with British anxiety about Soviet expansion into Persia (Iran), a longstanding issue that looked back to the nineteenth century, and about Soviet intervention in Chinese politics, which had been of major concern in the 1920s. Poland had been a front-line of anti-Soviet effort in 1920.

Theory also played a part. Nicholas Spykman, a Dutch immigrant who was head of the Institute for International Studies at Yale, in his *The Geography of the Peace* (1944), developed an anti-isolationist "Rimland thesis" for America in order to offset what he saw as a dangerous Soviet Union. He died, aged 49, in June 1943, but was already troubled by Soviet power and the prospect of the Soviet's dominating

Eastern Europe. At the same time, confident in the potential of the "Rimland," Spykman emphasised the value of maritime power alongside continental allies, the two necessary in order to prevent the dominance of Eurasia by any one power:

> "The influence of the United States can be brought to bear on Europe and the Far East only by means of seaborne traffic and the power of the states of Eurasia can reach us effectively only over the sea. This is true in spite of the growing importance of air power because the preponderant element in the transport of all but the most specialised items will continue to be the ships that saw the oceans… The United States will have to depend on her sea power communications across the Atlantic and Pacific to give her access to the Old World. The effectiveness of this access will determine the nature of her foreign policy … a continental ally who can provide a base from which land power can be exercised." (Spykman 1944, 25, 57)

This, ironically, suggested a fallacy of his geopolitical argument, because the shift to air power over the next decade was to be dramatic, and was to be shown over the next few decades in the aerial deployment of troops and/or equipment, as by the Western Allies to Berlin in 1948-9, the Soviets into Czechoslovakia in 1968, and American supplies to Israel during the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Furthermore, there was no real threat to the American position at sea until the Soviet Union built up a significant submarine force in the 1970s and 1980s.

Spykman's ideas and arguments continued to be influential beyond the Cold War. Thus, in 2022, Seth Cropsey, a former Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy, arguing the significance of the naval dimension of the Ukraine war, wrote:

> "To paraphrase Nicholas Spykman's idea, Ukraine's Black Sea coast is to the Ukraine war as the rimland is to the Eurasian landmass. Control of Eurasia's coastal regions is essential to control of the interior land; so it is with Ukraine." (Cropsey 2022)

In contrast to Spykman, Mackinder in a 1943 piece in *Foreign Affairs*, presented the Soviet Union as an ally against any German resurgence. It was an instructive aspect of the change in weight between allies that Mackinder's piece appeared in an American journal. Moreover, in terms of discussing the postwar world, it was the Americans who played a more original role than the exhausted British. In part, this contrast reflected the resources and confidence of America, and the determination to ensure that the post-war world did not lead to an international crisis for America comparable to that which had eventually followed World War One, a result attributed, somewhat unreasonably, to a lack of American engagement with the League of Nations, the precursor to the United Nations.

The agreements and policies of 1944-49 initiated by America were designed to produce a global order that would rectify the deficiencies of that after World War One (Neiberg 2015; Sharp 2018, Ill). As with the League of Nations, the United Nations

was supposed to be a universal way to handle flaws in the peace treaties as well as to confront revisionism and new crises. Indeed, this American determination was to be transformed because the post-1945 world rapidly became far more threatening, and was seen as such both in Western Europe and in America.

That also affected Britain although less so in some respects as there was less of an engagement there with the fate of China. Instead, the geopolitics of concern for Britain focused on imperial territories and roles, notably in the Middle East and South Asia. There was therefore a survivalist character to British geopolitics after World War Two. In turn, independence for Britain's South Asian possessions in 1947-48 greatly affected these geopolitics. The nature of British imperial geopolitics changed, not least with the loss of the support of Indian manpower.

Choice was a major element at the time, choice in analysis and choice in response. Indeed, the degree to which geopolitics was a field for debate, rather than a clear-cut prescription, was repeatedly clear with American policy during the Cold War. This involved a whole series of choices, not least in how the world was to be visualised. This was a question not simply of which cartographic projection was to be employed, but also the centring of any projection. Mackinder's generation had very much adopted the Greenwich Meridian, but this process put America toward the margin. A projection centred on America, and on mid-America at that, created a very different impression, as indeed remains the case. So, psychologically, did the view that continents were not necessarily the basic building blocks but, rather, oceans, as in the North Atlantic.

There was a continuity in (some) alliances and (most) bases, but not in the tasking and prioritisation that are central to strategy and that provide the context for geopolitics. Indeed, largely unexpected tasks for America threw areas to the fore, notably South Korea from 1950 and Israel from the late 1960s.

The usual presentation would be very different, focusing not on major changes in American geopolitics, but, instead, on the Cold War as the very goal and means of American policy, with rivalry with the Soviet Union treated as geostrategic as well as ideological, and grafted onto much of the assessment of earlier British policy toward, first, Russia and, then, the Soviet Union. Indeed, there was a continuity in the shape of the major role of Britain in the first Cold War, that with Soviet Communism from 1917 to 1941. Alongside a potent ideological contrast, this role drew on the earlier British rivalry with Russia that had only ended with the entente of 1907, and then had still left a degree of mistrust and competition. Returning from Moscow in March, the British diplomat Frank Roberts saw long-term geopolitical factors, rather than simply Communist ideology, as crucial:

> "There is one fundamental factor affecting Soviet policy dating back to the small beginnings of the Muscovite state. This is the constant striving for security of a state with no natural frontiers and surrounded by enemies. In this all-important respect the rulers and people of Russia are united by a common

fear, deeply rooted in Russian policy, which explains much of the high-handed behaviour of the Kremlin and many of the suspicions genuinely held there concerning the outside world." (The National Archives 1946)

The Cold War would then be discussed in terms of NATO (1949) and the National Security Council's NSC 68 document (1950), and a strategic architecture based on containment would be defined. This was very different to the earlier confidence in air power that was seen immediately after World War One, a confidence that was the rationale for the establishment in 1947 of the United States Air Force (Call 2009).
Containment is very much a geopolitical concept. America in 1941-45 had faced a two-front war but with Germany in no real position to mount an offensive and with that from Japan largely held to the western Pacific. From 1949, America again appeared faced by a two-front challenge, one in Europe with the Soviet Union and in East Asia with Soviet allies. America's alliance system and bases represented a forward commitment that had been present prior to Pearl Harbor, notably with the American position in the Philippines, but that had not been so central to American strategy. However, in 1940-41, the path to war in part was seen with American actions in response to Axis expansionism. What would happen from 1949 was unclear.

Containment as a concept that was to be applied in American policy and strategy received its intellectual rationale in an 1947 article in *Foreign Affairs* by "Mr X," George Kennan, the acting head of the American diplomatic mission in Moscow. The emphasis on inherent Soviet antagonism under Stalin in Kennan's "long telegram" of February 22, 1946 had an impact in Washington and elsewhere and was the basis for the article. In 1947, Kennan became Director of Policy Planning in the State Department.
The concept of containment was far from new, having been advanced in particular by the French after World War One in response to the Soviet threat to Eastern Europe. Moreover, similar geopolitical attitudes and narratives provided a way to manage the transition from British leadership, notably at sea, to American predominance (Wells 2017).

With geopolitics, however, it was not novelty in conceptualisation that was important, but, rather, application. In this case, the key element was arguing that America had a major role to play in containment. In the public debate this was accompanied by a supposed "lesson" from history, namely that an American lack of commitment to European power politics after World War One had led to the failure to restrain Hitler that, in turn, had obliged America to act against Germany in World War Two. As a first state, the prospect of chaos was to be limited by the offer that June of Marshall Plan Aid, an economic aid policy to aid recovery. Marshall, Secretary of State from 1947 to 1949, had earlier sought, in 1945-47, to mediate the Chinese Civil War, which would have brought a stabilisation conducive to American interests. This was an unrealistic and futile goal, in part because countries are not readily deployed units, but nevertheless a goal that was worth trying, in part because the cost in effort was low, and there was no real alternative.

The Cold War was to be presented in large part in terms of spatial threat, notably as perceived by the Soviet Union, being surrounded by NATO and other American allies and bases. Thus, Japan resumed its role as an adjunct of the anti-"Heartland" coalition, with its navy, in its focus on opposition to Soviet submarines, looking to America as it had at one time looked to Britain (Palatano 2015).

There was also an American sense of threat in the shape of the forward projection of Soviet power, notably to Cuba in 1962 and Egypt later in the decade, but also as Soviet bases, for example in Somalia, tested any idea of containment. Thus, the "Global South" played a role in terms of the wider struggle. This spurred American concern about the decline of the Western European empires and the "vacuum" of power that would be followed there by the Soviet Union. The very idea of such a "vacuum" was inherently a spatial one focused on a specific geopolitics. The latter, in the Cold War case, also led to familiar policies, notably keeping allies aligned, enemies weak, and neutrals such as Cambodia to co-operate (Rust 2016).

Yet what containment, and indeed the Cold War, meant for American policymakers was far from fixed. Instead, there was an essential fluidity. This extended to areas and to threats. For example, on January 5, 1957, Eisenhower announced to Congress what was to be termed the Eisenhower Doctrine, permitting the commitment of forces in the Middle East "to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations, requesting such aid against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by international communism." (Hahn 2006) This might appear clear, but in practice the threat in the Middle East at that point was from Arab nationalism and internationalism, and not from the Soviet Union. Aside from deliberate or unintentional obfuscation about the international situation, one seen later when Iraq was attacked in the post 9/11 "War on Terror," the fluidity in American policy in part arose from domestic political, social and cultural pressures helping cause hostility to foreign powers that were presented as themselves linked to the internally dangerous. As a result, the Cold War has been presented as a socially-constructed development (Hajimu 2015).

This approach underplays the real tensions at the level of the great and other powers across Eurasia; but these tensions and the apparently necessary responses in turn were perceived in a perspective of rising hostility and the related distrust. Moreover, at a functional level, much of the fluidity in perception and policy was due to the degree to which geopolitics does not occur in a one-sided perspective and on a comparable platform, but, instead, involves a response to the moves of opponents and other powers (House 2020). The end of the Western European empires was the key element in the latter, creating, as it did, opportunities and problems aplenty as a range of new states were established. They had opportunities to manoeuvre both between the global blocs and in terms of pursuing regional geopolitical ambitions of their own as with Egypt which had primacy and geopolitical interests across the Arab world.

There was optimism with decolonisation, notably in the shape of growth and social and political development through modernisation, whether American or Communist in its agenda. This was, as it were, an alternative theory and practice to colonialism, imperial control, and conventional geopolitics. Modernisation was regarded as a form of global New Deal, able to create liberal, capitalistic, pro-American democracies.

At the same time, there were the dynamics of threat and fear for the West, and they ensured that the nature and amount of hard power that might be required to accompany international liberalism attracted attention. Thus, by 1950, the Soviet atomic warheads test and Mao Zedong's conquest of China in 1949 had transformed the parameters for American strategy. The pre-emptive action that the possibility of airborne nuclear attack appeared to make necessary (Albertson 2019) provided a new take on geopolitics as the space-time sequence was radically altered. In part this was a matter of the range of aircraft, and the greater practicality of such attack; but, alongside technology, there was also the learned experience of the damage that could be inflicted through surprise attack, in short the prospect of another Pearl Harbor. Indeed, NSC-68, the basic document of containment, was a prime instance of fear driving policy or, at least, of fear as a selling point, within government and towards the population. The Communist bloc had greatly expanded from 1939 to 1949 taking over much of Eurasia, and this posed issues of containment, deterrence and defence.

The weakness of air power had been demonstrated in the Chinese Civil War (1946-49) when the Communists, the side that was weaker in air power, prevailed. In part, this was a reflection of specific Nationalist weaknesses, notably a lack of fuel and spare parts, and poor coordination with troops; but there was also the ability of the Communists to develop the relevant anti-tactics. The latter was a precursor of the situation in the Vietnam War and one to which the Americans devoted insufficient attention. Indeed, at the geo-strategic level, the operational inability to isolate the battlefield by means of air power, one variously seen in Normandy in 1944, in Korea in 1950-53, in Cuba in 1957-58, and in Algeria in 1958-62, undercut the value of strategies proposed in terms of the mass, range and payload of aircraft.

The issues of containment, deterrence and defense were accentuated and brought to the fore in 1950 when, through a Soviet proxy, an attack was launched on South Korea, a state supported by America. In response, in a classic instance of shoring up a system, one that had a political logic, rather than a military one, the NATO Council agreed on December 18, 1950 to a strategy of forward defence which meant holding West Germany against Soviet attack. In turn, this commitment affected planning, deployment, and force requirements, each of which created a dynamic that helped frame a geopolitical context. In America, policymaking, although not always public rhetoric, there was an understanding of the European and East Asia spheres as linked. The need for bases was a key point, but these were now increasingly air force rather than naval, although the latter remained important, as with the continued

significance of Hong Kong and Singapore to British strategy in the Far East: this was geopolitics in a traditional form (Seah 2019).

In contrast, the rail links that had interested Mackinder were not to the fore. Thus, in plans for strategic nuclear bombing, there was reliance on bases in eastern England for attacking St Petersburg and Moscow, and in Cyprus and northern Iraq for attacking Ukraine and southern Russia. Moreover, American policy toward Spain rested heavily on a defence partnership that included air bases, under a 1953 agreement. Similarly, the role of the bases in the Azores helped to explain why, although also not a democracy, Portugal was a founding member of NATO in 1949. The 1951 defence agreement with Iceland, a democratic NATO member, ensured that America could use the base at Keflavik which it, in turn, paid to develop. These and British air bases were crucial both to the resupply of American forces in NATO, and in providing strategic depth in the event of a Soviet advance into Western Europe that overran extensive territory.

For any such Soviet advance, and such advances were presented in fiction, notably in John Hackett's *The Third World War* (1978), the key target was the massive Rhein-Main Air Base, just south of Frankfurt. The base was America's leading air transport terminal in Europe and of key significance for the American presence in West Germany. As a result, the roads focusing on Frankfurt were rapidly repaired and improved after World War Two by the American occupation forces, which was an instance of the important local impact of infrastructure of air power geopolitics. The American network of bases was not restricted to NATO but also seen in Japan, the Philippines, and with the development of large aircraft carriers.

Politics was very important to this process, with reliable allies, such as Britain and Japan, providing the continuity that vindicated the geopolitics of air bases. Elsewhere, there could be difficulties. Thus, for the Western European empires, the retreat of imperial power and the provision of aircraft to independent air forces were linked to continual influence, notably in basing rights, training, and the provision of spares and maintenance. Thus, the Anglo-Ceylonese 1947 Defense Agreement that was part of the independence process allowed Britain to use the island's naval and air facilities in future emergencies, notably the major harbour at Trincomalee. This agreement lasted until the 1956 Suez Crisis led Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) to abrogate the agreement in a protest against British action.

In turn, concerned about the availability of harbour-bases, British planners planned a new emphasis on carrier-based air power deployed in the Indian Ocean, which encouraged navalists to press for a new generation of large carriers. This was another instance of the strengthened maritime component to geopolitics presented by the air age, one that prefigured submarine-launched ballistic missiles. British interest in power projection was shown by the unrealised proposal for a naval base in Western Australia as well as an integrated Commonwealth Far East fleet (Gjessing 2018). In

order to provide a nuclear strike capability, American carriers had their flight decks strengthened in the early 1950s, while steam catapults for launching were used from 1951. Aircraft carrying nuclear bombs required more fuel for their greater range and were therefore heavier.

In domestic geopolitical terms, the political, economic and cultural rise of California were all important to air power. Convair, Lockheed, Douglas, and North American aircraft manufacturers were all concentrated in Los Angeles County. The large-scale components industry expanded this geo-economic and geopolitical weight.

Yet, geopolitics is precisely that, not a geographical determination of politics, but a politics that reflects on geography. Thus, the response to the North Korean invasion of South Korea, and later to Chinese intervention, was far from inevitable. There had been indications in the winter of 1949-50 that America did not see South Korea as within its defence line, but in 1950 there was an American response which Kim Il-Sung of North Korea had not anticipated. In turn, the Korean War strengthened the Western alliance and led to American support of Taiwan. Far from being a controlled limited war, this was a conflict that escalated in unexpected ways and where deterrence did not work. Chinese intervention in late 1950 was a key instance of both.

Politics, moreover, should be understood in the widest sense, as including policy formation and differences within government (Path 2020). Thus, in the early 1950s, there was debate in America not so much, as in the late 1940s, about whether it should commit against Communism, but, rather, how far interventionism should extend. There had been talk of the "roll-back" of the Soviets in Eastern Europe. Indeed, during the 1952 elections, the Republicans, some of whom accused the Truman administrations (1945-53) of having "lost" China, had rejected "containment" as too passive, called for roll-back, and spoke of "captive nations" in Eastern Europe. This was a way to present the government as having squandered the legacy of World War Two.

In reality, American policy in Europe was to be much muted. American Cold War policy as a while was defined in 1953 as a result of Project Solarium, named after the Solarium room in the White House where Eisenhower found his Cabinet and government split on the response to Soviet expansionism and NSC 68 inadequate as a guide. As a result, alternative policy evaluations were considered including a more nuclear posture, and containment was reaffirmed. American nuclear strength was to be built up, but measures short of war followed (Pickett 1985); (Mitrovich 2000). The document itself lacked attention to geographical detail, but, nevertheless, alongside the broader emphases on nuclear strength and alliances, made reference to particular geographical areas. There was reference to holding "vital areas and lines of communication" (5) and the protection of "a mobilization base … adequate to insure victory in the event of general war" (6).
Allies were seen as crucial:

"The effective use of U.S. strategic air power against the USSR will require overseas bases on foreign territory for some years to come. Such basis will continue indefinitely to be an important additional element of U.S. strategic air capability and to be essential to the conduct of the military operations on the Eurasian continent in case of general war. (8) … …. Certain other countries, such as IndoChina or Formosa [Taiwan], are of such strategic importance to the United States that an attack on them probably would compel the United States to react with military force either locally at the point of attack or generally against the military power of the aggressor. (9)."

During the Hungarian Crisis of 1956 there was no military response to the Soviet deployment of forces to crush Hungarian independence. Nevertheless, the discussion of options then and earlier was instructive about how the geopolitics of containment, if such a phrase can be used, did not necessarily mean any particular policy. It also encompassed a number of national traditions such as the Christian imperialism of right-wing Portuguese geopolitics. It was also necessary to bring in change through time. Thus, the need for military cuts in the face of financial difficulties, as for the British navy after the two World Wars and in the 1960s does not really correspond to geopolitical arguments. Nor do the related reconceptualization of the goals and means.

The co-existence of specific strategic geopolitics with options, both over the choice between these as well as their implementation, was also the case with emphases on particular fronts of containment. The key instance was the balance in American commitments between Europe and Asia, in so far as each could be reified. This was not a fixed ratio, nor indeed necessarily a matter of "holding the line" in one area such that the situation was stabilised elsewhere: as with the argument today that Taiwan is being protected in Ukraine.

Another key element of choice was provided by the atomic strategy pursued and the relevant force structure (Braithwaite 2018). In particular, there was the question whether it would be appropriate as well as possible to use tactical nuclear weapons while preventing the cataclysm of a strategic-level, all-out nuclear war. As with other aspects of geopolitics, clarity was less obvious than assertion in this case.

The American sense of a "bomber gap" in the mid-1950s followed the identification of Soviet long-range heavy bombers from 1953. This led to a new geopolitics that focused more closely on the polar routes to vulnerability and attack. In America, there was a stepping up of the bomber program, secret aerial reconnaissance of the Soviet Union, and the construction of extensive early-warning radar systems in Canada designed to warn of Soviet attacks over the Arctic: the Pinetree Network in 1954, and the Distant Early Warning (DEW) and Mid-Canada Lines, both in 1957. The North American Air Defense Command, established in 1958, was important to the development of joint air-defense systems involving America and Canada.

In order to attack over the North Pole, America had constructed a base at Thule in northwest Greenland in 1951-52, a base able to stage and refuel American bombers.

The new geopolitics rested not only on weapons technology, notably the deployment from 1955 of the B-52 Stratofortress with its eight Pratt and Whitney J57-P-IW turbojets, its unrefuelled combat range of 3,600 miles, and its payload of thirty tons of bombs. The capabilities were to be enhanced from the late 1950s by aerial refuelling. Constant airborne B-52 alert flights began in 1958 (Yenne 2012). As a reminder of the multiple military technologies involved in geopolitics, the B-52s were complemented by the four American supercarriers built in 1954-58, as some of their aircraft could carry nuclear bombs, albeit over much shorter ranges.

There was also an intellectual mastering of territory, with the possibilities that offered for a differing intensity for geopolitical knowledge. This took place at a number of levels. The SAGE (Semi-Automatic Ground Environment) Air Defense system established in 1958 reflected American investment in new technology and involved the largest computers ever built. SAGE enabled prediction of the trajectory of aircraft and missiles. The Internet was to be developed and funded by the Defense Department's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in order to help scientists using large computers to communicate with each other (Abbate 1999). At a different scale, in Western Europe, new all-weather aircraft were embedded in a NATO Air Defense Ground Environment, an early-warning system that layered fighters, long-range nuclear missiles, and short-range tactical surface-to-air missiles.

In theoretical terms, there was a confidence that air power had transformed the situation. Air Marshal Sir John Slessor wrote in 1954:

> "Do not let us be distracted by geopolitical talk about heartlands, which was all very well in Mackinder's day but ceased to be relevant with the advent of the long-range bomber." (Slessor 1954, 34; Slessor 1957, 127)

Specific geopolitical factors were mentioned frequently by American commentators during the Cold War. Two obvious ones were the Domino theory and the argument that the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 was a threat to the Western position in the Gulf.

The Domino Effect or Theory argued that the fall of one country in Asia to Communism would lead to that of others. President Dwight Eisenhower enunciated the Domino Theory in a press conference on April 7, 1954. Eisenhower was questioned on the strategic importance of Indochina:

> "First of you, you have the specific value of a locality in its production of materials that the world needs.
> Then you have the possibility that many human beings pass under a dictatorship that is inimical to the free world.
> Finally, you have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the 'falling domino' principle. You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock

over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it
will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration
that would have the most profound influences… the loss of Indochina, of
Burma, of Thailand, of the Peninsula [Malaya], and Indonesia following…
the geographical position achieved thereby does many things. It turns the
so-called island defensive chain of Japan, Formosa [Taiwan], of the Philippines
to the southward; it moves in to threaten Australia and New Zealand.
It takes away, in its economic aspects, that region that Japan must have as a
trading area or Japan, in turn, will have only one place in the world to go – that
is, toward the Communist areas in order to live.
So, the possible consequences of the loss are just incalculable to the free world."
(Office of the Historian 1982; GovInfo 1954)

The image of the Domino theory, one readily taken from a game, an image which
was easy to communicate to politicians and public, encouraged the American
government to take a greater interest in the course and consequence of the
Western retreat from empire. The Communist takeover in China was followed by
effective Chinese support for the anti-French insurrection in IndoChina. This led
to American financial support for the French. In turn, once the Communists had
taken over in North Vietnam in 1954, the Americans were concerned that a failure
to support South Vietnam and to neutralise Laos would lead to the further spread of
Communism in South-East Asia.

The Domino Theory also lay behind American-backed intervention in Cuba in
1961 in the Bay of Pigs episode, as it was feared that the island would be the basis
for the spread of Soviet influence in Latin America. This intervention, and its total
defeat at the Bay of Pigs, was also an instance of "roll back" and a warning about
its vulnerability; although, looked at differently, there was a failure to provide
sufficient force, notably air cover, to this end. Yet again, this discussion underlined
the essentially politicised nature of the discussion of geopolitics and the difficulty of
applying the concepts without such politicisation.

The Domino Effect was also offered in support of Western commitments in the
Mediterranean and Middle East. Thus, American troops were sent to Lebanon in
1958 in response to the Eisenhower Doctrine announced in 1957 in which America
promised aid against the spread of Communism. Already, in 1957, assistance had
accordingly been provided to Jordan, although the Doctrine was not formally
advanced in this case. The American deployment in 1958 was instrumental to
the end of the crisis (Hahn 2006). The British deployment of forces to Jordan the
same year was part of the same anti-Egyptian stance (Tal 1995), and was followed
by military support for Kuwait against Iraqi expansionist claims in 1961. These
interventions were both responses to crises in particular countries, and designed to
prevent a sequential collapse of pro-Western governments. Thus, Kuwait was seen as
the forward-place for the Gulf.

In practice, geopolitical linkages were complex. Thus, as a prime instance of the complex nature of outcomes, the Vietnam War indeed led to the Communist takeover of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia; but not of Thailand nor Malaysia. At a different level, that of priorities, in 1965-6, during the Vietnam War, America had supported the military overthrow of the left-leaning nationalist government of Indonesia, the setting for the non-aligned 1955 Asia-Africa Conference at Bandung, and its replacement by a pro-Western government. This provided the West with a strategic depth for South-East Asia, and the geopolitical consequences thus of defeat in the Vietnam War were lessened greatly. The extent to which this transition could be readily conceptualised in terms of a movement or thickening of the "Rimland" is more instructive about the difficulties of applying geopolitical ideas.

At the same time, the relative ease with which Indonesia, a large state, the fourth most populous in the world, and one with significant natural resources, notably oil, transformed its affiliations posed a question-mark about the idea of two coherent blocks and also an obvious interplay of "Heartland" and "Rimland." Moreover, as another instance of the same, the Vietnam War was soon followed by Vietnam at war with China and its protégés in Cambodia. This war began with rivalry with the protégés which, in turn, led to a full-scale Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1978 to which China replied in 1979 by attacking Vietnam. As in the case of so many geopolitical analyses, it is possible to present this crisis in two lights. One involved China trying to prevent encirclement by the Soviet Union and its Vietnamese protégé. The other was of China also trying to anchor American support by presenting itself as a clear opponent of the Soviet Union (O'Dowd 2007; Zhang 2015).

Indeed, the plasticity of geopolitics was fully demonstrated by the Sino-Soviet split and its consequences. This took precedence over geopolitics focused on the containment of Communism. In part, the Vietnam War provided China and the Soviet Union with the opportunity to pursue and test their rivalry, alongside weakening America or at least committing its forces to what was a diversion as far as China and, even more, the Soviet Union was concerned.

Such diversionary consequences proved difficult to translate to geopolitical models as the latter, notably those of containment, offered little in the form of prioritisation between tasks and opportunities. Indeed, the prioritisation became central to the debate that surrounded the application of the models. The debate sounds more coherent than debates, for, in practice, the habit of contesting priorities and ideas was far from formalised. Again, debate pushed politics to the fore. Moreover, such models said little about the psychological elements that played such a significant role in deciding where to make commitments, and to what extent. An instance in the case of the Kennedy administration (1961-63) was the Catholic anti-Communism that influenced the President, notably in the cases of Cuba and Vietnam. This Catholic anti-Communism was a potent but multi-faceted ideological continuum that operated in many contexts from interwar Europe to Poland in the 1980s.

As such, geopolitics was a part of the total history of the age, and lacked a single trajectory. The latter was sought by the Soviet Union, which saw itself as at the revolutionary forefront, but found itself unable to control the course of developments. This was latent from the outset in the tension between a uni-directional party philosophy and practice, and the frictions offered by a variety of circumstances and by the moves of others.

There was a geostrategic mismatch over Vietnam. The Soviet Union provided aid to the North Vietnamese, notably surface-to-air missiles which increased the risk and cost of using American airpower, but both were modest compared to the American commitment. Convenience played a role. The Americans could intervene in Vietnam as they could not in inland Laos, which had been central to an international crisis in 1962 when America opposed Communist advance. Inland states could attract American intervention as did Afghanistan from 2001, but could also enjoy a measure of protection, as with the Serbian position in Kosovo in 1999. In South Vietnam, the Americans benefited from the major cities being on or near the coast. Ports provided a transoceanic lift that air power could not. At the same time, carriers could offer air power that was closer than land bases in for example Guam and Thailand. This meant that it was easier to replace fuel and weapons load more rapidly. More generally, carriers offered a different geopolitics, one free of concerns about adequate airbases, overflight rights, and maintenance. Aerial refuelling also extended range in a way that changed geopolitical considerations based on simple measures of range.

For political reasons, America could not attack the effective industrial capacity of North Vietnam which was located in China and the Soviet Union. But, the commitment to Vietnam was pushed to the fore in order to show that America could, would and therefore must act, and would not be dissuaded by the difficulties of the task, the use of the conflict as a proxy war and diversionary powers, by the Communist great powers, domestic or international criticism, or the search for a possible political settlement. This was a geopolitics of attitude, which indeed in a prime form of geopolitics.

One significant aspect of the situation was the American refusal to accept the degree to which they shared the space and the initiative with their opponents, and did so in a fashion that varied across Vietnam, with physical and human geographies both playing a role, as they had also done in previous conflicts (Lentz 2019; Jensen and Stith 2019). Indeed, this was a classic instance of conflict as geopolitics, with the latter understood as operating at a different scale to the conventional one. On a model used elsewhere, as in China, there was a determination by the Communists to use violence in order to win social control, weakening opponents by the assassination of their leaders, and other measures of intimidation that ensured that the government forces operated in what in effect was a vacuum. This was a geopolitics of the localities, one, common to insurgencies, in which there was a determination to force the government troops back to their bases and thus create a secure basis for the operation of the insurgents.

This sharing came to the fore with the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Tet offensive of early 1968, a surprise assault that caused major difficulties but was defeated. Again, the latter demonstrated the significance of attitudes. However misleadingly, the offensive contributed greatly, within America, in its alliance system, and more widely, to a sense of crisis in the American world order, a crisis that suggested that America was losing the Cold War and certainly the initiative. Given the significance of impressions to willpower, in this case to a degree geopolitics meant a field of battle, notably the contested city of Hué, that had clear political consequences.

So also, at least in design, with the American air attack on North Vietnam. Again there was a fusion of place and policy, creating a geopolitics that was turned into a strategy. American policymakers, seeking to contain the struggle, were reluctant to pursue the open targeting of an all-out, sub-nuclear, assault. Instead, there was a belief that the measures taken from 1965 could help determine North Vietnamese choices and resolve. That was not in the event the case.

The large-scale American use of aircraft represented a stand-off application of violence which contrasted with the standard aspect of insurrectionary warfare, namely a determination to close any such gaps. This was more generally the contrast between geostrategies involved in asymmetrical warfare.

At the same time, global geopolitics was being totally reshaped by Sino-Soviet struggles. Focusing on the "Third World", Mao Zedong, the Chinese leader, claimed that the real division was between North and South, not West and East, and argued that the Soviet project was like that of the Western powers, that they both pursued imperialism. Border conflict in 1969 made the rift readily apparent and thereby altered global geopolitics for all powers. This greatly complicated the theme of civilisational, or at least essential, struggle between Communist and non-Communist blocs. In turn, the range of Communist strategies now on offer encouraged a sense of flux, one that that accentuated the possibilities for a range of non-Communist strategies, as with West German *Ostpolitik*, a reaching-out for better relations with East Germany, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union that was intended to bring stability. Thus, the inner-German border between East and West Germany became, in West German eyes, a would-be zone for conciliation as well as confrontation. There were other elements at play including a decreased reliance on America that possibly prefigures current tendencies, and notably if Donald Trump becomes President anew.

In addition, the factor of politics was present at the time with the SPD (Social Democratic Party) under Willy Brandt (r. 1969-74), the first SPD Chancellor of West Germany, seeking better relations with Eastern Europe, a process continued under his SPD successor Helmut Schmidt (r. 1974-82). This was not so much a reaction against the Atlanticism of the previous Christian Democrat Chancellors as a bringing to the fore as well of another tendency in German geopolitics, but in a particular political context. The Russian question has been one for German leaders since the early eighteenth century when the buffers of the Swedish empire and a strong Poland

collapsed in the face of repeated Russian successes. *Ostpolitik* could appear as another iteration of the compromise of Russia, if not, to critics, propitiation, following (very differently) Bismarck, Weimar in the 1920s and (briefly) Hitler; but that was not how it appeared to the SPD leaders.

This situation highlighted the degree to which the period of an apparent clear-cut and clearly formed geopolitical antagonism of the 1950s was exceptional, rather than the norm. This was a theme that was to be exploited by Henry Kissinger, National Security Advisor in 1969-75 and Secretary of State in 1973-77, who sought to exploit the clashing geopolitical interests of China and Soviet Union. As such, Kissinger underplayed the extent of ideological, political and cultural tension within the Communist bloc: his *realpolitik* was another form of misleading rationalism.

The development of the range of weaponry in the age of aircraft and missiles altered the varied factors of geography. This was demonstrated in the Cuban missile crisis. Whereas in 1898, when America and Spain had fought over Cuba, the time constraints for intelligence gathering and transmission, and for force deployment and movement, were set by the technologies of the steam age, in 1962 the air age provided much more rapid moves, as in the U-2 flights over Cuba, the processing of the resulting information, and the preparations for attack. This did not, however, necessarily increase the ability to understand and, separately, control events. Indeed, effective crisis management in a speeded-up environment is both difficult and makes it harder to decide what is entailed by the geopolitical context and even conjuncture.

Contrasting national legacies, priorities, and opportunities added to the complexity. Thus, in military terms, America and Britain continued to place an emphasis in the 1950s on strategic bombing, one greatly enhanced by the availability of nuclear weapons. In contrast, although the Soviet Union had effective long-range bombers and an expanding navy, as it had not done during World War Two, the stress there was on the army and on ground support for it from the aircraft. For all these powers, the planned application of nuclear weaponry moved from aircraft to missiles.

In China, the stress was also on land forces. There, the legacy of World War Two, when air operations in China against Japan had been handled by the Americans, was compounded by the revolutionary character of Maoist military thought which also emphasised such forces and had an anti-technological dimension, even though there was also a commitment to new weaponry, certainly in the forms of jet aircraft and missiles.

Assumptions about the military context, notably in the form of specific national strategic cultures, were expressed by the spatial organisations of forces, not only their deployment but also the structural allocation of units in terms of land, sea and air commands. These were tied to strategic tasks and clarified geopolitical areas of concern and commitment. This was seen for example in the command structures of NATO, the Warsaw Pact, and individual states, notably America, as with the

establishment of United States Atlantic Command and Indo-Pacific Command, both in 1947, and (differently) of Central Command in 1983. Moreover, zones of concern, such as NATO's Sea Lines of Communication defence zone, and the comparable Soviet Bastion-defence zone to protect the submarine concentration on the Kola peninsula, helped shape planning and thus created a relevant geopolitics, however misleading this might be in terms of intentions in the event of conflict. Thus, the Soviets were less interested in challenging North Atlantic sea lanes than NATO believed (Dismukes 2020).

In addition, the spatial organisations of joint commands reflected a strong awareness of the value of joint operations, notably of air-sea co-operation, but also of its counterparts. In part, geopolitics in this form was therefore an aspect of force structure, and a way to foster a designed outcome. This was an instance of geopolitics as organisational context and, to a degree, content.

The *realpolitik* of détente in the early and mid-1970s was replaced in the late 1970s by a growing American return under President Jimmy Carter (1977-81) to confrontation. The Persian and Afghan crises provided a geopolitical context to this shift. However, there was also a rejection by Carter of the Soviet system, one based on his opposition to the Soviet stance on human rights (Nichols 2002).

The Cold War came to a renewed apex of tension in the early 1980s, with nuclear war apparently a prospect in 1983. There were more specific conflicts in Afghanistan, Central America, Angola, and the Middle East. In each case, the major power had only limited control over its protégés, but there was a sense that for America or the Soviet Union to permit failure on the part of its protégés would be to endanger credibility and therefore the entire system. In this respect, there was not so much the geopolitics of specific zones and particular concerns, but rather a geopolitics in which everything was involved, and, once made, commitments were difficult to reverse.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 was a classic instance of the difficulties with simplistic geopolitical modelling of the "geography is destiny" type. It also provided an example of the limited value in moving in commentary from the conjunctural to the historical, for the latter was frequently deployed as a context, with extensive reference to the "Great Game" of Anglo-Russian competition in the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth. In practice, a number of factors played a role in an intervention that had really begun not as a consequence of a Soviet masterplan, but as a result of short-term tensions in Afghan politics coming to a bloody inconstancy. In 1973, Zahir Shah, the monarch, was overthrown by his cousin and brother-in-law Mohammed Daoud Khan, a former Prime Minister. Backed by a group of Soviet-trained officers, this was a coup for modernisation, as also with the overthrow of monarchy in Egypt (1952) and Iraq (1958). Khan was willing to accommodate the Soviet Union, and the coup was seen as an extension of Soviet influence. It increased, but he was a nationalist, not a Communist.

In turn, in the Saur Revolution in 1978, Daoud was overthrown and killed in a coup mounted by the Soviet-backed People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. The misnomer-nature of the Party was rapidly displayed in the rebellions provoked by its unpopular forcible modernisation. These rebellions were met with brutality by the divided government, which itself had a coup from within in September 1979. This was unwelcome to the Soviet government.

How that situation accorded with geopolitical modelling was unclear, and indeed Afghanistan received scant attention from the international commentariat. It was an unstable client state, but one of limited consequence compared to Iran where the pro-Western Shah had been overthrow in January 1979. Indeed, it was the latter that focused American regional concern, not least with greater anxiety about the Persian Gulf.

Indeed, this anxiety captured the extent to which Cold War geopolitics were far less focused and consistent than might be suggested by a phrase of that type. The Americans devoted much of their attention not to the Soviet Union but to a string of lesser powers. Some, notably China, North Korea, North Vietnam and Cuba, could be fitted into the model by reference to Soviet influence. However, this model and Communist ideology were of no value with understanding Iran and were of scant use with Iraq, a Soviet ally but very much driven by its dictator, including in an opposition to Iran that led to a major war in 1980-88, an opposition that suited American interests. Concern about the Iranian Revolution helped provide America with a motive that drew also on economic interest in the shape of oil supplies, but the establishment of U.S. Central Command as an organising body for the American military commitment in the region, in turn, encouraged a hostile American response to a range of developments that would probably have better been approached indirectly (Bacevich 2016).

Meanwhile, encouraging concern with Middle Eastern developments, the oil crisis of 1979 contributed to a global economic downturn that helped America into recession in 1980. More specifically as a mood-setter, the humiliation of the failure to rescue the American hostages held captive by Iranian radicals in the American Embassy in Tehran, especially the unsuccessful rescue mission of April 1980, produced a sense of failure, with geopolitics shrinking to the significance of an inherently minor episode, prefiguring the later response to American losses (18 killed) in the Black Hawk Down incident in Mogadishu, Somalia in 1993. The deadly Islamic terrorist attack son New York and Washington in 2001 were far more major incidents, but again captured a shrinking of geopolitics in that the far-ranging response of the "War on Terror" was triggered by a highly specific incident.

The more general international situation had changed as a result of the responses to the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 in which the government was violently overthrown and a protégé installed. This provided the direct Cold War action conspicuously lacking in Iran where the theocratic revolutionaries kept the Soviet Union at a distance. Indeed, the Ayatollah Khomeini,

the leader of the Islamic Revolution and the Guardian of the Islamic Republic, described the Soviet Union as "the other Great Satan." Furthermore, when, two days after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Soviet envoy in Iran promised Khomeini assistance in any conflict with America, he was told that there could be no mutual understanding between a Muslim nation and a non-Muslim government. This was a very different, religious, geopolitics to that which was conventionally understood; but such a geopolitics was of great longevity.

As an instance of the number of factors involved, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan arose from a number of factors. A key one was that of an unstable borderland, the factor that had also led to the invasions of Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968). There was an unwillingness to see a client state collapse and a fear that problems could spill over into Soviet Tajikistan. More generally, Central Asia had a religious and cultural identity that Russian rule and Sovietisation had lessened but not ended. There was also anxiety that the Afghan government might turn to China, thus extending the threat to Soviet borderlands.
In terms of a Soviet "advance", there was the military dimension of closer air proximity to the Gulf, but also the ability to put pressure on neighboring Pakistan, an ally of China and an enemy of India, a key Soviet ally.

As so often with geopolitics, it was not so much the action, both intention and implementation, that was the key element, but, instead, the response, again both attitude and action. Western alarmism was accompanied by pressure for action, both there and elsewhere. In his State of the Union Address to Congress in January 1980, President Jimmy Carter warned that the Afghan invasion "could pose the most serious threat to peace since the Second World War," which was an exaggeration that testified to the alarmism of the period and that looked toward the exaggeration of the country's significance by American policymakers in the early twenty-first century. The Soviet invasion was treated not as a frontier policing operation designed to ensure a pliant government, but as an act of aggression that had to be countered for containment to work. This view drew on a tendency, seen throughout the Cold War, to exaggerate Soviet political ambitions and military capability. In part, this reflected the degree to which there is very little politically that can be gained from arguing that threats are being exaggerated. Instead, it is the opposite that is the case.

There is no simple divide here between "military" and "politicians." Instead, both can be reified in a misleading fashion and one, moreover, that ignores the degree to which military leaders are also politicians. As such, the extent to which they were able to present their views was significant and varied, both by state and also with time. Institutional and political changes, for example in Britain the loss of the separate service ministries in 1964, were highly relevant in this process (Wells 2017). In part, geopolitical arguments were an aspect of the process of lobbying or politicking by defence politicians.

However, pushing geopolitical conceptions to the fore and comparably encouraging the idea of strategic culture, it was difficult for the Americans to acquire accurate information about the Soviet Union, whether over Afghanistan or more generally. The Soviet Union was a closed society with a determination to keep policy differences as well as its capabilities secret. So also with China.

This acute tension was to be reversed as relations improved between America and the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, with Soviet forces withdrawing from Afghanistan and, as part of the end of the Cold War, a marked reduction in differences over Angola and Central America. These became both preludes and accompaniments to an unravelling that extended, in an unintended fashion, to the end of the Communist position in Eastern Europe in 1989 and, then, in 1991, to the fall of the Soviet Union. To Vladimir Putin, in his state of the nation address in 2005, this "was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century", had left many millions of Russians living in foreign countries (an argument employed by German revanchists in the 1920s and 1930s), and had fostered separatist movements within Russia. As with many statements employing geopolitics, there was no real suggestion of any precise usage, but, rather, the application, for, although geopolitical thinkers saw themselves as influential, geopolitics as practical is rather about assumptions and actions than the application of theory. The idea of geopolitical defeat, however, was an important one, and it helped explain the link for Russia from the Cold War to a humiliating and dangerous postwar situation that had to be remedied. Thus, geopolitics became a term meaning "should-be," as is more generally the case. The difference is provided by the degree to which commentators accept this point, one shared with the related concept of strategic culture.

The geopolitics of the 1980s had a strong geofinancial character. The marked expansion of capital availability in the world made it possible to cover the ever-widening federal deficit in America, one that owed much to a failure to increase taxation in order to fund expenditure. This had been the case with the Vietnam War and was also so with the Reaganite arms buildup in the 1980s. The reinvestment of oil revenues in America ensured that petrodollars became a measure of American influence and, in turn, meant that it was necessary for America to maintain its position in the Middle East.

Similarly, the beneficiaries of East Asia economic growth, particularly Japan which had become the world's second largest economy, invested in America, thus helping the Americans to finance imports from East Asia and, in particular, to draw on both the economic growth of Japan and the strategic asset of Chinese co-operation. Moreover, under the American umbrella, there were no serious issues in dispute between China and Japan. The Soviet refusal to make any concession over returning to Japan the Kurile Islands, seized in 1945, ensured that the Soviets passed up the possibility of massive Japanese investment in the Soviet Far East, which therefore remained undeveloped and unable to threaten China or to offset the American-Chinese *rapprochement*.

The geopolitical alignment with capital-rich East Asia and the Middle East was encouraged by the ending in 1984 by the Reagan government of the witholding tax on interest on income paid to non-residents. This encouraged the large-scale foreign purchase of Treasury bonds which helped contain inflation and finance rising military expenditure. Moreover, attractive American interest rates in the 1980s kept the demand strong and ensured that global capital flows focused on America, which put heavy pressures on the states that had borrowed heavily in the 1970s, notably in Eastern Europe, but also in South America. In a sense, the 1980s helped bring further to fruition American hopes in the mid-1940s that economic liberalism would spread American influence.

Indeed, America's vulnerability to domestic discontent or division over the geopolitical confrontations of the Cold War were assuaged by the ability to fund its commitments. This ability had hit a crisis in the early 1970s with the heavy burden of Vietnam added to other Cold War commitments, notably in Europe, South Korea and the Mediterranean, and these impacting on an economy affected by declining effectiveness vis-à-vis the rising competitiveness of West Germany and Japan in a context of fixed exchange rates, and then the shock of the oil price hike. There had been a slow post-crisis economic and financial restrengthening, before the fresh public finance pressures of Reaganomics, but the potential flaws of the latter in geoeconomic terms were lessened by the widespread stakes, domestic and international, in the system. The collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989-91 helped ensure that the much-discussed American policy drawbacks of the 1980s did not culminate in failure.

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BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

The right of the Republic of Moldova to defense and some aspects of defensive capabilities

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Abstract

Although it has declared itself a neutral state, the Republic of Moldova is compelled to consider potential sources of military threats. Defense is a fundamental and distinct field of national security, aiming to achieve national interests and the processes of political, economic, and social development of the state. According to international law, the Republic of Moldova has the right to defend and ensure its military security by all means at its disposal. It is legal to maintain Armed Forces, built on the principle of defensive sufficiency, for the defense of sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, as well as for the annihilation of armed conflicts and other acts of violence within the country that endanger the constitutional order.

Keywords:

After the war on the Dniester River in 1992, the citizens of the Republic of Moldova remain under a series of risks and threats of a military nature, such as the possibility of hostile use of the military and paramilitary forces by the regime on the left bank of the Dniester River; the presence of the operative group of Russian troops and military infrastructure on the territory of the Republic of Moldova; the possibility of the war in Ukraine to extend close to the border of the Republic of Moldova; information attacks (operations); cyber-attacks; terrorist attacks; illicit arms trafficking; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as the trafficking of their components; illegal migration (The Government of the Republic of Moldova 2018). The need for citizens' safety through the prism of the Republic of Moldova's right to defense is even more current now that, starting on February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation has launched a war against Ukraine, which has a direct impact on regional security in general and the Republic of Moldova in particular.

The right of defense and defensive sufficiency

The Republic of Moldova, by Art.11 of the Constitution, declared itself a neutral state. However, international law allows all states to use armed force as a last resort to counteract acts of aggression. States thus can use their armed forces against other states that violate international law to defend their territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty and to punish the aggressor. In this sense, they are entitled to adopt appropriate measures in their territory that allow them to achieve the stated goals. The Charter of the United Nations Organization (UNO) also recognizes the right to self-defense of each state which, in case of aggression, is entitled to retaliate by all the means at its disposal, either individually or together with other states which are in bilateral or multilateral political-military alliance relations, for the provision of mutual aid in case of an armed attack. Article 51 of the UN Charter provides the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense in the event of an attack against a UN member state (United Nations 1945).

At the same time, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova, on May 2, 2017, through its Decision on the interpretation of Art.11 of the Constitution (permanent neutrality), mentions that in case of threats to fundamental constitutional values, such as national independence, territorial integrity or state security, the authorities of the Republic of Moldova are obliged to take all necessary measures, including military ones, which would allow them to defend against these threats effectively (Constitutional Court 2017).

Thus, the Republic of Moldova has the right to defend and to ensure its military security by all the means at its disposal, considering it legal and necessary to have Armed Forces for the defense of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, the annihilation of armed conflicts and other acts of violence within the country that endanger the constitutional order (The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova 1994,

art. 57, art. 108). In this sense, the defense of the Motherland is a right and a sacred duty of every citizen, and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova represent the people's will to be defended and have constitutional provenance.

In this context, the Armed Forces must maintain the sufficient composition and capacity that allows them, in peacetime, to be the guarantor of statehood, neutrality and constitutional democracy, and from the moment the premises of the real aggression appear – to deploy through mobilization that would guarantee the defense of the country and the coercion of the aggressor to give up their plans. The law on national defense stipulates that the forces of the national defense system are constituted on the principle of defensive sufficiency (The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova 2003). The principle of sufficiency to ensure military security, or defensive sufficiency, or reasonable sufficiency for defense is characteristic of the building policy of the Armed Forces of all neutral countries. The implementation of the principle of defensive sufficiency in the military-strategic sphere implies granting a defensive character of the military doctrine, compliance with international treaty quotas, imitation in the general structure of offensive formations, etc. (Academic 2010).

Defensive sufficiency can be determined as the military capability of a state (a coalition of states), which ensures the deterrence of a potential adversary from aggression and, as the case may be, its rejection, but excludes the ability to launch a surprise attack and conduct large-scale offensive operations without further deployment of the armed forces and the implementation of other measures to strengthen their combat power. Defensive sufficiency also requires resolute suppression of external and internal provocations and violations of the inviolability of the state border and airspace, contributes to the increase of national authority and the effectiveness of political, diplomatic, economic and other measures and efforts of non-violent acts that contribute to ensuring their own and international security.

We can consider the most important objective criteria that express the defensive sufficiency: a peaceful foreign policy that recognizes the role of military force only as a means of repelling aggression; the open defensive nature of military policy, military doctrine and strategic concepts of the armed forces, which do not provoke opposing states to increase their military power; the numerical strength and defensive structure of the armed forces, which are not excessively burdensome to the economy; as well as the predominant development of some types of defensive weapons, which together should preclude the possibility of using the armed forces to conduct large-scale offensive combat operations (Makarenko 2000).

The level of defensive sufficiency is determined by several factors: the nature and extent of possible potential sources of military danger, the size of the territory, the geostrategic position, the availability of resources, and the political and military-strategic objectives of the state. Therefore, defensive sufficiency means such a state in the relations between states, in which the amount and capacity of the military

forces of a state are sufficient to ensure its security but insufficient to attack another state. With such an understanding of the principle of defensive sufficiency, we can conclude that the state must adjust its defense efforts to the international situation to the norms of contemporary international law.

Some aspects of defensive capabilities

The principle of defensive sufficiency, a legal category, should be established in the state's laws and expresses the basis of its military policy. We aim to examine some capabilities of defensive sufficiency, which determine the quality of the Armed Forces, such as the number of active military personnel, the number of trained reservists, and the quantity and quality of equipment and armaments compared to neutral countries.

The Republic of Moldova has the smallest army in Europe compared to its population. There is a need for a new approach and economic support capacity, which will bring into perspective a new structure of the National Army and a numerical force at the level of the standards of neutral countries. Sweden and Finland are under consideration until the time of application for NATO membership. For example, Finland's army has 23,000 soldiers in a population of approximately 5 million, which is 0.4%. Sweden has an army of 21,200 soldiers or a share of 0.3% for a population of over 10 million; Austria has an army of 23,000 soldiers for a population of 8.8 million, which is 0.3%. Regarding the National Army, which currently has 6,500 soldiers, based on the factors that influence defensive sufficiency through the lens of the population, it should be approximately between 7,800 and 10,400 people for a population of 2.6 million (The Government of the Republic of Moldova 2023a).

Increasing the number of the army's soldiers during peacetime is also necessary due to the considerations of reforming the Border Guard Service into the Border Police and removing it from the Armed Forces, as well as reducing the number of personnel of the General Carabineer Inspectorate. These reform actions reduced the number of military personnel in the Armed Forces by approximately 6000 persons compared to 2012. The tasks that these structures performed in the interest of the Armed Forces remained in the care of the National Army. Thus, objective 9.2.10 – the gradual increase in the number of contract soldiers provided in the National Development Plan for 2023-2025, must be seen as an increase in numbers over the current army situation (The Government of the Republic of Moldova 2023c).

To ensure the execution of combat missions according to the destination, the National Army was equipped with military equipment mostly inherited from the former Soviet Army. It was equipped with 208 combat vehicles on wheels and tracks (Cibotaru 2015). Of the artillery equipment, there were 69 M-30, 2A36, D-20 towed guns, 9 2S9 self-propelled howitzers and 59 82 mm and 120 mm launchers (10)

(fandom.com 2015). The National Army received 85 transport trucks and 43 multipurpose vehicles from the US as part of the Technical Assistance Program. China donated 13 cars for military logistics (Mihailovici 2015).

On October 30, 1992, the Republic of Moldova ratified the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which established comprehensive limits for key categories of conventional military equipment and provided requirements for the destruction of the weapons that exceeded these limits. In its military construction policies, the Republic of Moldova did not exceed these limits, and some were not even provided, such as tanks, attack helicopters, and others. According to this treaty, the Republic of Moldova has the following limits: max.210 units of battle tanks; max.210 units of armored fighting vehicles; max.250 units of artillery; max.50 units of fighter jets; max.50 units of attack helicopters (The Government of the Republic of Moldova 1992).
We will mention that the Russian Federation first suspended its participation in 2015. On May 10, 2023, it launched the procedures for the official denunciation of the treaty. On May 29, 2023, the Russian president promulgated the law regarding Russia's denunciation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) (Croitman 2023).

If we analyze, as an example, the proportion of tanks and combat vehicles in the Armed Forces of neutral countries per 1000 soldiers, we will find the following situation: the Republic of Moldova (without tanks) has 32 units, Finland has 100 units, and Sweden has 164 units. The Republic of Moldova has 3-5 times less armored vehicles for infantry. The same proportion is appreciated for other military equipment (Global Fire Power 2022). I noticed that the Republic of Moldova has no fighter jets and combat helicopters. In contrast, Austria has 15 fighter jets and 63 combat helicopters, Finland has 55 fighter jets and 20 combat helicopters, and Sweden has 71 fighter jets and 53 combat helicopters.

At the same time, we would like to mention that the equipment provided by the Army lags in comparable quality and requires refreshing due to the expired term of its operation. Refreshment is a mandatory process in maintaining the capabilities required by the military. For example, the term of exploitation and of being in the army equipment of armored vehicles and artillery is 40 years and more, provided that the instructions for exploitation and capital repairs, which are mandatory, are followed. This fact also dictates the planning of periodic re-equipment with new types of weaponry to meet the new combat requirements (Tkachev, Khrustalev and Rassadin 2009).

The Agreement signed between the Ministry of Defense and the Government of Germany is included in the actions to modernize the capabilities of the National Army. It provides the reception in 2023 of a batch of 19 Piranha 3 armored personnel carriers. The carriers will be used in the training process of the military and deployed in international peacekeeping missions (Ministry of Defence 2023a). Thus, carrying out modernization actions and acquisitions of new weapons systems instead of those

that have already completed their life cycle for the National Army, even keeping the number, is an actuality; it fits the principle of defensive sufficiency and is not the militarization of as stated by sources of hostile propaganda.

In this context, the Ministry of Defense has taken some actions for effective communication in combating more fake news and disinformation. We will mention a few: NATO and Romania „will invade" the Republic of Moldova; neutrality is what defends us, and we do not need the National Army, relations with NATO and other international organizations; the mobilization and combat training exercises and the modernization of the National Army are preparations to attack Transnistria; the Republic of Moldova is preparing to mobilize its population and attack Transnistria together with Romania; the US is building military objectives in Moldova; NATO is building a military base in Moldova and others.

In order to combat the disinformation, communication was ensured with media sources from the leadership of the Ministry of Defense and prompt answers were provided under the generic „StopFals" on the sites *stopfals.md* and *army.md*, the communication of the spokesperson of the Ministry of Defense was launched and others. Also, the Ministry of Defense, both at the level of the leadership of the institution and military units, as well as its military administrative structures in the territory, facilitated communication with civil society and citizens to ensure understanding of the National Army's functions and role in ensuring military security, the army training system, development needs, and multilateral assurance.

In peacetime, the Republic of Moldova cannot afford to maintain an army according to its structure, numerically supplemented with personnel and equipment that must correspond to the state's maximum military risk - war. The army's capabilities are staggered depending on the magnitude of the risk and the tasks facing it to respond to this risk. For this purpose, the mobilization of the army is carried out, which, through organization and assurance, represents an aspect of defensive sufficiency.

In the ranking for the annual review of the human potential of the defense „Global Fire Power" for the year 2020, the Republic of Moldova is in 112th place out of 138 countries that were taken into account. The comparative table of available manpower shows a potential of 60 thousand reservists who can be put under arms during mobilization. It should be noted that the same ranking for 2021 places us on the 107th place out of 140 countries, also mentioning a potential of 60 thousand reservists. For 2022 and 2023, they mention us with a potential of 12 thousand active reservists and 1 thousand paramilitaries (Global Fire Power 2023). For example, neutral countries like Austria are ranked 23rd, with a potential of 160 thousand reservists in a population of 8.8 million, and Finland is ranked 4th with a potential active reserve of 900 thousand in a population of 5 million (Global Fire Power 2023). From this perspective, the Republic of Moldova should have a minimum potential of 47 thousand active reservists and a maximum of 450 thousand.

Thus, it is necessary to ask the question of an analysis of the capacities to call this number of reservists under arms. The presented calculations do not consider the fact that there is a big problem because many reservists are working abroad, and the remaining ones have lost the benchmarks of values they must sacrifice. Also, a significant issue is the demographic situation, which influenced the reduction of the number of men who can be mobilized (The Government of the Republic of Moldova 2019). This situation affects the human resources of the army for both active and reserve military service. We will mention that in neutral countries, compulsory military service is kept, being considered the main form of training of citizens for the defense of the Motherland and the preparation of the reserve.

We must restore the ability to bring our reservists under arms if necessary. It is a complex problem at the state level, the examination of which belongs to the competencies of the Government of the Republic of Moldova. Today, the specifics of the country's defense missions and the new requirements for ensuring the state's security emphasize the military's professionalism. Under this aspect, mobilized reservists must also be trained professionals; people taken together and without training no longer have a place in the mobilization system.

In this context, we will mention that in the legislation of other states, a distinct form of performing military service is military service in reserve, which can be performed by a volunteer reservist or a reservist from the general reserve (Parliament of Romania 2006). In the national legislation, Law no. 1245 of 18.07.2002, regarding the preparation of citizens for the defense of the Homeland (The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova 2002), we need a separate chapter, „military service in reserve", which is currently limited to the formula „military service as concentrated reservists or mobilized". This approach provides for its existence only after receiving the summons. The experience of other states in the organization of military service in reserve implies a complex amount of activities and responsibilities assigned to the reservist in peacetime, particularly for the volunteer reservists.

An essential role in ensuring that national defense is played by the territorial defense forces, for which we can identify several defining missions: participation in the liquidation of the consequences of exceptional situations; granting aid to the territorial structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to ensure constitutional order when a state of siege and war is declared; guarding objects of national and local importance in the territory; ensuring the needs of the components of the Armed Forces involved in combat actions. To carry out the missions stated above requires forces in organizational structures supplemented by reservists with a certain degree of training and an appropriate endowment. These forces, in various forms, are organized in several states.

In Ukraine, the components of national resistance are territorial defense, the resistance movement, and the preparation of citizens of Ukraine for national

resistance. The essential thing is that the Territorial Defense Forces in Ukraine are not only formed when the state of war is declared but are created in peacetime and operate according to the missions established by law. In the Republic of Moldova, the fundamentals of territorial defense are laid out in the Regulation on the Territorial Defense of the Republic of Moldova, which requires an evaluation, both at the implementation level and the system's improvement.

For these reasons, we need to change the optics of the perception of defense capabilities, of the principle of defensive sufficiency, from not only the supervision of the Armed Forces but to their support, so that they correspond to the capabilities necessary for the execution of constitutional tasks to guarantee the sovereignty, independence and unity, territorial integrity of the country and constitutional democracy (The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova 1994).

The provision of financial resources is essential in achieving the defense policy's objectives. The perspective of increasing the amount of financial allocations established in the National Defense Strategy for the National Army will only allow – in the long term – reaching the level of ambition set by the Military Strategy. For this reason, after the approval of the Military Strategy, the Ministry of Defense developed a long-term military capabilities development plan (for 2020-2030), which contains detailed actions, including the related costs, for the development of the necessary military capabilities.

The war in Ukraine required a comprehensive analysis of the security sector and the development of a new National Security Strategy. In this approach, supporting the National Army becomes an imperative necessity. President Maia Sandu, at the 30th anniversary ceremony of the founding of the General Staff, emphasized that our country needs a functional and modern army, now, more than ever, capable of responding to the challenges of the time. For this, the authorities must invest in the military infrastructure and in providing the workforce with whatever is necessary. „The military must have adequate working and living conditions if we want to transform the National Army into a reliable shield for the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova" (Presidency of the Republic of Moldova 2022).

We will mention that the budget allocated to the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Moldova for 2023 is 1,697,163.3 MDL (approximately 1.7 billion MDL). Compared to the budget allocated for 2022, it is an increasing by about 650 million MDL. Thus, if in 2022, the defense budget constituted a little more than 0.3% of GDP, then, in 2023, the figure constitutes approximately 0.5-0.6% of GDP (The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova 2023).

At the same time, important aspects of strengthening the defense system can be found in the National Development Plan for 2023-2025 and the Government's Action

Plan for 2023 (The Government of the Republic of Moldova 2023b). Also, the state's political leadership widened the area of cooperation in the defense field, doing the first projects with the European Union. Decisions were made by supporting logistics in cyber defense and activities to strengthen military capabilities in the Republic of Moldova (MOLDPRES 2022).

In order to strengthen the capacities of the armed forces in the field of communications and the fight against cyber-attacks, the European Union (EU) has announced the granting of 40 million Euros in funding to the Republic of Moldova. The money comes from the European Peace Facility, a fund administered by the member states outside the European budget, the European Council and the court of the EU member states, as mentioned in a statement. The financing does not involve the purchase of armaments. The action will allow the provision of equipment, goods and services to strengthen the logistical capacities and mobility of some units of the armed forces of the Republic of Moldova. It will also help them fight against cyber-attacks and strengthen their unmanned aerial reconnaissance and tactical communications capabilities (Botnarenco 2022).

In the same context, for 2023, the Council for Foreign Affairs of the European Union approved a new assistance package for the National Army aimed at strengthening the defense capabilities of the Republic of Moldova. The support, worth 40 million Euros, is offered through the European Facility Instrument (EPF). This aid will be directed towards developing the national airspace surveillance capacity, transportation and mobility capacities and the logistics and communications capabilities of the National Army (Ministry of Defence 2023b).

In this context, we will note that the political leadership is aware of its role in ensuring and promoting defense policies for the defense of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova, and in this sense, providing the necessary level of training of the Armed Forces, which must be capable of exercising its established constitutional tasks.

Conclusions

The Republic of Moldova has the right to defense, to ensure its military security by all means at its disposal, considering it legal and necessary to maintain armed forces for the defense of sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, as well as for the annihilation of armed conflicts and other acts of violence within the country that endanger the constitutional order. Thus, defensive sufficiency for the Republic of Moldova, as a neutral state, means a condition in relations between states where the quantity and quality of its military forces are sufficient to ensure its military security, addressing its risks and threats. In this line of thought, we will fully exploit the potential of the principle of defensive sufficiency in its broader sense to ensure the capabilities necessary for the military security of the Republic of Moldova.

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The S-400 "Triumf": between expectations and results

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Abstract

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union invested heavily in its air defense systems, so its rightful successor, Russia, has now some of the most advanced air and missile defense systems in the world. Among them, the S-400 "Triumf" surface-to-air missile system is perhaps the most criticized, shrouded in mystery, and feared system in Russia's arsenal. Developed and then presented as capable of engaging a variety of aerial threats, the system gained a reputation, at least declaratively, of being able to counter US and NATO ambitions to win a conflict through airspace dominance.

Keywords:

Air and missile defense is often perceived as that type of defense that protects an objective or surface against threats posed by aircraft, drones, or missiles, and the simple existence of a capable surface-to-air missile system induces the erroneous idea of total protection at the level of a country or theatre of operations. It must be well understood that a system designed to combat such threats will never be able to intercept any aircraft, drone or missile with high effectiveness, for technical, tactical or operational reasons.

The diverse air threats, and here we can mention hypersonic missiles and unmanned aircraft systems, have further exacerbated their qualities to the prejudice of the systems that should combat them. If hypersonic missiles are considered the perfect weapons for defeating any air or missile defense due to their main characteristic of manoeuvrability at hypersonic speeds, this does not directly imply that other air threats with subsonic or supersonic speeds cannot do so.

Russia's handling of the conflict in Ukraine, where neither side controls the airspace[1], provides far more questions than answers about the future of the systems that are supposed to be responsible for it. The owner of one of the largest and most sophisticated air forces in the world, at least according to the rankings of various publications, Russia did not succeed or, maybe did not even set out to obtain air superiority in Ukraine, which caused great surprise and perplexity among Western military analysts. Under these conditions, the ground base air defense component represented at the highest level by the S-400 " Triumf " systems[2], deployed in Belarus and Crimea[3], imposed the rules regarding the use of air space, the Ukrainian planes being forced to fly at extremely low altitude (below 100 ft) for the execution of missions on the northern and southern directions (Bronk, Reynolds and Watling 2022, 12).

S-400 "Triumf" system

The S-400 "Triumf" system, developed by Russia's Almaz Central Design Bureau, is a long-range mobile surface-to-air missile system, capable of engaging aircraft, UAS's, cruise missiles and ballistic missiles and represents the fourth generation of Russian long-range systems. It is also the successor of the S-200 and S-300 systems, having been in service since 2007, but did not become operational until 2012 in Kaliningrad and in 2016 near Saint Petersburg (Dalsjö, Berglund and Jonsson 2019, 27). Development of the S-400 system probably began in the 1980s, with the developers' effort being kept secret from the public until 1993, two years after the collapse of the Soviet government (Hollings 2022). As with many Soviet weapons programs, which continued to be developed by the Russian Federation, budgetary constraints dictated that approximately 70% - 80% of the technology used by the original project be carried over and adapted from the S-300,

[1] N.A.: In the article *In denial about denial: why Ukraine's air success should worry the West*, the authors Maximilian K. Bremer and Kelly A. Grieco discuss, based on the actions carried out so far in the conflict in Ukraine, air superiority and its denial. Details at https://warontherocks.com/2022/06/in-denial-about-denial-why-ukraines-air-success-should-worry-the-west/, accessed 06.11.2023.

[2] N.A.: NATO reporting name: SA-21 Growler.

[3] N.A: The threat posed by the presence of the S-400 systems increased when they were supported by the Russian S-band 48Ya6 "Podlet-K1" all-altitude radar deployed in Belarus. More details at https://static.rusi.org/SR-Russian-Air-War-Ukraine-web-final.pdf , accessed 06.11.2023.

including missile storage containers, launchers, and radars. Testing of the system began in late 1999 or early 2000 at the Kapustin Yar missile range in Astrakhan Region, Russia (Missile Defense Project 2021). In 2017, The Economist considered that "the S-400 is one of the best air-defence systems currently made " (The Economist 2017).

From an organizational point of view, the standard S-400 battery consists of four launchers[4] each with four launch tubes, engagement radar (fire control) systems, surveillance radar target acquisition, and a command center (arranged on a vehicle). In the Russian army, an S-400 battalion (also known as a S-400 division) comprises two batteries, whereas a regiment has two S-400 battalions in its structure (Gady 2018). An S-400 battery with a maximum of 16 long-range missiles or 64 medium-range missiles, or a combination of the two (Dalsjö, Berglund and Jonsson 2019, 54), can deploy in five to ten minutes and supposedly engage up to thirty-six targets simultaneously (Roblin 2018). If one takes into account the number of missiles available for launchers and the national doctrinal provisions (launching two missiles to each target to increase the probability of a hit) (Bronk 2017), a simple calculation can show that a battalion can engage a maximum of 16 targets at the same time with long-range missiles, or 64 targets if only launching medium-range missiles (Dalsjö, Berglund and Jonsson 2019, 54). But the reality of the battlefield will never take into account the calculations on paper.

The performance of the S-400 " Triumf " system is mainly determined by the type of missile used and the air and missile defense configuration it is part of. Thus, the 48N6 missile series allows the system to hit aerial targets at ranges up to 250 km (Missile Defense Project 2021). They are also intended for intercepting medium-range ballistic missiles (maximum range of 3,500 km and speed of 4,800 m/s), at a distance between 5 and 60 km and an altitude between 2 and 27 km (Giles 2015, 16). Another series, with two versions with active radar missiles, known as 9M96 and 9M96DM, with short and medium range (40 and 120 km) is intended to be used against tactical aircraft, PGMs[5], and ballistic missile warheads, being the system's option for self-defense and for the protection of any nearby high-value target (Dalsjö, Berglund and Jonsson 2019, 28).

In the year 2021, the 77N6 missile series was in the testing phase and was expected to use hit-to-kill technology to destroy ballistic missiles (Missile Defense Project 2021). One of the system's new missiles is the so-called 40N6, with an estimated operational range of 400 kilometers (248.5 miles) and an altitude of up to 185 kilometers (607,000 feet), being responsible for the often-repeated claim that the S-400 has one of the longest ranges. The missile is reportedly capable of exo-atmospheric interception of intermediate-range ballistic missiles in the final phase of flight (Gady 2016), but there are fears among specialists regarding the radar's ability to support the system to make

[4] Transporter Erector Launchers/TELs.

[5] Precision-Guided Munition.

the most of the missile's performance (Missile Defense Project 2021)[6].
The system's declaratory ability to use different types of missiles, with distinct missions and particularities, may provide an important feature, namely the ability for the system alone to form a large part of a layered air defense. In this way, the S-400 system is among the most advanced air and missile defense systems available, on parity with the best the west has to offer[7].

The exclusive assessment of a surface-to-air missile system is inappropriate and can highlight at most how it is organized, staffed, or equipped. The discussion about the performance of such a system must have as its starting point its ability to integrate. In order to achieve increased effectiveness, it is thus required that the S-400 " Triumf " system be used as part of an integrated air and missile defense system, otherwise, the whole thing is just a costly and expensive military extravagance (Wilson and Parachini 2020). Based on the 2016 air and missile defense organization of Hmeymim Air Base in Syria, it can be inferred that the Russian military's approach to this concept is aimed at achieving a three-level layered defense, which thus allows the application of the A2/AD concept. Thus, for the mentioned base, the available systems were arranged to achieve a robust and, above all, flexible defense against a varied range of threats. The first layer was provided by the long-range S-400 and S-200VE systems, the second is handled by the medium-range S-300FM Fort-M and Buk-M2E systems, while the last layer integrated the SHORAD[8] Osa-AKM and S-125 Pechora-2M systems. Finally, the Pantsir-S1 systems were considered for the direct defense of the S-400 system (Khodaryonok 2016).

Vulnerabilities and employment of the S-400 "Triumf" system

It is well known that surface-to-air missile systems are differentiated by a number of constructive and technical or tactical characteristics, just as the situations in which they are used are distinct and different. Thus, there is consensus among military specialists that there is no ground-based air defense system that can be considered *the best*. A system can be valued by the design of which it is part of, by the decisions to use it, or by the level of training of the personnel who serve it.

For the surface-to-air missile systems, there are general vulnerabilities, otherwise characteristic of all systems, which may affect them differently, such as geographical factors (coverage due to mountainous features, the horizon of the earth, weather conditions), dependence on the presence of single surveillance and engagement radar (not always on the same platform), or the possibility of saturating of surveilling and engagement systems. At the same time, there may also be specific vulnerabilities, generated by the

high costs of maintenance or operation, the qualification of the personnel, the period of time required for deployment, the increasingly true assumption of operation in a disputed electromagnetic environment or the existence of countermeasures for different types of missiles, etc.

A specific problem for long-range surface-to-air missile systems is the limitation of the surveillance and engagement radar capabilities by the horizon of the earth. Without taking into consideration the possibilities to overcome this obstacle (some examples include the elevation of antennas, integrated work with early warning aircraft, the use of aerostats[9], and the use of systems within a layered defense) the S-400 system, but also other systems in this category, are vulnerable to a low-altitude attack by cruise missiles or drones, which in large numbers can overwhelm the system (Wilson and Parachini 2020). In a situation where the adversary has control of the airspace, this limitation can turn into a major vulnerability, making the defense mission or air and missile defense even more difficult.

The threat of cruise missiles is not the only one. Apart from the classic threats generated by aircraft, attacks by drones, ballistic or cruise missiles, the evolution of stand-off missiles and electronic warfare systems only demonstrates, if anything else, the difficulties faced by air defense, from the concept to demonstrate the effectiveness. Also, in this case, one must be aware of the fact that the long range of action is not a guarantee of success. Missile and drone attacks on oil production facilities in Saudi Arabia in 2019, or Ukraine's drone attacks that disabled Russian S-400 systems, are significant examples of air defenses being defeated with equipment that represents a low percentage of the complex systems cost that make it up and which are difficult to operate efficiently. For example, the S-400 costs approximately $500 million, a Patriot Pac-2 battery costs $1 billion, and a THAAD battery costs about $3 billion (Macias 2018).

One of the most comprehensive assessments of the S-400 system was carried out by the Swedish Defence Research Agency[10] in the *Bursting the Bubble report. Russian A2/AD in the Baltic Sea Region: Capabilities, Countermeasures, and Implications*. Throughout the 116 pages, the authors analyze the Russian A2/AD capabilities in the Baltic Sea region as well as NATO's possible countermeasures, also identifying a series of vulnerabilities and limitations of the S-400 system. Without being considered definitive or exhaustive, these limitations are (Dalsjö, Berglund and Jonsson 2019, 18, 27, 50, 54):

    - The effective range against low-flying maneuvering targets is much less than the declared maximum characteristics (400 km), sometimes even up to 20 km for small-sized targets evolving at very low altitudes (nap of the earth). For older Tomahawk cruise missiles, operating in mixed terrain, the effective range is 24–36 km;

[9] N.A.: The online publication Defense Romania presents the opinion of Russian military expert Vladislav Shurygin in the article Exasperated by Ukrainian drone attacks, Russians use balloons to detect waves of UAVs sent by Ukraine, according to which Russian air defense systems are not able to cope of unmanned aerial vehicles of the Ukrainian army that operate at low altitudes. Thus, it is inappropriate to use missile systems that are classically intended to combat aircraft or missiles, to combat the new threats. One solution may be the creation of a defense line, which would include radar balloons, as well as aerial surveillance, warning and communications posts; Details at URL: https://m.defenseromania.ro/exasperati-de-atacurile-dronelor-ukrainene-rusii-folosec-baloane-pentru-pentru-a-detecture-valurile-de-uav-uri-trimise-de-ucraina_624774. html.
[10] Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut/FOI.

- The limitations of the system in hitting all threats simultaneously, in the situation where they appear in large numbers in a short period of time;

- The existence of a single engagement radar for each battery can be a vulnerability, as taking it out of service will render the entire battery inoperable with the 16 or 64 missiles ready for launch;

- The size of long-range missiles (they are heavy and bulky, weighing about two tons), which means that reloading the launchers after launching them requires extremely valuable time, in the situation of multiple and complex threats;

- General characteristic of the system: it is probably optimized for the interception of ballistic missiles and aircraft considered high-value targets, flying at high altitudes, but intercepting small-sized targets at low altitudes may be an auxiliary function.

Recent history provides examples that demonstrate that surface-to-air missile systems have vulnerabilities and limitations and cannot always guarantee the results desired by military and political leaders. If Russian surface-to-air missile systems have been quite criticized following their recent use, especially in Syria, Armenia, or Ukraine, the Patriot systems take the headlines when they had difficulty in intercepting ballistic missiles in the Gulf War.

The Kremlin decided to deploy an S-400 "Triumf" system to Syria in 2015, a day after a Russian Su-24 Fencer was shot down, which Ankara said it had been using Turkish airspace without authorization (CBS NEWS 2015). Confirming in October 2016 the deployment in Syria of the S-300 and S-400 air defense systems, considered to be of the latest generation, the Kremlin emphasized that it provided air defense of its own air bases against US cruise missiles (Balmforth 2017). Analysis and reactions at the time focused on the formidable theoretical characteristics of the S-400 system and its huge 400 km range, which could cover much of Syria, the eastern Mediterranean, and southern Turkey (Bronk 2017).

[11] Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles.

But, after an attack with 59 TLAMs[11] that hit the Syrian government air base at Shayrat, on April 7, 2017, where Russian soldiers were also stationed (U.S. Department of Defense 2017), they, consternated, took to social media to find out what happened to the vaunted S-400 systems (Balmforth 2017). It is possible that the main reason why the S-400 system was not used to defend the Shayrat was the fear of failure. There was a real possibility that some of the S-400 missiles had missed their target or were not operating at normal parameters (as of 2017 the system had not reached combat-proven maturity), so that Russia's most important system in Syria could prove to be much less effective, even against fairly easy targets[12], than the huge publicity in the country and beyond assumed (Bronk 2017). At the same time, there was also

the assumption, supported by Russian and Western military analysts, that the systems were deployed too far from the Shayrat airbase to be effective against cruise missiles[13]. Under these circumstances, with the exception of destroying an important and hard-to-replace system, its malfunction would deal a huge blow to the reputation of invincibility the Russians had spent years building around the S-400.

Russian military analyst Aleksandr Golts estimated that it is not known whether "the Russian military was not able to intercept the missiles or if it did not want to", taking into account the fact that the Americans complied with the memorandum between Russia and the US-led coalition in Syria on the safe use of airspace, informing the Russians of this two hours before the attack (Balmforth 2017).

Both sides were careful to avoid direct conflict, with the Americans notifying Moscow before the attack, and Russia not engaging Tomahawk missiles as they approached the airbase, most likely on Putin's orders (Roblin 2018). However, there are also opinions according to which ensuring the integrity of Syria's entire airspace was just an overstated statement, aimed at stimulating the sale of weapons and systems deployed in Syria[14], in the case of a cruise missile attack, a perimeter of approximately 40 kilometers can be defended (Bronk 2018)[15].

There were also concerns about the performance of the S-300 and S-400 systems in 2020, also in Syria, when they had difficulty in detecting and engaging, on various occasions, Israeli cruise missiles or effectively countering attacks by Israeli forces (Arif 2021). Also in 2020, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict represents another example in which the vulnerability of the Armenian air defense was exposed, consisting predominantly of Russian surface-to-air missile systems, against Azeri drones, provided by the Turks and Israelis. During the fighting, Azerbaijan relied on the use of UAS for a wide range of missions, thus demonstrating a technological advantage over the air defense systems of the Armenian forces, which were otherwise designed to combat different threats.

It is important to understand that the myth of Russia's impenetrable air defenses is vital to its efforts to find buyers for these systems because the Russian military relies on foreign investment to ensure the continuity of programs, to develop various types of weapons and weapons systems (Hollings 2023). Even though the S-400 system was designed to combat aircraft and missiles, at distances and heights that vary depending on the type of missile, in Ukraine, Russian leaders have made the decision to use these systems to intercept HIMARS

[12] N.A.: Justin Bronk believes that the cruise missiles used in the April 7, 2017 attack are relatively old missiles that do not have radar-cross section reduction features or sophisticated maneuvering capabilities to avoid interception. See https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/rusi-defense-systems/russias-air-defense-challenge-syria.

[13] N.A.: The S-400 systems have been deployed at Russia's Latakia air base and its Tartus naval base, while the Shayrat is more than 75 kilometers away from the city of Tartus and more than 120 kilometers from Latakia. URL: https://www.military.com/defensetech/2018/01/26/russia-deploys-more-s-400-missile-systems-syria.html. Colonel (ret.) Mikhail Khodarenok, a correspondent for Gazeta.ru and an air defense specialist, claimed that the Shayrat air base is located about 200 km from Latakia, thus being at the upper limit of the S-400 system's capabilities. In order for a target to be hit at such a distance, it had to fly at an altitude of 8-9 km, otherwise, the multifunctional radar of the S-400 system could not engage it due to the horizon of the earth. Details at https://jamestown.org/program/russian-air-defense-us-strike-al-shayrat/.

[14] N.A.: Tom Balmforth presents in the article *After U.S. Strikes Syrian Air Base, Russians Ask: 'Where Were Our Vaunted Air Defense Systems?'*, available at https://www.rferl.org/a/weher-was-the-s-300-s-400-missile-defense- systems/28417014.html, the statement of Pavel Felgengauer, a Moscow-based military analyst, regarding the effectiveness of the S-400 system: *All this talk that we have secured the whole of Syrian airspace is artistic whistling.*

[15] N.A.: The effective engagement range of Russian air defense systems deployed in Syria against cruise missiles (flight altitude around 30–100 m) or low-flying aircraft is limited to their radar horizon, which for such targets is about 30-40 km. See https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/could-russian-s-400s-protect-syria-against-cruise-missiles.

rockets or, much more out of the ordinary, *to bombard* Ukrainian cities (Peck 2023).

Interception of HIMARS rockets cannot be considered unusual, given that modern surface-to-air missile systems are designed to combat a variety of aircraft and missiles. In Ukraine, domestic systems (S-300) or made available to Ukraine (PATRIOT or IRIS-T) were used to combat Kalibr cruise missiles or even Kinzhal missiles, declared to be hypersonic.

If the use of S-400 systems against HIMARS rockets suggests that the Russian military wants to achieve an effective missile defense, using the same systems to bombard Ukrainian cities[16] may demonstrate desperation and the intention to spread terror among the Ukrainian population, or simply show selflessness in fulfilling with any price of the established objectives. Despite the re-tasked air defense missiles, Russia's reconfigured surface-to-air missiles are less accurate than rockets deliberately designed to hit land targets. For example, a 182-kilogram warhead of an S-400 missile may be devastating against an aircraft or other missile, but it is ineffective against ground targets, especially compared to the 900-kilogram warhead of a cruise missile (for example of the Kh-22 missile also of Russian origin) (Peck 2023).

However, it must be understood that the success of an engagement is not so simple to determine, and the experience of the Patriot system during the 1991 Gulf War is instructive in this regard. The US military developed various reports detailing the performance of the Patriot system during *Operation Desert Storm*. According to reports at the time, they had an almost perfect success rate, with General Norman Schwarzkopf initially claiming a 100% success rate for Patriot structures (Werrell 2005, 205), other sources indicating an approximately 96% kill rate for SCUD missiles engaged in Saudi Arabia and Israel (General Accounting Office 1992, 2). Later, the Army revised downwards its estimate, stating that 90% of missiles aimed at Saudi Arabia and 60% of missiles fired at Israel were successfully intercepted (Cotton and Lewis 2020). As additional information became available, the Army again revised its estimate to 80% in Saudi Arabia and 50% in Israel, because in April 1992, following a revised assessment, reports indicated that the Patriot had 70% success in Saudi Arabia and 40% in Israel (General Accounting Office 1992, 2,3). However, when Congress disputed the results, the Army again revised the estimates, claiming that 52% of the missiles the Patriot system engaged were intercepted successfully (Cotton and Lewis 2020). However, Army leadership was very confident that approximately 25 percent of the engagements made by the Patriot systems resulted in the destruction or disabling of the target's warhead. Of these, approximately 9% of Patriot system engagements in *Operation Desert Storm* were supported by tangible evidence that a SCUD missile was destroyed or disabled after

[16] N.A.: The use of Russian systems for firing surface to air missile in ground-to-ground mode is known among specialists in the field. The SA-2 systems had this firing regime (see https://books.google.ro/books?id=xUS8--YFrlYC&q=%22SA-2%22+%22ground-to-ground%22+Serbs&pg=PA261&redir_esc=y#v=snippet&q=%22SA-2%22%20%22ground-to-ground%22%20Serbs&f=false), and in the conflict in Ukraine evidence of the use of the S-300 system in hitting some ground targets located on Ukrainian territory was presented online. Details at https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/russia-now-firing-s-300-surface-to-air-missiles-at-land-targets-in-ukraine-official and https://naviny.by/rubrics/politic/2011/10/17/ic_articles_112_175478/. The Ukrainians have also used modified versions of the S-200 surface-to-air missile (retired from service for over a decade) against targets behind Russian lines. The first use of this missile for the new missions was in the August 2022 attack on the Novofedorivka airbase near Saki in Crimea. More details at https://breakingdefense.com/2023/09/what-an-s-400-kill-and-a-spec-ops-raid-reveal-about-ukraines-ability-to-hit-russia/

a Patriot missile detonated in its vicinity, with the remaining 16% of engagements lacking such support (General Accounting Office 1992, 3).

The modernization process of the Patriot system seems to be efficient since a recent article shows its perfect effectiveness. Thus, the Patriot battery deployed in Ukraine would have had a 100% percentage of shooting down the 34 Iskander and Kinzhal missiles that Russia launched at Kiev on June 28, 2023, weapons that Moscow once presented as impossible to be shot down by air and missile defenses (Williams 2023).

Testing the S-400 "Triumf" system

New surface-to-air missile systems that provide air and missile defense may also have led to the widespread assumption that they are as effective as their producers claim. Even if reality most of the time disproves this, one thing is certain. These systems have to work because otherwise there would be no motivation for nations to buy them, at rather high prices. The transfer of interest, both by producers and those interested in acquisition, from the air defense component to the missile defense component and their integrated use, is something natural, as evidenced by recent conflicts. As researchers Shea Cotton and Jeffrey Lewis presented in their analysis for the *Nuclear Threat Initiative*, as of 2020 there were at least twenty-six countries that either possessed or were in the process of acquiring missile defense systems (Cotton and Lewis 2020).

The difficulty of missile defense should not be underestimated. Missile defense technology is not yet within everyone's reach, and recent experiences have shown that threats to it can always arise, many of them unthought of or at least not considered. Integration can be the key element of such a defense, but it can prove to be the most difficult activity and therefore must be well-planned, budgeted, and executed. Despite the criticism of its performance, the S-400 "Triumf" system must be seen as an effective and competitive system, being often characterized by analogy with the PATRIOT system, even if the direct comparison of the Patriot system to the S-400 is like a comparison of the transmissions of two different race cars (Hollings 2023). The difference between the two systems will always be the manner in which they are integrated into the complex concept of combat use.

If building missiles that fly far and at high speed is no longer a challenge, the difficulties of detecting, identifying, and then hitting small, moving, over-the-horizon targets are still formidable. Under these conditions, the way in which air and missile defenses carry out their missions is in itself an inexact science that lends itself to a lack of transparency. In the case of the S-400 system, it is possible that the lack of clarity over the system's testing activity, reflected in the local and international press, was one of the factors that contributed to criticism of the system in general and its combat effectiveness in particular.

Among countries testing or deploying missile defense systems (whether domestic or imported), for the period 1960-2019, 365 distinct engagements were identified from open sources. Of this total, 221 engagements were testing and 144 operational engagements, but it is possible that there are many more tests and operational uses of these systems than could be identified, a quite plausible reason being the lack of transparency regarding these activities (Cotton and Lewis 2020). The lack of transparency can be understood as a practice at the global level, if the issue is not analysed strictly militarily, because:

- The success of the tests is based on the use of interceptors in almost ideal conditions, and the favorable interpretation of the results can ensure the necessary elements for the extension of a program. At the same time, the overstatement of the results of some tests must also be seen through the lens of potential gain;

- Most of the time the purpose of the test is unknown, so the simple launching or activity of an interceptor can be a success in itself, even if it missed the target;

- Missile defense tests are expensive, and a possible failure would displease the political class. It must be understood that nothing is cheap when it comes to missile defense, except talk, and a capable system is not built by skipping steps or taking shortcuts (Mosher 2000).

Regarding the S-400 "Triumf" system, open sources are quite stingy regarding the information on its testing and use. While not alone in doing so, Russia has issued sweeping statements about the S-400's success, even though there are few public reports of individual tests of the system. According to Russian sources, the S-400 system was tested a total of 32 times in six combat exercises with very good results, which can be quite misleading (Hollings 2022). During these tests, Russian forces launched an unknown number of interceptors, intercepting an unknown number of targets with unknown characteristics. Furthermore, Russia has informed state media that 100% of intercept attempts of the S-400 system have been successful (Cotton and Lewis 2020).

If we take into account the limited number of reports on the S-400 system tests and the fact that experts in the field believe that only successful tests have been disclosed, then it can be suggested that Russia is hiding most of its development tests or other failed intercepts. The assumption that the system is infallible, fully developed, or that it requires no further upgrades is completely false.

Russia's opacity regarding the results of the S-400 program, during tests or the few situations in which it was in real combat conditions, did not prevent other countries from expressing their interest and even acquiring this system. However, assessments and opinions by experts from various countries, regarding the development and use of the S-400 system, led to two conclusions, which cannot be reached only with

the help of intuition. First, the system is not as capable as it is often perceived to be, and second, it is, however, among the most capable air defense systems in use today (Hollings 2022). Results of the S-400 system testing are provided to the public opinion and by some states that bought this system. Thus, on October 16, 2020, Turkey conducted the first real test of its S-400 system deployed in the northern region of the country in Sinop, by launching three missiles, which, according to a defense industry source, all successfully hit the targets designated. Turkey agreed to purchase the S-400 system from Russia in 2017 with the first batteries being delivered in July 2019 (Dahlgren 2020).

In an assessment that can be considered one-sided, the Americans are more transparent when it comes to missile defense tests conducted. However, it should not be left unnoticed that even their reports provide only superficial details of most tests (Cotton and Lewis 2020). However, the true test of the effectiveness of an air and missile defense system is its use in conflict, and despite their global deployment, missile defenses have only been used in isolation with rather controversial results.

Conclusions

Regardless of the surface-to-air missile system in question, its strengths and vulnerabilities are technical, financial, or human, and it is only as capable as the integrated air defense which it pertains to allows it to be. The full costs and complexity of such a system warrant a systematic analysis of the full range of military, diplomatic, and financial trade-offs. And the S-400 "Triumf" system cannot be excluded from this equation.

Criticized, blamed, or praised, the S-400 "Triumf" system is currently one of the most controversial surface-to-air missile systems in the world because it is constantly under the scrutiny of specialists, and any news about it is examined on all sides. Perhaps underused in conflicts and with uncertain or disappointing results, the system continues to be analysed from all angles to identify vulnerabilities, limitations, and advantages, with its developers committed to demonstrating that it really lives up to its promises and commitments. Otherwise, it is just another surface-to-air missile system of Eastern origin.

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BULLETIN
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Military counterespionage against Romania executed by the directorate of the independent gendarme corps from Bessarabia

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Abstract

The Russian Empire, with centuries-old imperial traditions, was based on military force, in which a significant role was played by the accumulation of information about opponents and the fight against foreign espionage inside the country. Based on a substantial collection of original historiographical material amassed through research in the National Archive of the Republic of Moldova, the author provides an analysis of the activity and results achieved by the Russian counterintelligence services. This work was conducted by the Independent Corps of Gendarmes, specifically represented by the Directorate of the Independent Corps of Gendarmes from Bessarabia, against the alleged activities of Romanian military espionage in the Russian Empire. The study is part of a larger work, devoted to the activity of the Independent Corps of Gendarmes from Bessarabia, whose activity, from a military point of view, was mostly directed against Romania.

Keywords:

secret services; Russian Empire; intelligence services; espionage; counterespionage.

From its beginnings, the Government Directorate of the Independent Corps of Gendarmes from Bessarabia was concerned with combating Romania's influence in the region and intercepting the activity of the Romanian secret services in gathering information of a military nature in its area of responsibility, activities which are considered counter-espionage. In order to prohibit the penetration of Romanian spies into secure areas, the Instruction elaborated for the Gendarmerie Corps of June 5, 1882, forbade the access of foreigners and established a regime of increased security for the fortresses of Hotin and Tighina (Bender), on the railways of the entire territory of Bessarabia with the infrastructure related – bridges, stations, tunnels, viaducts, depots, adjacent roads and others (A.N.R.M., F. 297, inv. 1, d. 4, 28 verso). The gendarme corps was tasked with compiling lists of persons of foreign citizenship who live in the territories bordering Romania in a depth of approximately 50 km., or along the Chisinau-Ungheni railway, in a depth of up to 10 km., or around the fortress of Tighina (Bender) within a radius of 25 km (Ibidem, 55 verso), and in case they are suspected of acts of espionage, secret surveillance should be instituted over them.

The first operative action against an alleged espionage attempt on the part of Romania took place in October 1883. On October 5, 1883, the Russian consul in Iași announced to the head of the Government Directorate of the Gendarmerie Corps, Colonel Ianov, that two spies, Alexandru Sdrobici and Petru Argentoianu, with the mission of studying, from a military point of view, the districts adjacent to the state border (A.N.R.M., F. 297, inv. 1, d. 15, 118). Both crossed the border through the Ungheni customs point, from where they continued their journey to Bălți, being followed by agents of the Gendarmerie Directorate. In Bălți they stopped at Bancic's hotel where they had meetings with Adolf Poizner and Anastasie Carp (Ibidem, 133 verso). Following the operative investigation, it was found that both Adolf Poizner and Anastasie Carp were Romanian citizens, both former career officers of the Romanian army. In Bessarabia, Adolf Poizner held the position of administrator of the domains in the village of Baroncea of the monastery of St. Spiridon in Iași, but at the same time, in case of necessity, he traveled to the places of maneuver carried out by the Romanian army. Anastasie Carp, for his part, was a reserve officer and leased land in the village of Ustia, Glodeni. Both, according to the gendarmes, were capable of transmitting information of a military nature transposed on the map (Ibidem, 134). The problem for the gendarmes was that they had not been caught red-handed and no incriminating evidence had accumulated against all four; this allowed Alexandru Sdrobici and Petru Argentoianu to return to Romania on October 10, 1883. The government gendarmerie directorate did not dramatize the situation in this particular case, because, as they reported to the upper echelon, Russia was roamed far and wide, officially, by Romanian officers from the remount service, tasked with procuring horses for the Romanian army, who all the possibilities to study the military potential of Russia unhindered in the lands where they were moving (Ibidem, 134 verso).

Another case occurred in 1885. Before the War of Independence, several hundred Romanian deserters gathered on the territory of Bessarabia who, on March 3, 1876,

were deported to Astrakhan, Vologda, Samara and Ufa governorates. In 1885, the government allowed these former deserters to leave their original places of residence and choose other places of residence. It was not surprising that most of them chose Bessarabia, of which 452 settled in Ismail land, recently retroceded to the Russian Empire and where Romanian legislation was preserved. From the observations of the local gendarmes, many of these returnees had military training and behaved suspiciously, and 92 of them disappeared and couldn not be found. Taking into account what had been reported, the Government Directorate of the Bessarabian Gendarmerie Corps, through the address of September 30, 1890, submitted to the Ministry of the Interior, proposed that these people be deported again to one of the four distant governments of the empire. The officials in the Ministry were not as cruel as those in Chisinau, and they allowed them to stay in Bessarabia, but outside the 50 km security zone along the state border with Romania (A.N.R.M., F. 297, inv. 1, d. 4, 77).

The gendarmes, who in parallel were also responsible for carrying out counter-espionage measures, with the detailed verification of hikers coming from Romania, had a lot of trouble. Thus, on June 5, 1911, a ship arrived at Ismail with 250 excursionists from Romania, most of them civil servants and teachers from Tulcea, with their wives, but among them, there were also three officers. The aid officer of the head of the Ismail State Gendarmerie Corps, Lieutenant-Colonel M. Afanasiev, without consulting superiors, allowed the vessel to enter Ismail port and disembark tourists (A.N.R.M., F. 297, inv. 1, d. 155, 196). The excursion took place without incidents, the excursionists were greeted at the pier by the city's officialities, and they visited the historical places of the city. At 19.00. in the chords of the Romanian national anthem, the ship with the tourists returned to the country (Ibidem, 200). The internal investigation carried out within the Directorate found that in this case there were no violations of Russian legislation, all the excursionists visited Ismail based on state border crossing certificates and on the list approved by the Russian consulate in Galati, and about the arrival excursionists, lieutenant-colonel M. Afanasiev reported personally, on June 11, 1911, to the head of the Directorate, during his stay at Ismail (Ibidem, 209).

On June 24 of the same year, the second excursion took place, in which 486 people participated, among whom not a single officer was observed. However, just in case, secret surveillance was instituted on the excursionists, which did not identify any espionage attempts, the excursion being of a recreational nature (Ibidem, 210).

The last excursion of Romanian tourists took place on June 18, 1914, when a group of 400 people left Galați for Odessa, where they stayed for a few days, and on June 22 they returned to Galați. According to the report of Lieutenant-Colonel M. Afanasiev, who supervised the excursion, nothing suspicious was observed during the Romanians' stay on Russian soil, as there were no military personnel among the excursionists (A.N.R.M., F. 297, inv. 1, d. 284, 4).

Obviously, the gendarmes were not concerned about the trips of tourists from Romania, but much more serious things, such as the case of the painter Constantin Manoliu, suspected of espionage activities for the benefit of Romania. Constantin Manoliu was a Romanian citizen, who studied at the painting school in Bucharest and the commercial college in Iaşi. In March 1911 he came to Bessarabia to specialize in religious art and in search of commissions to paint icons in churches under construction. After several searches, on September 10, 1911, he obtained the order to paint icons in the church under construction in the town of Novoselita, located on the border with Austria-Hungary (A.N.R.M., F. 297, inv. 1, d. 158, 2). In a short time, the local policeman suspected Constantin Manoliu of hiding under the mask of a painter, but in reality, he was a Romanian spy, a fact he reported to Lieutenant-Colonel Belevțev, in charge of the counterintelligence service, in Kiev. Lieutenant-Colonel Belevțev's arguments in support of the policeman's thesis were interesting: truant lifestyle, relations with suspicious persons living in the direct vicinity of the state border, among whom were the local priest, the head of the railway station, the head of the post office, plus Moldovans from the locality. All these, according to the opinion of the official from Kiev, were clear indications that Constantin Manoliu was a Romanian spy (Ibidem, 7). The policeman was even more explicit when he characterized C. Manoliu, a graduate of the painting school in Bucharest with a specialization internship in Paris, as a worthless painter who had elementary knowledge about art (Ibidem, 13 verso). From the policeman's report, it appeared that he had completed his studies at the Academy of Painting in St. Petersburg and only a merciless fate had made him a policeman in Novoselita. In order to clarify the situation, on January 24, 1912, the file regarding Constantin Manoliu's alleged espionage was transferred to the head of the Government Directorate of the Bessarabian Gendarmerie Corps, Colonel C. Nordberg (Ibidem, 15). The investigation carried out by the officers of the Government Directorate of Gendarmes did not find any facts in the activity of C. Manoliu that would confirm his espionage activity in favor of Romania and the need to be expelled from the Russian Empire. However, just in case, secret surveillance was instituted on him, the results of which are not known.

A similar case took place in 1913 when the Romanian citizen Dimitrie Sandu was accused of spying for Romania. He was born in 1876 in Galați, he was married, the father of 7 children, a photographer by profession, and in search of a better income, in 1911, he moved with his family to Chisinau, where he signed contracts with the photography workshops of Renbrandt and Shvarzman for taking orders from the province regarding the enlargement of the pictures on the photographs (A.N.R.M., F. 297, inv. 1, d. 232). For this purpose, he traveled through Bessarabia in search of orders, which could only come from wealthy people, including the military. While taking over the order to enlarge the photographs of the officers of the 14th Artillery Brigade, in the conversations held with the officers he showed good knowledge in the field of military history and artillery (Ibidem, 9) a fact that worried the local authorities, who suspected him of being a Romanian military spy, who under the

pretext of collecting orders traveled through Bessarabia and studied the military infrastructure of the region. On the order of the head of the counterintelligence service of the Odesa Military Region, Lieutenant-Colonel Apleceev, on the night of April 24-25, 1913, a search was made in his apartment, which found that his letters were of a private nature and did not contain secret material. Despite the fact that the investigation did not establish that Dimitrie Sandu belonged to the Romanian spy network, he was, just in case, expelled from the country as a suspect (Ibidem, 57).

Closely related to the case of Dimitrie Sandu was the investigation launched against Gheorghe Constantinescu, a Romanian citizen and business associate of Dimitrie Sandu. It all started on April 10, 1914, when at the request of the Romanian government, Gheorghe Constantinescu was detained in Ismail, prosecuted for spending the money of the clients of the branch of the "Moravia" Bank in Brăila for personal purposes (A.N.R.M., F. 297, inv. 1, d. 301, 116 verso), who took refuge in Bessarabia, where he began to practice photography. During the search, three topographical maps of the Hotin, Soroca and Bălți lands were found, the 1895 edition of the Gruzințev printing house in Chișinău, in which some routes were marked and some families were marked in Romanian. Based on the accumulated evidence, on April 17, 1914, Lieutenant-Colonel M. Afanasiev, the deputy head of the Governor's Department of the Independent Corps of Gendarmes from Ismail, decides to start a criminal trial against Gheorghe Constantinescu for espionage in favor of Romania, with the defendant being held under guard in Ismail prison (Ibidem, 1). At first glance, the case was easy and did not present great difficulties, especially after the examination of the maps, carried out on May 3, 1913, by the colonel of the 14th Artillery Brigade D. Dimidenco and the captain of the General Staff, C. Jihor, who found that the itinerary of the movement of Gh Constantinescu coincided with the concentration districts of the Austro-Hungarian and Romanian armies, which means that they were not chosen casually, but were suggested in advance by people who were aware of the strategic plans of both countries (Ibidem, 53 verso). Of the dozens of families marked on the map, which represented the clients of the unfortunate photographer, three attracted the attention of the gendarmes - Popovici, Stroescu and Haimovici. Even if the families were not accompanied by the patronymic, the gendarmes assumed that in the case of the Popovici family, otherwise quite widespread in Bessarabia and Romania, it was either Major Popovici, head of the Romanian army's espionage service, or the Russian sailor Vasile Popovici who became a spy, or Valer Popovici-Hațevici, a Romanian doctor residing in Odesa, known for his espionage activities in favor of Romania and, finally, Popovici Ion, a Romanian citizen, suspected of espionage (Ibidem, 52). Throughout the investigation, the defendant did not admit his guilt and insisted on his innocence (Ibidem, 116).

The investigation found that Gheorghe Constantinescu, a Romanian citizen, born on April 5, 1882 in Brăila, of a Greek father and a Romanian mother, graduated from the 4th grade of the local primary school, with the mandatory military

service completed during the years 1904-1908, in Galați, employed at the branch of the "Moravia" bank in Brăila, he fled Romania in 1912 after embezzling money from the bank's customers. During two years, 1912-1914, he worked as a traveling photographer and traveled, together with Dimitrie Sandu, all throughout Bessarabia in search of orders. To facilitate his movement in the region, he procured a geographical map of Bessarabia, legally edited in Chisinau, where he wrote down the names and addresses of his clients, as well as the most convenient routes to reach their destination. The investigation revealed his unattractive psychological profile, which did not match that of a professional spy. Arriving in Russia in the company of a certain Sabina Țumer, who became his mistress, he lived on her money, and after the latter changed her master, a policeman from Tiraspol (Ibidem, 117 verso), he went to Vadul Rașcov, where he married Ana Lungu, the daughter of the owner of a local brewery (Ibidem, 123), but soon divorced him after he found out that she got pregnant by the psalmist of the local church (Ibidem, 125 verso). Constantly looking for money, he begged for help from the exponents of the Greek diaspora in Chisinau, A. Sinadino, the bankers Kapitanopulo and Nikolaidi (Ibidem, 119 verso). Thus, after all the attempts to make Gheorghe Constantinescu, a simple adventurer, a military spy, the investigation got confused in its own conclusions, entering a deadlock, without bringing conclusive evidence that Gheorghe Constantinescu was acting as a military spy in favor of Romania.

In order to prove its importance and the necessity of increasing the amount allocated to secret operations, the Government Directorate of the Independent Corps of Gendarmes urgently needed to present at least a few successes in the fight against Romanian espionage. The previous three failures did not discourage the gendarmes, they found another nest of Romanian spies. This time the victim was chosen in the person of Alexandru Petrovici, a Serbian citizen residing in Reni. Born in Mitrovica, he graduated from the Military School in Graz (Austria), but during the Serbian War of 1876 (part of the Russo-Turkish War 1877-1878), the second lieutenant of the Austrian army, Alexandru Petrovici, deserted from the unit and joined the Serbian army, participating to the war, being wounded twice in battles with the Turks. After the end of the war, in 1878 he moved to Russia, and in 1911 he settled in Reni, where he opened a mineral water store (A.N.R.M., F. 297, inv. 1, d. 340, 6 verso). However, the most suspicious thing, in the view of Russian officials, was the fact that he traveled very often to Bucharest, where his sister lived, married to a Romanian officer, had many acquaintances among the state officials in the Rhine and, the most suspicious thing, at home he spoke in German, although he was a Serb by nationality (Ibidem, 5). All the indications "clearly indicated" that Alexandru Petrovici was a Romanian spy, for which he was arrested on December 6, 1914. The investigation carried out, as usual, did not find evidentiary material to confirm the person's guilt, however, just in case, it decided that Alexandru Petrovici, an elderly person (at the time of the trial he was 62 years old), should be deported to the Tomsk region (Ibidem, 1). The gendarmes' error cost Alexandru Petrovici his life, as he could not bear the long journey of 4,800 km, dying on March 27, 1915 (Ibidem, 99).

The last case of "catch" of an alleged Romanian spy took place in 1915, a case that even angered the governor of Bessarabia, Mihail Ghilhen. Thus, the counterintelligence service of the General Staff of the Odessa Military Region notified its colleagues in Chisinau, the Government Directorate of Gendarmes, that according to the reliable data they possess, the Romanian citizen residing in Ismail, Buiumen Kohn, a grain entrepreneur, travels often in Romania where he is on friendly terms with the police commissioner of Lascăr Catargiu commune (Tulcea county), Victor Melega. These facts required his immediate arrest under the charge of being a Romanian spy (A.N.R.M., F. 297, inv. 1, d. 366, 43). After the file reached the table of the governor of Bessarabia, the latter, exasperated by the failures of his subordinates, examining the file, found that he did not see Buiumen Kohn's actions as complicity in espionage in favor of Romania, and for this reason, he considered the given case as closed (Ibidem, 26).

Thus, as it appears from the study materials, during the researched period, the Government Directorate of the Independent Corps of Gendarmes from Bessarabia did not detect any spy who would have acted in favor of Romania. The fact is explained not by the lack of any interest on the part of the General Staff of the Romanian Army towards the Russian military potential, especially the one in Bessarabia, but by the accuracy and professionalism of the respective Romanian services, which did not need spies in the true sense of the word, but they relied on the population of the region, who willingly informed about all the changes in the military field. As reported by Colonel C. Nordberg, the head of the Government Directorate of Gendarmes, to the governor of Bessarabia, Mihail Ghilhen, in his secret report of March 24, 1913, information of a military nature was transmitted to Romania by the population of Bessarabia (A.N.R.M., F. 2, inv. 1, d. 9383, 1); the remedy would have been their expulsion from the districts adjacent to the state border (Ibidem, 25 verso). The problem, however, was that you could not expel the entire population from Bessarabia, studded with military objects.

Due to the impossibility of catching real Romanian spies, they had to be invented, thus giving rise to a true phenomenon of hysteria regarding the discovery of Romanian spies. It is important to mention the fact that, in addition to Bessarabian Romanians and Jews, they were accused of espionage in favor of Romania. Thus, on March 31, 1916, Berko Shprintzak was arrested, who, while traveling by train on the Chisinau-Orhei route, at the entrance to the city, near which engineering works were being carried out, started to sign something in his notebook, assuming that he copied the map with the positions of the defense nests (A.N.R.M., F. 297, inv. 1, d. 415, 10). On November 12, 1915, the resident of Chisinau, Iosif Grobokopatel, was detained, on the grounds that he was interested in the newly arrived contingent in the Chisinau garrison if there were no fellow citizens among those who arrived. Vigilant soldiers detained him and escorted him to the command, where it was found that the said Iosif Grobokopatel lived right opposite the recruitment center and therefore had every possibility to follow the movement and replenishment of the

troops. Having no other reason than the one invoked, the local authorities removed him from Chisinau, expelling him from the territory of the Odessa Military Region (A.N.R.M., F. 297, inv. 4, d. 60, 41 verso).

Citizens Leiba Shmutz and Kolman Vegner, both from Sculeni, who, as the local gendarmes assumed, were guided from Iași, were accused of organizing a spy network in favor of Romania, which led them to their arrest and transportation, on July 21, 1915, to the prison in Chisinau. The objective investigation, carried out by the judges of the Civil Court, found that the persons in question had been unjustly accused and on October 24, 1915, they were released from prison (A.N.R.M., F. 2, inv. 1, d. 9508, 18).

Sometimes the hysteria of discovering spies took on bizarre forms. Thus, on May 3, 1915, the peasant from Lipcani, Maria Piven, maiden name - Cebotari, was detained on the banks of the Prut River, as she was talking across the river with a Romanian soldier (A.N.R.M., F. 2, inv. 1, d. 9556, f. 1). The investigation proved that Maria Piven (Cebotari) was not a member of any Romanian espionage network, but simply the mistress of the Romanian soldier, who every night sneaked into her house, located on the banks of the Prut river.

On May 2, 1916, the woman Maria Cecoi, born Donțu, was detained and imprisoned in the Bălți prison, accused of espionage in favor of Romania. Following the investigation, it was found that the person could not be a spy, because she was actually suffering from a mental disease, a fact documented by medical expertise. There were more such cases, which once again demonstrates the degree of hysteria that gripped the official circles in Bessarabia on the eve of the revolution.

Conclusions

In the end, we can conclude that the activity of the Government Directorate of the Independent Corps of Gendarmes from Bessarabia in the field of informative and counter-informative activity was contradictory. In the information field, the Directorate could boast of some successes achieved thanks to a well-organized network of its secret agents for the collection of information of a military nature regarding Romania, information transmitted through Chisinau to the higher bodies in Odesa and St. Petersburg. However, this information had a tactical and, less often, operative character, and did not decisively influence the decision-making process regarding Romania by the supreme bodies of the Russian Empire. It was not uncommon for agents to provide their superiors with erroneous news, especially in the political field. If in the informative field, the Directorate's activity can be regarded as satisfactory, in the counter-informative field the results were disastrous. During the entire investigated period, until Romania entered into the war on the side of the Entente, and implicitly on the side of Russia, with all the efforts made by the officials

of the Directorate, no Romanian spy was detected who had been active in Bessarabia in favor of Romania. Even taking into account the sympathy of the population towards Romania, which daily transmitted information across the Prut, the question remains open as to whether the General Staff of the Romanian army sent specially trained agents to Bessarabia to obtain information of vital interest to the army.

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Revisiting Naval Conceptualism with reference to Corbett and Mahan

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Abstract

This article revisits age-old tested naval conceptualism provided by Corbett and Mahan, and critiques as offered by Booth, Gray, Grove, Jones, Rubel, Sestak, Till and Turner. Examples are presented with reference to Israel as a small to medium state and the larger maritime powers of Britain, China, Russia, and the United States. The need arises because naval warfare is linked to and dependent upon technological innovations. Nuclear propulsion, missiles, drones and cyber have changed the nature of warfare and coastguard capability. The roles of naval fleets have also changed in both defense, deterrence, and the offense due to new situations exampled by the Cold War, and asymmetric battles against violent and extremist organizations post 9/11. This has value for cadet training in the heritage of the profession, and the development of abstract considerations for a broad philosophical appreciation of naval and maritime affairs applicable when they become junior and inexperienced offices in planning, deployment, and operation. And beyond to ensure decisions and actions are a combination of experience and knowledge.

Keywords:

Underlying the argument in this article is my personal view that conceptualism is the philosophical view that there is no reality independent of our conception of it. To prove this, I shall present a solid argument showing that consequently naval warfare rests upon the content of the teaching of it, its relevance, validity, and quality. The focus of this argument in this article is to examine how the process of education on maritime security, cannot be separated from and is an integral part of the operational implementation of tactics, strategy, doctrine, and policy. The value of educating on maritime security is because combat at sea is by no means a definitive device. Junior and senior officers, with minimal experience and those more experienced, need to make decisions based on a combination of knowledge and experience.

In this article I argue that a useful means to educate on maritime security is to examine some very important naval conceptualizations in the light of current events. That provides a guide for operational actions. In the process if doing so I shall show that inherently there is a reflection on the development of abstract considerations and a broad philosophical appreciation of naval and maritime affairs. This I propose is a vehicle for the developing and spreading sound strategic thought that contributes to present and future naval planning, deployment, and operations.

I contest that this education is a necessity as today, we are facing new maritime security situations that demand a constant revisiting of naval conceptualizations. The conceptualizations must be taken in context of the situation and threat environment. That means that the size or type of warships and naval fleets and their weaponry needs to be constantly reviewed based on the research findings of revisiting the naval conceptualizations. This is a constant process due to changing political situations after the Cold War. That includes additional threat environments after the terror attacks of 9/11 and the increase of violent extremist organizations (VEO) and non-state actors.

Emerging and evolving technologies also impact the nature of naval planning and deployment. For example, Heller (2019) describes how technological innovations progressively during the Cold War and after such as missiles, drones and cyber gave even a small littoral warship more firepower than the largest World War Two ocean going destroyer. However, this generated additional problems in the defense of warships when attacking. For example, land-based missiles granted defense capabilities to even the smallest of states or VEO against amphibious landings. Notwithstanding differences in capability Professor Colin Gray (1992, 21) who was a civilian educator but who also served as a defense adviser to both the British and American governments, notes that there are strategic advantages to states who have larger navies over those who do not.

Having made these initial observations to justify the topic of this article, I now turn to the solid argument of this article where my personal view is that the means

of educating is through the critique of certain naval conceptualizations for their validity. This educating has a three-fold value. The first of which is to improve the overall knowledge of any naval cadet about the field in which he will be employed and deployed. The second is because such knowledge of conceptualizations leads to a better appreciation and understanding of the origins and applicability of operational tactics and strategy. The third is when the cadets enter service as junior and unexperienced officers. Any action or decision they take will be based almost solely upon their studies and knowledge so these need to be focused. Even when they have minimal and more extended experience, their studies and knowledge will be a determining element in any decision and action. So, this process is applicable for even the most senior of ship captains and admirals.

I will use the methodology of focusing on the conceptualizations of two of many renowned and distinguished in the maritime security field. My personal views and selection of these are justified by Armstrong (2022, 18) as being Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan (1866-1898) and Sir Julian Corbett (1854-1922). He notes that while there are many more naval theorists and historians, they may well be the fathers of British naval power and maritime theory upon which many other countries navies were born and initially raised. Their writings were published during the zenith of the British Royal Navy (RN) incorporating thinking from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Both died before World War One.

The selection of these two is not random. They are different yet complement each other. Mahan was a naval officer whose writings were nearly 20 years earlier than Corbett who was a civilian. Corbett's theories had more historical foundation but agreed with Mahan that they were only useful to naval professionals if they understand how to adapt that theory. The vindication of my selection of these two is because their writings and theories are often taught at war colleges and staff colleges. Their observations lie at the foundation of many naval strategic writings and teaching even one hundred years after their deaths.

Throughout this article to test the validity of some of their conceptualizations I will examine and cite from examples stemming from lessons learned and applied historically with reference to Israel as a small to medium state and the larger maritime powers of Britain, China, Russia, and the United States. Sources quoted are both primary and secondary from serving or former senior naval officers and from recognized naval analysts and strategists. I use this wide selection of examples and sources to highlight that while each state faces different threat situations with different equipment, there are some commonalities relating to the conceptualizations that have stood the test of time.

This finding of commonalities and so their universal application is evident in the research of Marshall (2021) who describes that large navies alike will face similar operational deployments and challenges as will those who are only engaged in

coastal defense. An intrinsic element of the commonality is the relationship between naval power and defense and foreign policy. Broadly the outlet of this is evident in the type of navy. This can be divided between riverine and littoral applications (brown- water navy), open-ocean applications (blue-water navy), and something in between (green-water navy). The issues and topics discussed that I discuss in this article are applicable to all of these.

Such findings strengthen my personal view that maritime security rests upon the content of the teaching of it, including the relevance, validity, and quality of conceptualizations. The process of education on maritime security cannot be separated from and is an integral part of the operational implementation of tactics, strategy, doctrine, and policy. I will expand upon this in the following five sections: Selecting some conceptualizations of Mahan and Corbett. Revisiting some of Corbett's and Mahan's Conceptualizations, A Focus on Alfred Mahan, A Focus on Julian Corbett, Pursuing naval strategies from the conceptualizations and six sub-sections on Decisiveness, naval supremacy, and naval control, Control of all spaces, National security & constabulary, Secure Sea lines of communication, Power projection, and Naval diplomacy.

Selecting some conceptualizations of Mahan and Corbett

In my personal view educating maritime security with the solid argument that reality is not independent of our conception of it requires a selection of conceptualizations that this section will do from the writings of Mahan and Corbett. The starting point is provided by Captain Brian O'Lavin (2009, 17) of the US Naval Special Warfare Command who has written on the applicability of Mahan's intellectual heritage on naval power. His focus is to link these to the reality of the context of the different international situations which have prevailed since World War Two. For example, Mahan's theory that the concentration of a nations fleet is to seek out and destroy the enemy fleet in a decisive naval battle. Similarly, O'Lavin (2009, 22) who has written on linking the applicability of Corbett's intellectual heritage on naval power to today's world. For example, his conceptualization of securing the command of the sea or preventing the enemy from securing it.

Clearly then the selection of specific conceptualizations is significant when doctrine, tactics, and strategy are formulated and reviewed. That requires a constant critique of conceptualizations to ascertain and determine their applicability to effectively command warships. Otherwise, the tail will be wagging the dog as naval officers' mindset will not be in harmony with the real world.

Large naval powers with blue-water navies and smaller with brown-water navies alike have recognized the need to constantly review and critique conceptualizations to synchronize them with deployments and operations. There is an importance of

accurate definitions in the conceptualizations for navies world-wide rely on a certain amount of theoretical training for all officers. For example, the United States Navy (USN) that is a blue-water navy uses the term Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD). In 2016 the head of USN naval operations, Admiral John Richardson (2016), wanted to root it out. His reasoning was "To ensure clarity in our thinking, we will no longer use the term A2/AD as a stand-alone term (acronym) that can mean different things to different people."

A reference to this process also comes for a brown-water navy for example Israel. While there is an overall military prowess of the Israel Defense Force (IDF) according to the 2022 Global Naval Powers Ranking (2023), Israel's navy arm is not included among the world's top 34 navies (unlike the navies of neighboring countries Turkey and Egypt). The reference is from Professor Dmitry Adamsky (2010, 173), who in addition to his academic career, has held positions in the Israeli Ministry of Defense and IDF including serving as assistant secretary of the committee charged with formulating Israel's national security concept. There he addressed the importance of defining an accurate and applicable systematic naval conceptualization, especially when the nature of war changes due to technological innovations. He referred to the conceptual-organizational confusion that prevailed in the Israeli Navy on the eve of the Second Lebanon War in 2006.

Placing Adamsky and Richardson on conceptualizations in context of operational implementation with reference to Corbett and Mahan is to quote Dr Benjamin Armstrong (2022, 16-21), who is a former USN naval aviator and who has lectured at U.S. Special Operations Command, the Defense Entrepreneur's Forum at the University of Chicago, and the U.S. Naval War College. He writes that Corbett agrees with Mahan that theories are only useful to naval professionals if they understand how to adapt them. If theories do not meet these criteria, then the conceptualizations are not fit for purpose and may well led to defeat rather than victory, or at least loss of ships and crew.

An applied example of this rationale for a conceptualization to be accurately defined, understood, taught, and learned before it is anchored operationally; and where the narrative leads in a coherent synthesis that builds into an outcome is given by Professor Efraim Inbar (1998, 100-112). He was the Chair of the University of Bar Ilan's BESA Research Center. He describes the Israel Navy's missile warships first commissioned in 1969. The first written manual for their deployment was like a Bible with a new tactical language and concepts in which the theoretical analysis of various battle situations was translated into do and don't instructions. He adds that this was not sufficient as when they entered the 1973 Yom Kippur War four years later the lessons passed down orally from naval exercises generated a specific conceptualization of what they could achieve operationally and what was impossible. In parts that differed from the original written manual.

So far in this article I have justified the need to educate on conceptualizations and to whom, the necessity to constantly review and critique them, how to select those applicable to operational requirements and those relevant from the writings of Corbett and Mahan. I will continue along this theme in the next parts on 1) Revisiting Corbett's and Mahan's conceptualizations, and 2) Pursuing naval strategies. Examples are from Britain, China, Israel, Russia, and the United States. There are sub-sections in these parts to facilitate logical divisions.

Revisiting some of Corbett's and Mahan's Conceptualizations

To commence this section, I highlight why conceptualizations need to be taught, and in doing so revisit some of Corbett's and Mahan's conceptualizations. In doing so I will draw a historical line from the years following World War Two. I provide examples how operational reality has impacted the validity of conceptualizations deducted from previous operational realities that no longer prevail, necessitating new conceptualizations. This is because there emerged both new situations and new instruments in maritime security. The former largely dictated to by the latter for the size, shape, and functions of naval forces.

An example of this provided by Speller (2018, 19) as a catalyst was the advent of nuclear weapons and the strategy of deterrence. Warship deployment progressively became tools of diplomacy and deterrence rather than to engage the other side in naval combat as conceptualized by Corbett and Mahan. This is also exampled by Professor Geoffrey Till (1984, 60) about submarines. He is a British naval historian who has taught at the Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, Royal Navy College Greenwich and the Joint Services Command and Staff College educating cadets and both junior and senior officers. Till writes that nuclear powered with nuclear weapons submarines for example in the Royal Navy (RN) and the United States Navy (USN) provided a unique service in the Cold War and beyond. Deployed in the depths of the oceans and undetectable they guaranteed a nuclear second-strike capability with intercontinental ballistic missiles. Such a strategy of deterrence and naval deployment challenged the validity of conceptualizations of Mahan who had not noted the importance of technological developments.

Furthermore, since the end of World War Two there have only been two occasions when submarines attacked and sank another ship. One was the sinking of the Argentine Navy's ARA General Belgrano (C-4), a light cruiser, on 2 May 1982 during the Falklands War. This was by the RN nuclear-powered submarine HMS Conqueror with a conventional warhead torpedo and the loss of 323 lives (Rossiter 2007, 34). The other was by the Pakistan Navy's diesel powered PNS Hangor (S131) on 9 December 1971. It sank the Indian Navy's INS Khukri (F149), an anti-submarine frigate, with one homing torpedo (Till 1984, 119).

A Focus on Alfred Mahan

I now delve into more depth with a focus on the conceptualizations of Alfred Mahan who was a naval officer especially relating to ocean battles. I also refer to submarines in this arena to ensure a full revisiting of his conceptualisations. In the section below I provide examples that could be used when educating on the topic as a starting point for creating awareness and for discussion by students.

The first example is by Goldrick and Hattendorf (1993, 78) who explain that submarines are not the only example of the changing role of naval forces as proxy land wars dominated the Cold War and not naval battles. Functions such as command of the sea and decisive battles (through which naval supremacy is supposed to be achieved) based Mahan's conceptualizations were less dominate components of naval strategy for all warships than previously. When the Cold War ended in 1989 the United States Naval War College (USNWC) went so far as to teach that the USN should assume that it had command of the sea. It did not need to exercise control through constant naval presence.

Taking this onboard and besides the end of the Cold War Gustafson (2019, 483–485) describes two other events that led the USN to move away from Mahan's conceptualizations of ocean battles. This eventuality guided the USN fleet in restructuring with new doctrine and strategy. The first was when Iraq launched two Exocet-type French made missiles on the American destroyer USS Stark that was sailing in the Persian Gulf in May 1987. How to defend warships from missiles, mines and artillery batteries located landward and indeed deploy amphibious landings facing the same threats became a priority.

Robinson (2023) provides the second example from experiences from the Gulf War of 1991 (Operation Desert Storm). It involved combined and joint operations with the primary role of the USN being support of landward operations. At the onset of battle the USN launched 12 Tomahawk cruise missiles against land targets from submarines while other naval surface ships launched 285 at the same time.
Mahan's naval warfare conceptualizations did not include such littoral or coastal warfare or such threats. These were all wake-up calls that conceptualizations such as Mahan's of two fleets that duel until one of them wins were not applicable for contemporary naval operations. The U.S. Department of the Navy (2023) shows that it was acutely aware that warships and systems had to have additional roles of defending from land attack, striking land targets, and in joint with multi-service and combined allied action. Moreover, naval officers had to be trained for such diverse roles and functions.

Other examples that brought significance to these observations include the attack of an Islamic fundamentalist group Al-Qaeda by an explosive boat on the destroyer

USS Cole in October 2000 outside the port of Aden (Gustafson 2019, 485); and attacks on naval vessels along the coast of Yemen by Houthi rebels ongoing since 2004 (Buffaloe 2006, 9).

Such new situations and new instruments progressively led to an evolution in USN doctrine and strategy. This negated many of Mahan's conceptualizations and brought about a new size and shape of the USN. In 2023 Captain Drennan (2023, 245-264) of the USN whose sea duty assignments have included two Los Angeles Class Fast Attack Submarines and five Nimitz Class Aircraft Carriers, including Chief Engineer in USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) summed up such a USN evolution. He observed the post-Cold War and post 9/11 type of warfare as being fundamentally different from warfare on the open sea for two main reasons. Firstly, warships that can operate in littoral areas are limited in size, speed of movement, and dimensions (due to limited maneuverability). Secondly, there is a likelihood that the enemy will take advantage of his opponent's closeness to the shore to attack ships.

Such experiences and an evolution in doctrine and strategy are not confined to large blue-water navies. An example of this for a small brown-water navy was damage to the Israel Navy Ship (INS) Hanit in the Second Lebanon War 2006. It was hit a Chinese made land to sea missile launched by Hezbollah that is an Iranian proxy terror group, when it was close to shore supporting land forces (Cordesman 2006, 45). Conscious of the need for change the commander of the Israel Navy Admiral Eli Sharvit (2016-2021) identified the cause of the problem. He said that the navy was not capable of defending its ships from land-based missiles as coastal/littoral warfare and asymmetrical warfare had not been concepts in the doctrine and strategy and so captains had not been trained. A process to do so commenced (Eiran 2021, 49-72).

A Focus on Julian Corbett

In a comparative fashion I now examine in more depth the conceptualizations of Corbett who was a civilian compared to Mahan who was a naval officer. As with Mahan as with Corbett and the section below provides examples that could be used when educating on the topic as a starting point for creating awareness and for discussion by students. The first of these is about how new situations and new instruments also demand reviewing the conceptualizations of Corbett based upon his observations of the Seven Years War that took place been 1756 and 1763 (Corbett 1997). These should also be critiqued with those of Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond who was a naval officer and his only disciple as a naval historian and whose ideas have been shown to be similar by Hunt (1982). It could be argued they were as equally influential strategic thinkers on naval and maritime strategic matters as Mahan.

Yet Widen (2007, 109-127) shows Corbett's writings are different from those of Mahan as he added the dimension of land warfare. He believed that total defeat or

subjugating the adversary could not be realized by naval warfare alone and required victory in land battles. Widen (2000, 106–124) describes how Corbett used Carl von Clausewitz's book On War as a heuristic point of departure. Clausewitz was a Prussian General and military strategist during the early 19th century.

Widen (2009, 170-185) further shows that at first glance it could be assumed that with this reference to land warfare that perhaps Corbett's conceptualizations would be applicable to proxy wars in the Cold War and counterinsurgency against VEO after 9/11. However, Professor Jerker Widén of the Swedish Defense University who has studied Corbett says this is not the case. The reasoning is that Corbett did not address sea to land warfare but proclaimed land combat between the adversaries. The Cold War instruments in the form of nuclear weapons and inter-continental ballistic missiles with the doctrine of deterrence did not lead to direct land battles between America and the Soviet Union. Even wars between ideological proxies for example Vietnam highlighted that victory or loss in these did not result in total defeat of either side.

Similarly, Dr. Prakash Metaparti (2010, 723-736) an expert on logistics and maritime studies at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University informs that the dominate warfare post-9/11 is asymmetrical combat that does not postulate naval forces. Given their lack of roles against adversaries, the functions of navies have moved from naval warfare more towards maritime security.

In revisiting both Mahan and Corbett, it is Professor Geoffrey Till who is one of strongest advocates that the conceptualizations of Corbett and Mahan need to be revisited for the purposes of educating to link them to operational realities. His writings echo and were echoed by his teachings at the USNWC. Till (2006, 28) emphasized that the location of engagement with an adversary would define strategy. He pointed out that while the area of coastal areas is barely sixteen percent of the global maritime space, it has decisive importance. This is since all ports are in them as are the choke points that could restrict or limit access. That highlighted the importance of littoral areas to the economic well-being and security of countries. So, he placed the battle more inshore than in the open oceans.

Pursuing naval strategies from the conceptualizations

I now turn to the next section where I aim to examine that a useful means to educate on maritime security is to revisit the naval conceptualizations in the light of current events. That provides a guide for operational actions. The rationale is that I have already shown beyond doubt that there are new situations and new instruments since the conceptualizations of Corbett and Mahan were formulated. These have been elucidated both by naval officers, civilian researchers and theoreticians and professors at educating faculties. Hence the modern naval arena is not just a division

of open sea and coasts as in the days of Corbett and Mahan. It needs to also be divided into functions. Professor Ken Booth who educates at a university and has also been a visiting researcher at the USNWC provides three main categories of functions: military, policing, and diplomacy that he has called the Trinity of Naval Functions (Both 1997, 9).

Gough (1988, 55-62) describes how Booth's categories merge with the legacy of Corbett's and Mahan's conceptualizations provide six topics. These are Decisiveness, naval supremacy, and naval control; Control of all spaces; National security & constabulary; Secure Sea lines of communication; Power projection; and Naval diplomacy. I devote a sub-section to each of these and in doing so I undertake an appraisal of which of Corbett's and Mahan's conceptualizations remain valid and those that do not. This process of revisiting the conceptualizations in conjunction to their application in operations is to place them in the context of pursuing and implementing naval tactics, strategies and doctrine. The underlying intent is to utilize them in educating.

Decisiveness, naval supremacy, and naval control

In this first sub-section, I prove that ideally cadets at military education faculties should spend their time in the class and library reflecting on what the strategic world looks like so that they are better prepared for how they could operate in that world thereafter. This provides a sound foundation for the first part of their careers where they lack operational experience or have only a minimal amount. I stress that there is no one means to achieve decisiveness, naval supremacy, and naval control yet the study of different views all contributes to doing so. To be sure Mahan and Corbett had different views, both valid for certain circumstances. Senior offices can also benefit by linking their experience with different concepts provided in literature and lecturers and in ongoing education of professional development short courses, seminars, and simulations. This will profess a diversity of thought all resting on sound foundations to provide a more holistic picture to taking decisions and actions.

The first example I take is from Vego (2009, 4) who describes how Mahan and Corbett differed on the decisiveness of naval power. On the one hand Mahan emphasized the victories achieved by the RN during the 18th, and 19th centuries were indeed in decisive battles and a series of naval blockades. These were intended to achieve naval superiority (command of the sea). Sprance (2004, 1-24) builds upon this saying that Corbett thought naval power was important, but not decisive, and argued that it rarely won wars by itself. They were not able to totally defeat or subjugate the adversary. To totally defeat or subjugate the adversary required land battle. He drew his assertion on historical evidence of Britain's campaign against Napoleon's army during the Peninsular War. Yet Corbett agreed with Mahan that there needed to be a focus on denying sea command to the opponent.

Hunt (1984, 86–107) places an accented reduction in the value of both Corbett and Mahan on this topic in the Cold War because there were no direct land or naval battles between the two sides that could have brought any decisiveness or victory. The Cold War was an ideological struggle between competing political and economic beliefs, philosophies, and systems. Frese (2020, 109-111) shows that from the 1960s on the Soviet Union looked towards global domination through revolutions and proxy wars to change leadership and political systems as called for by its President Nikita Khrushchev's.

Intrinsically it won the battle by such means but eventually lost the war due to economic collapse in 1989. Progressively during the Cold War, the world had less states with electoral democracies. Only a handful of the tens of African, Asian, and Latin American states who attained sovereign independence after World War Two espoused electoral democracies. By the 1980s in the last days of the Cold War only 23% of the world's states had electoral democracies. Even after the Cold War by 2016 this had risen to only 55% (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2017).

These were astute observations taken onboard by serving naval personal. For example, Stephen Jones (1955, 492–508), a USN officer added a professional weight to these observations. He informed considering new situations and new instruments that increasingly a navy's traditional roles and tasks in supervision and surveillance of the seas and oceans was being performed by satellites and patrol planes. For this naval presence aka Mahan was not essential. Jones' deductions from his naval experience remained consistent throughout the Cold War and after.

In line with practice the USN has an element of a bottom-up approach to educate and adjust doctrine and strategy. Adding to Jones' observations for example in 1974 Admiral Stansfield Turner, president of the USNWC, published his critique of the conceptualizations of naval superiority of Mahan. Turner had numerous roles including shore bombardments in the Korea War, combat operations off the coast of Vietnam and monitoring Soviets fleets. In that article, Turner (1974, 2–17) referred to the missions of the USN, and claimed that the term naval superiority was outdated, and that it should be replaced by the concept naval control.

Till (2018, 115) says that another scholar Professor Barry Posen, who also worked as a consultant for the RAND Corporation and an analyst for the US Department of Defense, also commented on these views of serving officers and educators. He wrote that after his intensive research of both blocs in the Cold War that it was difficult to achieve naval superiority in the terms meant by Mahan and that of land warfare victories called for by Corbett. He reiterated Turner's view that the purely military role of a navy conceptualized to achieve naval superiority or supremacy would decrease. In its place the role of naval control could be conceptualized.

A rejoinder came from Turner when he was appointed supreme commander of NATO forces in Southern Europe and later Director of the CIA. Turner (1990, 27-39.) wrote on the increasing significance of intelligence to determine the location and intent of the enemy fleet. If this was possible and successful, then naval control needs only be over limited areas in terms of territory for a limited period rather than complete supremacy over the ocean. Also, in analysis of the immediate post-Cold War period Gray (1994, 98) found that the shift from naval supremacy to naval control remained a valid shift. Gray argued that the goal of naval operations should be to support landward operations and not to be objectives in themselves.

A debate and discussion ensued on this topic of decisiveness, naval supremacy, and naval control between the critiques of Mahan and Corbett. Following this could well provide the basis for assigning a simulation exercise for naval cadets, and both junior and senior officers, in education faculties. To start the debate Professor Eric Grove further defined the term naval control. He was an educator at Britannia Royal Naval College, Royal Naval College, Greenwich and the University of Cambridge, a researcher at think tanks and consultant and coauthor for the first edition of the RN's The Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine – BR1806 (UK Defence Council 2004).

Grove's (1998, 5-21) definition of naval control commenced with agreeing with Turner that it is the conditions under which one state entity has freedom of action to use the sea for its own purposes in a certain area and for a limited period. He contributed by defining five main categories of naval control: absolute control, working control, disputed control, actual control of the enemy and absolute control by the enemy. Till (2018, 151) further contributed to the debate by defining four purposes for naval control: to ensure the regular supply of the country's industry; to strengthen or resupply the forces operating overseas; to supply the Allied forces overseas; and to ensure the operation of naval forces operating in the mission of power projection on the coast.

In 2015 Holmes and Yoshihara (2015, 23-51) describe how Professor (Emeritus) Robert C. Rubel, of the USNWC applied to a case this discussion with reference to Mahan's and Corbett's conceptualizations on defeat or subjugation. Kane (2016, 64) added that the case took a scenario where the main threat to America was China. It posed the question on how victory could be attained given Chinese naval strategy also has its origins in Mahan's conceptualization. The conclusions were if China were to follow Mahan's conceptualizations on decisive naval battles, then China could not attain victory. Even if China destroyed the USN they had not occupied America. Similarly, American victory could not be discussed as a purely naval victory following Mahan's conceptualizations or with land victories following Corbett's conceptualizations. Chinese naval and land forces could not be destroyed, and China could not be occupied. Decisiveness could only be attained by neutralizing China's power projection globally by other means, be they economic or political.

Control of all spaces

In this second sub-section, I focus on the control of all spaces, showing the maritime security must look at the larger holistic picture of the overall threat environment. As a start I example the crux of the case about America and China as these like those discussed in the British maritime doctrine document of the RN published in 2017. A wide range of potential state and VEO adversaries were looked at. The conclusions were that victory could not be measured solely from naval or land combat. Decisiveness towards defeat of an adversary could be outlined when there was control of the maritime space (including the seabed), the airspace above it, and the landward coast - all no longer posing a threat (Ministry of Defence 2017, 27–47). In 2021 USN Admiral Joe Sestak (2021, 147-164) added to this thinking on decisiveness and victory. He pointed out that no country could achieve supremacy in maritime or air space without also controlling cyber space.

Such contemplations and thinking are not only applicable to the doctrine and strategy of large maritime blue-water navies for example Britain and the United States. They can also be found in the experiences, doctrine, and strategy of a small brown-water navy such as Israel. In 2016 the commander of the Israel Navy Admiral Eli Sharvit called for a strategic review given that a prerequisite for naval operations offshore required that a land-based missile threat must be neutralized. That meant control of the land adjacent to the coast (Eiran 2021, 49-72). In 2022 the current commander of the Israel Navy Admiral Sa'ar Selma added that naval control would be seen as serving a purpose within a battlespace and not an end. The battlespace was multi-dimensional, and victory was required in all - land, sea, air and cyber (Fabian 2022).

It is fair to state that these views of a wide range of battlespaces place the nail in the coffin operationally for Mahan's and Corbett's conceptualizations of victory be it naval solely or naval and land. That does not mean that they should be ignored. It is important to educate on history that includes not only their writings but also to add their critiques. To this must be added real world contemporary cases as part of simulations to elicit and develop decision making skills for when they take command of warships. It would not be expected of cadets and even junior and senior officers to know and be capable of doing everything, given concern that this might lead them to be jack of all trades and master of none. More preferential would for each to specialize to be an expert in certain functions and roles. Yet an element of being an expert would require being aware of the function and roles of others to succeed in joint and combined operations in a multi-dimensional environment.

National security & constabulary

In this sub-section I delve deeper to show that educating on conceptualizations needs to also look at their origins from the political sphere. I take the first example from

Australian naval experts such as Money (2023) who writes that the maritime space is not just naval war but also has significant constabulary or policing roles. These have also been conceptually referred to as cognitive dissonance in certain academic literature. It might be cost effective to have the same ships undertake multiple roles and indeed they may have the capability to do by being platforms for an array of weapons and systems. However, the rules of engagement for different roles requires that the ships' captains must be confident to make an array of decisions with the appropriate knowledge.

That necessitates a comprehensive education not only on tactics and strategy in naval warfare, counter-piracy and counter-terrorism but also coastguard functions that include: maritime safety; vessel traffic management; ship casualty and assistance service; fisheries inspection and control; border control; environmental protection and response; prevention and suppression of trafficking and smuggling and connected law enforcement; search and rescue; monitoring and surveillance; customs activities; accident and disaster response; maritime, ship and port security; and in protecting national assets in the maritime economic zone (European Fisheries Control Agency 2023).

A larger maritime country might have both a navy and a coastguard such as the United States. A singular national fleet tasked with overall naval control for warfare, national security, coastguard roles, and performing peacetime constabulary duties is more likely evident in small to medium countries (Bowers and Koh 2019, 30). An example of this is Israel because of budget constraints. It has only nine corvette/missile ships and forty-five patrol boats for a coastline of 273 km with three major ports, eight marinas and offshore gas fields. Almost seventy percent of Israeli citizens live in cities and settlements along this coast (Israel Navy Web 2023).

The lessons could start by a discussion on what transpires when a new situation arises and what they would do. That in essence is the theme of this article in reviewing the conceptualizations of Mahan and Corbett given new situations and new instruments. A case that could be applicable to is Israel's experience of the defense of offshore gas fields. Israel's experience that led to new instruments both in warships and weapon systems started in 2012 (Helfont 2022, 53-63). This unfolded against the background of the discovery of the offshore submarine gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea off Israel, Lebanon, and Cyprus. The Israeli Cabinet tasked the navy with the task of protecting Israel's sovereign and economic interests in these and not to set up a separate coastguard (Chorev 2017, 47-62).

For this purpose, Admiral Ram Rothberg commander of the Israel Navy (2011-2016), formulated a new operating concept that had two components. The first was how to protect the gas production platforms from rocket and missile attack. The defense industries responded by developing the naval C-DOME system. That is an advanced naval configuration of the land-based Iron Dome system has proven very successful protecting against thousands of rockets and missiles launched from Gaza and Lebanon in recent years (Editorial 2022).

The second component was to evaluate warships as platforms for the C-DOME. The navy evaluated and found that its existing fleet could not do this or even effect naval control of the sea surrounding the gas production platforms. These were further offshore than the navy had ever operated. Four new corvette type ships were specially constructed in German shipyards and entered service as the Sa'ar 6 Magen class in 2021. These also gave the navy additional long-distance war fighting capability. So, the IDF Chief of Staff Eisenkot took advantage to add to the navy the role of striking VEO in foreign countries, protecting shipping lanes and supporting special operations throughout the Mediterranean Sea and deep into the Indian Ocean. Hence carrying a helicopter was added to the ship's design (Editorial 2022).

Whilst these were warfare and maritime security roles, an additional element emerged to the new situation and that was the authority over maritime economics. A private multi-national corporation (The Chevron Corporation) had the contract for the production facilities of the gas fields. But in times of conflict the navy was granted the authority to shut them down for security reasons. Naval officers had to be educated to be able to make such informed decisions. This was put to the test in May 2021 during a counter-insurgent operation in Gaza. Production from the gas fields was shut down by the navy for a few weeks due to threats of the gas production platforms being hit by missiles launched by the Hamas VEO in Gaza. The navy had multiple tasks simultaneously to protect these platforms with the C-DOME and at the same time land special operations ground forces as well as launch sea to land missiles (Segell 2022).

This example of protecting gas fields and production platforms is a case where a navy has been assigned a role to achieve national maritime security not addressed in the conceptualizations of Mahan and Corbett as they did not exist in their lifetime. For today's world the decisiveness they referred to has changed to one of ensuring defense and security short of combat but that is a form of victory. Another three dimensions that similarly are short of combat but require achieving decisiveness are the next three sub-sections on: secure sea lines of communication, power projection and naval diplomacy. In these elements of their conceptualizations are shown to retain certain validity.

Secure Sea lines of communication

In this sub-section I turn back to the main theme of this article to highlight that the purpose of revisiting Corbett's and Mahan's conceptualizations is also to examine where they remain valid in pursuing strategies with the goal of educating cadets and later in operations by both junior and senior officers. As the first example I take one of Mahan's arguments that certain functions cannot be replaced by any other means than a naval presence of ships. That is valid today for example, in addressing secure sea lines of communication (SLOC). The security of shipping lanes and keeping them

open is a constabulary function. It is essential to ensure trade, logistics, passenger ships and the movement of military forces between ports. These could be short lanes along coasts, through straits, harbor inlets, canals and bays or long sailing routes in the open sea (Mahan 1890, 9-16).

Whilst the function and role and the conceptualizations of such a necessity remain valid since Mahan's and Corbett's day new instruments have evolved. These take the form of diverse technologies some of which are not naval. This impacts the number and types of warships needed for SLOC. Stephen Woodall has looked at this. He served in the USN and has had academic and research positions. Woodall (1985, 362-69) wrote in his doctoral research that in World War Two a force of ten aircraft carrier battlegroups might have been required, with a strategy built around defensive barrier operations to protect the Atlantic SLOC. He compared this to the Cold War where this could have been achieved by three carrier battlegroups positioned near maritime chokepoints. The difference being the range and firepower of naval aircraft, cyber to detect the location of an adversary and missiles to strike them.

To facilitate education on such changes a simulation exercise could be given to cadets and junior officers to stand in the shoes of political decision-makers and senior warship captains. They will be provided with the outline of events and theories, asked to make decisions, and then see how the real-world situation evolves in comparison. Such an exercise would guide them in actions and decisions that they may have to take in the future. The results can be given to senior warship captains and Admirals to review as sometimes these can also provide new insights to them.

One such case of SLOC they could be asked to examine and simulate is the blockade of Ukrainian ports by the Russian Black Sea Fleet after the onset of hostilities in February 2022. The blockade prevented the export of wheat and grain and became one of the main challenges to global human security between February and July 2022. One option was to break the naval blockade by NATO fleets led by the USN. There were two dilemmas. One was that it would have drawn NATO into the war. The other was that it would have violated the (Montreux) Convention regarding the Regime of the Straits (1936) that restricts the entry of foreign warships into the Black Sea - the SLOC between the Black and Mediterranean Seas. The quandary was whether to abide by international convention and customary practices or whether to take military action for humanitarian purposes. If the latter path had been chosen there was a danger of escalation with many more casualties and states involved. If those in the simulation thought that naval means could resolve this SLOC conundrum, then they would have been mistaken. The solution achieved was a United Nations and Turkey led diplomatic effort to resolve the export blockade (Segell 2023).

Power projection

In this sub-section I focus on an additional element that cadets, and both junior and senior officers need to be educated about because they will encounter it. This element is that whilst securing and keeping SLOC open and defending ports and entire coastlines requires in part naval presence this might not be enough. What might be needed is taking the battle or the threat of battle to the territory of the adversary. The dictum being that the best means of the defense is the offense and not on one's own territory. That is achieving decisiveness, naval control, or even victory without placing one's own country and population in a position of facing an adversary's firepower. Pursuing such a strategy could be by power projection and / or naval diplomacy. That means Mahan's and Corbett's conceptualizations that naval forces are a means of projecting power to, within, and from the maritime space remain valid (Nistor and Scipanov 2014, 2-9).

However, some new situations and new instruments require certain additions and modifications to their conceptualizations. Today power projection is more than just naval power even though a dictum could be that the more naval oriented the adversary state is, the higher the level of naval power projection will be required. A group of academic researchers and professors have examined many inter-state wars, proxy wars and VEO counter-insurgency operations including the most recent in Syria, Iraq, and Ukraine. They deduce that power projection can be separated into two categories. The first is when power projection is related to the combat component of the naval strategy. The second is related to the diplomatic component of the naval strategy. In the latter fleets can be used as a show of force to deter, dissuade, or persuade short of combat or to bring the war to an end (Jordan *et al.* 2016).

Examples of the first are provided by Till (2018, 115) who describes that during World War Two naval power projection included the destruction of enemy forces, logistical support, and amphibious assault operations. The landings in Normandy in June 1944 led to the end of World War Two. Another example is from the Cold War, that of the Inchon landings in the Korean War 1950. These two examples lend to naval involvement of power projection being the support of land forces as a strategic combat enabler.

Yet progressively during the Cold War and after, amphibious assault operations have become restricted due to new instruments. Owing to shore defenses by missiles, Till (2018, 276) concluded that the chances of carrying out successful major amphibious operations are low. A case on this to analyze is the Russia-Ukraine conflict since February 2022. The Russian Black Sea Fleet was not able to use its amphibious fleet to land ground forces on the shores of Ukraine. Terrain constraints, amphibious lift limitations, difficulty sustaining air dominance, and logistical issues all pointed to the chancy success of any amphibious operation (Ozberk 2022).

Clark and Sloman (2016, 12) add to the debate on power projection related to the combat component of the naval strategy with cases on VEO. They inform that it is easier than previously for navies to use a relatively small amount of force to attack long areas of the coastline in power projection. The range and firepower of missiles today are far superior to those of naval artillery of Corbett's and Mahan's day. But missiles can also be used by VEO and states as defenders to limit the attacker's options to successfully carry out amphibious operations by defending the beaches with missiles.

To this can be added the experience and pursuit of strategies by a small state's brown-water navy that is also its coastguard. That entails power projection as a prompt response to some potential flash point including against insurgents and wider problems of criminality and disorder at sea. Israel is an example with information provided by Admiral Yedidia Groll-Yaari, the commander of the Israel navy (2000-2004). He found that naval power projection for warfare and maritime security can be achieved by using warships offshore, naval based drones and cyber in the integration of systemic warfare. He introduced three battle-space operational concepts for this: control, attack, and sustainment (Groll-Yaari 1998, 29-48).

Dr Tim Benbow, who has lectured at the Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth and the Defence Studies Department at King's College London where he is also the Deputy Director of The Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies uses these concepts with cases. Benbow (2007, 80-95) shows that naval forces are well suited to coastguard type power projection operations on the spectrum of conflict intensity short of inter-state wars. He provides examples on control of the maritime space, attacking insurgents and criminal elements and sustaining secure SLOC for cargo and passenger vessels.

Naval diplomacy

In this last sub-section of this last part of this article I stress that naval officers need to be educated that inherent to any form of naval power projection is the political purpose and goal. The means must suit the ends. This relates to the diplomatic component of the naval strategy of power projection. Naval doctrine and strategy have an umbilical tie to defense and foreign policy and diplomacy. Navies are a tool and means to achieve these. That lends to another element of the conceptualizations of Mahan and Corbett that retains certain validity. Mahan commented on this with direct reference to Corbett's study of the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). Mahan (1911) wrote in a letter that the strength of English action in that war came from holding the three related functions of army, navy, and diplomacy in one hand.

Examples are provided by Sir James Cable, a British diplomat and naval strategic thinker who wrote a series of works published between 1971 and 1994 about gunboat

diplomacy. He defined it as the use or threat of limited naval force, otherwise than as an act of war, to secure advantage or to avert loss. He divided the examples of gunboat diplomacy into four categories: definitive, purposeful, catalytic, and expressive. All of them are tools of diplomacy as a means of coercion. That is more the threat of the use of force that resulted in not needing to use force because the objectives were achieved by this show of force or capability as a type of diplomacy (Rowlands 2012, 89–106).

Booth (1985, 121) added examples in the post-Cold War era. He informed that the diplomatic role of the navy was a part of a state's foreign policy. According to him, to keep essential shipping lanes unimpeded, such as those in the Persian Gulf, the foreign policy of the United States relies on the symbolic display of naval strength. He highlighted photos from the USN where in the caption that appears next to aircraft carries it is written 90,000 tons of diplomacy.

Naval diplomacy is as evident a role for small states with brown-water navies as it is for large maritime powers with blue-water navies. Kevin Rowlands, the head of the Royal Navy Strategies Study Center, surveyed 500 naval incidents from the post-Cold War era. He notes that both small, medium, and large maritime states procure vessels with different systems on them to suit a mix of doctrine and strategies including as a means of foreign policy and diplomacy. He identifies three types of naval diplomacy: cooperation, convincing, and coercion. These give warships and navies symbols of national sovereignty and power, and not only purely military roles (Rowlands 2018, 45-48).

An example for Israel comes from the IDF Chief of Staff Lieutenant-General Aviv Kochavi in 2019. He referred to the status of manned surface vessels. He stressed that despite the growing trend towards the development of unmanned vessels, they would be used mainly for deception missions, electronic warfare, counter-arming, and anti-terrorist warfare. They could not and would not replace manned surface vessels as they are essential for naval control and naval diplomacy (Helfont 2022, 53-63).

This role of naval diplomacy places warships' captains as a feature and tool of civil-military relations (CMR). They must diplomatically coerce through their presence when projecting power but short of provoking an armed response. That leads to the need to educate the topic of international relations, political science and CMR at naval academies. The objective is to appreciate decision making and command and control as being a mix of: 1) the professional military expertise of the commander of a naval force in the field; 2) naval control resting with a joint branch headquarters that would have the relative advantage of monitoring, controlling and influencing the fire attack plans of all the forces (land, sea and air) and intelligence on the arrays of the enemy; and 3) power projection and naval diplomacy determined by the goals and objective of political elites.

Crucial to how this is undertaken from a technical point of new instruments is the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). It is an enabler of capabilities in their broad

sense of command, control, communications, computers (C4) and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) – in sum C4IRS. This also enables political elites to view the battle from afar making them better informed. This might be positive enabling the professional expertise of naval officers commanding warships to have an input to decision making (Sloan 2002, 103).

It might also be negative as political elites might wish to issue commands to the warship captains. A case study of China that is a blue-water navy state on this centralized control of forces has been undertaken by Professor Andrew Erickson from the USNWC. He and his co-author Chase (2010, 278) warns with examples that such over-centralization towards the direct involvement of political elites may harm the capabilities of the Chinese navy.

Similar positives and negatives apply for a small brown-water navy state such as Israel. Or Barak who is researcher at the National Security Studies Center at the University of Haifa informs that increased computerization has value because it enables the integration of military decision-making of different units at the tactical, strategic, and systemic levels. Barak (2021, 19-37) says it could lead to inexperienced and untrained civilian-political elites' involvement in battlefield decision making. In sum there is a need at all levels to educate on such notions as how to project power and be diplomatic in CMR with their own political elites to ensure that the strategy pursued is a viable naval and maritime one.

Conclusion

I commence this last part that is the conclusions with a summary of all the research findings and then proceed to suggest future research directions. Underlying the argument in this article is my personal view that conceptualism is the philosophical view that there is no reality independent of our conception of it. In this article I have remained consistent to this central theme and thesis throughout and not deviated from it.

The goal of this article was to provide a means, through revisiting the conceptualizations, to educate. A leading purpose I emphasized throughout this article consistently was to ensure that cadets can make valid decisions in operational situations where they lack or only have minimal experience as junior officers. Moreover, this knowledge gained is also applicable to senior officers. Once they have more experience this knowledge would assist in planning and operations.

To undertake revisiting the conceptualizations I presented a structure of five sections with six sub-sections in the last. In each I built upon the previous, to construct a solid argument from many perspectives and on a wide range of topics. The conclusions shown in each is that there is an iterative process of education on maritime security, with that of the operational implementation of tactics, strategy, doctrine, and policy.

The foundation of each part of this solid argument is naval conceptualizations. The specific methodology I applied used the conceptualizations of Corbett and Mahan. That was in the context of the situation and threat environment and technologies including the size or type of warships and naval fleets and their weaponry. I provided examples from many states citing many renowned experts.

To conclude I now present a summary of all the research findings for each section and sub-section. In the section "Selecting some conceptualizations of Mahan and Corbett" the findings relate to the applicability of their intellectual heritage. I found that both Mahan's "decisive naval battle" and Corbett's "securing the command of the sea or preventing the enemy from securing it" have stood the test of time and remain valid. I also noted that to these must be added the threat environment of non-state actors and violent and extremist actors. They were not applicable during their time. In the section "Revisiting some of Corbett's and Mahan's Conceptualizations" I found that revisiting their conceptualizations also requires addressing new technologies. The examples related to submarines. Combined these two research findings are extremely relevant for both junior and senior officers relating to the size, shape, and functions of naval forces.

I then added two sections that respectively focused more in depth on Mahan and Corbett. The purpose was to show their continual relevance even after revisiting their conceptualizations in the current threat environments and with different technologies undertaken in the previous two sections. I examined in detail Mahan's conceptualizations on ocean battles as opposing large naval forces has become less prevalent since World War II. More current is coastal/littoral warfare, asymmetrical warfare and combined operations with land and air forces. Yet when examining Corbett's conceptualizations regarding the linkages between naval and land warfare I found that Mahan's retains relevance for the control of naval choke points and ports. The research finding can be summarized as the location of battle engagement requires certain naval forces where there is no better alternative.

In the last section "Pursuing naval strategies from the conceptualizations" I expanded my focus of revisiting the conceptualizations of Corbett and Mahan to include as many as possible of new situations and new instruments since they were formulated. I divided these into the functions of military, policing, and diplomacy. I decided to do this because the modern naval arena is not just a division of open sea and coasts. My reasoning is that this adds value for educating cadets and for junior and senior offices to appreciate the daily applicability of the conceptualizations.

I structured this last section into five sub-sections. The first two relate to findings on military functions. In the first "Decisiveness, naval supremacy, and naval control" I found there is "no one solutions that fits all." My research findings stressed that a diversity of thought resting on sound naval conceptualization foundations is essential to provide a more holistic picture to taking decisions and actions and ensuring

victory. In the second "Control of all spaces" my research findings ascertained that maritime security must look at the larger holistic picture of the overall threat environment to assign specialist roles and tasks and related equipment for combined sea, land and air operations.

The next two sub-sections relate to findings on policing functions. In the first on "National security & constabulary" my findings went beyond naval warfare to show why education and conceptualizations are essential for captains of ships in the rules of engagement for different roles including those of coastguard functions, against criminal elements and in rescue operations. In the second on "Secure Sea lines of communication" I found that this is an example of a function that cannot be replaced by any other means than a naval presence of ships.

The last two sub-sections relate to findings on diplomacy functions and in part expand also on "Secure Sea lines of communication." The first is on "Power projection" where my research findings are that naval forces are one way of taking the battle or the threat of battle to the territory of the adversary. The dictum being that the best means of the defense is the offense and not on one's own territory. That is expanded further in the last sub-section "Naval diplomacy" where my findings are that inherent to any form of naval power projection is the political purpose and goal. Naval doctrine and strategy have an umbilical tie to defense and foreign policy and diplomacy. Navies are a tool and means to achieve these.

Having provided a summary of all the research findings I now proceed to suggest future research directions. These directions stem from the title of this article that calls to revisit conceptualizations. This must be an ongoing process in future research. Everything is in the melting pot where new situations, new threats and new technologies are iterative to my personal view that conceptualism is the philosophical view that there is no reality independent of our conception of it.

I believe that paradigmatic shifts in naval affairs since Corbett and Mahan involve a revolution in military affairs in terms of technology, operating doctrines, strategies and tactics, joint and combined operations, and in the aspects of decision-making of civil-military relations in real-time. Future research directions need to increasingly ascertain how to deal with more emerging new situations and new instruments as technology evolves and changes.

Future research directions also need to engage education pedagogy. Cadets are students and students do not learn simply by listening. Junior and senior officers can tell them that cramming for tests, rote learning, and blind tradition of following traditional texts such as Corbett and Mahan need in addition a critiquing of, by, and for today's world. They can also inform that learning also comes from experience and sometimes also errors. That means that any professional military education system requires a mix of a general education, with an emphasis on the individuality and

development of a cadet's critical faculties and continual professional development to reflect and review on experiences onboard ship.

Future research directions need to engage pedagogical approaches beyond lectures, articles, and books because they can but touch on the fringe of a subject. They can indicate certain points, draw out certain principles, excite interest—or otherwise. But they cannot replace the persistent study, and the discussion of views, from the operational experiences by which alone a professional's knowledge is to be distinguished from that of an amateur and limited experience.

To this end, a pedagogical approach could be a simulation exercise that might be undertaken at naval academies. The objective could be to get cadets to delve deep into the heritage of the profession, the development of abstract considerations including conceptualizations with a broad philosophical appreciation of naval and maritime affairs to determine the desirable characteristics of naval and maritime strategy for their future positions in the real world aboard ships. Junior and senior officers can also be given simulations in further shorter programs with specific objectives. Future research directions could focus on feedback from these simulations to examine gaps and what is needed to contribute to present and future naval planning, deployment, and operations.

I therefore conclude this article stressing that the potentials to be developed and to be realized are in the next steps in educating and in research. At the fore must be revisiting naval conceptualizations. Moreover, the nurturing of specialist think tanks for the development of concepts and doctrines specific could well follow the example of the USNWC, the Concepts and Doctrine Center in the RN, and the FRS Foundation for Strategic Research in France. To this should be added the bottom-up approach where captains of warships can contribute their experiences to be written into doctrine. For example, on counterinsurgent operations, coastguard and constabulary roles and geo-strategic shifts with new instruments such as missiles, drones and cyber. These are all topics for research directions.

The analogy I conclude with is that both educating and research might be akin to improving overall efficiency by promoting harmony between the quarter-deck and the boiler room and raising executive officers' awareness of the technical realities of the steam age. The alternative would end in blind herd instinct and battle failure. Beyond these beginnings, sooner or later naval officers at all ranks provided with the right directions in their education will light up a renaissance. And not just about points of view such as Corbett's and Mahan's conceptualizations on decisiveness, naval control, and victory. Being educated to look at the maritime space holistically with the full and proper examination of any conceptualizations tends towards serendipity when in combat or engaged in maritime security roles including naval diplomacy. The value of a maritime space also includes protecting the country's way of life and economic resources.

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BULLETIN
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Epistemological reassessment on the concept of resilience. Societal intangibles in the identity dilemma

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Abstract

Resilience is a concept borrowed from different fields of research like psychology, ecology and engineering and established in security studies. But the stability and relevance of the concept is not yet established as we have till the end of 2024, according to NATO agenda, to settle its substance and content. On the epistemological area, we need to establish the usefulness of such a concept as well as its identity and concrete added value to security studies since it overlaps with number of other concepts like security, vulnerability, good governance, sustainability and so on.

Keywords:

Five points on methodological approaches

Our qualitative study points out the components that are constituting those concrete differences in meaning, substance and content which recommend resilience to stay as a concept *per se* according to epistemological demands (Shea 2016). The identity dilemma has numerous sides and angles to address the subject, but we preferred to rely on the original sources of the concept, as well as on the definition that pushed the concept into practical relevance (Chandra *et al.*, 2011). This is the first methodological point we are focusing on, the identity of the concept. The sources for saving the concept are coming in the realm of societal security (Chifu, Nantoi and Sushko 2008) and intangibles (Chifu 2023b) as it is the case for their practical added value since those elements explain why measurable data and quantitative models do not suffice to cover the relevance of a country in war times.

It is true, however, that we need to recuperate, at the same time, the components that are explaining critical infrastructure resilience (European Commission 2023) as well as the resilience of the systems (Boon *et al.*, 2012) that act for offering constant, uninterrupted specific services to the population. Crisis management (including civil emergencies) and the content of decision making in crisis (Chifu 2019; Chifu and Ramberg 2007; Chifu and Ramberg 2008) is also a part of the specifics and added value of the resilience that need to be recuperated and included in the added value of the concept.

The second part of our study looks also into the components of institutional resilience (Aligica and Tarko 2014) and the mistakes in enforcing the concept as we are looking into the numerous models for creating indicators and grant a measurable model of institutional resilience. The separation of institutional resilience between resilience *per se* and resilience as a purpose (Gupta *et al.*, 2010) to support the continuity of services to a community or society is critical, as the opposite is ready to create monsters and give a role to authoritarian solutions. This is the second methodological approach.

Democratic resilience (Chifu 2018) as a condition, limitation and moral sense is also a must in describing institutional resilience as well as resilience *per se* in a democratic country. But here, we also have epistemological solutions that could prove the need for democratic resilience as a must on the long run, since authoritarian regimes are doomed to create imbalances, miscontent and mistrust and to open the door to direct instability through challenging the rules of the system which disregards the freedom of the individuals and free choices of the society. And this is a third methodological angle, if not condition for the full debate about resilience in democratic societies.

Last but not least, a full theoretical approach on criteria versus indicators, measurable evolutions versus non-measurable ones, qualitative versus quantitative elements in the reality around us are also of first importance for the study. That's

our fourth methodological concern and approach. We all know that when a model introduces values of the indicators with values comparable with the error of the model, the result is inconclusive and, therefore, should be dropped away (Fillion and Corless 2014). And new elements of quantitative assessments should replace those inconclusive indicators and models in order to stay in an acceptable framework and limits of errors in a practical study. And that is our fifth methodological approach.

Epistemological assessment on resilience

Resilience is a new fashionable concept over-used and threatened by irrelevance due to this excessive use, widening its coverage and understanding and dilution of its significance (Brown 2012). It has been borrowed from ecology (Adger *et al.*, 2011), psychology (Almedom 2008), and engineering, and moved into security studies. Its "vicinity" with a few other concepts and overlapping in meaning with the content of some others put at risk its scientific relevance and its identity. Resilience has become a concept widely used and extensively abused in the current literature, ready to lose its original means and fighting to find and to prove its real added value and relevance (Buikstra *et al.*, 2010).

The epistemological study on content, using multiple definitions of the concept of resilience and their relations with other neigbour concepts with overlapping means, shows that resilience is fundamentally linked to a human community/society and community resilience as an emergent property of dynamic social-ecological systems through which communities can respond positively to a range of risks, including shocks, extreme events, and other changes. Five different capacities assess how interactions between them confer resilience: place attachment, leadership, community cohesion and efficacy, community networks, and knowledge and learning. Its relevance is linked with conservation, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and community development (Folke et al., 2005).

For observing the substance of the concept, we used the last practical definition of NATO Art. 61. Vilnius Summit Communique (NATO 2023a), which introduces the following components:
• National and collective resilience is link to societies (to safeguard our societies, our populations) and to democratic resilience as well (reference to shared values).
• It is linked to crisis and civil emergencies - preparedness against strategic shocks and disruptions.
• It aims to boost "national and collective ability to ensure":
- continuity of government and of essential services to our populations, and
- enable civil support to military operations, in peace, crisis and conflict.
• It is linked to security through the vulnerability concept (strategic

vulnerabilities and dependencies).
• It is liked to critical infrastructure resilience as well as to system resilience of supply and services (supply chains and health systems).
• Societal resilience is a specific and core part of general resilience.
• It is also linked to man-made crisis, including governmental responsibility (the actions, commitments and legal obligations of individual Allies in other international bodies also contribute to enhancing our resilience).

Epistemology consecrates a concept and accepts its relevance for the scientific and academic purpose once it fulfils some core requirements (Elgin, 2019), that need to be covered by a new emerging concept:
• Clarity and clear delimitation of concept significance.
• The relevant "identity" of the concept which separates it from similar or related concepts, with overlapping significance.
• Relevance of the content that differentiate the new concept from similar ones.
• Usefulness and added value to the science and research.

The most recent concepts for defining resilience come from security – resilience is often linked to a trait or a component of the security, especially through vulnerability (Young 2010) – being resilient means also diminishing the vulnerabilities of a community/society. But resilience is not just that, since a resilient society can function also without diminishing its vulnerabilities and resilience is not only about vulnerabilities, but also about facing shocks and crises, adapting and preventing them, anticipating and even changing the reality of the future in order to access the most favourable scenario and get away from the worst case on.

On another point, linked to system resilience and institutional resilience, the concept tends to overlap and confound with good governance (Holling and Gunderson 2002; Ostrom 1990; Paavola 2007; Helmke and Levitsky 2004). Sustainability is another concept linked to the origins of the resilience in environmental studies, ecology, as resistance could be another term linked to critical infrastructure and engineering (NATO 2022a). So, the relevance of the term should be underlined when making the needed nuances and clear determination in relations with all those related concepts.

The overall concept analysis that we have done in the numerous means of the concepts and definitions found in the scientific literature show the following elements as definitory for the concept:
• First, it is individual centric and takes the societal perspective. In particular, the final goal of resilience is a functional societal and individual well-being, and the main contributors to resilience are individuals, with all of their interactions, social ties and power structures.
• Second, it takes a dynamic perspective. Shocks can differ in their chronicity and intensity, which influences the relative importance of stability versus flexibility (the absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities).

Moreover, during the dynamic response to shocks, it might happen that there is a change in the most relevant capacity, in the most affected entities, or both at the same time.

• Third, it emphasizes interactions, feedback and possible nonlinearities among various entities and layers of the system. This "system view" helps understanding how shocks spread among the different segments of the system, how they interact with each other and with the actors, and based on all these, where to intervene.

• Fourth, interventions may contribute actively to the resilience of the overall system, by enhancing the entities' own abilities to cope with disturbances. This could mean helping entities to invoke the necessary capacities (e.g. incentivizing people to accumulate savings to cope with a potential job loss) or support these capacities directly (e.g. unemployment benefits). Interventions may need to vary with individuals and change in time.

• Fifth, a crucial aspect is to be able to "bounce forward" (instead of "bouncing back"), to learn from past difficulties, and come out stronger from a witnessed storm. This means being able to use shocks as windows of opportunities, and thus translate the negative narrative of a "stormy future" into a positive one (crisis as threats and opportunities) (Manca, Benczur and Giovannini 2017).

Societal resilience (NATO 2022b; Chifu 2018) has proven its added value to the concept coming from practical questions and evolutions: during Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, being the one that explains the concrete results (Chifu and Simons 2023) when one side has all figures on its side – manpower, capabilities, weapons and ammunition storages, ideological post-imperial upper hand – but did not succeed in wining the war (Chifu 2021; Chifu 2022). Intangibles (Chifu and Simons 2023) and concrete elements that forge societal security are those making the difference, with a very thorough attention to those linked to societal security for avoiding the overlapping of those concepts. How those elements of societal resilience mix with other valid significances – like the resilience of critical infrastructure or of systems that deliver specific services to the communities – will offer the clear content and identity of the resilience is to be determined. If not, we will be facing a composite concept which includes all those elements of previously existent concepts and its value could be disputable if not really questionable.

Institutional resilience: common errors. Democratic resilience

Institutional resilience is both a by-product of system resilience and societal resilience, since institutions grant services to the community. But the problem with institutional resilience is to confirm two elements:

• It is not about resilience *per se*, for the sake of the survival of the institution, government or political power, but about the resilience of the community, society or nation for which the institution is granting services. Putting the

individual, citizen, taxpayer and voter, as well as the community, society and nation in the core of the concept (for whom is resilience?) is critical. Institutions are made through law by societies in order to fulfil a certain task, a certain objective, a service to the society and individuals, and could be transformed, reformed, dissolved or merged and the service could be taken away and fulfilled in a different administrative form for efficiency and effectiveness reasons. Institutions, governments, majorities, regimes are not subject to the concept of resilience (Gupta *et al.*, 2010).

• It is clearly and definitely linked to democratic resilience, on two accounts: first, because we are living in democratic societies and the norms, values and principles are at the core of our societies, so they should be defended, even though this could introduce limits to the means to achieve resilience; and second, because resilience is, on the long run, destined to be convergent with democratic resilience, since an autocratic society could be resilient and effective only on the short term, but on the mid to long term, divergences, misunderstandings and tensions are accumulating and they could not be diffused without proper communication, transparency, legitimacy of the executive acts, freedom of speech, freedom of public manifestations, of competitive, free and fair elections.

NATO Strategic Concept Madrid 2022 (NATO 2022c) has several references to resilience and they also refer to democratic resilience.

• First, resilience is about democracy, societies and democratic values – "ensuring our national and collective resilience is critical to all our core tasks and underpins our efforts to safeguard our nations, societies and shared values".

• Second, it counter-pose democracies and authoritarian regimes, underlying threats to democracy and the need to safeguard it through resilience means (even though here it is a little too much overlapping with the security content – "Authoritarian actors challenge our interests, values and democratic way of life. They are investing in sophisticated conventional, nuclear and missile capabilities, with little transparency or regard for international norms and commitments. Strategic competitors test our resilience and seek to exploit the openness, interconnectedness and digitalisation of our nations. They interfere in our democratic processes and institutions and target the security of our citizens through hybrid tactics, both directly and through proxies".

• Third, besides the attacks on democracy, it is an attack to the rules based order, so to the international system of laws and regulations, the democratic format of the world order – "They conduct malicious activities in cyberspace and space, promote disinformation campaigns, instrumentalise migration, manipulate energy supplies and employ economic coercion (NATO 2023b). These actors are also at the forefront of a deliberate effort to undermine multilateral norms and institutions and promote authoritarian models of governance".

The EU Strategic Compass (European Council 2022) has also clear references to the fact that resilience is convergent or contains the democratic resilience:

• First, it links resilience to hybrid threats – another important convergence to security that needs to be dealt with. Hybrid threats, cyber-attacks, manipulation of information and foreign interferences in electrons are the key threats that are countered by raising societal and national resilience (that includes institutional resilience).
• Second, societal and economic resilience (North 1990), critical infrastructure protection as well as the protection of our democracies at the national and EU level are tasks linked to resilience, according to the document.
• Third, fighting information warfare through access to credible information, free and independent mass media are also a part of resilience coming from the need to protect democratic resilience (European Commission 2020).

System resilience and critical infrastructure –
resistance versus resilience. What makes sense?

Another important part of the epistemological debate regarding resilience is the one separating resistance and resilience – related first and foremost to the source of the concept borrowed from engineering. Nuances are very important since the concept of resilience contains the significance of resistance but also has numerous other components. It is like the comparing of Nassim Taleb's opposites to fragility (Taleb 2014): resistance should be the equivalent of robustness, and resilience should be closer to anti-fragile.

Once again, Taleb underlines the fact that institutional resilience is not about the institution *per se*, to be robust and survive in the original form or shape in the constitutional and legal system, but it is about the capacity of the system and critical infrastructure to grant the continuity of the services it delivers to the population and the fulfilment of the tasks attributed in a direct form – institutional continuity – or in a different administrative form. It is also about the definition of the institution in terms of legal framework, procedures, and functionality rather than about walls, positions, political power enshrined into such institutions.

Moreover, another useful reference is that of the liquid society of Zygmunth Baumann (2000). In that case, the perspective is that institutions are no longer walls, buildings, paper, physical instruments, and tools, but functionality, responses, actions, and services fulfilled. A concrete example of that reality could be the functionality of the systems during pandemic: the services and continuity of the government was not linked to a day-by-day reunion of individuals to workplaces, but to the adaptation to a health urgency that let individuals act by themselves from home or from any place where they are. It is sure that there are some limits here since some services require going to concrete places and using physical instruments. But the idea of continuity of services and adaptability is very clearly reflected here as in Baumann's book.

Criteria versus indicators: the qualitative approach
to societal security and intangibles

In terms of intangibles (Chifu 2023b) and elements of societal security, one could clearly approach the concept of resilience from the part related to policies useful for the purpose of enforcing it (Berkes and Ross 2013). And here measuring progress and the effectiveness of the policies are very often transferred to models of indicators. But not all the realities are measurable. Not everything could be translated into indicators. On the contrary, the absolute majority of evolutions in reality are not measurable. Therefore, we tend to use models in these cases.

But models are not a panacea. Accessing and building models to measure realities help our cartesian minds, are very important and valid scientific grounds for assessing the level of resilience, for instance, in a particular field. But each model has an error, which comes from the estimation and approximation of reality. And when the error of a model is comparable to the value of an indicator or another, this cannot be relevant anymore. It is an unacceptable error.

Resilience is also the probability of ensuring the task, objectives, and services during and after a crisis, civil emergency, or disruptive event. Immaterial factors, non-measurable evolutions, and events as well as the intangibles (Chifu and Simons 2023) that could enforce and multiply the level of resilience are of first importance and could not be measured. How can we assess the progress or evolution of resilience?

With this we are arriving at the difference between criteria and indicators (Berg 2014). Indicators are the measurable ones, easy to frame and to compare, even though there could still be a dispute about their relevance to resilience. But there are also qualitative ways of approaching the evaluation of resilience, through criteria to be fulfilled. In this case, qualitative indicators, criteria, achieving concrete tasks are the only able to show us progress or regress, evolutions, or improvements in forging resilience (Bloor *et al.*, 2011). Societal security and the intangibles are the most frequent to need those qualitative frameworks to assess enforcement of resilience.

As an example, how could you measure the capacity of sacrifice? The capacity of supporting a war effort and absorbing the costs of a long-term war? The acceptability of the spendings and costs in war times, the power to endure suffering and pain for losing loved ones in a war? Intangible war characteristics are defining, as we have seen in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the one that gets a victory in a concrete clash. Despite the measurable indicators that show a different perspective. They include, the will to fight, determination, resolution, capacity of sacrifice, survival in harsh environments, for sure reputation, credibility, brand, leadership, compassion, moral, cohesion, unity, level of preparedness and experience, consciousness and support of the public opinion (Chifu 2023a). And some more.

Any model prepared to measure those intangibles has proven unacceptable due to enormous errors. Even the models involving perceptions of different experts, people, polls and so on are not real indicators of those evolutions and are doomed to fail. That is why we call them intangibles. And that is why we need to replace the quantitative indicators with qualitative ones coming from criteria and concrete tasks to be fulfilled by the system in order to reach the expected level of effectiveness.

Conclusions

The concept of resilience is far from being stabilized and to have fulfilled the epistemological requirements for making its way into the scientific and academic field. There are parts of that content, especially linked to societal resilience and intangibles that are recommending it. But there is still an important part of the journey to be concluded in order to integrate the other components of critical infrastructure resilience, system resilience, democratic resilience as well as crisis management, decision making and confronting disruptive events in order to achieve the endgame of consecrating resilience as a clear and full fledge concept.

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BULLETIN
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A Fitful Path: Nigeria's Faltering Counterterrorism Operation against the Boko Haram in the Northeast

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Abstract

Nigeria's security environment continues to be tense, tenuous and fluid. From all indications and yardsticks of policy planning and implementation, the country's security architecture seems to be unraveling. As the nation's security establishments confront multiple security crises especially in Northern Nigeria, their policy and operational reactions continue to be reactive. While the Boko Haram insurgency rages, a decade after the commencement of military operations against the group, military successes in the Northeast are at best modest. Following a decade of commitment of military resources including billions of dollars deployed to the procurement of armament and military hardware, expansion of forces' strength and creation of special operation formations, one can ask why have the military operations continued to falter and security architecture unravel? The study was anchored on the qualitative research approach and sourced data from published and openly available official documents, scientific publications and newspapers articles, reports, opinion pieces and commentaries. Making use of this open-sourced information, this study explains faltering military operations and Nigeria's worsening security environment to the failure of security planning, poor civil-military relations including lack of depth in intelligence agencies penetration of local communities across Northern Nigeria, rivalry among the three arms of the Nigerian Armed Forces, persistency of the poor culture of intelligence information sharing and lack of synergy and poor coordination among Nigeria's security establishments. This study recommends that more attention need to be paid to intelligence gathering, synergy and coordination among the security establishments in the bids to enhance the prospects of Nigeria's counter-terrorism operation and other military engagements across the country.

Keywords:

Counterterrorism Operation; Security Strategy; Intelligence Gathering; Boko Haram; Nigeria.

Nigeria is facing numerous security challenges and these crises seem to be defying solutions directed at addressing them, at least at present. Given that no geo-political zone of the country is exempted from the incidences of insecurity and rising criminality, these crises can be seen as highly existential for the corporate existence of Nigeria. As for Nigerians that are daily getting caught up in the crossfire between personnel of the Nigerian security institutions and the merchants of death that terror groups, bandits and kidnappers have become, the experience has been harrowing to say the least. Given the horrendous human and material costs of the security crises facing Nigeria, it will not be out of place to argue as Saliu (2020) asserted that the "country is in the throes of fighting a war essentially with itself". Indeed, the position that Northern Nigeria in particular is "hollowing itself out from the inside" aptly captured the existential nature of the current security crises that the Nigerian state and its security establishments are confronted with and battling to bring under control in Northeast and Northwest Nigeria.

To argue that Nigeria's security environment continues to be tensed, tenuous and fluid is stating the obvious. As the security challenges facing Nigeria continue to morph and change in dynamics, the security institutions notably the Nigerian Armed Forces and to some extent the Nigerian Police Force seem to be playing catch-up. Indeed, from all indications and yardsticks of policy planning and implementation, the country's security architecture seems to be unraveling. As the nation's security establishments confront multiple security crises especially in Northern Nigeria, their policy and operational reactions continue to be reactive rather than proactive, at least that seems to be the perception of many Nigerians. The security challenges that Nigeria currently face are not only dynamic and evolving in nature but some are actually geo-political zones/regional specifics and particularly Northern Nigeria in manifestation.

In Northeast Nigeria, the Boko Haram terrorist, its breakaway groups the Islamic State in West Africa Province ISWAP and the Ansaru terror groups continued to carried out targeted attacks largely against communities, schools, IDP camps and against military installations especially in Borno and Yobe states (Saliu and Saka 2019). While the Boko Haram insurgency rages, a decade after the commencement of military operations against the group, military successes in the Northeast are at best modest. Without doubt, the liberation of communities hitherto overrun and held by the Boko Haram in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states and the phased returning of displaced Nigerians back to their communities represented the height of successes in Nigeria's 'war on terror' under the regime of President Muhammadu Buhari (Onapajo 2017). However, the military campaign against the Boko Haram and its splinter terrorist groups continues to face challenges.

As the military campaign in the Northeast ebbs and the policy and operational strategies falter, fighters routed in this theater of operation seem to be linking up with bandits, cattle rustlers, kidnappers and sundry criminals in the Northwest. Indeed, more worrisome is the opening of new theater of conflict in the Northwest and part

of Northcentral as bandits, rustlers, kidnappers and everyday criminals combined to wage war of attrition against the Nigerian state and its military establishment. As bandits lay communities to waste in the Northwest, kidnappers abduct school children, students and ordinary Nigerians at will across Northwest states of Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara and Niger state in Northcentral Nigeria. No incidence shown more glaring the audacious nature of the criminals that had laid siege on the Northwest than the coordinated attacks and kidnapping of school students for ransoms in Kankara, Jengbebe, Greenfield and Tegina in Katsina, Zamfara, Kaduna and Niger states respectively (ICG 2020, 2018; Lar 2018). The current reality of the security environment in Northern Nigeria is pointing to the fact that banditry, cattle rustling and kidnapping have largely evolved into a criminally syndicated networks across the region.

Following a decade of commitment of military resources including billions of dollars deployed to the procurement of armament and military hardware, expansion of forces strength inclusive of the creation of the 7th Brigade headquarter in Maiduguri and specifically for the 'war on terror' campaign and creation of special operation units and formations, creation of the office of Chief of Intelligence among others one can ask why has the military operation continued to falter and security architecture unravel especially as it relates to the operations in Northern Nigeria? Why has Nigeria failed to win in a convincing manner the 'war against Boko Haram? What explains the unraveling of the country's security architecture in Northwest Nigeria and why are bandits, rustlers and kidnappers having free reign plundering communities and kidnapping Nigerians in their communities, along major highways and sadly in school compounds at will? With all the resources invested in the security sector and the security policies that have been crafted to address the security crisis in Northern Nigeria, why has success eluded Nigeria? What and how can one explain the worsening security environment particularly Northwest Nigeria?

To answer these questions, this article relied on the qualitative research approach and gathered data from published and openly available official documents, scientific publications and newspapers articles, reports, opinion pieces and commentaries. Utilizing these open-sourced information, this study anchored the faltering military operations and Nigeria's worsening security environment on a number of issues. Prominent among these are: the failure of security planning, poor civil-military relations including lack of depth in intelligence agencies penetration of local communities across Northern Nigeria, rivalry among the three arms of the Nigerian Armed Forces, persistency of the poor culture of intelligence information sharing and lack of synergy and poor coordination among Nigeria's security establishments. Other non-security explanation variables includes: the crisis of corruption especially in military budget, procurement and expenditure, partisanship, poor communication between the government and the security institutions to the people, one sided security reports and its implications for people's support for the

security operations especially in Southern Nigeria, the misguided statement for self-defense by then Minister of Defense and the attendant rise of the call for self-help in Southern Nigeria and the slippery argument of trying to avoid mounting civilian causalities by avoiding direct exchange of fire with bandits and kidnappers being made by the Nigerian Armed Forces among others. This study recommends that more attention need to be paid to intelligence gathering, synergy and coordination among the security establishments in the bids to enhance the prospects of Nigeria's counter-terrorism operation and other military engagements across the country.

The Nigeria State and the Management of Insecurity in Northern Nigeria

The Nigeria state and its security apparatus have sought to manage the nation's unending security challenges mainly through the deployment of the country's security asset. At the onset of the Nigeria state campaign against what was to become Boko Haram terror group, a joint security team code-named 'Operation Flush' comprising Nigerian Armed Forces, mainly Nigerian Army and Nigerian Police Force personnel, were deployed to dislodge members of the group known as the Nigerian Taliban from Kanama in Yobe State in 2003. In July 2009 elements drawn from the Nigerian Army and the Nigerian Police Force raided the compound of Muhammad Yusuf, the then leader of the Boko Haram sect in Maiduguri. Following rising insecurity arising from the activities of the Boko Haram group now under the command of Abubakar Shekau, the Nigerian government under President Goodluck Jonathan established the first full fledge military task force, specifically deployed to address the Boko Haram terror insurgency that had assumed frightening dimensions. Following a directive from the Commander-in-Chief, President Jonathan on 12th June 2011, the Joint Military Task Force, JTF code-named 'Operation Restore Order' headquartered in Maiduguri was established. Personnel for the JTF were drawn largely from the Nigeria Army, Air Force and Navy, the Department of State Security, the Nigerian Police Force (Saliu and Saka 2019, 8; Onapajo 2017; Onuoha 2014; Solomon 2012). The JTF had a two-battalion force strength from the Nigeria Army, 750 Naval personnel, 650 personnel from the Air Force, 1,500 from the Police and 500 personnel from the Department of State Security (Oyewole 2021, 9).

Following continued military attacks from the Boko Haram terror groups and the group's successes at grabbing and holding territories, and to give legislative effects to the war on terror, the Federal Government signed the 'Anti-Terror Bill' into law and declared a 'State of Emergency' on Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States on the 15th May 2013. The Federal Government also raised the troops level to 8,000 in 2013, 20,000 in 2014, 25,000 in 2015 and the force level stands at around 50,000 troops at present. This is aside the tens of thousands of local vigilantes constituted

into the Civilian Joint Task Force that has largely become invaluable to Nigeria's counter-terrorism war in the Northeast (Oyewole 2021, 9). Following the electoral victory of retired General Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressive Congress in the 2015 general elections and his inauguration, the first order of business for the President Muhammadu Buhari was the announcement of the relocation of military headquarters coordinating the counter-terrorism war in the Northeast from Abuja to Maiduguri, the centre of the military operations. Ramping up troops level, President Buhari also announced the formation of the Seventh Battalion of the Nigeria Armed with Headquarters at Maimalari Barrack, Maiduguri and appointed a Chief of Security Intelligence, an equivalent to the three Arms Service Chiefs to lead the coordination of intelligence operations as a strategic element of the war on terror (Saliu and Saka 2019, 9).

At the multilateral level, the Nigerian government had strengthened its military and intelligence cooperation with its immediate neighbours and the most important affirmation of the renewed cooperation was the reinvigorated commitment to the Chad Basin Commission, Multilateral Joint Task Force MJTF based at Ndjamena by troops contributing countries including; Benin Republic, Cameroon, Chad, Niger Republic with Nigeria as the major partner. At the bilateral level, the Federal Government under President Muhammadu Buhari was able to shore up Western Powers confidence in Nigeria and by so doing get more favourable responses especially on foreign military assistance for the prosecution of Nigeria's 'war on terror', security related intelligence information sharing and more importantly, acquisition and sales of military equipment to Nigeria. The most significant was the decision to sell twelve (12) A-29 Super Tucano fighter planes to Nigeria by the United States government under former President Donald Trump. Of the twelve, Nigeria has recently taken delivery of six of the fighter planes, while Nigeria fighter pilots, engineers and other operation support component personnel from the Nigeria Air Force have undergone intensive capacity training in the United States. The sales order for the fighter planes, their accessories and servicing agreement came at a cost of $593 million (Egobiambu 2021; Reuters 2012; Oyeleke 2021).

In all its ramifications, state response to the Boko Haram insurgency, starting from 2003 when Police operations were conducted in Geidam and Kanamma and 2009 against Muhammad Yusuf in Maiduguri has largely been militarized (Aghedo and Osumah 2012). The military approach was escalated following the institution of full-scale military task forces in the Northeast signaling the commencement of Nigeria's counterterrorism operation against the group. The Joint Military Task Force against Boko Haram in the Northeast transited through at least three stages. Starting with Operation Restore Order, 2011-2013; Operation Zaman Lafiya (We will live in Peace), 2013-2015 and the latest being 'Operation Lafiya Dole (Peace by all Means) (Oyewole 2021; Ibrahim and Bala 2018).

Faltering counterterrorism operation against Boko Haram in Northeast Nigeria: An assessment

There are a number of studies that have addressed the military approach at managing the Boko Haram terrorist insurgency. These studies appraised the successes of Nigeria's counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations especially as it relates to the military offensive in the Northeast. Other than this, they also assess the challenges confronting Nigeria state and its security establishment as it relates to the counter-insurgency/counter-terrorism operations especially in the Northeast. For example, Bappah (2016) averred that the failure of the military action against Boko Haram in Northeast Nigeria can be situated around three main issues. These are: the erosion of military professionalism under successive civilian administrations since 1999; the poor and unprofessional handling of the war on terror by the leadership of the Nigerian Armed Forces and lastly the lack of political decisiveness and non-demonstration of will by the leadership of former President Goodluck Jonathan and the top brass of the Nigerian military to end the insurgency. While these three issues are germane, however, they did not capture all the factors that accounted for the poor handling of Nigeria's counter-terrorism efforts against the Boko Haram under former President Jonathan.

Following the euphoria that greeted President Muhammadu Buhari's declaration that Nigeria has technically defeated the Boko Haram, Onapajo (2017) rhetorically asked whether Nigeria has actually defeated the group and recorded a decisive battle victory against terrorist insurgency in the Northeast. As it relates to the successes of the counter-terrorism efforts under former President Jonathan, Onapajo (2017) was emphatic in affirming that the military approach was ineffective much as the complimentary political approach at managing and addressing the Boko Haram terror insurgency under President Jonathan. Among the factors that can be attributed to explaining the ineffectiveness of Nigeria's counter-terrorism war, Onapajo (2017, 67) highlighted the large scale corruption that was the hallmark of military procurement and defense expenditure under the President Jonathan administration, the charges of human rights abuse in the prosecution of the counter-terrorism operations and the loss of confidence and goodwill of the international community in the regime efforts that emanated therefrom. As it relates to the pronouncement of technical defeat of the Boko Haram group under President Buhari, Onapajo (2017) agreed that one cannot dispute the fact that the regime had achieved tremendous progress in its fight against the group given some important milestones that had been recorded. However, Onapajo (2017, 69), argued that while the group might have been technically degraded, the military achievement should be seen as temporal, given that there are many signs suggesting that the threats of Boko Haram is still potent. Given, the resurgence of Boko Haram attacks against military and civilian targets starting from 2020 till present, it seems that Onapajo's (2017) worse nightmare and fear of a resurgent Boko Haram was actually not misplaced

after all. This, however, is not to deny the series of battle successes and military strides recorded by the Nigerian Armed Forces and other security institutions in the fore-front of the counter-insurgency operation against the Boko Haram in the Northeast and bandits, cattle rustlers and kidnappers in the Northwest in recent time (Ogbaje 2021).

Writing on the challenges confronting the Nigeria state in its counter-insurgency operations in the Northeast, Saliu and Saka (2019) identified poor interagency cooperation and coordination among Nigeria's security establishment, poor culture of interagency intelligence information management, poor civil-military relations and lack of respect for human rights which alienates the local population in the Northeast and corruption in defense budgeting and arms procurement as critical issues. While the issues raised by Saliu and Saka (2019) are of central importance, they largely dwell within the realm of security agencies operational challenges. Thus, the issues addressed by Saliu and Saka (2019) did not take more cognizance of importance issues that dwell within the realm of civil-military relations, political and social issues that do have serious implications on the success or otherwise of military operations in the Northeast and more recently in the Northwest. While the issues that regarded more the operational challenges confronting the security institutions will be addressed, attention will also be directed at discussion non-security related issues such as the crisis of corruption especially in security budgeting, military procurement and expenditure, poor communication between the government and the security institutions to the people, one sided security reports and its implications for people's support for the security operations especially in Southern Nigeria, the misguided statement for self-defense by the Minister of Defense and the attendant rise of the call for self-help in Southern Nigeria and the slippery argument of trying to avoid mounting civilian causalities by avoiding direct exchange of fire with bandits and kidnappers been made by the Nigerian Armed Force among others. These security and civil related challenges and issues undermining Nigeria's security strategy and military tactics are given attention in the remaining part of this section.

Poor inter-agency coordination and cooperation
One of the most critical challenges confronting the Nigeria security establishment is the crisis of inter-agency cooperation and poor coordination of operations and missions in manner as to aid the achievement of expected mission's objectives. The lack of synergy and crisis of inter-agency rivalry inclusive of unhealthy rivalry between military chiefs has works in manner as to undermine the operations of the security establishment in general and constrain military formations coordination that is highly essential for achieving set objectives and ultimately the success of the nation's internal security interests. The inter-agency rivalry observable in the relationships among the three arms of the Nigerian Armed Forces on the one hand and between the military and other security institutions notably the Nigerian Police Force and the Department of State Security, DSS dated back into history. Following decades of military dictatorship and the vanguard roles that personnel from the

Nigeria Army played in providing officers/administrators inclusive of the positions of Head of State, Chief of Staff Defense Headquarters (second in command), Chief of Defense Staff among other key civil and military positions under different military regimes, the Nigeria Army has been thrust into occupying a vantage position.

This situation has largely conferred an all-inclusive privilege on the Army and its personnel over and above other arms of the Nigerian Armed Forces. This circumstance of history then means that the Army always finds itself taking the leading position and often at advantage especially in the context of resources mobilization and deployment, procurement of operational assets, equipment and munitions, leadership roles in joint operations and missions. This has especially been the case for super Military Joint Task Forces that has been the hallmark of Nigeria military operational strategy in the war against Boko Haram in the Northeast, the fight against bandits and kidnappers in the Northwest and part of Northcentral and such other task forces deployed in other parts of the country. The lack of synergy and inter-agency rivalry at the institutional level which in-turn find expression between formations undermines cooperation between formations. This in turn prevents the formations from pooling resources, sharing intelligence information and coordinating operational strategies, tactics and plans; this invariably ends up undermining the successes of operational engagements and missions, thus resulting in failure for the security institutions and undermining the nation's efforts at securing its territory and people.

The bad blood, animosity and rivalry between security agencies in Nigeria and more importantly between the branches of Armed Forces and the Nigerian Police Force has been disastrous and as such undermines institutional collaboration, coordination and cooperation between these important security establishments that are the foundation of the nation's security architecture. In most instances attempts at proving superiority and the feeling of animosity between personnel from the armed forces and the police had resulted in bloody and violent confrontations on the streets of Nigeria cities resulting in loss of lives and destruction of properties with police personnel and institution often at the receiving end. On average, there are usually two reported cases/incidences of clashes between personnel of the Armed Forces (most times the Army) and police personnel in Nigeria on a yearly basis (Onyegbula 2019). Between 2005 and 2019, there were reported incidences of reprisal attacks carried out against police personnel, their property and formations by personnel from the Nigeria Army and on few instances, the Nigeria Navy and Air Force across the country. Issues that often spark the violent reprisal attacks against the Police are often mundane bothering on charges of disrespect of senior military officers by police personnel on civil policing duties. Such attacks are usually followed by denials, blames and counter blames with each of the concerned parties pushing different narratives and trying to justify their action often without official attempt at thoroughly investigating such skirmishes and appropriately punishing offenders often from the military (Onyegbula 2019).

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In the context of violent clashes of this nature, failure to punish offenders and continuing attempts at proving superiority by officers from the Armed Forces (often the Army) the foundation for rancor among troops drawn from the military, police and DSS into Joint Military Task Force had already been laid. It is therefore not a surprise when troops that are expected to blend, bond and work seamlessly in the context of their membership of joint task forces fail to give maximum cooperation, unable to trust one another talk less of being sure that the next officer beside them get their back in the heat of battle. Thus, it is not surprising that the feeling of comradeship that should exist between troops are non-existent. In the context of lack of trust, achieving synergy, collaboration, coordination and cooperation between troops, formations, and security institutions become a tall order. Unfortunately, these are essential ingredients for achieving success especially in the prosecution of a non-conventional war against Boko Haram, bandits, kidnappers and cattle rustlers in Northern Nigeria. Hinting to this defect, Auwal Musa Rafsanjani, the Executive Director, Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre, was quoted as stating that,

> "the rivalry between the different security organizations must stop. This
> dispensation must strike the rhythm for effective coordination, collaboration
> and synergy as a diamond formation to victory" (Agbedo 2021).

What the position above implied was that an important missing link accounting for the current challenges facing the Nigeria security establishment as it relates to the prosecution of their numerous internal security operations is the absence of inter-agency harmony. This has practically made the security agencies start exhibiting the paradox of a house divided against itself, just like it can be said that Northern Nigeria is hollowing itself from within (Onyegbula 2019).

Poor culture of coordination in the gathering and management of intelligence information

Closely related to the problem of lack of coordination, cooperation and synergy between the arms of the Nigerian Armed Forces and other security institutions in Nigeria is the problem of poor management and coordination of intelligence information. While rivalry between security chiefs and head of security institutions can partly be blamed for poor coordination of intelligence information, however, the genesis of poor intelligence information management is deep rooted and institutional. At the heart of the problem is the differential operation background and the challenge of overlapping responsibility and authority as it relates to the generation, coordination, management and sharing of intelligence information in timely and secure manner between the difference agencies that have statutory operational responsibility on intelligence information management. By statutory rule, the Nigeria state maintain three main security intelligence agencies. These are the Department of State Security, DSS, Nigerian Intelligence Agency, NIA (foreign intelligence information and espionage) and the Defense Intelligence Agency, DIA. Of the three, the DSS is statutory responsible for the generational, management and sharing of internal intelligence information inclusive of preventing internal

subversive elements and her mandate is expressly internal intelligence security. The DIA is responsible for the generation, management and sharing of military related intelligence information and the deployment of such for the sole purpose of defending Nigeria's territorial integrity. However, with increasing security threats and the drafting of the military into internal security engagement, the line is becoming blur between the DIA and DSS as it relates to the gathering and deployment of internal intelligence information (Saliu and Saka 2019, 12).

Aside these three, there is also the Directorate of Military Intelligence, DMI. The DMI was tasked with both military and domestic intelligence management roles under military dictatorship given the lack of trust on the intelligence unit of the Police and the DSS (then referred to as the SSS). Within the Nigerian Police Force, there is the existence of the Force Intelligence Bureau, FIB. Historically, the FIB as a special branch of the Nigerian Police Force has the mandate of gathering and management of internal intelligence information. Although the FIB lost out in the power politics of intelligence information management under successive military regimes and was largely marginalized and relegated, yet this important special branch of the Police still exists as a functional unit within the Police establishment. With these arrays of intelligence information management agencies and special branches, the issue of overlapping jurisdiction, authority and responsibilities will become problematic especially given the underlying context of inter-agency rivalry. Given the culture of inter-agency rivalry that continues to characterize working relationship among Nigeria's security agencies that have mandate on intelligence information gathering and management, the protection of turf and conflict of interest cannot but arise (Saliu and Saka 2019). Coupled with other challenges bedeviling the security institutions, these problems have largely contributed to the lack of cooperation, cohesion and oversight among the security and intelligence institution. The creation of the office of Chief of Intelligence in 2015 by President Muhammadu Buhari seems not to have contributed more to the effort at coordination, cohesion, synergy and the management of intelligence information especially as it relates to making intelligence information gathering and deployment the fulcrum of the Nigeria's counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations and missions in the Northeast, Northwest and across other zones in the country where task forces had been deployed (Saliu and Saka 2019).

Affirming the debilitating impacts of inter-agency rivalry, the Inspector General of Police, IGP Usman Baba was quoted as stating that, 'unhealthy inter-agency rivalry was a major factor limiting the capacity of the Nigeria's armed forces to effectively contain the insecurity bedeviling the nation'. Noting the destructive implications of inter-agency rivalry on the security establishment and the nation's security in general, IGP Baba, noted that,

> "inter-agency friction constitutes a major threat to internal security and national cohesion. Secondly, it accounts for budgetary wastage, duplication of functions, mutual suspicion, and encroachment on each other's legal and operational

space by competing agencies. And thirdly, it exposes security agencies to public ridicule and possible loss of public confidence in the ability of such agencies to perform their statutory functions" (NDA-Isaiah *et al.* 2021).

Practically all of these issues raised by IGP Baba have manifested in the activities of Nigeria security establishment with regards to their ongoing operations across the country. The negative implications of inter-agency rivalry and lack of cooperation and cohesion as pointed out by the IGP Baba are applicable to the Nigeria situation.

Pervasive corruption in defense budgeting, expenditure and procurement process

One of the most important non-military related crises undermining the military operations in Northern Nigeria is the pervasive culture of corruption and governance crisis bedeviling the Nigerian security establishment. Without doubt, the crisis of corruption, culture of patronage and resource mismanagement runs deep within the Nigerian military in particular and the larger security institutions in general. Most aspect of resources management processes within the Nigerian security establishment, but more importantly arms, ammunition and weapon procurement process have largely been turned into avenue for resource leakage and corrupt enrichment. High ranking military and civilian leadership inclusive of individuals within the larger civil society that have had engagements with defense and military procurement exercise in the past have been accused of resources pilfering and corrupt enrichment from arms purchase deals. The processes of arms procurement in Nigeria are largely made susceptible to corruption given the opaqueness, lack of transparency and accountability that characterized the process. The utilization of private security firms/middlemen in arms procurement as against country-to-country bilateral sales agreements has tended to worsen arms procurement corruption.

While arms procurement process has been largely corrupt, this story is incomplete without a better grasp of the culture of secrecy, lack of transparency and non-accountability that have been the hallmarks of defense budgeting and expenditure processes in Nigeria. The secrecy as it relates to defense budgeting and expenditure was a carry-over trait from the decades of military rule and all attempt at reforming defense budgeting and expenditure processes since the return to civil rule has failed to achieve the desire results. This is largely because the reform processes were half-hearted, lack the necessary political will and commitment and are not backed by the desire to reform on the part of the military/security establishment leaderships and high ranking officers. Thus, most attempt at reforms had largely been still-born processes, ineffective and failed adventure. The failure of reforms can be attributed to the entrenched and deep-rooted nature of corruption in defense budgeting, expenditure and arms procurement processes with proceeds from this treasonable crime lining the pockets of high officers within the military, other security institutions, the civil leadership within the executive and legislative arms of government and of course bureaucratic officers especially those at the Ministry of Defense, directly involved in defense budgeting, general expenditure and arms procurement.

Duruji, Idowu, Dibia and Duruji-Moses (2018, 439-443) catalogued forms of corruption in defense expenditure and military spending to include: repetition of expenses, inappropriate expenditure items, duplication of expenditures using different headings and expenditure heads with unduly large funds among other forms of corrupt practices. Indeed, there are numerous instances of pervasion of budgetary process, corruption in military spending and arms procurements that have been reported in the Nigeria media. The most celebrated in recent time has being the corruption in procurement and large scale theft uncover by the Presidential Committee instituted by President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015 to audit weapons and equipment procurement for the Nigeria's security institutions since 2007 (Premium Times 2015). The committee headed by Rtd Air Vice Marshal John Ode in its interim report, detailed irregularities in weapons procurement and management of defense fund traceable to the Office of the National Security Adviser (NSA) headed by Rtd Colonel Sambo Dasuki under the regime of President Goodluck Jonathan. The committee in its report noted that defense procurement contracts worth $2.1billion in nearly 53 contracts for the delivery of four Alpha jets, twelve military helicopters, bombs and munitions were not delivered to the Nigeria security agencies as ordered for in the contracts. As a follow up on the report of the committee Rtd Colonel Dasuki was placed on custody by the Federal Government. Upon further investigation conducted by the Economic and Financial Crime Commission, EFCC, judicial proceedings were initiated against Col Dasuki, high ranking military officers, bureaucrats, political appointees and companies implicated in what had become known as #Dasukigate and/or 'Nigeria's Arm-gate scandal' in media and popular parlance in Nigeria (Saliu and Saka 2019, 15-17; World Peace Foundation 2019; Sahara Reporters 2018; Oluwagbemi 2017; Premium Times 2015; Vanguard 2015).

Commenting on the negative impacts of corruption in defense budgeting, military expenditure and arms procurement, Rtd Colonel Tony Nyiam was quoted to have stated that:

> The military has a high impact of corruption on the allowances and welfare of fighting troops and on the quality of their arms. Besides, mid-career and junior officers, the rank and file (that is the non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and the other ranks) feel that the war in which most of their colleagues have lost their lives has become a source of embezzlement of public funds by some of their top senior officers (Vanguard 2020).

As it relates to the impact of corruption on morale of personnel in the security agencies but more importantly the officers and men of the three arms of the Nigerian Armed Forces, Rtd Colonel Nyiam was also quoted to have stated that:

> it's this witnessing or perception that funds allocated for the right military equipment purchases, and funds allocated for the far North theatre of war operations are being embezzled, that is, one of the major causes of low morale (Vanguard 2020).

In a nutshell, morale and fighting spirit of officers and men of the Nigerian Armed Forces are negatively impacted by grafts, corruption, patronage and nepotism that have fast become an entrenched practice within the defense and security establishment. The problem of corruption and fraud in defense budgeting, expenditure and military procurement largely undermines the capability, capacity, morale and fighting spirit of men of the Nigeria Armed Forces deployed for missions in the Northeast and of recent the Northwest. Corruption, graft and the crisis of poor management of men and materials and pervasive governance crisis bedeviling the security establishment constitute serious impediments to Nigeria's counter-terrorism operations in the Northeast and the efforts at combating the scourge of banditry, cattle rustling and kidnapping in the Northwest (Saliu and Saka 2019).

Poor coordination of civil-military relations and lack of depth with communities for intelligence information gathering

Every instance of insecurity, conflict and war has their intrinsic characters that are peculiar. The intrinsic characters that drive a conflict also inform the dynamics of such conflict and insecurity. To that end, it has become a trite in defense planning, military strategy and tactics that a better grasp of the nature and dynamics of a conflict should inform the nature of military operational responses. While conventional warfare can be addressed through a strategy that lays emphasis more on troop strength, deft logistic planning and fire power, for unconventional operations especially counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations, military planning and strategy encompass more that the above. While intelligence information gathering and its deft deployment is squarely at the heart of every military operation, conventional or non-conventional, the place of intelligence information gathering, its management and judicious utilization is even more critical and highly central to the successes of counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations and missions. To this end, military planners and strategists often lay particular emphasis, devote more man-hour and spend enormous military resources to the gathering of adequate and up to date intelligence information. Military planners and strategists are also very careful in the way and manner they manage the intelligence information gathered with the purpose of guarding against leak, compromise with the objective of forestalling mission's failure and consequent loss of personnel. The recognition of the centrality of intelligence information to the success of military operations informed the significance that military planners and strategists across the world placed on Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, ISR as a very special issue in military strategic planning (Schwille *et al.* 2020; Silva and Ribeiro 2018).

While it can be adduced that the creation of the office of Chief of Intelligence by President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015, the first in Nigeria's military history, signifies the appreciation of the role of intelligence gathering for the country's counter-terrorism war in the Northeast. However, the extent to which the creation of the office aided the immersion of military and security personnel in communities, infiltration of terrorist and insurgent cells and networks, sow disinformation and gathered updated intelligence

information that are deployed for the planning of military engagements in the theatres of conflicts is questionable. If anything, the resurgence of Boko Haram, the group's successes at ambushing military convoys, successful attacks on military and civilian targets pointed to the failure of intelligence gathering, management and deployment for mission successes. This failure is partly attributable to the failure of the Nigeria Armed Forces to win the hearts and minds of individuals and communities in the theatre of conflicts. The failure is a reflection of the failed nature of civil-military engagement by the Nigeria armed forces and poor appreciation of the centrality of people's support for the success of security missions/operations by other security institutions that make up the Nigerian security establishment (ICG 2018). Oyewole (2020) highlighted the tenuous nature of the relationship between Nigerians and the Nigeria armed forces by looking at conflict and cooperation that characterized the engagements between communities that host military installations and bases across Nigeria.

The genesis of the poor relations between Nigerians and personnel of the Nigeria armed forces on the one hand, and the people and the military establishment at the institutional level on the other hand was nurtured under decades of military dictatorship. Under military rules, the Nigeria armed forces routinely violate human rights, treat Nigerians with disdain and thus, are unable and unwilling to get people support and nurture trust of Nigerians. Similar poor relationship that was built on the culture of rights violation, harassment and use of violence existed between Nigerians and the Nigeria Police Force at individual and institutional levels. This poor relationship with the people by personnel of Nigeria's security establishment and their institutions has not abated since the return to civil rule (ICG 2018). The October 2020 #EndSARS protests across Nigeria's major cities also the poor relationship between personnel of the Nigerian police force and Nigerians and the violent attacks unleashed against police formations and personnel during the protests and afterward especially across Southeast Nigeria underscored the contempt that Nigerians hold police personnel and police institution in Nigeria.

Instances of high-handedness and extra-judicial killings abound in the Nigeria armed forces interface with the larger population in the Northeast and Northwest as well as the relationship between the people and the larger security establishment in Nigeria. The extra-judicial murder of Muhammad Yusuf, erstwhile leader of the Boko Haram in 2009 was a turning point in the group's militarized engagement with the Nigeria state. Amnesty International had detailed the appalling conditions of civilians detained by the Nigeria armed forces at Giwa barrack in Maiduguri. There has also been reported incidences of the Joint Task Force attacks communities as reprisals for Boko Haram attacks and ambush on the force. Amnesty International (2018a; 2018b) have detailed abuses and exploitation of civilians in the hands of personnel of the Military Joint Task Force in the Northeast theatre of operations. Indeed, more than any other right group, the Amnesty International have come to be perceived as enemy by military authority in Nigeria and the military institution has often had heated exchange and counter-communication.

The abuses that the armed forces have been accused of committing in the Northeast against civilian have contributed to the eroding of trust and support for the military in the area of operation. However, it is clear that the military cannot record overwhelming successes and exterminate the Boko Haram without unalloyed trust, support, understanding and assistance of the civil population in the Northeast. It is also becoming increasingly clear that the military institution is losing support of the communities in the Northwest as the people seem to see the efforts of the state not enough to address the insecurity, criminality and the climate of fear they have had to contend with as bandits, rustlers and kidnappers keep tormenting their communities without respite (Babangida 2021). However, winning the war against the Boko Haram and decimating criminals in the Northwest requires enormous goodwill, trust, understanding and ultimately cooperation and assistance from the civil population. Indeed, the successes of the Joint Task Forces, Operation Lafiya Dole and Operation Hadarin Daji in the Northeast and Northwest is squarely premised on the people of the communities providing appropriate, up to date and reliable intelligence information on the activities of the terrorists, bandits, rustlers and kidnappers to the military authority to aid their operational planning, missions' strategies and tactics. The relentless efforts of the civilian population to aid the war on terror in the Northeast, in particular the exploits of the members of the Civilian Joint Task Force in aiding the Nigerian war efforts in the face of threats to their persons, families and communities has been well documented (Agbiboa 2021, 2018, 2015; Gana 2020; Maiangwa and Ikechi-Ekpendu 2020).

Maiangwa and Ikechi-Ekpendu (2020, 331-333) painted the heroic roles of the CJTF as foot-soldiers to the Nigeria armed forces in combating Boko Haram by tagging along with the Joint Task Force in military operations. In specific terms, they mount check-points to identify and fish out collaborators and insurgents that they in-turn handed over to the military, gathering intelligence information on activities of Boko Haram and passing it across to the military for operational purposes, as community policing agents, providing security for Internally Displaced Persons camps and securitizing movement in and out of the camps, assist humanitarian groups aid agencies to control crowd in IDP camps and also provide security for aid agencies operation, clearing drainages, markets and public places, traffic control within Maiduguri and other major cities among other sundry support activities for the military efforts. While there have been instances of reported high-handedness and abuses, through training and re-organization into sectors for proper coordination, the Civilian JTF has been highly instrumental to the military efforts and seems to have become indispensable to local level security provision in Borno state, Maiangwa and Ikechi-Ekpendu (2020, 333) have argued. Of course, there is a caveat in that the Civilian Joint Task Force that has been reorganized as a state support militia can turn bad and become a new source of threat in post-Boko Haram Northeast Nigeria. Preventing the mutation of this state sponsored militia into a new form of threat is the responsibility of state authorities, national and local as well as the authority of

the Nigeria Armed Forces that worked and partnered with the group in prosecuting her war on terror in the Northeast.

Aside the issues of poor civil-military relations and lack of synergy between the military and civilian population in area of operations, there is also the increasing perception that the major handlers of the regime are poor in communicating to the general population. The pattern, tone and language of communicating with Nigerians by important figures in the current regime whether civilian and military have not been appropriate. The language so far employed has not been that which instilled confidence in the civil populace; neither did their messages communicate empathy. To that end, rather than communicate in manner that shores up popular support for state efforts, the military institutions in the ongoing security operations and the troops at the frontline, messages from senior government figures and military leadership have been those which erode support and stir up ethno-national sentiments across the country. Nothing demonstrated the clear lack of understanding about the importance of communicating to garner support for the State than the statement credited to the Minister of Defence, Rtd Major General Bashir Magashi, to the effects that Nigerians should not be cowards and that the people should take up arms and defend themselves from bandits and criminals (Omonobi 2021). The Minister, Rtd General Magashi was quoted by the Vanguard newspaper as stating that:

> It is the responsibility of everybody to keep alert and to find safety when necessary. But we shouldn't be cowards. At times, the bandits will only come with about three rounds of ammunition, when they fire shots, everybody runs. In our younger days, we stand to fight any aggression coming for us. I don't know why people are running from minor things like that. They should stand and let these people know that even the villagers have the competency and capabilities to defend themselves (Omonobi 2021).

Messages like this alienate the civil population and show a clear dereliction of duty on the part of the State. That message, as that coming from a retired General in the Nigeria Army and a sitting Federal Minister of Defence, was a clear demonstration of the lack of understanding of the significance of messaging for support by leading figures in the current regime. Similar messages that civilian population should take up arms and defend themselves were also uttered by Governor Bello Matawalle of Zamfara state, one of the state worse affected by rampaging bandits in the Northwest (Sani 2021). That a Governor elected to guarantee security will direct the people of its state to take to arm and confront well-armed bandits and dare-devil criminals is the height of poor communication and messaging from state officials to the population. The issue of poor communication and messaging undermines popular supports for the State and the military efforts in communities besieged by bandits and criminals in the Northwest. The flip side to messaging calling civilian to arms was that it can result to mass hysteria, emergence of vigilante group and the negative implications for long term peace and stability in the region.

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Conclusion

Nigeria is perhaps going through its worse security crisis since the end of the nation's thirty months' civil war in 1970. In the nation's recorded post-independence political and security history at no time have Nigerians been besieged by terrorists, bandits, armed herdsmen, kidnappers and sundry everyday criminals as the case is especially since early 2020. In the same wise, there has not been a time following the end of the civil war that the Nigeria's security establishment has been under intense pressure as they have been since late 2019 and early 2020. Worsening the plight of the nation's security institutions particularly the Nigeria Armed Forces has been the need to combat insecurity and criminality on multiple fronts. The decade old military engagement and deployment Boko Haram splintered groups (JAS, ISWAP & Ansaru) in the Northeast has continue unabated, even though President Buhari claimed that the group has been technically defeated in 2017. The upsurge in terrorist attacks against military and civilian targets in recent time, in the midst of reported death of Abubakar Shekau, factional realignment and the battle for supremacy among different factions operating in the Northeast confound logic and is baffling. Indeed, as Bukarti (2021) highlighted, factional splits of terror groups led to more, rather than less violence from Nigeria's experience against Boko Haram in the Northeast.

As if the terror of Boko Haram is not enough, the Nigeria Armed Forces and other security institutions are now contending with growing insecurity and criminality across Northwest Nigeria. As bandits, kidnappers and cattle rustlers engaged in mindless violence against civilian in the region, kidnapping and decimating communities, the Ansaru, a splinter group from Boko Haram also seems to be gaining foothold. Banditry and ransom kidnapping has extended southward to Northcentral Nigeria opening new arena of criminality that the Nigeria security institutions has had to contend with. While there is no threat of jihadist terrorism extending to Southern Nigeria at least for now and the region can be said to enjoy relative peace, however, upsurge in arrays of criminality and criminal enterprises notably ransom kidnapping is becoming worrisome. Of course, there is the threat coming from the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB and the group violence against personnel and institution of the Nigeria Police Force in the Southeast. While oil induced violence and criminality has receded in the Niger Delta, piracy, kidnapping, oil bunkering and sundry criminalities continue unabated necessitating continued presence military operation in the region.

To effectively address worsening security environment, the Nigeria state and its security establishment need to enhance the fire power of all the task forces deployed for security missions across Northern Nigeria. But more than this, the security establishment, especially the armed forces need to prioritize and deploy needed resources to the generation of up to date intelligence information, its management and synergize information, strategies and tactics sharing among segments of the

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security institutions engaged in security missions across the country. The Nigeria state and by extension the Armed Forces need to prioritize soft-power policy programmes directed at equipping communities with skills to counter violent extremist messages in Northeast and to identify individuals that are ring leaders of bandits in the Northwest and neutralize such threats before they magnify. To this end, the Nigeria security establishment need to prioritize and deploy resources to programmes and projects that benefit communities at the margin. The security institutions especially the Armed Forces, Police and the DSS need to engage in deep immersion in communities across Northern Nigeria with the objective of gathering information, countering violent narratives and enhancing capacity of communities for early warning and detection of security threats. The Nigeria state and the security institutions also need to be mindful of the language of their communication with Nigeria and understand the need for language that inspire confidence in people and stimulate their sense of patriotism.

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BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

Advancing NATO's quality assurance education by implementing the 'learn-watch-ask' training model

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Abstract

The paper introduces a detailed analysis and a method of implementing the "Learn-Watch-Ask" (LWA) training model, as a potential solution, to enhance quality assurance training within NATO. By addressing the fast-evolving demands of specialized domains, the LWA model integrates digital tools with traditional teaching methods to create a learning experience that is responsive to the student`s needs. The model is comprised of three interdependent components: the Learn module, represented by a structured online course; the Watch module, supported by a specialized YouTube channel for enhanced visual understanding; and the Ask module, created with an AI-driven chatbot for interactive learning. This innovative approach supports diverse learning styles, offering 24/7 accessibility and effectiveness. The paper further digs deeper into the identified shortcomings of traditional training models, emphasizing the need for practical, visual, and interactive elements in modern education. It explores the integration of the IBM WatsonX Assistant as a conversational AI chatbot in the LWA model, highlighting its advantages in providing consistent, accurate, and user-friendly interactions over Generative Pre-trained Transformer (GPT) AI models. Additionally, a 7-step process for adapting the LWA model to various domains is outlined, as well as the description of a comprehensive continuous improvement loop for the IBM WatsonX Assistant, ensuring its relevance and efficiency in the rapidly evolving educational landscape. The LWA model, with its unique approach to modern educational techniques, not only enhances the learning experience for NATO's Quality Assurance Course (S7-137) but also has the potential to be adapted across various specialized domains, promising a more effective and efficient workforce.

Keywords:

The fast-evolving nature of specialized domains such as quality assurance in education and training, and especially within NATO's Quality Assurance (QA) Programme requires a new educational approach to train new specialists. It must be at the same time comprehensive and flexible. Traditional teaching methods are becoming increasingly insufficient in preparing professionals for the specific, complex challenges of the modern world.

This is the reason why we must look more and more to the digital tools and technologies available for free, or as a paid version when costless alternatives are not an option. Digital Transformation is a very complex process and requires both initiative and innovation at all levels of an organization.

Moreover, education and training are the pillars on which the foundation of an effective and efficient workforce is built. Specifically in NATO, it is a major contributor to a higher level of interoperability, every Member Nation is aiming to attain.

This document introduces an integrated educational framework, dubbed the "LEARN - WATCH - ASK" training model. It is specifically designed to enhance educational outcomes within NATO's Quality Assurance (QA) Course (S7-137) delivered at NATO School Oberammergau (NSO).

Using an online course, structured to teach the students solely the theoretical knowledge and concepts, a specialized YouTube channel to enhance understanding with visual aids, and a conversational AI chatbot to boost students' interaction and curiosity, this approach seeks to adapt to various learning styles while enabling effectiveness and 24/7 accessibility.

Extensive testing by analyzing multiple parameters, will be conducted, as a pilot project, during the November 2023 and January 2024 iteration of the NATO QA Course (S7-137), scheduled to take place at NSO. The analysis will examine the course's pass rate, the accuracy of students' responses in the final test, and the quantity of questions instructors must address after each lesson.

Furthermore, this study explores the broader applicability of the integrated educational model across various specialized domains.

The identified shortfalls at the NATO QA Course (S7-137)

As a consequence of the continuous improvement process conducted during multiple resident iterations of the QA Course, several shortfalls have been identified. This came as a result of observations, lessons identified, and feedback received from the students, and later on analyzed by the Quality Assurance Team of Experts (QA ToE), as the Allied Command Transformation`s (ACT) Officers of Primary Responsibility (OPRs) for the content and delivery of this particular course. The officers within the expert team are also senior associate instructors at the NATO School Oberammergau, ensuring the delivery of the entire study program.

In simple terms, three areas required particular attention and eventually improvement solutions. The first one stemmed from the obvious need for more practical work to be conducted during the five days allocated for the course. The training solution per se is classified in ETOC (Education and Training Opportunities Catalogue) as having a 300 level in the Depth of Knowledge – DoK. "DoK refers to the level of learning to be achieved as a result of an education and individual training solution. DoK is an inclusive term addressing the Cognitive Domain - Knowledge elements, as well as the Psychomotor Domain - Skill elements and, when appropriate, the Affective Domain Attitude/Values elements" (NATO 2015).

The skills and knowledge are delivered to the students through a mixture of theoretical and practical lessons. Based on this classification, we assessed that it is very difficult to achieve this proficiency level in such a relatively short amount of time. Obviously, due to objective reasons, increasing the duration of the course was not a viable option. The only way we could have approached this was just by increasing the time allocated to practical work.

Consequently, this is where it was decided that we could take out some purely theoretical lectures and create additional space for syndicate work, so stringently needed for the students to be able to perform their duties as Quality Managers without any supervision. Later on, QA ToE decided to develop an online introductory course based on the theoretical lectures taken from the residential course. The training solution created would become a prerequisite for students to be eligible to enroll in the residential course.

The second issue that emerged was the lack of video/visual content that could be easy to digest by the students. It is well demonstrated that visual learning is more effective, in terms of memory retention than reading text or listening. Various studies report that 75% of all information processed by the brain is derived from visual formats. "Visual learning also helps students to develop visual thinking, which is a learning style whereby the learner comes better to understand and retain information better by associating ideas, words and concepts with images" (Raiyn 2016).

Additionally, the concepts presented were sometimes far too complex for just one lesson. The only approach to simplify things was by using micro-learning techniques. Dividing complex content into bite-sized videos would be a lot easier to understand and absorb by the students. Having this strategy in mind, we started developing several short videos explaining complicated concepts. "Employing this strategy to create short (< 3 minutes) videos that intentionally highlight only 3 to 4 key objectives is consistent with the educational theory that reducing an operation into its component parts fosters increased proficiency" (Palmon et al. 2021).

Finally, at every iteration of the course during a period of two years, we noticed that a massive amount of the questions received from the students, as instructors, were repetitive and most of the time easy to answer. Therefore, when an instructor

is constantly bombarded with repetitive questions, it not only consumes a significant portion of his time but also diverts attention from focusing on more complex inquiries or advancing the proposed curriculum. This situation can lead to inefficiencies in the training process and potentially hamper the overall learning experience for students.

The solution could have been something from the realm of the new emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI). A software application that can respond to students' questions, ranging from simple to moderately complex, around the clock, and, at the same time, capable of learning. "AI technologies have the potential to transform the way research and education are conducted by automating tedious and repetitive tasks, assisting in data analysis, and enabling new forms of learning and assessment" (Kooli 2023).

The need to adapt – traditional vs. modern training models

In a traditional training model, the only interaction comes from instructors and trainees communicating with each other. Probably, this is what many of us might have grown up with. Conversely, a modern training method supports a better interaction of the students with the content. This 'Traditional' setting has its merits, but it also comes with inherent limitations:

• The one-size-fits-all approach does not adapt to individual learning paces. Some students may find the pace too fast, while others might find it slow, making the learning process difficult and rigid rather than flexible.
• Often, students find themselves with questions after class hours, but face constraints in accessing real-time assistance. Sometimes, because of different personalities, students will not feel comfortable asking questions in front of a large audience.
• Visual aids, which can significantly enhance understanding, are often limited or entirely absent.
• The experience of sitting through lengthy lectures while striving to understand each educational concept is a common challenge.

Taking into consideration the advancements in technology and the better understanding of pedagogy, ultimately the focus has now shifted to adapt to the learner's needs. "An important precondition for effective teaching is that teachers continuously try to obtain a valid picture of the extent to which their students are progressing towards the learning objective(s), and adapt their teaching based on that picture." (van Geel et al. 2023). As a consequence, several advantages need to be considered in a long term for this approach:

• The modern approach offers better support and emphasis on self-paced learning, allowing the students to consume theoretical content at their level of comfort through an online introductory course.

• By having an AI chatbot capable of answering questions 24/7, learners are no longer bound by time constraints when they have multiple questions or when they do not understand and they feel the need to re-study the content. The use of short videos ensures that complex concepts are broken down into simple content easy to understand, unlocking the full potential of visual learning.

• The relatively new concept of 'Microlearning' encapsulates the essence of modern education. It is about bite-sized digital content, be it through online courses, videos, or chatbots.

• Lastly, all these digital tools and resources can support opportunities like syndicate work or other types of hands-on sessions, ensuring knowledge is not just theoretical but also actionable, and can be applied by the students in their day-to-day jobs.

In conclusion, as we move forward, striking the right balance between these methods, and understanding when to use each, is the key to unlocking a comprehensive and effective learning experience.

The "Learn-Watch-Ask" (LWA) training model

Modern students need tools that are flexible, engaging, and above all effective. As an educational methodology, the "Learn-Watch-Ask" (LWA) Training Model stands out as a cohesive and versatile approach to enhancing learner engagement and comprehension. The model is comprised of three components that can be used synergistically to boost theoretical instruction, visual representation, and interactive querying.

The 'Learn' Component. This is the starting point in which the students absorb the knowledge required for a specific domain through a structured content framework. Here, they are introduced to the core concepts, enabling them to build a robust theoretical foundation. Such a foundation is pivotal for subsequent stages, as it equips the learners with the necessary comprehension to advance to more complex practical training, should they feel the need to do so.

The 'Watch' Component. Most of the content taught in a course can be more easily understood when it is delivered in a visual format. The component, through doodle-like animated videos, provides an additional layer of interaction, boosting the student's engagement during the delivery of instruction. In this vein, using a specialized YouTube channel, this component offers short, engaging videos that simplify complex ideas into easily understandable parts. The main advantage is that it will augment the retention capacity of the learners.

The 'Ask' Component. In the age of speed and facile access to information, the 'Ask' component, within this construct, serves as a continuous learning companion. Powered by an AI chatbot, it can offer round-the-clock support, having the potential

to answer both simple and moderate complex questions posed by the students. The chatbot's 24/7 availability ensures that trainees have a reliable knowledge source, bridging potential comprehension gaps and reinforcing understanding as many times as they want.

As you can see depicted below in the *Venn diagram*, the real advantage of the LWA Training Model, however, lies in its ability to integrate each of the components individually into one another, in an interchangeable manner (see *Fig. 1*).

Figure 1   Intersections of the LWA Training Model components: A Venn Diagram

The '**Learn**' *and* '**Ask**' *integration*: By intertwining and re-using the content of the online course within the chatbot's answers database, there is a seamless integration of theoretical foundational knowledge and interactive querying. This combination ensures that each chatbot interaction not only addresses the question per se but also reinforces the core concepts delivered in the online training.

The '**Learn**' *and* '**Watch**' *integration*: Integrating the online course with pertinent videos fosters a multimedia-rich learning environment. This multimedia approach appeals to diverse learning preferences, ensuring that learners have multiple avenues to understand and internalize content.

The '**Watch**' *and* '**Ask**' *integration*: The mixture of visual content and prompt question answers represents the real advantage of contextual learning. As students navigate the video content, the chatbot can assist in clearing any ambiguities, potentially guiding them to other relevant visual resources. The videos can be integrated into the answers provided by the chatbot, adding more context.

The Advantages of the LWA Training Model

The LWA Training Model demonstrates multiple benefits, that can be utilized not only for the modern academic environment but also for broader training contexts, irrespective of the discipline or domain taught. This section aims to describe these advantages in greater detail.

Accessibility: The LWA Training Model ensures that no matter where you are or what time zone you are living in, you always can 'Learn', 'Watch', and 'Ask'. This means that the components and resources are accessible from anywhere, at any time. Whether the students are on the move, at the office, or at home, learning is at their fingertips, and accessible through all the mobile device types (mobile, tablet, laptop). If necessary, all the content of the components can be accessed without any type of account or login procedure.

Flexibility: This is where everyone learns at their own pace. The LWA training model is all about offering flexibility to their students. They can take their time, adapt the content delivery to their learning rhythm, and go back to any material whenever they wish to re-study it.

24/7 Support: Integrating an AI chatbot into the framework means that assistance is continuously available for the students. For any inquiry or any doubt, a learner might have regarding the course content, the chatbot is there to assist, ensuring that the learning process is not hampered due to unanswered questions.

Multimodal Learning: We came to understand that one size does not fit all in learning. The integration of text, video, and interactive elements supports different learning styles and preferences. Whether the student is a visual learner, auditory, or likes to read text, every aspect is covered within the components. "Multimodal learning is relevant as increases in technological tools and associated access to multimedia composing software have led to the ease of use of many modes in presenting, representing, and responding to information" (Bouchey, Castek and Thygeson 2021).

Cost-Effective: High-quality training does not always have to come at a high cost. Consequently, affordability often dictates the scalability and reach of any educational initiative. With the IBM Watsonx chatbot's free plan, we ensure that our platform remains budget-friendly while still delivering quality content.

Seamless Integration: Another great advantage of the LWA Training Model is the symbiotic relationship between its three core components: Learn, Watch, and Ask. This integrated approach ensures that learners transition smoothly across these elements, each reinforcing and augmenting the other seamlessly. Each component can be used in the other without the need for the instructor to know how to design

or code applications. Overall, it ensures a smooth and uninterrupted learning experience.

Security: Security cannot be compromised as it will affect the training provider`s credibility in the long term. The components used by the LWA training model are as secure as the cybersecurity standards followed by their developers. In this particular case, Google with its YouTube platform, is following industry-leading audits and certifications for customers, including compliance against ISO/IEC 27001/27017/27018 and SOC 1/2/33. IBM, as an industry giant, provides rock-solid security confirmed by the Trusted Supplier accreditation from the US Department of Defense (DoD), received in June 2023. Depending on the Learning Management System selected as the online course delivery platform, the security standards may be also different. The overarching aim regarding this aspect, should be securing the data in transit and at rest to the highest standards.

In essence, the LWA Training model is created to be a holistic experience with a major focus on modern learning characteristics. It is efficient, effective, and above all, tailored to ensure the best possible learning outcomes.

Understanding the difference between conversational and Generative Pre-trained Transformer (GPT) AI models

During the past decade, the utilization of artificial intelligence in education and training has gained significant traction. "AI is currently viewed by many as a driver that is integral to the fourth industrial revolution, and it may trigger the fourth revolution in education" (Zhai et al. 2021). Among the multitude of approaches, two mainstream models — Conversational AI and Generative Pre-trained AI (GPT) — as a manifestation of artificial neural networks and machine learning, stand out. This section aims to shed light on the distinctions between these models and evaluate their suitability for education and training delivery contexts.

Conversational AI: Commonly known by the majority of us as "chatbots", Conversational AI is designed to simulate human-like dialogue based on a predefined set of rules and responses. The AI technology stack, running in the background, helps the chatbot understand human language and respond accordingly. Below are the advantages that make this model perfectly fit for our purpose.
- *Consistency*: The most important feature I have found in Conversational AI solutions is its standardized responses. Regardless of the query phrasing posed by the student, the output remains unchanged, ensuring coherence in the knowledge delivered. Creativity offered by the GPT model would render the answer inconsistent, which would confuse the student even to a greater extent.
- *Accuracy*: Based on the principles on which it has been designed, Conversational AI returns accurate and validated answers, therefore offering

clarity to the learners and, more importantly decreasing potential ambiguities. This is one of the strongest points that makes it suitable for the academic environment. The creation and validation of the answers is done by multiple humans as subject matter experts, and it represents the supreme confirmation of the content accuracy provided.

• *Ease of Implementation*: The integration of Conversational AI into any type of Learning Management System (LMS) is very straightforward, typically necessitating minimal or no code adjustments. With just a few lines of code, predominantly JavaScript, the chatbot interface can be embedded in any webpage, irrespective of the script language used to design it.

• *Intent Recognition*: While both AI models possess intent recognition capabilities, Conversational AI is inherently more proficient and finely tuned specifically for understanding the user intent. No matter how the student phrases an intent, the AI will detect the intent and will provide the exact answer linked to it. (e.g., What is Quality Assurance? – What can you tell me about QA? Do you know the details about QA? – as intent rephrasing). In this case, the user would intend to find out information about the Quality Assurance.

• *Simplicity*: Creating and designing a chatbot, using modern no-code platforms can be very simple and straightforward. Any employee or team of employees can build a chatbot in a very short time, just by using a friendly user and intuitive interface. It eliminates the need for expensive developers and empowers virtually any employee with minimal knowledge to be able to design various chatbots in a very short time for the benefit of the organization.

Generative Pre-trained Transformer AI (GPT): GPT AI-based technology, on the other hand, is characterized mostly by its generative abilities, producing content based on the immense training data it had been fed with, rather than stable, clearly defined responses. Before trying and adopting the conversational AI model for this project, GPT technology was extensively tested to assess if such a model could be adopted. Below you can find the main challenges identified during the design and testing phase.

• *Consistency*: Taking into account its generative/creative focus, GPT can provide in most cases different answers to identical prompts. By always providing diverse texts, this issue potentially undermines the quality of the learning experience the students expect to receive.

• *Accuracy*: In some instances, I observed that GPT might fabricate information or generate misleading details, commonly named 'hallucinations', even when the Chat GPT version 4 engine was used and only pre-trained with data/text contained in just three framework documents. Such inaccuracies can be very dangerous, especially in academic environments, where factual precision must be the only concern of both instructors and students.

• *Bias*: 'Despite opposing views regarding the nature of intelligence exhibited by Large Language Models (LLMs), a relatively undisputed topic is the issue of bias. Bias, in the context of LLMs, has recently been studied as the presence

of misrepresentations and distortions of reality that result in favoring certain groups or ideas, perpetuating stereotypes, or making incorrect assumptions.' (Ferrara 2023). AI bias occurs when an algorithm produces systematically biased results because of flawed assumptions in the Machine Learning (ML) process. This problem can manifest even with relatively small quantities of data or documents, and most likely, even when adjusting various parameters, it is beyond the control of the developer using LLMs like ChatGPT.

• *Complex coding and implementation*: Additionally, unlocking GPT's enormous potential often requires diverse coding skills, ranging from creating simple scripts based on Application Programming Interface (API) queries to complex applications written in Python, PHP, Ruby, or Go. This challenge can lead to increased complexity and costs of the entire project.

Concluding, it turns out that Conversational AI had higher potential and compatibility with the LWA Training Model`s requirements than GPT-based AI. Because knowledge and accuracy are crucial in an educational environment, Conversational AI continually offers precise answers selected from a pre-defined database. On the other hand, whilst GPT is clearly outstanding in the creativity of texts provided, its versatility does not necessarily support the demand for scholarly objectivity. Therefore, Conversational AI offers a greater comprehensive fit for a much less complicated and dependable training model, like the LWA.

Enhancing the LWA Training Model
with IBM WatsonX Assistant

All the advantages that emerged during the multiple tests conducted to determine which AI model is properly aligned with the proposed objectives, ultimately pointed to the adoption of the IBM WatsonX Assistant product as the Conversational AI chatbot within the "LEARN - WATCH - ASK" (LWA) training model. The IBM WatsonX Assistant is a mature, secure, and cost-effective product, compared with similar other ones present on the market. The Lite version used in the LWA is offered free of charge, which is a huge advantage for tight-budget projects. Having Natural Language Processing (NLP) capabilities, it is specifically designed to provide consistently the right answers the learners need when posing their questions.

The Conversational AI Chatbot does not necessarily provide just simple answers based on pre-defined keywords. It understands, then determines the intent, and finally provides the correct pre-trained content as answers. Based on pre-designed conversational flows, combined with monitoring student engagement, the AI Chatbot can enhance the learner`s experience by making it more personalized and efficient.

Ultimately, by adopting IBM Watsonx Assistant in the LWA training model, the aim is to automate responses to frequently asked questions. As a consequence, the

instructors have the flexibility to focus more on complicated topics, ensuring that they can dedicate significant time to practical sessions as well. AI, in this context, is not replacing the human touch. On the contrary, it's amplifying it.

Designing a conversational AI chatbot based on IBM WatsonX Assistant

The chatbot, named Qbot, was designed particularly to answer simple NATO Quality Assurance topics, based on the trending data generated by the iterations of the NATO QA Course (S7-137), conducted during 2021-2023. Grounded on this analysis, all the queries identified as frequently asked questions were translated into intents (see *Fig. 2*) and added manually to the Chatbot`s database. Each intent was defined as a question phrased differently several times to train the AI to better understand the student`s intent and provide the correct answer.
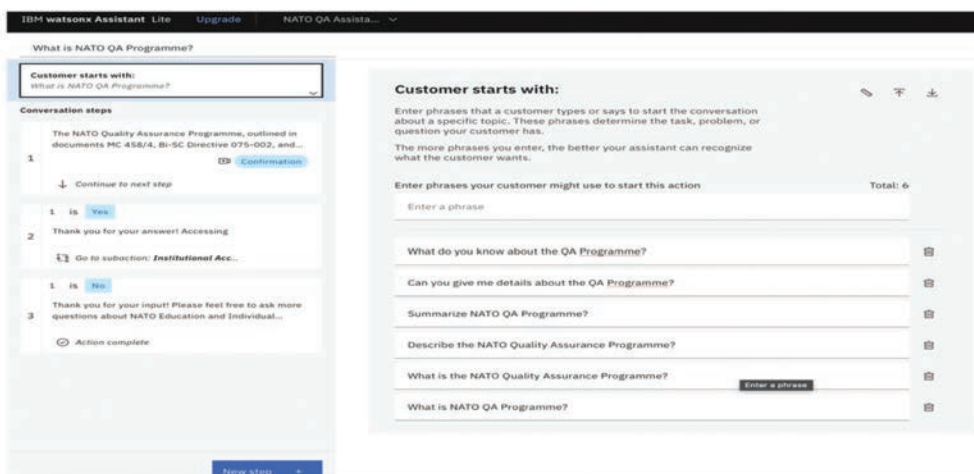
Figure 2 Defining an intent as a question phrased differently multiple times to train the AI (Admin interface)

**Figure 3
User`s starting screen**
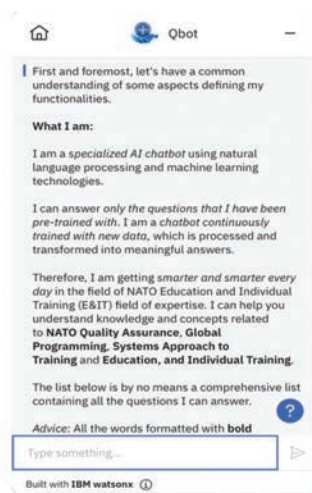
**Figure 4
Answering an intent**
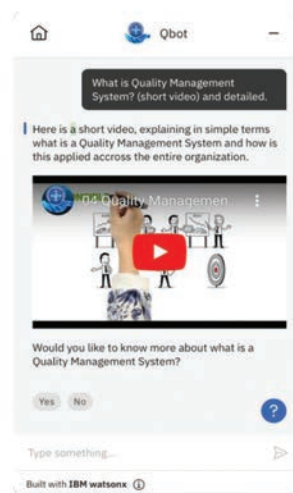
**Figure 5
Answer with video**

The front-end (user) graphical interface of the Qbot is clean and straightforward offering the students the opportunity to focus on the content provided as answers. Following the same design principle of simplicity, the starting screen contains five questions as examples, inviting the learners to get creative and address more questions (see *Fig. 3*).

The Qbot offers versatility in terms of providing answers to the end users. The text can present the possibility to be formatted when added as a pre-defined answer, to a particular intent registered in the database (see *Fig. 4*). Additionally, the text can be complemented with YouTube-embedded videos, significantly enhancing the students` understanding (see *Fig. 5*).

Intents and answers registered in the Qbot`s database can be continuously increased and improved as needed. The effectiveness of the chatbot in responding to questions addressed will be directly proportional to the quality of the answers it is supplied with; therefore, continuous improvement is paramount.

Applying the LWA Training Model
to different domains/disciplines

The versatility of the "LEARN - WATCH - ASK" (LWA) Training Model can be potentially extended beyond its initial implementation within NATO's Quality Assurance Programme and its Community of Interest. The training model can theoretically be adapted across various domains, disciplines, or particular fields of knowledge. This section outlines a systematic 7-step process, that demonstrates how the LWA Model can be adjusted to different sectors, ensuring its effectiveness and relevance in multiple educational contexts (see *Fig. 6*).
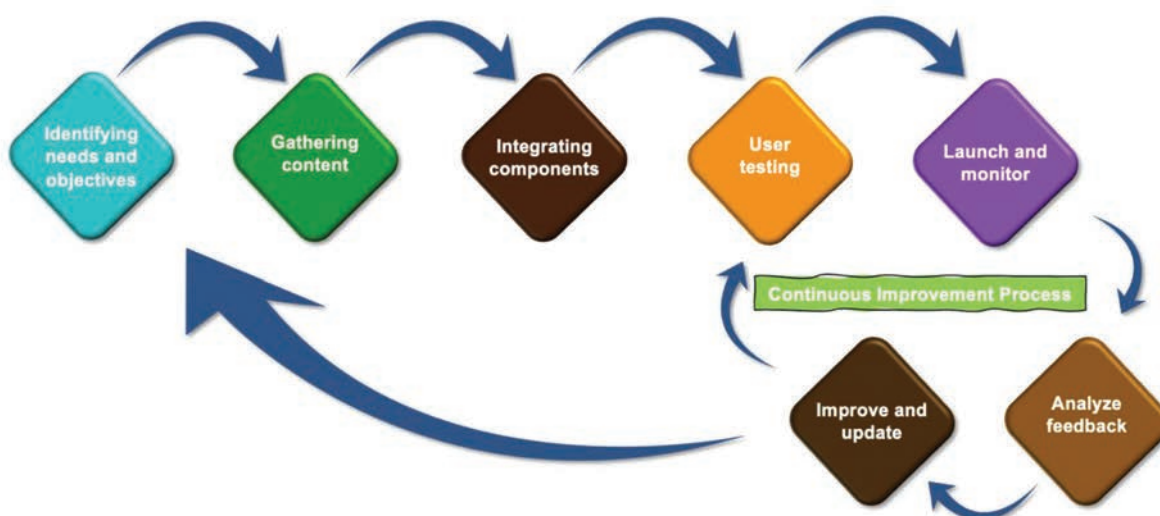
**Figure 6   Steps taken when applying the LWA Training Model to different
domains/disciplines including the Continuous Improvement Loop**

Identifying needs and objectives: The initial step involves a detailed analysis to understand the specific training needs and objectives of a particular domain in which you are planning to apply the LWA. One of the most important questions to ask should focus on identifying the goals aimed to be achieved with the LWA Model in the new domain. Clarifying these objectives, as early as possible, is essential for maintaining the implementation process in the right direction.

Gathering content: Content should be the cornerstone of all the components of the LWA training model. This step focuses on sourcing and organizing domain-specific materials that align with the three components of the LWA model: Learning (online course material), Watching (video content), and Asking (defining the answers for the chatbot intents). The emphasis should be put on ensuring that the learning content would not only be relevant but also custom-made for the intended target audience.

Integrating components: The LWA training model should be designed as a seamless user experience. This is one of its most important advantages. During this phase, the components should be integrated – online course, videos, and the chatbot – to be capable of using the content interchangeably. This combination aims to provide a cohesive and uninterrupted learning experience for the students.

User testing: Before a full-scale rollout, the adapted model should undergo rigorous user acceptance testing. From this perspective, this is a critical phase to verify the various indicators like effectiveness, ease of use, and student`s understanding of the content delivered by the three components. The intermediary feedback gathered during this stage is invaluable for fine-tuning the LWA training model during the next phases.

Launch and monitor: Following thorough preparation and testing, the LWA training model is then launched for the targeted audience, while close monitoring of performance metrics, already agreed upon, is crucial. This continuous observation helps in understanding how the training model is being received and utilized effectively and efficiently by the learners.

Analyze feedback: From the perspective of continuous improvement, an essential component of the model's 7-step lifecycle is the active collection and analysis of learner feedback. This step is fundamental for keeping the LWA Training Model relevant, engaging, and responsive to the learners' needs and preferences, based on the inputs received through the monitoring tools of each component.

Improve and update: Finally, after all the feedback has been collected and analyzed, the last step involves updating the components, specifically the Qbot, with the content created as a result of the previous steps. Although it is the last step in the continuous improvement process, this should not be regarded as a final action, but rather as a trigger to restart the whole process if needed. For instance, based on the

refined inputs there might be a need to go revisit step 1 and re-identify the training needs and objectives. (see *Fig. 6*) The feedback loop together with this final step can serve as a basis for improvement for any of the steps in the components` lifecycle.

By following the steps described above, the LWA Training Model demonstrates not just effectiveness but also remarkable adaptability to the feedback received from the learners using it. It can be customized to meet the specific requirements/needs of various educational sectors, thereby maximizing its impact and utility across online and in-person learning environments.

Applying the continuous improvement loop to the IBM WatsonX Assistant through monitoring and feedback analysis

From the quality assurance point of view, monitoring, and feedback are the critical steps that underpin continuous improvement. This process of ongoing refinement and updating helps maintain the component's overall effectiveness, addressing emerging requirements to stay relevant, as well as enhancing the learners` experience. The following section describes a comprehensive 6-step approach to continuous improvement, that can be applied to the IBM WatsonX Assistant, which is the 'ASK' component, within the LWA Training Model (see *fig. 7*).
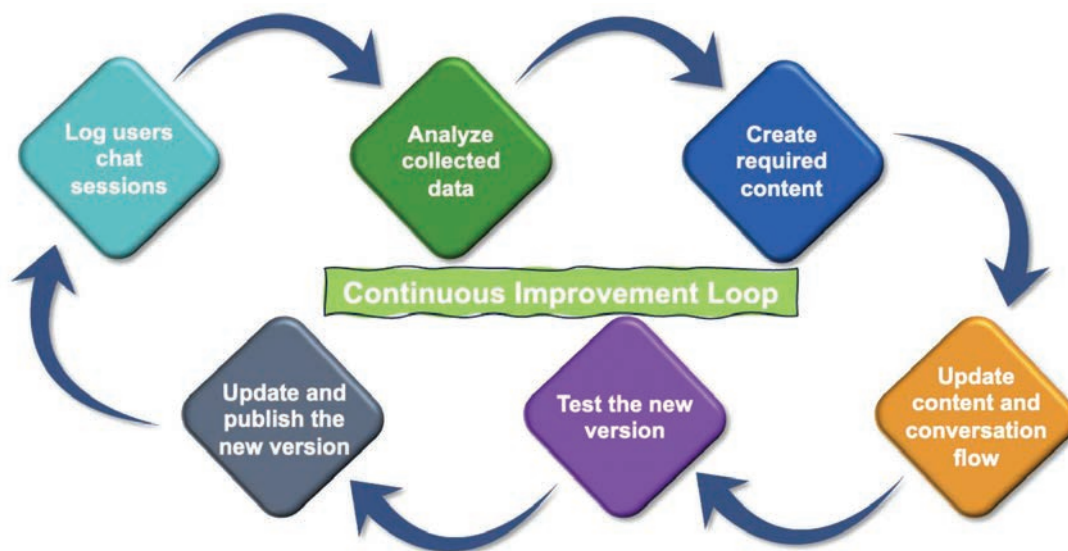
Figure 7 IBM WatsonX Assistant component 6-step Continuous Improvement Loop

Log users` chat sessions: Data collection is the first step that must be performed when applying Continuous Improvement. By meticulously logging user chat sessions, invaluable real-time interactions and feedback can be aggregated for further interpretation. This data serves as the raw material for analyzing and providing a window into the user experience, while ultimately highlighting areas for potential enhancement (see *Fig. 8*). Over time, as the data gets collected certain patterns, as well as anomalies or errors might emerge. Specific questions might be asked frequently,

revealing areas where the content delivered needs further clarity, emphasis, or new topics need to be addressed as potential answers. While these interactions are logged continuously, data protection and privacy are preserved during the entire process. Personal Identifiable Information (PII) is anonymized, ensuring that the platform used remains aligned with the regulations specified in the EU GDPR and US Privacy Act.
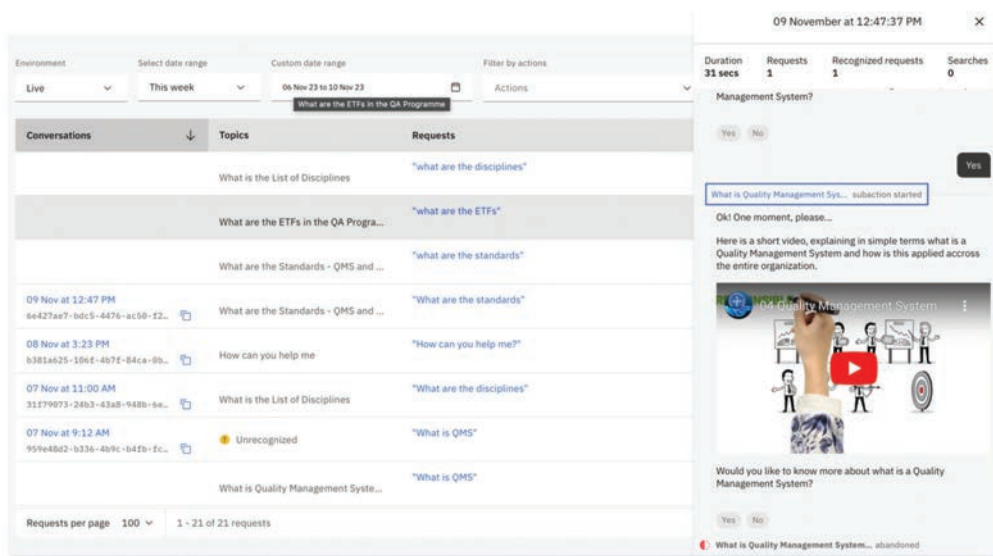
Figure 8 IBM WatsonX Assistant admin interface view for logged user chat sessions

Analyze collected data: The large amounts of data collected during *Step 1 – Log users` chat sessions* – represent just unfiltered information, that does not offer any potential for a meaningful interpretation. Further refinement is required to draw any conclusion. Analysis is the process of turning these raw data points into actionable insights. To achieve the desired goal, several analytical processes need to be performed during this step.

• *Pattern recognition*: By examining the logged chat sessions and recurring questions common misunderstandings can be identified, or areas/topics that are of high interest to the students. Recognizing these patterns/trends within the data flows allows adjusting the content delivered as pre-defined answers accordingly (see *Fig. 9*).

• *User behaviour understanding*: Beyond the direct questions that return a pre-defined answer, the data captured tells a story about the user`s/student`s behavior. Which topics do users frequently prefer? At what points do they seek extensive chatbot assistance? Understanding this behaviour helps create a more intuitive student learning experience.

• *Gap identification*: This is one of the most important analytical processes performed within the Continuous Improvement Loop. Attention should be directed towards the questions that the chatbot is frequently unable to answer. Additionally, these gaps are a crucial factor for optimization, because they can uncover other areas where the content or chatbot`s conversational flows might need enhancement (see *Fig. 10*).
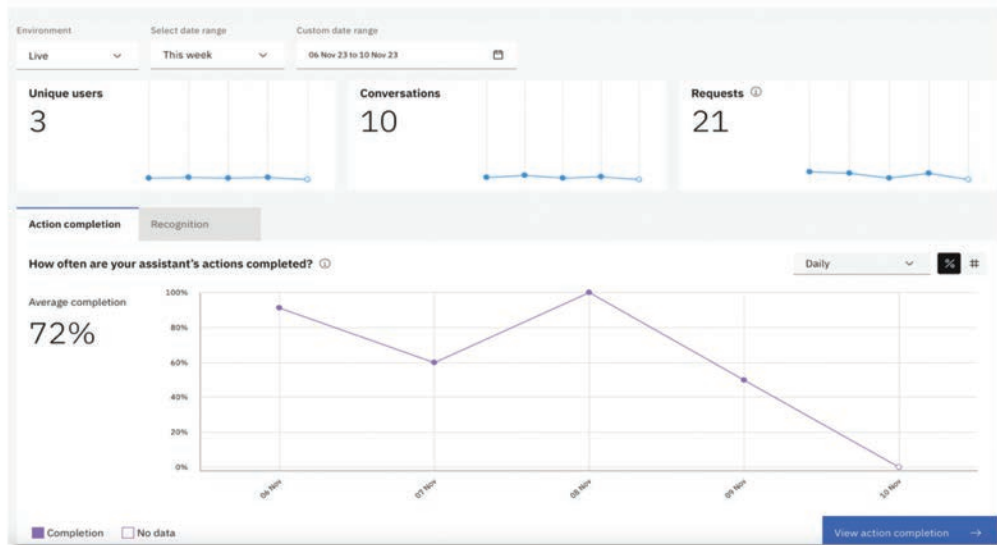
Figure 9   IBM WatsonX Assistant admin interface view for understanding user behaviour

• *Performance metrics*: The chatbot's success will be quantified using metrics like average completion rate, response accuracy, and engagement time duration. These statistics will offer a clear baseline that can be used to detect where improvements are needed (see *Fig. 9 – average completion rate*).

• *Feedback prioritization*: Not all feedback is of equal importance. By thoroughly analyzing the data, prioritization must be made to identify which areas to address first, ensuring the most pressing user needs are met promptly.
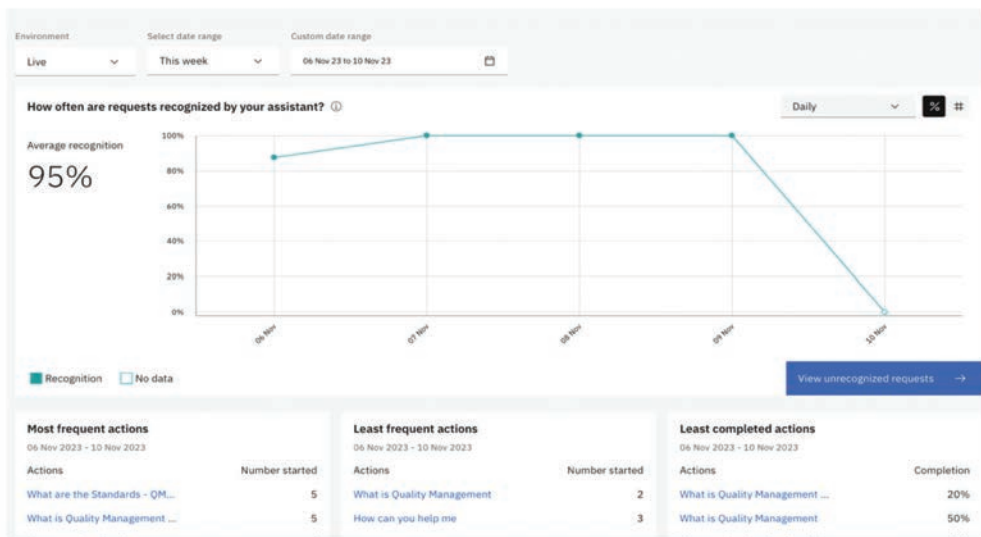
Figure 10   IBM WatsonX Assistant admin interface view for unrecognized requests

• *Create required content*. After the complex task of collected data analysis is completed, the laborious step of creating the required content, in response to the identified gaps, comes into play. The sub-steps performed guarantee that the new pre-defined answers will be relevant and properly optimized
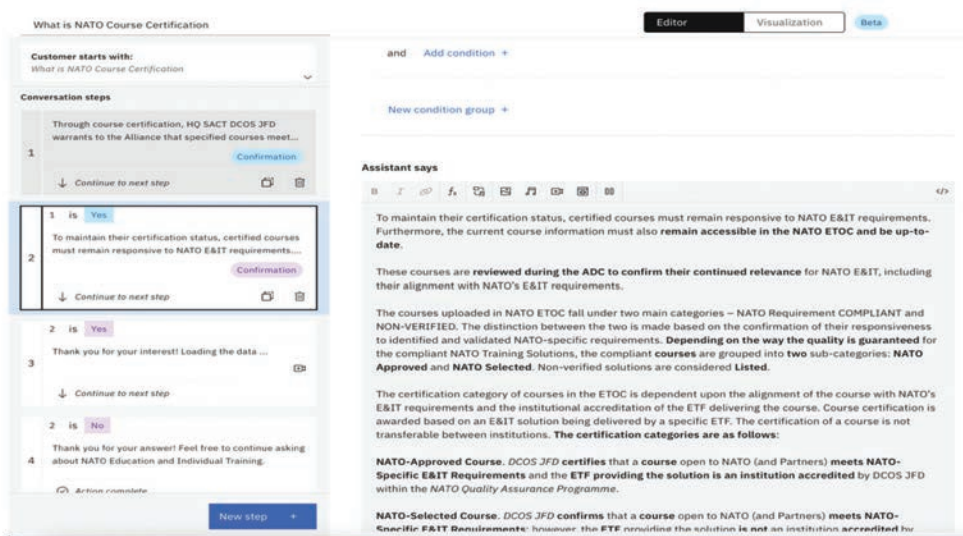
Figure 11 V IBM WatsonX Assistant admin interface view for content creation

for students` interaction (see *Fig. 11*). When designing new content several principles must be taken into consideration.

• *Diversity*. Depending on the insights analyzed in the previous step, this could mean creating a new set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), or, for an enhanced understanding, creating new educational videos to augment the text provided within the answers. The aim is to support various learning and interaction styles.

• *Collaboration*. Subject matter experts (SMEs), instructors, and user experience designers can collaborate closely. By pooling their expertise, the new content created is both accurate and engaging. The IBM Watsonx Assistant platform allows seamless collaborative working for multiple administrators.
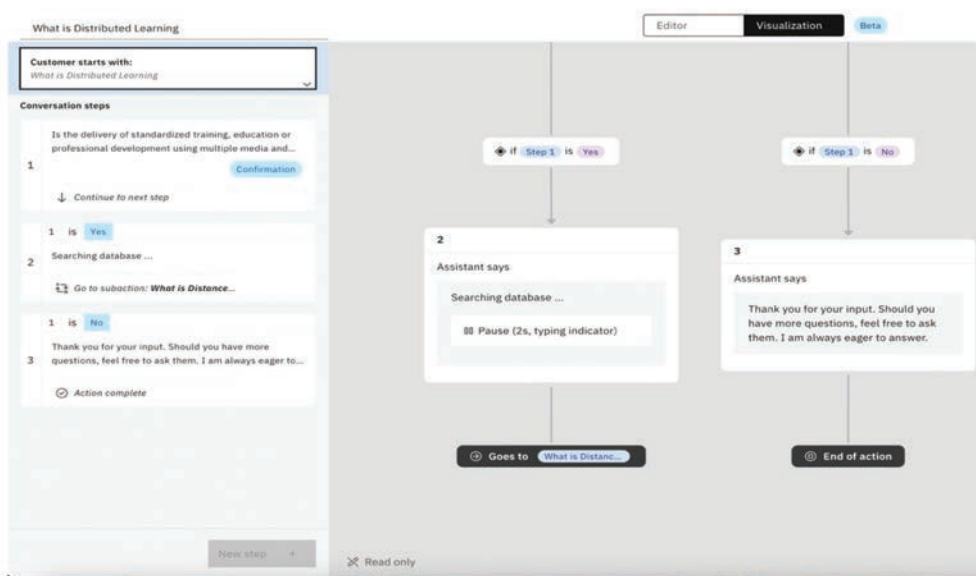
Figure 12 IBM WatsonX Assistant admin interface view for dialog logic flow

• *Interaction*. When creating new content for the chatbot, it is crucial to ensure it is formatted for seamless interaction. This might mean chunking information, adding interactive elements, or even designing content into a more conversational style flow, allowing the student to choose from a multiple-option menu. This principle also supports the microlearning approach (see *Fig. 12*).

• *Quality Assurance*. Every project/product irrespective of its size must aim for consistent quality. In this respect, every piece of new content undergoes rigorous checks. This ensures accuracy, relevance, and clarity, maintaining the high standards our students expect.

Update content and conversational flow. IBM WatsonX Assistant, as an AI conversational chatbot, may sometimes be limited by its level of understanding the intents posed by the students as questions. By recognizing the intent expressed in a student's input, the chatbot can choose the correct dialog flow for responding to it. Therefore, the chatbot will be as good as the logic defined in the back end to retrieve the most relevant information and present it to the student. The chatbot will also need to be trained to identify the desired intent, even if phrased using different words. Multiple utterances indicating the same intent must be provided for accurate detection (see *Fig. 2*). Examples will be used to build a Machine Learning (ML) model that can recognize the same or similar types of utterances and map them to the appropriate intent. As a result, this step should aim to tackle the following aspects:

• *Content synchronization*: This can be achieved by verifying that the new content created in the previous step is integrated seamlessly with other conversational flows and content already stored in the database. This can be translated into actions like updating FAQs, modifying/updating existing dialog flows (see *Fig. 12*), or even replacing outdated content with a fresher version.

• *Algorithms and dialog flow*: The chatbot's ML model is based on its algorithms and defined conversational flows. Gathering additional data and insights allows tweaking and refining these algorithms to boost accuracy, reduce misunderstandings, and ultimately ensure more quality responses for the students. By continuously feeding new data into the chatbot`s ML model, the chatbot evolves, learning from each interaction and becoming progressively smarter.

• *Scalability & flexibility*: The updates performed must not be solely present-oriented. Future goals envisioned for the chatbot must be taken into account, ensuring the chatbot can handle increased loads, newer query types, and more complex interactions, depending on the level of ambition projected.

Test the new version. Testing, in this particular instance, refers to the systematic process of evaluating and verifying the functionality, performance, and effectiveness of the chatbot. Additionally, by testing a new version, the integrity of the new updates is ensured. Before deploying any changes to the wider training audience, a rigorous validation process is essential. This step must be undertaken considering the following aspects:

• *Preliminary testing*: As soon as updates are integrated, preliminary checks are conducted to ensure basic functionalities remain intact. This type of testing should not go into too much detail, as it is solely meant for identifying any immediate and obvious issues that the new updates might have introduced.

• *Feedback integration*: If available, a tester or a team of testers, provide their feedback. It must detail any problems they encountered, as well as areas for improvement, or aspects they found particularly important to be brought into the developer`s/administrator`s attention.

• *Error handling*: This aspect is dedicated to identifying how the chatbot manages unexpected queries or challenges. If the tests are thorough enough and the feedback report sufficiently detailed, errors should be identified and mentioned inside. The goal is to ensure graceful error handling, minimizing students` frustration for not receiving the expected answer.

• *Regression Testing*: Lastly, one of the most important aspects is where the designated testing team ensures that the new updates have not negatively affected existing functionalities. Equally important, the chatbot must be carefully verified so that the newly integrated data does not introduce adjacent issues that might affect the old content.

Update and publish the new version: The final phase in the process of continuous improvement guarantees that all enhancements and recommendations identified in previous steps are addressed and incorporated into the new version. This marks the end of a development cycle and, at the same time, the beginning of a new one, maintaining the chatbot`s content updated and relevant for the targeted learning audience.

Conclusions

There is an increased need to shift the paradigm of education and training by adopting and exploiting the potential of emerging digital learning technologies. The "Learn-Watch-Ask" (LWA) Training Model, characterized by its innovative approach to the integration of digital tools and adaptive learning techniques, is trying to make its contribution to addressing the complex educational challenges in specialized domains.

The LWA model's success lies in its unique combination of structured online learning, visual aids provided by a YouTube channel, and interactive engagement through a conversational AI chatbot. This multimodal learning approach not only promotes diverse learning preferences but also ensures round-the-clock accessibility and relevance. The implementation of the IBM WatsonX Assistant as the conversational AI component of the model has proven particularly effective, offering consistent and accurate interactions that enhance the quality of the learner's experience.

The adaptability of the LWA model to various specialized domains illustrates its versatility and broad applicability beyond the limits of NATO's QA Course. The

continuous improvement loop implemented for the IBM WatsonX Assistant ensures the model remains dynamic and responsive to the evolving needs of learners.

Finally, the LWA Training Model represents an alternate modern educational methodology, blending traditional learning principles with cutting-edge digital tools. It offers a scalable, flexible, and effective framework that promises not only to enhance the quality of education within a particular NATO topic but also to serve, in the near future, as a valuable and affordable option at hand for the training solutions delivered in various other domains.

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BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

Argumentative strategies in the epideictic discourse of Elie Wiesel

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Abstract

The article presents the various rhetorical strategies used by Elie Wiesel in arguing his own position in a double dialogue: first with the audience, and indirectly with decision-making forces worldwide, secondly, with history. With discretion, but at the same time with argumentative force, he brings before the public the image of the suffering he experienced directly in the concentration camps and, constantly returning to the theme of people's indifference towards it, he expresses his hope that the said experience will not be repeated in the future. He succeeds in persuading the audience and at the same time impressing them deeply both through various types of discernible arguments and through rhetorical strategies conducted with sophistication, discretion and detachment. His inclusion in Simon Sebag Montefiore's anthology to which I have constantly referred to (Speeches that changed the world) is fully justified: the well-articulated, balanced argumentation, through the visible exploitation of ethical and affective resources, cannot, and it should not be left without echo in front of the two types of public to which it was addressed (contemporary and timeless).

1. The improvement of argumentative techniques and strategies (not only through theoretical refinement, but also through continuous exercise, according to the intended purpose) represents one of the necessary and absolutely essential desires of those involved in public life within democratic regimes. This truth has been ascertained since Greek-Roman antiquity; back then, the periods of democracy could constitute spaces for carrying out such activities. Not only scientists (rhetors), but also practitioners (orators) are living proofs of concerns essentially directed towards the discovery of truth and its persuasive transmission. The permanence over time of ancient rhetorical treatises, the echo over time of various concrete oratorical approaches, the model that they came to constitute make useful any preoccupation with careful study of the discursive structuring mechanisms of messages; as such, any study, any concrete analysis of the corresponding palette of strategies seems useful and with concrete benefits both culturally and didactically. Therefore, in the present article I propose to approach the creative laboratory of one of those educated, it seems, at the school of Greek-Latin oratory; having the painful privilege of having directly participated in crucial events in modern history, he stands in a court that takes a stand against what he considers to have occasioned the events to which he refers, the deportation of the Jews. Skillfully handling various discursive and argumentative strategies, skillfully playing with the distances in time, he manages to make his message known and deliver a formal speech that has the chances, as I try to illustrate, to remain anthological, enrolling in the rich tradition not only of instrumental oratory but also, desirably, of deliberative oratory.

2. Especially the crossroads moments of life with deep consequences on personal destiny are preserved *sine die* in the consciousness of those who experienced them. Even if they all leave a deep mark on us, only some of us manage, through various and random contests of circumstances, to bring them back, at a smaller or greater distance from the respective zero time, in front of those who show a certain interest in learning details about them; in that context, the intentions and response of the former are varied, taking, in relation to their reason, a form that is either narrative-descriptive/ memorialist, or didactic-moralizing. Both categories of actors of this often engaging, not infrequently painful show, for some through the anamnestic approach of lived experiences, for the others, through empathic participation, enter a game whose effectiveness depends on the oratorical qualities of the speaker and their effect on the audience.

One of the historical moments that left deep traces on an individual level (but also collectively, through social and political mutations) as well as on the level of mentalities was the holocaust, a phenomenon researched extensively and in depth from multiple perspectives not only by historians, but also philosophers of history. Regardless of the purposes of its study, any objective and verifiable information regarding any of its manifestations and consequences can only serve, by adding some details, to the recovery, in the last instance, of the historical truth. If the data come from a contemporary, whether he is a direct participant in the phenomenon

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or a historian, they are all the more precious as they bear the imprint of personal, direct experience, of living, total participation, being, as such, freed from the inevitable deformation (through the possible omission or through the inherent detachment) that the act of retrospection implies. Recorded in writing, they implicitly take their place among the creations of artistic literature; presented directly, in the form of a speech, regardless of the manner in which it was prepared, they are reborn most of the time as they were experienced, nostalgic, pleasant, gratifying or, on the contrary, painful, tragic, but always alive. The discursive form in which they are organized provides them with this quality by definition. Therefore, the one interested in the manner how information of a historical nature reverberates directly in the human consciousness has only one thing left to do: to read the accounts or speeches of the witnesses or to enjoy the privilege of hearing their didactic melody by listening to them. If the interest of a technical nature is added to that interest, if he aims to find out the deep rhetorical mechanisms that will have aroused his curiosity to study them, then, armed with a clear magnifying glass, he leans over them and tries to dissect them, as a doctor, at the risk of withering, for the moment, their beauty, but with the aim of understanding their essence.

Driven by such curiosity, I found it useful to turn my attention to one of the "*speeches that changed the world*", according to a contemporary historian (Montefiore 2010), namely the one given by Elie Wiesel[1] on April 12, 1999, within a succession of conferences occasioned by the entry into the third millennium and organized at the White House. There were two reasons that led me to focus on the analysis of the argumentative strategies used by the mentioned orator in the effort to transfer his own convictions to the audience: the classification by the historian Simon Sebag Montefiore of that speech in the category of those with an overwhelming influence on the collective mind and the fact that the speaker is the same person as the actor of the evoked events.

As a former prisoner (in the years 1944-1945) of the Auschwitz-Birkenau and Buchenwald camps and later, as an active militant constantly concerned with humanitarian issues (for which he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986), he was invited by the Clinton family to talk about the significance of that experience. The (didactic) reason for giving the speech is revealed by the American president's wife, who takes care to emphasize the orator's creed and competence[2].

3. In the vibrant speech held on that occasion, Elie Wiesel proceeds to an authentic anatomy, indeed, to a true indictment of man's indifference to the suffering of his neighbor. The theme of the speech, the concrete means of approaching it, the fundamental message transmitted through the speech

[1] Politician, but also teacher and writer with outstanding public activity (president of the Holocaust Memorial Council).

[2] On that occasion, Hillary Clinton significantly declared: *"You taught us never to forget. You have shown us why we must always listen to the victims of indifference, hatred and evil"* (Montefiore 2010, 257)

as well as the argumentative strategies by which the speaker will be electrified then the audience are as many reasons that give the verbal concert an aura of generality, enrolling it among those that remain (or should remain) in the tradition of soul-stirring, decision-making oratory.

To any genuine orator, Elie Wiesel appears to be familiar with the fundamental principles of oratory. The binary and balanced thematic structure of the speech, the juxtaposition of the two themes, *the indifference of people towards the suffering of their fellow men* and *the hope* for a future in which that attitude will no longer find its place show a solid argumentative construction: the orator knows the principle summarized clearly by modern researchers, according to which "*any persuasion process starts with a problem that needs to be solved, with an attitude that needs to be changed*" (Buluc 2020). The same balance illustrates the fact that the speaker aims to gain the listeners' adhesion, to inculcate in their minds his own creed, and the fact that the speech was delivered in the institutional heart of the United States, before an audience that included decision-makers (the President of the United States, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, members of Congress) confirm that he set out not only to impress but, above all, to cause decisions to be made. What attracts attention from the very beginning is the unitary circular character of the plea, both from the thematic point of view and from the audience's reporting point of view; by this we understand the fact that the theme of the speech is recurrent, not being mentioned only at the beginning, in the first lines (in the *partitio* section), but returning almost obsessively throughout its length. Also, the dialogue with the public is permanent, maintained by questions and punctual interpellations: "*Roosevelt was a good man, with a heart... Why didn't he allow these refugees to disembark?... What happened? Why the indifference, on the highest level, to the suffering of the victims?... Why did some of America's largest corporations continue to do business with Hitler's Germany until 1942?*" (Montefiore 2010, 205)

On the other hand, the same recurring rhetorical questions sprinkled throughout the article place Elie Wiesel in a timeless context, before a second, less concrete audience, before a court to which only high spirits and transfigured by suffering dare to address him (even in a rhetorical *altercation*): history, the deep springs of destiny: „*What is indifference?...What are its courses and inescapable consequences? Can one possibly view indifference as a virtue? Is it necessary at times to practise it...? Why the indifference, on the highest level, to the suffering of the victims?*" (Montefiore 2010, 203-205). The rhetorical questions fit the speech we are referring to in the same category as the famous funeral speech of Pericles to his fellow Greeks, from the year 430 BC, with the same quality: that of addressing contemporaries in concrete terms, but also abstract – to all Greekness, the Hellenic spirit, history.

4. *The strategies* put into play are multiple and oriented in particular directions, being elaborated in relation to the fundamental elements of an essentially inciting act of communication: if the sender is present with discretion, if brief references are made

to the entire contextual framework (the time and place of the speech), the receiver (in its double pose, as we will see) is the foreground instance of the discursive approach.

The indisputable *credibility* of the speaker is supported *ipso facto* by his quality as a former prisoner in the aforementioned concentration camps, a fact mentioned twice, directly and indirectly: *"Fifty-four years ago to the day, a young Jewish boy from a small town in the Carpathian mountains woke up ...in a place of eternal infamy called Buchenwald"* (Montefiore 2010, 203); *"over there, behind the black gates of Auschwitz, the most tragic of all prisoners were the Muselmänner, as they were called"* (Montefiore 2010, 204). The concrete, almost infinitesimal details brought before the eyes of the audience (direct participant or listener) open the black doors evoked to a trembling reality that only a former prisoner could dare to revive. The persuasiveness of the lines is given by the cinematic aspect of the illustrated images, but especially the precise x-ray of the prisoners' consciousness, the knowledge and revelation of their most intimate feelings give the passage a compelling persuasive nature: *"Wrapped in their torn blankets, they would sit or lay on the ground, staring vacantly into space, unaware of who or where they were - strangers to their surroundings. They no longer felt pain, hunger, thirst. They feared nothing. They felt nothing. They were dead and did know it"* (ibid.).

5. Having different dimensions, in direct and justified relation to the strategies pursued, the sections of the speech reflect the classic skeleton of an ancient plea: *the exordium* is deliberately performed *ex abrupto*: the moment and the context would not have allowed *insinuating* or *lavish* convolutions, so that *captatio benevolentiae* is achieved by directly introducing the listeners into the gray atmosphere of the camp; the corresponding shock is all the more intense as the move from a wondrous world to the pit of cruel suffering of the Elie Wiesel child is unexpectedly realized. It should be noted that the speaker chose to speak about himself in the third person, an elegant method of objective detachment in which he chooses not to place himself in the foreground, but to hide modestly behind the quasi-anonymity suggested by the functions of the respective people. The underlying antithesis expressively supports the idea through the presence of strongly affective words from the semantic field of extreme internal experiences: *"Fifty-four years ago to the day, a young Jewish boy from a small town in the Carpathian mountains woke up, not far from Goethe's beloved Weimar, in a place of eternal infamy called Buchenwald. He was finally free, but there was no joy in his heart. He thought there never would be again."* (Montefiore 2010, 203)

The cinematographic character of the story also emerges from the change of the two plans, of the evoked realities and the present. This *discursive strategy* of permanent oscillation is recurrent and is meant to hold the audience's attention by arousing curiosity, by constantly cultivating a sense of expectation; how exactly? Each time the two situations of the escape in the past (the description of the

moment of liberation or the conditions in the camp)[3] are followed by the taking of positions, sometimes sharp, sometimes detached, but always with a sententious air of the orator[4].

6. The thematic content of the speech unfolds on two levels: the two succinct evocations (*narratio*) and the argumentative strategy (*confirmatio, probatio*). From the first reading (or from the first hearing) the obvious character of a particular strategy emerges: it is thus observed that the entire discursive fabric is put at the service of the fundamental theme, the condemnation of indifference, the plea for its permanent presence in people's consciousness and for consistent involvement : all the rhetorical questions that constitute a real *leitmotif* of the composition, well and balanced placed along the speech create a real tension that denotes the intensity of the speaker's feelings. In this way, the Aristotelian *ethical* component of the argumentative strategy is masterfully constructed: just like a spectator, the reader witnesses the speaker's revolt against the traumatic childhood experience, but not its virulent manifestations, but its controlled presence, as it is sweetened by the passage of time and of the art of oratory; at the same time, however, he cannot help but notice how it struggles every time he stands up in the court asking rhetorically what the meaning of the attitude is that he considers the basic reason for everything that happened: the indifference of people, maybe also of destiny, of history. Moreover, in the last instance *the ordering principle of the entire argumentative scheme* is the feeling of *restrained revolt*, not explicitly manifested, not trivially externalized, but distilled, transfigured, wisely dosed, an obvious fact also at the lexical level. Moreover, the whole argumentative strategy is coherently generated by this principle; it has a ternary structure and it is made up of the following types of major arguments:

a) *argumentum auctoritatis,* in which the emphasis is on the person of the speaker: he is the fundamental authority of the discourse. His polymorphism is confirmed in terms of vocabulary, each time in an expressive way: he is the one who believes[5], affirms, supports with objective arguments[6], takes a stance[7], and the particular ways of realizing these determine the auditor to appropriate his point of view and to react at least in its inner forum, leaving history to confirm or deny whether that attitude will have manifested itself externally. *The argumentative force* is generated in this context not only by the multiplicity of instances of the speaker, but also by the fact that his interrogative voice emerges from every paragraph of the speech.

b)   *argumentum ad populum*, to which Elie Wiesel resorts to attract his audience's adherence and cooperation. Even if in essence his speech

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[3] *"Fifty-four years ago to the day, a young Jewish boy from a small town in the Carpathian mountains woke up…"; „… Wrapped in their torn blankets, they would sit or lay on the ground…"* (Montefiore 2010, 204)

[4] *"We are on the threshold of a new century, a new millennium. What will the legacy of this vanishing century be?"; „. Man can live far from God, but not outside God")* (ibid., 203)

[5] „ *"He thought there never would be again"* (Montefiore 2010, 257), *„…some of us felt that to be abandoned by God was worse than to be punished by Him"* (Montefiore 2010, 204).

[6] *"And now we knew, we learned, we discovered that the Pentagon knew, the State Department knew"* (Montefiore 2010, 205).

[7] *"Surely it will be judged, and judged severely, in both moral and metaphysical terms"* (Montefiore 2010, 203)*; "…indifference is never creative. Even hatred at times may elicit a response. You fight it. You denounce it. You disarm it"* (Montefiore 2010, 204); *„…this time, the world was no longer silent. This time we do respond. This time, we intervene."* (Montefiore 2010, 206)

falls into the category of *epideictic ones*, through the rich attitudinal range he also advertises himself from the category of *deliberative* ones. The discursive logic that supports these assertions is doubled by the use of linguistic tools (semantic and grammatical): verbs in the perfect tense move from the future to the present the decisions for which the speaker pleads for their usefulness, so that they appear as if they have already been taken, and the persuasive approach already crowned with success: "...*good things have also happened in this traumatic century...*" (Montefiore 2010, 206); "*This time, the world was no longer silent. This time we do respond. This time we intervene*" (ibid.). The use of the same verbs in the first person plural number have two functions: on the one hand, it denotes the involvement, the total participation of the sender in the respective decisions and actions (he addresses the audience from the same plane, he assumes the first task to be performed), on the other hand it constitutes yet another confirmation (if it was still needed) of the consistent use of ethical arguments, so necessary to convince the public; in their absence, any argumentative approach in an apparatus speech would sound exactly like the instrument that the Holy Apostle Paul is thinking about in his most emotional epistle[8].

[8] "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal" (Epistle I to the Corinthians, 13, 1).

c) *argumentum ad misericordiam* consists of the attempt to evoke the atmosphere in the camp and the condition of the prisoners, by means of concrete lexical tools: qualifying or ornamental epithets ("*place of eternal infamy*", "*behind the black gates of Auschwitz*"), metaphors ("*they were dead, but they didn't know it*"), the accumulations in the ascending climax ("*they no longer felt pain, hunger, thirst. They feared nothing. They felt nothing*") add expressiveness and an extra drama to the simple descriptions that through them themselves impress the audience *("wrapped in their torn blankets, they would sit or lay on the ground, staring into space...").* Also, the same pity-triggering effect is generated by the image of *the child* at the beginning and end of the speech; the change in the number of the respective noun is not accidental at all: if at the beginning the attention is drawn to the boy Wiesel "*from a small town in the Carpathian mountains*", in the end the invocation of the masses of children places him, by generalization, in a universal perspective: the destiny of the Wiesel child is in fact the fate of all children in times of war. Again the orator turns to rhetorical questions ("*What about the children?...Do we hear their pleas? Do we feel their pain, their agony?*") in the unanswered dialogue with the reason of history; together with the sententious tone ("*when adults wage wars, children perish*") they are intended to give the end of the speech a messianic tone, in full agreement with the social context that occasioned the delivery of the speech.

We believe that to the strategies or types of classic arguments, what could be called *argumentum ad historiam*, used repeatedly by the orator, should be added; its recurrence in universal literature can claim and justify at the same

time a place in the citadel; its purpose would be to allow the orator to invoke history, to demand, in the subtext, the judgment of past evils and to propose the correction, through the underlying didactic act, of man.

7. The strategy of omitting the section devoted to the rejection of the opponent's arguments (real or possible), specific to a classic speech, is not random at all, but on the contrary, well thought out. Engaging in a rhetorical dialogue with history, Elie Wiesel formulates the questions in a way that leaves no room for any answer, as it emerges by itself: "*Is there a philosophy of indifference conceivable? Can one possibly view indifference as a virtue?... What are its courses and inescapable consequences*?" (Montefiore 2010, 203).

In the last section of the speech we witness a succinct *digresio* in which the speaker invites the audience to a meditation on the fate of children[9]; thus, in order to give it even more dramatic dimensions, objective arguments from the category of statistically verifiable evidence[10] are brought in in an equally succinct *conquestio;* always attentive to the principles of classical rhetoric but without deviating from the discretion and refinement of their application, the orator expresses his creed in an apotheotic *conclusio;* its two qualities, succinctness and perfect lexical and semantic balance ("...*we walk towards the new millennium, carried by profound fear and an extraordinary hope*", (Montefiore 2010, 206) make it all the more vibrant.

[9] "*What about the children? Oh, ... their fate is always the most tragic, inevitably*" (Montefiore 2010, 206)

[10] "*Every minute one of them dies of disease, violence, hunger*" (Montefiore 2010, 206)

8. Like any argumentative discursive architecture, Elie Wiesel's speech also contains two usually inseparable components: *the explanatory* and *the seductive one*. The concrete procedures for their realization are varied and balanced: the logical substantiation of the ideas, the realism of the descriptions (brief, admittedly, but extremely percussive due to their suggestive force) contribute to the outline of the first one, the coherent subordination of the ideas and the examples that support them on the general theme stated, its treatment from several perspectives, its repetitive character. Knowing the principle according to which "*argument dynamites social inertia*" (Rovența-Frumușani 2000, 176) the speaker uses varied, logical arguments (ordered according to the most effective strategy recommended by the most knowledgeable sources (Olbrechts-Tyteca and Perelman 1968, 522), namely *the Nestorian one*), quasi-logical (of which the dominant one is the one based on reciprocity, in the form of a parallelism developed on a double plane: the consequences of human indifference on the Wiesel child and on contemporary children); *the arguments based on the structure of reality* enjoy the same treatment: the pragmatic ones (the treatment of people in Nazi camps and the joint decision of the United States and NATO to get involved in the Kosovo conflict; both are referred to at the end of the speech) and *the waste argument* (remembering the decision to joint involvement in saving the children of Kosovo, doubled by the expression

[11] "After recalling the military intervention in Kosovo to save the refugees, Wiesel asks, optimistic and to a great extent convinced of the change for the better in mankind: *„Has the human being become less indifferent and more human*?" (Montefiore 2010, 206).

of hope[11]). The second component is defined by the particular attention given to the *elocutio* aspect (more specifically the use of the stylistic figures of which we mentioned: metaphor, epithet, ascending climax, repetition, rhetorical questions) and by the use of ethical and affective arguments (exemplified *above*). Both components (present in a subordinate relationship, the explanatory one - the seductive one) prepare to achieve the same result: persuading the auditor and obtaining his adherence to the speaker's opinions and proposal.

9. Perhaps the most relevant (and at the same time more productive) argumentative strategy that Elie Wiesel appeals to is rhetorical questioning. The previously stated as well as its recurring character indicate the orator's preference for this effective, through the multiple springs it triggers, way of persuasion. Among the four ways of achieving communion with the audience, together with *the cultural allusion, the quotation and the* **apostrophe** (Rovența-Frumușani 2000, 43), his questions reflect various states of mind: the scrutinizing reflection in order to understand the connotations of the pivotal concept of the discourse ("*What is indifference? Etymologically, the word means "no difference*"), philosophical-ontological meditation ("*Is there a philosophy of indifference conceivable?*"), concern ("*What will the legacy of this vanishing century be? How will it be remembered in the new millennium?*"), aporia ("*God is wherever we are. Even in suffering? Even in suffering*"), diffuse but grounded hope ("*Does it mean that we have learned from the past? Does it mean that society has changed?*") (Montefiore 2010, 206). The argumentative and dialectical valences of rhetorical questioning have two sources: their relevance, generality, and depth, and the dual nature of the addressee (the sender himself and, as we have seen, history). Their number betrays the orator's soul turmoil but also his concern to understand the deep mechanisms of destiny, and the two aspects shine through from the very first words, an aspect that particularly sensitizes the audience.

Another quality of the speech consists in the cardinal feelings it conveys, which in fact constitute its fundamental skeleton: the shock of freedom, with which man does not know for what purpose to use it; loneliness in suffering, compassion, deep concern, ardent faith, fear, restrained but consistent hope. The detached, weighted tone, restrained with oratorical mastery, is also impressive; Wiesel does not allow himself to be dominated by dehumanizing feelings: although the memory of the suffering in the camp shines through in the interrogative attitude, in the vivid realism of some of the words used in the short descriptions, in the drive, finally mastered, to launch into an indictment of history, the orator does not turn into an ephemeral judge of the Nazis, but prefers a rhetorical dialogue with history, with destiny. He addresses the listening public, but also the eternal reader, the posterity in which he puts his hope that it will no longer be affected by the disease of indifference, which he considers the cause of all the suffering in the camp.

10. Having a descriptive aspect "*through valorization*" (Rovenţa-Frumuşani 2000, 27) and injunctive "*through the persuasion component*" (ibid.), effectively exploiting three of the four[12] principles of achieving persuasion, as formulated by modern researchers (Buluc 2020, 79) Elie Wiesel's plea can be considered a model of epideictic speech. The engaging attitude of the orator, his constant concern to evoke deep feelings in the audience (evident in the use of a wide palette of strategies, as I have tried to illustrate), the authorial detachment are qualities that support the paradigmatic aspect of the speech and highlight its quality as to constitute, beyond a historical document, also a fertile material for the study of the mechanisms of persuasion; deliberately ignoring the first, in the present research I have focused strictly on the second and highlighted with examples what it manages to convey in a technical and expressive manner.

Anchored in a precise moment in history, the speech, however, goes beyond the frames of the ephemerality through its topicality. Its echoes should ring in the consciousness of the empowered and cause them to act so that it will answer its original function. Otherwise, a new Wiesel will be able to make similar pleas in years to come, other viewers will be impressed, other scholars will lean on them, using them as lecture materials, but letting, through their own indifference, history repeat itself, once again implacably and proving that they will have understood nothing of a once vibrant message.

[12] *a) Establishing credibility; b) Presenting and framing the purpose of persuasion so as to include the common ground with the listeners; c) Strengthening the position, the change, the modification, the purpose of the persuasion using the most plastic language and clear evidence; d) Emotional connection with the audience".*

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BULLETIN

President Vladimir Putin's speech at the Victoria Day parade in the light of some Ciceronian rhetorical principles

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to examine the manner in which three of the principles of Ciceronian rhetoric and oratory are used in the speech of President V. Putin on the occasion of the Victory Day parade. The first of them, regarding the auditor's information, is partially respected by the Russian president, in that he presents too little data intended to provide a somewhat concrete picture of how Western countries have reported, over time, to Russia's defense requirements. Next, we bring enough examples to demonstrate the orator's preference for the principle that consists in convincing the audience by appealing to arguments of an affective nature. The third, convincing the public through ethical arguments, strictly depends on the achievement of the previous ones. The degree of respect for each one emerges from the specific quotes in the content. The natural conclusion of the approach is that the Russian president prefers only one of them, failing, in our opinion, to effectively capitalize on the other two, a fact that has (or should have) repercussions on the persuasion of the audience.

Keywords:

The factors that favored not only the retention in the history of rhetoric and oratory of the name Marcus Tullius Cicero but, moreover, his association with the aureole that the classic epithet bestows on him, were, in our opinion, similar to those that ensured the permanence of other names of Greek and Roman culture, too: the depth and precision of rhetorical and philosophical thinking (doubled by the scope of personal involvement as consul of Rome), the singular ability to intuit, as a politician, the contextual data at the social level, the precision and clarity of formulating the rules that would later become guiding principles in oratorical action, the singular ability to support deliberative, judicial and demonstrative speeches with equal talent and competence.

Taking faithfully (but also creatively) the principles of Aristotelian rhetoric, Cicero took care to nuance them by completing them with new ones; their use in medieval, renaissance, and modern rhetorical curricula, as well as their practice for over two thousand years, irrefutably confirm their validity. In addition, the fact that they are still subjects of research[1] (at least from the perspective of the latest directions of analysis in the field of linguistics) demonstrates, if it were needed, the depth and degree of generality that make the difference between scientific theories with circumstantial coverage and validity and those with permanent applicability.

It is therefore not surprising that people whose sphere of professional activity has a significant or defining public character, whether they are lawyers or politicians, use them in the two contexts in which the approach to persuading the audience is crucial through its effects in the medium or long term: at the bar, in more or less official circumstances, in any case, in front of decisive factors. It is therefore natural to expect that their speeches constitute models of eloquence, a fact that attracts their careful, objective study, *sine ira et studio*[2], in order to obtain important data of a technical nature that can interest not only linguistic analysis, of the specialists, but also the concrete activity, in the classroom, of the teaching staff.

These considerations led us to focus on a recent speech (Gava 2023) given by President V. Putin one year after the invasion of Ukraine, in front of the Federal Assembly in Moscow, which will interest us exclusively from the aspect of structure, discursive, and argumentative organization, of the concrete manner in which he respects, in his approach, the rhetorical principles of the most famous Roman orator mentioned above.

The central messages of the Russian president's presentation (occasioned by a special historical conjuncture (*"a difficult moment... a turning point for our country"*) were the following: managing the threats of the *"neo-Nazi"* regime in Ukraine (by initiating a *"special military operation"*); the

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1 A comprehensive bibliography of Cicero's rhetorical works can be found in the article *A Bibliography of Ciceronian Rhetoric*, in the official journal of the Rhetoric Society of America published by Taylor & Francis Ltd. (Rhetoric Society Quarterly), Vol. 6, No. 2, pp 21-28; also, from the same perspective, we found Lousene G. Rousseau's more recent article, *The rhetorical principles of Cicero and Adams* (published in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, June 5, 2009, pp. 397-409) to be useful, and especially the work of Raluca-Mihaela Nedea (cf. bibliography) and John Dugan, *Cicero's rhetorical theory*, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

2 (lat) *without anger and partiality* (a.n.)

uncontrollable expansion of NATO, the intrusion of the US and NATO into the areas bordering Russia and the specter of the underlying threat; the responsibility for starting the conflict (placed on the *"Kiev regime"*); the wars started by the US around the world (he speaks of the *"ability of the US to continue robbing the whole world"*), the rise of the Nazis in Germany, prepared, in his view, by the West; the existence of an *"anti-Russia"* project, more concrete, of its *"strategic defeat"* to which an action of looting is added, directed against it (*"The West has stolen our gold and currency reserves"*); the spiritual decay of *"millions of people in the West"* (seen as a *"catastrophe"* for which *"there is no cure"*); the understanding and support that the *"special operation"* enjoys among the Russian people; the socio-economic recovery efforts of the people's republics of Donetsk and Luhansk and the regions of Zaporozhye and Kherson; the approval of a plan for the reconstruction and development of the Russian armed forces; the suspension of Russia's participation in the Strategic Offensive Arms Reduction Treaty. In fact, the intervention of the Russian president had as its goal, as its essential message, precisely this last idea.

The entire interweaving set of ideas of the spoken text illustrates the observance of the first of the three desired goals of a speech (formulated by the Latin orator in the vernacular language[3]), namely that of *informing (docere)*. We specify the fact that, in Cicero's view[4], they overlap the three duties of the ideal orator. Resuming, we add that the first of the mentioned verbs refers to the quality of speech to prepare the proof of a thesis by informing the audience as precisely as possible about its truth. The veracity, accuracy, precision, clarity, and objectivity of the account (or of the description, depending on the type of speech, narrative, or descriptive) give the measure both of the fulfillment of the corresponding duty of the orator and of his deep respect towards the audience. Precisely here, the Russian president proves that he either does not know or does not take into account the recommendations of ancient rhetoric: the multitude of thematic directions approached, as we saw above, of equal importance (as they were presented) irremediably affects the first principle; if an ancient speech was conceived (and obviously supported as such) as subsumed by a single essential theme[5], a theme painted with polychrome touches, with details rich enough so that the public has before its eyes a coherent picture, the Russian president dissipates ineffectively in a speech that we would characterize, from this point of view, as *diluted* enough that it cannot be characterized by the *thematic precision* it needs to be really effective, according to the rigors of Ciceronian rhetoric.

Although he addresses countless ideas (seeming to meet information needs), although he is careful to order the information in a concentric and graded manner of *ascending climax* (intended to prepare the final message which constitutes a veiled threat[6]), yet, he essentially commits a technical

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3 *Docere, movere, conciliare*; in the terminology of E. Cizek - *"the triad of discourse functions"*, 191.

4 Orator, XXI, 69: „*Therefore the true orator,...*, will be the one who, in the forum and in civil cases, will speak in such a way as to convince, delight and excite. To convince, because it is necessary, to delight in order to please, to excite in order to obtain victory; for this last attribute is the most important of all in winning lawsuits ("*Erit igitur eloquens—hunc enim auctore Antonio quaerimus—is qui in foro causisque civilibus ita dicet, ut probet, ut delectet, ut flectat. Probare necessitatis est, delectare suavitatis, flectere victoriae: nam id unum ex omnibus ad obtinendas causas potest plurimum. Sed quot officia oratoris, tot sunt genera dicendi: subtile in probando, modicum in delectando, vehemens in flectendo; in quo uno vis omnis oratoris est*").

5 This essential aspect, moreover, placed it in one of the three types, as they were formulated by Aristotle, in *Rhetoric*, 1358b, pp. 101-102: deliberative, judicial, epideictic (also called demonstrative or apparatus).

6 *"Russia must be ready to test nuclear weapons if the US tests first... We will respond to any challenge, the truth is on our side."*

error. Although the accumulation of data can be interpreted as a strategy to keep awake and direct the attention of the audience in a precise direction, the mentioned mistake had to be avoided (if we refer to the requirement of *discursive efficiency*), since it prepares a possible failure, by neglecting of the second requirement of rhetoric (perhaps the most important in deliberative type speeches, such as the one we are dealing with), namely that of the persuasive approach (*movere*). From the same perspective, the first Ciceronian desideratum is also undermined by another decline, namely by the *general and, therefore, at least questionable, if not correctable, nature of the information provided: images such as generalized robbery, the theft of currency reserves and gold, the en bloc spiritual decay of the West* do not contribute in any way to informing the auditor, moreover, it can even confuse or even disconcert him in the absence of precise details, of concrete evidence.

The second rhetorical principle explained in detail by Cicero in two of his treatises on oratory[7] (*movere*) refers to the effort *to convince* the public by means of another instrument, namely the argumentative one. Knowing the effects of this device, the Russian president appeals to the sensibility of the audience by combining appropriate strategies; thus, it uses both types of arguments, as follows:

a) those of a logical nature (or with a logical appearance): the external threat is supported by the Russian president with the presentation of quite concrete data regarding the presence of military bases near Russia (*"the USA and NATO quickly deployed, near the borders our country, military bases, and secret biological laboratories"; "the creation of new positioning areas for anti-missile defense in Europe and Asia"*); the data on the number of victims of America's wars also seems to be accurate (*"about 900,000 people died, and more than 38 million became refugees"*); equally, the numerical argument is also used in the comparative estimation of the West's expenses in order to support Ukraine (*"It has already spent more than 150 billion dollars to help and arm the regime in Kiev"*).

The speaker's preferred reasoning to justify the way Western countries relate to their own country is that of analogy: within the limits of an entire paragraph, he tries to demonstrate that the West will do to Russia the same way it has done to all the states: it *destroyed* them. In the same context, we also note the use of inductive reasoning, verifiable in all three aspects of their structure[8]: *the establishment of similarities*, a visible approach in justifying the armament in order to counter the attacks of the West (*"Our next measures to strengthen the Army and the Navy should take into account of the experience of the special military operation..."*); *stating the target sentences* (*"Russia must be ready to test nuclear weapons if the US conducts tests first"*), asserting the conclusion (*"We will respond to any challenge, the truth is on our side"*).

[7] *Orator* (Latin title - *Orator*) and *About the orator* (original title - De oratore), passim.

[8] As they were formulated in the specialized literature, in the corresponding thematic chapters; with an indicative title, Stoianovici D., Borchin M., (coordinator), Cazacu, A. M., Nedea R. and others should be consulted.

At the same time, we must note that sometimes the classical scheme of reasoning is shaky; this fact is reflected in the presence (extremely sporadic, if not unique) *of the indicators of argumentation* (Stroe 2007, 167): those of the *progressive foundation* are used only once (*"entrepreneurs who invest in the development of their business and therefore in the development of the country"*), just as those of the *regressive foundation* are also used (*"their rental rate will be significantly lower than the market rate because a significant part of the housing payment will be covered by the state"*). In those contexts, one can observe the quasi-constant presence of stylistic figures so beloved by Putin, especially metaphors; saving him, to a certain extent, from the embarrassment in which the lack of ideas can project him, as some that *"ensure the affect-rational circuit"* (Frumușani 1994, 72), they are not only the favorite images of the orator, but also wanted, we might say, despite the somewhat shocking images projected by some of them (*"USA and NATO...spit on the whole world...rob the whole world"*).

b) those of an affective nature. The recurrent manner in which our orator appeals to such levers of persuasion, as well as their local color, leads us to admit that they constitute the preferred device of his speech, defining, at the same time, its *seductive* rather than *persuasive* specificity. A careful reading reveals that they are distributed (knowingly?) extremely judiciously: almost all the paragraphs and almost all the ideas mentioned in the above thematic apparatus are supported by such mechanisms. Unfortunately, their weight impieties on the persuasive approach itself, which, seen from the reverse perspective, of subsequent decisions, was required to be prepared, in our opinion, by arguments primarily (to the greatest extent) of a rational nature, possibly pigmented, finally (in the section of thanks and expressing gratitude towards compatriots from all social categories), by some arguments aimed at raising awareness. *The set of moral arguments* to which the Slavic orator appeals to soften the hearts of the audience is shaped by the following potpourri: the regime in Ukraine is a *neo-Nazi* one (and the memory, not to mention the sonority of the word used, is enough to inspire horror, revulsion, desire for removal); the regime in the neighboring country shows an *un-dissimulated hatred* towards Russia (which has shown a lot of patience to get out of the present conflict, *the most difficult*, doing *"really everything possible to solve this problem by peaceful means"*; however, it was surprised, in its attempt, by a cleverly executed move: *"a completely different scenario was being prepared behind our backs"*). According to the Russian leader, the US and NATO resort to *disgusting* methods, behaving *shamelessly, duplicitously* (*"destroying Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, Syria"*), without ever having the opportunity to correct their mistakes (*"For this shame, they will never be washed. The concepts of honor, trust, decency are not for them"*). Russia and the actions of the Russian army appear in a completely different light: histrionically presented in a defensive light (*"we are defending people's lives, our own home"*, „*we are not at war with the people of Ukraine"*, „*attacks on our culture, on the Church Russian Orthodox"*), it appears idealized, a few lines below (*"it is impossible to defeat Russia on the battlefield"*), having only one mission, that of doing her *"civic and simply human"* duty and defending eternal

values (which will be known thanks to war correspondents who *"take risks on the front line to tell the whole world the truth"*). The speaker's admiration goes, boundless and fiery, to the inhabitants *"of the people's republics of Donetsk and Lugansk and of the Zaporizhia and Kherson regions"*, for the quality and responsibility of having *"determined their future in referendums"*, as well as to *"the wives, sons, the daughters of the fallen soldiers, their parents, who raised worthy defenders of the Motherland"* who *"during the Great Patriotic War fought against Nazism, defended the Donbas"*. Finally, as an apotheosis, the speaker assures his audience that *"all of Russia still remembers courage, steadfastness and the greatest strength, sacrifice."*

The quoted words are, we believe, eloquent for the orchestrated approach (carefully dosed, not infrequently *in crescendo*, in its sensitive points) through which the orator almost makes even the most intimate chord of the Slavic soul vibrate. Words like the above give rise almost instantly, in the consciousness of the listening public, to obvious polarized feelings (on the one hand, indignation, repulsion, aversion, on the other, mercy, gratitude, solidarity, the spirit of sacrifice), preparing in the subtext, by their consistency, the positive reception of future similar decisions of the Russian president. The coherence of this argumentative strategy is also confirmed by placing, at the end of the speech, the appeal to compatriots, to whom due thanks (and promises) are brought.

Noting the fact that President Putin does not exploit the resources of the arguments subsumed by the *ethos-type*[9] approach (which the arpinat[10], faithful to the trained master from Stagira[11], equally recommends), we wonder, rhetorically, if he really knew them (either himself or his advisors). Due to the unbalanced weight given almost exclusively to the second of the three types, we would say that prisoners of the intention to manipulate the masses (mostly ignorant[12]) through emotional arguments, the authors and/or the actor of the speech either ignored in block Ciceronian technical principles, or they knew that the Slavic spirit allows itself to be convinced by feeling rather than reasoning. An argument in support of this idea is that component of speech that Cicero called *elocutio* and which refers to its ornamentation, namely the stylistic figures; if above we noted the rather flashy character[13] of the constructions specific to the mechanisms of logic (reasoning), in the same perspective we highlight, this time, the wealth of resources designed to sensitize the audience (but also the lecturer, equally): the epithets (*"disgusting method of deception"*), rhetorical interrogations (*"where are the discussions about the fight against poverty...? Where has it all gone? Where has it all disappeared?"*), rhetorical invocations (*"Forgive them, Lord, 'for they know not what they do"*), synecdoche (*"we defend...our own home"*), personifications (*"revival of enterprises"*), hendiada (*"mask of words"*), metaphors (*"they died under bombing by the hands of... executioners"*), hyperboles (*"millions of people in the West understand that they are being led towards a real spiritual*

[9] They aim at the persuasive role of the orator's own character, which, according to Cicero, cannot become fully convincing unless he proves a person of social and professional integrity.
[10] Epithet associated exclusively with the name and person of Cicero; it is derived from the name of the locality where he was born, *Arpinum*, today, *Arpino*, in the province of Frosinone, in central Italy (a.n.)
[11] ust like the previous toponym, this noun refers to Aristotle's birthplace, *Stagira*, in northern Greece (author's note)
[12] *Ignorant* (author's note)
[13] *Sporadic* (author's note)

catastrophe"), the ascending climax ("*the threat grew, moreover, every day...everything was prepared*"), the accumulations ("*the destruction of the family, of cultural and national identity, perversions, child abuse*"). All this but, more than that, their unique combination with colloquial elements specific to the urban lexicon ("*slicks", "elites... they're going crazy*"), incongruous with a public speech, proof that for some the orator asks the audience's permission ("*excuse me for my bad manners*") stylistically support the type of argumentative approach preferred by the Russian president.

However, we note the presence of some procedures of classical rhetoric exploited by the orator who seems aware of their resources; thus, like an actor from an ancient Greek or Shakespearean tragedy, he theatrically dialogues with the audience to evoke vivid emotions, difficult to control ("*Look what they are doing to their own peoples: the destruction of family, cultural and national identity, perversion and abuse on children are declared the norm. And priests are obliged to bless marriages between people of the same sex...Millions of people in the West understand that they are being led to a real spiritual catastrophe*"). Consistently, it exploits national ideals and issues bombastic hypotheses that are difficult to prove in order to emphasize the state of gravity in which the nation is and to justify its actions once more ("*They distort historical facts, constantly attack our culture, Russian Orthodox Church and other traditional religions in our country*"). From a technical point of view, he is concerned with the reception of his messages by the public, in that he explains "the field of reference of the speech, the objectives pursued, the main premises that he took into account and which condition the way of solving the objectives, the intended solutions" (Leordean 1992, 194).

The above are only a few concrete examples of strategies *to move (movere)* the audience by using arguments of a strictly affective nature. Arousing the listeners' feelings is a recurring tool in the discourse, we would say even slightly abused, as can be easily seen from the examples given. This fact confirms the statement of a researcher who investigated the rhetorical structure of Cicero's speeches, according to which "*seduction is external to the enunciative instance of the speaker..., it is opposed to Aristotelian rationality, and can be interpreted as a form of discursive manipulation aimed at persuasion*" (Nedea 2007, 34). The weight given by the Russian president to arguments of an affective nature and related strategies entitles us to claim that the speech is, in fact, subordinated to the approach of manipulation, and not the persuasion of the audience. The political context, the social realities, the hierarchy of power in the Russian state represent a background conducive to that action, allowing us to support this idea. A closer look at the details confirms our assertion. Our orator commits technical mistakes in relation to the structuring of the speech and the validity of the arguments.

According to the principles of classical rhetoric, the subject of a speech is clearly specified in its introductory section, a principle only partially respected by the Russian president, who does not mention it *expressis verbis*[14]; he only specifies that

his intervention is occasioned by *"a difficult moment, ..., a defining moment for our country, with the most important historical events, which determine the future of our country and our people"*, therefore he outlines the context in many lines too general to allow us to see here the *ad litteram* application of an oratorical rule. In addition, if two other errors could escape the ordinary listener, they were certainly perceived by the informed one, who will have noticed, in the president's approach, both a hasty generalization (*"I supported the financial system and entrepreneurs who invest in business development their and therefore in the development of the country"*), as well as the presence of some ambiguities: referring to the way in which the citizens interpret the military intervention, he actually does not qualify it in a precise way, but actually places it in an ambiguous category that it does not convey a clear message from which to take a firm position (*"I am proud - I think we are all proud - that our multinational people, the absolute majority of citizens have taken a principled position towards the special military operation"*).

The last of the three principles, *conciliare*[15], represents a corollary of the previous two and illustrates the orator's approach *to attract the audience* to his side. How exactly? Operating *more proprio*[16], but judiciously and precisely with the three types of arguments (logical, affective, ethical) necessary and sufficient to obtain the public's adhesion. Concretely, this aim is achieved almost mathematically to the extent that the principles and strategies specific to the three persuasive directions are respected.

The examples brought in support of the aforementioned assertions and positions converge in supporting the one-sidedness of President Putin's approach, in the sense of operating some changes that are not allowed in the scheme of the principles of Ciceronian rhetoric; in a society whose functionality would have been effectively ensured by the principles of a genuine democracy, his speech would have been appreciated as only partial, not very persuasive, and the masses and, why not, the political scene, would have let this reality shine through.

[14] (Lat.) *precisely, in clear, explicit terms* (author's note)

[15] (Lat.) *to attract to one's side* (author's note)
[16] (Lat.) *in own style* (author's note)

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Ukraine – environmental aspects of humanitarian demining

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Abstract

In 2021, Ukraine produced such an amount of food that it would have been possible to feed about 400 million people, not counting the population of Ukraine. The strategy for the development of the agricultural sector of Ukraine envisages providing food for 1 billion of the world's population by 2030. However, the aggression of Russia on February 24, 2022, and the subsequent hostilities led to the contamination of agricultural lands with a significant amount of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), which requires humanitarian demining. This article is devoted to the review of the humanitarian demining process from the point of view of its impact on the environment and the determination of the main components affecting the production of agricultural products. In the first period of the demining process, there will be a significant decline in the production of agricultural products. This decline will be determined by the reduction in the area of cultivated agricultural land due to the danger of explosion. In the course of the demining and liquidation of ERW, the area of land will increase, as will the volume of production, but the quality of products will decrease due to the presence of heavy metal compounds and explosive residues in it and the deterioration of the quality of the soil itself. Therefore, after the liberation of Ukraine's territory, contaminated by mines and ERW, taking into account its importance as the world's granary, the demining time is of great importance and Ukraine will be very grateful for any help that will reduce it.

Keywords:

humanitarian demining; unexploded ordnance; environment; agricultural land; foods.

Ukraine is located in the central part of Eastern Europe at the intersection of transport routes from Europe to Asia and from the Scandinavian countries to the countries of the Mediterranean region. Most of the territory of Ukraine is located in the western part of the East European plain, while the plains occupy 95% of Ukrainian territory. Thanks to a warm climate, a good topography (about 60% of agricultural land is flat, and another 35% has an angle of inclination between 1° and 3°) and the presence of large areas of black earth (a third of the world's reserves), Ukraine has extremely favorable conditions for agricultural production. Thus, according to the results of the 2021 (pre-war) year, the foreign trade turnover of agricultural products and food products exported by Ukraine reached more than $35.4 billion (Minagro 2022).

Russia's military aggression, which began on February 24, 2022, led to significant environmental pollution. The conflict has destroyed vast areas of agricultural land, burned forests, and destroyed national parks. The Ministry of Ecology of Ukraine estimates the financial damage caused to the environment of Ukraine from February 24, 2022, to February 20, 2023, at 51.45 billion US dollars (Guillot, Zimmermann and Coi 2023). More than 13 percent of the total territory of Ukraine is contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). Approximately 10 percent of agricultural land in Ukraine is contaminated with explosives (Chandler 2022).

After liberation, the territories of former battles are saturated with explosives in the form of unexploded and abandoned ammunition and minefields. The process of their elimination, in turn, will lead to a negative impact on the environment.
The purpose of this article is to review the demining process from the point of view of its impact on the environment and to identify the main components affecting the production of agricultural products.

1. The impact of the demining process on the environment

1.1 Indirect impact
The environmental impact of explosive remnants of war (ERW) can be direct or indirect (Hofmann and Rapillard 2015, 4). Indirect impacts are those that occur at times and locations other than the original location or detonation of the device. Figure 1 schematically illustrates the chain of environmental impacts that may result from the consequences of armed conflict. Indirect impact on the environment is accompanied by the population's fear of possible explosion (explicit or imagined). In this case, the population leaves agricultural regions, moving, as a rule, to urban and suburban areas (Hamad, Kolo and Balzter 2018, 2). The area of arable land and the area of pastures is decreasing, and as a result, the quantity and quality of food products are decreasing too. An indirect effect is also the action of explosive devices that remain in the soil and change its properties, usually in a negative way (Garbino 2019, 2).
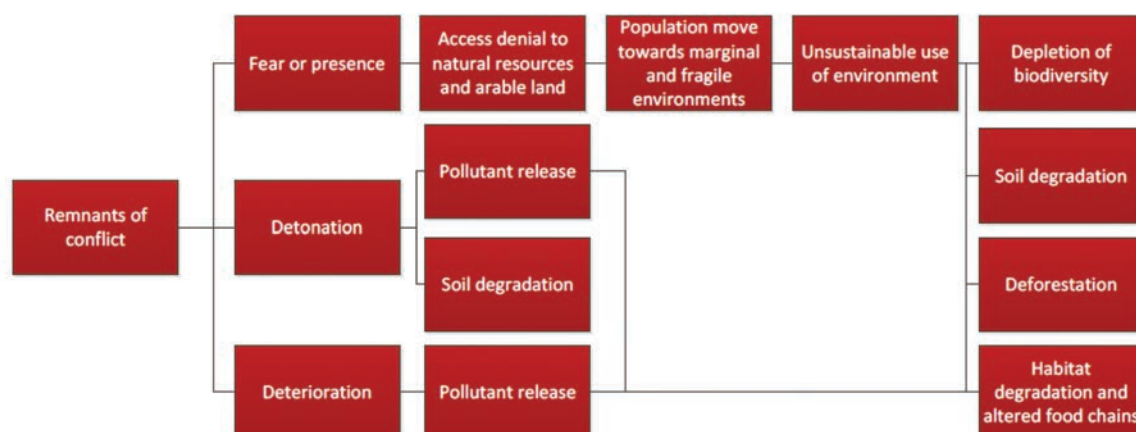
Figure 1: Environmental impact chain of remnants of conflict (GICHD 2014)

1.2 Direct impact

The on-the-spot (direct) impact of ERW can be defined as their impact on the environment at the time and place of explosion.

Disposal of mines and ERW consists of two stages: the search for devices and the actual elimination itself. Moreover, humanitarian demining differs from the military one in many respects. The standard to which clearance must be achieved is at least a 99.6% successful detection and removal rate and 100% to a certain depth, according to International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).

Searching for UXO causes pressure on the environment due to the presence of personnel and the setting up of temporary camps. The mere presence of demining personnel in the field and in temporary field camps can lead to the overexploitation of local resources such as water, wood, or food and the generation of waste that, if not properly managed, can lead to lasting environmental degradation long after the camp had left.

The search is usually carried out with the help of metal detectors and probes, sometimes with the help of trained animals (dogs and rats) that detect the presence of explosives by smell. In order to find and release UXO, it is necessary to prepare the territory, namely: the upper fertile layer of the earth is cut; while the root system of plants is damaged, low-growing plants (bushes, etc.) are destroyed to gain access to the likely location of explosive devices. Exposing the surface of the earth leads to the thinning of the fertile layer and the possible formation of erosion.

In principle, there are methods of non-contact search for explosive devices using, for example, thermal infrared (TIR) sensors (Fardoulis, Depreytere and Guthrie 2022), but they work more or less reliably only when UXO is slightly buried. Manual clearing remains the preferred tool, especially in densely vegetated areas where the main environmental challenge is to preserve as much vegetation as possible. However, manual cleaning is time-consuming and tedious, so mechanical systems can be used to speed up the process (GICHD 2004, 3).

Although the machines have significant potential to increase the efficiency of mine clearance, they have a negative impact on the soil and the ecosystem. Different mechanical systems (milling systems, flails, or converted agricultural equipment) are used to till the soil in search of remnants of the conflict (Dorn 2019, 3-7). This inevitably disturbs and often destroys the soil.

The soil can be moved to another location where it can be spread evenly over a large flat surface and then tested for explosives or evidence of explosives. When using chains and cutters, the soil passes through these systems, even if it remains in the same place after processing. The consequences of such practices can take the form of various types of erosion, changes in soil composition, reduction of soil fertility, and contamination by machine oil and fuel.

Mechanical systems remove or destroy vegetation, which in turn can lead to increased water runoff and wind erosion. Tillage increases the rate of wind erosion by dehydrating the soil and breaking it into smaller particles that can be picked up by the wind. The removal of vegetation also reduces the amount of organic matter, which is important for the stability of the soil structure. It is clear that less fertile soils are naturally associated with losses in agricultural production.

Soil degradation occurs when changes in its depth or physical or chemical properties degrade its quality. During mechanical demining, the organic layer as well as the soil surface is usually treated, and the physical or chemical properties and structure of the soil may be altered or damaged. This again can affect soil fertility, rooting potential, and water-holding capacity.

The disposal of collected mines and ERW is a separate issue. For decades, such munitions were destroyed by burning or detonating in the open air – so-called opening burning and open detonation (OBOD) (EPA 2019, 1-2). There are a number of munitions disposal methods (OSCE 2008); (EPA 2019, 12-17), but many of them require stationary conditions, which involve the transport of dangerous explosive devices and significant amounts of energy, so the OBOD method is still widely used.

At the same time, the presence of emissions of reaction products, remnants of explosive particles, and ammunition fragments that pollute the environment is observed (Figure 2). A mine or ERW explosion causes soil degradation by destroying its structure and disrupting its stability, causing local compaction and increasing the susceptibility of fertile topsoil to erosion (Figure 3). Soil is a living ecosystem and a finite resource, which means that its loss and degradation cannot be recovered in a human lifetime: depending on the ecosystem, this period can take 1,000 years to form just 3 centimeters of topsoil (Berhe 2007).

1.3 Long-lasting impact

When considering the issue of the elimination of mines and ERW, it is impossible not to mention the places of intensive artillery and rocket attacks, as well as the places of destroyed ammunition depots. In terms of their harmful impact on the

environment, they are no different from minefields.

The explosives contained in the ammunition can be in different states after their detonation (Figure 4).

1. Unexploded – the ammunition has not exploded, although its frame may be damaged and the explosive is in free contact with the environment.

2. Low-order detonation – explosion of ammunition, while the part of unexploded explosives is in the range of 27-49% (EPA 2012, 18).

3. High-order detonation – a mass of unexploded explosive is in the range of $2 \bullet 10^{-3}$–$7 \bullet 10^{-7}$% and, in principle, can be neglected (Walsh, et al. 2010).

Figure 2: Pollution of the environment during the destruction of munitions by OBOD (EPA 2019)
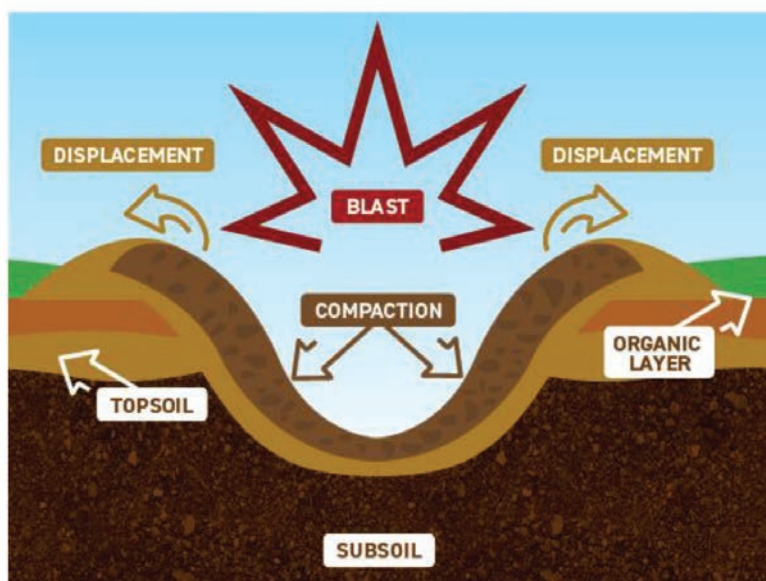
Figure 3: Impact on soil from explosive ordnance detonation (Frost 2021)

Figure 4: Different states of ordnance during the detonation (SAS 2022)

4. Detonation by «sympathy» – detonation of explosive in unexploded ordnance under the action of a shock wave from exploding ordnance (Taylor and Weale 1932). It is usually accompanied by low-order detonation.

Low-order detonation occurs in about 2.5% of cases even in new ammunition. The usage of outdated ones leads to the fact that from 10 to 30% of the explosive weapons used, dropped, fired, or launched do not explode as intended and many other explosive ordnance are abandoned in various locations (GICHD 2021, 21-26). In the process of liquidation of both mines and the rest of the damaged or abandoned ammunition, the metals that are part of them may enter the environment (GICHD 2021, 42-48; SAS 2022): aluminium into explosives filling; lead, antimony and arsenic (added to lead into small-arms cartridges), cadmium and zinc (a protective coating on ammunition shells), mercury (mercury fulminate into primers and detonators), tungsten, nickel, copper and cobalt (in the form of an alloy for cores of armour-piercing projectiles).

The danger to humans and the environment depends on the type of metal and its dose. The danger of a type of metal is conveniently displayed using the concept of a reference dose proposed by the American Environmental Protection Agency USEPA «...oral reference dose (RfD) – an estimate, with uncertainty spanning perhaps an order of magnitude, of a daily oral exposure to the human population (including sensitive subgroups) that is likely to be without an appreciable risk of deleterious effects during a lifetime...» (Wikipedia). In addition, some metals are carcinogens. Carcinogenesis is an increased risk of cancer during a person's lifetime as a result of exposure to carcinogens. The danger of a carcinogen is determined by the value of the so-called slope factor (SF), which represents the degree of the carcinogenic risk increase with increasing a dose per unit and is a value that describes the danger of

carcinogen. The values of RfD and SF for metals included in the ammunition are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: RfD and SF for metals which may be part of the ammunition
(IRIS, last updated on December 19, 2016)

Metal	RfD (oral) (mg/kg-day)	SF (oral) (mg/kg-day)$^{-1}$	Affected human organ
Al	1.0		Central nervous system (CNS)
Pb	0.0035	0.047	CNS, blood, reproductive and immune systems
Sb	0.0004		Respiratory organs
As	0.0003	1.5	Skin, CNS, cardiovascular, immune, hormonal systems (diabetes), gastrointestinal tract
Cd	0.0005	0.38	Kidneys, hormonal system
Zn	0.3		Biochemical properties of blood
Hg	0.0003		Kidneys, CNS, reproductive, immune, and hormonal systems
W	0.0025		Liver, cardiovascular system, gastrointestinal tract, blood, body weight
Ni	0.02		Liver, cardiovascular system, gastrointestinal tract, blood, body weight
Cu	0.019		Gastrointestinal tract
Co	0.02		Blood

In addition to heavy metals, mines and ammunition contain substances that in turn also pollute the environment. These include explosives and propellants (Pichtel 2012). Explosives are classified as primary, secondary, or tertiary based on their susceptibility to initiation. Primary explosives are highly sensitive to initiation and include silver azide and mercury fulminate. Primary explosives are often used to initiate secondary explosives in a so-called firing train. Common secondary explosives include N-methyl-2-4-6-trinitrophenylnitramine (tetryl), 2,4,6-trinitrotoluene (TNT), hexahydro-1,3,5-trinitro-1,3,5-triazine (RDX), octahydro-1,3,5,7-tetranitro-1,3,5,7-tetrazocine (HMX) and their mixtures. Tertiary explosives (common specimen – ammonium nitrate) are so insensitive to shock that they cannot be detonated by reasonable quantities of primary explosive and instead require a secondary explosive. In military ammunitions, tertiary explosives are rarely used (Agrawal 2010, pt. 2).

Solid propellants for guns, artillery, and mortars comprise low-explosive materials formulated to burn at a controlled rate and produce gases that propel rockets or accelerate projectiles from guns. Propellant ingredients are nitroglycerin (NG), nitroguanidine (NQ), nitrocellulose (NC), 2,4-dinitrotoluene (2,4-DNT) and perchlorate (Agrawal 2010, pt. 4). The values of RfD and SF for organic compounds included in ammunition are shown in Table 2.

From the above materials, it can be concluded that ERWs damage and pollute the environment, and this process can take decades. Let us consider the current state of humanitarian demining in Ukraine and the prospects for its development.

TABLE 2: RfD and SF for explosives and propellants which may be part of the ammunition (IRIS, last updated on December 19, 2016)

Substance	RfD (oral) (mg/kg-day)	SF (oral) (mg/kg-day)$^{-1}$	Affected human organ
TNT	0.0005	0.03	Enlarged spleen, immune system damage. Other harmful effects include reduced male fertility and a risk of cancer.
RDX	0.003	0.11	Damage to vital organs such as the liver and kidneys, pathology of red blood cells, and irritation of epithelial tissues
HMX	0.05		Harmful to the liver and central nervous system
Tetryl	0.004		Rash, skin irritation, dry cough, nasal irritation, headache
NG	0.03		Hypotension, venous pooling, increased vasodilatation, and reduced cardiac output can be expected, tachycardia and palpitations too
NQ	0.1		Whole body effects
NC	3 000		Whole body effects
DNT	0.002	0.68	Muscular incoordination, cyanosis, central nervous system depression, and respiratory depression followed by death.
Perchlorate	0.0007		Endocrine system

2. Organization of humanitarian demining in Ukraine

The work on humanitarian demining is coordinated by the National Mine Action Agency (NMAA). It asserts a plan of humanitarian demining activities for the year and also carries out coordination, sets priorities, and allocates areas for demining. The process of humanitarian demining includes the following activities (DSTU 2019):

– non-technical survey – collection, analysis, and assessment of information about the territory to determine it as a suspected dangerous area or a confirmed dangerous area and processes for the removal, reduction, or cleaning of areas for their further effective use without the use of technical means;

– technical survey – collection, and analysis of data using technical means on the presence, type, distribution, and surroundings of mine/ERW contamination sites to better determine the presence or absence of mine/ERW contamination and to support prioritization of land unblocking and decision-making processes;

– manual demining – involves the detection, neutralization (destruction) of all threats associated with mines/ERW, without the use of mechanized means and mine detection dogs;

– area of hostilities cleaning – systematic and controlled cleaning of dangerous areas;

– informing the population about the risks associated with mines and ERW – a set of measures to increase the level of awareness of dangerous areas residents with the order of actions and safe forms of behavior, aimed at reducing the risks of injury and death due to detonation on mines/ ERW.

Each type of activity is certified.

The state does not finance humanitarian demining – and this is, in principle, a normal practice for «mined» countries. All projects are paid for by international donors. Another issue is that complete dependence on donors creates uncertainty in future funding. With Ukraine, it seems, there are no such problems – the sums allocated for demining are only increasing. A mine action operator usually works directly with the donor for funding and receives approval from the NMAA to work in certain areas.

The reason why donors (not the state) pay for the work – is the high cost of the full demining cycle: $3–4 per square meter (non-technical survey – $130 – 180 per hectare), while the salary of the demining specialist – $1000–2000 per month.

The main problem of Ukraine is the huge potentially mined areas that should be surveyed: it is about 174 thousand sq. km. Since it is impossible to cover the entire territory at once, priority was given to agricultural land. By the end of the 2023 year, Ukraine intends to put into operation up to 165,000 hectares of land (1,650 sq. km). Altogether, the four-year demining plan envisages the priority commissioning of about 470,000 hectares (4,700 sq. km) of agricultural land (Nabozhnyak 2023).

In Ukraine, there are about 1,600 demining specialists, and at least 5,000 more are necessary. In such conditions, in order to speed up the demining process, there is a question of relaxing the procedures that regulate demining according to international standards, which, by the way, is opposed by foreign partners (Nabozhnyak 2023).

These standards include IMAS 07.13, published in 2017. It is the only international mine action standard to be dedicated to environmental management in mine action. It recognizes that shortcomings in environmental management can cause adverse short- and long-term environmental impacts, resulting in direct harm to the affected communities and reducing the positive results and outcomes expected to arise from mine action operations (Frost 2021, 13; IMAS 2017).

According to IMAS 07.13, mine action operations must be conducted in a manner that minimizes the negative impact on the environment and is safe for demining specialists and other people. Mine action planning must identify and assess relevant environmental aspects and identify appropriate and effective measures to mitigate negative environmental impacts. The NMAA and operators must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the environment in which mine action operations are conducted remains in a condition in which it is fit for its intended use after mine action operations have ceased. The NMAA should determine reasonable environmental mitigation measures based on cost-benefit considerations of various demining methods. Particular attention should be paid to the environmental conditions that are necessary for the continuation of safe human activities after the completion of mine action operations.

The standard establishes a number of general and minimum requirements for environmental management in the mine action sector. The standard does not

require the application of specific practical environmental mitigation measures but is a document that provides the NMAA with the tools to identify them. However, Annex C of IMAS 07.13 provides a useful list of some practical measures that may be used by NMAA and the mine action operator.

Conclusions

By analyzing the environmental aspects of the demining process, it can be predicted that after the liberation of the agricultural territories, where military operations were previously conducted and which are contaminated by mines and ERW, in the first time period there will be a significant decline in the production of foods. This decline will be determined by the reduction in the area of cultivated agricultural land due to the danger of the mine/ ERW explosion.

In the course of the demining and liquidation of ERW, the area of land will increase, as will the volume of foodstuff, but their quality will decrease due to the presence of heavy metal compounds and explosive residues in it and the deterioration of the soil quality, especially if a decision is made to abandon the procedures provided for by IMAS 07.13. This process strongly depends on the time of demining, since the transition of harmful substances into the soil and their subsequent participation in the food chain is stretched over time.

Therefore, after the liberation of the territory of Ukraine contaminated by mines and ERW, taking into account its importance as the world's granary, the demining time is of great importance and Ukraine will be very grateful for any help that will reduce it, especially if the demining process is to be carried out taking into account requirements of IMAS 07.13.

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Examining the Globalist and Marxian Groundworks on Human Insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st Century: Insights from Nigeria and South Africa

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Abstract

This study probes into the globalist and Marxian perspectives on human insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a particular focus on Nigeria and South Africa. By employing a case-study methodology and data from relevant secondary and archival sources, the study seeks to understand the effects of globalization, globalist ideologies, and Marxist ideologies on human insecurity in the region. While previous studies have primarily attributed human insecurity in Africa to internal factors, such as corruption, self-destructive public policies, poverty, environmental degradation, militancy, and insurgency, the globalist and Marxist contexts of the insecurity have received limited scholarly attention. While findings partly confirm that most human insecurities in the region are largely influenced by internal factors, the global environment, encompassing job insecurity, global warming, deadly viruses and pandemics, transnational crimes, drugs, and interstate conflict, also plays a significant role. The study further uncovers the exploitative, oppressive, and conflict-ridden interactions between the bourgeoisie and proletariats in Sub-Saharan Africa, thereby contributing to unfairness, deprivation, and conflicts that usually morph into human insecurity. To mitigate human insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa, the study proposes a collaborative global approach and a more equitable distribution of resources within the state. Understanding the globalist and Marxian foundations of human insecurity can provide valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders in devising comprehensive strategies to address this pressing issue in the region.

Keywords:

Globalisation; Class struggle; Globalism; Human insecurity; Marxism; Sub-Saharan Africa.

Marxist ideology posits that every society, including African political systems, is structured as a class corporation, giving rise to class conflict where one class seeks to dominate and oppress the other. According to Mbah (2014), whilst one of these classes is vastly productive, the other, on the other hand, is yet terribly impoverished. The bourgeoisie and the working class represent the two class identities in Marxist terms, leading to enmity, envy, disputes, and conflicting interests due to class oppression. It thus underscores why human insecurity arises from these clashes in class interests (Roth 2004).

Human insecurity becomes almost inevitable when the severely impoverished lack access to essential public services while the massively wealthy exploit their advantage to embezzle state funds, denying the poor access to basic necessities like education, healthcare, water, a safe environment, housing, and employment. In instances where access to public utilities is limited, protests by the working class and attempts by the bourgeoisie to quell such agitations can escalate into arbitrary arrests, violence, chaos, destruction of state property, secession, militancy, insurgency, and loss of life, among other forms of violence (Akinrinde, et al. 2021). In line with Akinrinde, Tar, Babalola, and Osuwa's position (Akinrinde, et al. 2021), Mbah (2014) finds that the ruling class does not freely cede power (in other words, it is not inclined to commit class suicide), and must be forced to do so through great struggle and/or violence. Class conflicts arise as a result of such agitations and fights. Human security in African countries is jeopardized by conflict, whether caused by class or otherwise. Conflicts paralyze states and prevent them from responding to basic human needs, while also jeopardizing human security (Akokpari 2007).

On the other side, globalists believe that an unstable global environment creates insecurity. The influx of migrants into Europe, or the mass migration of people from war-torn countries to refugee camps in other countries, as well as global warming, which drives people to travel for safety, are all global events that have mostly resulted in a hazardous global environment. A dangerous global space is a common source of conflict that can lead to human insecurity. For example, terrible diseases such as the COVID-19 Pandemic, EBOLA, Lassa fever, and even AIDS are spread through migration, and diseases like COVID-19 and EBOLA have made the global space hazardous and posed a threat to human security in Africa on multiple occasions. Illegal or coerced migration, as well as inadequate management of migrants by host countries, pose a hazard to human lives and property in those countries. A greater proportion of migrants live in insecure housing and working situations, putting them at greater risk of exploitation, accidents, and illnesses, as well as deportation (Stephan 2011). Human insecurity is still a global issue (Akokpari 2007). Terrorist attacks, international crime, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and diseases such as HIV/AIDS, SARS, avian flu, environmental degradation, and the expansion of wars throughout the universe all show the vulnerability of people in the North and South (Akokpari 2007).

Indeed, the preceding analysis illustrates that human insecurity in Africa can be attributed to both global and internal factors. Class conflicts and competition between the ruling and ruled classes are prevalent in African societies. The ruling class, particularly politicians, amasses wealth through corruption and mismanagement, while the majority suffers from poverty and the consequences of poor governance. Global challenges such as migration, climate change, disease spread, and international crime further contribute to the tumultuous atmosphere in African countries (Akinrinde 2018).

Human insecurity is widespread in Africa due to the unequal distribution of resources, where a few powerful individuals benefit at the expense of the majority (Akinrinde 2020). Consequently, there is a high number of out-of-school children, youth unemployment, poverty, and a rise in crime rates. Failure to provide education to the youth might lead to future threats of militancy, insurgency, riots, kidnappings, and armed robberies carried out by disillusioned youths. Nigeria, in particular, experiences a life under perpetual fear and insecurity due to the activities of anti-state organizations like kidnappers, militants, and insurgents.

The influx of African migrants into South Africa has also raised serious security concerns, leading to xenophobic attacks on foreigners, as South Africans perceive them as hindrances to the country's growth (Akinrinde and Tar 2021). Government officials in South Africa have expressed concerns about foreigners impeding the country's development (Human Rights Watch, 2000). This sense of inequality and relative deprivation in South Africa creates competition for limited resources, job opportunities, housing, and public goods, contributing to crime and further exacerbating insecurity (Tshitereke, 1999).

This study, relying on reports, archival materials, and data from existing relevant sources, takes a comprehensive look at the causes of human insecurity in Africa from both the globalist and Marxist perspectives. The article is, therefore, structured into three sections: the first sets the groundwork for the research, the second examines how globalist and Marxist theories explain human insecurity in Nigeria and South Africa, and the final section explores the issues raised in the case studies and provides recommendations for Sub-Saharan African countries.

Human Insecurity in Nigeria and South Africa: A Conceptual and Theoretical Explication

The issue of human insecurity in Nigeria and South Africa cannot be overstated, as it remains a persistent and recurring problem in both countries. As a consequence, both nations have been significantly affected by the negative implications of human insecurities which include but are not limited to internal violence, unemployment, poverty, and climate change, among others. In South Africa, xenophobia attacks,

violence, riots, hate crimes, and gang-related offenses have emerged as significant contributors to its general human insecurity. The occurrence of xenophobic attacks has escalated in frequency and intensity, raising considerable concern, particularly due to the continuous influx of illegal immigrants into the country (Mamokhosi, Lukong and Mandla 2011). On the other hand, insurgency, kidnappings, election violence, political killings, herdsmen/farmers crises, and secessionist crises abound as an example of insecurity in Nigeria. Although all of these have been substantially interrogated in the extant literature and implicated as internal reasons for insecurity in Africa, little research efforts have been made to explain human insecurity in Africa from the viewpoints of an unsafe global space and class struggle in African countries, both of which theoretical ontology underline the Marxist and globalist models.

Accordingly, while insecurity, within the context of the Marxist orientation, remains a global problem usually fuelled by forces like globalization, foreign aid, financial assistance-debt, market liberalization, and privatization, which all threaten human security, Globalism, on the other hand, contends that human security cannot be guaranteed in an uncertain international context (Akokpari 2007). Despite its prospects which include access to developed countries' markets, technology transfer, financial help from global monetary institutions, debt relief/cancellation, foreign aid, and so on, globalization continues to have negative consequences that can lead to human insecurity. Parts of the globalization problem in Nigeria, for example, are the imposition and implementation of IMF and World Bank policies in the country by successive Nigerian governments without adequate engagement with the people. The Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), privatization, deregulation, and other international agencies' policies, for instance, have further exacerbated poverty rather than alleviated it. Though privatization is a global economic strategy, it is practiced in Nigeria to benefit a few people while causing misery for the masses (Akokpari 2007). As a result, the country's social inequality gap continues to widen. According to Akokpari (2007), global pressures in the context of liberation, privatization, and debt have significantly harmed human security in Africa. Unfortunately, empirical and theoretical investigations have shown that the SAP policy failed to deliver in alleviating Nigeria's economic issues (Okolie, 2015; Nnamani, 2015).

Second, globalization can lead to people migrating to other nations in quest of higher education, greener pastures, and the acquisition of knowledge and technological expertise. Some migrants, particularly Africans, are exposed to unfavorable conditions, racism, intolerance, and prejudice as a result of the globalization process. Similarly, the killing of Africans by other Africans in South Africa in xenophobic conflicts exposes the dangerous side of the globalization process (Nel 2005). Furthermore, a study carried out by Mamokhosi, Lukong, and Mandla (2011) revealed that violence against foreigners has a global issue largely linked to society's rapid globalization process and development. This causes individuals to migrate, particularly from underdeveloped and less developed countries to developed or partly developed countries in quest of greener pastures.

Similarly, globalization transcends national borders and attracts migrant workers, which occasionally poses human security risks, particularly when migration is driven by factors like climate change, war, or diseases. As a result, the way host countries handle migrants is not exempt from human security threats, including the spread of diseases (Akinrinde and Tar 2021). Stephan (2011) established a nexus between security and migration motives. For him, forced migration occurs when living conditions deteriorate, making it impossible for migrants to sustain a stable life in their native regions due to civil conflicts or natural disasters (Stephan 2011).

It is essential to also acknowledge that climate change has equally led to a significant influx of Fulani herdsmen from neighboring countries such as Niger Republic and Chad into Nigeria, in search of food and water for their cattle. This has resulted in conflicts between the herdsmen and farmers. Expectedly, climate change profoundly impacts livelihoods, social order, peace, and stability. For instance, as agriculture expands, grazing grounds shrink due to global warming, causing animals to encroach into farmland and damage crops (Ezirim and Onuoha 2008; Ibrahim *et al.,* 2015).

Similarly, the impact of the Libyan crisis is a component of a dangerous global environment that is causing insecurity in other African countries. For example, Gadhafi's loyalists and warriors who have managed to flee Libya have infiltrated other countries with small arms and weapons, endangering human security due to misuse of weapons and armaments at the receiving countries. Light weapon accumulation in a country prone to internal conflicts quickly takes on a regional dimension, endangering the stability of neighbouring states and the entire sub-region (Ivor 2006). The ease with which such weapons can be procured, as well as their misuse, contribute to a climate of fear (Ivor 2006). The proliferation of guns and small arms is a problem in Nigeria and South Africa. Smuggled guns and small arms from war-torn countries have been used by criminals in both countries. For example, xenophobic attacks on overseas Africans are carried out by criminals in South Africa using guns and unlicensed weapons that have unlawfully crossed South African borders. Boko-Haram attacks against Nigerians and government facilities are carried out with weaponry smuggled into the country by displaced Libyan fighters. The availability of tiny guns feeds the cycle of violence and jeopardizes the sub-development region's prospects (Ivor 2006). It is therefore clear that the influx of small arms and weaponry from war-torn African states exacerbates the problem of human insecurity in both countries.

Again, globalization allows a continent or country to become more civilized, accessible, and developed in terms of technology, economic opportunity, industrialization, and social transformation, resulting in an influx of migrants to industrialized countries. People interact, intermarry, and engage in unprotected sexual intercourse while they migrate. In the process, individuals come into touch with fatal diseases and unwittingly carry them back to their home nations. This

invariably jeopardizes human security in both sending and receiving countries. In a country with a high proportion of covid-19 or HIV/AIDS, human lives are apparently in jeopardy. Akokpari (2007) reveals, for instance, that HIV/AIDS has wreaked havoc in Africa and has further exacerbated the continent's human security predicament. In Nigeria and South Africa, for example, HIV/AIDS has posed a threat to human security. Human insecurity in the sub-region has been exacerbated by the development of HIV/AIDS (Ivor 2006). From a globalist perspective, it is obvious that global events have a considerable impact on human security at the national level. The globalist perspective reveals a connection between international insecurity and national insecurity. The presence of a tumultuous global landscape marked by war, global warming, economic recession, climate change, disease outbreaks, conditional debt relief with hidden agendas, and animosity towards migrants inevitably leads to tensions or crises at the national level. This is evident in the form of vicious attacks on foreign African migrants, conflicts between farmers and herdsmen, and HIV/AIDS-related fatalities. All these factors collectively pose a threat to human security in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Marxism, for instance, human insecurity arises from the threat, danger, and sense of insecurity resulting from the domination and control of a nation's wealth, resources, and power by one social class (the bourgeoisie) at the expense of another (the proletariat) (Mbah 2014). Class struggle and revolutionary forces are inherent in societies with distinct social classes, leading to various conflicts and tensions between opposing groups (Mbah 2014). According to Karl Marx, the relationship between these two classes involves the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, with the state and its structures often supporting this dynamic (Akokpari 2007).

Nigeria and South Africa are states with class societies, and oppressive social and revolution-defining class relations. Oppression or exploitation, as well as revolutions and uprisings, can all lead to insecurity by causing tensions, crises, and conflicts, all of which signal danger and constitute a threat to human security. In both countries, inequitable access to state resources, a lack of basic services, and weak governance continue to inform constant competition, struggle, and confrontation between the ruling and the ruled. For example, in South Africa, the majority of the hostile attitude against foreign African migrants stems from a concern about lack of housing, job possibilities, and poor social service delivery.

The political class's drive to amass fortune for themselves and their associates leaves the masses with little and pessimism. As a result of the rising inequality gap, the wretched low class is enraged by anger and agitation. Anger and hatred built on deprivation could however devolve into violence, if not effectively controlled, and violence is a possible source of human insecurity. The constant desire for independence by the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) in Nigeria, for example, is based on marginalization, weak governance, and the ruling government's refusal

to provide people of Igbo descent an adequate sense of belonging. While the other two regions (North and West) had had presidents before and during Nigeria's democratic era, the East has not had one since Nnamdi Azikiwe of Igbo origin was once the President of Nigeria's first republic. This is interpreted to be a form of marginalization, which the IPOB has used as a rationale for its bid to secede from Nigeria on several occasions. Protests for secession in Nigeria have, indeed, resulted in skirmishes between Nigerian soldiers and IPOB members, which have resulted in a number of deaths and property devastation. This premise is supported by the finding of Mamah *et al.* (2016), in which it was revealed that protests demanding the release of IPOB leaders in Southeast states had turned brutal, with over 40 individuals killed, including a soldier, and over 50 individuals arrested.

The hindrance of agitations and rallies for a separate Biafra nation by the Nigerian government has further compounded the precarious nature of human insecurity in Nigeria. Additionally, Ojibara's (2016) findings showed that the disaffection of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) with the Nigerian state stems from the South-East's inability to produce a President since the Fourth Republic's inception. Structural imbalances within the Nigerian federation and uneven distribution of power among major ethnic and geopolitical groups have also fueled the clamor for secession (Ojo 2009; Achebe 2012; Ojibara 2016).

Similarly, South Africa has a history of class conflict between the ruling white class and the black population during the apartheid era. This led to widespread and well-established human insecurities during this time. Nelson Mandela's rise to prominence through revolutions and rallies against white exploitation and oppression of the black race illustrates the extent of oppression experienced by black South Africans during apartheid (Mamokhosi, Lukong and Mandla 2011).

Claassen (2017) associated xenophobic attacks in South Africa with the accumulated discontent of the governed class (people) towards the government, due to issues like lack of housing, employment opportunities, insecurity, and poor governance. In response to agitations and protests in Nigeria, on the other hand, the government's actions have often been violent and inflammatory, leading to arbitrary arrests, victimization, and imprisonment of agitators in Nigeria, particularly under the current administration. Such actions inevitably compromise human security.

Viewed against the backdrop of Marxism, Nigeria and South Africa are class-based societies, with dynamics between the ruling class (bourgeoisie) and the ruled class being exploitative, oppressive, and repressive. Confrontations and protests from the masses against corruption, unequal access to state resources, poor governance, and abuse of power have resulted in calls for secession, violent militancy, and xenophobia attacks, posing real threats to human security in both countries.

Data Presentation and Empirical Case-Study Analysis

We present in this section a case-study methodological analysis of data and reports elicited from secondary and archival sources. The choice of a case-study-oriented analysis here is to test the propositions earlier advanced in this study as to the validity of both globalism and Marxism within the contexts of the South African xenophobic experience and the Niger Delta's militancy in Nigeria.

Case Study One: Human Insecurity in South Africa

In the heart of Africa, South Africa, a nation often hailed as the economic powerhouse of the continent, has unfortunately witnessed disturbing waves of xenophobic violence. These recurring incidents serve as poignant reminders of underlying issues rooted in human insecurity. Although various forms of insecurity abound in South Africa, ranging from "Grab and Run", to car snatching, and robbery, among others, the focus here is on the recurring xenophobic violence that has assumed a dangerous proportion.

Basically, the surge of foreign nationals entering South Africa has been shaped by economic globalization, positioning the nation as a significant player in the global market. While this integration has spurred economic growth, it has also heightened competition for resources, resulting in economic disparities and job insecurities. Cultural exchanges, facilitated by globalization, have triggered cultural insecurities within specific South African groups, fostering fears of losing their cultural identity and contributing to xenophobic sentiments.

From a globalist standpoint, the interconnectedness of nations and the uneven distribution of resources is emphasized. In the context of South Africa's xenophobic violence, it can be interpreted as a reaction to global economic inequalities, where certain communities perceive foreign nationals as threats to their economic well-being. The relationship between the ruling class (bourgeoisie) and the ruled class is often characterized by exploitation, oppression, and repression (Mamokhosi, Lukong and Mandla 2011).

Globalists further argue that human insecurity is caused by an unsafe or insecure international environment. The opening up of South Africa's economic sector to the rest of the world, along with the advent of democratic rule and globalization, has led to an increasing influx of foreigners seeking various opportunities. This has resulted in xenophobic attacks, which are acts of hatred and intolerance leading to the deaths of foreign Africans in South Africa (Akinrinde, Babalola and Tar 2021). Migration across borders in Sub-Saharan Africa is driven by factors such as war/crisis, poor governance, insurgency, a desire for a better life and education,

and access to opportunities. The collective impact of these factors creates an international environment in the Sub-Saharan region that is largely unsafe and insecure, leading to the influx of Africans into neighboring countries with better prospects, industrialization, economic development, and rule of law. South Africa, as a prominent globalized country in the region, also attracts a significant number of foreign African migrants.

Marxist theory, on the other hand, posits that societal tensions stem from class struggles. In the South African context, xenophobic violence can be seen as an expression of economic frustrations within particular socio-economic classes, viewing foreign nationals as competitors for limited resources. Additionally, Marxist principles highlighting the exploitative nature of capitalism come into play, where the ruling class benefits at the expense of the working class. In the context of xenophobia, foreign nationals may be seen as a source of cheap labour, leading to resentment among local communities. The Marxist concepts of alienation and marginalization are crucial in comprehending the root causes of xenophobia. When certain groups feel excluded economically and socially, xenophobic sentiments can arise as a misguided attempt to regain a sense of control and agency.

Accordingly, Nel (2005) opined that, despite race-based discrimination, South Africa has been blessed with political, economic, and social transformation and change, as well as the adoption of a constitutional framework based on human rights, equality, and social justice. Locals, however, have reacted negatively to the surge of African migrants, fearing that their jobs, homes, and other possibilities will be taken over by foreign Africans. This surge of migrants has been met with xenophobic attitudes and animosity, which has been expressed not just by the general population, but also by government officials (Minnar 2005). The influx of African migrants, which is sometimes driven by an unsafe or dreary global African environment, produces fear, anxiety, and hostility in South Africans, who resort to attacking them over accusations that they are taking over their employment, housing, and other essential utilities. Dancygier (2010) found that such dynamics are linked to anti-immigrant violence in Europe. However, it has been characterised as intergroup (South African citizens and non-citizens) battles over few resources, particularly as economic conditions worsen (Human Sciences Research Council 2008; Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation 2008; Everatt 2010; Steinberg 2008; Misago 2012).

Examining the interplay between globalism and Marxism within the South African Context

- **Economic Exploitation**: The nexus of globalism and Marxism in South Africa's xenophobic violence is evident in the economic exploitation of foreign nationals. Global economic structures contribute to their vulnerability, exacerbating class disparities.

• **Cultural Clash**: The impact of globalization on culture, coupled with Marxist ideas of alienation, can lead to clashes between different cultural groups. Economic insecurities intertwine with perceived threats to cultural identity, amplifying tensions.

• **Role of the State**: Both globalism and Marxism highlight the role of the state in shaping socio-economic structures. In South Africa, a comprehensive analysis must scrutinize how state policies contribute to or alleviate conditions fostering xenophobic violence.

In essence, the influx of foreign nationals into South Africa and the subsequent xenophobic violence are complex phenomena shaped by the intertwined forces of economic globalization and Marxist principles. The economic, cultural, and political dimensions underscore the need for a comprehensive and nuanced understanding to address the multifaceted challenges that contribute to this disconcerting issue.

Case Study Two: Human Insecurity in Nigeria

Nigeria, a nation abundant in resources and cultural diversity, grapples with a persistent challenge to its stability, cum the Niger Delta militancy. A class society, Nigeria is influenced by the dynamics of the ruling class-masses relationship. The ruling class, primarily politicians, is often repressive and domineering, while the masses bear the burden of the ruling class's misrule, misuse of office, and bad governance. The oppressed class would later hold protests or agitations to demand justice, change, and decent government in order to combat injustice. Resistance polities have thus become a haven for those who are dissatisfied with capitalist social relations and the federal government/corporate alliance's hegemonic authority over oil, and who want to stand up to its exploitative agenda (Kimiebi, 2012).

Human security in Nigeria is further complicated by the loss of lives and property during protests. For instance, according to Uchendu (2007), the Nigerian State disrupted the struggle of the late Isaac Adaka Boro (1938-1968) and his fellow revolutionaries. Similarly, Ken Saro Wiwa and his companions were hanged for allegedly posing a threat to the Nigerian authorities in their fight against environmental degradation.

For example, militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta region began with simple agitations and rallies by residents demanding that the government develop their area in terms of infrastructure, excellent education, health, clean water, and the environment, among other things. As a result of the aforementioned, militancy was sparked by the failure of the government, or the ruling class, to offer adequate governance and pay attention to the difficulties afflicting the ruled class in this region. The Niger Delta, rich in oil reserves, has been a focal point for economic globalization. However, the benefits of this resource wealth have not trickled down to the local communities. Global

economic structures, often driven by multinational corporations, contribute to the exploitation of the region's resources, leading to economic disparities and fostering grievances that fuel militancy. Global interconnectedness also plays a role in the environmental impact of oil extraction, affecting local ecosystems and livelihoods. This environmental degradation exacerbates the socio-economic challenges faced by the Niger Delta communities, contributing to a sense of insecurity. The reality is that the Niger Delta's militancy is a result of the region's tremendous oil wealth not leading to regional prosperity (Kimiebi 2011).

Within the context of Marxist philosophy, it is clear that societal tensions often arise from class struggles. In the context of Niger Delta militancy, the control and allocation of resources, particularly oil wealth, become central. The ruling elite, in collaboration with multinational corporations, benefits disproportionately, leading to economic marginalization and fuelling resentment among the working class. Marxism emphasizes the exploitative nature of capitalism. In the Niger Delta, the capitalist structure, driven by profit motives and multinational interests, often results in the exploitation of both natural resources and the local workforce. This exploitation contributes to a sense of injustice that motivates the ongoing militant movements in the Niger Delta area (Kimiebi 2011).

Furthermore, as espoused by Marxism, realities of the Niger Delta unrest further underscore the role of the state as an instrument serving the interests of the ruling class. In the context of Niger Delta militancy, the Nigerian state's relationship with multinational corporations and its handling of resource allocation contributes to the deep-seated socio-economic issues that underpin militancy (Kimiebi 2011).

The Interplay between Globalism and Marxism within the context of Niger Delta militancy

• **Economic Exploitation and the Global Capitalist Landscape**
The synergy of globalism and Marxism within Niger Delta militancy is observable in the economic exploitation unfolding in the region. The mechanisms of global capitalism, steered by multinational corporations, play a significant role in economically marginalizing the local population. This systematic disenfranchisement becomes a breeding ground for grievances that fuel the militant movements.

• **Environmental Degradation and Global Responsibility**
The ramifications of oil extraction in the Niger Delta echo the global accountability of multinational corporations. The intertwined nature of environmental challenges on a global scale underscores that Niger Delta militancy is not merely a local issue but holds implications of global significance. The degradation speaks to a shared responsibility that extends beyond regional borders.

• **State Power and Global Impact**

Both globalism and Marxism cast light on the role of the state in shaping socio-economic structures. In the Niger Delta scenario, the alignment of the Nigerian state with global capitalist interests shapes its response to militancy. This alignment becomes a contributing factor to the persistent systemic issues that sustain and exacerbate the challenges faced by the region.

Conclusion

In examining the issues of xenophobia in South Africa and militancy in Nigeria through the prisms of globalism and Marxism, it becomes evident that these challenges are multifaceted, deeply rooted, and interconnected. South Africa grapples with xenophobia, a manifestation of economic disparities and cultural insecurities heightened by global forces. On the other hand, Nigeria faces the enduring struggle of Niger Delta militancy, a complex interplay of global economic exploitation, environmental degradation, and systemic issues perpetuated by the alignment of the state with global capitalist interests. It is clear from the preceding analysis that both xenophobia and Niger Delta militancy share common threads of global injustice. Economic globalization, driven by multinational interests, has played a pivotal role in exacerbating inequalities, leaving marginalized communities in South Africa and Nigeria grappling with economic disenfranchisement. The interconnectedness of these global forces, be it through economic exploitation or environmental degradation, underscores the universality of certain challenges faced by nations in the pursuit of equitable development.

Beyond theoretical frameworks, it is crucial to humanize these narratives. The victims of xenophobia and militancy are not abstract entities but individuals and communities grappling with profound insecurities. The South Africans experiencing xenophobia and the Nigerians affected by militancy share a common yearning for security, justice, and a dignified life. Addressing these challenges demands comprehensive, context-specific solutions. For South Africa, combating xenophobia necessitates inclusive economic policies, cultural sensitivity programs, and measures to empower local communities. In Nigeria, resolving Niger Delta militancy requires equitable resource distribution, international advocacy for human rights, and policies empowering local populations. it is essential to recognize that realities now demand a collective commitment to dismantling systemic injustices, fostering economic equity, and nurturing a global ethos of interconnectedness. By understanding the human stories behind these challenges and acknowledging the shared responsibility of the global community, stakeholders can strive towards a future characterized by inclusion, justice, and the collective pursuit of a more equitable and secure society in South Africa and Nigeria.

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A Glimpse of Baltic States
over the Russia-Ukraine War

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Abstract

This article examines the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict and its implications for the Baltic states. In the wake of July 11, 2023, the NATO summit was held in Lithuania with the participation of U.S. President Joe Biden. The summit occurred amid tensions between Russia and Ukraine and provided an opportunity for the East European nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to assert their positions on international platforms. Thus, the Baltic states serve as a transformed stage for the strategic alliance among the EU allies and NATO in opposition to Russia. Russia disclosed a list of unfriendly countries and territories, which includes the Baltic states. The war between Russia and Ukraine poses a security threat to the Baltic states, given their close geographical proximity and location as a junction between East and West. However, the Baltic states receive high-level military drills and special training for their nation-level armed forces as NATO member countries. Subsequently, the Russia-Ukraine conflict has multiple implications for the Baltic states. Thus, the paper argues that the Russia-Ukraine military escalation has strong geopolitical, economic, socio-cultural, and security disruptions over the Baltic states.

Keywords:

In the 16th month of the Russia-Ukraine war started in 2022, NATO meets its thirty-one allies in the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, on 11ᵗʰ July 2023. The President of the United States of America, Joe Biden, has arrived to participate in the NATO summit, making it a historic summit of NATO. As a strategic spot between the West and Russia, Baltic states remain vital stakeholders in the Russia-Ukraine war mediation, arbitration, military capacity building, and imposing sanctions. NATO summit has also restated that Russia's military conflict against Ukraine brought the transatlantic bond, unity, cohesion, and solidarity to reinforce international security and peace.

This subsequent era witnessed a series of war disruptions; military aggression began between Russia and Ukraine on 24 February 2022 in Luhansk Oblast and the Kerch Bridge was attacked on 7 July 2023. Kerch Bridge was an important strategic bridge connecting the Russian mainland with the Crimean Peninsula in the Black Sea. Though the claim was that the Ukraine sea drone made this attack, in retaliation, Russia withdrew the UN-brokered deal that allowed Ukraine to export through the Black Sea. The recent incident at the Orthodox Cathedral attack in Odesa on 23 July 2023, was claimed as Russia's assault on the UNESCO-protected historic city center of Ukraine. Ukraine responded the Cathedral strike was a "war Crime." Moscow expressed it had hit all its intended targets in the Odesa strike, claiming the sites were being used to prepare a "terrorist act" against Russia (AFP Agence France Press 2023).

For more than a year, the geopolitical tensions and conflicts in this area have remained intense between Ukraine and Russia. The developments in Russia-Ukraine relations are important political, economic, geopolitical, and security matters for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Thus, the Baltic states' governments are taking Ukraine's side and portraying Russia as an aggressor neighbour in Eastern Europe. Baltic states, as geographical entities, also had the legacy of the erstwhile Soviet Union in 1940; after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1991, they became independent states. Baltic states joined the EU and NATO in 2004. Thus, their geopolitical affinity with Europe and Russia is sensitive, considering security, geopolitics, and foreign policy relations. Baltic states play a significant role in bringing NATO into the neighbourhood of Russia, the most powerful military grouping ever seen in the world. During the Cold War, it had various directives aimed at countering the military alliance of the Soviet Union, known as the Warsaw Pact. Thus, The Baltic states emphasized their diplomatic alliances on the grounds of Eurocentrism and concerns related to apprehensions or anxieties regarding Russia. However, NATO expansion toward Eastern Europe and beyond was perceived as a security threat to Russia.

Baltic states reacted harshly to Russia for their military aggression in the region. The Baltic states have a similar political stand against Russia as they condemn the Russian acts in the region. These states supplied Ukraine with economic and military aid in the war against Russia. Baltic states illustrated the Ukraine war as a 'war against the West' (Bankauskaitė 2022) as it triggered antagonizing West and Russia again in the

international scenario. Similarly, they participated in NATO operations, reinforcing NATO involvement in East European countries. In addition, economic sanctions and various bans were enforced against Russia by the Baltic states in collaboration with the EU. Baltic states advocated an isolation strategy against Russia, where they stood in solidarity with the West.

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 Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, and Ukraine. According to the themes, the documents are used and analyzed. The Baltic states' security perceptions have been elaborated upon, and their reactions are marked in this paper.

Contextualization
After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, a new international order was constituted on the grounds of unipolarity, neoliberalism, and democracy. Thus, the Baltic states and Ukraine stepped into the systemic transition from the planned Soviet economy model to a liberal economy. The Ukraine-Russia war in 2022 turned into a full-fledged war and drove a bipolarity in the region. As a result, the Baltic states' security concerns increased in the context of the Ukraine-Russia war. Baltic states expressed severe anxiety because if they range against Ukraine, they expect they will be the next target of Russia (Bergmane 2020).

The historical trajectories of Ukraine-Russian aversion developed after the EU Eastern Partnership Summit was conducted on 28-29 November 2013 in Vilnius, Lithuania. The Eastern Partnership 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 et al. (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." Consequently, a series of developments occurred in Ukraine in the 2014 Euro-Maidan protests, change in the political regime, Crimea annexation, the Separatist movement in the Donbas region, and finally, the full-fledged war between Russia-Ukraine in 2022.

Estonia's Peril: The Comprehensive Fallouts of Russia-Ukraine Military Escalation

Estonia shares borders with Russia, which is around 180 miles away. During the Second World War, Estonia was part of the Soviet Union, and the disintegration of

the Soviet Union resulted in Estonia's independence in 1991. Estonia recognized Ukraine's independence on 9 December 1991. They formed diplomatic relations on 4 January 1992 onwards. On 1 October 1993, Ukraine formed an Embassy in Estonia. Estonia maintained a cordial relationship with Ukraine thenafter (Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of Estonia 2012).

Historical legacy, geographical location, and linguistic and religious affinity are major discourses in Estonia-Russia relations. The Soviet legacy and Russian cultural influence through the Russification policy and Sovietisation policy, as well as the memory and people-to-people connections, produced complex and confusing present situations among the people in Estonia. The geographical determinants, history, politics, and culture drive the Russia-Ukraine war scenario a serious security challenge for Estonia. The Ukraine-Russia war has generated severe security concerns and distrust in the thirty-two years of Estonia's independence.

 Kaja Kallas assumed Estonia's Prime Minister's office in 2021 after forming a coalition with the Centre-right Party. On 14 July 2022, Kallas dismissed seven ministers from the coalition party over welfare schemes. However, Estonia's economy was severely impacted by inflation. Kallas formed a three-party coalition government composed of Kalla siding Reform Party, Right-wing Isamaa Conservatives, and the Social Democrats. There were assumptions that the Centre Party had ties with the United Russia Party. The political uncertainty, financial troubles, and insecure frontlines were significant after-effects of the Russia-Ukraine war on Estonia. However, Estonia also spends on military support to Ukraine from their per capita income (Sytas 2022).

The Prime Minister of Estonia, Kaja Kallas has stated about the Ukraine-Russian war:
> "We first of all, exactly 18 years ago today, we joined NATO, which makes a huge difference. No NATO country has ever been attacked. We don't see any military threat, and we feel secure. At the same time, we also discuss in NATO to boost our defense because if we have such an aggressive neighbor and are clearly invading neighbor countries, then our deterrence should be boosted as well because in order to have peace, you have to prepare for war." Moreover, Kaja Kallas added that "Vladimir Putin has to be isolated politically on all the levels, because what we see in Ukraine, why there are more civilian casualties than there are military casualties, is because they are targeting the civilians and this is a war crime." (Kallas 2022)

Estonia's political setup stands with Ukraine and points to Russia as an aggressive neighbour. The President Alar Karis tweeted that:
> "Dear Zelensky, Ukrainian friends, Happy Independence Day. Estonia will stand with you until the war ends, we'll help to build a peaceful, democratic, and successful Ukraine. This morning we raised Ukraine flags and sang the Ukraine national anthem with the Khreshchatyk Choir from Kyiv. (Karis 2022)

TABLE 1: List of Sanctions by Estonia

Sanctions by the Republic of Estonia	Adopted Date	Description
Imposition of sanctions of the Government of the Republic in connection with the aggression of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus in Ukraine	Adopted on 8.04.2022	Restriction over Russian and Belarusian entry into Estonia
Imposition of a sanction of the Government of the Republic in connection with the situation in Belarus	Adopted on 28.08.2020	Ban on persons listed in the Foreign Ministry of Estonia
Sanction of the Government of the Republic in connection with the attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine	Adopted on 4.3.2022	Ban on joint military forces and armed units of Russia and Belarus-valid for two years from its entry into force
Imposition of a sanction of the Government of the Republic to limit the provision of services in connection with the war in Ukraine	Adopted on 01.04.2022	Restriction on service applies to the economic entity Yandex NV
Imposition of a sanction of the Government of the Republic in connection with terrorist acts by Hezbollah	Adopted on 28.10.2020	The entry ban on Hezbollah members in Estonia is valid for five years.

(Source: Republic of Estonia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
https://www.vm.ee/en/sanctions-arms-and-export-control/international-sanctions)

On 18 October 2022, Estonian lawmakers announced Russia as a "terrorist regime" over Russia's engagements in Ukraine for the illegal annexation and anxiety over the nuclear weapons role in the near future in the region. Members of the *Riigikogu* (unicameral Parliament) have declared that "the country will never recognize the violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine through aggression and sham referendums". (Riigikogu 2022)

As a neighbouring country to Russia, Estonia is directly affected by the conflict. The military escalation between Russia and Ukraine can have negative economic consequences for Estonia. Eesti Pank (2022) stated that "Russia's invasion of Ukraine will affect the Estonian economy through supply difficulties and higher inflation"(Eesti Pank 2022). It may disrupt trade routes, affect energy supplies, and create regional instability. Estonia's economy heavily relies on international trade, including its ports and transportation infrastructure. Any disruptions or trade restrictions can impact its export-import activities and overall economic growth. Estonian economy and monetary policy 2022/1 (23), viewed, "The sanctions on Russia will have some impact on Estonia's foreign trade both directly and indirectly through the exchange of goods with Estonian trading partners (ERR News 2022)".

The conflict can also have socio-cultural implications for Estonia. There is a significant Russian-speaking minority in Estonia, and tensions between Russia and Ukraine may have repercussions within this community. It can lead to increased divisions and polarization, affecting the country's social cohesion and interethnic relations.

As a NATO member, Estonia has security concerns regarding the escalation of war between Ukraine and Russia. It raises the possibility of a spillover effect, where the conflict expands beyond the borders of Russia and Ukraine. Estonia is particularly wary of potential Russian aggression and will enhance its defense capabilities and readiness. It could also result in an increased military presence of NATO forces in Estonia as a show of solidarity and deterrence.

The Russia-Ukraine armed aggression escalation has significant geopolitical, military, and security implications for Estonia. Russia appears to rely on a geopolitical reading of its identity in terms of a traditional land power, which necessitates maintaining physical control and a sphere of influence over its border regions to guarantee safety and security (Karaganov and Suslov 2018). The ongoing conflict in Ukraine represents a matter of pure geopolitics. This involves securing strategic control over valuable resources and seeking to reestablish connections based on shared culture and language that existing national boundaries have distorted. The Russian diaspora has been employed as a strategic instrument in Russia's efforts to pursue cultural diplomacy in alignment with its broader strategic goals. This tends to be worrisome for Estonia (Terry 2023). Most Estonian military and political elite consider only the United States of America capable of deterring or properly responding to Russia. Nevertheless, based on the Ukrainian experience, collective effort from other NATO member states might have a sufficient effect.

Estonia has stood out as one of the most significant contributors of military and other forms of assistance to Ukraine. By May 2022, Estonia had emerged as a leading global provider, donating substantial military aid totaling €230 million. This aid package included approximately 3,000 EUR pallets and 20 pieces of machinery. Among the items sent were Javelin anti-tank missiles, 122mm Howitzers, minesweepers, anti-tank grenade launchers, guided anti-tank systems, and various other military and supportive equipment. Estonia had also furnished Ukraine with 4x4 armored vehicles. This support highlighted Estonia's strong commitment to assisting Ukraine in the war with Russia (Hankewitz 2022). Like other Baltic countries, Estonia closely monitors the situation and takes measures to safeguard its interests and sovereignty.

Unravelling Dynamics: Russia-Ukraine Conflict's Manifold Impact on Latvia

As a post-soviet country, Latvia is closely associated with Russia in terms of geopolitical, economic, and socio-cultural arenas. The Soviet authorities suppressed Latvian political institutions and implemented the collectivization of agriculture, nationalization of industries, and centralization of Latvia. The Soviet government also implemented policies aimed at Russification, promoting the Russian language and culture while side-lining Latvian cultural expressions. The history of Soviet occupation and the subsequent independence movement have shaped Latvia's

perception of Russia. There are still tensions and sensitivities related to historical events, particularly regarding issues such as the Soviet occupation and the status of ethnic minorities. Latvia has a large Russian ethnic population, pertaining to close relations with Russia. Moreover, Russia and Latvia have exchanged tremendous trade engagements. Although the independent Estonia demonstrates Russia as a jeopardizing element in Latvia-EU relations, rather Latvia seems to ignore the fact of the selective history of its origin for the EU integration process.

Latvia supports Ukraine, even in the United Nations meeting in Geneva on 3 March 2022, where the Latvia Ambassador condemned Russia's military aggression on Ukraine. Ambassador Bahtijors Hasans has made Latvia's official statement that "Russia's use of force in Ukraine gravely violated international law and agreements in the field of disarmament" (Ministry of Foregin Affairs Republic of Latvia 2022). The Prime Minister of Latvia reacted to the Russia-Ukraine War in that:

> "The security of all Europe which is at stake. I think that we have seen that Putin's Russia over the past three weeks has completely evaporated. Suppose the next step we need is the fear of Putin, and Putin's Russia also has to evaporate if we look at the Ukrainian people. We can see an incredibly strong determination not to be subjugated, not to allow this imperialistic dictator to destroy their independence, destroy their way of life. So we must always continue to support Ukraine, which we are doing through military, humanitarian with medicines, fuel, and food with everything. But at the same time, it's very important that in Europe and NATO especially, we shore up our own defenses and shore up the entire eastern flank from the Baltic down to the Black Sea; this is actually already happening." (Karinš 2022)

Latvia's approach to the Ukraine crisis has balanced two opposing aspects. Latvia feels at risk from Russian aggression and has increased defense measures. At the same time, Latvia has close cultural and economic ties to Russia. Latvia's deep ties to Russia suggest that the country may be more open to engaging Russia to promote de-escalation in Ukraine, rather than isolating it (Vilson 2015).

On 11 August 2022, the Latvian Parliament mentioned Russian military aggression in Ukraine as an act of a "state sponsor of terrorism" (Permanent Mission of the Republic of Latvia to the United Nations 2023). Ukraine pressurized the Western partners to impose more sanctions on Russia to conclude the war. Latvia also acknowledges in the Baltic Assembly that the action of Russia in Ukraine was a targeted genocide against the Ukraine people. Latvia ceased its frontier for Russian citizens with Schengen visas. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova condemned the vote as "primal xenophobia," adding it is necessary to call the ideologues delivered by Latvia nothing but neo-Nazi. Latvia even banned nine television channels owned by the Russians (The Hindu 2022).

Latvia supports Ukraine in the military field with EUR 200 000 000 worth of military equipment, weapons, and personal equipment, dry food rations, ammunition,

anti-tank weapons, anti-aircraft missiles 'Stinger', fuel, etc. The government of Latvia has spent EUR 900 000 in response to requests for assistance by the Government of Ukraine. The Ministry of Justice supports places of detention in Ukraine (Public broadcasting of Latvia 2023a). Grant project competition for development cooperation organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports development cooperation in recipient countries selected by Latvia for 2022. The Government of Latvia has allocated up to EUR 116,000,000 for the Refugees Support Plan, prioritizing aid for refugees from Ukraine, which contains delivering up to 120 days of free accommodation and catering to support them during their displacement (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Latvia 2023).

Latvia admitted 32,000 Ukrainian refugees from Ukraine. Residence documents with the right to work have been issued to 25,882 Ukrainian refugees. Refugees from Ukraine numbered 11,792, and they were accommodated in the houses provided by Latvian municipalities. The Latvian government has instituted a start-up employment allowance of EUR 500 per person, providing essential support packages for food and materials. Emergency guardians were appointed for 600 children in Latvia for the Ukraine refugees. Free regional public transport and free Latvian language courses were arranged in Latvia for the refugees (Public broadcasting of Latvia 2023b). President Egils Levits (2022) said,

> "We Stand With Ukraine in this fight. Latvia provides all the support we can. But we all still need to do more. Military, financial, and humanitarian support is essential. but we also need to increase international pressure on Russia.#CrimeaPlatform".

On 31 March, the Latvian Parliament declared and voted against banning the public display of the letter "Z" because they believed it was used to glorify the Russian invasion of Ukraine (The Telegraph 2022). The Latvian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal tweeted, "Banning Russia from #Swift must be included in the package of wide sanctions against the aggressor. We are looking forward to the robust response of our partner (Shmyhal 2022)".

The Russia-Ukraine military escalation has profound and far-reaching implications for Latvia across multiple fronts, including geopolitics, economics, socio-culture, and

TABLE 2: List of Sanctions by Latvia

Sanctions by the Republic of Latvia	Actions
Russian Airlines	Banned in Latvia
Russian gas import to Latvia	Banned from 1st January 2023
Visa entry to Russia in Latvia	Suspended
Reissuance of permits of Russians and Belarussians in Latvia	Suspended till 30th June 2023
Rebroadcast list of 20 Russian TV channels in Latvia	Excluded
Russian Consulates	Closed

Source: The Financial Intelligence Unit of Latvia, https://sankcijas.fid.gov.lv/en

security. Latvia is a member of NATO, and the conflict prompts a re-evaluation of security alliances and defense strategies. It may lead to an increased NATO presence and military activities in the Baltic region to deter any potential Russian aggression. The military escalation highlights the importance of border security for Latvia. There may be a need for enhanced border surveillance and cooperation with neighbouring countries to prevent any destabilizing activities. The conflict can disrupt trade routes, affecting Latvia's export-import activities. As an open economy heavily reliant on international trade, any disruptions or trade restrictions can adversely affect Latvia's economic growth and stability. Latvia, like other Baltic states, is dependent on energy imports. The conflict can impact energy supplies, especially if they pass through or are sourced from the affected regions. This dependency increases the vulnerability of Latvia's energy sector to potential disruptions (Brzezinski 2023).

Latvia has a significant Russian-speaking minority, and tensions between Russia and Ukraine can have socio-cultural implications within this community. It may lead to increased divisions, polarization, and potential influence on internal dynamics, affecting social cohesion within the country. The conflict can strain ethnic relations between Latvians and Russian-speaking communities. It may exacerbate existing tensions and create challenges for maintaining harmonious relationships, social integration, and cultural diversity (Masters 2023). To ensure its security, Latvia may increase its defense capabilities, readiness, and cooperation with NATO allies. This can include strengthening military forces, improving intelligence sharing, and participating in joint military exercises. It increases regional tensions, affects trade and energy supplies, strains ethnic relations, and necessitates a focus on national security and defense readiness. Latvia closely monitors the situation, engages in regional cooperation, and works with international partners to safeguard its interests and sovereignty (NATO 2023).

Comprehensive Impact: The Russia-Ukraine Conflict's Ramifications for Lithuania

Lithuania's geopolitical, economic, and security connections with Russia have been complex and influenced by historical, political, and regional factors. While Lithuania and Russia share a border and have historical ties, their relationship has been strained in recent years due to various factors. The relationship between the Soviet Union and Lithuania during the Soviet era was complex and often contentious. During the early years of Soviet rule, Lithuania experienced contrived collectivization of agriculture, nationalization of industries, and suppression of political opposition (Kundu 2007). The Soviet regime implemented policies aimed at Russification, which included promoting the Russian language and culture at the expense of Lithuanian identity. Lithuania's desire for independence grew in the 1980s, fueled by the broader democratic and national awakening movements across the Soviet Union. In 1990, Lithuania declared independence, which was met with resistance from the

Soviet government. The Soviet era continues to influence Lithuania's geopolitical and historical perspective. The experience of Soviet rule has shaped Lithuania's commitment to independence and democracy and its desire to align with Western institutions like the EU and NATO (Tulun 2013).

Russia-Ukraine military aggression had serious implications for Lithuania. In this scenario of Russia-Ukraine armed aggression, Lithuania has cut the oil and gas imports from Russia. Lithuanian's Energy Minister Dainius Kreivys said:

> "Today Lithuania imports no oil, no gas, and no electricity from Russia. Lithuania does not pay a single penny to Russia for energy resources. For this, today we are completely independent of Russia's energy resources. But it took us time and huge effort to find ourselves in the position we are now (Seimas 2022)."

Gitanas Nausedas, the President of Lithuania, also tweeted the same and mobilised the rest of Europe to boycott Moscow's oil and gas. Thus, Lithuania has had multiple reactions and actions against Russia at the policy level.

The Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8) Foreign Ministers meeting was held in Kaunas on 6 September 2022; the Foreign Minister of Lithuania, Gabrielius Landsbergis, emphasized that,

> "In the context of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, we must continue to keep the unity of NB8, the whole of Europe, and the democratic world, provide political, economic, humanitarian, and military support for Ukraine, maintain pressure on Russia in an effort to end its military aggression against this country, and defend democratic principles within international forums (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania 2022a)."

Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte states that "if Russia invades Ukraine, the European Union should act quickly and decisively against Moscow and warn against thinking the Kremlin is bluffing over Ukraine" (RadioFree Europe Radio Liberty 2022a). Gitanas Nauseda tweeted that they "talked, as close friends and allies with Secretary Blinken, about the appalling war against Ukraine and security threats in Europe. Stressed the urgent need to move from deterrence to real defense. Reinforced NATO and the US military presence in the Baltic region is crucial (Nauseda 2022)". Karolis Vysniauskas (2022) wrote, "If Putin succeeds in Ukraine, will the Baltic states be his next target? (Open democracy 2022)".

On 24 February 2022, President Gitanas Nauseda declared a state emergency in the wake of Russia-Ukraine military aggression. Lithuania was under serious security anxiety over Russia-Ukraine military aggression (Reuters 2022).

There are apprehensions that hybrid attacks, potentially involving Russian and Belarusian engagements, could be strategically aimed at Lithuania's borders. President Gitanas Nauseda said, "We are witnessing Russia's criminal actions against Ukraine. We cannot remain indifferent to this unprovoked military aggression, which threatens millions of innocent lives and undermines the foundations of international order" (Mitra 2022).

Moreover, Lithuania's *Seimas* (Parliament) passed new legislation with 71 votes out of 117 casts and banned public events supporting "Russia or Belarus actions which led to this state emergency (Reuters 2022)." They have identified that Belarus has supported the Russian action, which Moscow terms "a special operation". Lithuania has banned TV and radio stations formed or maintained by Russian or Belarus subjects other than state or European Union broadcasting was allowed. Moreover, Lithuania stopped issuing visas to Russians and Belarussians.

Adam O'Neal (2022) remarked that Lithuania is shaken but not surprised by Russia's aggression in Ukraine. This apprehension likely derived from concerns about Russia's involvement and volitions in Ukraine, stimulating a prudent approach or vigilance toward Russia's activities in the region. Viktor Denisenko expressed, 'The Kremlin has been trying to influence our information space for a long time (Abend 2022).' The Foreign Ministers of Lithuania and Ukraine met on the 20th day of the Russia-Ukraine war in Lviv, where they declared a Joint statement on 15 March 2022;

> "Lithuania and Ukraine demanded Russia to immediately stop its unprovoked and unjustified aggression and to unconditionally withdraw all its occupational military forces from the entire territory of sovereign Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.[…] The ministers paid tribute to the bravery of the people of Ukraine and its military in defending their Homeland from the invaders, as well as for defending our shared European values, freedom, and democracy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania 2022b)."

They called upon the international community to provide Ukraine with comprehensive military, humanitarian, financial, and political assistance. Furthermore, they endorsed the rise of pressure on the Russian and Belarusian regimes, emphasizing the need for stringent measures to be implemented to sort out the Russian-Ukraine conflict. However, Lithuania advocated isolating Russia and its economy to undermine the Kremlin's capacity to attack its neighbours.

Further, the Joint Declaration has mentioned the membership of Ukraine in the EU, as the President of Ukraine submitted a membership form on 28 February 2022. Even the representatives of members of the EU and a group of ministers met in Brussels on 22 March 2022. They discussed Ukraine's membership in the EU, as many have encouraged EU membership in Ukraine (European Commission 2022). Many believe that Ukraine is fighting for its own security and that of Europe, and we must not forget this when assessing Ukraine's prospects for EU membership. The extraordinary situation requires extraordinary measures and solutions. For many, Ukraine belongs to the European Union family. The ministers reconfirmed the strong commitments of Ukraine and the Republic of Lithuania to the provision of the joint Declaration on the Development of Strategic Partnership between both countries for 2020-2022, signed by the President of Ukraine to the Republic of Lithuania on 27 November 2019 (Masters 2023).

On 29 March 2022, Lithuania's Ambassador Eitvydas Bajarunas to Russia was officially informed by Russia of the expulsion of employees from the Lithuanian Embassy. Lithuania's government has passed a resolution to the withdrawal of the Lithuanian Ambassador from Russia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania summoned the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Lithuania Alexey Isakov, to whom the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Mantas Adomenas expressed his strong protest over Russia's illegal full-scale military invasion of Ukraine (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania 2022c).

TABLE 3: List of Lithuanian Sanctions against Russia

Sanctions by the Republic of Lithuania	Actions
Lithuanian airspace for all Russian aircraft	Closed
Import of Russian gas	Suspended
Issuance of visas permits to enter the country by exception or for medical rehabilitation services to Russian citizens	Suspended
Russian and Belarusian service and product certificates	Suspended
Trade in Russian and Belarusian publications	Suspended
Rebroadcast 6 TV programs in Russian	Suspended
Certificates of construction products manufacturers in Russia and Belarus	Suspended
The level of diplomatic representation with Russia-the Russian Ambassador is expelled from the country, and the consulate in Klaipeda is closed	Downgraded
Sanctions adopted by the EU apply in Lithuania	Implemented

Source: Government of Lithuania, Sanctions against Russia and Belarus, https://lrv.lt/lt/informacija-apie-situacija-ukrainoje/aktuali-informacija-1/sankcijos-rusijai-ir-baltarusijai

Lithuania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has extended restrictive measures imposed by the European Union in February 2022 in response to Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. The sanctions included freezing the assets of Vladimir Putin and Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. An entry ban and freezing assets measures have been imposed on Russian State Duma members and specific Russian decision-makers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania 2022d). Financial sanctions have been implemented, including measures restricting Russian access to crucial capital markets and prohibiting European banks from accepting deposits surpassing specified values from Russian nationals or residents. Further, there are bans on exporting certain goods and technologies related to oil refining to Russia. An export ban covering goods and technology in the aviation and space industry restricts exports of dual-use goods and technology. Russian diplomats and other officials will no longer be able to benefit from visa facilitation provisions, which allow privileged access to the EU. Dalia Grybauskaite (Former President of Lithuania) says, "Sanctions will not stop Russia's aggression in Ukraine. Only a war can stop the war that has already begun" (Delfi 2022).

The Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis stated that

> "We in Lithuania know it very well that Ukraine is fighting not just for Ukraine but for us in the region, Europe, and everyone in the democratic world. It is our obligation not just to punish Russia for its actions but to help Ukraine with all and every means available" (Landsbergis 2022).

Lithuania's Foreign Minister calls on the EU Ambassadors to improve support for Ukraine. He further describes, "The EU could not give in to fatigue when supporting Ukraine's fight for European values. Military and economic support is particularly important at the moment, as well as a clear prospect of Ukraine's membership of the EU and future pressure on the aggressor –Russia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania 2022e)."

The military escalation underscores the importance of border security for Lithuania. Strengthening border surveillance and cooperation with neighbouring countries is crucial so as to prevent any destabilizing activities. The conflict can disrupt trade routes, impacting Lithuania's export-import activities. As an open economy reliant on international trade, any disruptions or trade restrictions can have adverse effects on Lithuania's economic growth and stability (Bilali, Odhiambo and Kisito 2023). Lithuania shares a border with Russia known as the Suwałki Corridor, which denotes a crucial 60 to 100-kilometer expanse of territory linking the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad Oblast with Belarus. Thus, it raises concerns about potential security threats. The military escalation raises the risk of regional instability and the possibility of spillover effects, including hybrid warfare tactics or cyber threats. The Russia-Ukraine military escalation has significant geopolitical, economic, socio-cultural, and security implications for Lithuania. It heightens tensions in the region, affects trade and energy supplies, strains ethnic relations, and necessitates a focus on national security and defense readiness. Lithuania closely monitors the situation, engages in regional cooperation, and works with international partners to safeguard its interests and sovereignty (Abend 2022).

Conclusion

The military aggression between Russia and Ukraine led to severe geopolitical, economic, socio-cultural, and security implications for the Baltic states at the national and international levels. Baltic states strongly condemn Russia for the military aggression in Ukraine. With the support of the EU, Baltic states attempt to contain Russia within their borders with the presence of NATO. Baltic states believe that Russia has never attacked NATO members. However, the Baltic states' security dilemma on Russia's engagement in the region is critical because Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have played a significant role in bringing NATO to Russia's borders. The Baltic states are apprehensive about Russia's engagements in the region because of their historical legacy, cultural affinity, geographical proximity, and energy

dependency. Furthermore, the Baltic states' security approach requires a reassessment regarding Russia's role in the region. Ignoring Russia's sphere of influence in the area poses significant challenges to the security of Baltic states, much like the situation in Ukraine. Although the concerns regarding Russia's intentions differ between the Baltic states and Ukraine, the seamless potential annexation by Russia remains a primary concern. This underscores the need for the Baltic states to reconsider their multilateral and bilateral relations with Russia. It is crucial to transform this powerful neighbor into a friend rather than an adversary in the state of affairs.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict acts as a multi-faceted catalyst, exerting significant implications across various realms within the Baltic region. The dynamic geopolitical landscape surrounding the Baltic states has been notably shaped by their perception of Russia as an aggressive neighbor with expansionist aspirations, leading to official condemnations against aggression and unequivocal support for Ukraine. Should Ukraine become a member of the EU and NATO, it would inevitably redefine the geopolitical scenario for the Baltic states, potentially altering regional power dynamics where Russia could change the geopolitical equilibrium in the regional system. The Baltic states strongly rely on NATO as a cornerstone of their national security instead of prioritizing the development of their robust national strategies and military capabilities. However, in the public domain, Baltic states assert that Russia has not directly attacked any NATO member state. Such statements can be seen as problematic and provocative and complicate diplomatic relations between Russia and the Baltic states, exacerbating existing tensions.

The Baltic states have deep historical ties to Russia, and this historical connection resonates in their socio-cultural fabric. In contemporary times, the status and living conditions of ethnic Russians within the Baltic states represent a significant aspect of their domestic challenges. Moreover, socio-cultural ramifications stemming from the conflict could lead to heightened societal tensions and ideological divisions within the Baltic states. These divisions might strain social cohesion and pose challenges in addressing the needs and perspectives of diverse ethnic groups. Economically, these nations are grappling with severe economic crises. However, through the support of the European Union and financial assistance from international organizations, governance in the Baltic states remains sustainable. These external aids and partnerships have been pivotal in stabilizing their economic situations and ensuring their continued functioning amidst challenging financial circumstances.

The paper contends that the Russia-Ukraine military escalation engenders robust and far-reaching impacts across the Baltic states, encompassing geopolitical realignments, economic uncertainties, socio-cultural tensions, and security vulnerabilities. The interplay of these multifaceted disruptions underscores the intricate and interconnected nature of the Baltic states' position within the ongoing conflict's broader context. As such, navigating these complexities demands a comprehensive and nuanced approach by Baltic states, Russia, and Ukraine to mitigate potential risks and cultivate stability amidst turbulent times.

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BULLETIN

Essential approaches to the use of combat drones. Specific elements of the armed conflict in Ukraine

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Abstract

Although used many years ago, by multinational allied forces acting in coalition in Iraq and Afghanistan, combat drones known as "unmanned aircraft systems" (UAS), "unmanned aerial vehicles" (UAV)", "unmanned combat aerial vehicles" (UCAV) or "remotely piloted vehicles" (RPV) represent a formidable weapon both for NATO states and for the forces fighting in Ukraine. Considering their essential characteristics, dimensions, load capacity, speed, range, flexibility, ease of operation and low costs, these means of combat come with huge advantages in achieving the operational objectives of combatant structures - regardless of the category they belong to. Thus, the present study includes a theoretical approach that can actually be implemented in the military operational realm, because it includes details and essential references to combat drones designed, produced and used by belligerent and non-belligerent states in connection with the armed conflict taking place on Ukrainian territory. Starting from the objective of the study, a series of important directions resulted for strengthening the actual potential of the joint and tactical forces to be used in national and multinational context within the North Atlantic Alliance, against the aggressive force of an adversary state.

Keywords:

The armed conflict in Ukraine highlights the profound technological impact on the effectiveness of tactics and equipment compared to several decades ago. According to the American publication *Wall Street Journal*, the nature of the war has changed profoundly, especially because thousands of drones belonging to the opposing Ukrainian and Russian forces are presently hovering along the front line. The major change involves the use of drones (UASs, UAVs, UCAVs, or RPVs), their role and importance in striking troops, equipment, military and civil infrastructures, etc., as well as in reconnaissance missions and battlefield monitoring. This means that from platoon to division level, operational leaders (commanders) have permanent, real time information and data regarding the situation in the field (Dumitrache 2023).

According to the definition given by Encyclopedia Britannica, "An unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV; UAS; UCAV; RPV) is an autonomously guided military aircraft, by remote control or both, carrying sensors, target designators, offensive munitions or electronic transmitters designed to interfere with and/or destroy enemy targets. Unencumbered by crew weight, life support systems, the design and safety requirements of manned aircraft, UAVs can be remarkably efficient, offering substantially greater range and endurance than equivalent manned systems" (Guimartin 2023).

Unmanned aerial vehicles, known as drones, are stand-alone systems that include the equipment necessary for their operation and control, each consisting of three essential elements: the vehicle (aircraft) operating without a pilot; the ground control/monitoring system of the UAS (UAV; UCAV; RPV) by the operator; the two-way connection between each UAS and the ground system, for control, status monitoring and obtaining all relevant information. Depending on their capacity, weight and the actions in which they are used, there are models of drones: fixed-wing; rotary-wing; hybrid (rotary and fixed-wing). In accordance with the requirements of manufacturing standards, the energy needed to activate the drones is provided by electric and conventional sources - suitable for aviation (e.g., jet engines). In the European Union, through "Drone Strategy 2.0", methods and commercial operations for the engagement of UAS have been established, taking into account the management of risks involved. The "Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – Putting European Transport on Track for the Future", elaborated and published in 2020, reveals the need for innovation and use of commercial drones (commercial UASs), for transport of goods within multimodal logistics, both inside and outside European urban areas (European Parliament 2023).

Developing methods for drone intersystem integration at joint and tactical levels, in the case of each opposing army, has facilitated rapid success in conducting several counteroffensive operations in the armed conflict in Ukraine. So, according to different posts on web pages or to recent interviews, the increased lethal effect of drone use in joint and tactical operations is considerable. For instance, the journalist Julian Roepcke from the German daily "BILD", a well-known observer and analyst

of the Russian-Ukrainian war, revealed (by posting on his Twitter page) that the significant number of drones at the disposal of Russian forces is slowing down Ukraine's counteroffensive. This claim was reinforced by two Ukrainian military officials. The first, major general Vadim Sibitski, deputy head of Military Intelligence Service, highlighted the fact that due to the significant number of drones used on the battlefield and due to real-time video surveillance, identified tactical combat forces - supported by tanks in the open field – can only operate for a few minutes before they are targeted (interview given to "The Wall Street Journal") (Figure 1). The second, Deputy of General Kirilo Budanov, considering the role of combat drones, stated that, "currently, an advancing tank or troop column can be detected within 3 to 5 minutes and hit in another 3 minutes...The survival rate of forces in motion is no more than 10 minutes" (Jucan 2023).

Figure 1 Image of hitting a column of enemy tanks in motion (Vornik 2023)

Drones play a particularly important role in successful planning and conduct of multinational joint and tactical operations and their integrated logistics. The effects of drone use in military actions, as well as other threats, have led the governments and military bodies of NATO member states (and not only) to provide for the equipping of combatant structures with such low-cost means of indisputable effectiveness and efficiency. Let us remember that the use of drones was decisive for the success of Azerbaijan in the armed conflict with Armenia, between October 27 and November 10, 2020, when in just 43 days, it regained its territory from the separatist Nagorno-Karabakh region. At that time, the Azerbaijani combat forces used Turkish and Israeli unmanned aerial systems to neutralize armored and artillery units (Vornik 2023).

In the near future, the operational structures of Romanian armed forces will be equipped with the "pocket drone" (small size, for research, observation, reconnaissance missions), and furthermore they will probably receive combat drones for all categories of forces, to be used in multinational tactical and joint operations within and/or outside national territory. Currently, there are ongoing contracts with:

"Elbit Systems Ltd" for 7 systems of the "UAS Watchkeeper X" model (21 drones) - 6 systems for Air Force and 1 system for the Navy (particularly, for carrying out reconnaissance and intelligence gathering missions). Another contract was signed with "Bayraktar" company for 3 systems of the "UAS Bayraktar" model (18 drones), for land force surveillance missions, directing artillery fire or the execution of ground bombardments against enemy combatant structures. Additionally, Romanian operational forces need suitable systems for jamming enemy drones. In this regard, we already have a Romanian system that will be developed by "Blue Space Technology" company (Minculete 2023, 156-165).

As the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict consumes important resources on a daily basis, Ukrainian military experts highlight the need to replace technologically superior combat systems with much cheaper ones, that are more flexible, maneuverable and can be provided in much larger quantities as compared to the first category. For instance, the F-35 multirole aircraft is technologically more advanced and efficient than any type of drone, but in financial terms, one such aircraft costs as much as around 55,000 DJI Mavic 3 drones (made in China, which can be purchased for 2000 dollars each). This fleet would have immense action power, even if some of the drones were not to reach their targets (Ionescu 2023).

In order to obtain, analyze, evaluate and interpret the information and data needed for our novel study, we used the necessary scientific research methods and tools, such as observation, comparative analysis, evaluation, interpretation, induction and deduction. Therefore, we have carried out a study based on the latest data available, which allows those interested to understand the role and importance of combat drones and even generate ideas for further scientific research.

Highlights of US military experience in using combat drones

The US armed forces have extensive experience in using combat drones in theaters of operations such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Following the lessons learned in these theaters of operations, military drones have been refined over the years. For aerial intelligence gathering, surveillance and reconnaissance, there are several types of drones (UAVs) operated by the US Air Force, which are particularly useful. Among these UCAVs (unmanned combat aerial vehicles) the following models are the most important: MQ-9 Reaper, RQ-4 Global Hawk and XQ-58A Valkyrie (experimental) (Borcean 2019).

One highly important drone ("a modular reconnaissance and attack UAV"), considered to be the most efficient in the world, used by the American combat forces in various operational situations is the "MQ-9 Reaper" model, a "remotely piloted vehicle/RPV by the USAF" (Svitlyk 2023). This unmanned aerial system, produced by "General Atomics" (a military contractor), is remotely operated by specific crew of two, *i.e.* the pilot and another member who has the mission to monitor the sensors

and guide the weapons (Euronews 2023a) (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Images of the US MQ-9 Reaper drone (Ziua News 2023)

The MQ-9 Reaper drone has the following technical characteristics: "a turboprop engine (Honeywell TPE331-10GD); horsepower, 900; maximum speed, 445 km/h (240 KTAS); length, 11 meters; height, 3.6 meters; wingspan, 20 meters; maximum flight altitude, 15,240 m (50,000 ft.); duration of a target surveillance mission, maximum 24 hours; maximum take-off weight, 4,763 kg.; freight capacity, 1361 kg-external load; transport capabilities, maximum 4 air-to-ground missiles or maximum 8 in the MQ-9a version or 4 Hellfire missiles and two Mark 82 laser-guided bombs" or "16 Hellfire missiles, equivalent to the payload capacity of an Apache helicopter"; range, 1,850 km (1,150 miles); cost, 32 million dollars each (Svitlyk 2023; Bâtcă 2019). With this particularly modern UAV, the following objectives can be achieved in the area/theatre of multinational joint operations: reconnaissance in enemy territory (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance - ISR); close air support; launching missile strikes on enemy positions; destruction of tanks, armored vehicles, shelters, fuel depots; causing significant damage to enemy warships; combat search and rescue (CSAR), such as for pilots from downed aircraft; monitoring convoys and offensive operations; release of routes; target identification; control of high precision weapon systems " (Pricop 2023).

MQ-9 Reaper drones can be equipped with: "AGM-114 Hellfire air-to-ground guided missiles designed to precisely hit armored, lightly armored or other targets; GBU-12 Paveway II systems - high-precision aerial bombs based on the classic Mk 82, weighing 227 kg., equipped with laser guidance system; GBU-9 attack munitions, *i.e.* JDAM bombs guided to the target by GPS and an inertial system; GBU-49 Enhanced Paveway II, with laser control and GPS/INS; GBU-54 – laser munitions systems that combine JDAM precision with laser pointers" (Svitlyk 2023).

In order to carry out daily missions in Afghanistan, the new MQ-9 Reaper drone model was used by US combat forces from the end of September 2008 until their withdrawal from this country-completed on August 31, 2021 (RFI Romania 2022). Thus, the "658th Aeronautical Systems Squadron, from the 303rd Aeronautical Systems Wing, included the program managers, logisticians and their subordinate staff (to carry out the appropriate support maintenance, resupply and transport services), as part of the team effort required to ensure the functioning of armed

and airborne MQ-9 drones (Global Security.org 2023), successfully integrated into multinational joint missions conducted in Afghanistan.

Over time, drones have been used outside armed conflict zones, too. For example, "During Barack Obama's terms, there were a total of 563 strikes, mostly with MQ-9 Reaper drones, in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen. By comparison, there were only 57 strikes under president George W. Bush." In 2019, MQ-9 Reaper drones, together with the related personnel and equipment, were relocated from the Polish Miroslawiec Air Base to Câmpia Turzii - where they are to be found even today (Euronews 2023a).

Due to their role in force multiplication, combat drones can now also (escort) fighter jets, such as the F-35A Raptor, F-22, Ra-B-21. In this situation, drones are highly important for: spotting and exposing the configuration of the enemy air defense network; jamming enemy radars and communication systems; search and detection of enemy warplanes; serving as decoys in aerial ambushes (thus being exposed to destruction); attacking enemy troops with rockets and/or other types of munitions; identifying and destroying enemy radars and surface-to-air missile installations, thus facilitating the protection of the escorted bomber plane (Borcean 2019) etc.

The complexity, precision and operational facilities of future wars are continuously dependent on technological developments, the endowment with modern equipment and the skills of personnel in tactical and/or joint operational structures. In this sense, the United States of America (which have been investing in similar autonomous systems for several years) will develop, through the Department of Defense (DoD), a modern fleet of high-performance drones - based on artificial intelligence - called "Replicator". This programme was inspired by the use of (low-cost) drones and smart weaponry by Ukrainian operational defence structures against superior Russian military forces, which enabled them to do so: interception necessary for proper neutralization of missiles launched by the enemy to hit cities, combat devices, military and territorial logistical infrastructure; disruption of supply-distribution chains of enemy forces in extended areas of operations; obtaining in real time the necessary information about the enemy and anticipation of his intentions; protection of operational structures, their movement, their transport columns, etc. a. Thus, "DoD aims to deploy thousands of autonomous systems in various domains over the next 18-24 months" (Stoica 2023).

Peculiarities of combat drone use in the Ukrainian theater of operations

The continuous scientific and technological development has led to the appropriate modernization of drones used in Ukraine, generating mutual attacks of the two opposing states, deep in their territories. The focus of both states on extensive

destruction of the enemy's equipment, combat positions, military depots, critical and territorial infrastructure, etc. resulted in drones of various types becoming increasingly sophisticated, flexible, maneuverable and low-cost systems (surveillance, reconnaissance and attack) operating at hundreds and thousands of kilometers to aim precise objectives.

One of the low-cost drones that is particularly maneuverable is the FPV model, which becomes active through the "first-person view" function. This allows real-time video images to be provided via the (profile) camera integrated into the front of the drone. During operation, the FPV drone (a quadricopter that can quickly reach high speeds, even over 100 km/h) is operated and controlled by the operator (who has the necessary skills) using non-military equipment (used in the socio-economic sphere for making videos or photo shoots), i.e. remote control, VR goggles and a special helmet.) Thus, the operator has the possibility to maneuver the device flexibly, to change its direction immediately and to see in real time all the camera shots, like the pilot of an airplane (creating the feeling that the operator is inside the drone) (Defense Romania 2023c).

If Ukrainian specialists are researching the effects of incorporating artificial intelligence as quickly as possible into the operation of combat drones (Free Europe 2023), the Russians at the Centre for Integrated Unmanned Solutions (CCBR) have gone so far as to create invisible drones, the Joker FPV (First Person View) model; based on a variant used in sport), resistant to electronic warfare (EW) jamming during "hibernation" ("wake mode"), which occurs some time after launch, and can then be operated quickly according to the missions to be carried out. In good time beforehand, the devices "will be placed on imposing heights and on the roofs of buildings or other tall structures as prepositions for attacks. In this way, only a few seconds pass between drone reactivation and attack, leaving the adversary no chance to launch anti-drone systems" (Figure 3). With its multi-functional platform, suitable for attaching payloads, the versatile Joker FPV drone is capable of: carrying out reconnaissance missions; hitting opposing battle positions with munitions of various types; action suitable for a kamikaze. The technical characteristics of the aircraft are not published (Răducanu 2023).

The two belligerent states, Russia and Ukraine have each established their own drone factories, they are conducting research and they are continuously training operators. Desiring to achieve success in the counter-offensive launched a few months ago, for liberating national territory from Russian occupation, Ukraine has already trained 10,000 (drone) operators in the special program "Army of Drones" and another 10,000 are currently being trained. On the other hand, Russia has implemented a strategy of training operators in high schools (Tudor 2023).

According to published government information, there are more than eighty companies operating in Ukraine producing increasingly sophisticated and long-

Figure 3 **Image of Joker FPV drone** (Răducanu 2023)

range combat drones with the potential to strike targets deep inside Russian territory or in Russian-controlled territory in Ukraine. The opposing state, Russia, which at the start of the war had limited resources (the somewhat more advanced Orion model, used for surveillance and reconnaissance missions), has developed new drone systems, such as the St Petersburg-made Orlan-10 (Brodsky 2023), not limited to the use of the Iranian Shahed 131 (characteristics: length, 2.2 m; wingspan, 2.5 m; weight, 135 kg; effective operational range, 900 kg. ; explosive payload, 15 kg; cost, around $20,000 per unit) and Shahed 136 (characteristics: length, 2.5 m; weight, 200 kg; effective operational range, 2000 km; wingspan, 3.5m; explosive payload, 30-50 kg; cost, around $20,000 per unit) (Cârlugea 2023; Ilicea 2023).

The war in Ukraine applies the concept in a certain way, but in the future AI will be able to carry out swarm drone attacks, which means that a lot of UAVs will be able to coordinate and cooperate in the air, to achieve the synergistic objectives of attacking one or more targets. The term "swarm drones" appeared in the year 2021, when the Israeli army struck the Hamas group with a large group of functional and coordinated UAVs with integrated artificial intelligence (Goncharenko 2023) (Figure 4).

Considering the vital importance of UAVs in the war, Ukraine is currently developing the "*Army of Drones*" project in order to quickly supply them to tactical operational structures engaged in the counteroffensive against invading Russian forces. In this respect, the

Figure 4 **Image of a swarm drone attack** (MCDC 2022)

government of Romania's neighbor removed customs barriers, so that the timely import of spare parts and the manufacture of the ammunition necessary for combat drones would be carried out. At the same time, on July 21, 2023, approval was given to produce more than forty models of drones to be used in operations (after testing and obtaining the appropriate licenses), compared to only seven for which contracts were signed a year before. In this regard, it is worth noting the interest of the Ukrainian state to develop a fleet of maritime drones by hiring the state company "SpetsTechnoExport", which succeeded in developing the maritime drone „Măgura V5" (Costea 2023), with the following essential technical characteristics: length, 5500 m; width, 1500 mm; height, 500 mm above the waterline; cruising speed, 22 knots; blast speed, 42 knots; range, 450 nautical miles (Navy Recognition 2023) (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Image of Ukrainian maritime drones (Costea 2023)

During the course of hostilities, several types of drones have been observed to be used by Russian combat structures. In order to facilitate operations to liberate the occupied territory, Ukrainian task forces received more than 600 cardboard drones as a donation from Australia. The prototype of this drone represents an innovation challenge from Australian Army specialists to build, in 2018 through SYPAQ, a low-observable cardboard aircraft operated by the low-cost Corvo Precision Payload Delivery System for remote resupply of cargo. In preparation for missions to retake the ground from invading Russian forces, the cardboard drone allows for the following key features: capture of essential surveillance video via GoPro cameras installed in perforated holes in the cardboard material; a range of over 100 km; a payload carrying capacity of three kilograms; landing capability with an error of approx. 2 m. from the intended landing site; wing span of two metres with minimal avionics; an engine module and payload compartment with a lid that opens by lifting); safe flight even in environments less conducive to other types (with light rain, high sea humidity, etc.) (Eckstein 2023).

Some time ago, the manufacturing company (based in Melbourne) released an improved version with an increased wingspan and a carrying capacity of six kilograms. With these drones, the Ukrainian special forces (and not only) have successfully attacked, for deterrence, several critical infrastructures, both in operation areas and in Russian territory (airports; ammunition or fuel depots; bridges and viaducts; Sevastopol Harbour, etc.) (Adevărul Newspaper 2023).

During the deployment and evolution of the counter-offensive of the Ukrainian liberation fighting forces, due to the effectiveness and efficiency of combat drones,

a real drone war was and is taking place operated by both forces in conflict. Thus, in the period from 25 September to 2 October 2023, the operational structures of the invaded Ukrainian state destroyed 220 units (pcs.) of equipment of the Russian combat and support units with the help of drones at their disposal, compared to the quantities of 87 units and 189 units destroyed previously in the weeks from 24 to 31 July and 28 August to 4 September (the same year). According to the assessment made by Ukrainian military specialists, the effects of the use of attack drones can be seen in the percentage of destruction caused by them in the total of 220 units of equipment (by type) as follows: 66% of all tanks; 50.7% of armoured infantry fighting vehicles; 36.2% of artillery barrel systems; 30% of MLRS (reactive projectile launchers – RPA); 25.1% of troop transport trucks; 50% of radio-technical means (radars, radio stations, electronic warfare systems, etc.); and 50% of the equipment of the Russian military.)" (Orjanu 2023).

Based on funds raised through the "Come Back Alive" Foundation in the framework of the joint project with UNITED24 and Monobank, the first batch of 5,000 kamikaze drones - PFV model (drone cost $52,000/unit) was purchased and delivered to the Ukrainian fighting forces (Defense Romania Team, 11 October 2023). Moreover, in the immediate future, Ukrainian volunteer specialists will develop and manufacture approx. 100 "Morok" kamikaze drones (long-range and with a warhead weight of up to 30 kg), with the aim of striking targets located up to 800 km away, including on the territory of the invading state. But, for implementation funds are needed, which will be provided through the foundation of Serhi Pritula – TV presenter in the Ukrainian state (Defense Romania 2023b).

Protection against attack drones

Regarding the development of protection systems against swarm drones, the USA did the following: in 2020, they launched "Project Convergence" in coordination with NATO multinational partners (which allows the creation of a prototype suitable for producing swarm drones); they established the Joint Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems Office (or JCO) to conduct experiments with the UAS system interceptor, operable in combination with the ground system that generates intense microwave flows, to neutralize swarm drones that attack equipment, combat positions and shelters, warehouses, moving columns, etc. with rockets, bombs, grenades (Montalti 2023, 1-5) (Figure 6).

An essential means of defending the Ukrainian state against Russian invasion forces is the use of *soft-kill* capability to disable enemy-launched drones. The mechanism of this smart jamming system is focused on radio frequency, allowing operators to actively monitor drones and neutralize them using appropriate handheld devices. The same system - *soft-kill* - can operate with limited performance using 25-35 mm caliber ammunition, taking into account the problems related to resupply (Montalti 2023, 1-5).
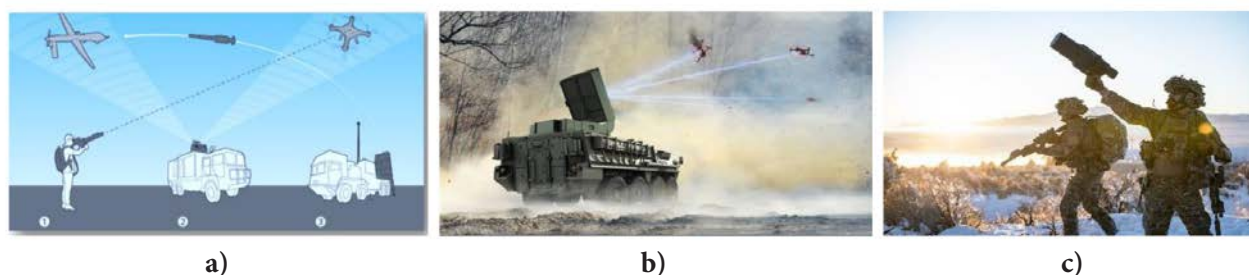
Figure 6 **Images with mobile attack drone neutralization systems (surveillance, reconnaissance) by: a) laser; radio frequency; jamming (Dima 2023); b) microwave (Montalti 2023, 1); c) radio frequency (with portable soft-kil system (Eckstein 2023)**

The drone jamming effect is achieved by sending intense signals (similar to "loud noise") in the direction of hostile drones. These will disrupt enemy drones, causing operators to lose control over them and try their best to recover the drones. Moreover, there are cyber tactics suitable for taking control of small enemy drones for one's own military purpose. However, in the case of larger drones, "kinetic" interception is effective; with Iranian-made "Shahed" drones and other models, large-scale jamming was required since they were frequently and intensively used for bombing critical and territorial infrastructures, various real estate in Ukrainian villages and towns. As a result of these attacks, many NATO members donated drone jamming systems to Ukrainian combat forces (Borcea 2023). Furthermore, Israel approved export licenses for two companies, Elbit and Rafael, in order to sell drone neutralizing systems, needed by the Ukrainian armed forces (The Times of Israel 2023).

To counter the use of enemy drones for destructive purposes in Ukraine and to reduce this threat to NATO, in September 2023, over a hundred specialists from member and partner countries of the Alliance had a meeting in Netherlands. They addressed the medium and long-term objectives of NATO members regarding the integration of techniques (equipment) to neutralize drones and other weapons at tactical and joint levels. In this sense, quite shortly (until winter begins), the first "interoperability standard for anti-drone tactics" will be created, a project in which the NATO Communications and Information Organization (or NCIA) (NATO 2022), as well as the companies accredited in the Alliance's defense field, will be involved. The set standard will be particularly important, giving the guidelines to be followed in manufacturing the mentioned equipment, which should have the necessary characteristics to connect with those of the military in crisis and/or armed conflict situations (in the operational environment) (Borcea 2023).

Drone operator training

Thousands of combat UAV operators are currently being trained by co-opting private drone schools and non-governmental organizations in states around Ukraine. According to the instructors from Kruk and Dronarium drone schools in Kiev, in the process of training, within five days, operators are trained towards the

following objectives: avoiding enemy detection while operating drones; effective use of camouflage tarps to conceal the positions from which drones are operated; the course of action in situations when the Russian electronic warfare structures take control of drones (the operator will be able to fly the drone further, if they control its movements, even if they no longer have access to other functions); mastering tactics of movement, camouflage, and use of maps (Free Europe 2022) etc.

When operating drones on reconnaissance missions, teams trained for this purpose will work in pairs of two, like snipers. While one soldier will coordinate the drone using a keyboard, the other will monitor its movement on an electronic map, based on the video stream transmitted by the drone, then they will determine the coordinates and transfer the images from the battlefield to the servers and headquarters of the respective combatant unit, immediately destroying the target with fire (Figure 7). Based on the training done, Ukrainian forces will act to keep drones in the air by: adjusting software; diversifying supply chains; using commercial drones on the battlefield, much easier to procure, etc. By September 2023, some 4,500 pilots have graduated from the Dronarium drone school, and most of them are now integrated into Ukraine's operational forces (Ilicea 2023).

Figure 7 Sequential images from operating a combat drone (Ilicea 2023)

If at first, the Bayraktar military drone model was successfully used by Ukrainian defense forces, since then, along with the Turkish drone, UAV operators have also used the following models: Shark; RQ-35 Heidrun; Flirt Cetus, etc. Although (as mentioned above) important manufacturing capacities have been developed, for the time being, only 10% of the war needs are met (approx. 300 drones/day). In this situation, some drone operators use cheap models (2500 euros/item) with small dimensions, manufactured in China by the DJI company, such as *Mavics* and *Matrices* (Ilicea 2023). These drone models were purchased with funds from donations of NGOs, in accordance with the "Army of Drones" initiative launched by the Ukrainian Ministry of Digital Transformation at the beginning of July 2022

(Andrei 2022), thus purchasing 1400 civil (commercial) drones, in three months. Meanwhile, from the beginning of the Russian invasion until October 2023, more than 4100 UAVs produced by DJI (mostly "Mavic" model) were purchased, through the Ukrainian charity foundation "Serhiy Prytula" (Ilicea 2023). All these acquisitions facilitate and enable the continuous training of volunteer drone operators.

Conclusion

Through the intensive drone use in the battles between the Ukrainian liberation forces and the Russian invaders, the action of the combatant forces was reconfigured in conjunction with the new destructive risks, especially regarding the integrated operational logistics. An example of the effective Ukrainian planning and action is the counteroffensive launched, on June 4, 2023, against the Russian occupation army; using cheap drones in these operations, the Ukrainian combat structures destroyed Russian equipment of tens and hundreds of millions of dollars. Therefore, the focus of action, with all means at its disposal and especially with drones and drone swarms, on the destruction of important combat equipment (tanks, complex artillery and missile ground and anti-aircraft systems, combat aircraft and ships, drones, etc.), ammunition and fuel depots of the enemy highlights the success achieved and the prospect of its development, for the complete liberation of the territory of the Ukrainian state from Russian occupation.

The lessons learned from the armed conflict in Ukraine show that drones can play a huge role in preparing and conducting combat actions, because they facilitate: the observation of invading forces in motion, thus reducing the number of military reconnaissance personnel needed to slip behind enemy lines for intelligence gathering; the launch of more accurate strikes by artillery units based on the coordinates provided; avoiding causing civilian casualties as much as possible, etc.

The effectiveness and efficiency of drone use in Iraq, Afghanistan and Ukraine reveal their increasing role of these devices in future wars, becoming an actual priority for NATO member states and for the Alliance, in general. Although there are resources and production capabilities in the field, it is necessary to develop and implement allied interoperable standards and capabilities appropriate for the production, training and use of advanced combat drones, as well as means of countering the enemy in high intensity joint and multinational tactical operations against (an) opponent(s) with equal potential.

Additionally, certain changes and doctrine adaptations are needed, to facilitate the integration of combat drones in the methods, techniques and procedures of planning, preparing and conducting offensive and/or defensive allied operations. Consequently, operational force leaders at joint and tactical levels will have to act proactively, anticipatively and collaboratively in planning and operational action,

by taking into account the situations and conditions resulting from analysis and evaluation: *situations and possibilities for effective and efficient use of combat drones in offensive and defensive operations; searching and determining the enemy's attack potential with such means (including swarm drones) on combatant forces (national and/or allied) and logistical structures within the force; counteraction and protection of own forces against all combat drones and/or enemy swarm drones by ensuring the availability and immediate use of specific jamming and neutralization equipment.* These considerations are also corroborated with the provisions of law no. 283 of December 6, 2021 (amending and supplementing Law no. 122/2011), regarding the situations and conditions of military intervention by Romanian armed forces, to neutralize drones, as well as remote control radioelectronic equipment.

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Warning signs of advanced Islamic radicalization

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Abstract

The article analyzes the primary cognitive and behavioral indicators observable following the manifestation of the Islamic radicalization process, specifically the advanced stage of radicalization. The research scope is also related to identifying signals of Islamic radicalization by utilizing a methodology based on the analysis of cases of radicalization among Romanian citizens.

As the research aims to analyze the main signals indicating the advanced stage of individual radicalization, these indicators are valuable for early warning, both from the perspective of practitioners and competent authorities in preventing and combating radicalization. They are also beneficial for civil society to increase awareness regarding the identification of radical discourse encountered in the online environment.

Keywords:

Since the expansion of the manifestation of the jihadist phenomenon in Europe, starting with the terrorist attacks of 2004–2005, the concept of radicalization has begun to receive increased attention in the field of academic research. However, the current state of knowledge remains incomplete: the definitions that theorize the phenomenon of radicalization may vary, and the causes and factors that predispose at an individual level to the triggering of the radicalization process are variable.

Thus, unanimously, researchers, specialists, and practitioners in the field of preventing radicalization have highlighted the need to identify the early signs of radicalization by the authorities with the aim of thwarting attempts to engage radicalized people in terrorist actions. In this sense, this article proposes the analysis of the applicability of the indicators of the advancement of the Islamic radicalization process by using a research methodology that is based on the analysis of cases of radicalized Romanian citizens. The hypothesis the article starts from is the idea that, although the causes that trigger the process of radicalization may vary from individual to individual, nevertheless, the signals that indicate the advanced state of radicalization follow a repetitive pattern in most cases of Islamic radicalization.

The reason why this article presents the radicalization process exemplified through the prism of the typology of Islamic radicalization lies in the fact that, following the applied methodology, it emerged that the incidence of jihadist religious radicalization cases is predominant in Romania compared to other types of radicalization, respectively political, ethnic, or ecological. The research questions to be answered in this article are: What are the cognitive indicators identified in the narrative of radicalized people? What are the main behavioral changes that can be assimilated as behavioral indicators that reflect the advanced stage of radicalization?

In this sense, the main objective of the article is to highlight a set of qualitative indicators, presented from a double perspective (cognitive and behavioral), that can constitute early warning signals regarding the advanced stage of radicalization, starting with their applicability in cases of radicalized Romanian citizens. The novel element that this article aims to contribute to the enrichment of research in the field of preventing radicalization lies in shifting attention from the analysis of the causes and factors that lead to radicalization—a fact often addressed in specialized literature—and focusing the analysis on the primary warning tools. These tools can be utilized by both civil society and authorities to identify the advanced stage of radicalization.

However, the dilemma in a question remains one intensely debated by psychological theories: how does the changing sense of identity operate in the case of young Europeans, shaped by an environment with democratic, liberal values and freedom of expression, to resonate with the brutal practices promoted as legitimate by terrorist organizations? (Campelo et al. 2018). In this context, it is necessary to mention the fact that, in regional environments dominated by authoritarian regimes, the

restrictive application of a rigid religion and the use of force to impose mandatory compliance with Sharia Law make the idea of using extreme violence to implement religious objectives an aspect rooted in the collective psyche as legitimate, a tradition of the place against which citizens have acquired emotional resilience over time (Hirsi Ali 2015). Instead, in the present article, the analyzed cases refer to Romanian citizens, shaped by the democratic values of the European environment, a fact for which analyzing the process of changing previous mentalities and beliefs by adopting radical approaches is useful for understanding the manifestation of the phenomenon at the macro-level, at the European and national level.

Theoretical concepts related to radicalization

The concept of radicalization is explained by a variety of definitions in the specialized literature (Kundnani 2012), essentially explaining the phasing of an individual or collective process characterized by the adoption of a violent ideology and an extremist belief system. Moreover, the process of radicalization can have as its finality a double perspective: obtaining changes in society in accordance with the promoted ideology or obtaining some objectives determined by non-state actors.

Thus, the concept does not benefit from a unanimously accepted definition (Veldhuis and Staun 2009, 4); radicalization can be defined as a staged process that uses socialization as a catalyst for mobilization for violent purposes and the promotion of an extremist ideology, even if it does not lead to materialization of violent actions (Hafez and Mullins 2015) or perhaps it can be explained in a complex way, as an individual or collective (group) process characterized by the promotion of an extremist ideology, which involves a dichotomous vision of the world and the delegitimization of state authority and it presents elements such as the use of pressure and coercion, various forms of political violence or acts of violent extremism in the form of terrorism and war crimes (McCauley and Moskalenko 2011). Although the definitions may vary in relation to the explanation of the phenomenon, nevertheless, the common elements that characterize the radicalization process can be found, such as the gradualness of the process, the legitimization and justification of violence to achieve certain objectives, the promotion and appropriation of an extremist ideology, and radical approaches.

Closely related to the notion of phasing the radicalization process, there are different framings of the concept of radicalization, starting with the difference between radicalization as a cognitive process, of joining and incorporating at a psychological level a set of extremist, radical beliefs (Hardy 2018, 79), and radicalization as a behavioral process, which involves extremist attitudes and behaviors, which can lead to acts of violence (Neumann 2013). In this sense, two psychological schools of thought offer the conceptual framework for understanding the complexity of the stages of the radicalization process, in the sense previously explained, respectively:

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the cognitive level of incorporating violent ideology and the behavioral level, in the sense of the materialization of changes in attitude or habits in accordance with the transposition of ideological elements (Wolfowicz et al. 2020).

The cognitive school of thought investigates the mechanisms of human thought and the ways of achieving changes in a person's perception, mentality, and values, starting from the idea that behind every change there is a mechanism of rationalization. The applicability of this school of thought in relation to radicalization leads to the assumption that the process of radicalization takes place as a way of incorporating and building radical ideas. On the other hand, behaviorist theory explains the behavior of the individual as a dynamic process of learning, assimilation, and experimentation with attitudes, actions, and habits. The applicability of behaviorist theory to radicalization is observed in most de-radicalization programs, in which individuals go through a new process of learning moderate behaviors and patterns to be substituted for radical ones (Benevento 2020).

The relevance of these theories lies in the differentiation between cognitive radicalization and behavioral radicalization in relation to the predisposition to respond and register violent reactions in an action plan and to commit terrorist acts, which is essential in the research field of combating radicalization and terrorism. Thus, starting from the attitude-intention-behavior typology, the classic pyramidal model differentiates between radical attitudes that can be evaluated by examining support, justification, or acceptance for radical behaviors and radical behaviors that are also delimited according to the type of ideological motivation: non-violent (activism) and violent (radicalism) (McCauley and Moskalenko 2017).

Radical behaviors motivated by violent ideology represent the manifestation of the radicalization process, essentially representing a sub-type of terrorism as the lethal manifestation of ideologically motivated violence, in the sense that there are more radicalized people than people who commit terrorist actions, but most terrorists are implicitly also radicalized persons (Wolfowicz et al. 2020). Also, an important clarification regarding the specificity of the radicalization process is that, in essence, it is a gradual process whereby a person adopts belief systems that justify the use of violence to bring about social change, identifying two different dimensions of manifestation: supporting beliefs and acting in accordance with them, or adopting radical beliefs without going into action (Maskaliunaite 2015).

Opinions according to which radicalization is a gradual process that involves a phasing of the phases of radicalization, which does not always materialize in committing acts of violence (Bjørgo and Horgan 2009), are frequently found in the specialized literature, highlighting the distinction between accepting radical ideologies and active involvement in committing acts of violence consistent with shared extremist ideological elements (Wilner and Dubouloz 2010). Precisely in relation to this opinion shared in the specialized literature, the distinction is

important to operate in order to highlight the delimitation of specific stages of the radicalization process, containing specific indicators that allow the authorities to thwart acts of violence, until reaching the transition to the planned action by the radicalized person (Silke 2011).

In support of this vision, it can be emphasized that the phasing of the radicalization process has been characterized in the specialized literature in the form of several theories (Hofmann 2012). One of the first models of the gradualness of the process was highlighted through the prism of the four stages of radicalization, consisting of the period of pre-radicalization of the individual by perceiving a social category or a triggering event as wrong, followed by framing them as unjust and revolting, followed by the third stage—the attribution of responsibility—and finally ending with the demonization of the social or governmental category (Borum 2003). Another theory identifies six phases of the radicalization process, explained through the prism of the psychological complexity of the radicalization process, in the sense in which the feeling of injustice triggers the justification for the use of violence, followed by the culpability of the targeted social categories and their dehumanization using a specific ideological language and symbolically, as well as placing responsibility in order to fulfill the divine mission and minimize the effects of terrorist actions (Dalgaard-Nielsen 2010).

On the other hand, the radicalization process is explained as being staged in three phases, starting with radicalization, mobilization, and engaging in terrorist actions (Sinai 2012). Mobilization is determined by catalysts in the form of triggers, such as contacts with a terrorist organization, the ability to train, and the willingness to act for terrorist purposes; these triggers determine the last phase of the process. However, in contrast to the theory of the three stages that highlights the gradualness of the radicalization process, the theory of the six stages, as well as the theory of radicalization in four stages, predominantly reflects cognitive elements that could be characterized as conceptual manifestations in the phase of appropriation and sedimentation of violent ideology, intensified by the factor of socialization or the existence of contacts.

Thus, from the perspective of explaining the psychological mechanisms, these last two theories reflect the stage of internalization, assimilation, and identification of the individual, but they do not highlight the transition of the individual that could signal the transition to the action plan. Another essential aspect, which often contributes to the failure of early identification of radicalization signals, is the incubation period (United States Bipartisan Policy Center 2011), understood as the internalization of radical beliefs for a certain period, followed by a turning point from which they can develop two scenarios: advancement of the radicalization process and behavioral manifestation, or abandoning radical beliefs and stopping the radicalization process. Also, the development of the process can be characterized by an alert rhythm of several months, or it can vary up to several years (United States Bipartisan Policy Center 2011).

As previously highlighted by the exposition of the theories regarding the stages of the radicalization process, it is important to clarify the fact that the changes in behavior as a manifestation of the reaction to the incorporation of ideological elements represent a stage prior to the advanced stage of radicalization but offer visible, early indicators regarding the existing risks. Another important aspect to mention is the fact that, regardless of whether it is the causes that predispose a person to radicalization or the pre-existing vulnerability factors (Bongar 2007), these aspects must be analyzed in a particular way, equally with the individualization of the signals that reflect the stages of a person's radicalization process (Schmid 2013). In this sense, in order to understand the conceptual nuances, it is imperative to analyze the cases of radicalization and the particular elements that indicate the gradualization of the radicalization process in order to determine a pattern of common features, a fact that is useful for an increased degree of awareness regarding resilience to the content and the extremist narrative (Stephens and Sieckelinck 2020).

Cognitive indicators of radicalization

Cognitive indicators can be identified in relation to an individual's beliefs, which can highlight a person's radical mindset and ideas and the presence of violent ideological elements. Thus, starting from the variety of definitions that explain radicalization, it can be observed that, predominantly, the phenomenon is explained as a change in the individual's perception and beliefs, orienting towards violence and extremist approaches (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008). Related to the defining elements of the concept, in order to investigate the incidence of cognitive radicalization, in the first instance, it is necessary to investigate the presence, first of all, of changes in the individual's perception and beliefs at a turning point in the individual's life.

Thus, the early warning model developed by the Center for the Study of Democracy proposes three indicators that suggest radicalization at a cognitive level (Khader et al. 2019), such as: openly expressing dissatisfaction with the state or authorities (with the specification that in states that experiencing economic or other difficulties is a normal indicator, which does not reflect indications of radicalization); the existence of a dichotomous vision regarding a certain subject, i.e., black-and-white thinking of the "us versus them" type; and the rejection of the legitimacy of the state authority. Also, another proposed indicator consists of the person suddenly changing from showing little or even no interest in religion to vehement and absolutist views in relation to religious interpretations (Webb 2017). Also, particularly important aspects to consider are the ways of expressing radical beliefs, namely the online environment, a fact highlighted by the numerous cases of radicalization and self-radicalization through virtual means (online social media platforms, video games) used as a tool, mainly with the acceleration of the impact of technologies on society (Akram and Nasar 2023). Thus, the most common signals that indicate radicalization in the online environment as the materialization and expression of radical beliefs

have been identified as the dissemination of violent materials with hateful content and radical speech, as well as photos and videos of extreme violence that promote extermination of social, religious, or national categories, and, on the other hand, the use of extremist language containing expressions from pro-ISIS or anti-European, anti-Semitic, or anti-American rhetoric (Rowe and Saif 2016).

In order to highlight the research starting point in this article, the methodology that it was based on comprised the qualitative analysis of cases of Islamic radicalization of Romanian citizens. Following the analysis of cases of Islamic radicalization, the first aspect observed was the applicability of the theory of online radicalization through virtual platforms and the modality of self-radicalization in all the cases studied. A second aspect observed was the applicability of the theory of the gradualness of the radicalization process, but also the presence of an incubation period, at a cognitive level, prior to the development of radical behaviors. The analyzed cases highlighted that the radicalization processes happened in a relatively short period of time, between one and two years. It should be noted that prior to the initiation of the process, subjects who are not part of a regional framework that predisposes them to the collective acceptance of customs and Sharia law (Ayaan 2015) usually go through an identity crisis, understood as a factor of vulnerability to radicalization.

In the analyzed cases, the identity crisis of the analyzed persons—understood as the loss of purpose and meaning in life, vision, or belonging to known national or social values—was added prior to radicalization to the interaction with elements of Islamic culture at the individual level, or as a result, interaction with Muslim people. However, the aspect that must be clearly differentiated in the present cases is the fact that the interaction with elements of Islamic culture or people with the Islamic faith took place in relation to radical and not moderate approaches to religion. In this sense, this fact should draw attention to misinterpretations according to which interaction with elements of Islamic culture or people automatically leads to the risk of radicalization.

The main differentiation criterion consists of moderate approaches versus radical approaches built on a cognitive level in relation to the Islamic religion. The gradualness of the radicalization process, observed in all existing cases, finds its applicability in the existence of four stages. In the first stage, we note the contact and germination of radical, extremist mentalities and their acceptance as normal due to vulnerabilities related to age, personality, psycho-emotional, or social context, which accelerates the incorporation of elements of radical ideology. In the second stage, their affiliation and validation follow, as well as repetitive, systematic incorporation actions, simultaneously with the isolation of the subject.

The third stage represents the action stage, in which the subjects want to share and disseminate the materials and narratives related to the extremist ideology, as well as to attract new followers, taking on the active role of the promoter of the continuation

of the radical texts. In the last stage, it should be noted that the intense feelings of hatred and enmity, fecundated and accelerated over time by the repeated calls to violent actions of jihadist texts and materials, follow a climax in an advanced stage of radicalization, in which the subject passes from the plane psychologically and verbally in the action plan, when performing acts of extreme violence following the model of those visualized in jihadist materials and carried out by jihadist models or members of terrorist organizations (collective beheadings, mass executions, torture).

Extreme violence produces an even deeper psychological impact than usual due to three indicators: the systematic and repetitive actions of visualizing and indoctrinating the subjects, which determines their resistance to counter-arguments; the mystification and symbolism that accompany the violence carried out by terrorist groups; as well as the attachment of a personal but also a group mission typical of jihadist narratives (Chifu, Popescu and Nedea 2012). In all cases of radicalized Romanian citizens, common elements of the violent Islamic ideology are present in the narrative used in the interaction with the surrounding people, as well as the one spread online on social media platforms and video games, in order to change the set of online user perceptions. Also, in addition to the ideological elements present in the propaganda narrative, aspects that highlight the wrong interpretations of the Islamic religion, religious values, and goals, respectively, are common elements of a radical interpretation of the texts from the Koran and the Islamic Hadiths (Abu Melhim et al. 2023).

As a result of the methodology used, the following indicators of radicalization were identified, which the people in the analyzed cases presented at a cognitive level:

- **The glorification of hatred and violence against "infidels"**, which goes beyond simple intolerance towards Christians, Jews, or moderate Muslims.
- **The glorification of jihadist leaders and the praise of jihad** are observed from two perspectives: both through virtual platforms (video games with jihadist heroes) or social networks through which the violent actions of jihadist leaders are exposed as an example for the promotion of jihadist goals, and in real-time by eulogizing them in front of social circles of contact or in front of family and relatives.
- **The assimilation of suicide as a covenant and proof of faith and fulfillment of Allah's will** comes from a distorted interpretation of the quotes from the Qur'an, which speak about jihad, especially by detaching the sounds related to jihad from the previous context and from the distinction between the spiritual and the military domain. The militarization of jihad was brought into the collective mind as the original interpretation of the Qur'an following Islamic schools of thought that assimilated wartime jihad against non-Muslims who attack Muslims as applicable in peacetime against any non-Muslim who does not accept Islamism. Thus, the idea of spiritual jihad expanded to that of jihad understood in the military sense (Amin 2014). Also, the concept of human sacrifice, or martyrdom, started with the fact that, in the Qur'an, it is specified

that martyrs are forgiven of all their sins and rise to the highest of the seven levels of paradise, not even having to perform funeral prayers on their bodies, assuming that all sins were forgiven and they immediately ascended to heaven (Hirsi Ali 2015).

• **The adoption of Islamic jihadist acronyms**: it is observed as a pattern in most cases of radicalization, as a materialization of the copy-cat effect. In the cases from Romania, two subjects adopted ISIS jihadist acronyms. Another characteristic aspect is the adoption of language specific to the narratives of jihadist discourse and specific terms from Islam to name religious notions related to faith, obligations, and customs (takia, sunnah, shahrib, fatwa, etc.), also taking over some slogans and expressions used by DAESH members, accompanied by religious justifications found in the texts of the Qur'an.

• **The lack of respect for the authorities and the inability to honestly understand the consequences of the actions** taken in relation to the degree of social danger. In all cases, no subject proved a degree of awareness or assumption regarding the seriousness of the actions committed. In this sense, the incidence of the indicators presented theoretically and at a practical level can be observed, such as the dichotomous thinking "us versus them" regarding jihadist objectives, the delegitimization of national and European authorities, as well as the use of extremist language in online materials and extreme violence, accompanied by radical discourse, inciting violence.

Behavioral indicators of radicalization

In the literature in the field, a series of indicators have been highlighted that suggest the advanced phase of Islamic radicalization, understood in the sense of the phase preceding the transition to the action plan, which can be framed as changes in behavior, prior to engaging in jihadist terrorist actions such as: visible changes in style of dress and behavior, alienation from family and old friends and the creation of another circle of friends who share radical ideas, religion becomes an explanation for everything and is constantly referred to; the oppression of moderate Muslims as infidels (Schmid 2013), participation in training, fighting or interest in weaponry, explosive substances, attending religious seminars of radical preachers, visiting jihadist websites and watching jihadist videos; giving language lessons, followed by trips abroad; efforts to evade detection (passport loss, etc.), sudden change of clothing to Western clothes prior to the terrorist attack (Bötticher and Mareš 2012).

Another set of behavioral indicators proposed in the literature consists of the identification of changes in behavior related to: the interruption of the activities of listening to music, television, and cinema; the dramatic change in eating habits; stopping all sports activities; changes in clothing; changing the circle of friends; and breaking relationships with family (Schmid 2016). In order to evaluate the incidence of these indicators in the behavior of radicalized people, an essential aspect is

the notion of self-image, defined as the perception that an individual attributes the accumulation of cognitive, social, emotional, and identity traits that it possesses. The self-image is the starting point related to the mechanisms and actions that an individual will develop or apply as a reaction to the self-image or how it is affected by the perception of the community to which it belongs (Chifu, Popescu and Nedea 2012).

Psycho-social theories (Arena and Arrigo 2005) have explained the importance of self-image and personal identity in the process of radicalization in the sense that a distorted, eroded, unstable self-image contributes greatly to the incorporation of violent ideology. On the other hand, personal identity plays a crucial role in radicalization because, most of the time, the process itself is triggered by an identity crisis, a search for purpose and meaning in life, or a loss of the sense of identification from the past (Ferguson and McAuley 2020). Identity can be lost on a personal level by disconnecting from former values, principles, mindsets, and lifestyles, or on a social level, in the form of isolation and seeking a sense of belonging in another community with different values.

Thus, it is observed in the process of radicalization how the subjects lose their old representation of life and acquire, step by step, more intensified identification with an opposite lifestyle, which marks a drastic, rapid change regarding the new sense of identity that they acquire. In this sense, the following behavioral indicators were identified as characteristics of the advanced stage of radicalization in the studied cases:

- **At the physical level**, changes in the clothing worn (niqab), coordinated changes at the hormonal level to determine the rapid growth of the Sunnah beard, and the adoption of a clothing style similar to that of a jihadist model have been identified, as also, dietary changes.
- **At the emotional level**: identifying with models of jihadist warriors and taking on the personal mission of martyrdom; sacrifice understood in the form of both infidel or moderate Muslim victims; and suicide as a guarantee in the form of obtaining paradise.
- **Exhortations to violence and fighting used in jihadist materials, justifying martyrdom**, accompanied by video and audio scenes representing terrorist attacks against European states seen as demons (jinn), terrorist fighters during training, detonating cars with explosives in public places, and presenting atrocities against Christians and Jews by terrorist members. Also, the presentation to the public of materials that consist of public executions, beheadings, arson, or desecration of corpses has the role of public intimidation, instilling terror and fear, but also attracting followers from vulnerable social categories such as young people or children who can easily instigate violence, being in a fertile period to capture new ideas or orientations promoted by modern means (video games, social media platforms).
- **At the social level**, it should be noted that the period of isolation that the subjects spent before and during the radicalization process was a fact that decisively contributed to the intensification of the incorporation of extremist

ideology. In addition to the fact that each subject demonstrated a total rejection of the old social groups, including their family, under the consideration of identifying people through associations such as "unfaithful" or "unfaithful" and "moderate", it is also noticeable the fact there is an almost unanimous desire for them to be integrated and included in the terrorist groups: either to go to Syria and join ISIS, or to demonstrate loyalty and gain the trust of the members of the terrorist groups. Also, to integrate at the community level and fulfill jihadist objectives, one can also emphasize the learning of the Arabic language during the radicalization process. Learning the native language can be considered a step toward acquiring a new identity in the sense that reciting the Qur'an and other Islamic texts, as well as addressing the ideology of targeted, specific categories, requires knowledge of the Arabic language as well as the feeling of authenticity of belonging to radical Islamic groups.

• **At the religious level**, it should be emphasized that the personal and social identity of the subjects is swallowed up by the religious identity they attribute to themselves. Besides, specific to radicalization is not only the embedded violent ideology but also the extremist, absolutist manner of reducing the whole of existence only to religious objectives and identifying the value of an individual and the meaning of life only in this role.

• **Travel abroad** has been identified prior to the advancement of the radicalization process, in part as an accelerating or triggering factor of radicalization relative to interacting with radicalized individuals in France or showing a desire to go to Syria and seeking logistical and financial ways to leave Romania.

In this sense, it can be observed, on the one hand, that not all radicalized people showed the whole set of indicators foreseen in the specialized literature: some people adopted a new style of clothing or a jihadist acronym, while others did not. Also, only a part of the people was aiming to go to Syria to join ISIS, a goal that was not, at least verbalized, unanimously. However, the isolation, removal or breaking of ties with friends and family, or tensions at work represented an indicator at the social level present in all cases, a fact also highlighted in the specialized literature (Grossman 2018) related to dichotomous thinking and absolutism that the subjects presented in their everyday lives.

A second indicator at the behavioral level identified in all cases is extreme aggression and violence, materialized both verbally, cognitively, and intentionally, in the sense of explicit exposure or through the dissemination of materials, or at the individual level, the intention to kill non-believers and to fulfill the objectives of ISIS. A third common behavioral indicator is the actions of spreading jihadist propaganda and promoting the extremist ideology of ISIS in various forms (video materials, photographs, written materials, violent video games), with the aim of attracting new followers and encouraging terrorist attacks. In fact, in essence, it has been highlighted that the purpose of recruiting and attracting new followers to

extremist ideology is one of the most certain signals in the case of radicalization, being undoubted concerning other indicators that must be correlated and analyzed in its complexity (Silke and Brown 2016).

Conclusions

The main aspect that emerged clearly from the analysis of the cases of radicalization was related to the fact that, although at the cognitive level, all subjects shared the same violent ideological elements and objectives of exterminating the infidels and carrying out jihad, the manifestation at the behavioral level involved customized elements, depending on the affinities of each subject. Also, as I highlighted previously, there is a common basis in the case of behavioral indicators as well, observed especially in the dynamic changes in the subjects' social relationships.

A second important aspect to remember is that one of the most significant elements, unanimously presented by the subjects, is the action of disseminating and promoting violent ideology both in the virtual environment and in social circles. This element is strongly accompanied by the verbalization of the objectives and mission of "carrying out jihad" present in the narratives of all the analyzed subjects. Although the behavioral indicators that emerged from the analysis of the cases mark the changes in attitudes and habits of the radicalized people in a visible way, nevertheless, they must be analyzed on a particular level and accumulated with other purely individual aspects of the history of the people in order to conclude on the incidence of radicalization. However, the direct and unequivocal expression of elements of violent ideology with extremist content, but also of jihadist objectives, is the common and indubitable indicator highlighted in this analysis.

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The terrorist threat to critical infrastructure from the perspective of criminal risk

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Abstract

The field of critical infrastructure protection emerged as part of the fight against terrorism. Although a transition to an all-hazards approach has taken place, terrorism remains a significant threat to entities providing essential services. The relief of the legislative framework provides a nuanced understanding of the interrelationship between the constructs of critical infrastructure and terrorism, conceptualizing the latter in the context of criminal risk. By criminalizing acts of terrorism, the legislator intends to protect social values, including those values dependent on the functioning of critical infrastructure. Moreover, exemplification through case law contributes to identifying vulnerabilities and facilitates scenario building based on criminal risks.

Keywords:
critical infrastructure; critical infrastructure protection; terrorism; criminal risk.

The evolution of the European critical infrastructure protection system reflects a predominantly reactive stance by the European Union. Specific incidents, such as the terrorist attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (2006), were pivotal in prompting coordinated responses and legislative endeavors. These attacks underscored the vulnerability of critical infrastructures, prompting the European Union to broaden its policy, adopting an all-hazards approach that addresses a comprehensive spectrum of threats.

Within the legal framework, state interventions prioritize the protection of paramount societal relations and values. This is evident in the realm of criminal law, where legal norms safeguard sectors vital to society, including those linked to critical infrastructure. Human actions, whether through acts or omissions, emerge as a significant threat to this infrastructure. More often than not, these human behaviors are deemed unlawful, carrying legal repercussions. Among the legal ramifications, criminal liability stands out due to its association with actions of heightened societal risk. The potential of criminal acts targeting critical infrastructures, thereby jeopardizing the essential goods and services they deliver, accentuates the need to thoroughly examine criminal risk. This is imperative to fortify the defenses around critical infrastructure. Furthermore, the essence of criminal norms lies in the preservation of vital societal relations and values, including those intrinsic to the sectors of critical infrastructure.

Terrorism, within this context, is viewed as a unique expression of the broader criminal landscape. Its examination, concerning national and international security dimensions, requires a specialized approach rooted in criminal law methodologies. The aim of this article is to provide an examination of how terrorism, conceptualized as a criminal risk, impacts the security and functioning of critical infrastructures. Through this approach, the study aims to shed light on the vulnerabilities inherent within these infrastructures.

In this article, after general considerations about terrorism, as a threat to critical infrastructure, the legislative landscape of the terrorist phenomenon is outlined. The next section of the paper addresses terrorism from a legislative point of view in order to identify the implications at the level of critical infrastructure. The way in which jurisprudence serves as a source for identifying vulnerabilities to construct risk scenarios is exemplified through a case in which a person investigated for acts of terrorism fraudulently left the territory of Romania by exploiting vulnerabilities of port infrastructure.

The Terrorist Threat to Critical Infrastructure

The motivation of terrorist entities to attack critical infrastructures is built around the following considerations: "*critical infrastructures are targets of strategic value for society; by attacking them, the perpetrators can demonstrate the inability of state*

institutions to act, and the attacker has the opportunity to gain a high degree of publicity and notoriety" (INTERPOL 2018, 26). The implications of attacking critical infrastructures magnify the psychological repercussions.

Prevailing academic discourses underscore the necessity of aligning critical infrastructure protection strategies with societal values and anticipations (Burgess 2007). These values are protected at a cross-sectoral level by preventing and combating the effects of the destruction or disabling of critical infrastructure. Social values have a certain specificity at the sectoral level, especially where the legislator has recognized the need to protect certain areas of activity of particular social importance through criminal norms, corresponding to specific critical infrastructure sectors.

A deep dive into offenses, wherein critical infrastructures are posited as passive subjects, underpins the crux of this discourse. It emerges that both the criminal legislative apparatus and the specialized frameworks for critical infrastructure protection are anchored in upholding a constellation of societal values pivotal for state security. These values, intrinsic to the protection endeavors around critical infrastructures, are encapsulated in Directive 2022/2557, delineating "vital societal functions, economic activities, public health, and safety, or the environment" as the object of protection.

The frameworks provided by the UN and INTERPOL make a distinction between 'critical infrastructures' and 'soft targets', considering the classification of soft and hard targets. Soft targets, as per this classification, encompass areas marked by substantial human congregation - venues like shopping centers, recreational facilities, and religious establishments. Conversely, 'hard targets' denote sites that are heavily fortified and have limited access. An intersection exists between soft targets and critical infrastructures, highlighting a pivotal nuance. Even though the intrinsic value of soft targets might not always correlate with the provision of indispensable goods or services, it remains imperative to weave their protection into a cohesive strategy against terrorist threats (INTERPOL 2018, 22).

In the extensive compendium of best practices (INTERPOL 2018, 22), a detailed taxonomy concerning terrorist threats to critical infrastructures is presented. This taxonomy spans the ambit of hybrid threats. Delineated by the nature of these threats, a bifurcation emerges between physical threats and cyber threats. Taking the genesis of these threats into account, particularly the origin of the adversary, a distinction is drawn between internal and external threats. Additionally, these threats can be contextualized based on their targeted scope, ranging from individual entities to broader campaigns targeting multiple assets.

Societal implications regarding the regulation of the terrorist criminal phenomenon

The literature in the field has approached the nature of terrorism-related offenses. Such offenses are differentiated from other criminal activities by their distinct methods of

perpetration, which range from overt aggression to more covert, sophisticated tactics. The individuals behind these offenses often possess "a level of specialization, education, and cultural awareness that is both unique and extensive" (Cristescu 2004, 1).

It is imperative to contextualize the criminalization of terrorism within a specific branch of law. This is due to the unique attributes and multifaceted complexity of terrorism, as well as the pressing need to safeguard societal values through legal means, both domestically and internationally. Expert literature has already proposed the establishment of a branch of law dedicated to counterterrorism (Roach 2015, 3).

Counterterrorism law is characterized as a complex and challenging subject, typically falling under criminal law, a branch of public law, also "Counterterrorism law involves the interaction between the public and private sectors, particularly regarding the financing of terrorism and the telecommunications system" (Roach 2015, 3). Counterterrorism law intersects with constitutional law, as the fight against terrorism involves the limitation and restriction of fundamental human rights provided for in international treaties and the constitution of each country. For example, the activities of intelligence services, which are imperative in the fight against terrorism, impose certain limitations on the right to privacy.

Counterterrorism law represents a vast and complex field that encompasses norms from criminal, administrative, constitutional, and international trade law. It is one of the tools used by states and international communities in the fight against terrorism. Additionally, regulations regarding migration and the relationship between national and international law are also relevant.

The assassination of King Alexander I of Yugoslavia and French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou in Marseille in 1934 marked a turning point in acts of terrorism with international implications (Bararu 2010, 11). This incident brought the issue of terrorism to the attention of the League of Nations and led to the adoption of conventions in 1937.

The definition of terrorism from the second Conference on the Harmonization of Criminal Law in Brussels in 1930 is as follows: "Acts that involve the intentional use of means capable of endangering the common safety constitute acts of terrorism, which consist of crimes against life, liberty, and physical integrity of individuals or acts that are contrary to private or state property" (Bararu 2010, 11).

Subsequent amendments and evolutions have occurred, reflecting the dynamic nature of terrorism. Internationally, resolutions like the UN Security Council Resolution 1373 in 2001 and Resolution 2178 in 2014, alongside initiatives at the European Union level, have been instrumental in shaping the discourse.

A significant step in the criminalization of terrorism was the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1373 in 2001 (United Nations Security Council 2001), which calls on member states to ensure that terrorism and its financing are criminalized as serious offenses. The criminalization of terrorism and its financing as offenses is

one of the key instruments in the fight against terrorism, considering the preventive, educational, and corrective functions of criminal law. However, the resolution is criticized for not providing a universally accepted definition of terrorism.

In 2014, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2178 (United Nations Security Council 2014), which expands the scope of terrorism offenses, requiring states to criminalize and sanction acts related to the international travel of individuals for planning, organizing, and committing acts of terrorism.

Indeed, at the European Union level, the Council Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism was adopted in 2002, and it was later amended by another framework decision in 2008. This decision provides a taxonomy of the terrorist phenomenon within the European context, including "terrorist offenses, offenses related to a terrorist group, and offenses connected to terrorist activities" (Official Journal of the European Union 2002). These decisions have had a significant impact on the decisions and actions in the field of counterterrorism within the European Union.

Financing terrorism is indeed part of terrorist criminal activities and is internationally criminalized through the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (United Nation Organization 1999), adopted by the United Nations. The approach to criminalizing terrorist financing is similar in many states, with guidance provided by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an intergovernmental body established by the G7 countries. At the national level, countries have implemented their legislation to prevent and combat the use of the financial and banking system for terrorism financing purposes. In Romania, for example, Emergency Ordinance No. 159/2001 was adopted for the prevention and combating of the use of the financial and banking system for the financing of terrorist (Romanian Government 2001). Article 15 of this legislative act criminalizes the provision or collection of funds for the commission of terrorist acts.

Romania's journey in criminalizing terrorism can be traced back to its Penal Code of 1864, where "high treason" was first codified, as an offense against the internal and external security of the state. In the Penal Code of 1937, acts of terrorism were incriminated under the name of *crimes and offenses against the state*, and in post-war criminal legislation, the Penal Code of 1968 incriminated offenses against state security.

Despite robust legal frameworks, Romania has not been immune to terrorism, with several high-profile cases underscoring the persistent threat. These incidents, ranging from explosive attacks to propaganda and incitement, highlight the spectrum of challenges faced by law enforcement agencies (Roach 2015). In 2002, a Romanian citizen was accused of committing acts of terrorism and other offenses through a non-public decision of the High Court of Cassation and Justice. This individual had stolen multiple grenades and projectiles from a military depot, which were then thrown into the courtyard of a high school, resulting in casualties and damages. One year later, the same person attacked a heavily trafficked alley in the capital city with grenades.

In 2008, Romania encountered a case of propaganda for terrorist purposes. Through a website, the defendant promoted ideas and concepts specific to Islamic terrorist groups. Furthermore, they constructed an improvised explosive device intended for detonation in a public location. A threatening message announcing their intentions was sent to television stations. However, the defendant was apprehended before carrying out the attack.

The third case involves incitement to acts of terrorism. The defendant was accused of contacting another individual and persuading them to kidnap three Romanian journalists in Iraq. The purpose of this action was to exert pressure on policymakers regarding the withdrawal of military forces from the conflict zone (Roach 2015).

Legislative Analysis of Terrorism, implications for Critical Infrastructure

When examining the legal framework surrounding the criminalization of terrorism, the following perspectives have been identified for analyzing the implications in the field of critical infrastructures:
- Critical infrastructures as targets of terrorist offenses;
- The exploitation of these infrastructures in furthering terrorist agendas;
- The interplay at the institutional level between terrorism prevention and counterterrorism system and critical infrastructure protection system.

This importance arises from two main analytical streams: recognizing critical infrastructures as potential terrorist targets and understanding their role as passive subjects in terrorism-related offenses.

At the national level, Law No. 535/2004 stands as a pivotal legislative act in addressing acts of terrorism. Chapter V of the mentioned legislative act lists the offenses related to terrorism. The norm of criminalization is complex, considering that terrorism manifests itself through multiple offenses aimed at achieving the specific goals of terrorists or terrorist groups. Offenses already criminalized in the Penal Code, committed under the conditions of Article 1 of Law 535/2004, are adopted, but new offenses are also criminalized, which have no correspondence in other criminal laws and describe bioterrorism, nuclear terrorism, as well as the targeting of certain public utilities that correspond to critical infrastructures (Article 32, paragraph (3), letters c and e).

A closer perusal of Law 535/2005 underscores that the realm of terrorist targets encapsulates specific sectors of critical infrastructures. From the provisions of the two legislative systems, the correspondence emerges between the legal definition of material factors in Law 535/2004 and the sectors of the national critical infrastructure nominated by Government Emergency Ordinance no. 98/2010—which focuses on the identification, nomination, and safeguarding of critical infrastructures—draws attention to their concurrence, as depicted in Table 1.

TABLE 1 Materials Factors and Critical National Infrastructure

Material factors	Sectors of Critical National Infrastructure
Environmental factors	Water, forests, and environment - Environmental protection
Agricultural crops and livestock, food, and other consumer goods	Food and agriculture
Strategic objectives, military or with military utility	National security
Social infrastructure facilities	Water, forests, and environment - Provision of drinking water and sewage Energy Financial and banking Healthcare
State and governmental facilities	Administration
Transportation systems	Transportation
Telecommunications and information systems	Information and communications technology
National symbols and values	Culture and national cultural heritage

Critical infrastructures, when dysfunctional or destroyed, evoke societal repercussions reminiscent of those orchestrated by terrorist acts. Foundational to many definitions of terrorism is the utilization of violence to exert a profound psychological impact on the population. This profound effect is achievable when key infrastructure entities are targeted, taking into account the criteria for determining the *significant disruptive effect* regulated by Article 7 of Directive 2022/2557: users and other sectors and subsectors dependent on the essential services provided by the critical infrastructure, the degree and duration of the incident and the geographic area affected by the incident, the importance of the entity on the market including the availability of alternatives for the essential services (Official Journal of the European Union 2022). Those criteria can be used to quantify the effect of a terrorist attack.

From the content of the provisions of Law no. 535/2004, it follows that critical infrastructures can be targets of terrorist actions. The correspondence between the passive subjects of terrorism offenses and the sectors of the national critical infrastructure established by Government Emergency Ordinance no. 98/2010 is presented in Table no. 2.

TABLE 2 Critical infrastructure, targets of terrorist offenses

Transport Sector, *Air transport* subsector	Offenses regulated by the Aviation Code committed for specific terrorist purposes
Transport Sector, *Water transport* subsector *Energy* Sector (offshore oil platform)	Terrorism offenses committed on board or against a ship or fixed platform
Food and agriculture Sector	Infecting the atmosphere or water
Industry Sector *Information and communications technology* Sector *Food and agriculture* Sector	Acts of sabotage, as defined by article 403 of the Penal Code, committed for terrorist purposes
Energy Sector (nuclear) *Industry* Sector (nuclear and radioactive materials)	Non-compliance with the regime of nuclear materials and other radioactive substances

Additionally, Article 33, paragraph (2) of Law No. 535/2004 highlights potential infrastructural vulnerabilities which can be exploited by terrorists. These range from the physical security of the infrastructure to the classified information that could

assist in planning a terroristic act. To curtail the likelihood of pre-terroristic offenses, improvements in these sectors are imperative.

From the perspective of the terrorist threat, beyond enhancing the resilience of critical infrastructures to minimize the probability and impact of a terrorist attack, the capacity of well-protected infrastructures to prevent and act as deterrents and counter-terrorism factors can also be analyzed. In the literature, the concept of "weaponizing critical infrastructure" has been developed to describe the use of critical infrastructures as "instruments of warfare through their exploitation and obtaining strategic advantages by potential adversaries by attacking highly interconnected vital systems" (Evans 2020, 6).

Based on the analysis of legal provisions, it can be concluded, on one hand, how critical infrastructures can be weaponized and used as vectors of the terrorist phenomenon, and on the other hand, the contribution of well-protected and resilient infrastructures to the prevention and combatting of terrorism. The correlations are presented in Table no. 3.

TABLE 3 Critical infrastructure, vectors of the terrorist phenomenon

Information and Communications Technology Sector	prevention and combatting of incitement to terrorism through public incitement, or propaganda
Information and Communications Technology Sector	prevention and combatting of the phenomenon of radicalization through accessing and possessing terrorist propaganda materials
Financial-Banking Sector	prevention and combatting of terrorism financing offenses
Transport Sector *National Security* Sector, *Borders, Migration, and Asylum* subsector	prevention and combatting of cross-border movements for terrorist purposes
Energy Sector *Industry* Sector	prevention and combatting of the production or procurement of explosive devices, weapons, or hazardous substances

Thus, it follows that the criminal risk and, in particular, the terrorist risk must be an essential element in the risk analysis of critical infrastructures. This analysis needs to be materialized in the Security Plan of the operator, taking into consideration the following two perspectives:
- Critical infrastructures as potential targets of terrorist attacks;
- Critical infrastructures as possible vectors of the terrorist phenomenon.

Therefore, adapted protection measures are necessary concerning the specific construct of terrorism to prevent or limit the effects generated by possible destruction or impairment of critical infrastructure elements in a terrorist attack. Considering the highly interconnected nature of infrastructure systems, they can be analyzed as direct or indirect targets of terrorist attacks, and the indirect effects that spread along the network of dependencies and interdependencies are also significant. Moreover, it is essential to identify vulnerabilities that allow the exploitation of infrastructure elements for terrorist purposes, considering the integration of critical infrastructure protection

into the extensive process of enhancing society's resilience against the terrorist threat. Given the identified correspondences, critical infrastructures need to be approached as potential targets of terrorist activities, and it is opportune to combine institutional efforts aimed at preventing and combating terrorism with the protection of critical infrastructures where these two domains intersect. Furthermore, the majority of institutions that are part of the National System for Preventing and Combating Terrorism are also responsible public authorities represented in the Interinstitutional Working Group for the Protection of Critical Infrastructures.

Law No. 535/2004 on the prevention and combatting of terrorism was amended and supplemented by Law No. 58/2019 to transpose the provisions of Directive 2017/541 of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union on combating terrorism. According to the 2019 Activity Report of DIICOT, the legislative amendment reflects "internal and international developments related to the terrorist phenomenon, institutional changes, and the national security objectives of Romania" (DIICOT 2020). Moreover, the changes brought by Law No. 58/2019 enable better cooperation among the authorities within the NSPCI, as well as between them and external partners.

For a systemic approach to critical infrastructure and the generation of relevant protection measures against terrorist threats, an institutional analysis is necessary regarding the cooperation between responsible public authorities and the National System for Preventing and Combating Terrorism (NTPCS).

By comparing the list of responsible public authorities approved by Government Decision No. 35/2019 and the composition of the National Terrorism Prevention and Counterterrorism System. (NTPCS) provided in Law No. 535/2004, the following responsible public authorities are not part of the NSPCT:
- Ministry of Energy;
- National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority;
- Ministry of Research and Innovation;
- Romanian Space Agency;
- Ministry of Culture and National Identity.

It can be observed that all Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) sectors are represented in the NTPCS by at least one responsible public authority, except for the Culture and National Cultural Heritage sector. As indicated in the specialized literature, the motivation behind terrorist attacks is often religious and ideological. Therefore, the cultural component is an important element in the analysis of the terrorist criminal risk toward critical infrastructures. The legitimacy of cultural attacks throughout history, as well as the status of cultural institutions as symbolic infrastructures, possible targets of terrorist entities, are arguments for the inclusion of the Ministry of Culture and National Identity in the NTPCS to enhance the protection of critical cultural infrastructures from a terrorist threat perspective.

Furthermore, considering the threat posed by nuclear terrorism and the strategic nature of critical energy infrastructure elements, the Ministry of Energy must be included in the NTPCS as well.

Exemplification of how vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure are exploited for the committing terrorist offenses

This section evaluates the vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure in the context of terrorist activities. By employing Decision No. 309/A/2014 of the High Court of Cassation and Justice, Penal Section as the primary dataset, this research elucidates how legal outcomes can offer significant insights into the modus operandi of criminals, thereby assisting in constructing informed threat scenarios. Analyzing a crime, underpinned by a juridical verdict, provides a structured framework to understand infrastructure vulnerabilities and build realistic threat scenarios.

The central document for this investigation is Decision No. 309/A/2014, wherein three individuals were adjudicated for abetting fraudulent border crossing of a suspect under terror activity investigation. The investigation ongoing was linked to the kidnapping of Romanian journalists in Iraq, a case that garnered widespread media attention, both nationally and internationally. This case encompasses two primary narrative trajectories: firstly, the orchestration and financing of a terror act, and secondly, the aiding of a suspect in illicitly exiting Romania, classified as a terror offense as per prevailing statutes.

The analytical focus is placed on the crime of aiding departure from the national territory of Omar Hayssam, offering a lens into transport infrastructure susceptibilities, especially those of ports.

In Southeastern Romania, the Port of Constanta is a significant infrastructure site, as evidenced by its involvement in the Omar Hayssam case. The court statement outlined Hayssam's evasion strategy, noting its sophistication and the influence of manipulated media narratives. Such findings indicate the essential role of transport operators that activate at the level of critical infrastructure in security assessments, highlighting potential threats and the occasional concealment of illicit actions via corporate facades (High Court of Cassation and Justice 2014).

From the point of view of Critical Infrastructure analysis, judicial findings corroborate that criminals strategized around infrastructure vulnerabilities. The fact that the modus operandi of the criminals was built around exploiting the vulnerabilities of the infrastructure is also confirmed by the court: "The decision regarding the chosen route was based on the obtained information regarding the vulnerability of the border area represented by the Port of Constanta, aspects that were observed during the investigations conducted in the present case" (High Court of Cassation and Justice 2014).

It follows that transport operators engaging in activities related to critical infrastructure and operating within the area of interest and influence of the critical entity must be included in the security environment analysis of the Critical Infrastructure Network (CIN) and treated as potential sources of threats within the risk analysis. In many cases, offenders camouflage their illicit activities through the companies they administer or control.

The analysis report of the Organized Crime Combat Brigade Constanța, reconstructed within the judicial decision pronounced in the case of Omar Hayssam (Decision No. 309/A/2014 of the High Court of Cassation and Justice), identifies a series of vulnerabilities in the port infrastructure regarding the transportation of clandestine passengers. According to this report, "boarding a commercial vessel docked at the ports of Constanta, Constanța Sud Agigea, and Midia can be performed by any person somewhat familiar with port traffic, without requiring prior activities or concealment maneuvers" (High Court of Cassation and Justice 2014). Thus, in 2006, the port infrastructure in Constanța presented the following vulnerabilities:

• Absence of a robust access control system.
• Boarding can be performed with only the permission or complicity of the ship captain.
• Numerous unmonitored hiding spots within ships.
• Limited video surveillance.
• Subpar security protocols, relying heavily on barriers and non-standardized security personnel.

Moreover, significant relations between the defendant and border authorities reveal vulnerabilities within the National Critical Infrastructure's human component. Thus, the human vulnerability of these critical infrastructures is identified, where employees have connections to criminal environments and can be influenced to misuse their public authority prerogatives.

Considering the vulnerabilities identified within the analyzed infrastructure, measures for enhancing protection can be identified and developed, ranging from physical protection of critical infrastructure assets to training and ethics of personnel.

Expanding upon the discussions, it is imperative to consider the broader ramifications associated with the potentiality of a nuclear incident or attack. Naval transport means, such as the vessel used by Omar Hayssam, and the control systems at existing border crossing points, present real vulnerabilities in terms of a potential terrorist or even nuclear attack. The transport and border infrastructure could facilitate the transportation of nuclear materials by terrorist entities. The existence of scanning devices on ships, capable of detecting the unique signature emitted by nuclear materials and thermal imaging for person detection, would significantly enhance the protection of critical infrastructures and significantly reduce the risk of illegal movements by terrorists and nuclear materials.

The threat of a nuclear attack is significant for the port infrastructure in Constanța, with the main vulnerability lying in the container transport system. The hypothesis of nuclear material or weapons and devices being transported within the European Union should also be taken into account. These could be transported by road along pan-European routes, by rail, but most likely by sea, exploiting the vulnerabilities associated with container transport. Air transport is unlikely due to heightened security measures in this sector.

One of the specific vulnerabilities of port infrastructure is the insecurity of containers in terms of the goods they can carry, as well as the existence of access control systems for people and goods that do not meet the technical requirements concerning the threat posed by the clandestine transport of nuclear materials.

Taking into consideration the case analyzed in this section, in Romania, especially in the area of the Constanța port, the following possible courses of action can be used for risk scenario building:

• Illegal procurement of raw materials and theft of sensitive technical information from a nuclear power plant, taking Cernavodă Power Plant as an example;

• Romania serves as a transit country for the illegal transportation of nuclear materials and devices, especially through maritime containers. Although this action may not result in an explosion on Romanian or neighboring states' territory, it creates a state of danger considering that this type of transport requires special security measures that are not implemented for clandestine transportation;

• Execution of a nuclear attack on Romanian territory. Although Romania has not been a direct target of international terrorist attacks so far, this course of action deserves consideration because it represents an incident with a low probability but significant impact.

Case law serves as a pivotal tool, offering profound insights into criminal modus operandi and causality based on which vulnerabilities and protection measures are identified. The examination of Hayssam's evasion illuminates the vulnerabilities inherent within transport infrastructures like the Constanța port. Consequently, judicious evaluations stand as invaluable assets in understanding criminal risks and in the framing of holistic threat scenarios for critical infrastructures.

Proposals

The interplay between terrorism risks and critical infrastructure underscores the indispensable importance of their examination within the realms of both national and international security frameworks. An act of terrorism targeting such infrastructures could culminate in devastating societal impacts, further exacerbated by the intricate interdependencies that characterize the critical infrastructure system. This interaction can be integrated into the risk analysis of critical infrastructures for comprehensive protection.

Critical infrastructures, owing to their societal significance, are not only susceptible to terrorist activities but can also potentially serve as conduits for these acts. Moreover, the analysis of the legal documents elucidates the legislative recognition of this intertwined relationship. Even if it is not a direct threat to critical infrastructure,

this perspective must be addressed in the extended context of resilience because critical infrastructure exploited for terrorist activities represents just an entry point for targeting the entire society.

Interinstitutional cooperation represents one of the necessary measures to enhance the protection of critical infrastructures regarding the terrorist threat. Despite the establishment of legislative and institutional systems at the national level for protecting critical infrastructures, as well as for preventing and combating terrorism, clear gaps remain, especially regarding the representation of key sectors within the National System for Preventing and Combating Terrorism.

The confluence of values preserved by criminal laws addressing terrorism's criminalization aligns succinctly with the values articulated within the legal characterization of critical infrastructure, as stipulated in Article 2, point 5 of Directive 2022/2557. Consequently, counter-terrorism initiatives emerge as inherent components of the overarching strategy for critical infrastructure protection. Such strategies must be adaptive, anticipating and addressing the multifaceted and evolving modi operandi of terrorist entities. Embracing a proactive stance by viewing critical infrastructures as potential terrorist targets facilitates a systematic vulnerability assessment, drawing parallels between terrorists' operational tactics and potential risk scenarios.

From a methodological point of view, the analysis of the legislative framework constructed around the main concepts of the research: *terrorism* and *critical infrastructure* highlights intricate correlations between these two domains and presents new research directions and perspectives regarding critical infrastructures and their protection against terrorist threats.

Moreover, jurisprudence proves to be a valuable source for illustrating cases in which critical infrastructure objectives are implicated in the commission of a terrorist offense, either as targets of attacks or as vectors for the manifestation of criminal activity by exploiting vulnerabilities. Hence, beyond identifying vulnerabilities, these jurisprudence-based case studies form the foundation for developing potential risk scenarios, serving as highly useful tools in the planning and enhancement of critical infrastructure protection.

Concluding, the dynamic nature of terrorism and its evolving methodologies necessitate an equally adaptive approach to critical infrastructure defense. Continued collaboration among public authorities, the enhancement of legislative provisions, and bolstered public-private partnerships can enhance the resilience of critical infrastructure.

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A legal approach with delayed effects on bilateral investigation of incidents at the Romanian Bulgarian border

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Abstract

In 1923, the Dobrogean Revolutionary Internal Organization – V.D.R.O. was created by reorganizing the revolutionary section of „Dobrogea" Society. Amid intervention by the Bulgarian authorities informed that the leaders of this group, influenced by the Bulgarian communists, were planning to start a revolt in the autumn of 1925, the Dobrogean Internal Revolutionary Organization – V.D.R.O split, creating a new organization called the Dobrogean Revolutionary Organization – D.R.O. – under communist coordination. From this moment, internally, a strong rivalry began between these terrorist organizations, V.D.R.O and D.R.O. Therefore, between 1925 and 1932, the irredentist activity of Bulgarian counties was reflected in numerous border incidents, investigated by joint military commissions, exchanges of fire between Romanian and Bulgarian border guards, mainly caused by fraudulent crossings of Bulgarian counties, 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. In order to stop these events and their investigation in a good collaboration by both parties, in 1932, a protocol agreed by the Government of Romania and Bulgaria was concluded and signed, known as Protocol no. 5, which sought to implement a simple procedure and methodology adapted to a concrete situation in the joint investigation of border incidents.

Keywords:

border incidents; mixed military commissions; komitadji; terrorism; South Dobrogea.

A brief history of the Romanian-Bulgarian border
after the end of the second Balkan war

On August 10, 1913, the Peace Treaty in Bucharest was signed by the warring parties: Romania, Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro. According to Article 2 of the Peace Treaty, the southern border between Romania and Bulgaria was delimited from the Danube, from Turtucaia, to the Black Sea to the south of Ekrene. Thus, a new part of the old Dobrogea, with an area of about 7,770 square kilometers, and a population of about 280,000 inhabitants, enters the Romanian state, territory that would go down in history as the Cadrilater (Vulpe 1938, 1).

As Professor G . Murgoci said, it was only a part of the military Quadrilater, which started above Turtucaia and stopped at the north of Varna "a quadrilater formed by the old border of Dobrogea, Danube, Danube, The Black Sea and a conventional line; but it cannot be compared to the old military quadrilateral and it is not even the geographical quadrilateral, which Tsar Alexander II wanted to give us since 1878, in exchange for the Romanian Basarabian counties Cahul, Bolgrad and Ismail" (Murgoci 1913, 5).

However, the conclusion of the Peace Treaty in Bucharest, in the summer of 1913, in addition to the fact that Romania was consolidating its role as mediator in the region at the same time, put an end to the Balkan crisis and achieved a fairer territorial configuration in the area. From an administrative point of view, the territory ceded to Romania, which had been under the control of its army since July 11, 1913, was to be organized in two counties: Durostor – with its capital in the ancient fortress of Silistra and Caliacra – residing at Dobrici (Bazargic). From 15 August 1913, with the official end of the state of war between Romania and Bulgaria and after the joint commission provided by the Peace Treaty had completed the new border line between the two countries, the process of installing the Romanian civil administration in the two counties was slow but safe until October 1913. The army, represented by the 17th Infantry Brigade, of the 5 Corps, ensured the transition from the Bulgarian administration to the Romanian one, a reality also sanctioned by the Law for organizing the New Dobrogea from 1/april 14, 1914 (Tudor 2005, 71).

Under this legislative framework, the Romanian administration was present in South Dobrogea until October 1916, when the organization of the economic, social and administrative activity of this territory was taken over by the Bulgarian government that empowered the „Dobrogea" Company to implement the management plan of the region.

In the context of the First World War and the conclusion of the Peace Treaty of Bucharest on May 7, 1918, Romania had been required to transfer the annexed territory to Bulgaria following the decision of the Peace Conference in Bucharest in the summer of 1913, namely the Cadrilater with the two counties of Durostor

and Caliacra. Bulgaria also received almost half of Northern Dobrogea, until a line approaching the Cernavoda-Constanta railway (Tudor 2005, 73). It should be noted that this peace treaty signed by Alexandru Marghiloman and imposed on Romania by the Central Powers, was not recognized nor ratified by King Ferdinand I. Moreover, by Article 15 of the Arimistice concluded on 11 November 1918 between Germany and the Entente Powers, the Peace Treaty of Bucharest, of 7 May 1918, it was declared null and void (Scurtu, Mocanu and Smârcea 1995, 21).

The new frontiers of Romania, much and fiercely discussed and negotiated by the Romanian delegation present at the meetings of the Peace Conference in Paris 1919-1920, they were recognized by the signing of treaties with Austria (Saint-Germain-en-Laye on 10 September 1919), Bulgaria (Neuilly-sur-Seine on 27 November 1919) and Hungary (Trianon on 4 June 1920). The treaty with Bulgaria reconfirmed the Romanian-Bulgarian border, as it had been established by the Peace Treaty of Bucharest on August 10, 1913, at which point, in Bulgarian society, a strong revisionist trend was born, supported by the political class. On 20 September 1920, the Romanian Parliament adopted the Law ratifying the treaty and ordered its publication in the Official Gazette[1]. Amid this general discontent of the Bulgarian people, the paramilitary and terrorist organizations had grown significantly, even if, sporadically, the Bulgarian politicians had disapproved at declarative level the actions of the Bulgarian komitadjis, which in the period 1920-1932 gradually intensified.

In these conditions, of the frequent attacks of the komitadji gangs, especially in the border localities in South Dobrogea, the Romanian government decided to colonize the Romanian Macedo in the counties of Durostor and Caliacra. In this regard, on April 24, 1924, the law amending the Law on the organization of New Dobrogea of July 26, 1921, was promoted, by which it was expressly provided that the State could make colonizations and estrangements in small consignments. Once the legal framework was created, the Macedo-Romans intensified their activity among the Romanian decision makers in order to obtain the approval of their colonization and ownership in Cadrilater (Tudor 2005, 188). In this context, several assassinations committed by Bulgarian komitadji against Romanian settlers were reported. By approving the text of the law on colonization of July 17, 1930, it was tried to create a legislative framework that would ensure their safety, but Romanian border guards reported border incidents that had an exponential frequency, with several killings of both settlers and Romanian civil servants and gendarmes being reported.

In this context, a new methodology for investigating these incidents was imposed, which was transposed into the provisions of a new protocol for investigating all events of any type that happened near the Romanian-Bulgarian border. It became obvious that the old procedure agreed in the joint

[1] The full text of the Treaty was published in Official Monitor no. 135 of 20.09.1920.

military commissions could no longer guarantee the safety of both the citizens who were close to the border and the Romanian border guards who were performing border guard missions.

A new legal framework for investigating incidents at the Romanian-Bulgarian border (12 March 1932)

In the spring of 1932, the Romanian-Bulgarian bilateral relations were tense as a result of frequent incursions and attacks by Bulgarian komitadjis, which took place in 1931 and the first three months of 1932. Therefore, at the initiative of the two governments, on March 9, 1932, the Bulgarian-Romanian Joint Military Commission met to investigate the border incidents on 22/23 September 1931,14/15 October 1931 and 18/19 November 1931. The Bulgarian side was represented by Colonel Gheorghe Popov, commander of the 6th District Border Varna, Major Stefan Popov commander of the 18th Kemanlar Border Section, Major Serafimov, commander of the 17th section Coslugea, captain Ioscov, commander of the Oboriste subsection, captain Pencov, commander of the Ghiuccediurluc subsection and a translator.

The Romanian side was represented by Colonel Badulescu Alexandru, commander of the 3rd guard brigade Braila and Major Popa Isaiah, commander of the Turtucaia border battalion. According to a previous agreement, the members of the commission met at 10.00 in the chancellery of the Romanian picket „Sublieutenant Stoica"/Boteni station, where by mutual agreement, they agreed on a plan after which the work of the joint committee was to be carried out. However, shortly before the start of the working meeting, the president of the Romanian military commission, Colonel Badulescu Alexandru, had a friendly discussion with Colonel Gheorghe Popov. According to the report submitted to the Border Guard Corps, *„colonel Popov told me that he has the government's order to be as peaceful as possible in the discussions; that the Bulgarian government is animated by the most peaceful and good feelings for the Romanian country; that he, Colonel Popov, cherishes the most perfect feelings of collaboration; that he was sent from Sofia from the General Staff where he was working at the command of the VI-th Varna Section (the Romanian border) precisely to put order in the relations and service relations at the border; that these three border incidents that are being discussed all occurred in the same sector and during his three-month absence from command, being on sick leave; that, finally, he himself is very dissatisfied with Captain Pencov's conduct in the command sector and where the incidents happened, which is why he asked for this officer's relocation. Colonel Popov, as commander of the sector, seems to be willing to perform an urgent and local trimming of future incidents that will arise and which he frankly told me that he wants to avoid them"* (AMFA n.d.).

In this positive atmosphere, the president of the Romanian commission read and handed the text of the official communication on the border incidents on the night

of October 14/15, 1931 and November 18/19, 1931, to Colonel Popov Gheorghe, colonel, the president of the Bulgarian commission, with the request that, after joint investigation of the events, the response of the Bulgarian party be transmitted in writing on March 10, 1932, 10.30 at the picket „Traian". The work plan for the events of 23/24 September 1931 was to be established on 10 March 1931 after the first two issues were settled. This protocol was read, approved and signed by the respective delegates at the meeting (AMFA n.d.).

After agreeing on this framework, the Romanian delegation presented the facts about the event on 14/15 October 1931 at the picket „Traian". According to this text, the Romanian commission informed the Bulgarian side of the following: „on the night of October 14/15, 1931, around 01.00 hours on the Romanian picket „Traian" from the Bulgarian territory, 7 shots were fired, of which one went through the porch of the picket hitting the front wall, while the second penetrated through the street of the picket in the attic exiting through the roof olana, after which five shots were fired over the picket. All the bullets were fired from a distance of about 50-100 meters from the border line on Bulgarian territory" (AMFA n.d.).

In the same press release, the Romanian side mentioned that the gunfire stopped immediately after the Romanian border guards fired alarm missiles in the direction of the attackers. On the morning of October 15, 1931 at 08.00, in front of the Bulgarian picket no. 5, the commander of the Romanian border guard company sent a written invitation to the commander of the Bulgarian border platoon, but he was told that he was away in Varna until the next day. Therefore, on 16 October 1931, the Bulgarian officer was again requested to appear at 08.00 in vicinity of the picket „Traian". It was answered by phone that one cannot come at the requested time, being available only in the evening, at 17.00, when he could show up at the Romanian picket no.50, when he could show up, in an opposite direction from the scene of the incident. Romanian officers insisted that the Bulgarian representative come to the scene before 17:00 so that the investigation could be carried out during daylight. However, „the Bulgarian officer showed up at 18.00 at the Romanian picket no.54 with a very strong attitude and hostile to a just investigation. After Captain Tutoveanu exposed the incident, Bulgarian captain Pencov avoided answering about the event, in reference to other incidents, no strangers occurred to the incident for which the meeting took place. Captain Pencov being asked by the Romanian captain Tutoveanu to present a Bulgarian projectile responded positively to his request, but when he was shown an identical one found near the Romanian picket „Traian", Captain Pencov, in the face of such evidence, he had an indecent attitude leaving the picket without further investigation" (AMFA n.d.).

After reading the press release and presenting the facts, the Romanian delegation asked a series of questions about this incident and how the Bulgarian commander responded to the requests of the Romanian border guards (AMFA n.d.). Therefore, the Romanian delegation asked the Bulgarian commission to answer the following questions: „*did*

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Captain Pencov know about the fires fired on Romanian territory and the alarm missiles fired by the Romanian border guards? if not, why not?; On October 15, 1931, Captain Pencov was in Varna and if so why did he not answer? If this event was investigated to discover the attackers, who are they and what measures were taken?; For what reason did Captain Pencov set another meeting point instead of the one where the event occurred when we know that on October 18, 1931 he was in Koslugea?; For what reason did Captain Pencov arrive at the time of the meeting when an investigation cannot be conducted?; For which reason did Captain Pencov, right from the beginning, have a strong attitude towards the Romanian officer instead of being conciliatory and willing to solve the incident amicably addressing the words what did you call me for?; *That is why Captain Pencov when he was presented with a projectile found at the attacked picket identical to those found in the cartridges of the Bulgarian border guards became irreventive and left the scene without completing the* investigation. *However, the Romanian officer led Captain Pencov to the border line. Does he remember this?"* (AMFA n.d.)

After reading the questions, the Romanian delegates indicated that, „*on October 18, 1931, at 08.00, they met at the picket „Traian" Captain Tutoveanu with Major Serafimov who was accompanied by the commanding captains of the platoon Oboriste and Ghiuccediurliuc for the investigation of the event on the night of October 14/15, 1931. On the spot, Major Serafimov noted the thoroughness of Captain Tutoveanu's statements, yet he refused to conclude the acts, proposing the establishment of a joint commission. Captain Pencov told the sub-locutor Perelighin that if the major had signed such an act, he would have been removed from the army the next day. The drivers of the carts who came with the Bulgarian officers declared in the kitchen at the picket „Traian" in front of the inhabitant of Cociu Curtev from Vladimiresti and the platoon leader Barbu Andrei, that they heard the soldiers of the Chiuccediurliuc platoon talking about that the Bulgarian picket patrol no.5 fired on the night of 14/October 15, 1931 in the dogs of the Romanian picket „Traian" and following the shots fired by the Romanian border guards answered again the patrol with gunfire*" (AMFA n.d.).

With these clarifications and views of the Romanian delegation, the first working meeting of the Romanian-Bulgarian joint commission was concluded. The next day, March 10, 1932, the members of the commission met at 10.30, at the Romanian picket „Traian", to check and confront on the ground, on the spot, the evidence supporting the Romanian side's claims regarding the incident on the night of October 14/15, 1931. These testimonies consisted of: the ricocheted blow produced by the bullet in the wall in front of the picket; the other blow indicated in the complaint could not be shown as the roof of the picket had burned the night before. At the same time the name Gociu Gh. Curtev from Vladimiresti commune was heard on the claims of the Bulgarian soldier in the kitchen of the picket on October 19, 1931, the day of Captain Tutoveanu's meeting with Major Serafimov and platoo leader Barbu Andrei on the same issue. After the completion of these on-the-spot checks, the Joint Commission went to the picket „Sergent Dogaru Adam" where the work on verifying the answers given by the Bulgarian commission in contradiction began.

With all assurances of good intentions of the Bulgarian government to resolve incidents at the common border, the answers given by members of the Bulgarian commission to the concrete questions of the Romanian side showed that the Bulgarian officers understood in a particular way the politics of their own government. Therefore, the Bulgarian delegates responded thus on the incident at the picket „Traian": on the night of 14/15 October *1931 „Bulgarian soldiers at picket no.5 did not hear any shots and did not see the signals given by the Romanians from the picket with missiles and as a result did not make known to their boss, Captain Pencov. The second man didn't know anything about those shots fired. The weather information that night recorded that the wind was blowing from the northwest and prevented the possibility of Bulgarian soldiers at picket no.5 to hear the shots fired/ even if in truth such a thing happened at a distance of 4 km"* (AMFA n.d.).

In the context of the weather conditions mentioned, it is obvious that the Bulgarian soldiers did not warn Colonel Popov Gheorghe about the request of the Romanian officers to investigate the incident. More than that, at the inspection of the cartridges made to the soldiers of the Bulgarian pickets, all the cartridges were found and as such it was not credible that these shots were fired by Bulgarian soldiers. The Bulgarian patrol that night *„did not shoot at the dogs from the Romanian picket nor on any other objective. The patrol card, official document, can be consulted and found that the patrol came to picket no.5 after performing his service, as early as 23 am on 14 October 1931, and the shots fired on the picket „Traian", as Captain Tutoveanu claimed, said, they fired at 0100 on the night of October 15, 1931. All residents of nearby villages, Korcut village, Ceanlar and Capugmahle were investigated/controlled and did not fire a gun that night. Only the forest gendarme of the village Korcut fired three shots at some shepherds to drive them out of the forest where they cut smuggled wood. It is possible that one of those bullets fell near the picket „Traian". In order not to repeat this (fire draws), interventions were made immediately at the Ministry of Agriculture, which prohibited its forest guards from shooting in the future border area, even when justified. This was done in order to avoid such matters. In general, all Bulgarian border authorities have done everything possible with the intention of removing in the future all misunderstandings caused by special views between us and the Romanian authorities"* (AMFA n.d.).

Towards the end of the talks, this Bulgarian point of view was reinforced by the fact that the frequent linguistic misunderstandings and terms between Bulgarian and Romanian officers are based on poor translation or understanding of soldiers on both sides at the moment when the presence of commanders is requested to discuss certain incidents or when a particular case is presented. Finally, although there was a need for clarification, a minutes was concluded, both in Romanian and in Bulgarian, agreed and signed by both parties, this is why at 18.30, the Bulgarian commission passed on its territory.

The common feeling of finding and discussing a methodology, a framework procedure, for investigating these incidents, materialized on March 12, 1932, when

a fundamental document was signed for both parties whose main purpose was normalization and finding common points, taking steps to follow in the investigation of incidents by future joint committees, so as not to leave room for interpretation. This document was Protocol no.5.

Joint efforts to improve bilateral relations between Romania and Bulgaria. Implementation of the new procedure for the investigation of border incidents

At the conclusion of the work of the Romanian-Bulgarian joint military commission, the president of the Romanian delegation was Colonel Alexandru Badulescu. He drew up a report to the Border Guard Corps, which drafted a report sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which he appreciated the fact that the Bulgarian delegation acknowledged the facts in part, correcting the Romanian complaints, for which the incidents were declared liquidated. In order to prevent further incidents, Colonel Alexandru Badulescu proposed and the Bulgarian delegation accepted a new investigation procedure which was recorded in Protocol no.5. Both delegations committed themselves to applying exactly those provisions on the entire Romanian-Bulgarian land border (AMFA n.d.).

According to this document concluded on 12 March 1932, the procedure accepted by both parties for improving service relations between the border guards of both countries stipulated that „*to the written or telephone invitation then confirmed in writing, the invited officer must show up as soon as possible within 24 hours of receiving the invitation except in urgent cases requiring immediate contact between officers. The commanders of platoons of both countries when they meet to investigate together a border incident, conclude in writing the findings made on the spot by signing them to each other for a change. The final investigation documents are made by the company commanders when the incident is appreciated by their resort, otherwise they address the higher authorities for validation. On the missile signal or the firing of 2 shots, the head of the neighboring country picket in the immediate vicinity, he immediately comes to the border stone to inform himself and ask for clarification by giving on their territory immediately the necessary competition. Regarding the animal crossings on one side or another of the border to proceed as follows: - if a picket animal crosses the border, the head of the neighbouring picket is forced to return it immediately without any act being completed; - if cattle of the inhabitants have crossed the border, they have, the platoon commander shall communicate in writing to the platoon commander of the neighbouring country to investigate. If the cattle have been found, they surrender to the owner before the platoon commander and record it in a report. We cannot settle matters of cattle crossings between the heads of the pickets, they are cut only by the commanders of platoons who are obliged to answer the invitation to meet. When smuggling is discovered, the respective platoon commander, after completing the investigation, announces the platoon commander of the neighboring country to track*

both the smuggler and those who have any mixture. The drafting of the documents
concluded by the officers of both countries must bear the seal of best faith. Any distortion
in this direction shall be sanctioned immediately. Any tree on the border line which is
tabulated as a sign of boundary may be cut only on the basis of a protocol concluded by
the officers of both countries. Let both countries leave a one-meter strip of land along
the border line and the mounds be bypassed" (AMFA n.d.).

To be well understood by the border guards, Protocol 5 of 12 March 1932 was
accompanied by the Instructions, drafted and signed on 26 November 1932,
which explained various aspects of the meeting of the officers, the contest that the
commanders gave each other, the arrangement of the water and hay issues at pickets
and border terminals, the animals passing from one side to the other, smuggling,
guarding border signs and meeting place for Romanian and Bulgarian border guards
(commanders). These instructions came into force on 1 December 1932 (AMFA
n.d.). For example, the meeting of the commanders of the border guards units took
place for important issues such as: investigating attacks from one side or another
on the picket, sentry or border patrol, or, investigating the attacks from one side or
another on the inhabitants working on land adjacent to the border area, investigating
the theft of cattle and crops, to return cattle passed from one side to another, for the
pursuit of smugglers, the investigation of the lack of politeness on the opposite side,
as well as in all cases when one of the commanders of the precarious units requires
relations for the proper running of the service (AMFA n.d.).

The officer invited to the meeting was obliged within 24 hours of receiving the
invitation to appear at the fixed point. Exceptions were killings, mass attacks or
major smuggling passes. If one of the officers called to investigate an incident was
missing, his help reported this to the higher authority, while also notifying the officer
who requested the meeting. The request for a meeting should always be in writing.
In case of force majeure, the request could also be verbal, but at the first opportunity
it had to be recorded in writing. Considering that, in general, the commanders of
platoons at the Bulgarian border guards were only officers, in the Romanian sectors
where platoon commanders were re-engaged the investigation of various incidents
was carried out by the Romanian officer commander of the neighboring platoon or
company commander. Romanian employees platoon commanders could only ask
for information about the incident. At the meeting, the officers were obliged to be
careful, fair and calm. Regardless of the character and result of their investigation,
they were obliged to part in the most cordial way possible, a fact of great importance
for the future relations between the border guards of both countries. In the event of
an impolitess, they were obliged to report to their superiors (AMFA n.d.).

The on-the-spot investigation was recorded „*in a minutes or protocol concluded in*
triple copy in Bulgarian and Romanian signed by both parties for the changeover and
applying the official seals. Each officer will take one copy in the neighbouring language
and two in their mother tongue. The copy written in foreign language concluded on

the occasion of the important incidents must be signed by the official translator. The minutes (the protocol) must contain exactly the content expressed and established. If, as a result of the investigation performed, the officers do not agree, then each one exposes you in the same report (protocol) showing the reasons why he does not agree. In the important incidents where they do not agree, call the immediate superior officer for clarification. In principle, the meeting will take place at the place where the incident happened for the investigation to be done on the spot. In unimportant cases such as: return of cattle, taking relations, the meeting is made for Romanians: a) the general picket Ramniceanu (Ecrene platoon); for Bulgarians - picket no. 2 On Varna-Balcic road or picket 4600 m N.V. village of Climentov (subsection 1/16); for Romanians – at the King Ferdinand picket (pluton Kuiungiuc); for Bulgarians – picket no.8 Varna road – Bazargic (subsection 2/16); for Romanians – picket second lieutenant Stoica (Boteni platoon); for Bulgarians – picket no.2 Dobrich (subsection 1/17); for Romanians – picket Lahovari (Vladimiresti platoon); for Bulgarians – picket no.6 road Vladimiresti-Ghecedeluci (subsection 2/17); for Romanians – picket sergeant Neagu (Ekiscea platoon); for Bulgarians – picket no.11 Bestepe-Trupciular road (subsection 3/17); for Romanians – picket Panculescu (pluton Kili-Kady); for Bulgarians – picket no. 2 road Mahmutslia-Sahinlar village (subsection 1/18); for Romanians – Vasile Lupu picket; ; for Bulgarians – picket no.8 Sarvii-Silistra Road (subsection 2/18); for Romanians – picket Omurgea; for Bulgarians – picket no.1 Omurchioi-Ferhatlar road (subsection 1/18)" (AMFA n.d.).

As regards the contest that the commanders were giving themselves, the pickets of border guards were obliged to be trained as the first responders to a possible incident or event, to support each other, and, certainly in the interests of good relations of friendship and neighborhood between the two parties. The request for competition was made by the head of the picket by launching one or two consecutive flares, in case of serious incidents, drawn only from the picket or the most visible place in the direction from which the danger came. On this call, the picket from the neighboring country was obliged to respond with a white flare signaling that he understood and sent patrols in the direction indicated by the flares (AMFA n.d.).

Relative to the problem of water and hay, the purchase of water at pickets was carried out according to previous agreements. In the border sectors where there were double (borne) border stones, the mowing of the hay between these border stones was simultaneously realized by Bulgarian and Romanian border guards, and the harvested hay was shared equally by the commanders of the respective platoons (AMFA n.d.).

Regarding the cattle or animals crossing the Romanian-Bulgarian border, the instructions of Protocol no.5 provided that *„different animals or birds belonging to the border guards who crossed the border had to be returned immediately by the picket commander without the completion of any act. Whether the cattle or animals belonged to the inhabitants of the area, the commander of the platoon (subsection) was obliged to notify in writing the neighboring platoon commander (subsection),*

mentioning some information related to the number and features of the cattle and the name and location of the owner and by which point they are suspected to have crossed the border. The commander of the platoon (subsection) in the neighboring country was obliged to immediately follow and notify the respective authorities in writing for their discovery and capture. For the ease of discovery of stolen animals, we propose to oblige the inhabitants of the border area (10 km deep) to mark their animals with insignia: for Romanians with R.m. The cattle are handed over at the meeting stones, personally by the officers with the minutes (protocol) after their property is established, with documents. The first three days after they are caught, they will not be charged any fee for maintenance, in the coming days the charge will be 14 lei per horse, 10 lei per cow and 4 lei per sheep as daily maintenance fee. It is not allowed for the heads of pickets to settle between themselves issues related to the crossing of cattle across the border that do not belong to the border guards" (AMFA n.d.).

As regards smuggling, the platoon commander (subsection) was obliged to notify immediately the commander in the neighboring country about the smuggling, the names of the persons involved in this activity and the area through which the fraudulent crossing of the border was made. The commander of the platoon (subsection) in the neighboring country was obliged, immediately after receiving the notice of smuggling, to start tracking the perpetrators and communicating in writing the result and the persons involved in smuggling. If the deed was found on its territory, but there were involved persons living in the territory of the neighboring country about whom the border guards authorities were not notified, the command was obliged to notify in writing and give information with precise data necessary for investigation.

Those who performed the guard service could not modify, cut or remove the border signs – trees or other distinct signs. If such an intervention was required, they were obliged to receive the approval of the higher authorities, after which the Romanian or Bulgarian officers responsible in the sector, concluded a report (protocol) (AMFA n.d.). If, from a technical point of view, on the map, the procedure agreed by both parties theoretically regulated the methodology of incident investigation on the spot, in practice things were different.

On April 7, 1932, the Border Guard Corps Command issued order no. 2827 ordering the 3 Border Guard Brigade to apply the provisions set out in Protocol no.5 Concluded by the Romanian-Bulgarian joint military commission on 12 March 1932. If at declarative level the Bulgarian military authorities claimed that they had removed the provisions of Protocol no. 5, the border incident occurred on the night of 9/May 10, 1932 highlighted the lack of training of Bulgarian soldiers. That evening, two armed individuals tried to cross the border into Bulgaria, for which they were summoned by the Romanian border guards. Soon the two suspects opened fire on the scene. The investigation carried out after the incident highlighted the poor knowledge of Protocol no.5 by the Romanian officers and border guards (AMFA n.d.).

Another incident occurred on August 1, 1932. The guardians' boat D.nr.1, while sailing to Bechet in front of the Bulgarian picket „Vadinul" due to an engine failure was carried by the current to the Bulgarian shore while Bulgarian border guards summoned the Romanian sailors to moor. Frightened by the possibility of a long seizure and the possibility of failing to fulfill their orders, the sailors managed to start the engine accelerating to the Romanian shore. While the boat was moving away from the neighboring shore, Bulgarian border guards opened fire on the boat, hitting it in full, being fired over 20 bullets (AMFA n.d.).

On December 13, 1932, Vasile Stoica informed Nicolae Titulescu, the minister of foreign affairs, through Note no. 3312, about the discussions he had with General Al.Kissov, minister of War and N. Mushanov, President of the Council of Ministers, on the establishment of the joint commission to investigate several incidents, including the one in which the Bulgarian komitadji was involved. In the long conversation with General Al. Kissov, which took place at the home of the British minister, Sydney Waterlow, the Romanian diplomat highlighted the worsening relations between Bulgaria and its neighbors due to the repeated refusal of Bulgarian border officers to participate, according to the agreements, to the joint investigations to which they were invited, as well as the refusal of the Bulgarian government to allow the establishment of joint committees when they were proposed to it. The English diplomat also agreed with the Romanian point of view. General Kissov replied that at least in two cases the Bulgarian investigation proved that the facts mentioned by the Romanian side did not exist. The answer of the Romanian minister came promptly regarding the investigations made by the Romanian side that reached contrary conclusions, for this reason, it was preferable to establish a joint military commission and not restrictive measures that the Romanian government would take at the border. Eventually the Bulgarian general agreed with Vasile Stoica.

Conclusion

At the end of 1932, the Romanian minister from Sofia, Vasile Stoica, pleaded in discussions with the president of the Council of Ministers, N. Musanov, to create joint military commissions that could limit any unnecessary agitation and tension at the border. The refusal of one of the parts of the proposal to establish a commission allowed the suspicion that it was guilty to float on it. The president of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers was intrigued by the intervention of the Romanian diplomat, suspecting a deal between Romanians and Yugoslavians, the latter requesting through their diplomatic representative in Sofia the formation of commissions for the investigation of incidents that took place at the Bulgarian-Yugoslav border. After the Romanian minister assured him that there was no such deal, N. Musanov reproached him that in the official documents and discussions in which he pleaded for the formation of joint committees, he used the phrase „commitagii bulgari", when in fact they were mere thieves who were only trying to cause agitation and a state of

tension at the common border. On the contrary, although he admitted that, in most cases, the incidents were caused by thieves or smugglers, Vasile Stoica replied that he could not name otherwise those who, after making inroads into the Romanian territory, were killed by Romanian border guards after attacking them, the magazines of the dobrogens in Bulgaria glorified them as national heroes, as was the case with Coliu Colev (or Curtev) killed on the night of October 3 to October 4, 1932 in Kidi-Kadi. In the face of such an argument, the Bulgarian prime minister replied that the organization supporting these magazines were communists and, of course, those who make inroads into the Romanian territory. This political belonging does not change the state of comitadji. In the end, N. Musanov said he wanted to eliminate any misunderstandings with Romania, accepting the establishment of joint military commissions. However, new border incidents were afterwards reported.

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The economic impact of terrorism – the efficiency of funds allocated by international development organizations
(Gaza Strip Case Study)

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Abstract

Terrorism is a concept that has existed internationally since ancient times, receiving different names from specialists depending on the period in which it was identified, the means and methods used in the activities carried out or the aims pursued by the actions of the members of various organizations.

One thing we would like to point out is that as long as there are different points of view, as long as the interests of some of the parties involved in a conflict, including those of an economic nature, are at odds, then the conditions will be created for the development or coagulation of resistance movements, which by their actions will be labelled as terrorist organizations.

One of the main terrorist organizations causing immeasurable economic damage, and whose actions are also likely to affect international relations, is Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya – HAMAS, also known as the Islamic Resistance Movement, which since 2006 has taken control of the Gaza Strip using armed force, imposing political and economic separation from the Palestinian Authority.

Keywords:

In the following pages we will try to analyze the economic effects of terrorist actions on some of the places where they are mainly active, based on data provided internationally following terrorist attacks, and then to identify the involvement of international bodies in post-conflict reconstruction and the amount of money they spend on developing and implementing viable solutions so that those territories no longer have to face possible terrorist activities in their area of interest and so that terrorist organizations no longer find favorable spaces for development by inducing fundamentalist ideas in the population.

Thus, at the end of the paper, after analyzing the conflict between the terrorist organization HAMAS and the Israeli authorities, as well as on the basis of the analysis of the work of international organizations such as the UN, we will be able to expose the main economic areas affected by the outbreak of a large-scale conflict between a terrorist organization and a state, which may also affect diplomatic relations at international level, leading to a development and perpetuation of the conflict with an impact on the civilian population.

The economic impact of terrorism at the international level – plans for the development of the Gaza Strip from the perspective of international organizations with a role in guaranteeing security

Although terrorism has existed internationally for a long time (Laquer 1987, 11-12), it was only after the 11 September 2011 incidents that security experts assigned it a clear role, leading to a reorientation of actions and the development of capabilities to fight it in a focused manner.

Thus, starting with the terrorist attack of 11 September 2011, followed by the war in Afghanistan, the invasion of Iraq, the fight against ISIS and Al Qaeda, Western states have shown a willingness to fight terrorism together, realizing the risks they run if they do not intervene where terrorist organizations have their origins, going beyond the idea of not going beyond the obstacle of their own territorial borders. The emergence and development of terrorist networks has been addressed in the same way by the main international organizations with a role in guaranteeing security. The UN, NATO and the EU have launched a series of operations to prevent the emergence of terrorism both on the territory of the Member States and in various parts of the world, to prepare the population to fight this scourge or simply to remove terrorist organizations that controlled part of the territory.

At the same time, mechanisms have been developed, both at state level and at the level of international organizations, to prevent the spread of terrorism, to stop terrorist groups from financing themselves and to prevent them from recruiting new members. The economic impact of terrorism, although difficult to quantify, can be exemplified

in the case of the 2001 terrorist attack and the activities of US representatives to compensate for the lives lost in that attack.

In this regard, the US has since 2015 developed a State-Sponsored Terrorism Victims Fund, administered by the Criminal Division's Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section (MLARS) under the direction of Special Master Mary Patrice Brown, which in April 2023 announced that it would make a payment to 5,361 victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, including relatives of the victims, such as their children or spouses. Previously, the Fund had paid out more than $3.3 billion to victims, with the total number of eligible applicants increasing from more than 2,000 in 2017 to more than 15,500 today. Of these, 12,117 claimants are victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and their family members, while another 3,652 were victims of other terrorist attacks (US Department of Justice 2023a). In total, since the Fund was created, the U.S. government has paid out approximately $6 billion in compensation to victims of terrorist acts and their family members through the Fund (US Department of Justice 2023b).

In terms of the amount paid to each of the victims, the US authorities pay compensation of USD 250,000 for a person killed, USD 100,000 for a spouse and USD 100,000 for each of the victim's dependents. For personal injury claims, the amount of money paid in compensation starts at $250,000 and can increase depending on the family circumstances of each victim (US Department of Justice 2023b).
These aspects presented above show that any terrorist action can have significant economic effects on a state, without analyzing in detail other areas such as the material damage caused or the level to which certain economic areas have been affected and the negative result in terms of revenue over a given period of time.

Given that, internationally, between 2010 and 2021, there were approximately 119,365 terrorist attacks in various locations around the world, this once again demonstrates the major economic impact that terrorism can have on the economies of states, both in terms of casualties and the various amounts of money that nations can lose as a result of damage to various branches of the economy or destruction of infrastructure.

The phenomenon of globalization has meant that the economic effects of terrorist acts are felt far beyond the geographical area in which they are committed. As an example, suppose a terrorist attack occurs with implications leading to the blockage of the Suez Canal for a certain period of time, these actions may affect all maritime cargo traffic between Asia and Europe, although such a possible event could only be recorded, in terms of space, on the territory of Egypt.
Thus, following summary calculations of the economic impact of terrorism at the global level, specialists in the field have estimated that these terrorist activities accounted for costs to states of approximately USD 613.6 billion between 2010 and 2019 (StatSoft 2023). On the basis of these calculations, we believe that the

economic implications of terrorist actions are far greater than can be quantified and, starting from the events of 11 September 2001, in addition to the compensation of victims and the calculations made of the damage to infrastructure, we believe that the intervention of the United States of America in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2022, which had a total cost of approximately USD 2.313 trillion, is also an economic consequence of terrorist actions and must be taken into account in the event of a comprehensive study of the economic cost of terrorism (Watson Institute 2021). This amount of money related to the US action in Afghanistan is, however, one that does not take into account the financial contributions of allies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations that acted during this period, as well as other costs of infrastructure, post-conflict reconstruction, etc., and does not include future interest payments on the money borrowed to finance the war or payments to be made for the lifetime of those affected, such as servicemen who participated in the hostilities and the medical and psychiatric care they will receive (Watson Institute 2021).

The main institutions with a role in guaranteeing security, such as the UN, NATO, the EU and the OSCE, through the programs they run, must become much more actively involved in preventing and combating this phenomenon, while respecting international conventions and without infringing the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. Why are we making this point? Because only by applying methods in accordance with international laws will we truly be able to make a clear distinction between the defenders of good, the promoters of prosperity, and the members of terrorist organizations working to the detriment of common interests, for their own good.

The swiftness with which these organizations have acted when crisis situations arise, such as in Afghanistan or the emergence and development of Daesh/ISIL, is the best example of international cooperation in combating and eradicating terrorism (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2021). By complementing each other and identifying common solutions to eliminate this international threat, the above-mentioned organizations have supported the formation of global coalitions, but have also taken action to stop the illegal funding of these organizations or to prevent the recruitment of new fighters from European states intending to move into these territories. In order to combat terrorism, the UN, the EU, NATO and the OSCE have issued a number of resolutions[1], strategies to combat terrorism[2], unilaterally support the measures adopted by NATO and the OSCE and participate in international initiatives in this field[3].

We can firmly state that the UN is the main global organization with a role in guaranteeing the security of its member states, but the shortcomings in decision-making on counter-terrorism actions lead us to believe that

[1] Since 1963, the international community has developed 19 international legal instruments to prevent terrorist acts. These instruments were developed under the auspices of the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and are open to the participation of all Member States.
[2] EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Action Plan, Media Communication Strategy, EU Strategy on Countering Radicalization and Recruitment for Terrorist Purposes, EU Strategy for Syria and Iraq – Countering Terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters.
[3] The Proliferation Security Initiative and the Global Initiative to Counter Nuclear Terrorism.

a change of direction, policies and strategies to combat terrorism is needed. Since within this organization there are states with clearly different views on terrorist entities, it is very difficult to find a consensus on declaring some organizations as terrorist and not liberating movements. These differences of opinion are mainly based on the strategic interests of certain countries, on the religion of the combatants, but also on the regional foreign policies exercised by certain influential states, an illustrative example being HAMAS, an organization which some states consider to be terrorist and others consider to be an organization fighting for the independence and territorial integrity of Palestine (Khalidi 2020, 10-15).

Although the main form of subsidy for HAMAS activities, particularly its military wing, is the collection of customs duties at border crossings with Egypt, which can amount to millions of dollars a month, there are suspicions that this terrorist organization has also appropriated over the years some of the money or materials made available by the UN to the civilian population in the form of aid (Merari and Elad 2019, 20-40).

In an interview on 23.10.2023, Tzipi Hotovely, the Israeli ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, credited HAMAS with building some 30 tunnels worth more than 100 million dollars out of money illegally taken by the organization from the UN (Bir 2023).
In this case, in addition to money from official sources, the terrorist organization has taken funds earmarked for aid to the civilian population in Gaza to develop its own defense capabilities, which suggests that the UN representatives have not paid sufficient attention to how the money is spent or the goods provided, such as construction materials, are used.

Brief history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – the economic cost of HAMAS terrorist action on 7 October 2023

The term Palestine comes from the Latin word "Palestina", having in ancient Greek "Palaistine" "παλαιστινη", the name being first recorded in the writings of HERODOT (ca. 484 - ca. 425 BC), who understood by it the Mediterranean coast from southern Phoenicia to the present-day Gaza area, a coast identified as the southern part of Syria, also known to the Hellenes as Koelesyria (Bir 2023). However, the population of this area is attested long before the Greek historian mentioned it, and over time the area described has been populated since the Palaeolithic by numerous other tribes, most of which were migratory at the time.
It should be noted that the first reports of the Israelite tribes coming to these territories occurred around the 13th century BC, when they established several settlements in the mountainous areas. Later, the territory was marked by numerous conflicts, and throughout history it has been under various occupations such as that of the Roman and Ottoman empires.

The economic importance of this territory is reflected in its strategic location at the crossroads of several trade routes between Asia, Africa and Europe, which led the powers of the time, such as France and Great Britain, to try to take it over from the 9th century. With the end of the First World War and the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, in 1918 the British army occupied Palestine and placed it under military administration, having previously prepared for this in the Sykes-Picot Round of 2016, in which Britain each claimed certain territories within the Ottoman Empire. During the British Mandate there were several clashes between the occupation forces and the population of this area, mainly of Arab origin, which led to the escalation of violence such as that between 1921-1929 when hundreds of Jews were killed in Palestinian localities such as Hebron, Jerusalem and Jaffa or the Arab uprising between 1936-1939.

Following the horrors committed against the Jews during the Second World War, United Nations Resolution 181 decreed on 29 November 1947 that the British Mandate would end on 15 May 1948 and that the territory would be divided into two states, one Jewish and one Arab, a solution which was rejected by the Arab community and led to widespread action which eventually led to the outbreak of a civil war between Arabs and Palestinians. The area has subsequently been a huge hotbed of tension that has generated several military conflicts between both Israelis and Palestinians, but has also drawn in neighboring states, the most important of which was the Suez Crisis - in 1956, The Six-Day War - the third major Arab-Israeli armed conflict, which lasted from 5 to 10 June 1967, between Israel and the alliance of the Arab states of Egypt, Jordan and Syria, the War of Usury – from 1967 to 1970, the Yom Kippur War – in 1973, the Lebanon War – in 1982.

In response to the significant territorial loss, as a result of Palestinian feelings of discontent, a so-called resistance movement called the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) emerged in 1964, and the first terrorist acts were committed since 1995 by an offshoot of it called Fatah, which was established on October 10, 1959, under the leadership of Yasser Arafat (Moceanu 2023).

Subsequently, between 1987 and 1993, the first Palestinian intifada took place, a term referring to the Palestinian uprising that led to numerous acts of terrorism against Israeli civilians. During the first Intifada, officially launched on 10 December 1987, the Hamas terrorist organization was officially created, this initiative being the result of a collaboration between Sheikh Ahmad Yasin and Muhammad Taha, an important member of the wing of the Muslim Brotherhood organization active at the time in the Gaza Strip. The military wing of HAMAS is known as the Ezzedin Al-Qassam Brigades and was created in 1992 by the so-called "Engineer", Yahya Ayyash, the nickname being a representation of his skill in creating improvised explosive devices that have been used over the years in various attacks against Israelis.

Peace negotiations for the conclusion of the first Intifada began with the Madrid Conference in 1991, but we believe that they officially began with the signing of

the Oslo Accords between the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization, a symbolic moment marking the beginning of recognition between the two entities and the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), which was to have responsibility for the administration of the territory under its control.

The second Intifada took place between 2000-2005, after the signing of the Oslo Accords and the return of PLO leaders from exile, led by Yasser Arafat. This period was characterized by numerous acts of terrorism, involving extreme violence on the part of the Palestinians, followed by reprisals on the part of the Israelis, the economic costs as well as the loss of life, destruction of infrastructure and the like could not be measured so far because of the difficulties of gathering all the data.

In 2005 elections were held throughout the Palestinian Authority, at which time HAMAS, although declared the winner, was unable to take control until it took over the Gaza Strip by force in 2007, leading to a division of the Palestinian Authority, with Fatah remaining in control of the partially autonomous West Bank. This was also the time of the last elections held in the Gaza Strip.

Following the continuation of terrorist acts, four other major conflicts between HAMAS and the Israeli authorities took place after 2005, between 27 December 2008 and 18 January 2009, between 14 and 21 November 2012, between 8 July 2014 and 26 August and between 10 May and 21 May 2021, in which there were numerous losses of human life, economic losses and the imposition by Israel of a military blockade of the territory, the restrictions being such as to cause other major economic losses which led to an increase in the level of poverty in the Gaza Strip and the outbreak of a genuine humanitarian crisis (Moceanu 2023).

All these restrictions and the almost total isolation of the Gaza Strip inevitably led to an almost non-existent foreign investment figure in the territory, to a halt in production activities due to a lack of raw materials, resulting in a vertiginous collapse of the economy, with almost 80% of the population reportedly dependent on international aid by 2022 and two thirds of the population below the poverty line.

To get an idea of the magnitude of the economic effects of this situation, in which a terrorist organization has taken control of a territory and then attacks the territory of a state, we must realize that the UN estimates that in mid-2022, 65% of the population of the Gaza Strip was food insecure, compared to 62.2% in mid-2021, and that the rate of poverty over the same timeframe has increased from 59% to 65%. Other areas where the situation in the region was one worth considering were those of health, education or transport to which the vast majority of the population did not have access (UNCTAD 2023b).

Although dependent on external humanitarian aid, without which the crisis in the Gaza Strip would have deepened further, by 2022 the Palestinian government had received only $250 million to strengthen its budget and a further $300 million for development projects, which represented 3% of GDP, a significant decrease from

previous years when, for example in 2008, the World Bank reported international aid at $2 billion, representing 27% of GDP.

The humanitarian crisis was further deepened by the unprecedented terrorist action carried out by HAMAS on 7 October 2023, when this terrorist organization carried out a large-scale attack on Israeli territory, resulting in approximately 1,200 civilian casualties and 200 people being kidnapped and taken inside the Gaza Strip.

In retaliation, the Israeli authorities began extensive offensive actions, bombings and a ground operation in the Gaza Strip. The bombing was aimed at destroying a network of tunnels built by HAMAS, HAMAS defense infrastructure, command and control centers and the liquidation of fighters, and was carried out mainly in the northern part of the region.

However, the economic effects of such an action will be difficult to quantify, since we are talking about the destruction of buildings, the almost complete destruction of infrastructure, the destruction of schools and hospitals, the destruction of the electricity and water supply network, and the sums that will be needed for post-conflict reconstruction will be very large.

Another element is the displacement of an impressive number of people, some 2 million refugees to the southern Gaza Strip, people who in November 2023 did not have the necessities of food, drinking water, access to health care or other basics for a decent living. The precarious economic state of the population in the territory is mainly due to the ongoing terrorist actions carried out by HAMAS against the Israeli authorities and especially against Israeli civilians, which have led to the restrictive measures that we have seen over the years, and now to a large-scale military operation.

The calculations to be made to determine the economic impact of the HAMAS action of 7 October 2023 can only be made after the cessation of hostilities, because the Israeli action seems at the end of November 2023, far from being over, and this itself involves significant expenditure like any form of war, which includes the use of technology, men, logistical means to support the fight, the transition of several economic areas to the form of war. This does not include many other economic sectors which are and will be affected by terrorist action, such as tourism, the means of procuring raw materials for industry and aviation.

Conclusions

Although international organizations such as the UN, and some states such as Israel, have taken important steps to ensure that aid money for the people of the Gaza Strip reaches the real recipients, the people in need, an important factor in HAMAS's success over time in getting the funds to carry out its work has been that the aid has been directed towards infrastructure development, the proper functioning of hospitals and schools and other benefits, including food aid, which provided

the inhabitants of the area with a minimum of daily necessities, and the territorial organization collected from taxes and customs payments other money which it did not need to use in these sectors.

By way of example, the UN has provided the Gaza Strip between 2014-2020 with approximately $4.5 billion, mainly through the UN Agency for Palestinian Refugees, and Qatar has provided approximately $1.3 billion since 2012, these being the main donors along with the Palestinian Authority which by 2021 is expected to spend $1.7 billion in the Gaza Strip, mainly to pay the salaries of civil servants who stopped working after 2007 when HAMAS took power (UNCTAD 2023a).

As we can see, the amounts of money that have flowed into the Gaza Strip are not insignificant, but it is necessary for international bodies to monitor strictly where this aid is going, in order to prevent HAMAS from receiving support to generate new capabilities to continue the fight against Israel.

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BULLETIN

Considerations regarding possible directions for improving the method of carrying out financial control in public institutions in Romania

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the current state and the fundamental role of financial control within public entities in Romania. Through a methodology based on comparative analysis, the study focuses on financial control legislation and practices, highlighting significant developments and changes in recent years. The analysis is enriched by assessing the impact of these changes on the efficiency and transparency of the management of public funds.

In particular, the article identifies progress made within the financial control system, highlighting legislative and administrative improvements as well as persistent challenges. Special attention is paid to the impact of the reforms on the transparency of public spending and the accountability of government institutions.

The results of the analysis emphasize a gradual tendency to improve financial control practices, but also highlight the continuous need for reform and adaptation to European and international standards. Through this analysis, the article contributes to the existing literature on this topic, providing an updated perspective on the state of financial control in Romania and emphasizing its importance for efficient and responsible governance. In conclusion, the study reveals the vital importance of continuing reforms in the field of financial control, not only to improve administrative efficiency, but also to strengthen public confidence in the way state resources are administered.

Keywords:

Control in general, together with planning, organization, management and evaluation, represents one of the most important functions of the entity's management system and "represents a means of preventing illegal acts, identifying deficiencies and establishing the necessary measures to restore of legality" (Mihăescu 2015). This is achieved through a "permanent or periodic analysis of an activity, of a situation in order to follow its progress and to take measures to improve it" (DEX 2011).

In the last decade, Romania has gone through numerous economic and political changes that have significantly influenced the way public entities manage and control their finances. Economic growth, integration into European structures, as well as political fluctuations have brought to the fore the need for a robust and transparent financial control in the public sector. This complex dynamic has determined a continuous reassessment of financial control systems, with the aim of ensuring an efficient management of public resources and responding to the expectations of citizens and international bodies.

Financial control in public entities is not only a legal requirement, but also an essential pillar for ensuring responsible and efficient governance. In the Romanian context, where the public sector plays a significant role in the economy, an effective financial control is crucial for preventing the waste of resources, fighting corruption and promoting transparency.

Starting from the fact that managers, in the management activity, use as the main source the financial-accounting information viewed as a "communication, a piece of news or a message that contains new elements of knowledge of some states, some situations or the conditions of manifestation of certain phenomena or economic processes from the past, present or future" (Moroşan 2000), we believe that the quality and results of financial control depend both on ensuring an optimal use of public funds and on strengthening public trust in state institutions.

Through this article, we aim to investigate the current state of financial control in public entities in Romania, identifying both the progress made and the challenges that persist. The main objectives of the article are: the analysis of the legislative and institutional framework, the evaluation of the implementation of financial control practices and the identification of directions for improvement in this field. Through this approach, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how financial control can be optimized to meet Romania's current and future needs in its unique economic and political context.

In what follows, we will explore the legislative and institutional framework that governs financial control in Romania, analyze current practices and discuss challenges and potential solutions to improve this essential system for the proper functioning of the public sector.

Considerations regarding the directions for improving financial control in public institutions in Romania

Financial control is an important component of economic control, whose main purpose is to know and verify the way financial resources are managed and administered by economic entities (Mihăescu 2015). So, financial control represents "a knowledge process and a practice that encourages study, action and reflection" (Munteanu *et al.* 2020).

Financial control in Romania is defined by various legislative acts, which establish the framework and general principles of this process. In essence, financial control represents the set of activities and measures adopted by the state to ensure the efficiency, effectiveness, economy and legality of the use of public funds. "Depending on the choice of accounting policies, the financial results will differ" (Carataş 2020), so the results obtained as a result of the financial control activity are the starting point in the decision-making process of the entity.

Financial control in public entities in Romania is regulated by a complex legislative framework, which includes national laws, government ordinances, as well as European directives and regulations. Among the most relevant normative acts is Law no. 500/2002 on public finances, Law no. 273/2006 on local public finances, and Law no. 94/1992 regarding the organization and operation of the Court of Accounts. These laws establish the basic principles of financial control, including the responsibilities of public entities to manage funds efficiently, ensure transparency and respect the legality of expenditures.

In recent years, the legislation on financial control in Romania has seen several changes, reflecting both the adaptation to European standards and the response to specific internal needs. Recent changes include measures to increase transparency and accountability, as well as improve the effectiveness of financial control. For example, the introduction of electronic reporting and auditing systems has increased the capacity to monitor and evaluate public spending.

The legislative reforms had a significant impact on the way public entities in Romania manage their finances. The implementation of new standards and procedures led to a better management of financial risks and increased the degree of accountability and transparency (Oprean 2019).

In Romania, financial control is exercised at several levels and by various institutions. The Court of Accounts plays a key role in auditing public finances and assessing compliance with the legislation in force (Munteanu *et al.* 2020). Other relevant institutions include the Ministry of Public Finance, internal public audit structures, as well as internal financial control departments within each public entity. The roles and responsibilities of these institutions are clearly defined in the legislation, each having specific duties in the financial control process.

The objectives of financial control in Romania, as in many other countries, are diverse and aim to ensure an efficient, transparent and legal management of public resources. The main objectives can be summarized as follows:

a) Legality and regularity:

Verification of compliance of financial transactions and activities carried out by public entities with national legislation and with applicable European or international norms. This includes ensuring that expenditure is authorized and within approved budget limits.

b) Efficiency and Effectiveness:

Evaluating how public funds are used to determine whether established objectives are being achieved cost effectively and efficiently. This objective aims to maximize results with available resources.

c) Economy:

This objective focuses on minimizing costs without compromising the quality of purchased goods and services. It involves prudent and responsible management of financial resources.

d) Transparency and accountability:

Ensuring increased visibility and accessibility regarding the use of public funds. Transparency is essential to increase public trust and to enable effective civic monitoring and control. It is also necessary to create an environment in which every public entity and every person involved in the process of managing public finances is accountable for decisions and his actions. This includes the obligation to justify and explain how resources are used.

e) Preventing and combating fraud and corruption:

Identifying and reducing the risks of fraud and corruption in the management of public funds. Financial control must ensure effective mechanisms for detecting and preventing financial irregularities and abuses.

f) Adaptability and continuous improvement:

Continuous adaptation of financial control practices to changes in the environment, legislation and technology, as well as continuous improvement of control procedures and systems.

These objectives reflect Romania's commitment to ensuring a responsible and transparent management of public finances, an essential element for effective governance and for strengthening citizens' trust in state institutions.

From the point of view of the objectives and the time of implementation, the financial control exercised in our country can be classified into several main categories, as follows:

a) Preventive Financial Control:

This type of control is carried out before a financial operation is carried out. Its purpose is to verify the legality, regularity and sometimes timeliness of operations. It is an ex-ante control, which takes place before the hiring, liquidation and ordering of expenses (Sgardea 2017).

b) Current or simultaneous operational financial control:

This control overlaps almost entirely, in time and space, with the content of

ongoing economic and financial activities, allowing an operative intervention to correct errors and remove the causes that generated them. This type of control is exercised from within the entity.

c) Subsequent financial control:

This control is carried out after carrying out the financial operations. Its main purpose is to verify the legality and regularity of these operations and to identify possible irregularities. The subsequent control can be carried out by the Court of Accounts or other financial control bodies.

d) Financial management control:

It refers to the assessment of how financial resources are used within an entity to achieve the established objectives. This type of control focuses on performance and achieving results. The reporting of the results of the financial management control is carried out in accordance with the provisions of art. 10 para. 3 of the annex to GD no. 1151 of November 27, 2012.

These types of financial control are complementary and contribute to an integrated system of supervision and regulation of financial activities in the public sector in Romania. By combining these approaches, both compliance with the law and the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of public funds are ensured.

We believe that the main challenges regarding the exercise of quality financial control, which provide reasonable assurances that the entity's objectives will be achieved and aim to find solutions regarding: the lack of human and financial resources, the need for training and continuous professional development of the personnel involved in financial control, as well as technological difficulties such as implementing appropriate IT systems. Also, resistance to change and bureaucratic inertia can prevent adaptation to new procedures and standards (Popa 2000).

Despite the challenges, there are examples of good practices and innovations that can serve as models for improving financial control. These include the use of information technology to streamline audit and control processes, transparency and accountability initiatives, and collaboration between different public entities to share best practices.

The main limitations of financial control in Romania can be identified in several areas, reflecting both structural challenges and aspects specific to the local context:

a) Human resource quality and limited institutional capacity:

A major problem is the lack of qualified and trained personnel in financial control entities. This leads to low efficiency and delays in carrying out audits and financial evaluations.

b) Bureaucracy and inefficient processes:

The financial control system in Romania is often characterized by complex and inefficient bureaucratic procedures, which can slow down the audit process and reduce control effectiveness.

c) Insufficiently developed technology and IT systems:

Digitization and automation of financial control processes are still in their infancy in many public entities. The lack of integrated and modern IT systems limits the ability to quickly and efficiently analyze financial data.

d) Lack of transparency and responsibility:

There is often a lack of transparency in the presentation and publication of financial data. This affects public trust and limits the possibilities for civic oversight over the management of public funds.

e) Ambiguous or continuously changing legal framework:

Legislation governing financial control can sometimes be ambiguous or subject to frequent changes, which creates uncertainty and difficulties in the consistent application of the law.

f) Resistance to change and organizational culture:

In some public entities, there is a resistance to change, either because of habit or because of vested interests. This can prevent the implementation of more effective financial control practices.

g) Inadequate funding:

Insufficient funding of financial control entities can limit their ability to conduct thorough audits and develop professionally.

h) Conflict of interest and corruption:

In some cases, there are risks of conflict of interest or even corruption, which can undermine the integrity and effectiveness of financial control.

Addressing these limitations requires a coordinated effort that includes legislative reforms, investment in human and technological resources, improving control processes, and promoting a culture of transparency and accountability. These actions should be accompanied by a firm commitment from the authorities to improve the financial control system in Romania.

In our opinion, based on the analysis of the context of financial control in public entities in Romania, we can identify several main directions for improvement, namely:

1. Intensification of digitization and automation:

The implementation of advanced technological solutions for the automation and digitization of financial control processes can increase efficiency, accuracy and transparency. The use of integrated IT systems would facilitate real-time monitoring and analysis of financial data.

2. Strengthening institutional capacity:

Improving the training and professional development of staff involved in financial control is essential. This includes both training in financial law and auditing practices as well as developing digital skills.

3. Improving the Legislative Framework:

Updating and simplifying relevant legislation to reflect international best practice and to respond more effectively to current needs. Clarifying and standardizing procedures can reduce ambiguities and improve compliance.

4. Promoting Transparency and Accountability:

Fostering a culture of transparency and accountability among public entities. This can be achieved by regularly publishing audit reports and financial data, thereby facilitating public oversight and increasing citizen confidence.

5. Strengthening Internal and External Audit:

Strengthening internal and external audit functions through additional resources, specialized training and a clear mandate to assess and improve financial control.

6. Integration of Risk Management:

Implementation of effective risk management within financial control processes. This involves the identification, assessment and proactive management of potential financial risks (Păunescu 2021).

7. Inter-institutional collaboration:

Encouraging collaboration and exchange of best practices between different public entities and financial control institutions. This may include partnerships, networks and exchange programs.

These improvement directions aim not only at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of financial control, but also at strengthening public trust in the integrity and transparency of the management of public funds. Implementing these improvements will require a coordinated and sustained effort from all stakeholders.

Conclusion

The detailed analysis of financial control in public entities in Romania revealed important aspects, both positive and negative. Significant progress has been made in digitizing processes and strengthening the legislative framework, but there are still major challenges related to institutional capacity, the efficiency of control processes and transparency in the management of public funds.

The findings of this study have important implications for policy formulation and financial control practices. They highlight the need for an integrated and coherent approach to improving the financial control system. This involves investing in human resources, technology and infrastructure, as well as adopting more transparent and accountable practices.

Based on the analysis performed, we can formulate the following recommendations:
- it is essential to intensify the efforts for training and continuous professional development of the personnel involved in financial control;
- accelerating digitalization and automation processes to increase the efficiency and transparency of financial control;
- revising and simplifying the legislation to remove ambiguities and facilitate the effective application of the rules;

- encouraging a culture of transparency through the regular publication of audit reports and financial data;
- strengthening internal and external audit functions by allocating adequate resources and specialized training;
- the adoption of a proactive risk management within the financial control processes.

In conclusion, financial control in public entities in Romania is in a continuous process of evolution and adaptation. Efforts to reform and improve must continue, taking into account changes in the economic, social and technological environment. An efficient and transparent financial control is essential not only for an adequate management of public resources, but also for strengthening citizens' trust in state institutions.

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