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EDITORS' NOTE

The Wider Black Sea or the extended Black Sea Region plays a crucial role in European security. The region has become in 21st Century a strategic frontier for Europe (especially European Union), United States (NATO), and Russian Federation. The recent European wars – 2008 in Georgia and 2014 in Ukraine (ongoing), held in the Black Sea basin confirms its geopolitical importance. The Black Sea region for ages was an area of military, political and economical confrontation between the regional actors and global powers. Nowadays, the Black Sea basin seems to be the crucial region of the Euroasian rivalry.

The newest issue of “Ante Portas – Security Studies”, which I am pleased to share, is mostly concerned with the threats and challenges that we are recently witnessing in the Black Sea basin. Our Authors represent the countries from the region, especially Georgia. Their studies show numerous problems, specific and complex, such as the NATO regional approach towards missile defence in the Black Sea basin (Alika Guchua), cyber warfare, and new technologies (Thornike Zedelashvili), Russia’s propaganda and disinformation (Revaz Topuria, Zaza Tsotniashvili), asymmetric warfare and terrorism in the region (Vakhtang Maisaia & Magdana Beselia), or the future of the Ukrainian conflict (Vadim Volovoj, from Lithuania).

The other articles concern various issues represent many regions and areas of research. Igor Ivanow & Svetlana Petrenko (Kazakhstan) brought us the importance of the INF Treaty for Central Asian security, and Muhammad Maigari Abdullahi, Usman Ahamd Karofi, Uthman Abdullahi Abdul-Qadir & Ibrahim Arafat (Nigeria) described the Nigerian counter-terrorism and special military operations.

Military and defence matters play the main role in the recent issue, however, not the only ones. Svetlana Cebotari & Stelana Stejaru (Moldova) emphasized the role of the UN Security Council in the COVID-19 crisis management, Tomáš Beňuška (Slovakia) shows the challenges of social security in the context of religion and demography, Olena Yatsenko (Ukraine) continues the problem of social security (or society’s security) in the virtual space, Przemysław Furgacz (Poland) announced the incoming revolution in the banking system.

I am proud, as “Ante Portas – Security Studies” Editor-in-Chief, of diversity that characterizes our journal – the diversity of Authors, opinions, points of view, areas of interest. I am sure that all of our readers will find this as an added value. Enjoy your reading!

Jakub Žak
Editor-In-Chief

I. ARTICLES

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Alika GUCHUA¹
Georgia

NATO REGIONAL APPROACHES TO MISSILE DEFENSE - IN THE CONTEXT OF BLACK SEA SECURITY

Abstract:

In modern times, the security of the Black Sea region is given great attention in international politics. This is an important area of interest for the Euro-Atlantic Alliance, as evidenced by the European Parliament's Strategy for the Black Sea, adopted in 2011. NATO's close attention at the 2016 Warsaw Summit and the Parliamentary Assembly in Bucharest in 2017 shows its interest in this issue, as well as at the 2019 Washington Ministerial meeting, which approved a package of security actions The Black Sea. After the annexation of Crimea by Russia, we can safely say that the region is included in the sphere of interests of global players. The Black Sea is simultaneously a confrontation line between global powers, where the interests of Russia and NATO, Russia and the European Union, on the one hand, and Turkey, Russia, and the United States, on the other, diverge. The article discusses the importance and role of the Black Sea in the context of global security. The policy of modernization and development of missile defense systems and strategic strike weapons in the Black Sea region is also being discussed. The main approaches and characteristics of NATO's regional security policy in the Black Sea are discussed.

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Keywords:

Black Sea Security, NATO, Russia, Aggression, Global Security, Armed conflict, International Actors, Missile Defense, Strategic Strike Weapons

Introduction

It should be noted that in modern times, NATO plays a significant role in strategic strike weapons, as well as in the field of missile defense. It is noteworthy that NATO has new policies and approaches to Black Sea security. Since the Alliance openly named Russia and China as a threat, the issue of protecting regional security in the Black Sea and modernizing and developing missile systems has become more urgent. Following the annexation of Crimea by Russia, the Black Sea Basin has become even more strategically important to the EU and NATO, both politically and militarily, in the region, given Russia's growing position and growing militarization in the Black Sea Basin. The importance of the Black Sea for NATO and the European Union was especially emphasized at the 2016 NATO Warsaw Summit and the 2017 NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Bucharest, as well as in the 'Black Sea Strategy' adopted by the European Parliament in 2011.

The Black Sea region is very important for NATO, both for the European allies and for the United States, i.e. as the main bridge for energy carriers between East and West and as a barrier against various dangers and challenges. Security controls in this region are driven by the various interests of the Black Sea littoral states. The interests and priorities of some countries align with the strategic interests of the North Atlantic Alliance, while some states oppose NATO activation in the region.

We can say that given that the region's three coastal states are members of NATO, Russia perceives Russia's significant military advantage and its aggressive policies in the region as a worrying threat to the Black Sea region and a challenge to Euro-Atlantic security as a whole. Besides, the Black Sea region is an advanced scene where NATO and Russian military forces interact most closely. All of this is a source of constant tension. The situation is further aggravated by the fact that Russia has, in fact, completely covered the Black Sea region with anti-penetration and missile systems. The escalation of the situation is also evidenced by the recent escalation caused by the interaction of the US fighter jet and the Russian bomber, during which the Russian aviation

used electronic warfare to create significant problems for the American ship.

Based on the relevance and complexity of the topic, the methodological basis of the research is the analysis of historical, descriptive, and political research. The main goal of the study is to identify the problems of achieving security and stability in the Black Sea region, as well as the factors hindering the achievement of stability in the region.

Regional security of the Black Sea

The security environment in the wider Black Sea region – which brings together the six littoral states (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine) and a hinterland including the South Caucasus and Moldova – is rapidly changing. It combines protracted conflicts with a significant conventional military build-up that intensified after the events of 2014: Russia's takeover of Crimea. Transnational connections between conflicts across the region and between the Black Sea and the Middle East add further dimensions of insecurity. As a result, there is a blurring of the conditions of peace, crisis, and conflict in the region. This has led to an unpredictable and potentially high-risk environment in which military forces with advanced weapons, including nuclear-capable systems, are increasingly active close to each other².

In recent decades, the Black Sea region has become increasingly important as a place where the national interests of the leading regional powers (primarily Turkey, Russia, and Ukraine) meet, as well as the geopolitical and geo-economic interests of such major world players as the United States and the European Union. The reason for the attention to the Black Sea region on the part of external forces is, first of all, its transit significance: important transport routes connecting the countries of the West with hydrocarbon-rich Central Asia and the Caucasus pass here.

During the Cold War, the Black Sea was an arena of confrontation between global players. In 1968-1988, the United States sent ships to the Black Sea to defend its rights (following the Montreux Convention) to free movement in Soviet territorial waters and to demonstrate that all states enjoy the right to freedom of navigation and flight. In 1988, two

² A. Kuimova, S. T. Wezeman, *Georgia and Black Sea Security*, "SIPRI Background Paper", December 2018, p. 1, <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2018-12/bp_1812_black_sea_georgia_0.pdf> (20.11.2020).

US Navy ships (cruiser USS Yorktown and the destroyer USS Caron) demanded unhindered passage of warships into the Soviet territorial waters of the Black Sea. A standoff ensued with the Soviet Black Sea Fleet, which controlled American ships crossing the territorial waters of the USSR, and Soviet naval ships deliberately collided with both US ships. It was the worst naval standoff in the region from World War II to the 2008 Russian-Georgian war.

In this regard, the Montreux Convention regulating the movement of vessels in the Black Sea should be taken into account. It is important to take into account the Montreux Convention, which limits the presence of NATO warships in the Black Sea. In mid-February, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg stated that the alliance was considering 'further strengthening' its presence on the Black Sea. Russian politicians described this as a 'provocation'. However, NATO's activities are restricted by the Montreux Convention. The 1936 agreement on the 'Regime of the Straits' gave Turkey back full sovereignty over the Bosphorus. Warships of states not bordering the Black Sea may not stay there longer than 21 days. The tonnage of the ships is also limited³. The changed reality after the end of the Cold War, the threat of terrorism and NATO expansion (Romania and Bulgaria joined the alliance) have put on the agenda the issue of revising the Montreux Convention, a proposal that is unacceptable for Turkey and Russia since it contradicts their interests. The Montreux Convention is the basis for a favorable security system for Russia and Turkey in the Black Sea region since it ensures their priority status and limits the participation of other players in the region. To better understand the current situation, we can look at the map of the Black Sea. The conflict regions are marked on the map with a stroke (Figure 1).

³ R. Goncharenko, *NATO steps up naval presence on the Black Sea*, <<https://www.dw.com/en/nato-steps-up-naval-presence-on-the-black-sea/a-47732883>> (22.11.2020).

Figure 1. Black Sea basin.



Source: *SIPRI informs on Black Sea security*, <<https://www.sipri.org/news/2019/sipri-informs-black-sea-security>> (20.11.2020).

Since 2014, due to the political crisis in Ukraine and the aggravation of Russian-American relations, the United States and its NATO allies have sought to strengthen their military presence in the Black Sea sea zone: for example, the number of calls by warships of the alliance countries has significantly increased (the overwhelming majority of them belong to the American Navy) to the Black Sea. At the same time, the number of exercises with the participation of the Black Sea member states of NATO, Ukraine, and Georgia has increased, during which the formation of operational formations and groups of the naval forces of multinational composition and various purposes, as well as their deployment in destination areas, are being worked out.

In the context of continuing to expand its military activities in the alliance, the possibility of revising certain provisions of the Montreux Convention is being studied, in particular, the removal of restrictions on the displacement of military ships passing through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, as well as the extension of their stay. This would make it possible to increase the efficiency of the deployment of NATO military forces on the southeastern flank of the bloc and to ensure the build-up of the naval grouping in the Black Sea.

As a result of the unprecedented militarization carried out by the Russian Federation after the annexation of Crimea, the military balance in the Black Sea region has significantly changed in favor of Russia. Russia has strengthened both the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea and its air defense systems and various types of guided missile systems. This gave Russia access to almost the entire territory of all the Black Sea countries.

Russian military buildup and A2/AD in the Black Sea basin. Anti-Access/Area-Denial (A2/AD) is military jargon to describe the situation when a state deploys weapons systems, often with long-range capabilities, to deny foreign forces freedom of movement in the theatre. Land-based surface-to-air missiles, surface-to-surface ballistic or cruise missiles, and anti-ship missiles are the capabilities most often used for building up A2/AD. Additional elements may be added to the system – for example, advanced aircraft, surface ships, and submarines, and their capabilities for air superiority and control of the seas. Enhanced communications and surveillance systems and cyber warfare capabilities also contribute to this comprehensive A2/AD network, which will try to disrupt the electromagnetic spectrum and deprive foreign forces of its use⁴.

Of key importance for establishing control over the water and airspace is the deployment of the S- 400 Triumph surface-to-air and K-300P Bastion-P coastal defense missile systems (effective range of about 400 km), supported by the Monolit-B and other radars providing long-range surveillance, early warning, and target acquisition. Modernized air bases host an air force division and two regiments of naval aviation, which together have about 100 fixed-wing fighters and ground-attack aircraft, and have the capacity for accommodating reinforcements. The Black Sea fleet itself is strengthened primarily with six improved Kilo-class (Project 636.3) diesel submarines (this brigade is based in Novorossiysk), which has granted it new capabilities for projecting power onshore with the long-range Kalibr 3M54 cruise missiles⁵.

Separately, it should be noted the significant place of Turkey on the military-political map of the region. With the second-largest army in NATO, Turkey has the most powerful fleet in the Black Sea. Official

⁴ P. Anastasov, *The Black Sea region: a critical intersection*, <<https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2018/05/25/the-black-sea-region-a-critical-intersection/index.html>> (22.11.2020).

⁵ P. K. Baev, *New Perspectives on the Black Sea Theater in Russian Strategic Culture*, <<https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/security-insights/new-perspectives-black-sea-theater-russian-strategic-culture-0>> (24.11.2020).

Ankara attaches great importance to modernizing and building up the combat capability of its Naval Forces. In particular, Turkey's immediate plans include the creation of a powerful submarine fleet that will be able to control the entire water area of the Black Sea. To achieve this goal, Turkey has allocated 2.19 billion euros to finance the program for the construction of six type-214 submarines. Today, the Turkish Navy has 14 submarines built according to the German project.

The armed conflict between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 stimulated the intensification of Turkish foreign policy in the Black Sea and Caucasus region: it was after it that Ankara put forward the Platform for Stability and Cooperation and intensified its efforts towards resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh problem and its relations with Armenia. Thus, the main political tasks of Turkey in the World Cup can be characterized as a desire to ensure political and military security in the region. Turkey is positioned as a key player and an independent power pole. Turkey enough tightly integrated into the structures of the Alliance.

The strengthening of Russia in the Black Sea, along with its militaristic and aggressive policy, poses a threat to small states in the region with insufficiently developed defense and naval capabilities. Ukraine lost 70% of its navy as a result of the occupation of Crimea. Georgia has only a few coastal (battleships), while the naval forces of NATO member countries Bulgaria and Romania are quite outdated and not very diverse, at the same time, their defenses are rather weak. The annexation of Crimea practically destroyed the Ukrainian fleet, most of the warships were captured by Russia, and some moved to the Odesa port. NATO provides significant assistance to Ukraine in developing its naval capabilities and assists Ukraine in strengthening its coastal defenses and the Black Sea Fleet, while Ukraine participates in various Alliance naval missions.

In the past years, Romania has pushed heavily for further integration of the Black Sea states opposite Russia. Romania's desire for coordination resulted in a few proposals of joint military operations, including the permanent establishment of a Black Sea fleet, consisting of naval contributions from Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey. Romania's military capabilities remain weak, as the country has a relatively modest defence budget and has been preoccupied with out-of-area missions such as the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. Romania's attempts to modernize have been met with delays and complications. Romania's plan of 85 acquisitions is lacking with only 15 completed and its forces are using equipment from the Warsaw pact era. Comparatively,

Bulgaria's capacities lack more so than that of Romania. Bulgaria's defence budget falls greatly behind Romania and its forces face aging capabilities with modernization efforts in the far future⁶. Given the naval capabilities of Romania and Bulgaria, they need NATO support and strengthening their defenses. What is vital for them in light of the threats from Russia. While Russia is developing and modernizing more and more strategic missile weapons. Romania and Bulgaria with the supports of NATO, are trying to strengthen their naval forces and intend to buy warships from the alliance.

Moldova's role in Black Sea security is quickly becoming crucial. With an escalating conflict in the Transnistria region, aggravated by Russian influence, Moldova remains in a hanging balance. Its efforts to build defence capabilities are marred by its fledgling independence movements, unstable political system, and a slow economy. As a NATO partner for peace, Moldova is a recipient of numerous capacity-building and defence reform initiatives⁷.

At present, under the pretext of ensuring the security of Europe, the United States has begun to deploy missile defense systems in Romania and Turkey, thereby strengthening its military presence in the Black Sea basin. A concrete manifestation of this was the regular stay of U.S. warships in the Black Sea with calls at the ports of Georgia and Ukraine.

NATO missile defense in the Black Sea

The events of recent years in the Black Sea region have shown that the processes taking place in the region have a direct impact on Euro-Atlantic security. It is also noteworthy that in the Black Sea region, due to its geopolitical position, threats from the south merge with the Russian threat, and this accumulation effect further aggravates regional security.

NATO has a real but narrow path to respond to a "deteriorated security situation" (NATO Warsaw Summit Declaration) in the Black Sea region. The objective must be, in the most cost-effective and militarily efficient way, to demonstrate NATO cohesion and deter Russia from pushing further in the region while simultaneously limiting the risks of military escalation. A balanced NATO presence in the Black Sea that doesn't dramatically alter the balance of forces in the region will help

⁶ A. Rogan, *Black Sea Security Brief*, <<http://www.atahq.org/ata-policy-focus/black-sea-security-brief/>> (24.11.2020).

⁷ *Ibidem*.

convince the Kremlin that further military steps would be counterproductive and preserve room for dialogue⁸.

The initiative in creating missile defense systems in the Euro-Atlantic space naturally belongs to the United States. They have colossal technological, financial, economic, and military organizational capabilities in the field of missile defense, incomparable with all other NATO members put together. The political and military task of creating systems for detecting and intercepting ballistic missiles of various ranges – missile defense (ABM) – has been an important part of the foreign policy and military-economic agenda of the U.S. leadership for several decades. It will remain an important component of U.S. military technological development and defense and security policy for the foreseeable future. Moreover, the importance of missile defense in these areas has been steadily increasing in recent decades.

NATO described the Black Sea region as ‘important for Euro-Atlantic security’, but it was not until the July 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw that NATO leaders pledged to increase alliance presence in the region through the creation of the Tailored Forward Presence (TFP)⁹. NATO actively participates in strengthening the security of the Black Sea region, the Alliance actively supports strengthening the military potential of its member states, including assisting partner states.

Following the decision taken by NATO leaders at the Warsaw Summit, the Alliance has deployed 4 military units up to a battalion in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Poland. This was followed by the deployment of anti-missile systems, which led to rather aggressive statements by Russia but did not take open aggressive steps.

The Black Sea region is also the location for one of NATO’s major missile defense elements. Romania is home to the Aegis Ashore ballistic missile defense site in Deveselu, which became operational in August 2016 (3 SM3 Block IB, 24 missiles). While the site is designed to counter ballistic missile threats emanating from outside the Euro-Atlantic area (which unambiguously excludes Russia), it is an important U.S. contribution to NATO missile defense, which is perceived by Moscow as challenging its strategic interests. Because Russia recognizes that the Deveselu site will shape the U.S. military presence in the region for the long term, it has repeatedly stated the site was a legitimate target, which

⁸ *NATO and Russia in the Black Sea: A New Confrontation?*, <<https://www.csis.org/analysis/nato-and-russia-black-sea-new-confrontation>> (25.11.2020)

⁹ *Ibidem*.

in turn fuels calls to protect the site, exactly the military build-up dynamic that Russia seeks to avoid¹⁰.

All this points to a purposeful development of a Russian offensive capability centered on Crimea and the Russian Black Sea Fleet, which tends to alter the military balance in the region and beyond. At the same time, with characteristic vehemence, Russian policymakers and opinion shapers get incensed about purely defensive measures taken in response by the NATO countries. Witness to that is their disproportionately nervous reaction to the formal inauguration of the missile defense facility at Deveselu, Romania, on May 12, 2016. Contrary to the evidence, Russian propaganda depicted the event as threatening to their national security and went as far as to evoke the possibility of scrapping the INF Treaty of 1987, thus eliminating the last vestiges of arms control and opening the door to a renewed arms race¹¹. The United States and Russia withdrew from the agreement, which further exacerbated the problem of global security.

In a form of psychological warfare, Russia is attempting to foster the perception that its A2/AD capabilities form an impenetrable or ironclad bubble to paralyze NATO decision-making in a crisis and to undermine alliance cohesion in the region. Several independent analyses have suggested that while Russia's air defense systems are formidable, they do have gaps and are vulnerable to advances in Western offensive capabilities¹².

Integrated Air and Missile Defense in the region remains an aspiration but is starting to see some improvements. Romania hosts the U.S. Navy Aegis Ashore land-based ballistic missile defense system at Deveselu, which is deployed to protect European cities from Iranian missiles and is already operational. Romania is increasing the capabilities of its growing F-16 fleet. It is also purchasing the Patriot surface-to-air missile system and expects to begin receiving them in 2021. Turkey's purchase of the Russian-made S-400 Air/Missile Defense System is a serious concern for the Alliance. It is not interoperable with NATO systems and the U.S. has declared that Turkey can no longer be a part of the F-35 program. However, Turkey continues hosting critical TPY-2

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ S. Celac, S. Cropsey, D. Dungaciu., *Why the Black Sea Matters*, "New Strategy Center – Hudson Institute Center for American Seapower", May 2017, p. 10.

¹² S. J. Flanagan, I. A. Chindea, *Russia, NATO, and Black Sea Security Strategy*, <<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1096677.pdf>> (27.11.2020).

tracking radar capabilities for the ballistic missile defenses of the region¹³.

In February 2019, Moscow announced the deployment of Tupolev Tu-22M3 Backfire bombers to the Gvardeyskoye airbase in Crimea allegedly to counter U.S. Navy Aegis Ashore missile defense installations in Poland and Romania. These strategic bombers are capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Aegis Ashore is based on radar and missile systems contained aboard American guided-missile destroyers and cruisers but configured as a ground installation. The sites in Romania and Poland can detect, track, target, and launch interceptors to counter a ballistic missile threat coming from the Middle East. The Aegis Ashore system was part of the Obama administration's European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) to missile defense designed to interdict small numbers of missiles from Iran and Syria; if modified, it could defend against Russian missile threats¹⁴.

Since 2011, Russia has been developing hypersonic weapons to strengthen its defensive and offensive forces in the Black Sea. On October 7, 2020, Russia tested the Zircon supersonic anti-aircraft missile. Vladimir Putin was informed about this by Valery Gerasimov, the chief of the General Staff of Russia. According to official data, the Russian Navy will be in service from 2021. This can create a serious threat to military-strategic stability in the Black Sea region and the world.

The U.S. withdrawal from the Treaty on Open Skies is a serious threat to global security. The main reason given by the U.S. is the arbitrary interpretation and recurrent violation of the terms by Russia. Under the Open Skies Treaty, states can conduct reconnaissance flights over each other's territory following predetermined quotas. The parties are obliged to warn each other 72 hours after providing the exact coordinates of the flights, collect intelligence information on each other's territory and enter the data obtained into a single database. An 'open skies' have been created to monitor the implementation of existing disarmament treaties, which is the international legal regime for airspace. The Open Skies Agreement is the third international treaty that the United States has abandoned since the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of Iran and the Treaty on Intermediate-Range and Short-Range Missiles. What matters is whether the United States sticks to

¹³ B. Hodges, J. Bugajski, R. Wojcik, C. Schmiedl, *One Flank, One Threat, One Presence – A Strategy for NATO's Eastern Flank*, "Center for European Policy Analysis", May 2020, p. 43.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

New START. Agreement on the ‘reduction of strategic nuclear weapons’ for the next five years, which was signed in 2010 and expires in February 2021. Given this fact, the regional security of the Black Sea is in great danger. The new U.S. administration needs to pursue a correct policy of limiting strategic strike weapons. At the same time, NATO must ensure the security of the Alliance with anti-missile systems.

Conclusion

NATO and the EU need to intensify regional cooperation on new security challenges, including terrorism and hybrid threats, establish appropriate formats and improve coordination, which can play an important role in ensuring security in the Black Sea region. The U.S. and NATO need to develop effective strategies and policies to contain Russian ambitions in the Black Sea region.

In 2019, the United States withdrew from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, accusing Russia of secretly creating the 9M729 missile based on the 9M728, which fell under the INF Treaty. According to many military experts, in almost each of these cases, the main driving force that destroyed the agreements was the distrust of the parties to each other. That is why the Open Skies Treaty is important not only as a source of information about other countries but also as a tool for establishing more trusting relationships.

The lack of effective cooperation between the United States / NATO and the Russian Federation in the field of missile defense, and the development of confrontational relations in connection with it, in the event of real missile threats, may due to the lack of coordinated joint measures and effective mechanisms and principles of interaction to prevent a missile attack lead to disastrous consequences. All parties are hardly interested in this development of events. It is also necessary to formulate reliable and comprehensive measures that could contain potential Russian aggression in the Black Sea region.

The main goal of NATO and the European Union is to ‘contain’ Russia and ensure stability in the Euro-Atlantic region, and the key is to fully understand the threats and risks posed by NATO member states and Russia to strategic strike weapons in the Black Sea region. The violation and cancellation of the aforementioned arms control agreements pose an even greater threat to the regional security of the Black Sea.

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BLACK SEA REGION SECURITY, CYBER WARFARE, AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Abstract:

In the wake of technological advances, cyber-attacks are becoming more dangerous, becoming a part of everyday life and an element of all conventional warfare. For Black Sea countries as well as the rest of the world, security is paramount. In discussing the issue, we must analyse the opportunities that the countries of the Black Sea basin have, first of all, the threats posed by Russia. This unpredictable state is carrying out the occupation of territories, military aggression, and large-scale cyber-attacks in this region, which is not a guarantee of peace and security. Russia is trying to influence almost the whole world and especially the Black Sea region – Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Georgia with large-scale cyber-hacking attacks and continuous disinformation fake news. Against the background of cyberattacks and misinformation propaganda, it is difficult to determine what kind of safe environment can be created in this region. This requires new research, recommendations, scientific papers, defence strategies. Cooperation with the EU and NATO needs to be strengthened. Following the Warsaw Summit, the Euro-Atlantic Alliance enacted Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, that is, the principle of ‘collective defence’ in terms of cyber warfare, cyber-attacks, and cyberterrorism. The topic discusses the cybersecurity issues and defence mechanisms of the countries of the Black Sea region, as well as the ongoing processes in the field of cybersecurity in this region. The paper discusses the threats and risks posed by Russia in the field of cybersecurity, as well as its impact on world politics.

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Keywords:

Black Sea region, cyberwar, cyberattack, cybersecurity, cyberterrorism, information war, hybrid war, Russian Federation, asymmetric threat, international security

Introduction

Talking about stability and security in the Black Sea region is a very difficult issue today. Let's face it, the invading country dominates the region and does not allow any of its neighbours to act or develop independently. Talking about security would not be complete without considering the context of the EU and NATO, given that the main theme of the paper is the situation created against the background of revolutionary advances in cyber technology when it is difficult to identify the attacker. The Russian phenomenon throughout the world is a noteworthy issue that has great potential and seeks to create a reality that is only in its interests. Russia has almost limitless capabilities not only in the military but also in terms of cyber technology and information-propaganda, as well as a continuous resource of manipulations, which it carries out continuously. Obtaining facts and evidence is not even an easy task.

The Black Sea region is important for both NATO's European allies and the United States. It is a kind of bridge between East and West. In this region, the interests of Europe, NATO, and the United States often conflict with the interests of Russia. The Kremlin began to assert and consolidate its power in the Black Sea basin against Georgia as early as the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and then consolidated it with the 2008 war, when it launched a powerful cyberattack in parallel with a military offensive. In addition to damaging Georgian government agencies and critical infrastructure, Russia has significantly expanded its occupation. If we analyse the situation with a cold mind it was a rehearsal before the invasion of Ukraine. The military attack on Ukraine in 2014 was accompanied by large-scale cyberattacks, followed by the occupation of territories. The purpose of our article is to determine the defence capabilities of the Black Sea Basin countries in terms of cybersecurity, to present the role of NATO in the Black Sea region, and to assess and analyse cyber threats from Russia. The article uses historical and political research analysis.

Cyberattacks from Russia and Cyber-Defence Capabilities of the Black Sea Region

Cyberwarfare is becoming more visible and dangerous internationally over time than ever before. We can partly agree with the view that cyberwar is a cheaper form of warfare than conventional war. Cyberattacks either precede or accompany all conventional wars.

Russian cyber-aggression extends not only to the countries of the Black Sea basin but also worldwide – both in Europe and in the United States. An example is an attempt to interfere in the 2016 United States presidential election. It is true that despite the completion of the investigation, in this case, it was still not clear, but no one can deny the attempt to intervene. There were also attempts at hacking into elections in Germany, France, and Italy. Russia's cyber-technological advances are so great that it is almost one step ahead of other international actors and does not shy away from indirectly straining relations with NATO. This is not a direct conflict, it is more like a game where elements of the Cold War are abundant – the Kremlin also realizes that the alliance has a military advantage. In this case, a direct attack on any member state or an ally would not be a smart move. At this stage, a form of hybrid warfare is beneficial to Russia – it poses a great threat to NATO member states, but does not cross the red line, the violation of which will lead to the enactment of Article 5 of the Charter. The Kremlin is working innovatively in various conflicts. Due to the specific geopolitical environment, it has successfully managed to adapt cyberattacks to expand its interests. As already mentioned, he continues to occupy countries in the Black Sea region to this day, gradually engaging in hybrid warfare, carrying out disinformation manipulations, and actively using cyber elements. It is interesting what the Russian government's vision is in terms of global threats. In the 2015 version of the Russian National Security Doctrine, the 16th and 17th paragraphs consider the U.S. and NATO as the main adversaries, while the 7th paragraph directly states the role of the Russian Federation in the maintenance of world order².

That is, the Russian Federation says that it does not even pose a threat to other countries, but is itself a victim and has the potential to improve to deal with threats from the U.S. and NATO. Of course, it has almost the same approach as the countries of the Black Sea basin. In this

² Russian National Security Strategy, *Edict of the Russian Federation President – On the Russia Federation's National Security Strategy*, Moscow 2015, pp. 1-4.

case, sometimes it is in the role of a saviour, sometimes it is in the role of a peacemaker, sometimes it is still in the role of a victim. The real situation and the facts prove the opposite.

Russia annexed Abkhazia and Crimea. This allowed the aggressor to expand control over the Black Sea and carry out unprecedented militarization, modernizing the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol³. It also strengthened air defence and developed air systems. Russia can now easily wage hybrid war on any Black Sea country⁴. That's not all, Russia has deployed nuclear weapons in the region, 15 new warships in the Black Sea, some of them equipped with missile equipment⁵.

It should be noted that Bulgaria, which is a member of the European Union and NATO, tries not to irritate Russia and avoids interfering in security issues. However, this does not exclude the possibility of cyberattacks on this country by Russia. If any country in the Black Sea region tries to take a step that is unacceptable to Russia, it will have a war of appropriate strength at the expense of both military and cyber capabilities. In 2019, for example, Bulgaria bought eight new Lockheed Martin F16s for \$ 1.256 billion from the United States, the largest military acquisition since the end of socialism. Bulgaria received cyberattacks in response. Hackers stole the personal financial data of thousands of Bulgarians and spread it by Russian e-mails. According to the leading Bulgarian newspaper 24 Chasa, the file was emailed by Russian hackers with more than 1.1 million identification numbers based on income, social protection, and health data⁶.

Bulgaria supports cooperation and strengthening the military capabilities of coastal countries. There are a lot of problems in this country, including in the field of defence. Therefore, its positions are weak, especially on Black Sea security issues.

Both Georgia and Romania must be some of the main initiators of NATO activation in the Black Sea region. Romania has come up with an

³ V. Socor, *The Black Sea Region: NATO's Exposed Sector on the Eastern Flank (Part Two)*, "Eurasia Daily Monitor", 2016, Vol. 13, Issue 114, pp. 117-118.

⁴ S. Blank, *Memo to NATO: Wake Up Before Putin Turns the Black Sea into a Russian Lake*, <<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/memo-to-nato-wake-up-before-putin-turns-the-black-sea-into-a-russian-lake/>> (11.11.2020).

⁵ *Russia to Respond to NATO Black Sea Force by Deploying New Weapons-Report*, <<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/russia-to-respond-to-nato-black-sea-force-by-deploying-new-weapons-report/>> (12.11.2020).

⁶ *Hackers Hit Bulgaria Sending Data From Russian Email*, <<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/07/16/hackers-hit-bulgaria-sending-data-from-russian-email-a66431>> (12.11.2020).

initiative to create a NATO-led Black Sea Fleet, which has received positive feedback. However, this issue has another side – the Russian factor. Romania's position and ideas are categorically unacceptable to Russia and have therefore become a hotbed of intense cyberattacks. The Romanian Defence Minister also stated at the Bucharest summit: “Romania is experiencing Russian aggression on the Black Sea coast daily. It avoids a wave of cyberattacks and political interference. Russia daily increases its military potential on the Crimean peninsula”.

However, Romania has increased its defence spending from 1.81% to 2% of GDP and continues to support the strengthening of NATO positions in the Black Sea region, which means peace and stability. Nevertheless, we must admit that achieving peace and stability in the Black Sea basin is not an easy task, and even impossible shortly.

Turkey, which is interested in security, is also an important player in the Black Sea region. Turkey, like Bulgaria and Romania, is a NATO member and should show full support in the region, but that does not seem to be the case at all. There is the Montreux Convention, signed in 1936, which provides for the control of the Bosphorus Strait by Turkey. Although this document is in jeopardy in the face of Russian aggression, NATO's role in the region is strictly limited under this convention⁷.

Turkey is trying to maintain balance and pursue its interests in the Black Sea region. In many cases, there are common interests with Russia, and cooperation with NATO is also mandatory. When Turkey does not behave the way Russia wants, the aggressor reveals his face here as well. With asymmetric and soft power technologies the Moscow is trying to harm Turkey. In this case, from the main topic of our article, we will focus on cyberattacks. For example, after Turkey shot down a Russian military plane over the Syrian border, Russian hackers launched DDoS attacks on Turkish Internet servers, shutting down government agencies, banks, and other commercial websites⁸.

Let's go back to Ukraine and Georgia, where large-scale cyberattacks took place even after the conquest of territories – in 2017, the internal system of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine was attacked by hackers. This was also stated by the Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine Pavel

⁷ J. Bugajski, P. Doran, *Black Sea Defended: NATO Responses to Russia's Black Sea Offensive*, “Centre for European Policy Analysis”, Strategic Report No. 2, July 2016.

⁸ J. Global, *Turkish Internet Servers under Sustained Cyber Attack*, <<https://jakartaglobe.id/news/turkish-internet-servers-sustained-cyber-attack/>> (14.11.2020).

Rosenko: "It seems that the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has been attacked by hackers. The network is currently down."⁹

At that time, not only the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine was the target of hacker attacks, but also the critical infrastructure. Ukraine is trying to escape from the shackles of Russia, but it fails. As for Georgia, it is also experiencing harassment, military provocations, as well as cybertechnologies, and information-propaganda manipulations. Russia's attitude towards Georgia and Ukraine is almost the same, but it differs from Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey. As we have already mentioned, Russia avoids the direct confrontation with NATO member states.

There is a cybersecurity bureau in Georgia as well as a data exchange agency. These agencies work in the field of cybersecurity and try to respond quickly to cyber incidents. Nevertheless, large-scale cyberattacks are often carried out in Georgia. The country does not have the resources to protect itself from such cyberattacks. For example, after the 2008 Russia-Georgia war, cyberattacks took place in 2019, when the websites of Georgian government agencies went down and the country's leading TV stations were working with delay for several days, intending to steal confidential information and destroy TV archives¹⁰.

Although three countries in the Black Sea region are members of NATO, it is still not possible to properly respond to Russian aggression and we can say that Russia has significant control over the Black Sea region – it uses various technologies and manipulations to influence the Black Sea countries and weaken their political aspirations.

NATO Cyber Security Capabilities and the Black Sea Region

When we say that Russian hegemony is raging in the Black Sea region, we cannot forget the other side – NATO, the European Union, the United States. Their support and steps towards peace are important events in the Black Sea region. Were it not for cooperation and various military, technological or financial supports, the situation in the Black Sea region would have been much worse. NATO and the EU are trying to deepen

⁹ *Ukraine cyber-attack: Chaos as national bank, state power provider and airport hit by hackers, Russian energy firms and Danish shipping company also hit by hackers*, <<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-cyber-attack-hackers-national-bank-state-power-company-airport-rozenko-pavlo-cabinet-computers-wannacry-ransomware-a7810471.html>> (6.11.2020).

¹⁰ *The cyber-attack in Georgia in October 2019 was carried out by the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces*, <<https://1tv.ge>> (13.11.2020).

cooperation in the South Caucasus and specifically in the Black Sea region. There is also active cooperation in the field of cyber defence – conferences and practical training are held. Michael Gaul, senior advisor in NATO's Strategy and Projects Emerging Security Challenges Division, explains: “Cyber threats in this region often come from common sources and have many of the same characteristics, including the method of attack. Therefore, practical cooperation in the field of cyber defence between the Black Sea and South Caucasus partners can only guarantee their national and collective security.”¹¹

Security and cyberdefence, both globally and in the Black Sea region, are directly linked to NATO. The need to strengthen defence against cyberattacks was first discussed by NATO member states at a summit in Prague in 2002. Since then, cybersecurity has become an important component of NATO's agenda. In 2008, the first cyberdefence policy document was adopted. The process of integrating cybersecurity into the NATO defence system has been active since 2012. At the Wales Summit in 2014, the Allies made cyberdefence a key part of their collective defence, saying that a cyberattack could lead to the application of Article 5 of the NATO Treaty on Collective Defence. At the 2016 Warsaw Summit, Alliance member states recognized information and communication network security as one of their key defence areas and agreed that NATO must defend itself as effectively in cyberspace as it does on land, sea, and air. NATO's main partner in the field of cybersecurity is the European Union, with which the Alliance signed a technical agreement on mutual assistance and cooperation in February 2016¹². At the 2018 Brussels Summit, the Allies agreed to set up a new cyberspace operations centre. Given the common challenges, NATO and the EU are strengthening cooperation in the field of cyber defence, especially in the exchange of information. Joint training and researches are conducted¹³.

Of particular note is the merit of the United States, which spares no effort to develop new regulations on cybersecurity and also spares no

¹¹ *Enhanced cyber defence cooperation in the South Caucasus and Black Sea region*, <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_121969.htm> (15.11.2020).

¹² *NATO's Cyber Defence Evolution – NATO's New Digital Wall*, <<https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/evolyutsiya-kiber-oborony-nato/>> (16.11.2020).

¹³ *Brussels Summit Declaration – Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 11-12 July 2018*, <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_156624.htm?selectedLocale=en>

funds. Expenditures on cybersecurity in the U.S. budget are increasing every year. It is already known that by 2021 this sector will be funded with 18.8 billion dollars¹⁴.

Conclusion

At the 2018 Brussels Summit and the Ministerial of Defence, special attention was paid to ensuring the security of the Black Sea and deepening practical cooperation with Georgia in this process. The Substantial NATO-Georgia Package (SNGP) has been developed under the auspices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. Under the package, the Border Police Coast Guard Department will train two boarding teams and implies involvements in the NATO Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC) process. This is already a step forward in terms of strengthening maritime security in the region.

If the alliance accelerates its expansion in the Black Sea region, of course, Russia will become more aggressive, but the process should not be stopped. At this stage, Ukraine and Georgia have the same problems, which one of the main obstacles in terms of NATO membership – is the occupied territories. Unfortunately, these problems cannot be solved. In this case, it is necessary to develop a new scheme that will set Russia at least the same red line as it has imposed on member states. Cybersecurity does not and cannot be localized in any one space. It is a war without borders. Russia or other harmful actors can be eliminated only through joint efforts, cooperation, and at the same time strengthening own cyber technologies. This includes training, as well as the development and refinement of new security systems.

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¹⁴ Department of Homeland Security Statement on the President's Fiscal Year 2021 Budget, <<https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/02/11/departments-homeland-security-statement-president-s-fiscal-year-2021-budget>> (17.11.2020).

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**RUSSIA’S WEAPON OF WORDS IN NUMBERS.
EVOLUTION OF RUSSIAN ASSERTIVE (DIS)INFORMATION
ACTIONS: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
OF THE CASES OF RUSSO-GEORGIAN WAR 2008
& ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA 2014**

Abstract:

Russian assertive actions over the last decade have led some observers to think that the Kremlin is employing fundamentally new concepts of an armed conflict. Subsequently, the scholars of the field came up with several buzzwords and ill-defined concepts such as ‘hybrid warfare’ and ‘Gerasimov Doctrine’. This paper claims that the novelty of Russian actions is not in terms of its military transformations per se, but rather the specific way the military had been integrated with other instruments—mostly state-run and coordinated information operations. Thus, the study puts a novel emphasis on information operations and asserts that, while in certain cases Moscow still uses the conventional military, the Kremlin's new plan is to achieve goals through information online in the first place. Thus, the paper focuses on analysing the evolution of Russian information strategy. In doing so, quantitative content analysis is deployed to examine narratives built by RIA Novosti and Russia Today/RT during the Russo-Georgian War of 2008 and annexation of Crimea in 2014. The comparative analysis of the two successive cases demonstrates the gradual progression of Russian information strategy insofar as by 2014, in contrast to 2008, pro-Kremlin media exploited some contested areas of international law in a more

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sophisticated manner to depict compatibility of the Russian actions with the democratic procedures and standards of international law.

Keywords:

Gerasimov Doctrine, hybrid warfare, information warfare, disinformation, Russian Federation, Georgia, Ukraine

Introduction

The International Relations study domain has long concluded that every country attempts at promoting its interests on the international scene. However, while countries vary in how they pursue their strategic goals and national interests, the assertive actions of the Russian Federation over more than a decade now have earned the state a specific reputation.

The Kremlin's actions in Ukraine made some observers think that we had encountered fundamentally new concepts of armed conflict². This thought was later extended due to Moscow's alleged meddling in the 2016 U.S. Presidential campaign. Consequently, these narratives resulted in the widespread adoption of various buzzwords such as 'hybrid warfare' and the attempts to conceptualise Russian actions into something novel.

Despite the numerous debates and scholarly contributions, even after six years since the annexation of Crimea, there is still a lack of comprehension regarding Russia's actions. As scholars and politicians are still struggling to understand the elements of so-called Russian 'hybrid warfare', the consequent ways to counter it are puzzling. The relevance of the term 'hybrid' as well as the novelty in contemporary Russian actions is to be questioned.

This study contends that Russian assertive activities do not necessarily represent any new form of warfare, but are a result of the Kremlin's effective and expanding use of information as a weapon. As the new technologies have revolutionised the exchange of information together with the ways of communications, it consequently enabled the transformation of media into an excellent tool for information warfare. It should be noted that while speaking about Russian media, we mostly

² K. Giles, *Russia's 'New' Tools for Confronting the West Continuity and Innovation in Moscow's Exercise of Power*, London 2016.

mean Kremlin-owned outlets that tend to contribute to interpreting events in compliance with the narratives of the official Russian government. Consequently, the main focus of the paper is to find empirical evidence of how Russian handling of information has been evolving and what it incorporates. In examining this involvement the paper looks into two leading Russian media outlets, RIA Novosti and RT, and analyses their coverage during the Russo-Georgian War in 2008 and Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The case of the Russo-Georgian war is selected as it is believed to serve as a testing ground for the Russian government before their further actions (i.e. annexation of Crimea). The 2008 war showed several unprecedented tactics in use, as the Kremlin incorporated cyber and other information operations together with its traditional deployment of military powers. As Crimea represents Russia's successive confrontation after Georgia and the information operations have played a vital role in this conflict, it has been selected as the second case for the paper.

In parallel with the conventional military operations, Moscow not only managed to destroy Georgia's physical communication infrastructures but also shut down governmental and news websites via DDoS attacks, leaving the country in an information vacuum. At the same time, the Kremlin tried to deny the Georgian government a chance to set its own narrative of the conflict. However, despite the know-how, as argued by Heinrich and Tanaev Russian state-backed media coverage was generally not doing its best in pretending objectivity and echoed official Kremlin statements³. On the other hand, the Georgian government hired Aspect Consulting, a comparatively well-known PR firm, to spin public opinion. Thus, some observers noticed that despite Russia winning the physical war, Georgia was more successful on the information battlefield insofar as the West initially accepted the narrative of the Georgian government⁴.

A small war of 2008 led the Russian Federation to rethink many issues related to its information strategy. As a result, several reforms have been carried out. Russian government increased military spending and started a modernisation program⁵. The new Military Doctrine was soon

³ H. G. Heinrich, K. Tanaev, *Georgia & Russia: Contradictory Media Coverage of the August War*, "Caucasian Review of International Affairs", 2009, 3(3), pp. 244-260.

⁴ P. Wilby, *Georgia has won the PR War*, <<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2008/aug/18/pressandpublishing.georgia>> (06.04.2019).

⁵ J. Cooper, *Russia's state armament programme to 2020: a quantitative assessment of implementation 2011-2015*, Stockholm 2016.

adopted. While acknowledging their defeat on the information battlefield, Kremlin even created Information Troops – the special governmental agency inside the military to deal with information operations⁶. Thus, the informational aspect of conducting the war was highly prioritized by the official Moscow after the 2008 war.

Eventually, when it came to Crimea, the Kremlin was more prepared, lessons had been learned, mistakes analysed and reforms carried out. Therefore, the Kremlin employed some of the cyber and operational tactics already tested in Georgia, but this time with a more coordinated effort to win the war-related narrative over Ukraine. As a result, the altered and modified information tactics proved to be effective: instead of trying to win the hearts and minds of the international and domestic societies at the same time, Moscow refocused on establishing her narrative within the Russian-speaking population in Russia and Crimea. In parallel, the Kremlin managed to leave the West and even the rest of Ukraine in total confusion about the ongoing situation in the region and won the information war even before the start of the physical one.

The paper first develops a theoretical framework for locating the Russian use of information as a warfare tool. Theoretical analysis is followed by the qualitative examination of the empirical data in comparison of the Russo-Georgian war of 2008 and annexation of Crimea in 2014.

What is Russia's new way of warfare?

In an attempt to conceptualise Russian assertive actions, the scholars of the study domain came up with many concepts and terms that do not adequately serve in describing the process. Seely⁷ found out that there are more than 25 terms used to describe elements of the Kremlin's contemporary warfare, however, all of them could easily be put in three categories. As one group claims that Russia invented a new way of warfare, the opposing group does not see any wrongdoings in Russian action as they often label Russian actions as 'soft power' and similar terms. The third group oversimplifies Russian actions by regarding them as simply a lie, often labelling it as 'fake news'. Unfortunately, neither of

⁶ A. Unwala, S. Ghori, *Brandishing the Cybered Bear: Information War and the Russia-Ukraine Conflict*, "Military Cyber Affairs", 2015, 1(1), pp. 1-11.

⁷ R. Seely, *Defining Contemporary Russian Warfare*, "The RUSI Journal", 2017, 162(1), pp. 50-59.

them provides a clear and comprehensive understanding of Russian actions.

For several years, the scholars from the first group relied on the so-called ‘Gerasimov Doctrine’ as an explanation for Russia’s new, so-called ‘hybrid warfare’. The problem is that ‘Gerasimov Doctrine’, as a strategic doctrine, does not exist. As it was figured out later by Mark Galeotti, who had accidentally created the term, Gerasimov was not setting up a hybrid doctrine for Kremlin⁸. Indeed, it would be complicated to prove the novelty of ‘hybrid warfare’ (or any other similar term). The idea of furthering national interest without going into a traditional war could be traced back to Sun Tzu, who famously advocated creating the conditions of victory without fighting. Moreover, nearly all wars in the past had some elements of ‘hybridity’ and have certainly used ‘unconventional’ methods. It would be a mistake to assume that war could be limited by and put in certain frames⁹. Thus, labelling Russia’s approach as ‘hybrid’ would not merely be incorrect but might also be unhelpful and misleading¹⁰. Marking Russian actions as a new form of warfare, for which no preparation could have been possible, might be counterproductive. Mansoor states that “hybrid warfare has been an integral part of the historical landscape since the ancient world, but only recently have analysts – incorrectly – categorized these conflicts as unique”¹¹. Indeed, no matter what label we attach, Russian contemporary actions do not represent a new kind of warfare, as the war was rarely just a military affair.

The limitations with the second group’s logic, who brand Russia’s actions as just ‘soft power’ is not difficult to identify. By the classic definition, ‘soft power’ is a concept of achieving state aims while using attraction instead of coercion¹². Russian actions are not short on violence as seen in Ukraine and Georgia, however, even when violence is the last resort, Russian non-violent means do not necessarily rely on ‘attraction’. Thus, considering the exploitation of the coercive measures and absence

⁸ M. Galeotti, *I’m Sorry for Creating the ‘Gerasimov Doctrine’*, <<https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/05/im-sorry-for-creating-the-gerasimov-doctrine/>> (11.12.2018).

⁹ R. Johnson, *Hybrid War and Its Countermeasures: A Critique of the Literature*, “Small Wars & Insurgencies”, 2018, 29(1), pp. 141-163.

¹⁰ K. Giles, *op. cit.*

¹¹ P. R. Mansoor, *Introduction: Hybrid Warfare in History*, [in:] W. Murray, P. R. Mansoor, eds. *Hybrid Warfare: Fighting Complex Opponents from the Ancient World to the Present*, New York 2012, pp. 1-17.

¹² J. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means To Success In World Politics*, New York 2004.

of 'attractive' courses by Russia, the framework of soft power would be irrelevant in understanding its strategies.

The third group, mainly politicians rather than scholars, have oversimplified Russian actions. They assert that the Kremlin is occupied with disseminating lies, lately commonly labelled as 'fake news'. However, the definition of 'fake news' seems a bit more problematic as it could include satire and parody as well. Misinformation is yet another term often used in a similar context. However, as defined, misinformation is just inaccurate information that is the result of an honest mistake or negligence¹³. All in all, it would be a clear underestimation of Russia's strategy to assume that all they do is spread lies.

This paper asserts that one cannot call Russian assertive actions in Georgia and Ukraine a new form of warfare. At the same time, there was an element that still may stand out from what we used to see in warfare before. The conflict in Ukraine saw the conventional military paired with the uniquely developed state-run information campaign. At one glance this does not represent any novelty either, as disinformation campaigns were deeply embodied in the Soviet practice. However, the latest Russian actions took information operations to a whole new level.

Nowadays, the Russian Federation uses information as a weapon. According to Pomerantsev the new Russia does not just deal with disinformation, lies, forgeries, and the leaks usually associated with information warfare¹⁴. He claims that Kremlin under Putin "reinvents reality, creating mass hallucinations that then translate into political action"¹⁵. Since the Russo-Georgian war in 2008, military and intelligence decision-makers in Moscow do not regard the information in the familiar terms of 'public diplomacy' or 'propaganda', instead, they see it in weaponised terms "as a tool to confuse, blackmail, demoralize, subvert and paralyze"¹⁶. Indeed, in 2015 Russian Minister of Defence Sergei Shoigu openly supported the thought as he claimed: "the day has come, where we recognise that the word, the camera, the photograph, the internet and information, in general, have become yet another type of weapon, yet another expression of the Armed Forces. This weapon may be used positively as well as negatively. It is a weapon which has been

¹³ D. Fallis, *What is Disinformation?*, "Library Trends", 2015, 63(3), pp. 401-402.

¹⁴ P. Pomerantsev, *Russia and the Menace of Unreality*, <<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/09/russia-putin-revolutionizing-information-warfare/379880/>> (25.01.2019).

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

part of events in our country in different years and various ways, in defeats as well as in victories”¹⁷.

While ‘weaponising’ information, the Kremlin made vital alterations to the Soviet tactics. The main characteristic of Soviet *dezinformatsiya* and propaganda was based on portraying the narrative of ‘us’ against ‘them’¹⁸. ‘Us’ or the Soviet side was presented positively in almost every matter, while ‘others’ mainly the West were criticised, demonized, and diminished. This approach, however, did not prove to be effective. As Nye explains, the Soviet propaganda was inconsistent with its policies¹⁹. This was a lesson well-learned as modern Russian information operations do not necessarily promote the Kremlin’s agenda. Lucas and Nimmo believe that instead the Kremlin aims to “confuse, befuddle and distract”²⁰, further agreeing with Pomerantsev and Weiss in stating the following: “modern Russia has weaponised information, turning the media into an arm of state power projection”²¹.

The matter of the truth demonstrates another vital change in the strategy. For the Soviets, the idea of truth was crucial. Even while consciously lying, the Soviet propaganda always tried to ‘prove’ that the Kremlin’s information was a fact²². However, for modern Russia, the idea of truth is somewhat irrelevant²³. While the Soviets used to reclaim concepts such as ‘democracy’ and ‘human rights’ to mask their opposites, Putin’s Russia combines the Soviet-era ‘whataboutism’ and ‘active measures’ with a postmodern smirk claiming that everything is a sham and not even the West believes in such concepts as ‘democracy’ or ‘human rights’²⁴. Nowadays, the Kremlin does not make an effort to persuade people that it is telling the truth. Instead, it questions the whole notion of the ‘objective truth’ claiming that any opinion, no matter how bizarre, has the same weight as others. With this notion of the Post-truth

¹⁷ F. S. Hansen, *Russian Hybrid Warfare: A Study of Disinformation*, “Danish Institute for International Studies”, 2017, 6, p. 29.

¹⁸ B. V. Bruk, *International Propaganda: The Russian Version*, Institute of Modern Russia, <https://imrussia.org/media/pdf/Research/Boris_Bruk__International_Propaganda_Russian_Version.pdf> (20.11.2020).

¹⁹ J. Nye, *op. cit.*

²⁰ E. Lucas, B. Nimmo, *Information Warfare: What Is It and How to Win It?*, Washington 2015.

²¹ P. Pomerantsev, M. Weiss, *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money*, New York 2014.

²² P. Pomerantsev, *Russia and the Menace of Unreality...*

²³ *Ibidem.*

²⁴ *Ibidem.*

Moscow demonstrates its capacity to dictate the terms of the truth and consequently enhance its aura of power.

Lucas and Nimmo have further characterized ‘weaponisation’ tactics in what he calls ‘Russia’s 4D’²⁵. According to him, when a major event happens involving Kremlin’s interest, Russia uses the following strategy: dismissing the critics (i.e. accusations as Russophobia); distorting the facts (i.e. falsifying evidence and presenting so-called alternative facts); distracting from the main issue (i.e. accuse someone else and blur the reality); and/or dismaying the audience (i.e. threatening any action with military consequences)²⁶.

In combination with the strategy-related changes, the Russian government amended their means too. The technological transformations since the Soviet enabled large-scale changes in the ways how information is purposefully spread. While realising the importance of the online field, current Russian information operations combine some of the Soviet-tested tricks with modern technology and its capabilities²⁷. Use of the internet and technology radically revolutionised the game: if in the Soviet times KGB would have to work hard to spread its ‘dezinformatsiya’ in the Western press, nowadays spreading fake photos and then reposting them as ‘fact’ in traditional media is a matter of hours, if not of minutes²⁸.

The adjustment to and exploitation of the new circumstances of the online platforms has been rather comprehensive by the Russian government. Giles believes that Russia has invested hugely in adapting the principles of subversion to the internet age²⁹. According to him, these investments cover the following three areas: firstly, internally and externally focused media with a substantial online presence (i.e. RT and RIA); secondly, the use of social media and online forums as a force multiplier to achieve a broader reach and penetration of Russian narratives; and lastly, language skills, to engage with target audiences in their languages³⁰.

Weisburd, Watts, and Berger divide Russian strategy regarding the use of technology for political purposes in ‘white’, ‘grey’ and ‘black’

²⁵ E. Lucas, B. Nimmo, *op. cit.*

²⁶ *Ibidem.*

²⁷ V. Madeira, *Haven’t We Been Here Before?*, Fife 2014.

²⁸ P. Pomerantsev, M. Weiss, *op. cit.*

²⁹ K. Giles, *op. cit.*

³⁰ G. Simons, *Perception of Russia's soft power and influence in the Baltic States*, “Public Relations Review”, 2015, 41(1), pp. 1-13.

measures. The ‘white’ measures are mainly controlled by RT and Sputnik, which push Kremlin-approved messages online. At the same time, ‘white’ content provides ammunition for ‘grey’ measures, which employ smaller outlets, bots as well as so-called ‘useful idiots’³¹. Some of them regurgitate Russian narratives, sometimes even without taking a direct order from Russia or realising that they are playing the Kremlin's game. Next, come the ‘black’ measures. According to the 1992 USIA report, during the Soviet times, the ‘black measures’ were mainly conducted by the special agents, while now it is delegated to coordinated hackers, honeypots, and hecklers³².

When it comes to objectives behind the above-mentioned Russian actions, the overwhelming majority of scholars agree that Kremlin tries to rather disrupt the Western narratives than to provide a counter-narrative via sowing confusion, causing doubts, dividing opinions, and undermining the notion of objective truth being possible at all³³. Pomerantsev believes that Russia wants the target to think that ‘If nothing is true, then anything is possible’³⁴. This, according to him, will give us the sense that Putin’s next moves are unpredictable and therefore dangerous. Hence we will end up “stunned, spun, and flummoxed by the Kremlin's weaponization of absurdity and unreality”³⁵. The aim then is to control the information in whatever form it takes. Creating informational chaos and ambiguity serves as the strategic advantage to further Russia’s interests abroad³⁶. On the one hand, it cast doubts on the Europeans in the Western values and leads to a successful penetration from the public

³¹ A. Weisburd, C. Watts, J. Berger, *Trolling for Trump: How Russia Is Trying to Destroy Our Democracy*, <<https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/trolling-for-trump-how-russia-is-trying-to-destroy-our-democracy/>> (15.02.2019).

³² United States Information Agency, *Soviet Active Measures in the "Post-Cold War" Era 1988-1991*, Washington 1992.

³³ A. Averin, *Russia and its Many Truths*, [in:] J. Althuis, L. Haiden, eds. *Fake News: A Roadmap*, Riga 2018, pp. 59-67; K. Giles, *op. cit.*; M. Lupion, *The Gray War of Our Time: Information Warfare and the Kremlin's Weaponization of Russian- Language Digital News*, “The Journal of Slavic Military Studies”, 2018, 31(3), pp. 329-353; N. MacFarquhar, *A Powerful Russian Weapon: The Spread of False Stories*, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/29/world/europe/russia-sweden-disinformation.html>> (13.01.2019); Pomerantsev, *op. cit.*

³⁴ Pomerantsev, *op. cit.*

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ J. Rogers, A. L. Martinescu, *After Crimea Time for a New British Geostrategy for Eastern Europe?*, London 2015.

opinion space into the decision-making space³⁷. And on the other hand, the Russian government translates such kind of foreign policy success into greater regime stability at home³⁸.

Methodology

The paper focuses on analysing dominating media narratives of two Kremlin outlets with the Russo-Georgian War in 2008 and Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. The main focus of the analysis is to find empirical evidence on how Russian use of information has been evolved. Since the Russian government views itself to be in an ongoing information war, mass communications represent a crucial arena of global politics, in which, according to the Kremlin's way of thinking, rival powers try to further their interests and undermine others³⁹. Russian government openly stated in its Foreign Policy Concept of 2013 the need to 'develop its effective means of information to influence on public opinion abroad', and 'counteract information threats to its sovereignty and security'⁴⁰. In line with this, Kremlin has made huge investments to be able to convey Russian points of view to other countries as well as to sell them domestically⁴¹. Besides, substantial changes were made to adapt the principles of subversion to the internet age. Giles stresses out that internally and externally focused media with a substantial online presence represents the top priority in Moscow's information strategy⁴². One might even consider 'weaponisation' information and projecting narratives to foreign and domestic audiences as a matter of national security.

Acknowledging the increasing significance of the internet and new communications for the Kremlin's politics, the paper looks at the 'weaponisation' of information through the strategic narratives. To see how the strategy works, the paper analyses coverage and narratives of the Kremlin media outlets during Russia-involved conflicts. As the outlets are directly controlled by the Russian power elite, they do represent the

³⁷ M. Lupion, *op. cit.*

³⁸ A. Averin. *op. cit.*

³⁹ S. Hutchings, J. Szostek, *Dominant Narratives in Russian Political and Media Discourse during the Ukraine Crisis*, [in:] A. Pikulicka-Wilczewska, R. Sakwa, eds. *Ukraine and Russia People, Politics, Propaganda and Perspectives*, Bristol 2015, pp. 173-185.

⁴⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, *The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation 2013*, Moscow 2013.

⁴¹ S. Hutchings, J. Szostek, *op. cit.*

⁴² K. Giles, *op. cit.*

Kremlin's official position. While some might view the coverage of these outlets just as pure journalism, the paper believes that the way Russian media frames and builds representations of events, personalities, or groups have an important public resonance and implications for the governmental aims. Therefore, analysing Kremlin's main narratives for domestic and international audiences shows the ideas, fears, and goals of the Russian government enabled us to understand Kremlin's information strategy. Analysing the coverage during two different conflicts with six years difference will also allow seeing the expansion of the Kremlin's strategy.

The study uses data of two sets of articles drawn from two state-backed pro-Kremlin digital news websites, RIA Novosti and RT (formerly Russia Today). RIA, a state-owned domestic Russian-language news agency, operates under the Russian Ministry of Communications and Mass Media. While Russia Today, also known as RT, promotes itself as an independent outlet, it is backed by the Russian government as even Putin admits their relationship⁴³. RIA represents the biggest and the most popular online news source for the Russian-speaking population and RT conveys Kremlin's messages to the international audience. At the same time, RT was the only international news outlet reporting from Tskhinvali during the 2008 Russo-Georgian war⁴⁴. However, after 2008 both outlets went through rebranding, reforms, and expansion. Russia Today was rebranded into RT, while RIA Novosti joined the newly established Russian international news agency Rossiya Segodnya. Therefore, to a certain extent, both outlets could be regarded as different players during the Crimea case.

The first set of data covers the 2008 Russo-Georgia war and consists of articles published within a week from 7th to 13th of August 2008. The timeframe is chosen as the 7th of August is acknowledged to be the starting date of the war, while the 13th is the day when it ended. The second set is devoted to articles covering Russia's annexation of Crimea, published during the timeframe of 20th February to 19th March 2014. In this case, the timeframe is much bigger compared to the Georgian case, however, this is due to the differences like Crimean case. While the Maidan demonstrations had been going on in Kyiv for months, they

⁴³ M. Fisher, *In case you weren't clear on Russia Today's relationship to Moscow, Putin clears it up*, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2013/06/13/in-case-you-werent-clear-on-russia-todays-relationship-to-moscow-putin-clears-it-up/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.6672d7c05a53> (12.05.2019).

⁴⁴ The outlet even mentions this fact on their history page as a milestone.

erupted into violence from February 20th. Therefore, this date has been selected as the starting point. By the 19th of March, the referendum was concluded and Russia had already integrated Crimea as part of the Federation.

Within these parameters, after a preliminary reading through of all the articles published by both outlets, 30 news articles from Russia Today and 60 similar pieces from RIA Novosti covering Russo-Georgian War have been selected. The selection was made based on the importance of the topic, the number of views per article, and the equal redistribution between the topics covered for the analysis. Following the same selective logic, 60 news articles have been selected from RT and 100 similar pieces from RIA Novosti. It should be noted that the study limits its analysis on news articles only as they convey the quickest reinterpretations and reach out to many readers instantly.

The scrutiny is based on the content analysis. The quantitative account of the data is generated following the keyword coding and the thematic analysis⁴⁵. The analysis encompasses 100 coded keywords and phrases, which are then grouped into different categories. For grouping, the paper is using the categories created by Miranda Lupion, as she put keywords into six broader thematic categories based on the ideas they represent: humanitarian, legal, chaotic/aggressive, historical/cultural, Western interventionist, and order/safety⁴⁶.

Through quantitative content analysis, the paper intends to assess the following three factors: First, the thematic consistency, as the paper looks on whether two different outlets promoted the same themes and narratives for the domestic and international audience. The second criterion is the keyword volume. Several keywords are analysed according to their groupings, to see which category has dominated the news cycle and which narratives were more preferred by each outlet. The final factor is sophistication, observed to see whether the outlets pushed the various Russian narratives at the same time.

The paper intends to show that quantitative content analysis will provide sheer numbers and evidence behind the Kremlin's narratives, which while comparing two cases, will show how the clear evolution of Russian information strategy from the Russo-Georgian War of 2008 to the annexation of Crimea in 2014. It should be noted, that while the paper shares the dominating idea that Russian information strategy was

⁴⁵ A. Bryman, *Content Analysis*, [in:] A. Bryman, ed. *Social Research Methods*, Oxford 2012, pp. 288-309.

⁴⁶ M. Lupion, *op. cit.*

more effective in the case of Crimea compared to Georgia, the project itself does not intend to examine the effectiveness or success of the Kremlin's new strategy as it is beyond the scope of the paper. Instead, the intention is to observe the particular strategic changes. Due to various limitations of the study, some other aspects of Russia's information strategy such as 'grey' and 'black' measures underlined by Weisburd, Watts & Berger ought to be more comprehensively addressed in further studies⁴⁷.

Quantitative Comparative Analysis of the Russian Information Weaponisation Strategies

The Russian Federation applied different yet strategically similar narratives to both Georgian and Ukrainian cases. While in the Georgian case the main justification for the military involvement was based on the notions of humanitarian intervention and Responsibility to Protect, in the Crimean case the contested norms of international law were further emphasized via more thematically diverse and sophisticated 'weaponised' media. The Kremlin outlets developed a whole chain of narratives based on Russian governmental interpretation of international law incorporating the norms of a humanitarian catastrophe; accusations of the illegitimacy of the interim government; fascist allegations and the right for self-determination. Instead of openly admitting the presence of Russian troops in the conflict like it was done in the Georgian case, in the Ukrainian case the outlets preferred to distort the facts to hide the connection of self-defence forces with Moscow. Also, Western criticism was met with the counter-arguments within the tactics of 'whataboutism' mainly referring to Kosovo as a precedent.

The paper accentuates quantitative data to empirically demonstrate the development in Russian information strategy from Georgian to the Crimean cases. Through quantitative content analysis, the paper evaluates the three following factors: (1) thematic consistency, (2) keyword volume, and (3) sophistication.

Russo-Georgian War 2008. Thematic consistency

As already stated above, thematic consistency refers to the extent to which Russia Today and RIA Novosti promoted the same topics within

⁴⁷ A. Weisburd, C. Watts, J. Berger, *op. cit.*

the narrative. If the outlets promoted similar themes, then the thematic consistency could be regarded as high, while the low thematic consistency would indicate that these two outlets covered the event from different thematic perspectives.

While looking at the 2008 case, thematic consistency looks quite high, as both Russia Today and RIA Novosti had prioritised more or less the same topics. Within both outlets, the chaotic/aggressive theme was the most popular, followed by the humanitarian theme, while the historical/cultural theme was the least popular in both cases. The topics coded as Legal, Western, and Order and Safety are in the middle-ranking for both outlets, with a slight difference as the Western theme was number three by popularity for Russia Today. In RIA Novosti's case, Order and Safety was the one in the top three, then followed by Legal and Western themes respectively. The full thematic rankings for both outlets are comparatively illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Themes ranked by the volume and priority on each outlet for the case of 2008

	Russia Today	RIA Novosti
1	Chaotic/Aggressive (372)	Chaotic/Aggressive (573)
2	Humanitarian (237)	Humanitarian (246)
3	Western (81)	Order and Safety (59)
4	Legal (80)	Legal (48)
5	Order and Safety (64)	Western (27)
6	Historical/Cultural (7)	Historical/Cultural (2)

Keyword Volume

Keyword volume counts several pro-Russian keywords used in articles published by Russia Today and RIA Novosti. The paper calculated the number of keywords separately by the topics alone and then in proportion to the total word count. The keyword volume is later compared to the respective data from the Ukrainian case to observe the transformation.

Table 2 depicts the raw keyword counts for Russia Today, while Table 3 illustrates the raw keyword counts for RIA Novosti. Subsequent

Table 4 shows the percentage of pro-Russian keywords adjusted to the word count for both outlets.

Table 2. Keyword count for Russia Today. The case of 2008

Category	Example keywords	Total number of keywords
Humanitarian	peacekeeper, refugee, civilians, humanitarian, aid, help	237
Legal	international law, genocide, ethnic cleansing, negotiations, tribunal, resolution	80
Chaotic/ Aggressive	military, killed, wounded, troops, violence, ruined, destroyed	372
Historical/ Cultural	Nazi, Hussein, Yugoslavia	7
Western	US, NATO, EU, UN	81
Order and Safety	stability, safety, a ceasefire	64

Table 3. Keyword count for RIA Novosti. The case of 2008

Category	Example keywords	Total number of keywords
Humanitarian	мироотворец (peacekeeper), беженец (refugee), мирное население (civilians), гуманитарная помощь (humanitarian aid)	246
Legal	международное право (international law), геноцид (genocide), этническая чистка (ethnic cleansing), переговоры (negotiations), трибунал (tribunal)	48
Chaotic/ Aggressive	военные (military), убитые (killed), раненые (wounded), войска (troops), насилие (violence), разрушены (ruined), уничтожены (destroyed)	573

Historical/ Cultural	Нацист (Nazi), фашист (fascist), история (history)	2
Western	США (U.S.), НАТО (NATO), ЕС (EU), ООН (UN), запад (the West)	27
Order and Safety	стабильность (stability), безопасность (safety), прекращение огня (ceasefire), освобождение (liberation)	59

Table 4. Percentage of the thematic keywords of the total word count for both outlets. The case of 2008

Category	Russia Today	RIA Novosti
Humanitarian	2.20	2.04
Legal	0.74	0.39
Chaotic/Aggressive	3.45	4.75
Historical/Cultural	0.06	0.01
Western	0.75	0.22
Order and Safety	0.59	0.49

Sophistication

Within the frameworks of this analysis, sophistication stands for the volume to which outlets covered the event from various pro-Russian narratives at the same time. Therefore, the outlet which pushes more narratives per report has a greater sophistication, while the ones that promote only one topic have been evaluated as of lower sophistication.

The initial glance at the articles left an impression that Russia Today might have had higher sophistication as judged by the length of their articles compared to RIA Novosti. 30 articles from Russia Today had almost the same total word count as 60 articles from RIA. The average word count for Russia Today was 325 words per piece, while for RIA the same number was 205. Almost 40 percent of articles by Russia Today were more than 400 words in length, while the number for RIA was less than 7 percent. Some of the articles from RIA were as short as 18 words only. This shows that RIA had focused on shorter reporting, promoted

mainly one topic at the time, and, therefore, demonstrated less sophistication.

As seen from the keyword analysis, the chaotic/aggressive topic was dominating the reports of both outlets. Table 1 shows that in total, both outlets used keywords related to this topic 945 times, which is more than the total number (851) of all other keywords. Only the total number of keywords related to the humanitarian topic is worth mentioning, which at 483, is nearly half of the number of chaotic/aggressive keywords, but still more than the sum number of all the other keywords from the other four groups. Thus, chaotic/aggressive and humanitarian topics were both mainly used together, to create an image of crisis and enemy, and then justify Russian intervention via portraying Russia as a rescuer. Therefore, both outlets were mainly promoting one topic, while the other themes/topics were comparatively underrepresented within the discourse.

Analysis of quantitative data from the Georgian case leads to the conclusion that the Kremlin-backed media in 2008 demonstrated high thematic consistency and low sophistication. This could be one of the reasons for less success on the informational battlefield in 2008, as according to Lupion, single theme alignment and low level of sophistication results in the less effective ‘weaponisation’ of information⁴⁸.

The annexation of Crimea 2014. Thematic consistency

While Russia Today and RIA Novosti have prioritised almost the same topics during the 2008 case, demonstrating a high level of thematic consistency, the same would be only partially true in their coverage of events of 2014. As seen from Table 1, in the Georgian case the same two topics (Chaotic/aggressive and humanitarian) were dominating in both outlets, at the same time, a historical/cultural narrative was the least popular for both of them. While looking at Table 5, reflecting on the thematic rankings for RT and RIA Novosti during 2014 coverage, one might think that the pattern is similar. Both media outlets tried to portray the interim government as illegitimate and the Crimea referendum legitimate. Therefore, the legal topic was the most popular with almost identical amounts of keywords used within the two outlets. Both RT and RIA devoted quite some time to

⁴⁸ M. Lupion, *op. cit.*

portray the situation in Kyiv as chaotic as possible, making the chaotic theme the second most popular for both outlets. However, RT had almost twice as many keywords for this topic compared to RIA. Apart from these two narratives, the priorities of the outlets are drastically different, with the only humanitarian topic being equally unimportant for RT and RIA. Hence, despite demonstrating three topics with the same rankings, one can still not call the thematic consistency for the Crimean case as high as it was during the Georgia case. It should be noted that the consistency is still high, but not as omnipresent as this was shown in the Georgian case where the two narratives had essentially dominated the coverage of the event. Therefore, if thematic consistency for the Georgian case was considered as high, in a respective manner, in the 2014 case it could be labelled as the medium.

Table 5. Themes ranked by the volume and priority on each outlet for 2014 coverage

	RT	RIA Novosti
1	Legal (1686)	Legal (1593)
2	Chaotic (1461)	Chaotic (761)
3	Order and Safety (646)	Western (427)
4	Western (564)	Historical/Cultural (410)
5	Humanitarian (547)	Humanitarian (332)
6	Historical/Cultural (378)	Order and Safety (278)

Keyword Volume

In measuring the number of pro-Russian keywords used in the articles, the paper first calculated the number of keywords according to their groupings and then compared it to the proportion of the total word count. Table 6 depicts the raw pro-Russian keyword counts for RT, as Table 7 illustrates the raw keyword counts for RIA Novosti, while Table 8 shows the percentage of pro-Russian keywords adjusted for the word count for both outlets.

Table 6. Keyword count for RT for 2014 coverage

Category	Example keywords	Total number of keywords
Humanitarian	refugee, civilians, humanitarian, aid, help	547
Legal	referendum, coup, coup-imposed, constitutional, illegal	1686
Chaotic/ Aggressive	Turmoil, radicals, bandits, military, crisis, rioters, protest, Kalashnikov, wounds, seized, Maidan	1461
Historical/ Cultural	Nazi, Bandera, neo-Nazi, Jews, Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Soviet Union	378
Western	U.S., NATO, EU, UN, Western, European, American	564
Order and Safety	self-defence, stability, safety, order, peace	646

Table 7. Keyword count for RIA Novosti for 2014 coverage

Category	Example keywords	Total number of keywords
Humanitarian	гражданское население (civilians), помощь (aid)	332
Legal	референдум (referendum), международное право (international law), переворот (coup), легитимность (legitimacy), закон (law)	1593
Chaotic/ Aggressive	кризиса (crisis), радикалы (radicals) убитые (killed), раненые (wounded), насилие (violence), Коктейль Молотова (Molotov Cocktail)	761
Historical/ Cultural	Нацист (Nazi), фашист (fascist), Бандера (Bandera)	410
Western	США (U.S.), НАТО (NATO), ЕС (EU), ООН (UN), запад (the West)	427

Order and Safety	стабильность (stability), безопасность (safety),	278
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Table 8. Percentage of the thematic keywords for both outlets

Category	RT	RIA Novosti
Humanitarian	1.43	1.12
Legal	4.42	5.36
Chaotic/Aggressive	3.83	2.56
Historical/Cultural	0.99	1.38
Western	1.48	1.43
Order and Safety	1.69	0.93

A glance at Table 8 implies an increase in keyword volume, however, Table 9 makes the picture more accurate. As seen from the thematic keyword percentage comparison, there has been a substantial increase from the Georgian case to the Crimean case in terms of pro-Kremlin bias in digital media coverage. Table 9 depicts that the usage of pro-Moscow keywords has increased for both outlets. For Russia Today/RT percentage of the specific keywords compared to the word count of the articles has almost doubled from 7.79 percent to 13.84 percent, this difference of 6.05 percent accounts for a 77.66 percent increase. While comparing keyword usage for RIA articles from 2008 to 2014, the keyword percentage growth is 4.88 percent as it grew from 7.9 percent in 2008 to 12.78 percent in 2014, accounting for a 61.77 percent increase.

Table 9. Comparison of thematic keywords percentage for both articles during Georgia and Crimea cases

Category	RT 2008	RT 2014	RIA Novosti 2008	RIA Novosti 2014
Humanitarian	2.20	1.43	2.04	1.12
Legal	0.74	4.42	0.39	5.36
Chaotic/ Aggressive	3.45	3.83	4.75	2.56

Historical/ Cultural	0.06	0.99	0.01	1.38
Western	0.75	1.48	0.22	1.43
Order and Safety	0.59	1.69	0.49	0.93
Total sum of keyword percentage	7.79	13.84	7.9	12.78

Sophistication

While the case of Georgia was characterised by low-level of sophistication, Crimea's coverage is drastically different. First, as seen from the keyword volume, both outlets increased their use of pro-Russian keywords in their articles by more than 50 percent which could lead to the presumption that the outlets have also increased their article length. Indeed, while covering the Crimea case, both outlets have put more effort and increased the number of words in each article. While in 2008 during the Georgian case, the average word count for Russia Today's articles was 325 words, in 2014 the average length increased by 95 percent, as the average length of RT articles for Crimea case was 635 words. In parallel to this tendency, RIA has also seen an increase from 205 words on average per article in 2008 to 306 words, accounting for 49 percent growth.

Increased article length did not only result in an increased number of pro-Russian keywords but also let outlets promote more topics within each article. In 2008, one topic, chaotic/aggressive, was dominating reports for both outlets in such a notable way that it hijacked the whole news cycle and overshadowed the other narratives. As seen from Table 1, both outlets used the keywords from this thematic grouping more than keywords from any other topics combined. The keyword volume is drastically different in the 2014 case. Despite both articles prioritising the same topic, the legal narrative did not monopolise the news cycle. The situation was almost the exact opposite of the 2008 case, as a total number of keywords from legal thematic (3279) was almost half of the sum (5804) of keywords from the other groupings.

One could assume that both outlets have learned the lesson that, the less effective 'weaponisation' of information that occurred during 2008, might have been a result of low sophistication and single theme alignment.

Therefore, in 2014 one could witness higher thematic sophistication as both outlets devoted significant attention to all the topics and promoted a couple of narratives at the same time. While the increased length of pieces was crucial to achieving higher sophistication, the increase in the total number of articles also played a role. In 2008 Russia Today had only around 50 articles devoted to Georgia while for RIA the number was around 800. On the other hand, in 2014 RT published a couple of hundred pieces, while RIA Novosti had more than five thousand articles covering Ukraine. It should also be mentioned that the coverage period for Georgia was only a week, while for Ukraine it was a month, however, the increase in articles is still exceeding the expected discrepancy due to the periodic difference.

The increased number of the articles resulted in a more diversified news circle and an expanded number of the covered topics. However, even in one article, both outlets would try to integrate a piece from the other narratives. It is also worth mentioning that this was first done by RIA Novosti in 2008. The outlet demonstrated a tendency to conclude each article on the subject regardless of its theme with the following statement: “On the night of August 8, Georgian troops invaded the territory of the unrecognized republic and fired, including from the Grad volley fire, the capital of the Republic of Tskhinvali. The city is destroyed, nurseries, schools, the only hospital are broken. More than 34 thousand refugees left the republic. The authorities of South Ossetia reported 1.6 thousand dead. During the conflict, 18 Russian peacekeepers were killed, more than 150 were injured”⁴⁹. The text was repeated word after word in 9 articles out of 60 that have been analysed for the paper. Russia Today did not use this tactic back in 2008.

In 2014, both outlets used the above-discussed strategy more often and in a more sophisticated way. During the first stages of the coverage, RIA would finalize almost every article with a special piece entitled “how has the situation in Ukraine worsened”. The recurring text under this piece would blame the escalation on the opposition while portraying them as radicals. Furthermore, the notice would end up with an information of several deaths and injuries to emphasize the chaos narrative. Following this tendency, RIA would also conclude articles with the “what is happening in Ukraine” section using the same narrative. However, the outlet was not limited to this one narrative only. Articles

⁴⁹ RIA Novosti, *Iz Gruzii nie wypuskajut rossijskich turistow – oczewidcy*, <<https://ria.ru/20080810/150250631.html>> (17.04.2019).

published a bit later would notify the reader about “how [was] Crimea different from other regions of the country”, once again emphasizing the Crimea’s Russian population and the region being part of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. In several cases, the articles encompass the section: “how was the government in Ukraine changed” section, serving to portray the interim government as illegitimate; labelling revolution as a violent seizure of power and underlining that Crimea was against the new illegitimate government. Before the referendum one would see a different section, entitled “how did the situation on the Crimean Peninsula escalate”, conveying the interpretation of the protests in Crimea and the demand for the referendum. There were several articles, where all of these three ending sections would be put together in one article. Other ending sections included ones about “how can Russia use its armed forces outside the country” and “how Russia provided fraternal help to Ukraine”. After the referendum, RIA switched back to labelling the change of government in Kyiv as a coup and added a new end section about the Crimea referendum reminding the readers that 96.77 percent of Crimeans have voted in favour of Russia.

RT was also using the same tactic however in a slightly different way. In several articles, the outlet would have different subsections about “ethnic controversy” or “how was Crimea separated from Russia” to provide the reader with another narrative. The outlet also repeated a couple of stories about the status of Sevastopol being the subject of debates in the 1990s and about Crimeans protesting about the illegitimate government in Kyiv. A number of times RT ended articles by reminding the readers that the majority of the population in Crimea was Russian and that they used Russian for communication. However, the tactic was seen through less volume compared to RIA. On February 27th the outlet published an article titled “the facts you need to know about Crimea and why it is in turmoil”. After this, in several other articles, the outlet would put a link to the article with the facts about Crimea. Later the same tactics were applied to the article entitled “Russia’s 25,000-troop allowance & other facts you may not know about Crimea”. In some articles, the outlet put links for both pieces at the same time.

Derived from the analysis, the following conclusion can be outlined: the deployed strategy by the two outlets served at conveying all the narratives from the different themes together. In addition to this, by providing the same information several times, the media outlets tried to portray their interpretations as facts in an attempt to shape the reader’s

opinions on the subject in favour of Moscow. Thus, by 2014 Russian strategy of ‘weaponisation’ of information turned into a more complex and sophisticated tool than it had been in 2008.

Conclusion

When it comes to the Russian assertive actions, scholars use different terms and concepts to describe the process. However, as seen here, most of them do not adequately or comprehensively represent an accurate framework for explaining Kremlin’s behaviour. The so-called ‘Gerasimov Doctrine’, which is increasingly mentioned by Western scholars, is not even an official doctrine, but an analysis of ‘The Arab Spring’ from the Russian perspective. This example demonstrates the problem with the conceptualization. In the absence of an adequate term, several scholars thought that Russia had been waging a completely new type of war, which some labelled as ‘hybrid warfare’. However, even the biggest proponents of the term cannot conceptualise it properly and admittedly reflect on the various flaws of the concept. Most of the definitions of ‘hybrid warfare’ are either too broad, as they incorporate both violent and non-violent features, or too narrow, as they use regular and irregular wars either simultaneously or sequentially in the theatre of operations.

While one group of concepts fail as they neglect violence, ‘hybrid warfare’ fails to conceptualise non-violent measures, which represent if not the main pillar, one of the crucial factors in certain Kremlin strategies. Other than that, while ‘hybrid warfare’ proponents focus on incorporating ‘unconventional’ methods with the traditional military, it does not indeed imply any novelty in warfare. All wars in the past have used ‘unconventional’ methods, therefore had some elements of ‘hybridity’. Neither ‘soft power’ nor ‘public diplomacy’ does the justice in describing Kremlin’s assertive behaviour as Russian means rarely rely on ‘attraction’ which represents a key pillar for both of these concepts. Terms such as ‘fake news’ and ‘misinformation’ did not prove to be the most suited concepts either.

Departing from the conceptual bewilderment, the paper attempted at demonstrating that novelty of Russian actions is not in terms of its military, but rather the specific nature of the operations that Russia has been pursuing on the latest occasions. In particular, the specificity is reflected in the way the military was integrated with other instruments, mostly the state-run and coordinated information operations in the cases

of the Russo-Georgian war in 2008 and the case of Crimea in 2014. While in certain cases Moscow still uses conventional military, Kremlin's new approach seems to be focused on achieving its goals through information online in the first place, rather than fight the enemy on the battlefield. Therefore, the paper had focused on information as the main 'weapon' in the hands of the Russian government.

Labelling such actions as 'weaponisation' of information, the study has shown that Moscow does not regard the information operations as a short-term strategy limited to wartime, but rather as a constant feature of international relations. Therefore, the Russian Federation is not engaging in information warfare but is waging the information war instead. This continuity in the Kremlin's strategy is also seen in the expansion and eventual sophistication of the tools deployed.

In an attempt to demonstrate the gradual evolvement of the Russian 'weaponisation' of information, the empirical analysis drew upon two comparative cases of Russo-Georgian and Crimean cases. The quantitative scrutiny focused on the Kremlin-backed media's coverage of the two cases during their escalation. Following the analysis of the related articles by Russia Today and RIA Novosti, the expanding sophistication and diversifying thematic alignment has characterized the development of the Russian information strategy over time.

In 2008, Russian media devoted just a few articles to the coverage of the conflict. At the same time, both the Russian language RIA Novosti and English Russia Today promoted mainly the same narratives for the international and domestic audiences. Both outlets prioritised the same 'chaotic/aggressive' and 'humanitarian' topics while heavily relying on official Kremlin statements. Thus, the coverage resembled state-orchestrated propaganda conveying Kremlin's narrative to the wider audience.

In contrast to 2008 coverage, the Russian information 'weaponisation' tactics for 2014 devoted a greater deal of attention to Crimea as seen in the number of articles. In conjunction with numbers, the length of the articles was also increased by 49 percent on RIA and by 95 percent on RT. This subsequently resulted in an astonishingly increased number of the thematic composition of the analysed data. The significantly increased number of the thematic keywords reflected the intensification of the more pro-Kremlin narratives in the media coverage. In contrast to the 2008 case, through which the main accent was towards cultivating anxiety and fear through portraying the situation as a chaotic humanitarian crisis, the 2014 coverage demonstrated a more balanced

and diverse news cycle. Also, in regards to the Crimean case, the absolute majority of the analysed media content encompassed the different identified topics, directed at influencing the readers' understanding of the events. RT and RIA built the whole chain of narratives concerning grey areas of international law, such as humanitarian catastrophe, protection of civilians, secession, and right for self-determination. Kremlin media used historical narratives quite well too, which they almost ignored in 2008.

A more diverse news cycle excluded the chances of any particular topic hijacking the narrative. Therefore, 2014 coverage demonstrated less thematic consistency between articles but a high level of sophistication reflected in the variety of thematic perspectives within single articles. This increased flow of information created an illusion of diverse opinions, challenged Western values, and misled the audience in their pursuit of objective truth.

In sum, the paper concludes that Russian assertive actions cannot be described with buzzwords like 'hybrid warfare' or 'Gerasimov doctrine'. Instead, all attention should be devoted to the Russian use of information for strategic purposes. The research of the Georgian and Crimean cases has disclosed that the Russian strategy of 'weaponisation' of media has undergone some notable advancements turning into a more sophisticated and complex tool. Further research on other elements of Russian use of information (such as 'grey' and 'black' measures) would complete the thesis. However, one cannot ignore the fact that the Kremlin's use of information for strategic purposes is evolving into a powerful weapon, and shortly Russian keyboard might be worse than an AK47 bullet.

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**ASYMMETRICAL WARFARE STRATEGY
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS TO THE BLACK SEA
REGIONAL SECURITY IN 21ST CENTURY: NON-STATE
AGGRESSIVE ACTORS AND TERRORISM**

Abstract:

Today, military politics have become a dominant factor in the aegis of the contemporary international and regional security, and this provision is also relevant in the Black Sea Region. The nature of military politics presupposes the existence of asymmetric threats, which is revealed in the implementation of functional politics by the states and implies the following components: power, chance, astonishment, armed forces, their doctrines, and armaments. The asymmetric military identification is vital to recognize at the regional level, with the example of the Black Sea Region and it's involvement of so-called 'Non-State Aggressive Actors' (DAESH, Al-Qaeda, etc.). After the Russian annexation of Crimea, the Black Sea Region would be designated as a conflict zone and therefore NATO has reinforced it's eastern security policy accordingly. The International Community witnessed that there are two regional hegemonies: Russia and Turkey, pursuing their own geopolitical and economic interests in the Black Sea region and the region around the Caspian Sea (including one that sees regional power interests). Recently, China, as a global power in its own right, with its 'One Belt and One Road' Initiative (OBOR), expresses it's own interests toward the region,

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including from the asymmetric threat perception points of view. Suffice to say, the Asymmetrical wargame scenario has been demonstrated precisely in the Tskhinvali Region with wargaming between Russia and Georgia, and in Crimea with hybrid war between Russia and Ukraine. These interactions have occurred in aegis of the Black Sea Region as it grapples with asymmetric threats on both Military Strategically and Operational levels.

Keywords:

asymmetric warfare, asymmetric threats, the Black Sea Region, Tskhinvali region, Crimea, regional hegemon, Russia, Turkey, China, OBOR

Introduction

The Black Sea Region a key geopolitical entity in the make-up of security policy and stability in Europe and Asia. numerous issues in the region, including ethnic conflicts, ongoing state-building processes, the presence of vast natural resources, and strategic transport and energy corridors mean that the region is an extremely important and sensitive area.

In geographical terms, it is difficult to specify the boundaries of the Black Sea Region since there are numerous regional and sub-regional structures. In the post-Cold War period, there has been a large measure of openness to several neighbouring areas, such as the Mediterranean, the Balkans, and the Caspian region. This kind of openness makes it difficult to define both the nature of the region and its borders and is reflected in terms such as ‘Black-Caspian Seas Region’ and ‘Black-Mediterranean Seas Region’. Some analysts have even argued that the Black Sea Region is simply an intellectual invention. To avoid confusion, the approach used here is based on the definition adopted by the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC).

At the end of the Cold War, the states around the Black Sea regained their freedom and escaped from what could be described as ‘a bipolar conceptual straitjacket’. This historical event not only marked the start of a move towards independence, democracy, and a market economy, but also unleashed previously suppressed ethnic, national, and territorial conflicts, and even terrorism. From the early 1990s onwards, the region witnessed armed conflicts and an increase in political tension. Political

and territorial disagreements such as border disputes and clashes between both peoples and states are the main reason why the prospects for regional security cooperation are rather bleak. The Black Sea basin was of secondary importance for the Euro-Atlantic community during the 1990s as it focused on stabilizing and integrating central and eastern European countries from the Baltic to the Black Sea. However, in the 21st century, the changing global and regional balances created new political and security dilemmas for the Black Sea Region. The global and regional powers increasingly supported competition for political and security agendas which, although they occasionally contradicted each other, were interlinked.

After September 11th, 2001 the U.S. increased its involvement in the region, with new programs in Georgia and Ukraine, for example. This went hand in hand with the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) enlargement processes and global political developments. The differing approaches to the creation of security and stability in the region led to tension and rivalry between the regional actors.

In the post-Cold War period, the Black Sea Region failed to develop a cooperative security vision or structure in which the regional actors would have been the principal stakeholders. The Russian-Georgian War in August 2008 showed quite clearly that the initiatives designed to pacify the region had not produced a security system capable of preventing or containing internal and interstate conflicts. One lesson that can be learned from the August 2008 crisis is that the interplay of regional and global forces will continue to dominate future political and military issues in the region and it remains to be seen whether the war in August 2008 will lead to a new cooperative security environment in the Black Sea Region. Finally, all kinds of security issues ranging from energy security to environmental degradation; from terrorism to illegal trafficking in arms, human beings, and drugs continue to be unresolved as a result of the existing international rivalry.

Another important issue is energy security. The need to achieve energy supply diversity on the one hand and the risks associated with energy dependency on Russia on the other show the importance of gas and oil from other sources being piped to the European markets through the region. The energy dispute between Russia and Ukraine in late 2008 and early 2009 clearly illustrated the importance of energy security for the region and for the EU. In addition to exploration, production, and transport-related problems, oil and natural gas have become one of the

main security issues in the Black Sea Region, which as the principal energy transit route, is also a testing ground for the interaction between producer, consumer, and transit countries. This means that the region is not only a potential hub, it is the host of numerous rivalries as well.

Finally, several problems associated with soft security issues which range from environmental concerns to the potential for social unrest and economic collapse need to be analysed, especially when there is a likelihood that they will disrupt political stability and security in the region. Potential destabilizing threats such as the global financial crisis also need to be kept under review, as does the impact of the crisis on the countries in the region or on the redefinition of the roles of the regional powers, and the opportunities arising from a redefinition of the global economic environment.

By and large, the Black Sea Region is also of increasing geo-economic importance especially concerning developing energy security provisions in aegis of the European Union via the import and logistical opportunities. With the emergence of the Caspian Basin, Middle East, and Central Asia becoming some kind of energy gateway, the importance of providing and fostering security and stability in the Pan-European Area cannot be understated. It is interesting to underpin that energy security in the Wider Black Sea Region as defined by the concrete scientific and academic analytical school approaches reflected in international relations, like interdependence theory³.

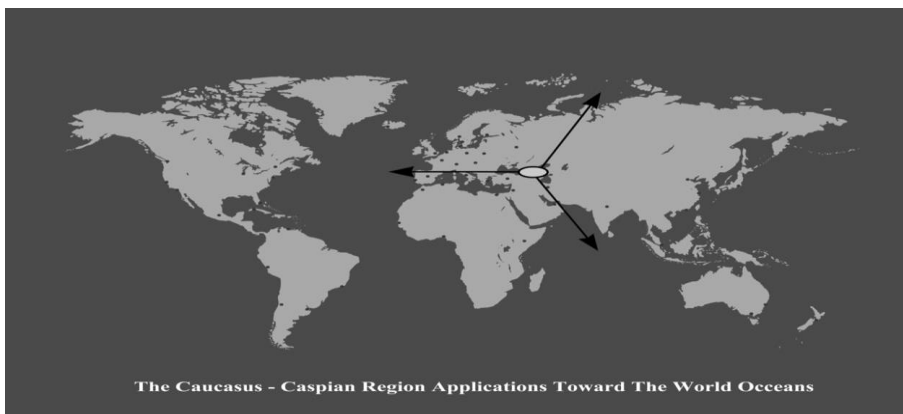
Geopolitical Classification of the Black Sea Region – Wider Black Sea Implication for the World Politics

As previously outlined, geographical implications for the Black Sea Region due to the geopolitical transmission and transformation after a 'bipolar system demolition' in contemporary international relations. As a result of this, regional security is increasing steadily. There are several indicators on why the region has become so important and unique not only in the Cold War period but more so afterward due first of all to the very unique geopolitical implications of the region. The region has primary access to the 'Three Oceans' line (Nord, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans – see Map 1) via multiple gateways including Black Sea Basin, the Persian Gulf, and Central Eurasia. Moreover, concrete geopolitical

³ I. Chifu, A. Sauliuc, B. Nedea, *Energy Security Strategies in the Wider Black Sea Region*, Bucharest 2010, p. 9.

determinants of the importance of the region are considered with three main criteria having pure geopolitical meaning.

Map 1: The Black Sea Region applicability toward the 'Three Oceans' line.



These unique geopolitical indicators are further explained below:

- 1) Combination of three concepts: Talasokratia+Telurokratia +Montekratia;
- 2) 'Eurasian Balkan' acronym for spurring new asymmetric challenges Key international energy gateway providing unlimited delivery of energy resources to international markets.

Nevertheless, the geopolitical implication is only the so-called 'macro' level of analysis and is fitted to a pan-regional classification and global political relevance of the region. To provide the so-called 'micro' level of analysis and importance of the region in aegis of the regional and local implications there are some approaches to make classification of the Black Sea Region. The classification is based on classical geopolitical identification similar to that of British geopolitical school founder Professor Halford Mackinder's 'Heartland Theory'. According to his theory, Mackinder defined the global geopolitical system into three main territorial areas: 'Pivot Area' (or another way 'Heartland'), 'Inner or Marginal Crescent', and 'Lands of the Outer or Insular Crescent'⁴. Even Mackinder endorsed simplistic dictum upon based on which he identified

⁴ G. O. Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: the Politics of Writing Global Space*, London 1996, p. 33.

then world order: “Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland: Who rules the World-Island commands the World”⁵.

In this respect, based on the classical geopolitical methodology is possible to define geopolitical identification of the Black Sea region. Having considered the above-mentioned passage is necessary to figure out the following possible configuration. The configuration is identified regional geopolitical architecture in three concrete circles, similar to the British classical geopolitical school approach:

- 1) Black Sea Basin – ‘Inner Core’ Ring – namely six littoral states of the Black Sea itself (Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine, Georgia, Russian Federation);
- 2) Black Sea Region – ‘Outer Core Ring’ – the land and seascape from the Balkans to the Caucasus and from Ukrainian and Russian steppe to Anatolia;
- 3) Wider Black Sea Region (Area) – ‘Close Outer’ Ring – the territory encompasses the following geopolitical spaces MENA, Caspian Basin, South, and Eastern Europe.

Considering the geopolitical classification is important to clarify the dispositional characteristics of the regional ‘circles’. The scheme means demonstrating true geopolitical content in each of the ‘circles’ – for instance, Black Sea Basin associated with ‘Talassokratia’⁶ geopolitics, Black Sea Region – associated with ‘Montecracy’⁷ geopolitics, and Wider Black Sea Area (Region) – associated with ‘Telurokratia’⁸ geopolitics. Roughly this is the geopolitical modality of the Black Sea region and follows up the British geopolitical school founder Mackinder’s dictum is very possible to create the same version for the regional dimension and if the dictum exists, the one is to be as follow: “Who rules Black Sea Basin commands Eurasia (Post-Soviet Space). Who rules Black Sea Region commands the Pan-Europe. Who rules Wider Black Sea Region commands the World Politics”.

This interesting approach contains historical provisions that detrimentally influenced regional geopolitics. The most important and critical challenge is the fact that there are a large number of actors and clashing interests within the Black Sea Region. Using security terms, the region suffers from several historical legacies. The Black Sea Region

⁵ R. D. Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography*, New York 2013, p. 74.

⁶ Talassokratia – geopolitical jargon means sea power domain in politics.

⁷ Montecracy – geopolitical jargon implies influence of mountainous geographic terrain on foreign political and military strategic decisions.

⁸ Telurokratia – geopolitical jargon means land power domain in politics.

used to be treated as a 'passive area' and analysed as the periphery of more significant geographical units. Thus the Black Sea basin has been variously described as the backyard of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, as an extension of the Soviet zone of influence, as the frontier of Europe, and, finally, as the extension of the Mediterranean world. Moreover, the existence of several distinct sub-regions within the Black Sea Region – the Caucasus, the Balkans, and to a certain extent the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East – is another factor that destabilizes the area. Time and again sub-regional identities have prevented the emergence of a Black Sea identity, created instability, and impeded the establishment of a comprehensive regional security framework. There are both regional and non-regional actors in the Black Sea Region, and three principal actors exert varying degrees of influence on the available security policy options (reflection of the passage is below). At the present time, the Black Sea region is becoming very important to world markets because it has large oil and gas reserves that are only now bargaining to be fully developed (taking into consideration the energy resources of Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Romania, Russia, transit potency of Georgia, Bulgaria, Turkey and very closed disposition toward the Caspian Basin). Developing these resources has resulted in competition both between companies to get the contracts to develop this potential, and between nations to determine the final export routes. According to experts of the RAND Corporation, the Caspian oil potential today is 2% of the world's total (Venezuela has one-fourth of such reserves; Iraq, one-seventh; and Saudi Arabia, one-seventeenth). Therefore, the Caspian Sea region's oil and gas potential and the Black Sea region's transition ability have attracted much attention since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Due to the unique geopolitical location, the Black Sea region interlines four very important areas: the Middle East, Central Europe, Central Asia, and Western Europe thus more raising the political status of the region for the international society. The nations in the Black Sea Region and nearby 'gateways'⁹, that includes such actors as Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Turkey, Romania, Russia, Bulgaria, are already major energy producers and exporters, and production will increase with additional investment, technology, and the development of new export outlets. The Caspian Sea is 700 miles long and contains 6 separate hydrocarbon basins. However, the Caspian Sea strategic reserves importance is difficult to consider by

⁹ Term used by the American scientist Saul B. Cohen and in this context means geographical one for key passages of the Black Sea for shipping of oil and gas. See: D. Minix, S. Hawley, *Global Politics*, New York 1998, pp. 50-51.

the exclusion of South-East Europe and the South Caucasus regions. The South Caucasus' strategic importance cannot be overestimated: it is a link between the North and the South (Russia and the Persian Gulf), it is a source of oil and gas for the European and Pacific markets¹⁰. Besides one should perceive the regional geopolitical perspective. The Caucasus has an important geopolitical role to play as a link between the North and the South (Central Eurasia, which is Russia, and the Middle East) and the West and the East (Western Europe-the Balkans-the Caucasus-Central Asia-Southeast Asia-the Far East). The true mechanism of managing the 'resources' distribution requires stable and cohesive political stability and basement. It drives all nations to engage in a new relationship mechanism and by a joint effort to build democracy, a free-minded society, and rigid statehood. Otherwise to say the broader Black Sea-Caspian-Central Asian dimension, bringing in all countries of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, would be based on the existing mechanism of the Organization for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) of which the countries of the Caucasus and South-East Europe are members. The BSEC organization itself would be upgraded operationally, with full membership now appropriate for the EU because of the status of Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey as accession candidates, and possible association links with the South Caucasus as well as their membership in NATO. This institutionalization might be laying the foundation for further development of the Black Sea reserves exploitation to benefit all participated nations and societies. This is a real chance for regionalization success and working towards integrative negotiation ends.

Military Dimension of The Wider Black Sea Regional Security: NATO and Russia's 'New Cold War' Competition

Threat assessment criteria are being considered as the most prevalent academic instrument in reaching true realms of logics of international relations. In the 21st century, threat identification has been determined and transformed into concrete systematic modalities. Having considering the 'Copenhagen School' securitization concept where there are five rings of security provisions that are enlisted in the following way: 1) Political Security, 2) Military Security, 3) Economic Security, 4) Society Security, 5) Environment Security.

¹⁰ V. Maisaia, *The Caucasus-Caspian Regional and Energy Security Agendas – Past, Contemporary and Future Geopolitics: View from Georgia*, Brussels 2007, pp. 15-17.

Therefore, with the enumerating ‘five rings’ provision in the 20th and 21st centuries, two academic sub-fields in international relations have emerged. Namely, strategic and security studies as a whole, representing the most important contribution to the research of security issues in aegis of the political science. Even today, some authors consider them to be the only real research platform of security research¹¹. In that manner it is important for true classification of threat identification to be clarified in the manner of threat-challenge-risk. However, the classification is still plausible and general enough and yet to have been confirmed in the academic and analytical methodology frame. Nevertheless, there are two types of threats that are already identified but in a general way – symmetric and asymmetric threats¹².

It is through this lense that the military security dimension is more applicable for analysing the situation and importance of the region in the aegis of international politics. Approaching the region from the military perspective is necessary to introduce the jargon of ‘Geostrategic Gateway’ – space or area vitally important from global security and military perspectives and transposed in a modality labelled as the ‘southern limited flank’ in aegis of the CFE Treaty of Istanbul OSCE Summit. Relatively, Black Sea regional security is referred to as a ‘Geostrategic Gateway’ mainly due to the contemporary ‘New Cold War’ provision where a coercive competition between NATO and Russia for gaining dominance over the Black Sea region.

Due to the strained relations between the West and Russia, from one standpoint, an economic war between the EU/USA and Russia via sanction policy level and a military confrontation between NATO and Russia via demonstration ‘military muscles’ between competing forces is possible. In that scope, mainly NATO-Russia military confrontation as one of the dangerous ‘combat zones’ is sought to be the Black Sea Basin and its littoral territories which are labelled as the ‘Black Sea Security Dimension’. The flawed geostrategic situation in the area is making it possible to deteriorate the geostrategic environment in the area further on and the indication derives from those actions taken by the Kremlin’s incumbent authority.

¹¹ R. Ondrejcsak, *Introduction to Security Studies*, Bratislava 2014, pp. 24-26.

¹² E. Beraia, *The U.S. Foreign Policy Priorities in the Post-Cold War Period (1990-2016): Georgia’s Case from Transnational Challenges (Including Migration) towards Enhancing Institutional Transformation*, Ph.D. thesis at International Black Sea University (IBSU), American Studies Program, Tbilisi, Georgia, 21.09.2017, pp. 72-73.

On July 27th, 2015 a new naval doctrine was declared and later approved by the President of the Russian Federation. This document has identified a new version or interpretation of the military doctrine that was approved by the National Security Council in December of 2015. The naval doctrine has identified strategic areas and basins, such as the Arctic and the so-called 'Atlantic' direction, which includes the Black Sea Basin. The doctrine also undermines the role of the fleet (both military and civilian), the shipbuilding industry, harbours, and rigging infrastructure as priorities for the further development of Russia's naval economy. The perception based on these documents leads to the conclusion that Russia is trying to position itself as a great power with the ability to increase its military capability on the Caspian-Black-Mediterranean Seas axis.

The Centre of this axis is the Black Sea, a basin from which NATO risks being excluded. The Russian policy-makers seek to regain its nation's great power status-quo through domination in the basin by controlling three key-points: Crimea, the mouths of the Danube, and the Bosphorus. Having considered the latest events, Russia has partially achieved these strategic goals – first occupying and then annexing the Crimea while reinforcing military positions and capabilities in the peninsula, with the creation of so-called 'The Eastern Mediterranean Task Force' to control the Turkish Straits and the Middle East (especially Syria). The naval grouping was created within the Black Sea Fleet and provided a detachment of combat ships and boats for the Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf region. Meanwhile, Russia pursued its control of the Bosphorus (the Task Force was reinforced by the nuclear-carried submarine 'Rostov-on-Don', which sailed from Novorosiisk to join the Force and was equipped with the newest strategic weaponry system 'Kalibr' missiles). With this reinforcement of naval forces, Russia is seeking to get under the control of the third pillar – the mouth of the Danube. However, to further reinforce its presence in the Black Sea basin, the Russian authority announced that 30 new ships are to be supplied to the Black Sea Fleet, including six new frigates, six new submarines, and other smaller naval landing vessels. In addition to that, the Black Sea Fleet will reinforce its anti-access strategy (A2/AD) against NATO forces. Moreover, according to the "Jamestown Foundation" – officially Moscow decides to set up in the Crimea an 'unapproachable fortress' and military key-spot. In the peninsula, with only a 2.2 million population, the Russian militaries received several SU-27SM and MIG-29 fighters, SU-25M ground attack aircrafts, IL-38N

maritime patrol/anti-submarine aircrafts, KA-52K attack helicopters, and KA-27ASW helicopters.

Additionally, the Kremlin is planning to deploy in Crimea its strategic military armaments, which enables it to carry on nuclear warheads. A regiment of TU-22M3 strategic bombers, which can be used as platforms for different high-precision missiles, will be deployed at Gvardeyskoye airfield, 15 kilometres northwest of Simferopol. It is necessary to consider the fact that in the North Caucasus Military District, now transformed into operational-strategic HQ 'South', already deployed in Engelsk airfield strategic bomber jets with nuclear devices and equipment (TU-160 'Black Bear' and TU-95M). The Rostov-on-Don military airfield already received '4+1' generation modernize aircrafts SU-34 and SU-35 also capable to carry on nuclear tactical bombs and air-to-land cruise missiles with precision guide systems. Also, with the creation of two batteries of strategic strike rocket complex 'ISKANDER-M' targeting Georgia and Ukraine it becomes clear that Russia has sufficient enough strike capabilities to operate properly in any operational directions. This is enough to demonstrate a military 'muscle show' toward these yet uncontrolled nations.

The Kremlin's decision to launch the unprecedented second phase of massive military drills 'KAVKAZ-2016' in aegis of the sudden alert mission operational-tactical level with the involvement of 11 thousand servicemen and with the usage of strike military capabilities – S-300M air-defence complexes, SU-34 jets, tactical-operational rocket systems 'ISKANDER-M', etc. means that Russia seriously considers beginning a war campaign in the region in any direction. According to Warsaw-based magazine "New Eastern Europe", together with the new naval infantry and Special Forces units, some of which have already been used as part of its hybrid war, Russia will own a significant strike force, which could help implement different military combat operations in the Black Sea basin. In 2016 the Russian Ministry Defence announced some interesting points on further reinforcement of the military capabilities in the area. For example, the Russian government would spend \$2.4 billion by 2020 to provide its Black Sea Fleet with state-of-the-art ships, submarines, air defence systems, and naval infantry. Similarly, the Caspian Fleet is being reinforced with new military ships and vessels equipped with sea-to-sea and sea-to-land cruise missiles 'Kalibr' and 'Bulava', even covered the operational-tactical zone in Syria and Iraq.

Taking together all these factors, and precise attention to the regional security environment, if the Russian government completes its missions

in the way how it has prescribed in the naval doctrine, the Black Sea Fleet will have full control over the Black Sea by 2020. In that retrospective provision, the military balance at present time between the NATO and Russian forces decreased in the proportion of 2:1 in favour of NATO, but reinforced conditions by 2020 will tip the balance in the same proportion but in Russia's favour. In that configuration, Georgia is in a dangerous positions due to its littoral space and its unfrozen seaports that Russia needs very badly. Hence, Georgia is to be coveted as new aggressive steps from the Russian authority after the Parliamentary elections, namely toward the ports directions. Hence, the Georgian government and society have to be very attentive toward any provocations spurred from the Russian side.

Asymmetric threats in a Black Sea Region – Military strategically and Operational levels

Demonstrating the nature of asymmetric warfare using the example of the Black Sea region reflects well what kind of forces Actors have. In a broad sense, we can see it as a match of interests and there is also self-interest in the game. The existence of asymmetric threats in the Black Sea region gives rise to this region as a strategically important corridor for trade, transport, and energy routes between Asia and Europe and has a very specific role for Europe, the USA, Russia, Turkey, and other countries. The Black Sea has coastlines in six countries, including the EU member states Bulgaria and Romania and NATO member countries Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey. Until the 20th Century, there was the Black Sea mare nostrum for Empires (Byzantine, Ottomans, and Russia). The Soviets also had their own interests and during the Cold War, the Black Sea was divided into blocks and after all this, Turkey wanted to build a south-east European geostrategic area. The Black Sea can become the main transport and energy transit corridor while also serving as the route for the transfer of Central Asian resources to Europe. This dimension comes in correlation with the 21st Century challenges. The current challenge is energy and energy routes, e.g. Europe needs the Black Sea to diversify its transit routes to the Caspian Sea and to Central Asia, to Iran, and maybe at some point to Iraq. Ukraine is working closely with Azerbaijan and Georgia to develop such routes. The Black Sea region is the geopolitical place for three large dimensions: US, EU, Russia.

The term ‘asymmetry’, ‘asymmetrical threat’ or ‘asymmetrical warfare’ is used very often, nowadays the term ‘asymmetric warfare’ is understood as employing terrorist methods. In *Modern Warfare* Klaus-Peter Lehmann defines asymmetry as a lack of symmetry, i.e. the existence of an imbalance. This imbalance can be expressed in several ways. He identifies five basic asymmetries: 1) the classic imbalance of forces, 2) the different determination or motivation, 3) the different legitimation or statehood (i.e. non-state Opponents are usually not on a legitimate, rule of law Base), 4) a discrepancy in the methods used as well the different quality of the resources¹³.

In this sense, a conflict is always asymmetrical when there are significant differences in terms of the forces, means and methods used, but also in terms of the motivation and morality of the opponents¹⁴. “The terms Asymmetric Warfare and Asymmetric Threats are used for the type of security threat that is directed against political, strategic, military, and economic structures in a form that does not correspond to the typical conventional threat scenarios. Asymmetry always exists when one of the conflicting parties behaves unexpectedly differently, for example through a new form of tactic, with an unexpected use or different use of existing weapons, or through attacks against »other targets«”¹⁵. Asymmetries of strength arise from the fact that one side gains a lead over its opponents through permanent innovations in military organization and weapons technology, which can no longer be made up within a foreseeable period. the superior side of shooting up new spheres and new spaces for warfare are tried, into which the other side cannot follow due to technological inferiority¹⁶. These threats are deriving from the conceptual and practical activities performed by the Armed Forces units of the Russian Federation.

This is a good case to define what the jargon ‘Asymmetric Threat’ means, one common definition declares, “Asymmetric Threat – the irregular threat of using power as the source of the threat to define the

¹³ K. P. Lohmann, *Zur Entwicklung der modernen Kriegführung. Grundlegende Asymmetrien und eine mögliche Strategie*, [In:] J. Schröfl, T. Pankratz, *Asymmetrische Kriegführung – ein neues Phänomen der Internationalen Politik?*, Baden-Baden 2004, pp. 57-62.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ F. Korkisch, *Die amerikanische Sicht: Asymmetric Warfare*. In: Josef Schröfl, Thomas Pankratz, [In:] J. Schröfl, T. Pankratz, *Asymmetrische Kriegführung...*, p. 145.

¹⁶ B. Richter, *Irreguläre Kriegführung am Beispiel des Libanonkrieges im Sommer 2006*, „Armis Et Litteris“, Vol. 18, 2006, p. 171.

purpose of attack as well as means and capabilities causing serious harm to a state”¹⁷. Asymmetry of strength is opposed to the asymmetry from weakness, where the loser tries to evade the superior side with the help of creative strategies and tactics. A classic form of strategic asymmetry out of weakness is the partisan war, the aim of which is not to reveal oneself, to evade open combat, and to act from behind the scenes, attack like a raid, and then go into hiding again. The asymmetry is based on the idea that the fighters tend to be unrecognizable. The aim is to extend the war over space and time and to wear down the superior enemy¹⁸. The partisan war was considered the prevailing asymmetric Strategy to offer resistance to a technologically and organizationally superior opponent, very often the central goal of the partisan struggle was to become a state actor and thus to achieve rebalancing. The most important difference between partisan struggle and terrorism is that partisan struggle is defensive, while the terrorism strategy also offers offensive options for the defeated opponent¹⁹.

Today there is no longer any doubt that the line between war and peace is becoming increasingly mixed and it is being purposely obscured for strategic reasons - states are destabilized from inside, for example by inciting minorities, perhaps this is an indicator that, hybrid warfare has begun to achieve political goals.

Hybrid warfare indicates a flexible mixed form of the open and covertly applied, regular and irregular, symmetrical and asymmetrical, military and non-military means of conflict to blur the threshold between the binary states of war and peace, particularly under international law. Hybrid wars include three different fronts of action: on conventional battlefields; with the public and the population of the attacked country; among the home population and the international public. Hybrid wars are therefore carried out by both state and non-state actors. These multimodal activities are generally operationally and tactically geared towards achieving synergy effects in the physical and psychological dimensions of the conflict²⁰. This means that hybrid warfare can be achieved through the use of both conventional and irregular combat modes, not

¹⁷ V. N. Konyshchev, A. A. Sergunin, *Sovremennaya voyennaya strategiya*, Moscow 2014, s. 15.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ H. Münkler, *Der Wandel des Krieges – Von der Symmetrie zur Asymmetrie*. Verlag Velbrück Wissenschaft, Weilerswist 2006, s. 148.

²⁰ F. G. Hoffmann, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*, Arlington 2007.

characterized only in the military but also in the economic sense and by the intensive use of the media to wage an information war.

Why has Hybrid warfare become the ‘dark side’ of globalization and new technologies? That is the question, the fact is, that globalization and new technologies (Cyberspace) act as a catalyst for hybrid methods of warfare. In the 21st Century, the decisive characteristic for security policy is asymmetrical threats or warfare that arise in many forms. Some of these forms of asymmetrical threats or warfare can be conventional such as robbery, ambush, surprise, deception, subversion, the appearance of irregular forces, hacker attacks from cyberspace against the ICT infrastructure, etc.²¹ The prospective demonstrates if terrorism will become the central threat in the 21st Century, but at the instant after September 11th, 2001, terrorism has moved to the centre of threat perception as almost the most important asymmetrical threat or form of asymmetrical warfare, and it can be assumed that this view will continue.

Asymmetric Warfare in Tskhinvali Region and Russian Annexation of Crimea as a Hybrid Warfare Strategy

“Operating in the Black Sea signifies our commitment to partners and allies in the region. It is an important diplomatic mission (USS Donald Cook is in the Black Sea to conduct routine maritime security operations that support regional stability) and Donald Cook has enjoyed the hospitality of Black Sea countries many times before” – said Cmdr. Kelley Jones, commanding officer of the USS Donald Cook²². The U.S. Navy routinely operates in the Black Sea to work with NATO Allies and partners, including Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Turkey, and Ukraine. It is in the world’s best interest to maintain a stable, prosperous Black Sea region and deter aggressive actors who seek destabilization for their gain.

On August 7th, 2008, in violation of the ceasefire agreement of 1992, extensive, heavily armed troops entered South Ossetia, i.e. Georgia, through the Roki tunnel – this action was a response by the Russian Federation after the Bucharest Summit Declaration²³ decision on

²¹ F. Korkisch, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

²² M. Shelbourne, *Destroyer USS Donald Cook Now Operating in the Black Sea*, <<https://news.usni.org/2020/11/23/destroyer-uss-donald-cook-now-operating-in-the-black-sea>> (12.12.2020).

²³ On April 3 in Bucharest, NATO had promised Georgia membership, but, at the instigation of France and Germany, refused to include Georgia and Ukraine immediately in the Action Plan for Membership Preparation (MAP). *Bucharest*

Georgia's future admission to NATO. Russia lifted the economic embargo against Abkhazia and South Ossetia and in May 2008 sent soldiers to Abkhazia to repair the railway line on the coast that had previously connected Russia with Georgia. Russia assured that these soldiers were unarmed so that it was not a violation of the ceasefire agreement. Russia was and is now an aggressor against Georgia. Others expressed themselves more cautiously and said that Russia did provoke, but the actual process is much more complex and needs to be seen in a larger political context.

The five-day war from 7th to 12th August 2008, between Georgia and Russia, with the participation of armed groups from South Ossetia and Abkhazia did not resolve the conflict, rather it drastically changed the conflict situation and created a new front line between the West and Russia. After the war, Russia recognized the independence of the de facto states of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and immediately concluded military assistance pacts with both states, which allow it to have a stronger military presence in both territories with 3800 men and heavy weaponry in each region. From the perspective of Georgia – should Georgia be admitted to NATO shortly, the explosive situation would arise that Russian troops would be illegally stationed on NATO soil. In turn, in Russia's view, NATO would unlawfully threaten the existence of two independent, sovereign states and allies of Russia. Although the USA had modernized the Georgian armed forces through trainers and supplies of material and support for Georgia's NATO membership, many European governments, especially those of the larger countries, warned of a new NATO eastward expansion due to the foreseeable conflict with Russia as the 'frozen conflict' in Georgia. Remarkable is the fact, that South Ossetia (Area is 3,900 km with 70,000 inhabitants) strives for unification with North Ossetia and thus with Russia because North Ossetia is one of Russia's national federation subjects. South Ossetia is only connected to North Ossetia by difficult-to-negotiate passes in the high Caucasus Mountains and by the Roki Tunnel.

A conflict is always asymmetrical when there are significant differences in terms of the forces, means and methods used, but also in terms of the motivation and morality of the opponents²⁴. This case is a classic imbalance of forces: Georgia's Defence Forces – the Infantry Brigades as of 2008 numbered as follows: headquarters (60 men) and

Summit Declaration, <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm> (1.12.2020).

²⁴ K. P. Lohmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-62.

headquarters company (108 men, two AIFVs), three light infantry battalions (591 men each), one combined tank battalion (two armoured and one mechanized company – a total of 380 men, 30 T-72 tanks and 15 AIFVs), a maintenance battalion (288 men), an artillery battalion (371 men, 18 122-mm D-30 towed howitzers, 12 120-mm towed mortars, 4 ZSU-23-4 self-propelled anti-aircraft gun systems), a reconnaissance company (101 men, 8 APCs), a communications company (88 men, two APCs), a combined engineer company (96 men) – all in all, 3,265 servicemen²⁵. The Artillery Brigade served as the main means of fire support for the Land Forces. In mid-2008, it numbered up to 1,200 men and included: headquarters, a battalion of 152-mm 2A65 Msta-B towed howitzers, a battalion of 152-mm 2S3 self-propelled howitzers, a battalion of 152-mm Dana self-propelled gun-howitzers, a battalion of BM-21 Grad, RM-70, and a Grad LAR multiple-launch rocket systems, a battalion 100-mm MT-12 anti-tank guns²⁶ a training battalion, a supply battalion, and a security company²⁷.

The following units belonged to the Georgian Air Force in August 2008: Air Force Operations Centre; Marneuli airbase (fighter-bomber squadron with Su-25, training squadron with L-39); Alexeyevka airbase (Mi-8 helicopter squadron, UH-1H helicopter squadron), mixed helicopter squadron (Mi-8, Mi-14, Mi-24); drone squadron; six radar stations; a radio reconnaissance unit; two air defence posts (two battalions with missile systems S-125M, two battalions with missile systems 'Buk-M1', up to 18 combat vehicles with missile systems 'Osa-AK/AKM', as well as some combat vehicles missile systems Spyder-SR) and an air defence unit; a training centre including an An-2.39 flight squadron²⁸.

Russia's Defence Forces – since 2006 regular manoeuvres of the North Caucasian military district have taken place on a large scale. One of the goals was to show the Russian troops stationed in the region to Tbilisi. The manoeuvres 'Caucasian Frontier-2006', 'Caucasian Frontier-2007' and 'Caucasus-2008' caused the greatest sensation. These took place in the summer and represented a series of individual manoeuvres by the 58th Army and the 4th Army of the Air Force and Air Defence stationed in the region. Individual sections of the airborne troops and the

²⁵ Ministry of Defence of Georgia, *Strategic Defence Review*, Tbilisi 2007, p. 87.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 89.

²⁷ B. Makharidze, *Interview with the head of the financial department of the Ministry of Defence*, "Defence Today", No. 3, 2007, p. 2.

²⁸ Ministry of Defence of Georgia, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

Russian Black Sea Fleet also took part. The airborne troops were represented as usual by a tactical battalion formation of the 76th 'Pskov' Airborne Division and several units of the 7th Airborne Assault Division from Novorossiysk. The total number of military personnel involved in the 'Caucasus 2008' manoeuvres reached 10,000 soldiers and hundreds of armoured vehicles. As a part of 'Caucasus 2008', a company of the marine infantry went ashore for the first time from a large landing ship on a beach in the Imereti flatland near Sochi, a few kilometres from the Russian-Abkhazian border. Another aspect was the transfer of several Su-24M tactical bombers to the Sochi airport and the subsequent implementation of training flights from there²⁹.

The different determination or motivation – as a result of the Russian provocation, Georgia replied to take advantage of the decisive superiority of the reshaped army and to crush the core of the South Ossetian armed forces as quickly as possible, to occupy the capital Tskhinvali and to block the Trans-Caucasian highway in order to prevent transport volunteers from Russia. Russia was and is a Hegemon in the Caucasus despite Turkish interests. Also, Russia sees post-soviet countries as its 'own' place and all NATO steps in this region or Eastern Partnership politics are seen as a threat to Russia. Also, non-state opponents took part in the August War (North Caucasus mercenaries), and different ways of warfare were used, e.g. cyber-attacks and economic pressure.

The Russian annexation of Crimea at a Hybrid warfare level: Russia's strategic military planning has changed radically in the past decade. This happened under the influence of the so-called 'colour revolutions', which led to regime changes in Ukraine (Rose Revolution 2003), Georgia (Orange Revolution 2004), and Kyrgyzstan (Tulip Revolution 2005)³⁰. The experiences in the Georgian War in 2008 in particular influenced a strategic rethinking in the Russian armed forces which focused on fast, flexible units with mobile anti-tank guided weapons.³¹ This rethinking was theoretically supported by the Chief of the Russian General Staff and Deputy Defence Minister, Valeri

²⁹ M. S. Barabanow, A. W. Lawrow, W. A. Zelujko, *Die Panzer des August*, Moscow 2010, pp. 38-39.

³⁰ J. Forbrig, P. Demes, *Reclaiming Democracy: Civil Society and Electoral Change in Central and Eastern Europe*, Washington 2007.

³¹ R. Beckhusen, *To beat Russian tanks, the Baltic States Study the Georgia War: 2008 conflict with Russia proves that anti-tank missiles rule*, <<https://medium.com/war-is-boring/to-beat-russian-tanks-the-baltic-states-study-another-war-710812d7e5b8>> (11.11.2020).

Gerasimov. In an article published in a military journal in February 2013, Gerasimov stated that the ‘coloured’ revolutions of the Arab Spring, supposedly produced by the Western world, had shown how a ‘prosperous state’ quickly moved into a zone of the armed conflict and became the victim of a military intervention by NATO³². From his perspective, therefore, ‘coloured revolutions’, especially in the post-Soviet space, are to be prevented by Russia at all costs. According to Gerasimov, non-military means should be combined with the covert use of Special Forces. According to the Russian Chief of Staff, it was possible to maintain a permanent front on the territory of the enemy state. In this context, he also pointed out the special importance of mobile units and precision weapons³³. In his article published in 2013, General Gerasimov concluded that the Russian Federation also had to acquire skills for waging a ‘non-linear war’ (he avoids the term ‘hybrid war’). On the Russian side, non-linear warfare was also viewed as a means of compensating for deficiencies in the conventional armed forces. At the same time, it was of great importance for the Russian Chief of Staff to develop suitable defensive measures against a hybrid attack by the West³⁴. With the publication of a NATO review video on July 3rd, 2014, with the title ‘Hybrid War - Hybrid Response’, the term became the official language for this type of war³⁵.

The reform of the Russian Armed Forces which began in 2008, also served to prepare for hybrid military operations. The focus of the reform was the creation of small and flexible units that can be deployed quickly in regional trouble spots. Besides, the capacities in the area of Special Forces were significantly expanded. In this way, the Kremlin leadership created military instruments to be able to intervene specifically in the post-Soviet area³⁶. The ‘Zapad’ manoeuvres of the Russian army in 2013, which was carried out in Kaliningrad and on the Russian western border in conjunction with Belarusian troops, are also related to this. According to official Russian information, the ‘Zapad’ manoeuvres served to

³² W. Gerasimov, *The value of science in prediction*, “Military-Industrial-Kurier”, 27.02.2013.

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ H. Reisinger, A. Gol’c, *Hybrider Krieg in der Ukraine: Russlands Intervention und die Lehren für die NATO*, “Osteuropa”, Vol. 64, No. 9/10, 2014, p. 120.

³⁵ NATO: *Hybrid War – Hybrid Response*, <<https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2014/07/01/hybrid-war-hybrid-response/index.html>> (10.11.2020).

³⁶ M. Klein, K. Pester, *Russlands Streitkräfte: Auf Modernisierungskurs. Stand und Perspektiven der russischen Militärreform*, “SWP-Aktuell”, Vol. 72, 2013, p. 2-3.

prevent an attack by illegal armed groups against Belarusian territory. However, the military annexation of Crimea in spring 2014 was in large part noticeably similar to the manoeuvre carried out in 2013³⁷. In this case, 'Zapad' can be seen as a manoeuvre in preparation for interventions by the Russian Federation in the post-Soviet area.

Hybrid warfare practiced by the Russian Federation in 2014, after the Euromaidan Revolution are based on the ideas of General Gerasimov. On the one hand, the Kremlin leadership took advantage of the critical attitude of a large part of the Crimean population towards the new central government and supported the pro-Russian forces advocating a split from Ukraine³⁸. At the same time, Russian Special Forces (Spetsnaz) appeared in Crimea without a sovereign badge and occupied strategically important positions there. The deployment of Special Forces that could not be identified gave the Russian side an important element of surprise, as the Ukrainian troops did not know how to react to them³⁹. The military presence of Russia in Crimea increased in a very short time through the deployment of employees of the military secret service, airborne troops, and Cossack units⁴⁰.

The Russian annexation of Crimea was accompanied by the massive use of propaganda, which focused on the targeted manipulation of information. For example, there was talk of a massive De-Russification of ethnic Russians by the new Ukraine's central government or a possible takeover of the Black Sea fleet by NATO. Besides, Russian state media described the 'Maidan Revolution' as fascist and extremely Russophobic, creating an important narrative that later also came to bear in Moscow's hybrid warfare in eastern Ukraine and played an important role in mobilizing the pro-Russian movement there played⁴¹.

Politically, Russia is taking steps toward a position of dominance in the Black and Azov Seas. It is trying to take control of parts of the sea, the shipping routes, or important waterways (straits). The focus of Russian policy is to strengthen the entire Russian south side on the Black and Caspian Seas and Ukraine has fundamental strategic importance location on the Black and Azov Seas. It gets the Moscow free movement

³⁷ M. Malek, *Moskaus Schlachtpläne. Hintergründe zu Russlands Krieg in der Ukraine*, "Osteuropa", Vol. 64, No. 9/10, 2014, pp. 99-100.

³⁸ D. Johnson, *Russia's Approach to Conflict - Implications for NATO's Deterrence and Defence*, "NATO Defense College Research Paper", No. 111, 2015, p. 8.

³⁹ H. Reisinger, A. Gol'c, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

⁴⁰ M. Malek, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁴¹ H. Reisinger, A. Gol'c, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

(from Kerch and the Sea of Azov) not only for those on the Crimea stationed Russian Black Sea Fleet, but also across the Volga-Don Canal to the Azov and the Black Sea incoming Caspian fleet. Reach of the Kremlin are the most important goals, even without realizing the plan, which was considered at times but rejected as currently unrealizable, to create a Russian-dominated land bridge ('New Russia') along the northern coast of the Black Sea from Mariupol to Odesa⁴². Russia is strengthening its Black Sea Fleet because it has a decisive role in the dispute with the USA and also attaches to the Mediterranean. At the same time, Moscow is expanding control in a neighbourhood region of the EU that Brussels neglects and in which Moscow has and uses the opportunity, as an 'arbiter' in conflicts that it has had a hand in creating.

Russia is not the only regional power in the region. Turkey is pursuing their interests between the three seas. The same applies to China with its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI or Silk Road Initiative), to a lesser extent for Iran and Saudi Arabia. In any case, Russia remains the most powerful state in the region. The behaviour of the other regional powers depends on whether they contribute, or cautiously, reinforce the effect of Russian politics.

'Non-State Aggressive Actors' and Black Sea Region

The phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and returnees also had a major impact on the security situation last year, although a large number of returnees have not arrived after the military defeat of ISIS in Syria and Iraq in 2018. Returnees with military training and combat experience (handling explosives and weapons) represent a risk potential that is difficult to calculate, because they can act without empathy concerning the use of force and often maintain contact with members of terrorist organizations on site. This contact attitude can also extend to former comrades-in-arms from other countries and thus lead to networking and assembling among each other. However, the number of returnees in 2018 was low, given a large number of departures in previous years. The perpetrators of the terrorist attacks or prevented attack attempts in Europe in 2018 were (with a few exceptions) not returnees from the Syrian-Iraqi war zone⁴³.

⁴² B. Bartsch, et. all, *Antagonismen in der Nachbarschaft der Europäischen Union, Geopolitische Ambitionen in der Schwarzmeer-/Kaspischen Region*, Berlin 2020.

⁴³ Bundesministerium für Inneres Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz und Terrorismusbekämpfung (BVT), Wien 2019, p. 12.

At the time in Iraq and Syria, there are still about 4,000 to 6,000 ISIS fighters, a few hundred in Afghanistan, and smaller groups in Libya, Egypt, Yemen, and the Caucasus⁴⁴. In these countries, ISIS continues to be a threat and benefits from the ongoing instability. There is a distinction in international relations and geopolitics between 'geographical' and 'geopolitical' regions and for the Black Sea region, the Caucasus plays a leading role. The unrest in the Caucasian region means unrest in the Black Sea area. Different religious confessions, traditions, and different views of freedom are especially important in the area. Radical Islam was ultimately able to establish itself in the North Caucasus through the influence of foreign Islamists and the globalization of jihadist structures. The first transnational jihad in Afghanistan (1980-88) and new communication technologies also promoted the spread of radical Islamist ideas. Also 'Al-Qaida' played an important role in the radicalization and Islamization of the movements North Caucasus. The first Chechen war changed the nature of the North Caucasian resistance movement, which was previously shaped mainly by secular national ideas. As a result, Islamic rhetoric was increasingly used, but that, in particular, acted as a means of mobilization and provided the movement with an ideological basis⁴⁵.

In the Muslim regions of Russia and the entire post-Soviet space, the North Caucasus is an epicentre of Islamist revolt. Armed resistance under the slogan of jihad is coordinated here by a so-called 'The Islamic Caucasus-Emirate'. Just like ISIS, the emirate also has a court of law that implements Sharia law, which also implies Islamic law. Besides administering law, the emirate maintains a secret service, special military units, and a volunteer and martyr brigade. Despite its numerous institutions, the Caucasus-Emirate is a decentralized structure that is organized into individual cells. The most important difference to the Islamic State is in the fact that the emirate appears as an underground organization that does not have any permanently controlled territory. Even 'The Islamic Caucasus Emirate' declaration of war is directed primarily against Russia, the Caucasus emirate is in contact with global jihad e.g. the terrorist attack on 3rd April 2017, when a suicide bomber in

⁴⁴ J. Seldin, *Far From Dead: Tens of Thousands of IS Fighters Linger in Iraq, Syria*, <<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/far-dead-tens-thousands-fighters-linger-iraq-syria>> (8.11.2020).

⁴⁵ A. Seib, *Vom Kaukasus-Emirat zum Islamischen Staat im Nordkaukasus - Eine qualitative Frame-Analyse zu Strategien und Zielen radikal-islamistischer Videopropaganda*, 'Osteuropa Institut Arbeitspapiere', Vol. 2/2017.

St. Petersburg metro killed 14 people and injured 73⁴⁶. The Caucasus-Emirate is not a regional part of 'Al-Qaida', but it is in contact with other affiliated jihad fronts. Since the Chechen wars, there has been an increase of fighters from other Islamic countries into the North Caucasus. Since March 2016, relations between the EU and Russia have been based on terms of implementation of the Minsk agreements to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine, strengthening relations with the eastern partner countries and other neighbours in Central Asia, also engagement with Russia in selected areas such as the fight against terrorism⁴⁷.

In the Black Sea region, Turkey sees itself after the terrorist attack on 11th September in its special geostrategic role for the entire West and the USA. With the fall of its last enclave al-Baghuz in eastern Syria in March 2019, the territorial rule of IS ended in the Syria/Iraq region and at the end of October 2019, the IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was killed in a US military operation in northwest Syria. Following this, the IS resigned after its complete military defeat in Syria and Iraq (a quasi-state actor), walked back to being an underground terrorist group and the organization continues to pursue a strategy of terror. At this time 'Al-Qaida' continues to play a leading role within the global jihadist scene and both organizations claim to use every possible opportunity to carry out of terrorist attacks⁴⁸. In Syria, the end of the ISIS created an option for many jihadist fighters to leave the region, and the Black Sea and Caucasus Region is a promising place for fighters. It is for this reason Georgia could be a short-term halt and that creates a safe route for fighters to the North Caucasus.

In this sense, the situation in Turkey shows the seriousness on the one hand, of inside state terrorist organizations, like the Kurdish separatist of Workers' Party of Kurdistan (PKK); and on the other hand extra-state terrorist organizations include ISIS and 'Al-Qaida' and the other global jihadist fighters. Terrorist organizations such as 'Al-Qaida' or ISIS mainly benefit from the upheavals in regional and international politics. Decisive for their development and consolidation as terrorist networks

⁴⁶ C. Osthold, *Das Kaukasus-Emirat: Genese, Struktur und Aktivitäten*, <<https://christianosthold.de/2017/04/08/das-kaucasus-emirat-genese-struktur-und-aktivitaeten/>> (7.09.2020).

⁴⁷ *Außen- und Europapolitischer Bericht. Bericht des Bundesministers für Europa, Integration und Äußeres*, Vienna 2018.

⁴⁸ *Verfassungsschutzbericht. Fakten und Tendenzen. Kurzzusammenfassung*, Berlin 2019.

are above all the erosion of state structures and the associated power vacuum – as happened in Afghanistan from 1979 onwards, Iraq in 2003 or Syria after 2011. these nations, marked by war and civil war offered at the time offered ideal conditions for ideological training and terrorist training for recruits from all over the world.

Conclusion

The Black Sea region's geopolitics is still actual and very relevant from the theoretical framework of international relations and security studies and the realpolitik perspective. However, this status would be made fragile, as the Black Sea region has become one of the world's most tragic humanitarian, political and economic disaster zones. The region enters the 21st Century still drinking the deadly cocktail of 19th Century nationalism and great power rivalry. The insecurity of the region also blocks the development of the wider Black Sea-Caspian-Central Asian economic axis. New dangerous challenges – terrorism and low-intensity conflicts may subvert the security system of the region and although these might be considered as 'external,' but little awareness of the political constraints that curb and dash all prosperous dreams of the nations within. Hence, the regional system in the Black Sea area is complex and prone toward instability but with the opportunity for enhancing security provisions in the nearest future. A new military-technical revolution has substantially affected the geostrategic environment in the Black Sea region and a 'New Cold War' has made military confrontation and ensuing stalemates steadily and intensely increase. It is symptomatic that the identification of the 'Geostrategic gateway' is precisely reinforced by the status-quo of the region due to the 'New Cold War' phase development along with Russia's involvement into the Black Sea Basin. Pair with this, 'military muscle' demonstrations which indicate that asymmetric warfare doctrine in its origin where non-state actors (military private companies, terrorist organizations, criminal groupings, etc.) and closely affiliated with state structures (like Spetsnaz forces) are still in force. The foundations of Russian geostrategy in the post-Soviet space are strategic plans, based on the tradition of 'Turanian' civilization, and the concept of the Russia-Island by Vadim Tsymbursky. Russia does not intend to rebuild the Soviet Union or create another tsarist empire, but to control space, identified as its own, and to function as one of the poles in a multipolar system. Therefore, Russian geostrategy assumes the formation of such a system by weakening the West and

building its sphere of influence. The control of own zone shall be carried out by strengthening the ties with the Russia-Island's shelf on the political, economic, and military level, and by pushing the influence of foreign power centres out of the entire great limitrof (post-Soviet area), by neutralizing those states of the great limitrof (including violating their territorial integrity) that are trying to take the opponent's side. To simplify things, this approach can be described as the Russian version of the Monroe doctrine.

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INFLUENCE OF THE INTERMEDIATE-RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES TREATY TERMINATION ON THE REGIONAL SECURITY OF CENTRAL ASIA

Abstract:

In recent years, we have seen an aggravation of relations between the leading nuclear powers. These relations have entered a phase of irreconcilable contradictions and political problems. This paper is devoted to the problem of preserving the nuclear-free status of Central Asian countries. The study of this issue is very relevant in the context of the intensified global geopolitical struggle between Russia, China, the United States, and Iran. The authors used the method of expert survey and scenario approach to study the stated issues. Based on the data obtained, scenarios for the development of the geopolitical situation in the region under consideration were developed.

Keywords:

regional security, Central Asia, INF Treaty, the Nuclear-free status of Central Asia, China, Russia, USA, Afghanistan, nuclear security, nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ).

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Introduction

At the beginning of the 21st Century, the issues of ensuring nuclear security are coming to the fore. This is mostly because the main geopolitical players do not maintain the previously existing nuclear security structure. This is evidenced by the increase in the number of countries possessing nuclear weapons, as well as the aggravation of relations between the main nuclear powers, represented by Russia, the United States, and China. The treaty in question expired at the initiative of the United States of America in 2019. In our opinion, the termination of this treaty on the one hand ‘unties the hands’ of the parties who signed it, and on the other hand leads to a situation of ‘dangerous freedom of action’, since the most effective instrument that has been curtailing the arms race for the past 30 years is disappearing. Now, without regard for others, you can create missiles, placing them at a very close distance from the border with a potential enemy.

The issue of nuclear security occupies a special place in the modern political science discourse. This is largely dictated by the fact that global stability depends on the responses to the challenges taking place due to the increase in the number of nuclear powers. Among the works devoted to the comprehensive study of nuclear deterrence, it is worth highlighting A. V. Fenenko³, I. F. Bocharov⁴, A. A. Kokoshin⁵, V. M. Burenok and Yu. Pechatnov⁶, N. Zinevich⁷, and others.

Various researchers are interested in the issue of ensuring global nuclear security, as it is in the concluded agreements that they see an instrument for ensuring global nuclear security. V. P. Kozin⁸, V.

³ A.V. Fenenko, *Sovremennyye kontseptsii yadernogo sderzhivaniya*, “Mezhdunarodnyye protsessy” Vol. 10, 2012, pp. 68-87, <<http://intertrends.ru/system/Doc/ArticlePdf/690/Fenenko-29.pdf>> (1.12.2020).

⁴ I. F. Bocharov, *Sovremennyye podkhody SSHA k yadernomu sderzhivaniyu*, “SSHA i Kanada: ekonomika, politika, kul'tura” 2008, no. 4, pp. 19-31.

⁵ A. A. Kokoshin, *Strategicheskoye yadernoye i neyadernoye sderzhivaniye: priority sovremennoy epokhi*, “Vestnik Rossiyskoy akademii nauk”, 2014, vol. 84, no. 3, pp. 185-195.

⁶ V. M. Burenok, Yu. A. Pechatnov, *O kriterial'nykh osnovakh yadernogo sderzhivaniya*, “Vooruzheniye i ekonomika”, 2013, no. 1, pp. 21-30.

⁷ N. Zinevich, *Yadernoye sderzhivaniye v nachale XXI veka*, “Obozrevatel”, 2007, p. 15.

⁸ V. P. Kozin, *K 30-letiyu podpisaniya dogovora o likvidatsii RSMD: klyuchevyye problemy realizatsii*, “SSHA i Kanada: ekonomika, politika i kul'tura”, 2018, no. 1 (577), pp. 25-42.

Dvorkin⁹, K. Bogdanov¹⁰, V. I. Esin¹¹, M. A. Zhuravkov¹², M. S. Soloviev¹³, Yu. G. Golub and S. Yu. Shenin¹⁴, A. E. Golyakova¹⁵, V. I. Batyuk¹⁶, Yu. I. Nadtocheya¹⁷, E. P. Buzhinsky¹⁸, and others devoted their works to the study of the issues associated with the INF Treaty.

As a rule, in the works devoted to nuclear security, scientists put the main emphasis on the problem of ensuring the balance of power or the observance of the interests of the states possessing nuclear weapons. At the same time, it rarely comes to the question of ensuring the interests of nuclear powers in the regions whose states have declared themselves free of nuclear weapons. The nuclear-free status preservation by the Central Asian region (including Afghanistan) is, in our opinion, the most important issue that requires greater consideration, since this is the only region that is locked between Iran seeking to possess nuclear weapons, as well as the nuclear powers such as Pakistan, China, and Russia. It should be noted that the United States has the largest number of military bases on the entire planet. And if a

⁹ V. Z. Dvorkin, *Kak sokhranit' dogovor o likvidatsii raket sredney i men'shey dal'nosti*, "Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya" 2018, vol. 62, no. 10, pp. 22-25.

¹⁰ K. V. Bogdanov, *Po tu storonu dogovora RSMD: Voenno-politicheskiye posledstviya dlya Yevropy*, „Sovremennaya Yevropa”, 2019, no. 4 (89).

¹¹ V. I. Esin, *Otsenka vozmozhnostey sokhraneniya i adaptatsii dogovora RSMD k sovremennym realiyam. Rossiya i Amerika v XXI veke*, "Institut SSHA i Kanady Rossiyskoy akademii nauk", 2008, no. 1.

¹² M. A. Zhuravkov, *Dogovor mezhd SSSR i SSHA o likvidatsii raket sredney i men'shey dal'nosti i yego posledstviya. Aktual'nyye problemy mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniy i diplomatii (1918 g. – nachalo XXI veka)*, Moscow 2015, pp. 179-184.

¹³ M. S. Soloviev, *Razryv dogovora po likvidatsii raket sredney i maloy dal'nosti – kak faktor, podryvayushchiy mirovuyu bezopasnost*, „Sbornik trudov konferentsii. Materialy mezhvuzovskogo nauchno-prakticheskogo seminara”, 2018, pp. 84-87.

¹⁴ Yu. G. Golub, S. Yu. Shenin, *Ostanovka ili tupik? Elity SSHA o krizise DRSMDF*, "Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya", 2020, vol. 64, no. 3, pp. 20-28.

¹⁵ A. E. Golyakova, *K voprosu o vykhode SSHA iz DRSMDF: opasnyye posledstviya*, [in:] *Aktual'nyye problemy konstitutsionnogo, munitsipal'nogo i mezhdunarodnogo prava (sbornik nauchnykh statey)* Moscow 2019, pp. 37-41.

¹⁶ V. I. Batyuk, *Krakh dogovora o RSMD: chto dal'she?*, "Rossiya i Amerika v XXI veke", 2019, no. 1, p. 18.

¹⁷ Yu. I. Nadtocheya, *Rossiysko-amerikanskiy dogovor RSMD i problema tret'ikh stran*, "SSHA i Kanada: ekonomika, politika, kul'tura", 2019, no. 3 (591), pp. 5-22.

¹⁸ E. P. Buzhinsky, *Yest' li budushcheye u dogovora o likvidatsii raket sredney i men'shey dal'nosti*, "Indeks bezopasnosti", 2014, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 147-152.

couple of years ago the Americans allegedly could afford to place an anti-missile defense system along the perimeter of the borders of China or Russia, today we are already talking about the fact that they will be able to deploy intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles in proximity to the borders of China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. For Central Asia, the issue of maintaining a nuclear-free status is becoming topical, because the region borders on the countries, capable of producing this type of missiles and, hypothetically, can use them as an instrument of military pressure on neighbours.

Formulation of the problem. Given the change in the global balance of power, accompanied by the INF Treaty termination, the Central Asian states are faced with the problem of maintaining their nuclear-free status. Is the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty termination capable of affecting the security architecture of the region?

The purpose of the study is to determine the main threat of Central Asia losing its nuclear-free status after the termination of the treaty on the elimination of intermediate and shorter-range missiles (INF Treaty) concluded between the USSR and the United States on December 7, 1987.

Research objectives:

- 1) To identify the security risks of Central Asia after the INF Treaty termination;
- 2) To predict the most likely scenarios for the development of the situation in Central Asia after the termination of the INF Treaty based on the risks identified.

An expert survey and scenario-based forecasting were used as methods of research. We selected the expert survey method because the issues of the course of events in the Central Asian region are poorly studied and to determine the most likely scenarios for the unfolding situation, it is necessary to interview experts competent in this area. The experts are represented by specialists in the field of international relations and international security. This survey was conducted to collect the initial data for modeling the scenarios in Central Asia.

Scenario-based forecasting or so-called 'scenario planning' allows one to pay attention to the potential risks and to develop solutions that would manage them. It consists of determining alternative sequences of the developments in the region in a certain period of the future. In our study, the use of this method is a logical continuation of the expert survey conducted. The authors proposed the scenarios below.

Nuclear-free status of Central Asia

The declaration of the Central Asian region free of nuclear weapons was a very important and largely symbolic event. Marat Tazhin, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, noted in his article on the matter: “This historic document crowned the efforts of five Central Asian states which had been working for nine years to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ). On February 27, 1997, the leaders of the five Central Asian countries signed the Alma-Ata Declaration. In the light of their concerns over the state of the environment, which suffered as a result of the USSR nuclear complex operation, they fully approved the creation of the NWFZ in Central Asia¹⁹. The parties that signed the agreement ‘On a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia’ committed themselves not to allow the production, acquisition, deployment, storage or use of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on their territory.”²⁰

The nuclear-free status of Central Asia is a guarantee that the United States of America will not be able to deploy its nuclear missiles in the region. Nevertheless, we should not forget about the presence of the U.S. military in Afghanistan, which have all the resources to deploy intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles on the territories controlled by the security forces of Afghanistan, which may target Iranian military facilities, Russia’s CSTO allies, and Russian military bases in the region, as well as military facilities in China. It is also important to note that Pakistan, neighboring Afghanistan, has been a full member of the SCO since the summer of 2017, and therefore can be a potential target for American missiles²¹. At least today, we are not talking about the fact that the U.S. presidential administration will take such a step. However, if the situation develops according to this scenario, all the most dangerous competitors for the United States hindering the implementation of

¹⁹ *Stat'ya Ministra inostrannykh del Respubliki Kazakhstan M. Tazhina otnositel'no vstupleniya v silu Dogovora o zone, svobodnoy ot yadernogo oruzhiya, v Tsentral'noy Azii. Ofitsial'nyy sayt Posol'stva Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, <<http://old.kazembassy.ru/ru/posol/oficialnayaastana/vistupleniagosudlic/315-visgoslic48>> (12.20.2020).*

²⁰ *Dogovor o zone, svobodnoy ot yadernogo oruzhiya, v Tsentral'noy Azii Semipalatinsk, 8.09.2006.*

²¹ *Vstupleniye Indii i Pakistana v SHOS: chasha vesov na storone optimistov, <https://www.inform.kz/ru/vstuplenie-indii-i-pakistana-v-shos-chasha-vesov-na-storone-optimistov_a3034410> (20.20.2020).*

Washington's foreign policy in Eurasia will potentially be in the strike zone.

Besides, the Central Asian region is within the reach of missiles that can be deployed at U.S. military bases in Iraq, as well as on U.S. Navy ships in the Persian Gulf. The problems that the countries of the region will have to face are difficult to overestimate. All countries in the region are interested in ensuring the political situation around the new arms race does not go beyond the framework of international law. In the event of an increase in tension, the countries of the region are most likely to find themselves on the opposite side in the conflict with the United States of America. Maintaining neutrality as Turkmenistan is trying to do or multi-vector policy as pursued by most countries in the region will be virtually impossible under this scenario. Since the countries of the region are committed to Russia within the CSTO and to China within the SCO. Specifying the interests of the countries in the region, the following should be noted:

- 1) The countries of Central Asia are interested in maintaining the balance of power on the continent. They are not interested in weakening Iran and Russia in the Middle East, nor are they interested in weakening China. Moscow plays a decisive role in ensuring regional security in Central Asia. China is a key trading partner of the region's countries. The weakening of Iran will most likely directly affect the growth of terrorism which will inevitably threaten Afghanistan's neighbours in the region;
- 2) The countries of Central Asia are interested in preventing any conflict situations. The power imbalance in the region will inevitably lead to an increase in regional tensions. This is understood in the same way in all Central Asian capitals. Therefore, the states of the region will actively cooperate on the issues ensuring regional security;
- 3) The countries of Central Asia are interested in foreign investment and economic growth. China takes an advantage of these strategies, launching the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as Russia does, cooperating with the countries of the region within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union. Thus, due to the active development of economic ties with Moscow and Beijing, the countries of the region in question are moving towards minimizing ties with the United States of America.

Taking into account the interests described above, it is possible to simulate scenarios for the situation development in the event of tension escalation on the external borders of the region after the U.S. withdrawal

from the INF Treaty. These scenarios involve attempts by non-regional countries to use Central Asia as a foothold for the deployment of military forces and a response from other non-regional actors.

Expert survey results²²

At the end of 2019, the expert survey was conducted at the Kazakh-German University, which was attended by 15 leading Kazakh and foreign experts, specialists in the field of international relations and security. Among them are experts from research institutes in Kazakhstan, university professors, and specialists from international analytical centers.

The purpose of the survey was to identify the expert community positions on topical issues of regional security in Central Asia including an assessment of the state and peculiarities of the global military-political situation dynamics since the United States withdrew the INF Treaty on August 2nd, 2019, as well as to elicit new challenges and threats to the security of the Central Asia countries.

According to the experts, the following threats arose for the entire system of international security in connection with this event:

- 1) Increasing the arms race on a global scale;
- 2) Increased tension in relations between countries such as the United States and Russia, the countries of the European Union, etc.;
- 3) Further disintegration of the system of international treaties and the system of international law;
- 4) Threat of nuclear war;
- 5) Potential revitalization of NATO on the borders with Russia and Belarus;
- 6) Destruction of the global security architecture;
- 7) Impossibility of building trustworthy relations between the great powers.

According to some experts, "...the termination of this treaty will in no way affect the entire system of international relations, and new threats will not arise. On the contrary, the termination of this treaty will normalize the situation from the point of view of the international security system, since at present a serious pool of nuclear powers²³ has

²² The results are the Author's own source.

²³ Authors' note: the official list of nuclear powers for 2020 includes 9 states (Russian Federation, USA, UK, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, North Korea).

been formed, which have a desire to transform the modern world order and whose activities were not governed by this treaty.”

Besides, one of the expert opinions is that “in general, now the entire international security system is in the process of transformation and, based on this, it is an absolutely natural process, just as the security system changed after the Peace of Westphalia, etc.”

Based on these points of view, we can draw the following conclusion that the termination of this treaty states only the fact that a modern weapons system and a new system for ensuring international security require new approaches, documents, and agreements between countries. The termination of this treaty merely reflects the fact that the time has come to completely reform the entire system of international relations including the legal basis.

As for the regional security of Central Asia, Kazakhstani experts generally believe that the termination of this treaty cannot somehow affect the region, since it is part of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and describe this situation as follows: “the countries of Central Asia are the small and weak states that are under the nuclear umbrella of the countries that guarantee our security (for example, Russia) and now no one here is interested in fighting. Rather, this region has a lot of internal socio-economic problems: the impoverishment of the population, the low efficiency of political regimes, and public administration. These problems are relevant in terms of ensuring security. There are no external threats as such”.

In terms of risks for the Central Asian region, which were indicated by foreign experts, the following can be distinguished:

- 1) “The risk of being involved in the conflict between the United States and Russia. This is especially noticeable for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, which are allies and partners of Russia within the CSTO”;
- 2) Geographic proximity to Russia in the event of nuclear war;
- 3) Information war between the Russian Federation and the West;
- 4) The likelihood of China using the new Cold War for further expansion in the region;
- 5) Threats of China and problems of Russia as close neighbors and strategic partners (especially for Kazakhstan);
- 6) General aggravation of the international situation.

Describing the peculiarities of the socio-political situation dynamics in the world, most experts agree that: “The world is entering the stage of international competition between the great powers, free from a treaty base. The transitional period will continue, resulting in a necessity to

form a new balance of power. Probably, it will become the basis of a new long-term system of international security. In the course of its development, the proneness to the conflict will remain high. There is a hope that a major military conflict will not start, as it was in history when the global balance of power was changing.”

This global redistribution of power, property, and capital will take place between the United States, China, and Russia, and according to foreign experts, regional security will be determined by the level of interaction with these powers due to the geographical location, relations with China and Russia within the framework of organizations such as the SCO and the CSTO. The best solution for the region is to preserve the existing format of cooperation and initiate new forms of regional integration. According to various experts from Central Asia more attention should be paid now to the domestic policy and socio-economic development of the region.

Moreover, Kazakhstani experts proposed the following measures to ensure security at the regional level: “it is necessary to take joint vigorous measures to form a regional security system under the auspices of the Treaty on Joint Actions to Combat Terrorism, Political and Religious Extremism, Transnational Organized Crime and Other Threats to Stability and Security signed by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on April 21st, 2000”.

The prevailing opinion among foreign experts is: “that in the medium term, the international security system will change dramatically, and this will eventually be a new world order, the contours of which are taking shape now.” For example, within the frameworks of the Silk Road Economic Belt project, one of the three trans-Eurasian economic corridors (northern) runs through Central Asia²⁴.

Risks for the region

The conducted expert survey makes it possible to identify the main risks for Central Asia that may emerge after the INF Treaty termination. In our opinion, they can cause concerns not only in the countries of the region considered but also at the global level, since any destabilization in the region may negatively affect traffic flows that pass through the center

²⁴ N. D. Diamonds, *Proyekt Ekonomicheskogo poyasa Shelkovogo puti kak instrument razvitiya ekonomiki Kitaya*, <<https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/proekt-ekonomicheskogo-poyasa-shelkovogo-puti-kak-instrument-razvitiya-ekonomiki-kitaya/viewer>> (7.12.2020).

of the Eurasian continent. Besides, the geo-economic destabilization of the region will exert a negative impact on the common Eurasian security space due to the increasing challenges of terrorism, separatism, and uncontrolled migration. The two most likely risks that will directly threaten the region in the event of an aggravation of contradictions between the major nuclear powers are:

- 1) Risk No. 1. Attempts to put pressure on the countries of the region by the nuclear powers to deploy intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles on their territory. The desire of individual centers of world power to influence the foreign policy of the Central Asian countries is likely to lead to attempts to destabilize these states from within by introducing trade restrictions and using technologies for organized riots;
- 2) Risk No. 2. Reformatting the design of regional security in Central Asia. This can affect trade relations of the regional countries as a whole and sever economic ties between individual countries in particular.

The risks outlined above may result from attempts by well-known nuclear powers to use the territories of both the countries of the region and countries bordering on the region to strengthen their military presence to respond to emerging threats to their national interests.

Scenarios for the development of events

The risks identified in the course of the expert survey make it possible to consider the behavior of nuclear powers in the course of realizing their strategic interests as the most important prerequisite for destabilizing the situation in the region.

Scenario No. 1. The most probable scenario is that the Central Asian countries retain their nuclear-free status and do not allow the deployment of nuclear and non-nuclear missiles on their territory. As a presumption, we accept the assertion that the countries of the region, as well as the countries bordering on the region, are not interested in destabilizing the regional security system. The United States of America also shows an interest in maintaining regional stability. Consequently, all interested actors will make efforts to preserve regional stability. At the same time, we admit the possibility of increased competition for control over the region using various economic and political instruments. For example, China, Russia, and the United States can use soft power tools. These include the media, educational programs, and economic interaction. This

scenario is supported by the official statements of the leadership of the countries of the region about the need to strengthen cooperation, as well as to promote various integration initiatives such as One belt one road and the Eurasian Economic Union. It is also worth noting that Beijing and Moscow are attempting to combine these two projects by cooperating within the SCO. This option seems more likely to us, since transport routes pass through Central Asia, thus increasing the economic importance of the region.

Scenario No. 2. A conflict with the use or the threat to use intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles may flare up with the participation of regional players who will struggle for influence in the Central Asian region. As a presumption, we accept the statements that each of them is struggling for the realization of their national interests, as well as the statement that at the moment there are no contradictions between them because each of them (China, Iran, Pakistan, and Russia) is in varying degrees of conflict with the United States. However, if the U.S. leaves the region, primarily its military bases, the balance of power in the region will change dramatically. Another very important circumstance is that each of the individual countries does not have sufficient resources to resist the nuclear powers. In this case, a struggle will begin for influence on the region on the part of countries that have nuclear potential on the one hand and economic potential to advance their geopolitical agenda on the other. These developments will lead to a revision of the regional security formats in effect. The very fact of strengthening the position of one side will lead to retaliatory actions from competing countries and other regional players. As a result, tensions between regional players will increase, which will require interference by the international community to normalize relations. In this case, the region will face destabilization resulting from an imbalance in the regional security system.

Scenario No. 3. The United States can strengthen its military presence under the pretext of combating international terrorism. The intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles without nuclear warheads can be used to strike at military bases in Afghanistan, and their counterparts with a nuclear charge can be used to deter other nuclear powers.

Consequently, strengthening terrorists' positions in Afghanistan can be an excellent pretext for placing this class of missiles dangerously close

to the borders of the Central Asian countries, which are the members of the regional security organizations such as the SCO and the CSTO²⁵.

It stands to reason that other countries possessing missiles with similar characteristics will have to react to this. As a result of the escalation, factors influence the further development of this situation, American military bases may become targets for attacks by any terrorist and bandit groups or Iran, as was the case in January 2020.

When drawing up this scenario, we proceeded from the presumption that the geographical proximity of the region to the borders of the key competitors of the United States, represented by China, Russia, and Iran, forces the administration of the United States of America to influence the military-political situation in the region. Furthermore, the deployment of bases with intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles in the region may become the most powerful instrument of such influence. We assume that not only Afghanistan but also any country of the region may deploy these military bases.

Conclusion

The study showed that the main threat to the nuclear-free status of the Central Asian countries is the disruption of the global balance of power, which can lead to changes in the architecture of regional security. This, in turn, can largely be the result of a change in the foreign and security policy vectors of the countries in the region. It is important to note that the foreign policy of the Central Asian countries does not always match the declared doctrines. Another factor is that the foreign policy vector is a reflection of the economic interests of political elites. If one of the global actors gains economic influence, it will be able to influence the foreign policy of its neighbors satisfying the economic needs of the ruling political circles.

Thus, we can claim that the INF Treaty termination poses a threat to Central Asia since it removes the corresponding obligations from the signatory countries, which in itself opens a 'window of opportunities' for the use of the Central Asian countries in the interest of stronger regional and global players. Consequently, all the actors in international relations, both regional and global, are interested in maintaining stability within the framework of the established formats for ensuring regional security. It is

²⁵ A. Khrolenko, *Taliby s boyami rvutsya k vlasti, Kabul okruzhen?*, <<https://ru.sputniknews.kz/columnists/20200710/14447652/afghanistan-taliby-kabul.html>> (6.12.2020).

necessary to strengthen international cooperation within the SCO, where the interests of China, Russia, India, Pakistan, and Iran (observer country) are represented. The SCO platform allows discussing issues related not only to ensuring security but also to promote economic cooperation.

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THE ROLE OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL IN COVID-19 CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Abstract:

Currently, we experience a conditional reality imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, with both immediate and long-lasting repercussions on the international system and the behavior of each state. For this reason and because the new virus has a dynamic evolution in time and space, research of the impact of the new virus is needed not only from a biogenetic perspective but also in the context of other fields, including the international relations realm. The events we are witnessing at the present challenge to keep up with transformations taking place in the international arena, especially those in the field of virology. As epidemics over time, viruses that cause them to change and occur constantly remain only the fact that they will always influence not only interpersonal relations but impose conditions for new realities in the system of international relations. This article aims to highlight the main gaps in the work of the institution responsible for maintaining peace and security in the international arena, especially in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.

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One of the most discussed issues, both in an academic environment and in the discourse of polemologists, political scientists, economists, and specialists in other fields, is the impact of COVID-19 on international security. Although during the first three months of 2020 the full attention of the international community was focused on the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on individual, society, human and interpersonal relationships, indispensable attention should be paid, also, to the activity or inactivity of institutions responsible for maintaining peace and security on the international arena. The United Nations (UN) is the main organization with such responsibilities in the security sphere, especially the Security Council as a decisive forum. Thus, on the background of outbreaks of the virus on a global scale, the activity of the Security Council is particularly observed by the international community. Currently, in the event of epidemics, especially in the case of a pandemic, occur the greatest disasters concerning the extent of involvement of the UN Security Council in settling the COVID-19 crisis.

For a better understanding of the efforts or weaknesses of the UN Security Council, there is a need for a careful analysis of the work of the institution, including its management by UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres. Thus, at an interval of approximately five months since the emergence of COVID-19, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has warned that the world body is facing the ‘worst test’ since its founding 75 years ago, as global peace and security are threatened by the coronavirus pandemic. It is the first time in the history of the UN when its 15 ambassadors met to discuss a pandemic³. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned the UN Security Council that the coronavirus pandemic threatens international peace and security, as it could lead to increased social unrest and violence that would significantly undermine the capacity of the community to fight the disease⁴, and in the

³ *Coronavirus, uno de los mayores retos de la ONU desde su creación*, <<https://www.voanoticias.com/a/coronavirus-uno-de-m%C3%A1s-grandes-retos-de-onu-desde-su-creaci%C3%B3n/5366900.html>> (19.09.2020).

⁴ *COVID-19 amenaza la paz internacional, dice jefe de ONU*, <<https://www.20minutos.com/noticia/273161/0/aseguradoras-podran-recibir-dinero-por-perdidas-en-obamacare/>> (19.09.2020).

future, “the commitment of the Security Council would be essential to maintain peace and to reduce the impact of COVID-19 crisis on international security”. The Security Council has fifteen members, five of them are permanent, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, China, and Russia, representing the main body for maintaining international peace and security. Its decisions are coercive, the latter having a wide range of powers if it finds a threat or an attack on international peace and security⁵.

“To overcome the pandemic, according to the Secretary-General, it is necessary to unite all efforts. The meeting of the Security Council was convened at Germany’s initiative because the Security Council has been deafening silent since the emergence of the virus”, mentioned ambassador Christoph Heusgen⁶. In his speech, Heusgen noted the efforts of the permanent members (United States, Russia, China, France, United Kingdom) to develop a resolution⁷.

Thus, the strongest institution of the United Nations, which has remained silent on the COVID-19 crisis since it began to spread around the world causing the death of tens of thousands of people, issued its first press release. According to the document, dated 23rd March 2020, support was expressed for all efforts related to the possible consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in conflict-affected countries and recalled the need for unity and solidarity with all those affected. Although the international community is at an early stage of the COVID-19 crisis, it is expected that, with collective efforts, worldwide, in the next 6 months, the violent advance of the virus will stop⁸.

From this perspective, the United Nations Security Council should strongly assert the subject of coronavirus. It is problematic to understand the passive response of the organization responsible for detecting threats to international peace and security, as it had experience in monitoring other epidemics. In the case of AIDS, the disease has been declared through resolutions as one of the greatest challenges for the development,

⁵ *Charte des Nations Unies de 1945*, <<https://www.un.org/fr/charter-united-nations/>> (19.09.2020).

⁶ *COVID-19: le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU exhorté à s'unir, sa "raison d'être"*, <<https://www.lesoleil.com/actualite/COVID-19/COVID-19-le-conseil-de-securite-de-lonu-exhorte-a-sunir-sa-raison-detre-a8407ed02e3a0d32225b70398b4cc9e4>> (19.09.2020).

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ *El Potencial Impacto Del Coronavirus COVID-19 En La Seguridad*, <<https://www.ventasdeseguridad.com/2020033111968/noticias/empresas/el-potencial-impacto-del-COVID-19-en-la-seguridad.html>> (19.09.2020).

progress, and stability of societies, which has consequently required a global and exceptional response. More recently, the Security Council addressed the spread of the Ebola virus in Liberia (2014) and Congo (2018), declaring the epidemic as a threat to the region and stressing the need to consolidate all efforts of the international community in fighting epidemics. Given the number of countries affected by a coronavirus, including the number of infections and deaths, as well as the impact it has on the world economy, it is unexpected that the Security Council at the meeting on March 23rd, 2020, did not consider declaring COVID-19 an unprecedented threat to international security. Along with China, the United States, and Russia, there are now five European countries that can promote this stance: France and the United Kingdom, as permanent members, and Germany, Belgium, and Estonia as non-permanent member-states⁹.

At the international level, many organizations act daily to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and/or its consequences, following specialized principles. WHO, the UN specialized agency is the leading organization that responds by identifying, for example, manufacturers of diagnostic kits, also by focusing on vaccine research and development, fundraising, monitoring the global spread of the virus, etc. Other organizations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), also have a role in managing the pandemic outbreak – economic and financial.

Moreover, according to the Secretary-General, the pandemic represents 8 risks to international security:

- The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to further erode trust in public institutions;
- The economic fallout of this crisis could create major stressors, particularly in fragile societies, less developed countries, and those in transition;
- The postponement of elections or referenda, or the decision to proceed with a vote – even with mitigation measures – can create political tensions and undermine legitimacy;
- In some conflict settings, the uncertainty created by the pandemic may create incentives for some actors to promote further division and turmoil;
- The threat of terrorism remains alive. Terrorist groups may see a

⁹ *La seguridad humana como prioridad global*,
<https://elpais.com/elpais/2020/03/22/opinion/1584878347_635255.html>
(19.09.2020).

window of opportunity to strike while the attention of most governments is turned towards the pandemic;

- The weaknesses and lack of preparedness exposed by this pandemic provide a window into how a bioterrorist attack might unfold – and may increase its risks. Non-state groups could gain access to virulent strains that could pose similar devastation to societies around the globe;
- The crisis has hindered international, regional and national conflict resolution efforts, exactly when they are needed most;
- The pandemic is triggering or exacerbating various human rights challenges. Could be an observed stigma, hate speech, and white supremacists and other extremists seeking to exploit the situation.

The United Nations (UN) faces one of the unprecedented challenges in its history¹⁰, according to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, calling on March 25th, 2020, to immediately cease hostilities in Yemen¹¹, after launching two days earlier a call for a global ceasefire as the international community faces a common enemy: “COVID-19, the speed of pandemic’s spread showing that to continue a war is meaningless”. Also, the Secretary-General launching the appeal for ceasefires “explicitly called to end the escalation of violence and armed conflict to focus efforts on the real fight against the COVID-19 crisis”¹². The world is at war with COVID-19.

The silence of the Security Council is only an official silence, because, late, the meetings began to be organized practically, to some extent in artisanal conditions, which only aggravated the feeling of inability to react. From March 12th to March 30th, 2020, officially, from the Security Council, no attitude was seen. China, which chaired the Council until April 1st, 2020, first canceled meetings on March 16th, then suspended all activities from the official agenda, and for many days it remained the only element on the Security Council’s website, following to be updated.

¹⁰ *L’ONU, temple du multilatéralisme ébranlé par le coronavirus*, <https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/l-onu-temple-du-multilateralisme-ebanle-par-le-coronavirus-15-03-2020-2367193_24.php#> (19.09.2020).

¹¹ *Resolution 2515. Non-prolifération/Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Letter from the President of the Council on the voting (S/2020/246, added)*, <<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2515>> (19.09.2020).

¹² *Face à l’ennemi commun, la COVID-19, le Secrétaire général appelle à un cessez-le-feu mondial: “L’arrêt des combats. Partout. Tout de suite”*, <<https://www.un.org/press/fr/2020/sgsm20018.doc.htm>> (19.09.2020).

However, the permanent delegations of certain Security Council Member States announced on the social network Twitter that an informal virtual meeting, as a test, was organized on March 24th, 2020 – more than a week after the suspension of Council’s activities. The meeting was not included on the agenda of the Security Council and taking place during a brief time – only over an hour – was not clear the subjects of discussion, moreover, could not be found a report, the official website of the United Nations presenting any information regarding the given meeting. Therefore, the only information available is the one disseminated on social networks and press, that cited an anonymous diplomat who acknowledged that the operation of the meeting was ‘rather artisanal’¹³. After a second virtual meeting on March 26th, announced by the Chinese mission, again on Twitter, regarding the work of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)¹⁴, a meeting directly focused on the problems of the COVID-19 virus took place. Further, at the informal meeting held on March 30th, the discussion focused on certain conflicts. For the first time since March 12th, France communicated, via the website of the French delegation to the UN, the content of its interventions at this meeting, aimed to examine the threat of COVID-19 crisis expansion, in Syria and Palestine¹⁵.

A careful analysis of UN works regarding the COVID-19 crisis indicates that the existence of certain decisions on the current situation has been published only on 31st of March. Thus, the member states of the Security Council communicated in a ‘very chivalrous’ manner, because, again, these are only montages published on Twitter, regarding the unanimous adoption of four resolutions at the March 30th meeting: the resolution 2515 on North Korea, resolution 2516 on Somalia, resolution 2517 on Sudan and resolution 2518 on peacekeeping¹⁶. However, the texts remain unknown, no report has been published so far on the official website of the United Nations, mentioning the work and agenda of the

¹³ *Le Conseil de sécurité de l’ONU s’essaie, difficilement, à la visioconférence*, <<https://www.lefigaro.fr/international/le-conseil-de-securite-de-l-onu-s-essaie-difficilement-a-la-visioconference-20200324>> (19.09.2020).

¹⁴ *Déclarations officielles de politique étrangère du 12 mars 2020*, <<https://cz.ambafrance.org/-Declarations-officielles-de->> (19.09.2020).

¹⁵ R. Maurel, *L’(in)activité du Conseil de Sécurité face au COVID-19: où est confinée la “communauté” internationale?*, <<http://www.revuedlf.com/droit-international/linactivite-du-conseil-de-securite-face-au-COVID-19-ou-est-confinnee-la-communaute-internationale/>> (19.09.2020).

¹⁶ *COVID-19: le Conseil de sécurité de l’ONU exhorté à s’unir, sa “raison d’être”*, *op. cit.*

Security Council. In other words, the premier global body for maintaining international peace, the temple of post-World War II multilateralism, has not met officially since March 12th. It was only twelve days after the interruption of its activity that a perfectly informal meeting took place in ‘artisanal’ conditions; it took a total of 18 days after the interruption of the physical sessions for an informal meeting and probably punctuated by connection problems, to finally settle problems raised by the global pandemic, without adopting a resolution directly related to COVID-19 outbreak and without the possibility to be verified, in the absence of decisions’ texts.

In this case, the Security Council has generated by its absence, considering the practice since 1945 and its functions, and expecting horizon that justifies confusion, if not a disappointment, for the international community. Thus, there are many reasons to believe that the Security Council should concentrate on the COVID-19 issue, rather than standing deafening silent. There could be highlighted four main reasons:

- 1) First, the Security Council tends to undertake various issues, not necessarily within its area of commitment, but it missed an opportunity to ‘take note’ of a global situation, even when it is likely to fall within its sphere of competence, and often welcomed by the international community. Since the 1990s, it has not hesitated to delineate such a region of the world or even in general, as a ‘threat to stability’¹⁷ and sometimes as ‘threat to peace’¹⁸ a situation that goes beyond peaceful relations between states, even without a direct link to interstate relations. Humanitarian tragedies have been the subject of Council resolutions, using Chapter VII of the Charter, which allows it to take measures that can go as far as authorizing the use of force; we are thinking of ‘smuggling of migrants and human trafficking’ in the Mediterranean, the situation in Libya¹⁹. More recently, the main organization responsible for the maintenance of peace has been able to take into consideration the effect of natural disasters,

¹⁷ *Le Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies adopte une résolution historique sur la jeunesse, la paix et la sécurité*, <<https://www.un.org/press/fr/2015/pi2146.doc.htm>> (19.09.2020).

¹⁸ *Résolution 2118 du Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies*, <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%A9solution_2118_du_Conseil_de_s%C3%A9curit%C3%A9_des_Nations_unies> (19.09.2020).

¹⁹ *Resolution 2240 (2015) / adopted by the Security Council at its 7531st meeting, on 9th October 2015*, <<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/806095>> (19.09.2020).

the risks of such disasters or climate change on certain security situations in Somalia²⁰, Mali²¹, or more recently in the Democratic Republic of Congo²² - these are just a few examples. Even characterized as a threat to international peace and security, it is absolutely surprising that the Security Council does not officially take over this world news as chaos dominating certain COVID-19 affected states susceptible to threaten subtle security balances;

- 2) Second, this official silence is deafening because there is a remarkable precedent. By resolution 2177 of 19th September 2014, the Security Council undertook actions in case of the Ebola health crisis escalation, intervening where it was not necessarily expected and calling it a threat to international peace and security²³. Given this precedent, which is, only a confirmation of the inclusion of health issues among security subjects²⁴, we, therefore, have the right to expect at least a formal reaction from the Security Council;
- 3) Third, this silence is deafening, as certain tasks can only be exercised by the Security Council. Although very exceptionally and in the event of an impasse, the United Nations General Assembly can remedy the deficiency of the Council, which has only the primary, and not the exclusive, responsibility for maintaining peace and security²⁵, only the latter has the political legitimacy, institutional power, and legal instruments to organize a strong global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among many possible means of action, the Council could, thus, impose corridors for transporting medical equipment and, at the very least, coordinate the actions of organizations fighting the pandemic;

²⁰ *Resolution 2472 (2019) / adopted by the Security Council at its 8537th meeting, on 31st May 2019*, <<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3807184>> (19.09.2020).

²¹ *Résolution 2447 du 13 décembre 2018, S/RES/2447 (2018)*, <<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/fr/content/resolutions-adopted-security-council-2018>> (19.09.2020).

²² *Resolution 2502 (2019) / adopted by the Security Council at its 8692nd meeting, on 19 December 2019*, <<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3840347>> (19.09.2020).

²³ *Resolution 1308 (2000) / adopted by the Security Council at its 4172nd meeting, on 17 July 2000*, <<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/418823>> (19.09.2020).

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ *Résolution 377 (V) De L'assemblée Générale*, <https://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ha/ufp/ufp_ph_f.pdf> (19.09.2020).

- 4) Fourth, the official silence of the Security Council is more deafening in the context of discourse and commitment of other international actors, compensating for its inaction. Besides the press starting to analyze this astonishing silence²⁶, the attention is directed to the General Secretary who mobilizes, continuously using the rhetoric of war²⁷. Moreover, on March 25th was launched a “COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan”²⁸ and the Security Council would probably take note of it only afterward. Thus, referring to immediate meetings of the international economic forums. The G7 heads of state and government met by videoconference on March 16th to seek a coordinated response and, the final statement of which was published²⁹. On March 25th, another meeting of G7 foreign ministers took place³⁰ to discuss their joint actions in response to the pandemic³¹, and the G20, also, convened an emergency virtual summit on March 26th³². The UN Secretary-General has even written a letter to the G20 calling for concerted and decisive action to face the current global health crisis and to establish a plan, stressing the need for international solidarity and cooperation to eradicate the virus³³. This fact conveys that the Secretary-General is appealing to the Group of Twenty (G20) for support giving the inaction of the Security Council. Given the above, it seems incomprehensible the Security Council passivity or delays to manage the state generated by COVID-19.

²⁶ *La réponse au coronavirus fait débat au sein du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU*, <<https://www.la-croix.com/Monde/reponse-coronavirus-fait-debat-sein-Conseil-securite-lONU-2020-03-25-1201085971>> (19.09.2020).

²⁷ *L'ONU, temple du multilatéralisme ébranlé par le coronavirus, op. cit.*

²⁸ *Ibidem.*

²⁹ *G7 Biarritz: Conférence de presse à l'issue du sommet*, <<https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2019/08/27/g7-biarritz-conference-de-presse-a-lissue-du-sommet>> (19.09.2020).

³⁰ *Coronavirus - Déclaration du ministre de l'Europe et des affaires étrangères à tous nos compatriotes à l'étranger (17 mars 2020)*, <<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/le-ministere-et-son-reseau/actualites-du-ministere/informations-coronavirus-COVID-19/coronavirus-declarations-et-communiqués/article/coronavirus-declaration-du-ministre-de-l-europe-et-des-affaires-etrangeres-a>> (19.09.2020).

³¹ *L'ONU, temple du multilatéralisme ébranlé par le coronavirus, op. cit.*

³² *Ibidem.*

³³ *Nations Unies, Point de presse quotidien du Bureau du Porte-parole du Secrétaire général de l'ONU*, <<https://www.un.org/press/fr/2020/dbf200324.doc.htm>> (19.09.2020).

According to some opinions, the Security Council blocked due to Russia's refusal for fifteen days to hold a decision-making convention based on a procedural aspect. If the statements of the Russian representative should be presumed true, the Charter of the United Nations does not allow the organization of virtual meetings and, specifically, to make decisions on-line³⁴. According to the Russian argument, Article 28 (3) of the Charter, stipulating that “the Security Council may hold meetings at such places other than the seat of the Organization as in its judgment will best facilitate its work”, provides only for physical meetings. Also, and predominantly, no provision would allow for a virtual decision, the vote being usually made by a show of hands during the sitting.

At least three elements demonstrate the great weakness of this argument. On the one hand, Russia seems to present a surprising formality here, if we refer to the practice of the Security Council. Procedural formalism is not what most characterizes the Security Council, which remains above all a political body. Thus, the chapter ‘Voting’ in the Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council contains a single simple rule: “the voting procedure of the Security Council is in accordance with the relevant articles of the Charter and the Statute of the International Court of Justice”. This formalism invoked by Russia contrasts with the actual practice of the Council at its three meetings on March 24th, 26th, and 30th (no statement on the official agenda – not even as part of the informal consultations – no minutes) published contrary to provisions of the Article 54 of the Regulation³⁵ and with the general practice of the Organization. It should be mentioned that the United Nations, like many other international organizations, is not formalist. Thus, it was observed that certain decisions on the Security Council commitment, for example, regarding the transparency of its activity, were taken based on a simple note of the President of the Security Council without further formality and presenting any problems³⁶.

To this end, the consideration of formalism seems implausible. On the other hand, more formal international organizations have quickly adopted a derogatory procedure to convoke virtual meetings

³⁴ *Résolution 2447, op. cit.*

³⁵ *Règlement intérieur provisoire du Conseil de sécurité*, <<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/fr/content/ripes/chapitre-8>> (19.09.2020).

³⁶ *Note 507 du Président du Conseil de sécurité du 26 juillet 2010, S/2010/507*, <<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/fr/subsidiary/wgdocs/notes>> (19.09.2020).

appropriately. The issue of meeting and voting procedure appears more significant for the EU institutions, their acts may be abolished, if necessary, by the Court of Justice of the European Union – which is not the case with the Security Council and the legal context of the United Nations. Thus, on 23rd March the Council of the European Union approved a temporary derogation from its rules of procedure “in view of these exceptional circumstances, and with a view to ensuring institutional continuity in the decision-making of the Council, it is necessary to temporarily derogate” from the relevant provisions of the Council’s Rules of Procedure for one month, renewable³⁷. It is difficult, given the few formal requirements of the Security Council, to admit that such a procedure would not be possible – provided Russia accepts it.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Russian reluctance seems to be in total contradiction with Article 28 (1) of the Charter of the United Nations – the same Article 28, advanced to block the decision-making process – which states that “The Security Council shall be so organized as to be able to function continuously”. This provision should serve without difficulty as a basis for the adoption of exceptional procedural rules. Even not in emergency circumstances, this paragraph seems to justify the development of an already inflexible decision-making procedure. But the functioning of the Security Council, as a political body, is such that the Russian refusal, whether founded or not, blocks the organization of meetings and, especially, the decision-making process. The Embassy of the Russian Federation further claims that there is no reason to fear the meeting at the United Nations headquarters. Equally embarrassing, the Russian blockade could have led to a violation of rule 1 of the Rules of Procedure, stipulating that the Security Council shall meet “at any time he deems necessary, but the interval between meetings shall not exceed fourteen days”.

The evolution of the Security Council work, whose members triumphantly announced on Twitter, after agreeing on March 30th to unanimously adopt four resolutions, could primarily nuance all the above remarks.

Within the circumstances created by its activity, The Russian Federation considers the operation of the Security Council as

³⁷ *Décision (UE) 2020/430 du Conseil du 23 mars 2020 portant dérogation temporaire au règlement intérieur du Conseil eu égard aux difficultés de déplacement causées dans l’Union par la pandémie de COVID-19, JOUE du 24 mars 2020, L88 I/1, <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32020D0430>> (19.09.2020).*

‘satisfactory’. At least three out of four resolutions –unpublished by present-day – refer, undoubtedly, to provisions that are in general terms consensual; among these, two resolutions, along with the resolution 2515, still needed to be adopted urgently. In conditions of the UNSOM mandate ending on March 31, 2020, seems unreasonable the fact that the Council of Security did not consider renewing it even for one year, thus the resolution 2516 (2020) regarding the situation in Somalia would not appear as ‘imposed’³⁸. North Korea, as well, was and continue to be the subject of intense discussions. Permanent member states China and the Russian Federation stated in favor of removing the sanctions³⁹. A technical decision was, although, expected on 27th March, given the reason for the resolution 2515⁴⁰. Only resolution 2518 on peace maintaining missions do not provide for a restricted calendar; nevertheless, the Council did not enforce a resolution in this regard in 2019 – the last resolution concerning peace maintaining missions dating from 2018⁴¹.

To this end, given these rationalities, the UN Security Council did not react in due time. Consequently, the elements described above indicate that the Council of Security not only failed to convoke for deliberation on the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and the global health issue, it also concluded its operations hardly, through a collective agreement on procedures to approach the current problems. Given that, it is to expect the meeting announced via Twitter on March 31st, 2020, regarding Afghanistan relates to the report on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Another integrated and multidimensional peacekeeping mission on stabilizing the situation in Mali (MINUSMA) will be organized soon. The Security Council follows, to a certain extent unofficially, its schedule without including in the top of agenda on prioritized global issues the COVID-19 crisis. In this context, could be expected the resolution will be focused on the current conditions in each country⁴².

³⁸ *Le Conseil de sécurité proroge jusqu’au 30 juin 2020 le mandat de la Mission d’assistance des Nations Unies en Somalie (MANUSOM)*, <<https://www.un.org/press/fr/2020/sc14151.doc.htm>> (19.09.2020).

³⁹ *Résolution 2495 du 31 octobre 2019, S/RES/2495 (2019)*, <<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/fr/content/r%C3%A9solutions-adopt%C3%A9es-par-le-conseil-de-s%C3%A9curit%C3%A9-en-2019>> (19.09.2020).

⁴⁰ *Resolution 2515, op. cit.*

⁴¹ *Résolution 2447, op. cit.*

⁴² R. Maurel, *op. cit.*

This position seems, at the current stage, surrealistic, and is difficult to conclude other than observing the fact that fragile legal arguments presented by the Russian Federation did not resist the need to convoque for an analysis of the COVID-19 outbreak impacts, and that traces untenably a principle, obviously shared by China that chairs the Council.

Moreover, observing the activity of the UN Security Council during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis could be outlined several weaknesses. In this context, should be mentioned that Russia, China, and United State are not, at the present stage, supporters of UN and its institutions, continuing to criticize publicly their activity. At the beginning of the health crisis that could be seen at international dimension around March 12th, it was possible to presume that members of the Council, especially the permanent members, were preoccupied with the pandemic on the territories of their states. In other more banal terms, permanent and non-permanent members had 'other concerns' than convening the Security Council. This inference already reveals a deficiency of the UN institutional system and seems to be based on the idea that nothing catastrophic can happen to the five great powers and they can ensure stability in the world. In these circumstances, could be noticed an official strengthening of the position of states in combating the COVID-19 crisis. The case of France can serve as an example, since March 12th making efforts to fight the pandemic⁴³. France has also contributed to accelerating the cooperation of the international community to settle problems related to the COVID-19 outbreak⁴⁴.

At the same time, some contexts aggravated the dispute, and here could be remarked the comments of the Chinese Foreign Minister spokesperson, arguing that coronavirus is of American origin⁴⁵. The media made the Chinese hypothesis public to the entire world⁴⁶, while U.S. authorities insist on the 'Chinese virus'. The U.S. officials also accuse China and the Russian Federation of conducting a campaign to misinform the population and the entire international community.

⁴³ *Déclarations officielles de politique étrangère du 12 mars 2020, op. cit.*

⁴⁴ *Déclarations officielles de politique étrangère du 19 mars 2020*, <<https://cz.ambafrance.org/-Declarations-officielles-de->> (19.09.2020).

⁴⁵ *Corona-complotisme : Pékin accuse sans preuve les Etats-Unis d'avoir apporté le virus en Chine*, <<https://www.nouvelobs.com/coronavirus-de-wuhan/20200313.OBS25985/corona-complotisme-pek-in-accuse-les-etats-unis-d-avoir-apporte-le-virus-en-chine.html>> (19.09.2020).

⁴⁶ *Coronavirus: la Chine accuse les Etats-Unis d'être à l'origine de la pandémie*, <<http://www.leparisien.fr/international/coronavirus-la-chine-accuse-les-etats-unis-d-etre-a-l-origine-de-la-pandemie-24-03-2020-8286891.php>> (19.09.2020).

The image appears all the less bright when it refers to an informal international government. Meanwhile, the two G7 meetings – without Russia and China – issued final statements, the major economic powers declaring they are “convinced that the current difficulties imposed by COVID-19 pandemic require a closely coordinated international approach”⁴⁷. At the request of Saudi Arabia, concerned about the oil economy⁴⁸, the G20 in exceptional circumstances convoked a meeting on 26th March. The G20 member states, which go far beyond purely economic and financial discussions, committed to ‘strengthen’ the WHO’s mandate to coordinate the international fight against the pandemic, particularly, staff protection and first-aid health care, and the provision of medical equipment, especially diagnostic tools, treatments, pharmaceuticals, and vaccines. Thus, the G20 meeting recognized the need for urgent short-term action to intensify global efforts to resolve the COVID-19 crisis⁴⁹. It seems legitimate to ask whether the G20 does not outstep its informal tasks⁵⁰. The introduction of the Final Declaration undoubtedly highlights the importance that G20 members attribute to the UN framework in the circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis. Together with the World Health Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the United Nations, and other international organizations, the G20 is committed to undertaking all measures necessary to overcome the pandemic⁵¹. The flexibility of the G7 and G20 actions is to the detriment of the Security Council. These fora have essentially economic vocation, but concerns about the state of the world economy have led them to pay particular attention to the COVID-19 crisis.

⁴⁷ *Déclarations officielles de politique étrangère du 17 mars 2020, COVID-19*, <<https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/03/26/declaration-finale-du-sommet-extraordinaire-des-chefs-detat-et-de-gouvernement-du-g20-consacre-au-COVID-19>> (19.09.2020).

⁴⁸ *Coronavirus: face au krach pétrolier, l’Arabie Saoudite se prépare “au pire”*, <<https://www.sudouest.fr/2020/03/18/coronavirus-face-au-krach-petrolier-les-saoudiens-se-preparent-au-pire-7340699-10861.php>> (19.09.2020).

⁴⁹ *Résolution 2480 adopted by the Security Council at its 8568th meeting, on 28 June 2019*, <[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2480\(2019\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2480(2019))> (19.09.2020).

⁵⁰ *Déclarations officielles de politique étrangère du 26 mars 2020, COVID-19*, <<https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/03/26/declaration-finale-du-sommet-extraordinaire-des-chefs-detat-et-de-gouvernement-du-g20-consacre-au-COVID-19>> (19.09.2020).

⁵¹ *Coronavirus: face au krach pétrolier, l’Arabie Saoudite se prépare “au pire”*, *op. cit.*

Although there is a lot of criticism regarding the (in)activity of the Security Council, it is reasonable to believe that, so far, the absence of a resolution on COVID-19 is justified by the maintenance of these two antagonistic positions. The assumption of the political situation can be summarized as follows: The United States threatens to reject any proposal to reduce sanctions, and the two Eastern states block any proposal that could evoke responsibility for resolving the COVID-19 crisis. In any case, this blockade implies the slowdown of the UN mechanism. Both the official silence and the uncomfortable advanced discourse to justify the situation highlight the UN institutional formalism and contribute to the discrediting, by its actors, of the main instrument of multilateralism. COVID-19 seems to affect the institutional multilateralism that is already attacked, often unjustifiably, by leaders advocating unilateralism or bilateralism.

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**AN ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL MILITARY OPERATIONS
IN INTERNAL SECURITY MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA
(1966-2019)**

Abstract:

This article identifies different operational codenames adopted by the Nigerian military in special domestic operations from 1966-2019 and examined whether the operations were executed in line with the codenames. In Nigeria, the military has an established tradition of codenaming special operations, in both internal and foreign missions. Since 1966, the Nigerian military has been involved in internal security management and codenamed all the operations using both English and

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local language names. The aftermath of the first military coup d'état on 15th January 1966, was the beginning of military involvement in domestic security operations in addition to their constitutional responsibility of defending the territorial integrity of the country. The Effect Perspective (TEP) is adopted as the theoretical framework which gives proper nuance to the study. Methodologically, data were elicited through in-depth interviews. The findings explain why several military operations have failed to achieve the objectives of their codenames. It concludes that there is no correlation between the operational codenames and their outcomes of special military operations in Nigeria because the desired results of restoring peace have not been achieved within the specific time frame given when they were launched. The paper concludes that the majority of special military operations launched in Nigeria failed below expectations and unable to restore peace in their country in line with the operational codenames as a result of factors identified in the study.

Keywords:

Code-names; Evaluation; Internal Security Management; Military; Nigeria; Special Operations

Introduction

Military in Nigeria and other countries have been involved in the internal security management of their home countries and several foreign countries, particularly during peacekeeping missions of the United Nations, regional and continental organizations, with a panoply of operational names, meant to reflect the contexts of the expected outcomes of the operations. Major military powers within the international system often adopt such names for their military operations at home and in foreign countries. Equally, the special military operation includes operations carried out under the aegis of international organizations such as the United Nations, Economic Community of the West African States, and African Union in areas experiencing conflict and violence⁵. The code labeling of security operations has been an age-long practice in the security field. It has been more pronounced in Nigeria, especially since 1999 when the country metamorphosed from a military junta into democracy. In almost

⁵ J. L. H. E. Ehrensward, *Special Operations-Myths and Facts*, Copenhagen 2014, p. 6.

two decades of democratic experience, Nigeria has witnessed myriads of conflicts and armed violence, which necessitated the formation of security operations to address the security challenges.

The problem with the launched special military operations and their codenames was the inability of the military deployed to violent areas to end the cycle of violence. The earliest series of special military operations with unique code-names in Nigeria began in 1966 to curb political violence that erupted as a result of the first military coup in the country. Special military operations are designed or set up to achieve a specific target apart from conventional operations. The essence of special military operations is to address a security challenge at hand⁶. This sort of operation is characterized by unique tactics and maneuvers, carried out by special squads who obtain special training and are equipped with sophisticated weapons, which have either long- or short-term plans to achieve their aim expressed in their operational codenames and framework.

Similarly, it was observed that most of these operations were exclusively military due to the inability of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and other paramilitary personnel to sustain domestic security by conducting tangible clinical operations directed at ridding the Nigerian polity of violence and conflicts. This led to the formation of special military operations, whose methods include, but not exclusive to air and land operations in the designated areas of operation, special military operation also uses navy and collaboration with other security agencies in intelligence gathering⁷. The special military operation encompasses conducting timely surveillance and patrol to maintain stability during the post-violence period. Based on the above, the objective of this paper is to evaluate code-names and the outcomes of special military operations in Nigeria, assess the *modus operandi* adopted by the military in their operations, and examine whether the operations were able to restore peace in the areas that were established. The paper aimed to answer the following questions: What is the relationship between a codename and its outcomes? What are the methods of operation? Do the operations restore peace in their areas where they were established?

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 6-7.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

Special Military Operations: Review of Related Literature

This section aims to identify and assess the various special military operations that were conducted to tackle internal and external security challenges in various parts of the world. Launching a special military operation is a routine exercise within the security circle if the need arises. That was why, the Turkish military, in an attempt to protect the country from external bellicosity in January 2018, launched the operation ‘Olive Branch’ that was conducted along the corridors of the Syrian Northwestern area of Afrin. In satisfying the framework for the operation, the military deployed enormous aerial power, which comprised 72 combat air jets alongside ground forces into the Afrin areas. The Turkish government deployed a quarter of its total air force strength for this operation. It was an impressive force generation where principal fighter jets composed of F16 variants and F4 2020s were mobilized. Militarily, such an all-out aerial bombardment by the Airforce recorded a huge success⁸. This showed that the method adopted was strictly a warfare technique where military hardware and software were deployed to achieve the objectives of the operation. The method of the operation was able to suppress the uprising across the border shared by both Turkey and Syria. The major setback to the operation was that the approach adopted by the military had deviated significantly from the peaceful method as code-name, ‘Operation Olive Branch’ suggests. A year after the operation was launched, separatists’ fighters entered a ceasefire with the Turkish government. In light of the foregoing, however, the *modus operandi* did not sync with the operational codename; however, the operation was able to successfully restore peace and stability in the area.

In the Philippines, Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P) or Operation Freedom Eagle was launched in January 2002 with Special Operation Forces by the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) to curb the recruitment, training, and operation of various domestic and transnational violent extremist networks in the country. The aim was to curtail the rising influence and threats of the Al-Qaeda as well as stultify the activities of its operatives and the recruitment of prospective foot-soldiers. This was because Al-Qaeda had alliances with Abu Sayyaf terror group and Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines, the

⁸ C. Kasapoğlu, S. Ülgen, *Operation Olive Branch: A Political-Military Assessment*, Istanbul 2018, <<http://edam.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Operation-Olive-Branch-01.pdf>> (20.12.2020).

military intelligence received from the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and the technical prowess of the U.S. such as aerial surveillance, and a signal was used to weaken the strength of the terrorist groups in the areas. These were the techniques used for the success of the operation in the Philippines. This collaboration or synergy assisted Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines to detect the hideouts of the terrorist leader of Abu Sayyaf, in the place where American missionaries, kidnapped by Abu Sayyaf's organization were kept⁹. The OEF-P forces deployed different intelligent techniques of surveillance to track the movement and operations of the terrorist organizations in the areas covered. However, despite the military capacity available, the purpose of the operation was defeated because the Moro Islamic Liberation Front had not been cleared from the area. This showed that despite the long duration of the operation, its objective, which was the safety and freedom of residents, was not achieved between 2002 and 2015. The goal of the operation was to free the region from the activities of the Islamists' fundamentalists and terrorist groups. However, it was abortive because the activities of the terrorists within the zone were widespread and defied the measures adopted by the joint military task force between the Philippines and the U.S.

Furthermore, a special military operation named Operation Path to Deliverance or Rah-e-Nijat was launched in the Pakistani province of South Waziristan in June 2009 to combat terrorists' activities, especially Al-Qaeda and Taliban, and in neighboring Afghanistan¹⁰. The operation aimed to destroy the structures and operational base of the Tehrik-i-Taliban in Pakistan. However, the operation turned out to be catastrophic because the topography of Waziristan is mountainous and it was difficult for the Pakistani and the foreign forces to navigate the areas due to difficult terrain and the residents are warriors who harbor and assist Islamist terrorist group in their areas¹¹. The Pakistani military recorded one of the biggest losses of forces after the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. During the operation, 60,000 soldiers and 45,000 special combative troops, as well as 15,000 troops on standby, were mobilized for the

⁹ J. Thomas, C. Dougherty, *Beyond the Ramparts: The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces*, Washington 2013, <<https://csbaonline.org/uploads/documents/SOF-Report-CSBA-Final.pdf>> (20.12.2020).

¹⁰ M. Jan, S. A. Paracha, M. Anwar, M. Imran, *Military Operations in Waziristan: Public Perceptions in Pakistan on Terra*, "Gomal University Journal of Research" 2011, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 93-109.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

military operation to weed-off the terrorists¹². The outcomes of the operation showed that the forces were able to confiscate RPG-7 rockets, anti-aircraft machineguns, and SPG-9 rounds from the terrorists. However, the forces were unable to arrest top Taliban leaders like Mullah Fazlullah, Baitullah Mehsud, who was killed in a drone attack in August 2009, and Hakimullah Mehsud, who operated in Waziristan and who was killed in 2013. Operation Path to Deliverance was unable to rid the Afghan-Pakistan border of Taliban and Al-Qaeda terrorists. This was because it was erroneous to over-rely on aerial operations in mountainous areas and that people who had information about the hideouts of the wanted terrorists in the areas were not incorporated into the operation to give the troops' intelligence information.

In an attempt to stop the depopulation and destruction of the Albanian population in Kosovo, on March 24th, 1999, NATO launched Operation Allied Forces to destroy the military structure of the then Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milošević. The allied forces used airstrikes on targeted areas in Kosovo and Serbia which lasted seventy-eight days. Nineteen NATO members contributed warplanes to the Operation Allied Force (OAF)¹³. The military campaign succeeded only where peace agreement conceived during the G-8 summit had been accepted by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Additionally, the OAF led to the signing of a military-technical agreement between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and NATO, through which the withdrawal of Yugoslavian forces from Kosovo was to be supervised by NATO personnel. The agreement made provision for NATO peacekeeping forces to take over Kosovo after the withdrawal of the Yugoslavian forces. However, the Operation Allied Forces of the NATO recorded only one setback. This concerned the death of two Apache helicopter pilots who were involved in an accident during training in Albania¹⁴. In this case, the military restored peace in the Balkans and justified the code-name of the operation.

Geopner evaluated the impact of military operations sent abroad by the U.S. from 2001 in Afghanistan to 2015 in Iraq¹⁵. The study found that

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ S. Bowman, *Kosovo, and Macedonia: the U.S. and Allied Military Operations*, Washington 2002, <https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20020108_IB10027_d78c629b46594db7faf87396db776206c7c98900.pdf> (1.12.2020).

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ E. W. Geopner, *Learning from Today's Wars. Measuring the Effectiveness of America's War on Terror*, "Parameters" 2016, Vol. 46, No. 1, p. 111.

the military operations did not achieve their aim which was to stop the rise of terrorism and curtail terrorist activities in the targeted areas. An empirical survey that used a multiple regression statistical model revealed that U.S. military operations have increased the rate of terrorism worldwide. The findings further revealed that about 80% variation of recorded terror attacks from 2001 to 2013 can be attributed to how much money the United States spent fighting terror and how many military members were deployed to fight the war. Unfortunately, the results indicate that U.S. efforts have been correlated with a worsening of the terror situation¹⁶.

Geopner concluded that “between \$1.7 and 4 trillion dollars have been spent and more than two-and-a-half million military members have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. [...] Despite these efforts, the data indicate primary objectives have gone unmet and some areas have worsened (e.g., the number and strength of Islamist-inspired terror groups). Potentially, U.S. efforts may have inadvertently exacerbated conditions important for terrorist activity, conditions that increased the motivation to join terror organizations and the opportunity to carry out terrorist acts”¹⁷. Despite these efforts, the data indicated that the primary objectives had gone unmet and that some areas had worsened (e.g. the number, and strength of Islamist-inspired terror groups). In the same vein, the American foreign military campaigns have exacerbated conditions important for terrorist activity, conditions that increased the motivation to join terror organizations and provide them with soft targets and victims of terrorist attacks. However, Geopner identified the reason behind the failure of U.S. military operations against terrorism. The operations increased hatred against the USA and this was used by the terrorists who were Islamic fundamentalists to recruit more fighters and members.

The failure of the U.S. military to achieve its core mandate on counter-terrorism terror could be a result of faulty strategies implemented which motivated some people in affected areas to join terror groups and made terrorism more feasible. This is evident in Iraq where myriads of American-backed military interventions were unable to stabilize and unite the country which was united and peaceful under the leadership of Saddam. The American invasion aggravated longstanding creeds of difference between Sunni and Shiite Muslims which under Saddam were

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 116.

checked and feud controlled. Similarly, introducing a democratic system of government in countries that hitherto were used to monarchical and dictatorial regimes and leadership like Iraq and Afghanistan, would be extremely difficult. This is because Islam is against most of the features of democracy such as periodic elections, tenure for leaders, and freedom of religion and association. Therefore, Islamic fundamentalists saw the U.S. campaign for the introduction of democracy in the Arabian Peninsula as anti-Islamic. In this sense, the military campaign ended up creating religious hardliners and fundamentalists rather than cleansing the terrorists in the region. This is possible in a country with weak state institutions to fight religious fundamentalism and where the security agencies are unproductive. Corroborating this assertion, a study revealed that the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan failed to democratize the country which was one of the major objectives of the operation¹⁸. This showed that the democratization of the country was part of the objective of the military operation. Therefore, the inability to institutionalize democracy also breeds and fertilizes terrorists in the region. Similarly, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda have strong membership in rural areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Garb systematically evaluated the outcomes of some selected special operations in the world¹⁹. These operations include the deployment of the European Union Police Advisory Team (EUPAT) to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the European Union Integrated Rule of Law Mission in Iraq (EUJUST LEX-IRAQ); the European Union Force (EUFOR) Democratic Republic of the Congo or Operation ARTEMIS in 2003 during the Ituri conflict, the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) with the aim of peacekeeping related to the Darfur conflict; the NATO Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean; the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Additionally, the researcher assessed the success of some United Nations operations/missions such as peacebuilding mission UNMIT in East Timor (2006-2012); observer mission UNOGIL in Lebanon (June-December 1958); monitoring mission UNMOGIP in India and Pakistan (established in 1949); UN military observer mission UNOMSIL (1998-1999) and UNAMSIL (1999-2006) in Sierra Leone; observer mission UNAVEM I in Angola (1989-1991); support mission UN SMIH in Haiti (1993-1996); implementation mission ONUCA in Central America (1989-1992); and

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 120.

¹⁹ M. Garb, *Evaluating the Success of Peace Operations*, "Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies" 2014, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 44-63.

UN Transitional Assistance Group UNTAG in Namibia (1989-1990)²⁰. The study found out that these peacekeeping or military missions were well implemented and succeeded in achieving the aim of their operations. Specifically, missions spearheaded by the EU were evaluated as the most successful peace missions in the world. However, the UN and NATO peace operations were evaluated and assessed as the less successful missions. The EU-supported military operations had pragmatic objectives which they were able to achieve within the specified time frame. However, the UN military missions were unsuccessful due to a lack of commitment to the contribution of forces and paucity of funds.

Similarly, in Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom, as well as Operations Iraqi Freedom have been relatively ill-defined campaigns with unrealistic strategic objectives. The assessment revealed that operational command located at the regional headquarters in Afghanistan required subordinate units with at least 400 soldiers for land surveillance and patrol²¹. However, the military operational base in the Afghan capital, Kabul, deployed 2,000 officers to the battlefield but failed to realize half of the targets in 2011 to end the activities of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in the country²². Similarly, Connable and Downes-Martin maintained that the lack of defined and clear objectives at the onset of the operations specifically for a strategy for non-conventional wars was one of the factors which accounted for an unsuccessful military campaign in Afghanistan. However, the military operation was unsuccessful because it over-relied on quantitative data alone for strategic planning and assessment of the war on insurgents. A similar failure misled the U.S. military in Vietnam because the results of the campaign assessment were inaccurate. This affected strategic decision-making and support during the war.

The United States of America coalition in Afghanistan launched Operation Enduring Force in October 2001 to support the then interim government in Kabul after the overthrow of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda to support the fragile peace in the country. M. Gaul, and J. Eric adopted a

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 56.

²¹ B. Connable, *Embracing the Fog of War: Assessment and Metrics in Counterinsurgency*, Santa Monica 2012; S. Downes-Martin, *Operations Assessment in Afghanistan is Broken: What is to be done?*, "Naval War College Review" 2011, Vol. 64, No. 4, pp. 103-125.

²² B. Connable, *op. cit.*; S. Downes-Martin, *op. cit.*

different statistical tool to evaluate military operations in Afghanistan²³. They used an inferential statistical tool (time series) with regression analysis from 1st January 2010 to 31st October 2012 to monitor the performance of the troops. Data were elicited from the base of ISAF (International Security Assistance Force's) Headquarters in Kabul. The study established that the mission was unable to achieve its codename objective, which was to end the activities of Al-Qaeda, Taliban, and hostilities of other clans against the coalition forces. The work further attributed the failure to the inability to raise funds to establish an operational database. The special operation lacked funds to acquire data that could be used for quality control and assessment as well as installed analytic software. In Somalia, for example, contradictory and uncoordinated strategy and policy resulted in poor operational planning and execution, reconstruction, and analysis.

Beech stated that the inability of the UN special operations to record success in Somalia was because the United Nations Security Council resolutions were not an acceptable replacement for the ousted Somali government²⁴. The faction or clans' leaders refused to support the decision of Operation Gothic Serpent to deploy American troops in their country because of political and ethnic interests. This made it extremely difficult for the deployed troops to achieve their objectives of stabilizing the country since the fall of the central government in 1993. The effect was the abysmal performance of the foreign military operations and Somalia, a classic example of a failed state. The above studies reviewed identified different military operations with their codenames. The outcomes of the military operations were not commensurate with the operational codename in Somalia as they failed to restore peace and stability in the country. The assessments showed that the deployed forces underestimated the military capability and strength of the clans' warlords; this was apparent in the inability of Operation Gothic Serpent to arrest Mohamed Farrah Aidid who declared himself the Somali President and encouraged civilians to take up weapons against the foreign army.

The studies reviewed and discussed above reveal how different special military operations were launched and executed with different

²³ M. Gaul, J. Eric, *Time Series Analysis in a Theatre Strategic Headquarter*, [in:] A. Williams, J. Bexfield, F. F. Farinaand, J. de Nijs. (eds.), *Innovation in Operations Assessment. Recent Developments in Measuring Results in Conflict Environments*, Norfolk 2015, p. 86.

²⁴ M. F. Beech, *Mission Creep: A Case Study of US Involvement in Somalia*, Fort Leavenworth 1996.

codenames. The methods adopted and their performances within the time frame for the operation have shown that most of the special military operations were not executed or carried out in line with their codenames due to the wrong methodology and techniques used. Said studies found a lack of an elaborated operational guide for the military personnel during field operations, lack of funds, and above all faulty operational contingency plan in case of an unforeseen circumstance. Similarly, some special operations failed to take into consideration the views or perceptions of the people who have a vital role to play in assisting the force with intelligence tip-off regarding the operation in the places concerned. Generally, the major issue in the special operations reviewed was theoretical (policy framework) and the techniques of operations which led to the inability to achieve what the codenames connote.

In Algeria, as part of a response to an insurgency by the National Liberation Front (FLN: Front de Libération Nationale), on November 1st, 1954, the French military launched Grid Operation (quadrille). This special military operation aimed to eliminate members of the FLN in the Aurès and Kabylie regions of the country. The military deployed 300,000 soldiers, heavy weapons, particularly artillery, and occasionally aircraft were used for bombardment. Despite the military power of the French power, the operation was not able to eliminate the FLN insurgents who hid in the mountains²⁵. This shows that the deployment of enough troops and military hardware is not enough to achieve the aim of the special military operation. There is the need for the military personnel deployed to the war front to understand the geographical terrain of the areas to enable them to know the hideouts of the opponents and discover them. This is similar to the war against Boko Haram insurgents in Northeastern States of Borno and Yobe, which are mostly desert areas and most of the military personnel deployed lacked knowledge of the areas and found it very difficult to adapt to the terrain. This has enabled the Boko Haram insurgents to survive a series of special military operations since 2009.

Operation Mistral in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was a United Nations-mandated deployment. The South African National Defense Force (SANDF) contributed immensely to the operation, which was created to protect unarmed civilians in the conflicts. A composite helicopter unit was established, five Oryx helicopters and three Rooivalk

²⁵ M. S. Alexander, J. F. V. Keiger, *France and the Algerian War: Strategy, Operations, and Diplomacy*, [in:] M. S. Alexander, J. F. V. Keiger (eds.), *France and the Algerian War, 1954-62: Strategy, Operations, and Diplomacy*, London 2002, p. 15.

attack helicopters were deployed to restore stability in the country. Soldiers from Tanzania, Malawi, and South Africa performed beyond expectations and the operation was able to restore peace and stability in the eastern DRC²⁶. The findings of Mlambo are relevant to this study; however, the special military operations in Nigeria did not mobilize forces from a regional bloc or organization. Nonetheless, Mlambo indicates that the deployment of both military hardware and software is integral in achieving the aims of military operations.

Operation Vimbezela was launched in the Central African Republic (CAR) to restore peace in the country. South Africa provided major support for the success of the operation in 2013. The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) agreed to assist also in the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) of the rebels and victims of the violence²⁷. South Africa alone deployed over 200 soldiers in Bangui and 2013, Elite Units 7 and 8 of the South African Medical Battalion were deployed to CAR. However, Operation Vimbezela was not able to restore peace in CAR because the rebels possessed more ammunition and foot power than the deployed soldiers; from March 22nd to March 24th, at least 15 soldiers were killed by the rebels²⁸. Like Operation Mistral in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Operation Vimbezela had armed forces drawn from a subregional organization The South African National Defence Force (SANDF). Unlike Operation Mistral, Operation Vimbezela due to lack of funding was not able to procure military hardware and software for the operation. This means that the deployment of military personnel without the procurement of the required operational equipment hindered Operation Vimbezela to achieve its goals in line with the codename.

Operation Sophia, headquartered in Rome, is a European Union-wide naval military operation to combat people smuggling from North Africa to Europe and prevent loss of life in the Mediterranean. Launched in June 2015, the operation reduced human trafficking, because of the training of Libyan Coastguards and Navy provided by the European Union, and implemented the United Nations arms embargo on the high

²⁶ E. Mlambo, *International Peacekeeping Operations: SANDF and DIRCO*, Briefing, 02.03.2018 Parliamentary Monitoring Group, <<https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/25896/>> (25.11.2020).

²⁷ A. Seeth, *Battle Colours Presented to Units in Honour of Battle of Bangui*, <<https://city-press.news24.com/News/battle-colours-presented-to-units-in-honour-of-battle-of-bangui>>, (14.11.2020).

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

seas off the Libyan coast in 2016. It has also increased the arrest of smugglers on the Libyan coast. However, the operation in an attempt to arrest traffickers and smugglers put migrants and asylum seekers at higher risk because those who were arrested are detained at Italian ports instead of being moved to Europe²⁹.

In Mozambique, Operation Copper was launched in January 2011 after a Mozambican fishing vessel was hijacked by Somali water pirates in 2010³⁰. The aim was to enhance the performance of the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces (FADM) in countering piracy in the Mozambique Channel. Similarly, the mandate of the operation was extended to include actions to target drug, arms, and human trafficking, as well as illegal fishing. To achieve the mandates, two South African Navy vessels were deployed in the northern Mozambique Channel³¹. This indicated that some military operations are launched to strengthen existing armed forces operations in a violent area. However, unlike most cases in Nigeria, Operation Copper focused mainly on waterways operation against piracy. Special military operations in Nigeria comprised both waterways operation against oil bunkering on the sea in the Niger Delta region and land operations in other parts of the country. However, the success or otherwise of Operation Copper has not been documented but it has restored some level of sanity in the country's waterways.

In the same vein, Operation Cordite in Sudan was established in July 2004 to implement peacekeeping agreements in the country. Many of the troops were mobilized by South African National Defence Force staff officers and observers to the Darfur region of western Sudan. The operation was designed to support the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS)³². Operation Cordite, an African Union (AU) peacekeeping force, operated primarily to perform peacekeeping operations related to the conflict in Darfur. The operation contributed to a hit-free referendum for the separation of Sudan: Sudan and South-Sudan. The forces of

²⁹ European Commission, *EU Operations in the Mediterranean Sea*, <https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/securing-EU-borders/factsheets/docs/20161006/eu_operations_in_the_mediterranean_sea_en.pdf> (10.10.2020).

³⁰ *Mozambique: SA Navy Completes Patrols in the Mozambique Channel*, <<https://allafrica.com/stories/201808100620.html>> (8.11.2020).

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² *War in Darfur-Operation Cordite*, <<https://samihistory.com/2016/07/27/war-in-darfur-operation-cordite>> (10.12.2020).

Operation Cordite were sent to Juba, the capital of South Sudan, to protect the country after its independence from Sudan in July 2011³³.

Another factor that contributed to the failure of most of the special military operations in Nigeria and other developing countries is corruption and mismanagement of funds earmarked for the procurement of weapons and benefits for the personnel deployed to fight the criminals, terrorists, and armed bandits. Ladan-Baki stated that the level of destruction caused by Islamic insurgents and other criminal groups in Nigeria has compelled the Government to procure weapons³⁴. However, the funds meant for the procurement of the weapons were siphoned by corrupt top military and Government officials. The resultant effects of the corruption and misappropriation of funds have aggravated the security challenge and security personnel deployed to the battlefield have been demoralized due to the lack of sophisticated weapons and fringe benefits. Examining the effects of corruption among the military and funds earmarked for weapons' procurement, Goh and Muravska observed that corruption in the military is among the challenges that contribute to the failure of military operations in different parts of the world³⁵. Corruption leads to sabotage among the military personnel and damages the reputation of the military in the eyes of the public which they established to defend and protect. Goh and Muravska concluded that when the military is deeply into corrupt practices, it erodes public respect and support, as well as the integrity of the military as a system.

Furthermore, the International Crisis Group provided a holistic assessment and analysis of Nigerian military performance in the fight against insurgency in the Northeast part of Nigeria and criminals in other parts of Nigeria³⁶. The findings revealed that Nigeria's security agencies are in turmoil which was hitherto one of the best in Sub-Saharan Africa. Specifically, Nigerian Army has performed exceptionally in different peacekeeping missions in different parts of the world but at home, they are struggling at the hands of the Islamic insurgents, armed bandits,

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ I. S. Ladan-Baki, *Arms Procurement Mirage, Corruption, and Insurgency in Nigeria*, "International Journal of Politics and Good Governance" 2016, Volume VII, No. 7.3 Quarter III, pp. 1-7.

³⁵ K. Goh, J. Muravska, *Military-owned businesses: Corruption & Risk Reform. An initial review, with emphasis on exploitation of natural resource assets*, London 2012, pp. 1-28.

³⁶ International Crisis Group (ICG), *Nigeria: The Challenge of Military*, "Reform. Africa Report" 2016, Vol. 237, pp. 1-33.

kidnappers, and cattle rustlers. Court cases against former military officers who superintended different military formations in the most troubling years of security challenge is an indication of mismanagement of resources and corruption in the military. There was evidence of some fraudulent practices within the military establishment such as payroll fraud where officers diverted money meant for their subordinates and other activities to their pockets. The study concluded that the majority of the top military personnel are more interested in their vested interests than their serving the interest of the country this is among the reasons why the Nigerian military is marred by logistic deficit and lack of maintenance of existing weapons. This correlates with the submission of former National Security Advisor to former President Goodluck Jonathan, General Andrew Azazi Rtd. who averred that Nigeria's military lacked sufficient weapons to tackle the Boko Haram insurgency and other security problems in the country³⁷.

Ouédraogo assesses the military professionalism in Africa and the factors that led to their inability to restore peace in the continent found that weak operational capacity within many African militaries renders them unable to play this role, calling into question their very relevance³⁸. The study established that among the multitude of reasons that could explain this inefficacy, the following issues stand out: gaps in the chain of command leading to indiscipline, inadequate oversight of procurement practices, weak resource management diminishing operational capacity, poor morale, and a misaligned or obsolete mission. The resulting weak oversight of procurement contracts by defense ministries enables widespread corruption and creates a governance problem. For example, in an assessment of 19 African defense sectors, Transparency International found 90 percent scored in the bottom two quintiles for transparency in the procurement cycle. Similarly, the researcher concluded that corruption at the top of the chain of command undermines the morale of the troops, making them increasingly prone to participating in or condoning corrupt practices themselves. In countries where pay is paltry and irregular, soldiers are tempted to extort money or in-kind payments from the local population or turn to profit-oriented activities to survive.

³⁷ S. E. Udounwa, *Boko Haram: Developing New Strategies to Combat Terrorism in Nigeria*, Carlisle 2013, pp. 1-38.

³⁸ E. Ouédraogo, *Advancing Military Professionalism in Africa*, "Africa Center for Strategic Studies. Research Paper" 2014, No. 6, pp. 21-23.

Usman examined the impact of corruption in the fight against Boko Haram insurgents in Northeast Nigeria. The study found that the sum of 2.1 Billion U.S. Dollars budgeted by the Federal Government of Nigeria to procure weapons was diverted was shared by government officials, top military officers, and contractors. This left the security personnel deployed to the battlefield without the required weapons to dislodge the insurgents and tackle other internal security threats. Therefore, it has become apparent that corruption and mismanagement of funds can undermine the capacity of military or security personnel to achieve their operational tasks³⁹.

The above literature reviewed showed how different authors assessed special military operations in some parts of the world; most of these studies concluded that some of the special military operations have not yielded the desired results. However, this study conducted in Nigeria has approached the problem from a different perspective, that is, the views of both Military personnel and some civilians were sought to corroborate the opinion of each other.

Theoretical Framework: The Effect Perspective (TEP)

There are several theories and models for the evaluation of military operations and performances; these include Engagement Space Assessment, Combat Assessment, and the Effect Perspective. The Effect Perspective (TEP) is adopted for this study because it has more explanatory power to evaluate the performance of military operations in the area studied than the other perspectives. TEP focuses on the outcomes and effects of a special operation on a zone, people, or duration. It addresses questions such as whether the stated objectives or goals of a military campaign have been achieved. It equally assesses the unplanned outcomes of the military operations generated. Similarly, TEP is regarded as a goal-free evaluation because it includes MOE (Measures of Effectiveness) and BDA (Battle Damage Assessment) approaches, because of this, it is held that TEP is designed to assess the consequences of military operations⁴⁰. In this paper, TEP is used to assess the security situation before and after the launch of special military operations in the

³⁹ U. D. Usman, *Impact of Corruption on Insurgency in the North-Eastern Region of Nigeria*, "IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)" 2017, Volume 19, Issue 1. Ver. I, pp. 19-25.

⁴⁰ J. Frelin, *Purposeful Assessment: Assessing the Effects of Military Operations*, Stockholm 2009, p. 21.

violence-prone areas in Nigeria. It has enabled the evaluation of the operational strategies adopted, codenames used, and the results of the operations. Various special military operations were evaluated based on the situation before and after the launch of the operations. The time frame for the operation stated at the launch of the operation was taken into consideration. The theory has not enjoyed wide currency in military studies. However, it is popular among academics and researchers because it focuses on ex-post events.

Methodology

This paper adopts a qualitative design where data were collected from primary and secondary sources. In-depth interviews (IDI) were conducted with some of the community leaders of the states/regions where the military special exercises took place, government officials working with the Defense ministry, and security personnel deployed to the areas in which the operations were launched. The interviews were conducted in English with literate participants while for the illiterate participants, they were conducted in local languages which the interviewees speak fluently (Hausa, Pidgin English). Literature ranging from relevant textbooks, scholarly journal articles, newspapers and news magazines, and relevant materials on the Internet was consulted. This research aimed to gather robust data, validate findings and conclusions about the evaluation of special military operations and their outcomes. The purposive sampling method was used to select civilian participants based on their age and knowledge of the phenomenon investigated in the selected areas; they are residents of the areas where the operations were launched, specifically the community leaders and other inhabitants of the areas. Similarly, the snowballing technique was used to get interviewees military personnel and participants who work with the Ministry of Defense (Defense Intelligence Agency). A total of twenty participants were interviewed, Ministry of Defense (Defense Intelligence Agency, military, police officers, and community members). Regarding the selection of special military operations, the researchers searched the military archives for the chronicles of the special military operation launched as part of measures for internal security management. Therefore, the researchers purposively selected all special military operations launched in Nigeria from the independence which Nigeria got from Britain in 1960. This paper used a thematic method of data analysis to analyze the recorded and transcribed interviews with the selected

participants. The data generated were coded based on the recurring themes in the participants' responses, analyzed and conclusions were drawn based on the analysis.

Data Analysis: Evaluation of Codenames and Performance Outcomes

Armed violence and social conflicts are common social issues in Africa generally and Nigeria in particular. Conflicts of different causal factors are synonymous with countries like Angola before 2002, Central African Republic, Sudan, and South Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, the difference from one country to another is the management of these conflicts in the affected countries. The conventional response to these conflicts is the formation of a special military operation to handle the situation. In Nigeria, 1999 marked the beginning of the third phase of beleaguered democratic government with myriads of conflicts. These conflicts and violence were zoomed out of proportion and defined along ethnic and religious divides. Additionally, the upspring of militants in the oil-producing Niger-Delta and kidnapping of foreign nationals working with the oil companies and wealthy businessmen, communal clashes between adherents of Islam and Christians, and violence between pastoralists-farmers in Northcentral and Jihadist's' rebellion in the Northeast have combined to produce grave security challenge in Nigeria.

The conflicts have shifted from using small weapons to the application of assorted lethal weapons by the different parties to the conflicts. The intensity and the recalcitrant attitude of the combatants and sponsors are beyond the Police's capacity to handle. The glaring inability of the Nigeria Police Force to handle the internal security challenges has compelled the Federal Government of Nigeria to deploy the military for the internal security operation. These operations come with different names and objectives. However, most of the special military operations have not delivered the expected results in line with the operational codenames. It has been observed that giving a special military operation a codename is an old practice of security operation in Nigeria dating back to 1966 after the first military overthrow of democratic government. The coup leaders launched Operation Damisa, operation Giwa (Elephant), Operation Zaki (Lion), and Operation Kura (Leopard) to sanitize the military after the coup. These operations were not aimed at restoring peace in a conflict-affected area or country but to identify some targeted

officers and soldiers in the military who were not in support of the coup plotters. Since then, the use of catchy operational codename has become prevalent whenever the military was deployed to manage political, ethnic, and communal armed violence. The apparent failure of the Police and other security operatives to manage these internal security challenges paved the way for drafting the military outside their customary responsibility of defending the country against external aggression. Participants during IDI sessions observed that Operation Damisa was intended to be aggressive like Lion and Tiger as well as strong like Elephant but the outcome of the operation had not justified its codename. On the contrary, it polarized the military and civilians along ethnic and regional divides which led to a counter-coup in August 1966.

Operation ‘Restore Order’

The military campaign to end the activities of Boko Haram insurgents led to the launching of a plethora of special military operations, each with different operational codenames. In June 2011, to halt the rampaging attacks of Boko Haram, JTF Operation Restore Order was launched by the military Chief of Defense staff to oversee the security situation in the States where activities of the insurgents were rampant. The Operation drew personnel from all the security agencies in the country: Nigerian Army, Air Force, Navy, Nigeria Police Force, and paramilitary agencies like Nigerian Customs Service and Immigration Service were also part of the operation. Despite the mandate of the operation which was to decimate the insurgents and render them incapable of unleashing havoc and annexing Nigerian territories, the insurgents became more powerful and continued to carry out their operations in the areas. A military officer during IDI stated that the operation had failed to restore peace in the States affected by Boko Haram because the Nigerian military was not used with the guerilla warfare style adopted by the insurgents. The military lacked training on how to detect locally manufactured improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers among the residents. Nonetheless, the operation confined the activity of the insurgents to only three states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe. However, one of the operational flaws of Operation Restore Order was the absence of a cordial relationship with the residents of the areas who would have assisted the security to identify the members of the Islamist insurgent group among the populace.

Operation ‘Lafiya Dole’ (Compulsory Peace)

The inability of the Operation Restore Order to restore peace and order in Northeastern Nigeria led to the introduction of Operation Lafiya Dole. It was launched as a strategy to clear the Boko Haram fighters carrying out their activities along the international frontiers of Nigeria, Cameroon, and the Niger Republic. It was launched after the annexed 14 Local Government Areas in the States of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe were reclaimed by a joint military operation to ensure the areas were safe and free from insurgents. To sustain these achievements, Operation Crackdown, Operation Gama Aiki, Operation Deep Punch, and Operation Safe Corridor were also set up to consolidate on the achievements of Operation Lafiya Dole. The target was to clear the members of the Boko Haram hiding in riverine areas of Lake Chad, Cameroonian highlands, and the desert border with the Niger Republic. Furthermore, these operations served as a cordon off to block the terrorists running away from Operation Lafiya Dole, Operation Crackdown, and Operation Deep Punch. However, despite the presence of different special military operations, Boko Haram has continued to attack security facilities and civilians at the reclaimed Local Government Areas in Borno, Adamawa, and the Yobe States.

A participant who worked with Defense Intelligence Agency in Adamawa State stated during the IDI session that series of special operations in the Northeast are interlinked with each other to stop the insurgents from outsmarting the military and other security agents deployed. To substantiate the assertions of the military personnel, during interviews with the residents of the affected areas stated that there were series of attacks on military formations in the Northeast in 2019 launched by the Boko Haram insurgents. During the attacks, the insurgents targeted military arsenals where it was ransacked, several soldiers and officers were killed. According to the interviewees, the successful attacks on the military by the insurgents was an apparent failure of the operational strategies and tactics of the military stationed in the areas. Similarly, in Northern Borno and parts of Eastern Yobe, an interviewee who worked with the Aid Agency explained that the reason for the inability of the Nigerian troops to end the insurgency was due to the lack of efficient warfare infrastructure and inadequate welfare package for the troops deployed to the battlefields. He further narrated that the weapons of the insurgents were far better than those of the military and that they had numerical superiority over government troops. Additionally, the

majority of the participants were undivided on the view that the Nigerian military lacked the experience of guerilla fighting tactics adopted by Boko Haram. Deducing from the above discourse, several factors have contributed to the failure of special military operations to achieve their goals in line with the operational codename. This was corroborated by the nagging complaints from soldiers drafted to the war front. They complained about the lack of modern sophisticated weapons that can match or surpass the weapons possessed by the insurgents which were evident in several attacks on the military base. In several episodes of the attacks on security formations, the military failed to defend themselves against the rampaging insurgents.

Operation ‘Safe Haven’ (OPSH)

The ethnic, political, and occupational armed conflicts in Plateau State reached a boiling point with the 2001 mass killings and wanton destruction of properties; this consequently made the Federal Government of Nigeria launch a special military operation tagged Operation Safe Haven. The military operation was established in 2010, and it covered the areas affected by the armed violence in northern parts of Plateau State. The military operation was however extended to Kaduna State, which equally witnessed similar communal violence, especially in southern Kaduna, where cases of recurring clashes between the Muslims and the Christians, and between farmers and herdsmen became rampant. The OPSH divided Plateau State into nine zones for convenient coordination of the exercise, prompt response to distress calls, and intelligence gathering of information. The OPSH successfully restored peace in Jos metropolis where there has not been any major outbreak of violence since 2012. The exercise, however, failed to provide a haven beyond the metropolis; thus, unnecessary killings have continued sporadically in the rural areas of the State. Personnel operating at other zones that comprise many rural areas grossly lack the geographical knowledge of the terrain (mostly mountainous and valleys) and the necessary experience to address communal violence, which was mostly carried out at night. The armed forces deployed were on different occasions caught unaware by the attackers who used footpaths in the bush to unleash mayhem on the major highways where the military personnel had their checking points.

The expansion of the operation to Kaduna has by no means provided respite to the communities that have consistently witnessed armed

violence between the farmers and the pastoralists. The OPSH carried out ground surveillance in the areas identified as the hotspots, but the lack of motorable roads has prevented the military vehicles from accessing the remote villages which overtime have become killing fields. This resulted from the strict reliance of OPSH on ground surveillance, patrol as well as a customary technique of stop and search of commuters plying major highways. An IDI with a military officer in the 3rd Armoured Division, Jos, stated that OPSH was unable to provide the needed protection in the rural areas whenever there was an attack because the areas are mountainous which makes it very difficult for military vehicles to enter the rocky landscape and respond rapidly. Similarly, there was no aerial surveillance to cover areas that could not be accessed by vehicles. It could be deduced that the restoration of relative peace in Jos Metropolis and some Local Government Areas covered by the operation showed that armed violence had reduced significantly because of the presence of the military in the city. Whereas in the areas where there was no presence of the OPSH due to insufficient personnel, people were left at the mercy of the marauding killers.

The operation which aimed to provide haven has failed in its major purpose of protecting the citizens that it was meant for. In addition to this, the deployed armed military was severely criticized for being lackadaisical in their responses to reports of attacks. The personnel of OPSH was only found in the urban centers, that is, the Local Government Headquarter and mounted checkpoints on highways leading to Jos, the state capital, while the villages were left unprotected. These are some of the reasons why the villages became a vulnerable and soft target for attacks and why killers flee after unleashing terror without arrest. Therefore, reliance on only land operation strategy without aerial surveillance and concentration of the operation on urban areas are some of the reasons why OPSH has existed in Plateau State since 2010.

Operation ‘Sharan Daji’ (OSD, Sweep the Forest) and ‘Harbin Kunama’ (Scorpion Sting)

The OSD was set up to end killings by armed bandits, kidnappers, and cattle rustlers in the Northwestern zone of Nigeria comprising states like Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto, and Kebbi. The criminals operating in the aforementioned states had earlier rendered the road which links Kaduna state with Niger State and Katsina to the Zamfara States unsafe. They also displaced several communities in Zamfara,

Katsina, and the Sokoto States. The heightened insecurity compelled the government to launch another military operation to strengthen the existing operation within the zone to tackle the activities of the criminals. In this regard, the Chief of Army Staff launched Operation Sharan Daji as a replacement for Operation Harbin Kunama which was launched in 2016 but was unable to decisively bring to an end the activities of the armed bandits, kidnappers, and cattle rustlers in the region. The cardinal objective of OSD is to clear the bandits from their hideouts in the Kamaku forest, which stretches from Kaduna State to Katsina and Zamfara States. The operation consists of aerial surveillance and ground patrol of the affected areas. The operational base of the personnel of the Nigerian Air Force, stationed at the Katsina Airport, is comprised of Katsina, Zamfara, and some parts of the Kaduna States, which are meant to provide assistance to the ground forces and ensure a rapid response when the need arises. Despite the deployment of a military battalion in the areas, the armed bandits and kidnappers have intensified their operations without any sign of reduction. Villages were burnt, some residents were killed and livestock was stolen. This paper argues that the forces deployed were not sufficient to cover the vast areas. Additionally, the Nigerian military is not familiar with combating crimes like kidnapping and cattle rustling. OSD and Harbin Kunama failed to achieve the aim of their codenames which was to sweep the kidnappers from the forests due to poor interagency collaboration between the ground forces and aerial surveillance patrol team. Ground troops were ambushed on several occasions in Zamfara State because of attempts to raid kidnappers' den without receiving emergency reinforcement or assistance from the Airforce operating from Katsina Airport.

Operation 'Egwu Eke I and II (Python Dance)

The operation was launched in Southeastern Nigeria to check criminal activities in five states: Enugu, Ebonyi, Anambra, Imo, and Abia. Operation Egwu Eke was launched in 2017 to consolidate the existing operation (Egwu Eke I) and to disband the secessionist movement which demands a sovereign country out of Nigeria called Biafra by the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB). The members of the secessionist movement vandalized properties belonging to people from Northern Nigeria who are residents within the South Eastern region of the country. This prompted the Nigerian government to take decisive military action because it may lead to civil war or the break up of the country.

During the exercise, the military mounted checkpoints on major routes and thoroughfares in the above five states of the region. The operation was meant to develop measures to combat kidnapping, armed robbery, and other criminal acts like gun-running, human trafficking, and illicit pharmaceuticals and psychotropic substances. During the operations, the army organized military drills, training and raided the hideouts of suspected criminals. Besides, cordon and search operations were carried out by the special operation team, which successfully stopped the threats to the lives and properties of the residents in the region. In the same vein, the military exercise was able to reduce the influence of IPOB under the leadership of their fugitive leader Nnamdi Kanu. Despite the above achievements, crimes such as the kidnapping of wealthy businessmen, government officials, and politicians have continued unhindered within the region. Given this, it is realized that the operations left more to be desired. This is because Python has neither danced nor swallowed the challenges that it was formed to address.

This study encountered some problems during the fieldwork which was the refusal of the military personnel to divulge information easily regarding the operational frameworks, tactics, and methods. The researchers elicited information through the use of the snowballing technique from personnel working with the Ministry of Defense (Defense Intelligence Agency) in Nigeria and the Nigerian Army. Interviews were conducted but the interviewees refused to allow their voice to be recorded, so they were conducted without audio recording. This helped the researchers to obtain information and assessment of various special military operations in Nigeria from the security personnel. This was achieved with the assistance of an acquaintance who works with the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) under the Ministry of Defense and another Lieutenant Colonel working with the intelligence unit at the border between Nigeria and the Niger Republic in Sokoto and Kebbi States. Virtually all the participants responded to the questions in the IDI and KII Guides including probing questions that came up in the course of the interview. The participants were able to respond to all the questions because they were purposively selected with a help of a guide who knew the participants well.

It has been found that apart from operational and systemic impediments that led to the inability or failure of the majority of the special military operations could be attributed to the failure of the government and corruption within the military and military personnel. At the peak of Boko Haram insurgency in 2014, the then President of

Nigeria was accused of shielding the sponsor of insurgents who were in the Government for political reasons⁴¹. Similarly, Mr. Stephen Davis, an investigative Journalist revealed what is beneath the surface revolving around the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast. It was reported that some highly-placed politicians were the brain behind the activities of the insurgents. The report revealed that \$2 billion (£1.3bn) meant for the procurement of weapons was siphoned by the then National Security (NSA) during the Presidency of Goodluck Jonathan⁴². Furthermore, Dr. Davis found that the Central Bank of Nigeria was among the top financier of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria⁴³. In the same vein, a member of parliament from Borno State and a former Governor of Borno State were accused of harbouring Boko Haram insurgents in the Northeast.

Discussion of Major Findings

The present study revealed that the major expectation of the general public and security experts within the military circle is that special operations should produce results in line with their code-names and the specific objectives of the operation. The special operations identified in this study have introduced some effective military maneuvers to restore peace in the areas deployed in Nigeria but some of these measures have not produced a lasting peace which was the main reason for the launching of the special operations. This correlates with the mission of Operation Boleas in Lesotho by the combined South African and Botswanan forces which was to intervene militarily in Lesotho to prevent any further anarchy and to create a stable environment for the restoration of law and order. The forces were deployed to locate and identify, to destabilize opponents, to disarm and contain them, and to strike where applicable with the necessary force to eliminate the threats against the government of Lesotho⁴⁴.

⁴¹ *Soyinka attacks Jonathan over Boko Haram, says President shielding sect's sponsors for politics*, <<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/168109-soyinka-attacks-jonathan-over-boko-haram-says-president-shielding-sects-sponsors-for-politics.html>> (12.11.2020).

⁴² *Boko Haram Sponsors: Revisiting the Mr. Stephen Davis' Report*, <<https://elombah.com/boko-haram-sponsors-revisiting-the-mr-stephen-davis-report/>> (20.11.2020).

⁴³ *Exposing the CBN Boko Haram 'sponsor'*, <<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/09/exposing-cbn-boko-haram-sponsor/>> (16.12.2020).

⁴⁴ T. Neethling, *Military Intervention in Lesotho: Perspectives on Operation Boleas and Beyond*, "Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution 2006", Vol. 2, p. 2.

The findings of this study reveal that special military operations in Nigeria such as Operation Lafiya Dole in the Northeast and Operation Sharan Daji in the Northwest are yet to address insecurity in the areas deployed. This indicates a mismatch between what the codenames intended to achieve and the performance of the military deployed due to the lack of accurate assessment and planning before the deployment of forces. This is in line with the evaluation of Operation Boleas conducted by Neethling⁴⁵, which found that the decision to deploy troops to Lesotho by the South African government was hurriedly taken. This has left the forces deployed without a proper contingency plan, especially in light of vagueness and uncertainty concerning the ambit of South Africa's foreign policy framework for peace enforcement. They were not fully combat-ready, as time was too short for proper planning, preparation, deployment drills, and rehearsals by the units involved. Besides, stock-level planning for operational reserves was not properly done, resulting in a strain on supplies of military hardware when the need arose.

The essence of a special operational codename is to achieve the set objectives, particularly through the display of diverse maneuvers that will enhance the achievement of the purpose within the shortest time possible. It was further realized that a plethora of special military operations has kept military personnel out of barracks for a long time, a situation that has significantly impacted both the military and the civilian population. The military personnel has gradually become acclimatized to the civilian population because of the presence of military personnel found on major thoroughfares in cities and villages that are confronted with security challenges.

It was further observed that some of the major reasons for the incoherence between the outcome of special military operations and code-names were that faulty operational methodology and operational logistics were employed. This was evident in the inability of the special operations to end the armed banditry, cattle rustling, and kidnapping in the country, hence the formation of new special operations. This implies that the outcome or performance of the special military operations assessed or evaluated in Nigeria has not met the expectations of their codenames. This correlates with the findings of Weber who argued that the failure of special operations in the Northeast lies in the army's lack of

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

interest in pursuing its mission⁴⁶. Chad has sent troops to Nigeria and Cameroon which is an indication that awareness of the urgent need for stabilization missions has risen in the region. Several thousand Chadian troops are active in Nigeria, more than 1,000 in the area of Baga and Lake Chad, 2,500 in Cameroon. Some Chadian special forces are U.S.-trained and experienced in fighting jihadist organizations in the Sahel. It is within the context of the above discourse, that the Effect Theory evaluates the pre-and post-insecurity situations in the areas in which the special military operations were launched. It is shown that some operations were able to restore fragile peace but they lasted beyond their time frame and complex security challenges evolved.

The study has further established that despite the myriads of special military operations in Nigeria with catchy codenames which the citizens expect an end to security challenges, on the contrary, the security challenges have worsened which necessitate the establishment of new special military operations in addition to the existing ones that failed to restore peace and order in different parts of Nigeria. The failure of the several special military operations could be attributed to both internal factors within the military, and external factors, the failure of the government to provide funds for the procurement of weapons, and payment of security personnel benefits.

Similarly, there were accusations and counter-accusations on the involvement of some external forces that contributed to the continuation of the Boko Haram activities and the failure of the majority of the special military operations in Nigeria to achieve their objectives in line with the operational codenames. The mixture of misappropriation of funds and corruption between the government officials and top military personnel; which means that continuation of the security challenges serves as a conduit for siphoning public money meant for the execution of the operation or management of internal security in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The conclusions are drawn from the analysis of the data elicited from the participants during interviews. The paper concludes that as of June 2019, more than ten special operations with varying labels were ongoing in different parts of Nigeria. So far, the outcomes, however, have

⁴⁶ A. Weber, *Beating Boko Haram. Military Action Alone Cannot Defeat the Islamist Group. Northeast Nigeria needs a Share of the South's Wealth*, "The Security Times", 28.02.2015, p. 2.

not matched the desired objectives of the operations, which ab-initio necessitated the code-names. This shows that giving a codename to a military special operation in Nigeria was the adoption of catchy phrases by the military to create a positive impression in the minds of the citizens that they are capable of addressing insecurity in the country. However, the lingering security challenges in the country revealed that the different operational codenames have not justified the rationale behind the codename as part of measures to restore peace in the affected areas in which they were launched. Despite the failures of the special operations to achieve their mandates, the military deployed to handle security challenges which the Police and other paramilitaries can handle in Nigeria. That is why the military is more active and visible in the internal security management in Nigeria more than the Police whose constitutional responsibility is to manage internal security except in a situation that is beyond their capacity. It has become a usual practice now in Nigeria that whenever there is an outbreak of violence which is above the capacity of the police, the military is deployed to handle it. These deployments are often accompanied by an operational codename on how to deal with the security challenge; yet, without positive results; the operational codenames were at variance with the performance of the military personnel deployed.

Prolonged operation beyond the time frame has led some people to accuse the military of fueling the crises to benefit from the allowances and money for the procurement of weapons' contract. Specifically, Operation Safe Haven (OPSH) operating in Plateau State has been accused of taking sides in the ethnic and religious conflicts in the State which exacerbated and prolonged the conflict, hence, the continuation of the existence of Operation Safe Haven in the areas. The apparent failure of some special operations has made some Nigerians lose confidence in the capability of the military to address the security challenge in the country. Additionally, operational codenames no longer create hope in the minds of the citizens who in the past had high expectations of positive outcomes whenever a special military operation with a codename is was launched.

Corruption among the security personnel who benefits from the money meant for the security management and politicians who have vested interests have contributed to the failure of most of the special military operations in Nigeria. Revelations from the trial of former heads of security agencies in Nigeria have revealed the extent of graft among the security personnel. The direct consequence of corruption in internal

security management is that security deployed to the battlefield are left with obsolete weapons and without adequate payment of salary and allowances were often overpowered by the insurgents who possessed superior or sophisticated weapons. Similarly, politicians who want to use security challenges to woo votes to win elections during the electioneering campaign hence support the criminals or fan inactive antagonism to incite unrest or violence.

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RELIGION AND DEMOGRAPHY: CAUSALITY OR CORRELATION?

Abstract:

The article is focused on finding out whether religion and demography is causality, correlation, or anything at all, since the last decades we can see enormous regional disparities considering demographic patterns in different parts of the world governed (to a certain extent) by different religions. In the first part is the article oriented towards the relation between religion and demography and what attitudes different religions hold towards matters of sexuality, births, and fertility stimulation as these aspects are essential for issues regarding demography. In the second part of the article, we apply the theoretical approach from the first part to the contemporary religious landscape and prognoses by using quantitative, comparative, and deductive methods.

Keywords:

demography, religion, fertility, Islam, religious landscape

Introduction

In today's world, we can see significantly different demographic patterns throughout the globe, and very often it is associated with religion. Religion is the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about values that shape human behaviour. Most predominantly the last decades there is a trend, that demographic curves of developed countries

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are starting to descend whereas demographic curves in developing countries are strikingly rising. There are apparent connections when it comes to the somewhat conservative way the religious teachings react to practices of birth control and the first impression could be that religion indeed affects demography by its dogmata, however, as we point out later in the article, it is not as simple as it might seem. The goal and purpose of this article in this matter are to find out to which extent is demography influenced by religion and to which extent is it backed by socioeconomic indicators.

Religion and its influence on demographic aspects

We can understand religion as a certain basis for a world-view and from a world-view, naturally, a set of values is derived. From this set of values are practically all opinions and views even further derived and to a certain extent, we could say, that even habits or rather behavioral patterns. In this manner, religion influences demographic processes which form society including aspects such as decisions on establishing marriage, birth rate, and again, demographic influences from the global religious landscape. In this regard the question is, whether between religion and ascending, or descending demographic curve is a correlation, a causality, or anything at all, or there are completely different factors at play, which have little to no connection to religion.

In our effort to find the nexus between religion and fertility for example is a problem, however, residing in the number of apparent associations which could be false. We could state, that Islam has a definite positive influence on a demographic curve because currently, Muslims are the fastest-growing religious group in the world², but the reason behind their high rate of fertility could stem from socioeconomic conditions, not religion.

The same approach was employed by Calvin Goldscheider who studied religious differences in the context of demographic behaviour and stated, that the attempts to explain the influence of religion laid usually on two principles, or rather approaches: the first he called ‘characteristic’ and there he talked about what we wrote previously: that on its basis the nexus between religion and fertility could be false, which could be found by looking into the variables such as education, income, or place of birth.

² M. Lipka, C. Hackett, *Why Muslims are the world's fastest growing religious group*, <<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/06/why-muslims-are-the-worlds-fastest-growing-religious-group/>> (20.12.2020).

These often show a putative role of religion, because should we start creating groups based on these variables, we often find out, that religious differences are starting to fade out in favor of socioeconomics. However, should the nexus between fertility and religious affiliation remain even after we counted in the socioeconomic backgrounds, in that case, Goldscheider speaks of the second principle, the so-called ‘particularized theology hypothesis’³. The basis of this theory is that the researched demographic behaviour, mostly higher birth rate of a certain religious group, could be accounted for by the teaching of said faith regarding the issues of births⁴. We could imagine it for example as a situation when the higher birth rate of Catholic Christians than atheists is explained by the position of the Catholic Church towards the usage of contraception.

McQuillan states, that it is in no way surprising, that discussions about the influence of religion on demographic behaviour start with a discussion about values. Religions emphasize moral codes, which direct human behaviour even more than any other societal institutions, and a plethora of religious traditions give special attention towards areas such as sexuality, position, and tasks of man, woman, and place of a family in society. Based upon the role which the specific idea represents it is, however, important to differentiate between two categories of values – between relatively specific norms or rules, which aspire to regulate behaviour, which is directly connected to certain determinants of fertility and then wider values and principles whose effect on fertility is indirect.

According to Goldscheider, the first category rests upon the premise of particularized theology hypothesis, in short: certain rules, which are created to directly influence certain determinants of fertility are mostly typical for Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam)⁵. Should we look upon the opinion of these religions on the use of contraception or abortion, then all three religions support some kind of restriction on the matter. Roman Catholic Church has a clear mind on this topic – on the official level it forbids all kinds of birth control⁶, while some other Christian denominations gradually moved towards a more relaxed view in the area of contraception, though still rejecting

³ C. Goldscheider, *Population, Modernization and Social Structure*, Boston 1971.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ J. Noonan, *Contraception: A History of Its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists*, Cambridge 1986.

abortions⁷. A similar situation is with Judaism, where only the orthodox groups continue with restrictions on the practice of sterilization or abortions⁸. When it comes to Islamic teachings, the absence of a clear religious hierarchy in this faith resulted in the situation, that there is no universally supported view on a lot of these issues. In general, we could say, that Islam stands rather in opposition to abortions and contraception as well as sterilization, an interesting aspect in this faith however is, that the opinions of Islamic leaders‘ and scholars‘ teachings and Muslim believers significantly differ. An analysis of religious texts and survey of religious leaders⁹ suggest, that even though there often is a general ‘official approval’ of certain forms of birth control, surveys in numerous Muslim populations has shown, that men and women often give religious reasons to why they do not practice birth control¹⁰.

The view of Abrahamic religions differs from the eastern traditions of Buddhism, or Hinduism. These faiths do not have built up formal hierarchical structures, which are typical for scripture-based religions and do not define clear norms of behavioral conduct, which would play the role of the law for believers. We could say, that the texts of these religions are rather of an advisory character, recommendation, or somewhat an inspiration for the believers, who are – at the end of the day – considered responsible for themselves. Although the lead thinkers of Hindu or Buddhistic traditions expressed certain unease in the context of reproduction, mostly abortions¹¹, it never led to explicit rules restricting these practices nor were they threatening with punishment.

We should not forget, however, that the influence of religion on demographic aspects or fertility is not to be seen only through the prism

⁷ H. L. Smith, *Contraception and natural law*, [in:] *The Anglican Moral Choice*, ed. P. Elmen, Wilton 1983, p. 181-200.

⁸ A. Kasher, *Jewish ethics: An orthodox view*, [in:] *World Religions and Global Ethics*, ed. S. C. Crawford, New York 1989.

⁹ C. Underwood, *Islamic precepts and family planning: The perceptions of Jordanian religious leaders and their constituents*, “International Family Planning Perspectives”, Vol. 26, Issue 3, 2000, pp. 110-117.

¹⁰ B. Caldwell, Barkat-e-Khuda, *The first generation to control family size: A microstudy of the causes of fertility decline in a rural area of Bangladesh*, “Studies in Family Planning” Vol. 31 (3)/2000, pp. 239-251; J. B. Casterline, Z. A. Sathar, M. ul Haque, *Obstacles to contraceptive use in Pakistan: A study in Punjab*, “Studies in Family Planning”, Vol. 32 (2)2001, pp. 95-100.

¹¹ S. C. Crawford, *Hindu ethics for modern life*, [in:] *World Religions and Global Ethics*, ed. S. C. Crawford, New York 1989; J. Simons, *Religions, population: Doctrines of*, [in:] *Encyclopedia of Population*, New York 2003.

of relation towards contraception or abortions. Religions developed even other ways, which have the potential to limit or stimulate the birth rate. One of these could be for example the rules on entry to sexual unions. Restrictions of the age of entry to union, number of spouses, entry to other unions after a divorce, or death of a spouse are frequent in numerous traditions, again mostly in those Abrahamic. As relevant for the issue of fertility are even the rules regulating sexual activity outside of officially recognized unions, but even the issues of sexuality inside of those officially recognized. Several religions developed rules dealing with the timing and frequency of sexual relations between spouses, for example, a lot of African religious traditions support long periods of postpartum abstinence¹². Even in the Christian traditions, we can sense theses ‘justifying’ sexual acts ultimately for the sole purpose of conception, although there is an especially interesting concept originating in the medieval Canonic law, so-called ‘marital/conjugal debt’, which speaks about the obligation of spouses to not decline partner sexual satisfaction. Hull considers this one of a few cases when the Catholic theology supports sexual relations and is surprisingly egalitarian since the concept applies equally to men as to women¹³.

Specific norms, which touch determinants of fertility are essential but do not conceive ideological elements of a religious influence on demography in its entirety. Goldscheider states, that it is important in these studies to look at the wider sociocultural references related to religious beliefs and their potential to influence fertility¹⁴. There are two types of potential influences mentioned in the literature. The first one consists of values, which speak about the issues of fertility directly without creating actual specific rules regarding the practice of fertility regulation. We can put as an example the case of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), which doesn’t have any direct rules regarding contraception, even though its philosophy is pronatalist, which should reflect Mormon theology¹⁵. They believe, that the plan of

¹² R. Schoenmaeckers, I. H. Shah, R. Lesthaeghe, O. Tambahe, *The child-spacing tradition and the postpartum taboo in tropical Africa: Anthropological evidence*, [in:] *Child-spacing in Tropical Africa: Traditions and Change*, ed. H. J. Page, R. Lesthaeghe, London 1981, pp. 25-71.

¹³ I. V., Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700-1815*, Ithaca 1996.

¹⁴ C. Goldscheider, *Population...*, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ T. B. Heaton, *How does religion influence fertility?: The case of Mormons*, “Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion”, Vol. 25, No. 2, 1986, pp. 248-258.

salvation could be achieved only when all worthy souls (which are not yet born) come to the world and Mormons have to help make it happen. That is, at the end of the day, supported even by the teachings of this church regarding the central role of the family in a particular religious community¹⁶. Marital status is suitable for everyone, even the church leaders and big families are a sign of loyalty towards the church's teachings. This aspect was underlined even by the practice of polygamy in the Church, which is not officially practiced nowadays any more as it was repealed by the Church itself in 1904¹⁷. This resulted in the fact, that Mormons typically achieved a higher birth rate than other religious groups in the same society¹⁸ even though rules forbidding contraception were absent. It was simply a perception of the believers. Some sources show, that we can see a similar stance in the case of Muslims. Predominantly in developing countries where Muslims are a minority, the emphasis on the importance of family and a positive image of big families supports higher fertility and leads men and women to the understanding that any practice of family limitation is not following their faith¹⁹.

A similar example could be seen even in some African or Asian religious groups, which are bound to a certain important religious obligation towards their ancestors. In a lot of traditional African religions to give birth to a high number of children is often associated with fulfilling a duty towards their ancestors and serves as a sign, that those who conceive children are especially gifted or blessed, while a shame is cast upon those infertile or sterile, which is considered a punishment of sinners from their ancestors or gods. And since women are usually accused of inability to conceive, mothers with a high number of children have a specific social status²⁰.

The second type of influence consists of values, which address wider issues of social organization with a potential to influence fertility. Goldscheider shows an example of this type in religious teachings about

¹⁶ L. L. Bean, G. P. Mineau, D. L. Anderton, *Fertility Change on the American Frontier*, Berkeley 1990.

¹⁷ *Scriptures of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for the Sunday Schools*, Salt Lake City 1968.

¹⁸ T. B. Heaton, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ S. P. Morgan, S. Stash, H. L. Smith, K. Oppenheim-Mason, *Muslim and non-Muslim differences in female autonomy and fertility: Evidence from four Asian countries*, "Population and Development Review", Vol. 28, Issue 3, 2002, pp. 515-537.

²⁰ J. C. Caldwell, P. Caldwell, *The cultural context of high fertility in sub-Saharan Africa*, "Population and Development Review", Vol. 13, No. 3, 1987. pp. 409-437.

applicable roles of men and women. In his analysis of Arabs living in Israel, he states, that a higher birth rate does not reflect specific teaching related to contraception as much as views of Muslims on the nature of family relations and separated roles of women. A lack of access to opportunities to gain income increases the dependence of women on male family members and puts a priority on conformity towards an ideal of woman as a mother. And considering the importance of family and the weight of the size of the family, women are pressured by relatives and the community to birth to children²¹.

The status of women in religious communities is a frequent argument defending the influence of religion on demography. As we have pointed out above, regardless of the fact whether a practice of contraception usage, a stance towards abortion, a role of a family in the value system of believers, or a social status of the mother with numerous offspring is in some way tied up in a formal complex of rules, essential is how the specific religious community perceives it. In this matter, it is advisable to turn attention towards the European conditions where can we see, that Christianity is partially losing its influence in favour of liberalization of values, while Islam is gaining a stronger status in individual European societies and how these facts establish on the ground of religious landscape.

A global religious landscape in an alternance

In recent years the number of children born to Christians was confirming a dominant position of Christianity as the most widely practiced religion in the world, however, that will not apply much longer. According to estimates of Pew Research Center, by the year 2035 should number of children born to Muslims exceed the number of children born to Christians²². The population of Muslims will rise twice as fast as the overall world population between the years 2015 and 2060: while it is estimated that the world population will increase by 32% in the upcoming centuries, the number of Muslims will increase by 70% – from 1,8 billion in 2015 to 3 billion in 2060 – while Muslims made up only 24,1% of the

²¹ C. Goldscheider, W. D. Mosher, *Patterns of Contraceptive Use in the United States: The Importance of Religious Beliefs*, “Studies in Family Planning” Vol. 22, No. 2, 1991, pp. 102-115.

²² Pew Research Center, *Europe’s Growing Muslim Population*, <<https://www.pewforum.org/2017/11/29/europes-growing-muslim-population/>>, (31.05.2020).

overall population in 2015, in 2060 it is expected that three out of ten people will be Muslims (31,1% of the world population)²³.

The main reasons why specifically Muslims increase their number so rapidly lie in demographic indicators. Muslims tend to have more children than members of other religions. Numbers show, that an average of children which Muslim women have is 2,9 per one, while in the case of Christian women it is 2,6 and an average of all non-Muslims is 2,2 and this applies to all regions of the world, where the Muslim community is numerous – Muslim birth rate exceeds that of non-Muslims everywhere²⁴. Another factor is the median age. Muslims have the lowest median age among all major religious branches – 24 in 2015, while for non-Muslims it is 32, which means that a higher rate of Muslims will be in a point of their life where they will start to have children, what in combination with birth rate enhances the increase of Muslim population again²⁵. As we mentioned in the first part of this article, we shouldn't forget the socioeconomic backgrounds, which could affect fertility (and demographic indicators in general). In this regard stands, that more than one-third of all Muslims is concentrated in Africa or the Middle East, where the highest population growth is estimated regardless of religion.

However, even in these regions grow Muslims as a religious group the fastest. Muslims in sub-Saharan Africa are younger on average and have a higher birth rate than the overall population of said region. They are increasing as a percentage in every region of the world except Latin America and Caribbean, where they are a relatively small number²⁶. Should we look even more closely – Muslims increase faster on a state level as well, for example in India, where their number increases faster than (as of today) dominant Hindu population and the estimates say, that the number of Muslims in India will rise from 14,9% in 2015 to 19,4% (or 333 million) by 2060²⁷.

²³ M. Lipka, C. Hackett, *op. cit.*

²⁴ *Ibidem.*

²⁵ *Ibidem.*

²⁶ Pew Research Center, *The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050: Muslims*, <<https://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/muslims/#regional-change>> (31.05.2020).

²⁷ C. Hackett, *By 2050, India to have world's largest populations of Hindus and Muslims*, <<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/04/21/by-2050-india-to-have-worlds-largest-populations-of-hindus-and-muslims/>> (31.05.2020).

The same goes for Nigeria, where the number of Christians and Muslims in 2015 was equal, while by 2060 should Muslims get to 60,5% of the population²⁸.

While in plenty of developing regions of the world the population (regardless of religion) is increasing, in developed regions is the demographic curve reversed. A lot of authors are not afraid to mark this phenomenon as 'The European demographic suicide' to describe the projected state of this continent by 2050, in which the European Union should lose as much as 49 million people in productive age²⁹. The states try to substitute this natural decrease with immigration and we could assume that a significant part of the main countries of origin will be those, which due to their natality will be harshly overpopulated. Concerning the aforementioned facts in the context of Islam as the fastest-growing religion leads us to how the religious landscape in Europe will gradually change. Naturally, as in the other regions of the world, even in Europe Islam grows faster than other religious groups. Pew Research Center drew up three scenarios that differ regarding projected future levels of migration. The baseline of all scenarios is the Muslim population in Europe (for their research defined as 28 member-states of European Union plus Norway and Switzerland) in the half of 2016, estimated at 25,8 million, which represented 4,9% of the overall population of Europe (and a rise from 19,5 million/3,8% in 2010)³⁰.

We can call the first scenario 'the scenario of zero migration', which operates with an assumption, that all migration to Europe descends and stops permanently on zero right away. Considering these conditions, the Muslim population will rise only through the natural increase from 4,9% (on the baseline) to 7,4% by 2050³¹. One of the reasons is what we mentioned above: Muslims have lower median age and higher birth rate than other Europeans.

The second scenario – 'medium' – estimates that all refugee flows stop, but the 'casual' levels of migration to Europe will continue, be it

²⁸ M. Lipka, C. Hackett, *op. cit.*

²⁹ J. M. Boussemart, M. Godet, *Europe 2050: Demographic Suicide*, <<https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0462-europe-2050-demographic-suicide>> (31.05.2020).

³⁰ Pew Research Center, *The Changing Global Religious Landscape*, <<https://www.pewforum.org/2017/04/05/the-changing-global-religious-landscape/#fn-27661-1>> (31.05.2020).

³¹ *Ibidem.*

due to work-related reasons or others. Under these circumstances, the population of Muslims in Europe should reach 11,2% by 2050³².

The third, highest scenario estimates, that the waves of refugees between 2014 and 2016 will continue even in the future with absolutely the same religious composition (primarily Muslims) besides 'casual' levels of migration. In this scenario should Muslims form 14% of the European population, or almost three times of the baseline position by 2050³³.

Whereas the population of Muslims should increase in all three scenarios, the European non-Muslims should decrease in numbers also in all three scenarios. The overall population of Europe including Muslims and non-Muslims should decrease significantly without migration (from 521 million to an estimated 482 million), while in the medium scenario it stays roughly stable and in the high one, it slightly increases³⁴. In the context of migration, it is necessary to point out, that between 2010 and 2016 was the migration itself the main aspect accelerating the rise of the Muslim population in Europe. Approximately 2,5 million Muslims came to Europe due to reasons different than an asylum application, therefore for example work or education and 1,3 million Muslims gained (or were expected to gain) refugee status, while only 250 000 Muslims left Europe³⁵. The natural increase was only a secondary factor. In the context of European Muslims, there were 2,9 million more births than deaths in this timeframe, and considering conversions, they were regarded only as a small factor in the terms of the whole Muslim population change with less than 160 000 people, who either converted from Islam to another faith (or disregarded faith completely) or from another faith to Islam during the years from 2010 to 2016³⁶.

Conclusion

It is necessary to admit, that looking for causality in the relation between religion and demography is a vain effort. The nexus between these two terms is a very complex one and is leaning to several variables.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ C. Hackett, *5 facts about the Muslim population in Europe*, <<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/11/29/5-facts-about-the-muslim-population-in-europe/>> (31.05.2020).

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

What creates patterns of behaviour within demographic processes by far cannot be narrowed down to religious affiliation – if anything, it is a religious affiliation in connection with socioeconomic conditions, regional customs, cultural traits outside of religious practices, and plenty of other phenomena. Not restrictions from religious authorities or conventions, as much as alleged perceptions or cultural customs of individual believers (which do not need to necessarily originate in religious traditions) stand behind the stimulation of fertility, negative attitude toward any form of birth control, or issues of marriage and reproduction in itself.

Although, what is incontestable are the numbers that suggest, that certain demographic patterns within certain religious groups are not coincidental. Correlation between religion and demography is undeniable and demographic prognoses show, that by the year 2035 should the highest number of children be born to Muslim parents, and by 2060 should Islam be the dominant world religion. On the contrary, the states of the European Union – in which currently the influence of Christianity descends and gradual liberalization of values dominates – begin to lose population rapidly. Thus, in this regard, we are not talking only about a higher increase of Muslim numbers anymore, but a decrease of non-Muslims, which significantly transforms the European religious environment. Should we not perceive it as but a regional statistic anymore and take into account what effect could a rapid increase of Muslim population in the individual states have, then this reality starts to gain completely new connotations regarding the clash of European liberal values with Islamic dogma.

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THE INCOMING REVOLUTION IN THE WORLD BANKING AND FINANCIAL SYSTEM

Abstract:

Manifold and ongoing developments seem to hint that humanity is just ahead of historic shifts in global banking as well as the financial system. The landmark changes at this moment are unavoidable. The ultra-loose monetary policies practiced by the leading central banks in recent years for a record-breaking period have not resulted in a permanent enhancement of the global economic situation but barely extended the inevitable agony of the current global financial system for additional several years. The COVID-19 pandemic and resultant global economic crisis only made things worse. These simple facts beg the following questions: what future global financial system would probably look like? What currency is going to substitute the role hitherto fulfilled by the crumbling U.S. dollar? How painful the upcoming giant changes will be for societies? What the incoming revolution in geo-economics will mean for geopolitics? Unfortunately, financial boom and bust cycles are not the thing of the past but rather seem to be inextricably linked to the way the modern financial system works. This decisively needs to be reformed. The harbingers of epochal changes are on the horizon. The author will describe them in the paper.

Keywords:

finances, banking, crisis, financial crisis, banking crisis, international economics

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Introduction

Whilst studying the subject matter of contemporary international financial relations I have propounded the following research questions I would like to briefly answer in the paper: What future global financial system would probably look like? What currency is going to substitute the role hitherto fulfilled by the crumbling U.S. dollar? How painful the upcoming giant changes will be for societies? What the incoming revolution in geo-economics will mean for geopolitics?

The text proceeds in three basic chapters. In the first chapter, I raise the topic of the U.S. dollar which is gradually ceasing to be the dominant world currency. I argue that several clues and cues are implying that the dollar rather sooner than later will stop being the main reserve currency of the globe. According to me, the most probable substitution to the dollar in this crucial role will be special drawing rights. One of the premises inducing such conclusion was the unexpected sell-off of the U.S. Treasuries by the central banks of the leading world economic powers during the years 2014-2016.

In the second section, I argue that gold once again is becoming the salient financial asset and will have a central role in the new global monetary system emerging on the horizon. I also explain why the price of gold has been artificially kept down for an extended period in the latest decades.

In the third chapter, a question of the crisis of the Western banking system has been addressed. I contend that the often illegal and immoral activities of the biggest Western banks in recent years have led to – hard to understate – the loss of their credibility and reliability among their clients. That in turn significantly heightened the risk of possible bank runs in the not so far future. I claim that there is no painless solution to the current huge troubles of the Western banks. I have focused in this chapter on two financial institutions – Deutsche Bank and Banco Monte dei Paschi di Siena as excellent examples of the degeneration of the Western banking practices. I have also enumerated in this chapter five principal solutions that must be essentially done if we seriously intend to repair the Western banking system.

The collapse of the U.S. dollar as the leading global reserve currency

Presently, the dollar is unquestionably the most important and the dominant world reserve and trade currency. Suffice it to say, the states in

which currencies are pegged to the dollar every year generate approximately one-third of overall global production. About 39% of the global debt is denominated in dollars. Almost two-thirds (63.4% to be precise) of the global foreign exchange reserves is the currency issued by the U.S. central bank². On top of that, the dollar remains the dominant currency in the extraordinarily salient oil market.

Over the years 2014-16 U.S. Treasuries have been dumped by the foreign central banks on an unprecedented scale. Since 1977, when the first relatively exact data concerning U.S. Treasuries net buying by foreign subjects began to be collected regularly³, we did not witness such a sell-off of the U.S. bonds by foreign central banks. Demand for the U.S. government bonds among foreign central banks – and probably also, however to a lesser extent, among foreign sovereign wealth funds – broke down. Although the demand on the U.S. Treasuries coming from foreign private investors is still rather high, the facts drafted above ought to be treated as a severe warning for the U.S. government which if neglected, may lead to pernicious and deleterious ramifications. Purchasing U.S. Treasuries may appear no longer safe and, consistently, a rising number of leading financial actors lose trust in the U.S. dollar.

Among the leading central banks unloading dollars in the last two years from their foreign exchange reserves are People's Bank of China (PBoC), Bank of Japan (BoJ), Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA), Central Bank of Brasil (CBoB), Bank of France (BoF) and Central Bank of Russia (CBoR)⁴. Saudi Arabia by selling U.S. Treasuries mainly patches up the budget⁵. The plunge in oil prices decisively took its toll on the Saudi economy. The reasons that drive other central banks to sell are more nuanced and not always easy to unravel.

² *When the Dollar's Strength Is a Weakness*, <<https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:oHcueADuKsYJ:https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/when-dollars-strength-weakness+&cd=1&hl=pl&ct=clnk&gl=pl>> (15.11.2020).

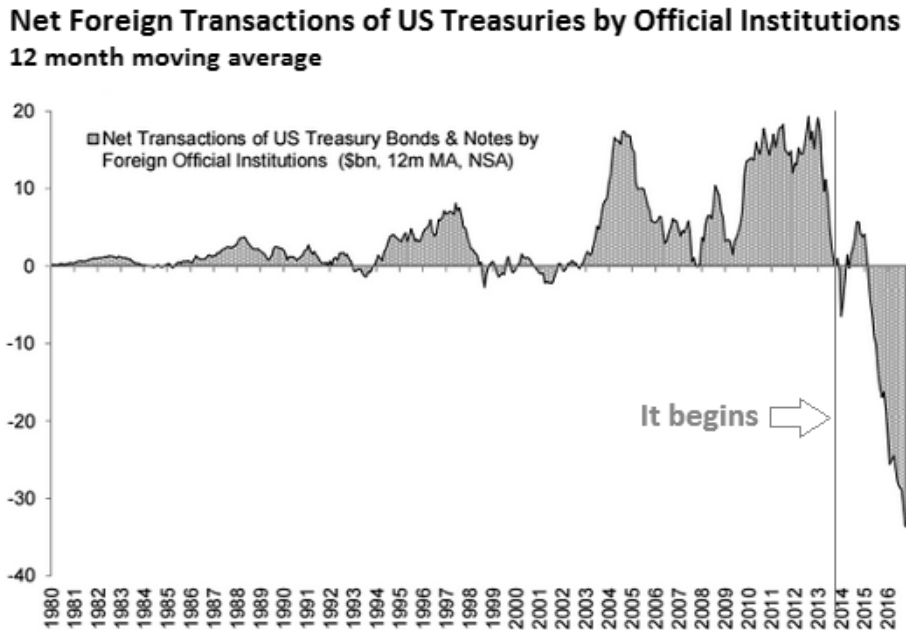
³ *China Now Dumping Unprecedented Amounts Of U.S. Treasuries*, <<http://kingworldnews.com/china-now-dumping-unprecedented-amounts-u-s-treasuries/>> (15.11.2020).

⁴ *Dollar tonet: Rossiya i Kitaj sbrasyvayut gosobligatsii SSHA*, <http://planet-today.ru/stati/finansy-i-krizis/item/59658-dollar-tonet-rossiya-i-kitaj-sbrasyvayut-gosobligatsii-ssha?utm_medium=referral&utm_source=lentainform&utm_campaign=planet-today.ru&utm_term=136374s7953&utm_content=4952446> (16.11.2020).

⁵ W. Zieliński, *Banki centralne pozbywają się amerykańskich skarbówek jak nigdy dotąd*, <<http://www.rp.pl/Finanse/309269950-Banki-centralne-pozbywaja-sie-amerykanskich-skarbowek-jak-nigdy-dotad.html#p-1>> (18.11.2020).

It is quite difficult to determine exactly who and in what exact quantity holds the U.S. T-Bills, T-Notes and T-Bonds. The U.S. Department of Treasury has at its disposal – at least officially – merely data about accounts with U.S. Treasuries conveyed to it by brokers and custodians functioning in the U.S. Nevertheless, for the lack of more reliable and trustworthy data, we have to rely on the only accessible ones.

Figure 1. Net Foreign Transactions of U.S Treasuries by Official Institutions over the Years 1980-2016.



Source: *Wolf Street*, <<http://wolfstreet.com/2017/02/09/foreign-governments-sell-u-s-treasuries-as-never-before-but-who-buys-them/>> (11.11.2020).

The conventional explanation of the sell-off of mostly long- and mid-term U.S. Treasuries by the People's Bank of China says that it is a result of Beijing's intention and urgent need to prop up weakening China's currency. To prevent the devaluation of the yuan the PBoC simply increases the supply of U.S. dollars by selling U.S. Treasuries denominated in dollars from its reserves. Because the pressure for devaluation of the yuan remains strong in recent months Chinese central bankers willy-nilly are compelled to sell a lot of Treasuries to shore the yuan up and defend the currency peg. There is probably a grain of truth in

this explanation, however, this *eclaircissement* seems to completely omit other important factors. From an analytical standpoint, not taking into account these factors may later turn out to be a severe mistake.

Undoubtedly, in recent years there has been a growing apprehension among Chinese financial and political elites that the People's Republic of China became too much dependent on the U.S. dollar. By allocating so many dollars in its official reserves China became excessively vulnerable for the contingency of a drastic and deep depreciation of the U.S. dollar against other currencies, including the yuan. That means, that in case of substantial loss of value by the U.S. dollar, especially during a relatively short time, China would suffer a serious and tangible loss. Hundreds of billions of dollars so stringently amassed for decades in PBoC's reserves would in such a scenario lose a significant portion of its real value. Colloquially speaking, if such an eventuality materializes, the Middle Kingdom would be stood up by the U.S. That would mean that China had exported real, touchable goods to the U.S. over decades in exchange for paper dollars worth not much. But that is not the only reason why China is not interested in the radical depreciation of the dollar relative to the renminbi. The other, equally important, the reason is that the greatly cheaper dollar would automatically and inescapably entail the much smaller exports of Chinese goods to the United States and – in consequence – significantly inhibit China's economic growth⁶. That, in turn, would lead to the rise in unemployment and would make anti-government protests in the PRC more likely.

One might argue that a scenario of fast and deep loss of purchase parity by the U.S. dollar is very improbable. Is that so? We should all keep in mind that since 2008 the Federal Reserve emitted a giant amount of dollars in four rounds of unconventional monetary policy known as Quantitative Easing. After the COVID-19 pandemic took place the Fed additionally injected \$1.5T into the U.S. economy. In the process, it vastly augmented its balance sheet. Despite the so far gigantic increase in U.S. money supply – much to the surprise of many – did not bring about a significant increase of the inflation in the United States, it can be almost totally explained by the fact that the bulk of this newly printed money conveyed to commercial banks has been stashed by them at special non-obligatory accounts in the Fed instead of lent to borrowers. This led to a slump in inflation, though a temporary one. Moreover, it needs to be

⁶ P. Furgacz, *The Economic Relations of the United States and China over the Years 2005–2015*, [in:] Żakowski K., *Changing Determinants of Foreign Policy in East Asian Countries*, Lodz 2016, p. 37.

recalled in this context that there is always a shorter or longer time lag between monetary growth and inflation. Even more symptomatic in this context are Donald Trump's announcements that the U.S. dollar is significantly overvalued – which is correspondent to the facts – and that it must be substantially depreciated to give U.S. exports a boost and to diminish U.S. imports to finally erase huge and persistent U.S. trade deficits. Chinese authorities certainly noticed these statements.

In October 2016 China ceased to be the biggest external holder of the U.S. government debt. It was replaced by Japan⁷. Whereas in November 2013 Mainland China held \$1316.7B of U.S. Treasuries at the end of 2016 it possessed merely \$1058.4B of U.S. Treasuries⁸. At the end of November 2020, China held \$1063.0B of U.S. Treasuries. In other words, China diminished its exposure to the U.S. debt over the 7 years from November 2013 to November 2020 by 19.27%. Prima facie, it may appear that it is not so much. However, here two relevant aspects need to be highlighted. There are some natural limits of dumping U.S. Treasuries that China cannot excel without impinging upon its national interests and harming itself acutely. First of all, in 1977 the U.S. Congress passed a law entitled International Emergency Economics Power Act. The aforementioned law gives the American president a prerogative to freeze any banking and broker account in any financial institution in the United States if he deems the financial transactions carried out by foreign and domestic subjects are unfriendly and threaten to destabilize the U.S. financially. Thus, if the People's Bank of China suddenly decides to dump the unreasonably high amount of U.S. Treasuries provoking a market collapse for U.S. government debt, the president swiftly and unavoidably would block all the accounts from which the Chinese would conduct the destabilizing sell-off of U.S. Treasuries. One should keep in mind that the Americans de facto control all systems of dollar payments in the world. Secondly, it does not lie in the interest of China to make for the sudden and deep plunge in prices of U.S. government debt because in such a tumble it would incur significant and unnecessary losses. In contrast, it is in the interest of China to sell U.S. Treasuries when their prices are quite high and when the U.S. dollar is strong against other currencies. At the turn of 2016 and 2017, we witness exactly such a situation. That is why getting rid of U.S. Treasuries presently can be

⁷ *Major Foreign Holders of Treasury Securities*, <<http://ticdata.treasury.gov/Publish/mfhhis01.txt>> (20.11.2020).

⁸ *Ibidem*.

interpreted as a prudent investment decision⁹. The dumping of U.S. T-Bills by, among others, China together with the rise in U.S. interest rates led to an increase in the yields of the 10-year T-Bill from 1.46% in June 2016 to 3.11% in November 2018. Admittedly later yields of the 10-year T-Bill decreased to 0.88% in November 2020, we may predict that very soon they are to go up again in a fast tempo, especially in the first quarter of 2021. To put it simply, it appears that China was selling U.S. government bonds in the years 2016-18 at a maximum tempo it can do without harming itself concurrently. This pattern may be repeated by Beijing in the future, particularly if the bilateral U.S.-China relations would deteriorate even more than during the Trump administration.

If the U.S. dollar consistently loses its credibility as the leading global reserve currency, it begs a question of which currency could replace the dollar in this key financial role. The economy of the issuer of the dominant global reserve currency should be large. At the moment solely the eurozone and China have comparably large economies as the U.S. However, the eurozone desperately fights for survival and its future as a unified economic bloc is on a knife-edge, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic hit the European economy painfully. Western European banks are in even more dismal condition than their equivalents across the pond. As concerns China, currently, approximately 81% of world trade settlements are conducted in U.S. dollars, whereas just 9% is carried out in renminbi¹⁰. In the long run, Beijing intends to substitute the U.S. dollar with the yuan as the leading global currency. Nonetheless, to achieve this aim the Middle Kingdom has to firstly accomplish the following smaller objectives:

- Transform the PRC's capital market in such a way to make it attractive for investors from every corner of the world as well as make it deep and friendly enough, especially for foreigners. In particular, the PRC needs to create a sufficiently deep and liquid government bond market comparable to that of the United States;
- Make the Chinese currency freely and fully convertible in international and domestic markets which in practice is

⁹ W. Richter, *Foreign Governments Dump US Treasuries as Never Before, But Who the Heck is Buying Them?*, <<http://wolfstreet.com/2017/02/09/foreign-governments-sell-u-s-treasuries-as-never-before-but-who-buys-them/>> (10.11.2020).

¹⁰ J. Nye Jr., *Is the American Century Over?*, Cambridge-Malden 2015, p. 51. Other data are a little bit different. For instance Stratfor claims that dollar is involved in more than 85 percent of foreign exchange trades. See: *When the Dollar's Strength Is a Weakness*, *op. cit.*

tantamount to putting an end to a currency peg of yuan to U.S. dollar and giving up on any form of capital control;

- Significantly augment the usage of the renminbi in trade and financial transactions abroad with a simultaneous decrease in the employment of dollars as a principal trade currency.

All the above-mentioned objectives cannot be brought into effect quickly. Of course, China's financial and political authorities started to do measurable efforts to fulfill these aims being governed by the adage from ancient China that 'a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step', nonetheless, this process is certainly going to take a lot of time.

The logical conclusion is that there is no currency at the moment that could dethrone the U.S. dollar in the short to medium term. Having said that, I must add that we also have at our disposal the special drawing rights (SDRs) which are emitted by the International Monetary Fund. Probably the SDRs are the best candidate for a new leading global reserve currency. A growing amount of pundits pays attention to such a possibility¹¹. Nowadays, the basket of SDRs consists of dollars, euros, yuans, yens, pounds sterling in strictly specified weighs. The dollar accounts for 41.7%, the euro 30.9%, the yuan 10.9%, the yen 8.3%, and the pound sterling 8.1% of the total basket's value. Mainland China with its renminbi in November 2016 has joined the prestigious club of countries that could boast having their currencies in the SDR basket. Even though currently the SDR bond market is very small and not much diversified in comparison to the U.S. Treasury market, this can change swiftly if the governments of leading world powers would take appropriate decisions. Arguably, over time the composition of the SDR basket will be gradually changing in favour of yuan and concurrent disfavor of the dollar as well as euro.

Some signs are indicating that the International Monetary Fund is increasingly becoming a kind of world central bank. IMF often appears as the lender of last resort in financial crises. However, currently, the IMF fulfills primarily the interests and wishes of the richest Western powers which find a reflection in the structure of voting right – it is heavily skewed in favor of the U.S., Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, and France to the prejudice of China, India, Russia, Brasil, and other emerging economies. The fact that the voting power of China in the

¹¹ See for example: *Turkey Maneuvers to Escape Its Dollar Trap*, <<https://www.stratfor.com/geopolitical-diary/turkey-maneuvers-escape-its-dollar-trap+&cd=1&hl=pl&ct=clnk&gl=pl>> (6.12.2020).

organization is only 6.41%, whereas U.S. voting power is at the level of 17.44%¹² is meaningful because both economies are comparable in terms of their significance to the world. China is only slightly less important than the U.S. in this respect and it advanced vastly in the unofficial rankings of the most influential and germane economies for the world over the last three decades.

To conclude, the exorbitant privilege – as the French Minister of Finance Valéry Giscard d'Estaing famously called it – of Washington enjoying U.S. dollar status as the main international reserve currency has been vanishing step by step. The U.S. dollar's days as the indisputable principal global reserve currency are numbered. Too many doubts arose about the Fed's monetary policy, the U.S. chronic budget deficits and ever-growing U.S. government debt, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic battered the world economy. As well, too many influential and powerful political actors like China, Russia, Iran – and even Turkey in last years¹³ – have set off a chain of events to undermine the U.S. dollar privileged position in global finances. This process is inevitable despite expected Washington's ferocious efforts to stop or – at the minimum – slow it down.

The return of the gold as the salient financial asset

The thesis that gold once again comes back as the most germane financial asset can be corroborated by the symptomatic shift in the central banks' official net gold purchases. Whereas in 2005 central banks all over the globe net sold a record quantity of 663 metric tons of gold, a decade later they bought 588 tons of the same yellow metal (see Figure 1 for comparison). With hindsight, some decisions of the central banks now seem to be extremely foolish. For instance, the chancellor of the British exchequer Gordon Brown in 1999 decided to sell approximately two-thirds of Great Britain's gold reserves at extremely low prices. Similarly, Switzerland also sold a lot of its gold holdings in the first years of the

¹² *IMF Members' Quotas and Voting Power, and IMF Board of Governors*, <<https://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/memdir/members.aspx>> (20.11.2020).

¹³ For instance, on December 2016 the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan commanded the biggest Turkish corporation to expeditiously convert their dollar holdings to Turkish lira – a one another blow to the position of U.S. dollar. The Turkish companies eagerly fulfilled the order. With this action Turkey de facto joined the group of nations wanting and acting to weaken the global status of dollar. See: *Turkey Maneuvers... op. cit.*

2000s when the gold prices were exceptionally low. However, nowadays this inclination to get rid of gold from official national reserves ended. For years the gold market has been manipulated and gold prices have been artificially suppressed by COMEX, ETFs, bullion banks, hedge funds, and – most importantly – the leading central banks as well as the Bank for International Settlements. The major manners in which manipulations could be employed are leasing unallocated forwards, manipulation through stop-loss limits, and paper manipulation through COMEX futures¹⁴. The U.S. and China have been vitally interested in gold price suppression, but paradoxically, for completely different and opposing causes. To make a long story short – the U.S. perceives gold as an alternative and competitor to the U.S. dollar. Hence, Washington is not interested in the rise of gold prices because such prospective increases – especially if drastic and serious – would make for undermining the confidence and trust in U.S. currency, the credibility of which is dependent to a substantial degree on its stability and attractiveness of potential alternatives to it. Beijing, on its part, also wants to keep gold prices low as much as possible because it is constantly buying huge amounts of gold on international markets, mostly in secrecy. It is an open secret that the PRC in reality holds much, much more gold than it officially admits. China declares that it possesses 1,948 metric tonnes of gold¹⁵. Beijing asserts that since the end of 2016 it only increased its gold reserves by 105,4 tonnes of gold, which hardly any expert believes. Unofficially, China has gathered closer to 12,000 tonnes of gold, which would make it by far the largest gold holder on the globe¹⁶. What is more, Mainland China perpetually and consistently purchases new gold bars to further augment its holdings. Beijing is interested in buying gold cheaply, thus it has been purchasing the precious metal quietly, without unnecessary publicity, usually using discreet intermediaries in the process. Due to such actions, it can buy

¹⁴ All the aforementioned ways of gold price manipulation have been thoroughly and convincingly described by James Rickards in his book *The New Case for Gold* in chapter 4 “Gold Is Constant”. See: J. Rickards, *The New Case for Gold*, New York 2016, pp. 88-115.

¹⁵ *Top 10 Countries with Largest Gold Reserves*, <<https://www.usfunds.com/investor-library/frank-talk-a-ceo-blog-by-frank-holmes/top-10-countries-with-largest-gold-reserves/>> (15.11.2020).

¹⁶ E. von Greyerz, *ALERT: China Now Possesses Up To A Shocking 12,000 Tonnes Of Gold And Last Week's Takedown Was The Desperate BIS*, <<https://kingworldnews.com/alert-china-now-possesses-up-to-a-shocking-12000-tonnes-of-gold/>> (10.11.2020).

gold cheaper and, additionally, without unnerving or annoying the world superpower.

The Russian Federation's central bank has bought more than 1,000 tonnes of gold over the previous seven years. Even more symptomatic are the purchases on the part of the Middle Kingdom. The PBoC has purchased at least 3,000 tonnes of gold over the same period. Together Russian and Chinese gold acquisitions account for more than one-tenth of all the official gold in the globe. In addition to that, according to a respected financier James Rickards, Beijing on the quiet has also purchased huge – though not specified – sums of SDRs in nonpublic secondary market transactions brokered by the IMF¹⁷. In this context, we should underline two exceptionally germane issues. First and foremost, both Russia and China are geopolitical rivals of the West in general and the U.S. in particular. They are interested in undermining the position of the U.S. dollar – at least to some degree. Second, both states could boast about very effective intelligence services able to discover the true condition of the Western financial system. Therefore, the aforementioned immense purchases of gold can be properly interpreted as a preparation for the incoming of the new great financial crisis that would eclipse the previous ones. As James Rickards remarked, the key to wealth preservation is to move out of the declining form of money – dollars – and into the rising forms of money – gold and SDRs – sooner, rather than later¹⁸. This elucidation of Beijing's and Moscow's financial activities sounds quite convincing and coherent. Constant purchase of gold and – to a smaller extent – SDRs are the response on the part of China and Russia for the anticipated debasement of dollars and the breakdown of the global financial system, which core is the financial system of the West. Many other smaller and less powerful states for some time have been on a buying spree of gold. For instance, several years ago the authorities of Kyrgyzstan, except for adding new gold to its official reserves, also started to encourage their citizens to put their savings away in gold¹⁹. The above-mentioned facts imply that the future role of gold in the world monetary system will be crucial. Many states secretly prepare

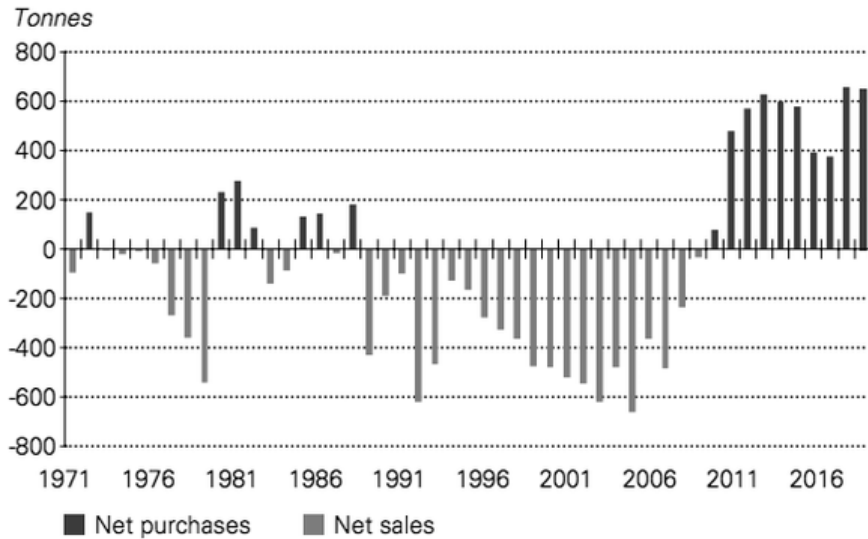
¹⁷ J. Rickards, *The 4-Front Assault on the Dollar*, <<https://dailyreckoning.com/4-front-assault-dollar/>> (5.11.2020).

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ K. Kolany, *Sto gramów złota dla każdego. Gdzie? W Kirgistanie*, <<http://www.bankier.pl/wiadomosc/Sto-gramow-zlota-dla-kazdego-Gdzie-W-Kirgistanie-7500251.html>> (7.11.2020).

for a huge reset in the global financial system²⁰, among other things, by the accumulation of gold. All in all, the present global financial system with fiat currencies at its core is an exception – not the rule – in the monetary history of the world.

Figure 2: Central bank gold buying 1971-2019.



Source: R. Pakiam, E. Mazneva, *Central Bank Gold-Buying Seen Climbing From Near Decade Low*, <<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-09-29/gold-buying-by-central-banks-seen-climbing-from-near-decade-low>> (12.12.2020).

The crisis of the Western banking system

Many banks across the Atlantic ocean desperately fight for survival. Scrutiny at the Western European banks reveals that in many cases they are moribund. For that matter, a lot of Western bankers deserve berating at a minimum. Amid European banking systems, particularly the Italian banking system presents spasms of close collapse. It is estimated that

²⁰ This huge reset of the global financial system is sometimes called ‘the Great Reset’ – a term popularized by the World Economic Forum.

non-performing loans of European banks are worth €1.3B²¹, which unquestionably is an enormous amount. In the Italian case, non-performing loans account for 17% of all loans given by Italian banking institutions. COVID-19 pandemics, which particularly hardly hit Italy, and the ensuing deep recession only worsened the problems of the Italian banking system.

The largest Italian bank and one of the largest banks in Europe at all – namely, the UniCredit Group has announced lately that it expects a dizzying net loss for the 2016 year reaching about €12B. Admittedly in the next three consecutive financial years, UniCredit Group reported net profits, this does not compensate for a giant loss for 2016. Regrettably, the condition of Italian banks is so dire that there are no sweet cures for them – only the bitter ones.

Unfortunately, it is not solely Southern Europe that has to grapple with immense financial predicaments. Even Germany – the economic powerhouse of Europe and purportedly a model example of responsible financial governance – has its financial skeleton in the cupboard. Deutsche Bank's different sordid feats drew the deserved attention of German – and not only German – public opinion. Whenever one talks with Polish representatives of the banking sector or political circles about the unenviable condition of the Western European banking system sooner or later the topic of Deutsche Bank is summoned by them in the discussion.

Deutsche Bank – the symbol of the German banking industry has been struggling with plenty of various legal troubles, notorious financial scandals, investigations, and accusations brought against it by its clients and business partners. Among other things, the bank in the last eight years has been charged with:

- Tax evasion in conjunction with the trading of emissions certificates²²;
- Intentional failures to report money laundering²³;
- Obstruction of justice²⁴;

²¹ J. Szewczak, *Świat na zakręcie*, “wSieci” 2017, No. 11 (224), 13-19.03.2017, p. 81.

²² M. Bartsch et al., *A Reputation in Ruin: Deutsche Bank Slides into a Swamp of Scandal*, <<http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/deutsche-bank-reputation-at-stake-amid-a-multitude-of-scandals-a-873544.html>> (10.10.2020).

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

- Embellishment and whitewashing of financial statements to cover up losses together with other illegal accounting practices²⁵;
- Deliberate circumvention of sanctions imposed by particular states as well as the international community on the Islamic Republic of Iran, Sudan, and a few other countries²⁶;
- Money laundering via so-called mirror trades in favor of Russian criminal organizations (overall \$10B have been laundered thanks to Deutsche Bank's complicity)²⁷;
- Participating in collusion to fiddle the accounts of Italy's third-largest bank, Monte dei Paschi di Siena enabling it to conceal sky-high losses over the years 2008-2012²⁸;
- Participation in collusion to manipulate the benchmark LIBOR interest rate²⁹;
- Participation in collusion to manipulate gold and silver markets – the accusation to which the Deutsche Bank confessed³⁰;
- Conscious selling of toxic mortgage-backed securities and misinforming its clients about their true risks³¹.

The list above by no means should be treated as the full review of Deutsche Bank's unethical demeanor. All the above cases and many others tarnished the reputation of this giant of global banking worldwide and, as we all know, gaining a good reputation requires decades of hard and fair work. All these have been forfeited by the management of the leading German financial institution. In 2017 Deutsche Bank was directly

²⁵ M. Hesse, T. Schulz, *Whistleblower Accusations: Did Deutsche Bank Fraudulently Hide Huge Losses?*, <<http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/whistleblower-accuses-deutsche-bank-of-concealing-billions-in-losses-a-871933.html>> (10.10.2020).

²⁶ E. Caesar, *Deutsche Bank's \$10-Billion Scandal*, <<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/08/29/deutsche-banks-10-billion-scandal>> (11.10.2020).

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ *Deutsche Bank Charged By Italy For Market Manipulation, Creating False Accounts*, <<http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2016-10-01/deutsche-bank-charged-italy-market-manipulation-creating-false-accounts>> (13.10.2020).

²⁹ See: B. Masters, P. Jenkins, *Big banks investigated over Libor*, "Financial Times", 15.03.2011; S. Böll et al., *Behind the Scenes in the Libor Interest Rate Scandal*, <<http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/the-libor-scandal-could-cost-leading-global-banks-billions-a-847453.html>> (13.10.2020).

³⁰ *Deutsche Bank manipulował. W handlu złotem i srebrem*, <<http://niezalezna.pl/79269-deutsche-bank-manipulowal-w-handlu-zlotem-i-srebrem>> (14.10.2020).

³¹ J. Strasburg, A. Viswanatha, *Deutsche Bank, U.S. DOJ Continue to Discuss Mortgage-Securities Settlement*, <<https://www.wsj.com/articles/deutsche-bank-u-s-doj-continue-to-discuss-mortgage-securities-settlement-1475440468>> (3.11.2020).

involved in about 7.800 lawsuits all over the world³². The prevailing majority of them were the result of complaints filed by dissatisfied customers, business partners, financial regulatory bodies, and governments.

As one of the German journalists observed: “The charges are always the same, and the word ‘fraud’ appears almost everywhere: The bank stands accused of lying, swindling, and cheating in conjunction with billions in real estate loan transactions. It is said to have cheated its customers while lining its own pockets. And it stands accused of having gambled more recklessly and exhibited less moral responsibility than many other financial institutions”³³. In this light, nobody ought to be surprised to find out that the biggest German bank failed several European and American banking stress tests in a row in recent years and the only one it passed in July 2016 managed to pass because it was given a special, privileged treatment by the European Central Bank which – reportedly by the way of exception – agreed for some strongly controversial concessions beneficial to the Deutsche Bank³⁴. To better understand the consequences of this message one must realize that the stress tests are constructed in such a way to be ‘passable’ for the possibly highest number of banks – all to boost confidence in the banking system among the public. Bear in mind that we are discussing the global systematically important bank ranked at the first position in the ranking of such banking giants by the IMF in the special report issued in 2016.

The problems of the Deutsche Bank are so huge that they appear to weigh on German politicians. For example, in 2016 German chancellor officially and publically encouraged German citizens to gather stores of staples and basic items sufficient for 10 days. It may imply that enforcement of a kind of banking vacation is seriously considered among German government circles.

Banco Monte dei Paschi di Siena (MPS) – the oldest world bank (which is very symbolic!) and the third-biggest bank of the third-largest, in terms of GDP, the economy of the eurozone has gigantic financial difficulties being in fact in the state of insolvency. Interestingly, its problems only secondarily resulted from objective and hard to predict

³² U. Fichtner, H. Goos, M. Hesse, *The Deutsche Bank Downfall: How a Pillar of German Banking Lost Its Way*, <<http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/the-story-of-the-self-destruction-of-deutsche-bank-a-1118157.html>> (15.10.2020).

³³ M. Bartsch et al., *op. cit.*

³⁴ *ECB Allowed Deutsche Bank To Cheat In Latest Stress Test, FT Reports*, <<http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2016-10-10/ecb-allowed-deutsche-bank-cheat-latest-stress-test-ft-reports>> (17.10.2020).

and to counteract external circumstances, processes, and occurrences. Primarily, its current plight has been caused by years of mismanagement as well as giant, blatant and purposeful swindles, frauds, scams, hustles, and defraudations conducted with the knowledge and approval of the infamous bank's leadership with some contribution of many Italian multimillionaires and politicians³⁵. For years Italian financial authorities and central bank, including the time during which Mario Draghi presided over the Bank of Italy, turned a blind eye to these reprehensible practices. Suffice it to say, 70% of non-performing credits lent by the MPS are loans exceeding €0.5M. In other words, these loans were lent to wealthy firms and borrowers. From every three euros given in big credits by MPS, one euro disappeared irretrievably. In the light of the facts described above, no one should be amazed that Italian public opinion is outraged that MPS had been bailed out with taxpayer's money. In reality, the managers of the MPS are to blame whereas the Italians foot the bill for the sins of those managers. The bankers are fully aware of the fact that the public has lost confidence and trust in banking systems and that this process has been burgeoning over time. That is one of the main reasons why lately the concept of a cashless society is so intrusively, stridently, and persistently endorsed. Public opinion is subjected to massive propaganda campaigns aimed at convincing it that cashless payments are the real blessing for the economy. For this very reason, many far-fetched and highly dubious arguments are presented to the public as undisputed facts. That is why, every argument for getting rid of cash is vastly exaggerated, whereas any argument against this opinion is passed over in silence, neglected, belittled, or derided. In a cashless society, a negative interest rate policy could be practiced without limits because no bank depositor would have a chance to withdraw his or her savings from the bank account. In a cashless society, there will be no bank runs. Still, the people will be subject to constant robbing as well as surveillance on the part of banks, governments, and secret services. Nobody would be able to buy a newspaper or book without knowledge of some powerful institution in the loop of invigilation.

As one financial analyst and commentator accurately noticed: "Our financial system is like the Titanic: technologies such as high-frequency trading (HFT) and innovations such as securitization and complex derivatives have enabled major players to construct an enormous, fast-moving financial system that creates the illusion of low risk because the

³⁵ P. Kowalczyk, *Sen szalbierzy*, "Do Rzeczy", 2017, no. 5.

risks are not visible until disaster strikes. (...) All that has been accomplished since 2008-09 is there are a few more lifeboats and better communication when disaster strikes. But the risks of financial disaster have actually increased since 2008-09, as participants have bypassed regulations via shadow banking, dark pools, etc., and deepened their dependence on HFT skimming via superfast trades executed by superfast computers”³⁶.

After scrutinizing the subject matter I concluded that five principal things urgently need to be done to repair the Western banking system:

- The largest banks must be broken apart for smaller ones. Those who argue that if some financial enterprise is “too big to fail”, it is simultaneously too big to allow it to exist are decisively right. Too frequently in the past decade, we witnessed a situation when the big banks pled, requested, entreated, and appealed for bail-outs, which were financed ultimately from the public’s purse. This demeanor is nothing more than an original sort of extortion on society. The comparison of Irish and Icelandic cases proves that shoring banks up by hook or by crook is rarely economic and rewarding in the long run;
- The predominant majority – if not all – of financial derivatives should be point-blank forbidden. Derivatives in reality do not avail significantly economy and society. Instead of that, their broad implementation into the financial systems caused vast and disproportionate augmentation of risk rooted in them. To be sincere, this is probably the most serious problem of the Deutsche Bank which is supposed to amass a tremendous sum of high-risk – or even toxic – derivatives in its balance sheet as well as, reportedly, off-balance-sheet derivatives³⁷. The Deutsche Bank’s enormous exposure to derivatives reaches tens of trillions of euros and there are constant rumors that Deutsche Bank misstated

³⁶ C. H. Smith, *Why Our Financial System Is Like the Titanic*, <<http://charleshughsmith.blogspot.com/2016/03/why-our-financial-system-is-like-titanic.html>> (22.10.2020).

³⁷ J. Rickards, *Don’t Forget About Deutsche Bank*, <<https://dailyreckoning.com/dont-forget-deutsche-bank/>> (19.10.2020).

many of them³⁸. Deutsche Bank's gross derivative exposure is assessed at about €48T³⁹;

- The bankers who broke the law should be finally sentenced and jailed proportionally to their crimes on a massive scale. Presently, it is not a rule to sentence the richest bankers and managers of financial institutions for imprisonment for their numerous and baleful criminal deeds – it is rather an exception to the rule. As practice hints, nobody from the highest echelons of banking and financial elites had been sentenced for criminal charges. For example, in the U.S. usually banks strike a deal with the Department of Justice and pay some sum of compensation or fine for their illegal actions. Unfortunately, such fines are most often considerably lower than the previous profits derived from unethical and unlawful activities. The impunity of the most influential bankers is rattling the public's cages. Even a singular case of spectacular arrest for the well-known financier would fire a shot across the bow among this milieu;
- In the U.S. commercial and investment banking should be categorically, once and for all separated. Many distinguished economists and financiers call for the reintroduction of the once revoked Glass-Steagall Act. The Trump administration set off this process⁴⁰;
- Huge deleveraging. Truncated balance sheets of banks would help them substantially for certain. In this respect once again the Deutsche Bank negatively stands alone among other Western

³⁸ M. Sully, *Deutsche Bank Said to Review Valuations of Inflation Swaps*, <<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-10-26/deutsche-bank-said-to-review-its-valuations-of-inflation-swaps>> (1.11.2020).

³⁹ M. W. DeCambre, *Deutsche Bank pegs its derivatives exposure at about \$22 billion — and faces challenges in shedding those assets*, <<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/deutsche-bank-pegs-its-derivatives-exposure-at-about-22-billion-and-faces-challenges-in-shedding-those-assets-2019-07-26>> (30.10.2020).

⁴⁰ W. Zieliński, *Banki pod topór. Prowokacja nadzorcy*, <<http://www.rp.pl/Banki/303149934-Banki--pod-topor-Prowokacja-nadzorcy.html#ap-1>> (2.11.2020).

banks. For instance, whereas JP Morgan is leveraged 15 to 1⁴¹, the Deutsche Bank is leveraged at the ratio of 24:1⁴².

Dragging our feet with essential financial reforms neither will prevent nor will soothe the incoming financial crisis. As well, it will not calm down intensifying political strifes in the European Union or the United States. In the light of the facts mentioned above, no one should be surprised nor astonished that increasingly more people sign on with the miscellaneous ideas and concepts of more or less total remolding of how the banking system works and functions. There are some calls for even the complete resignation from the fractional reserve banking and for nationalization of the Federal Reserve. These voices in the not so far future will probably enter the mainstream. Rumbblings of disgruntlement come from every direction and every side of the political spectrum – from the extreme left through the balanced centre to the extreme right. Interestingly, an increasing number of financiers, bankers, and economists are receptive to revolutionary reforms in the field of finances. Experts from various institutions are teaming up to find a realistic solution for transformation in the global financial system. Hammering out a public consensus on this matter by no means will be an easy and short process, nevertheless, it is a viable chance to make necessary reforms without too much shock. If global society manages to go through this dangerous and bumpy period in its economic and social history it will have chalked up a historic feat indeed. To do that politicians cannot budge under the pressure of miscellaneous lobbyists as so often was the case in the past.

Public opinion must constantly and persistently bring down bankers' necks. It is not prudent and wise to keep bankers at their word, because the foregoing experience teaches us that honoring a pledge is not a behavior typical of high finance. The wrath of the public against the abuse of power by the financiers is rampant and widespread. What is more, it is intensifying year by year on a global scale. Not by any means, we should interpret this phenomenon as a mindless mob having in for

⁴¹ B. Berkowitz, *Which of the Large U.S. Banks Is Most Leveraged?*, <<https://www.fool.com/investing/2020/07/26/which-of-the-large-us-banks-is-most-leveraged.aspx>> (15.11.2020).

⁴² F. Garrido, R. Ahmad, *Leverage ratios at Europe's largest banks, Q4*, <<https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/news-insights/latest-news-headlines/leverage-ratios-at-europe-s-largest-banks-q4-57550337>> (15.11.2020); M. Shedlock, *Systemic Risk: Deutsche Bank #1 at \$100 Billion (BNP Paribas 2nd, Societe Generale 3rd)*, <<https://mishtalk.com/2016/10/03/systemic-risk/>> (16.11.2020).

bankers. It is rather a symptom of growing social and civic consciousness as well as a justified feeling of outrage. Big banks will go down hard, nevertheless, their collapse seems at this stage unavoidable and imminent.

Conclusion

The need to revamp and reform the global financial system is progressively pressing. Ranting tirades about the material and income inequalities as well as notorious criminal activities conducted by the high finance – though to a substantial extent justified – will not help much. In 2017 after 9 years since the Great Recession started global debts rose to a mind-boggling quota of \$180T⁴³. It is evaluated that at the end of 2020 the global debt will reach \$277T⁴⁴. That means that in a short period between the beginning of 2017 and the end of 2020 the global debt rose by roughly 54%. This is a truly fast pace of debt accumulation, which appears untenable in the long run. None of the serious problems plaguing the world finances has been resolved since 2008. Many of them have even deepened and worsened especially after the COVID-19 pandemic acutely hurt the global economy. Humanity is on the cusp of fundamental shifts in its economic and social systems, which are difficult to overstate. The major fear is that the trouble one ‘too big to fail’ the bank has created could trigger a worldwide undesirable reaction producing a global loss of confidence and waves of quickly progressing consecutive bank runs. However, other possible solutions to the huge problems of the modern world like the bailout of the biggest banks from taxpayers’ money de facto lead to the economic crisis as well. Further bailouts of the largest banks would be exceptionally costly and would make for the vast increase in the level of public indebtedness, which even without the inclusion of future bailouts is enormous. As well, the solution in the form of further issuance of giant quotas of money in the long term inescapably would lead to severely boosted inflation. Unfortunately, it appears that for the central bankers the only solution to these problems is to simply crank the printing presses to emit more dollars, euros, yen, and pounds. Every imaginable scenario entails huge difficulties and a common loss of confidence in the stability, fairness, and safety of the financial systems.

⁴³ J. Szewczak, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ R. Campos, *Global debt to hit record \$277 trillion by year end on pandemic spending splurge: IIF*, <<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-global-debt-idUSKBN27Y239>> (19.11.2020).

Nowadays we have found ourselves in a situation like from the ancient Greek tragedy, in which no solution is good. We have exclusively bad options to choose from.

All the signs are that the Middle Kingdom will find itself at the top of the new slowly emerging global financial system, though its position will be less privileged and powerful than that of the U.S. in the current world financial system. Without a doubt, that will be a very heavy blow for the geopolitical and geoeconomic power of America that got used to global hegemony and too often takes it for granted. Most likely, the SDR – not renminbi – will be widely introduced instead of the dollar. The new SDRs will arguably be backed by gold. It is still an open question whether the new global monetary system will be more similar to the Bretton Woods or the classical gold standard, yet we can be certain that it will not be based on fiat currencies as it is at present.

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SOCIALITY IN VIRTUAL SPACE: PRAXEOLOGICAL DIMENSION IN SECURITY STRATEGIES

Abstract:

The article examines sociality as a precondition for becoming a system of social relation and communication, public opinion, and collective beliefs in the virtual space. It is argued that the essence of the social is virtual, such as social roles and hierarchies, habitus and rituals, institutions, and others. It is defined the way of understanding virtual reality as a special communicative space where take place a tendency to the disappearance of personal and public, ethnic and social, or cultural factors of differentiation. Instead, the sociality of cyberspace produces an effective model of social cooperation, which serves as an embodiment of utopian concepts of social order. Following the principles and emphases of interpretation, the problem of sociality in the virtual space determines ways of solving a wide circle of political, economic, ethnic, global, and ecological problems. The sociality of virtual space is characterized by anonymity, intensity, and operationality of its manifestation and influence. Such transformations are explained by the general aggressive nature of Infospace and the pursuit of subjectivity to the maximum of self-actualization. These characteristics emphasize the measurement of new challenges to society's security and well-being on a global scale.

Keywords:

virtual space, sociality, information culture, cyberspace, community, communication, security strategies.

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Introduction

The mechanisms of adaptation don't limit the way of human activity. Humankind can reformat, arrange the surrounding space according to his requests and needs. We could confirm that culture is a virtual space of symbol, meaning, abstraction, value, and else. Culture is embodied in things but not reproduced from artifacts. And this is its virtual, ideal, or spiritual meaning. The key to this way of functioning of culture is society, a stable system of realization of sociality.

The direct purpose of information technology is to consolidate the monumental scale of world civilization. However, such an applied aspect of the content and role of information technology, of course, isn't limited. Information technology produces a special type of reality, namely, virtual reality. The number of adherents of virtual reality is growing rapidly around the world, along with the increasing amount of time invested by the average citizen in cyberspace. That is, virtual reality becomes more important to the average person than first-order reality. This fact allows us to talk about Internet addictions: the painful commitment of the masses to the simulation environment. The priority of the virtual over the real threatens the biological as such. Also, several thinkers, philosophers, and psychologists underline a kind of expansion of the virtual into reality: frequent cases where the horizon of everyday life of a person is guided by the axioms and principles of virtual reality. Thus, the number of cases of unmotivated aggression in adolescents is growing, from beatings and humiliation recorded by a mobile phone for further placement on the global network, to mass murders, shootings, which have repeatedly occurred around the world. Thus, the philosophical discourse of the concept of sociality in the context of virtual reality is a priority of modern humanities. So, in 2020 have started two international projects in NPDU: Jean Monnet Chair "Social and Cultural Aspects of European Studies" (SCAES) and Jean Monnet Project "EU Values of Diversity and Inclusion for Sustainable Development" (EVDISD). Among the projects' main tasks should be called the study of interaction and communication in the virtual space, its dangers and challenges.

Praxeological dimensions of sociality in the modern world

Following the principles and emphases of solving sociality's conceptualization, the contours of interpretation of many problems of political, economic, ethnic, and global, ecological nature are determined.

Thus, Martha Radice analyzes the problem of the realization of sociality in the context of the modern urban landscape, the specifics of which the author calls 'multiculture'². Jeff Malpas also follows this logic of understanding the phenomenon of sociality and its role³. He argues that the phenomenon of sociality underlies the spatial representations and orientations of humans. In other words, the fundamental problem of the existence of society and culture as a genesis involves attributive human sociality.

The idea of sociality as a certain precondition, a context for realization, will be fair. Sarah Pink interprets this category comprehensively as the unity of activity, sociality, and place. As for her, the unity of these factors produces a kind of social locus, concerning which it is appropriate to make judgments of an evaluative and prognostic nature. Daniel Hjorth explores sociality from the standpoint of the commercialization of modern social life⁴. He believes that the interaction of society and business leads to the formation of the concept of 'social entrepreneurship' and significantly transforms the content of definitive practices of the phenomenon of sociality. In other words, the ways of determining sociality are formed following the context, where the gradation of the definition of value takes place.

However, it is not capital, but values of another order are more important in determining the content of the category of sociality. Often the category of sociality is identified with civic consciousness or position. The methodology of this approach to the study of sociality raises some doubts. Thus, Trevor Stack distinguishes four categories of citizenship: political, national, legal, and social⁵. Suppose the first three categories are known and understood. In that case, social sociality means stable structures of consciousness of individuals who identify themselves as part of a certain community, not limited by ethnic or state factors. It is a motivating sense of belonging to a rather abstract community, a community as such. The author comes to such differentiation based on a

² M. Radice, *Sociality, spatiality, conviviality, community*, „Ethnic and Racial Studies”, 2019, Vol. 42, Issue 3, pp. 395-401.

³ J. Malpas, *Space and sociality*, „International Journal of Philosophical Studies”, 1997, Vol. 5, Issue 1, pp. 53-79.

⁴ D. Hjorth, *Public entrepreneurship: desiring social change, creating sociality*, „Entrepreneurship & Regional Development. An International Journal”, 2013, Vol. 25, Issue 1-2: The distinctiveness of the European tradition in entrepreneurship research, pp. 34-51.

⁵ T. Stack, *Beyond the state? Civil sociality and other notions of citizenship*, „Citizenship Studies”, 2012, Vol. 16, Issue 7, pp. 871-885.

significant empirical base of questionnaires and surveys of recipients of different categories. We consider the very fact of such a motivational structure as an argument that confirms the definition of sociality as the intentionality of subjectivity to the social. But citizenship is a derivative phenomenon, as a form of embodiment and realization of such an intention in social life's objectified structures.

In the context of defining sociality as a prerequisite, Trevor Butt forms his concept, who considers sociality to be the basis of the phenomenon of empathy and studies it in the context of M. Merleau-Ponty's existential phenomenology⁶. L. M. Leitner and D. T. Pfenninger also follow the line of identification of sociality and empathy⁷. Margaret Gilbert explores sociality in a slightly different context⁸. She analyzes the phenomenon of sociality based on the concepts of 'common intention' and 'joint action'. In other words, the study of sociality is justified from the standpoint of social convention and collective beliefs. Otherwise, the discourse of sociality acquires signs of excessive speculation.

Also, a productive direction of the study of sociality is to study the specifics of its explication because of the historical context. The sociality of Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Modernity is motivated and ideologized by various worldview principles. Accordingly, the present also forms peculiar principles of sociality. Thus, Lee Thompson and Julie Cupples explore the formation of digital sociality in the online space of modern ICT⁹. According to them, modern gadgets don't lose sociality but change the form of one's explication, increasing one's impact on society's dynamics as a whole.

Individuals are attributively endowed with sociality and need to belong to a social group. Thus, in existential philosophy, a specific feature of existence is 'being-to-another'. However, a person's life has a focus on the Other, as evidenced by a whole galaxy of outstanding classics, giving separate addresses and emotional assessments of this direction. Establishing communication with the Other necessarily implies the presence of a mediator, or mediative space, a space of

⁶ T. Butt, *Sociality, role, and embodiment*, "Journal of Constructivist Psychology", 1998, Vol. 11, Issue 2, pp. 105-116.

⁷ L. M. Leitner, D. T. Pfenninger, *Sociality and optimal functioning*, "Journal of Constructivist Psychology", 1994, Vol. 7, Issue 2, pp. 119-135.

⁸ M. Gilbert, *In Search of Sociality. Philosophical Explorations*, "An International Journal for the Philosophy of Mind and Action", 1998, Vol. 1, Issue 3, pp. 233-241.

⁹ L. Thompson, J. Cupples, *Seen and not heard? Text messaging and digital sociality*, "Social & Cultural Geography", 2008, Vol. 9, Issue 1, pp. 95-108.

communication. Of course, such a function of mediation is performed by semiotic, or sign-symbolic reality, i.e., culture. Thus, culture explicates sociality as an attributive trait inherent in the human essence and acts as a factor in the consolidation of society as a whole. At the heart of the concept of 'sociality', most of its researchers point to such determinants as 'relationship', 'mutual agreement', 'community of human existence'. So, sociality is the embodiment of the belief in a common way of building a world of life, the desire to belong to a community. Society is a way of life of many subjects, based on the agreed order of worldview, values, and community activities.

Aggression and entropy of Infospace: new configurations of morality

If we talk about the complex characteristics of a human, it is customary to indicate their bio-social nature. Characteristics of humans as biological essence under the influence of a new virtual ontology also change significantly. Thus, loud hyperdynamic, atrophy, and rudimentation of some organs, significant 'rejuvenation' of the so-called 'age' diseases: heart attacks, strokes, osteochondrosis, etc. But even if we don't focus on the pathological manifestations of biological transformations, there are some common stereotypes of behavior, that also pose a threat. Forgetting about food, personal hygiene, interest in the opposite sex is quite natural for adherents of cyberspace. Fundamental biological instincts, such as the instinct of self-preservation or the instinct of procreation, are being supplanted.

Fundamental study of this issue was received in the works of Professor of the University of Hertfordshire (UK) Luciano Floridi, in particular in work "Open Problems of the Philosophy of Information"¹⁰. According to the author, the information revolutions radically change not just the course of everyday life, but the content of the concept of the Universe. The information space, or the created intellectual environment (in L. Floridi's terminology) is formed by reontologizing the surrounding reality. Thus created infosphere, or totality of information objects, formulates a new conceptual idea of the Universe. It employs other laws of physics (reversibility of time, its and space plasticity, multivectority, fragmentary laws of mechanics and gravity, etc.), other laws of life, biology (the ability to add health 'in one click', the conditionality of death, and the exchange substances and reproduction of the genus should

¹⁰ L. Floridi, *Philosophy and Computing: An Introduction*, London/New York 1999.

not be mentioned), other laws of knowledge (fakes, information intrusions, encyclopedias, providing an unlimited number of editors, general anonymity and unlimited freedom of expression). And logically, other laws and principles of social and personal relations.

The lack of clear coordinates for self-identification in the infosphere, the conditional and arbitrary or fragmentary nature of determinants, the general aggressive nature of the information space – all these tendencies lead to the disorientation of the person. And we remember that disorientation, or controlled entropy, is the simplest and most effective way to manipulate an individual or a community. The subject in this context is allowed to act incognito, avoiding the results of action or responsibility. That is, cyberspace doesn't imply the presence of a subject as an agent of action. All traditional systems of ethics are based on an agent responsible for his actions. L. Floridi creates a non-anthropocentric ethical theory. His information ethics is characterized by researchers as centered on the passive ('patient-centered') aspect of human activity. Even inaction is a consciously chosen act. Everything that a person does or does not do is subject to moral evaluation. The Socratic principle of ethics, according to which the basis of every evil deed is ignorance of man, in the days of the fifth information revolution is extremely difficult to justify. We do not aim to refute the conclusions of prominent classics of culture, Socrates in particular. Wide access to information doesn't mean a high level of culture or education. As in the famous proverb about a grenade in the paws of a monkey. Such situations in the infosphere are not only widespread but even more dangerous. Destruction in consciousness is also the disorientation of a person with all the following consequences.

There are many philosophical concepts of the nature and genesis of evil. Since the Enlightenment, it has become a tradition to consider social organization's imperfection as a source of evil. The reality in general, and society in particular, create insurmountable obstacles to simple human happiness. Virtual reality is a field of unlimited possibilities, which can give a person the fulfillment of the most secret desires. Such a powerful channel of sublimation can minimize social conflicts, collisions, and shocks. Virtual reality sets a fundamentally different logic for defining purpose and content. The eternal struggle of priorities, the problem of choice as a curse of freedom – the vestiges of a passing era. 'All-inclusive' - this is the slogan of the era of prosperity. In this regard, virtual reality can perform the functions of 'promised land' or 'paradise on earth' for an unlimited number of sufferers.

The Chinese scientist Liu Gang discusses the problem of orientation in an aggressive and noisy info-space¹¹. The reason for this severity of the problem, the researcher sees in the focus of the Western paradigm of thinking on cognitive philosophy, which is limited to the internal systemic way of analytics. Instead, he proposes an orientation philosophy, which is based on a modal theory of information and the idea of possible (information worlds). The work's historical and philosophical basis consists of traditional Chinese philosophy and the genius works of G. Leibniz. Modality significantly determines the content and nature of analytical procedures. The subject in such a discourse is accustomed to a variety of contexts, and therefore the aggressiveness of the information space is not able to confuse him.

Significantly, the comprehension of modern technogenic problems and the corresponding socio-cultural transformations is carried out within the framework of the Platonic-Aristotelian paradigm of epistemology. Plato's "Myth of the Cave" prophetically describes the current contradictions between the fragmentary perception of reality, the conformism of such a habit, and the need to adapt to the expanding information universe.

Synchrony and diachrony of virtual communication

Along with the biological nature, human social attribution undergoes significant transformations. The great Aristotle defined society through communication, which connects different individuals into a single social organism. Communication can take place in two planes: synchronous and diachronic. Communication in the aspect of synchrony means interaction in a single space-time, i.e., participation in social processes. The diachronic context of communication involves dialogue at the level of culture, accumulated semantic and value constructions. Thus, society and culture are the parties to one medal, one existential essence of man, which is manifested in the need for the presence of the Other, and hence overcoming and transcendence. Refusal of reference entails the negation of both subject-object relations and subject-subject relations.

Being in virtual reality is like a 'God's game'. First, it is unlimited possibilities, the ability to be guided solely by their tastes and preferences. Secondly, it is complete freedom that does not involve

¹¹ L. Gan, *Philosophy of Information and the Foundations of the Future Chinese philosophy of science and technology*, "Philosophy questions", 2007, No. 5, pp. 45-57.

responsibility because virtual reality is a space of simulation, illusion, and copy, full of existential tension. Third, absolute freedom implies the same absolute loneliness. This being *ex nihilo*, which is not determined by anything but its subjectivity, has traditionally been considered the Absolute prerogative. The disappearance or expulsion of the Other destroys the fundamental foundations of human sociality. Thousands and tens of thousands of virtual friends in social networks don't exclude loneliness, fear, and despair and don't mean an active civic position or a high level of personal culture. Hyper-sociality, an incredible activity in the information space, destroys the archetypal skills of social interaction, turns into asociality, or sociopathy in more familiar terminology. We are dealing not just with information technology, not even with IT-culture, but with a new type of existence: dialogue with everyone with complete anonymity and impersonation of the mentioned 'everyone'. The metaphor of romanticism 'loneliness in the crowd', or a hermetic tragedy from where there is no way out, becomes loneliness in the network, which does not burden, but on the contrary, allows the desired pattern of self-identification. Thus, communication in a synchronous section of the virtual world is, in essence, a conversation with the best interlocutor – himself. In this regard, the need for schizoanalytic procedures, which are declared by postmodernism, becomes obvious.

However, communication in cyberspace has other properties. Confirmation of this fact is appropriate to consider the events of 2014-2015 in Ukraine. As you know, Internet users with the help of information and communication space of social networks, caused a change of government in the country and mobilized society to resist external aggression. Accordingly, it would be appropriate to assume that with the help of digital technology for the first time in human history it was possible to implement utopian communist doctrines, beginning with Pythagoras and Plato: building a society of total happiness. It is appropriate to assume that with the help of ICT is the embodiment of the classical ideal of a just social system, communism in its classical (non-Soviet) view.

Diachronic communication, in terms of culture, is based on a different understanding of time. Synchronous is updated in the current model, so it is quite organically reflected in virtual reality. Diachrony in the present moment connects the past as historical memory and the future as the intention of a logical continuation. Virtual reality is a continuity of the present, therefore, doesn't require memory and tradition, and the future is a set of equivalent possibilities, the implementation of each of

them doesn't exclude the others. The nonlinearity of time is an attributive feature of virtual reality. Thus, the need for culture as the transmission of experience and connection of generations is lost. Besides, the main function of culture is protective. According to F. Nietzsche, culture is a thin apple peel over the hot chaos¹². Its purpose is to hide the unattractive ugliness of nature. Culture makes the surrounding reality acceptable and habitable. Virtual reality is a product of humans, a world in which humanity is the main architect and creator. And he needs to defend himself only from himself. Is there a need for this? The negative answer will be obvious. However, in our opinion, this is a wide field for discussion.

According to many researchers, culture is a consequence of natural human mortality. In today's relevance, a human is immortal. Understanding the phenomenon of death requires a memory that captures the departure of loved ones and knowledge of the inevitability of the future. Virtual reality gives a feeling of immortality, belonging to the Substantial principle or information. The person in cyberspace is a segment of the general information flow. Thus, the new ontology necessarily affects anthropogenesis at all its levels, including archetypes. Changing communication and psychological skills shifts the emphasis on communication procedures and, as a result, changes somatics. These transformations are due to interactivity as an attributive feature of virtual reality.

Based on the derivative, secondary nature of the ontological status of virtual reality, arbitrariness in the way of existence of its objects, the lack of clear criteria of existence, meaning, and causality, there is a wide range of problems associated with metamorphoses that occur in modern phenomena of subjectivity and sociality. It is significant that the widespread demand from society for virtual reality products, some thinkers associate with escapism techniques, gaining freedom through 'escape from society' in the terminology of E. Fromm. Thus, E. O. Taratuta calls virtual reality freedom from the social without going beyond the social system¹³. Indeed, if the category of freedom presupposed a transcendental act of spiritual growth and development in the classical tradition, then modernity increasingly insists on the attribution of conformism and mannerist perfectionism. Naturally, virtual reality is the environment where such intentions find the necessary and

¹² F. Nietzsche, *Evil wisdom. F. Nietzsche Works*, Vol. 1, Sankt Petersburg, p. 829.

¹³ E. E. Taratuta, *Philosophy of virtual reality*, Sankt Peterburg 2007, p. 148.

sufficient tools for implementation and satisfaction. A virtual object is plastic in itself, and virtual space is created according to the needs and requests of a person: in communication, searching for information, purchasing the necessary things and services, etc. In other words, virtual reality is a sphere of sublimation of the psychological and emotional states of humans.

Maximum expressiveness and clarity, deliberateness of virtual objects have a very pragmatic purpose. This feature produces a significant emotional reaction of the actor, dependence, and passion for such an intensity of perception. Therefore, the generation of modern students is bored at school because the constant reality on the horizon of everyday life doesn't have such an intense impact on perception as the aesthetics of virtuality. Note that the aesthetics of virtual space plays a decisive role in the demand for these technologies. Unlike the traditional communicative model, where language acts are a mediator as a sign-symbol system, communication in cyberspace is carried out through an image. Thus, verbal communication practices presuppose the need for rationality, through which the semantics, syntax, and pragmatics of the text, both oral and written, ensure and maintain the adequacy, accuracy of transmission, and reception of information content. Virtual space is a translation of an image, not a word, so the priority in the reception certainly belongs to the impression, emotional response, rather than reflective-analytical activities. It appeals to emotions, stimulation, and 'cultivation' in the virtual space that leads to the improvement of the 'living presence' technology and expands the possibilities of interaction in the immersive computer dimension.

Thus, the multidimensionality of reality in IT-processes is a fait accompli. The matter is different: the order of being in the world changes, being itself loses its traditional foundations. A 'new ontology' is brewing, the attributes of which must be understood and formulated. To describe and analyze the principles of interaction between man and the world, the position of 'two realities' - objective and subjective - was quite sufficient. Moreover, the thesis of the identity of being and thinking is one of the axioms of heuristic ambitions. The thesis was shaken in the IT era when the multiplicity of realities became a fait accompli, and the growing virtual reality shifted the object-subject coordinates. Inherent in the classical paradigm, the idea of the world as a set of discrete beings is not convincing in the space of virtual reality. Impermeable to knowledge object, stronghold, and the curse of epistemology, is beyond the psychological, the explication of which is virtuality. As M. Foucault said,

the secret is that there is no essence¹⁴. In the virtual space, the essence is exhausted in the phenomenon; the lack of depth precludes pluralism of interpretation. The virtual object is entirely in the power of its creator and consumer. Based on this, the question of the status of uniqueness and the necessity of the existence of being is removed, as well as the procedure of its cognition. The relation to being consciousness builds not on the principle of analogy, and the principle of reduplication: the creation of clones. Children who grew up in cyberspace don't break toys to open the internal structure; they create them with the content they already need. The unusual plasticity of a virtual object naturally leads to a lack of reference. Reference as such is a necessary principle of communication between subject and object. Postulating the refusal of reference leads to irreversible changes in the subject: uncritical perception of information, openness to suggestive emotional influence, the anonymity of communication, the priority of presentation and positioning before the essence, rudimentation of long-term memory, and development of operative, search for impressions as motivational communicative.

Conclusions

The modern information society exists on principles that demonstrate the expansion of the virtual into reality. Such a priority of the virtual over the real is a threat to the biological both in the context of life support and given the changing archetypes of human thinking and consciousness. Under the influence of virtual reality technologies, the reontologization of reality and the transformation of sociality's basic predictions as a prerequisite for belonging to the community, common values, and beliefs. Significant differences characterize the Infospace of virtual reality compared to first reality: it employs other physics laws, other ideas about the meaning, value, and uniqueness of human life, other epistemological procedures, and other principles of interaction between people. On the one hand, such opportunities provide the necessary space for the realization of subjectivity, the sublimation of its effects and aspirations, to minimize social conflicts and conflicts of interest. New communication technologies make it possible to create a new format of solidarity without class, property, ethnic and cultural differences. On the other hand, the information space of virtuality is oversaturated with

¹⁴ M. Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the subject. A course of lectures given in College de France in 1981-1982*, Saint Petersburg 2007, p. 677.

various messages and patterns of behavior, which disorients the modern man in his worldview priorities and prospects. And since one of the most important functions of culture is defined as protective, a dilemma arises: is the space of virtual reality a promised land for man, which brings needs and a resource for self-realization, or is it an evolutionarily new round of adaptive and creative abilities? And given the above arguments makes the second answer is more convincing.

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II. COMMENTARIES

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UKRAINIAN QUESTION – NO GOOD END?

Abstract:

There is a deadlock implementing the ‘Minsk deal’. The question is – what will be the end? The answer will depend on the position of Russia and America. The former doesn’t want escalation but is ready for any scenario. The latter is cautious too, but one day, seeking its interests may use the war in Ukraine as a tool in a new geopolitical game. In this case, the disaster of the Ukrainian statehood may happen.

Keywords:

Minsk deal, Russia, America, Normandy Four, Ukrainian statehood, Donbas, Donetsk, Luhansk, Novorossiya, land corridor to Crimea

Introduction

Six years have passed since the beginning of the military conflict in Ukraine. It was a hope that the so-called ‘Minsk deal’ will solve the problem in a way, acceptable to Kyiv, Donbas, Russia, and the West. But now the reality has changed.

Already from the start, it was clear that the ‘Minsk deal’ was more useful for Russia and Donbas. It was signed by Ukraine after painful military losses and supposed to create a ‘state in a state’, which would be

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very close to Moscow and could block any Western policy of Kyiv. So, there is no surprise that after some time Ukraine with the silent support of the United States and Europe began to sabotage the implementation of the 'Minsk', and many Ukrainian high-level politicians have been fairly declaring that their state signed the deal just to win time and that some conditions are unacceptable to Kyiv².

Thus, today the process moved from the phase when the 'Minsk deal' had to be realized to the phase when Ukraine wants to revise it (first of all, the requirement to change the Constitution and the condition of the control of the border with Russia). Moscow of course is against such an approach, and the deadlock – something like 'No War, No Peace' – has occurred.

Accordingly, there is a question – what is the way out, how the situation will develop? To answer it the main determinants must be formulated. The first one – the position of Russia, the second one – the position of America and (in some part) Europe, the third one – the situation in Ukraine (not the position of the state, which is not relevant, because it fully depends on the West, as separatist Donbas regions do on Moscow).

For now, it seems that today's uncertainty may last a long time (months or even years). If almost nothing has changed for six years, why something must change in another six ones? But historical experience shows that any 'frozen conflict' one day can become 'hot' again. The examples of Georgia (2008) and Karabakh (2020) are more than evident. Then the question is – why the war may start again in Ukraine (who can begin it) and what can be possible consequences for its statehood?

Russia – sleeping bear

Mike Pense once said that a Russian bear never dies – just hibernates. This idea may help to explain Moscow's position on Ukraine. It is clear that the Kremlin is not satisfied with Kyiv's unwillingness to implement the 'Minsk deal', but such a 'middle' situation is better to it than a new war. Several arguments.

² *Kyiv rejects Russia's demands to include Donbas special status in Ukrainian Constitution*, <<http://uawire.org/kyiv-rejects-russia-s-demands-to-include-donbas-special-status-in-ukrainian-constitution>> (08.11.2020); *Minsk agreements impossible to fulfill – Ukraine's Kravchuk*, <<https://www.unian.info/politics/donbas-war-minsk-agreements-impossible-to-fulfill-kravchuk-says-11144114.html>> (08.11.2020); P. Zayats, *Reznikov rasskazal, pochemu Minskiye soglasheniya nevozmozhno vypolnit'*, <<https://ukraina24.segodnya.ua/vlast-news/5349-ministr-rasskazal-pochemu-minskie-soglasheniya-nevozmozhno-vypolnit>> (08.11.2020).

First, in Georgia Russia before the conflict in 2008 hadn't been demonstrating any signs of aggression. To say more – the situation of uncertainty was useful to it as a tool of influence. Because of Mikhail Saakashvili's actions, it had to react militarily and to recognize the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia – the end of the game. At the same time, it decided not to change the regime in Tbilisi despite the possibility to do it.

In 2014 Russia took Crimea only after Maidan win in Kyiv because it decided that it must do it (was its perception of the situation right – other question). In 2015 Russia had an opportunity to take more Ukrainian territories, but it didn't take even Mariupol. After that, seeing the politics of Kyiv, it had a lot of pretext to renew the war and, for example, create a land corridor to Crimea and/or take the whole Donetsk oblast and Luhansk oblast, but it didn't do that again.

It is obvious that Russia is not afraid of new American and/or European sanctions, but it is, for example, interested in the realization of the 'Nord Stream 2' project (restarting war in Ukraine could endanger it as the case of Alexey Navalny did, and for Germany, it would be much more difficult to save it in such situation). In other words, Kremlin does not look for additional problems and prefer to wait (for the deeper internal crisis in Ukraine and bigger popularity³ of the pro-Russian powers there), also giving Russian citizenship to Donbas people (as in South Ossetia and Abkhazia) and supporting separatists' armies.

But Moscow is ready for any scenario. Russian bear can wake up and go to war if it decides that 'the red line' is crossed (as it was in the case of Crimea in his opinion). Then, the question is – what the Kremlin can percept as 'the red line'? Today president Zelensky strengthens military cooperation with Great Britain and Turkey. There are talks about factual British bases in Ukraine⁴. Such military presence of the West in the very close Russian neighborhood can be unacceptable for Moscow and it can decide to 'cut' Ukraine from the Black Sea. The other thing which can push the Kremlin to military operation – new broad destabilization in Kyiv (new Maidan) and a

³ *Partiya "Oppozitsionnaya platforma" polozhitel'nootsenila vybory na Ukraine*, <<https://iz.ru/1078450/2020-10-26/partiya-oppozitsionnaia-platforma-polozhitelno-otcenila-vybory-na-ukraine>> (26.11.2020).

⁴ A. Sharipov, *Velikobritaniya Pomozhetukraine sozdat' dve voyenno-morskiye bazy – zamestitel' glavy OP Zhovkva*, <<https://hromadske.ua/ru/posts/velikobritaniya-pomozhet-ukraine-sozdat-dve-voenno-morskie-bazy-zamestitel-predsdatelya-op-zhovkva>> (09.11.2020).

further escalation in Donbas. Today political and social-economic tension in Ukraine is growing every day, but a lot will depend on the word of America.

America can change the game

There is 'Normandy Four', but the role of Western Europe in the Ukrainian crisis is not very big. It can try to save this format and to imitate some activity, but, the leading role in the West, solving Ukrainian problems, belongs to Washington. For example, during the last meeting of 'Normandy Four' leaders president Zelensky refused to take back the national military in all points of Donbas, and Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov said that this happened because of the position of America⁵. Of course, it is the Russian version, but many signs show that the American word determines the foreign policy of Kyiv.

Even during the presidency of Donald Trump the line of Democrats, who hadn't lost influence in the American foreign policy system, was dominant towards Ukraine (Trump was mainly interested in Joe Biden's personal affairs there as a factor of presidential elections in America). It must be said that despite public aggressiveness towards Russia Biden told Petro Poroshenko not to provoke Russia in Crimea⁶. But this doesn't mean that approach can't change in the future.

Several factors can lead to that. First, desire to get rid of the 'Minsk deal' through new war, because this agreement narrows the maneuver of Ukraine (America). Second, purpose to put more pressure on Russia by the new military conflict to get an advantage in some other sphere. Third, the internal situation in Ukraine can deteriorate in a dangerous way (people will be ready for a new Maidan, and the popularity of the pro-Russian forces will grow rapidly), and only 'external mobilization' through 'Putin's aggression' can help to stabilize it. Finally, Russia can react strongly, if Washington decides to locate its tactical nuclear and/or hypersonic missiles in Ukraine.

Possible consequences

All these steps are very risky because of one thing – the unpredictable reaction of the Kremlin. America (as in the case of Georgia) may hope that the Ukrainian military (it is very hard to imagine

⁵ Lavrov: *Ukraina otkazalas' ot razvedeniya sil povsemu Donbassu iz-za SSHA*, <<https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4250348>> (09.11.2020).

⁶ *The full version of the Biden and Poroshenko conversation*. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdBzRFJGctI>> (09.11.2020).

that NATO will interfere – at least directly) will be powerful enough to stop Donbas armies, supported by Russia, but it is a miscalculation. Putin clearly said that in case of a Kyiv attack in the East, the Ukrainian statehood will be put in question⁷, and nobody can say, where Russia will stop in this case. There are several scenarios.

In 2019 separatist Donetsk⁸ and Luhansk⁹ Republics adopted the laws, which state that their borders coincide with the borders of Donetsk oblast and Luhansk oblast appropriately. It means that if the war begins, unrecognized Republics can reach these borders. At the same time, Russia can create a land corridor to Crimea and in general ‘cut’ Ukraine from the Black Sea. To say more, the idea of ‘Novorossiia’ may be put on the table once again. Finally, Kremlin can decide to change the regime in Kyiv, using Donbas separatists and loyal political forces in Ukraine.

Figure 1. Novorussian Federation.



Source: *Novorussian Federation?*, <<http://flag-review.blogspot.com/2015/01/novorussian-federation.html>> (17.11.2020).

⁷ *Putin prigorzil Ukraine problemami dlyagosudarstvennosti za ataku na DNR*, <<https://www.rbc.ru/politics/07/06/2018/5b190ca19a794743fd6aef44>> (09.11.2020).

⁸ *V DNR priyanyali zakon o gosgranitse*, <<https://ria.ru/20191129/1561741247.html>>, (09.11.2020).

⁹ *V LNR prinyali zakon o granitsesamoprovozglashennoy respubliki*, <<https://www.rbc.ru/politics/18/12/2019/5dfa27b89a79471864319ec7>> (09.11.2020).

Russia's decision where to stop will depend on several moments. First, military success, and is supposed to be fast, keeping in mind the possibilities of the Russian military machine and still poor condition of the Ukrainian army. Second – and much more important – the position of the Ukrainian population in different regions. For example, people in Odesa may be glad to become a part of 'Novorossiya', but people in Dnipro not so much. In other words, Russia (separatists) may take Donetsk oblast, Luhansk oblast, and some other Eastern regions, but not all, because of potential problems with their loyalty (control).

So, minimal scenario – Donetsk oblast, Luhansk oblast, and land corridor to Crimea. It could be an acceptable cost for the West in the context of a broader geopolitical game with Russia, but a territorial disaster for Ukraine. For the moment this is only a hypothetical situation. However, the examples of Georgia and Karabakh show that in the case of the 'frozen conflicts' there is no question 'if the war restarts', but 'when it restarts'.

There is one specific politician in Russia – Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. He says a lot of crazy things. Some experts think that he is just a show maker, a political clown. Others propose to listen to him with attention because sometimes he says what Kremlin wants, but cannot say itself openly. So, not so long ago he predicted¹⁰ that the war in Ukraine may restart in 2021 or 2022, because Kyiv, pushed by the West, will attack Donbas and Crimea. As a result, 70-80 percent of the Ukrainian territory will become part of Russia, the other one – will join the EU and NATO (Poland and Germany may be involved in the conflict). It looks unreal, but in today's world, unreal things happen too often. Anyway, it seems that there can be no good end to the Ukrainian story.

Conclusion

The Ukrainian case is very complicated. There was a hope that the 'Minsk deal' will solve the problem, but now the deadlock occurred in the implementation of the agreement. It may last a long time, but the history of the 'frozen conflicts' shows that one day or another they become 'hot' again. The development of the situation will depend mainly on the position of Russia and America. The Kremlin doesn't want to

¹⁰ *Voyna i razdel Ukrainy proizoydut v 2021-2022godu, - Zhirinovskiy*, <<https://rusvesna.su/news/1606374914>> (26.11.2020).

restart the war but is ready for any scenario. Washington for now is cautious too, but one day may decide to use military conflict in Ukraine to improve American geopolitical position. The possible result – a disaster of the Ukrainian statehood, but it seems that there can be no good end to this story.

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Zaza TSOTNIASHVILI¹

Georgia

**RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION AGAINST GEORGIAN
CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES
(GEORGIA, TSKHINVALI REGION)**

During the dissolution of the Soviet Union, conflicts erupted in Georgia in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia and the Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia. While these conflicts resulted in a tragedy affecting the entire country, the populations in and adjoining these territories were hit especially hard.

Today, Russian propaganda suggests that Ossetians are claiming Georgian culture and heritage as their own in an attempt to pit Georgia against Ossetians when the true conflict is between Georgia and Russia. Georgian citizens must preserve our heritage by widely disseminating the authentic history of the hand-carved monuments our ancestors created. We cannot allow this truth to be lost as a result of today's complex information war.

Mankind is facing a new challenge because the information warfare used for many years is becoming increasingly relevant. Although this war is invisible, it happening every minute of the day and is very dangerous, in part because it is having a negative impact on local conflicts. Many scholars believe that the conflicts presented as ethnic conflicts are in reality the result of a conflict between great ideologies and they are fueled by disinformation that has created a rift in Georgian-Ossetian relations.

Information warfare is a tactic in hybrid warfare, defined by Frank Hoffmann as: “the combined use of various methods of combat,

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including conventional, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist and criminal acts, to achieve victory.”² In his view, future wars will combine traditional and irregular combat operations, deploying both weapons and weaponized misinformation. The lethality of traditional conflict will be combined with the fanaticism of irregular combat in a long-term strategy.

Georgians vividly remember the fateful recent past that has befallen us, whose roots can be traced back in history. Well-known historian Vakhushti Bagrationi wrote about the settlement of Ossetians in Georgia: “And the Ossetians come into Georgian as the number of people inside country was reduced from the enemies.”³ According to the Russian ambassador to Georgia – Tatischev (1604-1615) in the middle of the 17th Century they also settled in the headwaters of the Great Liakhvi. By the 1770s, 2,860 Ossetian households lived on the southern slopes of the Caucasus. Of these, 860 lived in Samachablo; 200 in Saeristao and the rest scattered through many other places. Until the 20th Century, only Georgians, Armenians, and Jews lived in Tskhinvali. Some Ossetians were baptized as ‘Christians’ as soon as they settled in Kartli and tried to assimilate Christian customs. This had a positive effect on their consciousness, general culture, character, and behavior. The newly settled Ossetians were assisted by local Georgians in such tasks as arranging the yard-house, cultivating the gardens and vineyards, and overcoming other challenges.

Georgian kings, ecclesiastical and public figures made every effort to spread literacy and knowledge among our fellow Ossetians. The education of the children of the Ossetians was greatly enhanced by the highly educated King-poet Archil, who brought together the leading Ossetians and preached the importance of education. The Ossetians agreed, Archil divided several Ossetians into Russia, and in 1700 introduced Russian printing presses and Georgian letter molds to Moscow, which the Ossetians liked very much, as Zakaria Chichinadze noted⁴.

Georgian kings greatly assisted the Ossetian churches and monasteries as having a real mission to spread true knowledge and education among the population. King George XI of Kartli (1671-1688

² F. Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*, Arlington 2007, p. 5.

³ V. Bagrationi, *Description of Kingdom of Georgia*, Tbilisi 1941, p.71

⁴ Z. Chichinadze, *The Settlement of Ossetians in Kartli and the Worthiness and Merit of Georgians on Them*, Tbilisi 1916.

and 1703-1709) donated bells with a gift inscription to the monastery in the village of Dzivgisi, Zeicis Zion, as a sign of friendly relations with the Ossetians.

Conflict, as early as 1991, manifested itself in the form in which our lives were sacrificed in the face of a hard yesterday, today, and an uncertain tomorrow. Due to well-known political and military processes, the Tskhinvali region, which was cut off from Georgian boundaries, has become an isolated entity and continues to live under the full influence of the Russian Federation.

The OSCE Mission to Georgia started working in the Tskhinvali region in late 1992. As a result of the conflict, up to a thousand people were killed and up to a hundred people were missing. About 70-80,000 people were evicted from their homes. The region was virtually empty. As of today, the population of the Tskhinvali region / South Ossetia is 15,000-20,000.

It is natural that the information war, which is going on strongly all over the world today, is being actively carried out to completely separate the region from Georgia. In the current situation, Russia plays the role of 'mediator' and 'peacemaker' in the conflict it inspired. On June 24th, 1992, under the Russian (Sochi) Treaty, a joint peacekeeping force (consisting of Russian, Georgian and Ossetian) was deployed in the region and a Joint Control Commission was established.

Occupying forces of the Russian Federation are currently deployed in the Tskhinvali region, in violation of the August 12th, 2008 ceasefire agreement brokered by French President Nicolas Sarkozy, which obliges Russia to withdraw its military forces to pre-conflict positions. The illegal decision of the Russian Federation on the so-called Tskhinvali region / South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Only Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Nauru support the recognition of 'independence' at this stage. As a result of the efforts of the Georgian authorities, Tuvalu and Vanuatu withdrew their recognition decision.

Today's Great Hybrid Conflict, in which Russia is actively involved, incorrectly presents the Tskhinvali region as the historical homeland of the Russian policy-making Ossetian population. This is a lie masquerading as truth spread around the world through falsified information. Sadly, Georgians are not doing enough to defend our cultural heritage against this disinformation. Unless Georgia speaks out vociferously, this disinformation will become 'fact' for those who read it.

Georgia is a poor country. We do not have abundant gas or oil. However, our ancestors left us a rich cultural legacy that we must

preserve and pass on to future generations. Our forefathers built churches and castles that weathered the centuries and form the foundation of our heritage. Their labor was manual. Our labor is digital. We must protect and correct the historical record.

From this point of view, it is interesting to observe what appears in local news. It is simply an ‘echo’ of the Kremlin's policy. Against this background, Russian-Ossetian local propaganda weapons are actively engaged. The media remain one of the most powerful tools for developing Kremlin policies and imposing them on the people whose lives they control.

The 1990s were a time before the internet had fully consumed traditional television, radio, and print media, especially in the Tskhinvali region. These media outlets were among the most popular in the Tskhinvali region, and spread the Russian point of view:

- “Yuzhnaya Ossetia” (Republican Public-Political Newspaper);
- “Website of the President of South Ossetia”;
- “Xurzærin” (Tsiskari); Osinform (News Agency);
- Iriston.com (on the history and culture of Ossetia);
- Resa (State News Agency) (Head of State News Agency) Maia Kharebova;
- Ossetian.com (ossetians.com);
- “Iron Avzadjï Club” (Ирон æвзæджы клуб) Alans Language Club, and others.

The information war has proliferated significantly since then and the occupiers are now attempting to reinvent the true history of Georgian cultural monuments located inside the occupied territories for their interests. It is cultural cleansing accomplished by purposefully leaving out key facts in their retelling. The Georgian roots of Georgian architectural monuments are being purged in the Ossetian retelling of ancient history, creating a new, fake ‘reality’.

Contemporary bloggers are covering the Tskhinvali region and spreading this misinformation, including Maria Plion (Plieva), Zarina Sanakoeva, Temur Tskhovrebov, and others. The website ‘Ossetian Radio and Television’ (Information-Analytical Edition) is adding to the disinformation, as is “Yuzhnaya Ossetia” (Republican Socio-Political Newspaper). And although they are slightly critical of governmental communication to serve their own goals, their pushback is not nearly enough to combat the historical misperceptions that have been created.

For example, the 16th Century Georgian monument Achabeti Fortress has been renamed ‘Alans Fortress’, to claim the site as Ossetian.

Schoolchildren visit so-called restoration works, which are widely covered by the above-mentioned ‘media outlets’ and spread in the Russian-speaking world. This generation will grow up with a fundamental misunderstanding of their geographical and cultural history.

Another noteworthy example is the false information spread about the 12th Century Ikorti temple, recently portrayed as if members of the Ossetian royal family Bidzina Cholokashvili, Shalva, and Elizbar Ersitaves were resting here. These historical figures are Georgian, who sacrificed themselves to Georgia. It is known that two years later the leaders of the Kakheti uprising of 1659 were tortured to death in Iran. After a long time, their remains were secretly recovered and buried in the temple of Ikorta⁵.

Over time, if left unchallenged and uncorrected, new generations will never know Georgia’s true history. Consequently, Georgians need to work with progressive-minded Ossetians to restore the historical friendship of these two peoples and clarify historical misperceptions created by Russian misinformation. If Georgians do not take active steps to combat the misappropriation of their churches and other ancient monuments, they will be lost forever.

Georgian government and citizens must create and reintroduce powerful Internet resources to reclaim historical and legal reality. It is the basis for maintaining Georgian statehood. If centuries ago Georgia had suffered physical destruction with the sword, today it is experiencing the destruction of its cultural heritage through an information war. Our birthrights are being eliminated before our eyes. We are in great danger, and unless all nationalities of our small country stand together for truth, we risk losing the cultural legacies our ancestors left for us.

Ilia Chavchavadze’s 19th Century publication “Sounds of Stones” is especially relevant as the methods of falsification used by the conquerors centuries ago threaten Georgian culture monuments and geopolitical justice. The cornerstones of our historical buildings were removed in Javakheti and replaced with news stones falsely claiming the handiwork of our forefathers.

⁵ *The Ikorta church of the Archangel*, <<https://www.ikorta.com/news/the-ikorta-church-of-the-archangel>> (23.12.2020).

III. REVIEWS

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Pavlo LODYN
Ukraine

**CORRESPONDENCE 1950-2000, JERZY GIEDROYC, BOHDAN
OSADCHUK, ED. BY BOGUMILA BERDYKHOVSKA AND
MAREK ZHEBROVSKY, COLLEGE OF EASTERN EUROPE,
WOJNOWICE 2019, PP. 937.**

It is difficult to imagine the nature of modern Polish-Ukrainian relations without the influence of the ideas and concepts of Parisian “Culture”. In 2020, 20 years passed since the magazine stopped publishing with the death of its cult editor Jerzy Giedroyc (1906-2000). Bohdan Osadchuk (1920-2011), the 100th anniversary of whose birth we also had last year, became a faithful ally of the Editor in establishing a dialogue between the two peoples.

The correspondence between the two iconic figures arranged in the book by Bogumila Berdykhovska and Mark Zhebrovsky helps to open the veil of processes that preceded the appearance of important texts on the pages of “Culture”, socio-political actions initiated and participated by J. Giedroyc and B. Osadchuk. Their collaboration and correspondence began in 1950 when a Congress for Cultural Freedom was held in Berlin in June to bring together intellectuals to discuss countering communist influence. B. Osadchuk, whom B. Berdykhovska called a ‘rare bird’ (Rava Avis) in the emigration environment because of his liberal views, helped to establish contacts for J. Giedroyc with the Ukrainian emigration, as evidenced by the letters. Acquaintances with the Sovietologist Borys Levitsky (1915-1984) and the historian Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky (1919-1984) became especially valuable. As a correspondent for the influential Swiss newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, which was

well versed in European affairs, B. Osadchuk actively shared information with the Editor, as well as ensuring the dissemination of the ideas of “Culture” in the European media space.

“Dear Mr. Jerzy, I gave birth to a monster, not a chronicle. I am very embarrassed that it turned out so great, but I wanted to show the Polish reader the whole picture of Ukrainian views” – so wrote B. Osadchuk to J. Giedroyc in March 1952 before making his debut in “Culture”, starting the column “The Polish-Ukrainian Chronicle” (often wrote under the pseudonym BEO). In their letters, the interlocutors actively discussed important publications in the magazine and the reaction to them among the emigrants, such as the article by the priest Józef Majewski in 1952, in which the author called on Poles to finally abandon their claims to Lviv and Vilnius; proposals of Juliusz Meroszewski – a key publicist of “Culture” on politics. For the first time, the Editor initiated the publication of an anthology of Ukrainian poetry and prose by the intelligentsia destroyed by the communist authorities, entitled *The Shot Renaissance*. Correspondence helps to reveal the details of its preparation and efforts to promote it. An important document of the emigration period was the Declaration on Ukrainian Affairs of 1977, signed by representatives of Polish, Hungarian, Czech, and Russian emigration. His text said that the destinies of the peoples of the region were closely linked and that there would be no truly free Poles, Czechs, and Hungarians without free Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians, and Russians. J. Giedroyc's establishment of contacts with the environment of the Russian emigration, which gathered around the magazine “Continent” by Vladimir Maksimov, preceded the appearance of the declaration. This even led to criticism from B. Osadchuk, which follows from the correspondence. However, an agreement was reached between the allies and fruitful cooperation continued.

J. Giedroyc's political line embodied the slogan “There is no free Poland without a free Ukraine”. Therefore, in a letter to B. Osadchuk, the Editor was sincerely pleased with the independence of the Ukrainian state: “Extremely congratulations. Ukraine's independence is a historical date, moreover, in the full sense of the word. I am very glad that the Polish government did not disappoint and recognize independence, without looking at Western countries”. B. Osadchuk believed that the final issue of Polish-Ukrainian relations would not be decided in exile, but at the level of the governments of both. Therefore, the architects of the Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation, while remaining in Berlin and Maison Lafitte, actively monitored the political life in Ukraine and

Poland, looking for politicians to succeed the case of Jozef Pilsudski and Simon Petliura. In his letters, B. Osadchuk often sharply criticized the then politicians and diplomats, the lack of activity of officials, and those actions that hindered reconciliation between Poles and Ukrainians. J. Giedroyc also sought to make greater progress in bilateral relations, writing in 1997: "I am discouraged from making efforts to promote Polish-Ukrainian relations. It is hard on the Polish side, but there is no partner on the Ukrainian side".

The correspondence between J. Giedroyc and B. Osadchuk is an exciting journey through 937 pages of multifaceted dialogue between the Pole and the Ukrainian, who made the lion's share of their efforts to achieve reconciliation of their peoples for a common movement towards a better future.

Wiktor MOŻGIN

Poland

**ŁUKASZ LEWKOWICZ, THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN THE
INTERNAL AND FOREIGN POLICY OF THE SLOVAK
REPUBLIC (1993-2020), PUBLISHER OF THE MARIA CURIE-
SKŁODOWSKA UNIVERSITY, LUBLIN 2020, PP. 97.**

The region of Central and Eastern Europe is currently the object of interest of many politicians, research, and analysis centers. This is mainly due to the ambiguous role that countries such as Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary play today in the geostrategic plans of world powers. In American geopolitical thought, this region is perceived as a ‘buffer zone’ between American interests on the one hand and Russian interests, or more and more often Chinese interests, on the other. Nevertheless, today, due to the tightening of cooperation between individual countries, the importance of this region is changing, causing their strategic interests to also be taken into account in the international arena. It is worth emphasizing, however, that from the perspective of the Polish state, an extremely important strategic aspect is getting to know the interests of neighbouring states that shape their internal and external policies. In this context, an invaluable item that has recently appeared on the Polish market is the scientific monograph by Łukasz Lewkowicz “The Russian Federation in the internal and foreign policy of the Slovak Republic (1993-2020)”.

The author presents an in-depth analysis of the Slovak political scene, with particular emphasis on the country's relationship with the Russian Federation. The thematic scope of the monograph is extremely topical as it concerns the process of shaping the internal and external policy of the Slovak Republic in the conditions of the hidden information war that has been going on for several years, which the Russian Federation is waging against the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe region. In this context, it is also important that the author

thoroughly deals with these issues, presenting the various levels of Slovak politics from a historical perspective, which allows us to understand the overall picture of specific events. The chronological range included in the monograph concerns the years 1993-2020. The starting point is marked by the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic on January 1, 1993, and the final one - by the parliamentary elections in that country, which took place on February 29, 2020, ending the term of the coalition government of Peter Pellegrini.

The monograph has a solid theoretical basis, and a correctly conducted research analysis and precise presentation of the interdependencies of the studied phenomena and their context allowed the author to formulate specific conclusions and forecasts, giving the work an additional analytical value that can be used by various types of research centers and decision-makers in various countries. In this sense, the role of publications cannot be overestimated.

It is also noticeable that the author used a variety of research methods in an extremely skilful way during the preparation of this work. In this respect, it is important to emphasize the author's use of a decision analysis, which consisted in showing political phenomena from the point of view of the decision center, the decision-making process, political decision, as well as political implementation. The monograph shows the correct selection and selection of the right source materials, logical derivation of conclusions, and a combination of various aspects of a specific problem, which indicates the high level of the author's competence in this subject area. It should also be mentioned that there is a wide selection of literature in three languages – Polish, Slovak, and English – which indicates the author's objective approach to the research process. However, it is worth pointing to the fact that many Internet sources are used in the monograph, which could constitute an objection in the face of the disinformation struggle taking place online through competing sites – primarily Russian and Slovak. Nevertheless, it proves the topicality of the subject matter undertaken by the author, and also allows confronting the data contained in Internet sources with the actual state.

The language of the monograph is formal. The author skilfully uses vocabulary and words in the field of international relations, security, economics, political science, and the sciences of culture and religion. It is worth noting that in the introduction the author presents the semantic scope of the basic concepts used in the work, such as the foreign policy of the state, determinants of this policy, and soft power in international

relations. This activity allows maintaining a uniform and compatible narrative structure of the text, without escaping in terms of meaning in a direction other than that defined. The terms emphasized by the author also indicate the multifaceted nature of the monograph, as it covers three levels – political, economic, and cultural.

The main goal of Łukasz Lewkowicz's work is therefore to present the policy of the Slovak Republic towards the Russian Federation in a comprehensive manner. In this context, the author also took into account the issue of both internal and external factors influencing Slovak-Russian relations and analyzed their multidimensional and complex nature in an extremely skilful manner.

The author in his work verifies four basic hypotheses. The first one concerns the fact that internal determinants (especially the historical perspective, geographical environment, demographic and economic potential) influenced Slovakia's foreign policy towards the Russian state. The second, in turn, refers to the fact that the evolution of Slovakia's immediate international environment after 1989 had a strong influence on Slovak-Russian relations. The author interprets this process by referring to three important phenomena, which were the collapse of the Soviet Union, Euro-Atlantic and European integration. The third hypothesis put forward by the author indicates that Slovak-Russian relations after 1993 were dynamic and changeable, which was related to the policy implemented by successive Slovak governments and individual party leaders.

The fourth hypothesis refers to the multifaceted nature of the thematic scope and concerns the claim that economic cooperation developed the best, political cooperation was variable, while in recent years a strong Russian presence in the socio-cultural sphere has been visible in Slovakia. It is worth emphasizing that in the course of the work, these hypotheses are verified several times using separate research methods, which additionally gives credibility to the results of the presented analyses and conclusions.

The monograph consists of four chapters in which the author uses a problem-chronological structure to present the process of shaping the Slovak political scene, implementing the issue of Slovak-Russian relations in these considerations.

The first chapter contains an analysis of the factors influencing the shape of the internal and external policy implemented by Slovakia. It presents the historical perspective of the development of Slovak-Russian relations from the end of the 19th Century to the socio-political

transformations in 1989-1993. In the first chapter, the author also analyses the internal determinants that had a significant impact on the process of forming relations between Slovakia and Russia, taking into account in this context the geopolitical situation, socio-economic situation, political system, demographic factor, as well as the concept of foreign policy. This part also presents the issue of the impact of the changes in the international environment on the internal and external policy of Slovakia. The first chapter of the monograph is a solid theoretical basis for further deliberations by the author.

The second chapter is devoted to the general dynamics of Slovakia's policy towards Russia after 1993. This part of the monograph presents the policies implemented by individual governments, therefore the author divided the analyzed period into three stages: 1993-1998, 1998-2006 and 2006-2020. This activity made it possible to systematize the research process to comprehensively present Slovak-Russian relations after 1993. As a result, the author was able to highlight the key moments in which the Slovak authorities changed their approach to Russia in an excellent way, as well as to present the reasons leading to these changes.

In the third chapter, the author presents an analysis of the use of economic instruments in mutual interstate relations. He focuses, among other things, on the issue of Slovakia's dependence on supplies of Russian energy resources, as well as the case concerning Slovak nuclear energy, which is one of the significant determinants affecting Slovak-Russian relations. Moreover, the author discusses in this chapter broadly understood economic cooperation between the two countries.

In the last, fourth chapter, the author presents the results of research on how Russia uses a wide range of socio-cultural factors towards Slovakia. This part of the monograph must deal with the topic of ideological premises, such as Pan-Slavism, and common historical events, which Russia skilfully implements in a narrative directed at Slovak society, thus creating an effective tool of influence in this country. Besides, the author presents the issue of Slovak-Russian scientific and cultural cooperation, pointing to the extensive institutional structure that currently functions in Slovakia. In this context, it is also worth emphasizing the fact that this part of the monograph presents an extremely interesting phenomenon at present, namely the problem of pro-Russian right-wing extremism in Slovakia. The legitimacy of addressing this subject is the result of the fact that views of this type are becoming more and more popular among Slovak society, which may prove the effectiveness of Russian propaganda tools used in this area.

To sum up, the scientific monograph “The Russian Federation in the Internal and Foreign Policy of the Slovak Republic (1993-2020)” by Łukasz Lewkowicz is an excellent work that fills the gap in Polish and Slovak literature on the subject, presenting a comprehensive political science approach to Slovak-Russian relations after 1993. This work, through its analytical and research potential, constitutes the basis and contribution to further research on the Slovak foreign policy, which is still a dynamic process, especially taking into account relations with a country such as the Russian Federation. All this constitutes a high content-related assessment and scientific value of this publication.

Emilia KOJTYCH-LICHOTA

Poland

**MIKAEL WIGELL, SÖREN SCHOLVIN, MIKA AALTOLA,
GEO-ECONOMICS AND POWER POLITICS IN THE 21ST
CENTURY: THE REVIVAL OF ECONOMIC STATECRAFT,
ROUTLEDGE, ABINGTON, NEW YORK 2019**

The principal thesis of the authors which is prevalent throughout the book is that the contemporary states employ power politics using highly diversified economic tools and instruments. The authors assert that increasingly more states from so different parts of the globe like the Middle East, the Far East, Post-Soviet, or North America prefer to practice economic means in foreign policy than military ones. Contemporary political leaders, especially in the democratic states, keep off resorting to military interventions. For any president or prime minister, it is not easy to perpetuate social popularity if he or she involved their nations in military conflict. Resorting to economic tools rather than military actions is also more economic and cost-effective. The financial and political costs of military intervention are often extremely high, or at least much higher than costs of using the economic instrument in power politics. Authors argue that policy-makers prudently noticed that economic tools may be as effective as military ones and are frequently less risky and cheaper. Therefore, no observer of power politics in the modern world should be surprised to see that states to gain strategic influence tend to use more willingly economic than military power. This rule pertains to not only great powers but smaller states too.

The modern globe is so inter-connected and mutually dependent that manipulating economic binds is equally or even more effective than bombing or shelling. On the pages of the book, the reader finds out about various tools and manners by which major states wield economic power. Trade, finance, investment, development aid, economic sanctions are

only several of the multitude of means of areas in which geoeconomics may be employed.

The big advantage of the book is that it was co-written by scholars and experts from different parts of the globe. Such diversified perspectives and a wide selection of authors is an undoubted strength of the book. Particularly interesting is chapter 11 written by Mikael Mattlin and Bart Gaens in which they conduct an insightful comparative analysis of China's and Japan's development lending practices. Another interesting chapter raises the problematics of the use of geoeconomic instruments in the fierce regional competition of India and Pakistan. The author of this chapter Smruti Pattanaik convincingly presented how different lobbying groups impact the geoeconomic policies of both major regional players and archrivals. Yet another noteworthy chapter was dedicated to practicing geoeconomic tools by Sub-Saharan states – Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria. Most scholars who scrutinize geoeconomics focus their attention on major powers likely the U.S., China, or Russia. Sören Scholvin demonstrated an independent streak and accurately described how smaller and less powerful states resort to the economic instrument to realize their strategic objectives and to expand their power. Thus, the chapter drew up by Sören Scholvin is particularly illuminating.

Although the scope of raised problems in the book is quite extensive, one can get an impression that certain aspects of geoeconomics were not given sufficient attention. For example, the authors did not write much about currency and trade wars. Another unheeded topic is the Nord Stream pipeline which is a classic case of creating geoeconomic binds that serve to tie the alliance between Russia and Germany in the long run. Literally, one sentence in the book is insufficient.

To conclude, despite some minor shortcomings, the book is unquestionably an interesting position for anybody who wants to deepen knowledge on geoeconomic practices in the 21st Century. The remarks and insights made in the book by different distinguished co-authors are original and thought-provoking.

FOR AUTHORS

1. Submitted articles should not be published before and their quality will be put to the anonymous review.
2. The maximum volume of the article should not exceed 1.5 publishing sheet (60 thousand characters with spaces, approx. 30 typewritten pages). Languages of publication: Polish or English. It is necessary to attach a summary of the article in English (maximum 15 lines) together with separate keywords (maximum 5). Specific editorial requirements are presented below.
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