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SECURITY FORUM 2024

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Conference Proceedings

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CZECH ARMED FORCES AND HYBRID INTERFERENCE: CONCEPTS AND METHODS OF EVALUATING RESILIENCE¹

Dominika Kosárová², Antonín Novotný³

ABSTRACT

All the NATO and EU members have to deal with at least some elements of adversarial hybrid campaign. The success of such a campaign depends on how resilient the state and society are. This applies not only to citizens in general but to the armed forces in particular, as they also have been targeted by hybrid campaigns of foreign actors. Resilience towards hybrid interference is thus a highly relevant concept in the defence field. In the Czech context, it has been researched within the project “Armed and security forces’ resilience towards hybrid threats”. This conference paper presents concepts and methods behind the project from the perspective of the Czech armed forces.

Keywords: *resilience, hybrid interference, Czech armed forces, survey*

Introduction

Hybrid is used in relation to different categories including threats, campaign, operation, strategy, warfare, and others. Due to its broad use yet vague definition, it is subject to critical analysis (see Stojar, 2017, Van Der Venne, 2021). Yet despite the vagueness and sometimes even disputed utility, these terms are largely used in the official documents of states and organizations facing such adversarial activities (see Joint Communication..., 2016; National Strategy..., 2021; Strategic Concept, 2022; A Strategic Compass, 2022).

For the purpose of this article, we will mainly use the term hybrid interference. From the perspective of Czech strategic documents, hybrid interference consists of a combination of tools exploiting vulnerabilities within a state or society aimed at disrupting stability, democracy, and the rule of law (National Strategy..., 2021). The success of such a campaign depends on how resilient the state and society are. This applies not only to citizens in general, but

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to the armed and security forces in particular as their members too are exposed to (and in some cases even deliberately targeted by) adversarial hybrid campaign. Their vulnerability could have serious repercussions for the state's defence and security. Resilience towards hybrid interference is thus a highly relevant concept in the security and defence field and is subject to research by Masaryk University and the University of Defence under the project "Armed and security forces' resilience towards hybrid threats". The goal of this project is to explore and analyze the resilience of the Czech armed forces and armed security corps to different elements of an adversarial hybrid campaign. It aims to identify their vulnerabilities to hybrid interference and propose how to increase the resilience of the armed forces and armed security corps as well as that of their members through education, training, and awareness.

This conference paper will focus on the part of research implemented by the University of Defence, hence it will take the perspective of the Czech armed forces. Our ambition is to provide an overview of concepts and methods implemented within the project. It answers two basic questions: what do we research (conceptualization), and how do we research it (operationalization)? It summarises our approach to studying the resilience of the Czech armed forces towards hybrid interference, which we believe is applicable also in other states to study their armed forces' resilience against adversarial hybrid campaigns. More detailed information about concepts and methodological approaches can be found in already published articles, especially in **Mareš, Kraus, Drmola (2022)**, **Divišová et al. (2021)**, **Bížik et al. (2022)** and **Divišová et al. (2023)**.

1 Conceptualisation

The research is based on two key theoretical concepts: hybrid interference and resilience towards it. We first had to overcome terminological challenges in defining the two concepts that are widely used yet still very vague. This especially applies to the concept of "hybrid" which is used to name a wide spectrum of activities or phenomena (warfare, threat, campaign, strategy, operation, and others). For research purposes, the team of Masaryk University defined hybrid interference through a set of characteristics it has to meet (Mareš, Kraus, Drmola, 2022, 350):

- its objectives violate the security interests of the targeted state,
- it is in the grey zone of hostility (below the threshold of war),
- its implementation implies deniability,
- it has a subversive or destabilising effect,
- its objective is primarily psychological impact and disintegration at the systemic and structural level.

As for resilience, the concept can be applied to any entity and any negative phenomena, which then largely influences its characteristics and research. In our case, we study the resilience of the Czech armed forces towards hybrid

interference. Stemming from the above-mentioned features of hybrid interference, we defined the resilience of the armed forces towards it as *“the capacity of the military to fulfill its core mission enabled by physical and moral components of the fighting power and to continually transform and adapt in the face of external hostile influence targeting perception and decision-making of the armed forces members and leadership.”* (Divišová et al., 2021, 19)

At the same time, it must be emphasized that resilience towards hybrid interference is a complex multi-dimensional concept that can be decomposed into psychological, social, institutional, and national dimensions. The four dimensions differ primarily in two key aspects: who is the bearer of resilience, and what are the sources of their vulnerabilities? Is it targeted against an individual and its vulnerabilities stemming from personal predispositions (micro-level); a community where resilience largely stems from social relations; an institution and its efficiency; or the nation as such (macro-level)? Each dimension is attributed with different protective factors or values that enhance one’s ability to withstand hybrid interference, as well as vulnerabilities or risk factors having the opposite effect. However, individuals are always members of a community and citizens of a state, hence their ability to withstand hybrid interference results from the interplay of all these dimensions and their respective vulnerabilities. The same applies to the resilience of the armed forces, whose resilience is derived from factors operating at all four levels.

Tab. 1: Conceptualisation of resilience for research purposes

Dimension of resilience	Resilience of who?	Resilience towards what?
National	Citizen / State	Adversarial hybrid interference
Institutional	Armed Forces / Command	
Social	Member of a community / Member of the armed forces	
Psychological	Individual	

Source: based on Divišová et al. (2021)

Bízik et al. (2022) then tested the four dimensions in terms of their utility and applicability in empirical scenarios. For the purpose of testing, different case studies were selected where a state and its military, in particular, were facing an adversarial hybrid campaign. The objective was to identify the dimension(s) of resilience targeted by such a campaign. The case studies included: (1) Hamas pretending seduction to exploit vulnerabilities of Israeli soldiers in order to gain information and data (targeting vulnerabilities in the psychological realm). (2) Extremist paramilitary groups trying to recruit US veterans exploiting their feelings of isolation, lost identity, meaning, and value anchorage (corresponding mainly to social dimension). (3) Dissemination of pro-Russian narratives and influence in the French military (exploiting institutional vulnerabilities). (4) The

People's Republic of China's disinformation campaign within the Republic of China targeting soldiers as part of the nation exploiting thus vulnerabilities pertinent to the national dimension of resilience. (5) Russian hybrid interference against Ukraine and its security apparatus since 2014, targeting vulnerabilities in all four dimensions of resilience. (6) al-Qaeda in Iraq and later ISIS attempting to recruit ex-soldiers and demoralize the Iraqi army by exploiting weaknesses in all four dimensions of resilience. The case studies showed a hazy boundary between different dimensions of resilience, suggesting they rather form a continuum that, if possible, is exploited by the enemy in its full spectrum.

To sum it up, the project is focused on *soft resilience* where hybrid interference is targeted against individuals and communities, in our case, soldiers as individuals (exploiting weaknesses in the psychological dimension of resilience), as members of the armed forces (social or institutional dimension) and finally as citizens of the Czech Republic (national dimension). This also implies that we are focused on hybrid interference that exploits cognitive rather than technological vulnerabilities.

2 Operationalisation

After we defined the resilience of the armed forces towards hybrid interference, we had to decide how to evaluate it: what we needed to measure and how to do it. Operationalisation thus served to answer one of the project's research questions: "How to measure the resilience of the Czech armed forces towards hybrid interference?" For that purpose, we developed a measurement tool, which consists basically of a survey. Based on an extensive literature review, we first identified key variables in each dimension of resilience (see Kimhi et al., 2019; Brülisauer et al., 2022; Divišová et al., 2023). These are the factors that, according to current knowledge, affect one's ability to withstand hybrid campaigns. This includes so-called protective as well as risk factors (increasing or decreasing resilience respectively). We were then looking for ways how to measure these variables directly or indirectly through various items (in other words, what information can help us to measure each variable, hence what should we ask our respondents to learn more about the variable). For instance, to measure patriotism, we asked respondents how proud they felt about their Czech citizenship. The following table provides an overview of the key variables and corresponding items that were covered by the survey (items included in the table correspond to questions in the survey, and they were selected to evaluate respective variables).

Tab. 2: Operationalisation of resilience for research purposes

Resilience dimension	Key variables	Items evaluated in the survey
National	Political attitudes	<i>satisfaction with the current political situation; evaluation of foreign policy orientation and defence; satisfaction with the functioning of democracy; attitudes towards democratic regime and non-democratic alternatives; politics and relations in the unit; trust in institutions</i>
	Perception of justice	<i>perception of respect for human rights; perception of fair and equal treatment in the current political system</i>
	Patriotism	<i>pride of citizenship; determination to defend state sovereignty; patriotism as a motivation to pursue a military career; attitudes towards teaching patriotism and civil defence; evaluation of armed forces' capabilities</i>
	Optimism	<i>outlook towards future</i>
	Threat perception	<i>evaluation of current security situation; perceived level of fear towards suggested threats</i>
Institutional	Motivation*	<i>motivation to pursue a military career; motivation to obey certain orders; social and political perception of the military</i>
	Leadership*	<i>trust in command, commanders' evaluation in terms of values; motivation to obey certain orders</i>
	Fighting power	<i>evaluation of armed forces' capabilities</i>
	Loyalty	<i>probability to recommend military service; probability to choose military service again; personal relationship to the military</i>
	Morale	<i>morale evaluation</i>
Social	Cohesion* / Moral integrity	<i>politics and relations in the unit; experience with negative social phenomena in the military; morale evaluation; trust in</i>

		<i>command; personal relationship to the military</i>
Psychological	Personal satisfaction	attitudes towards democracy and non-democratic alternatives; <i>satisfaction with the armed forces as an employer; outlook towards future</i>

* Components of morale as an important part of fighting power.

Italics is used for items that were integrated into the resilience index.

Source: based on Divišová et al. (2023)

The survey consists of a set of 26 questions to evaluate resilience and 7 demography-related questions. Some of the questions were deliberately taken from the public perception polls so that we could later compare the attitudes of military personnel to prevailing public attitudes. For most questions that measure attitudes (towards foreign policy orientation, armed forces as the employer, defence-related issues, trust, and others), the Likert scale was chosen for response options. The entire survey has been published in **Divišová et al. (2023)**.

It is important to note that boundaries between dimensions of resilience are not strictly given, and some variables overlap across different dimensions. This was the case of morale, primarily attributed to institutional resilience, but can also serve to evaluate social resilience if the question is focused on social relations. Moreover, some evaluated items may be applied to several variables and respective dimensions. For instance, perception of the future can be attributed to both national and psychological resilience as a predictor of optimism or personal satisfaction, respectively. Similarly, attitudes towards democracy relate not only to national resilience but given that they may reflect personal satisfaction as well, they serve to indirectly evaluate also psychological resilience. This approach enabled us to measure personal satisfaction indirectly and avoid more intruding questions about respondents' privacy which might have discouraged respondents from finalizing the survey.

The questionnaire was distributed online among five pre-selected groups of respondents (military high school students, first-year military college students, military personnel serving at a selected military unit, senior officers comprising Captains and Majors, senior officers comprising Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels). All these groups consist of military personnel getting prepared for command positions where they will be charged with decision-making. Instead of representativeness, we were looking for diversity. The data were gathered for more than one year, during which 884 respondents completed the survey.

3 The way ahead

At the time of preparing this paper, the data obtained by the survey are still under analysis. To analyse the data, we use a combination of qualitative and quantitative approach. A qualitative approach was selected for those questions that were not value neutral and it will serve to better interpret results of quantitative analysis. For quantitative analysis, responses were first coded on a scale from 0 to 100 (with a higher score corresponding to a better state in terms of resilience). The mean will be then calculated for each dimension of resilience. This will result in four values (resilience indexes), each for a different dimension. Our objective in the subsequent stage is to compare these values among the groups and among dimensions of resilience.

At the same time, we prepared a list of hypotheses about relations between different variables or items in the questionnaire (for instance, the level of education or personal satisfaction on the one hand and support for democracy on the other hand). These hypotheses were formulated based on literature review and can be thus supported in already published research including public perception polls in the Czech Republic. Some were also suggested during expert interviews conducted with more than 60 Czech and foreign experts on hybrid interference to gather more insights about the researched topic. A statistical approach will be employed to test the hypotheses and study these relations more in depth. Moreover, where applicable, we seek to compare the results of our survey to public opinion polls conducted in the Czech society and see if (or where) the attitudes of soldiers differ from the public perceptions.

The results will serve us to identify vulnerabilities of the Czech armed forces towards hybrid interference. These will be crucial for the final phase of the project, where we will seek to formulate strategies to overcome such vulnerabilities. For that purpose, we will mainly use the methods of SWOT analysis and modeling. Given that we want to focus our recommendations on education and training, a thorough analysis of the current state of military education and training will be required. The findings of the survey and subsequent research are expected to be published throughout 2024 and 2025.

Conclusion

To conclude, this conference paper dealt with the topic of the Czech armed forces and hybrid interference from the perspective of soft resilience (focusing on individuals or communities and rather cognitive than technological vulnerabilities). More in-depth research is currently in progress as part of an ongoing research project. While more robust findings and outcomes are expected to be published in the upcoming months and years, this paper sought to present the key concepts and methods behind the research. We presented the definition of hybrid interference via a set of features suggested by the Masaryk University team

and a definition of resilience of the armed forces towards hybrid interference as developed by the team at the University of Defence. The multidimensional approach to resilience was crucial for its operationalisation.

We operationalised the resilience of the Czech armed forces towards hybrid interference in the form of a survey. A questionnaire was developed to measure variables (protective or risk factors) pre-defined in every dimension of resilience. Subsequent data analysis will result in an index for every dimension as a predictor of the Czech armed forces' resilience towards hybrid interference. This approach will enable us to compare results among different cohorts or depict changes in time. Furthermore, it has the potential to identify differences among countries, as the survey is replicable to study the resilience of other countries' armed forces too (with only slight adjustments of some questions to the local context). The ultimate ambition of the project is to formulate recommendations and strategies on how to overcome identified vulnerabilities and thus enhance the resilience of the Czech armed forces towards hybrid interference.

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ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS AND A REVIEW OF EU ENGAGEMENT

Marijana Musladin¹

ABSTRACT

The South Caucasus is an ethnically very diverse region, heavily burdened by so-called frozen conflicts. The causes of these conflicts go back to history, and they especially intensified at the end of the 1980s and 1990s through the efforts of South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Nagorno Karabakh to separate from Georgia and Azerbaijan. These conflicts also led to significant involvement of various international actors in the region (Russia, EU, USA, Turkey and Iran). However, their engagement was motivated by different geopolitical interests, which is why the negotiations, which lasted for years, did not bring a final political solution. The paper will analyze the concept of (frozen) ethnic conflict with a focus on the South Caucasus region and a review of EU engagement.

Key words: *ethnic conflicts, frozen conflicts, South Caucasus, EU*

Introduction

In the fifth wave of EU enlargement, the South Caucasus region, i.e. Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, become very important for the European security architecture. The renewed conflicts over Nagorno-Karabakh in the fall of 2020 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 put additional emphasis on the South Caucasus region. At the same time, the increasing involvement of the EU in the South Caucasus is noticeable, especially in taking on a mediating role between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. The aim of the paper is to point out the significant strategic importance of the South Caucasus for the EU, to explain why the resolution of frozen conflicts in the region is of exceptional importance for the EU. The paper will try to show how, with every shift in the international order, the South Caucasus region turns to ethnic conflict. At the same time, a new adjustment of international relations is taking place, and there is a danger of escalation of the frozen conflicts (Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh). Some new open war in the South Caucasus could lead to political, economic and energy problems for the EU as well.

1 Contemporary security challenges – ethnic conflict

Ethnic conflict is one of the key contemporary security challenges and a significant threat to international peace and security. One of the reasons for the

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high threat is the possibility of a re-ignition of the conflict even though it has not been active for decades. In the highly globalized world of the 21st century, ethnic conflicts are still relevant, and one of the best examples is the South Caucasus region. Ethnic conflict is the main driver of instability and possible armed escalation in the South Caucasus region, and is a decisive factor in the internal and external policies of the countries in the region.

Reuter (2021) defines ethnic conflict as a violent conflict in which the goals of at least one side are defined in ethnic terms, and the conflict and possible solutions are perceived along ethnic lines. **Brown** (1993, pg.5) defines ethnic conflict as a dispute over important political, economic, social, cultural or territorial issues between different ethnic groups. He further argues that in international security theory, ethnic conflict was a relatively unimportant threat during the Cold War. **Brown** (1993, pg.7) also emphasizes that a large part of Europe and Asia fell under the influence of communism, which suppressed ethnic conflicts between ethnic groups through authoritarian means. However, with the end of the Cold War and the breakup of the USSR and Yugoslavia, old ethnic tensions spread again and ethnic conflict became one of the main threats to international security.

Ethnic conflicts often tend to develop into a protracted frozen conflict. The term frozen conflict began to appear in political discourse in the 90s of the 20th century, and the label "frozen" emphasizes that the fighting is over, but that the threat of re-escalation is constant, affecting the daily lives of people in those areas. **Lachert** (2019), states that frozen conflicts appear in regions where the central government no longer has full control over the territory. The mentioned territory is under the control of separatists who are negotiating with the central government in order to strengthen their position. The low probability of a diplomatic solution does not imply a greater possibility of an armed and military solution. Frozen conflicts are doomed to remain unresolved. **Lachert** (2019) concludes that all of the above weakens the central government and encourages the interference of other states in internal affairs, openly or secretly supporting the separatists through military, financial and humanitarian means.

Smetana & Ludvik (2018) define frozen conflict as a long-term post-war process, characterized by the absence of stable peace between the two warring parties. The danger of a thawing of the conflict may also threaten the security of the entire region, as well as beyond, as a result of international support for separatist movements. **Smetana & Ludvik** (2018) provide four criteria for characterizing a conflict as frozen, the conflict must be international, post-war, it must have fundamental unresolved issues, and the absence of stable, long-term peace is required.

Frozen conflict eventually goes through a certain peaceful or violent thaw as a result of internal or external factors. A peaceful thaw usually occurs as a result of dialogue, often through third parties to the conflict such as other states, international organizations or non-governmental organizations. A peaceful thaw

represents the best possible outcome of the conflict, where through diplomatic initiatives and processes both sides find a compromise on the fundamental issues. With a violent thaw, the fundamental issues are resolved by military means, the conflict escalates into an open war where one side suffers a decisive defeat and accepts the terms of the winning side, which eventually leads to peace. The frozen conflicts in the South Caucasus have so far been thawed exclusively through violence, in Georgia in 2008 and in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2016 and 2020. Peaceful and violent thawing often do not lead to a resolution of the conflict, instead it slides back into freezing. **Smetana & Ludvik** (2018) continue that there is also a third way to turn a frozen conflict into a stable peace, so that the conflict "exhausts" itself. The dying out of conflict can also happen in the long term, ethnic groups can smooth out relations over time, or disagreements can simply cease to matter over time. The geopolitical context in the South Caucasus has not changed radically since the collapse of the USSR, and Russia still has significant influence in the three countries. However, in the event that Russia finds itself in a situation like that of 1917 or 1991, when a crisis of central power arises, the question is how capable it would be of successfully maintaining control. In such a change in the geopolitical context, all three options for solving the frozen conflict presented by **Smetana & Ludvik** (2018) are likely, not just deflating the conflict. This is precisely why greater EU involvement and strategies are needed in the event of such a development.

Frozen conflicts such as Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh have been violently unfrozen several times over the years, however, the conflict has never been resolved, instead it has returned to a frozen status. Despite numerous attempts, diplomatic initiatives aimed at a peaceful thaw in the last 30 years have not succeeded, nor has the conflict been "deflated". Taking into account the history and intensity of the ethnic conflict in question, as well as the involvement of regional powers in it, it is difficult to expect a gradual deflation of the conflict. The only solution is a peaceful thaw through negotiations and diplomacy, because otherwise there is a possibility of a violent thaw and resolution of the conflict by military means, which in the past led to war crimes and the expulsion of the civilian population. Likewise, the frozen conflicts in the South Caucasus have a constant threat of further escalation and conflict spillover to the wider region.

2 EU engagement in the South Caucasus

Over the past thirty years, the EU has lost its role as an observer to the affairs of the South Caucasus to that of interested parties with more and more clearly defined interests in the region.

Namely, during the 1990s, the EU had a rather limited engagement in the South Caucasus region. The wars that broke out did not directly affect the EU, as was the case with the wars in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. **Delcour**

(2011, pg.179) claims that only a few EU member states opened their embassies in the South Caucasus states, while the Delegation of the European Commission, which at that time was becoming one of the main external political mechanisms of the EU, was opened only in Tbilisi in 1995 and was responsible for all three countries of the region. **Delcour** (2011, pg.179) argues that the South Caucasus region has received much less attention and opportunities than Ukraine, Russia and Moldova. This trend will continue in the second half of the 1990s. Meanwhile, other international actors - Russia, Turkey and Iran - were already active in the area of the South Caucasus, which limited the scope for EU engagement. The Russian Federation has been present in the South Caucasus from the beginning and played a role in all three wars in the region, while post-war negotiation and conflict resolution mechanisms included the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. **Delcour** (2011, pg. 182) points out that in the 1990s, the EU simply did not have a sufficient legal framework and mechanisms for an active security policy and participation in the conflict resolution process.

However, after 2000 there was a dramatic change in the EU's attitude towards foreign policy and its foreign policy interests, which directly influenced the EU's greater engagement in the South Caucasus. Relations between the EU and the three countries of the South Caucasus will gradually develop, especially after the signing of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement in 1999.

Since 2003, the EU has had a special representative for the South Caucasus, and immediately after that, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia were admitted to the European Neighborhood Policy. After the appointment of the special commissioner, a security strategy was also adopted, which calls for greater EU activity in the region, which is crucial for European security.

In order to strengthen the European neighborhood policy, the Eastern Partnership was launched in 2009. However, in this overview of the development of the most important policies and instruments of EU cooperation with the countries of the South Caucasus, for the purposes of this work, the focus is on the concrete engagement of the EU in the conflicts in the South Caucasus.

The Russian-Georgian war that took place from 7 to 12 August 2008 was an opportunity for the EU to show itself as a relevant international factor.

Whitman & Wolff (2010) state that the French EU presidency was instrumental in achieving a ceasefire during the Russian-Georgian conflict in 2008. **Forsberg & Seppo** (2010, pg. 127) point out that already on September 8, French President Sarkozy, EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy Solana, and European Commission President Barroso reached an agreement with Russian representatives on the withdrawal of Russian forces from Georgian territory. On September 15, the Council of the European Union established the Monitoring Mission of the European Union in Georgia. According to Fischer (2009), EUMM Georgia was launched with the aim of achieving long-

term stability in the South Caucasus region, and preventing the re-escalation of violence.

In contrast to the EU's clear position on the issue of the conflict in Georgia, **Mikhelidze** (2017, pg. 159) claims that the main problem with the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh was that the EU did not take a firm and unequivocal position, but relied on the creation of documents, i.e. on the highlighting of projects which started and finances. **Paul** (2015) states that the EU has placed itself on the sidelines of the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process, and maintains the official position of supporting the work of the OSCE Minsk Group. The EU also calls on both parties to adhere to the principles adopted by the Minsk Group in 2007 in Madrid, by which the opposing parties committed to demilitarizing the province, deploying international peacekeeping forces, returning refugees, and holding a referendum on the future of Nagorno-Karabakh. **Mikhelidze** (2017, pg. 160) argues that EU policy is also contradictory, the ENP action plan for Armenia emphasizes the importance of national self-determination, while the action plan for Azerbaijan emphasizes territorial integrity. This is also pointed out by **Paul** (2015) who believes that the EU policy of a balanced position has led to the fact that it supports territorial integrity, but also the right to self-determination in the region.

Whitman & Wolff (2010) see the culprit for the limited involvement of the EU in the way decisions and policies are made within the EU. Although the situation improved considerably with the Treaty of Lisbon, especially with the establishment of the EEAS, all important foreign policy decisions must receive unanimous support in the Council of the European Union. The member states have very different historical experiences, economic, social and political ties with Russia, which shape their policies towards it. Although in response to Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022, the entire EU united and passed nine packages of sanctions, there are different opinions within the EU as to whether the sanctions are excessive, or, according to others, insufficient.

It is clear that the EU would find it difficult to reach a consensus in the event of a significant intervention in the resolution of conflicts in the region. The situation in the South Caucasus cannot be considered without taking into account the interests and influence of the three regional powers, and it is to be expected that the member states would shape their positions according to their relationship with Russia and, to a lesser extent, Turkey. Precisely because of this, the EU needs to define a specific framework for conflict resolution that would include a wide range of different interests, within the EU, outside it and all parties involved in the conflict.

Unlike other world powers, the EU does not have the ability, nor the desire, to use the so-called "hard power" in conflict resolution. That is exactly why EU needs to come up with own approach that will be an alternative to resolving conflicts by force or pressure. In this way, the EU can become an important factor at the world level in conflict resolution, without violating its norms and ideals.

However, the EU is not the only power for which the South Caucasus is a strategically important area. There are primarily three regional powers (Turkey, Iran and Russia) that have a long history of controlling and interfering in the region, which is still the case today. All of them significantly affect the security situation in the South Caucasus. Any future EU policy and strategy towards the South Caucasus must take into account these three countries and their interests. Without an objective analysis and measures and ways to counter their influence, the EU will not be able to achieve all its strategic goals in the South Caucasus.

3 Instead of a conclusion

Since the beginning of its involvement in the South Caucasus, the EU has made a great step forward in bringing the region closer to the EU. The growth of the EU's influence in the region was made possible by changes within the EU itself, such as the formation of the CSDP and the EEAS, as well as the strengthening of the role of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The key question is whether new changes are needed in European foreign policy or whether a greater presence can be built within the current institutional framework. The priority problems that need attention are the frozen ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Instruments such as the Eastern Partnership, although relatively successful, were not designed with the aim of active conflict resolution. In the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, this region has never been more important for the EU. The argument that the EU has limited instruments for external and security action is not entirely correct. The Russian invasion of Ukraine overthrew many taboos that existed inside and outside the EU and showed that it can definitely and unequivocally act externally if there is a political will for it. From the ten package of sanctions, the sending of military aid through the European Peace Aid Instrument, the revitalization of the European Defense Agency as well as the EUMAM Ukraine training mission for Ukrainian soldiers, the EU has shown that it can do much more than is normally expected of it. Certain initiatives such as the European political community launched by French President Macron are welcome, and it should be noted that an agreement was reached on the deployment of the EU observation mission in Armenia at the first summit in Prague on October 6, 2022. However, it is difficult to expect that an interstate forum that meets once or twice a year will bring a major breakthrough in conflict resolution.

The question of the status of the three separatist provinces - Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh is very complicated and sensitive for all parties involved. Ethnic tensions in these provinces were present even before the EU existed, and they cannot be resolved overnight. Ethnic conflicts in the region can only be resolved in the long term. The EU faces a big task, ethnic conflicts go back a long way in history, and differences and historical injustices are deeply rooted in the peoples of the region, which cannot be easily overcome. History has

shown that every time there is a change in the international order or the levers of power in Russia begin to fall, the region descends into violent conflicts. It is obvious that the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 has triggered a new change in the international order, and the EU must be ready to meet the various scenarios that may unfold and try to prevent new conflicts by permanently resolving them.

With the current rearrangement of the international order, it becomes clear that the EU cannot expect the USA to solve security crises in Europe forever, as it did in the 1990s in the area of the former Yugoslavia. The South Caucasus has never been an area of particular interest to the US, and it can be concluded that it will remain so in the future. The EU must take more responsibility for the areas in its immediate neighbourhood. During the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the EU demonstrated its ability and willingness to respond decisively to the biggest security crisis in Europe since the end of the Cold War. It is important that the EU takes advantage of this opportunity and continues to act with the same intensity, and not let fatigue occur as it sort of happened with the enlargement policy.

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CURRENT THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE ASPECT OF THE FUNCTIONING OF THE STATE IN AN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

Each state, operating in the environment of other states, pursues many interests. Safety takes a special place among them. In this article, the author notices both threats to international security and challenges facing the security policies of states and collective international actors. The main purpose of writing the article was to analyze cases of events dangerous to state security, based on the example of the Republic of Poland. Technological progress, globalization and the unstable neighborhood of NATO's eastern flank currently pose threats to the security and stability of the system of the Republic of Poland. An important phenomenon that he analyzes is the reconfiguration of the international order that has been taking place in recent years, which, in his opinion, constitutes a serious challenge for the West, including its security policy.

Keywords: national security, threats, state, NATO

Introduction

Each state, operating in the environment of other states, pursues many interests. Safety takes a special place among them. By participating in international relations, the state constantly strives to ensure and maintain an appropriate level of security (Falecki, Kochańczuk, Sowidraniuk, 2018, pp. 10-14), thanks to which it guarantees its survival, ensures comprehensive development and gives a sense of security to its citizens. However, these activities depend on many factors, including primarily geopolitical and military conditions.

1 Aspects of national security

Security is a dynamic, ambiguous and multi-aspect concept. Considering the functioning of state institutions and participation in the international system,

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the most important aspects for the state will be two aspects of security: political and military (Jakubczak, Jakubczak, 2023, pp. 7-10).

1.1 Political security

Political security is defined in various ways. This term covers both the stability of the constitutional order and the political and social situation in a given country, as well as the protection of democratic values and democratic institutions. For this reason, political security can be generally defined as the process of maintaining the constant readiness of state structures to take up challenges, take advantage of opportunities and reduce risks in the political aspect (Czupryński, 2014, p.11).

State activities aimed at ensuring an appropriately high level of political security depend on many factors that can be called political conditions of state security. These include:

- independence and sovereignty of the state,
- sovereignly elected authorities, stable legal system (including the constitutional order),
- stable political system (including the party system),
- well-functioning state authorities,
- an independent judiciary,
- accepted and respected human rights and freedoms,
- a well-functioning civil society characterized by high political culture,
- efficient and effective diplomatic activities.

1.2. Military conditions of state security

Military security refers to the relations between the state and the international environment in which the military factor participates. Referring to the general definition of political security already presented, military security can be considered the process of maintaining the constant readiness of state structures to take up challenges, take advantage of opportunities and reduce risks in the military aspect (Majchrzak, 2023, pp. 6-20). Military security is also the state's ability to eliminate military threats, the essence of which is the use or threat of use of force against a given state by other entities (participants in international relations). These include direct and indirect manifestations of the use (or threat of use) of armed forces, e.g.:

- demonstration of strength,
- military blackmail,
- military provocation,
- border incident,
- armed border clash,
- armed attack by informal groups,

- armed conflict in any form.

In addition, threats of a military nature include:

- excessive expansion of the armed forces, which violates the local, regional or global balance of power and may constitute a signal of an approaching war (in particular, the increase in armament of countries considered unstable and dangerous should be counteracted);
- failure to comply with or circumvent arms control obligations and insufficient responses when those obligations are violated.
- proliferation (spread) of weapons of mass destruction - the uncontrolled flow of this type of weapons poses serious threats to the entire international community;
- presence of foreign troops without the consent of the host country's authorities;
- activities of special (intelligence) services of other countries, recognized for basic pre-emptive action and weakening military potential.

Military security understood in this way depends on many factors, which are generally called military conditions of state security (Majchrzak, 2023, pp. 25-28). These include primarily:

- an efficiently functioning state security system,
- clearly defined and clear strategic goals,
- very well trained and professional armed forces,
- high level of technological advancement of the armed forces,
- involvement in international alliances (primarily those of a military nature),
- high military awareness and strategic culture of a given society.

2 Security environment of the Republic of Poland

With the changing situation in the country, after Poland's accession to the European Union and then to the Schengen area, the occurrence of certain threats, e.g. illegal migration, has intensified. Moreover, 2001 seems to be a breakthrough year in the perception of security, when the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center took place.

After September 11, 2001, the anti-terrorist system around the world changed. Public awareness of the new threat has increased. Progressing globalization and easier migration have brought threats resulting from religious differences and traditions.

After the attack, the fight against religious fanaticism became a trend in the construction of a new system, technology and army in the United States (Pieróg, Wywiół, 2016, pp. 191-197).

The EU Security Strategy for 2020–2025 presents updates on areas at risk of attacks, such as cyberspace, state infrastructures and technologies (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2020). The most important goals in this Strategy are the early detection of threats and the speed of response to them,

as well as focusing on the currently extremely important commitment to jointly engage all parties in maintaining the level of security.

2.1. Global context

The dynamics of events in Poland's security environment is today the highest since the fall of the Soviet Union. We are observing increasingly rapid changes, not only political, but also economic, social and cultural. Global trends listed below significantly influence the shape of specific challenges and threats (Majchrzak, 2023, pp. 20-28). These are:

- The disconnect between globalization in many areas is becoming increasingly visible and the interests of nation states. Globalization processes are met with growing opposition in various parts of the world, both in developing countries and in other countries and developed. It takes various forms and is increasingly becoming the driving force behind the popularity of new political and social movements.
- The order based on international law is subject to further shocks. They result mainly from the aspirations of individual countries to play a more important role in a regional or global order. There is usually a belief among them about the need to limit the domination of the United States.
- Changes are inevitable, resulting from the relative decline of the role of Western countries and the rise of new economic powers. The United States will remain the largest global power, but some adjustments are to be expected in American politics. They will result, among others, from the need for stronger involvement in the Pacific region, taking into account relatively new problems (e.g. clash of interests in the Arctic region), as well as changes in the balance of power. in regions such as the Middle East.
- State actors still play a dominant role in the international arena. Depending on their goals, they are a source of stability or new threats. National governments are becoming increasingly better at using non-state actors to achieve their own goals. • Non-state actors (transnational corporations, non-governmental organizations, social movements and extremist groups) are a very wide and diverse group, with extremely different motivations and methods and goals of action. Monitoring their activities will become increasingly difficult in the future. They will try to gain access to modern technologies, and some will create their own, advanced solutions unavailable to state institutions.
- Social trends in developing countries, such as the growing degree of urbanization, migration waves or growing tensions in increasingly inefficient authoritarian regimes, may over time trigger crisis situations, the control of which will require the sending of international humanitarian missions.

- The fruits of dynamic technological development will not only have positive implications but may also become a source of instability (Mazurek, 2021, pp. 316-328). The spread of new communication methods, lack of control over large data sets, lower costs of using modern technologies (e.g. 3D printing), the use of learning machines for military purposes - these are just selected phenomena that may pose challenges of a previously unknown nature to the armed forces and scale.

2.2 Main threats and challenges

What must the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland be ready for by 2032? The global trends mentioned above have an impact on the situation in our region. They co-shape local threats and challenges. The list below is not exhaustive.

2.2.1 Unstable neighborhood of NATO's eastern flank

The Russian Federation remains the main source of instability in the vicinity of NATO's eastern flank. Using various tools, it influences the situation in the countries of the former USSR, stimulating political conflicts, corrupting the local elites and striving to gain control over weak state structures (Legucka, 2016, pp. 17-23). Nevertheless, there are many disturbing trends in the region that are not related to the activities of the Russian state.

Ukraine is in the most difficult moment in its modern history. Part of its territory is occupied by Russia, and in the east of the country there is an ongoing conflict still fueled by the aggressor. At the same time, Kiev must undertake reforms whose costs are borne by society or which affect powerful interest groups. We are observing internal problems that will hinder the development of the Ukrainian state, including reforms of the local security sector. We hope that the Ukrainian identity, which is being reborn based on the fight against the aggressor, will contribute to strengthening the state's structures.

Belarus is becoming increasingly dependent on Russia, despite periods of distancing itself. This is especially visible in the area of security. The armed forces and special services of both countries have been strengthening ties, conducting joint exercises and cooperating at every level for many years. It is very likely that this trend will continue and strengthen over the next decade.

Difficulties in implementing structural reforms, high level of corruption and the frozen conflict in Transnistria are the most important problems plaguing Moldova. Effective integration with other European countries and closer cooperation in the field of security are made more difficult by the fact that the Moldovan elites still face fundamental choices. They concern the state's development model, as well as vectors of foreign cooperation.

A potential source of instability for our region is the situation in the South Caucasus, perceived by the Russian Federation as its alleged sphere of influence. (Szeptycki, 2021, pp.287-295). In the perspective of 2032, it is highly probable that Moscow will play up social tensions and frozen conflicts in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

2.2.2 Unstable neighborhood of NATO's southern flank

The dynamics of events in the Middle East and North Africa means that attempts to forecast the situation in this region are burdened with a high margin of error.

Stabilizing the situation in this region of the world will require not only ending the ongoing conflicts, but also strengthening the administrative systems of the countries there and creating new development prospects, especially for young people. The chances for effective action in this direction are still slim, mainly due to the conflicting interests of key countries in the region. Additional complications are caused by the Russian Federation, which treats interference in this part of the world as an opportunity to put additional pressure on Western countries. This poses specific threats to the security of NATO member states.

Over the next 15 years, the Middle East and North Africa will remain a region particularly vulnerable to clashes caused by conflicting interests of state actors. and non-state. Demographic situation, uncertain prospects for the development of local economies (especially those based on oil extraction and export), combined with the fragile legitimacy of political systems, they may contribute to the emergence of further crises and conflicts (Pronińska, Balcerowicz, 2021, pp. 136-156).

There is a high probability of the emergence of new migration waves, which pose a challenge in many dimensions, primarily security issues. Mass migrations are a problem that is still waiting for comprehensive solutions, also in the field of crisis management.

The situation in the region will continue to provide a suitable basis for the development of extremist organizations, which will not only act in the interests of their ideology, but also seek the support of state actors. Terrorist attacks will remain one of the main methods of their activities.

There are many indications that due to the above threats, we will be obliged to provide support to allies in various types of operations: stabilization, humanitarian, and military (Lorenz, 2022).

2.2.3 Terrorism

Regardless of the successes of the operation against the so-called Islamic State, the threat of religiously motivated terrorism will remain high, including to Western European countries. We can expect the emergence of further terrorist

organizations with territorial ambitions, as well as the appearance of their cells in the European Union. Terrorist organizations may be used by some state actors.

A potential terrorist attack in Poland - a NATO and EU member state identified with Christianity - may be exploited by the so-called Islamic state, not only to expand the "war against infidels", but also to intimidate members of the coalition fighting against the above-mentioned organization.

Close international cooperation, including: the exchange of information, including that obtained by military organizations, will be an indispensable element of combat with the terrorist threat (Nowacki, 2014, pp. 403-441).

2.2.4 The evolution of Western integration structures

Poland is part of the largest military alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and co-creates the economic power of the European Union (Riedel, 2022, pp. 115-135). Anchoring in Western integration structures constitutes the basis for the security of the Republic of Poland and creates conditions for ensuring the well-being of its citizens. Both organizations will evolve in the perspective of 2032, and our duty is to co-shape the changes, not just passively participate in them.

Membership in NATO is the foundation of our thinking about collective defense. Over the next 15 years, determination will be necessary to reach an agreement between the members of the Atlantic Alliance, build a common catalog of threats and strengthen allied solidarity. This involves the need, for example, to adapt command structures to the new situation, but changes should not be made at the expense of organizational cohesion. Tangible signs of commitment to building common security, such as maintaining an appropriate level of defense spending or modernizing the armed forces, will become more important. A key challenge may be to develop a common position among all Allies in the event of a regional conflict in the neighborhood of NATO.

The European Union has been undergoing dynamic changes practically since its establishment. It is almost certain that by 2032 it will be subject to deep structural transformations resulting from the creation of mechanisms to respond to economic crises, the stabilization of the euro zone, and the resolution of dilemmas related to the degree of mutual integration. Security issues will remain one of its aspects. Actions in this area should enrich NATO operations, not compete with them.

Deep changes in the political situation in the member states, especially the largest ones, may have a direct impact on the fate of both structures. Individual external actors, led by the Russian Federation, will continue to act to stimulate conflicts within NATO and the EU and weaken their unity. They will manifest themselves, among others: in attempts to weaken transatlantic cooperation and limit the American military presence in Europe. The coming years will also bring

opportunities for the countries of our region to strengthen their position in both NATO and the EU (Grzybek P., 2021, pp. 104-119).

This will be possible, among others: provided that they develop common positions on important issues and establish effective cooperation in various areas, including security.

2.2.5 Technological progress and the future battlespace

Progress in areas such as communication, transport, medicine and energy in the next fifteen years it will cause fundamental changes in the life of societies. As a result, the armed forces will undergo transformation - not only in the form of the most visible, new weapon systems, but also, for example, in the management of planning processes.

The future battlefield will be much more chaotic than today's. The increasing effectiveness of systems integrating sensors and effectors will be balanced by new disruptive agents (Dąbrowski, 2017). The exchange of fire will become more intense. It will be operated by numerous platforms controlled by humans remotely or even performing tasks autonomously, based on an appropriate algorithm.

In the perspective of 2032 and beyond, "conventional" military equipment, such as tanks, armored personnel carriers and multi-role manned aircraft, will still play the main role. New means of reconnaissance (including satellite), concealment and destruction will be developed, becoming cheaper and easier to use. The role of automated systems will increase.

The next 15 years will bring easier access to lethal technologies for unauthorized organizations. Increasingly advanced encryption of connections will facilitate not only the communication of extremist groups, but also the distribution of funds, arms trade and obtaining information about the use of commonly available hardware and software for military purposes.

Although wars in the future will continue to be fought primarily by kinetic means, other methods of warfare will also become increasingly important. Cyberspace and the information battlefield are already becoming a new type of front, free from many restrictions (e.g. legal), and enabling more equal competition for countries with diversified military potential. This is a sphere in which it will be particularly easy to blur the boundaries between states of peace and war. The high pace of development of electronic and information warfare tools will be maintained. Increased possibilities in the field of analysis of large data sets will revolutionize state security management in many aspects.

When analyzing the resulting threats, the possibility of uncontrolled use of the mentioned technologies by non-state actors should be taken into account. It is highly probable that disproportions in development between individual countries will increase. Competition in technological development will intensify, especially among leading economic powers.

Summary

National security covers many areas of state functioning; therefore it should be understood in a broad way. The state of this security is influenced by many conditions, both internal and those resulting from the functioning of the state in the international environment. It includes not only factors affecting the state's defense, but also others, e.g. security of energy supplies. The Ministry of National Defense is fully aware of this.

Although the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland remain ready to cooperate in combating various types of threats, the Strategic Defense Review focuses on the most important threats and challenges to the state's interest. They are primarily related to potential aggression against Poland or an allied country, as well as repelling irregular actions below the threshold of war.

The military must also be ready to cooperate in responding to non-military crisis situations or to participate constructively in foreign operations.

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MILITARY ALLIANCES IN 21ST CENTURY

Daniel Šmihula¹

ABSTRACT

The article is analyzing a role of military alliances in t a today world. Regardless a fact that due to the UN Charter their real purpose must be expressed in a less clear way and camouflages as a “defence cooperation”, “regional security organization” etc. they are a keystone of a global security and political system. There are now two main multilateral defence organization: NATO and the EU and a bunch of bilateral treaties on defence and military cooperation with practical impacts comparable with a traditional alliance. The most impressive is the US global system of allies. In these years we experience a forming of two system of global alliances: The Sino-Russian block and an alliance of democratic states in Europe, America and Pacific led by the USA. This is a signal of a coming global military confrontation.

Key words: *alliance, security, treaty, war, USA, China*

Introduction

Military alliances were and still are the most important phenomenon of international relations and international law. However, it is interesting that after 1945 international law theory dealt with military alliances quite sporadically. The very respectable study book from Professor Malcom N. Shaw does not provide even a definition of the military alliance. It only contains information about regional security organizations defined as “regional arrangements or agencies for dealing with matters relating to international peace and security”. (Shaw, 1997, p. 881). The same example is provided by another very representative study-book of Austrian authors (Neuhold, Hummer, Schreuer, 2004). No mention about military alliances.

Such an approach is not an ignorance. It is a result of an intention of the winners of the WWII who believed that as soon as one universal world organization to protect peace and security had been established, all potential military alliances were not needed more and their existence would have gone against the spirit of the UN system. In this way also stipulations of the Charter of the United Nations were formulated.

A special responsibility was conferred on the Security Council which was to play a role of a global “coordinator” of military activities in order to maintain international peace and security (Article 24 of the UN Charter). The UN Charter in the Article 51 mentions the possibility of collective self-defense and in Article 52 the potential existence of regional arrangements or agencies for the maintenance of international peace and security, but they are obliged to act in

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consistency with the “Purposes and Principles of the United Nations” to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes. Practically they should have been under a supervision of the UN and its Security Council (Article 53). For that, a legal monopoly on the legitime use of force in international relations has only the Security Council. Individual states are deprived of right to wage wars in their own name with exception of a selfdefence (Neuhold, Hummer, Schreuer, 2004, p. 349). In this way the UN Charter practically forbade traditional military alliances. Therefore, their real existence was being systematically blurred and camouflaged in international law. On the other hand, they have survived, and a real life of the international community forced national states to continue in a proved praxis of mutual military alliances.

Unlike international law the theory of international relations is less rigid in this question and accepts an existence of military alliances (Krejčí, 2014, p. 244). However, they are not referred as “military alliance” or “alliance treaty”. They all pretend to be “regional security organizations” pursuant to the Article 52 -54 of the UN Charters - in order to legitimize their existence. The second legally acceptable possibility is to qualify publicly the real alliances as just “platforms for a cooperation in defence affairs”.

But military alliances exist even today regardless of they are camouflaged and officially transformed in a form acceptable by international law. This is the first reason why the phenomenon of “military alliances” is important even now to study and to analyze.

The second reason is a global remilitarizing and securitization of international relations.

The purpose of this article is to provide a brief overview existing military alliance in the present world.

1 Definition of Military Alliance

A definition of military alliances we can find for example in a book of Professor Oskar Krejčí. According to him the military alliance can be defined as a formal treaty between two or more states establishing a coordination of their defined military and military-diplomatic activities (Krejčí, 2014, p. 244-245). They are results of security concerns of the participating states or a wish to change existing power balance and an international order in their favor. Methods to reach these goals can be military. It is an agreement on the use of force.

Parties of the alliance treaty should have at least several common security and political interests. The most frequent is a common enemy. If participating states have the same ideology or civilization values, the alliance is statistically stronger. (Unlike regional security organizations, military alliances are usually oriented against already defined enemy – not only a potential threat to a stability and security of the system.)

The are two basic types of alliances: bilateral and multilateral.

Alliances can multiply economic, political and military power. On the other hand, interest of individual participating state are modified by a common compromise between interests of all participating states. The larger the alliance is the more the individual interests diverge. Sometime in a treaty there is expressed an obligation of a military support in a case of an attack on one party (a defense pact), in other cases only a promise of consultation (an entente) and in other case only an obligation given by the signatories not to engage in military action against each other. How signatories will react in a case of a real military threat in a real life depends not only on treaty provisions but on real military and political factors at the moment.

Within the present existing international system, it is not easy to distinguish between real alliances which would work in condition of a real war and limited regional security organizations or just treaties on military cooperation (training, information sharing etc.). We can try to identify them with the main attention paid to real defence alliances – including an intuitive estimate of whether the given organization will be functional in the event of a real threat.

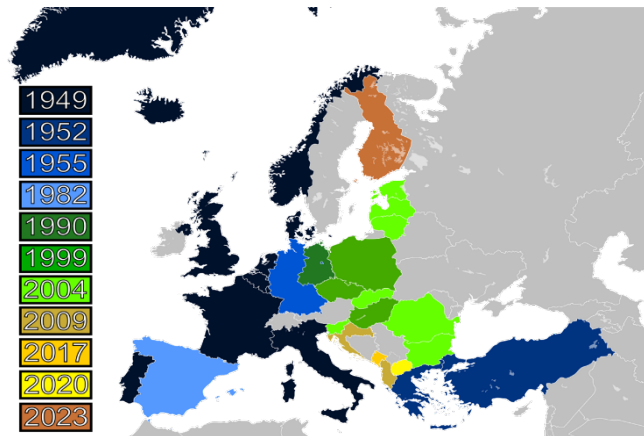
3 Multilateral Military Alliances in the Present World

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) established in 1949, actually with 31 members (and Sweden knocking on a door) is the most popular and the most known present military alliance. The Article 5 of the Treaty commits each member state to consider an armed attack against one member state, in the areas defined by Article 6², to be an armed attack against them all. Upon such attack, each member state is to assist by taking “... such action as (the member state) deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.” (The North Atlantic Treaty, 1949).



A global view on NATO

² „...on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, on the Algerian Departments of France, on the territory of Turkey or on the Islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer “



NATO enlargement

European Union with its 27 member states is not usually seen as a defense and military alliance. But it is. After the Lisbon Treaty (2007, in force since 2009) the article 42/7 of the Treaty on the European Union provides that “ If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter... ”. However, a mechanism of a cooperation and existing capacities of the EU are still underdeveloped and therefore it is in a shadow of NATO.



EU member states

The Five Eyes (FVEY) established in 1943 is an intelligence alliance comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States (5 English speaking countries) which are parties of a multilateral United Kingdom – United States of America Agreement (UKUSA) which was considered as a secret treaty until 2005. (Five Eyes Intelligence Oversight and Review

Council, 2022, webpage) In the area of intelligence sharing it is a very seriously seen alliance which is a basis for their practical informal defence alliance. It is not possible to imagine now that some power would attack for example UK or Australia and other member states of this English speaking block would not intervene.

Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS) is from 1951 a trilateral collective security agreement between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. Since 1986 New Zealand partially suspended its membership. The Australia–US alliance remains in full force. Clearly legally the common obligations in a case of an aggression seem to be less binding than in a case of the EU or NATO but from a view of strategical reasons it is almost sure that the USA would defend Australia and New Zealand.

AUKUS is a trilateral security partnership for the Indo-Pacific region established in 2021 between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The partnership envisages cooperation in military technologies and information sharing. New Zealand has already expressed an interest to join to this club and potential members can be also Canada, Japan and South Korea. (U.S. Department of Defence, 2024)

These five militaries and defence alliances mentioned above are relatively predictable and reliable.

There are also a handful of multilateral alliances that we may have some doubts about:

Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) formed in 2002 has now 6 member states (3 states have already left). The Article 4 of the Collective Security Treaty established that an aggression against one signatory would be perceived as an aggression against all. This organization is led by Russia but and it seems now that Armenia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are weakening step by step their ties with Russia. The last reliable regional ally for Moscow is only Belarus.



CSTO members

Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio-pact) created in 1947 is based in a "hemispheric defense" doctrine of American states. Now it is a group of 17 states, led by the USA. Theoretically, an attack against one is to be considered an attack against them all (Article 3) but a real effectivity of this military pact is unclear.



Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance

The Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) established in 1971 are a series of bilateral defence relationships established by a series of multi-lateral agreements between Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United Kingdom, all of which are Commonwealth members. There is no specific commitment to intervene militarily, and the agreement is merely consultative.

However, the UK and Australia maintain a personnel and facilities based in Malaysia and Singapore (Tossini, 2017).

Peninsula Shield Force is a partnership of Gulf states - the collective military mechanism of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates) having been formed since 1984 with a joint military command (Reder, 2017). It currently includes a joint military force of 40,000 men.

Regional Security System (RSS) is an international agreement for the defence and security of the eastern Caribbean region. This community was created in gradual steps after 1982. It is a block of 8 small countries, mostly islands, the biggest one is Guyana. A military value of this block is unclear.

The Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) is a counter-terrorist military alliance between 41 member states in the Muslim world formed in 2015. Its objective is to fight against the so-called Islamic State and other terrorist groups. Its efficiency is now unclear.

Lublin Triangle established in 2020 is a regional alliance of Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine for the purposes of strengthening mutual military, cultural, economic and political cooperation and supporting Ukraine's integration into the European Union and NATO. The Lublin Triangle supports granting Ukraine the status of NATO enhanced partner and considers a NATO Membership Action Plan for Ukraine to be the next necessary step in that direction. This regional alliance is about a mutual support, not about a common defence (Dordevic, 2020).

British–Polish–Ukrainian trilateral pact is an agreement between Poland, Ukraine and the UK announced in 2022. It is not a real defence pact but a partnership to improve cyber security, increase energy security, and counter disinformation (mostly in Ukraine). It is a part of Ukrainian effort to create a net of regional alliances or partnerships (Sprenger, 2022).

Alliance of Sahel States is a mutual defense pact created between Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso in 2023. The pact is a an answer of military regimes to a threat of West African political bloc ECOWAS to intervene militarily to restore civilian rule after a coup in Niger. This new alliance declared that any attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of one or more contracted parties will be considered an aggression against the other parties. However, a stability and durability of this alliance is questionable.

3 Bilateral Military Alliances in the Present World

Besides multilateral treaties which we can consider as some forms military alliances regardless their designations, titles and formal provisions there is also several bilateral military or defence treaties. The majority of them are part of the US defence system but we can find also several very old agreements which are still in force.

In a group of **historically older alliance treaties** we can find:

Anglo-Portuguese Treaties of 1373 and 1386. They are the oldest continuous treaties in effect to this day. They were reactivated in 1943 and 1982. Entente Cordiale from the year 1904 between **France and UK** is said to be valid but mostly obsolete (at was about solution of colonial issues). This fundamental accord was developed and promoted several times during the last decades. For example, in so called Lancaster House Treaties in 2010 about a cooperation in defence, nuclear capacities, intelligence, defence industry and operational matters.

Ogdensburg Agreement signed in 1940 is an agreement between the **USA and Canada** about a defence of the North American continent. Now it is in a shadow of NATO, but it established the Permanent Joint Board of Defence, which remains as the senior advisory body on continental security and the North American Air Defense Command.

The USA has the most bilateral alliances. The **US alliance system** created after the WWII covers the whole planet. The most important US bilateral treaties are:

The **US -Philippines alliance** is based on the **Mutual Defense Treaty between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States of America (MDT)** which was signed in 1951. It was followed by several treaties on enhanced cooperation. Regardless of some hesitations in the past for both parties this bond is one of the most important.

The **U.S.-Japan alliance** was established by the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan) was signed in 1951 and several times revised. It commits the two nations to defend each other if one or the other is attacked "in the territories under the administration of Japan". (Maizland, Cheng, 2022).

The **US-South Korean alliance** is crucial for a survival of this Asian nation. Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of Korea was signed in 1953. In a case of the attack in Pacific area both parties would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes. (Article III of the treaty).

The US- Brazil partnership has its roots in the WWII cooperation. The basic document on a military cooperation is Brazil–United States Treaty signed in 1952.

The **US-Israael alliance** is based on the US–Israel Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement from the 1952 and several other special treaties and protocols.

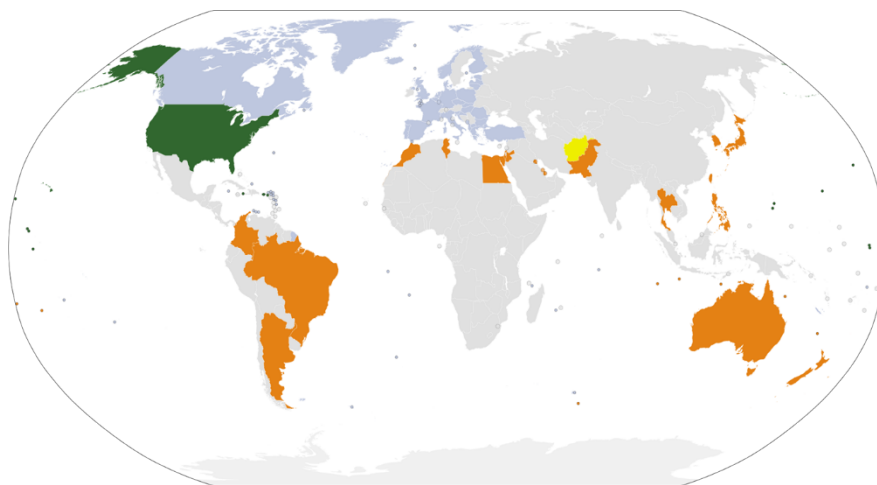
The US-Pakistan military partnership has a long tradition. The Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement was signed in 1954.

The **US-British alliance** has besides NATO framework a lot of official and non-official links. The most important is the US–UK Mutual Defence Agreement from 1958 nuclear weapons co-operation. It allows the US and the UK to

exchange nuclear materials, technology and information (and in this way to develop British nuclear arsenal).

The **US-Thai alliance** has been established in 1962 Thanat–Rusk communiqué in which the United States promised to come to Thailand's aid if it faced aggression by neighboring nations. Mutual military cooperation provided US also access to Thai military airfield etc.

The **US-Taiwan partnership** is specific because the US recognize it as a part of the People Republic of China. When US established diplomatic relations with PRC they confirmed their security guarantees to Taiwan by enacting the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979. It does not guarantee the U.S. will intervene militarily if the PRC attacks or invades Taiwan but provides Taiwan a significant military assistance.



US alliance system (NATO and non-NATO allies)

The US is not the only state having allies. There are also several **agreements of other powers.**

Probably the most significant is an **alliance between China and North Korea.** The main Sino-North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance is a treaty signed in 1961. The military obligations are expressed in a very strong wording. In a case of an armed attack of an third state “...the other Contracting Party shall immediately render military and other assistance by all means at its disposal.” (Article II)

One of the strongest alliances of today is beyond any doubts the **Union State of Russia and Belarus (USRB, est. in 1997)** as a supranational union of these two states (Masters, 2023). The present goal is an integration in economy, intelligence and defence. The currently valid agreement (Treaty on the Creation of a Union State of Russia and Belarus, signed in 1999) envisages a high level of integration of both armies, and this process is currently underway. Russian allegedly deployed tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus. The military cooperation is based on a series of partial contracts.

Conclusion

Military pacts and alliances stayed a constant element of international relations – in spite of obfuscating wording of multiple treaties. On the other side it seems that several formally existing pacts in critical situation would not work (Rio pact) or are considered as obsolete. Some others will work regardless of their vaguely stated obligations (ANZUS, AUKUS) – just because of a traditional political unity of its parties.

After 2010 – 2020 we are experiencing a wave of creating new alliances and treaties on military cooperation. It is a part of the process of forming alliance of democratic states led by the USA in Europe and the Pacific region which is a reaction on the growing power of China, Russian expansionistic attempts. (Now we can only hardly predict what will happen after US presidential election in autumn 2024.) A potential counter partner of western democratic alliance is a block of China, Russia, Iran and North Korea, which could gain a military superiority in a case of a new American isolationism.

This process of forming military alliances with a perspective of bipolarism between western democracies led by the USA and the Russia-China block together with massively increasing defence spendings and a new wave of regional conflicts we must consider as signals of a coming global military confrontations perhaps even a new world war. Therefore, democratic states now have a moral obligation to prepare themselves for a confrontation and war. This obligation concerns a society, politics, economy, industry and domestic and foreign politics. As the first step they must reject the paradigm of radical pacifism which has been preventing them from thinking in category of potential great war for a survival. The western democracies in one united strong alliance must re-militarize themselves, dramatically enlarge their military assets and capacities, increase their defence production and integrate their citizens and their civic societies in defence matters.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND PERSONAL SECURITY

Ivan Tsanov¹

ABSTRACT

The essence and main features of artificial intelligence and personal security are examined. The concept of AI is said to be used in four main senses. The thesis that personal security has emerged as a large scientific area is defended. The interaction between AI and personal security is explored, describing, and analyzing the positive and negative aspects that are conditioned by their interaction. It is concluded that in the coming years AI and personal security research will see a strong development because the future global society will be dominated by the phenomenon of artificial intelligence, and security (incl. personal security) also will be at the center of public and scientific interest.

Key words: *artificial intelligence, AI, personal security, security*

Introduction

At the beginning of the 21st century, two radically new phenomena are developing on the public horizon in the field of technology and security – artificial intelligence (AI) and personal security. Artificial intelligence in its practical dimension is a completely new phenomenon, never seen before in human history. Personal security exists, but it is underestimated at the expense of other types of security – especially national security.

The interaction between artificial intelligence and personal security is poorly studied from a scientific point of view and exactly that interaction is the *subject of our research*. The *purpose of research* is to demonstrate both positive aspects and negative aspects of the interaction between artificial intelligence and national security. To realize the purpose of the research, *historical and analytical approaches* are used.

1 Artificial Intelligence: Definitions and Basic Meanings

One of the first opportunity for the practical implementation of artificial intelligence appeared with the creation of electronic computing machines (ECMs), which took place around the 1930s. The American researcher **John Vincent Atanasov** (1903–1995), who is of Bulgarian origin, developed an electronic computer in the period 1937–1942. He worked at the University of Iowa (USA), together with his assistant **Clifford Berry** created a computer named

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ABC (Atanasoff-Berry Computer). The ABC computer greatly influenced the further development of computer technology.

The *turning point* in the birth of artificial intelligence, understood in the modern sense, is the famous test of **Alan Turing** (1912–1954), proposed by him in 1950 in his article “Computing Machinery and Intelligence“ (Turing, 1950, pp. 433-460). According to Turing, the question “Can a machine think?“ is absurd, and he proposes a completely different formulation of the problem. The Briton is convinced that one should break beyond speculative and even meaningless speculations about the possibilities of artificial intelligence by embarking on his experimental research using computers.

There is no unified scientific opinion about the nature of artificial intelligence (Simon, 1996). There is nothing unusual about this, since the study of AI is a relatively young scientific discipline, unlike sciences with a centuries-old history such as mathematics, chemistry and history, for example. A report entitled “Artificial Intelligence and Life in 2030“ and published by Stanford University in the USA gives a somewhat unusual perspective on the absence of a generally accepted view (definition) of the nature of artificial intelligence:

“It is curious that the lack of a precise, universally accepted definition for AI has probably contributed to the growth of this field and it has been able to flourish and gather an ever-accelerating pace. Instead of being guided by an approximate general direction, AI practitioners, researchers, and developers have been driven by the imperative of 'let's get on with it“ (Artificial Intelligence and Life in 2030, 2016, p. 16).

Narrow specialists in the field of artificial intelligence give different interpretations of its essence, which, however, are not so opposite if we look closely at them. In a popular work by **Stuart Russell** and **Peter Norvig** (Russell and Norvig, 2016), where the problematic of artificial intelligence is treated, some definitions of artificial intelligence are proposed, organized into four categories: 1. Systems that think as person; 2. Systems that act like a human; 3. Systems that think rationally; 4. Systems that act rationally. It is quite clear that the fundamental elements around which the ontology of artificial intelligence is built are five: system, thinking, action, rationality, human.

The concept of artificial intelligence is actually used in four main meanings, which should be kept in mind and taken into account.

Firstly, AI is understood as a theory of creating and constructing software and technical means that are able to perform intellectual activity that is identical and/or resembles human intellectual activity.

Secondly, AI is understood as these software and technical tools themselves, as well as the activities performed with their help.

Thirdly, AI is interpreted through the lens of science, which deals with its study and research.

Fourthly, under AI is also implied all non-scientific views and ideas that are found in society regarding the phenomenon in question.

In fact, we can reduce the large number of definitions of artificial intelligence to the following synthetic definition: artificial systems that think and act either like humans or that think and act rationally (Tsanov, 2022).

2 Nature and main features of Personal Security

Research on the complex phenomenon of personal security has seen rapid development over the past two decades. More and more researchers, organizations, institutions and even countries and supranational structures are involved in this research race (Kosmider and Strzelec, 2021). Various specialists and experts from diverse branches and spheres of human knowledge work in the targeted extensive research field: political scientists, lawyers, psychologists, philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, security experts and others. It is not far-fetched to argue that personal security has emerged as a *large scientific area*. However, the massive research in the considered issue did not lead to theoretical clarity regarding the essence and main characteristics of personal security, which is observed even at the conceptual level. In this regard, in our opinion, the need for a kind of synthesis is ripe.

Something else is also noticeable. In the past, personal security was underestimated at the expense of other types of security – international security, national security, military security, business security, information security, etc. Nowadays, this trend is gradually being overcome and personal security is at the center of research related to the vast domain of security.

According to **Janusz Gierszewski** (2017), the origin of the term personal security can be traced back to the four basic human freedoms proclaimed in 1941 by US President **Franklin Delano Roosevelt** (1941) – valid everywhere in the world: 1. Freedom of speech and expression; 2. Freedom of each person to worship God in his own way; 3. Freedom from want – the existence of economic arrangements that will provide each nation with a healthy life for its own inhabitants in peacetime; 4. Freedom from fear – worldwide reduction of arms to such an extent and in such a comprehensive manner that no nation is in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any of its neighbors.

It is not possible to understand the nature of personal security without considering its relation to *human security*. In the study of this relationship, however, we come across a very serious problem of a scientific nature, since human security, like personal security, turns out to be a term with a shaky scientific status and not entirely clear semantics.

The concept of human security is inextricably linked to the work of the United Nations, and the intended concept undergoes continuous development. In this regard, the adoption of Resolution 66/290 by the UN General Assembly on 10 September 2012 marked an important milestone in the implementation of

human security on a planetary scale (Human Security Handbook, 2016). In paragraph 3 of the Resolution, the UN General Assembly agreed by consensus that human security is an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and multifaceted challenges to the survival, livelihoods and dignity of their peoples.

Based on the different views on the nature of personal security, we can describe *five of its main characteristics*:

First, personal security covers a large number of elements, the main of which are related to the rights and responsibilities of the individual, the physical protection of the individual from numerous and diverse risks, dangers and threats, as well as a strong psychological component.

Second, personal security is incorporated into the scope of human security. The personal security-human security relationship is essentially a part (personal security) – whole (human security) relationship.

Third, there is no universally accepted and completely legitimate definition of the concept of “personal security“. In this theoretical field, there is a great conceptual diversity and semantic instability of the concept in question.

Fourth, personal security has various dimensions – institutional, political, economic, academic, psychological, social, cultural and others. They all have their own specifics.

Fifth, the role and importance of personal security will grow in the future. This is determined by powerful factors of an objective and subjective nature. It is not excluded that at some point in the future, personal security will become the predominant type (variety) of security for society (in area of Western Civilization) and will begin to dominate, for example, national security.

3 Interaction between AI and Personal Security

In general, it can be argued that the interaction between AI and personal security can have both positive and negative aspects. Let's look at them individually.

The interaction between AI and personal security has several *positive aspects* that contribute to enhancing overall security and protecting individuals. Here are some key benefits:

1. Threat Detection and Prevention (Tsanov, 2024): AI systems can analyze vast amounts of data in real-time to detect potential threats, such as cyberattacks, identity theft, or physical security risks; Machine learning algorithms can identify patterns and anomalies, helping to prevent unauthorized access or activities.

2. Biometric Authentication: AI-powered biometric systems, including facial recognition, fingerprint scanning, and voice recognition, provide secure and convenient methods for personal authentication; These systems enhance the accuracy and reliability of identity verification, reducing the risk of unauthorized access.

3. **Fraud Prevention:** AI algorithms can analyze transaction data and user behavior to detect unusual patterns that may indicate fraudulent activities; This helps in preventing financial fraud, credit card scams, and other forms of online and offline deception.

4. **Smart Surveillance:** AI-driven surveillance systems can monitor and analyze video feeds in real-time, identifying suspicious behavior or objects; This enhances physical security by providing early detection of potential threats in public spaces or private environments.

5. **Personalized Security Alerts:** AI can analyze individual user habits and behaviors to create personalized security alerts; For example, if an AI system notices unusual login times or locations, it can send alerts to the user, providing an extra layer of security awareness.

6. **Cybersecurity Defense (The Security Intelligence Handbook, 2020):** AI is crucial in the field of cybersecurity for identifying and mitigating cyber threats; Machine learning algorithms can analyze network traffic, detect malware, and adapt to evolving cyber threats in real-time.

7. **Autonomous Security Systems:** AI-powered autonomous security systems, such as drones or robots, can patrol and monitor areas, providing a proactive approach to security; These systems can respond quickly to potential threats without putting human security personnel at immediate risk.

8. **Privacy Protection:** AI algorithms can be designed to process personal data while preserving privacy through techniques like federated learning or differential privacy; This ensures that sensitive information is protected, and only relevant insights are shared for security purposes.

9. **Incident Response and Recovery:** AI can play a role in rapidly identifying and responding to security incidents, minimizing damage and aiding in recovery efforts.

While these positive aspects are significant, it's crucial to address potential ethical considerations and concerns related to privacy and misuse of AI in personal security applications. Striking a balance between technological advancement and ethical safeguards is essential for responsible AI deployment.

The interaction between AI and personal security also raises several *negative aspects and concerns*. It's essential to consider these issues to ensure the responsible development and deployment of AI in the realm of personal security:

1. **Privacy Concerns:** AI systems often rely on vast amounts of personal data for analysis. This raises concerns about the potential misuse or unauthorized access to sensitive information, leading to privacy violations.

2. **Biases in AI Algorithms:** If the data used to train AI algorithms contain biases, the system may perpetuate and amplify those biases, leading to discriminatory outcomes, especially in areas like facial recognition and predictive policing.

3. **Security Vulnerabilities:** AI systems themselves may become targets for malicious activities. Hackers can exploit vulnerabilities in AI algorithms or manipulate training data to compromise the security of the system.

4. **False Positives and Negatives:** AI systems are not infallible and can produce false positives or false negatives. In personal security applications, these errors may lead to unnecessary panic or, conversely, the failure to detect real threats.

5. **Invasion of Personal Space:** The deployment of advanced surveillance technologies, such as facial recognition or constant monitoring, can lead to a feeling of constant surveillance and an invasion of personal space, negatively impacting individuals' mental well-being.

6. **Lack of Transparency:** Many AI algorithms operate as “black boxes“, making it challenging to understand their decision-making processes. Lack of transparency can erode trust in the system, as users may not know why certain security decisions are made.

7. **Job Displacement:** The automation of certain security tasks through AI may lead to job displacement for security personnel. This can have economic and social implications, requiring considerations for retraining and workforce transition.

8. **Overreliance on Technology:** Overreliance on AI for personal security may result in a diminished human presence and decision-making, potentially leading to a lack of human judgment in critical situations (Tsanov, 2018).

9. **Ethical Considerations in Autonomous Systems:** AI-powered autonomous security systems, such as drones or robots, may face ethical dilemmas in decision-making, especially in situations requiring complex moral judgments or responses.

10. **Regulatory and Legal Challenges:** The rapid advancement of AI technology often outpaces the development of appropriate regulations. The lack of clear guidelines and oversight can lead to legal challenges and uncertainties surrounding AI in personal security.

Addressing these negative aspects requires a comprehensive and ethical approach to AI development, including transparent algorithms, robust security measures, and a commitment to protecting individual privacy and rights. Policymakers, developers, and organizations must work together to establish responsible practices and regulations for the deployment of AI in personal security contexts.

Conclusion

In the article, in a concise style, we described, analyzed and explained AI and personal security, and the interaction between them. We found that AI and personal security have a very complex nature, and also that there is no scientific clarity about their precise definition. We proved that the interaction between AI

and personal security has both positive and negative aspects. We expect a very rapid development of scientific research in that problem area, as in the future societies on a global, regional, national, local and individual scale will be dominated by the phenomenon of AI. Also of key importance are the implications of AI with security in all its dimensions – incl. personal security.

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STRUCTURAL AND PERSONAL SECURITY TOWARDS STRATEGIC RESOURCES

Monika Zawartka¹

ABSTRACT

The development of civilization contributes to the emergence of various threats, which so far have been most often defined as military and non-military. That is why today we are talking about political, biological, economic and broadly understood social risks and threats. On the one hand, these are threats related to demographic issues, the labor market and social security, but also environmental threats that concern the security of resources that today can easily be called strategic. These include, among others, issues related to water supply to the population. The issue of the water supply system and management of its resources is one of the key areas related to population security, both in terms of structural and personal security. If special conditions arise, water supply companies must also take specific actions that will allow for the supply of water in the so-called special conditions. The presented issue seems to be not only related to the development of human living space, e.g. urban agglomerations, but also has a significant impact on the quality of life.

Key words: *security, structural and personal security, water supply system*

Introduction

The development of civilization contributes to the emergence of various threats, which so far have been most often described as military and non-military. However, it turns out that non-military threats increasingly cover various aspects of social life. That is why today we are talking about political, biological, economic and broadly understood social risks and threats. Therefore, it seems that among the identified threats, social threats are one of the most important ones. They refer to personal and structural threats. On the one hand, these are threats related to demographic issues, the labor market and social security, but also environmental threats that concern the security of resources that today can easily be called strategic. These include, among others, issues related to water supply to the population. The issue of the water supply system and management of its resources is one of the key areas related to population security. This issue concerns primarily the population living in cities, where there is no other way to access this resource except water supply networks. The issue should not be underestimated in relation to people living in rural areas, because a large part of them have water supply networks, although some rural households still have wells. Hence, the management of water resources, both its quantity and quality, covers two

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important areas. On the one hand, it is to meet the needs of the population, the economy, i.e. industry and agriculture, as well as the needs resulting from tourism, especially sports and recreation. On the other hand, water management is related to the protection of water and the aquatic environment. Therefore, it becomes necessary to determine and implement both technical and organizational requirements regarding the operation of water supply devices and ensuring drinking water supplies for residents of cities and public facilities. This means that companies distributing water must meet certain conditions that will enable continuity of water supplies to the population and industry. Water supplies are usually carried out under the so-called normal operation. However, there may be restrictions on the water supply, which may include complete lack of supply or unfitness for consumption. Such an event is caused by dangerous situations such as a natural disaster or contamination. If special conditions arise, water supply companies must also take specific actions that will allow for the supply of water in the so-called special conditions. The presented issue seems to be not only related to the development of human living space, e.g. urban agglomerations, but also has a significant impact on the quality of life.

Security in its structural and personal dimensions

Safety as such is understood as the absence of threat, or it can also be defined as the opposite of danger. Since it is an ambiguous concept, according to various definitions, the concept of security can be understood as: a state of non-threat, peace and certainty; a state that gives a sense of certainty and a guarantee of its behavior and a chance for improvement; certainty and absence of physical threat or protection against such threat; reasonable standard of living; the primary need of humans and social groups; the basic need of the state and national systems; a continuous social process in which actors try to adapt the mechanisms that provide them with a sense of security; as well as a state and process that is not characterized by variability over longer periods of time because it depends on the mobility of force systems. (Skrabacz, 2012) Therefore, security is a state of freedom from anxiety and threat, fear, danger, attack; it is also freedom of action without the feeling of threat. (Brzeziński, 2009) Therefore, it can be concluded that security is the belief in the personal dimension - in individuals, and in the structural dimension - in groups and entire communities, that they are beyond the reach of any threat. One of the key areas of personal and structural security is the area of strategic resources, which include, among others, the water supply system and management of its resources.

All threats consist of two important aspects related to the perception of threats - objective and subjective. The objective aspect includes phenomena that cause a state of uncertainty, i.e. a state that includes real threats and is subject to rational judgment. In this aspect, specialized services such as the police, but also the fire brigade and water distribution companies are responsible for public safety

and order. Their task in this area is to constantly monitor threats, which will allow for practical effectiveness of actions in the event of a possible threat. However, the subjective aspect refers to the individual feeling and perception of phenomena that are considered unfavorable or dangerous. Therefore, the subjective aspect refers to their mental reception. (Brzeziński, 2009) The subjective aspect of security and its sense of security also results from psychological areas. In turn, Daniel Frei points to security as a state and distinguishes four of its forms: a state of lack of security, when the perception of threat is consistent with the level of its occurrence; state of obsession; a state of false security, which can be related to distorting reality, and a state of security when its perception is adequate to the level of threat. (Gierszewski, 2019) This definition perfectly reflects the hydrological situation both globally and locally. It can be noticed that, depending on the need, sometimes the moment and the situation, issues related to water management have been and are presented differently by both politicians and ecologists. And the most rational voices are those of experts.

It is important to remember that security is seen as a need. The sense of security is one of the basic human needs. Without its implementation, a person will not develop and will not strive to satisfy his other needs. Abraham Maslow presented a hierarchy of human needs, which he divided from the most basic to those that are called higher-order needs, and which also determine human development. He formulated a thesis that the natural path of human development leads from satisfying basic needs to increasingly higher ones. The need for safety belongs to the group of lower-level needs, next to physiological ones. Therefore, it is one of the needs that an individual must satisfy first. Therefore, security is a value that individuals, groups and communities particularly value, is important and is therefore particularly important to them. And in this sense, this value becomes particularly important in situations of changing reality or threats. (Marciniak, 2009) Difficulties in the supply of drinking water in urban areas may be a situation that may disturb the sense of security. Water supplies are usually carried out under the so-called normal operation. However, there may be restrictions on the water supply, which may include complete lack of supply or unfitness for consumption. Such an event is caused by dangerous situations such as a natural disaster or contamination.

Development and natural resources

One of the factors of structural and personal security is development. However, in the analyzed issue, it is important that the development is sustainable. Its concept dates back to the 1970s. Already then, experts pointed out that if the way in which the Earth's resources are used does not change and thus development will not become more sustainable, the Earth's resources and the possibilities of further development will be reached within the next hundred years, to which we are currently approaching. Thus, the concept of sustainable development

emerged, which refers to meeting the needs of the present in such a way as not to expose future generations to the inability to meet their own needs. The idea of sustainable development is therefore based on two important aspects. The first of them concerns the needs and their satisfaction and implementation, and above all, the basic needs of poor people in the world. The second one is the idea of limitations, resulting from the state of limitations and social organization, which concerns the ability of the environment to meet the needs of current and future generations. This concept is based on three pillars: protection of the natural environment and social development, which is the result of economic development. (Marczuk, 2012) It is extremely important that the subject in the concept of sustainable development is man. This is evidenced by the position of the participants of the United Nations conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, which reads: "Human beings are the center of attention in the process of lasting and sustainable development. They have the right to a healthy and creative life in harmony with nature". (Deklaracja w Rio..., 1992) This provision was combined with the demand that states adopt strategic documents in this regard. Poland has given the idea of sustainable development the rank of a fundamental right, which results from Article 5 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland that: "The Republic of Poland safeguards the independence of its territory, ensures human and civil freedoms and rights as well as the security of citizens, guards the national heritage and ensures environmental protection, guided by the principle sustainable development." (Konstytucja RP, art. 5)

Discussions around sustainable development initially concerned the need to reduce pollution and other negative impacts of economies on the natural environment. However, over time, decision-makers recognized the need for a new understanding and approach to sustainable development, referring to three fundamental factors, i.e. respect for the natural environment, social progress and economic growth. Thanks to this, the concept enters the main area of considerations on socio-economic development and is reflected in all development policies. In this way, sustainable development began to be perceived as intergenerational solidarity, which involves finding solutions that, on the one hand, guarantee further growth and, at the same time, actively involve all social groups in development processes, giving them the opportunity to benefit from economic growth. (Agenda 2030 na rzecz..., 2024) The assumptions of sustainable development are closely related to natural resources and their effective management, which is reflected in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular the 2030 Agenda (Agenda 2030 na rzecz..., 2024) treats the following goals:

Goal 6 "Ensure access to water and sanitation for all people through sustainable management of water resources";

Goal 8 "Promote stable, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all people"

Goal 12 "Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns."

The indicated goals may be difficult to achieve in Polish conditions, because water resources are a significant problem for Poland. Surface water resources in Poland amount to approximately 60 billion m³, and in dry seasons this level may drop even below 40 billion m³. Retention reservoirs are characterized by low capacity, which in total does not exceed 6% of the volume of annual water outflow from the country, which does not provide sufficient protection against periodic water excesses or deficits. This results in difficulties in water supply in some areas of the country. In particular, in the south of Poland, water-intensive industry and the development of demographic processes as well as specific geographical and hydrographic conditions cause water deficits. The annual surface water resource in Poland per capita is 14 m³, while in most European countries freshwater resources are above 50 m³/capita. Only Cyprus and Malta have smaller resources in the EU than Poland. (Ochrona środowiska, 2023) Therefore, we are among the countries poor in water resources.

Water is a strategic resource

Water is a strategic resource not only in our country, but practically throughout the entire planet, even though there are countries that have large or significant resources of this raw material. However, we should still pay attention to the rational and responsible management of water, which is a global strategic resource.

Since the industrial revolution in the 19th century, water consumption around the world has increased more than three hundred times. (Kuciński, 2013) Of all the water on the globe, hydrologists calculate that only 3% is fresh water. The rest are sea and ocean waters. 77% of fresh water comes from glaciers. Groundwater and deep-sea water remain available for use. (Hołyst, 2016) According to calculations by the World Water Forum, in 2025 humanity will have half the current amount of drinking water at its disposal. Since these sketchy data are not optimistic, water can be considered an extremely strategic raw material.

When looking at water management, it is worth pointing out the structure of water consumption in the first decade of the 21st century. It turns out that 70% of its resources are used by agriculture, 20% by industry, and only 10% by municipal economy. This overall structure of water consumption changes when factors related to both economic development and geographical location are taken into account. In highly developed and industrialized countries, water consumption per capita and in industry is much higher than in developing countries, where water is used mainly (apart from population needs) for agriculture. (Kuciński, 2013) These differences are as follows. In North America and Japan, daily water consumption per capita is 350 liters, in Europe it is 200 liters, and in Sub-Saharan African countries it is only 10-20 liters of water per person per day. Assuming that the current trends in the use of freshwater for food and sanitary purposes, as well as in industry and agriculture, do not change, according to hydrologists, by 2025,

two thirds of the world's population (approx. 5.5 billion) will live in areas with medium and high water scarcity, and the amount of drinking water will be reduced by half of its current amount. (Gwiazda, 2012) It should also be emphasized that Poland is one of the last places in Europe in terms of drinking water resources.

For some time now, significant importance has been attached to saving water. It turns out that approximately 10% of surface waters are subject to management. (Hołyst, 2016) The remaining huge amounts flow into the sea. Significant water losses are also recorded in groundwater, which also flows into the sea or evaporates, causing huge water losses today and in the future. The retention reservoirs available in the country have a small capacity and can retain about 6% of the annual water inflow. This is too little to provide protection against both water deficit, i.e. droughts, and its excess, i.e. floods. Therefore, the water deficit in Poland is growing systematically, every year. Low rainfall and modest groundwater resources may cause a crisis in water supplies in the future.

Thus, issues related to water supply are inextricably linked to ecological issues. And ecological safety is an important element of the functioning of the state and the implementation of various tasks, including those related to water supply. Ecological security is therefore related to all activities aimed at preserving or restoring natural balance, as well as ensuring current and future generations an appropriate quality of life and the right to use natural resources. Therefore, the basic obligations as part of the state's pro-ecological activities should include, among others: special environmental protection by state authorities, organizational units, social organizations and citizens. In this way, we can talk about implementing the principle of universal environmental protection and ensuring that citizens have the right to use environmental values; preventing and counteracting unfavorable changes to natural elements and restoring them to their proper condition.

Conclusion

Water is a raw material that ensures survival and a sense of security. When water resources are limited, the increasing limitation of the ability to meet this need causes an increase in the psychological sense of threat. economic growth, as well as global population growth, will require access to increasingly larger drinking water resources. Increasing the amount of drinking water in one region will result in deepening water shortages and disruption of the hydrological balance in another region. However, climate change will make this situation even worse. These are aspects that significantly confirm the thesis about the illusion and instability of safe water supply

Therefore, providing and securing water will require international cooperation in the spheres of science, technology, politics, as well as cooperation of scientists, ecologists, economists and ethicists. (Sachs, 2006)

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HUNGARIAN-UKRAINIAN AND HUNGARIAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RUSSO-UKRAINE WAR

Ladislav Pásztor¹

ABSTRACT

On 24th February 2022, Russia launched a military invasion of Ukraine to topple the pro-Western Ukrainian government and install Moscow-aligned figures in power. However, this original goal of Russia's "special military operation" was not realised, leading instead to a prolonged attrition war between Russia and Ukraine, which has now lasted for nearly three years. While Russia has transitioned to a war economy and, in collaboration with countries like Iran and North Korea, it can resupply its stockpiles of munitions, drones, and some heavy armour, Ukraine remains largely dependent on support from democratic Western nations. During the conflict, Russia has significantly damaged Ukraine's critical infrastructure, including defence industries. Western allies, led by the United States of America (USA), have provided Ukrainian forces with vital military equipment, supplies, and ammunition. They have also delivered financial aid to ensure the basic functioning of Ukraine's economy, which is on the brink of collapse, and extended humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian war refugees, including simplified residency schemes and support for their integration into the societies and economies of host nations. While all Western countries provide humanitarian aid to Ukraine, some nations bordering or near Ukraine (such as Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria) have refused to provide military assistance or have done so minimally. Hungary has rejected all forms of military aid to Ukraine and has refused to allow the transfer of allied military assistance through its territory. Furthermore, Hungary has blocked financial support and loans to Ukraine and has vehemently opposed European Union and Western sanctions on Russia. This has led to frequent accusations from EU member states that Hungary is acting as an ally of Russia. There are also claims that Budapest is distancing itself from its Western allies, with some suggesting that Hungary hopes to annex part of Ukraine's Zakarpattia region in the event of Ukraine's collapse to mitigate its "Trianon trauma".²

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² The "Trianon trauma" is a term that encapsulates the deep and lasting sense of national grievance and collective sorrow that many Hungarians feel regarding the Treaty of Trianon, signed on 4th June 1920, after the end of World War I. This treaty drastically redrew Hungary's borders, stripping the country of about two-thirds of its pre-war territory and around 60% of its population. Significant Hungarian populations were left outside the new boundaries in regions that became parts of neighbouring countries (Austria, Croatia, Serbia, Slovakia, Romania, and Ukraine). The loss of territories under the Treaty of Trianon is perceived as a national tragedy, resulting in a sense of injustice and historical loss that has persisted over the decades. This trauma has significantly shaped Hungarian national identity, politics, and foreign policy, particularly about ethnic Hungarians in surrounding countries. Notably, the Trianon trauma's ongoing influence is evident in its continued resonance in Hungary's political and cultural discourse, with periodic calls for reconciliation or restitution for the losses incurred under the treaty. This historical trauma contributes to the nationalist and revisionist sentiments in some

This paper aims to analyse Hungarian-Ukrainian and Hungarian-Russian relations since the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a multipolar global order dominated by the USA. The focus is on the political, military, and economic dimensions of cooperation between Hungary and Ukraine, as well as Hungary and Russia. The analysis will address two key questions: (1) Is Hungary a Russian ally? Furthermore, (2) Does Hungary support the breakup of Ukraine, and would it be feasible for any neighbouring country to annex parts of Ukraine?

Key words: *Russo-Ukrainian War, Hungary, Russia, Ukraine, regional security*

Introduction

As early as 1982, **Yuri Andropov**, then leader of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), initiated a series of reforms to restore economic growth, improve labour productivity, and address the economic challenges faced by the crumbling empire. He also focused on combating corruption and abuses of power within the Party's nomenklatura. These efforts laid the groundwork for the broader economic and social reforms introduced under the dynamic leadership of **Mikhail Gorbachev** in 1985. Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost* led to transformative changes in Central and Eastern Europe, a testament to the power of visionary leadership in shaping history.

The end of the Cold War, marked symbolically by the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9th November 1989 and the reunification of Germany on 3rd October 1990 (Hughes, 1999, p. 600), culminated in the dissolution of the USSR by 1991. With the end of the bipolar world order, terms such as “socialist” and “capitalist” began to lose relevance in reference to independent countries. The European political landscape was reshaped, and the Warsaw Pact was dissolved. As a result, notably in the former socialist countries, newly established governments across Europe significantly reduced the size and budgets of their armed forces. Former socialist countries, except for certain post-Soviet republics, transitioned into democratic states and joined the European Union and NATO.

However, not everywhere did the transition from a socialist political system and a planned economy to a democratic parliamentary system and a market economy take place without bloodshed, as in the case of the reunion of Germany, or the 1993 disintegration of Czechoslovakia into two independent states. In

parts of Hungarian society and the rhetoric of certain political groups that seek to emphasize the significance of Hungarian communities living outside Hungary's modern borders. Opinions on the “Trianon trauma” differ not only from the point of view of the states that invaded Austria-Hungary, but also divide Hungarian politicians, Hungarian and foreign historians. For more information, see, e.g., the book by former Hungarian minister of foreign affairs **Géza Jeszenszky** (Jeszenszky, 2023) or reputable Hungarian historians, such as **Ignác Romsics** (Romsics, 2020a; Romsics 2020b). On the other hand, the Trianon trauma is also analysed from the point of view of the newly formed states by historians working in the states created after the collapse of Austria-Hungary, such as the Slovak historian **Roman Holec** (Holec, 2022), or young researchers, such as **Patrik Szeghó** (Szeghó, 2024), who approaches the disintegration of Austria-Hungary from the perspective of the South Slavic perspective.

Europe, the breakup of Yugoslavia was accompanied by seven armed conflicts,³ which resulted in the Yugoslav War between 1991 and 2001.

NATO and the Russian Federation, the latter as the legal successor of the USSR under the auspices of the United Nations (UN), took part in peacekeeping operations in the territory of former Yugoslavia. From 1992, the Russian Federation sent its personnel to peace missions in this area (UNPROFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, as well as in Kosovo as part of IFOR/SFOR and KFOR troops). Russian military units joined the KFOR mission in Kosovo on the night of 11th – 12th June 1999. About 200 Russian troops, previously involved in the SFOR mission, seized Slatina airport near Prishtina without notifying NATO. Russia's goal was to establish its own security zone in Kosovo. By July 1999, a compromise was reached, giving Russian forces their own command structure, while they were also to report to the NATO commander in Europe. Russian soldiers had certain privileges, such as not being obligated to arrest Serbian war criminals. The Russian contingent initially numbered 3,600 soldiers but was reduced to 600 by 2002, reflecting the changing dynamics of the conflict. Russia completed its troop withdrawal in July 2003, marking the end of its military presence in the former Yugoslavia (Romańczuk, 2018, pp. 46–47).

In my point of view, this event marked the initial indication of emerging military tensions between NATO, representing the West, and the Russian Federation over maintaining influence in the former Eastern Bloc countries. Politically, tensions between the West, primarily represented by the USA, and the Soviet leadership, a key player in the Cold War, had already surfaced. This was particularly concerning the right to self-determination for Central and Southern European states within the USSR's sphere of influence, as well as Soviet republics. A notable example of this is President **George H.W. Bush's** "Chicken Kiev" speech, delivered in Kyiv on 1st August 1991, which signalled the USA hesitation toward the disintegration of the USSR.

The USA maintained a cautious stance on Ukraine's independence. In his "Chicken Kiev" speech on 1st August 1991, President **Bush** warned that the USA would only support independence movements to build democratic regimes, emphasizing the distinction between freedom and independence. Before Ukraine's independence referendum, **Bush** informed **Gorbachev** that the USA would back Ukraine's decision if it adhered to nuclear arms control, international arms agreements, and human rights protections. **Gorbachev**, however, viewed USA support for Ukraine's independence as interference in Soviet internal affairs (Fedinec, 2021, p. 190).

³ Ten-Day War, Croatian War of Independence, Bosnian War, Insurgency in Kosovo, Kosovo War, Insurgency in the Preševo Valley, Insurgency in Macedonia.

1 The historical developments involving Hungary, Russia, and Ukraine in the aftermath of the USSR's collapse

In order to better understand the broader political context, it is essential to acknowledge that in the 1990s, Western powers viewed ethnic and minority conflicts in former socialist states as security threats. The preferred solution was not territorial adjustments, but the implementation of appropriate minority protection standards. To prevent security issues, the Council of Europe adopted the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Additionally, since the 1990s, the European Union included minority protection clauses in association, accession, or economic cooperation agreements with Eastern and Central European, Caucasian, or Central Asian states. At the June 1993 Copenhagen Summit, the EU confirmed minority rights protection as a condition for membership for aspiring countries. Similarly, the EU, in collaboration with Central and Eastern European countries, worked to resolve sensitive minority issues through bilateral treaties. A notable example of this collaborative effort was the French-initiated negotiation series, resulting in the signing of the European Stability Pact, aimed at reducing conflicts in countries with association agreements with the EU (by 1993: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia), and those with solid prospects for NATO membership under the NATO Partnership for Peace program (NATO PfP) (Vizi, 2021, pp. 19–22).

1.1 The historical developments involving Hungary

Hungary joined NATO on 12th March 1999 (Szenes & Siposné Kecskeméthy, 2019, p. 212), then joined the European Union on 1st May 2004, and the Schengen Area on 21st December 2007 (Hungary – EU country profile, n.d.). In 2006, Hungary found itself on the verge of state collapse due to prioritizing the interests of government power over the state's interests. In 2008, the global economic crisis broke out, the consequences of which were felt in Hungary in 2010, the same year when the government of the so-called “National Cooperation System” [Hungarian: *Nemzeti Együttműködés Rendszere*] of Prime Minister **Viktor Orbán** (Pásztor, 2019, p. 215) was established. Since this year, **Orbán** as a Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance [*Fidesz – Magyar Polgári Szövetség*, Fidesz] leader has been in government power continuously as Prime Minister.

Before that, it was Hungarian Democratic Forum [*Magyar Demokrata Fórum*, MDF] (which was a Hungarian nationalist, national-conservative and Christian democratic party) and one of the party founders – **István Csurka** – that played an important role in the nationalist movement of Hungary. **Csurka** was the one who expressed his disapproval in the National Assembly when approving the

Agreement on the foundations of good neighbourliness and cooperation between the Republic of Hungary and Ukraine and worked on the revision of Trianon. While approving this treaty, **Csurka** attempted to revise the existing borders of Hungary, but he needed to meet with understanding in the plenary session. In the end, 223 of the total number of 279 voting MPs approved the agreement's wording. It should be added that the National Assembly of Hungary had 386 members at that time. The MDF split in two because of the primary agreement between Hungary and Ukraine. The radical wing, led by **Csurka**, emerged from it and founded the new nationalist party called Hungarian Justice and Life Party [*Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja*, MIÉP] (Fedinec, 2021, p. 198).

In 2003, the Right-Wing Youth Community [*Jobboldali Ifjúsági Közösség*], which had primarily unified university students since 1999, transitioned into a political party known as Jobbik – Conservatives [*Jobbik – Konzervatívok*, Jobbik]. Upon its foundation, Jobbik presented itself as a value-oriented, conservative, nationalist, and Christian party, employing radical methods. (Róna, 2014) After the decline of MIÉP, Jobbik became the most prominent party on the radical right in Hungary, with some analysts considering it part of the far-right (Király, 2009). However, by late 2013, the party started a gradual shift, abandoning its radical nationalist ideology in favour of a centre-right populist direction. This evolution is a significant aspect of Jobbik's history. Today, Jobbik defines itself as a conservative, centre-right party (Hitvallás, 2024).

During the second Orbán government (29th May 2010 – 6th June 2014), only two days after the vote of confidence in the government, the governing parties submitted a draft law on National Unity Day [*a nemzeti összetartozás napja*] to the Hungarian National Assembly, which approved the law with the support of the government parties and Jobbik (2010. Évi XLV. törvény a Nemzeti Összetartozás melletti tanúságtételről, 2010).

The simplified naturalization procedure, commonly known as „dual citizenship”, was a significant reform initiated by the Hungarian National Assembly. This reform, aimed at improving the situation of Hungarians living abroad and maintaining relations with the mother country, was a testament to the agency and responsibility of the decision-makers. On 26th May 2010, the Hungarian National Assembly, which was formed after the parliamentary elections in April 2010, made the crucial decision to modify the citizenship law. Of the 386 MPs, 263 (68.26 per cent) were from Fidesz and 47 (12.18 per cent) from Jobbik. (2010. évi Országgyűlési Képviselő Választás 2. fordulójáról..., 2010) They introduced simplified naturalization based on ethnicity for Hungarians living across the border. The essence of the simplified naturalization procedure is that Hungarians across the border do not need to settle in Hungary to obtain Hungarian citizenship; they do not need to pass a citizenship test, it is sufficient to know the Hungarian language, and do not need to prove their residence in Hungary and proof of livelihood (1993. évi LV. törvény a magyar állampolgárságról, 2024).

Meanwhile, the transformation of Fidesz and Jobbik was not just a mere adjustment but a significant shift in Hungarian politics. Fidesz, over time, embraced Jobbik's "Hungary for Hungarians" policy, while Jobbik, in turn, distanced itself from its radical right-wing ideology. This evolution culminated in the formation of the Our Homeland Movement [*Mi Hazánk Mozgalom*, MHM] by **László Toroczkai** and several politicians who departed from the Jobbik after the 2018 parliamentary elections. The agreement in cooperation between the MIÉP (Dull, 2019) and the Independent Smallholders, Agrarian Workers and Civic Party [*Független Kisgazda-, Földmunkás- és Polgári Párt*, FKgP], on 20th February 2019, marked a turning point in Hungarian nationalist politics (Együttműködési megállapodást kötött..., 2019).

The revision efforts by Hungary and the assessment of the behaviour of the current Hungarian government are reflected in the summary of **Rastislav Káčer**, the former Slovakian ambassador to Hungary and the later foreign minister of Slovakia. According to this, the policy of the current Fidesz and the Hungarian government in power since 2010 is alarming. **Viktor Orbán** gradually moved from a liberal position to a national radical position. He gradually adopted more radical views to draw voters away from Jobbik, thereby pushing the extremist party back. **Orbán** and Fidesz assimilated the nationalist, irredentist, revisionist ideas represented by Jobbik, which transformed himself – and FIDESZ – into Jobbik. According to **Káčer**, if you live in Hungary as a foreign diplomat, you hear nothing else, but only „*how unjust Trianon was. There are constant memorials, and history has constantly been thematized.*” (Címer, 2023)

It should be mentioned that the nationalist MIÉP officially disbanded in July 2021 and FKgP is under liquidation (Megszűnt a MIÉP, felszámolási eljárásban az FKGP..., 2021; Két szebb napokat látott part..., 2023).

The political developments described above suggest that the current Hungarian government might be inclined to revise the Treaty of Trianon. However, let us consider that the governing Fidesz has an absolute majority of 135 deputies in the 199-member National Assembly and the radical MHM another 6 (Az Országgyűlés és az Országgyűlés Hivatala – Bevezetés, n.d.). There is also parliamentary support for adopting laws that could create domestic political conditions for this scenario. However, the current European political reality and security architecture do not allow this scenario to be fulfilled. Also, the Hungarian army's total military strength of about 32,000 could not support this nationalist policy of Hungary. Not to mention that after more than a hundred years since the signing of the Treaty of Trianon, it is difficult to imagine the support of the Hungarian national minority living outside the borders of Hungary.

It is crucial to emphasize the pivotal role of the World Federation of Hungarians [*Magyarok Világszövetsége*] in initiating the referendum on Hungarian dual citizenship, which took place on 5th December 2004. The referendum, which was linked to the issue of hospital privatization, was a two-part vote that ultimately failed due to low turnout. In the dual citizenship question,

only 2,949,849 (37.5 per cent) valid votes were cast by those eligible to vote (8,048,739 persons). Of the votes cast, 1,521,271 (51.6 per cent) were for, and 1,428,578 (48.4 per cent) against (2004. évi népszavazás, n.d.). This high proportion of dissenters meant that Hungarian communities outside the borders could feel that the motherland citizens did not consider them with equal rights.

1.2 The historical developments involving Russia

The Russian Federation, established in May 1992 by renaming the original Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, is a key player in the global security system. As the primary successor state of the USSR, it has assumed the USSR's position as a permanent member of the UN Security Council with the power of veto. It is also a leading member of the Commonwealth of Independent States and a member of the G20 and other international organizations, contributing to its significant influence on international relations. Since 1999, the absolute ruler of Russia has been **Vladimir Putin** continuously, who alternately held the positions of prime minister and president.

Until 1999, it seemed that Russia and the “West” could work together. However, through the events in Kosovo mentioned in the introduction, as well as NATO's air strikes against Serbia and Montenegro, on which Russia vehemently disagreed, the good relationship came to an end. Moscow suspended its relations with the NATO Permanent Council, and the NATO office in Moscow was temporarily closed. The Russian security policy decision adopted in 2000 listed that NATO and the USA disregarded Russia's interests in the Balkans as one of the most significant security risks. (Nagy, 2018) Subsequently, Russia's 2015 National Security Strategy states that NATO's global power projection is in violation of international law, while activating the Alliance's military activities, further expanding the Alliance near Russia's borders and establishing a missile defence system will jeopardize Russia's national security (Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 31.12.2015 № 683 “О Стратегии национальной безопасности Российской Федерации”, 2015, articles 15 and 106).

Russia's post-Soviet history in international relations has been characterized by its strategic attempts to reassert influence over former Soviet republics, often through direct military intervention or support for separatist movements. When the Soviet Empire collapsed in 1991, Russia, as the successor state of the USSR, strategically tried to plant the seeds of future influences on its former territory. Moscow could not directly control the successor states, however, it could at least try to control them. In the spirit of the Stalinist-communist-imperial “*divide et imperia*” method, such efforts persisted even after the collapse of the USSR. (Ondrejcsák, 2023, p. 33)

The modern imperial policy of Russia, a direct continuation of the wars of conquest and annexation of Tsarist Russia and the USSR, is a complex strategy. It involves military force, diplomacy, political and economic coercion, and the

pretext of 'protecting the Russian-speaking population.' This method of interfering in the internal affairs of a foreign state is termed an asymmetric or hybrid war in scientific literature, a terminology that accurately describes its diverse influences.

Regardless of the name of the Russian activity, Russia has unleashed or subsequently frozen several conflicts. It is mainly about Moldova, where since the early 1990s, Russia has supported the breakaway region of Transnistria in Moldova, by providing economic and military aid. This unresolved conflict has hindered Moldova's integration with Western institutions such as the EU. Next is the Chechnya and the North Caucasus conflict (1994–2009), where Russia faced separatist movements, notably in Chechnya. Two wars occurred (1994–1996, 1999–2009). Russia crushed the Chechen independence movement, leading to severe human rights violations. In 2008, Russia invaded Georgia following a conflict in the separatist regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which were supported by Russia. The five-day war ended with recognizing the independence of these regions by Russia, contrary to international law. Russia has had a tense relationship with the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) since they regained independence in 1991. While these countries joined NATO and the EU, Russia has periodically exerted pressure through cyberattacks, energy policy, and military threats. Notably, in 2007, Estonia suffered a massive cyberattack, widely attributed to Russia, following the relocation of a Soviet war monument. Finally, Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, following the Ukrainian Euromaidan protests and the ousting of a pro-Russian president, marked a turning point in Moscow's international relations. The annexation was widely condemned by the international community, leading to sanctions from the EU, the USA, and other countries. Additionally, Russia has been involved in supporting separatist movements in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, a conflict that escalated into a full-scale invasion in 2022 (Galeotti, 2016; Romsics, 2023).

These actions reflect Russia's broader strategy of maintaining influence in its near abroad through military intervention, economic leverage, and hybrid warfare tactics.

Moreover, many social, political, and economic challenges beset Russia, including the rise of an oligarchy, societal stratification, and a lack of competitiveness (Fedinec, 2023, pp. 79–83). The country's economy heavily relied on mineral-based energy carriers, such as petroleum and gas, its primary export products. This reliance on a narrow range of goods, as evidenced by the Atlas of Economic Complexity data for 2021, hampered Russia's global competitiveness, with its most significant goods exports being in low and moderate complexity products, minerals, and metals (The Atlas of Economic Complexity..., n.d.). And Russia uses its mineral wealth as a weapon.

1.3 The historical developments involving Ukraine

Ukraine declared its independence from the USSR on 24th August 1991, approved by 90.32 per cent of the Ukrainian voters in a referendum on 1st December 1991 (Центральний державний архів...). The independence of Ukraine (and the other Soviet republics) led to the dissolution of the USSR on 26th December 1991. It is important to emphasize that independent Ukraine was created within the borders of the former Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and like other former socialist states, Ukraine still has many Soviet-type weapons, ammunition and explosives. In addition, the country possessed a significant arsenal of nuclear weapons. Given the political instability, high-level corruption, and economic difficulties of the newly established state, there was a real danger that Ukraine would not be able to maintain the nuclear weapons that remained on its territory after the collapse of the USSR. The nuclear security problem was solved by the “Memorandum on security assurances concerning Ukraine’s accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons” (NPT), signed in Budapest on 5th December 1994 (United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, 2021). Under the NPT, the Russian Federation, the USA, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland confirmed their recognition of Ukraine becoming parties to the NPT, and effectively removing all Soviet nuclear weapons from Ukrainian soil. The three nuclear-weapon states signing the NPT document “reaffirm their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, and that none of their weapons will ever be used against Ukraine except in self-defence or otherwise in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations” (United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, 2021, article 2). Between 1994 and 1996, there were Soviet nuclear weapons stationed in independent Ukraine but their disarmament took place under Russian operational control.

Cooperation between independent Ukraine and NATO began in 1991 when Ukraine joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. It was followed by Ukraine’s accession to the NATO PfP on 8th February 1994. In July 1997, at the NATO summit in Madrid, NATO and Ukraine signed the *Charter on a Distinctive Partnership*. At the Bucharest summit on 3rd April 2008, NATO leaders agreed that Ukraine would become a member of NATO if it met the necessary membership criteria. However, in 2011, President **Viktor Yanukovich**, known for his pro-Russian stance, officially abandoned Ukraine’s pursuit of NATO integration (Siposné Kecskeméthy, 2022).

The initiation of the Association Agreement with the European Union began in 2012. However, on 21st November 2013, President **Yanukovich** declined to sign the agreement, opting instead to pursue closer economic ties with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. This decision sparked widespread protests, known as the *Euromaidan* movement, marked by anti-Russian and pro-European

demonstrations. Protesters advocated for stronger ties with the EU and opposed Yanukovich's pivot toward Russia (Ukraine crisis: Timeline, 2014).

The refusal to sign the *EU Association Agreement* significantly contributed to escalating tensions in Ukraine, eventually leading to significant political changes, including **Yanukovich's** ousting and Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014, followed by the war in eastern Ukraine. The *Euromaidan* movement was a pivotal moment in Ukraine's history with profound regional implications. In eastern Ukraine, two self-proclaimed and internationally unrecognized republics – the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics – emerged, while Crimea has remained under Russian occupation since March 2014. Amid the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian hybrid war, the Minsk agreements, facilitated by the Trilateral Contact Group (comprising representatives of Ukraine, Russia, and the OSCE, with mediation by France and Germany), failed to resolve the conflict. Ultimately, on 24th February 2022, Russia launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine.

Ukraine applied for EU membership in February 2022 and was granted candidate status in June 2022. In December 2023, EU leaders approved the start of accession negotiations. In parallel, Ukraine and the EU have strengthened political and economic relations, notably through the Eastern Partnership (EU relations with Ukraine, 2024). The NATO summit in Washington in July 2024 did not yield a significant political breakthrough to expedite Ukraine's NATO membership process. While the Washington declaration affirmed that Ukraine's full Euro-Atlantic integration is irreversible, it only promised that the Alliance would invite Ukraine to join once member states reached consensus and all necessary conditions were fulfilled (Tálas, 2024).

2 Hungarian-Russian relations

The development of Hungarian-Russian relations in the early 1990s, as with other Central European countries, was influenced by the transformation of the European security and economic environment and the end of the bipolar world order. The international structures of the socialist bloc – Warsaw Pact, Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, USSR dissolution – were disintegrated.

The withdrawal of the Soviet troops stationed in Hungary for 47 years was completed on 16th June 1991. However, neither of the parties agreed on the financial issues, which were only concluded in the autumn of 1992, during the visit of Russian President **Boris Yeltsin** to Budapest: the parties mutually renounced their demands against each other (Gazdag & Remek, 2018, pp. 205–209).

At the beginning of the 1990s, in the middle of the regime change process and after the coup in Moscow, on 6th December 1991, **József Antall** signed the Soviet basic agreement with **Mikhail Gorbachev** and the Russian basic agreement with **Yeltsin** in Moscow. The Soviet treaty was actually redundant at

that point, but **Antall** insisted on it regarding it as an act that ended the Soviet relationship, especially that the condemnation of the Soviet military intervention in 1956 was made official through an exchange of letters between the foreign ministers, which became an integral part of the treaty. This marked the official end of the Soviet era, including the condemnation of the 1956 intervention (Fedinec, 2021, p. 193).

However, the dependence on Russian energy sources remained significant. The expansion of the Paks II nuclear power plant also points in this direction. In December 2014, the Hungarian government classified the Paks nuclear power plant investment as an investment of prime importance from the point of view of the national economy and fundamentally necessary from the point of view of the security of the energy supply. (Paksról döntött a kormány, 2014). The investment received EU approval in 2023, and Russia is carrying out the construction (Infostart/MTI, 2023). This classification underscores the strategic significance of the investment and its role in shaping Hungarian-Russian relations. Even though Hungary participates in the Organization of Turkic States as an observer (Türk Államok Szervezete és Magyarország, 2024), Budapest has done little in energy diversification.

Hungarian-Russian diplomatic relations are also lively, and even after the West reduced its diplomatic relations with Moscow, Hungary maintains increasingly intensive relations with Russia. This trend is well reflected by **Péter Szijjártó's** presence at the 20th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June 2016. At the economic forum, the Hungarian foreign minister signed two contracts with the Russian side: on the amendment of the agreement on the long-term supply of natural gas and on the production of 700 railway cars – for the Egyptian market in Hungarian-Russian corporate cooperation (Fontos megállapodásokat kötött Szijjártó Péter Szentpéterváron, 2016).

Higher-level Russian-Hungarian relations are also outstanding. Between 2010 and the escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian war on 24th February 2022, Hungarian Prime Minister **Viktor Orbán** met Russian President **Vladimir Putin** 11 times. At the meetings the export of Russian energy carriers to Hungary, the renovation of the Paks II nuclear power plant, and other economic issues were discussed. The two sides met seven times in Moscow and five times in Budapest (Erdélyi, 2022).

The activities of the International Investment Bank in Hungary and its employees' diplomatic immunity have sparked international protests, particularly concerning the presence of Russian intelligence agents in Hungary (Siklós & Karóczkai, 2023). Even in the midst of the Russo-Ukrainian war, Hungary refrained from expelling Russian diplomats and took a measured approach to Western sanctions (Nótin, 2018; Szijjártó: Magyarország nem tervezi orosz diplomaták kiutasítását, 2021).

Hungary's business relationship with the Russian defence industry has significantly diminished, aligning with the withdrawal of Soviet-Russian military

equipment. The Zrínyi National Defence and Armed Forces Development Program (previously ZRÍNYI 2026) has been instrumental in this transition, facilitating the procurement of Western, non-Russian military equipment. However, the program also features intriguing exceptions, such as the factory overhaul and renovation of Mi-17 (Mi-8) military transport helicopters and the modernization of Mi-24 attack helicopters (Pásztor, 2019, p. 220).

Following the escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian war in February 2022, Hungary's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, **Péter Szijjártó**, undertook several significant diplomatic missions to Russia. These included his participation in the 25th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (Kassai, 2023). His most recent visit to Saint Petersburg was on 30th August 2024, following the EU Foreign Ministers' meeting in Brussels. **Szijjártó's** critique of the Brussels meeting, which focused on the Russo-Ukrainian war and economical sanction against Russia and Belarus, was particularly pointed. The next day, he visited Russia, where he engaged in crucial discussions with **Alexey Miller**, CEO of Gazprom, on the vital importance of Russian gas for Hungary's economy (Oroszországból jelentkezett be Szijjártó..., 2024).

In addition to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister **Orbán** also visited Moscow. In June 2024, he made a high-profile visit to Russia, where he met President **Putin**. This controversial visit, which stirred up a debate, came after he had visited Kyiv and met with Ukrainian President **Zelenskyy**. **Orbán's** trip to Moscow was part of what he described as a "peace mission" to foster dialogue between Ukraine and Russia amidst the ongoing war. The European Union, which **Orbán's** government presided over at the time through its rotating presidency, was quick to distance itself from the trip. The visit was also seen as a significant diplomatic win for **Putin**, allowing him to portray himself as less isolated internationally. Despite the EU's distancing, **Orbán** positioned himself as one of the few European leaders still able to engage with Kyiv and Moscow, attempting to leverage his connections for peace talks (Orbán Viktor a békéről tárgyal..., 2024; Orbán visits Putin..., 2024).

3 Hungarian-Ukrainian relations

In the context of the reunification of Germany and the democratization processes of the states of Central Europe, Hungary played a relatively significant role, among others, by opening its western borders to the citizens of the German Democratic Republic in 1989 and organizing the so-called Pan-European picnic (Pásztor, 2020, p. 217). Concerning Ukraine, Hungary officially recognized Ukraine's independence on 3rd December 1991, which made Hungary the third country to recognize Ukraine, following Poland and Canada. Additionally, on the same day, Hungary signed a protocol establishing diplomatic relations with Ukraine and was the first to open an embassy in Kyiv. This gesture solidified Hungary's support for Ukraine's newfound sovereignty after the dissolution of the

USSR (Ukrajna Magyarországi Nagykövetsége, 2022). In addition, Hungary was the first country to sign an agreement on the foundations of good neighbourliness and cooperation only five days after establishing independent Ukraine (Vizi, 2021, pp. 216–229).

The relations between Hungary and Ukraine are significantly influenced by the status and living conditions of the ethnic Hungarian national minority living in the Transcarpathian region of Ukraine.⁴ Hungary's approach to these people, treating them as citizens of its own country, underscores the depth of its commitment to their security and well-being. In this context, it is about the fulfilment of foreign policy and security interests, which were set out by the government of Prime Minister **József Antall** in the early nineties.

The **Antall** government's foreign policy strategies were not just a response to the changing geopolitical landscape, but also a proactive approach to shaping the country's future. The government program clearly stated the goal of restoring full sovereignty, a key commitment to national independence, and turning to the Euro-Atlantic direction. Another key aspect was the re-introduction of the unresolved relationship between the state and the nation into the tasks of Hungarian foreign policy. This linked the state policy that articulates the interests of the country and the Hungarian nation, including the course of national politics following the interests of Hungarians. The new strategy, with its three directions, was a testament to the government's optimism and hope for the future.

⁴ Transcarpathia [*Закарпатська область*], historically part of Hungary until the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, lies on the Ukrainian side of the present-day Hungarian-Ukrainian border, established after World War II. Following the Monarchy's dissolution, the region was assigned to Czechoslovakia under the terms of the Saint Germain and Trianon treaties until 1938. On 2nd November 1938, following the First Vienna Award, the southern part of Transcarpathia was ceded to the Kingdom of Hungary under **Miklós Horthy's** leadership. Subsequently, on 15th March 1939, the Hungarian military advanced into the territory. In October 1944, the Soviet Red Army entered Transcarpathia, and on 29th June 1945, the area was formally annexed to the USSR. With the dissolution of the USSR, Transcarpathia became part of the newly independent Ukraine. The region has since developed into a highly ethnically and culturally diverse area, a fascinating mosaic of different traditions, languages, and customs. According to the official 2001 census, Transcarpathia's population was approximately 1.25 million, and 151,000 (12.1%) self-identified as Hungarian (Всеукраїнський перепис населення 2001..., n.d.). A shadow census conducted by Hungarian researchers in 2017 estimated the Hungarian minority population to be 131,000, including temporarily absent individuals and Hungarian-speaking Roma communities. Of this group, it was estimated that 11,000 to 12,000 individuals resided abroad for more than half of the year (Fedinec, 2021, p. 187). Consequently, the number of Hungarian's minority in Ukraine in 2017 was estimated at no more than 120,000. Following the escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict in February 2022, this number is likely to have decreased further due to three key factors: (1) Many Hungarian men who had sought employment abroad may have chosen not to return to Ukraine, thus avoiding military service in the Ukrainian armed forces. (2) Women and children who remained in Ukraine may have followed their male relatives abroad or left the war-torn region independently. (3) Wartime casualties have also contributed to population decline, though the full extent of these losses will only become apparent after the conflict concludes.

- (1) joining the Euro-Atlantic institutions as soon as possible, and integration into the European processes.
- (2) putting good neighbourly and regional relations on a new foundation.
- (3) the formulation of a new national policy about Hungarian minorities living beyond the border, primarily in neighbouring states. (Gazdag & Remek, 2018, p. 212).

The **Antall** government's foreign policy is followed by the current Hungary's National Security Strategy (hereinafter: HNSS 2020). Accordingly, in context of the mentioned strategy, the state representatives feel particular responsibility for promoting the prosperity of Hungarian communities in their homelands beyond Hungarian state borders. *"Hungary contributes to the stability of the region through a minority policy that supports the preservation and development of ethnic/national minorities living within its borders in all respects, while upholding relations with the Hungarian communities beyond its borders and supporting their legitimate aspirations. Depriving Hungarian communities beyond our borders of their existing rights is in conflict with European and Euro-Atlantic values and is therefore deemed unacceptable. Hungarian citizens living outside Hungary's borders constitute an inseparable part of the Hungarian nation not only in terms of culture, but also in terms of public law. Our nation's security and the security of Hungarian citizens living abroad mutually reinforce one another"* (Government Resolution 1163/2020 [21st April] on Hungary's National Security Strategy, 2020, article 13). *"The situation of Hungarians living beyond our borders constitutes an inseparable element of the security of Hungary. In the spirit of the national responsibility towards Hungarians living beyond our borders, as stipulated in the Fundamental Law of Hungary, we are closely monitoring the development of their situation in our neighbouring states. We support the notion that these Hungarian communities should be able to enjoy the forms of self-government and autonomy best suited to their specific situation as communities, while continuing to live in their native lands"* (Government Resolution 1163/2020..., 2020, article 84).

After lengthy expert and political consultations, the Hungarian-Ukrainian basic agreement was signed in Kyiv on 6th December 1991. The document contains the principle of territorial integrity (inviolability of borders) and articles ensuring the protection of the rights of the ethnic Hungarian minority. Substantial Hungarian domestic political disputes were caused by Article 2, paragraph 2 of the basic treaty, which states, *"The Parties shall respect each other's territorial integrity and declare that they do not have and will not have any territorial claims against each other."* In Hungary, the treaty negotiations emerged as a susceptible issue in a historical context, mainly due to the consequences of the Treaty of Trianon. In Ukraine, on the other hand, bilateral relations were characterised by a positive attitude towards Hungary until the adoption of the Ukrainian education Law in 2017. The relationship between the two countries was considered particularly good, strengthened by the work of the Hungarian-Ukrainian joint

committee, which met fifteen times in total between 1992 and 2011. The last official meeting occurred in Budapest in December 2011, although it ended without signing the protocol (Fedinec, 2021, p. 208).

After 2017, relations were further worsened by the Ukrainian Education Framework Law, which significantly limited the mother-tongue education of national minorities by introducing mandatory Ukrainian-language subjects from the fifth grade (Čaplovič, 2017). In March 2022, during the peace negotiations with Russia, Ukraine indirectly acknowledged its tough stance on the use of languages by national minorities (Орлова, 2022). In December 2022, the National Assembly of Ukraine adopted the Ukrainian Law on National Minorities, an essential condition for the country's EU accession. The Law further restricted minorities' rights, including the right to self-identification, the use of national minority languages, education, and participation in political, economic, social, and cultural life (Kreft-Horváth, 2022). This process particularly sensitively affected the Hungarian community living in Transcarpathia.

The issue of dual citizenship⁵ also sparked political and security disputes in several countries neighbouring Hungary, as these states have tightened the conditions for dual citizenship or banned it altogether. Ukraine considered the situation where a person takes citizenship in another country on ethnic bases while still living in Ukraine a particular risk. As early as 2011, the Ukrainian Security Service [Служба Безпеки України, SBU] paid increased attention to monitoring and harassing Ukrainian citizens who took Hungarian dual citizenship, which further worsened the relationship between the two countries (Ukrajna: zaklatják a honosítást kérőket, 2011). The intelligence problem culminated in September 2018 when a hidden camera recording was made of the handing over of Hungarian passports at the Hungarian consulate diplomatic mission in Berehove, which resulted in a diplomatic conflict: the Hungarian consul's expulsion, followed by a Ukrainian diplomat's expulsion from Budapest (Kiutasította Ukrajna a beregszászi magyar konzult, 2018). These events further strengthened diplomatic tensions, only exacerbated by the Russo-Ukrainian war that escalated in 2022 (Kiss, 2022). The issue of dual citizenship and the restrictions of minority rights put a heavy burden on Hungarian-Ukrainian relations, especially in connection with attacks against the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association [*Kárpátaljai Magyar Kulturális Szövetség*, KMKSZ] in February 2018, and provocations against local Hungarian communities such as posting of provocative information boards in 2017 or the planned detonation of Hungarian Verecke Conquest memorial at the Veretskyi Pass (Felgyújtották a KMKSZ központi irodáját, 2018). The relationship between the two countries has been poisoned by

⁵ This opportunity has become attractive to ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine, especially in Transcarpathia. Interest in the simplified naturalization procedure increased significantly, and many people took advantage of this opportunity.

the activities of the Russian security services, which may have been behind the local incidents.

Summary

Based on the facts presented in this study, the answer to the two fundamental questions posed in the annotation is answered in Hungary's current security strategy, which concerns Russia and Ukraine. Propaganda about the annexation of the western and southwestern parts of Ukraine to Poland, Hungary and Romania is spread only by the former Russian president **Dmitry Medvedev** (Krempaský, 2022). It is important to note that none of the mentioned EU and NATO member countries expressed their interest in annexing any territorial area of Ukraine.

Hungary is essentially fulfilling the provisions of its HNSS 2020, which states that *„the Russian Federation is one of the key actors in the international system, serving an indispensable role in managing several global and regional security issues. However, major tensions have developed recently in the relations between NATO and Russia and between the EU and Russia. Amidst the deteriorating security environment, NATO has strengthened its deterrence and defence posture and suspended its practical civilian and military cooperation with Russia. At the same time, it has left the channels of political dialogue open, as the Alliance does not seek a conflict and does not intend to pose a threat to Russia. Given the situation, there is a particular need for political dialogue with Russia and for measures that reduce risk and build confidence. Hungary regards the maintenance of the cohesion of NATO and the EU to be one of its priorities, while it has an interest in the pragmatic development of Hungarian–Russian relations and economic cooperation.”* (Government Resolution 1163/2020..., 2020, article 118)

“Hungary has an interest in a strong, democratic, stable, and economically developing Ukraine with whom we can foster balanced bilateral relations. Legitimate efforts to reinforce Ukrainian national identity must not, however, come at the expense of the acquired rights of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia.”

Moreover, cooperation with Russia is in Hungary's national economic, security, and strategic interest. Hungary wants to develop economic cooperation with Russia in areas not affected by international sanctions (Szijjártó Péter: Egész Európa..., 2024). Hungary continues to provide comprehensive humanitarian aid to Ukraine. However, it is also true that Budapest blocks some EU or NATO proposals to gain a political advantage for itself or mitigate Brussels's unfavourable decisions towards Hungary. It also uses the institution of “constructive abstention” in the case of Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO. Ultimately, the representatives of the Hungarian government follow their domestic political interests and the country's business priorities with their

decisions. Due to this, however, they are moving further and further away from the majority policy of the EU and NATO.

Finally, the answer to the first key question (Is Hungary a Russian ally?) is NO. Hungary follows its national interests. The answer to the second question (Does Hungary support the breakup of Ukraine, and would it be feasible for any neighbouring country to annex parts of Ukraine?) is NO. All these countries respect international law, moreover, as they are aware of the fact that changing the status quo would set an extremely negative precedent generating shock-waves all over the world.

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