

FOREWORD

It is no secret to readers of the Hungarian Defence Review that major changes are occurring in the security environment. Internal political upheavals, evolving strategic thinking, developments in the laboratory, events on the ground in Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa, environmental concerns, and challenges to the rules-based international order are adding up to significant uncertainty about the future. The authors of the current issue track some of these trends, and thereby contribute to our readiness to understand, and deal with, this uncertainty. Two main themes dominate: developments in military science and analyses of the changing security environment.

The two major challengers of the rules-based international order – China and Russia – are the subject of the articles on the changing security environment. Of particular interest in this section is the paper on intelligent warfare by a Chinese author, since it offers an insight into the Chinese views on the future wars.

Depending on the sources one consults, artificial intelligence is either a great benefit, or a grave danger to mankind (or perhaps both at the same time). However, for better or worse, AI will be with us in the foreseeable future in civilian life, as well as in the military field. As our first military science article asserts, AI will become a particularly useful tool of operational planning. No military force can function without adequate logistics – but that does not mean that everything must accompany an army on the march: obtaining supplies locally, and contractors have always been part of the logistical system. Contractors can provide valuable service in support of Alliance operations, as long as their interests and limitations are also taken into consideration.

The war in Ukraine, as the first truly large-scale modern war in Europe in nearly eight decades, is of great interest to every military specialist. An analysis of the Ukrainian offensive to liberate Kharkiv oblast' offers a detailed view of modern battlefield tactics. The armed forces are the guarantors of the independence, security and territorial integrity of the nation that fields them. They can carry out their mission only if they face the most likely adversary with the skill sets and tools necessary to prevail in a modern conflict. As Ukraine's example shows, that does not necessarily mean the latest in military hardware: obsolescent equipment can also do yeoman service, if it is operated by skilled and determined personnel, under the leadership of dedicated commanders.

Although the war in Ukraine has shifted the focus of the Alliance to the enhancement of national defence, the recent events in the Middle East are a stark warning of the threat that violent religious and political extremists represent. In that context, the article on the employment of the armed forces in counterterrorist operations is a reminder that this is a perilous pass to take, because it diminishes defensive capabilities and may damage civilian-military relationships.

Other articles address such other – perhaps less immediate – challenges as climate change that is becoming a security issue for some nations, or the opportunity that technology offers in military education and training. A book review complements the two major themes.

Some of the articles in this issue are considerably longer than this journal's usual limit of 15-20 pages, but the editors felt that the subjects they cover are important enough for a detailed treatment, and publishing them in two instalments several months apart would have diminished their impact.

by Álmos Péter Kiss