Hungarian Defence Review

FOR THE HOMELAND

HUNGARIAN DEFENCE FORCES

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ZRÍNYI KIADÓ

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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

István Szabadföldi – Imre Négyesi

THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH OF MILITARY STRATEGIC OPERATIONS PLANNING AND ITS SUPPORT BY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ABSTRACT: *Military operations are always preceded by political decisions and the transition to military means in the management of conflicts in order to pursue political goals takes place in either national or alliance context. Information operations, all-source intelligence as tools for intelligence and counter-intelligence play a key role in the planning of military operations. The last two decades have brought with them the explosive spread of digital technologies. The application of communication technology (5G), sensor systems, IoT (Internet of Things) produces a huge amount and multiple types of data, from which Big Data analytic systems and algorithms using Artificial Intelligence (AI) gain usable information. Accordingly, applications supported by AI play an increasingly important role in military operations on strategic, operational, and tactical levels. The analysis of data collection from all-source intelligence – especially SIGINT (Signal Intelligence) and OSINT (Open-Source Intelligence) and the AI-supported analysis is a key to success for Effect based Operations (EBO).*

KEYWORDS: *MDMP, M&S modelling and simulation, DIME, PMESII, ASCOPE, Wargaming, Information warfare, OPLAN*

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INTRODUCTION

The objectives of the article are twofold but interrelated: our first aim is to provide a short summary of the new NATO Operations Planning methodology detailed in the COPD v3.0 COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONS PLANNING DIRECTIVE, the second is to provide an overview and analysis of the application of AI in supporting the Operations Planning process especially at strategic and operational levels.

Military planning went through an evolution[1] since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the Prussian Great General Staff as the first sophisticated planning organization started to focus on mobilization scheduling, logistics, replacements, and the effective use of the railroad, the telegraph and breech-loading artillery and machine guns.

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[1]   Ehlers R. and Blannin, P. "Integrated Planning and Campaigning for Complex Problems," *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 51, No. 2 (18 May 2021). https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol51/iss2/10.

The Prussian planning model was adopted by other great powers, including the United States, and it worked well as long as the industrial warfare based on mass conscription was the military technological paradigm. The two world wars and the development of nuclear weapons resulted in a paradigm shift, nevertheless both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact continued to plan for conventional war in Europe and used, tried, and tested planning processes. *Figure 1* describes the change in the character of warfare as it was published in the article written by General of the Army Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the and Russian Federation Armed Forces in 2013.

According to Gerasimov: "The very »rules of war« have changed. The role of non-military means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness."[2]

POLITICAL CRISIS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

"War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."
"War is merely the continuation of politics with other means."
Carl von Clausewitz[3]

The use of military force is a political act, and the political objectives always have higher importance in the conduct of a military operation or campaign. During the conduct of military operations, the contributing nations have varying interests and objectives that have to be taken into account. That means that the aims and objectives stated are often results of compromises.

Figure 1 indicates the role of non-military methods in the resolution of interstate conflicts and presents the primary phases of conflict development as described in 2013 in the famous article of General of the Army Gerasimov, which later was labelled as the Gerasimov Doctrine[4]. He outlined the modern-day Russian Military Strategy and defined the attributes of the modern hybrid warfare of combining military, technological, information, diplomatic, economic, cultural, and other tactics for the purpose of achieving strategic goals.

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[2] Gerasimov, V. "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying out Combat Operations." *MILITARY REVIEW,* January-February 2016 (n.d.). https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/January-February-2016/

[3] Clausewitz, C. *On War.* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976)

[4] Gerasimov, V. "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight." (in Russian) *Voenno-Promishlenni Kurier.* 27 February 2013. https://vpk-news.ru/articles/14632. Accessed on 31 December 2021.
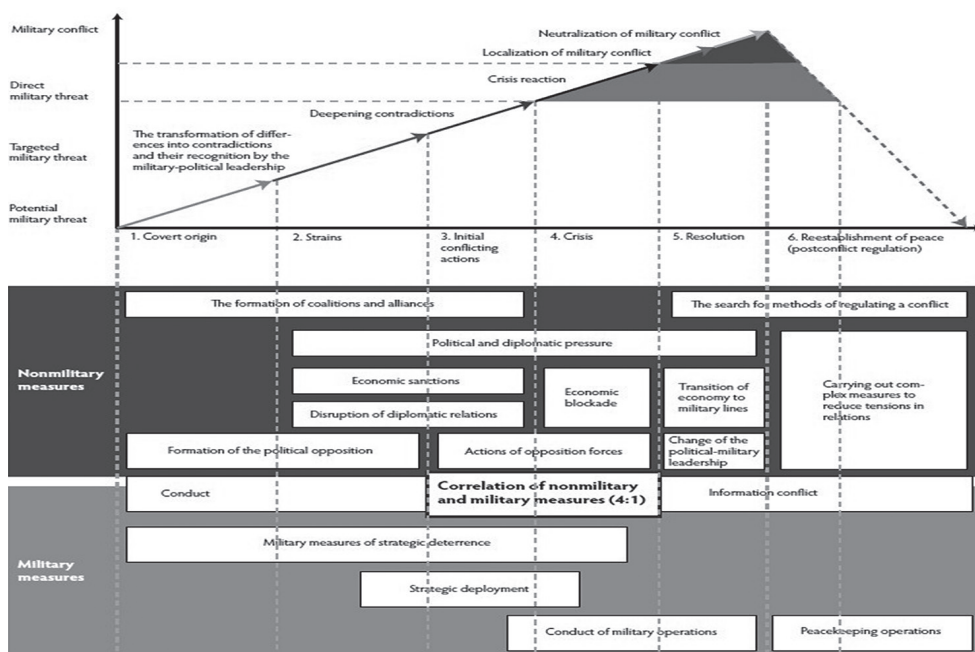
Figure 1 *The Role of Non-military Methods in the Resolution of Interstate Conflicts*
Source: *V. Gerasimov's article in Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kurier, 26 February 2013, translated by Charles Bartles*[5]

Having identified a critical situation, the requirement of influence emerges. In order to be influential, it requires understanding of the situation, to obtain and develop the knowledge to enable insight *(knowing* **why** *something has happened or is happening)* and foresight (*being able to identify and anticipate what* **may** *happen).*[6]

The development of understanding is based upon the situational awareness (SA) to identify the problem. Analysis of the situational awareness results in greater comprehension, insight of the problem, and assessments based on this comprehension provide understanding of the problem – foresight. *Figure 2* depicts the correlation of the factors playing a role in the influence.

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5   Gerasimov, V. "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight."
6   *JDP 2-00 Understanding And Intelligence Support To Joint Operations. 3ʳᵈ edition, with change 1.* (Shrivenham: 2014).
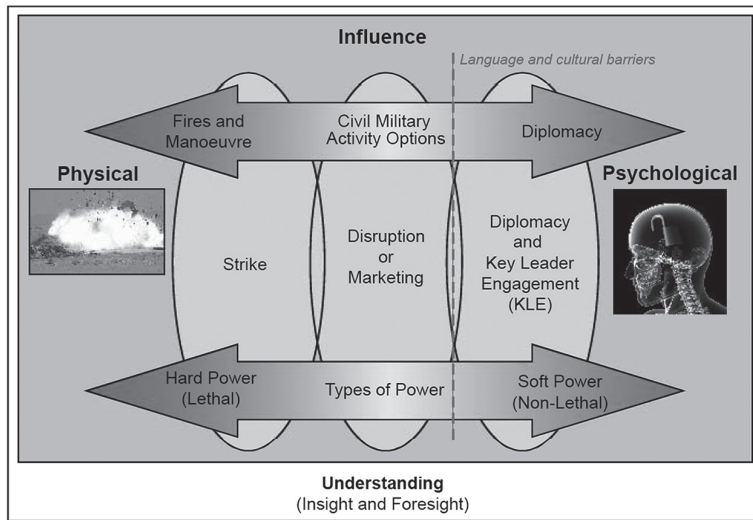
Figure 2 *The Spectrum of Influence*[7]
Source: *Jdp2_00_ed3_Understanding and Intelligence Support to Joint Operations_with_change 1_20110830*

The Euro-Atlantic community has two basic structures of evaluating and developing political and military strategies of defence and crisis resolution: NATO and the EU.

In order to enable the European Union to assume its responsibilities for crisis management, the European Council (Nice, December 2000) decided to establish permanent political and military structures.[8] The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) outlines the EU's leading role in peacekeeping operations, conflict prevention, and strengthening the international security as an integral part of the EU's comprehensive approach towards crisis management, involving civilian and military assets.

NATO utilizes four levels to describe operational activities; political, strategic, operational, and tactical. The political level embraces all the others, which means that each action, right down to the tactical level, must be in harmony with the principal political objectives.

Figure 3 shows NATO's six-phase generic Crisis Response Process (NCRP) which facilitates strategic political decision-making through the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in an emerging crisis whether it corresponds to Article 5 or Non-Article 5. In the given circumstances the NAC will decide for each relevant crisis whether NATO is to act and, if so, in what way. Although each crisis is unique, the NCRP ensures that the Alliance is ready to perform the whole spectrum of Article 5 and Non-Article 5 missions encompassing all of the NATO core tasks.[9]

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[7]   *JDP 2-00.*

[8]   "Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Structure, Instruments, Agencies," Text, EEAS – European External Action Service – European Commission, Accessed on 30 December 2021. https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp/5392/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp-structure-instruments-agencies_en

[9]   *COPD v3.0 – Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive.* 2021. Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe.
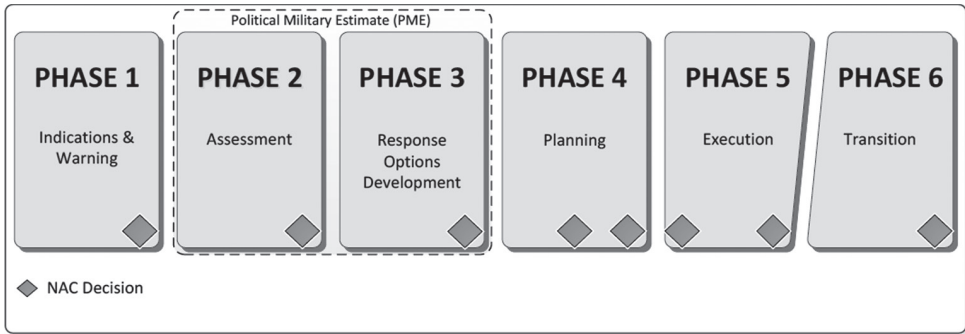
Figure 3 *NATO Crisis Response Process – Six-Phase Generic Process*[10]
Source: *COPD v3.0 COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONS PLANNING DIRECTIVE*

NATO acknowledges that the military means alone cannot resolve a conflict. The Alliance's Strategic Concept states, "that the lessons learned from NATO operations, in particular in Afghanistan and the Western Balkans, make it clear that a comprehensive political, civilian and military approach is necessary for effective crisis management"[11].

MILITARY SOLUTIONS AND OPERATIONS PLANNING

The Design of Operations[12] process includes the graphical depiction of the linkages between end state, objectives, effects, lines of effort or operation (LoO), centres of gravity (CoG) etc. This provides the visualization of the plan, initially developed as a design framework from which options can be induced and once an initial operations framework has been agreed, it will become the operations design.

Since international crises are complex and change over time, at the outset it is likely that the stakeholders have different understanding of the problem and do not share the same view on how to react. Therefore, the International Design approach is unavoidable when consultations with the involvement of some stakeholders are carried out.

As the Alliance assessed the actual situation and declared it unacceptable, the desired end state is defined. The PMESII (Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, Information) framework system analysis provides the basis for the assessment, and the flow of action moves toward the military and non-military measures, the Diplomatic, Information, Military, Economic (DIME) instruments of power (IoP).

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10   *COPD v3.0.*
11   *COPD v3.0.*
12   *COPD v3.0.*

Situational Awareness (SA)[13]

SA "is the human perception of all available elements of information relating to a specific situation that enables a holistic and informed interpretation of the operating environment". *Figure 4* depicts the main activities of Situational Awareness.

The Alliance continuously monitors and analyses the international environment to identify crises that could have an impact on NATO's security interests, and takes diplomatic, political and military measures to prevent them from evolving into larger conflicts. The NATO Strategic Concept outlines engagement with other international actors and the conduct of collaborative analysis.

Effective SA *(Figure 5)* requires continuous horizon scanning as a "collaborative effort involving all NATO political and military capabilities at all levels to assess potential risks and threats to NATO security interests".

The following should be considered as potential – but not exclusive – indicators:
1. Threats or acts of armed attack or aggression.
2. Proliferation and delivery of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).
3. International terrorism/extremism.
4. Instability from failed and failing states.
5. Environmental and humanitarian disasters.
6. Security of vital resources.
7. Organized/Transnational crime (for example human trafficking and narcotics).
8. Hostile communications and information activities targeted at NATO.
9. Cyber and hybrid threats.
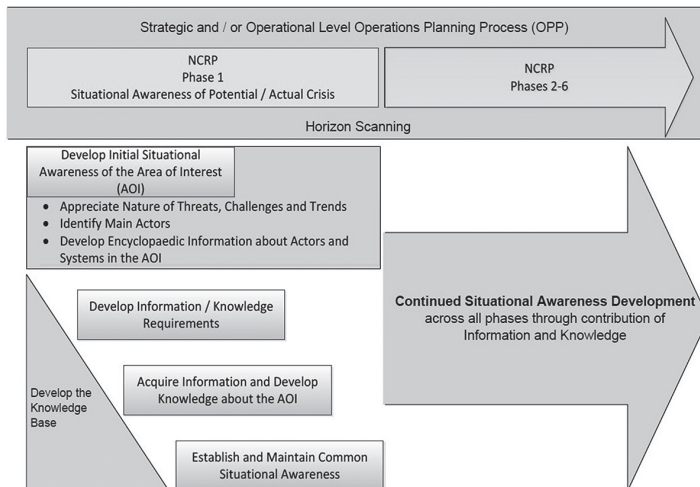
Figure 4 *Situational Awareness Main Activities*[14]
Source: *COPD v3.0 Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive*

The different levels of Situational Awareness include the Perception that involves the processes of monitoring and indicator detection; the Comprehension that requires the fusion of information to understand how it will influence the objectives; and the Projection that provides assessments of possible outcomes that potential actions may result in in the operating environment.

To develop initial SA of the Area of Interest (AOI) through information and intelligence related to the operating environment is a must to differing levels of SA understanding. This includes a comprehensive identification of indicators to be monitored over time to understand trends, and to identify the main actors in the area.

In order to develop information and knowledge requirements, to establish a Knowledge Base (KB), the staff acquire information about the designated area of interest, and establish and share common situational awareness.
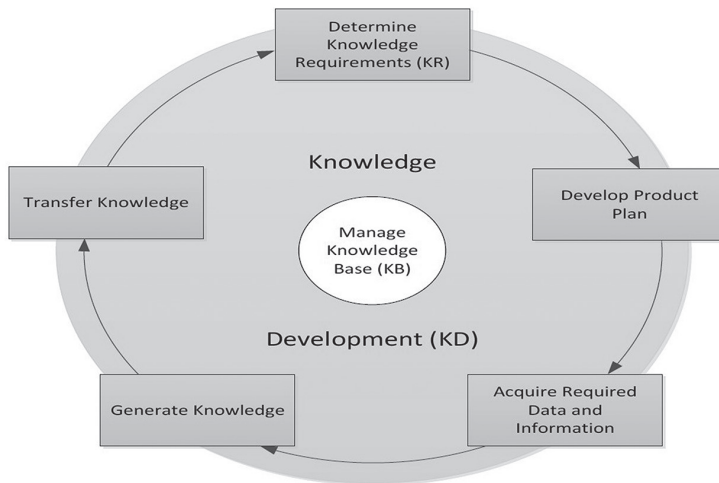
Figure 5 *The Knowledge Development Process*
Source: *COPD v3.0 COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONS PLANNING DIRECTIVE*

The KD process covers "the acquisition, integration, analysis, and sharing of information and knowledge from relevant military and non-military sources" as it is shown in *Figure 5*. This process "includes analysis of the relationships and interactions between systems and actors considering different PMESII factors to enable a COM and staff to better understand the possible effects of DIME Instruments of Power (IoP) actions carried out."

Strategic-level planning[15]

The strategic level of the Operations Planning Process (OPP) is carried out by the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and directed and guided by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). Here we summarize – without aiming to give an exhaustive list – the main elements of each phase in order to understand the objectives and

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15   *COPD v3.0.*

the course of the planning process, and also to understand the end-state which would bring about the desired solution for the crisis management.

The strategic OPLAN is "designed to develop strategic products for consideration by NATO military and political authorities to support their decision-making on the strategic level in response to a crisis on a Comprehensive Approach (CA) basis."

Strategic planning starts with an in-depth analysis of the crisis and the root causes as a result of the continuous situational awareness.[16] The analysis is basically an actors and factors analysis covering the different actors and systems in the operating environments. It includes the actors' identified objectives, modus operandi, strengths and weaknesses, interactions and interdependencies.

The Engagement Space is the part of the strategic environment concerning the crisis in which the Alliance has decided to engage. It is different from the operating environment that is defined as 'a composite of the conditions, circumstances and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander (COM)'.[17]

Phase 1 – Initial Situational Awareness of potential crisis

The purpose of Phase 1 is to assist the NAC and/or NATO HQ staff in their NCRP Phase 1 activities with the identification of relevant emerging crises. Phase 1 main activities include continuing to monitor the actual crisis as part of Comprehensive Crisis and Operations Management Centre (CCOMC) scanning activity, direction may be given to build an initial understanding of the crisis and make an initial estimation and its possible implications to NATO.

Phase 2 – Strategic Assessment

Strategic Assessment aims "to develop and coordinate SACEUR's Strategic Assessment (SSA) of an emerging crisis and support the Political-Military Estimate (PME). A strategic assessment may also be conducted for an ongoing NATO operation and may lead to the revision of the OPLAN"[18]. Phase 2 will start on SACEUR's direction to develop a military assessment, having received the task from the NAC, and ends with SACEUR's submission of the SACEUR Strategic Assessment (SSA), which is the NATO Military Authorities' (NMA) advice for NAC consideration.

It is crucial to identify and analyse the principal actors and their role in the crisis and to determine and analyse the strategic Centre of Gravity (CoG). *Figure 6* describes the characteristics of Centres of Gravity.

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[16]   "New responses to new challenges: the comprehensive crisis response and operations at SHAPE." (in Hungarian) *Honvédségi Szemle,* 2017/6. http://real.mtak.hu/124824/1/HSZ_2017_145_6_Poloskei_Janos_Antal.pdf Accessed on 27 June 2022.

[17]   *COPD v3.0.*

[18]   *COPD v3.0.*
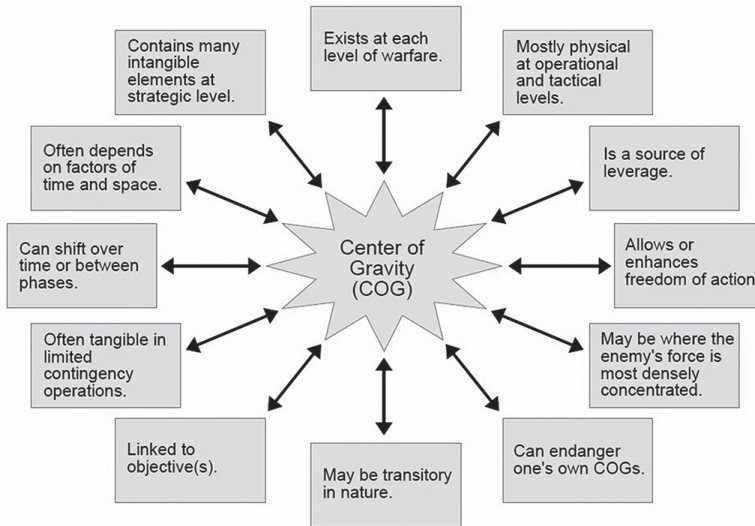
Figure 6 *Characteristics of Centres of Gravity*[19]
Source: *"JP 2-01.3," DINFOS Pavilion. Accessed on 16 December 2021. https://pavilion.dinfos.edu/Policy-Doctrine/Article/2131656/jp-2-013/*

Phase 2 evaluates potential strategic ends – the desired NATO end-state; NATO strategic objectives and strategic effects, ways and means considering that not all the desired elements of the end-state may be achieved by only military means.

Phase 3 – Military Response Options Development

The purpose of NCRP Phase 3 is to finalize the desired NATO end-state and further develop the potential strategic, political and military response strategy for the Alliance. At the military strategic level, Phase 3 develops military options for NAC to consider, supporting their Political Military Estimate (PME) process. Phase 3 reviews and analyses the political direction and guidance, determines military and non-military strategic objectives, selects and develops Military Response Options (MROs). In the end, a Strategic Risk Evaluation Matrix is developed with a mitigation strategy and conclusion of which risks are unacceptable, conditionally acceptable, and acceptable, where no risk mitigation actions required.

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[19]   "JP 2-01.3," *Pavilion – Dinfos Online Learning.* https://pavilion.dinfos.edu/Policy-Doctrine/Article/2131656/jp-2-013/ Accessed on 16 December 2021.

Phase 4 – Strategic Plan Development

Phase 4a – Strategic Concept of Operations (CONOPS) Development
The Strategic Plan Development is divided into two parts: Phase 4a – the development of a Strategic Planning Directive (SPD) and CONOPS; and Phase 4b – the development of a strategic OPLAN. The purpose of Phase 4a is to "describe SACEUR's concept for the conduct of the NATO-led military operation, in accordance with other non-military and non-NATO efforts, to achieve the NATO MSOs and establish conditions required to assist in the achievement of the desired NATO end state. It also includes the development and issuing of the Strategic Planning Directive (SPD) to provide authoritative direction to SHAPE, the designated HQ(s), Allied Command Operations (ACO) subordinate commands and other supporting NATO agencies".

Phase 4b – Strategic OPLAN Development and Force Generation
The purpose of Phase 4b is to identify and activate the forces and capabilities required to implement the strategic CONOPS and accomplish the mission within acceptable risks. It also specifies the sequence of the strategic activities and operations, including the deployment, employment, sustainment, and C2 of NATO-led forces, for the accomplishment of the agreed NATO military mission, as well as the possible necessary interaction with cooperating non-NATO entities. The international legal provisions are put in place during this Phase, the military and non-military activities are synchronized in a Comprehensive Approach in Phase 4b. The employment of strategic resources, the StratCom considerations are also important parts of the plan. Phase 4b activity includes planning for C2, the main components of the command structure, and the definition of the Theatre of Operations (TOO) and the Joint Operations Area (JOA).

Phase 5 – Execution

The purpose of Phase 5 is to provide strategic advice, direction, and guidance to achieve MSOs to reach the NATO end-state. The main activities of Phase 5 "include the coordinating actions necessary to initiate an operation, the implementation of the strategic OPLAN, monitoring and facilitating the operation, identifying and managing strategic risks, and the continued generation of resources for success"[20]. The execution phase involves the coordination, de-confliction and synchronization of the subordinate commands via a Strategic Capabilities Office (SCO). It also assesses the relevance of current plans and directives with stakeholders, and if required a plan review (using Phase 2-4 process).

Phase 6 – Transition

Phase 6 contains the transition and termination of a NATO military operation. This involves the "handover of responsibility to proper authority (UN, other IOs, EU or homeland actor, etc.) in the crisis area and the withdrawal of NATO forces"[21]. It is done in a controlled manner to avoid this action being a destabilizing effect on the whole mission. Apparently,

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[20]   *COPD v3.0.*
[21]   *COPD v3.0.*

this is the most difficult part, and obviously, it failed in the case of the withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2020.

Phase 6 activities include the conduct of transition planning, strategic assessment of MROs, preparing strategic transition CONOPS and/or OPLAN, the coordination and collaboration between SHAPE, NATO HQ, NATO Agencies and relevant actors.

The termination of the operation "must be in accordance with the StratCom. The Comprehensive Crisis and Operations Management Centre CCOMC executes and manages all the post operation termination activities, like end of mission reports, archiving information, completing lessons learned post operation analysis."[22]

THE DIME/PMESII/ASCOPE/ICR2 FRAMEWORK

The strategic and operational planning requires the in-depth understanding of the Operational Environment (OE). To understand the environment, it has to be divided into domains where the actors can be identified, the processes can be analysed and understood, the influencers and decision-makers can be identified. Without proper understanding of these factors and actors a definition of the end-state can even fail and the result is an unachievable objective. One of the OE analysing approaches is the PMESII methodology. Military operations are planned and prepared in the DIME/PMESII/ASCOPE/ICR2 framework, which are key tools to understanding the operational environment. An ex-ante evaluation of the expected impact of operations is of primary importance for defining the content and process of the operations (COA–Course of Action). Analysing the expected impacts of these action plans is paramount to success.

DIME implies the application of four Instruments of Power of Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economy. PMESII examines the operational environment in six domains: Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information and Infrastructure. The ASCOPE approach is used primarily in counter-insurgency operations to analyse Areas, Structures, Capabilities, Organizations, People, and Events, whereas ICR2 stands for assessing both Information-Collection Requirements (ICR) and Information-Capabilities Requirements (ICR).[23]

Understanding the operational environment means that the actors have to tackle the challenges of operating in the human domain in general.[24]

By covering the PMESII domains, this approach is going further on the traditional focus on military matters only.[25] The Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment (JIPOE) makes the planning staff capable of assessing the potential impact of the operational environment on the accomplishment of the mission. The COM and the staff develop a holistic view of the operational environment with regard to the causes and background of the crisis and the specific dynamics.

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[22] *COPD v3.0.*

[23] Szabadföldi, I. "Military Operation Planning (OPLAN) Supported by Artificial Intelligence." Presentation, *In the Service of the Nation Conference 2021* - 2021. 70.

[24] *Operating in the Human Domain.* US SOC, 2015. https://nsiteam.com/social/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SOF-OHD-Concept-V1.0-3-Aug-15.pdf

[25] *AJP-5 Allied Joint Doctrine for the Planning of Operations with UK National Elements.* NATO Standardization Office: 2019.

The PMESII domains

In the PMESII framework, the OE is often considered and therefore consists of six plus two, that is to say, eight operational variables. The application of these operational variables to a specific operational environment by the developers, in cooperation with subject matter experts, gains a holistic and detailed understanding of that OE via the analysis continued systemically. The additional two operational variables, often framed with the acronym PMESII-PT,[26] are the Physical terrain and Time.

In order to get a deeper understanding of the operational environment, the COPD introduces the term Comprehensive Preparation of the Operational Environment (CPOE), and declares that NATO utilizes the PMESII model for the CPOE. The CPOE is a "cross-headquarters process, supported by the various functional and special staff areas", and it considers "the assessments of non-military and non-governmental organizations, the JIPOE and the Joint Intelligence Estimate support".[27]

The identification of the Centre of Gravity (CoG) in the specific domains is key to carrying out an Effect-based Operation (EBO). Intelligence plays a crucial role in collecting the information regarding the PMESII domains on all three levels of intelligence.[28] Strategic-level intelligence serves both for senior military and civilian leaders and combatant commanders *(Figure 7)*.
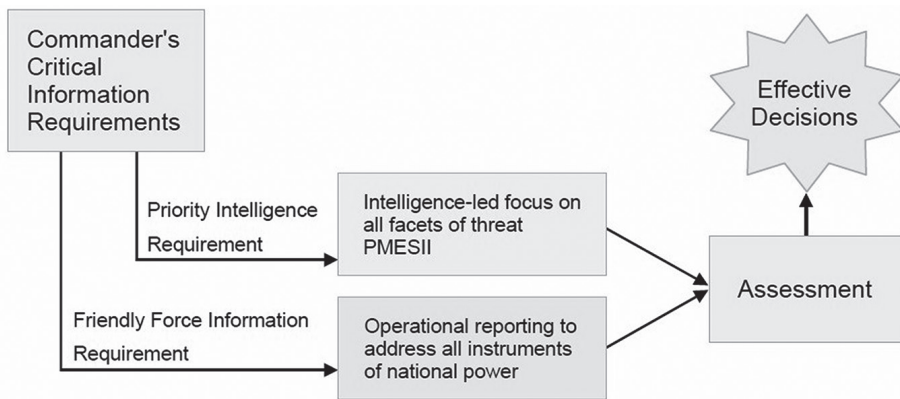
Figure 7 *Commander's Critical Information Requirements and Assessments*[29]
Source: *JP 2-0, Joint Intelligence*

[26]   *TC 7-102 – Operational Environment and Army Learning.* Washington DC.: HQ Dept of the Army, 2014. https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/tc7_102.pdf Accessed on 23 November 2021.

[27]   *AJP-5.*

[28]   *JP 2-0.* 144.

[29]   *JP 2-0.*

AI SUPPORTING THE OPERATIONS PLANNING

The US Congress appointed the National Security Commission on AI, which after two years of work submitted a Final Report in 2021. One of the Report statements was that "a new warfighting paradigm is emerging because of AI". Substantial investments are being poured into AI development projects and in the military domain extreme secrecy surrounds the cutting-edge solutions, very few details are public of the actual results. The AI-influenced warfighting idea is often called "algorithmic" or "mosaic" warfare. These phrases outline that a new era of conflicts is emerging that will be dominated by AI, and algorithms will fight against algorithms. The winning part will be determined by the amount and quality of military data, the algorithms developed, the AI-enabled networks that are connected, the AI-enabled weapons deployed, and the AI-supported operational concepts applied to wage new ways of war.[30]

The DoD outlined an ambitious strategy to be "AI-ready" by 2025. *Figure 8* depicts the strategic goals.
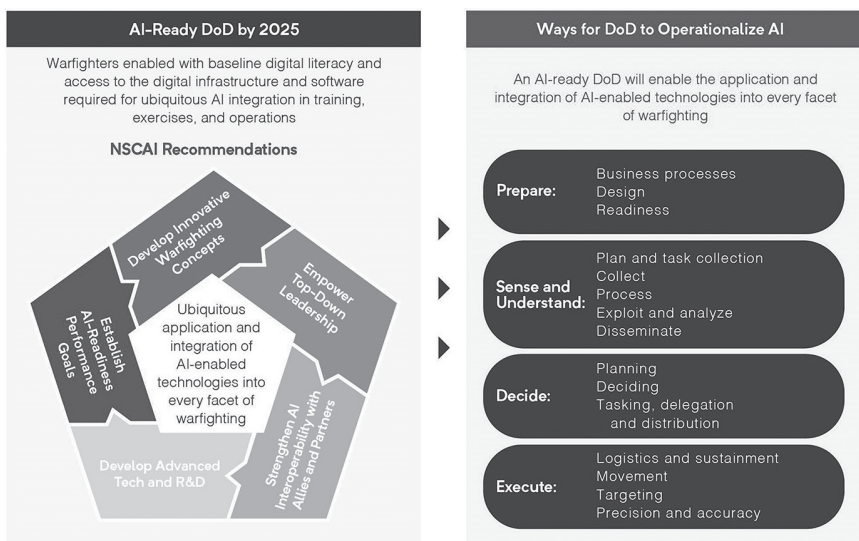
Figure 8 *An AI-Ready DoD by 2025*[31]
Source: *National Security Commission on AI – Final Report*

There are both possibilities and challenges for AI in military applications[32]. In the military domain, the potential for AI is present in all domains (land, sea, air, space and cyber) and at all levels of warfare (political/strategic, operational, tactical). At the political and strategical levels, AI can be used to destabilize an opponent state's social and political stability by producing and disseminating large amount of fake information. And *vice versa,* AI would

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[30]   Final Report. (Arlington: National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence, 2021) https://www.nscai. gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Full-Report-Digital-1.pdf Accessed on 17 January 2022.

[31]   *Final Report.*

[32]   Svenmarck, P. et al., "Possibilities and Challenges for Artificial Intelligence in Military Applications." Researchgate, 2018. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326774966_Possibilities_and_Challenges_for_ Artificial_Intelligence_in_Military_Applications. Accessed on 17 January 2022.

also be the best instrument to defend against such attacks. Below strategic level, at operational level AI can be an efficient tool to select the optimum COA, and at tactical level, AI can improve autonomous control in unmanned systems in order to operate them more efficiently and increase battlefield impact.

Essentially, AI is expected to provide support in efficient military decision-making concerning both time and information constraints. Military decision-making will benefit from human-AI synergy[33] and the main reasons to employ AI systems to support the decision-making of military commanders are the following:

1. the vulnerabilities of human decision-making,
2. the diversity and complexity of conflict situations,
3. the information and technology means employed in warfare,
4. the amount of information needed to be processed in real time.

AI-based military decision support models can be based on neural networks (NN), Bayesian belief networks (BBN), Fuzzy Logic (FL), Genetic Algorithms (GA) and Expert Systems (ES).[34]

NN is based on the concept of a neuron as a unit for information storage, and mapping input to output. NNs are composed of processing elements called nodes, where a weight is associated with each connection between nodes. Weights are given randomly at the beginning, and change during the network's learning process. The neuron gets a numerical input vector and each element of the input vector is scaled by a weighting constant assigning the importance to each input.

Fuzzy Logic is a form of many-valued logic in which the truth value of variables may be any real number between 0 and 1. It is employed to handle the concept of partial truth, where the truth value may range between completely true and completely false.

Genetic Algorithms are used to generate high-quality solutions to optimization and search problems by relying on biological models like mutation, crossover and selection for tackling complex problems. GA applications include optimizing decision trees for better performance, automatically solve sudoku puzzles, hyperparameter optimization. GA repeatedly modifies a population of structures in order to choose an appropriate structure for a particular problem.

Expert systems (ES) use a knowledge base including a set of rules represented mainly as if–then rules and an inference engine that provides computer reasoning through inductive, deductive, or both inductive-deductive reasoning.

The various AI techniques to boost Decision Support Systems (DSS) in CoAs selection tackle the description of the event, the development of possible CoAs, the identification of criteria for the CoA's evaluation process, the evaluation of the CoAs in accordance with the criteria, analysis and comparison of these CoAs, and post-execution analysis being executed either sequentially or simultaneously.

[33] Bosch K. and Bronkhorst, A. "Human-AI Cooperation to Benefit Military Decision Making." NATO STO, 2018. https://www.sto.nato.int/publications/STO%20Meeting%20Proceedings/STO-MP-IST-160/MP-IST-160-S3-1.pdf

[34] Prelipcean, G., Boscoianu, M. and Moisescu, F. "New Ideas on the Artificial Intelligence Support in Military Applications," Recent Advances in Artificial Intelligence, Knowledge Engineering and Data Bases. https://www.wseas.org/multimedia/books/2010/Cambridge/AIKED.pdf Accessed on 17 January 2022.

AI support for the DIME/PMESII framework model

As discussed previously, the DIME/PMESII framework model assists in enabling effects-based planning to consider a broader set of options and a broader understanding of their potential impacts. The problem is the understanding of the cause-effect relationships among their variables, and modelling these relationships and using them to forecast outcomes is a real challenge. One of the solutions to tackle this challenge was the design and development of the Probative Rapid Interactive Modelling Environment (PRIME)[35] software tool for effects forecasting. The objective of PRIME was to support analysts and strategy planners by exploring the full range of consequences associated with the considered courses of action (COAs) and to allow teams of analysts to collaboratively develop forecasts for planned actions. PRIME has two main functions: the first is to provide support for the development of generic DIME/PMESII models that forecast direct or indirect PMESII effects given a type of DIME action on a given type of entity. The second function is to leverage these generic models to produce specific forecasts about the combined effects of a specific COA.

Such solutions' effectiveness and efficiency can be extended with wider application of AI techniques, like machine learning using DNN (deep neural network) technology. The DIME/PMESII/ASCOPE framework can be considered as a multidimensional matrix of variables with cross-effects. With properly designed algorithms, those variables/parameters changes will trigger effects on others that can be forecast.

Challenges and expectations of AI application

The U.S. DOD established five ethical principles for the development and use of AI: "the systems need to be responsible, equitable, traceable, reliable, and governable and it is stated that efforts have to be done to minimize bias in data on which AI operates".[36]

Since AI systems need to be trained with a large volume of data sets (Big Data), the use of AI for military strategic planning means additional challenges, namely that AI may augment threats, "change their nature and characteristics, and also pose new security concerns. An exercise of integration of AI with nuclear C2 systems showed that such systems were vulnerable to malicious manipulation that can seriously decrease strategic stability, coming from the risk of the intervention of adversarial AI actors using techniques to deceive or disrupt C2 systems".[37]

Additional challenge is the "battlefield singularity" when AI may accelerate the warfare so much that humans cannot follow the developments, leading to lost control over the COA resulting in strategic errors, or leading to accidents and conflict escalation.

Another type of challenge is the mental challenge, when commanders and staff could be "technology-dependent", and the classical art of warfare features of intuitive, adaptive aspects of military command and decision-making are diminishing.

[35] Lawrence, J. D. and Murdock, J. L. *Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, Information (PMESII) Effects Forecasting for Course of Action (COA) Evaluation.* Ft. Belvoir: DTEC, 2090.

[36] Vestner, T. "From Strategy to Orders: Preparing and Conducting Military Operations with Artificial Intelligence." GCSP, 17 February 2023. https://www.gcsp.ch/publications/military-operations-and-artificial-intelligence. Accessed on 27 February 2023.

[37] "From Strategy to Orders."

A further challenge is that AI systems would provide fast and complex recommendations for human decision-making that the military staff may have no time or capacity to assess. Additionally, in the case of the application of multilayer neural network technology, due to its complex operational mode, they do not understand how the system has reached its conclusions (AI black box effect).

CONCLUSION

We can conclude that if sufficient quantity and quality of data are available, AI solutions boost data analytics processing at an incomparably higher speed than human computing. That would break down operations into specific tasks of allocating resources, predicting enemy actions or mitigating risks with an improved accuracy and higher velocity of decision-making.

The different models applied in the course of the military operations planning process, like DIME/PMESII/ASCOPE/ICR2 frameworks are key tools to understand the operational environment, and the evaluation of the expected impact of the operations has primary importance for defining the optimum COA.

Analysing the expected impacts of these action plans is paramount to success in which AI technologies may provide an efficient tool in terms of speedy decision support and accurate predictions as well. ASCOPE factors are dimensions in which the PMESII operational variables (systems and sub-systems) are identified, and behind this structure, a plethora of structured and unstructured data exists providing the basis for a properly designed algorithm for operations planning support.

Considering the high-level autonomy of AI systems, it may result in developing a specific doctrine for the armed forces to clarify if AI is regarded as a technical tool with a mathematical and computing system, or as an agent with cognitive abilities, an autonomous influencer.

The military operations planning process is data intensive, time sensitive and effective, and efficient result oriented. AI technologies and their military applications have only emerged recently, and the integration of AI into the armed forces will definitely transform the design and execution of military operations.

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György Gulyás – Gyula Szajkó

ISSUES, QUESTIONS AND DIFFICULTIES RELATED TO USING CONTRACTOR SUPPORT TO OPERATIONS

ABSTRACT: *It is a basic requirement of successful multinational operations that the necessary resources should be at NATO's or nations' disposal in the required time, quantity, and quality. For this, the Contractor Support to Operations (CSO), which is one important pillar of the operations logistics support, assumes more and more roles. The contractors' basic task is to supplement the capability- or capacity gaps showing up in the military or in the Host Nation Support. Besides this, CSO frees up military capacities and, at the same time, the military can achieve new and necessary expertise. However, the consideration to use contractors requires a thorough discretion from the early stage of the operation planning process. This should cover not only the capabilities of the potential civilian companies and the military requirements, but military planners should also take into account the interests of the enterprises that may provide support to the operations. As the demand for civilian services grows, so does the competition between national defence forces for the most suitable suppliers with the best capabilities and capacities. The authors' aim is to draw attention to the importance of understanding the conractors' interests and limitations, as well as to give some suggestions on harmonizing the military and civilian service providers' goals to the benefits of both parties.*

KEYWORDS: *logistic support, Contractor Support to Operations, commercial contracted capability, interests of the military and contractors, competition*

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INTRODUCTION

There are different ways of researching the necessary logistic support for an operation but the CSO makes a more and more significant contribution to them. Nations and NATO have realized the added value of civil companies to military missions. It is absolutely clear that the organic military assets and supplies, packed and used for the deployment of units, cannot satisfy the military needs in the long run. In addition, it does not make sense to bring all necessary materials and supplies to the theatre when deploying, or to operate a supply chain for all supply classes, arranging for the transportation of every single day of supply from home bases. Host Nation Support (HNS) can provide a solution to supplement the military needs to a certain degree, furthermore, through different types of multinational logistic cooperation we can establish additional capabilities.

Contractors have an absolutely different approach to military operations. Civilian companies are eager to provide support to the nations or NATO but the nature of this cooperation is different. Although companies make a profit of cooperation, to the military it may seem that their willingness is without any preconditions. It is not true. The main role of the CSO is to fill in the gaps in the logistic capabilities, caused by the lack of military and HNS capabilities and capacities. Although, generally we can state that the market is ready to support miliary operations, military planners and leaders must not forget that companies work for profit. The market has its own rules, which the companies have to observe if they want to keep their enterprise functional and prosperous.

Besides the commercial rules of the market, we have to understand that contractors have their limitations too. Many of those are the same that limit the commanders' freedom of action or the start and seamless flow of an operation. NATO and nations always identify the issues, problems, and limitations which may hamper their work and those which block or restrain them from using contractors for whatever reason, but the interests of the market are less considered.

However, taking into account the issues, problems, limitations, and interests of civilian companies would make the logistic planning process more effective and would save working hours and manpower capacities for both the companies and military. And time is a key factor when considering the start of a new mission or deployment of forces, especially, if a nation or NATO have to deploy their units in very high readiness. One way or another, besides the identification of military goals, logistics resources, and limitations, it is absolutely reasonable for military planners to take into consideration those of the civilian market as well. It would be beneficial for both parties.

LOGISTIC SUPPORT OF MULTINATIONAL OPERATIONS

Before analysing the operational logistic support, it is necessary to define the types of military operations. According to the AJP-3.4[1] we can classify the military operations as warfare operations and military operations other than war. During the past two decades, the Hungarian Defence Forces – as NATO ally – have taken part in military operations other than war (MOOW). It includes those activities that belong to Non-Arcticle 5 operations. These actions can be divided into different "areas" and additional sub-areas that are the following:[2]

– Peace Support: The Peace Support Operations (PSOs) can contain activities which use diplomatic, civilian and military means as well, to restore or maintain peace. These can be:
  ● Conflict Prevention: with that we try to prevent disputes from escalating into armed conflicts;
  ● Peacemaking: we can speak about peacemaking if a conflict have already started and the current situation has to be managed by diplomatic means and help of military support. Diplomatic means can be mediation, negotiation, isolation, sanctions,

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[1] *AJP-3.4 Allied Joint Doctrine for Non-Article 5, Crisis Response Operations,* NATO Standardization Agency 2010.

[2] *AJP-3.4.* 39–55.

or other activites, and military actions can also be taken, for example, as a threat of intervention;

- Peace Enforcement (PE): These operations are coercive in nature and are carried out when the consent of opposing sides to the conflict has not been achieved or might be uncertain. The difference between PE and other PSO activites is that the mandate allows more freedom of action for the commander concerning the use of force so he/she has opportunities to apply a wide range of options;
- Peacekeeping: with such operations the deployed forces monitor and facilitate the implementation of a peace agreement. If it is necessary – for example: in case of the loss of consent – PK could evolve into PE operations;
- Peacebuilding (PB): These are a set of procedures and tasks with wich we can support the reinstatement of normal, everyday life. PB may include mechanisms to identify and support structures that will consolidate peace and foster the sense of confidence.

– Counter-irregular Activities: they may include acts of a military, political, psychological or economic nature, carried out by indigenous or non-state actors. In such a situation, NATO and the UN use different means, for example: military, political and economic actions to maintain peace and order. These can be the following:

- Counterinsurgency (COIN): COIN operations often include military education and training programs because it is the properly trained and motivated local military forces that can perform the most effective actions in this category.
- Counterterrorism: those activities with which the interested parties are able to neutralize terrorism before and after hostile acts are carried out. It is conducted by specially organized, equipped, and trained Counter-Terrorist (CT) forces.

– Support to Civil Authorities: it embraces all of tasks, measures and military activities that provide temporary support, which includes Military Assistance to Civil Authorities and Support to Humanitarian Assistance Operations.

– Search and Rescue: SAR may be carried out in support of any NATO operation and if it is necessary, NATO could assist the national SAR efforts as well.

– Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEOs): In general, NEOs are national diplomatic initiatives in which NATO or UN forces and organizations take part in a supporting role. NEOs can be defined as operations conducted to relocate non-combatants threatened in a foreign country.

– Extraction operations: they can be described as missions where NATO-led forces assist in or cover the withdrawal of a military mission from a crisis region.

– Sanctions and embargoes: they are designated to force a nation to follow international law or to conform to a resolution or mandate.

– Freedom of Navigation and Overflight Operations: These operations are carried out to demonstrate international rights to navigate sea or air routes.

It can be seen that different operations may be conducted by a member state of NATO or the UN. Naturally, logistic support has to comply with and follow the operational requirements. It is essentially important to make logistic support available in the full spectrum of NATO operations. It means that resources – which are necessary to conduct operations without failure – must be provided in the adequate quantity and quality, in time and place with optimal cost expenditure. Logistic organizations that conduct support of forces directly, and the National Support Element, which is responsible for support in theatre, have to be able to

coordinate with the Joint Logistic Support Group and to make use of services provided by Host Nation Support and CSO. The planning and operation of a supply chain may depend on different factors which can be the following:[3]

– the requirements that are defined in the operational plan;
– nature of the operational tasks and estimated time of implementation;
– distance of the area of operations, the opportunities of the strategic transportation;
– geographical and climatic characteristics of the operational area;
– infrastructure of the area of operations;
– use of support, resources, and services that can be provided in the area of operations.

It may be said that a lot of factors could affect the logistic support of an operation. The logistic organization and personnel have to pay attention to these and, in line with the characteristics of the operation, the supply must be properly organized and planned. However, what kind of materials and equipment should be provided in a multinational operation? The NATO Logistics Handbooks classify materials and equipment in five classes, which may help the organizations to distinguish those supplies that have to be provided for a mission. In accordance with STANAG,[4] materials and equipment are classified as follows:

– Class I: Items of subsistence, e.g. food and forage, which are consumed by personnel or animals at an approximately uniform rate, irrespective of local changes in combat or terrain conditions.
– Class II: Military equipment for which allowances are established by tables of organization and means, e.g. clothing, weapons, tools, spare parts, vehicles.
– Class III: This class includes petroleum, oil and lubricants for all purposes, (except for operating aircraft, e.g. gasoline, fuel, oil or greases, contained in Class III/a – aviation fuel and lubricants).
– Class IV: Military equipment and materials for which initial issue allowances are not prescribed by approved issue tables. It normally includes fortification and construction supplies as well as additional quantities of items identical to those authorized for initial issue (Class II) such as additional vehicles.
– Class V: It includes ammunition, explosives and chemical agents of all types.

With classification of materials and equipment, the logistic organizations, units, and subunits are able to determine which supplies and services could be provided by the theatre Host Nation Support and CSO, relying on national resources or a Logistics Lead Nation (LLN). Naturally, there are some equipment and materials that belong to national responsibility, irrespective of the nature of the operations, e.g. armaments, personal equipment, or tracked and wheeled military vehicles. However, there are also some materials that may be provided by Host Nation Support or CSO, e.g. related accomodation services and infrastructure, transportation network (requisitioning of airport, seaport, road and railway) or use of logistic storebase. Also, there are some materials and services that may be provided by a LLN, e.g. food, operating of airfield, or fuel. Thus, organizing supply may depend on technical agreement, HNS capabilities or the circumstances of an operation.

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[3]   *Ált/217 – Hungarian Defence Forces Joint Force Logistics Doctrine,* 3rd edition. (in Hungarian) (Budapest: Hungarian Defence Forces, 2015) 198.
[4]   *NATO Logistics Handbook.* NATO Standardization Agency, 2012. 27.

Logistic support of a multinational operation may be achieved through two-level support and multi-channel supply. Two-level support would mean in this context, that e.g. in a huge extended operation, a supply chain may be built up by relying on home bases in our country and, in the theatre, by using a National Support Element. Regarding the sources of supplies and services, the military can use different channels. Materials and services can be provided by civilian service providers, military storebases, HNS, or through multinational logistic support.

According to operational experience, services and supplies provided by HNS and civilian service providers have a definite importance. In an extended operation, e.g. ISAF operation, it happened many times that the materials and equipment – requested by the forces deployed to the theatre – arrived only six months later than the requested date. Our mission experience was similar: HUN PRT[5] requirements, sent to the superior military organizations in February, were satisfied only in October in the theatre by the logistic units and subunits.[6]

We mentioned that there were supplies, provided only from national resources, but in some cases there were a lot of materials and equipment which could have been provided also by HNS or commercial companies, but we did not employ them because we did not have information about these opportunities in theatre. If we want to increase the effectiveness of a supply chain, we have to examine all opportunities that a theatre can offer for the logistics. It means that HNS capabilities and services provided by CSO have to be explored at the beginning of operations. If we know what materials, equipment, and services can be provided through such a method, we can decrease the delivery time and storage costs so we can shorten the supply chain. But we have to face a lot of challenges if we want to apply contractor support in an operation.

WHY DO NATO NATIONS USE CONTRACTOR SUPPORT TO OPERATIONS? WHAT IS IT USED FOR?

If we want to give a short and simple answer for this question, the quote below referring to the US military, exemplifies best the use of contractors:

"Joint Publication 4-10, Operational Contract Support" makes the point that the United States "has always used contracted support in military operations at various levels of scope and scale." "We have contracted for everything from shoes and rifles to medical support, maintenance and repairs, security, intelligence, engineering support, and much more."[7]

So, basically, we can say that CSO is not purely a logistics or sustainment function, since the military employs contractors for intelligence, construction, facility management and operation, training, force protection, linguistic services, base services, and communication too. In fact, nowadays, all major operations rely on CSO significantly. In some cases, contractors may be able to substitute for military forces, which allows for the reduction of the military footprint in the joint area of operations. This can speed up the operational tempo,

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[5]   Hungarian Provincial Reconstruction Team.

[6]   Szajkó, Gy. and Fábos, R. "Ideas on Possibilities of Development in Military Logistic Chain." (in Hungarian) *Katonai Logisztika,* 28/1–2. 2020. 169.

[7]   Williams, D. K. and Latham Jr., W. C. "Sustainers should understand operational contract support". *Army Sustainment,* May-June 2016. Focus. 4.

improve domestic political support, and civilian enterprises can also be used to overcome mission-related force strength restrictions as well.

Employing contractors in military operations is not new, of course. The number of civilian service providers grows continuously, e.g. the proportion of contractor to military personnel was 1:55 in Vietnam, 1:1 in Iraq and 1.43:1 in Afghanistan.[8] Considering the different fields of contractors' employment, the table below can give us a real picture of the use of contractors in operations.

OIR (Iraq and Syria) Summery

The distribution of contractors in Iraq and Syria by mission category are:

Category		
Base Support	1,097	19%
Construction	435	8,10%
IT/Communications Support	267	4,80%
Logistics/Maintenance	1,722	31,20%
Management/Administrative	271	5,20%
Medical/Dental/Social Services	19	0,20%
Other	70	1,20%
Security	364	6,50%
Training	23	0,50%
Translator/Interpreter	656	15%
Transportation	399	8,30%
Total	**5,323**	
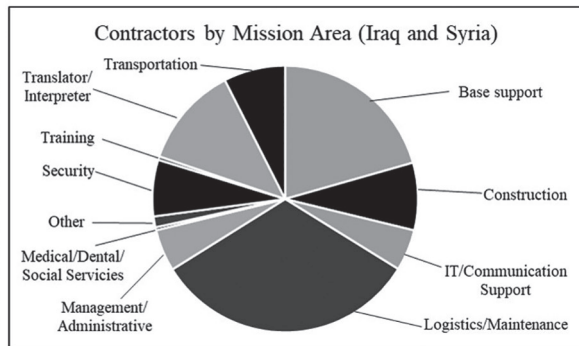
Figure 1 *Contractor Support to Operation Inherent Resolve*
Source: *Contractor support of U.S. operations in the USCENTCOM Area of Responsibility.*
ODASD (Program Support), July 2018

When the military considers using contractors, the main goal is to receive the required capabilities. Those capabilities are delivered through contracts. Therefore, the properly chosen type of contract, the contracting techniques, also the effective contracting process are key for receiving the necessary supplies and services in time. Regarding the start of the contracting process, we can speak about planned and ad-hoc contracting. We can initiate a contracting process for capabilities not met through the previously held force generation process or other modes of different support. We can call this a planned contracting. But the military can start a process also as a response to unforeseen new requirements which come up during an already ongoing operation. In this case, we can start an ad-hoc contracting process. The latter gives the commander a greater flexibility to overcome unforeseen hurdles, but it also includes the risk of non-compliance of the contractor, delayed delivery of services, high costs, or simply reluctance of service providers to bid against the requirements, which are short-notice in most cases.

Therefore, planning the sources of the required supplies and services, including CSO, needs to be considered at the very early stage of the operation planning process, also the advantages, disadvantages and limitations of using civilian service providers. Furthermore, the military has to identify alternate sources, and plan other contingency solutions in case the contractors cannot comply.

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[8]   *EU Concept for Contractor Support to EU-led military operations.* (Brussels: Council of the European Union, 2014) 9.

ISSUES, QUESTIONS, LIMITATIONS OF THE MILITARY'S SIDE

There are limitations, risks, and other considerations that national military forces or NATO have to keep in mind when planning the use of contractors to support their operations. There is always a threat of the disruption of an ongoing service or that a contractor is not able to comply with requirements. Military planners know very well several methods to mitigate the risk of threats, e.g. through considering and planning contractor support as early as possible or appointing and applying a Contract Integrator (in case of NATO it is the NATO Support and Procurement Agency — NSPA). Some of the considerations, from a military point of view, have already been very well collected in the NATO Logistics Handbook (such as: type of operation, phase of operation, force protection and operational security),[9] which include the risks originating from those considerations. One way or another, the characteristics and phase of an operation have a great influence on chosing this type of support at all, and force protection or security related considerations may impose additional tasks on the military (like: the military to provide security and medical support to contractors). But now, let us focus mainly on those things which have not been mentioned yet.

If the NATO nations, like Hungary, contemplate employing civilian service providers to support their operations, they have always had the opportunity to examine the experience already gathered in this field. It is evident that the US military has a huge knowledge on using CSO, so it is worth studying its achievements. Having realized the limitations, risks and problems, the US military established some governing principles of using contractors and incorporated them in its doctrines. These principles are as follows:

– Contractors do not replace force structure. They augment Army capabilities and provide additional options for meeting support requirements.
– Depending on mission, enemy, terrain, troops, time, and civilian considerations, contractors may deploy throughout an area of operations and in virtually all conditions.
– Commanders are legally responsible for protecting contractors in their area of operations.
– Contractors must have enough employees with appropriate skills to meet potential requirements.
– Contracted support must be integrated into the overall support plan.
– Contingency plans must ensure continuation of service if a contractor fails to perform.
– Contractor-provided services should be invisible to the users. Any links between Army and contractor automated systems must not place additional burdens on soldiers.
– The Army must be capable of providing critical support before contractors arrive in the theater or in the event that contractors either do not deploy or cannot continue to provide contracted services.
– Although contractors can be used as an alternative source of capabilities at theater or corps level, commanders must remain aware that, within a given operation, using contractors could decrease flexibility.
– Changing contractor activities to meet shifting operational requirements may require contract modifications.

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[9] *NATO Logistics Handbook.* 162.

These basic principles provided the framework for developing doctrine and policy for contractors on the battlefield. They are applicable to contractor efforts today and on the future battlefield.[10]

The Russian agression in Ukraine in 2014 created some new challenges and limitations when considering CSO. NATO tried to address the new Russian challenge, and, as a result, new defence concept (Deterrence and Defence), new NATO entities and missions (like NATO Force Integration Units, Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, enhanced Forward Presence) or enhancement of existing formations (such as enhanced NATO Reaction Force) were brought to life. Speed, flexibility and reliability got a much higher emphasis than before in operation support. The extremely high readiness time created new types of requirements from the nations and NATO for operations or possible operations. Due to the mentioned very high readiness, the importance of pre-arranged Assured Access Contracts (AACs) or dormant contracts grew significantly. Although other ways of shortening the lead time of the establishment of a new commercial contracted capability also exist through different contracting techniques (like pre-selection of potential contractors), these methods were not effective enough any longer.

Some may think that with establishing AACs the very high readiness related issues have been solved, but it is not true in every instance. Besides the already known risks and limitations (e.g. disruption of services, too high price of the services – due to the growing and separate requirements) new ones have emerged. Some of them are the following:
- the industry cannot support the requirements, especially at (very) short notice;
- the industry is reluctant to support the requirements, in other words the requirements may not be attractive enough due to time or notice limitations or because of the disproportion between the invested costs, time period and efforts (to establish a new contracted capability) and the benefits of the contractor (e.g. too much efforts for a short run dormant contract);
- contractors to provide fuel (or other supplies) from other that Russian sources;
- NATO and national military forces have to compete with the civilian companies for the resources (e.g. in case of military rail transportation in Europe due to the lack of capable rolling stocks);
- the Contract Integrator (CI – NSPA) cannot support the increasing number of requirements of the nations due to lack of capacities, etc.

In addition, we cannot speak about isolated cases because nations, appearing either individually or collectively with their requirements in the market, and the NSPA experience the same issues and problems. That is why it became extraordinarily important for the military to understand the contractors' limitations and interests. NATO and nations must re-determine their requirements, re-plan their concept or operations if needed, and have to figure out how to use the CSO in the most effective way. Since in the new defence concept the nations assuming responsibilities, e.g. as framework nations (FWN) of the VJTF, face similar challenges, the contracting procedures and contracted capabilities should also provide a solution to meeting the requirements of all rotating FWNs.

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[10]   Fortner, J. A. "Institutionalizing Contractor Support on the Battlefield". *Army Logistician,* 32/4. 2000. 13.

When talking about a solution, it can be a new individual commercial contracted capability for one single nation that other nations can also join. However, actually, establishing a multinational solution would be more reasonable. It can be a scalable multinational framework contract, a new partnership or a project group under the aegis of an existing partnership, specialized for a certain type of supply or service, making possible the new solution to be available for all those participating nations that are interested in it. NSPA (as a Contract Integrator), through its partnership offices as common platforms, has a great role in collecting, consolidating, synchronizing the national requirements and building consensus for multinational solutions through the civilian service providers from the industry. The authors' firm belief is that the significance of multinational solutions will grow in the future and for this, a better understanding of the market is essential.

ISSUES, QUESTIONS, LIMITATIONS OF THE CONTRACTORS' SIDE

When speaking about operations, we can say that the military is aware of its own requirements related to support to operations. Although the nature of operations may change from time to time due to technical developments, different geographical locations or other reasons, NATO and nations, through their operation planning mechanism, are able to define or redefine their basic requirements towards the industry.

However, when discussing the support provided by civilian service providers to military, direct and indirect support to operations should be considered. CSO includes mainly provisions of different supplies (but primarily food, bottled water, fuel), services (minor or major contruction works, transportation, base services, real life support, etc.) and some additional engineering support with assets which are ready for use within a relatively short time period (e.g. elements of already existing deployable capabilities, like containerized housing units, tents, power generation with technical support and labour to operate and maintain those assets). Establishing new contracted capabilities for these supplies and services may require a shorter period of time (e.g. in case of the NSPA, it takes approx. 4–6 months) generally.

Longer military operations may require significant engineering and construction works as well, which happened e.g. in Afghanistan when series of development projects were executed at the Kabul International Airport. Such significant construction works may take for several years from designing the plans until the completion of building works.

Besides, the above-mentioned civilian companies have a very huge role in developing weapon systems, military vehicles, and other military equipment. Those weapon systems and equipment are inevitable for the successful military operations. The civilian companies, with the development of new weapon systems and equipment, through their involvement in the whole life cycle management of those systems, support the operations in an indirect way as well. Many times, contractors prepare technical assets, different capabilities primarily for the inventory of the national defence forces (e.g. a deployable medical ROLE 2 package to be stored at a home base but available in case of needs during an operation), or they provide repair and maintenance services as well in the theatre or at home bases to the military assets and vehicles.

The military requirements towards the companies, involved in Life Cycle Management of weapon systems, vehicles and other military equipment, are well collected in an article by Balázs Taksás, and are the following:

– To manufacture appliances meeting the technological standards of the present. (Technological level)
– To create their products and services in an affordable and competitive way. (The principles of economy)
– To be able to support the maintenance of appliances and to be able to operate the manufacturing or their services both in peacetime and in wartime. (Security of Supply)
– *"There is no hierarchy among these three requirements, as they are all equally important, therefore it can be named The Trinity of Defense Industry."*[11]

Technological level

Security of supply

Principles of economy
(Competitiveness)
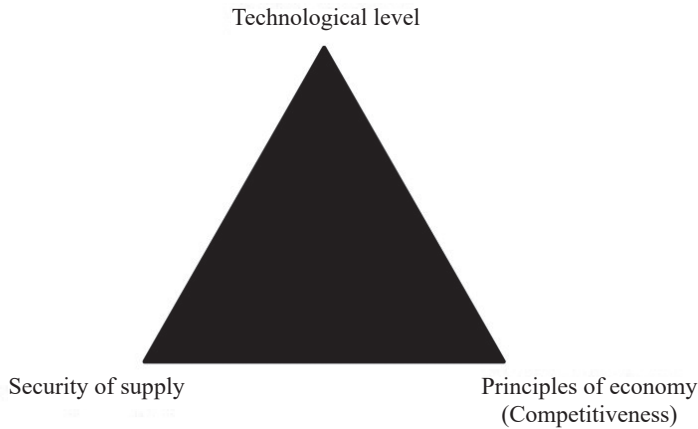
Figure 2 *Drawn by the authors, based on Balázs Taksás: "The Trinity of defense industry."*
Source: *Prepared by Balázs Taksás*

Regarding the defence industry, one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century for the companies is how to keep the balance among the elements. It may happen that when the contractor strenghtens one element it entails the weakening of the other two.

Similar requirements have been formulated, as CONDO principals (Contractor on Deployed Operations) in a promotion publication of a commercial service provider, the Persides Ltd.:

Persides is able to offer an assured CSO end-to-end solution in terms of capturing and refining deployed support requirements. Providing bid/proposal management and subsequent management of a deployed contractor support service upon award of contract whilst remaining compliant with the following CONDO principles:

– Contract Sponsor must provide an assured service for the Military Commander using contractors in circumstances that do not involve unacceptable military risk.
– In providing CONDO capabilities, it is accepted that they should be attractive or profitable for the contractor whilst demonstrating value for money for the MoD.
– The operational circumstances within which CONDO capabilities are delivered must be as safe and secure as possible for the workforce.[12]

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[11] Taksás, B. "The Trinity of defense industry." *Economics and Management,* 8/1. 2019. 71.
[12] "Contractor Support to Operations (CSO) & Contractors on Deployed Operations (CONDO) – Providing enduring in-theatre technical support to front line operations." Persides. 29 May 2014. https://www.military-systems-tech.com/sites/militarysystems/files/supplier_docs//CONDO.pdf Accessed on 3 February 2022.

Some of the above-mentioned requirements can be reached through the already existing and well-known cooperation between the military and industry, like the security for the work-force. NATO has already realised this very valid requirement from the industry, that is why the employment of contractors, depending on the type or the phase of an operation, with the proper security and health provisions, is thoroughly considered.

But making a military requirement attractive and guaranteeing that the provision of service will be profitable for the contractor create a new challenge. The main reason of that is the nature of the new type of requirements the nations developed after 2014. For example, the VJTF concept requires pre-arranged AAC capabilities, so that the units can deploy at the determined extremly short Notice-To-Move time. Planning the supply and support requirements of the VJTF units causes a challenge even for military planners, since the time and place of delivery of the required materials or services are not really known. Although pre-planned response plans have been created by NATO, which identified possible JOAs, the only thing that is clear is that the supplies and services will be required quickly after an activation of the units in high readiness.

If the military planners find the way of formulating their requirements in a way that the contractors are able to bid against, it still does not guarantee that providing the required service brings profit to the contractor. An AAC requires supplies, materials, transport assets or services to be pre-planned and to be put aside for the military in case of needs. In other words, the contractor is expected to assume a commitment for the required duration (which is one year in case of the VJTF readiness) but it is not sure that this committed service pays back the contractor's costs and efforts. When discussing this point, we enter into a debate with István Balla who claims in his essay, that with the size of the service fee, it is possible for the military to create a strong interest that can minimize the risk of non-compliance of the contractor.[13] We think that it is not always true, mainly if we speak about the support to VJTF through commercial contracted capabilities. First of all, other nations' military forces (or a civilian company from the industry that competes for the same capacity or capability) may pay more and we lose the chance to obtain the required service. Secondly, in case of an AAC or dormant contract, the contractor is able to calculate the possible profit that it loses with putting its capabilities and capacities aside for the military, but at the same time it may lose a certain share of the market. So, withdrawing its capacities from the market, its rivals would fill this supply or service gap, offering their services and exploiting this situation. This disadvantage cannot be calculated and cannot be imposed on the military, in addition it is not sure whether the contractor can regain its previous status in the market. Furthermore, in some cases, the time, money, and efforts invested in the establishment of the new contracted capability may not pay back within the one-year contract duration which covers the readiness time of the VJTF. This problem, as a striking example, came up recently during the preparation phase of the German VJTF in connection with establishing rail transport services for the units in very high readiness.

From this point of view, the support to the European Union Battle Groups (EUBGs) is even more challenging. The EUBG units are only on 6 month standby. The place of delivery of the possible supplies and services is not known, just like in the case of NATO's very high readiness units. These military formations are also expected to move at short notice so, most

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[13] Balla, T. "Civilian and military assets in light of contracted logistical services." (in Hungarian) *Katonai Logisztika,* 10/3. 2003. 51.

probably, they cannot be sustained without pre-set AACs. However, as it was mentioned previously, this type of contract may not be attractive enough for potential contractors even if the military may need to pay a significant amount of stand-by fee. The civilian service providers prefer those commitments that guarantee their benefit. That is why multiyear contracts and ones that ensure the profit and visibility of service providers in the market are favoured. But these objectives cannot be achieved without actual and factual deliveries. In other words, contractors can be used for dormant contracts but their interest is the establishment of additional contract package(s) as well, which includes actual delivery of supplies and or services too. Pure dormant contracts themselves may generate reluctance of civilian service providers. It is NATO and the nations' responsibility to figure out how to make their requirements attractive, which are able to satisfy the needs of the military and the contractor too.

SUMMARY

As it turns out from this article, the use of CSO generates numerous challenges. The goal of the military is to have civilian service providers deliver value for money without endangering the effectiveness of an operation. By today, the contribution of the contractors, with their special expertise and technical know-how, has become a vital part of the nations' force projection capability. Besides the many positive effects on the operations, it still seems to be a challenge for both parties to cooperate in the most effective way. For this, it is expected from both the contractors and the military to have a better understanding of the other's interests and goals. Integration of the contractors in the military planning is a part of this process, which is not new. But what is more important, NATO and its member states should include the aforementioned requirements in the military training and educational material as well. The NATO or Hungarian, doctrines and guidances, dealing with CSO, should be supplemented by some new chapters that detail the basic operation of the civil service providers, the potential risks of using them, the possible mitigation of those risks and the limitations of applying CSO. This guidance could also depict the business model of some of the most significant and successful civilian service providers, but certainly the basic goals, interests of the contractors should be listed. These documents should also include the military considerations related to this topic, the phases of the operational planning process with the relevant military actions; furthermore, some new contracting techniques should also be detailed. In short, the documents would serve as a source for training and planning by providing a collection of very compact and comprehensive series of practical guidances for CSO. To prepare such a training material, the military can rely on the experience and expertise of the NATO, EU and national Contract Integrators too. Through paying more attention to the training process, bringing some knowledge of idiosyncrasies of the commercial service providers, the military could reach the full integration of CSO to the military operation from planning to execution.

Our firm belief is that the units in high readiness should be supported not only by training but also through multinational commercial solutions that could provide support to the different nations with their units in rotation. In our understanding, solutions mean new type of commercial contracted capabilities, which guarantee the contractors that their time, costs and efforts will pay off. And on the other hand, the military will also be ensured that their operations will be supported as required. Since the nations' requirements for their VJTF units in rotations are very similar, it is feasible to establish contracted capabilities that are flexible and scalable enough to be used by the next nation in rotation and other nations to

have the opportunity to join these capabilities. Contract Integrators can facilitate the establishment of such capabilities providing a platform to collect and consolidate the requirements, where a consensus can be built in developing the exact requirements. Furthermore, they can provide their knowledge of the market and use the most proper contracting techniques to develop the best commercial contracted solution. Having a good understanding of the operation, interests, and goals of the contractors, the military would be easily aware of what to expect from them, and would avoid imposing unrealistic requirements, or wasting time and manpower to non-executable requirements.

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Márk Takács

THE KHARKIV OFFENSIVE: THE VIEW FROM THE COMMANDER'S SIGHT – A CASE STUDY

ABSTRACT: *The offensive of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in early September 2022 in the Kharkiv Region is an outstanding achievement and marks a significant cornerstone in the story of the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War. The goal of this study is not to retell the story of this operation and not to invent something that already exists, but to present this historically significant military operation from the view of the tactical-level infantry commander. At which level, after all, wars are decided.*

KEYWORDS: *infantry, tactical-level of war, Ukraine, Russia, offensive, penetration, delaying action*

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INTRODUCTION

This offensive operation from 1st to 14th September, which is recently called the "Kharkiv counteroffensive", is no doubt a huge Ukrainian success. Not just because of the obvious military achievements, but also because of the fact, that an operation like this could be planned, prepared, and executed. This means that if nothing unexpected happens, the strategic initiative has been retained by the Ukrainians for the first time in this conflict since the spring of 2014.

Until finalizing this paper (15/11/2022), the ongoing conflict can be divided into four big phases with numerous sub-phases:
 – The Russian offensive to capture Kyiv and all major Ukrainian cities.
   ● "Thunder Run" to Kyiv with air assaults;
   ● unsuccessful push of mechanised forces to capture the initial objectives.
 – The Russian offensive for the capture of the Donbas.
   ● Breakthrough to Izyum;
   ● unsuccessful river crossings on the Siverskiy Donetsk near Bilohorivka;
   ● breakthrough at Popasna;
   ● the battle for Severodonetsk and Lysichansk;
   ● "grinder" for Bakhmut.
 – The Ukrainian offensive for the liberation of Kharkiv Oblast.
   ● Diversionary (?) attack at Kherson;
   ● diversionary attack near Balakleya;
   ● breakthrough at Volokhiv Yar;

- exploitation and pursuit to the Oskil River;
- attack through the Oskil River and the battle for Lyman.
– Russian mobilization and slower Ukrainian advance
- counterattack and defensive operations in the northern part of the Luhansk Region;
- ongoing "grinder" for Bakhmut;
- liberation of Kherson.

In this study, I will examine the third phase and the first four of its sub-phases (a-d). I will not write about the battle for Lyman, because it is not a decisive part but the consequence of this operation.

The available information regarding the actual military operations is about brigade-level and above. My goal is to use my knowledge to identify the role of the battalions and companies in order to have a view of tactical-level infantry commanders, mainly company commanders. I chose this perspective for two reasons. First, I am an infantry officer with thorough tactical-level knowledge and in the focus of my Ph.D. research is the deployment of infantry units at tactical level in the recent conventional wars. The second reason is my firm conviction that, in spite of the rapid technical advance, in the end, wars are still decided at tactical level, where infantry units fight each other in brutal, extremely fast-paced close combat.

I must emphasise that I relied only on open sources. I made my deductions based on these open sources and on my expertise, therefore in the future, further examination and evaluation of this topic will be absolutely necessary.

MISSION ANALYSIS PRIOR TO THE OFFENSIVE

The analysis of a mission is carried out with the guidance of the METT-TCC acronym. M: Mission, E: Enemy, T: Terrain and weather, T: Troops and support available, T: Time available, C: Civil considerations, C: Cyberspace considerations. The brief mission analysis I present here is purely a deduction based on open-source information, experts' analysis, and my knowledge. I will not cover the "last C" (Cyberspace considerations) because it is far away from my expertise.

Mission

To fulfil a mission always means carrying out a task. There are two types of tasks: specified task (which is given by the superior) and implied task (which is deduced by the commander who received the mission).[1]

I assumed that the mission of the Ukrainian forces was the defeat of the 20th GCAA (Guards Combined Arms Army) and the destruction and/or defeat of the 1st GTA (Guards Tank Army) in order to retain the strategic initiative, liberate a large part of Ukraine, and eliminate the threat posed by the Izyum bridgehead to the Ukrainian forces in the Donbas. This can be called the specified task at strategic level.

This specified task – as always – led to numerous implied tasks that in turn led to numerous specified tasks at operational and tactical levels, which again, led to numerous implied

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[1]   Larsen C., Wade, N. M.: *US ARMY Small Unit Tactics.* (Totowa: The Lightning Press, 2016) 1-26.

tasks. In order to fulfil this task, the Ukrainians had to carry out a large-scale offensive. In the first phase of the offensive, they had to break through the Russian defences. In the second phase, they had to seize vital terrain in order to encircle the 1st GTA. In the third phase, they had to destroy/defeat the 1st GTA.

To successfully execute the first phase, the Ukrainians had to achieve a breakthrough. For a successfully breakthrough the most vital task is to find a weak spot in the enemy's defences. In order to find a weak spot, the attacker must execute intelligence and reconnaissance tasks. There are multiple ways to do this, and it is without doubt that the Ukrainian side enjoys an unprecedented amount of ISR assistance (Intelligence, Reconnaissance, Surveillance) from the US.[2] Of course, it is an essential support, but not sufficient *per se.* The Ukrainian side had to carry out such reconnaissance tasks as aerial reconnaissance with drones, recon patrols, reconnaissance in force by infantry units, engineering recon for river crossings, road recon, etc.

After the weak spot is found, it is time to organise the breakthrough. For this, the attacking side has to form two groups:
– breakthrough element,
– support element which consists of two sub-elements:
  • support by diversionary attacks (this consists of infantry that attacks an enemy force in the vicinity of the breakthrough, in order to fix the enemy),
  • support by indirect fire (artillery).[3]

Therefore, the focus of my study, the tactical-level infantry commander, can receive the following types of missions:
– reconnaissance in force;
– take part in the first or second echelon of the breakthrough;
– take part in the support element, and, of course;
– can be in reserve.

In the Kharkiv offensive, the breakthrough was just the first decisive tactical task. After the successful breakthrough, the AFU's (Armed Forces of Ukraine) units executed envelopment, exploitation, and pursuit. For an envelopment, just like for a breakthrough, the attacker needs a manoeuvre force, which envelops the enemy (attacks his flanks) while there is also a need for a fixing force, which fixes the enemy in order to enable the manoeuvre force to envelope him.

The envelopment, if executed right after the breakthrough is a perfect means to widen the breakthrough in order to provide secure passage for the second echelon and the logistics to support the main attack. The other typical case of envelopment is when the enemy counterattacks and the first echelon fixes it, while the second echelon carries out the envelopment in order to defeat the enemy's counterattack.

The successful breakthrough and envelopment are followed by the exploitation and the pursuit. To briefly describe the exploitation:

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[2] Julian, E. et al. "U.S. Intelligence Is Helping Ukraine Kill Russian Generals, Officials Say." *The New York Times,* 04.05.2022. Downloaded: 23.09.2022. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/04/us/politics/russia-generals-killed-ukraine.html

[3] *FM 3-90 – Tactics.* (Washington DC.: Department of the Army, 2023) 2 5-10.

Exploitation is not normally conducted below the brigade level. Exploitation often follows a successful attack to take advantage of a weakened or collapsed enemy. The purpose of exploitation can vary, but it generally focuses on capitalizing on a temporary advantage or preventing the enemy from establishing an organized defence or conducting an orderly withdrawal. To accomplish this, the brigade (or higher-level unit) attacks rapidly over a broad front to prevent the enemy from establishing a defence, organizing an effective rear guard, withdrawing, or regaining balance. The brigade secures objectives, severs escape routes, and destroys all enemy forces.[4]

In case of an exploitation an infantry company commander, again, can receive various missions. The main element of an exploitation is a series of hasty attacks and fast tactical movements. There is no available, valid, open-source information for all the hasty attacks carried out by the Ukrainian forces in the exploitation phase of the Kharkiv offensive. However, I can deduce from the size of the units and the size of the area of operations that after the successful breakthrough, multiple hasty attacks were carried out successfully at company level.

All in all, the reader can see, that an infantry company (and of course platoon) commander of the AFU could find himself in multiple situations with multiple types of missions. These are:
– reconnaissance in force, recon patrol,
– frontal attack or fixing force in the diversionary attack,
– frontal attack in the first echelon of the breakthrough element,
– frontal attack in the supporting (fixing) element of the breakthrough,
– envelopment in the second echelon,
– fixing force in an envelopment,
– hasty attack (which can usually mean frontal assault or envelopment at a sub-unit level).

According to open sources and my deduction, these are the missions and tasks that were carried out by Ukrainian infantry companies in the Kharkiv offensive.

Enemy

For the analysis of the enemy, the attacker must gather information regarding the enemy's:
– task & purpose (goals, tasks, course of actions),
– positions (exact place and level of fortification),
– composition (units, equipment, level of training, morale).

In the first days of September the long-awaited "Kherson offensive" finally was launched by the Ukrainians. Before the actual commencement of this offensive, the Ukrainians had employed all types of information warfare to draw the Russian's attention to the southern sector of the frontline. Furthermore, the officially stated Russian intention at this time was the "liberation" of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson Oblasts.[5] As a result of this, the Russian military leadership (which is according to rumours, rigidly controlled

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4   *FM 3-90.* 2 5-51.
5   Stepanenko, K. et al. "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 1," *Institute for the Study of War,* 01.09.2022. https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-1 Visited: 12.09.2022.

by Vladimir Putin) had sent all the available reinforcements arriving from Russia, and the bulk of its elite forces, the naval infantry and airborne (VDV) units, to the west side of the Dnipro river in the Kherson Oblast.

After this redeployment, the two formations in the path of the future Ukrainian offensive were the 20th Guards Combined Arms Army (20th GCAA) and the 1st Guards Tank Army (1st GTA). These were formidable forces, but after more than a half year of war, their combat power had significantly decreased, and some of their most effective units had been redeployed to the Kherson Region.

The northern part of the frontline was the area of responsibility (AoR) of the 20th GCAA from the Oskil River/Russian border down approximately to the P78 highway. From this highway down to the border between Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblasts was the AoR of the 1st GTA.

The 20th GCAA, which would receive the Ukrainian main attack, had the 144th Guards Motorised Rifle Division (144th GMRD), the 3rd Motorised Rifle Division (3rd MRD), and the 11th Army Corps (11th AC) under its command.[6]

These seemingly fearsome units were far below their authorised strength. Basically, a standard motorised infantry division has 2-3 motorised infantry regiments or brigades (depending the original peacetime composition) and a tank regiment or brigade, as well as numerous combat support (artillery, air defence, engineer, etc.) and combat service support (logistics, signal, CBRN, etc.) battalions and companies. The widely accepted standard unit of the Russian land, airborne and naval infantry forces is the Battalion Tactical Group (BTG). Originally, a peacetime regiment or brigade can form one full-strength BTG.[7] This means that a division had 2-3 "infantry-heavy" and 1 "tank-heavy" BTG under its command. If we do the math, (144th GMRD plus 3rd MRD plus 11th AC), we can see that the full-strength 20th GCAA should have had at least seven, but possibly nine BTGs under its command, and should have been supported by overwhelmingly strong artillery. The width of their AoR was approximately 150 km. Thus, a single BTG (not more than 1,000 soldiers) was responsible for a frontline of almost 17 km. This was too much for a single BTG, if we consider that according to NATO standards a "basic" battalion is responsible for a 4×4 km area, and a NATO-standard Battalion Battlegroup can be responsible for a front of up to 8 km in width.

However, in this war the number of deployed troops is usually smaller than that prescribed in the related manuals. The first reason for this is, of course, the smaller number of deployed forces. The other (and in my opinion the more important) reason is the presence of sophisticated sensors that can gather information from greater distances, therefore provide the ability for a given unit to control a far greater area than was possible some decades earlier.

Furthermore, the 20th GCAA had an unknown number of Russian internal security forces ("Rosgvardiya") and "separatist" forces under its command, mainly from the so-called Luhansk People's Republic (LPR). These reinforcements were necessary because of the above-mentioned redeployments, and the high losses suffered after more than half year of war. According to relevant sources, the divisions had only one depleted BTG under their

6   Axe, D.: "12,000 Russian Troops Were Supposed To Defend Kaliningrad. Then They Went To Ukraine To Die." *Forbes,* 27.10.2022. https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2022/10/27/12000-russian-troops-once-posed-a-threat-from-inside-nato-then-they-went-to-ukraine-to-die/?sh=11de83223375 Visited: 29.10.2022.

7   Takács, M. "Short Study: Describing the Major Features of the Russian Battalion Tactical Group." *AARMS,* 2021/2. 49–65.

command.[8] Of course, separatist and Russian Interior Ministry's forces were deployed in the gaps, but the combat effectiveness of these forces and their cooperation with the divisions were very far below the necessary level.

All in all, the Russian 20th GCAA had approximately 3-4 depleted BTGs and an unknown but clearly inadequate number of separatist and interior forces. This was clearly not enough to carry out effective defensive operations against the Ukrainians.

The 1st GTA's situation was only slightly more favourable. In late August, the main task of the 1st GTA was to maintain pressure on the Ukrainian defences from the area of Izyum to the direction of Slovyansk and Kramatorsk.[9] The 1st GTA had approximately seven BTGs consisting of the forces of the 2nd Guards Motorised Rifle Division (GMRD) and the 4th Guards Tank Division (GTD). However, the bulk of their forces was concentrated to the south, in the area of Bohorodychne and Krasnopillya in order to exert pressure on the Ukrainian defences northwest of Slovyansk.[10] Therefore, the majority of the 1st GTA's forces could not take part in the fight against the Ukrainian offensive.

Briefly, the task of the Russian forces in the way of the imminent Ukrainian offensive was as follows:

– 20th GCAA: to hold the line around Kharkiv in order to screen the artillery bombarding the city, and cover 1st GTA's right flank in the area of Izyum.
– 1st GTA: to maintain pressure on the Ukrainian defences NW, N, and NE of Slovyansk and Kramatorsk, in order to slowly but surely gain ground and destroy the Ukrainian forces defending this area.

The first phase of the Ukrainian Kharkiv offensive affected mainly the Russian 20th GCAA. The defences of the 20th GCAA's left flank were extremely weak. Due to the low number of available units, the defensive line was not coherent, there was no depth of the defence, and no sufficient reserves were available to execute effective counterattacks there.

All in all, the Ukrainians (with immense US intelligence support) had correct information about the Russian defences. They knew where it would be useful to launch a fixing attack, where it was possible to break through, and in which direction it was useful to exploit the success of the breakthrough.

Terrain and weather

The importance of the terrain is undoubted. If carefully analysed, the terrain helps us, if not, the terrain quickly turns against us providing our enemy good opportunities to defeat us. For a quick, but thorough terrain analysis, we can use the OAKOC acronym. The letters stand for Objectives, Avenues of approach, Key terrain, Obstacles, Cover and concealment. Of course, the terrain analysis must be carried out from our mission's point of view. The analysis can be carried out with the help of maps, aerial images, software tools, etc. Of

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8   Huweiler, S.: "Russian Advances in Ukraine." *UaWarData: Tracking the Russian Invasion.* https://uawardata. com/ Map as of 11th September 2022. Visited: 12.09.2022.

9   Stepanenko et al. "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 1." *Institute for the Study of War,* 09.01.2022. https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-1 Visited: 20.09.2022.

10 Stepanenko et al. "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 1."

course, the AFU supposedly had exact information about the area of their offensive, since it was their country, and because of the above-mentioned intelligence support.

Objectives

Deduced from the actual manoeuvres during the offensive and the *Mission* part of the METT-TC analysis, the Ukrainian offensive had four phases, with the following objectives:

Phase 1, the diversionary attack: attack by fire Balakliya and Lyman from the south.
– Phase 2, the breakthrough: cut the highway between Balakliya and Volokhiv Yar, and occupy the town of Volokhiv Yar.
– Phase 3, the exploitation: occupy the towns of Semenivka and Shevchenkove, and secure the gains of the exploitation by seizing Kupyansk and Sen'kove.
– Phase 4, the pursuit: pursue and destroy the 1st GTA, or at least force it to withdraw from Izyum.

Avenues of approach

The avenues of approach must provide a safe and secure path to reach the objective. To reach an objective against a resisting enemy, of course, the attacker must deploy a large force of battalions and brigades. An avenue of approach consists of movement corridors. Basically, one movement corridor provides space for a company. It is widely accepted that for a safe and secure movement of a company, approximately 1,5-2 km wide space is needed.

If we take a look at the terrain of the Ukrainian manoeuvres, we can see that the terrain is wide and flat. In late summer (which was extremely dry in 2022), the soil was dry, the small canals were almost empty, therefore the avenues of approach could be planned with great operational freedom. This freedom and the favourable terrain provided safe and secure avenues of approach and a comfortable freedom of movement for the attacking Ukrainian units.

Key terrain

Key terrains are those areas in the Area of Operations (AO) that are vital to control to achieve the mission. It means that there can be a situation where the key terrain is different from the point of view of the attacker and the defender. In order to achieve success, the attacker must seize his key terrain, and control it and the avenues of approaches leading to it – while the defender's success depends on his retaining his key terrain. It is also important to identify the key terrain regarding the enemy's task and objective, in order to prevent the enemy from reaching its goal.

An examination of the task and purpose of the Ukrainians, and a careful examination of the terrain identify the following key terrains that would serve the goals of the various phases of the Kherson offensive.

Phase 1, the diversionary attack:
– the bank of the Donets River in the line of Pervomai'ske – Bairak – Nova Husarivka;
– the most important key terrain is the bridge (K1) over the Donets River north of Bairak: if the Ukrainians wanted the Russians to take the bait, they had to attack the bridge in order to show their commitment to cross the river and break through to Balakliya from the south.
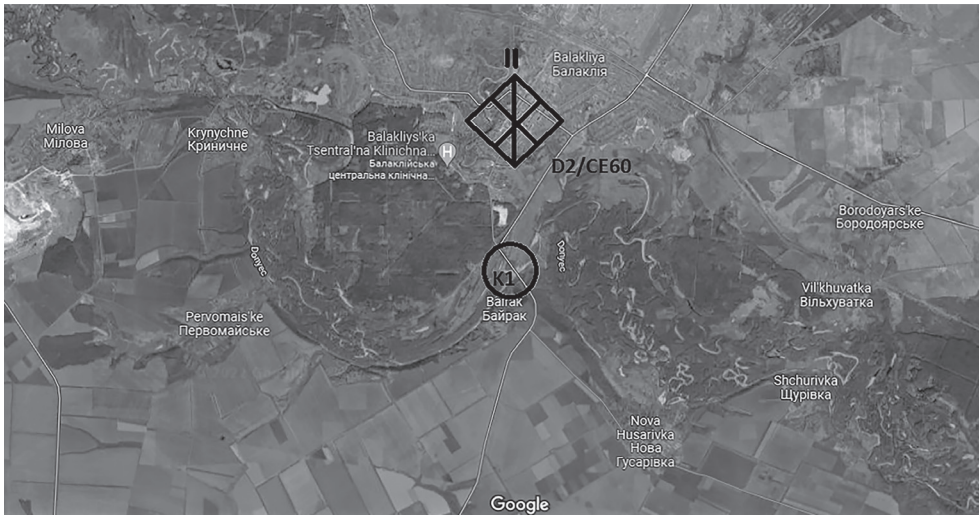
Image 1 *Deduced key terrain of the diversionary attack*[11]

Phase 2, the breakthrough:
- in order to successfully break through, it was necessary to fix the Russian forces in Balakliya. Therefore, it was vital to attack and capture Vrebivka (K1),
- to effectively break through the Russian defences, there were two key terrains which subsequently led to two key tasks:
  - to capture the highway between Balakliya and Volokhiv Yar east of the village of Yakovenkove (K2),
  - to capture the area where it was the easiest to cross the Serednaya Balakliika River and at the same time cut Volokhiv Yar from the south (K3),
- to widen and secure the breakthrough, it was indispensable to capture the town of Volokhiv Yar (K4).

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[11] The author's work.
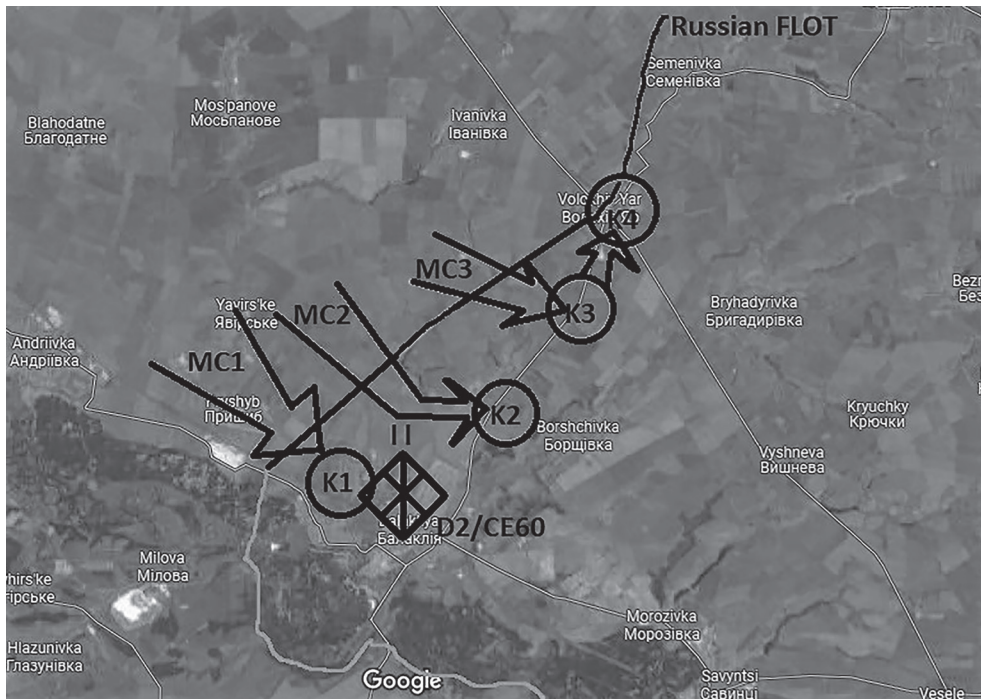
Image 2 *Deduced key terrains and movement corridors (MC) of the breakthrough phase*[12]

Phase 3, the exploitation:
  – after the breakthrough, the Ukrainians exploited the breakthrough with two parallel
    attacks in the direction of the Oskil River:
    ● one was conducted from Volokhiv Yar to Shevchenkove and Kupyansk;
    ● the other was conducted from Balakliya to Vesele and Horokhovatka;
  – in this phase the key terrain at operational level consisted of the above-mentioned ur-
    ban areas. The tactical level key terrain and tasks will be discussed later.

Obstacles

Briefly, there are two main types of obstacles: natural and man-made obstacles. Their com-
mon feature is that both types of obstacles can hamper us in reaching our goal and/or ham-
per our enemy in reaching their goal.

    Natural obstacles are – usually – well known to both sides, and both sides can and should
take them into consideration. If there is a river, a swamp, a hill or a dense forest, it is easily
identified on an accurate map and a commander can easily adjust his plan in order to ex-
ploit these obstacles, secure his troops' freedom of movement (FOM), and at the same time
hamper that of the enemy.

    The man-made obstacles also have two types: urban areas and complex fields of obsta-
cles made by the defender. The urban areas – most of the time – behave just like natural

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obstacles: they are "default" features of the terrain, and both warring parties are well aware of them.

The complex fields of obstacles are different. Most of the time, the defender deploys complex fields of obstacles (consisting of mines, barbed wire, ditch, IED, etc.) in order to prevent the attacker from achieving their goal by slowing and canalizing the offense and, of course, inflicting casualties.

For the superficial observer it can be seen that the actual AoR is a flat land without any major obstacles. From a strategic point of view, it can be true, but if we observe the Kharkiv offensive with a tactical scope, we can identify many obstacles.

First and foremost, the main obstacles in the AoR were the:

– Siverskiy Donetsk River, the Oskil River, numerous canals and creeks;
– the town of Balakliya and numerous small villages and industrial compounds (the most important, of course, are those in the way of the Ukrainian main attack – see *Image 2* above);
– treelines, small swampy forests on the banks of the canals.

Until the time of finalizing this paper, I did not find any reliable sources regarding the Russian obstacles along their defensive lines. Therefore, I can only deduce from the speed of the Ukrainian advance, that there were no significant fortifications in the way of the Ukrainian offensive.

Now we can see, that at tactical level, the AoR was very far from being an easily passable flat terrain. In order to achieve success, the Ukrainian tactical-level commanders had to thoroughly identify the obstacles in their way and had to prepare their troops to bypass or break through the dangerous areas and to use the terrain in their favour.

Cover and concealment
Obviously, this part of the OAKOC terrain analysis is about the camouflage features of the AoR. Of course, vegetation is an important part of the concealment. High treelines, dense forests, and even high grass can cover troop movements or defensive fortifications. The troops can also contribute to concealment: commanders have to employ measures to improve their forces' concealment, such as perfecting individual camouflage or hiding their equipment and movement. These can be done by actually concealing and hiding and by mimicking troop movements.

It is also important to emphasise that concealment is not just a visual issue. In war, commanders must employ measures to conceal their troops in the infrared range, electronic warfare's (EW) battlespace, and the information domain. Therefore, on the modern battlefield, it is extremely difficult to conceal even a single APC, let alone whole units. As experts say, the battlefield had become "naked" because sophisticated sensors can detect troops and operations from space, air, and cyberspace.[13] I assume that in the near future this will lead us to a decreasing density of forces in the first echelons of the AoRs in order to protect forces from the effective range of the enemy's sensors and long-range artillery.

Before February 2022, most experts (including myself) thought that Russians possessed an overwhelming superiority in ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance) means at

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[13] Watling, J. "The Key to Armenia's Tank Losses: The Sensors, Not the Shooters." *RUSI,* 06.10.2020. https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/rusi-defence-systems/key-armenias-tank-losses-sensors-not-shooters Visited: 04.10.2022.

both levels of war. I assume that even the Russian offensive itself was proof of the complete misuse of this superiority at the strategic level of intelligence. Furthermore, at tactical level the Russian BTGs suffered heavy losses mainly because of poor situational awareness caused by poor intelligence and inadequate decision-making.[14] In this actual offensive, the ISR capabilities of the Russian forces were even more diminished, because the more capable Russian units were on their way or had even just arrived in the area of Kherson to stop the long-awaited Ukrainian offensive. This led to a situation that in the way of the Ukrainian main attack the lines were held by Rosgvardiya forces (as I mentioned above) whose commanders, and staffs were not prepared to conduct tactical-level intelligence.

However, it is still a matter of debate why the Russian strategic-level ISR did not discover the concentration of division-size Ukrainian forces a dozen kilometres from their FLOT (first line of own troops). What is even worse, it seems that the preparation of the Ukrainian attack was discovered[15] but the Russian commanders did not prepare their defences adequately.

The cover has a lot of correlation with concealment because what is covered is usually concealed. The commanders must carefully observe and prepare (if possible) their AoR to find covered routes to key terrains (see Avenues of Approach part), to find cover for their valuable and/or vulnerable assets, and to cover the movement and positions of their forces.

In this particular operation, the terrain did not provide a lot of cover because of the lack of hills and valleys. However, the aforementioned treelines, urban areas, forests, and canals could provide some cover at a tactical level. This is important for my paper because it means that the tactical-level commanders could easily find covered routes for their tactical-level manoeuvres, (e.g. envelope a battle position of a depleted Russian company with a mechanised infantry platoon in order to subsequently assault and defeat this battle position with appropriate supporting fire provided by the other platoons of the company).

I must underline here, that in this actual offensive, in this actual AoR the well-trained company commanders could easily find appropriate cover to carry out their task. This fact paired with the "blindness" of Russian ISR assets had created a favourable environment for the Ukrainian offensive.

Troops and support available

It is clear that the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) (and the state itself) can maintain its resistance thanks to continuous Western support. In the first two phases of this conflict, (see the phases in the Introduction) the main focus was on the defensive capabilities both in technical and tactical aspects. After the Russian capture of Lysychansk, it seemed, that the AFU finally could contain the Russian offensive, but the continuous flow of western support remained critical to maintaining the AFU's operational capabilities.

After the capture of Lysychansk on 3 July, the Russian advance effectively came to a halt. According to experts and my assessment, a timeframe of opportunity (and a need) for the Ukrainian counteroffensive has appeared.[16] Albeit the Russians did not have sufficient power to launch decisive offensive operations, they still had an overwhelming superiority in firepower, and in time, they could have bled the Ukrainians white with a constant artil-

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[14]   Takács. "Short Study." 55. and 58.

[15]   Social media post by @epodubbny. *Telegram.org.* https://t.me/epoddubny/12137 Visited: 13.11.2022.

[16]   Kofman, M. and Evans, R. "Ukraine's Window of Opportunity?" *War on the Rocks,* 28.07.2022. https://warontherocks.com/2022/07/ukraines-window-of-opportunity/ Visited: 14.09.2022.

lery bombardment.[17] This led to the recognition, that the Ukrainians can and must retain the initiative in order to avoid the slow destruction of their forces (and their country) in a yearslong artillery grinder.

For the Kharkiv offensive, the Ukrainians had gathered a 5 brigade-strong force, which is the approximate equivalent of a NATO standard division. These elements of the offensive force were (from north to south):
  – the 103rd and 113th Territorial Defence Brigades (TBD);
  – the 92nd and the 93rd Mechanised Infantry Brigades (MIB);
  – the 3rd Tank Brigade (TB);
  – the 25th and the 80th Air Assault Brigades (AAB);
  – and unknown elements of Ukrainian Special Forces.

Of course, these forces were supported by additional artillery. Furthermore, I have to underline that it is still not 100% clear, which elements of which Ukrainian units were involved in this offensive. However, for the scope of my study, it is almost indifferent what the official identification number of the unit was, what really matters is the actual size of the unit and the size and time of their operation, and this information is valid and available.

At the time of finalizing this paper, we can see that the Ukrainians used deception on a grand scale. However, it is still not clear whether the Kherson offensive was originally meant to be a decisive operation or a strategic shaping operation for the support of the Kharkiv offensive. From our point of view, it is indifferent, what the original goal was, because the huge "operational noise" made in the information space by the Ukrainians, and the launch of the attack on 31 August had perfectly diverted the Russians' attention to the southernmost sector of the frontline.[18] I consider this operation as a strategic-level decisive operation with a different speed which "turned-out-to-be a diversionary attack".

Ultimately, it is totally indifferent whether the Kherson offensive was originally planned to be or became a diversionary attack only later. This operation had created favourable conditions for the Ukrainian offensive. According to experts' and my assessment, the Ukrainians' goal was to drive a wedge between the 20th GCAA and the 1st GTA by breaking through the thinly held defensive line of the 20th GCAA. After the breakthrough, the further goal was to encircle the 1st GTA in order to defeat and/or destroy the main threat to the northern flank of the Ukrainian forces in the Donbas down to the Zaporizhia Oblast.

As I wrote above, the Ukrainian offensive can be divided into four phases: diversionary attack, breakthrough, exploitation, and pursuit. To successfully execute these phases, it is necessary to deploy a slightly different composition of forces in extremely different ways.

For a diversionary attack, it is important to have a sufficient number of troops to make the enemy believe that it is an actual attack. For this it is enough to have a number of attackers equivalent to the enemy, the more important factor is to have motivated troops to employ a wide range of fires and manoeuvres against a matching enemy to successfully deceive the defender.

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[17] Staiano-Daniels, L. "Why Russia Keeps Turning to Mass Firepower." *Foreign Policy,* 19.06.2022. https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/06/19/why-russia-keeps-turning-to-mass-firepower/ Visited: 14.09.2022.

[18] Stepanenko et al. "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, August 29." *Institute for the Study of War.* 08.29.2022. https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-29 Visited: 15.09.2022.

For the breakthrough, it is widely accepted to have at least sevenfold superiority in combat power in the area of the breakthrough. Of course, this does not mean deploying seven times more troops, but having better trained, better motivated, troops with commanders who have better situational awareness, and employ a more effective military decision-making process. Next to these "human resources"-related factors, of course, it is important to have superiority in artillery, to have aerial dominance, to have at least equal quality in terms of equipment, and to have flawless logistics.

For the exploitation and the pursuit, it is indispensable to have again, flawless communications, good coordination, excellent situational awareness, and (I think it is the most important) to have well-trained, motivated commanders with a sufficient amount of tactical freedom to adapt to the quickly changing situation and to retain the tactical-level initiative. Furthermore, these units and commanders must use highly mobile and reliable IFVs and APCs with a substantial amount of swiftly available fire support.

If we have a look at the Ukrainian offensive in the Kharkiv oblast between 6th and 14th September, we can see that the Ukrainians had sufficient quality and quantity of troops to achieve their goals.

Time available

As I wrote above, the Russian offensive was practically stopped after the capture of Lysychansk in early July. The stationary warfare could have easily led to the slow destruction of Ukrainian forces by the superior Russian artillery.

Parallel with this, western support seemed to have reached its peak mainly because of the shadows over the European and US economies and most importantly, the limited number of available military equipment.[19]

I assume that these two factors had created a "now or never" opportunity for the Ukrainians to deliver a serious blow to the Russians, retain the initiative, boost the morale of their own troops and people, and last but not least, prove to their supporters that it is still worth supporting them.

The other time factor was in connection with the weather. The muddy season, the "Rasputitsa" usually begins in late October, therefore if the Ukrainians launch a successful attack in early September, they can have a comfortable seven weeks to execute even strategic-level manoeuvres.

Briefly, I assume that the time (both in operational and weather means) was appropriate for this offensive.

Civilian considerations

The attitude of the civilian population is often overlooked in a conventional conflict. Traditional military thinking presumes that the population will take cover in the way of the destructive power of the military and they will only creep out from cellars when the fighting is far away from their neighbourhood. Albeit, a significant amount of Ukraine's population escaped the country, especially from the areas that became a battlefield, there were multiple

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[19]   Turak, N. "The U.S. and Europe are running out of weapons to send to Ukraine." *CNBC,* 28.09.2022. https://www.cnbc.com/2022/09/28/the-us-and-europe-are-running-out-of-weapons-to-send-to-ukraine.html Visited: 04.10.2022.

examples of the Ukrainian population actively supporting the AFU and actively hampering the operations of the Russians.[20]

These actions by the Ukrainian population were totally surprising for the Russians, mainly because of the poor strategic-level intelligence regarding the expected attitude of the Ukrainian population in case of a Russian offensive. After the first shock, the Russians employed countermeasures which led to serious atrocities against the civilian population. The war crimes highly likely committed by Russian troops are widely known today.

All these factors led to the fact that in the area of the Ukrainian offensive, the attitude of the population was negligible regarding the offensive, but the support of the population of the recaptured settlements surely boosted the morale of the Ukrainian troops. However, mainly after the success, it has to be considered that supplying the population in the recaptured areas puts serious pressure on the AFU's logistics system.

DESCRIBING THE OPERATIONS

As I wrote above, the Ukrainian Kharkiv offensive can be divided into four big phases: diversion, breakthrough, exploitation, and pursuit. In this part of my study, I will examine both phases and I will attempt to discover and describe the decisive tactical-level operations in order to present the truly important and decisive factors of this offensive.

The diversionary attack

Before the main attack, the Ukrainians had executed a carefully planned diversion. As I wrote above, I do not consider the Ukrainian offensive in the Kherson Oblast to be a diversion. I assume that it was another decisive offensive of the Ukrainians but with another operational tempo. The diversion of the Kharkiv offensive consisted of the following two attacks.

Crossing the Siverskiy Donets
The first element of the diversionary attack was a Ukrainian river crossing attack on 1 September on the Siverskiy Donetsk River 4 km west of Siverskiy in order to capture Ozerne and Yampil.[21] This attack did not succeed but it was clearly enough to divert the attention of the 1st GTA to its left (Eastern) flank.

Because of the distance of this attack and the breakthrough, I assume that this attack was an operational-level diversion, in order to divert the attention of the area's most formidable Russian formation far away from the future main attack.

At a tactical level, the river crossing[22] is one of the most difficult operations consisting of multiple tactical tasks:

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[20]   Harding, A. "The small town which managed to block Russia's big plans." *BBC,* 22.03.2022. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60840081 Visited: 04.10.2022.

[21]   Cooper, T. "Ukraine War, 16 September 2022: East Kharkiv." *Medium,* 16.09.2022. https://medium.com/@x_TomCooper_x/ukraine-war-16-september-2022-east-kharkiv-fae7688306e2 Visited: 17.09.2022.

[22]   Most field manuals call this operation "water-gap crossing" or "wet-gap crossing," but in this case the water gap was clearly a river, and I will use the term "river crossing" in my study.

– to reconnoitre the spot(s) of the crossing;
– to employ effective fires to pin down the enemy at the opposite bank (exit bank) of the river;
– to assault the exit bank in order to gain a bridgehead to secure the main forces;
– to have main forces cross the river and exploit the attack.[23]

Reconnoitre the spot(s) of the crossing

First of all, the attacker has to find the spot of the river crossing. In this area, the river has to have a runoff, width, bank, and river bed adequate for the operation. After these natural circumstances, the enemy forces present could be overpowered by the attacker. These operations are usually conducted by ISR elements; therefore, they are not in the scope of my study.

Fire support of the crossing

After adequate reconnaissance, the attacker must overpower (at least pin down) the defender at the exit bank. This – usually – is the task of the artillery and air force. In this case, there are no sources for deploying a large number of Ukrainian aerial assets in this operation; therefore, I assume that this was done by Ukrainian artillery. At tactical level, infantry units do not have crucial tasks in this phase, they are mainly preparing and planning the river crossing, or more probably, they are conducting a tactical march from an assembly area to the spot of the crossing.

Assault through the river

Ideally, just after the artillery finished its fire missions against the enemy forces at the exit bank, the assault on the exit bank commences. This can be done either by air assault or by fording and swimming through the river. In this concrete operation, there are no sources regarding air assault, therefore, I assume that the assault was executed by amphibious APCs (BTR-80 is still present in high numbers in the AFU) and by rubber boats.

From the later reached dimensions of the bridgehead (1 km deep, 3 km wide), and available open sources[24] I can deduce that this attack was executed by not more than one battalion. In this case, the crossing could happen at one or two crossing spots.

From the point of view of the infantry company commander (CO), he (of course with his unit) can cross the river by both means and he can be in both the first and second wave of the attack. If the company is in the first wave it must conduct a tactical movement from the assembly area to the spot of the crossing. During this movement, the CO must maintain firm control over his company, through solid communication and clear orders (regarding route, objective, contact drills, and emergency situations).

Arriving at the river, the vanguard platoon must identify the spot of the crossing. For this, the platoon leader (PL) must use the tools of land navigation correctly and must have good situational awareness. Both of these can be assured by proper training and accurate information from the CO, and this information is a result of a carefully executed planning and preparation phase. This phase, – because of the Western training – I assume was done by the Troop Lead-

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[23] *FM 90-13 – River Crossing Operations.* Washington DC.: Department of the Army, 1998. 3-1.
[24] "Invasion Day 194 – Summary." *MilitaryLand,* 05. 09. 2022. https://militaryland.net/news/invasion-day-194-summary/ Visited: 18.09.2022.

ing Procedures (TLP).[25] All in all, I must underline here, at the commencement of the assault the vanguard platoon must close up to the river and occupy favourable positions to provide effective supporting fire to the incoming platoons of the company. After the company arrived at the bank of the river, it is possible to cross the river at once (if the terrain is favourable and the enemy is pinned down adequately), or platoon after platoon.

In both cases, the PL must organise the direct fires of the platoon. The PL and the subordinates must identify the targets in advance, the PL must:

– employ effective fire control measures;
– give correct fire orders;
– employ effective graphic control measures;
– designate engagement areas useful to destroy or at least pin down the enemy on the exit bank.

In this concrete operation, the river was approximately 50-80 m wide, therefore all weapons in an infantry platoon could be used (of course, except pistols and hand grenades). The main weapons of the platoon are the turret weapons of its APCs or IFVs (in this case the 14.5 mm KPVT heavy machine gun, the 7.62 mm PKT medium machine gun), and the infantry machine guns (7.62 mm PKM medium machine gun). The PL must carefully divide his AoR between his unit's weapons in order to form mutually overlapping sectors of fire, which ensure effective fire at the enemy. I must note here that firing over water can have an effect on the trajectory of the bullets and it also has to be considered during the assault.

All in all, supported by direct fires the company crosses the river in its amphibious vehicles, in boats, or hasty equipment. Until finalizing this paper, I did not find any resources regarding the equipment used for the crossing in this operation, but from the unit that executed this (15th Special Operations Regiment)[26] I would exclude none.

Advance from the exit bank and securing the bridgehead
After crossing the river with serious direct and indirect fire support, the crossing units must advance from the crossing point in order to give space to the following units and echelons. To do this, it is necessary to carry out offensive tactical tasks. I will thoroughly describe the fundamentals of basic offensive tactical tasks in the subsequent parts of my study.

Until that, I would like to mention that in this case, the attacker's tasks depend on the opposing enemy on the exit bank. If the enemy is still present but successfully pinned down by fire, the attacker can assault the enemy instantly. If we consider a company, it can assault successfully a force not bigger than two platoons (if they are seriously affected by fire). It means, that the attacking company can secure an area up to 800 m wide and 400 m deep. If everything goes as planned, the first company is followed by multiple other companies and they can secure more ground. According to recent manuals, the objective of an attacking battalion (consisting of three infantry companies) can be up to 2 km wide and deep.[27] Of course, on difficult terrain, and/or facing heavy resistance, these numbers become smaller.

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[25] For further information on the TLP conducted by mechanised infantry units, see *FM 3-21.11 – The SBCT Infantry Rifle Company.* Washington DC.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2003. 2-5.
[26] "Invasion Day 194."
[27] *Ált/54 – Tactical Manual for the Land Forces of the Hungarian Defence Forces, part II – Battalion.* (in Hungarian) (Budapest: Hungarian Defence Forces, 2014) III-8.

In this concrete situation, the bridgehead was no larger than 2 km wide and 1,5 km deep. According to my deduction, it means that this diversionary river crossing was carried out by a Ukrainian BTG with sufficient artillery support.

Frontal attack on Balakliya from the south

The other part of the diversion was another Ukrainian attack from the south to the north. This attack I should call a tactical-level diversion, because it was carried out in the vicinity of the actual main attack and its goal was to divert the attention of the tactical and operational-level units of the Russians near the subsequent decisive operation.

This operation was launched just before the main attack (5 September)[28] and continued overlapping in time with that. This operation was meant to look like another river crossing; however, the actual river crossing was neither executed nor planned. The only goal of this operation was to "make some noise", to divert the attention of those very units to the south, which could have put up some resistance against the Ukrainian main attack.

The tactical tasks of a frontal attack are largely similar to the ones we will see later at the decisive operations. However, in this case, this attack was not meant to be a decisive offensive operation, therefore the tactical tasks were the following:
- a tactical movement to the own FEBA[29], then passage of lines;
- tactical movement through the enemy's FLOT[30] and defeating its screening forces;
- attacking by fire the enemy's main forces' battle positions in its FEBA.

As I wrote above, during this actual operation, there was no intention of breaking through, but to make the Russians believe that this attack is the one they should defeat. In order to achieve this, the Ukrainians had to have a significant effect on the Russian defences. To have this effect, the Ukrainian company and platoon commanders had to execute the following tasks:
- to find favourable firing positions for their armoured vehicles (mainly APCs), machine guns, light mortars, and anti-tank missiles from which they can fire effectively and at the same time, are well protected against enemy fire and premature discovery;
- to organise a system of fires to effectively suppress the enemy and destroy dangerous assets (e.g.: artillery observers, anti-tank missiles, IFVs, machine guns);
- to designate routes for withdrawal if the enemy deploys its reserves to counter the assumed attack;
- to organise the coordination of indirect fires to inflict high casualties on the enemy's reserves;
- to designate alternate and reserve firing positions to effectively destroy the enemy's reserves and counterattacks.

This tactical-level diversion proved to be effective because the main attack had the element of surprise. Furthermore, after the breakthrough, units conducting this operation have successfully pushed into Balakliya from the south.

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[28]　Hird, K., et al. "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 6." *Institute for the Study of War,* 06.09.2022. https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-6 Visited: 01.10.2022.

[29]　FEBA = Forward Edge of the Battle Area

[30]　FLOT = Forward Line of Own Troops

The breakthrough

It is without a doubt that the first step for Ukrainian success was the success of the break-through. The breakthrough at tactical level is called penetration. "In a penetration, the attacker concentrates forces to strike at an enemy weak point and break through the position to rupture the defence and break up its continuity. The attacker then uses the gap created to pass forces through to defeat the enemy through attacks into his flanks and rear. A successful penetration depends on the attacker's ability to suppress enemy weapons systems, to concentrate forces to overwhelm the defender at the point of attack, and to pass sufficient forces through the gap to defeat the enemy quickly."[31]

This definition leads to the consequence that for a successful penetration, the following tactical tasks need to be executed (in the sub-points, there are the actual tactical tasks which are the responsibility of the infantry):

– Suppression of the enemy defences;
  ● this is the task of the artillery and army aviation, the infantry at this time conducts a tactical march in the direction of the enemy.
– Penetrating the main line of resistance (practically the FEBA of the enemy);
  ● attack and support by direct fires;
  ● dismounting the infantry;
  ● breaching the enemy's obstacles;
  ● assaulting the enemy's battle positions.
– Widening the gap for securing the flanks;
  ● seizing the enemy's secondary battle positions (envelopment or frontal assault);
  ● defeating minor (maximum company-level) enemy counterattacks;
  ● securing the advance of the second echelon.
– Seizing the objective and subsequent exploitation;
  ● repel enemy (battalion-level) main counterattacks;
  ● successfully deploy the second echelon;
  ● attack into the enemy's rear and flank and achieve operational-level (brigade) objectives.

Now we can see that an infantry company can have multiple types of tasks. In this part of my study, I will examine each step of the Ukrainian penetration and describe the tactical tasks possibly executed by infantry companies.

Penetration between Andriivka and Vovchyi Yar

As I wrote above, to achieve the breakthrough, the first step is to successfully defeat the enemy's screening forces between its FLOT and FEBA. These forces usually do not even try to stop the attack, as their task is the early warning of the defenders regarding the commencement of the attack, and slow the attackers' progress with fire and obstacles. After defeating the screening forces, the attacker meets the FEBA of the defender.

The attacker has to break through the obstacles made by the defender. Ideally, it is a 50-100 m wide area of mines, barbed wire obstacles, ditches, etc. parallel with the FEBA, approximately 2-300 m from it. To do this, the attacker must suppress the defending units

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[31] *FM 3-90-2 – Reconnaissance, Security, and Tactical Enabling Tasks, Volume 2.* Washington DC.: Department of the Army, 2013. 5-5.

in their battle positions by indirect and mainly direct fire (because of the dangerous vicinity for enemy artillery), and reduce the obstacles with bulldozers, by sappers, etc, or at least open clear lanes for the infantry and tanks.

After it has been done, the attacker assaults the defenders' battle positions. At tactical level, in accordance with recent manuals, a company attacks no more than 1.5 km wide and its primary objective is a battle position (BP) of an infantry platoon.[32] Of course, these platoon BPs normally cover each other's flank with overlapping fields of fire in order to make it difficult to envelop them.

The above-written paragraphs contain the ideal situation according to manuals. However, in this operation, the defender had huge disadvantages. As I described at the METT-TC, the terrain was flat, the ground was dry, there were no serious obstacles that could have limited the Ukrainians' freedom of movement (FoM), and most importantly, there were not enough well-trained and motivated Russian troops to build ideal defences. Mainly this is the reason, why the Ukrainians decided to attack here.

In this actual operation, the Russian defences in the way of the first echelon of the Ukrainian main attack were insufficient. I assume that they tried to concentrate their forces to hold the small villages of Andriivka, Zhotneve, Yavirs'ke, and Vovchyi Yar. Between these settlements, they did not build any fortified positions; the most they could do is to man observation posts (OP) and patrol the open areas. However, because of the low quality of these forces, I assume that even these inadequate measures were not executed properly.

From the quick success of the first days, I deduce that the Ukrainians had a clear picture of the Russians' defences, therefore I assume that the first echelon companies had received the above-mentioned four settlements as their primary objectives (see *Image 3,* circles with numbers 1). The width of the breakthrough was 10 km, which means to me that the breakthrough was conducted by at least two, or rather three Ukrainian infantry battalions.

Right flank – the capture of Andriivka, attacking towards the Shyfernyy Kombinat

At the Ukrainian right flank, the first objective was Andriivka. Andriivka is a small town with a population of a bit under 10,000, but because of its rural, agricultural character, the settlement stretches more than 4 km in SE-NW and 2 km in N-S. At the northern perimeter of the settlement, there is an industrial area with huge gas tanks, railroads, and plants.

If heavily defended it could have delayed the whole Ukrainian offensive, but as I mentioned, the Russians did not have the means to fortify and man the town. Relying on available open sources I assume that the Ukrainians captured Andriivka without a fight and easily pushed toward Balakliya on the T2105 road.[33] Deducing from the speed of the Ukrainian advance, I think that maybe one company secured the western and northern entry points, while the other infantry companies pushed through the village. The other option (if we consider the subsequent Ukrainian tactics of bypassing pockets of resistance) is that the first echelon bypassed Andriivka from the north and attacked forward the Balakleys'kyy Shyfernyy Kombinat.

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32   *Tactical Manual for the Land Forces of the Hungarian Defence Forces,* III-8.

33   Hird, K. et al."Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 7." *Institute for the Study of War,* 07.09.2022. https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-7 Visited: 12.09.2022.

Until finalizing this text, I did not obtain any valid information regarding which way the Ukrainians captured Andriivka, but it is clear, that they did that in the early hours of their offensive.

Centre – the main push to the north of Balakliya

The main attack of the break-in (the first phase of the breakthrough) was executed in the centre. The goal of this attack was to cut the T2110 road between Balakliya and Volokhiv Yar in order to effectively penetrate the Russian defences and to make unfavourable conditions for the Russians both north and south from this bulge.

In order to successfully achieve this goal, the primary tactical objective was the capture of Yavirs'ke, which is not even a village, but a small industrial compound with no more than a dozen of surrounding houses of workers. The actual difficulty of capturing this village is the fact that two small canals/creeks channel all kinds of movement from the west to the vicinity of this area, and to further hamper the attacker, the Krainya Balakliika river forms a swampy, and difficult-to-cross perimeter with only few passable fords and culverts. Again, this settlement could have been easily defended with adequate means, but as I described earlier, this was not the case.

The Ukrainian units easily bypassed this settlement. If we accept my deduction that in the first echelon of the main attack at least one battalion was deployed in the centre, we will come to the conclusion that the main forces of the battalion bypassed the settlement from the north and no more than a company captured the settlement without any serious combat (see *Image 3).*

Left-flank – Securing the main effort from the north, the capture of Vovchyi Yar

To secure the main effort in the centre, the Ukrainians had to capture Vovchyi Yar. This is a small village on the banks of the Kainya Balakliika River. Again, it could have been a heavy fight if it had been well defended, but it was not, therefore the Ukrainian attackers crossed the river SW from the village and then captured it without any resistance.

After the capture of the village and securing its bridge over the river (in order to hamper any possible counterattack from the north), the Ukrainians must have pushed forward to the east. According to open sources, they did not meet heavy resistance until this time, and they managed to penetrate the Russian defences, by effectively breaking through the first echelon of battle positions. The Ukrainian offensive has managed to achieve the first step of the breakthrough by reaching my hypothetical Phase Line A (PL A) after a few hours of launching the offensive.

Image 3 *The deduced tactical tasks and manoeuvres during the Ukrainian penetration between Balakliya and Volokhiv Yar*[34]

Breakthrough north of Balakliya

After successfully penetrating the Russian defences by capturing the primary objectives, the Ukrainian forces pushed towards the T2110 road to achieve the breakthrough. To achieve this breakthrough, the Ukrainians had to capture Balakliya (or at least contain its defenders), cut the T2110 road near Yakovenkove, and take Volokhiv Yar to secure the northern flank of the penetration.

Right flank – capture Vrebivka and contain the defenders of Balakliya

The easiest way for the attacking Ukrainian forces was the T2105 road, but on this road, there were the Balakleys'kyy Shyfernyy Kombinat and the town of Verbivka. The Kombinat is a huge industrial compound and Verbivka is a small town mainly consisting of one or two-storey buildings built from bricks and concrete. Both of these settlements could have provided a favourable defensive battle position for the Russian defenders, but mainly because of the successful Ukrainian diversionary attacks, and the lack of troops, there were not enough Russian forces to fortify and man these crucial areas. Therefore, by afternoon Verbivka was liberated by the Ukrainians who then reached the outskirts of Balakliya.[35] This was the first place where they met with notable resistance.

Because the operational objective was to break through the Russian defences and to threaten the back of the 1st GTA, the Ukrainians did not try to capture Balakliya at all costs or as fast as they could. This would have been a difficult task anyway. Balakliya is an industrial town and can be approached from the west through two thin corridors: the T2105 road and the railroad. This meant that if we accept that Balakliya was held by a depleted bat-

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[34]   The author's work.

[35]   Balmforth, T. "In liberated Ukraine town, locals sob with relief, relate harrowing accounts." *Reuters*, 14.09.2022. https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/liberated-ukraine-town-locals-sob-with-relief-relate-harrowing-accounts-2022-09-13/ Visited: 15.09.2022.

talion-sized Russian unit, the Ukrainians still would have deployed at least a full-strength brigade to swiftly overcome the defenders.

Of course, this would have drawn away serious resources from the main attack, therefore, the Ukrainians have contained the defenders from the north, while fixing them from the south by the aforementioned tactical-level diversionary attack (see part 3.1.2.).

It means that at least one company of the first echelon had to close the western exits of Balakliya, while the other two companies did the same at the longer, northern perimeter. I assume that this battalion was the same that had been the first echelon since the commencement of the attack in the early morning of 6 September.

To close the exits the company commanders (CO) had to disperse their platoons between the boundaries, received from the battalion (presumably from the battalion tactical operations centre = TOC). The CO has to identify the key terrain which has to be occupied or kept under fire and/or conduct effective surveillance to fulfil this task. The platoon leaders (PL) position their platoons in accordance with the CO's intention.

In this actual situation, the town's western exits could be easily checked; as there are only two narrow corridors between the Balakliya River, the Siverskiy Donets River, and the industrial areas. The northern exits were more problematic because north of the town there is an enormous military depot (by the time largely empty) with high fences and huge warehouses. But at the same time, it makes it easy to monitor the outer wall, and the two narrow passages next to the depot, one is a crop field (not wider than 400 m) and the other is the T2110 road leading to the north from Balakliya.

All of these means, that the Ukrainian forces could easily contain the defenders of Balakliya with a force, not larger than a battalion.

The main attack in the centre – cut the T2110 road near Yakovenkove

After the successful first couple of hours of 6 September, the Ukrainian main attack was still at the centre. The primary tactical goal was to cut the T2110 road between Balakliya and Volokhiv Yar. The terrain here was flat, but some creeks and canals could have easily channelled the Ukrainian movement into Russian kill zones. However, due to the dry summer, these canals were mostly dry and the Russian defences were virtually non-existent. As a result, the Ukrainian first echelon battalion could reach and cut this road with ease.

Deducing from the speed of the advance and the terrain, I assume that the Ukrainian COs had ordered their companies to use marching formations (e.g. column, wedge, echelon) instead of the line formation (which is the basic battle formation).

The main attack in the centre was successful, the road was cut by the morning of 6 September. Now it was the time to secure the penetration and finish the breakthrough successfully.

Securing the breakthrough from the north
– defeating the Russian counterattack and liberating Volokhiv Yar

According to recent manuals, if the first echelon of defensive battle positions (BP) has been penetrated, the defender must deploy counterattacks into the enemy's flank to inflict casualties and stop its advance.[36]

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[36]   *FM 3-90-2.* 6-5.

Of course, the attacking force should be well aware of this, therefore during the planning, the attacking battalion commander must take measures to cover his flanks from the possible direction of the counterattack. It means, that during this phase the battalion commander must identify in advance (or give orders to his COs to identify) the dangerous directions favourable for enemy counterattacks (see OAKOC above). After identifying the possible direction of the enemy counterattack, the attacking commander must employ countermeasures, such as:

– have a reserve force to outmanoeuvre the counterattack;
– prepare the attacking forces to continuously monitor and screen their flanks in the dangerous direction;
– have pre-planned indirect and direct fire missions that can be executed after transmitting a password to inflict heavy casualties on the counterattacking force, and fix it while the reserve conducts the manoeuvre.

In this war, the Russians often suffer heavy casualties mainly because they are unable to execute what their own field manuals specify to them. In this actual situation, there is a great amount of irony, because the Russians have perfectly executed a desperate counterattack from the direction and in the time as their field manuals specify, however, since the Ukrainians had anticipated the counterattack they managed to repel it.

Until finalizing this study, I did not find any validated sources regarding the Russian unit conducting this counterattack, but most of the relevant experts write and speak about a BTG of the VDV.[37]

These sources claim that the counterattack came from the area of Volokhiv Yar and was defeated SW of this settlement in the open area. If it is true, relying on my knowledge and the relevant field manuals, first, the counterattack must be checked. It can be done by effective direct and indirect fire. In this case, because of the presumably close range and the speed of the events, I assume the direct fire of the infantry companies was the main element of halting the counterattack.

If this was executed effectively, there is still a chance that the counterattack continues successfully if the COs and PLs of the counterattacking force can quickly and precisely report the situation and their commander (battalion commander, or the battle captain at the TOC) quickly switches the main effort of his counterattack (and of course, adequate forces are available). In spite of the fact that the counterattacking force was presumably VDV, they were plagued by the strict and stubborn military decision-making process employed in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

Meanwhile the Ukrainians effectively used what they learned from the US and UK advisors, and the western style MDMP[38] and TLP adapted to their own national characteristics proved to be effective. It is still unclear from which direction (after assessing the terrain and the forces, I drew a sketch regarding that operation, see *Image 4),* but the counterattack was outflanked and defeated so effectively that the Ukrainians had taken Volokhiv Yar itself by the afternoon of 6 September.[39]

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[37] Cooper, T. "Ukraine War, 16 September 2022."

[38] MDMP = Military Decision-Making Process

[39] Bielieskov, M. "Ukrainian Balakliya-Kupyansk Offensive: Sequence of Events, Mechanics and Consequences." *Eurasia Daily Monitor.* Volume: 19 Issue: 133. https://jamestown.org/program/ukrainian-balakliya-kupyansk-offensive-sequence-of-events-mechanics-and-consequences/ Visited: 20.09.2022.
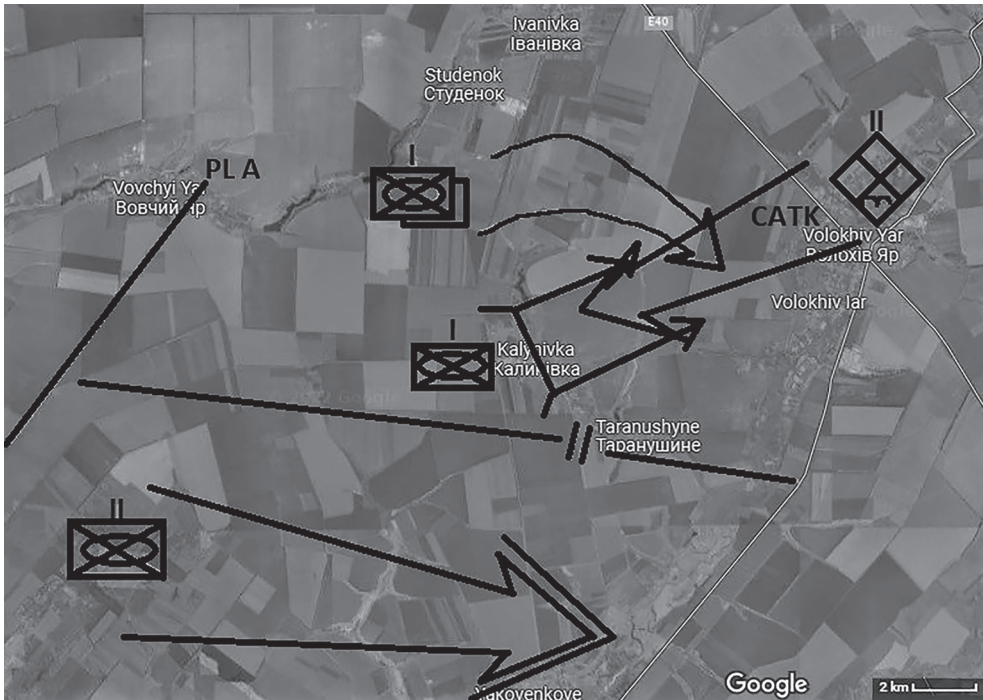
Image 4 *The possible tactical tasks conducted during the Russian counterattack SW of Volokhiv Yar* [40]

The following paragraphs are completely based on my deduction. The Ukrainian battalion commander on the left flank of this brigade had to have some information regarding the commencement of the Russian counterattack. He could receive intel from his superior (brigade) or could gather it via his reconnaissance capabilities. It is probable that in this situation it was easy to spot the incoming Russians because the weather was good, the visibility was great, and the terrain was flat.

After realising the Russian counterattack, the Ukrainian battalion commander had to manoeuvre his forces in order to meet the needs of defeating a counterattack, explained above. Deducing from the terrain, mission, and speed, the Ukrainian left flank battalion could have its companies in a column or a long echelon-left formation. The companies themselves could employ a line, or a wedge formation with their platoons with the infantry still mounted.

In this case, the first company could meet the first company of the Russian counterattack. If this company had received appropriate information regarding the Russians' manoeuvre, the CO could deploy his forces in a favourable position (e.g. a tree line or a streambed, see *Image 4)*. In this concrete situation, according to my deduction and based on the terrain and my experience, the CO could consider the following:

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[40]   The author's work.

– quickly giving orders to his PLs to prepare for a hasty defence to stop and fix the ene-
my's counterattack by inflicting casualties;
– dividing the engagement area between these platoons, specify from which distance the
platoons should be allowed to open fire on what kinds of targets;
– the PLs must dismount their infantry, preferably outside the distance of the Russian
anti-tank assets;
– moving the infantry into favourable positions: put the machine guns in a place, from
where they can utilise their maximum range, and put the anti-tank missile troops in a
position, from where they have a clear observation and field of fire to the possible move-
ment of the enemy's armoured vehicles (in this case, probably BTR-82 or BMD-2);
– moving the vehicles into firing positions where they are somewhat covered and from
which have a clear observation and field of fire to the enemy;
– having executed all these measures, this company can effectively halt the Russians'
counterattack temporarily and can be a base of fire element for the Ukrainian man-
oeuvre to the Russians' flank.

While this base of fire element is being formed, the following two companies of the battal-
ion are constantly moving forward. While doing so, they receive information from the TOC
to perform a flanking manoeuvre. In this actual situation, I found it more probable that this
manoeuvre (which was the main effort in this tactical situation) was carried out in the grain
field south of Ivanivka because on the right there was a great chance of running into the
neighbouring battalion. To avoid fratricide, the unhealthy density of troops in a large field
in front of the enemy's counterattack, and because of the favourable terrain, I assume that
the manoeuvre was executed as I drew it.

The manoeuvre element consisted of one or two companies. If two, then one of the COs
should be appointed as a senior, but it is more common that the TOC leads their operation
with a few simple instructions:
– the task & purpose (destroy the counterattacking Russian force in order to secure the
flank of the main attack);
– size and direction of the Russian units (not bigger than 3 infantry companies, maybe
some tanks, moving from Volokhiv Yar to SW);
– from which direction should the manoeuvre be executed (south of Studenok, left from
the base of fire element company);
– strictly designate the right perimeter of the engagement and the limit of advance (LOA)
area to avoid fratricide;
– actions after the destruction of the enemy.[41]

After beating the counterattack and successfully cutting the T2110 road, the Ukrainians
successfully penetrated the tactical depth of the Russian defences; hence they had reached
more than a 10 km deep and 20 km wide penetration by the afternoon of the first day.

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[41] It is still unclear whether the goal of the Ukrainians was to defeat or destroy the Russian VDV BTG, but it is
clear that the counterattack was not successful, they could not even temporarily halt the Ukrainian advance,
or threaten the main attack.

According to relevant field manuals, it means that in this period they successfully achieved more than what is specified for a mechanised infantry brigade conducting a conventional armoured penetration.[42]

Operations after the operational breakthrough

After cutting the T2110 road, containing the Russians in Balakliya, and defeating the Russian counterattack, we can clearly state that the successful tactical-level penetration was followed by an operational-level breakthrough. Moreover, we should consider the fact that parallel with this operation the Ukrainian 103rd, and 113th Territorial Defence Brigades commenced their attack from the area SE of Chuhuiv, to the direction of Chkalovkse.

However, there is no available open-source information regarding the Russian military decision-making in this operation. It is almost sure that by the afternoon of 6 September the HQ of the 20th GCAA had realised that the Ukrainians had penetrated into the operational depth of their defence between Chuhuiv all the way down to Balakliya. In this situation, the 20th GCAA should have tried to halt the Ukrainian advance or request permission to withdraw its forces to defendable positions.

With the liberation of Shevchenkove on 7 September, the Ukrainians had forced the Russians to withdraw to Hrushivka and later to Kupyansk. On the southern flank, after a one-day battle, the Russians withdrew from Balakliya towards Vesele on 8 September.[43] Here, the Russians could maintain some kind of resistance, or the Ukrainians could not dictate a high tempo after the liberation of Balakliya. The reason is still unclear, but considering the fact that there was a daylong battle for Balakliya, and the Russians could withdraw from the town, I assume that the Russians could maintain some kind of cohesion and could conduct a fighting withdrawal.

On the northern flank, on 9 September the vanguard of the Ukrainian offensive (probably the 92nd Mechanised Infantry Brigade)[44] reached the eastern outskirts of Kupyansk, thus effectively cutting the 20th GCAA into two. It forced the depleted, low-morale Russian 20th GCAA to withdraw instead of trying to resist the Ukrainians.

In the following part of my study, I will examine and describe the tactical aspects of these two days (8 and 9 September).

Exploitation – push to the Oskil River

After a successful operational breakthrough, to continuously retain the initiative, it is indispensable to continue the offensive operation. Once breakthrough have been achieved, two kinds of military operations need to be considered: exploitation and pursuit. Their common features are:
  – planned and executed at brigade level or above;
  – conducted after a breakthrough against a beaten enemy.

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[42] *Tactical Manual for the Land Forces of the Hungarian Defence Forces,* III-8.

[43] Stepanenko, K. et al. "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 9." *Institute for the Study of War.* 09.09.2022. https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-9 Visited: 18.09.2022.

[44] Stepanenko, K. et al. "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 10." *Institute for the Study of War.* 09.10.2022. https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-10 Visited: 12.09.2022.

The main difference between these two types of operations is that exploitation focuses on occupying vital territories (terrain-oriented attack), while pursuit focuses on pursuing, catching, and destroying the retreating enemy forces (force-oriented attack).

If we take a look at the Ukrainian operations on 8 and 9 September, we can clearly see, that this was a very successful exploitation. However, its successful execution requires meeting a lot of criteria. "The brigade commander must receive accurate assessments and reports of the enemy situation to capitalize on the opportunity for exploitation. Typical indications of the conditions for exploitation include:
– a significant increase in EPWs (enemy prisoners of war);
– an increase in abandoned enemy equipment and materiel;
– the overrunning of enemy artillery, C2 facilities, and logistics sites;
– a significant decrease in enemy resistance or in organized fires and manoeuvre;
– an intermixing of support and combat vehicles in formations and columns;
– an increase in enemy rearward movement, especially of reserves and FS (fire-support) units."[45]

With my focus on the mechanised infantry company, it is important to find the possible roles and tasks for them. What we know is that the Ukrainians advanced on paved roads, and if they met with resistance, the fast-moving first echelon bypassed it, and the second echelon tried to defeat the resisting enemy. This pattern perfectly fits the exploitation's criteria. In this actual situation from Volokhiv Yar and Shevchenkove to Kupyansk, the Russians did not resist stubbornly, after the first Ukrainian units bypassed them, they retreated usually disorderly.[46]

However, it is easier said than done. To successfully execute an exploitation, the attacker must fulfil numerous tactical tasks at a very high level. Not to mention the previous successful operational breakthrough.

After the breakthrough – depending on the sustained casualties – the first, but usually the second echelon executes the exploitation. In this case, the first echelon's task is to execute a hasty defence. By doing so the infantry company commanders can receive the following tasks:
– to cover and continuously observe key areas in the direction of the enemy (e.g.: roads, forests, bridges, culverts, urban areas);
– to be prepared to support by fire (if needed) the second echelon's advance;
– to join the second echelon as its rear guard or reserve;
– to clear obstacles to secure the freedom of movement of the second echelon.

The second echelon's infantry commanders can receive the following tasks:
– to swiftly advance to the new FLOT (hasty defensive positions of the first echelon);
– to swiftly execute passage of lines;
– to maintain speed and initiative by using appropriate tactical movement techniques (formation, speed, gaps, land-nav, advance guards);
– to effectively execute contact drills against the enemy if needed;

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45   *FM 3-90-2.* 5-52.
46   Stepanenko, K. et al. "Russian offensive campaign assessment, September 8." *Institute for the Study of War.* 09.08.2022. https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-8 Visited: 12.09.2022.

– to obtain a high level of situational awareness to recognize the enemy units which need to be bypassed;
– to quickly and correctly report dangerous enemy groupings, and enemy counterattacks and call for fire or bypass or prepare to defeat them (depending on the order of the brigade commander);
– to mark left-behind enemy materiel, UXOs, and possible IEDs and quickly hand over EPWs to avoid being slowed down by them.

In this actual operation, it is still not known whether the first or second echelon conducted the exploitation. It is not even clear which brigade conducted the exploitation, but according to Ukrainian governmental and near-governmental sources the 92nd Mechanised Infantry Brigade did so.[47]

To successfully see ourselves in the role of the infantry company commanders (COs) of this brigade, primarily we should observe the actual operation and subsequently the terrain, and finally the enemy. The 92nd Brigade reached the western outskirts of Kupyansk on 9 September, and on 10 September they turned south to cut the route of retreat of the remnants of the 20th GCAA.

According to all sources and based on the speed of the advance, it is clear that the brigade advanced largely on paved roads, employing tactical march techniques. However, it is also clear that in the vicinity of Shevchenkove and at the Western approaches of Kupyansk (near Hrushivka) heavy clashes took place (defensive operations described in the subsequent part).[48] Based on these facts, I can deduce that the 92nd Brigade had executed the exploitation at a very high level.

To do so, near Shevchenkove, the vanguard's CO must obtain firm radio communication with his foremost platoon to receive accurate reports regarding the enemy in the town. This very CO had to swiftly deploy his troops to defeat or at least suppress the enemy in the southern outskirts of Shevchenkove. On 9 September, elements of the 103rd and 113th Territorial Brigades had already attacked the town from the west, therefore I assume that the Russians did not try to firmly hold it. It means that after the first company of the 92nd had opened fire on them, the Russians started withdrawing to the east.

This leads us to the fact that the subsequent companies of the first battalion of the 92nd had received the task to try to cut the escape route of the Russians. It meant that the second and third companies had to turn east and advance through the small villages of Samars'ke and Hroza and then occupy firing positions approx. 500 m south of the P07 road. To do so, the battalion HQ (presumably the battle captain at the TOC) must have had an extremely up-to-date and clear picture of the companies' actual situation, the ability to quickly assess the situation, and discover the option (and also a need) to turn the bulk of the battalion east to achieve a quick tactical victory.

To do so, these COs and their platoon leaders (PLs) must have had flawless communication and high-level situational awareness (based on quick and accurate reports of their subordinates) to find the route leading to the best positions to fire at the withdrawing Russians.

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[47] "Invasion Day 198 – Summary." *MilitaryLand,* 09.09.2022. https://militaryland.net/news/invasion-day-198-summary/ Visited: 12.09.2022.

[48] Stepanenko, K. et al. "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 9."
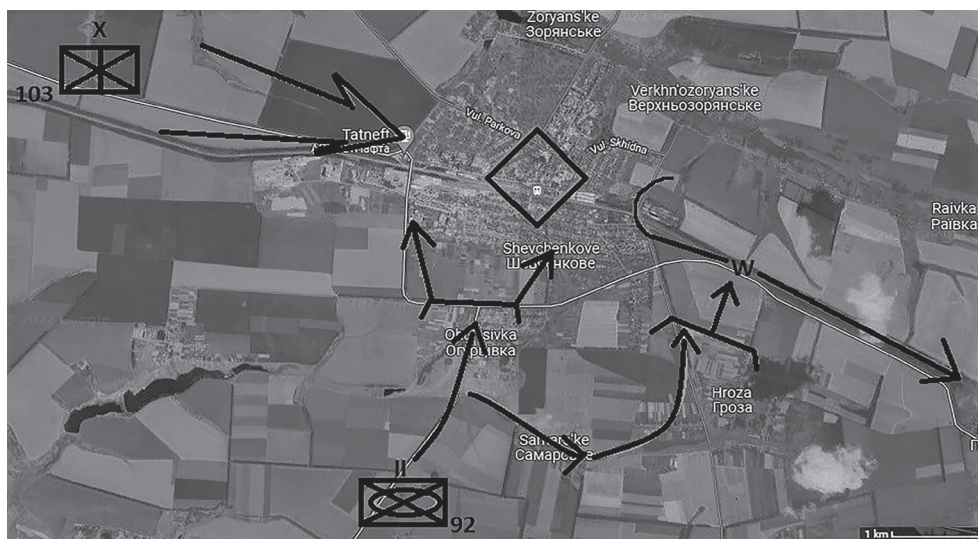
Image 5 *Possible operations around Shevchenkove on 9 September*[49]

After the liberation of Shevchenkove, the Ukrainians pushed towards Kupyansk, to capture this vital crossing on the Oskil River before the Russians could have withdrawn their forces through it. This is a classical exploitation manoeuvre: occupy key terrain to effectively hamper the enemy in reaching its goal.

By the end of 9 September, even Russian official sources had admitted that there was a "problem" in this region, showing reinforcements moving in the direction of Kupyansk.[50] Possibly those were the Russian units with which the Ukrainian 92nd Brigade reported short but heavy fighting before reporting the liberation of the western side of Kupyansk. This fighting took place at the village of Hrushivka, 10 km west of Kupyansk.

From the fact that the fighting was short but fierce, I can deduce that the Russians executed here a successful delaying action, or a Russian sub-unit had heroically tried to halt the overwhelming Ukrainian advance. However, a delaying action is more possible because by the end of 9 September it had to be clear to the Russians that the 20th GCAA was defeated and the only chance to stabilize the front was to withdraw beyond the Oskil River.

I assume that the clash at Hrushivka was largely similar to the one described above:
– the advance guard platoon of the first company had met with Russian resistance;
– the PL reported the enemy's 3Ds (direction, distance, description) to his CO;
– the CO ordered his other platoons to form a line according to the terrain to support the first platoon by fire and at least suppress the Russians;
– at the same time, the CO reported the enemy's 3Ds to the battalion's TOC;
– the battalion's TOC ordered the other companies to execute a flanking manoeuvre on the Russians to defeat them or at least force them to fall back.

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[49]   The author's work.
[50]   Stepanenko, K. et al. "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 10."

This operation was also executed quickly and successfully, the exploitation was conducted with total success by the 92nd Mechanised Infantry Brigade. The main reason for this at tactical level was the excellent communication between the PLs, COs, and TOCs. The other reason of the success was that in case of a communication breakdown the Ukrainian sub-unit leaders had the freedom to decide what to do in order to execute their tactical tasks. According to my experiences, communication and freedom are the most important elements of success besides the appropriate training.

Of course, I do not have any information regarding the quality of the Ukrainians' tactical communication, but deducing from the success of the exploitation, this must have been the case.

Russian defensive operations at the time of the exploitation

However, the Ukrainians executed the exploitation with huge success; we should examine the Russians' actions on these two days (8 and 9 September). I should emphasise, that in spite of being penetrated and defeated, an operational-level commander must take measures to slow down the tempo of the exploitation. In this case, the defender can conduct retrograde operations. The related field manuals designate three types of retrograde operations:

– Delay. This operation trades space for time and preserves friendly combat power while inflicting maximum damage on the enemy.
– Withdrawal. A withdrawal is a planned, voluntary disengagement from the enemy, which may be conducted with or without enemy pressure.
– Retirement. Retirement is an operation in which a force that is not in contact with the enemy moves to the rear in an organized manner.[51]

Between the original Russian FLOT and the Oskil River on these two days, the Russians conducted a couple of delaying actions. These delaying actions took place at Shevchenkove, on the road to Hrushivka, in Hrushivka itself, and on the western outskirts of Kupyansk.

The fact that these clashes have not lasted longer than an hour also supports my deduction that these were delaying actions trying to slow the Ukrainian advance. The delay is one of the most complex and dangerous operations because it is executed with significantly smaller forces, against an overwhelmingly superior enemy after its operational breakthrough. The order for a delay always originates at brigade level (or above).

To successfully execute a delay, primarily it is essential to have a ground that the delayer will exchange for time and troops. In this operation, the ground was adequate. After this, the delayer has to have an easily defendable line as the final protective line (FPL) which he will and can defend against the advancing enemy.

At the infantry company's level, it is highly likely that the company will "fight alone", meaning without fire and/or visual connection with the adjacent friendly forces. Because the delay is conducted when there is not enough force to form a coherent defensive line, it is unavoidable to have open flanks and huge gaps between the delaying sub-units.

All in all, to successfully execute a delay the CO must:
– have a clear understanding of the concept of operation (CONOP), which is not that easy if we consider the fact that the delay was ordered probably after a defeat and with great haste;

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[51] *FM 3-90-2*. 6-20.

– thoroughly analyse the terrain to identify the enemy's possible movement corridors, and the favourable terrain to inflict heavy casualties on the advancing enemy;
– to inflict heavy casualties, these favourable positions must provide clear observation and field of fire in a distance that allows using the maximum effective range of the turret guns and anti-tank missiles;
– these positions also have to have covered escape routes;
– the CO must designate engagement areas, specify the amount of ammunition that can be used up in each position;
– specify multiple criteria which have to be met to start the movement to the subsequent delaying position;
– specify the tasks at the FPL.

After the commencement of the delaying action, the CO can maintain strict leadership based on radio and other measures (smoke, signal flare, time, consumed ammunition, etc.) to ensure that the delay is executed appropriately. Or he can "ride with a loose rein" by allowing his subordinate PLs to execute the delay between the previously specified limitations and to report only when the FPL has been reached.

Both options have their pros and cons, but based on the information that I have so far gathered regarding the Russian military decision-making process[52], I have to state that strict leadership was maintained during these operations west of Kupyansk on 8 and 9 September.

Furthermore, I can also state that these delaying actions had ambivalent results. They were unsuccessful because the Ukrainians could defeat the 20th GCAA and advance more than 40 km in four days. The Russian milboggers were talking about a disorderly rout.[53]

But we can consider the delay mildly successful, therefore the more important elements of the 1st GTA could withdraw to the east, which I will describe in the next part of my study.

Pursuit of the 1st Guards Tank Army

It seems that on 8 and 9 September the main effort of the Ukrainians was the exploitation operation of the 92nd Mechanised Brigade. However, at least the same size force was attacking SE in the general direction of Izyum. Again, I have to underline that I could not gather valid information regarding the actual intent of the Ukrainian commanders, but deducing from the events, I can firmly state that the Ukrainians' operational goal was to pursue and destroy the main forces of the withdrawing 1st GTA by attacking their rear. This operation is called pursuit.

According to open sources the Ukrainian 80th Air Assault Brigade, main elements of the 3rd Tank Brigade, and unidentified elements of the "Kraken" Special Operations Regiment had received the task to pursue and defeat the 1st GTA.[54] The pursuit is a very dangerous operation because it means that the swiftly advancing force does not bypass the enemy's pockets of resistance, but attacks and defeats them. To successfully execute this, the attacker must have overwhelming superiority, the enemy must be severely disrupted.

[52]   Takács. "Short Study." 55.
[53]   Stepanenko, K. et al. "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 10."
[54]   "Invasion Day 198 – Summary." and Hunder, M., and Hnidyi, V. "Russia gives up key northeast towns as Ukrainian forces advance." *Reuters*, 11.09.2022. https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-troops-raise-flag-over-railway-hub-advance-threatens-turn-into-rout-2022-09-10/ Visited: 14.09.2022.

"A pursuit is ordered when the enemy can no longer maintain a coherent position and tries to escape. Once ordered, the close coordination between the pressure and encircling forces is critical for the necessary synchronization. The brigade's mission is the destruction of the enemy rather than avoiding enemy contact.

The direct-pressure force organizes a movement to contact and prepares to conduct a series of hasty attacks. Encirclement results when a force is able to sever the enemy's lines of communication and prevent his reinforcement or escape. The encircling force must have greater mobility than the enemy. The encircling force is usually created from uncommitted forces and must be strong enough to protect itself from the enemy's reserves and what is left of the main body. The direct-pressure force must track the movement of and coordinate with the encircling force. Timing is key to the success of the mission, and information systems are key to this synchronization. The encircling force should be prepared to conduct a hasty defence until the direct-pressure force succeeds in destroying or forcing the enemy to surrender. The ultimate goal of pursuit is to fix the enemy between the direct-pressure force and the encircling force and then to destroy the enemy."[55]

These are all serious demands, and it is extremely rare to meet all of them. We can see why, if I describe the meaning of these demands at tactical level. If one finds these requirements similar to the exploitation, it is not a coincidence. At tactical level, the hasty attack is almost the same when these are conducted in an exploitation or a pursuit. The advance guard platoon must report the enemy's 3Ds and secure the company's other platoons' movement to his flanks to effectively attack the enemy by fire. The difference comes after this.

The following companies are closing up to the first one, to increase the pressure on the enemy. It is not uncommon to deploy a whole battalion to put adequate pressure on the enemy. Parallel with that, the enveloping force begins conducting the envelopment. At the infantry company's level, the following tasks have to be considered:
– tactical movement into the enemy's flank or rear (it means that all measures of tactical movement have to be executed at a high level);
– conducting a hasty attack on the enemy (it requires close coordination between the pressure and flanking force, which largely relies on the accurate reports of the COs and PLs);
– actions on the objective (clearing the objective, collecting EPWs, executing medical tasks, rearming weapons – if needed, preparation for continuing the pursuit);
– continuing the pursuit.

These are all extremely difficult tasks, particularly if we consider, that these are conducted after a successful operational breakthrough. Therefore, it is not a surprise if I state that the pursuit of the 1st GTA achieved ambivalent success.

It was successful, because the Ukrainians captured at least a battalion-worth intact T-80 MBTs (main battle tanks) of the 4th GTD and large amounts of other materiel.[56]

However, it was not so successful if we consider the fact that the bulk of the 1st GTA was able to withdraw to the east on low-quality paths between the town of Oskil and Studenok.

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55   *FM 3-90-2.* 5-52.

56   Lendon, Brad. "The rot runs deep in the Russian war machine. Ukraine is exposing it for all to see." *CNN,* 12.09.2022. https://edition.cnn.com/2022/09/13/europe/ukraine-advance-russia-war-analysis-intl-hnk-ml/index.html Visited: 12.10.2022.; and Oryx. n.d. https://www.oryxspioenkop.com/2022/02/attack-on-europe-documenting-equipment.html Visited: 16.09.2022.

This is true if we consider the fact that until finalizing this text, there was proof only for a limited number of Russian POWs and abandoned equipment near Izyum. Indeed, a battalion-worth of intact T-80s was left behind by the 4th GTD but besides this, casualties in personnel and the losses of important artillery were very low. Therefore I assume the bulk of the 1st GTA was successfully withdrawn. This statement receives more proof if we consider that elements of the 1st GTA were fighting in the subsequent battle of Lyman and were active participants in limited offensive actions in the vicinity of Svatove throughout late autumn 2022.[57]

To further assess this episode of the Ukrainian offensive, we have to take a look at the hard facts. On 10 September, forward reconnaissance elements of the 92nd Brigade crossed the Oskil River at Kupyansk, heavy fighting was reported NW of Izyum. By the end of 11 September, Izyum was captured by the Ukrainians.

If we compare these with the previous paragraphs, we can see that the Russians had managed to withdraw their forces from the forming cauldron by the end of 11 September. Furthermore, it was made possible even for the units that fought risky delaying actions near Vesele, Chystovodivka Izyum, Borova, and Oskil. From open sources, it is not known which elements of the 1st GTA conducted these actions, but from the point of view of this study, it is almost indifferent. According to open sources, these actions were fierce, but short in time, which further proves my statement regarding the successful delaying action. For the tactical considerations, see the section "Russian defensive operations..." of this study.

All in all, I can state that the 1st GTA was withdrawn with high losses in equipment (largely due to the low morale of certain troops) but it was able to save the bulk of its personnel and artillery, thanks to the brave and well-executed delaying actions on 10 September.

SUMMARY

After the liberation of Izyum, the fighting was far from over. In the subsequent battle of Lyman, the Ukrainians won another significant victory. However, in my opinion, that was not another decisive battle, but the result of the decisive victory achieved west of the Oskil River.

The so-called Kharkiv offensive of the AFU was a huge success. The superiority in intelligence, planning, military decision-making, morale, and training resulted in the liberation of more than 500 settlements and 12,000 km^2 by the AFU.[58] This superiority resulted in local superiority in combat power. If we consider these facts, we can accept the Russian claim to be true, that the Ukrainians had eightfold superiority.[59]

These facts are all widely known, it would have been unnecessary to write them down after a lot of high-quality think tanks and analysts had done so. My goal was to describe all

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[57] Stepanenko, K. et al. "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 14." *Institute for the Study of War,* 11.14.2022. https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-14 Visited: 15.11.2022.

[58] "Ukraine must demine 12,000 km^2 of liberated areas in Kharkiv region: official." *Reuters,* 09.21.2022. https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-must-demine-12000-km2-liberated-areas-kharkiv-region-official-2022-09-21/ Visited: 14.11.2022.

[59] "Ukraine troops 'outnumbered Russia's 8 times' in counterattack." *Al-Jazeera,* 09.12.2022. https://www.aljazeera.com/amp/news/2022/9/12/ukraine-troops-outnumbered-russias-8-times-in-counterattack Visited: 15.09.2022.

the possible tactical situations and considerations amid which the infantry company commanders had to fulfil their missions.

I hope that I managed to present the complex and demanding nature of these tactical tasks. These are situations that in the end, decide the success of a military operation. In summary, the commanders:

- must maintain flawless communication with their troops and superiors;
- must extremely quickly assess the situation and give appropriate orders under extreme stress;
- must have the tactical freedom to solve their task as their assessment suggests;
- the subordinates must report the situation correctly and in time, to support the commanders' decision-making.

Of course, not only the tactical level decides the war. I have to underline that the kill chain has to be super-fast, the battalion and brigade commanders must ensure tactical freedom for their subordinate commanders, and the battalion and brigade staff must perform staff work at a very high level.

However, the planning, preparation, invested money, time, and all efforts are useless if the small tactical engagements are not won, and to win these engagements, the aforementioned factors are a must to master. Furthermore, to understand the reason behind this Ukrainian strategic victory, it is indispensable to be familiar with tactical-level operations.

In this study, I attempted to use my knowledge and open sources to do so, but I am sure that only decades after the end of this terrible war, the time comes when we can have a clear picture. Therefore, this study will need to be revised, but I think we have enough information to understand the most important lessons to learn by current militaries, and using them with our knowledge we can achieve valuable lessons to learn.

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Péter Álmos Kiss

THE ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES IN COUNTERTERRORISM

ABSTRACT: *The armed forces are organized, trained and equipped to fight the external enemies of the state, and they have a role to play in maintaining internal security as well. However, such "military assistance to the civil power" missions are fraught with risks. This paper addresses three of those risks. The armed forces' national defence capabilities are affected and their budget is burdened with non-military expenditures. Performing law enforcement duties (especially without adequate training beforehand) carries with it the risk of poisoning the civil-military relationship for a long time – and once it is lost, it is very difficult to regain the trust of the population. Employing the armed forces in the counterterrorist role may also turn a dangerous, but manageable terrorist threat into a deadly, no-holds-barred armed conflict. In spite of the many potential problems, the armed forces do have a role to play in counterterrorism.*

KEYWORDS: *Northern Ireland, The Troubles, occupied territories, West Bank, Gaza, military assistance to the civil power*

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MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE CIVIL POWER

Every modern state has some legal mechanism to employ its armed forces within its own borders in certain emergencies. This makes a lot of sense because the armed forces generally have a large pool of trained and disciplined manpower, a command structure that can respond to most situations, and they usually have a can-do attitude – nothing is impossible, although it may take a little time to perform miracles. They also have special skills and equipment generally not available in the civilian worlds. Therefore, there is nothing controversial about mobilizing army units to assist in flood relief, decontaminate a major chemical spill, or ask the air force to fly supplies to communities that are isolated by a heavy snowfall.

A far more controversial issue is to call upon the armed forces to deploy their trained and disciplined manpower and specialized equipment for internal security missions. This has been happening with increasing frequency in Europe, and the threat of terrorism has generally been the primary reason for it. Deploying the armed forces on counterterrorist duties (or on any other internal security mission, for that matter) may improve the security situation temporarily: the soldiers' training, mobility, firepower and discipline are likely to prevail even against the most dedicated anti-government activists or terrorists. However, it is a controversial decision, because the soldiers are expected to employ their professional

skills not against an external enemy, but against fellow citizens. Sending the soldiers into the streets generates unexpected – and certainly unintended – negative consequences.

The list of potential problems is long, from a scrambled chain of command to heavy collateral casualties.[1] Through the experiences of the United Kingdom and Israel this paper focuses on only three of them: the effect on military readiness, civil-military relations, and the terrorist organization.

WHY TURN TO THE MILITARY?

When a government suddenly faces a terrorist challenge, it must accomplish two broad categories of immediate and concurrent tasks in order to gain control of the situation. In the affected areas, it must maintain permanent and undiminished state power through enhanced and continuous presence of the security forces in support of a functioning public administration. It must also create a secure environment for the population by isolating the terrorists from the people, preventing terrorist operations (or at least making them more difficult to carry out), and commencing counterterrorist operations. The success or failure in these tasks will influence all other aspects of counterterrorism.

The two categories of tasks are closely interrelated. The obvious primary purpose of maintaining the persistent presence of state power is to serve as the guarantor of security of the population in the affected area, but the secondary purposes are scarcely less important. The constant presence of government authority serves as a reminder to the population that the state not only collects taxes and punishes wrongdoing but also provides protection and such essential services as education, health care and welfare. It also facilitates the collection of timely, accurate, and actionable intelligence that is essential for fighting the terrorists.

Police forces are generally organized for normal peacetime conditions. In a reasonably well-governed, modern society the ratio of the law enforcement organizations (police and gendarmerie) to the population is somewhere around 1:300, or even less. With this ratio, a moderately competent police force can maintain public order, enforce traffic rules, and catch criminals. However, this ratio is nowhere near adequate for generating the all-encompassing state power presence that is a necessary condition for success in a serious internal security crisis.

International experience gained in various counterinsurgency and counterterrorism campaigns going back 70 years or so, provides a rough guide to the force requirement. *Table 1* shows some internal conflicts that had a significant terrorism component. The figures suggest that the security forces will face grave difficulties and may fail entirely unless their personnel strength reaches a certain critical mass: they simply would not have the manpower to maintain territorial dominance. As a rule of thumb, a ratio approaching one security forces member to every 50-60 citizens offers a good chance that the state will prevail.

Some words of caution are in order, when examining the table. First of all, "success" is defined narrowly, in strictly military terms, as the defeat of the terrorist organization in the field. This is a good – often essential – foundation for terminating the conflict on the government's terms: as Henry Kissinger put it, "…the guerrilla wins if he does not lose.

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[1]   Hughes, G. *The Military's Role in Counterterrorism: Examples and Implications for Liberal Democracies.* The Letort Papers series. (Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, 2011)

The conventional army loses if it does not win."[2] However, a military victory is not enough. A lasting political resolution requires a whole-of-government approach that is beyond the control of the military forces (and all too often military success is squandered away by short-sighted policies). In the Battle of Algiers, the French created an astonishingly high ratio of security forces to residents,[3] destroyed the terrorist organizations in the city, and in subsequent operations achieved a similar success on a much larger scale in the rest of the country. In 1969 the Rhodesian security forces, and in 1998-1999 the Yugoslav security forces achieved similar sweeping results. Yet neither the French, nor the Rhodesian or the Yugoslav government could translate military victory into a political settlement.

NATO's occupation of Kosovo (June 1999) shows that a high ratio and the capacity for escalation dominance do not guarantee the government's success: there is much more at play than just the number of armed men. The ratio of NATO forces to the population of Kosovo was 1:50, yet they could not (or perhaps had no intention to) prevent Albanian vengeance and the mass expulsion of the Serbs and other minorities. Obviously, political will and clear guidance are also determining factors.

The Rhodesian government's success during the first phase of the Bush War (late 1960s) in spite of the lopsided security forces to population ratio is an outlier. The insurgent organizations were operating from foreign soil, their contact with the local population was almost non-existent, and their fighters were poorly trained, poorly led and unmotivated. Also, they faced highly trained, well led, professional security forces, whose operations limited the affected area to a sparsely populated belt along the border, while the rest of the country was unaffected by the conflict.[4] Clearly, these factors outweighed all others. When the insurgents changed their strategy (1971 and after), the unfavourable forces to population ratio led to the failure of the counterinsurgency campaign.

2 Kissinger, H. A. "The Vietnam Negotiations." *Foreign Affairs,* January 1969, reprinted in *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy,* 11(2) pp. 38–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/00396336908440951
3 Hervé. P. *Gathering Human Intelligence in Counter-Insurgency Warfare: The French Experience during the Battle of Algiers (January-October 1957).* (Quantico: US Marine Corps CSC, 2009) https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA519288.pdf
4 Kiss, P. Á. *Winning Wars amongst the People: Case Studies in Asymmetric Warfare.* (Dulles: Potomac Books, 2014)

Table 1 *Security forces to population ratios in selected internal conflicts*[5]

Conflict	Forces to population ratio	Outcome for government
Algerian war – Battle of Algiers (1957 Jan-Oct)	1:33	success
Rhodesia Bush War (1969)	1:300	success
Rhodesia Bush War (1971)	1:273	failure
Rhodesia Bush War (1976)	1:144	failure
Rhodesia general elections (1979)	1:102	failure
N Ireland 1969-1971	1:250-1:150	failure
N Ireland 1972-1980	1:55	success
N Ireland 1980-1999	1:62	success
Punjab, 1984-91	1:270-1:186	stalemate
Punjab, 1994	1:69	success
Kosovo 1998-1999 Yugoslav counterinsurgency	1:48	success
Kosovo 1999 – NATO occupation	1:50	failure
Basra 2003-2007	1:300	failure
Baghdad 2007 Feb-Nov	1:50	success

Few police forces have the capability of increasing their personnel strength to the necessary 1:60 to 1:50 ratio at short notice. The problem may be solved temporarily by transferring police forces from unaffected regions to the trouble spots, but this is strictly a short term proposition, and may actually exacerbate the overall security situation. The transferred personnel will not be familiar with their new area of operations, and their transfer leaves a security vacuum in its wake. Crime will rise in the regions with reduced police coverage, and the terrorists may also expand their operations there. Unless the terrorist threat can be eliminated in a very short time, there is no alternative to increasing the personnel strength of the police. Until that augmentation takes place, the only way the government can maintain control of the situation is to rely on the armed forces.

Both the security for the population and the persistent state presence tasks require skills that police are not trained for, as well as equipment that is either not in the police inventory, or available only in small quantities. Not even the largest police organizations are likely to have tents, cots, sleeping bags, field kitchens, mess kits and the like in anything near adequate quantities, or helicopter lift and cross-country assets to move 50 or 100 armed men and their tactical equipment. When the requirement for these capacities arises, it is preferable to borrow them from the reserve stocks of the military forces, rather than purchase them outright. Once the counterterrorist campaign is over, borrowed equipment can be returned to the military, whereas purchased items must be warehoused or sold off at serious discount. When it comes to training, soldiers find little mystery in infantry tactics, patrolling in the mountains, bush and forests, long-range sniping, command and control of large-scale operations, secure communications, manning crew-served weapons, ambush,

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[5] Based on Ibid, Chapters 4–7 and pp. 170–173.

or land navigation. They are part of a soldier's daily routine, but not part of the usual police skill set, and it is best to rely on the military forces for the necessary training.

Defeating the terrorists in combat is usually far less a problem: the training, equipment and tactical mobility of the security forces – perhaps with the exception of those in a few failed states – are far superior to anything the terrorists would have. They can easily beat any terrorist group, once they find it. The immediate problem is to find the terrorists among the population, and fix them long enough to engage and neutralize them, all without causing collateral damage. This requires good, timely, and actionable intelligence on the terrorists' locations, movements, habits, and support networks. Most law enforcement organizations have some intelligence assets but these are usually quite limited. They may be adequate to keep track of a few members of the lunatic fringe, but inadequate to support a sustained counterterrorist campaign. Therefore, military intelligence personnel and equipment will likely be needed, until police capabilities improve.

TWO CASES

The British experience in Northern Ireland, and the Israeli experience in the occupied territories offer useful insights into military operations in an internal security/counterinsurgency/counterterrorism context. Discussion of the details of these complicated and long-running conflicts is beyond the scope of this paper, but a brief outline may be in order.

The United Kingdom and the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland

In the summer of 1969 inter-communal violence between republicans and loyalists (or Catholics and Protestants) reached such an intensity that the local police lost control of the situation, and several battalions of the British Army had to be deployed to separate the two sides and restore order. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) adjusted to the new situation, and transitioned from inciting public disorder to initiating an insurgency campaign (1969-1971). Early in the conflict the IRA's fragmentation commenced: factions broke away to form more radical and more violent organizations. The largest and most effective was the Provisional IRA. The fragmentation did not mean enmity: the factions often cooperated and supported one another.[6]

The government responded by significantly expanding the security forces. Regular army battalions were deployed, the police (Royal Ulster Constabulary – RUC) was expanded from 3,500 in 1969 to 7,000 by 1980. A local territorial defence force (Ulster Defence Regiment – UDR, later renamed Royal Irish Regiment (RIR) Home Service Force) was raised. Additional regular units were brought in from time to time, as the intensity of the conflict required. At the peak of the insurgency phase of the conflict (1973) the armed forces deployed over 25,000 servicemen (17,000 regulars and 8,400 territorials).

The insurgency was eventually suppressed in the mid-1970s by the overwhelming strength of the security forces. As a result of the insurgency's failure, the more radical IRA factions transitioned to a terrorist campaign. The operations of the security forces eventually persuaded them that they could not achieve their goals through violence. In 1994, all factions

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6   Ó Faoleán, G. *A Broad Church: The Provisional IRA in the Republic of Ireland, 1969-1980.* (Newbridge: Merrion Press, 2019)

accepted a ceasefire, and a long period of negotiations followed. With the decommissioning of the IRA arsenals and the Army's gradual return to barracks an uneasy peace returned to Northern Ireland. Operation Banner, the British Army's longest campaign (nearly 40 years) came to an end on 31st July 2007.

Israel and the occupied territories

Israel has been the target of terrorist attacks since the declaration of the state in 1947. Until the late 1980s, the authorities – and Israeli society – considered the terrorist threat a dangerous nuisance, but not an existential threat. The IDF (Israel Defence Forces) conducted retaliatory strikes against the terrorist infrastructure in the neighbouring states, but its primary mission was to defend the country against peer and near-peer enemies – the armed forces of the Arab countries.[7]

The territories Israel occupied in the Six-Day War in 1967 did not pose a serious internal security problem for twenty years, either. Israeli occupation was seen as less repressive than the Jordanian and Egyptian had been. In spite of the occasional riots, bombings, or knife attacks, the Palestinians seemed to accommodate themselves to the occupation. Personal relations between Jews and Arabs were seldom friendly, but they were reasonably peaceful at least. The infrastructure projects the Israeli authorities undertook in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, as well as employment opportunities in Israel improved the quality of life of the local population, and the economic boom that followed the war benefited the Palestinians nearly as much as it did the Israelis.[8]

Israel's control of the territories faced the first serious challenge (the first intifada) in late 1987. Strikes and violent demonstrations followed each other all over the occupied territories, Israeli patrols and checkpoints were pelted with rocks, vehicles were overturned, individuals and small groups were attacked. Unlike such disturbances previously, the unrest did not die down after a few days, as the Israeli authorities had expected.[9] The level of violence was fairly low, and disturbances were confined to the occupied territories. Although the IDF deployed a large force, it was unable to suppress the insurgency, and the intifada came to an end only when the Oslo peace process started.[10]

When the peace process failed in the fall of 2000, the second intifada broke out. It was a far more violent uprising than the first one: the Palestinian Security Services (raised as

[7] Catignani, S. "Israeli Counterinsurgency: The never-ending 'whack-a-mole.'" in *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency.* (Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn, eds. Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2012) pp. 263–275.

[8] van Creveld, M. *The Sword and the Olive: A Critical History of the Israeli Defense Force.* (New York: Public Affairs, 1998) Ch. 20. and Martin van Creveld, *The Land of Blood and Honey: The Rise of Modern Israel.* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2010) Ch. 4. This version of the reality in the occupied territories is disputed by many scholars (both Jewish and Arab). See for example Adams, M. "Israel's Treatment of the Arabs in the Occupied Territories." *Journal of Palestine Studies,* 6(2), pp. 19–40. and Shafir, G. *A Half Century of Occupation: Israel, Palestine, and the World's Most Intractable Conflict.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017)

[9] van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive.* Ch. 20. and van Creveld, *The Land of Blood and Honey.* Ch. 4.

[10] Karkar, S. "The first intifada 20 years later." *The Electronic Intifada,* 10 December 2007. https://electronicintifada.net/content/first-intifada-20-years-later/7251 (Accessed on 6 July 2020) and Erbay, T. "The Role of the Military in Counterterrorism: Unintended Consequences." (Published Master's Thesis, Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School, 2012) p. 44. https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/27825/12Dec_Erbay_Tayfun.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (Accessed on 6. July 2020)

part of the Oslo peace process) and the various terrorist organizations also joined the fray. Their gunmen fired on the Israeli soldiers from behind civilians, small teams infiltrated the Israeli settlements and murdered Jewish civilians, Israeli towns near the border of the occupied territories were attacked by rocket and mortar fire, and suicide bombers spread death and destruction in the Israeli heartland. In response, the IDF deployed heavy firepower, and carried out large-scale military operations to destroy the terrorist infrastructure. The intifada came to an end only in 2005, as a result of the interplay of several factors: kinetic operations of the security forces, construction of the separation fence, political developments within the Palestinian society, ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza.[11]

The internal security risk did not disappear after the intifadas came to an end. The large-scale deployment of forces has continued. The soldiers have become the muscle for the Israeli internal security organization, the Shin Beth, and internal security in the occupied territories turned into the primary mission of the IDF ground forces.

EFFECT ON MILITARY CAPABILITIES AND READINESS

In 1968 the British Army had two infantry battalions and an armoured reconnaissance regiment[12] stationed in Northern Ireland.[13] None of them was performing assistance to the civil authorities' duties. When the local political structures proved unwilling and the local police incapable of controlling inter-communal violence in 1968-1969, additional regular Army battalions (as well as specialists from the other services) were moved into the province. Army strength eventually stabilized at six regular battalions on long tours (initially 18, and subsequently 24 months), one regular battalion of short (initially four, subsequently six months) tour, and 11 UDR/RIR battalions. Additional units were deployed for specific manpower-intensive operations, or when the intensity of the conflict so required.[14]

At the peak of the "Troubles", 17,000 regulars plus 8,400 UDR/RIR – the equivalent of two divisions – were deployed. Since until the end of the Cold War the British Army's personnel strength stood at about 155,000, this 25,400 meant that – at least in 1973 – over 18 percent of its ground forces, as well as nearly proportional material and financial resources were tied down in internal security missions and were not available for regular defence tasks. Before a battalion was deployed, its personnel had to be trained on internal security duties. When it returned from Northern Ireland, leaves had to be granted, selected personnel had to be released to service schools, deferred medical treatments had to be taken care of, and the entire unit had to be retrained on its original mission. These added months to the deployment period – as a result, a battalion on a six-month short tour was not available for nearly a year, one on a 24-month long tour was away for nearly 30 months.

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[11] Schachter, J. "The End of the Second Intifada?" *Strategic Assessment,* 13(3) pp. 63–70. https://www.inss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/FILE1289897140-1.pdf Accessed on 6 July 2020

[12] In the organizational scheme of the British Army the cavalry and artillery regiments are battalion-sized formations.

[13] David French, *Army, Empire, and Cold War: The British Army and Military Policy, 1945-1971.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) p. 291.

[14] *Operation Banner: An Analysis of Military Operations in Northern Ireland.* Army Code 71842. (London: Ministry of Defence, 2006)

Hard data from Israel are more difficult to come by, but according to reasonably reliable sources, only three battalions (two in the West Bank and one in Gaza) were performing internal security duties in the occupied territories.[15] In 1987, when active resistance began, the IDF had to increase its troop deployments significantly – this author estimates that it maintained at least a division-equivalent (about 12,000-15,000 soldiers) in the Territories, and ramped up their numbers when operations so required. Since the active duty personnel strength of the Israeli Defence Forces (all services) has fluctuated between 140,000 (1990) and 160,000 (today)[16] – an average of 10 percent of this strength was tied down in the Territories, and was not available for national defence tasks. For Israel, with a much smaller economy than the UK's, with much more doubtful strategic alliances, and with potential enemies much closer, that was a very heavy burden.

The British battalions deployed to Northern Ireland did not exercise as a unit for at least a year, and the brigades that they were part of had to train with one battalion short. An artillery commander deployed to N. Ireland could not fire his guns at all during his tour of command, let alone participate in a major exercise.[17] The IDF, whose effectiveness depends on a large body of reservists, was affected by these problems to a far greater extent. When reservists were called up, instead of the usual 17 weeks of training they went to the West Bank or the Gaza Strip to serve as muscle for the internal security organization, the Shin Beth. They became highly effective at that mission, but lost much of their primary skills: armour crews did not drive their tanks or fire their guns for years on end and did not participate in large-scale exercises. Cross-training was not conducted at all. Much the same was true of infantry and artillery, as well as other specialists. Even more seriously, brigade and division commanders had little or no opportunity to gain experience in commanding large formations on operations.[18]

The Cold War ended without the UK armed forces having to face the armies of the Warsaw Pact, and performed creditably in Operation Desert Storm. The IDF was less fortunate. The unexpected war with Hezbollah in 2006 showed the insidious effects of concentrating on internal security missions for a long time. Instead of chasing small, elusive teams of terrorists or rock-throwing Palestinian teenagers in sneakers, the IDF was suddenly confronted by a force equivalent to two highly trained infantry brigades with a decentralized command and control system, lavishly provided with state-of-the art anti-tank missiles, dug in on ideal defensive terrain. The IDF was not ready for it: Israeli commanders up and down the chain of command, as well as individual soldiers made elementary mistakes while trying to manoeuvre. The IDF suffered losses that were not only painful for Israeli society, but also highly embarrassing for a force that had racked up a long string of impressive successes against much larger national armies. This author is not suggesting that the IDF suffered a defeat, or that its embarrassing performance was due only to the long antiterrorist mission in the Territories. There is ample evidence that serious mistakes were made before

[15] van Creveld, *The Land of Blood and Honey.* Ch. 4.; Erbay, *The Role of the Military in Counterterrorism.* p. 42., and Catignani, "Israeli Counterinsurgency."

[16] Cordesman, A. H. *Arab-Israeli Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric Wars.* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006) p. 96.

[17] *Operation Banner.* p. 7–2.

[18] Matt M. Matthews, *We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War.* (Ft. Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press. 2008) pp. 27–28., 50., 64.

and during the war by the highest military and civilian authorities.[19] But the commitment of much of the available forces to the Territories did contribute to it.

Fighting a much weaker enemy that hides among the population, constant media scrutiny, frequent investigations and disciplinary actions for the sake of political expediency will inevitably affect the morale of the forces. These were not significant problems for the British Army: its long service professionals returned to "real soldiering" once their battalion's deployment to Northern Ireland was over. The Israeli reservists had no such opportunity. When they were called up, they could look forward only to the dreary duty of trying to suppress the aspirations of a restive population, and to court martial for any mistake or error in judgment. This soon led to serious morale problems throughout the IDF.[20]

Morale will also suffer if the political establishment or the superior officers fail to provide adequate support and rock solid legal protection to the soldiers on the ground. The assistance to the civil power mission requires that the soldiers (often of junior rank and with limited experience) make instant decisions on the application of force. Inevitably, they will make the wrong decision sometimes. In such cases (and especially if a hostile media condemns every action the security forces take) the temptation will be there to sacrifice the soldiers on the altar of political expediency. Both Israel and the United Kingdom let down their soldiers from time to time. Most disgracefully, the United Kingdom has allowed the prosecution (30-40 years after the alleged offense) of soldiers who had already been cleared once by an inquiry or a court martial.[21]

Finally, there is the issue of resources. Maintaining (or, ideally, improving) the armed forces' defence capabilities is an expensive and never-ending process. If military assistance to the civil power becomes part of the armed forces' mission, then a significant part of their budget must be dedicated to support it. Since defence budgets are seldom very generous, the armed forces must make hard choices in their acquisitions. Both the British Army and the IDF expended significant resources on internal security training, vehicles, weapons, ammunition, and other materiel optimized for internal security duties. Neither the specialized vehicles and equipment, nor the training programs were of any use on the battlefield, but they had to be paid for.

The British Army wound up its operations in Northern Ireland in 2007, and returned to its primary mission of national defence. In contrast, the IDF must still shoulder the heavy burden of the occupied territories: in 2017 75 percent of the regular forces and mobilized reservists were serving in the territories. Of these, 80 percent were providing security for the settlements, and 20 percent were engaged in counterterrorist operations.[22] Current figures are not available, but they can hardly be much better.

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[19] Ibid. pp. 22–28. and Kober, A. "The Israel Defense Forces in the Second Lebanon War: Why the Poor Performance?" *The Journal of Strategic Studies,* 31(1), pp. 3–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390701785211

[20] van Creveld. *The Land of Blood and Honey.* Ch. 4.

[21] "NI parties hit out at veteran prosecution pledge." *BBC,* 15 November 2019. https://www.bbc.com/news/election-2019-50372932; O'Neill, J. "Military prosecutions: Veterans' protections 'should cover NI.'" *BBC,* 15 May 2019. https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-48285622 Accessed on 6 July 2020

[22] Ben-Sasson Gordis, A., Levi, Y. and Agmon, S. *Israel's National Security and West Bank Settlements.* (Jerusalem: Molad, 2017) pp. 6., 15.

EFFECT ON MILITARY-CIVILIAN RELATIONS

The British Army has a well-deserved reputation of high standards of realistic training and discipline – but it is focused on defeating the armed forces of external enemies, so its doctrines are based on the Clausewitzian principle of applying overwhelming force to compel the enemy to submit. This is hardly the appropriate principle when dealing with fellow citizens, friends, brothers, voters, taxpayers. Since the first units that were deployed in Northern Ireland had received no training in military assistance to the civil power duties, both the commanders and their troops had to rely on the Clausewitzian tactics, techniques, and procedures they were familiar with. They interpreted the internal security tasks as combat missions, applied overwhelming and indiscriminate (or at least not very discriminating) force, and caused collateral casualties and damage. In no time at all, this behaviour thoroughly poisoned the relationship between the armed forces and society.

Initially the Army was seen as a neutral force that would rein in the wilder elements of both sides. When the first battalions were deployed to separate the communities, both the Catholics and the Protestants welcomed them, because they expected them to put an end to the riots and restore calm. Housewives – both Catholics and Protestants – treated the patrols to cups of tea and biscuits, and little old ladies (again, of both confessions) cooked breakfast for the soldiers on checkpoint duty.[23] The Army did its part also to win hearts and minds: it opened community centres, took children on excursions into the countryside, and delivered meals to pensioners.[24] The IRA recognized the danger in this good-natured sipping tea and children becoming friends with British soldiers, and successfully provoked the heavy-handed methods that primarily affected the civilian population. The troops responded to the provocations the only way they knew: with overwhelming and indiscriminate force. They used copious amounts of tear gas, returned fire when fired on regardless of possible civilian casualties, destroyed civilian property while conducting cordon-and-search operations, arrested and abused civilians who had little or no connection to the IRA.

The most egregious incidents took place in the first years of the operation. In late March 1970, in an effort to keep Catholic and Protestant demonstrators apart the Army used tear gas, which provoked several days of rioting. In the *Falls Road Curfew* incident (3rd July 1970), a large-scale operation to search for illegal arms in Belfast developed into a riot and gunfights between soldiers and the IRA, in which four civilians were killed. A 36-hour curfew was imposed on the area, and a cordon-and-search operation was mounted, in the course of which civilians were abused and their property extensively damaged by frustrated soldiers. In *Operation Demetrius* (9-10 August 1971) dawn raids were carried out throughout Northern Ireland in order to arrest IRA members and leadership. Several hundred people (few of them with any connection to the IRA) were arrested, and many were severely abused while in detention. During the protests that followed 20 civilians were killed (as well as two IRA members and two soldiers). Fourteen civilians were killed and 12 wounded during a demonstration in Londonderry in the *Bloody Sunday* incident (January 30. 1972).[25] The British Army begun a thorough training program in internal security duties, issued

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[23] Hennessey, T. *The Evolution of the Troubles: 1970-1972.* (Newbridge: Irish Academic Press, 2007) p. 6.

[24] Thornton, R. "Getting it Wrong: The Crucial Mistakes Made in the Early Stages of the British Army's Deployment to Northern Ireland (August 1969 to March 1972)." *Journal of Strategic Studies,* 30(1) pp. 73–107.

[25] Edwards, A. *The Northern Ireland Troubles: Operation Banner, 1969-2007.* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2011) pp. 34–38. Erbay, *The role of the military in counterterrorism,* pp. 15–38.

(and regularly revised) restrictive Rules of Engagement, and generally assumed a less aggressive posture. But by the time these measures took effect, it was too late. The attitude of the Catholic population of Northern Ireland became hostile – now they viewed the Army as an alien occupying force.

The Clausewitzian principles have served the Israeli armed forces for over seven decades. An aggressive, combative spirit and the will to win have pride of place in their training, and they have a reputation for military competence, earned through a series of impressive victories over the regular forces of neighbouring states, sometimes against impossible odds. This competence has not carried over to success in resolving the internal security challenge posed by the restive Palestinian population.

Just as armed forces all over the world, the IDF also focuses on fighting the external enemies of the state. At the time the first intifada broke out, the IDF had no training, no doctrines, and no equipment for internal security operations. It obeyed the prime minister's order to "break arms and legs" as it broke up demonstrations: it used tear gas, baton charges, rubber bullets, and occasionally live ammunition. It imposed long curfews, carried out house searches and mass arrests, detained (and in the course of interrogation often enough tortured) prominent Palestinians. Shin Beth deployed teams of agents disguised as Arabs, whose task was to gather intelligence, but sometimes also functioned as death squads.[26]

None of it was working. Even before the intifada, few Palestinians accepted willingly Israeli authority, but most sought some form of accommodation with the occupation, in order to provide shelter, food and security for their families. Friendly relationship between Israelis and Palestinians was rare (although not unknown) before the intifada, and even rarer between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians, but Israelis could still go shopping in Palestinian areas unarmed. This uneasy peace was already showing serious strains in the early 1980s, and it came to an end with the intifada. As time went on (for over five years), and as casualties mounted, attitudes hardened on both sides, and the Palestinians' resentment of the occupation turned into implacable hatred of everything Israeli – but particularly of the security forces.[27]

When the peace process failed in the autumn of 2000, the second intifada broke out. During the first four or five weeks, events followed the pattern of the first intifada: violent demonstrations, civil disobedience, strikes, and small scale attacks on Israelis. The level of violence increased sharply as gunmen hiding in the crowd during demonstrations fired on the Israeli security forces and suicide bombers caused mass casualties in Israeli cities. Infiltrators, rockets and mortar fire disrupted the life of settlements near the border of the occupied territories. In response the IDF deployed heavy firepower (including artillery, naval gunfire, and helicopter gunships) and carried out raids and large-scale military operations to destroy the terrorist infrastructure, with the foreseeable collateral casualties – and the foreseeable hardening of Palestinian attitudes.[28] Then the Palestinian Security Services' forces began operations against the IDF.

Israel's security forces have been generally (though not always) successful in suppressing Palestinian violence directed against Israeli citizens. However, the measures they have taken reflect the attitude that Palestinians are not entitled to the same rights and protections

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[26]   van Creveld, *The Land of Blood and Honey.* Ch. 4. and Erbay, *The Role of the Military in Counterterrorism.* p. 41.

[27]   Ibid. p. 52.

[28]   Ibid. p. 45.

as Israelis, because they are the restive – and alien – population of a land acquired by force of arms, rather than fellow citizens or wards of the Israeli state. Instead of creating the conditions for a political solution, the military operations caused the Palestinians' unfocused resentment and latent hostility to become open and implacable enmity, ruining the chance of an amiable settlement for the foreseeable future. The organizations fighting the Israeli occupation have gained popular support; as a result, their strength and prestige have grown, perpetuating the need for the deployment of military forces.

EFFECT ON TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

In the 1960s, factionalism and inadequate leadership weakened the IRA. When the Troubles broke out, its military capabilities were quite limited: a process of demilitarization had started some years earlier, and it had few trained fighters, its stock of weapons and other warlike materiel was small, and a shortage of funds seriously constrained the scope of its operations.[29] By the early 1980s, the Provisional IRA had sidelined the Official IRA, and became a dedicated, highly skilled, professional organization that was capable of a sustained terrorist campaign not only in Northern Ireland, but also in the rest of the United Kingdom and on the continent of Europe.[30] The British Army's operations aided this development every step of the way.

The Army's heavy-handed tactics (in part provoked by the IRA[31]) created mass popular support among Northern Ireland's Catholics for a determined and sustained resistance to British occupation. Suddenly there was no shortage of recruits, funds were pouring in not only from the local Catholic population, but also from overseas. As the insurgency was gradually suppressed, the official IRA withdrew from the battle, but the Provisional IRA continued the fight by transitioning to a terrorist campaign. It adopted a cellular structure that was far more difficult to penetrate and disrupt than the original company-battalion-brigade structure, and developed efficient intelligence, quartermaster, finance, and engineering branches. Attrition took a toll on numbers, but those who survived the clashes with the security forces became more dedicated, more professional, and there was no shortage of recruits to take the place of those killed or arrested.[32] The operations of the IRA became focused and well planned, their execution was professional and deadly. It also began to carry out operations overseas, in England and in the rest of Europe.

The British Army's operations also provided a wealth of propaganda material, and the Provisionals made full use of it. Events of Operation Demetrius, the Fall Road Curfew, and Bloody Sunday reverberated around the world. Not only did they bring international condemnation upon the United Kingdom, but also resulted in moral and material support to those opposed to the continued British occupation. The Provisionals also made mistakes that seriously damaged their cause, but local, British, and international public opinion was far more lenient towards them.[33]

The effect of the IDF's operations on the terrorist organizations in the occupied territories parallels those of the British Army during the Troubles. When the Palestinian Authority

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[29] Ó Faoleán, *A Broad Church,* pp. 17–45.
[30] Ibid and *Operation Banner,* pp. 1–3. – 1–4.
[31] Ó Faoleán, *A Broad Church,* p. 56.
[32] *Operation Banner,* pp. 3–1 – 3–3.
[33] Ibid. pp. 2–7 – 2–8, 2–14.

was established in 1994 in accordance with the Oslo agreement, the dominant Palestinian organization (Yasser Arafat's al-Fatah) was at a low ebb of its military capabilities, and the smaller organizations were in no better shape either. This changed in a few years, as the attrition of personnel and resources that the IDF's kinetic operations imposed on the radical Palestinian organizations forced them to adapt in order to survive. Their skills and professionalism improved, as they had to pay close attention to operational security, and plan their operations with meticulous care.

The heavy-handed treatment of Palestinian civilians and collateral casualties as a consequence of indiscriminate firepower significantly increased the Palestinians' support for violence against Israelis, and motivated many young men (as well as an increasing number of women) to retaliate in kind.[34] Some acted individually: random knife attacks and incidents of mob violence became more frequent. Others joined the various radical Palestinian organizations, whose prestige was growing: they were seen not as the cause of Israeli retaliatory strikes, but as the protectors of the people.

The operations of the security forces provided an unending stream of propaganda material that the Palestinians exploited with consummate skill. Graceful Palestinian teenagers pelting tanks with stones, houses badly damaged in Operation Cast Lead, Muhammad al-Durrah face down behind a concrete drum – they all became iconic images of the Palestinians fighting Israeli oppression. The Israeli authorities proved to be surprisingly inept at countering the Palestinians' media operations. They had a difficult task, no doubt: the Israeli voice often was not heard because many international new organizations and NGOs were willing partners in anti-Israeli propaganda.

THE LESSONS SO FAR

International experience has shown that soldiers do not make very good policemen. Nevertheless, they do have a role to play in the defence against terrorism, because a government facing a serious internal security challenge often has no other choice but to turn to the armed forces, until it can bring police strength and capabilities up to an adequate level. When it does call out the soldiers, the government must proceed with great care, lest it exacerbates an already bad situation. At the very outset, the government must clearly define the roles the armed forces are to play, the tasks they are expected to perform and the timeframe of their deployment.

The first and most obvious role of the armed forces is to support the police with military capabilities: the army's vehicles, aircraft, transport assets, and field equipment can supplement the limited cross-country and transportation capabilities of the police. Second, electronic and aerial reconnaissance capabilities can provide intelligence information the police cannot acquire otherwise. Third, most soldiers move with confidence in swamp, forest, and difficult terrain, day or night; fire and movement tactics, employment of heavy firepower and planning and executing large-scale operations are their daily fare. The police also need these skills in order to fight terrorists effectively, and soldiers can provide the necessary training easily enough.

However, terrorism (outside of the pages of some learned theoretical treatises) hardly ever occurs in its pure form. The challenge to the state's authority will likely encompass general

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[34] Erbay, *The Role of the Military in Counterterrorism,* pp. 51–52.

political instability, competing propaganda narratives, street politics, mass mobilization, rallies, marches and demonstrations that may turn violent, riots, widespread civil disobedience, and inter-communal violence, in addition to terrorism. The terrorists will exploit party politics and parliamentary manoeuvres to find political cover, deploy very agile strategic communication to justify their actions, use rallies, marches, demonstrations and riots as cover for launching attacks on the security forces, and obtain shelter and sustenance among the sympathetic elements of the civil population.

These challenges must all be dealt with using the most appropriate tools for each, and the armed forces will likely be employed far more extensively than just supporting the police with transportation assets and intelligence collection, or training them in infantry tactics. Instead, they will also perform purely police functions: escorting demonstrations, breaking up riots, providing additional manpower to police patrols, arresting and processing suspects, identifying, separating, and detaining violent (often armed) extremists in the course of demonstrations, and pursuing and neutralizing identified terrorists.

Before the armed forces are employed on tasks that require them to use force against civilians, all ranks must receive extensive training in military assistance to the civil power. Without such training both the commanders and their troops will interpret internal security tasks as combat missions, apply overwhelming and indiscriminate (or at least not very discriminating) force, and cause collateral casualties and damage. In no time at all this behaviour can thoroughly poison the relationship between the armed forces and society. The soldiers must always act in accordance with the doctrine that the people they are dealing with are fellow citizens who do have certain constitutional rights, even if they abuse them, or they are people under occupation, who possess the sympathy of the international community, even if they abuse their victim status. Even if the security forces conduct themselves in the most professional manner, the collateral casualties and damage that excessive force causes may create more terrorists than it eliminates, as enraged individuals join the organization, offer it material and moral support, concealment, sustenance and the most precious commodity in an asymmetric conflict: information.

However, there are some counterterrorism tasks the military forces are better prepared to perform than the police. As countless encounters have shown, the law enforcement doctrines of proportionality, minimum necessary force applied as a last resort, respect for individual rights and the rule of law do not work very well against highly motivated terrorists, whose survival calculations are fundamentally different from those of ordinary criminals. Instead of the doctrine of minimum necessary force as a last resort, a more appropriate approach may be to apply such force as is necessary to secure the terrorists' arrest or elimination.[35] While police officers (even police commandos, trained in more aggressive procedures) may be quite uncomfortable with such escalation dominance doctrines, such approaches are quite natural for a soldier. Hostage rescue by violent assault, eliminating terrorist leaders by long-range sniper fire, ambushing a terrorist team on the way to an operation, or executing a retaliatory strike beyond the border are well within the skill set of military forces.

The armed forces' primary mission of defence against peer or near-peer external enemies requires a particular organizational structure, certain tactics, techniques procedures, and a

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35   Mahadevan, P. "The Gill Doctrine: A Model for 21st Century Counter-terrorism?" *Faultlines.* Vol. 19. http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume19/Article1.htm Accessed on 6 July 2020

certain mindset – as well as very comprehensive training programs. The antiterrorist mission requires a fundamentally different organizational structure, a different skill set, and an entirely different mindset – as well as very comprehensive, but entirely different training programs. Reorganizing and retraining for a fundamentally different mission, and not exercising regularly the primary tasks will inevitably lead to a decline in training standards in the primary defence mission. In order to reduce this negative effect on armed forces' readiness, it is imperative to keep military assistance to the civil power as short as possible: accelerate the development of police strength and release the soldiers to their traditional task quickly, as police capabilities improve. While the troops are needed, rotate the units after short deployments. The French Army may have found the right balance In Operation Sentinelle: the battalions deployed on internal security duties are returned after two months to their national defence mission. The two-month break in training routine is short enough not to lead to deterioration in the soldiers' or the units' training standards.[36]

All internal security challenges (including terrorism) are primarily political, economic and law enforcement problems. No doubt, it may be necessary to use force in order to restore security and law and order, but the use of force comes only at the tail end of the list of tools available to the government to resolve the problem. The use of force is seriously counterproductive if it contributes to the root causes of the problem – or even worse, creates a new root cause. And that is exactly the greatest risk in employing the armed forces on internal security duties.

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Ita Bonner – Elton Qendro

CLIMATE CHANGE AS A THREAT MULTIPLIER FOR EXTREME NATURAL EVENTS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ALBANIAN ARMED FORCES' PREPAREDNESS FOR SECURITY RISKS LINKED WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

ABSTRACT: *Climate change will have far-reaching consequences as floods, droughts, storms and heavy rainfalls become more intense and possibly more frequent. In the last years, Albania experienced a higher frequency of natural events requiring the response of the Albanian Armed Forces, either for the evacuation of civilians, search and rescue missions, or support to emergency services. The focus of this article is to analyse how climate change serves as a threat multiplier of extreme natural events, particularly within Albania, and its effect on the response by the Albanian Armed Forces. A comparative case study approach has been used to analyse the connection between climate change, three extreme natural events, and the Albanian Armed Forces' response during the phases of immediate reaction and immediate response. The findings of this paper support the argument that the increased frequency of natural events, multiplied by climate change, will result in an increased demand for the intervention by the military personnel. Additionally, this paper will provide evidence that there is a need to adapt the military's strategy, resources, as well as operational and tactical preparedness to the effects of climate change and consequently to be able to better respond to extreme natural events.*

KEYWORDS: *Climate change, Albanian Armed Forces (AAF), extreme natural events, NATO, preparedness*

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INTRODUCTION

The "World Risk Report 2021" calculates the disaster risk index for 180 countries based on risk, hazard/exposure, vulnerability, susceptibility, coping, and adaptation.[1] In the 2021 report, Albania ranks in the first three countries with the highest exposure and among the top five countries with the highest vulnerability.[2] Furthermore, according to the World Bank report of 2014, the maximum potential probable losses in Albania from a disaster with a 250-year mean return period (MRP) are estimated at US$2.3 billion for earthquakes and US$1.3 billion for floods.[3]

The latest climate change scenarios for the Balkan region in general, and Albania within it, show more intense and longer heatwaves, more extended periods of drought, heavier rainfalls in a shorter time[4], etc. All these cause fires, floods, and other extreme natural events and situations that require the intervention of the Albanian Armed Forces. In addition, these extreme events can lead to the loss of human lives and property, affecting the overall national security situation.

In the 2022 "Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment" (CCSIA), NATO accepts that climate change is a "threat multiplier" that has significant security implications for the Alliance at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels[5]. The CSSIA describes the effects of various climatic hazards: (1) on NATO's strategic environment; (2) on NATO's assets and installations; (3) on NATO's missions and multidomain operations; (4) on NATO's resilience and civil preparedness. These effects were further reiterated at the 2022 NATO Summit in Madrid, where the Secretary General launched a High-Level Dialogue on Climate Change and Security. In January 2023, during the Symposium on Climate Change and Capabilities, NATO, as part of its agenda, began incorporating climate change considerations in the Alliance's work on capability development[6].

The authors' contribution to this discussion involves analysing how climate change serves as a threat multiplier of extreme natural events, particularly within Albania, and its effect on the response by the Albanian Armed Forces. The focus is on investigating the connection between three climate change-induced extreme natural events, and the Albanian Armed Forces' engagement during the phases of immediate reaction and immediate response. In addition, this article describes how the increased frequency of natural events, multiplied by climate change, can result in an increased demand for intervention by military personnel. Further, the authors explore the need to adapt the Defence Strategy, resources, and operational and tactical preparedness to the effects of climate change, consequently being able to better respond to extreme natural events.

1   Aleksandrova, M. et al. *"World Risk Report"*. BEH-IFHV. 2021. https://weltrisikobericht.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/WorldRiskReport_2021_Online.pdf, Accessed on 25 June 2023.

2   Aleksandrova. "World Risk Report."

3   "Albania – Disaster Risk Mitigation and Adaptation Project (English)." World Bank Group. 2014. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/313781468193510916/Albania-Disaster-Risk-Mitigation-and-Adaptation-Project Accessed on 25 June 2023.

4   Ciardini, V. et al. "Global and Mediterranean climate change: a short summary." *Annali dell'Istituto superiore di sanita,* 52. (2016). 325–337.

5   "The Secretary General's Report. Climate Change & Security Impact Assessment." NATO Web. 28 June 2022. https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/280622-climate-impact-assessment.pdf Accessed on 25 June 2023.

6   "NATO Hosts Symposium on Climate Change and Military Capabilities." NATO Web. 23 January 2023. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_211018.htm?selectedLocale=en Accessed on 25 June 2023.

This article begins by analysing the country's climate change background and effects, followed by the legal framework under which the response is coordinated. After this, the authors will provide the research methodology, including the main research question and the discussions arising from the hypothesis obtained from answering it. Following this, we will analyze three extreme natural events in three consecutive years in three different locations within Albania, focusing on the first two phases of immediate reaction and immediate response, presenting and discussing the results, and providing our conclusions related to the findings.

BACKGROUND

As a result of a changing climate, in recent years, Albania has experienced higher temperatures, an increased number of heatwaves, droughts, fires, and heavier rainfalls, both in frequency and duration. These have caused life- and property- threatening events, which have caused losses in agriculture and physical infrastructure, leading to food insecurity, threats to critical infrastructure (national parks, cultural sites, and military bases), etc.

The Albanian Strategy of Defence[7], approved in 2019, considers climate change a threat to national security, with its effects having multiple ramifications leading to natural events/ disasters, migration, displacement, health risks, natural resources reduction, etc. Likewise, the 2014 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Albania[8] considers climate change as an unconventional external threat to national security.

Regulating natural events preparedness and management in Albania is done by the highest-level law 45/2019[9], "On Civil Protection." This law sets out the operational side of the civil protection system, defining the responsibilities of the institutions and elements of this structure, international cooperation, the rights and obligations of citizens and private entities, education, training, and inspection. One of the main achievements of this law was setting a framework that resulted in the creation of the Civil Protection Agency in 2019, which is the highest authority responsible for emergency preparedness and response, and is an entity under the Albanian Ministry of Defence.

The management of extreme natural events is shared between three hierarchical levels, from the highest level down:

National level. The Ministry of Defence, and within it, the National Civil Protection Agency is responsible for creating conditions for a society capable of reducing risks of disasters, preventing, preparing, and coping with disasters, as well as intervening during the phase of recovery through an integrated and efficient civil protection system. The Ministry of Defence coordinates work when and if needed with other central government institutions or agencies.

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7   "Decision no. 628, dated 25. 9. 2019 for the Approval of the Strategy Review Document of Defence of the Republic of Albania". Albanian Ministry of Defence Web. 25 September 2019. https://www.mod.gov.al/images/ PDF/2020/rishikimi-strat-mbrojtjes-2019.pdf, Accessed on 25 June 2023.

8   "The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Albania." Albanian Ministry of Defence Web. July 2014. https://www.mod.gov.al/images/PDF/strategjia_sigurise_kombetare_republikes_se_shqiperise.pdf Accessed on 25 June 2023.

9   "Law 45/2019, On Civil Protection." Albanian Ministry of Defence Web. 30 July 2019. https://www.mod.gov. al/images/akteligjore/mbrojtja-civile/Ligji-45-2019-Per%20Mbrojtjen-Civile.pdf Accessed on 25 June 2023.

Regional level. At County level, the County Prefect office has a primary role in disaster risk reduction and civil protection. This office coordinates work with local government units, drafts, approves, and updates the Plan for Civil Emergencies in the County, gathers data, etc.

Local level. In cases of emergencies, it is the local government that has the responsibility to intervene first. If their capacities are limited, they can call for assistance from the neighbouring municipalities, state police, and the Armed Forces.

We already know that natural disasters, extreme events, and civil emergencies do not know country borders. They can happen within the territory of a country, originate in one and expand in another, or happen simultaneously across borders. Albania officially joined the EU Civil Protection Mechanism in November 2022.

For the purpose of this study, we will carry out our analysis in the first two stages (out of five) of dealing with natural disasters[10], which we will also apply to explain extreme natural events:

– Preparation. In this stage, plans and programs are written, and responders are trained.
– The immediate reaction. It happens up to twenty-four hours from the time the disaster occurs.
– Primary response. Lasts from several days, up to one week after the event.
– Supplementary response. It begins one week after the event and lasts several weeks.
– The rehabilitation stage. This can last for years and is concluded when life returns to normal.

Because of their crucial importance in providing a better understanding of the deployment of the Albanian Armed Forces on one side and providing security, safety, and saving human lives on the other, the authors will try to analyse the second and third stages.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in this article is a comparative case study approach. Comparative case studies cover two or more cases in a way that produces more generalizable knowledge by utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods. This method involves analysing and synthesising the similarities, differences, and patterns across two or more cases with a common focus or goal. This approach is beneficial for understanding and explaining how context influences the success of an intervention and how to better tailor the intervention to a specific context to achieve the intended outcomes[11].

As individual case studies, the authors have examined three extreme natural events during three consequent years – the 2020 fires in Elbasan, the 2021 floods in Lezha, and the 2022 fires in the Sazani Island. For this study, the individual case studies analysed have been selected to present differences in time, terrain, and location. However, they provide a good understanding of the similarities of the fast-onset consequences of climate change

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[10] Vach, G. "The supplementary response to an earthquake. In light of the Israeli mission's activity in Albania". Paper presented at the Extreme Natural Events and Security Issues 6th International Conference, Security Academy of Albania, Tirana, Albania, 31 May 2021.

[11] Goodrick, D. "Comparative Case Studies, Methodological Briefs: Impact Evaluation 9, UNICEF Office of Research". UNICEF Web. 2014. https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/brief_9_comparativecasestudies_eng.pdf Accessed on 25 June 2023.

and the effects on the engagement and deployment of the Albanian Armed Forces in their management.

This article focuses on one main research question and two hypotheses, which were designed based on the information and findings provided during the analysis of these three case studies. The main research question of this article is: *How does climate change serve as a threat multiplier of extreme natural events, particularly within Albania, and what is its effect on the response by the Albanian Armed Forces?*

Although the Armed Forces are the last responders, we have witnessed more frequent deployments to respond to and manage natural events in recent years. Upon request from local and regional authorities, the Albanian Ministry of Defence evaluates the scale of the event, the type, and the resources needed, both in equipment and personnel. Variables such as the frequency and need for intervention by the Armed Forces, timing, and resources engaged are essential to understand the trend of such events in the future, adapt the military's strategy, resources, as well as operational and tactical preparedness to be better positioned in the response phase. Under this optic, the hypotheses we explore are:

H1: The increased frequency of natural events, multiplied by climate change, results in an increased demand for intervention by military personnel. As the climate change effects' scale and intensity are projected to increase in the following decades[12], there will be an increase in the demand for intervention and deployment of military personnel. Furthermore, overlapping natural events will put even more pressure on allocating assets, both in terms of human resources and equipment.

H2: Implementation of the Albanian Defence Strategy's measures targeting climate change will increase operational and tactical preparedness. The 2014 National Security Strategy and the 2019 Defence Strategy of the Republic of Albania consider climate change and natural disasters as threats to national security, and accept that assessing and taking steps to cope with these threats will positively impact the management of the security situation in the country.

DESCRIPTION

For this analysis, the authors have selected three natural events located in three different areas of Albania during three consecutive years, starting with the most recent, namely the 2022 fires on Sazani Island, the 2021 floods in Lezha, and the 2020 fires in Elbasan.

2022 fires on Sazani Island

Sazani is the largest island in Albania, part of the Marine National Park[13], strategically positioned in the Mediterranean Sea, between the Adriatic and Ionian seas. During the Cold War, Sazani Island was used as a submarine base by the Soviet Union. In 1997 some motorboats and Italian Navy ships were positioned on the island, which assisted in combatting illegal trafficking. In 2012, after twelve years of staying on the island and a successful

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12   "Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change". Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Web. 2021. https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6/wg1/IPCC_AR6_WGI_FullReport.pdf Accessed on 25 June 2023.

13   Tomàs-Vives, P. "Management Plan for Sazani Island". National Coastal Agency Web. January 2015. http://www.bregdeti.gov.al/doc%20pdf/Sazani%20island%20management%20plan%20130115.pdf Accessed on 25 June 2023.

war against illegal trafficking, the Italian forces left the island[14]. Sazani is a former military ward, where, although there has been ongoing work by the Armed Forces in clearing it[15], there is still unexploded ammunition.

On 5 June 2022, due to extremely high temperatures, a massive fire was reported in Sazani Island. Not only did this pose a risk to the area's rich biodiversity, but there was an extremely high danger due to unexploded ammunition.

How was the immediate reaction managed? Because of the proximity to the island and legal obligations, the first on the ground were firefighters from Vlora County and the Agency for Protected Areas staff, who were engaged in controlling the flames on the island[16]. Although it is the last responder, sixty-one Albanian Armed Forces troops, from Navy and Army were present from the very early hours of the event[17] demonstrating the severe danger this event posed. As media reports cited[18], the Albanian Ministry of Defence declared that *"the terrain and dense vegetation have made it extremely difficult for troops to intervene, while as a former military ward, unexploded ammunition also poses a danger. The troops on the ground continue their efforts even during the late hours while measures have been taken for their replacement and reinforcement."*

What happened during the immediate response? After forty-eight hours, the Albanian Ministry of Defence declared that the fire had been controlled and a perimeter had been set. However, the intervention from air was deemed necessary[19]. On the third day, one hundred more troops of the AAF were deployed on-site, while three Navy ships were put on alert[20]. At that time, a "Canadair CL 415" aircraft became operational as part of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (Emergency Response Coordination Centre – ERCC). This aircraft was provided by Greece following the official request from the Albanian Agency for Civil Protection[21]. After the air intervention, the work was still ongoing on the ground to create a deforestation belt, which was considered crucial for the insulation and containment of the fire.

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[14]   Shkurti, F. "National Marine Park Karaburun – Sazan and today's trends for tourism development". *International Journal of Geoheritage and Parks,* 7/1. 2019. 1–14.

[15]   "Albanian Armed Forces Clean Sazani from Dangerous Ammunition." Albanian Ministry of Defence. 10 July 2020. Video, https://www.mod.gov.al/aktualitet-video/4438-fa-pastrojne-sazanin-nga-municionet-e-rrezikshme Accessed on 25 June 2023.

[16]   "Fire on the Sazani Island, the Navy, and Army Forces Have Been Fighting the Flames for Hours." *Tirana Post Web.* 5 June 2022. https://www.tiranapost.al/aktualitet/zjarr-ne-ishulli-i-sazanit-forca-detare-dhe-toke-sore-prej-oresh-lufto-i515465 Accessed on 25 June 2023.

[17]   "Ministry of Defence: Flames in Sazani, Danger of Ammunition Explosion." Tirana Post Web. 5 June 2022. Video. https://www.tiranapost.al/aktualitet/zjarri-ne-ishullin-e-sazanit-ministra-e-mbrojtjes-rrezik-per-shperthi-i515467 Accessed on 25 June 2023.

[18]   "Ministry of Defence: Flames in Sazani."

[19]   "Fire in Sazan, Albania supported by the EU Civil Protection Mechanism". *The Military Newspaper,* 10 June 2022. Official. 2.

[20]   "Fires in Sazan/Greece comes to Albania's aid, brings the Canader fire-fighting aircraft". Zjarr TV. 7 June 2022. Video. https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=9R9MrivUpZA Accessed on 26 June 2023.

[21]   "Fire in Sazan, Albania supported by the EU Civil Protection Mechanism."

2021 floods in Lezha

Lezha is a municipality in Central Albania, with a territory of mainly plain fields and hills. Lezha County is situated close to the longest river in Albania, the Drini River, and the Adriatic Sea on its western side, making it highly exposed to both the rise of the river and sea level. Its geographical position, urbanization, and historical interventions in the terrain during the communist period are only some of the causes of extensive floods, which have occurred more than once a year in recent years. Due to the urgency posed by these repeated events, the Municipality of Lezha has developed a Civil Emergency Plan[22], a comprehensive document that clearly specifies the names and contact information of people responsible for specific steps, the functions, and the management of the emergency operations centre within the municipality, the volunteer force, etc.

The rainfall of 7-9 January 2021 caused significant damage, including 3,500 ha of flooded lands, of which large agricultural lands[23], landslides in inhabited areas, damage to infrastructure (the bridge that takes residents to the main motorway), severe problems with secondary roads[24], etc.

How was the immediate reaction managed? Data show that during the first twenty-four hours the emergency unit at municipality level intervened to help evacuate the affected families[25]. As planned in the local Civil Emergency Plan, families that did not have alternative accommodations were taken to accommodation structures such as hotels, motels, etc. In addition, local engineers and civil emergency staff undertook some physical interventions on the bridge embankments that allowed the water level and amount of water flow to temporarily decrease. The available information shows that these were the main steps the local government took, and the mayor declared to the media[26] that they were expecting more specialized help from the central government, the Ministry of Defence, and Civil Protection Agency. This can also be confirmed with data from the Ministry of Defence, which states that its troops were put on high alert[27] and about to move into Lezha Municipality.

What happened during the immediate response? After the immediate response, the media reported that military personnel had arrived there by the end of the day on 8 January 2021[28]. This demonstrates that the event was so extensive that the local resources (human or equipment) had to be increased to cope with the situation. Due to the influx of water from

[22] "Disaster Risk Reduction Plan for the Municipality of Lezha". Co-PLAN Institute for Habitat Development UNDP Web. December 2020. https://www.undp.org/albania/publications/plani-i-emergjencave-civile-lezhe Accessed on 26 June 2020.

[23] "The floods in Lezha, the mayor told "ABC": The water is receding." ABC News Web. 11 January 2021. Video. https://abcnews.al/permbytjet-ne-lezhe-kryebashkiaku-per-abc-uji-po-terhiqet/ Accessed on 26 June 2023.

[24] "Flooding in Lezhë, the bridge in the village of Kalivaç collapses, residents are isolated". Shqiptaja.com Web. 9 January 2021. Video https://shqiptarja.com/lajm/permbytjet-ne-lezhe-shembet-ura-ne-fshatin-kalivac-izolohen-banoret?r=read_more Accessed on 26 June 2023.

[25] "Mayor Ndreu: The situation due to the rainfalls in Lezha is dangerous, we have evacuated some residents." Exit News. 8 January 2021. https://exit.al/kryebashkiaku-ndreu-situata-nga-shirat-ne-lezhe-e-rrezikshme-kemi-evakuuar-disa-banore/ Accessed on 25 June 2023.

[26] "Mayor Ndreu: The situation due to the rainfalls in Lezha is dangerous."

[27] "Floods in the country, the AF doubles the capacities in favor of the residents". The Albanian Ministry of Defence Web. 8 January 2021. https://www.mod.gov.al/newsroom-2/4675-permbytjet-ne-vend-fa-dyfishon-kapacitetet-ne-ndihme-te-banoreve Accessed on 25 June 2023.

[28] "Floods in Lezha, the military has landed! The water level in the Drin river falls." *Shqiptarja.com.* 8 January 2021. Video. https://shqiptarja.com/lajm/permbytjet-ne-lezhe-zbarkon-ushtria-bie-niveli-i-ujit-ne-lumin-drin Accessed on 25 June 2023.

the river, one of the main bridges was destroyed, leaving more than 1,500 civilians, as well as students and schoolteachers isolated. The Support Command Engineers were on site, working on refitting the bridge to allow access to and from the isolated area[29]. According to the Minister of Defence declarations[30], on 9 January 2021, the Armed Forces carried out three evacuation measures, one in urban and two in rural areas.

Some reports show that on 10 January the Head of Civil Emergency Protection and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces were on-site[31], monitoring the situation. Also, the Armed Forces Engineers' work to reconstruct the main bridge was ongoing[32]. As for equipment, military trucks and rescue boats were utilized during this phase. This critical situation was managed within 4-5 days. No loss of lives was reported, but the infrastructure was heavily damaged.

2020 fires in Elbasan

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Albania was widely affected by a high number of fires. According to official data from the Albanian Ministry of Defence, during the first seven months of 2020, there were 329 fires, while only during July, there were 168 fire instances[33], burning on 598 hectares. These events requested the intervention of local, regional and national emergency services and military troops.

Elbasan County is located in central Albania, affected by a typical Mediterranean climate with hot summers. Its terrain is rich in hills and mountains, with Mediterranean shrubs and pine forest vegetation. In July 2020, several fires were reported within the Municipality of Elbasan. Such natural events often break out in one area, and spread into others. Our analysis will focus on the intervention during the fire at Guri i Zi village, Administrative Unit Labinot Mal, Municipality of Elbasan.

The fire is believed to have been initiated in Funari, a tourist site close to Guri i Zi. Due to the wind, on 22 July 2020[34], the fire was reported to have spread to Guri i Zi.

How was the immediate reaction managed? On-site, the fire was reported on 22 July 2020, and it was moving faster than expected due to the wind. The media reports that

[29] "Destroyed by the Floods, the Armed Forces Immediately Start Work on the Construction of the Kalivaç Bridge in Lezha." The Albanian Ministry of Defence Web. 10 January 2021. Video. https://www.mod.gov.al/newsroom-2/4681-u-shkaterrua-nga-permbytjet-fa-nisin-menjehere-punen-per-ndertimin-e-ures-se-kalivacit-ne-lezhe Accessed on 25 June 2023.

[30] "The Minister of Defence Inspects the Flooded Areas: We Have Increased Readiness, the Situation Is under Control." The Albanian Ministry of Defence Web. 9 January 2021. Video. https://www.mod.gov.al/newsroom-2/4677-ministri-i-mbrojtjes-inspekton-zonat-e-permbytura-kemi-rritur-gatishmerine-situata-ne-kontroll Accessed on 25 June 2023.

[31] "The Armed Forces engaged on the ground to deal with floods." The Albanian Ministry of Defence Web. 10 January 2021. https://www.mod.gov.al/newsroom-2/4680-forcat-e-armatosura-angazhohen-ne-terren-per-perballimin-e-permbytjeve Accessed on 25 June 2023.

[32] "It was destroyed by the floods, work begins for the reconstruction of the Kalivaçi bridge in Lezha." *Report TV,* 10 January 2021. https://www.report-tv.al/lajm/u-shkaterrua-nga-permbytjet-nis-puna-per-ndertimin-e-ures-se-kalivacit-ne-lezhe Accessed on 25 June 2023.

[33] "Armed Forces Engaged against Fires in Forests and Pastures." *The Defence Newspaper No.08/2020.* August 2020. 23.

[34] "The tourist site of Funari and Guri i Zi in Elbasan is in flames". Ora News Web. 22 July 2020. https://www.oranews.tv/pika-turistike-e-funarit-dhe-gurit-te-zi-ne-elbasan-perfshihet-nga-flaket, Accessed on 26 June 2023.

firefighters were moving into the area on the same day to try and control the fire[35]. The terrain was challenging and inaccessible by the firefighter vehicles. The emergency services, helped by local volunteers and residents, were trying to contain the fire using improvised means. These efforts did not succeed, and the fire was getting closer to the inhabited area, threatening its residents' lives and property. Within the first day of the event, it was clear that the fire could not be contained by the local or regional resources, and the Mayor of Elbasan Municipality called for an air intervention[36].

What happened during the immediate response? In response to the local authorities' request, help from the Albanian Armed Forces came soon enough. On 23 July 2023, a helicopter of the Air Force intervened. Resources from the emergency services and the intervention from the Armed Forces resources via air extinguished the fire within the same day.

Although the last resort, the intervention from the Ministry of Defence came within the first 48 hours of the event because the threat to lives and property was extremely high. The alarming natural events at national level, combined with the high engagement of resources from both local and national levels, was a topic of concern for the Head of the Civil Emergency Protection Agency[37], which also granted recognition to the Minister of Defence for the tireless efforts of the Armed Forces.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The effects of climate change result in increased temperatures, longer heatwaves, more severe rainfalls, flash floods, landslides, etc. The threat multiplier effect can impact both the local and national levels. At local level, these events affect the already most vulnerable communities, while at national level they can halt economic development and increase inequality.

Albania has witnessed an increased number and frequency of natural events, often overlapping, requiring the intervention of the Armed Forces from sea, air, and land. During three consecutive years – 2020, 2021, and 2022 – we have described three extreme events spread across Albania. However, if we consider the bigger picture, there have been multiple natural events of different types in the same county requiring the intervention of emergency services and the Armed Forces. For instance, in 2021, Lezha County suffered from fires and floods, putting at risk critical infrastructure and endangering civilian lives and property.

The three events described took place in different locations in different years. Although different in type, nature, and size, they all have similarities regarding the need for intervention of the Armed Forces. According to official reports from the Albanian Ministry of Defence, in July 2020 alone, the number of Armed Forces' engagement in fire emergencies was 200[38], whereas in 2021, there were 4,960 troops and 152 vehicles deployed[39]. Accord-

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[35] "The tourist site of Funari and Guri i Zi in Elbasan is in flames".

[36] "Massive fire on Labinot Mal, difficult terrain for firefighters, intervened from the air". BalkanWeb. 23 July 2020. Video. https://www.balkanweb.com/video-zjarr-masiv-ne-labinot-mal-terreni-i-veshtire-per-zjarrfikeset-nderhyhet-nga-ajri/ Accessed on 26 June 2023.

[37] "Fires in the country – NCPA letter to Municipalities and Police." *The Defence Newspaper No.09/2020.* 20.

[38] "Armed Forces Engaged against Fires in Forests and Pastures."

[39] "Management of fires in the entire territory of the country. Rama and Peleshi appreciate the work of engaged forces and Civil Defence." *The Defence Newspaper No.09/2021.* 20.

ing to the Albanian Strategy for Defence of 2019, the number of active personnel would be 8,500. It is a significant indicator considering that the number of troops engaged during the 2021 fires was more than half of the AAF active personnel. This demonstrates the severity of these extreme natural events and the risk to human lives, property, and national security.

Further, various projections show an increased frequency of natural events. According to the 2021 World Bank Group's assessment for the Climate Risk Profile in Albania, the temperatures are projected to continue to increase across South Eastern Europe, and Albania's summers are expected to experience the greatest degrees of warming, with an increase of 2.4°C to 3.1°C during June to August.[40] Higher temperatures and more frequent heatwaves are often associated with draughts, which can cause more fires both in frequency and severity. Scholars have also argued that there will be an increase in the sea level in the Mediterranean[41]. To further exacerbate this situation, rainfall scenarios reveal a likely decrease in annual precipitation leading to less available water, and more frequent heavy rainfalls with longer duration, causing flooding and economic damage[42].

Considering the historical data in the context of Albania, there is a link between climate change-induced natural events and the consequent need for engagement of the Armed Forces. When further analysing climate change models and their effects, there is scientific evidence that supports the hypothesis of an increased frequency of extreme natural events. An increase in such natural events will result in an increased demand for the intervention by Albanian military personnel at the national level. Using these models can help predict the need for intervention, its frequency, and its scale, which can better position the Armed Forces in the planning phase.

As of 2022, NATO has called climate change a "threat multiplier" and an unavoidable factor that will measurably increase the risks to the security of its citizens[43]. The threats posed by climate change within the Alliance and outside of its border have been jointly agreed upon to such a point that Canada, together with the NATO Allies, is currently working toward the establishment of the NATO Climate Change and Security Centre of Excellence[44]. In its Agenda on Climate Change and Security, NATO has set out four goals to be tackled across the Alliance: (1) Increase Allied awareness; (2) Adapt to climate change; (3) Contribute to the mitigation of climate change; (4) Enhance outreach.

The 2019 Albanian Defence Strategy and the 2014 National Security Strategy accept climate change as a risk to national security. The National Security Strategy also confirms that the civil protection system does not have sufficient resources to face the increasing number of emergencies and the swift rehabilitation of situations caused by them.

[40]   "Climate Risk Profile: Albania". The World Bank Group Web. 2021. https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/15812-Albania%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf, Accessed on 25 June 2023.

[41]   Ciardini. "Global and Mediterranean climate change: A short summary". 325–337.

[42]   "Third National Communication of the Republic of Albania under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change". The Albanian Ministry of Environment. June 2016. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Albania%20NC3_13%20October%202016.pdf, Accessed on 25 June 2023.

[43]   "The Secretary General's Report. Climate Change & Security Impact Assessment."

[44]   "NATO Climate Change and Security Centre of Excellence". The official website of the Government of Canada. Canada.ca. 6 March 2023. https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/nato-otan/centre-excellence.aspx?lang=eng, Accessed on 26 June 2023.

Albania's accession to NATO took place in 2009. As part of the Alliance, in both strategic documents mentioned above, Albania complies, supports, and operates within the context and directions of NATO.

In the national context, historical and scientific predictive data support a potential increase in climate change-related extreme events. Climate change as a threat has been accepted by the national strategy, which sets out the framework for the operational and tactical levels within the Armed Forces. However, while this threat has been accepted, there is a lack of agreed measures to be taken into this account. On the other hand, aiming at increasing preparedness, NATO emphasizes that the Alliance should continue strengthening national and international resilience, considering the impacts of climate change.

While Albania's approach towards climate change as a threat multiplier for extreme natural events goes in the same direction as NATO, there is a need for clear, national-scale measures. Targeting climate change and its consequences at strategic level will demand an increase in operational and tactical preparedness, providing better and more efficient allocation of human and financial resources within the Albanian Armed Forces.

CONCLUSIONS

The 2021 "Annual World Risk Report" that calculates the disaster risk index for 180 countries ranked Albania in the first three countries with the highest exposure and among the top five countries with the highest vulnerability[45]. According to the World Bank Group's 2021 assessment for the Climate Risk Profile in Albania, the summers in the country are expected to experience the greatest degrees of warming, with an increase of 2.4°C to 3.1°C.[46] Higher temperatures and more frequent heatwaves are often associated with draughts, which can cause more fires both in frequency and severity. Scholars have also argued that there will be an increase in the sea level in the Mediterranean[47]. To further exacerbate this situation, rainfall scenarios reveal a likely decrease in annual precipitation, more frequent heavy rainfalls with longer duration, causing flooding and economic damage[48].

According to official reports from the Albanian Ministry of Defence, during July 2020 alone, 200 men and women of the Armed Forces were deployed in fire control operations in Albania[49]. During the following year, 2021, the total number of engaged resources of the AAF was 4,960 troops and 152 vehicles[50]. This is a significant indicator considering that the number of engaged personnel during the 2021 fires was more than half of the AAF active personnel, as planned in the 2019 Albanian Defence Strategy. This demonstrates how severe these extreme natural events are and the risk posed to human lives, property, and national security. This situation is also supported by the three case studies described in this article: the 2022 fires in Sazani Island, the 2021 floods in Lezha, and the 2020 fires in Elbasan.

In the 2022 "Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment" (CCSIA), NATO accepts that climate change is a "threat multiplier" that has significant security implications for

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[45]   Aleksandrova. "World Risk Report".

[46]   "Climate Risk Profile: Albania."

[47]   Ciardini. "Global and Mediterranean climate change: A short summary".

[48]   "Third National Communication of the Republic of Albania under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change".

[49]   "Armed Forces Engaged against Fires in Forests and Pastures."

[50]   "Management of fires in the entire territory of the country."

the Alliance at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels[51]. The 2019 Albanian Defence Strategy and the 2014 National Security Strategy accept climate change as a risk to national security. The National Security Strategy also confirms that the civil protection system does not have sufficient resources to face the increasing number of emergencies and the swift rehabilitation of situations caused by them.

Considering the historical data in the context of Albania, there is a link between climate change-induced natural events and the consequent need for the engagement of the Armed Forces. When further analysing climate change models and their effects, scientific evidence supports the hypothesis of an increased frequency of natural events, resulting in an increased demand for intervention by Albanian military personnel at national level. Using these models can help predict the need for intervention, its frequency and scale, which can better position the Armed Forces in the planning phase and resource allocation.

While Albania's approach towards climate change as a threat multiplier for extreme natural events goes in the same direction as that of NATO, there is a need for clear, national-scale measures. Targeting climate change and its consequences at strategic level will increase operational and tactical preparedness, providing a better and more efficient future allocation of human and financial resources within the Albanian Armed Forces.

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[51]   "The Secretary General's Report. Climate Change & Security Impact Assessment."

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Tamás Varga

THE INNOVATIVE USE OF DISTANCE-LEARNING TRAINING MATERIALS IN VIRTUAL REALITY (VR) SPACES, AND THE OPPORTUNITIES TO APPLY THE FURTHER DIMENSIONS OF VIRTUALITY (AUGMENTED AND MIXED REALITY – AR/MR) IN MILITARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND IN TACTICAL PROCEDURES

ABSTRACT: *The restrictions and regulations aimed at preventing the global spread of the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID) pandemic, which had its outbreak in 2019, have been exerting negative influence – and, in certain areas, positive impacts – on various dimensions of education and training for more than one year now. Despite the heroic cooperation, terrible and painful losses of human life could not be avoided. However, the effects of the restrictions on alternative education and training processes, on the development of individual digital competencies, and on the emergence of the latest technologies are indisputable.*

Education and training conducted in the form of distance learning are already based on considerable experience, and the examination of training materials, their application methods, and the less explored further opportunities have become a major research area in the last nearly one year.

The rapidly developing technological innovations for the use of virtual spaces (the dimensions of virtual, augmented, and mixed reality) still provide unexploited possibilities, not only in the field of education and training, but they may also play an increasingly important role in operational procedures. It is well demonstrated by one of the latest procurement projects of the United States Armed Forces, in which Microsoft Hololens augmented reality-based systems have been purchased in a substantial amount and of high value[1].

It must be stated that this "trend" is no longer only US soldiers' privilege, as a number of similar – though significantly smaller-scale – programmes are run successfully which support the training of certain groups of soldiers[2]. For the time being, it means supporting the training of merely certain groups, since – in the framework of the Zrínyi Defence and Military Development Programme – the particular simulation capabilities are enabled and set up parallel to or following the scheduled supplies of the technical equipment. These tools are mainly in garrisons where they are required for capability development, and where the real

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[1] Sullivan, M. "Here's how the Army will use 120,000 Microsoft HoloLens headsets in battle". Fast Government. 5 April 2021. https://www.fastcompany.com/90630728/microsoft-army-hololens-deal, Accessed on 3 June 2021.

[2] Koszticsák, Sz. "Szolnok received a helicopter simulator." (in Hungarian) MTI. 11 February 2019. https://iho.hu/hirek/helikopterszimulatort-adtak-at-szolnokon-190211 Accessed on 3 June 2021.

assets and the operating and supporting staff are located. Up to now, such systems have been set up in the training of air force personnel – simulation systems related to the Airbus H145M helicopters, Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC), helicopter door gunner etc. However, their appearance is expected in the training of land forces – armoured, artillery and infantry as well, in the near future.

The drills in military activities and in various tactical procedures are of primary importance so that the combat readiness level of the armed forces can be set and maintained, which is – even in peacetime – exceptionally demanding in terms of financial, material, and technical requirements. It is, therefore, essential to identify training procedures, such as the various simulation systems that enhance the achievement of training objectives and are cost-effective at the same time. In the modern preparation and training system of the armed forces, "the already available cost-reducing digital technical training systems will play an important part. From a merely technical viewpoint, we are in an easy situation since the technical training opportunities of the 21ˢᵗ century go as far as the imagination goes. On the international market, the simulation systems for tasks are available in all phases of training"[3].

KEYWORDS: *distance learning, virtual, augmented and mixed reality; hybrid learning materials*

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INTRODUCTION

A professional soldier may feel uplifted and inspired when standing near some new and state-of-the-art technical equipment, especially if it incorporates the latest achievements and innovations of the modern defence industry, and is able to support the armed forces in conducting their missions. Its role is only to support them, since not even the most modern military equipment is capable of working effectively without trained personnel. Naturally, it is only the future when the development of artificial intelligence and *autonomous system*s might reach the level at which – in compliance with the appropriate moral and ethical standards – the tools can be enabled to have certain decision-making and enforcement powers. However, I am certain that it is the person who must take the final decision in truly complex situations.

At the current development level of combat equipment, the thorough education and effective training of soldiers are the way to the full utilization of capabilities, and the development of the quality indicators is one of the main objectives for all instructors and trainers.

My personal motivation and commitment are also rooted in this conviction. In my research, as a trainer as well as a PhD student at the University of Public Service, I examine what form and methodology must be used to cater for the individual learning preferences,

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3   Révész, B. "The Hungarian Defence Forces may receive more cutting-edge technology." (in Hungarian) Honvedelem.hu. 10 December 2020. https://honvedelem.hu/hirek/ujabb-csucstechnika-erkezhet-a-magyar-honvedseghez.html Accessed on 3 June 2021.

learning strategies and motivations of the current military personnel while – besides the traditional and predominantly frontal teaching-based education processes – the alternative methods are also given greater importance and, thereby, students are provided with a variety of options for achieving their educational and training objectives.

Therefore, the aims of my research, besides defining the basic learning preferences of the target audience (the military personnel of the Hungarian Defence Forces) are as follows:

– to make recommendations on the methodological character of future distance-learning training materials (the content format in line with learning preferences, the applied platform, reference model, etc.);

– to create a new reference model applying and combining the existing and future distance-learning training materials and the opportunities provided by virtual reality space;

– to prove that virtual spaces (VR/AR/MR) open up opportunities even for developing and acquiring practical skills and abilities.

Another aim of my research is to lay the foundations for an educational and training platform and service launched in virtual and/or augmented reality spaces, which do not manifest themselves in physical reality, but are able to foster the development of a soldier's individual cognitive abilities (presenting and transferring new information within several dimensions of learning preferences – visually, audibly in writing, etc.). In addition, the platform and service will provide opportunities for the simulation of events and activities in the real physical space, where soldiers will be able to practise diverse tactical procedures and test feasibility in almost laboratory-like circumstances.

CONQUERING THE DIMENSIONS OF VIRTUALITY

It would be rather unfair to claim that the idea of virtual reality or virtuality is one of the achievements of modern science because there have already been initiatives with the objective of placing an individual or a group of individuals into a "space – situation – event" which either takes place at some point in time in the past or is set in a fictitious and futuristic world. One of the best examples of this is Feszty körkép (Feszty Cyclorama) in Ópusztaszer, Hungary, or The Bourbaki Panorama, in Switzerland. Due to their enormous size, both take their visitors out of the real world and mesmerize them with the lifelike presentation of a past event.

The display itself is impressive, however, the possibilities of visualising an event in space and time are rather limited. Furthermore, no interaction is possible among the various elements, therefore these otherwise magnificent works of art can be used for educational or training purposes to a lesser degree only.

The active use of virtual *realities* (where the plural is not accidental, for today one can distinguish between virtual, augmented, and mixed realities) is a genuinely modern technology. Nowadays its potential is primarily exploited by the entertainment industry where the video game sector is one of the fastest growing fields with near-real-life visualisations and experience-based service at the core of innovation. Naturally, the advances of technology are not confined to this sector since graphic design, data processing and analysing also affect IT and vice versa. Modern game developers and game engines are now able to create an almost real-life three-dimensional appearance in a video game, where using various devices and motion sensors one is able to interact with the game elements, manipulate and

control them; furthermore, these elements can manipulate their users. It seems obvious that these kinds of simulation programs have a place in military education and training.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF VIRTUAL DIMENSIONS

For this study and for the design of future simulation programmes, it is essential to make a clear distinction between the various types of virtual dimensions and their basic methods of application.

Basically, one can distinguish between virtual, augmented, and mixed reality dimensions. In many cases, experts' opinions differ on the interpretation or the use of these, possibly due to the fact that the borderline between them is not very clear.
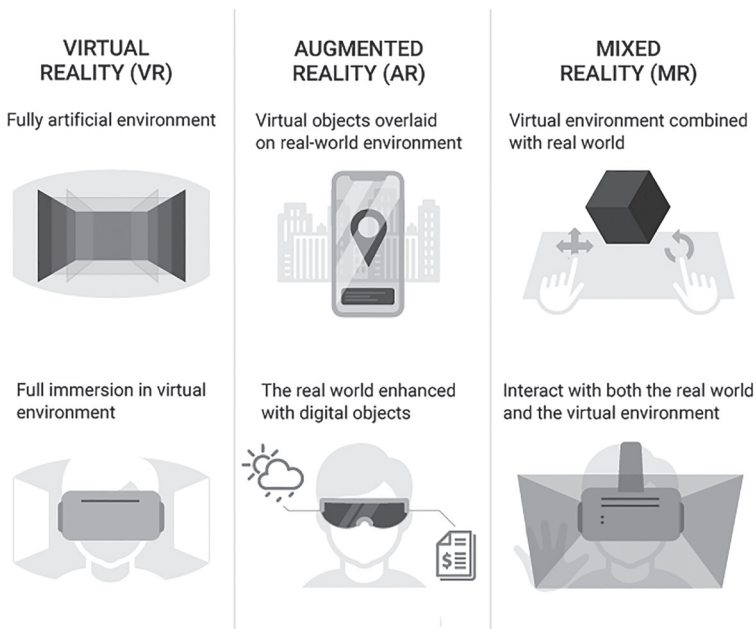
Figure 1 *The definition of virtual, augmented and mixed reality*[4]

"Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) – although still used interchangeably by many – in fact, are two entirely different concepts. Virtual reality is not identical with augmented reality. Virtual reality differs from augmented reality in one very important aspect. Once virtual reality goggles are put on, you get into the dimension, space, room, or place where that particular game or application takes place and the outside world is totally blocked out. In augmented reality, however, you stay in the original, real surroundings in which the artificially created, virtual, otherwise non-existent objects or contents appear.

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[4]   Gleb, B. "VR vs AR vs MR: Differences and real-life Applications". Rubygarage. 4 January 2020. https://rubygarage.org/blog/difference-between-ar-vr-mr Accessed on 8 June 2021.

In augmented reality, you look at something through the camera of a mobile phone or tablet and a specific application adds pictures and information."[5]

Therefore, in the case of VR you are totally isolated from your surrounding environment, while in AR you perceive your own physical dimensions and can act in them, but additional virtual, passive, and non-interactive objects also appear to support your activities.

Mixed reality, compared to the previously discussed VR and AR, represents a higher level of development, where you can interact with both the real, physical world including its objects and virtually created ones by means of a motion-simulating active device.

The creation of virtual reality is based on the principle of stereoscopy, which "combines all imaging techniques for creating or enhancing the illusion of three-dimensional vision in an image. Three-dimensional vision occurs when the brain processes and combines two offset images perceived by our eyes in real time (stereopsis). Consequently, if two offset images are shown to the left and right eye separately, it yields a perception of 3D depth."[6]
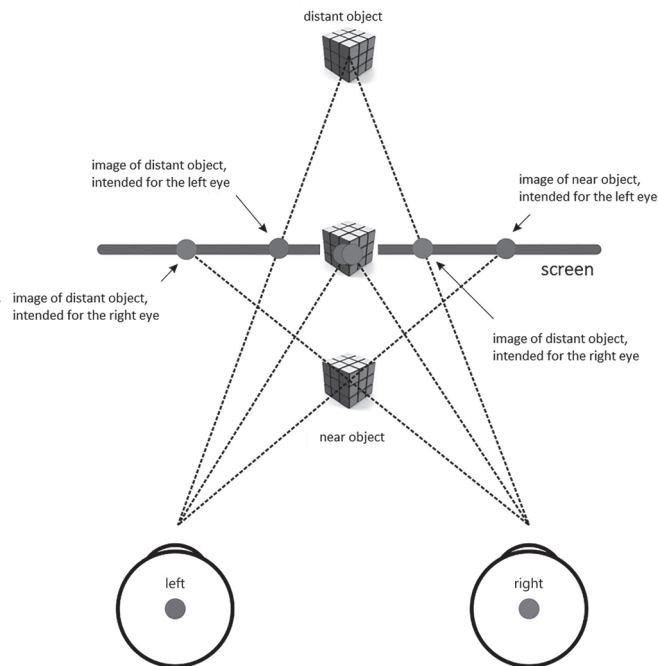
Figure 2 *The history of three-dimensional visualization techniques*[7]

5   "What is the difference between extended reality and virtual reality?" (in Hungarian) Holoszoba.hu. 7 February 2017. https://holoszoba.hu/mi-a-kulonbseg-a-kiterjesztett-valosag-es-a-virtualis-valosag-kozott/ Accessed on 8 June 2021.
6   "Sztereoszkópia". Museum-digital.de. 28 March 2020. https://rlp.museum-digital.de/index.php?t=tag&id= 5966&navlang=hu Accessed on 8 June 2021.
7   Fekete, T., Antal, Á., Tamás, P., Décsei-Paróczi, A. "The history of three-dimensional imaging." (in Hungarian) Mogi.bme.hu. https://mogi.bme.hu/TAMOP/3d_megjelenitesi_technikak/ch06.html, Accessed on 8 June 2021.

It is vital to point out that virtual dimension techniques are based on the deception of the human senses, especially the eyes. Handling this is a formidable challenge in itself, but for safety reasons it is also important to determine the negative effects of these techniques on the human body from an anatomical point of view, both in the long and short term.

The early applications for VR space, especially ones involving physical movement, resulted in a negative experience for the users. This phenomenon is rooted in anatomic cognitive dissonance and the conflict of convergence and accommodation. The former means, "your brain becomes confused when your body and brain perceive two different stimuli. For example, you are sitting comfortably in an armchair, with a helmet on, and a controller in your hand when your brain receives a signal that you are running for your life in the jungle. This kind of cognitive dissonance can easily cause confusion, dizziness and discomfort.

The latter occurs when you are looking at an object or person and your eyes set the focus depending on the distance you are from that particular object or person. Convergence refers to the fact that the closer the object or person you are looking at is the more your eyes converge. Accommodation, on the other hand, is when your lenses are set depending on the distance from what you are looking at, so that the light coming from the object falls on the area of sharp vision. These two processes take place simultaneously therefore in the real world things that look near are near, the ones that you see at a distance, are a long way away. In virtual reality, however, you are looking at two displays placed in front of your eyes, and regardless whether you want to focus on the nearby things or the ones further away, your eyes will only focus on the objects that are very close. Eye muscles are confused, accommodation practically ceases to function, and this confusion can lead to fatigue, discomfort or vomiting."[8]

SIMULATION SYSTEMS IN THE TRAINING SYSTEM OF THE HUNGARIAN DEFENCE FORCES

In the current training system of the defence forces, it is the simulation systems developed for the crew of military helicopters and JTAC (Joint Terminal Attack Controller) personnel that represent the most advanced technology.

In spite of their high acquisition costs, these systems have resulted in significant savings in expenditure, however, they are only capable of providing effective supplementary training for a minority of the personnel. This training is supplementary, since the time spent in real operational or exercise environment cannot be replaced with time spent in simulation systems; the experience gained in such environments are not equivalent. However, practising in simulators still forms an important part of the training, since a wide range of possible situations can be simulated, which can provide effective help in developing the skills of quick decision-making and reaction capacity.

It is important to note that these simulation systems are also based on virtual reality, however, the users do not normally wear VR goggles because visualisation is carried out by outside projectors. On the one hand – from an ergonomic point of view – it is rather positive since it eliminates the problems of cognitive dissonance. On the other, however, the accidental lack of realistic spatial perception still remains an important issue.

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8   Bari, M. "Oculus promises virtual reality free of vomiting." (in Hungarian) 24.hu/tech. 18 May 2018. https://24.hu/tech/2017/05/18/hanyasmentes-virtualis-valosagot-iger-az-oculus/ Accessed on 16 February 2020.

The simulation programme developed for helicopter door gunners is totally different in approach from the one described above, being entirely based on virtual reality. The pilot is responsible for the manoeuvres of the aircraft to ensure that it reaches the designated landing zone on the pre-defined aerial route. The scope of duties of a door gunner is at least as complex as that of a pilot since he is responsible for providing protection for the aircraft. "However, in some cases it may include providing aerial escort and security for columns of convoys on the ground, which is carried out in different ways in an urban terrain and in open ground. In order to avoid helicopters falling prey to friendly fire of door gunners while changing position, door gunners must spend many hours in simulators. As many hours as necessary so that both the pilot and the door gunner could carry out their duties automatically, safely, and effectively."[9]

Obviously, at the level of the average infantry soldiers – based upon the enormous user demands and the character of their fundamental tasks – planning needs a different approach and a different way of thinking.

It can be stated of all the three simulations systems above that the system of activities is fixed in one position, that is, users do not or hardly move while using the simulation devices, the substantial part of their activities takes place in virtual space. So in case of assignments that are fixed in one position (pilot in the cockpit, door gunner, JTAC operator, the crew of infantry fighting vehicles, turret gunner, etc.) and no change of position occurs, applications based on virtual reality may take a market leader position and be capable of supporting the system of training.

In the case of infantry sub-units that comprise a large number of personnel, however, the situation is fundamentally different. The vision and spatial recognition of soldiers cannot be eliminated by placing VR goggles on them since they carry out tasks that basically involve movement and position change (e.g. occupying a line or an objective). In such cases, systems based on reality may be the solution, where soldiers – while acting in real physical space – may be provided with supplementary information (geographical position, weather conditions, compass markers, "friend-or-foe" identification signals, real-time video signal transmitted by autonomous devices, etc.) to help them carry out their basic functions. Obviously, it must be examined how much the supplementary AR interfaces support or hamper soldiers in implementing their duties and what effect the entire system has on the cognitive capacity of soldiers and the length of recreation after the operation.

VR-AR PROJECTS SUPPORTING MILITARY TRAINING AND EDUCATION BASED ON INTERNAL RESOURCES

In the training and education system of the Hungarian Defence Forces, the ambitions affecting virtual and augmented reality – apart from the procurement of simulators supporting the training of helicopter crew and JTAC operators mentioned above – are rather modest for the present. One might think it is still viewed as a supplement to traditional training systems rather than an independent area of training.

All the simulation devices that have been procured, deployed, and have become operational to date belong to prestigious suppliers in a segment of the international arms industry (Thales, Saab, etc.), a fact that is apparent in the elaboration and effectiveness of the

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9   Trautmann, B. "Imagined flight – more than simulator." (in Hungarian) Haborumuveszete.hu. 16 September 2016. https://www.haborumuveszete.hu/phirek/9/alakulatok-hirei/kepzelt-repules-tobb-mint-szimulator Accessed on 8 June 2020.

simulation systems, and obviously in the expenses of their procurement, installation, and maintenance[10].

One might justifiably ask that when the tasks of relatively minor significance in the long list of basic missions of the Hungarian Defence Forces, or their advancement can be expected to take place later, what solution will be provided for effective training? Is it possible to support VR-AR training programmes and ideas that have more modest budgetary needs but can be efficiently applied and based on the "grey matter" of trainers and instructors solely?

In my view, the answer to this question is affirmative. This statement is based upon the fact that within a short period of time following the Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) distance-learning training materials (the distance-learning modules of volunteer reserve officers, and NCO basic course), which were devised by civilian capabilities in 2018 and 2019, identical, sometimes more developed, internal resource-based digital learning materials were published which are even capable of effective support for the education and training needs of the Zrínyi Programme (the digital training material of civilian employees in 2020; LEOPARD2A4HU).[11]

Following the same logic and based upon the experience that trainers and instructors who actively carry out their tasks in the system of training and education can formulate the operational needs of the training capability that supplements the educational process, great achievements can be made in the field of development of training capabilities provided there is trained information technology personnel available who can implement the objectives.

In the next part of the paper, a few project initiatives and ideas will be described that our colleagues are currently working on.

A FUSION OF TRADITIONAL SCORM DISTANCE-LEARNING TRAINING MATERIALS AND AUGMENTED REALITY APPLICATIONS

The targeted completion of distance-learning training materials with media elements is of outstanding importance, since in the vast majority of cases these materials are intended for learners whose learning preferences are not known. For this reason, the learning process must be structured in a manner that provides the necessary information for all preferences in a written, oral, or visual form.

Even in the case of traditional frontal lectures, instructors tend to illustrate the information relevant to a topic with pictures, videos, and animations. Although these make three-dimensional demonstration possible, the projected media elements still appear on a two-dimensional surface.

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[10] Koszticsák Sz. "Szolnok received a helicopter simulator."
[11] Ördög Kovács, M. "Digital study materials aid in training." (in Hungarian) Honvedelem.hu. 1 February 2021. https://honvedelem.hu/hirek/digitalis-tananyaggal-segitik-a-kikepzest.html Accessed on 9 June 2021.

A fusion of traditional SCORM training materials with applications based on augmented reality might provide a much more representative and advanced-quality opportunity of visual representation – supplemented with several elements of learner–training materials interaction – where the content of the training material built up in the application (e.g. a real, three-dimensional model of a static or moving technical device) is activated by a picture or a diagram integrated in the distance-learning training material.

In this case, on certain surfaces of the training material, supplementary signs must be placed, which draw the learner's attention to the fact that additional content is available, related to the training material. Focusing the application window of the smart device on the training materials displayed on the computer screen, the supplementary contents appear in real three-dimensional representation. Buttons and surfaces that are necessary to activate additional information can be placed on both the surface of the smart device and in the augmented reality space created before on the smart device for interaction – magnification, rotation, activating supplementary information related to certain parts.

If need be, the application could be complemented with sensory devices that make the representation of real physical spatial movement possible in virtual space (Leap Motion Controller), a solution that can ensure a much more advanced possibility for interaction with virtual models. However, this approach is closely connected to the area of mixed reality.[12]

This seems to be the most cost-effective solution until the quality level of augmented reality goggles on the market reaches that of the virtual reality goggles. As soon as the great developing companies – e.g. Microsoft, Oculus, Qualcomm – are able to offer augmented /mixed reality goggles in an accessible price category ($2-300) as opposed to the current $800-2,500 each, the number of hybrid or solely AR/MR training modules will undoubtedly enter the area of training and education.

At certain points of the learning process a pair of augmented reality goggles of adequate quality could be synchronized with the learner's personal computer if necessary, and will activate the training contents placed in augmented reality space without user interaction. Learners will be able to interact freely with these training contents, especially with three- or more-dimensional models, using their hands – since no longer will they need to keep their smart devices in their hands in order to display AR space –, or by simply "clicking" certain surfaces in the space, they can activate built-in sub-programmes concerning the models.

VIRTUAL REALITY BASED APPLICATIONS USING 360-DEGREE VIDEO RECORDINGS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

The system of military activities – especially in a state of emergency and when participating in international operations – is characterized by extraordinarily high-level stress and risk factors. The security status might change in a split second, to which you need to respond within the same amount of time to safeguard your own and your comrades' life and safety, as well as bearing the mandate of the operation and the rules of engagment in mind,

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12 Habók, L. "Interaction engine: kezünkből csinálna VR kontrollert a Leap Motion". hwsw.hu. 25 August 2016. https://www.hwsw.hu/hirek/56069/leap-motion-interaction-engine-vr-vive-oculus.html Accessed on 9 June 2021.

causing the slightest possible collateral damage to civilian lives, property and the natural environment. These criteria can only be fulfilled after an effective high-quality training course has been completed and the appropriate situational awareness has been established.

"Situational awareness means the perception of the environment and the environmental elements in the light of the events occuring around us. It plays an important part both in time and space. It requires active attention, an observation analysis and some intuitive prediction of possible outcomes and consequences. Everything within this concept plays an active role in certain professions as well as in every civilian person's life, for some people more than for others. It is of primary importance in professions, such as law enforcement and security jobs, traffic control, and in any jobs of high-level responsibility and high risks. In day-to-day life, it may play an important part in transport or in avoiding situations with negative people."[13]

Therefore, creating appropriate situational awareness may be a matter of life and death in certain cases. This is one of the reasons why it is essential to train soldiers in lifelike situations at the end of particular training phases and during final exercises.

In order to drill soldiers in various activities and tactical procedures, it is an established routine to analyse video recordings that examine (pros and cons) the feasibility of such procedures in diverse situations. This practice is absolutely applicable, but in these cases, the soldiers are "merely" external observers of the given situation, and they are not able to experience its 360-degree dimensions. However, controlling an assembled crowd in an operational area, crossing a terrain under the threat of some suspected explosive weapon, or protecting a VIP – all require full three-dimensional perception of the situation.

The various VR applications in which the situations are recorded using 360-degree cameras can effectively support the creation of the appropriate situational awareness, even in the preparation phase prior to a foreign deployment. Certainly, this idea is not a new discovery; there exists a number of programs that have been designed with the same purpose. The initiative of the United Nations Organization, named UNVR, is an example, which is basically aimed at "sensitizing" certain decision-makers of the member states (potential project support providers) in relation to various UN missions.[14]

Some possible internal VR programs to improve situational awareness:

– *A VR application supporting the UN military observers' aerial reconnaissance exercise*
Conducting aerial reconnaissance, registering the opposing parties' military equipment and activities, and documenting the movements and actions of troops banned from military activities or movements, and actions taking place in control zones are an integral part of the military observers' training programme accredited by the UN (International Military Observers' Course – IMOC).[15] All this requires a considerable number of air assets and hours flown, which entails expenses of millions of HUF from the national military budget. Provided that the simulated activities along the flight path can be recorded with 360-degree cameras, after the one-time development of the VR

[13] Pazsit, Z. "Situational awareness." (in Hungarian) blog.pazsitz.hu. 6 August 2019. https://blog.pazsitz.hu/pszichologia/szituacios-tudatossag/ Accessed on 9 June 2021.

[14] "VR Films". UN Virtual Reality. 2019. http://unvr.sdgactioncampaign.org/vr-films/#.YMD6y_kzZPY Accessed on 09 June 2021.

[15] Kelemen, I. "Patrol exercise and aerial reconnaissance." (in Hungarian) Honvedelem.hu. 7 October 2019. https://honvedelem.hu/galeriak/jarorgyakorlat-es-legi-felderites.html Accessed on 9 June 2021.

program and the procurement of the necessary additional equipment (VR equipment), the program can be reused on countless occasions during theoretical preparation, and it will presumably have a positive impact on the actual implementation as well.

– *Procedures at legal/illegal checkpoints in case of peaceful or hostile crowds – a supporting VR-application*

Examining how operations must be carried out and how security must be organised at legal /illegal checkpoints and in case of peaceful or hostile crowds is an integral part of the courses and training events that prepare soldiers for operational tasks. In cases when soldiers need to interpret and define 360-degree security to the full extent of space, a 360-degree VR application can be an opportunity to make the training more effective.

– *VR applications supporting the tactical procedures training*

Practising proper tactical procedures (marching formations and movement in the field, the process of examining the terrain, mine and improvised explosive device awareness in threat areas, searching objectives, etc.) comprises a basic part of practical military training. Being able to execute them automatically at the level of 'muscle memory' might be the key to the survival of the individual soldier and their comrades in theatres of real tactical operations or peace operations. According to the methodology of military training, demonstration and illustration play an important role in the training process: the instructors first demonstrate the activity divided into small steps then the entire procedure to the trainees, then they practise the recruits until their performance level achieves proficiency.

Obviously, trainees can only view and examine the activity from one perspective during the demonstration phase, which, in the case of a complex process (e.g. the relative position of soldiers to one another, or individual sectors of observation, or more complicated marching formations that might be affected by the terrain), makes the process of understanding and acquisition more difficult.

In my view, what might help is the use of a methodologically well-based virtual reality application that is capable of demonstrating the proper implementation of tactical procedures, where one can freely switch between views of a squad or a platoon, and can examine the individual movement and activities from any perspective.

Applications demonstrating the process of terrain examination, or mine and improvised explosive devices awareness in threat areas, and searching objectives could be structured on the same logic, where the proper implementation of established and accepted procedures may be demonstrated for trainees.

Naturally, it must be emphasized for trainees that the use of the given procedures might depend on the operational situation, the activities of enemy forces, weather conditions, and that the procedure demonstrated in the application can only be viewed as one of the several suggested ways of implementation. In a live operational environment, it is the right and duty of the on-scene commanders to choose a procedure after thoroughly considering the situation.

VR-AR PROJECTS SUPPORTING REAL-TIME TACTICAL PROCEDURES

The possibilities of the use of programmes and applications based on virtual, augmented, and mixed reality in the field of training and education are more or less proven; several progressive initiatives exist in the civilian industrial sector. Examples include the car industry, where the proper implementation of the assembly of parts is supported by augmented reality

applications, or medical diagnosis, where with the aid of visual representation of certain examinations (e.g. surgical interventions) of diseases can be treated with greater efficiency.

One can ask whether such technology can be applied in the field of military tactical procedures, which can contribute to the success of combat engagement directly, and to the survival of the personnel using military technology indirectly.

In my opinion, the answer is yes. In the following, an attempt will be made to prove this merely on theoretical basis.

One arm that has the greatest mobility and firepower in ground forces is armour. Main battle tanks have been a key element in ground operations since the beginning of the 20th century; their main task is to penetrate enemy lines and ensure victory in the depth of the battlefield. During the two world wars, these formidable combat vehicles played extremely important roles, and their rationale has not been questioned ever since.

A tank is a complex weapon system, an armoured fighting vehicle developed for direct contact with the enemy. A tank is the ideal combination of firepower, armour protection, and mobility. Firepower is provided by weapons mounted on a tank, in most cases a large-calibre gun in a rotating turret and supplementary weapons. Armour protects personnel, the engine and ammunition; the level of protection depends on the thickness and the material of the armour, the way in which its parts are fitted together, and the angle of armour plates. The main characteristics of mobility include speed, the capability of moving on rough terrain, and effective range. Mobility can be influenced by a variety of factors: the type and performance of the engine, the suspension and arrangement of the running gear, the width of the tracks, the system of transmission, the thickness of the armour, and the total weight of the vehicle.

In my view, a further indicator of the survival of main battle tanks could be the effectiveness of visual reconnaissance. If the optical devices of a tank are capable of representing the surrounding field around a tank in a greater range of vision, and their magnifying parameters are highly advanced, then the crew of the tank will reconnoitre and identify enemy units faster and open fire at them.

An example is the LEOPARD2A4 main battle tank that has good tactical characteristics, in which the visual reconnaissance is supported by a PERI R17 gyro-stabilized panoramic commander sight periscope and prisms built in the turret.

The commander's sight ensures the visual observation of the space around the tank with a 27°×7° field of view, horizontally 360°, vertically 33°, (from −13° to +20°) with magnifications of 2× and 8×.

Based upon the specifications above, it can be stated that the efficient visual observation of the ground around the main battle tank requires continuous and precise work from the commanding personnel, with regard to the size of the area to be observed and the relatively limited range of the field of view.

One might ask whether, apart from the traditionally installed optical equipment (PERI R17 commander sight, the EMES main range finder, the FERO-Z18 auxiliary telescope and the prisms), new systems of cameras with a 360° field of view could be installed to ensure more effective reconnaissance. Could the three-dimensional image be transmitted and displayed on a head-up display placed on the headgear of the crew of the tank? Could the projected image be synchronised with the movement of the head with a gyroscopic motion sensor?

In my view, the answer is yes. It is feasible in technical terms, however, several important factors need to be considered:

– The vulnerability of camera systems: The traditionally installed equipment is fitted with strong armour protection in order to provide protection against the destructive effects of hostile weapons. If need be, the camera systems available on the market must be retrofitted with armour, or further research must be conducted to develop the equipment that has the appropriate indicators for protection.

– Integrability into the fire control system: The "brain" of the tank is the fire control system, a ballistic computer, which calculates the appropriate ballistic elements relying on basic information such as the speed of the tank, inclination angle, target distance, etc. An important question to be answered is whether the three-dimensional image generated by the camera systems can be synchronized with the main targeting systems. If there is a lack of cooperation between the systems, the advantage of the rapid visual detection enabled by the three-dimensional cameras is lost since the traditional targeting system must be used, which wastes time and requires careful divided attention.

– The availability of Identification Friend or Foe (IFF): Besides rapid visual detection, it is essential that the own or friendly forces' military equipment can be identified clearly, which is an extremely difficult task in low visibility conditions. It would be an enormous benefit if computers were able to calculate the GPS-based positions of the own forces' military equipment in a three-dimensional image provided by the cameras, whereby assisting the crew in avoiding friendly fire and in opening fire on hostile tanks. Obviously, the protection of the collaborative computer networks also needs to be taken into account, as the advantage gained might easily lead to a major downside, and provide an opportunity for hostile forces.

There is a long list of further areas to be examined, and a number of theoretical as well as practical questions need answers before an ideally workable theory is put into practice, and may support the crew in battle.

Choosing which virtual dimension (VR – virtual reality or AR – augmented reality) must be used in the creation of the program is of primary importance since certain capabilities and indicators, such as the range of the field of view and the feasibility of the interface, etc., might appear as advantages in one dimension or disadvantages in another.

A key issue is what range of the field of view is provided by the tools, goggles, and head units belonging to the different dimensions.

In virtual reality, the field of view may be covered with content up to 170 degrees (Pimax 8K VR goggles), and the reliably functioning Oculus VR goggles are also capable of covering a 90- or 100-degree range of the field of view.

The data provided by the important devices (e.g. firing modes, the commander's computer system, the details of the ammunition reserve and the grenade launcher system, the position of the tank/turret, etc.) can be placed in the areas close to the peripheries. In this case, the advantage of virtual reality as an operational dimension is that it allows an interface without divided attention. Its drawback is, however, that it leads to further isolation among the members of the crew on the battlefield, which has already been disconnected from the outside world. In addition, an extra computer unit needs to be set up between the installed devices and the VR head unit for the visual representation of the data provided by those devices.
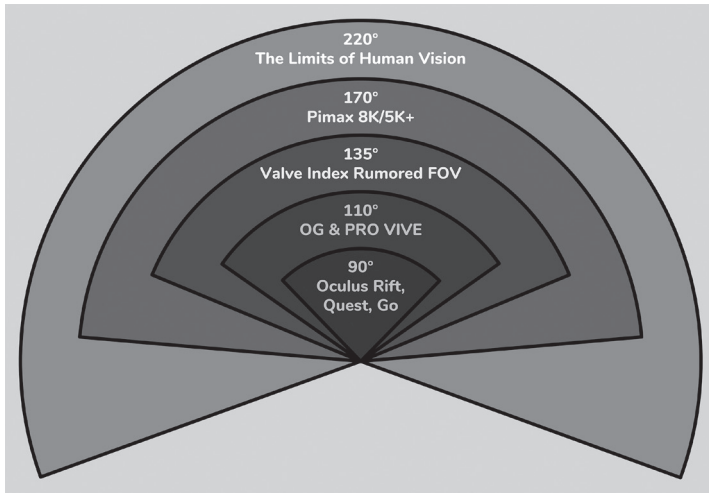
Figure 3 *The field of view of VR tools*[16]

When using augmented reality, a considerably more limited field of view is provided, which, in the case of one of the most widely acknowledged devices, the Microsoft Hololens 2 AR goggles, is 43°×29°. One advantage of the augmented reality dimension is that the crew members are not isolated, that is they can stay in visual contact within the battlefield. Furthermore, the displays of the installed equipment are visible through the parts not covered by content, and there is no need to develop auxiliary computer units in order to enhance data transmission. On the other hand, a great disadvantage from an ergonomic point of view is that the attention of the crew is divided between the field of view of the goggles and the equipment on the battlefield.

SUMMARY

As I stated in my introduction, for me as a professional soldier, it is inspiring and uplifting to stand near a modern technological device, especially when it incorporates state-of-the-art and cutting-edge military technology, is innovative, and capable of supporting the armed forces to accomplish their mission successfully. It also feels gratifying when a group of soldiers master the theoretical basis for handling the new device systems of the Zrínyi Programme or start practical training using digital training materials developed by specialists, graphic designers and communication experts. Indeed, virtual, augmented or mixed reality programs and applications can add substantially to the productivity of the courses aimed at developing these skills.

Obviously, we are still at the very beginning of this process when it is essential to understand and learn to apply the basic principles of VR-AR technology in order to help achieve

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[16] "FoV Comparison". OculusQuest. Reddit. 2019. https://www.reddit.com/r/OculusQuest/comments/b9veej/fov_comparison/ Accessed on 14 June 2021.

proficiency in the various graphics educational software (3D model design- Blender) or game engines (UNITY, UNREAL).

The next step marks the most crucial point in the process, namely the development and approval of project ideas aligned with the training programmes. Here, it is of key importance to convince the strategic decision-makers that they can rely on the human resources of the Hungarian Defence Forces to realize even such seemingly futuristic projects. With a relatively low budget and at well below market price, it is possible to build high-quality training capacities of international standard or beyond, which are able to cost-effectively meet the objectives of military education and training in the long run.

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Col. Liu Xiaoguang

THE NEW EVOLUTION OF WARFARE: INTELLIGENT WARFARE

ABSTRACT: *With the rise of a new round of science and technology and industrial revolution, high-tech groups represented by artificial intelligence are bringing profound influence and changes to future wars. Based on the analysis of the inevitability of the evolution of intelligent warfare, this article focuses on the essential characteristics of intelligent warfare and proposes possible forms of the development of intelligent warfare.*

KEYWORDS: *warfare, intelligent, evolution*

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INTRODUCTION

At present, a new wave of technological development is surging and unstoppable. High-tech clusters represented by Artificial Intelligence (AI) are accelerating their development and are widely used in the military field. Countries around the world have issued guidance strategies to facilitate innovative breakthroughs in military intelligence. Whether actively embracing or passively accepting, the trend toward military intelligence is hard to resist. Its innovative development will profoundly change human cognition, thinking, and mode of combat, and trigger significant changes in the form of warfare.

THE INEVITABILITY OF THE EVOLUTION OF INTELLIGENT WARFARE

The second decade of the 21st century is a decade of the rise and rapid expansion of AI. With the rapid development of intelligent technologies such as AI, big data, cloud computing, biotechnology, and unmanned systems, as well as the in-depth integration with traditional technologies, it has changed the ability of human beings to understand and transform the world in terms of epistemology, methodology, and operating mechanism. Intelligentization will become a new stage in the development of human civilization following mechanization and informatization, leading the military field to achieve comprehensive innovation breakthroughs and accelerating the arrival of the era of intelligent warfare.

The transformation of social and economic forms laid the material foundation for intelligent warfare. Friedrich Engels argued that "As the mode of production, so the mode of combat."[1] Looking at the whole history of the development of human society and war, it is not difficult to find that humans usually employ similar tools for both production and combat. At present, the fourth Industrial Revolution is sweeping the world at an unprecedented pace. Some major disruptive technological innovations are creating new industries and new forms of business, transforming social production and consumption from industrialization and automation to intelligentization, and driving changes in social production methods and economic forms. German Industry 4.0, US reindustrialization, Made in China 2025, Japan's Robot Strategy, and the corresponding policies of other major countries will promote the technological revolution from the technological field to the entire economic and social fields. In the military field, new social production tools and methods will also greatly improve the efficiency of research and development, production, and procurement of war tools, and provide a material basis for the development of intelligent warfare.

A new round of global scientific and technological revolution is the fundamental reason for driving intelligent warfare. Friedrich Engels pointed out: "Once technological advancements can be used for military purposes and have been used for military purposes, they very immediately and almost necessarily, often violating the commander's will, cause changes or even transformations in the styles of warfare."[2] With the brewing and forming of a new round of scientific and technological revolution, the new generation of information technology represented by quantum information, 5G communication and Internet of Things (IOT) will accelerate the breakthrough, which will transform the way of information support on the battlefield; the accelerated development of life science represented by biotechnology, cognitive technology and brain science will make the cognitive domain a new battlefield focus; new damage mechanism weapons represented by technologies such as directed energy, hypersonic speed, electromagnetic cyberspace attack, etc. will cause major changes in strike modes; unmanned equipment technologies represented by environmental perception, intelligent control, and system coordination are gradually applied and popularized, the new model of "unmanned combat" will become possible. Breakthroughs in intelligent weapon systems represented by key technologies such as AI, autonomous intelligence, and autonomous control will give birth to new concepts of autonomous operations. These high-tech breakthroughs in the military field will bring unprecedented transformative and disruptive changes, accelerate the comprehensive remodelling of the operational theory, mode of operation, weaponry, and organizational structure, and drive the evolution of intelligent war.

The great powers competing for the strategic commanding heights have become the background of the times to promote intelligent warfare. At present, the world's major military powers have elevated the development of artificial intelligence to a national strategy, and made military intelligence a focus of national defence and military construction to seize the initiative in future intelligent warfare. In recent years, the United States has successively released the *National Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Strategic Plan*, *FY2009-2034 Unmanned Systems Integrated Roadmap* and *The Department of Defense's*

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1   Byely, B. et al. "Marxism-Leninism on War and Army (A Soviet View)." Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2002. 282.

2   "Marx and Engels Military Anthology, volume 2." (in Chinese) Beijing: Soldier Press, 1981 edition, p. 362.

Artificial Intelligence Strategy,[3, 4, 5] comprehensively promotes the development of intelligent weapon systems and unmanned combat systems. Russia has issued *National Strategy for the Development of Artificial Intelligence for the period until 2030*, *2018-2025 State Armament Plan* and other strategic plans, clearly proposing to increase the proportion of unmanned combat systems in the Russian military's weaponry to 30% by 2025.[6] NATO Science & Technology Organization released *Science & Technology Trends 2020-2040* to analyse and evaluate the development trends and potential impact of Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDTs) in 8 fields, including big data, AI, and autonomous technology in the next 20 years, in order to strengthen NATO decision makers' understanding of the impact of technological development on military capabilities.[7] The fierce competition among the world's major military powers and international organizations for the right to speak in military intelligence will inevitably stimulate the militaries of other countries to take preventive measures, intensify military competition and accelerate the development of intelligent warfare.

Prospective military theoretical design provides catalytic guidance for the evolution of intelligent warfare. At present, the major military powers represented by the United States have an unprecedented degree of innovation in the concept of combat. In September 2013, retired U.S. Air Force Lieutenant General David Deptula proposed the concept of "Combat Cloud";[8] in 2014, Paul Scharre, a researcher at the Center for a New American Security, launched a report *Robotics on the Battlefield Part II: The Coming Swarm*, proposing the concept of "Robot Swarms Operation";[9] in early 2015, the U.S. Navy proposed the concept of "Distributed Lethality";[10] since 2016, the concept of "Multi-Domain Battle, MDB" has become a hot topic of research and discussion by the US Army.[11] In November of the same year, it was formally included in the newly issued U.S. Army Doctrine Publication

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3   "The National Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Strategic Plan." National Science and Technology Council. October 2016. https://www.nitrd.gov/PUBS/national_ai_rd_strategic_plan.pdf Accessed on 12 December 2020.

4   "FY2009–2034 Unmanned Systems Integrated Roadmap." Department of Defense. April 2009. https://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/library/reports/2009/dod-unmanned-systems-roadmap_2009-2034.pdf Accessed on 12 December 2020.

5   "Summary of the 2018 Department of Defense Artificial Intelligence Strategy." Department of Defense. 12 February 2019. https://media.defense.gov/2019/Feb/12/2002088963/-1/-1/1/SUMMARY-OF-DOD-AI-STRATEGY.Pdf Accessed on 12 December 2020.

6   "Emerging Military Technologies: Background and Issues for Congress." Congressional Research Service. 10 November 2020. https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R46458.pdf Accessed on 11 December 2020.

7   "Science & Technology Trends, 2020-2040." NATO Science & Technology Organization. 4 May 2020. https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/4/pdf/190422-ST_Tech_Trends_Report_2020-2040.pdf Accessed on 11 December 2020.

8   "Deptula: Combat cloud is new face of long-range strike." Armed Forces Journal. 18 September 2013. http://armedforcesjournal.com/deptula-combat-cloud-is-new-face-of-long-range-strike Accessed on 12 December 2020.

9   "Robotics on the Battlefield Part II: The Coming Swarm." Center for a New American Security. 15 October 2014. https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/robotics-on-the-battlefield-part-ii-the-coming-swarm. Accessed on 12 December 2020.

10 "Distributed Lethality." U.S. Naval Institute. January 2015. https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2015/january/distributed-lethality. Accessed on 12 December 2020.

11 "The Multi-Domain Battle." *Defense News.* 3 October 2016. https://www.defensenews.com/digital-show-dailies/ausa/2016/10/03/the-multi-domain-battle/ Accessed on 12 December 2020.

ADP 3-0 Operations;[12] in April 2017, Bob Work, the Deputy Defence Secretary, proposed the concept of "Algorithmic Warfare", which is essentially an "intelligent +" operation based on AI;[13] in December 2018, the US Army released document *"Multi-Domain Operations, MDO",* and renamed the MDB concept to MDO;[14] in the second half of 2019, on the basis of the MDO, the concept of "Joint All-Domain Operations" emerged.[15] All these innovative theories attach great importance to the research and development of AI and autonomous capability, which will play an important leading role in the development of intelligent warfare.

The recent practice of local warfare provides a practical stage for the exploration of intelligent warfare. At the end of 2015, the Russian army used the "Andromeda-D" automated command system to command 6 "Platform-M" and 4 "Argo" combat robots in Syria. With the support of self-propelled artillery groups and several drones, they carried out the world's first ground combat based on a cluster of combat robots and successfully completed the mission.[16] On 9th January 2018, Russia's Khmeimem Air Base and Tartus Naval Facility in Syria were attacked by 13 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) by Syrian militants. The Russian army responded with electronic attacks and firepower in a timely manner. The control of six drones was taken over, and another seven drones were destroyed by Russian air defence forces.[17] In addition, the "pre-practice" of training is also rehearsing future wars and operation methods. For example, since November 2019, the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) has regularly organized Alpha Dogfight man-machine confrontation, aiming to explore the simulated air combat AI algorithms within visible range. From the results of the first three simulation confrontations, AI Algorithms defeated human pilots in a crushing victory in the virtual air combat.[18] Through the lessons learned from many related wars and the "pre-practice" of training, the buds of intelligent warfare are emerging and gradually growing.

THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INTELLIGENT WARFARE

The future war is developing towards intelligence, but the academic circle has not reached a consensus on the definition of intelligent warfare. Many combat styles discussed at present belong to either information operation or intelligence operation, which still need to be

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[12] *ADP 3-0 Operations.* Washington DC.: Department of the Army, 2016. https://www.atec.army.mil/otc/ADP3-0.pdf Page 6. Accessed on 12 December 2020.

[13] "Algorithmic Warfare: DSD Work Unleashes AI On Intel Data." *Breaking Defense,* 28 April 2017. https://breakingdefense.com/2017/04/dsd-work-unleashes-ai-on-intel-data-algorithmic-warfare/ Accessed on 12 December 2020.

[14] "The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028." Department of the Army. 6 December 2018. https://www.tradoc.army.mil/portals/14/documents/mdo/tp525-3-1_30nov2018.pdf Accessed on 12 December 2020.

[15] "The Army Shapes Joint All-Domain Operations." AFCEA(Signal). 1 August 2020. https://www.afcea.org/content/army-shapes-joint-all-domain-operations Accessed on 12 December 2020.

[16] "Russian Robot Technology in Syria." CERPESC (Centre européen de recherche pour la PESC). 15 February 2012. https://europavarietas.org/csdp/csdpblog/russian_robot_technology_syria, Accessed on 11 December 2020.

[17] "Syria: Drone Swarm Attacks Russian Military Bases." TRIPwire Technical Resource for Incident Prevention. 12 January 2018. https://tripwire.dhs.gov/news/209478 Accessed on 11 December 2020.

[18] "Alpha Dogfight Trials Foreshadow Future of Human-Machine Symbiosis." DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency). 26 August 2020. https://www.darpa.mil/news-events/2020-08-26 Accessed on 11 December 2020.

discussed. It is generally believed that intelligent warfare is an integrated war on land, sea, air, space, electricity, network, and cognitive fields based on the Internet of Things (IOTs) information system, using intelligent weapons and equipment and corresponding combat theories and methods.[19] Intelligent warfare is a new form of war that is different from mechanized warfare and information warfare. It has some iconic features that distinguish it from them.

Infrastructure of the Internet of Everything (IoE). Under intelligent conditions, various combat, command, and support entities such as personnel, equipment, systems, and materials distributed on the battlefield will be closely connected as needed through Cyber-Physical Systems (CPSs) such as IoT terminals and mobile IoT covered in all time and space. At the same time, a low-latency, high-capacity, and highly reliable basic network link is constructed in a complex environment to form real-time automatic collection, transmission, and processing of battlefield data. The IoT terminal is dynamically connected, has random access, functional reorganization, self-healing, rapid self-organization and other capabilities to provide services for intelligent operations. On the one hand, the IoE will produce the big data needed for intelligent combat. While each entity on the battlefield outputs its own data through various sensors, the real-time detected target environment information data is gathered and transmitted to nodes and the cloud through the network. These full-time, automatically collected, and aggregated data will collectively form operational big data, providing a "mine" for algorithm training, pattern mining, and optimization analysis for intelligent operations. On the other hand, the IoE will provide powerful computing capabilities and algorithm support for intelligent operations. The computing and algorithm combat resource clouds deployed at different levels and scales will be connected to the ubiquitous IoT through CPSs, which can not only gather operational big data for algorithm training, but also provide required computing power and algorithm model support for operations and command at different levels.

Iteratively evolved combat system. With the establishment and improvement of the intelligent battlefield ecosystem, the single-task system will have the characteristics and functions of life-like bodies, and the multi-task system will be like a forest with ecological cycles and evolutionary functions similar to nature. The future evolvable combat system is not only a quasi-ecosystem composed of multiple mission systems with different functions and similar life forms, but also a game system that can compete, confront, survive, and repair. Each system can quickly form response strategies and take actions based on the changes in the battlefield environment, the threats they face, their own capabilities, the accumulated experience and knowledge in the past, and the model algorithms established by a large number of simulation, confrontation, training, enhanced learning, and continuous revision, optimization and self-improvement in practice. Because an intelligent combat system is not exactly the same as a living body, a single intelligent system is similar to the living body, but the multi-system combat system is more like an "ecosystem + confrontation game system", which is more complex than a single living body and more social, group-like, and emergent. The evolution of the combat system will show a progressive relationship from easy to difficult, simple to complex. Under certain time and space conditions, evolution is not infinite but usually converges, the model algorithm converges to the relative optimum, the platform and cluster converge to their

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[19] Li, Minghai. "The Winning Mechanism of intelligent war." *Frontier.* 2019(02). 35–38.

maximum capability and potential, the mission system converges to the specific goal, and the combat system converges to the mission, demand, and winning.

Organic symbiotic relationship between people and equipment. In the age of intelligence, the relationship between humans and weapons will change fundamentally, becoming more and more distant physically and closer cognitively. The equipment form and development management model will be completely changed. Human thoughts and wisdom will be deeply interlinked with weapons and equipment through AI, fully advanced in the equipment development stage, optimized and iterated in the training and use stage, and further upgraded and perfected after combat verification, and so on. On the one hand, humans and weapons get gradually separated from each other physically, but gradually merged into organic symbionts cognitively. Human thought and wisdom will be involved in the whole process of weapon system design, development, production, training, use, and support. Unmanned combat systems will perfectly combine human creativity and thought with precision, rapidity, reliability, and fatigue resistance of a machine. The organization form of traditional weapons and equipment, on the other hand, will completely change. Back-end cloud support, diverse front-end functions, virtual and real interaction, online and offline CPS and human-computer interaction systems based on front and back AI will become the new structure and form, and eventually, it will form a complex that integrates machinery, information, network, data, and cognition.

Algorithm-led battlefield dominance. Under intelligent conditions, combat elements represented by "AI, cloud, network, cluster, and terminal", and diversified combinations form a new battlefield ecosystem. Among them, AI systems based on models and algorithms are the core combat capabilities. The traditional human-oriented warfare will be mostly replaced by AI models and algorithms. Algorithmic warfare will play a decisive role in a war, and the traditional land dominance, air dominance, sea dominance, and information dominance will also be transferred to the intelligence dominance or cognitive dominance. On the one hand, algorithmic advantage will dominate cognitive advantage. Big data can be quickly transformed into useful information and cognition after being processed by high-performance, high-efficiency algorithms. Therefore, the party with the algorithm advantage can dispel the "fog of war" in time,[20] making cognition deeper. On the other hand, algorithmic advantages will dominate decision-making advantages. Algorithms will gradually replace people's "thinking" and repeated explorations to a large extent, thereby accelerating cognitive iteration, quickly proposing flexible and diverse combat plans and countermeasures in response to changes in the situation, continuously disrupting the enemy's established attempts and deployment, and ultimately shape cognitive advantages and decision-making advantages into action advantages.

Unmanned combat mode. Under the conditions of intelligent warfare, unmanned combat will become the basic mode. Generally speaking, unmanned operations may experience three stages of development. The first is the initial stage of human-led and unmanned system assistance, that is, unmanned operations under the leadership of humans, and operations are completely controlled and led by humans. The second is the intermediate stage led by unmanned systems and assisted by humans, that is, unmanned operations under limited

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[20] Carl von Clausewitz is credited with coining the term "the fog of war," although he never actually used it. He did speak of fog as a metaphor for war's ambiguities. http://www.strategybydesign.org/fog-of-war Accessed on 14 December 2020.

human control. The control by humans in the whole process of operations is limited, auxiliary but critical, and in most of the cases depends on the autonomous action capability of the platform. The third is the advanced stage where the rules are manned and the actions are unmanned, that is, humans have made overall design in advance to clarify the autonomous behaviour and game rules under various combat environment conditions, and the unmanned platform and forces will perform autonomously in the implementation stage. With the continuous upgrading of the integration and development of AI and related technologies, unmanned technology will develop rapidly in the directions of autonomy, bionics, clusters, and distributed collaboration. It needs to be emphasized that although human platforms will always exist in intelligent warfare, bionic robots, humanoid robots, swarm weapons, robotic forces, and unmanned system operations will become the norm in the intelligent era. At the same time, unmanned technology based on AI will gradually expand to other fields, such as network offense and defence, electronic countermeasures, public opinion analysis, and infrastructure management and control.

POSSIBLE PATHS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT FORMS OF INTELLIGENT WARFARE

The development of warfare is never accomplished in one move. There is a process from quantitative change to qualitative change, from primary change to advanced change, and intelligent warfare is no exception. By comprehensively analysing the general law of the development of military technology in the world, and combining with the development trend of high-tech groups represented by AI, the future development of intelligent warfare may roughly go through three forms.

Automatic form. The form of automation is the initial stage of intelligent warfare. It is mainly marked by the intelligentization of weapon systems, command automation, and combat systemization. AI technology is mainly applied at equipment level, that is, through upgrading and transforming the combat capability of existing equipment, significantly reducing or even getting rid of its dependence on people, and improving the comprehensive strike effect and the ratio of combat efficiency and cost. In this form, weapons and equipment or combat systems can automatically run rules, processes, and styles after receiving instructions, but the whole process of operation still relies on human intervention to a high degree. At this time, the combat system only has the pre-designed functions and capabilities, and there are obvious indicators and capability boundaries. The automatic form can ensure that the weapon system has better control ability and combat ability in the complex confrontation environment, and ensure that the system can effectively fight, so as to improve the combat performance of the system, which mainly includes full-automatic process, full-automatic function, and over- limit function design of the weapon system. The realization of the automatic form focuses on technical fields such as the interconnection and intercommunication of various weapon systems, information transmission, remote control, embedded technology, and real-time operating systems. At present, major powers in the world have relatively mature technical reserves in these fields, and the development of weapons and equipment is in the stage of automatic development.

Autonomous form. The autonomous form is the intermediate stage of intelligent warfare. It is marked by equipment autonomy, unmanned battlefields, power integration, and human-machine coordination. It can realize highly self-organized and coordinated operations

among multiple types of unmanned equipment and systems, and develop mutual trust and coordinated operations between manned and unmanned systems. AI has begun to fully integrate into all aspects of offensive and defensive systems. At this stage, a weapon system has certain perception and cognition capabilities, and its dependence on human intervention in the entire process is greatly reduced. The combat system can independently complete multiple links or a specific task after setting the working mode. At this time, the capability indicators and boundaries of the combat system will gradually be broken, and its performance may greatly exceed people's expectations. The realization process of the autonomous form will emphasize the automatic perception and cognitive capabilities of weapons and equipment, and will focus on technical fields such as fuzzy logic, pattern recognition, feature extraction, and decision support represented by AI technology. It is currently in a stage of rapid development, and the world's military powers have invested a lot of resources in the related fields.

Self-evolving form. The self-evolution is the advanced stage of intelligent warfare, which will realize all the elements and multi-level intelligent control of the combat system, and form a fast linkage organization and deep coordination of multiple combat forces and multiple types of combat elements, such as land, sea, air, space, network, and electric space. After the system starts, it can independently accomplish all the functions and tasks, and has the ability of self-optimization and improvement. Compared with the autonomous form, the self-evolving form will have stronger ability of experience-based learning and self-improvement, can basically get rid of human intervention and be independent in a specific field. The self-evolving form is the highest level of intelligent development of weapon systems and the final stage after the highly developed AI technology. At this stage, the weapon system has extremely strong autonomous perception and cognition capabilities, and many unexpected new capabilities will continue to emerge on this basis. The arrival of the self-evolving form will completely change the existing combat mode and form of warfare. The realization of a self-evolving combat form requires a considerable period of technological accumulation and progress. In this form, the development of weapons and equipment may be out of human control and become individuals with independent cognitive capabilities. By then, how to limit the self-evolving direction of the system and reasonably control its intelligence level will become a new topic for the development of intelligent warfare.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In the development journey of human war and peace, the train of intelligent war is speeding up. Looking back at the starting point of intelligence, we see that the original intention of human beings is to try to overcome the weakness of human functions by extending human intelligence to machines. With the development of technology, this goal is not so far away. However, what price do we need to pay to overcome these weaknesses, and are these costs worth it? Does the interaction and collaboration between humans and intelligent weapon systems extend human's territory or make humans lose their original territory? Is the human-machine civilization under the joint action of humans and intelligent machines to insist that human civilization move forward according to its existing track, or to create a new civilization with harmonious co-existence between humans and machines, or to let machines lead us to an unknown new world? Although we will not have the answer now, our actions will determine the answer in the future.

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Edina Julianna Haiszky

NEO-EURASIANIST RUSSIAN GEOPOLITICS AND THE NEW EMPIRE-BUILDING DISTRIBUTION RUSSIAN-CHINESE RELATIONS: "UTILITARIANISM OR WORLD POLITICS TANDEM?"

ABSTRACT: *Both the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China are defining and unique features on the world security map. The aim of this analysis is to review the main schools of Russian geopolitical thought, with a particular focus on neo-Eurasianism, and to take stock of the extent to which the ideological community with the PRC persists and the impact on the relationship of the two parties of the decline of Russian influence in the Central Asian region and the rise of China in the last year, as a result of the Russian-Ukrainian war and Russia's turn to the West.*

KEYWORDS: *Moscow-Beijing axis, neo-Eurasianism, empire-building effort, strategic alliance, counterbalance, Russia, China, United States of America*

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INTRODUCTORY THOUGHTS

The purpose of this analysis is to present the neo-Eurasianist school of thought that currently characterises Russia's geopolitics through the view of the theoretical-political vision of Aleksandr Dugin and to start from this line of thought to answer the question "Is the Chinese-Russian relationship merely a utilitarian partnership or can it be considered a world political tandem?"

In the selection of my topic, I combined three themes of my interest – geopolitics, Russia and the strategic positioning of countries in the international environment – and formed them into a coherent whole. The relevance of the question is that Russia, due to its specific geographical and historical situation, has always developed its strategies along different lines of thought than either Western or Far Eastern countries. At the same time, precisely because of its aforementioned location, it possesses key territories and raw materials important for both Europe and Asia. Thus, I find it interesting to analyse the duality that has characterised the country for two and a half decades, from a new perspective that has so far been little examined from a security policy point of view in Hungary.

I begin my analysis with a brief description of the history of Russian geopolitical thought in order to provide an adequate theoretical basis, followed by a review of the main cornerstones and factors of the Russian-Chinese relations from the 90's to their current state, with special focus on the examination of the impact of the war (2022) in Ukraine.

AN INTRODUCTION TO RUSSIAN GEOPOLITICAL TRENDS

For more than two and a half decades, the Russian Federation has been a special "spot" on the world security map, just as its predecessor, the Soviet Union, had been. The country combines both the old 'imperial' style of governance and approach – with a particular focus on empire-building – and the technical tools and advocacy mechanisms of the 21st century. This kind of duality is prominent also in Russian geopolitical thinking. Thus, the aim of this subsection is to present and isolate the views of the five main Russian geopolitical trends, which are Zapadnik (Westerniser), Slavophile, Marxist, Eurasianist, and Neo-Eurasianist.

Zapadniks

The Zapadnik (Westerniser) and the Slavophile tendencies, which reflect and represent two completely different schools of thought, first emerged in the 19th century as, in fact, opposites of each other.

The core of the Russian geopolitical movement, also known as the Zapadnik or Westerniser movement, was the intellectuals of St Petersburg, the Venice of the North[1]. One of their main theses is that the Russian territories are lagging behind Western Europe and thus Russian history is nothing more than an attempt to overcome the disadvantage vis-à-vis the West. They point to Tsar Peter I as the cornerstone of Russian history, since it was his reign when the civilisational development of the Russian population began. It is interesting that this was seen as a guarantee of nothing less than a change in the authoritarian, patriarchal society of the time, the abolition of all political social systems associated with Asia, and the rethinking of Russian society in Western terms, in short, the abolition of Asiaticism.[2] The basis for this, in their view, was the dismantling of unchecked tsarist power and the establishment of a consensus-based system between the people and the ruler. Besides the above mentioned trend, the "Westerniser" tendency has been a decisive factor in the history and the way of geopolitical thinking of the modern Russian Federation as well, as many of the mistakes of the 1990s are still attributed to this approach.[3]

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[1]   Kaalem, J. "A Russian empire 'from Dublin to Vladivostok'? The roots of Putin's ultranationalism." *Los Angeles Times.* 28.03.2022. https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2022-03-28/putin-ultranationalism-ideology-russia-ukraine

[2]   Tsygankov, A. P. "Mastering space in Eurasia: Russia's geopolitical thinking after the Soviet break-up." *Communist and Post-communist Studies,* 36/1., 101–127.

[3]   Tsygankov, A. P. *Russia's foreign policy: Change and continuity in national identity.* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019)

Slavophiles

In contrast, the Slavophile movement emerged from the intellectual circles of Moscow as a counter-pole to the Westerners and included among its main representatives Nikolai Danilevsky[4] and Fyodor Dostoevsky. The "Russian idea" was born under the influence of Schelling's philosophy in the Slavophile ideology in the 1830-40s. He attributed to Russia a world-historical mission to save European civilization from the moral decadence of Western civilization (the emptying and formalization of Catholic and Protestant religiosity, egotistical individualism, materialism, increased social tensions due to the Industrial Revolution, the epistemological, absolutisation of rationalism, and the imposition of technical progress). Slavophiles saw Russian development as an alternative, peculiar path, which avoided the above-mentioned distortions and therefore had the potential for renewal. The most viable source of self-identity was derived from the Orthodox religion. They were based on Christian universalism, so their criticism of the West did not strike a hostile tone.[5] The dimension of "Asianism" was missing from their vision. In their view, it was not the reforms of Tsar Peter I that were important since the social and political changes brought about by the various reforms were destroying the particular way of life that had developed in the Russian Empire. It was argued that spatiality played a prominent role in Russian geopolitical thinking: Russia could not be linked to Europe because of its specific location (the Asian territories of the empire), and Europeanism could not be integrated at all because of the specific Russian legal system and the Russian people's spirit. The thinking they developed rejected complementarianism, as they attached importance to the trust between the tsar and the people and to the unquestionable authority and morality of the ruler. At the same time, they did not believe that the people's participation was necessary in the management of a state with such a large population and territory, but rather that power should be concentrated in one hand.

Finally, though not least in importance, the ideology of pan-Slavism is also linked to the Slavophiles. It is an ideology that is still making its presence felt today and is also shaping the politics of our time.[6] Pan-Slavism is nothing other than the ideology of an all-Slavic alliance under Russian leadership. This messianistic vision is very important in the history of Russian political thought. A number of Russian political authors, policymakers, and men of power – even today – think of this political aspiration as an indispensable element. According to most of them, there is no nation, no strong national identity, and it cannot exist without messianistic elements. It is important to recall that in the 1990's there was a conservative geopolitical tendency as well, which was partly just neo-Eurasianist, with representatives such as Zhirinovsky, Zyuganov, and Prokhanov, who were close to Dugin, but could be considered more anti-zapadnik or conservative. Contemporary thinkers believe that this consciousness has been lost in the European region. According to Danilevsky, mentioned above, the alliance of the Slavs and its inherent strength could stand up to the idea of a united Europe.[7] This idea is at the core of Slavophile geopolitical thinking. Eastern

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4   Zenkovszki, V. V.: *Russkie misliteli i Yevropa.* (Moscow: Respublica, 1997) 69–75.
5   Novikova, L. I.–Sizemskaia, I. Ny. "Vvedenie." In: *Rossia mezhdu Yevropoi i Aziei: Yevraziski soblazn.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1993) 6–7.; Novikova, L. I.–Sizemskaja, I. Ny. *Russkaia filosofia istorii.* (Moscow: Magistr, 1997) 73–88.
6   Gecse, G. "Pánszlávizmus az orosz és a szovjet külpolitikában, 1914–1991." Külügyi Szemle, 7. évf. 1. szám, Budapest, 2008. 144–169.
7   "Russkaia filosofia." *Malij entsiklopedicheski slovar.* (Moscow: Terra, 1994) 306.

Europe is a multi-ethnic and clearly Slavic-majority region, which, if unified (i.e. peacefully integrated), would give Russia a significant territorial and economic area. Moreover, the Slavic peoples and countries united under the banner of pan-Slavism would enjoy the full support of the Russian hegemon. We can also see that in this way, this emerging Eurasian state is not described as a threat, but as a kind of compensation, as a preservation of the status quo.[8]

Eurasianists

The Eurasianist Russian geopolitical thinking emerged in the 1920s, in the midst of the post-October Revolution emigration movements. Its centres were primarily in Sofia, Prague and Berlin. The 'idea' was born out of a meeting of minds between two young scholars. Linguist Nikolai Trubetzkoy, in his 1920 essay "Europe and Humanity,"[9] expressed his view of the destructive influence of Western egoism, which he saw as a barrier to the self-fulfilment of the rest of the world's peoples. In his view, civilisations can only be viable if they develop according to their own internal values. These ideas inspired the geographer and economist Pyotr Savitsky, whose 1921 work "Europe and Eurasia"[10] reflected on what Trubetzkoy had said. His paper already contained all the essential elements of the later theory, since he interpreted Russia as a geographically and ethnically distinct world, neither part of Europe nor Asia, but a synthesis of the two. He declared that its culture was a common creation based on the values of the peoples living there, a counterpoint to Western civilisation.

The first collection of reflections on this trend was entitled "Exodus to the East"[11] (1921) and a year later "On the Road" (1922), and outlined the main features of the Eurasianist worldview:[12]

– pluralism (which recognises the diversity of cultures)
– anti-racist and anti-colonialist (rejecting the claim of superiority of all civilizations)
– anti-western (since the claim to universality in practice today derives from the Romano-Germanic world)
– conservative (which recognises the eternal values inherent in popular cultures, language, ethnos, tradition, etc.)
– imperial (since it considers that the ethnes of Eurasia can only develop their own identity in a powerful, strategically integrated form of "state-world" or "Eurasian Empire")
– pro-Russian (which insists on the preservation, strengthening and revival of originality and Russian ethnic traditions)
– revolutionary (which calls for the rejection of ideologies previously popular in Russia, both Western and imported: liberalism, socialism, Marxism, and those specific to Russia: tsarism, reaction, order monarchy, etc.).

The core of Eurasianist thought, therefore, is to identify Russia as a specific ethnographic and cultural world: a heartland located in the middle between West and East, Europe and

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8   Szilágyi, I. "Az orosz geopolitikai gondolkodás." In: Geopolitikai szemle. Budapest, 2019.
9   Trubetskoi, N. *Istoria. Kultura, Yazik.* (Moscow: Progess, 1995)
10   Savitski, P. N. *Kontinent Yevrazia.* (Moscow: Agraf, 1997) 141–160.
11   Trubetskoi, N. *Istoria. Kultura, Yazik.*
12   Szilágyi, I. *Az orosz geopolitikai gondolkodás.*

Asia. And because of its special location, Russia has its own characteristics, which distinguish it from both continents and make it neither Eastern nor Western.

Their understanding is similar to the one of Sir John Halford Mackinder's 1904 lecture "Geography is the key to history,"[13] in which he argued that the reasons for the different development of the West and the East are to be found in their different historical circumstances and their different civilisations. At the same time, Mackinder pointed out that the Eurasian region is a key area with Russia as its central state, and that its geographical determinacy has a major impact on the country seeking its path in political and cultural terms.

Neo-Eurasianists

The neo-Eurasianist movement emerged in the 1990s, triggered by changes in the region such as the end of the bipolar world order and the demise of the Soviet Union, as well as the creation of the CIS and the Russian Federation. Thus, the period 1992-1997 witnessed significant changes in the geopolitical thinking of the Russian political leadership.[14]

While there are no specific individuals who hold positions in the Kremlin or main institutions that can be directly labelled as ones having neo-Eurasianist thoughts, it is important to note that the Kremlin's official stance and policies can align with some aspects of Eurasianism. However, influential figures associated with the Russian government who have expressed views that align with elements of neo-Eurasianism can be highlighted.

For example, Dmitry Medvedev has held several high-ranking positions in the Russian government, including the post of President from 2008 to 2012 and Prime Minister from 2012 to 2020. Medvedev has been a proponent of Eurasian integration and played a key role in establishing the Eurasian Economic Union. He has emphasized the importance of economic cooperation and integration among countries in the Eurasian region, promoting closer ties with neighbouring states in several speeches at the World Economic Forums. For example in 2009, he mentioned the goal of building a common economic space from Lisbon to Vladivostok, emphasizing the idea of a Eurasian community with shared economic interests.

It is also important to mention Sergei Lavrov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia since 2004, who has an influential role in shaping Russia's foreign policy.[15] While not explicitly espousing neo-Eurasianist ideology, Lavrov has been a strong advocate for regional integration and cooperation, particularly within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).[16] His diplomatic efforts often prioritize maintaining stability and enhancing relationships with countries in the Eurasian space.

Thirdly, Valentina Matviyenko, the Chairwoman of the Federation Council, the upper house of the Russian parliament, has been a prominent figure in Russian politics. While

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[13] Dodds, K. "Halford Mackinder and the 'Geographical Pivot of History': A Centennial Retrospective." *The Geographical Journal,* CVII. évf. 2004/4. 292–297.

[14] Deák, A. *Az orosz külpolitikai gondolkodás története (1992–1997).* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2005)

[15] Fox, T. "Eurasianism, History, and the Narrative Space: Why Russian Information Operations are so Effective." West Point Modern War Institue, 03.12.2018. https://mwi.westpoint.edu/eurasianism-history-narrative-space-russian-information-operations-effective/

[16] "Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's statement and answers to media questions following a meeting of the SCO Foreign Ministers Council, Tashkent, 29 July 2022." *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.* 29.07.2022. https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1824510/

her views do not align exclusively with neo-Eurasianism, Matviyenko has been a vocal proponent of strengthening Russia's ties with neighbouring countries, including those in the Eurasian region.[17] She has emphasized the importance of economic cooperation, cultural exchange, and strategic partnerships to promote stability and development in the region. The importance of Valentina Matviyenko in Russian politics is further demonstrated by the fact that she and her delegation visited China at the invitation of Zhao Leji, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) of China in June 2023.[18]

While neo-Eurasianism has influenced certain segments of Russian political thought, it is important to note that the direct impact of this ideology on Russian presidential speeches and joint Russian-Chinese statements may not be explicitly documented. However, there have been instances where certain themes and ideas aligning with neo-Eurasianist thinking have been present.

It is important to note that the concept of neo-Eurasianism is broad and can encompass various interpretations, that these individuals may not fully align with all aspects of the ideology, and they are not necessarily members of the Russian political leadership. Additionally, the Russian government's official stance and policies are shaped by a variety of factors, and it may not be accurate to attribute a single ideology to its leadership. Moreover, current and concrete examples of the followers of the Eurasianist movement are Sergey Glazyev[19] or Ramzan Kadyrov. The former is an economist and politician who holds neo-Eurasianist views. He was an adviser to the President of Russia on regional economic integration and is known for his advocacy of closer economic cooperation among the countries of the Eurasian region. Glazyev is a supporter of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), a regional organisation aimed at promoting economic integration among member states while Kadyrov – although known primarily for his role in Chechnya – has advocated a strong Russia and closer integration with other Eurasian countries.[20] He stressed the importance of preserving traditional values and cultural ties among countries in the region.

In the next chapters, I will discuss this in greater details and at greater length, since it is a key conceptual element of this analysis.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RUSSIAN GEOPOLITICAL THINKING AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian geopolitical thinking underwent significant shifts, characterized by several key features. First, there was a renewed emphasis on preserving Russia's territorial integrity and national sovereignty, as the disintegration of the Soviet Union resulted in the loss of vast territories, Russian-speaking population, and geopolitical influence. The collapse of the Soviet Union shattered the common ideological

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[17] "Russia enjoys unconditional consensus about relations with China – upper house speaker." TASS. 10.07.2023. https://tass.com/politics/1644743

[18] Xu, Y. "Russian Federation Council Speaker's China visit demonstrates continuity, stability of China-Russia relations." *Global Times.* 09.07.2023. https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202307/1294013.shtml

[19] Escobar, P: "Sergey Glazyev: 'The road to financial multipolarity will be long and rocky'". *The Cradle.co.* 13.03.2023. https://new.thecradle.co/articles/sergey-glazyev-the-road-to-financial-multipolarity-will-be-long-and-rocky

[20] Sharafutdinova, Gulnaz: "What the rise of Prigozhin and Kadyrov tell us about Russia." *Aljazeera.* 06.12.2022. https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/12/6/what-the-rise-of-prigozhin-and-kadyrov-tells-us-about-russia

framework that held the diverse Soviet republics together.[21] In the second half of the 1990s, Russian foreign policy was marked by the Koziryev-doctrine[22] of accepting the existence of a multipolar world order, and by the portrayal of the West as a traditional ally and Eastern Europe as a natural sphere of interest. The Primakov doctrine posits that a unipolar world dominated by the United States is unacceptable to Russia and offers that Russia should strive towards a multipolar world managed by a concert of major powers that can counterbalance the unilateral power of the U.S. Russia should both insist on its primacy in the post-Soviet space, lead integration in that region, and oppose NATO expansion.[23]

Russia, as the largest successor state, embarked on a quest to redefine its national identity and reaffirm its sovereignty. The focus shifted towards re-establishing the Russian Federation as a strong and independent nation, seeking to protect its territorial integrity. Secondly, Russia sought to reassert itself as a major global power, advocating for a multipolar world order, and countering what it perceived as Western hegemony. Many in Russia saw the collapse of the Soviet Union as a period of humiliation and perceived encroachment by the West. This experience shaped a new mindset focused on countering Western influence and re-establishing Russia as a global power.[24] Russian geopolitical thinking, particularly under President Vladimir Putin, has been marked by a desire to challenge Western hegemony, assert Russia's interests, and prevent the expansion of NATO and Western institutions in Russia's periphery. Thirdly, a focus on the near abroad emerged, as Russia aimed to maintain influence in its immediate neighbourhood both through economic, political, military means, and reshaping regional dynamics by using Russian minorities in neighbouring countries as destabilising factors. Fourth, the concept of a "privileged sphere of influence" in the post-Soviet space gained prominence, with Russia seeking to establish its dominance and prevent the encroachment of Western powers in regions such as Eastern Europe and Central Asia.[25] The collapse left a power vacuum in Eurasia, prompting Russia to pursue closer regional integration. Geopolitical thinkers in Russia advocated for the above-mentioned concept of Eurasianism, which emphasized the unique cultural and historical ties between Russia, its neighbouring countries and the region. The geopolitical assertiveness is manifested in the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1991, and the later formation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 2015 was the manifestations of Russia's efforts to maintain influence in the region[26]. Finally, there was an alignment of geopolitical thinking with traditional values and the preservation of Rus-

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[21] Ostianova, N. *Changes in Russia's Approach Towards Central Asia.* (master thesis) (Olomouc: Palacky University of Olomouc, 2021) 23–40.

[22] A concept, not officially, but named after the first Russian Foreign Minister, Andrei Koziryev.

[23] Rumer, E. "The Primakov (Not Gerasimov) Doctrine in Action." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 05.06.2019. https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/06/05/primakov-not-gerasimov-doctrine-in-action-pub-79254

[24] Myre, Greg: "How the Soviet Union's collapse explains the current Russia-Ukraine tension." *NPR.* 24.12.2021. https://www.npr.org/2021/12/24/1066861022/how-the-soviet-unions-collapse-explains-the-current-russia-ukraine-tension

[25] Berls, E. R. Jr. "Strengthening Russia's Influence in International Affairs, Part II: Russia and Its Neighbors: A Sphere of Influence or a Declining Relationship?" *NTI.* 13.07.2021. https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/strengthening-russias-influence-in-international-affairs-part-ii-russia-and-its-neighbors-a-sphere-of-influence-or-a-declining-relationship/

[26] Deriglazova, Larisa. "The Soviet Union's Demise As Seen by Today's Russians." Wilson Center. 09.12.2021. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/soviet-unions-demise-seen-todays-russians

sian cultural and historical identity, which influenced policies regarding the protection of compatriots abroad and the promotion of conservative norms domestically.[27]

Overall, the collapse of the Soviet Union fundamentally reshaped Russian geopolitical thinking. It triggered a search for national identity, an emphasis on regional integration, a focus on countering Western influence, a reliance on energy resources, and a more assertive approach on the global stage. These features reflect Russia's evolving geopolitical thinking in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's dissolution, as it aimed to navigate the country's position in a changing global landscape, continued to shape Russia's geopolitical actions, and laid down the base for interactions with the international community nowadays.

ALEKSANDR DUGIN AND THE EMPIRE-BUILDING GEOPOLITICS OF THE NEO-EURASIANIST MOVEMENT

The name of Aleksandr Dugin may be familiar to those interested in Russia, geopolitics, or politics. The reason is that the gentleman is credited with the modernisation and fundamental reassessment of the Eurasianist school of thought in the 1990s, and thus with the emergence of the neo-Eurasianist geopolitical movement.[28] Dugin has written several books on the subject. His main work was published in 1997 under the title "The Foundations of Geopolitics", which can be considered as a "handbook for the creation of the Eurasian Empire."[29]

Eurasianism can be defined as an ideology that holds that Russia and its "peripheries" are situated in the mid-ground between Europe and Asia. The country's distinctiveness originates from the fact that its culture is a "fusion" of Slavic and Turkic-Muslim peoples, but it is also believed that Russia should highlight its distinctly Asian attributes. Eurasianism rejects the view that Russia is on the periphery of Europe; on the contrary it interprets its geographical position as the basis for a kind of visionary "third way." "This theory has been appealing to many academics and policymakers of the international community because it offers an understanding of the collapse of the Soviet Union and restores Russia's troubled historical and political continuity: an alter-globalist philosophy of history, a new pragmatist articulation of "sovietism," a replacement for the explanatory global patterns of Marxism-Leninism, the expansionist geopolitical principles of Russia, and much more. To illustrate the analysis of the issue, I mention Marlene Laruelle's findings, who stated that the impact of the theory can be summarized in four major points:

- Through denouncing the dominance of Europe, the West, and capitalism as detrimental to humanity as a whole, there is a rejection of the "Atlanticist" control.
- The assertion is made that Russians and non-Russian populations within Russia, the former Soviet Union and certain parts of Asia, share a common cultural unity and historical fate.
- It is posited that the central geographic positioning of this Eurasian region inherently leads to an imperial style of political organization, and any attempts at secession are

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[27]   Tsygankov. "Mastering space in Eurasia."

[28]   Lubov, S. and Gazdag, F. *Oroszország és Európa. Orosz geopolitikai szöveggyűjtemény.* (Budapest: Zrínyi, 2004)

[29]   *Oroszország és Európa. Geopolitikai szöveggyűjtemény.* (Bazsó, M., trans.) (Budapest: Zrínyi, 2004) 333–376.

doomed to failure, leaving newly independent states with no alternative but to revert back to a unified political entity.
– There is a belief in the presence of cultural constants that provides deeper meaning to contemporary political events.[30]

To complement the above mentioned, the basic idea behind Aleksandr Dugin's work on Russia today, the evolution of international relations and the Cold War is as follows: *"The break-up of the USSR was a triumph of the Atlantic strategic line that has accompanied us throughout the 20th century. The West is winning the Cold War in the East. Sea power has triumphed over heartland."*[31] The underlying content of this is that the United States of America and its allies have encircled the giant Soviet state by seizing the so-called heartland. At the same time, the Soviets refused to cede their occupied territories in Eastern Europe, and this kind of double pressure eventually crushed the Soviet Union, thus ending the bipolar world order. Russia, cannot resign itself to this situation and aims to seek a reversal of the process and build a multipolar system. However, Dugin stresses that the new Eurasian continental bloc cannot be a reconstruction of the Warsaw Pact.[32] It must be a cooperation covering the whole of Europe as far as the Atlantic, with the addition of a few priority sectors (India, Iran, Indochina) on the southern Eurasian coast, guaranteeing the neutrality of the former, but without taking these areas out of the control of Atlanticism.[33]

The idea also means that Russia must first of all redefine its relationship with the four civilisations that surround it (Chinese, Islamic, Hindu, Latin-Germanic). A solid reference point also requires a Russian intellectual self-definition, which means that it is in the fundamental interest of the state to defend its originality – its Russian identity – at all costs, both from the Eastern and Western powers.[34] One important means of doing so is to federalise or to engage in the so-called Rimland (peripheral areas),[35] which is of key geostrategic importance, as mentioned above. This intermediate area has no real substance, but has a kind of 'mediating function' because its domination is one of the main stakes in the aforementioned cultural and civilisational struggle between the two. It is probably from this idea that today's well-known Russian aspiration to build a 'buffer zone' between Russia and NATO, to which many countries have fallen victim to a greater or lesser extent along the lines of the Baltic[36], Belarus, Poland, Georgia, Ukraine, could be derived[37]. This would greatly contribute to the Russian empire-building process by access to the warm seas and thus to the

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[30] Laruelle, M. *Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire*. (Washington, DC.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008)

[31] Dugin, A. *Osnovi geopolitiki.* (Moscow: Arktogeia, 2000).

[32] Fellows, G. S. *The Foundations of Aleksandr Dugin's Geopolitics: Montage Fascism an Eurasianism as Blowback*, Electronic Theses and Dissertations on the University of Denver, Denver, 2018.

[33] Dugin. *Osnovi geopolitiki*. 162.

[34] Linde, F. "The Civilizational Turn in Russian Political Discourse: From Pan-Europeanism to Civilizational Distinctiveness." *The Russian Review.* Vol. 75. 2016/4., 604–625.

[35] Dugin. *Osnovi geopolitiki*. 167.

[36] Galeotti, Mark: *The Baltic States as Targets and Levers: The Role of the Region in Russian Strategy.* Marshall Center, April 2019. https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/security-insights/baltic-states-targets-and-levers-role-region-russian-strategy-0

[37] Tabachnik. M. *"Defining the Nation in Russia's Buffer Zone: The Politics of Birthright Citizenship in Azerbaijan, Moldova and Georgia."* (dissertation) (Santa Cruz: University of Santa Cruz, 2017)

unification of sea power (SeaPower) and the Russian essentially land power (Heartland) in a Eurasian federal system.

The end goal, as envisioned by Dugin, is to create a situation where the Russian-dominated Eurasian territory enters into a strategic and later anti-American alliance with Central and South America, Africa, and parts of the Indonesian archipelago: Dugin sees the Global South in particular as a partner in this sense.[38] In order to do this, however, the countries of the Orthodox civilisation that forms the axis of Eurasia will have to redistribute the spheres of influence in Eastern Europe among themselves, in the Mackinderian sense while the countries of Central Europe, and the countries of the European West, which are likely allies of the anticontinental forces, should be repositioned between Germany and Russia, which form the axis of Europe.[39] Aleksandr Dugin sketched a quadripolar world model akin to Karl Ernst Haushoffer's concept of the pan-region as a result of the success of this process,. This international system should be implemented along the Moscow-Tehran, Moscow-Tokyo, Moscow-Berlin and Moscow-Beijing alliance axes.[40]

In conclusion, the Russian neo-Eurasian school of geopolitics believes that the Russian Federation has no choice but to follow the above-described path. The reason for this, as Dugin puts it – based on his own experience – is that RF has no state history in the narrow sense of the term – not including the Soviet Union – its borders are contingent, its cultural markers are confused, its political system is unstable, its economy is fragmented and its ethnic composition is mixed. The conglomerate is therefore only a product of the disintegration of a global world power and part of the overall picture. The most important thing is the determinacy of Russia's geopolitical thinking, which is a product of its specific geographical location and endowments.

A good example of this is the fact that since the 15th century Russia has essentially pursued a land or heartland geopolitics. In addition, the neo-Eurasian trend is also characterised by a geographic and geopolitical approach to social and political processes: the cornerstone of Russian geopolitics is the link between spatiality – the retention of influence over territories formerly under Russian sovereignty – and culture. In this context, one important point to note, according to Aleksandr Dugin, is that "Russian geopolitics is not simply the application of universal geopolitical laws to well-defined concrete circumstances." The problem is that Russian geopolitics can only be studied in a meaningful way through a deep understanding of the characteristics of Russian society, through a joint study of the present and the past.[41] While the other basic thesis is the quest for the Russian state's own way and the need to preserve its uniqueness at all costs. It is worth highlighting in Dugin's view that the key for Russia is to avoid the trap of regional power, since, as he puts it, it is "unthinkable

[38] Dugin envisaged a partition of Asia with Iran and Japan in the same way that he envisaged a partition of Europe with Germany.
[39] Speranskaya, N. "The Fourth Political Theory of the "Other Europe". *Centre for Conservative Studies, Department of Sociology of International Relations, Department of Sociology,* 2013. 372–384. (in Russian)
[40] Botz-Bornstein, T. "Russia, Japan, China and the Resistance to Modernity: Eurasianism and Pan-Asianism Reconsidered". *Center for Conservative Studies, Department of Sociology of International Relations, Faculty of Sociology,* 2013. 265–287. (in Russian)
[41] Dugin, A. *Foundations of Geopolitics.* Moscow: Arktogeia, 1997. (in Russian)

without an empire"[42] and amounts to national suicide.[43] This is evidenced by the country's parallel efforts to establish unchallenged influence over 'near abroad' territories[44] – Belarusian elections, annexation of Crimea, cyber-attacks against the Baltic States, Russia's coup d'état attempt allegations against Moldova in 2023[45] – and to play a region-shaping role at international level, for example with the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015,[46] or the Collective Security Treaty Organization, established in 1992. It has also become a structuring power in the international relations system by building links with other international integrations: the creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, joining the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, being the permanent member of the UN Security Council, where Russia most frequently applied it's "veto power" on major issues such as preventing the strengthening of sanctions against North Korea in the first months of 2023.[47]

In order to assess the relationship between Russia and China from this ideological point of view, it is interesting to look at Aleksandr Dugin's perception of China. In his writings Dugin previously took an explicitly hostile tone and point of view towards China: he perceived the country as a formidable danger to Eurasia-Russia, verging on the Atlanticist factotum.[48] Dugin expressed concerns regarding the possibility of China making a future aggressive move towards the North, specifically targeting Kazakhstan and Eastern Siberia. In a section titled "The Fall of China," Dugin explicitly cautions that China poses the greatest geopolitical threat to Russia from the southern direction. He argues that China endangers Russia's interests both as a geopolitical stronghold for Atlanticism and as a nation with a concentrated population seeking to expand into unclaimed territories.[49] Due to the perceived risk that China poses to Russia's vital geopolitical interests, Dugin argues for the dismantling of the People's Republic of China. He emphasizes that when Tibet, Xinjiang, Mongolia, and Manchuria are considered together, they form a security buffer for Russia. Dugin asserts that Eurasia-Russia must actively strive for the territorial disintegration, fragmentation, and political and administrative partitioning of China, as without Xinjiang and Tibet, China's potential geopolitical advancement into Kazakhstan and Siberia would be thwarted. Additionally, the extensive postscript section added to the 1999 edition of "Foundations of Geopolitics" justifies a fundamentally anti-China tone. Aleksandr Dugin restates his conviction regarding the necessity for Eurasia-Russia to engage in the fragmentation of China. However, in a later interview conducted in late July

[42]　Dugin, A. *Last War of the World-Island. The Geopolitics of Contemporary Russia.* London: Arktos Media Ltd. 2020, 1–12. (in Russian)

[43]　Laruelle, M. *Aleksandr Dugin: A Russian Version of the European Radical Right.* Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center of Scholars. 2001.

[44]　Huasheng, Z. "Russia and its Near Abroad: Challenges and Prospects". Valdai Club. 09 March 2021. https://ru.valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/rossiya-i-eye-blizhnee-zarubezhe/?sphrase_id=642614 Accessed on 18 July 2023.

[45]　Preussen, W. "Russia is planning coup in Moldova, says President Maia Sandu" Politico. 13 February 2023. https://www.politico.eu/article/moldova-president-maia-sandu-russia-attack/ Accessed on 18 July, 2023.

[46]　Ilyash, Gy. "Az Eurázsiai Gazdasági Unió és az Övezet és Út Kezdeményezés kölcsönhatásai Közép-Ázsiában". *Külügyi és Külgazdasági Intézet,* E- 2020/43. 2020. 1–16.

[47]　Vladimir -Bugamina, E. "Geopolitics: Theory and Practice". *Proszpekt,* 2021. 186–210.

[48]　Mahjar-Barducci, A. "China, Russia, And The Creation Of A Multipolar World Order – A Russian Perspective" MEMRI, 5 October 2020. https://www.memri.org/reports/china-russia-and-creation-multipolar-world-order-%E2%80%93-russian-perspective Accessed on 30 July 2023.

[49]　Dugin, A. *Foundations of Geopolitics.* Moscow: Arktogeia, 1997. (in Russian)

2001, Dugin slightly softened his stance, presumably in deference to Putin's declared position on China, albeit only to a limited extent.[50] He maintained his assertion that Russia's relationships with Japan, Iran, and India held greater importance and significance than its ties with China. The cooperation of the parties, organised along the lines of a common Eurasianist thinking, is evidenced by the fact that as "geopolitical compensation" for the loss of its northern regions – Dugin recommends – China should be offered development in a southern direction: Indochina (except Vietnam), the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia comprise China's appropriate sphere of dominance. China's current sphere of priority interests seems to revolve around various issues. These include maritime boundary disputes in the South China Sea, territorial disagreements concerning the Senkaku and Spratly Islands, as well as the construction of artificial islands.

In essence, I think it is important to note that Dugin described contemporary modern Russian geopolitics as a conservative, holistic, anthropological community-focused, idealistic, loyal and ascetic system of ideas that assumed the former balance of power of the bipolar system in a multipolar system. Dugin's ideas found resonance within certain think tanks and research institutions in Russia. For example, the Katehon think tank, founded by Dugin, promotes discussions on geopolitics, Eurasian integration, and traditional values. Other institutions, such as the Institute of Social and Economic Studies of the Population and the Centre for Strategic Research, have also engaged with neo-Eurasianist themes in their research and policy recommendations. It can also be said that the current Russian geopolitical thinking is characterised by a Eurasianist approach, with only a partial realisation of neo-Eurasianism, because the Russian political establishment as a whole does not fully adopt the ideas of Aleksandr Dugin, nor is it clear that Dugin is behind the political moves. It is important to understand that the influence of Dugin's ideas on Russian political leadership and decision-making may vary among individuals and over time. The impact of his specific ideas on specific policies or agreements may not always be explicitly documented or publicly attributed.

CHINA-RUSSIAN RELATIONS: "UTILITARIANISM OR GLOBAL POLITICAL TANDEM?"

Relations between Moscow and Beijing have never been so tight and close throughout history as they stand today. This growing proximity is the result of three decades of consistent efforts by the political leaderships of Russia and China to strengthen their mutual ties and enhance cooperation in various domains such as politics, military affairs, economy, and ideology. The relationship that has emerged can be described as an informal alliance, rooted in a deep conviction shared by the ruling elites of both countries regarding the fundamental alignment of their strategic interests and the ideological similarities between their authoritarian regimes. Consequently, this alliance goes beyond mere tactical expediency and is characterized by a genuine convergence of interests, even though internal tensions may still exist.

It has taken a relatively long time to go from the theory of Eurasianism to its practical realisation, because of changing forces in world politics and geopolitics. At the same time, the importance of Eurasia – not only for Russia – has increased significantly over the last 20 years, as it is one of the most populous and dynamically developing regions in the world

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[50] Ostianová, N. "Changes in Russia's Approach Towards Central Asia". Thesis presented in fulfillment of master studies in Department of Political Science and European Studies, Palacky University of Olomouc. 2021.

and a potential counterweight to the US in the international system. We are therefore witnessing the emergence of a 'Eurasian era', with the economic, energy – and in some cases military – and power centres increasingly shifting eastwards. As a result of this trend, the idea of Eurasia began to look more and more like a viable option for many countries in the region in the 2000s.

In Russian politics, the Eurasian idea began to emerge at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, as relations with the West deteriorated[51]. The cause of that is that in the context of globalisation Russia is left with two paths: the first is semi-peripheral integration with China or the European Union. The second – which was the one finally chosen – was to create a Eurasian Empire or Union in the centre of Eurasia in accordance with Aleksandr Dugin's approach. However, the question that still remains for the international community today is whether the Russian-Chinese relations that currently dominate the region extend only to the limits of utilitarianism or they comprise now a global political tandem. In the current chapter, I seek to answer this question first and foremost through an examination of the international cooperation and economic issues that currently define the relationship between the two sides the most.

Russian-Chinese relations from regime change to the present

The fact that Russia chose the latter option can be traced in a number of foreign policy concepts. In 2000, it explained its integration into the region in terms of the need for economic development in Siberia and the Russian Far East[52]. In 2008, it began to attach increasing importance to the region, i.a. by presenting the Sino-Russian relationship as a strategic partnership and a cornerstone of regional and global functionality.[53] In 2013 it called the Far East the fastest growing geopolitical region in the world.[54] The 2016 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation[55] did not specifically focus on China-Russia relations, but it highlighted the significance of deepening ties with strategic partners, including China. There are six key points related to China-Russia relations from the 2016 doctrine:
  – Strategic Partnership: The Concept emphasized the strategic nature of the Russia-China relationship and referred to it as a "comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination." It stressed the importance of developing political dialogue, expanding trade and economic cooperation, and enhancing cultural and humanitarian exchanges.

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[51]   Dugas, M. "Timeline of US-Russia Relations (1983-2020)". Russia Matters. 17.12.2021. https://www.russia-matters.org/facts/timeline-us-russia-relations-1983-2020 Accessed on 2 August 2023.

[52]   The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, approved by the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin. Moscow: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. 2000. (in Russian)

[53]   The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, approved by the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin. Moscow: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. 2008. (in Russian)

[54]   The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, approved by the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin. Moscow: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. 2013. (in Russian)

[55]   The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, approved by the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin. Moscow: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. 2016. (in Russian)

– Multipolar World Order: The doctrine emphasized the importance of creating a multipolar world order to ensure international stability and balance of power. It called for strengthening cooperation with countries like China to counterbalance what Russia perceived as the dominance of Western powers.
– Regional Cooperation: The Concept highlighted the need to promote regional cooperation and integration, particularly in Eurasia. It acknowledged the importance of initiatives like the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Silk Road Economic Belt (part of China's Belt and Road Initiative) in fostering economic development and connectivity in the region.
– Security and Defence: The doctrine recognized the significance of maintaining regional and global security. It emphasized the importance of strategic stability, arms control, and international cooperation in countering common threats and challenges.
– Economic Cooperation: The Concept emphasized the importance of expanding economic cooperation with China, including trade, investment, and joint projects. It acknowledged China's role as a major economic partner, and stressed the need for deeper integration between the Russian and Chinese economies.
– International Organizations: The doctrine underscored the importance of strengthening collaboration with China within international organizations and forums such as the United Nations, BRICS, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). It highlighted the shared positions and coordinated efforts between Russia and China on various global issues.

The relationship between the two states was further strengthened by the Trump administration's open designation of Russia and China as strategic competitors from 2017 and then a trade war launched against them in 2018[56], which sent them a message that the US would do everything in its power to prevent their further rise. In June 2019, the Russian and Chinese heads of state announced that their relationship in the area of international strategic cooperation would evolve to an even higher level. Their joint declaration set out clear goals and directions: joint coordination in foreign policy actions, strategic support for each other, and joint defence of their security, sovereignty, territorial integrity and independent development path. Their cooperation has thus reached a level that is both a response to the increasingly competitive nature of the behaviour of the US, but it also openly articulated their desire to transform the world order.

The above-mentioned points are further supported by the 2023 foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation, which attaches particular importance to the Eurasian region in achieving its strategic objectives[57]. It aims at a comprehensive deepening of relations with friendly, sovereign global centres of power and development on the continent, which in principle coincide with Russian approaches to the future world order and concepts for solving key problems of world politics. In the context of the People's Republic of China, Russia's goals are broad and general: to further strengthen comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation and focus on mutually beneficial cooperation and development in all

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[56] Sutter, R. "How the United States Influences Russia-China Relations". *The National Bureau of Asian Research,* 2018. 13/6. 1–5.
[57] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, approved by the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin. Moscow: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. 2023. (in Russian)

fields, to enhance mutual assistance and cooperation in the international arena to ensure security, stability and sustainable development at global and regional levels, both in Eurasia and in other parts of the world[58].

However, in spite of these documents and the popular perception, the relationship between the parties has not always been so balanced[59]. Sino-Russian (before that Soviet) relations go back centuries. During the period of imperialism, these countries were enemies of each other. A little later, communist ideology was able to put the two sides on a common platform, then geopolitical and realpolitik imperatives eventually overrode this artificial political cooperation. The formation of the present alliance started in the early 1990s, but its intensity has changed over time. It gained momentum whenever Moscow came into confrontation with the United States and weakened when Washington seemed willing to accommodate its geopolitical ambitions. As far as the relationship between the parties is concerned, I would like to highlight two documents that have laid the foundations for the current state of Sino-Russian relations. The first is the 1997 joint declaration of the leaders of the two countries on "a multipolar world and the international world order"[60]. This not only rejected US hegemony, but also declared to the international community the presence of a new type of Sino-Russian relations with the outside world. Furthermore, a treaty on good neighbourliness, friendship and cooperation was signed in 2001.[61] Since that date, we can speak of a strategic partnership between the two countries, which, as it happens, was renewed in June 2021 for a further five years.[62] A significant turning point came in 2012, when the People's Republic of China (PRC) became an indispensable and irreplaceable partner for the Kremlin. This shift occurred after Moscow concluded that the primary goals of US policy towards Russia were to promote democratisation and regime change. The year 2012 also coincided with Xi Jinping's takeover of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, which led to a more authoritarian domestic policy and a more assertive foreign policy stance.[63] Subsequently, Sino-Russian relations evolved into an informal alliance between 2012 and 2018, as both powers openly clashed with the United States and recognised the enduring and structural nature of this conflict.

Regarding Sino-Russian relations, the conceptual commonality of neo-Eurasian ideology was manifested in three major points: a shared approach to civilisation, attempts to reorient the dynamics of international politics in their own neighbourhood, and calling for the de-

[58] Sutter, R. "The Strategic Implications of Russia-China Relations: Regional Perspectives". *Asia Policy,* 2018. 2018/1. 1–45.

[59] Yuan, J. "A Brief History of Sino-Soviet Union/Russia Political Relations from 1949 to 2019." Russian International Affairs Council. https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/columns/asian-kaleidoscope/a-brief-history-of-sino-soviet-union-russia-political-relations-from-1949-to-2019/ 25.11.2020. Accessed on 3 August 2023.

[60] United Nations Digital Library, Letter dated 97/05/15 from the Permanent Representatives of China and the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, 15 May 1997.

[61] Wishnick, E. "Russia and China". *Asian Survey,* 41/3. 2001. 797–821.

[62] Reuters. "Russia, China extend friendship and cooperation treaty -Kremlin". Reuters, 28 June 2021. https://www.reuters.com/world/china/russia-china-extend-friendship-cooperation-treaty-kremlin-2021-06-28/ Accessed on 3 August 2023.

[63] Rudd, K. "The World According to Xi Jinping: What China's Ideologue in Chief Really Believes". Foreign Affairs. 10.10.2022. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/world-according-xi-jinping-china-ideologue-kevin-rudd Accessed on 3 August 2023.

velopment of a multipolar international system in which the US is not the hegemonic power and can count itself among the major decision-makers[64].

   – As an implementation of this kind of unity neither China nor Russia identify themselves as nations but as civilisations. The ruling elites of both states reject Western liberalism and the ideology of the global market. Instead, they see their countries as independent civilisations with their unique cultural values and political regimes. In the context of this common mindset of the parties, it is important to note that for a long time China was primarily regarded as a civilisational state. Then, over time, Vladimir Putin joined this approach and stated that Russia's status as a civilisational state was and would continue to prevent the country from "dissolving in this diverse world".[65] The prevalence of this approach is not only impacting global power distribution, but also reshaping post-Cold War geopolitics, moving away from liberal universalism towards a focus on cultural exceptionalism. In order to give a concrete example Xi Jinping has emphasized on numerous occasions the need for China's elites to revitalize Chinese civilization by energizing its cultural elements that transcend boundaries of time, space[66], and nationality while maintaining both enduring and contemporary significance. He specifically refers to the timeless allure of Confucian harmony, which the Communist state promotes domestically and internationally. In addition, Beijing's endeavours to assert control over Taiwan and the South China Sea are rooted in a vision of establishing a civilizational sphere of influence. Samuel Huntington anticipated the potential for confrontations between states of one civilization and states of another, but he did not foresee the rise of civilization states[67] (or "the one modern state – one civilization model") and its far-reaching consequences for the West and others. China's reversion to its historic global primacy could lead to its becoming the ideal type of civilisational state. Beijing today is known for its "four supers" and "one blend": super-large population; super-large territory; super-long traditions; and super-rich cultures. Each of these characteristics is a mixture of ancient and modern[68]. In Russia, the presence of imperial consciousness and thinking is deeply ingrained in their current strategic planning, as expressed by Aleksandr Dugin's assertion that the country cannot exist without imperialism. However, while it is widely recognized as a defining aspect of their foreign policy, it is also considered highly risky, bordering on self-destruction. The Russo-Ukrainian war marked a turning point, with President Putin emphasizing

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[64] Brands, H. "The Battle for Eurasia. China, Russia, and their autocratic friends are leading another epic clash over the world's largest landmass". Foreign Policy, 4. 6. 2023. https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/06/04/russia-china-us-geopolitics-eurasia-strategy/ Accessed on 3 August 2023.

[65] Reuters. "Putin appeals to Russians' patriotism on national day" *Reuters*. 12.6.2023, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-appeals-russians-patriotism-national-day-2023-06-12/ Accessed on 3 August 2023.

[66] Guangyuan, L. "China's pride in its own civilisation and respect for others is rooted in a belief in equality*" SCMP*. 25.04.2023. https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3218168/chinas-pride-its-own-civilisation-and-respect-others-rooted-belief-equality Accessed on 3 August 2023.

[67] Orsi, D. "The 'Clash of Civilizations' and Realism in International Political Thought*". E-International Relations*. 15.4.2018. https://www.e-ir.info/2018/04/15/the-clash-of-civilizations-and-realism-in-international-political-thought/ Accessed on 4 August 2023.

[68] Pabst, A. "China, Russia and the return of the civilisational state." *NewStatesman*. 8.6.2019. https://www.newstatesman.com/world/2019/05/china-russia-and-the-return-of-the-civilisational-state Accessed on 4 August 2023.

Russia as an entire civilization with even greater intensity. The state is not just revered and worth sacrificing for, but is also viewed as a distinct and superior civilization, with a unique historical trajectory spanning a thousand years. Throughout this historical narrative, cultural traditions and values are transmitted across generations[69]. The Russian civilization-state possesses its own revered figures, a pantheon of heroes that has remained unchanged from the Soviet era to the present, including Aleksandr Nevsky, Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, Joseph Stalin, Yuri Gagarin, and many others. Imperialism and colonialism are fundamental components of Putin's vision of civilization and are closely tied to warfare. This ideology is not novel; it directly draws inspiration from Stalinism, as well as earlier Eurasian and Slavophile narratives. War is depicted as a means to restore historical justice, as a form of defence and prevention, and as an act of liberation. Putin asserts that the territories of the empire "must be reclaimed and strengthened." In line with this perspective, over the past year, President Putin has repeatedly declared to the Russian people, through numerous speeches and statements, that the "special operation 2022" is a natural extension of the Great Patriotic War (known as World War II in Russia). Essentially, it is framed as an existential conflict between Russian civilization and the Western world[70].

– Besides this, the basis and origins of China-Russia cooperation are political, as both parties are calling for the development of a multipolar international system in which the US is not the hegemonic power and can count itself among the major decision-makers. At the same time, the economic, military and energy aspects of the relationship are becoming increasingly important. The diplomatic relationship between the two countries is thought-provoking and worthy of attention from the West, as there are currently nearly 400 agreements between them covering all areas of cooperation. In addition, a further hundred agreements have been concluded at regional level, and direct meetings at state leadership level are organised at least once a year. In a brief summary, the alliance between Russia and China is based on the similarity of their global strategic interests, in particular the fact that they both pursue an assertive foreign policy. By engaging in simultaneous activities, both countries aim to compel the United States of America to allocate its limited resources, thus enhancing Russia's position in Europe and China's influence in the Indo-Pacific. Furthermore, the foundation of this alliance also builds on a hierarchical and socially Darwinian perspective of international relations, which is embraced by the ruling elites of both the Kremlin and Zhongnanhai.

– Another dimension of the parties' ideological community is the fact, that both country's attempts to reorient the dynamics of international politics were particularly visible in their own neighbourhood, as it is intuitively a logical concept that regional predominance should be an important element of the claim to great power status. China is putting forward territorial claims in the adjoining seas, carrying out a massive territorial settlement programme in the South China Sea, and strengthening its military

69   Anchan, N. "Russia's war and the rhetoric of the 'civilisational state' in global politics". *The Loop by ECPR*. 17.08.2022. https://www.google.com/search?q=samuel+huntington+and+civilational+state&oq=samuel+huntington+and+civilational+state&aqs=chrome..69i57j33i10i160l4.7811j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8 Accessed on 4 August 2023.

70   Pabst, A. "China, Russia and the return of the civilisational state." *NewStatesman*. 08.06.2019. https://www.newstatesman.com/world/2019/05/china-russia-and-the-return-of-the-civilisational-state Accessed on 4 August 2023.

presence in the East China Sea, as well as intensifying political and military pressure on Japan over the disputed Senkaku (Diaoyu in Chinese) islands[71]. On the other hand, Russia annexed Crimea in 2014 and opened a new stage of the conflict with Ukraine in 2022, by fomenting the war in eastern Ukraine. Besides these coercive measures, both states have put forward a complex set of initiatives that show how they believe international politics and cooperation should work in their respective regions: the New Silk Road Initiative and the above-mentioned New Eurasian and Eurasian Economic Union (EurSEC).

This kind of ideological community can be seen in some concrete examples, such as the Russian presidential speeches, the Joint Russian-Chinese Statements, or shared geopolitical perspectives.

As mentioned above, Russian presidents – including Vladimir Putin – have emphasized in their speeches the importance of regional cooperation and integration, which aligns with some aspects of neo-Eurasianist thought. For instance, in his speeches, Putin has highlighted the significance of Russia's partnerships with neighbouring countries and the Eurasian region as a whole. He has spoken about the need for economic integration, security cooperation, and the preservation of cultural ties in order to foster stability and development in the region.

Besides this, joint statements issued by Russia and China often focus on areas of cooperation and shared interests. While not explicitly attributed to neo-Eurasianism, these statements often highlight the importance of strategic partnerships, economic integration, and the development of the Eurasian region. For example, joint statements between the two countries have emphasized the alignment of their respective integration initiatives, such as the EAEU and China's Belt and Road Initiative, to enhance connectivity and cooperation in the Eurasian space.

Thirdly, as mentioned, Russia and China share certain geopolitical perspectives that resonate with elements of neo-Eurasianism. Both countries advocate for a multipolar world order, emphasize the importance of national sovereignty, and seek to counterbalance what they perceive as Western dominance. While these perspectives are not solely attributed to neo-Eurasianism, they do align with the broader notion of enhancing regional cooperation and influence in the Eurasian space. Nevertheless, it is important to underline that it is not plausible – despite the common points in Russian and Chinese external policies – that the complete implementation of the concept is in sight.

The impact of the past year on Sino-Russian relations

The relationship between Russia, China and the other countries of the Eurasian region is undeniably rooted in a history of shared identity: a desire to build a new ideology that would provide a sense of identity for their communities. In this respect, Russia can build a new, binding ideology for the Eurasians to reclaim the geographical and cultural sphere of the post-Soviet space. This is also reflected in the fact that since the beginning of Vladimir

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[71] Beckmann, R. *China's 'Island-Building' in the South China Sea: Implications for Regional Security*. Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, 2017.

Putin's presidency, the Euro-Asian ideology has received political and economic support from the government to create a large-scale integration project.[72]

The outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian war in 2022 and the past year itself have led to a significant increase in intensity in the relationship between the two countries. This is illustrated, inter alia, by the Russian President's description of the relationship between the two countries at the meeting between Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping in February 2022: "Russia considers China as its most important strategic partner and like-minded friend. Moreover they see the Russian-Chinese relations as the – neo-Eurasianist – model for international relations in the 21st century"[73]. The Chinese President stressed that the friendship between the two states is "without borders". It can also be seen as a similar relationship-building step, that Xi welcomed Dmitry Medvedev, leader of the ruling United Russia party, to Beijing in December, 2022. During his current visit to Moscow, Wang Ji was previously also met by Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.[74] In addition, the above-mentioned bilateral relationship-building meetings are continuing: on the 10th of July 2023, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Valentina Matviyenko. Preisdent Xi noted that with the joint efforts of both sides, Sino-Russian relations have maintained a healthy and stable development momentum, and cooperation in various fields has shown steady progress. The Russian representative stated that the social basis and support for the generation-to-generation friendship between the two countries is growing stronger, and in order to further strengthen it, the Federation Council of the Russian Federation stands for deepening Russian-Chinese cooperation and is ready to intensify exchanges with the National People's Congress in order to provide legal guarantees for the implementation of the agreements between the two leaders[75].

In addition to the political and military dimensions, cooperation has also intensified in the form of projects and joint efforts in a number of other areas during the past few years, for example disinformation and railways development. These include a steadily growing effort by China to spend billions of dollars to spread pro-Russian propaganda in 2022. Mainly with a focus on the Global South, as well as the countries' increasing information warfare campaigns, within the context of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine – according to James Rubin, coordinator of the Center for Global Engagement, a US State Department agency created to "expose and counter" foreign propaganda and disinformation. Interestingly, to show the increasing intensity of the relationship: in the initial four months of 2022, there was a significant surge in retweets of Chinese diplomats by Russian sources compared to the same period in 2021. This increase was primarily driven by the amplification of Russian

72 Schmidt, M. "Is Putin Pursuing a Policy of Eurasianism?" *DEMOKRATIZATSIYA,* 13/1. 2005. 87–100.

73 Putin, V. *"Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the International Relations Entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development".* Official website of the President of Russia. 04.02.2022. http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/5770 Accessed on 5 August 2023.

74 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. "Xi Jinping met with Speaker of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation Valentina Matvienko". The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. 10.07.2023. Министерство иностранных дел Китайской Народной Республики (fmprc.gov.cn) Accessed on 7 August 2023.

75 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. "Xi Jinping met with Speaker of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation Valentina Matvienko". The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. 10.07.2023. Министерство иностранных дел Китайской Народной Республики (fmprc.gov.cn) Accessed on 7 August 2023.

state media outlet RT, but it was also observed at diplomatic level. For instance, the Chinese embassy in Paris retweeted the Russian embassy in Paris multiple times, even on sensitive topics such as denying war crimes in Bucha. Likewise, we can observe a similar pattern in reverse, with Russian officials retweeting Chinese government officials and state media. From January to April 2022, Russian diplomats retweeted Chinese officials over 140 times, which is almost a tenfold increase compared to the same period in 2021. Interestingly, the most retweeted accounts in this case are not state media, but rather Chinese officials, particularly those associated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including the official Ministry of Foreign Affairs account. Besides the content that has a significant anti-American tone, there is also a noticeable convergence in messaging, particularly concerning the war in Ukraine. A prominent narrative revolves around portraying NATO as the aggressor in the war, which is further reinforced by adopting the Kremlin's viewpoint that NATO expansion is directly responsible for the conflict. While this talking point had some presence in Chinese messaging prior to the war, there has been a notable surge in its adoption since the conflict began. When examining the term "war" in the statements of Chinese officials that we monitor, it can be observed that, apart from China itself, which predominantly focuses on diplomatic declarations, the most frequently mentioned country in relation to war by Chinese officials in 2022 is the United States, rather than Ukraine or Russia. Surprisingly, the number of mentions of the United States is nearly double of that of Russia, specifically in tweets discussing the war.[76]

The steadily strengthening nature of Russian-Chinese relations over the past decades is reflected in a number of joint declarations and projects. An example is the recent announcement made by Chinese Defence Ministry spokesman Tan Kefei[77] – based on the speech of Xi Jinpin – in March of 2023, that the armed forces of the People's Republic of China are ready to establish a higher level of cooperation with the Russian Federation in the field of strategic communication and coordination[78]. In addition, the two countries are ready to work together to implement global security initiatives. Furthermore, military confidence building in the form of joint maritime and air patrols and exercises has also become a priority area. A recent high-profile instance of the latter is the Sino-Iranian-Russian joint naval exercise in the Gulf of Oman between 15th and 19th March, where the three nations sent forces including 12 ships, special operations and diving units, strengthening their navies' capability to carry out various tasks and further deepen the friendship and practical cooperation among the three countries[79]. Another interesting example is the current railway project between China and Russia, known as the China-Russia High-Speed Rail (CRHSR) project, aimed at strengthening transportation infrastructure and connectivity between the two countries. The project involves the construction of a high-speed rail line spanning approximately 7,000 kilometres, connecting

[76] Wintour, P. "China spends billions on pro-Russia disinformation, US special envoy says". The Guardian. 28.02.2023. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/28/china-spends-billions-on-pro-russia-disinformation-us-special-envoy-says Accessed on 6 August 2023.

[77] Kyiv Post. "Beijing to Cooperate with Russian Military in a Number of Areas - Chinese Defense Ministry". Kyiv Post. 30.03.2023. https://www.kyivpost.com/post/15148 Accessed on 6 August 2023.

[78] Jinping, Xi. "Forging Ahead to Open a New Chapter of China-Russia Friendship, Cooperation and Common Development". The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2023. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/202303/t20230320_11044359.html Accessed on 6 August 2023.

[79] AlJazeera. "China, Russia and Iran hold joint naval drills in Gulf of Oman". AlJazeera. 15.03.2023. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/15/china-russia-iran-hold-joint-naval-drills-in-gulf-of-oman Accessed on 9 August 2023.

Beijing in China with Moscow in Russia. The primary goal of this project is to enhance bilateral trade and economic cooperation by facilitating faster and more efficient transportation of goods and people. By reducing travel time from several days to just a few hours, the CRHSR project seeks to boost economic ties, attract investment, and promote cultural exchanges between China and Russia. It demonstrates the balance of power between China and Russia, showcasing their ability to collaborate on major infrastructure projects, and project their influence on a global scale. It underscores the increasing importance of China as a key player in Eurasia and highlights Russia's willingness to cooperate and benefit from its neighbour's economic prowess. From a geopolitical perspective, the China-Russia High-Speed Rail project carries significant implications for both parties. Firstly, it strengthens the strategic partnership between China and Russia by deepening their economic integration and interdependence. Enhanced transportation links between the two countries contribute to the development of a Eurasian trade corridor, which can serve as an alternative to traditional sea routes, reducing dependence on maritime transport. This project also enhances China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as it expands China's reach into the heart of Eurasia and reinforces its economic influence in the region.[80]

The continued strengthening of the relationship between the two sides is also reflected in the significant increase in the number of high-level bilateral meetings between the two countries. In February this year, in Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin received Chinese State Councillor Vang Ji, a member of the Chinese Communist Party and head of the bureau of the Central Committee's Foreign Affairs Commission. On this occasion, the Russian side stated that relations between Russia and China are developing steadily and reaching new frontiers. In addition, the Russian head of state praised the contribution of cooperation between the two sides both in terms of stabilising the international situation and providing humanitarian aid. Vang Ji pointed out that Sino-Russian relations are steadily improving despite international pressure. Relations between Moscow and Beijing are not directed against third countries and are not subject to pressure from third parties. He said that the relationship is based on strong economic, political and cultural foundations, which also refers to the ideological community of neo-Eurasianism[81].

In conclusion, in order to get a full picture of Russian-Chinese relations, it is essential to highlight a rather controversial situation. The "strategic partnership" and the "unprecedented level of relations" have been emphasised even when there were differences between the parties, but the parties are not entering into a real alliance.[82] The primary reason for this is that sovereignty is such a priority for both countries that they are fully committed to one another. It is also important to stress that the People's Republic of China is committed to its own national objectives and is ready to implement joint projects even without Russia, as demonstrated by the agreements and declarations made by nine other states, including Argentina, Paki-

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[80]   Russia Briefing. "First Moscow Direct Freight Train Departs From Beijing". Russia Briefing, 26.03.2023. https://www.russia-briefing.com/news/first-moscow-direct-freight-train-departs-from-beijing.html/ Accessed on 9 August 2023.

[81]   The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. "Russian President Vladimir Putin met with President Wang Yi of the People's Republic of China". The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. 22.02.2023. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202302/t20230224_11030788.html Accessed on 10 August 2023.

[82]   Kim, P. "The Limits of the No-Limits Partnership: China and Russia Can't Be Split, but They Can Be Thwarted." Foreign Affairs. 28.02.2023. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/limits-of-a-no-limits-partnership-china-russia Accessed on 10 August 2023.

stan and Saudi Arabia, on the establishment of the International Lunar Exploration Station. In addition to the sovereignty issue, the geographical proximity of the parties, their shared geostrategic interests and thus their conflicts of interests in the Central Asia region also play an important role. The power balance between Russia and China in the Central-Asian region is characterized by a complex interplay of interests and competition. For instance, in Central Asia, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has led to an increased economic influence through infrastructure projects, while Russia maintains political and security ties with these countries. In terms of energy resources, Russia has traditionally relied on Middle-Asian gas supplies to maintain influence over European markets, while China has been investing in energy infrastructure to secure resources for its own domestic needs. This competition for resources adds to the power dynamics between the two countries. In terms of security, both Russia and China have engaged in the Middle-Asia region. Russia has actively participated through the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), while China has provided assistance in border security and counterterrorism efforts. The diverging approaches and priorities of Russia and China in addressing security challenges further influence the power balance. Moreover, the region's proximity to Afghanistan and its security threats, including terrorism and drug trafficking, pose additional challenges that both countries seek to address. The evolving dynamics in the Middle-Asia region will continue to shape the power balance between Russia and China, affecting regional stability and broader global geopolitics. In addition, border conflicts, both historical and ongoing, play a crucial role in shaping the power balance in the Middle-Asia region. The most significant change at the moment might be that, while the Russo-Ukrainian war is diverting Russia's resources, capacities and attention to the West, Chinese influence – in areas considered to be its immediate and traditional sphere of interest of Russia – is steadily increasing.

This was demonstrated by the diplomatic milestone for Chinese President Xi Jinping in May this year. He invited the leaders of five Central Asian states to the city of Xian for their first-ever joint summit without the contribution of Russian politicians. Following the recent establishment of the China-Central Asia Summit, a surge in apprehension ensued. It can be said that Russia's influence in Central Asia has weakened due to the war in Ukraine, and China perceives an opportunity. This development, juxtaposed with the G7 meeting taking place simultaneously in Japan, is regarded as a contest for influence, referred to as "duelling summits." China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its growing economic partnerships with Central Asian nations have laid a solid foundation for cooperation in trade, infrastructure, and energy. The substantial financial support pledged at the China-Central Asia Summit, amounting to 26 billion yuan (approximately US$3.8 billion), reflects a robust economic collaboration, further contributing to the prevailing unease. The apprehension is compounded by Russia's evident decline in power and influence following its invasion of Ukraine[83]. Despite indications of increased cooperation between China and the Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan), there has been no abrupt change in China's policy towards the region. China's objective is not to dominate Central Asia or fill a power vacuum. Instead, by strengthening ties with its neighbours, China appears primarily focused on maintaining stability on its western periphery. This, in turn, would create a buffer zone to effectively

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[83] Hayley, A. "China's Xi unveils grand development plan for Central Asia". Reuters, 19.05.2023. https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/chinas-xi-calls-stable-secure-central-asia-2023-05-19/ Accessed on 10 August 2023.

manage the persistent security challenges it faces in the Asia-Pacific region to the east. China's diplomatic priorities provide valuable insight into its ambitions in Central Asia. These countries became China's immediate neighbours after the collapse of the Soviet Union. China's diplomatic blueprint underscores the importance it assigns to "major powers, its periphery, developing countries, and multilateral platforms," with Central Asia playing a critical role in this framework. From Beijing's perspective, Central Asia and Russia represent the gaps in what they perceive as a US encirclement strategy[84]. Initially, China's relations with Central Asian countries progressed slowly due to its focus on major powers and Southeast Asian neighbours. The lack of dynamic diplomatic mechanisms also hindered closer ties with Central Asian countries, despite security cooperation at the borders. Thus, the inauguration of the China-Central Asia Summit in Xi'an, emphasized by President Xi Jinping, was a significant milestone on the ancient Silk Road, marking a crucial turning point. While China acknowledges the importance of its relationship with Central Asia, its larger focus is on the dynamics of its relationship with the United States. Washington has identified Beijing as a "strategic competitor" and is engaged in regional conflicts centred around the East and South China Seas, including Taiwan. Additionally, China views US initiatives such as the Indo-Pacific Strategy, the Quad alliance involving Australia, Japan, and India, and the AUKUS partnership with Australia and the United Kingdom as efforts to encircle China, limiting its influence on the first island chain and obstructing access to the Indian and Pacific Oceans[85]. From China's perspective, Central Asia and Russia represent vulnerabilities in this perceived US strategy. Despite the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan in 2021, China remains cautious of US involvement in Central Asia, as other powers may encourage "colour revolutions," which China sees as a threat to its interests, and Xi explicitly mentioned this term during his remarks at the China-Central Asia Summit. Concerns persist about the US Central Asia strategy unveiled by the Trump administration in 2020, which designated the pursuit of a "more stable and prosperous Central Asia" as a "primary strategic interest," allowing the region to pursue political, economic, and security interests with various partners on its own terms.[86] For China, the stability of the eastern region is of utmost importance. Simultaneously, building stronger relations with Central Asian states is integral to China's national security. Russia's conflict with Ukraine has introduced another layer of complexity, as China worries about potential US manoeuvres in the region.

Therefore, China's diplomacy in Central Asia should be understood within the context of evolving regional dynamics.[87] The resolution of past conflicts has helped stabilize the border areas and fostered greater cooperation, while alignment on regional issues like

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[84] Kínai Társadalomtudományi Akadémia Xi Jinping Gondolatkutató Központ a szocializmusért kínai jellemzőkkel egy új korszakhoz: *Tudományos útmutató a nagyországok diplomáciájához kínai jellemzőkkel az új korszakban*, Ostheory, 12.09.2019. http://www.qstheory.cn/llwx/2019-09/12/c_1124988849.htm Accessed on 10 August 2023.

[85] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. "Reality Check: Falsehoods in US Perceptions of China". Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. 19.06.2022, https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/wjbxw/202206/t20220619_10706059.html Accessed on 10 August 2023.

[86] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. "Keynote Speech by Xi Jinping at the China-Central Asia Summit (Full Text)". Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. 19.05.2023. https://www.mfa.gov.cn/zyxw/202305/t20230519_11079936.shtml Accessed on 10 August 2023.

[87] Umarov, T. "Is Russia Losing Its Grip on Central Asia?" Foreign Affairs. 30.06.2023. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/russia-losing-its-grip-central-asia Accessed on 10 August 2023.

the South China Sea disputes highlights the level of collaboration and shared interests between the two countries. However, these conflicts also demonstrate the potential for tensions and competition that can arise, underscoring the delicate nature of the power balance between Russia and China in the region.[88]

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND A CONCLUSION

In summation, both historical and civilizational processes have played a prominent role in the development of Russian foreign policy strategy and geopolitical thinking. Furthermore, each tendency also attaches great importance to spatiality and an autonomous Russian identity. This is reflected in the Zapadnik (Westerniser), Slavophile and Eurasianist schools of thought.

According to the neo-Eurasianist view, Russia is a great power, which is at the same time the Heartland of the world with its own specific characteristics. Its main characteristic is that it is a special ethnographic and cultural formation, situated between the West and the East. Its specific location means that it is neither part of Europe nor part of Asia, but embodies and represents a distinct Eurasian civilisation.

Russia, as the successor to the Soviet Union, has provided an excellent breeding ground for this by reorganising its power, extending its political sovereignty over large parts of the territory of the former Soviet republics and resuming imperial politics. The Russian political leadership has pursued a strategy of neo-Eurasianism and multipolarisation of the international system, which it has since pursued in its foreign policy. In this way, long-standing Russian geopolitical trends have been put at the service of expansionist realpolitik objectives. Particular emphasis is placed on the insights and ideas of the 'Moscow School', which is characterised by the name of Aleksandr Dugin, on Russia's Eurasian identity, a new four-polar world order – in connection with which the current spheres of influence are redistributed – and US hegemony.

The influence of neo-Eurasianism in Russia can be observed in certain actions and policies undertaken by the Russian government. There are four major areas of examples of how the neo-Eurasianist movement's impact can be traced in Russia's actions: The establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is a significant manifestation of neo-Eurasianist ideas in action. The EAEU, launched in 2015, is a regional integration project aimed at fostering economic cooperation among member states, including Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. It promotes the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labour, as well as the coordination of economic policies. The creation of the EAEU aligns with the neo-Eurasianist vision of enhancing integration and cooperation among countries in the Eurasian region. Besides this, Russia's approach to regional security and cooperation in the Eurasian space also reflects elements of neo-Eurasianist thinking. Russia has actively engaged in multilateral organizations, such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to promote stability and cooperation in the region. These efforts emphasize the importance of maintaining strong relationships and partnerships with neighbouring countries and aim to

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[88]   Silk Road Briefing. "China and Russia Preparing To Push The United States & European Union Out Of Central Asia". Silk Road Briefing. 12.06.2023. https://www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/2023/06/12/china-and-russia-preparing-to-push-the-united-states-european-union-out-of-central-asia/ Accessed on 10 August 2023.

counter external influences that may threaten regional stability. The promotion of cultural and linguistic ties among countries in the Eurasian region is another aspect influenced by neo-Eurasianism. Russia has implemented policies to support the preservation and promotion of Russian language and culture in neighbouring countries. It has established Russian-language schools, cultural centres, and media outlets to foster cultural connections and maintain a sense of shared heritage among Eurasian nations. It is also important to mention that Russia's geopolitical engagements, particularly in its relations with countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus, reflect elements of neo-Eurasianist thinking. The Russian government seeks to maintain influence and strategic presence in these regions, focusing on economic, political, and security cooperation. Russia provides military support, engages in bilateral agreements, and offers economic incentives to enhance its ties with these nations, aligning with the broader goal of strengthening the geopolitical position of the Eurasian region as a whole. These examples illustrate how the neo-Eurasianist movement's impact can be traced in Russia's actions and policies. It is important to note that these actions may not be driven solely by neo-Eurasianist ideology, but rather reflect a mix of geopolitical, economic, and strategic considerations.

The Russian Federation, in the name of its 'anti-West' narrative and as a counterweight to the deterioration of relations with European countries, has shown an increasing interest in the Far East over the last twenty years. China, as an inescapable player in the regional and global international community and a country with which it has had a varied history of relations, has been the subject of growing Russian interest. One reason for this is that Russia's location and recognition of its position as a great power has led it to seek to play the role of "balance of power" in relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China.

The answer to the question posed at the beginning of the study, "Can the Sino-Russian relationship be considered a purely utilitarian relationship or a global political tandem?" is, in my opinion, that it is currently a purely utilitarian relationship, with the PRC being the more dominant and effective party in asserting its interests. Furthermore, it is unlikely that there will be a complete establishing of the balance of power between the parties in the near future and a willingness to establish a truly global political tandem. In light of all this, can Russia's policy towards China and the Far East be considered successful? On the one hand, the attempt at Russian integration can be regarded incomplete because the countries concerned – with the possible exception of energy – have not responded adequately. In these circumstances, Russia's aim, which was to gain recognition of its status as a great power, was to replace its Western relations with the East and possibly improve the social and economic indicators of the Russian Far East. In this respect, Russia's role in the Far East does not meet these high expectations today and can hardly be expected to do so in the coming decade. However, if we look at this issue in terms of challenges or alternatives, the balance of Russian foreign policy seems rather more successful: it has managed to dynamically increase and integrate its trade relations with the region, and the penetration of the dominant Russian sector, energy, is underway, Moscow is showing unprecedented political activity in the region, and has so far managed to keep Beijing's penetration of Moscow's former spheres of influence on a peaceful track. Finally, in my view, it is hardly possible or worthwhile to announce any major Russian expansionist superpower programme in the region. The reason is that Russia has to reckon with 'factors' in the region, such as China or Japan, so it has no realistic chance of achieving clear economic dominance in the near future.

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M. Ali Samay

THE STRATEGIC PATH OF RUSSIA IN EURASIA

ABSTRACT: *The transformation of the bipolar world order into unilateral or American globalization began following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ever since, the regions, countries, and markets of the world have been bizarrely interconnected with American economy and politics. Within this model, the US has become the centre of the world security, political and economic affairs. The re-emergence of Russia in the early 21ᵗʰ century raised the geopolitical and geo-economic importance of the entire Eurasian continent. China, India, Turkey, and Iran have coordinated some of their interests with Russia. These Eurasian powers are likely to create a common or shared geopolitical and geo-economic dominance in the region. This paper posits the hypothesis that Russian Eurasianist foreign policy strategy implies a comprehensive regional security, including political and economic cooperation initiatives by applying global partnership theory instead of heartland and rimland theory. It seeks an answer to the question of how Russia can shape a multi-vector diplomacy to convince the Eurasian great, middle and small powers to cooperate and coordinate their policies.*

KEYWORDS: *Russia, Soviet Union, Eurasianism, bipolar world order, multilateralism, global partnership*

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INTRODUCTION

The Eurasian security, political, and economic cooperation is among the most important questions in international politics. Sustainable economic development, political stability, and security need powerful regions, shared values, and common goals to construct balance of power for better global security and peace. The new world order needs fundamental changes and reorganization such as moving from unilateralism towards multilateralism and global partnership. The transformation of the bipolar world order into unilateral or American globalization began after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ever since, the regions, countries and markets of the world have been bizarrely interconnected with American economy and politics. Within this model, the US has become the centre of the world security, political and economic affairs.

The re-emergence of Russia in the early 21ᵗʰ century raised the geopolitical and geo-economic importance of the entire Eurasian continent. This opened a new study era for experts and researchers to study the structuralization principles of the entire Eurasian supercontinent. In this regard, the re-emergence of Russia as a great geopolitical and military power in Eurasia is a considerable challenge to the current Western-centric world order. Russia with its central role in the Soviet Union and the last great power in recent decades of power

politics of Eurasia has more historical, geopolitical, security capacity, and economic resources to influence the Heartland and the World Island again. According to Rutland, *"Russia has deployed political, military and economic tools in order to keep influence and advance its interests"*[1]. As for now, despite the United States' long-term preventive balance of power strategy and deep concerns in the region, China, India, Turkey, and Iran have coordinated some parts of their interests with Russia. These Eurasian powers are likely to create a common or shared geopolitical and geo-economic dominance in the region. The very meaning of strategic shifts and policy cooperation among Eurasian nations is a balance of power and challenge to US-led globalization. These common and shared geopolitical and geo-economic efforts will constitute a Eurasian powers' club that will lay a better ground for Eurasian security, political, economic and technological initiatives. Considering all the above-mentioned issues, my hypothesis is: *Russian Eurasianist foreign policy strategy has become highly considerable for the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), China, India, Turkey, Iran and other Middle Eastern and Asian countries because it implies a certain degree of appropriate comprehensive regional security, including political and economic cooperation initiatives by applying global partnership theory instead of heartland and rimland theory.*

In this regard, my research question is: *How can Russia shape such a multi-vector diplomacy to convince the Eurasian great, middle, and small powers to cooperate and coordinate their policies?*

THE EURASIANIST FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY OF RUSSIA

One of the main points in Russia's Eurasianist foreign policy strategy is to build trust and show Russia as a non-aggressive country. Russia is considering to build a new political environment in the region. It seeks to achieve its regional and international influence by installing new perspectives and norms in Eurasia. Enjoying bigger influence and letting others have their voice on policy and decision-making processes seem to be the new model of regional integration in Eurasia. Russia's foreign and security policy has developed step by step from different directions to this point. These directions meant stability in its zone of influence in the early 1990s, Pan-Slavism in late 1990s and early 2000s, opening to the West or Western modernization in the first decade of the 21th century, and currently Eurasian integration and regional and international security, political and economic cooperation.

The Eurasian view in Russian regional and international politics is a policy of prestige. According to Hans J. Morgenthau, *"Prestige, in contrast to the maintenance and acquisition of power, is but rarely an end in itself. More frequently, the policy of prestige is one of the instrumentalities through which the policies of the status quo and of imperialism try to achieve their ends"*[2].

Russia is not interested in integrating with the West anymore. This could work for a while until all sides become ready to reach the level they can cooperate with one another as peers while having their own values and interests. Russia needs to prove itself as a great, sustainable and reliable, regional and international power. This is the reason why Russia

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[1]   Peter, R. "Paradigms for Russian Policy in the Caspian Region." *Energy and Conflict in Central Asia and the Caucasus,* Volume 163. 2000.

[2]   Morgenthau, H. J.: *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle For Power and Peace.* Seventh edition ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 1978) 83.

appears at the places where the US or the West in general is involved or interested. Paul M. Carter Jr. argues, *"during the past decade, Russia's foreign policy ambitions have steadily increased, including in areas of conflicts or instability in the Middle East, Africa, and the Western Hemisphere"*[3]. It means the new international and foreign policy of Russia is looking to make conflict zones in certain regions or countries where the US intervened. Russia follows this policy towards nations to provide them alternative options and make them ready to join Russia's Eurasian and regional security, political, and economic cooperation strategy. The reason Russia is confronting western powers alone and does not request its friends and powerful strategic partners to stand by it or at least act as mediator between Russia and the West is that the former seeks to demonstrate its great power status.

The case of re-emerging as a great regional and international power for Russia is the matter of to be or not to be. Confronting the most developed and economically better structured Western countries would not bring good times for Russia. Russia may fail and face a series of problems, including threats. It is a hard political and historic decision. Referring to basic rules for taking hard political steps Robert D. Kaplan refers to Darius, *"if you think yourself stronger, stand and fight, if not, submit"*[4], and according to Sun Tzu *"the side that knows when to fight and when not will take the victory."*[5] Russia's main goal is to create a new world order. A world order, which refuses the primacy of one over others. Once Amir Timor (Tamerlane) told his soldiers, *"A knight dies once but a coward dies repeatedly."*[6]

One of the most outstanding points in the new Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation in 2016 was the use of force and power projection outside the country and outside its zone of influence. In this regard, Vladimir Frolov writes, *"On the surface, Russia's new Foreign Policy Concept is a low key technical document. But if you read between the lines, it contains significant changes to Russia's approach to international affairs and emphasizes a growing willingness to use force to achieve the Kremlin's goals."*[7]

The term "use of force" or more clearly hybrid warfare as the new Russian way of war in its foreign policy concept originates from the so-called Gerasimov doctrine (2013). The author of the doctrine is General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation Armed Forces. The Gerasimov doctrine applied hybrid warfare that transcends boundaries between peace and war. General Valery Gerasimov argues, *"The very "rules of war" have changed. The rule of non-military means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the power of forces of weapons in their effectiveness"*[8]. It is a model of all-of-government warfare and related to achievement of political goals. As he writes, *"The use of political, diplomatic, economic and other non-military measures in combination with the use of military forces"*[9]. In other words,

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3   Carter, P. M. Jr. "Understanding Russia's Interest in Conflict Zones." Washington DC.: United States Institute of Peace. 469. 2020.

4   Kaplan, R. D. *The Return of Marco Polo's World: War, Strategy, and American Interests in the Twenty-first Century.* (London: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2019) 46.

5   Sun Tzu. *The art of war.* In: *Strategic Studies.* Second ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) 86–110.

6   Brion, M. *I am the World Occupier Timur.* (Tehran: Mostufi Publication, 1984) 180.

7   Frolov, V. "Russia's New Foreign Policy – A Show of Force and Power Projection." The Moscow Times, 6 December 2016. https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/12/06/russias-new-foreign-policy-based-on-force-and-power-projection-a56431

8   Gerasimov, V. "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight." (in Russian) *Voenno-Promishlenni Kurier.* 27 February 2013.

9   Gerasimov. "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight."

the Gerasimov doctrine can be described as the development of an operational concept to increase the confrontation capacity of Russia with the West.

According to Eugene Rumer, the main points of the Gerasimov doctrine are:
– Whole-of-government warfare.
– Fusion of elements of hard and soft power across various domains.
– Permanent conflict transcending the boundaries between peace and war.[10]

In this doctrine, General Valery Gerasimov applies the following new operational forms and methods:
– Initiations of military operations by groupings of line-units (forces) in peacetime
– Highly manoeuvrable, non-contact combat operations of inter-branch groupings of line-units.
– Reducing the military-economic potential of the state by the destruction of critically important facilities of its military and civilian infrastructure in short time
– The mass use of high-precision weaponry, the large-scale use of special operations forces, as well as robotic systems and weapons based on new physical principles and the participation of a civil-military component in combat operations
– Simultaneous effect on line-units and enemy facilities throughout the entire depth of its territories
– Warfare simultaneously in all physical environment and the information space
– The use of asymmetric and indirect operations
– Command-and-control of forces and assets in a unified information space.

The aim the Gerasimov doctrine wants to achieve is the powerful return or re-emergence of Russia in the world affairs as a partner among other major powers. The Gerasimov doctrine increased the practical value of Russian military in the Russian foreign and national security policies. The use of force drastically increased the capacity and activity of Russian foreign policy in the current international politics and conflicts. Some of the experts believe the Gerasimov doctrine is the implementer of Russian foreign policy strategy and national security interests. However, the driver of Russian foreign policy strategy and national security policy is still the Primakov doctrine. The military in its old and new form has always been the implementer of Russian foreign policy strategy. The Gerasimov doctrine can be recognized as the classical *"getting around strategy"* of Amir Timor (Tamerlane). When Amir Timor mobilized his army to conquer Baghdad, he was aware of his enemy's strength. He used *"getting around strategy"* to take over on his enemy.

"In my left side, when my riders attacked the enemy's army, in response, my riders come under a heavy arrowing attack. The heavy arrowing attack destroyed some of my riders and warhorses. The lesson I learned from that attack showed that the enemy is strong and well prepared for defense and if I conduct a direct attack, possibly my army might be destroyed. Therefore, I decided to get around the enemy's army."[11]

According to the foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation in 2016, one of the strategic national priorities for Russia is *"facilitate the development of constructive dialogue and partnership with a view to promote harmony and mutual enrichment among*

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[10] Rumer, E. "The Primakov (Not Gerasimov) Doctrine in Action." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 5 June 2019.

[11] Brion. *I am the World Occupier Timur.*

various cultures and civilizations" [12]. The document highlights, *"the world is currently going through fundamental changes related to the emergence of a multipolar international system"* [13]. Enhancing a multipolar international system in Russian foreign policy strategy can be traced back to the 1990s. In other words, it stems from the Primakov doctrine.

Russia's contemporary security, defence and foreign policy strategy was conceived by Yevgeni Primakov in 1996. The Primakov doctrine, named after him, has been the actual theoretical background and defining concept of the Russian security, military, and foreign policies for more than two decades. The most outstanding principles of the Russian foreign and security policy in the Primakov doctrine (1996) are:

– View of Russia as an indispensable actor with an independent foreign policy
– Vision of a multipolar world managed by a concert of major powers
– Insistence on Russia's primacy in the post-Soviet space and the pursuit of Eurasian integration
– Opposition to NATO expansion
– Partnership with China and India. [14]

The doctrine suggested that it would be beneficial for Russia to maintain good relationships with Eastern powers. Based on its Eastern roots, Russia should consider the technology, economy, and social development gap between Russia and Western powers. This gap will make different interests for both. That is why it is very important for Russia to keep its Eastern mentality and relations towards the West. Based on this perspective, Russia as a key geopolitical and military power in Eurasia is not in a position to work in the same team as developed Western countries. The West wants Russia to behave as Western countries do and follow Western norms and values. However, according to its geographical and geopolitical position, Russia could not act this way because it is not a fully European country, nor an Asian one. The geographical and geopolitical position of Russia is deeply rooted in its history. It lay the ground for Russian political elite to represent Russia as a Eurasian country and act in-between. According to numerous experts, Primakov was the one who injected the idea of multilateralism into post-Soviet Russia and drafted the concept of Russia-India-China strategic triangle to counterbalance the western alliance and the US-led unipolar globalization. [15]

We believe that the emergence of a multipolar international system in the current globalized world will lay the ground for a knowledge-based and more stable global partnership. The term Eurasia can help Russia to re-emerge as a regional and international great power and build a reliable partnership with other major powers. In this regard, according to Pihla Barnier, after becoming Minister of the Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Primakov said, *"despite the current difficulties, Russia has been and remains a great power, and its policy toward the outside world should correspond to that status … In advocating partnership relations with our former cold war adversaries, we proceed from the need for*

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[12] "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation." The MoFA of the Russian Federation. Web. 1 December 2016.

[13] "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation."

[14] Rumer. "The Primakov (Not Gerasimov) Doctrine in Action."

[15] Simha, R. K. "Primakov: The man who created multipolarity." *Modern Diplomacy,* 30 June 2015. https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2015/06/30/primakov-the-man-who-created-multipolarity/

an equitable – and I want to put special emphasis here on this – equitable and mutually advantageous partnership that takes each other's interests into account"[16].

This is a desire for post-Soviet Russia to position itself in the centre and act between East and West or Europe and Asia as a major power instead of invading eastward and westward. Today geo-strategically Russia turned to China to redefine its foreign policy and position between East and West. Eurasia needs a "technological update", including know-how and economic resources to build its infrastructure which has been expected from Western partners, however, after the confrontation with the West over Ukraine, it became clear that there would be no chance for meeting such expectations in the near future.

Confrontations with the West in Syria, Ukraine, and potentially in Yemen and Venezuela posed numerous difficulties to Russia's economy and household. The average monthly salary across Russia has shrunk, decrease in oil prices, devaluation of the ruble, looming recession, inflation, and worsening investment climate are the main factors leading to Russia's economic misfortunes. These hardships result in exerting social, economic, and political pressure on Russia's government and cause serious concerns to political leaders. Nevertheless, from the balance of power point of view, it is very essential for Russia to be the strongest one and ensure no outsider can dominate the Russian political and economic system. In this account, such states usually create a new equilibrium or balance of power for the regional and international political relations. The new equilibrium or balance of power in Russian politics is the neo-Eurasianist regional and trans-regional settlement instead of installing neoliberal norms and US-led unipolar globalization. Related to Russia's new balance of power act, Dimitry Trenin's argues about *"Sino-Russian and greater Asian cooperation"*[17] as shown below:

– Russia's confrontation with the United States will help mitigate Sino-Russian rivalries, mostly to China's advantage. However, this does not mean Russia will be dominated by China. Moscow is likely to find a way to craft a special relationship with its partner.
– Through its enhanced relations with non-Western countries, Russia will actively promote a concept of world order that seeks to reduce U.S. global dominance and replace it with a broader great-power consensus.
– The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), due to include India and Pakistan this year (2015), is on its way to becoming the principal development and security forum for continental Asia.

Russia or Russian political leaders are providing Eurasianism to change their undisclosed geopolitical, geostrategic, geo-economic, political and economic sphere to a disclosed and co-operative sphere. The Eurasianist way of thinking provides and supports common and long-term Eurasian connectivity, sustainability and reliability.

THE COMPLEXITY OF REGIONAL STRUCTURALIZATION

The Russian political mentality is manifested in automatic countering unipolar globalization and multilateralism. Reality demonstrates that the Russian political leadership's attitude

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[16] Bernier, P. *Yevgeny Primakov's Operational Code and Russian Foreign Policy.* (Tampere: University of Tampere, 2018) 47.
[17] Trenin, D. "From greater Europe to greater Asia. The Sino-Russian Entente." Carnegie Moscow Center. April 2015.

towards multilateralism and rules-based order is complicated and sceptical. In this regard, Russia's significant consideration is about who is actually writing the rules.[18]

Various political scientists and international relations experts believe that no world order has been fully implemented and no world orders exists. Compared to 20th century multilateral and bilateral world order, we are in a transition period to another or new paradigm. The new world order is yet to be defined because its global or regional tendency is still unsolved. According to G. John Ikenberry, *"the irregular and episodic pattern of international order formation is itself an important observation about the nature of change"*[19]. At the same time, in his book *"After Victory"* he also refers to the fact that a complete version of balancing power is still to guarantee a real sustainability for international order. He refers to the neorealism and liberal world order theories but shows the weakness and lacking factors of them too. The central debate in his book is *"How to create and maintain order in a world of sovereign states"*[20].

In this complexity of order, Russia is on the path to build the Eurasian security, political and economic system with other Eurasian powers. Russia is still trying to find a position in between of every direction to be an active part of the world while keeping sovereignty and independence. Russia applies neo-Eurasianism in its bilateral, regional, and international relations as a rule of recognition. In practice, the neo-Eurasianism concept has two directions in Russian politics. A Russo-centric nationalist direction represented by Alexander Dugin (2017) and other Russian nationalists, and a regional integrationist direction represented by Russian security and foreign policy experts and state leaders like Vladimir Putin, Dimitri Medvedev, and Sergei Lavrov etc.

In other words, Russo-centric and regional integrationist points of view or directions depend on different generations of political leaders. There are old generations of leaders who learned from the Soviet Union's defeats and collapse and act carefully. On the other hand, there is a new generation of political leaders who grew in modern Russia and act offensively. In this regard, Eugene Rumer points out, *"The key question for the Kremlin is whether to push for greater capabilities and take additional risks in pursuit of a more ambitious set of global aspirations, or to continue to follow the Primakov doctrine and the careful practice of calculating the risks and benefits of a given course. New generations of Russian leaders are less mindful of the Soviet experience of overextension than the current generation of leaders may be more influenced by the successes of Crimea and Syria, more inclined to take risks, and more ambitious in their vision for Russia. How they address these ambitions and exercise Russian hard power will have major consequences for the future of Russia, Eurasia and the World"*[21].

To put it in another way, neo-Eurasianism is a concept of regional and social integration and regional order for Russian leaders. According to a theoretical definition, *"Regional integration is the process of establishing a degree of supranational authority beyond the nation-state within a particular geographical region – that is, where the governments of nation-states decide to hand over some decision-making capacity to a new, higher level*

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[18] Chernenko, E. and Gabaev, A. "What Russia Thinks about Multilateralism." Carnegie Endowment for Peace, 2019.

[19] Ikenberry, G. J. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars.* New Edition. (Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2019)

[20] Ikenberry. *After Victory.*

[21] Rumer. "The Primakov (Not Gerasimov) Doctrine in Action".

of governance"[22]. Social integration means the formation of a new identity beyond national boundaries by intensifying positive interactions between citizens of different countries. The successful social integration can be a guarantee and possible condition for a successful political, economic, military, and technological integration.[23]

The regional integrationist Eurasian direction of Russia is welcomed by China, India, Turkey and Iran for taking their historical relations, involvement, experiences, interests, future views, contemporary practical strategies, policy options, and their economic relations and geo-economic interests into consideration. Russia seeks to work together with other regional powers in all aspects to promote Eurasian security, political and economic initiatives.

In the case of Eurasian cooperation, Russian foreign policy strategy has the possibility to play a central role in making all other powers align with each other. The practical transformation process of Eurasian unity started after relations between the US-Russia, US-China, US-Turkey, and US-Iran had deteriorated over ongoing conflicts in Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, South China Sea conflict, S-400 deals, and other types of military and strategic partnership. The rise of Russian Eurasianist foreign policy direction and its role in regional security, political and economic initiatives are considered as an alarming threat from the American and Western point of view.

The intensity of cooperation among Eurasian powers like Russia, China, India, Turkey, and Iran in security, political, economic, and technological areas can be considered as a degree of integration. Their policy cooperation, coordination, harmonization, and integration can help regional and international securitization, too. The alignment of the Eurasian great, middle, and small powers can intensify transforming regional and inter-regional initiatives like the Commonwealth of Independent States (CSI), SCO, BRICS Cooperation, Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). The institutional frameworks can put the heartland theory of Mackinder to an end. Regarding Sino-Russian and greater Asian cooperation, Dimitry Trenin argued, *"The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, due to include India and Pakistan this year (2015), is on its way to becoming the principal development and security forum for continental Asia"*[24].

The rise of Russia, China, India as great powers and the emergence of middle powers, like Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and others in the Eurasian region and the trans-border, trans-regional security, political, economic, and technological cooperation have laid a better ground for a common regional development process. Russia plays a central role in policy cooperation and policy coordination processes among Eurasian great, middle, and small powers.

On the other hand, the U.S. and the European Union are also significantly involved in the development process of Eurasian initiatives. According to Andrew C. Kuchins, *"the baseline for U.S. policy was established in 1992, the prevention of a peer competitor emerging in Eurasia"*[25]. The most important and long-term aim of the U.S. is to promote Russia's transition to becoming a neoliberal market democracy. To the end of avoiding the return of a revanchist Russia, the U.S. simultaneously promoted the expansion of NATO and the European Union close to Russia's borders. At the same time, the U.S. strategy focused on

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[22] Diez, T., Bode, I., & Da Costa, A. F. *Key concepts in international relations.* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing, 2011) 187–191.

[23] Diez, T., Bode, I., & Da Costa, A. F. *Key concepts...* 187–191.

[24] Trenin, D. "From greater Europe to greater Asia."

[25] Kuchins, A. C. "What is Eurasia to US (the US)?" *Journal of Eurasian studies.* Volume 9 (2). 2018.

promoting the same market democracy and sovereignty to the states neighbouring Russia. By this shift, the U.S. wanted to become the only dominant power in terms of promoting democracy, economic openness, and sovereignty in the region.[26]

The United States acts sensitively towards the rise of other powers, mainly in Eurasia. The return of Russia as a great political and military power and the rise of China as a great economic and technological power have increased a fear of declinism in the United States. The rise and growth of the Soviet Union from 1945 to the 1980s was the appearance of declinism for the United States. The United States feared that the Soviet growth could develop the communist East better than the capitalist West. From 1980s, Japanophobia constituted the fear of declinism in America. In the 1990s, a huge number of scholars and universities warned that the Japanese economy had overtaken the United States. According to Lester Thurow and others, the Japanese GDP per year was growing twice as fast and the U.S. GDP and its GNP per capita was 22 percent higher. Back to the declinism, Paul Kennedy also wrote about this in his book *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers.* According to Glenn Hubbard and Tim Kane, Kennedy's book *"was much more than a declinist manifesto"* in which he asks the readers *"to think about history in economic term".*[27] Regarding declinism, Glenn Hubbard and Tim Kane writes, *"Here the Theory predicts that follower nations will approach but not surpass the leader, or the frontier"*[28].

THE STRUCTURE OF THE WORLD ORDER IN RUSSIAN EURASIANISM

According to Mark Bassin and Dugin, modern Russia's path is not the one meant to rebuild classical Eurasia. Dugin's neo-Eurasianism advocates a very different vision of Russia's position to the world. Russia's international position is shaped by a genuinely global perspective, which has the Eurasian new world order in its centre. This is a complex model for the reorganization of the entire world. In this imaginary model, the world is divided into four Macro-Regions that Dugin calls *"geo-economic belts"* or *"zones".* These would be Euro-Africa, Asia-Pacific, America, and Eurasia.[29]

In a slightly different view presented by Anita Sengupta in her book *"Asiatic Russia",* the author focuses on Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who raises the importance of the "belt of anticipation". In Anita Sengupta's words *"there is a consecutive vertical row of countries of Eurasia from Russia in north to India in south (Central Asian countries, Iran, Pakistan) that does not yet link either with the east or with the west. Despite all the differences among these countries they constitute a relatively solid group from the point of view of potential resources and possibilities of influencing not only the balance of power in Asia or Eurasia but even the geopolitical balance of the world"*[30]. The most important term

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[26]   Kuchins, A. C. "What is Eurasia to US (the US)?"…

[27]   Hubbard, G. and Kane, T. *Balance: The economics of great powers from ancient Rome to modern America.* Edited by First. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014) 16–34.

[28]   Hubbard, Glenn, and Tim Kane. *Balance.* 19.

[29]   Bassin, M. "Eurasianism 'Classical' and 'Neo': the lines of continuity." Cesran International. https://cesran.org/eurasianism-classical-and-neo-the-lines-of-continuity.html

[30]   Sengupta, A., Chatterjee, S. & Bhattacharya, S. (Eds.). *Asiatic Russia: Partnerships and Communities in Eurasia.* (New Delhi: Shipra, 2009) 24.

is that since Russia is not a full member or ally of the European or the East Asian Sphere it may choose a third option to build a new security system uniting the countries of the *"belt of anticipation"*.[31] However, according to Mackinder's comment, *"Every country has had its own geographical perspective"*[32]. The emergence of a "zone of anticipating" could improve the trans-Eurasian meaning of the heartland uniting Russia, India, Central Asia, and Iran in one line.

In a general context, Eurasia is the Earth's largest continent covering and connecting Europe and Asia. It borders the Arctic, Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans, as well as their seas. In terms of population, Eurasia is the most populated continent on the Earth, hosting the world's most populated countries (like China, India, Russia, and other CIS and South Asian and Asia Pacific nations). Its population is over 3 billion. Russia, as the central power of Eurasia has borders with seas of three oceans. Russia is washed by the Baltic, Arctic (Barents, White, Karsk, Laptevs, East-Siberian, Chukotsk) and Pacific (Bering, Okhotsk, Japan) seas. Russia is also a significant power in the Black Sea, Azov Sea, and Caspian Sea. Considering Eurasia's geographical importance, human potential, natural resources, production and industrialization potentials, and their relations and positions in the world economy, we can state Russia and Eurasia are located at the crossroads of the world economy, politics and security.[33] According to Robert D. Kaplan, *"Eurasia has become a comprehensible unit, because of interactions of globalization, technology and geopolitics"*[34].

Accordingly, the association of the four geo-economic belts (Euro-Africa, Asia-Pacific, America, and Eurasia) may happen as a result of the establishment of international principles of equality and mutual recognition. In this theory, what remains unchanged from its classical form to neo-one is the elimination, destruction, or at least derailment of American global hegemony or American Atlanticism. Such goals could only be achieved through an alliance of three macro-regions against the North American superpower. For this step, as Dugin points out, the first direction is the Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis, the second direction of Russian Eurasianism is Central Asia, with the creation of a Tehran-Moscow axis, and the third one would be the Tokyo-Moscow axis.[35]

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[31]   Sengupta et al. *Asiatic Russia.* 24.
[32]   Mackinder J. H. "The Geographical Pivot of History." *The Geographical Journal,* Volume 23. Mo.4. 1904.
[33]   Stroev, E. S., Bliakhman, L. S. and Krotov, M. I. *Russia and Eurasia at the Crossroads: Experience and Problems of Economic Reforms in the Commonwealth of Independent States.* Berlin: Springer-Verlag. 1999. 5–37.
[34]   Kaplan, R. D. *The Return of Marco Polo's World.*
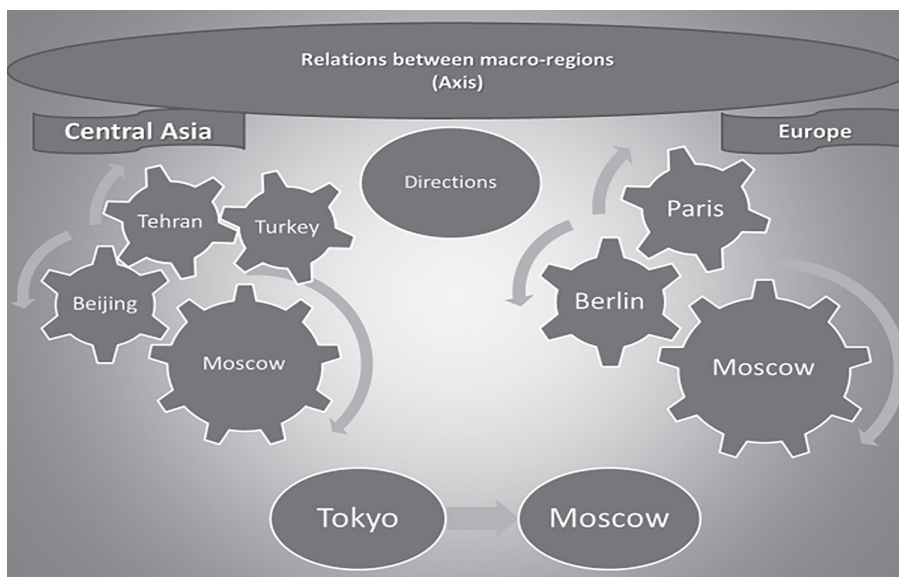[35]   Bassin, M. "Eurasianism."

Image 1 *The current directions of Russian foreign policy strategy*

The CSI, the EAEU, the CSTO, the SCO, the BRICS and other bilateral and multilateral cooperation platforms are parts of influence transition strategies for Russia and other Eurasian powers. These strategies are built first and foremost on the alignment of the Russian, Chinese, Indian, Iranian and Turkish sides aiming at keeping their influence across the whole of Eurasia and the balance with non-Eurasian powers by providing a source of help, cooperation, coordination, and common security, political and economic infrastructure. According to realist explanations, the alignment theory is a *"systemic explanation to identify a state's relative position in the structure of the international system as the primary determinant of alignment outcomes"*[36]; at this stage, the power balancing theory is the main interest of states wishing to move and shape their strategic orders. Balancing power for a state or states means moving against the strongest power and potential hegemony to ensure no state will dominate the system. In this account, the states create a new equilibrium or balance for the international political order.[37]

According to Russian foreign policy strategy, the regional and even international strategic shifts against American Atlanticism or American globalization can be summarized as follows:

- De-dollarization process in international trade, monetary and finance system.
- Supporting Anti-American or even non-democratic states and non-state political and military groups all over the globe.
- Turning countries and regions where the US has some strategic interests and boots on the ground into conflict zones.

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[36]   Miller, E. A. *To balance or to Not Balance.* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006) 12.
[37]   Miller, E. A. *To balance or to Not Balance.* 12.

– Practicing international power and influence transaction policies by providing economic, investment, technology, infrastructure, military, security and even intelligence facilities to certain government and political or military groups.
– Practicing policy cooperation, coordination, harmonization and integration based on mutual equality and recognizing each other's interests within CIS, SCO, BRICS, EAEU, CSTO, and other bilateral forms.

To achieve the above-mentioned goals, Russia builds its foreign policy strategy in three different aspects: *"Bilateralism, Globalization, and Regionalism"*[38].

The three-level foreign policy strategy helps Russia seek a game-changer position by conducting multi-vector diplomacy with its partners bilaterally, globally and regionally. The three-level foreign policy strategy laid the ground for Russia to act as a strong partner for small and weak states through bilateral ties, as a regional great power in regional institutions, organizations, and as a global great and strong actor in international conflicts and initiatives. This enabled Russia to rise again and exert political influence upon other great powers in the region and the world by reshaping Eurasianism, transforming it into neo-Eurasianism and gathering the countries around itself. Related to Russia's foreign policy strategy and economic relations with the East and West, the press secretary of the president of Russia, Dmitry Peskov stated the following:

"China is not our partner number one yet. Still the EU and EU countries are trade partners number one for us and I cannot agree with those who say that Russia is turning eastward. No, I hope Russia will never turn eastwards. The Russian Eagle looks both sides – westward and eastward, that is the nature of every dimension of policy of Russia let it be political and diplomatic activities or economic ones"[39].

This is one of the most exciting segments of today's world politics. The Eurasian great, middle, and small powers are trying to grow as a large and effective body in the region, drawing on regionalism. The Eurasian security, political, and economic cooperation is the manifestation/embodiment of bilateralism, regionalism, and globalization in Russian foreign policy strategy. Russia applies this strategy in order to change unilateralism to global partnership.

CONCLUSION

Today, the great powers of the world confront each other; some of them, typically Western powers, are in an era of power survival, while the Eurasian powers, such as Russia, China, India, Turkey, and Iran are in the era of power transition. The Eurasian powers are shifting towards a new form of cooperation with the West. Ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union the large powers of Eurasia have successfully retained their political and economic systems. These countries have chosen to enhance their regional cooperation in security, political, economic, and technology fields to defend their interests. Eurasia is a powerful region that can develop in its own path and find regional solution to address regional conflicts. Within a global

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[38] Molchanov, M. A. *Eurasia Regionalisms and Russian Foreign Policy.* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2015) 72–79.
[39] Peskov, D., 2019. "Like in the Wild West, US tells Europe to buy American natural gas at gunpoint – Kremlin Spokesman." *Russia Today-Web.* 3 June 2019. https://www.rt.com/shows/sophieco/460929-peskov-kremlin-spokesman-interview/. Accessed on 5 June 2019.

partnership model, powerful regions, comprehensive regional cooperation, and regional institution-building processes are the most significant. Regional cooperation increases the geopolitical and geo-economic values of the region and helps promote inter-regional ties and interactions. Regional powerfulness is the appropriate phenomenon that secures and stabilizes the world order. History has proved all multipolar, bipolar, and unipolar world orders to be failed models as they lacked the means for successfully handling challenges and threats. The Russian Eurasianist regional-international view that contains global partnership could work as an enhanced version or supplementary instrument of globalization developed in post-Soviet Eurasia through mutual understanding and recognizing one another's interest, influence, and demands.

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Anna Szappanos

GEOPOLITICS, SUPPLY CHAINS, AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN EAST ASIA

Book Review
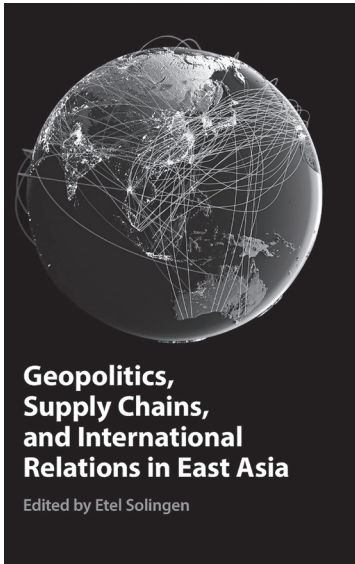
During the past couple of years, geopolitics has become a very popular field of research. Certainly, for a good reason. Geopolitics involves a wide variety of fields, from political science through economics to geography, therefore it involves many different researchers as well. It is also a great example of the phenomenon called spillover effect since with the help of geopolitics we can see the development of international relations from different angles and can give explanations to the events happening all around the world. With the title *Geopolitics, Supply Chains, and International Relations in East Asia,* this book gives an insight into the East Asian side of geopolitics and international relations.

This volume was edited by Etel Solingen, a Distinguished Professor, and Thomas T. and Elizabeth C. Tierney Chair in Peace and Conflict Studies at the Department of Political Science, University of California, Irvine. All the previous books she has written, co-authored, or edited revolve around international relations, focusing on international security and nuclear weapons among others (e.g., *Nuclear Logics: Contrasting Paths in East Asia and the Middle East; Sanctions, Statecraft, and Nuclear Proliferation).* Many of her works are award-winning books. In the light of her academic achievements, the reader can feel ensured they are reading a book with authentic information from credible resources.

This book is a rather new piece of work since it was published in 2021 by Cambridge University Press and is 320-page-long making it into a convenient read for people interested in the covered topics. By looking at the table of contents, we can see that the book is divided into three parts: *Global supply chains, geopolitics, and trade wars; Domestic political, economic, and social dimensions of global supply chains; Postscript on Covid-19.* We can also see that this book is a collection of studies written by many different authors from different research fields, nonetheless equally important in connection with the main topic, predominantly with supply chains, from various perspectives.

As she mentions right at the beginning (Preface and Acknowledgements) this book examines the global supply chains from a broader point of view, with focus on their role in international relations, while also going beyond economic dimensions, including international

security. It is also worth mentioning that Covid-19 broke out during the making of the given volume, so the authors did their best and tried to incorporate as many implications of the effects of the pandemic as possible. Moreover, the pandemic drew attention to fields that otherwise would not be examined in such details (e.g., medical equipment, pharmaceuticals etc.). During our everyday lives, we might not consider how many countries supply chains go through, connecting the world in many ways, thus creating goods that can be labelled as "Made in the World". Since the territorial focus in this volume is on East Asia, we can read about the region's connectivity to the rest of world. This connectivity is based on a complicated network of interdependence caused by global supply chains (GSC).

When researching East Asia, China simply cannot be left out as it is one of the biggest economic influences in the region, however, without its participation in GSC it could never have achieved such results. The given region is also an excellent example to understand the interdependencies in the world. *"The volume thus focuses not only on China as the largest GSC node connecting East Asia with itself, the US, and the rest of the world, but also on other East Asian relationships embedded in GSCs, such as those between Japan and South Korea, Japan and China, Taiwan and China, China and Hong Kong, Taiwan–China–South Korea, and North and Southeast Asian countries",* claims Solingen. East Asia is not only interesting because of its development in the past couple of decades but because of its present challenges as well. As Solingen states, international relations in East Asia face the most complex geo-political and geo-economic threats, e.g. trade-and-technology wars, sanctions and protectionism, tensions from the Korean peninsula to the South China Sea, the so-called Thucydides trap assumingly fuelling the US-China competition etc.

As mentioned above, this volume consists of three parts. In Part I (Chapters 2–7) the reader can acquire knowledge about the trade war between the US and China via different instances. In these chapters, we can see the role of global supply chains in respect of the trade war. The authors show the effects of the trade war through analysing specific cases, e.g. the case of Huawei, artificial intelligence, and the widely popular Apple's iPhone. Given its relevance today in our everyday lives, the smartphone industry has its own chapter (Chapter 5). Still discussing the topic of trade war, it is also depicted through a third GSC actor, which is Japan in Chapter 3. In Chapter 6, the hidden costs of geopolitical disputes that are affecting the growth of GSCs in East Asia are explored. While the region has become central to the study of these issues, the literature on international political economy is still lacking in terms of the precise pathways that lead to shifts in GSCs. This chapter aims to provide a framework for analysing the effects of these disputes on the region's GSCs. The competitive dynamics between China and the US are discussed in Chapter 7 of this volume, which focuses on the role of GSCs in the development of African economies.

The focus of Part II (Chapters 8–12) is on the domestic political, economic, and social factors influencing policy in relation to GSCs in different states. The development of China's outward-looking political and economic model, which in recent decades has defined the goal and receptivity to GSCs, is examined in Chapter 8. The political environment that underlies the Trump administration's policy toward GSCs, particularly those that link China and the US, is analysed in Chapter 9. The chapter examines how US businesses responded when the US imposed tariffs on Chinese imports in 2018, and it offers three political models to explain why businesses chose to engage in the trade war with China. The analysis of domestic factors in US politics is continued in Chapter 10 while the political implications of GSCs for labour are given more attention. In a broader context of rising inequality and changing geopolitics, both rhetorical framing and contestation of GSCs in US politics are

analysed. Chapter 11 calls attention to another set of political factors that pose a danger to the GSC infrastructure and political cooperation in East Asia. Nowhere is the issue more urgent than in Northeast Asia, which is home to many GSC members. In Chapter 12, it is argued that the growth of GSCs around the world has made it possible for transnational alliances of unions and workers to exert more influence over wages, working conditions, and labour rights through initiatives that make use of GSC structure and rely on private governance rather than punitive state action.

Part III, which is also the last chapter (Chapter 13) functions as a postscript written in mid-June 2020, when there was a lot of doubt about the future of GSCs in international relations due to the deterioration of US-China ties as well as Covid-19, which intensified threats to GSCs. The chapter starts by summarizing the major ideas from Parts I and II, then it analyses how the GSC reacted to geostrategic and pandemic shocks. Due to the fact that these were fast shifting goals by mid-2020, the chapter can only offer a preliminary assessment.

Global supply chains have emerged as a crucial and contentious aspect of global economic interdependence as discussions about the future of US-China trade ties get more heated. To address global supply chains, Etel Solingen brings together a potent interdisciplinary group of academics. This timely book advances critical discussions concerning geopolitics, economics, and technological innovation. In her reimagining of interdependence and conflict, Solingen sheds light on the complex connections that exist between nations and other players via GSCs. Given the growing economic and political difficulties in that region, the focus on East Asia is particularly pertinent at this time.

Etel Solingen (Editor):
Geopolitics, Supply Chains, and International Relations in East Asia
(2021, Cambridge University Press, ISBN: 978 110 898 546 8)

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The editors realise that the value and impact of many submissions lie in their timeliness. However, the assessment of papers could take a considerable length of time. To strike a balance between these two contradictory requirements, the editors will respond to each submission with a preliminary assessment within four weeks. Authors are requested not to make further enquiries before three months have elapsed.

STYLE

It is difficult to be prescriptive about the use of a certain style in an international multidisciplinary journal. However, as a general guideline, the most important considerations are consistency and clarity: authors may use either UK or US or any other version of English, but not mix them (i.e. no "program" and "programme" in the same paper, except in direct quotes).

REFERENCES

As with all serious professional publications, sources used and ideas borrowed in *Hungarian Defence Review* articles must all be acknowledged to avoid plagiarism. Research containing no references will not be considered. Note numbers should be inserted after punctuation. For the purpose of uniformity and to simplify the editorial process, the use of footnotes is required. The footnote containing the first reference to a specific source should be detailed. The short-title method is used for subsequent references to the same source. The use of *Ibid.* and *op. cit.* is discouraged. All direct quotes require a reference with a specific page number. When referring to a central idea in a specific work, no page numbers are required.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviations and acronyms should be given in full when they occur for the first time and the abbreviation/acronym should be given in parentheses. Acronyms such as ECOWAS and HIV/AIDS should be written in caps. Do not use full stops in acronyms, for example USA., RSA., UN. Avoid the use of abbreviations/acronyms in headings. Please note that acronyms and abbreviations that are well known and in daily use in one professional discipline or in one particular region of the world may be completely unknown in another.

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Start all bulleted lists with capital letters. Semicolons are required between bullets and a full stop after the last item in the list.

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Table, graph, map and figure captions should be placed at the bottom. When reproducing data from a diagram or table, or when copying the entire table or diagram, it should be referenced by means of a footnote.

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Use the format appropriate for the version of English selected for the paper.

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Indicate the hierarchy of levels, preferably not more than two. Use capitalization, numbering and font (boldface, italics) to distinguish between levels.

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Use italics for the titles of books, periodicals and newspapers.

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Numbers from one to ten are written out, except dates, page numbers, percentages, etc. Use a comma as the thousands separator, for example 1,000, and a period for decimals, for example percent. The term 'percent' is to be used in text, while the symbol (%) should be used in tables, graphs, etc.

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Use double quotation marks for quotations. Long quotations (40 words or more) are usually indented and blocked, without quotation marks. Do not use italics in these indented paragraphs. Use square brackets to indicate authors' insertions and changes to the original. Additional emphases are noted as [my italics/emphasis]. Omitted text is indicated by an ellipsis in square brackets […]

STYLE OF REFERENCE

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Archival references

Archival depot, library or museum followed by the collection, group of documents or papers.
  Examples:
Footnote and reference list: Department of Defence Archives (hereafter DOD Archives), Chief of the General Staff (hereafter CGS) 607, CGS/3/2/1Vol. 1, CGS Adjutant General (hereafter AG), 6 June 1952.
Subsequent reference to this archival group can be made as follows: DOD Archives, CGS/3/2/1Vol. 1, CGS-AG, 6 June 1952.

Journal article

Last name, Initials. "Title of Article". *Journal Title* Vol./Nr. Year. pages. DOI.
  Examples:
Footnote: Scholtz, L. "The South African Strategic and Operational Objectives in Angola, 1987–1988". *Scientia Militaria: South African Journal of Military Studies* 38/1. 2010. 79.
Subsequent reference: Scholtz. "The South African Strategic…". 80.
Reference list: Scholtz, L. "The South African Strategic and Operational Objectives in Angola, 1987–1988". *Scientia Militaria: South African Journal of Military Studies* 38/1. 2010. 77–113. DOI: 10.5787/38-1-80.

Book

Last name, Initials. *Title of Book.* Place of publication: Publisher, Year.
  Examples:
Footnote: Gray, C. S. *Modern Strategy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. 56.
Subsequent reference: Gray. *Modern Strategy.* 62.
Reference list: Gray, C. S. *Modern Strategy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Two or more authors:
  Examples:
Footnote: Ward, G. C. and Burns, K. *The War: An Intimate History, 1941–1945.* New York: Knopf, 2007. 52.
Subsequent reference: Ward and Burns. *The War...* 85.
Reference list: Ward, G. C. and Burns, K. *The War: An Intimate History, 1941–1945.* New York: Knopf, 2007
For four or more authors, list all of the authors in the bibliography; in the note, list only the first author, followed by *et al.*

Chapter

Last name, Initials. "Title of Chapter". In Last name, Initials and Last name, Initials (eds), *Title of Book.* Place of publication: Publisher, Year, pages.
  Examples:
Footnote: Kiras, J. "Irregular Warfare: Terrorism and Insurgency". In Baylis, J., Wirtz, J. J. and Gray, C. S. (eds), *Strategy in the Contemporary World: An Introduction to Strategic Studies.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. 189.
Subsequent reference: Kiras. "Irregular Warfare…". 200.
Reference list: Kiras, J. "Irregular Warfare: Terrorism and Insurgency". In Baylis, J., Wirtz, J. J. and Gray, C. S. (eds), *Strategy in the Contemporary World: An Introduction to Strategic Studies.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. 185–207.

Internet document

Last name, Initials. "Title of Document". Site Owner. Date. URL, Accessed on Date.
  Examples:
Footnote: Engelbrecht, L. "Analysts Welcome Defence Budget Boost". defenceWeb. 28 October 2009. http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4918&Itemid=379, Accessed on 3 June 2010.
Subsequent reference: Engelbrecht. "Analysts Welcome Defence Budget Boost".
Reference list: Engelbrecht, L. "Analysts Welcome Defence Budget Boost". defenceWeb. 28 October 2009. http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4918&Itemid=379, Accessed on 3 June 2010.

Newspaper article

Last name, Initials. "Title of Article". *Name of Newspaper,* Date. Section. Page.
  Examples:
Footnote: Sefara, M. "Beast that instills only fear and loathing". *The Sunday Independent,* 30 May 2010. Sunday Dispatches. 14.
Subsequent reference: Sefara. "Beast that instills…". 14.
Reference list: Sefara, M. "Beast that instills only fear and loathing". *The Sunday Independent,* 30 May 2010. Sunday Dispatches. 14.

Thesis

Last name, Initials. "Title of Thesis". Thesis presented for degree (stipulate in full). Name of university, year.

Examples:

Footnote: Jordaan, E. "South African Defence since 1994: A Study in Policy-Making". Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the MMil in Military Sciences. Stellenbosch University, 2005. 25.

Subsequent reference: Jordaan. "South African Defence since 1994…" 28.

Reference list: Jordaan, E. "South African Defence since 1994: A Study in Policy-Making". Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the MMil in Military Sciences. Stellenbosch University, 2005.

Conference paper

Last name, Initials. "Title of Paper". Paper presented at Name of Conference, Place, Date

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Footnote: Heuser, B. "Strategy Making: The Theory vs. the Practice". Paper presented at the First South African Conference on Strategic Theory, Stellenbosch, 11 June 2009.

Subsequent reference: Heuser. "Strategy Making…"

Reference list: Heuser, B. "Strategy Making: The Theory vs. the Practice". Paper presented at the First South African Conference on Strategic Theory, Stellenbosch, 11 June 2009.

For further information, please visit http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citation guide.html, http://support.ebsco.com/knowledge_base/detail.php?topic=996&id=7029&page=1

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– The submission file is in OpenOffice, Microsoft Word, RTF, or WordPerfect document file format.

– Where available, URLs for the references have been provided.

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To ensure the integrity of the blind peer-review for submission to this journal, every effort should be made to prevent the identities of the authors and reviewers from being known to

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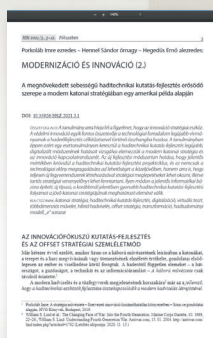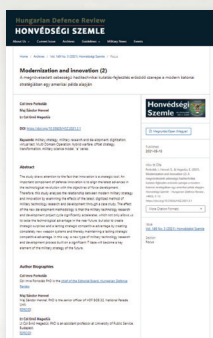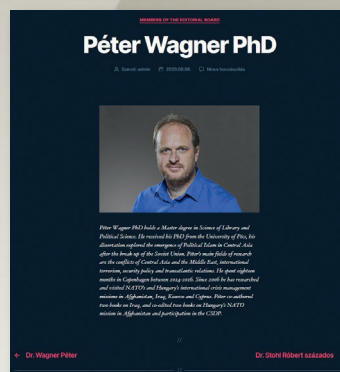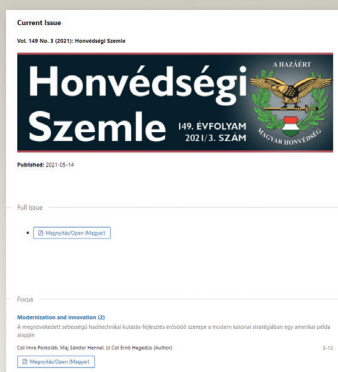This journal does not offer any honoraria, and does not charge any author fee, either.