



PANORAMA OF GLOBAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT 2015 - 2016

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STRATPOL

Blagoevova 2676/16, 851 04 Bratislava, Slovakia

www.stratpol.sk

office@stratpol.sk

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Peter BÁTOR, Róbert ONDREJCSÁK (eds.)

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Editors:

Peter Bátor
Róbert Ondrejcsák

Autors and Reviewers:

Petra Andělová
Anett Arany
Tomáš Baranec
Paraskevi Baxevani
Michael Brtnický
Ruta Buneviciute
Shubra Chaturvedi
Iaroslav Chornogor
Tamás Csiki
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Matej Drotár
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Natalia Wojtowicz
Lucia Yar

Head Coordinators: Jana Heglasová and Katarína Lišaníková

Coordinating Team: Peter Bátor, Róbert Ondrejcsák, Richard Turcsányi,
Lucia Husenicová, Erzsébet N. Rózsa, Beata Górka Winter

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CONTENS

A. Euro-Atlantic Area	11
STRATEGIC FUTURE OF THE V4 AFTER THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS – CONVERGENCE OR DIVERGENCE.....	13
Karolina Gawron-Tabor	
THE EU COMPREHENSIVE INSTITUTION BUILDING PROGRAMME – NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN GEORGIA AND MOLDOVA	25
Veronica Russu	
NATO AND UKRAINE AFTER THE MAIDAN REVOLUTION	35
Zdeněk Kříž	
UKRAINE IN CRISIS: THE ECONOMIC AND SECURITY CONSEQUENCES FOR EUROPEAN UNION, UKRAINE AND RUSSIA	49
Marek Lenč - Martin Kudrec	
FROM A ‘HYBRID WAR’ TO A ‘HYBRID PEACE’? IMPLICATIONS OF RUSSIAN IRREGULAR WARFARE IN UKRAINE FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY	61
Andriy Tyushka	
FOUNDATIONS OF SOFT SECURITY IN THE FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS: FRONTIER OF NATO ENLARGEMENT OR EURASIAN ALTERNATIVE?.....	71
Jason Strakes	
EXPLORING NETWORK-CENTRIC WARFARE AND ITS ROLE FOR THE US IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR	81
Filip Svítek	
THE BALKANS AND THE PHENOMENA OF “FOREIGN FIGHTERS”	91
Aleksandar Vanchoski and Kristina Doda	
BREAKING THE DUAL SPIRAL OF DIMINISHING CAPABILITIES.....	101
Tamás Csiki	
B. East and South East Europe	113
BALTIC AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN SECURITY AFTER THE UKRAINE CRISIS	115
Matthew Rhodes and Ruta Bunevičiute	
THE UKRAINE CRISIS AND THE FUTURE OF US TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN EUROPE: IS THERE A RATIONALE FOR DISARMAMENT?	121
Tomas A. Nagy	

THE IMPACT OF RUSSIA-UKRAINIAN WAR ON INTERNAL PUBLIC DEBATE ABOUT FOREIGN POLICY IN UKRAINE	131
Angela Gramada	
RUSSIA'S MODIFIED FOREIGN POLICY AND THE DYNAMICS OF ITS MILITARY DOCTRINE	141
Dali Kurdadze	
RUSSIAN HYBRID WARFARE IN EASTERN EUROPE: CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS.	151
Robert Person	
HYBRID MAIDAN IN MOLDOVA: APPROBATION OF RUSSIAN METHODS OF INFLUENCE	161
Sergiy Gerasymchuk	
SECURITY SECTOR REFORM AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTS IN UKRAINE: HUMAN SECURITY PERSPECTIVE.....	171
Oleksandr Tytarchuk	
NATO-UKRAINE RELATIONS: TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES	181
Sergii Tolstov, Iaroslav Chornogor	
THE CHANGE OF THE MILITARY BALANCE IN THE BLACK SEA REGION ...	193
Hanna Shelest	
THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION IN KYRGYZSTAN: BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND STATE FRAGILITY	203
Guilherme Moreira Leite de Mello	
TRANSNISTRIA: A GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGE WITHIN A CHANGED REGIONAL STATUS QUO	211
Hanna Vasilevich	
THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT AND REGIONAL SECURITY: THE IMPLICIT INTERESTS OF REGIONAL PLAYERS.....	221
Armen Grigoryan	
THE RISE OF THE ISLAMIC STATE IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS - REASONS AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES.....	231
Tomáš Baranec	
KAZAKHSTAN AFTER PRESIDENT NAZARBAYEV - UNCLEAR FUTURE OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN SUCCESS STORY	241
Peter Plenta	
PERSPECTIVES OF THE KYRGYZ PARLIAMENTARY EXPERIMENT IN THE LIGHT OF TWO ELECTIONS (2010-2015).....	251
Pál Gyene	
“MINSK AGREEMENTS” AND THE RUSSIAN MILITARY IMPLICATIONS IN THE POST-SOVIET AREA.....	263
Nadiia Koval	

C. Middle East and Africa	273
TURKEY IN 2015: HOW ELECTIONS, KURDS AND A NEIGHBOURING CONFLICT SHAPED TURKEY'S SECURITY	275
Lucia Yar	
SECURITY POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND ITS INTERESTS IN SYRIA	285
Lukáš Tichý	
FROM INTERIM DEAL TO COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT: TWO CRUCIAL YEARS IN IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME	295
Matej Drotár	
SHIA MILITIAS IN IRAQ: BADR ORGANIZATION VS. THE "ISLAMIC STATE" - RECIPE FOR DISASTER OR SUCCESS?	303
Toms Rätfelders	
THE END OF ARAB SPRING IN EGYPT: THE 'DEEP STATE' RECLAIMS ITS POSITION	313
Katarína Pevná	
WHILE THEY WERE NAPPING: OBAMA'S STRATEGY IN SYRIA 2011-2013.	323
Dušan Fischer	
THE ISLAMIC STATE: A TOTALITARIAN EXPERIMENT IN THE RUINS OF SYRIA AND IRAQ?	333
Ondřej Filipec, Michael Brtnický	
THE STRUGGLE OF IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA OVER IRAQ	343
Robert Czulda	
NIGERIA'S BOKO HARAM – IT WILL BE A LONG WAR.	353
Viktor Marsai	
MIGRATION CRISIS, NEGATIVE IMPACT OF MIGRATION - A CASE STUDY OF KENYA.	367
Lucie Konečná	
D. Asia and Pacific	379
HISTORY - JAPAN'S ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM.	381
Simon Drugda, Filip Sebok	
SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE BORDERLAND AREAS: CHINA'S PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT ON THE MEKONG RIVER	391
Richard Grünwald	
SOUTH KOREAN TRUST-BUILDING POLICY: IS RE-UNIFICATION AN UNREACHABLE DREAM?	399
Lucia Husenicova	

DOMESTIC POLITICS AND PERSONAL BELIEFS IN TAIWAN'S TERRITORIAL CLAIMS: THE DIFFERING APPROACHES OF CHEN SHUI-BIAN AND MA YING-JEOU	409
Moises Lopes de Souza and Dean Karalekas	
THE U.S. PIVOT AND STRATEGY IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA DISPUTE	421
Petra Andělová and Mária Strašáková	
NEITHER DETERRENCE NOR REASSURANCE, BUT BOTH: A DEFENSIVE REALIST ARGUMENT FOR JAPANESE SECURITY POLICY	433
Shuhei Takemoto	
E. New Threats	443
THE PRO-RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND SLOVAKIA	445
Ivana Smoleňová	
NATO'S ADAPTATION TO CYBER DOMAIN AFTER THE WALES SUMMIT ...	455
Milan Hanko	
THE SPLIT OF NORDIC EUROPE OVER REFUGEE CRISIS: THE RISE OF EXTREMISM?	465
Kateřina Lišaníková	
AFTER PARIS: THE BINARY MODEL TO INTERPRET THE ATTRIBUTION OF TRANSNATIONAL TERRORIST ATTACKS	477
Anett Arany – Máté Szalai	
EU'S ENERGY UNION: FEW NOTES ON THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE.....	489
Matúš Mišík	
NEW WAVE OF JIHADI TERRORISM IN EUROPE: WINNING BATTLES BUT LOOSING THE WAR?	499
Ryszard M. Machnikowski	
PHENOMENON OF "FOREIGN FIGHTERS" - COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ISLAMIC STATE AND PRO-RUSSIAN SEPARATISTS IN EASTERN UKRAINE...	509
Natalia Wojtowicz	
THE 'AUDACITY' OF DRONE OPERATIONS: OBAMA'S COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS	519
Kennedy G. Ondieki	
DIGITAL COUNTERINSURGENCY: CONFLICT BETWEEN ANONYMOUS & ISIS	529
Dušan Madaj	
MODERN AUTHORITARIANISM AS A SECURITY THREAT TO CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE	539
Michal Mochťák	

Euro-Atlantic Area

STRATEGIC FUTURE OF THE V4 AFTER THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS – CONVERGENCE OR DIVERGENCE

KAROLINA GAWRON-TABOR

In the light of the events in Ukraine, the intensive exchange of opinions about the future of the Visegrad Group (V4) has started. The aim of the article is to analyze statements and actions taken by the V4 in 2014. The article attempts to answer the following question: how will the Ukrainian crisis affect the functioning of the V4? The Ukrainian crisis demonstrated the lack of consistency in actions and statements of the Visegrad countries, as well the gap between individual V4 states. The issue that divides them is their attitude toward Russia, not toward the democratic changes in Ukraine. On the whole, the different assessment of Russia's actions did not affect the functioning of the Visegrad Group itself, but had a great impact on the V4 image in the international arena and on the possibility of becoming a self-sufficient body that could shape the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Nevertheless, the different approach to Russia does not exclude meetings, consultations and exchange of views on the matters within the framework of the Visegrad countries' common interests. The cooperation in the areas directly related to the region may be increased, especially in the energy infrastructure, broadly understood energy security, defence and the digital agenda. These areas are essential to a broad understanding of security and development of the individual countries in the grouping and they have already incurred expenditures in their provision.

Moreover, the states do not have to appear in the international arena as a single entity in these areas. A new cooperation agreement between the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria may be a challenge for the Visegrad Group.

Contribution to the EU *Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)* development

The Visegrad Group has a long tradition of supporting Ukraine in its democratic transformation (Gawron 2010). The V4 countries are aware that Ukraine is important for them for strategic reasons and therefore worked together in times of the crisis. On this subject the V4 held several meetings at different levels. The Prime Ministers, Ministers and the Presidents met a few times discussing Ukraine and the crisis. Moreover, the V4 countries pledged to increase the Eastern Partnership allocations within the International Visegrad Fund. They also agreed to step up their efforts to help Ukraine to implement the reforms stipulated by the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and to supervise the progress in specific sectors and areas: Slovakia would observe the energy policy field; Poland would share best practices in the area of public administration reform; the Czech Republic would take

over the civil society sector, education and media; while Hungary would provide input in restructuring the economy and developing small and medium enterprise.

Expressing support for Ukraine, the V4 also issued a joint letter to Catherine Ashton, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, and Stefan Füle, the EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy, in early March 2014. It advocated the rapid signing of the Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (AA. DCFTA) between the EU and Ukraine (Visegrad Group 2014c). In the Joint Statement of the Foreign Ministers of the V4 countries and the Eastern Partnership, which followed their meeting on April 28-29, 2014, all the Visegrad countries clearly *condemned the Russian armed aggression and the annexation of Crimea as well as the political and military actions to destabilize the Eastern part of Ukraine* (Visegrad Group 2014e). The V4 Foreign Ministers together with the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom condemned the decision of the separatists to hold local elections in Donbass region on November 2, 2014, considering it illegal and contrary to the Protocol signed in Minsk on September 5, 2014. This was confirmed in the statement of the Foreign Ministers of the Visegrad Group and Ukraine in December 2014 (Visegrad Group 2014b).

The contradiction between the V4 statements regarding the support for Ukraine and the declarations made by particular politicians is noticeable, e.g. by Robert Fico, the Slovak Prime Minister, by Miloš Zeman, the President of the Czech Republic, and by Viktor Orbán, the Prime Minister of Hungary. Orbán's speech in which he appealed to Ukraine to grant "full collective rights" to the Hungarian minority in Zakarpattia Oblast met particular criticism (Mészáros 2014). As noted by Sadecki (Sadecki 2014): *Although Orbán has declared his support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine, given the Ukrainian-Russian conflict his statements fit in with the rhetoric used by Russia in that it claims that the government in Kyiv is undemocratic and accuses it of discriminating against ethnic minorities in Ukraine.* Orbán's statement can be explained by the ongoing election campaign in the country (parliamentary and the European Parliament elections), although their tone for the V4 as an entity, which clearly supports the Ukraine, was negative.

Certain differences between the four Central European countries are fundamental - these include: the conclusions concerning the appropriate response to the Russian moves, the need for Western pressure on Russia and its scope, the problem of taking Russia into account in the resolution of Ukrainian problems. At the extremes of this deep division as regards the conflict in Ukraine stand: Poland, adopting the toughest position on Russia, actively supporting sanctions, including economic ones, and Hungary, suspicious of the Western countries and clearly supporting Moscow. The Czech Republic and Slovakia stay in the middle, maintaining a pragmatic and moderate position in order to avoid risks as much as possible and opposing any further sanctions against Russia. The V4 countries are not able to adopt a common position with regards to the EU sanctions towards Russia.

The individual policies of the Visegrad countries towards Russia are defined by a combination of business interests, energy security, and domestic political ambitions, which are decidedly different in all four cases. The economization of bilateral relations is particularly important in the case of Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. It stems from the

dependence on Russia in the trade of cars, automotive products, electrical equipment and dual-use items. This whole segment comprises more than 80% of their exports to Russia (Poland less than 40%) (Kałan 2014). Dangerfield (Dangerfield 2015) notices that Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic after their accession to the European Union have focused on more intensive and long-term trade cooperation with Russia. The economization is expressed also by Central Europe's addiction to Russian natural gas and crude oil (in the case of Slovakia reaching almost 100%). Domestic political ambitions are also important in the V4 countries' attitudes towards Russia.

The Polish attitude to the sanctions against Russia differs from the other V4 countries. Poland has advocated for tough sanctions, including economic ones from the beginning. In the case of Poland, a greater significance in relations with Moscow lies in the perception of Russia as a direct threat, as well as traditionally a very strong trans-Atlantic commitment. Adopting a hard stance towards Russia serves certain geopolitical ambitions as well. It is hard to say to what extent Poland views the sanctions through the prism of the economy. Among the Visegrad countries, Russia has the highest share in Poland's exports, with a figure currently standing at 5.4 per cent (Rácz 2014). Economically speaking, this implies that it is actually Poland that has the most to lose in the event that Russia responds to EU sanctions with economic counter-measures (Ministerstwo Gospodarki. Departament Strategii i Analiz 2014). In addition, Poland, like other V4 countries, is dependent on natural gas supplies from Russia, albeit to a lesser degree. In 2010 Poland signed a contract with Gazprom for delivery until 2022.

The political ambitions are particularly evident in the case of Hungary's Prime Minister and his "Eastern Opening" policy, which assumes to strengthen the cooperation with Russia (as well as China) and to reap the serious economic benefits offered by Eastern partners. Orban has criticized sanctions against Russia (Szakacs 2014). Moreover, he has strengthened Hungarian economic cooperation with Russia: 1) entrusted, without a tender, the development of a nuclear power plant in Paks to the Russian company Rosatom in return for a 10 billion euro (10.8 billion USD) loan; 2) assured of readiness to accelerate the construction of the Hungarian section of the South Stream gas pipeline; 3) began talks on the gas contract expiring in 2015; 4) invited Putin to Budapest. Orban is treated in the European Union and the United States as a Putin's trojan horse (Mueller 2014). It seems that Orban's pro-Putin policies in Hungary will continue, given that Orban readily makes ideologically favorable references to Putin. His statement about illiberal democracy evidences that. However as noted by Mateusz Gniazdowski (Warzecha 2015) from the Centre for Eastern Studies Warsaw: *Orbán declared his "red line" up to which he is ready to participate in this pro-Russian game within the EU. Even with his recent interview for "Kommersant" he acknowledged that it will be Germany's position towards Russia, to which ultimately Hungary will be subordinate.*

The Czech Republic initially voted against the introduction of the third wave of sanctions. Prague explained this by the need to protect the Czech exporters' interests, especially heavy machinery industry linked with the Russian market. Thus, the Czech Repub-

lic's disapproval of the EU economic sanctions against Russia has been a preventive measure to thwart the escalation of the EU-Russian trade war, which could freeze the export of industrial products or suspend imports of energy resources. The Czech rhetoric regarding sanctions in 2014 was double track. It resulted from a division over sanctions that arose in the government. The Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministries view Russia as a country which is destabilising the European security architecture and is making attempts to revise the international order (Šafaříková 2015). On the other hand, the Minister of Industry and Trade sees Russia as a key non-EU economic partner for the Czech Republic, with whom co-operation needs to be enhanced (Czech Ministry of Industry and Trade 2015). The two contrasting stances on Russia presented by the Czech government are reflected in the moves taken by the left-wing Prime Minister, Bohuslav Sobotka. He is trying to keep the Czech Republic in the mainstream of EU and NATO debate about Russia, while maintaining good economic relations with Russia. Jiří Pehe (Pehe 2015) notices that the adoption of the new Foreign Policy Concept of the Czech Republic will accomplish the following: *Czech foreign policy after a year of this experience will go back to its Havel traditions along the axis of putting emphasis on Atlantic cooperation, vigilance against Russia, and human rights vis-à-vis authoritarian regimes.*

Slovakia holds a “multi-vectoralism” approach in foreign policy. It is based on the ability to maintain sustainable, multi-layered relations with different partners. Slovakia is interested in maintaining dialogue and close economic relations with Russia, as well as emphasizing its commitment to the EU and NATO. The Slovak government agreed to the sanctions against Russia effective March 2014, as well as July 2014. However, the government's position on EU policies with regards to the sanctions imposed by the Prime Minister, Robert Fico, began to change at the height of the presidential campaign in late March. According to Fico's new position the sanctions against Russia are counterproductive, lead to escalation of tensions and make it difficult to find a diplomatic solution. Fico, on one hand, expresses support for Moscow, conducting the policy of large gestures, but, on the other hand tries to become independent from Russian energy (plans to build the Easting gas pipeline; signed contract with a new supplier of nuclear fuel in November 2014; suspended expansion of the power plant in Jaslovské Bohunice and imports military equipment from Russia).

The researchers from the Polish Institute of International Affairs (Kałan and Vass 2015) observe: *In Slovak–Russian relations, one can see an interesting phenomenon: the more spectacular are Fico's gestures of support to Moscow, the more efficient are measures to reduce energy dependence on Russia.* Fico also gave assistance to Ukraine by running a reverse flow on Vojany-Uzhgorod gas pipeline. Bratislava has also adopted a strategy of small steps, so a radical reorientation is not to be expected. We should not expect any easing of criticism of the sanctions or opening the reverse flow in the “Brotherhood” pipeline. On the other hand, it is unlikely that Slovakia will block EU projects linked to the crisis in Ukraine.

The Visegrad Group remains consistent in its policy statements with respect to the Western Balkans. This area remains significant and placed as a priority in the programs

presented in both Hungarian (2013-2014) and Slovak Presidency Programmes for the Visegrad Group (2014-2015). What's more, the Visegrad countries are taking joint steps to promote the European integration of the Western Balkan countries and to assist them during their preparations to become members. The V4 countries welcomed the European Commission progress reports on the candidate countries and potential candidates as a balanced and objective assessment of the situation.

The Ukrainian crisis has not affected the level of activity in the V4 + format. The Visegrad Group held meetings within the V4+ format among others as V4+ B3 (the Baltic States), V4 + EaP, V4+2 (Romania and Bulgaria), V4+ Germany, V4+ Benelux; In 2014 also new formats were created: V4+ Korea and V4+ the Swiss Confederation. This shows that the V4 countries want to present themselves as a coherent region in the international arena.

Consultations and co-operation on current issues of common interest: climate policy

The Visegrad countries effectively cooperate in preparing the 2030 Framework for Climate and Energy Policies finally adopted at the European Council of 24 October 2014 in Brussels. The Visegrad Group has also committed to cooperate with other countries: Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia. At the EU Summit, which took place in October 2014, the V4 countries, Bulgaria and Romania managed to push through a compromise that reflects their interests and positions without compromising the EU's overall positions ahead of the global climate summit in Paris in 2015. The 2030 package foresees the following: reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40%; increasing the share of renewable energy to at least 27% at the EU level; increasing energy efficiency by 27 percent (non-binding target). The Visegrad countries agreed to these reduction goals. Their biggest win was over the principle that *the member states with a GDP per capita below 60% of the EU average may opt to continue to give free allowances to the energy sector up to 2030* (European Council 2014).

Digital agenda

Until 2014, Visegrad as a region did little to articulate and represent its own interests in the rapidly evolving discussions around the EU's Digital Agenda as part of the Europe 2020 initiative. Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary prepared a document in which they presented their common priorities for the EU's strategy for a digital single market, which is to be presented in May 2015. The joint contribution of the V4 to the single digital market that focuses on issues relevant for the region is: promotion of start-ups, elimination of barriers to cross-border e-commerce, security, infrastructure development and improvement of digital skills. In the process of creating the single digital market the V4 faces a major challenge. This is one of the most fragmented areas - both on the EU as well as regional levels - in which the Visegrad Group has ever launched its own policy initiative.

V4 sectoral cooperation

Defense

The financial crisis, the introduction of the new cooperation concepts in the NATO defence capability development and the European Union's (Pooling and Sharing), as well as the leadership of Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland in the Council of the European Union gave a new impetus to cooperation of the Visegrad Group countries in the field of defense in 2010. The Ukrainian crisis has increased the involvement of the V4 states in this matter. A new approach is visible in the Budapest Joint Statement of the Visegrad Group Heads of Government statement from October 14, 2013. In it, the Prime Ministers of the Visegrád countries task the Defence Ministers to enhance defence cooperation to: 1) Draft a long-term vision for our defence cooperation strategy that would also streamline our common capability development efforts; 2) Strengthen cooperation in the field of training and exercises of the armed forces in the V4 format; 3) Explore the possibility to create a framework for an enhanced defence planning cooperation on the V4 level (Visegrad Group 2013a). In the Visegrad Group, cooperation and departure from political and declarative level to specific and practical one is noticeable as evidenced from the "Long Term Vision of the Visegrad Countries on Deepening their Defence Cooperation" from March 12, 2014. In the document the V4 Defence Ministers stated that practical cooperation shall focus mainly, but not exclusively, on three critical areas (Visegrad Group 2014d): 1) capability development, procurement and defence industry; 2) the establishment of multinational units and running cross border activities; 3) education, training and exercises. To support the implementation of the objectives, a multi-year Action Plan will be elaborated and will provide the description of concrete joint projects and initiatives. The progress on these tasks would be annually presented to the Ministers of Defence. The Action Plan shall be a living document subject to regular updates. In principle, the Action Plan shall serve as guidance for each V4 presidency.

The objectives set by the Visegrád Group seem to be moderate. The moderation and concreteness of the aims create a greater chance for their implementation. This is due to two factors: 1) a political and 2) an economic. The moderate goals also result from the fact that there is a significant difference in military potential between Poland and other Visegrád Group countries, which may hinder a more advanced cooperation. Since the outbreak of the economic and fiscal crisis in 2008, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary have reduced military spending. These countries allocate respectively 1%, 1.1% and 0.8% of their GDP for armaments and only 10% of their budgets for modernizations in the armed forces, which does not allow for large modernization investments in the coming years (Strítecký 2012, 71-8).

The defence planning cooperation should be an important aspect of the V4 cooperation in the military field. According to "Framework for an Enhanced Visegrád Defence Planning Cooperation" presented by the Visegrád defence ministers in March 2014,

capability-building projects might essentially seek three types of practical solutions: a) combining and sharing the assets; b) joint equipment procurement; c) research and development (Visegrad Group 2014a). During the planning phase of the capability development project, by default, the Visegrád countries should always first examine whether the projects are feasible and mutually advantageous to be implemented in the V4 framework. It should be noted that such an approach is not easy as it requires a significant change in the mindset and working process, but it is an important step to take for further cooperation. The new approach to cooperation also provides the establishment of an institutional structure relating to the field of defence planning. The documents from the years 2013-2014 appoint three new institutions responsible for decision-making and implementation of activities in the field of joint defence planning: Senior Body, V4 Planning Group, and working teams. What is important is also set specific procedure to take action regarding defense planning.

In March 2014, the Visegrad Ministers of Defence finally decided on the creation of the Visegrad Battle Group that will be ready for rapid deployment on behalf of the EU during the first half of 2016. The battlegroup is to number 3280 soldiers (Government Office of the Slovak Republic 2014). Poland has accepted leadership over the whole formation. Whether or not the defence cooperation will be of a new quality will be determined by the successful implementation of approved projects and creating – alongside the Visegrád battlegroup – other flagship initiatives. Setting goals and institutional structure outline are important steps, however the completed projects can indicate the new quality of cooperation. It should be borne in mind that the implementation of the projects will not be an easy task. There are without a doubt several factors that largely preclude taking joint actions and sometimes the discussion on them hinges on the disparity in the budgets allocated to MoD by individual Visegrád countries.

Energy security

Energy sector became the flagship field of V4 regional cooperation during the last decade. In institutional terms, it evolved from the establishment of the Expert Working Group on Energy in 2002 into the High Level Group on Energy Security in 2011. Ensuring energy security became a topic that the V4 successfully brought to the EU forum. Creating a single Central European gas market will help to increase energy security of the V4 countries and improve their negotiating position with gas suppliers. The Road Map towards a Regional V4 Gas Market emphasises the need for developing the infrastructure, in particular the Polish-Czech, Polish-Slovak and Slovak-Hungarian connectors. The document also establishes a new institutional framework for V4 cooperation: the V4 Forum for Gas Market Integration which shall provide political support and coordination among ministries, national regulatory authorities and also transmission system operators (Visegrad Group 2013b).

The year of the Forum's operation suggests that cooperation is evolving towards a common implementation of the network codes and the creation of the conditions that support an increased usage of non-conventional gas supplies. At the same time, a project

is being developed to harmonise concessions for gas trading companies in the region. The Visegrad initiative provides for cooperation in the construction of infrastructure and the implementation of network codes. However it does not at this stage propose any specific design model for the regional market. Thus in the long run, it offers greater opportunities to diversify the gas supply sources, and to lead to a more liquid Central European market.

The construction of the North-South gas Corridor is underway, with the construction of the interconnector between Hungary and Slovakia completed. Nevertheless, this interconnector was not put into use and the Poland-Slovakia interconnection is still missing. In addition, the V4 managed to get funding from the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) program to continue work on the North-South Gas Corridor. Work on expanding the cross-border connections along the North-South line will not be suspended, but the individual strategies of individual countries for maintaining good energy relations with Russia may reduce the chances of creating a coherent, regional gas market with a number of alternative gas supply sources. The position of Hungary will be particularly important here as Hungary also signed the V4 letter addressed to the Speaker of the US House of Representatives, John Boehner, in which the Visegrad countries called for lifting of the ban on US natural gas exports in order to mitigate the negative consequences on natural gas deliveries to the EU stemming from the tense situation between Russia and Ukraine (Speaker of the House John Boehner 2014).

The Slavkov Triangle

Another challenge for the Visegrad Group may be the creation of a new regional platform established by Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia at the end of January 2015. The purpose of the Slavkov Triangle is to launch a framework of strengthened co-operation in neighbourhood issues and European affairs, and in fostering growth and employment (Government of the Czech Republic 2015). As Vit Benes has observed (Beneš interview by Jůn 2015), it can be agreed that *the timing is not right for a regional initiative in the form of the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria*. Needless to say, opinions on the Czech-Slovak-Austrian cooperation are divided. Czech and Slovak analysts believe that the Slavkov Triangle does not threaten the existence of the Visegrad Group (Strážay 2015; Schneider 2015). Poles are more cautious in their assessments (Kašan 2015), while the Hungarians more critical (Lázár 2015). It does not appear that in the short term the Slavkov triangle could endanger the existence or functioning of the V4. The weaknesses of the triangle are as follows: it's not a verified formula (the declared range of activities is far too broad and overlaps with the V4 and the EU initiatives) and it is given to diverging interests of the signatory countries. From the Austria's perspective the most important goal of the initiative is opposition to sanctions against Russia and strengthening of economic ties with Moscow. The Czechs would like to revive bilateral cooperation with Austrians starting with cross-border issues. Slovaks are more than ever committed to the Visegrad Group. However if the Triangle is to have a lasting effect, there is a chance it can jeopardize the V4 in the long term.

Conclusion

The Visegrad Group is 1) a consultative forum to coordinate policy before the EU summits, not to shape policy towards Russia; 2) an instrument of financial support (IMF); 3) The initiator of regional projects. It works best on sectoral issues (for example energy security or defence) and on questions where the V4 share a common position vis-à-vis the EU, such as the climate policy or the Digital Agenda. In short, V4 works well for matters where agreement does not require a large dose of political capital. It is a good way of coordinating positions on issues where possible, and limiting the damage where it is not. However, its biggest strength lies in the personal relationships, forged over many years of regular meetings linked to the EU calendar. That core asset remains in good shape.

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THE EU COMPREHENSIVE INSTITUTION BUILDING PROGRAMME – NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN GEORGIA AND MOLDOVA

2

VERONICA RUSSU

List of Contents

Introduction

Institution building as part of the EU Neighbourhood Policy and Eastern Partnership

CIB – general overview

The CIB clusters - Cluster I: Rule of law, human rights, democratic governance

Cluster II: Public administration reform, E-governance

Cluster III: DCFTA in Moldova and Georgia

Conclusion

Introduction

The main aim of the European Union in the EU candidate countries, potential candidates and Eastern Partnership countries is the transformation and reforming of state institutions. Strong public institutions offer credibility, welfare and efficiency in relation with the citizens. The EU uses tools such as SIGMA, TAEX and Twinning for institutional building capacity in the candidate and potential candidate countries, while for the EaP it has designated new tools – the Comprehensive Institution Building Programme. The main objective of the CIB Programme is to create new institutions, staffed with new bureaucrats and prepare them for the implementation of the Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement.

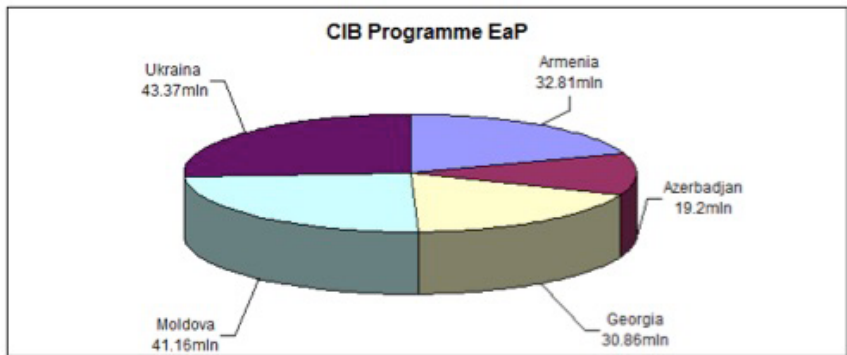
Institution-building as part of the EU Neighbourhood Policy and Eastern Partnership

The gradual EU approximation of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine poses great challenges to these countries, as well as to the EU and its member states. Since 2004, the EU strives for a deepening of its relationship with the countries on its eastern borders within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). In 2009, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) was launched for the six countries mentioned above, to intensify their relations with the EU and to create a stable political and security environment on the Union's external borders.

Although the six eastern ENP/EaP-countries are not yet potential EU candidates, they are trying - to very different degrees - to benefit politically, economically and

through assistance from stronger relations with the European Union. The EaP bilateral track focuses on concluding bilateral political AA including DCFTA, visa facilitation and energy sector cooperation, while the EaP multilateral track supports reinforced regional cooperation. These agreements build on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) which the EU had concluded with almost all former republics of the Soviet Union during the 1990s, and are similar to the European Agreements with the Central and Eastern European countries including leaving 'open future developments' in relation with the EU (Schimmelfennig 2015, 261-262). Compared with the PCAs, the AA is more comprehensive because it includes three main dimensions: DCFTA, political dialogue in the area of foreign and security policy, justice and home affairs and economic and other sector cooperation (AA Moldova 2014, L260). During the third EaP Summit in Vilnius in November 2013, the EU initiated the agreements with Georgia and Moldova. In June 2014, the EU signed the AA with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and the European Parliament ratified these AAs in November 2014. Nevertheless, the AA with Georgia and Moldova provisionally entered into force on 1 September 2014, after the ratification by all 28 EU member countries. Greece was the last country which ratified the AA in November 2015.

In view of the EaP's success in institutional reforms in the partner countries, the Comprehensive Institutions Building (CIB) Program was launched by the EC and introduced as a new funding priority within the framework of the 2011-2013 bilateral ENPI National Indicative Programme. A total of approximately EUR 167 million has been earmarked for the CIB initiative over the 3 financial years.



Source: Compilation by author on the basis of the NIP 2011-2013 for EaP countries

The aim of the CIB is first and foremost to prepare EaP-partner countries for the implementation of AA and DCFTA. Both AA and DCFTA imply lengthy and complex negotiation processes. Therefore the European Commission together with its EaP partner countries deemed it important to elaborate and follow structured medium-term approaches for capacity building of core national public institutions.

CIB – General overview

A Framework Document (CIB Moldova 2010, 2) for the 2011-2013 CIB Programme for the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter Moldova) was signed in 2010. The Document focuses on three priority reform clusters eligible for assistance from the CIB programme: reforming the public administration to ensure capacity to implement the AA agreement; ensuring respect for the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedom; and preparing Moldova in view of a future DCFTA. 13 core CIB institutions have been identified on the basis of their strategic importance for European integration. Each cluster has a set of institutions that will help implement the reform. The State Chancellery of Moldova has been designated as the country's CIB Coordinator.

Concerning Georgia, the Framework Document (CIB Georgia 2010) was signed in October 2010 outlining the key priority areas, which include AA negotiations and coordination, DCFTA and trade policy, democratic development, good governance and human rights. Ten key institutions were identified in order to develop these priorities. The CIB coordinator in Georgia is the office of the State Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration. According to the Guidelines for the preparation of the CIB Programme under the EaP (2009), each CIB institution should develop an Institutional Reform Plan, outlining the priorities to be pursued, the measures to be taken, the input to be provided and the sources of funding. Other EU funds including Twinning, TAEX and SIGMA will complete the CIB Programme.

From the beginning, the elaboration of Institutional Reform Plans (IRPs) was planned to take place in six months' time, however extensive needs and requirements and the gap between the professionalism of civil servants and implementation of reforms involved many internal negotiations so that at the end all countries have completed the IRPs by early 2013 (Report CIB 77). Moreover, both Moldova and Georgia adopted IRPs for the institutions which are not part of the CIB Programme.

The purpose of this paper is to assess the CIB's performance in Georgia and Moldova by a way of the first preliminary results in the field of democratic reforms, human rights and good governance and the implementation of DCFTA. For the evaluation of the CIB Programme, EU official reports, annual reports of state institutions, think-tanks and own observation were used.

The CIB Clusters - Cluster 1: Rule of law, human rights, democratic governance

Under the CIB Programme, the EU tries to assist and support the home reform process of the EaP countries and their democratic transition. Both Moldova and Georgia have focused on reforming and development of their democratic institutions, rule of law and the respect for human rights. Within the CIB Programme, Moldova made progress, however, it was not deemed sufficient. At the moment, Moldova has to make strides in combating corruption, carrying out the prosecution reform and reforming the justice sector, making it more independent of political interference.

Reforming the justice sector was the main priority of the Moldovan Government since 2009. Unfortunately, this has not happened completely, because of lack of interests from the political elites, due to the country's communist heritage or lack of professional know-how. A justice reform strategy for 2011-2016 was adopted in November 2011 (Par-

liament RM 2011b), as well as the Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy which was approved in February 2012 (Parliament RM 2012a). The main aim of the Strategy is to build an accessible, efficient, independent, transparent, professional justice sector, with high public accountability and consistent with European standards to ensure rule of law, and protection of human rights (The Strategy 2011, 1). A working group for coordination and monitoring has been created (Ministry of Justice of RM 2012) for the implementation of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy. Moldova has further elaborated normative acts, prepared legislation respecting European standards, while lesser progress was made in reducing the scourge of corruption.

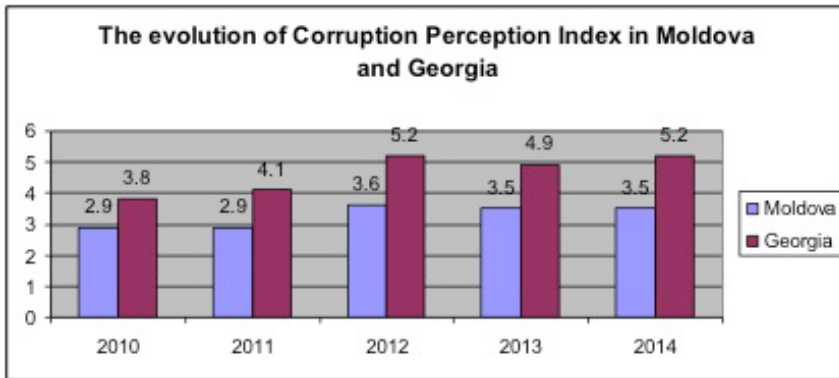
An important aspect in the justice sector reform was the introduction of the mechanism of the judges' performance evaluation by an Evaluation College. The law was adopted in July 2012, and the evaluation system was operational from 2013. The aim of this evaluation is to establish the level of knowledge and professional judge's aptitude and the capacities to apply the theoretical knowledge in practice and establish the weakness and strength aspects in the judicial activity, improving professional skills on the individual level and the level of court of law (Law 154 2012, art. 12.1). However, it seems the implementation of the law in practice, did not have the desired effect. According to the evaluation report written by ODIHR/OSCE, the evaluation procedure of judges' performance does not correspond with evaluation objectives. The poor motivation and reasoning by the Evaluation College in its decisions shows the impossibility of establishing the competence and qualifications at the judge level. (ODHIR/OSCE Report 2014, 56-57).

In case of Georgia, the country has registered important steps towards achieving the independence of the judiciary system. Adopting the Law on Common Courts in May 2013, and the selection of the members of the High Council of Justice under new rules that increase transparency and reduce the political influence, the judiciary has become more independent in relation to the Prosecutor's Office, has been noted by the EC in the progress report for 2013 (Progress Report Georgia 2013, 6-7). Furthermore, Georgia's progress was marked by the adoption of the concept of the reform of the Prosecution's Office. The institutional reform of the Prosecutor's Office started in earnest in December 2014. The Parliament, civil society and a government agency all have participated in the elaboration of the reform plans, which has been noted in the EC Progress report for 2014 (Progress Report Georgia 2014, 6). Another successful step registered by Georgia was the creation of the new department which will monitor the crime investigation process (Agenda 2015).

The situation in Moldova is slightly different to that of Georgia concerning the prosecution system reform. In July 2014, the Parliament has finally adopted this concept and in September it was published in the Official Monitor of Moldova. Overall, the prosecution reform saw the greatest number of difficulties and as a result, its support by the EU was slashed by 1.8 mln, from EUR15 mln to EUR13.2 mln (Europa Libera 2015).

The scourge of corruption continues to be a threat to the development of the public institutions for both Moldova and Georgia. Nevertheless, Georgia has registered small progress compared to Moldova. According to the Transparency International Index from 2010 till 2014, Georgia's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) score was 3.8 in 2010; 4.1 in 2011; 5.2 in 2010; 4.9 in 2013 and 5.2 in 2014, which shows that even though corruption in Georgia remained stable, it has nevertheless registered a slight improvement. Conversely, in Moldova, the CPI score was 2.9 in 2010 and 2011; 3.6 in 2012 and 3.5 in 2013 and 2014, illustrating that corruption in Moldova remains constant. Moreover, according to the

Global Competitiveness Report (2014-2015) Moldova has the most corrupt justice system in the world.



Sources: Transparency International Index reports 2010-2014

Cluster II: Public administration reform, E-governance

The reform of the public administration is a fundamental requirement for the implementation of the AA and DCFTA. Moldova has made limited progress on public administration reform. There is not a clear strategy for the public administration reform, civil servants are poorly prepared for the implementation of new reforms, and also the average salary remained low (Progress Report Moldova 2014, 9). Yet the implementation of the e-governance has registered significant progress.

The CIB Document for Moldova (2010) mentions that in the EaP countries, modern concepts of public administration reform include the building up and improvement of e-governance for the benefit of citizens, the private sector, and other relevant actors. The State Electronic Government Centre (EGC) within the State Chancellery has been charged with offering e-service aspects of the CIB reforms. The development of e-governance increases the transparency of public services, public institutions become friendlier in relation to citizens, it increases trust in the public institutions and the most important aspect of corruption is diminished in the realm of public services. What's more, EGC Barometer shows that 293,302 citizens requested an e-record in the period between September 2012 - March 2015 (EGC Barometer 2015).

The "Criminal record" service is one of the most requested public services in Moldova. Open Data Portal is an innovative initiative for governments, civil society and the ICT communities worldwide. This portal includes free access to public governmental data in a standard online format. The aim of this e-service is to increase the transparency, productivity and responsibility of public institutions. The same barometer shows that 44 central public administration authorities published on the Portal an aggregate of 801 datasets. The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interiors, National Statistics Bureaus and the Ministry of Economy are the most active central public administration authorities in publishing datasets on the Portal (EGC Barometer March 2015).

In case of Georgia, an important step in the development of e-governance was the creation of the Public Official Asset Declaration System. The system is operational from 2010, helping citizens access online asset declarations of Georgian public officials. From 2010 till 2013 the official declarations uploaded to the online system have increased to 22,000 (CSB Georgia). For successful implementation of the AA and DCFTA it needs to create new institutions and new bureaucrats. Both countries identified lack of efficient government structure, lack of administrative capacity of the institutions involved in the implementation of the AA and DCFTA, lack of professionalism of civil servants, compounded by low absorption capacity for external assistance.

The improving of the human resources management system is pursued on the basis of the CIB Programme. Public institutions should have a 'healthy' management, because they need to provide good and friendly public services for citizens. The training of 'new' bureaucrats should be the most important aspect in the development of human resources management for both Moldova and Georgia. Both countries have set out, as part of their strategies, the professional development of these capacities by a way of organising seminars, workshops, and study visits for civil servants from both countries.

In this way, Georgia has taken an important step in the elaboration of the Approval of the Rules for Conducting Attestation of Civil Servants and on the Approval of Competition Procedures specified under the Law of Georgia on Civil Services, which entered into force on 18 June 2014 (Annual Report Georgia 2014, 17). An important change was made by involving independent experts in evaluation committees who do not have any employment relationship with these institutions (Annual Report Georgia 2014, 18).

Cluster III: DCFTA in Moldova and Georgia

The DCFTA constitutes a trade part of the AA and covers trade in goods including tariff elimination or reduction for further opening of the services markets and prepares and improves conditions for investors. Also, it contains provisions on the facilitation of customs procedures, on anti-fraud measures and trade defence instruments (UECBV 2014, 2).

The main aim of DCFTA is to bring Moldavian and Georgian legislation closer to the European legislation in trade areas. From September 2014 Moldova started to bring its legislation in line with the EU *acquis*. Also, it has proceeded to simplify custom procedures including an electronic declaration for imports and exports (Progress Report Moldova 2014, 12). What's more, in 2013, it has registered 326,262 e-customs declarations, while in January 2015, the number of e-customs increased by 43% (Customs Moldova 2014a/b).

Moldova has registered yet another success in its development of the concept of Authorised Economic Operator in August 2014. AEO Certificate holders enjoy a number of advantages and simplifications, which significantly reduces both the time required for customs clearance of goods as well as expenses incurred for carrying out foreign economic transactions, including: priority access in crossing the state border, reduction of customs controls and other benefits. Further, this means that business partners are recognized as trustful, strengthening the security and safety of the company, which lowers inspections costs and improves customer loyalty (Fiscal Monitor Moldova 2015). In present, there are 71 authorized economic agents with AEO certificate (Customs Moldova, 2015).

Georgia's progress was instead based on the effective use of the CIB Programme to modernise the country's National Food Agency (NFA) responsible for sanitary and Phyto-sanitary standards. Using the principle 'more for more', the EU allocated an additional financial grant of EUR 19 mln for the NFA for the improvement of the management system in line with the EU standards and legislation (Agenda 2014).

Both countries recorded similar progress in development of the public procurement area. A Procurement Training Centre was opened in Georgia and began providing trainings on procurement legislation and Georgia continues to implement and improve its procurement system. The main progress in Georgia lies in the introduction of simplified application procedures, registration of procurement entities and increasing of the accountability standards (Progress Report Georgia 2013, 15; Progress Report 2014, 13). In Moldova the automated informational system was launched called 'Sate Registry of Public procurement'. This platform is the first step for the digitalisation of the public procurement process, the aim of which is to increase its transparency, efficiency and credibility. Currently, the system is used by the 100 public authorities (Budianschi et. al.2014, 12). Yet, the main problems in the public procurement system, mentioned by the group of experts, are: lack of a strategy for the development of e- procurements, lack of financial resources for the promotion of the use of public procurements, lack of or insufficient information of economic agents regarding the component of e-procurement (Budianschi et. al. 2014, 65).

Due to the specific features in the political and economic development of each country, the CIB programme has different results. On the one hand, Moldova is the best performer in the implementation of e-governance, on the other Georgia was able to effectively use the CIB assistance for the modernisation of its Food Safety Agency. Nevertheless, it is necessary to mention that the implementation of CIB Programme started later than envisioned because of a variety of issues. In this case the main results of the CIB implementation would be visible at the end of 2015. Thus, further research is needed to analyse the preliminary results of the program's implementation.

Conclusion

The EaP continues to offer substantive support for each partner country which wants to be closer to the EU. Therefore, by signing the AA with the EU, Moldova and Georgia should both make maximum effort for the implementation of the agreement on their way of approximation to the EU. Both Moldovan and Georgian governments should continue their effort in the implementation of democratic and administrative reforms. The CIB Program is a very important tool for the preparation of public institutions, without which the implementation of the future AA would be much harder, even impossible. Therefore, both countries should use CIB to maximum extent in order to provide their public institutions with all the technical and financial levers for bringing their activities closer to EU standards and values.

In Georgia and Moldova there is an undeniable need to build stable and impartial institutions and enhance the institutional infrastructure to ensure the capacity to implement the AA, including the DCFTA. It is therefore necessary to continue with reforms which contribute to the strengthening of the democratic system, especially its participatory aspects. The governments should therefore create a further set of policies for the greater involvement of citizens in the democratic decision-making. There still remains an

acute need to enhance the trust of citizens in public institutions, to improve the business environment, and to create a friendly climate for favourable democratic and economic development.

The signing of the AA and DCFTA between the EU and Moldova and Georgia respectively was the principal achievement within EaP initiative. Even if Moldova and Georgia have not yet received the perspective of EU membership, both countries should insist on the implementation of the AA including DCFTA because these will provide them with the necessary tools to approach their ultimate goal.

The EU should continue its financial assistance for institutional building, while enacting stricter monitoring of the implementation of CIB, especially when it comes to the judicial institutions.

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NATO AND UKRAINE AFTER THE MAIDAN REVOLUTION

ZDENĚK KŘIŽ

List of Contents

Introduction

Evolution of NATO – Ukraine relations after the end of the Cold War

Present state of NATO-Ukraine relations

Likely scenarios for NATO - Ukraine relations

Conclusions

Introduction

In the early 1990s, NATO entered a new phase of its existence and the Alliance underwent a rather difficult and complicated adaptation process consisting of many features, inter alia establishing close cooperation with non-member countries and NATO enlargement. The best possible forms of cooperation with transition states in Central and Eastern Europe were sought and new institutions were established, in particular the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and Partnership for Peace (PfP), serving the development of Ukraine-NATO relations as well. NATO and Ukraine relations had oscillated, for more than two decades, between modes that can be defined as endeavor to acquire partnership and to obtain membership. Hence it is no surprise this issue has been dealt with a number of Ukrainian and other authors. The history of these relations has been examined in depth and to a satisfying degree (Lyubashenko and Zasztowt 2012, 37-46). Therefore this paper aims to give only a brief overview of the history of mutual relations and focuses on their current state and likely scenarios of their future development.

Evolution of NATO – Ukraine relations after the end of the Cold War

After the birth of independent Ukraine, the country launched cooperation with NATO within the afore-mentioned institutions, as it joined the NACC in 1992 and the PfP in 1994. Therefore, the relations between NATO and Ukraine developed within the context of general establishment of relations between NATO and post-communist states. Nevertheless, there was a factor distinguishing Ukraine from the other states (with the exception of Russia), i.e. its military arsenal inherited from the Soviet Union era, comprising also nuclear weapons. Ukraine is estimated to have inherited a third of the Soviet military-industrial complex, including research centres and production plants producing 17% of the total Soviet military-industrial production (Gerasymchuk 2007, 4). Based on the accession to the Lisbon protocol of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty I (START I), Ukraine renounced its Soviet nuclear inheritance in favour of Russia. The Budapest

Memorandum, signed in 1994 by the representatives of Russia, Ukraine, the United States and the UK, provided Ukraine, in return for this unprecedented step enforced by foreign political, domestic political and economic circumstances, with security guarantees from the signatories of this document (not from NATO). In particular, it regards respecting Ukrainian independence and sovereignty and abstaining from using or threatening to use military force against Ukraine (Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the UN Office and International Organizations in Vienna 2015). More likely a symbolic, rather than a real turning point in the mutual relations was the signing of the *Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Ukraine* during the Madrid NATO summit in July 1997. On the grounds of this document, the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC) was established (Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Ukraine 1997). The issue of Ukrainian NATO membership was not on the agenda at that time. Thus mutual cooperation strove to help Ukraine in building democracy, arms industry conversion, transforming the military sector and, last but not least, involving Ukraine in some expeditionary operations (Bosnia and Kosovo), undertaken by NATO then.

A true turning point in the mode of mutual relations occurred in 2002, when the Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma declared Ukraine's interest to obtain NATO membership. Even though Kuchma was suspected of taking this step in order to divert attention away from Ukrainian domestic problems, to which he had greatly contributed, it was a major change of the Ukrainian approach (Kriendler 2007, 5). Consequently, in November 2002 at the Prague NATO summit, the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan set the framework of mutual cooperation for both parties and the long-term goals that are to be achieved. It is easy to deduce from the goals of the document, which are relatively detailed, that Ukraine saw it as a tool of preparation for accession to NATO. The afore-mentioned chronology shows that the issue of Ukrainian membership in NATO had arisen shortly before the Orange Revolution, orienting the country towards the West. After the Orange Revolution, NATO declared its interest to assist Ukraine with its heading towards the West (de Hoop Scheffer 2004). Following Kuchma's shift in the country's orientation, in 2005 the Intensified Dialogue was launched with NATO and in January 2008, the Ukrainian political leadership submitted an official request for involvement in the Membership Action Plan (MAP) programme.

The 2008 Bucharest NATO summit is generally regarded in scholarly literature as a defining moment regarding the events in Ukraine. Nevertheless, its significance has various interpretations. Ukraine was given a very vague assurance of future membership and NATO formally kept the open-door policy, yet at the same time the conclusions from the summit emphasised that Ukraine (and Georgia) is not ready for its membership in NATO (North Atlantic Council 2008). Hence Ukraine was not involved in the MAP, which brought obvious disappointment in the pro-Western part of Ukrainian society. It was the resistance of Germany and France that stood behind this Alliance policy (Erlanger and Myers 2008). One part of authors argues that it opened a window of opportunity for the Russian aggression as a result of NATO showing its weakness. Another group of authors

points out that NATO has decided not to boost cooperation with a country which is internally torn concerning the issue of membership, objectively unprepared for the membership and whose membership could result in a new Cold War between Russia and the West. The 2010 election victory of Yanukovich caused another turnaround of the Ukrainian policy, which was, however, evident already when Yanukovich held the post of Prime Minister. The new Ukrainian leadership adopted the policy of non-alignment in military blocs; yet concurrently, it expressed its interest to further cooperate with NATO (Deutsche Welle 2010). Ukraine went on participating in many Alliance programmes, was involved also in the Alliance's expeditionary operations, including ISAF, NATO Training Mission in Iraq, Operation Active Endeavour and Operation Ocean Shield. Last but not least, in 2010 and 2011, Ukraine also took part in the NRF. The institutional background (NATO-Ukraine Commission) established for mutual cooperation remained untouched. Cooperation functioned according to the Annual National Programme which was first established in 2009 and which is based on its working groups. Yanukovich further developed cooperation with the EU and had reservations about Ukraine's membership in the Eurasian Customs Union. Cooperation has focused on Ukrainian participation in peace-support operations and transforming the military sector through the Joint Working Group on Defence Reform (JWGDR), PfP and Planning and Review Process (PARP). It aimed to help Ukraine provide civil control over security issues and transform the Ukrainian army from a mass army of the Cold-War type into a modern armed force. Also practical military-technical cooperation continued in order to strengthen interoperability of the Ukrainian army with NATO armies. Practical implementation of reforms recommended by the Alliance was left to Ukrainian discretion and exclusively within its competence. The problems associated with this fact and the analysis of accomplished results goes beyond the framework of this text.

This solution of Ukraine's foreign-political future in fact meant temporary disappearance of a problem that was to burden relations between NATO and Russia and the cleavage in the Ukrainian society. The Alliance respected this trend, if not welcomed it, as it was obvious that that the Ukrainian membership in NATO could become the apple of discord within the Alliance. Moreover, the last thing the Alliance would wish for was to risk deterioration of relations with Russia, especially after the Obama administration had announced the policy of reset. On the whole, up until the 2014 Russian invasion and illegal annexation of Crimea, the cooperation between NATO and Ukraine had oscillated between the modes of "partnership" and "Ukrainian effort to acquire membership". These have changed on the grounds of impulses coming from Ukraine and NATO assumed a reactive policy. The John Mearsheimers "surrealist" claim (2014) that the West has developed a strategy to move Ukraine out of the Russian orbit is not substantiated by empirical evidence.

Present state of NATO-Ukraine relations

The afore-mentioned description of the history of mutual relations clearly shows that behind the Maidan events of 2013-2014 stood the signature of the association agreement with the European Union, which Yanukovich refused to sign contrary to his previous promises. In opposition to that, the European Union was trying to reach the agreement until the last moment. Months preceding the summit, it waived some requirements it had imposed on Kiev, such as the adjustment of electoral laws or “selective justice” (in particular the controversial imprisonment of Yulia Tymoshenko) (Diuk 2014, 11). Ukraine’s accession to NATO was not on the agenda then; it re-appeared on the agenda, initiated by the Ukrainians, in the December 2014 after the Russian aggression against Ukraine, which started by the illegal annexation of Crimea and continues by the hybrid war in the east of Ukraine (Rácz 2015).

In response to these events, NATO condemned the Russian policy and especially Russia’s illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea and its deliberate destabilisation of eastern Ukraine, ceased military cooperation with Russia, discussed the new security situation with Ukraine and on many occasions required the restoration of Ukrainian territorial integrity, adhering to the Minsk I and Minsk II agreements and withdrawing the Russian support to separatist forces (NATO 2015b). Already from the very beginning of the conflict, NATO helped coordinate humanitarian and medical aid to internally displaced persons and provided an advisory group to the civil contingency plans and crisis management measures. In 2014, Ukraine joined the Partnership Interoperability Initiative in order to preserve the achieved level of operational effectiveness after the end of NATO-led operation in Afghanistan in the technical, operational and doctrinal dimension. In April 2015, Poroshenko signed the Annual National Programme of NATO-Ukraine cooperation for 2015 which is aimed to introduce NATO standards in Ukraine (Mission of Ukraine to the NATO 2015). In general, NATO assists Ukraine in the transformation of defence and security sector and promotes democratic reforms.

Alliance launched programmes of military aid to Ukraine focused on the field of non-lethal weapons. The following Trust Funds, on the basis of which the decision was taken at the 2014 NATO Wales Summit, serve this purpose: nationally-led Trust Funds (Command, Control, Communications and Computers; Cyber Defence; Logistics and Standardization; Medical Rehabilitation; and Military Career Management), established in September 2015 (NATO 2015a). Moreover, in June 2015, these funds were supplemented by a new one aimed at demining explosive devices (Ukraine Under Attack 2015). Yet the budget of these activities totalling nearly 5.4 million EURO (Interfax-Ukraine 2015a) is greatly insufficient for the Ukrainian needs. In September 2015, the Road Map of Partnership in the Sphere of Strategic Communications, the Agreement on the Status of NATO Mission to Ukraine and the Joint Declaration on the Enhancement of Defence-Technical Cooperation Between NATO and Ukraine were signed (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine 2015). Last but not least, NATO provides military training to the Ukrainian

armed forces, both via mentoring and joint military exercises e.g. Rapid Trident 2015, Fearless Guardian, Sea Breeze and Ukraine 2015. Some individual NATO members have provided significant military aid as well. The USA has provided Ukraine with military support totalling 260 million USD. Its largest part is composed of 230 Humvee jeeps, two anti-battery mobile radars, type AN/TPQ-36, 22 sniper rifles type M107A1 and two U.S. drones type KS-1 (Heyden 2015).

The crucial question is whether the Alliance or particular NATO members should extend military support by direct weapon supplies, which would eliminate the Russian military advantages in the C4, air defence and night vision systems and by lethal weapons supplies, as Ukraine has required from the Alliance on a long-term basis (Reuters 2015). For the time being, this step is strongly opposed in the West both among analysts and politicians. Their main argument is their fear of further escalating of the ongoing armed conflict (Norton-Taylor 2015). Nevertheless, Ivo Daalder, Michele Flournoy, John Herbst, Jan Lodal, Steven Pifer, James Stavridis, Strobe Talbott and Charles Wald question these reservations stating that *“Russia has already continuously escalated: seizing and annexing Crimea, encouraging and aiding separatists in eastern Ukraine, providing the separatists with heavy arms, and ultimately invading the Donbas with regular Russian army units”* (Daalder et. al. 2015, 5).

On the whole, it can be said that at present NATO is trying to support Ukraine to the extent so that it does not deepen the dispute with Russia and at the same time make Kiev hope that sometime in the future it will be given a more extensive military aid or even membership in the Alliance. The Alliance policy is a sign of the compromise among members, who are not united regarding the solution of the Ukrainian crisis (Giles, Hanson, Lyne, Nixey, Sherr and Wood 2015, 24-27). Also the interests of the Alliance’s bureaucratic and military apparatus certainly play a role here, fearing the loss of NATO’s credibility. Simultaneously, the West presses Ukraine to make transformation changes, which took place in a majority of post-communist states at least a decade ago. There are other Western institutions serving this policy, especially the European Union and International Monetary Fund. In fact, the Alliance re-adopts the political strategy applied in the past on post-communist states striving to obtain NATO membership. The vision of future membership without clear assurances serves as a reward for transformational efforts. However, it must be taken into account that the West pursues this “stick and carrot” strategy towards Ukraine under different outside circumstances than in other post-communist states. None of them has faced a hybrid war from a more powerful neighbour at the time it was preparing for the NATO membership and Russia has never made such resistance to the pro-Western orientation of any other country, as in the case of Ukraine. Western politician should bear in mind that what worked in the past under specific circumstances, can fail today in case of Ukraine.

The outcome of the current political strategy pursued by NATO towards Ukraine is that neither Ukraine nor Russia is satisfied with the Alliance’s policy in this crisis. Even though there is certain disappointment in Ukraine about the Alliance policy to date, Ukraine still follows the Western path and continues to cooperate with NATO in the area

of peace support operations. The sign of this cooperation is the involvement of Ukrainian troops in the NATO led-mission in Afghanistan replacing Resolute Support.

Likely scenarios for NATO - Ukraine relations

The future relations of NATO and Ukraine can develop according to several scenarios, each with a varying degree of probability. If Ukraine as a state disintegrates, this development will have consequences that are virtually unpredictable. The scenario of the end of Ukraine as an independent state within its internationally recognized borders may seem rather unlikely at first sight. However, if we overcome the conventional style of thinking and take into account that the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia no longer exist, the scenario becomes less far-fetched. In any case, the present-day situation in Ukraine is unenviable. The country has been run for two decades as a company used by the oligarchs as a cash cow for their profits. The macroeconomic indicators have been constantly deteriorating. Inhabitants are divided along several cleavages, the most significant of them being social, ethnic and religious ones. However, these conditions are not sufficient for the disintegration of Ukraine, as we can see them in a number of other European countries (Sherr 2015, 24-27). If not for the outside pressure, the situation of Kiev would not be so critical. After the resolution of the Crimean question in the early 1990s up until the year of 2014, Ukrainian disintegration along ethnic or religious cleavage had been of little significance. No relevant international organisation pointed out to ethnic or religious groups being systematically and continually suppressed in Ukraine. Ukraine is not deeply divided as many ill-informed experts state not paying attention to the many shadows of grey (Motyl 2015, 80). The main problem lies in the fact that Ukraine is in the middle of an undeclared hybrid war with Russia, which initiates potential conflicts in Ukraine and if necessary intervenes by regular forces of the Russian army (Gregory 2015, UNIAN 2014). Last but not least, Putin perceives Ukraine as an artificial state with no right to survive and this perception is an integral part of his neo-imperial ideology (Motyl 2015, 78). One cannot but agree that *“Moscow has underestimated the coherence and resilience of Ukraine, but this does not mean that it cannot achieve its core objectives: to wreck Ukraine if it cannot control it, to preserve Russia’s western borderlands as a ‘privileged space’, and to make Europe accept that ‘there can be no security without Russia’”* (Giles, Hanson, Lyne, Nixey, Sherr and Wood 2015, 7-8). The survival of Ukraine hence depends on two factors: the ability of the West to prevent another escalation of conflict by Russia and ability of the current Ukrainian political leadership to implement necessary reforms. Due to Russian economic problems, the first task could prove easier than the latter.

Therefore, if we accept the premise that Ukraine will survive, there are two main possible scenarios of its relations with NATO in the future: the country’s early accession to the Alliance or continuing partnership without an early membership. There are various nuances of the potential partnership which cannot be analysed in detail due to the limited space in this article. Hence it is suitable to focus especially on the issue of whether one can expect the country’s early accession to NATO.

For any country to be able to join the Alliance, at least three conditions must be met: The country's interest to obtain membership, its readiness for membership as regards the requirements of the Study on NATO Enlargement; and the third condition is the consent of all NATO member states for the accession of a new member. Ukraine declared its interest in Alliance membership in December 2014 under circumstances that are described in the previous chapter. Thus attention will be paid to the other two conditions.

The Study on NATO Enlargement is the key document setting the *de facto* requirements for new NATO members, despite avoiding this very formulation. On the whole, the Study on NATO Enlargement sets a relatively broad range of requirements for new member states. Ukraine's readiness to join NATO will be examined according to four key criteria: 1. the establishment of a consolidated democratic political system with democratic civil-military relations, 2. the ability of Ukrainian armed forces to meet Alliance's obligations and contribute to the NATO security, 3. the settling of territorial disputes with neighbours and 4. public support for NATO membership (NATO 1995). Today, the main flaws of the Ukrainian preparedness for NATO membership lie in the quality of democracy and settling territorial disputes with neighbours.

Today's Ukraine cannot be irrefutably referred to as a consolidated democratic country, but more likely a sub-type of the so-called illiberal democracy, which has been defined by Fareed Zakaria (2005, 109-147) as a system in which some democratic mechanisms are applied (e.g. regular elections) but in practice, a number of liberal-democratic features are neglected (such as violation of fundamental rights and freedoms, tendency to concentrate power in the hands of a strong executive and diminish power of other authorities). Although there has been some progress in democratization after the "revolution of dignity", a lot of work has to be done. Civil-military relations and their democratization still cannot be referred to as corresponding to NATO standards. One of the causes is a different concept of civil control, which is understood in Ukraine more likely as observation and monitoring rather than direction or supervision; this is so due to their conviction about the inappropriateness of civilian interference in the matters of the armed forces, whose ability to guarantee the country's security and defense could be violated by these incompetent intrusions. Moreover, "*the traditions and culture within the Ukrainian army are eclectic and contain both the values of a democratic state and those of the Communist past*" (Gerasyanchuk 2012, 266). Last but not least, there is a huge problem with voluntary battalions in Ukraine. On the one hand, they saved Ukraine from defeat at the time when Ukrainian regular army was neither willing nor ready to fight. On the other hand, even the existence of these battalions contradicts democratic civil military relations as there is a real threat that these battalions will interfere into the Ukrainian domestic issues using military force. On the whole, after the political changes implemented in association with Maidan, Ukraine has undergone another wave of democratic transformation, which is not absolutely unsuccessful for the time being. It managed to hold several elections that took place in compliance with democratic procedures. However, that is only the beginning of democratic consolidation and it is not very likely that this process will be completed in several years so that the country is ready for early membership in NATO.

Ukraine is a country that has unresolved territorial disputes with neighbours and it is certain that it will not have solved them in the near future. The result of the Russian policy in Ukraine so far is the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia and the outbreak of war on the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk. The existence of the “people’s republics” enables Russia to escalate the conflict at any time, if it finds it of use. All other territorial ambiguousness between Ukraine, Belarus and Moldavia are of no significance in light of this fact.

As regards the state of Ukrainian armed forces, on the one hand, they are able to participate with their selected parts in the Alliance expeditionary operations, which they have proved several times over the past two decades. Yet on the other hand, building capabilities for territorial defence are of primary importance at present. The size of the Ukrainian army has increased over the past two years from 146,000 to 280,000 soldiers and the expenditures on defence have grown to 4 billion USD (5% GDP) for 2016 (Ukraine Reform Monitor Team 2015). The current Ukrainian establishment assumes that within the reform of the security sector and the launching of a new military doctrine, full compatibility of Ukrainian security forces with the forces of NATO members will have been accomplished by 2020 (Interfax-Ukraine 2015b). The state of Ukrainian armed forces is not ideal, as the reforms of the previous two decades have not been consistent; part of the financial means intended for their development was embezzled and these forces are still infested with Russian agents (Bodner 2015). Nevertheless, the Ukrainian armed forces *per se* are not an obstacle to the country’s potential accession to NATO. After the implemented radical changes, Ukrainian armed forces did fight and in many cases proved high moral standards and determination (even though less of an art of combat). After all, they still have not lost the hybrid war with Russia despite numerous defeats and made Putin pay the price which is high in comparison to what Russia had to pay for the annexation of Crimea. Regarding the experience they gained with the Russian methods of waging war in the past two years, Ukrainian armed forces could be more likely a contribution for Alliance capacities than a burden. That would be true especially if they managed to organise the transfer of experience and findings in an adequate form to other NATO members.

Compared to the past, the attitude of the Ukrainian population towards NATO membership has changed. In the early 1990s, the degree of supporting the accession to NATO was greater and it ranged among 25-30%; gradually, due to disillusionment resulting from the development in the country, it went down to 14-20% (Kozlovska 2006, 37). However it has changed against the background of the ongoing Russian hybrid war as in 2015 by 64% percent of Ukrainians are in favour of the NATO membership (Voribiov 2015). Hence, if the lack of consent among inhabitants has been a very important argument against an early accession of Ukraine to NATO, thanks to Vladimir Putin’s policy, this argument is no longer relevant. Yet it remains questionable as to how permanent the shift in public opinion actually is, what the territorial differences are and how reliable the data are.

According to the Study on NATO Enlargement on the whole, the Ukraine of today does not meet the criteria for membership. President Poroshenko believes that these

deficits will be removed in the next 6-7 years (Barrabi 2015). However, even if Ukraine did succeed in doing that in a short span of time, it would not mean an absolute guarantee of membership, as there is the third condition to be met, i.e. the consent of the existing members. At present, there is a very strong resistance in the Alliance against Ukrainian accession to NATO. Its most vociferous opponent is undoubtedly Germany. Chancellor Merkel states that the Association Treaty with Ukraine does not aim to accomplish the membership either in EU or in NATO (ČTK 2015). Frank-Walter Steinmeier expressed many times his opinion that Ukraine should not seek the NATO membership (Hoffmann 2014). To a certain extent, this German policy is supported by the local public opinion. In June 2015, Pew Research Centre published research according to which 57% respondents from Germany were against Ukraine's membership in NATO, while it was only 18% in Canada, 28% in the USA, 24% in Poland, 25% in the UK, 29% in Spain, 44% in France and 46% in Italy (Simmons, Stikes and Poushter 2015). Hence the German public is the most strongly opposed to Ukraine's accession to this organization among the most influential countries. Germany also hopes this will leave open door to the dialogue with Russia regarding the solution of the crisis in Syria where, as Berlin supposes, Moscow plays a constructive role (Defense News 2015).

In fact, Moscow responded to Ukrainian intentions to join NATO by a series of usual threats or "an appropriate military answer", placing Ukraine on the list of its enemies. Moreover, Russia also claims that it is NATO and its intentions to change Ukraine to an area of confrontation with Russia that stands behind the change of Ukrainian policy and not the Russian illegal annexation of Crimea and the hybrid war in the east of the country (idnes.cz 2014). Behind the German policy, there are naturally also vast economic interests of Germany in a region that serves to Russia as a source of cheap resources and to the entire Central and Eastern Europe as a source of cheap components and market for the final German production, which is profitable mainly for Germany. Yet Germany is not alone in its resistance. Ukrainian membership in NATO has been opposed on a long-term basis also by France and Italy has a detached attitude as well (Stratfor Global Intelligence 2015), (RT 2015). In such circumstances, it is not very likely that the third condition for Ukraine's accession to NATO would be met in the near future. Thus the scenario of an early Ukrainian NATO membership (within several years) is not very likely.

Conclusions

At the present, out of the three conditions (interest in membership, readiness for membership and members' consent), only one is met, i.e. Ukraine's interest in obtaining the membership. To a great degree, the future relations between NATO and Ukraine depend on which attitude towards Putin's Russia the Alliance will agree. The Western policy so far stems from the belief that sooner or later it will be possible to return to the same level of cooperation with Russia as before the Russian aggression against Ukraine and to do business as usual. This policy is built upon the assumption shared by many Western European states that there is nothing to fear from Putin's Russia (Katz 2015). The steps

taken to intensify the defensive capacity in the Baltic have always taken into account this option and in the discussion within NATO, Moscow's interests have to a great degree been always taken into consideration. Economic sanctions imposed by the West on Moscow are always selective and with no short-term impact on Russian economy. In the long-term perspective, they undoubtedly have the potential to do serious harm; nevertheless, they enable Putin to return to cooperative behaviour before sanctions can start to hurt. The faith in the strength of economic sanctions is the building stone of the Western policy. Behind it, there is the belief that the present Russian establishment sees security problems in a way similar to the West and prioritizes economic profit. In the years to come, we will find out whether this assumption is right and Russia will become a global partner of the West, a hope shared by many influential individuals in the West.

Even though Ukraine is not very likely to achieve readiness for membership in several years' time, even if it did so and the afore-depicted attitude of NATO towards Russia persisted, it is nearly out of the question that Ukraine would become a NATO member. Russia always has the possibility to exchange the return to cooperation with NATO for rejecting Ukrainian membership in the organization. Paradoxically, the only real chance for Ukraine's accession to the Alliance is the continuation of a "new Cold War" between NATO and Putin's Russia. Only under such external circumstances and simultaneously also Ukraine's ability to meet the Alliance criteria for membership, a positive consensus could be reached in NATO over Ukraine's invitation.

Ukraine has to make tremendous progress in its political transformation, security sector reform and economic consolidation. Only then can the issue of Ukraine's NATO membership be put on the table. Nevertheless, there is low probability for Ukraine's early accession to the Alliance and its relations with NATO are very likely to develop according to the "partnership" mode with attributes such as "intensified", "unique", etc. Ukraine will be able to interpret them for itself as getting ready for future membership and use them as a rationale for the necessity to bring about unpopular reforms inside the country. NATO cannot afford to absolutely refute its cooperation with Ukraine for political, prestige's and security reasons (Simón 2014, 71), (Kaim 2014, 4). Ukraine's failure would bring enormous security repercussions not only for Eastern and Central European countries but for the West as well (Giles, Hanson, Lyne, Nixey, Sherr and Wood 2015, 8). Last but not least, a certain form of intensified partnership between Ukraine and NATO could be a short-term consolation prize for Kiev and substitute for an early membership in the Alliance. That could also be one of the reasons why Kiev has so ostentatiously decided to adopt the policy of joining NATO and did not choose to pursue a less obvious political strategy.

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UKRAINE IN CRISIS: THE ECONOMIC AND SECURITY CONSEQUENCES FOR EUROPEAN UNION, UKRAINE AND RUSSIA

MAREK LENČ – MARTIN KUDREC

List of Contents

Introduction
Current domestic development in Ukraine
Failed policy in EU's neighbourhood?
Ukrainian crisis and the Russian war
Russia's hybrid warfare
Germany as a guardian and its limits
Implications for Slovakia
Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

Ukraine's conflicting history offers a long list of choices between Russia and the West. For centuries, Ukrainians have failed to achieve their own state. After a short period of independence on the eve of WWI, an independent Ukraine reappeared on the map of Europe in 1991, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It came into existence as second largest European country inheriting territories with different histories and identities. However, Ukraine's prospects in the era of independence were rather disappointing, especially, if we take into account the complexity of Ukraine's potential. The country's political leadership was unable to reform the economy, raise democratic standards and to break a strong dependency on Russian gas deliveries. Moreover, majority of Ukrainian political elites preferred to maintain strong economic and political ties with Russia. While having a similar starting position as many other post-Soviet countries, Ukraine's GDP per capita in 2014 was only one-third that of Poland, Lithuania, or Russia and only one-half of that of Belarus.

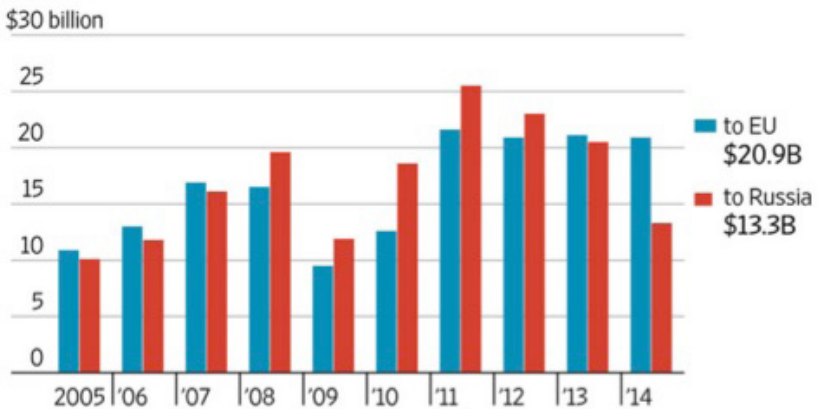
Current domestic development in Ukraine

In 2015 Ukraine's economic situation deteriorated even more. The exchange rate of the national currency hryvnia collapsed (Xe 2015). Ukrainian Central Bank and government introduced draconic and non-standard capital and foreign currency controls to stabilize the situation. Black market with foreign currencies has emerged once again and inflation jumped to a high double digit rate. The current GDP of Ukraine is hard to de-

termine, but probably at least in nominal value, is smaller than the GDP of Slovakia. And the economic recession has not run its course yet. Predictions by international organizations are bleak and the recession is even expected to deepen this year (2015). Ukrainian Economy would shrink at least by another 7% (Mills 2015) after accounting for inflation which stands at around 60%. Even export, despite the heavy depreciation of hryvnia, is collapsing. Needless to say, the main trade partner of Ukraine before the crisis was Russia, but trade between these two countries has deteriorated significantly, namely 61.3% in the first quarter of 2015. This is a much bigger problem for Ukraine. Falling trade volumes with Russia are understandable, but worse for Ukraine is that even trade volumes with EU slipped by one third in the first quarter of 2015 (Mills 2015).

Export potential to EU after unilateral cancellation of import duties from EU's side has been for a long time considered one of the biggest immediate advantages and economic assistance for Ukraine after the revolution and the ensuing rapprochement between EU and Ukraine.

Ukraine's exports of goods and services



Source: Ukraine State Statistics Service

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Internal problems and war have, at least for the moment, disrupted this potential.

Moreover, Ukrainian economy has been for a long time exploited due to its high interconnectedness with Ukrainian oligarchs who were using their economic power in order to gain political influence and to secure often disputably acquired fortunes after the market liberalisation in the early nineties. The expected war on oligarchs was launched by Kyiv central government only recently under pressure from the West, after relative stabilization of the situation in the East of the country. De-oligarchization of Ukrainian economy is a key to restoration of its legal order, reduction of corruption, but more importantly also a prerequisite for continued support from Western financial institutions, such as IMF or

EBRD. Over the last months, despite its own corruption scandals, the new government managed to diminish political influence and sources of oligarchs such as Akhmetov, Koloimoisky or Firtash. However, despite public commitment to reform efforts, Yatsenyuk's governing coalition finds itself in political power struggles over the implementation and slow pace of reforms which is also one of the main reason that these oligarchic influences have not been cut yet.

Failed policy in EU's neighbourhood?

In both, 2004 and 2013, Ukraine has experienced large popular protests against the country's pro-Russian direction. If compared, the outcomes of each one of these protests differ significantly. In 2004, none of the actors, neither Ukraine with its civil society nor European Union, were ready to sustain profound transformations brought by Orange revolutionaries in terms of pro-western orientation of the country. Reflecting the changes regarding both, European Union and NATO enlargements, Ukraine could have become a priority on the political agenda. However, the Orange revolution ended up a disappointment and Ukraine missed its historic window of opportunity. The newly elected political elites failed to dismantle domestic oligarchic ties, deliver progressive reforms and ended up entangled in large corruption scandals. The internal disputes in Juschenko-Tymoshenko coalition combined with the division of the West after US invasion of Iraq made it only easier for the European Union and its member states to continue overlooking Ukraine. In 2005 Germany under Schroeder chancellorship agreed to launch the biggest ever bilateral project with Russia – Nord Stream, which also aimed to bypass Ukraine.

In the coming years neither France nor Germany stood behind Ukraine's pro-western aspirations. Sarkozy's France strengthened its traditional focus on the Mediterranean and Maghreb dimension and Germany continued to be viewed from Kyiv as a country that hinders Ukraine's ambitions towards EU and NATO. Both, Yuschenko and Yanukovych blamed Berlin's diplomacy for turning down the official invitation for Ukraine for the Membership Action Plan at the NATO Bucharest summit in 2008 as well as for blocking the EU from giving Ukraine the EU membership perspective in the Association Agreement (AA).

Germany also showed signs of reluctance when it came to creation of Eastern Partnership which was born as a construct of two hawkish foreign ministers, a Swede Carl Bildt and a Pole Radoslaw Sikorski. At that time Berlin's diplomacy considered Eastern Partnership an initiative that could both benefit but also undermine its interests in the region. Therefore it was more likely to opt for the "common neighbourhood model" where EU and Russia would compromise on their economic interests. In another words, Germany was very careful when it came to Russian interests in the region. Back in 2009, this was well demonstrated by the numerous objections to the language of the text of the Joint Declaration adopted during the EaP summit in Prague. It was Germany who *"insisted on using the term 'Eastern European Partners' instead of 'European states', which was supposed to prevent these countries from referring to Article 49 of the Treaty of Lisbon."* Germany

also persisted in its *“objections to calling the new deepened bilateral agreements ‘the association agreements’ in order to avoid connotations of Europe Agreements.”* By doing so, Berlin wanted to be sure about the message EU sends to six EaP countries and Russia. Eastern Partnership was strictly rejected as a pre-accession instrument of EU enlargement and was mainly about to bring the partner countries closer to the EU economically, but not politically (Gottkowska 2010, 3-4).

Ukrainian crisis and the Russian war

In 2013 Ukraine has made its choice for West again. The protests which were started mostly by young people gradually grew into larger gatherings and later on led to the dismissal of President Yanukovich on 22 February 2014 and the establishment of an Interim-Government under the leadership of Arseniy Yatsenyuk. Since then Ukrainian-Russian relations turned disastrous over the Russian military intervention in Crimea, the military conflict in Donbass, disputes regarding the gas deliveries for Ukraine as well as over the implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) of the AA.

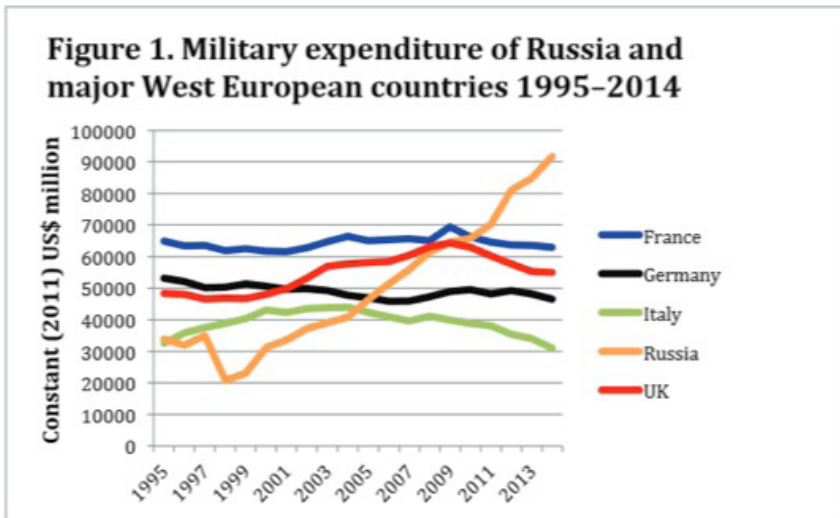
Summing up the recent events, Vladimir Putin is most likely to enter history as a president who lost Ukraine. Since autumn 2013 Russia has lost its pro-Russian president, significant political representation in the Ukrainian parliament as well as Ukrainian popular support not only in west of the country but likely also in parts which have been historically much more pro-Russian. Even though Russians and Ukrainians share strong ties over the orthodox religion, ethnic origin, cultural traditions or Soviet heritage, none of that seems to matter after Russia's actions in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine.

In order to secure its strategic national interests, Russia violated international law and broke its multilateral and bilateral commitments to Ukraine. It is important to note that Russia, along with the United States and the United Kingdom, was one of the three nuclear powers which signed security assurances for Ukraine guaranteed in the 1994 Budapest Memorandum. The memorandum was signed in exchange of Ukraine giving up its 3rd largest nuclear weapons stockpile. Of course, Russia's breaking off its promise is undermining the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The reaction of the West with regards to Russia's use of force came in the form of sanctions, assistance to Ukraine and negotiations with both parties. Following the imposition of Western sanctions, economic ties and diplomatic relations between the West and Russia deteriorated to the point which is comparable to only to the era towards the end of the Cold War. If only one and half years ago Russia could count with Ukraine as possibly one of the most important partners in its future economic and strategic plans for the post-Soviet region, now Russia has to deal with Ukraine as an actor of international relations in a more pessimistic scenarios. Ukraine, after the Crimea referendum and its annexation and the fighting in Donetsk and Lugansk regions, started massive modernization and reform of its formally big, Soviet-style and ineffective armed forces.

Ukraine's military industry, which is represented by Ukroboronprom, has been for a long time one of the most modern industries in the country. For many reasons and

due to insufficient funding by the government, it was producing weapons systems mainly for export, making it the 8th largest arms exporter in the world in the 2009–2013 period, surpassing even countries like Italy and Israel in this statistic (SIPRI 2014). At the time of this writing, the military industry of Ukraine is focusing more on domestic deliveries which should support and bolster its armed forces. What's more, Ukraine plans to speed up refurbishment of many types of tanks and armoured vehicles from the stockpiles from Soviet times. It also plans to dramatically increase production of most modern tanks, armoured vehicles, anti-tank weapons etc. (World defence news 2015). Alongside domestic production and sources, Ukraine's military has been boosted by limited military deliveries from US (Defense news 2015) and other western countries. On the other hand, Russia increased its defence spending (between 2004 and 2014 Russia doubled its military spending to approximately \$70 billion, becoming the third largest defence spender), is modernizing its nuclear capabilities and has made verbal nuclear threats against the Alliance. Irrespective of its possible intentions, Russia, which perceives NATO as a major threat, has developed the military and political tools to undermine credibility of West (Lorenz 2015).



Source: SIPRI 2015

However, the situation in which a “brother” nation with a border less than 500km from Moscow, and with current very problematic relationship with Russia is massively building up its armed forces, can't be considered a long-term victory or an improvement of the strategic and geo-economic situation of Russia, despite the swift successful annexation of Crimea and stabilization of pro-Russian LNR and DNR¹ in Eastern Ukraine, which were both near the military collapse after Ukraine government offensive in

¹ Lugansk People's Republic and Donetsk People's Republic

the summer of 2014.

Possibly even worse for Russia from a strategic point of view is that its active military involvement in the Ukraine conflict combined with planned massive military procurements is one of the most prominent factors leading to the end of disarmament process, in EU and European NATO countries, which has been in progress since the end of the Cold War. Even Germany which was leading this disarmament process is starting to rethink this position and plans to boost own shrinking military capacities (Corbett 2015). It's very questionable if starting an arm races in Europe is even in the long-term Russian interest with such a limited economic potential.

Russia's hybrid warfare

Russian behaviour in the Ukrainian crisis shows a striking divergence between the reality on the ground and official Russian statements. Russia never admitted neither to be a part of the conflict nor to be one of the combating sides. Nevertheless, there is a long list of evidence that proves Russian active military engagement in eastern Ukraine. The disaster of Russian foreign policy from the outbreak of the Maidan protests was, however, balanced with achievements in the short run in post Yanukovych era. In this regard, we identify the following aspects:

1) *Media usage* - to a large extent Russia was able to affect the political sentiment of the international community toward Ukraine while portraying it as a failed or fascist state. Embedding fascist narratives in the Ukraine conflict enabled Russia to win time and effectively postpone and question the response of Western governments to Russian aggression.

2) *Usage of membership in international organizations* - Russia has effectively blocked majority of international community's efforts to manage and resolve the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Using its position in the UN permanent Security Council, Russia proclaimed to veto any efforts of deployment of UN peacekeeping mission in Ukraine. It is also unlikely to expect EU mission (except advisory type mission) without a UN mandate to be sent. Accordingly, NATO engagement is unthinkable as Russia considers it to be a part of the conflict. Therefore, the only relevant international organization with considerable capabilities present in Ukraine is the OSCE. The current mandate of its mission was extended until 31 March 2016. In spite of the fact that its ambitions are limited, improvement of OSCE mission is most likely to serve as a stabilization mechanism for the situation in Donbass.

3) *Victimization of its position* - Russia never accepted the role of aggressor even though it is the stronger party in the conflict. It also tries to portray itself in the position of a victim of Western (mostly NATO driven) aggressive policies against Russia. Russia also believes to be accommodating its interests by using force, when all other tools – economic coercion, massive economic assistance and diplomacy with the West – fail to secure its interests.

4) *Policy of "divide and conquer" towards EU* - the events in Ukraine sparked off

significant anti-European rhetoric of Russian elites. However, the mutual mistrust has not only stayed at a declaratory level, but is well demonstrated by concrete actions aimed at dividing EU member states. Invitation to Greece from Russia to become the sixth member of the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) well underlines the geopolitical ruthlessness of this game. In order to pursue its strategic foreign policy goals, Russia prefers not to take coherent action against the West. And at the bilateral level, despite the ongoing crisis, it is still relatively successful in maintaining high quality of relations with several Central European countries,² Cyprus or Greece. These relations are mostly built upon strong personal ties, rather than domestic political consensus.

Germany as a guardian and its limits

In modern history, Berlin and Moscow had often very competing views on the role of Central and Eastern European states. Tensions over influence in this region and over different (often competing) futures of particular territories were not an exemption. While Russia seems not to abandon old patterns of geopolitical thinking, Berlin and Brussels offer to Kyiv a different, partnership-based, future.

In the current conflict, Berlin stands strongly on the side of Kyiv. At the same time it cannot afford to lose contact with Moscow as it realizes that European security can only be built with Russia and not against it. Therefore, Germany's *ultima ratio* lies in maintaining a political dialogue with Russia. Since the outbreak of the conflict, Berlin adopted two principled positions a) "*The conflict cannot be resolved by military means*" and b) "Ukraine's territorial integrity is not negotiable." Further on, Merkel indicated that Germany will not return to business as usual with Russia and will try to change its behaviour. The tools to achieve these goals are supposed to be "*talks, assistance and sanctions*" (Merkel 2014). These statements enjoy high level of support among majority of EU member states and all G7 members. Current consensus among Western political elite says that sanctions against Russia must stay in place until it implements a deal to end the fighting in Ukraine. It is unlikely to expect the lifting of these measures before concrete results in terms of resolution of the conflict will be made.

Germany, alongside with France, plays a key mediator role in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, most of all through the Normandy format, but also thanks to its bilateral relations. The measures adopted during the summit of leaders of Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia on 11-12 of February contains 13 points, including commitments of Ukrainian government to reform its constitution, holding of local elections in Donetsk and Lugansk oblast by the end of 2015 as well as restoration of the control of the state border to Ukrainian government. However, the Minsk II agreement has to be understood not as the end of the process, but rather as its beginning. In enforcement of this agreement Germany undertook significant diplomatic offensive and any attempts leading to its failure will harm Germany's image as well as reveal the inability to reach its political goals with Russia.

² Austria, Czech republic, Slovakia, Hungary

The recent development in DPR and LPR also bears positive news for Ukrainian central government as its leadership faces several problems. At the beginning of June, first public protests appeared in Donetsk demanding to end military actions as well as provocations by DPR's fighters (Coynash 2015). Its support by the local population should not be overestimated.

Despite the current very shaky ceasefire, Ukrainian government has to be prepared for renewal of larger military escalations in the east of the country, prevent the state from defaulting, restore its economic potential, push for reforms and at the same time be very careful not to lose the trust of its own population. These aims can be achieved only through transparent and effective governance, diplomatic efforts and thanks to large financial and intellectual assistance from the West.

Implications for Slovakia

The current situation and development offers to Slovakia both – great political and economic potential on one hand, but also direct threats to its security. For Slovakia, the most plausible outcome from the current crisis in Ukraine would be a stable Ukraine with pro-EU government and direction. This scenario assumes that Ukraine will implement the necessary structural, economic and political reforms and ensure massive support for these reforms in West and East of country. This should be at the same time accompanied by a diplomatic solution of the conflict in the East of the country, whilst keeping Russia cooperative. Unfortunately this scenario doesn't seem very realistic for now.

In the economic sense, free trade with stable, reformed and growing Ukraine could open huge potential to correct the regional disparities in Slovakia. The current border and border regime with Ukraine, which resembles more the Iron Curtain than a standard European border, can't offer to Eastern Slovakia the same economic potential as opened borders with some of the most developed European countries, as it does for Western Slovakia. Despite the fact that we are neighbours with Ukraine our mutual foreign trade has been just 1% in 2014 of the whole foreign trade of Ukraine (Ukrstat 2015).

Ukraine is now offering educated and much cheaper labour than China. For instance, the minimum wage in Ukraine is now around 45€ and average wage before taxes is around 140€ (Trading economics 2015). Ukraine's private manufacturers and companies that have been able to survive war and economic depression are very competitive regarding price but often not well-versed in doing business with the EU. Besides this Ukraine needs a lots of investments and even smaller Slovak companies can offer sums which can have considerable impact for the country.

Slovakia was in a similar position to Ukraine as a state in the 90s and 2000s. So if Ukraine anchors itself in the EU economic and security sphere, Slovakia could and should benefit considerably as addressing the economic problems is one of the pillars how to solve the current political and military crisis in Ukraine. Slovakia has a potential to play a crucial role in Ukraine's aspiration of much bigger economic cooperation with the EU and we should be prepared for this change (to be a strategic window or bridge between the EU/

West and Ukraine). Along with our diplomatic efforts, it is probably one of the most crucial roles we can play in the current crisis and changing geo-economical and geo-political situation.

This presents itself as one of the best options for Slovakia, how to avoid a worst-case scenario: Ukraine as a half-failed or failed state. Ukraine with strong economy and citizens with positive vision would make it much harder for strong Russian interference in the country's internal affairs. We shouldn't forget that one method of how Russia gained broader support in the annexed Crimea were economic incentives and improved conditions like wages and pensions for the local population.

Conclusions and recommendations

There is only a short list of things that Russians and Ukrainians agree on and one of them is that the events of Maidan were about the European Union. If we assume that this statement is true, both sides share this view for different reasons. For the Ukrainian civil society, the association with European Union represented a way of strengthening its state and a way of getting rid of its corrupt elites. On the other hand, Russian political elites have almost zero interest in strengthening civil society, either of its own or of neighbouring states, but well understand that the power of Europe's attractiveness lies in encouragement of transparent and democratic governance. Therefore, we assume that Russia would rather prefer to return to state-to-state politics and in that aspect EU is not a desirable element of European politics.

As a result of the Ukrainian crisis and Russian military interventions in the East of Ukraine, mutual relations between Russia and the West are marked with confrontation and rising anti-Western rhetoric. If only one and half year ago Russia could count with Ukraine as possibly one of the most important partner in its future economic and strategic plans of post-Soviet region, now Russia has to contend with Ukraine as a state and actor of international relations in more pessimistic scenarios. Russia's annexation of the territory of its neighbouring state also represents a major shock to the way European post-Cold War architecture has been organized. In fact Russia used its military to secure its interests and to gain political influence. However, at the same time the desire to be treated as a first rate power caused significant damage to its own economic interests and led to the violation of democratic principles, fundamental values and international law. In many ways, the consequences of Russian actions are accompanied not only by identity struggle of East and Central European nations, including Ukraine and Russia, attempts to rewrite the history of 20th century, but also possible end of the post-Cold War era.

Even though we can observe also cooperative elements in Russian behaviour (Minsk II, Iran peace talks, ISIS), overall the relations have deteriorated in ways comparable to the Cold War era. From a long term perspective, however, this does not hold a very optimistic scenario for Russia. By taking aggressive and divisive steps against European countries, Russia is also losing its main strategic asset – the ability to balance China's growing ambitions by its relations with Europe.

The biggest dilemma for the EU would be a scenario where Russia is not interested in restoring its relations with the West and that it prefers strengthening regional structures in the Eurasian Economic Union and global ties with the rest of BRICS. We also should not forget that the current confrontation serves well the interests of Russian political elites in that it diverts the public's attention from bad governance, lack of progressive policies and corruption. In a state of verbal war with NATO, a much larger number of problems can be attributed to the "aggressive policies" of the West rather than to domestic political leadership. Combined with Russia's unwillingness to cooperate, unpredictability of its further behaviour, verbal threats against the Alliance, this could lead to further decrease in security in Eastern Europe. Therefore, EU has to find a way to effectively engage with Russia, facilitate Ukraine's progressive reforms, prepare for long lasting political and financial commitment to Ukraine and at the same time strictly demand fulfilment of the agreement reached in Minsk.

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FROM A 'HYBRID WAR' TO A 'HYBRID PEACE'? IMPLICATIONS OF RUSSIAN IRREGULAR WARFARE IN UKRAINE FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

ANDRIY TYUSHKA

List of Contents

Introduction

Defining Russian 'Hybrid War' in Ukraine and Beyond: Colour Counter-Revolution (Warfare)

Towards a 'Hybrid Peace'? Ramifications of Russian Colour Counter-Revolution (Warfare) for International Security

Conclusions

Introduction

Concluded anew on 11 February 2015 to lay an end to the so far greatest challenge for the post-cold war European security order, the Minsk accord ('Minsk II') has showed, with its very initial stage of a rather non-committed implementation, that the solution to a problem, which itself has not been properly defined, may well breed hybrid and ambiguous effects in the end. Deployment and extension, since March 2014, of the specter of 'hybrid warfare' methods in Ukraine not only provides for tactical success of Russian foreign policy in this realm, but also proves lacking readiness of the European and international communities to respond to a security threat that considerably extends beyond the borders of the Ukrainian nation-state. Since the annexation of Crimea, these threats are encapsulated by essentially dishonesty and distrust, insecurity and uncertainty that prevail in European and international security perceptions. What becomes certain, however, is the understanding that hybrid warfare can hardly end with anything but a hybrid outcome – a 'hybrid peace'. Hybrid peace presents an idea that is not really new to the world that has survived the 'cold peace' and 'cold war' eras, but it challenges the current order in a far more brutal, miserable, complicated and 'sophisticated' way.

Defining Russian 'Hybrid War' in Ukraine and Beyond: Colour Counter-Revolution (Warfare)

Originating from a modern-time Europe and conducted nearly exclusively through legitimate regular and recognisable state armies, the warfare maintained its conventional (also known as classic or regular) posture up to the second half of the 20th Cen-

ture. While having, to a larger extent, remained conventional in form, the decisive battles in today's wars are fought not on conventional but on asymmetric battlegrounds involving mainly non-kinetic means. Information, culture, ideas, urban spaces and institutions – all have become targeted battlegrounds for what is increasingly getting identified (or rather mystified) as a 'hybrid war' fought by irregular (special) forces, often without any insignia and legitimate recognition, as well as enlisted 'local communities' and sponsored crime and terrorist networks.

Conceptualizing hybrid warfare is a daunting task indeed, yet its very defining notion, hybridity, defies neat categorization in many respects. Hybrid tactics can be well observed and thus identified and analysed, but as a theory, 'hybrid war' can offer anything but a clear and certain prediction tool. The literature on hybrid wars abounds with conceptualizations that tend to grasp everything and say nearly nothing certain about what one or another vision of a hybrid war implies. One of the pioneers who, through a series of articles and books, popularized the concept in early 2000s, was Frank G. Hoffman. Attempting to name the beast, he defined a 'hybrid threat' as any '[...] adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs a fused mix of conventional weapons, irregular tactics, terrorism, and criminal behaviours in a battle space to obtain their political objectives' (Hoffman 2009, 15). The heterogeneity in origin and composition of 'hybridity', inherent to this notion of threat, prevents the formulation of a universal or at least consensual definition of a hybrid war. This is why the term is used rather arbitrarily, blurrily and very distinctly. One of the perhaps most succinct and neat definitions is provided by McCuen (2008, 108):

'[...] *hybrid wars* are a combination of symmetric and asymmetric war in which intervening forces conduct traditional military operations against enemy military forces and targets while they must simultaneously – and more decisively – attempt to achieve control of the combat zone's indigenous populations by securing and stabilizing them (stability operations)' [emphasis added] (McCuen 2008, 108).

Thereby, McCuen (2008) escapes the trap of mystified 'hybridity' by pointing to the very *conventional form of hybrid warfare as a full-spectrum war* involving both physical and conceptual dimensions, while acknowledging its *unconventional (asymmetric) battlegrounds* – the combat zone's indigenous population, home population and the international community. The support of all of them is crucial for achieving strategic aims by all available means below the level of conventional warfare. As Gray (2005, 232) posits, irregular warfare is 'an old story meeting post-modernity'. A case-by-case definition of particular origin and composition of 'hybridity' would therefore be needed to establish the causality and dynamics of the hybrid conflict in question.

In case of the Russian intervention in Ukraine, be it called 'aggression', 'hybrid conflict', 'humanitarian intervention', etc., much of the debate revolves around two *main narratives* that bring to the surface of analysis either domestic or foreign political considerations as sources of Russian conduct. The domestic politics narrative points to the challenges Ukraine's democratization move since early 2000s has been posing for a viable Russian authoritarian state. As a result, the sources of President Putin's conduct in Ukraine following the resolve of the *Maidan* revolution in 2014 can be traced back to

serious concerns about maintaining his domestic power and rule. Instead, the foreign political narrative is constructed around realist international relations assumptions, framed by the eternal geopolitical rivalry argument, and derives the sources of Russian conduct in Ukraine from the latter one's westward move signaling Ukraine's creeping integration into the Western structures (EU, NATO) and thus endangering Russian position in the never paused, according to Russian perceptions, 'spheres of influence' battle.

This article tries to escape analytical eclecticism and related biases posed by the selection of one of the aforementioned narratives to follow, and posits that the Russian conduct is informed by a mix of both of these threat perceptions and considerations – a *double threat*³ is therefore implied herewith. In its effort to frame Russian involvement in Ukraine as a legitimate policy, the Kremlin's official rhetoric posits these are the rights of ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking population in Ukraine that need to be protected. However, the aforementioned two narratives suggest that the sources of Russian conduct evidently extend beyond the boundary of an allegedly bilateral conflict between Russia and Ukraine, wherefore Russian actions cannot be a priori defined and justified as a humanitarian or compatriot policy aimed to protect ethnic Russians and/or Russian-speaking population abroad. So, the question arises what is Russia really fighting for in Ukraine? Russian domestic discourse flourishes with echoes from the Kremlin's 'explanations', mainly containment of Ukrainian fascism and revived fight against the eternal foe – the US. Internationally, Russia has initially sent the signals of fighting fascism and protecting indigenous Russian population in South-Eastern Ukraine. However, with the end of 2014, crowned with the upgrade of Russian military doctrine, Moscow openly echoes its domestic narrative about enemies abound around – first of them being the United States – that are believed to endanger Russia's security through colour-covert actions in Ukraine. A blurred picture, overwhelmingly shadowed by the powerful ideological projection of 'eternal lie' or 'universal deception' promoted by Russia, becomes clearer outlined with each next Moscow's move within the hybridity's trap matrix (cf. *Figure 1* below).

Reisinger and Golts (2014, 2) claim 'it was all in the cards – Moscow [was] "threatened" by colour revolution', although *plausibly denied* it (as, in principle, the script of hybrid warfare prescripts!). President Putin's Chief of General Staff, General Valeriy Gerasimov (2013) took a firm stance on this in early 2013 assessing that 'so-called colour revolutions [...] demonstrate that a prosperous state, in a matter of months or even days, may turn into a bitter armed conflict, becoming a victim of foreign intervention, falling into chaos, a humanitarian catastrophe and into civil war'. Moreover, General Gerasimov's

³ The argument here goes that, in order to understand Russian involvement in Ukraine and beyond (in the post-Soviet space but also, recently, in Syria), the 2014 revolutionary developments in Ukraine need to be seen in a broader temporal and geographical political perspective. As such, they are perceived by the Kremlin as a 'double threat': On the one hand, 'colour revolutions' (as democratisation instruments) posit a threat to Russia's authoritarian domestic regime and thus elicit Kremlin's response in the form of 'colour counter-revolution'; on the other hand, 'colour revolutions' are regarded by Moscow as a form of war waged by the West to check Russian regional hegemony and international influence, wherefore these appear to provoke Russian geopolitical and military-strategic 'response' in the form of 'colour counter-revolution warfare' (on these twofold – domestic-focused and international systemic – understandings of the 'colour revolution' phenomenon in Russian political and foreign policy thinking cf. e.g.: Horvath 2011; Babayan 2015).

(2014, 17) more recent take defines 'colour revolutions' as a 'form of non-violent change of power in a country by outside manipulation of the protest potential of the population in conjunction with political, economic, humanitarian and other non-military means'. In order to arrive at an integral perspective of Russian vision of colour revolutions, this, to a larger extent, adequate military-political statement has to be complemented with the persisting distrustful geopolitical thinking of enmity and rivalry with the 'West' that has informed Russian foreign policy, with a brief exception for the period of 1991-1996 years (Tyushka 2015, 22).

In short, the Russian vision depicts colour revolutions as a chaos strategy pursued by the West to undermine Russia's security, integrity and 'historically just' ambitions. Consequently, the Russian view of 'colour revolutions' is predicating that this is a form of geopolitical struggle, through which influential players on the world stage attempt to achieve their military-political goals avoiding substantial costs of military operations that would otherwise incur, maintaining a positive international image ('no one to blame'), and preventing large-scale casualties (conventional warfare). Third Moscow Conference on International Security (MCIS) held on 23 May 2014 was genuinely outspoken on this matter for it explicitly identified 'colour revolutions' as 'a new form of aggressive war' (Papert 2014, 7). Seen from such an angle, Russia's 'mission' has been launched therefore to control this alleged Western aggression and chaos ('*controlled chaos*' strategy, to use Johnson's (2015, 5) wording) while not hesitating to use favourable circumstances to advance Russian foreign political goals (opportunist strategy). The element of Putin's opportunism⁴ has not to be underestimated in this regard, yet since the Soviet times, the two main sources of Russian conduct have been *ideology and circumstances*, as originally maintained by Kennan (1947).

In terms of ideology, Russia's core belief, which it is promoting in the world, is that there is no truth but only interpretations – a so-called 'eternal lie' or 'universal deception' ideology well-described in Pomerantsev's (2014) book *Nothing is True and Everything is Possible*. Drawing on the conference presentation of Col-Gen Vladimir Zarudnitsky, Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces (Zarudnitsky 2014), Bērziņa (2015) pioneers an apt idea on how to frame the hybridity of Russian threat and conduct not only in Ukraine but also all around the Russian borders and within its allegedly claimed 'sphere of influence' – a 'colour counter-revolution' or 'colour revolution warfare' (cf. *Table 1* below):

⁴ On how the overthrow of President Yanukovich rule and domestic vulnerability in Ukraine 'inspired' Russia (or presented an offer Russia could not resist) to annex Crimea and seek breakaway and accession to the Russian Federation of Eastern Ukrainian regions, see the 'Kremlin policy papers' (supposedly originating from 4-12 February 2014) leaked and published by Novaya Gazeta on 24 February 2015 (Novaya Gazeta 2015).

Table 1. 'Colour revolution' vs 'colour counter-revolution (warfare)' models

	Colour revolution model	'Colour counterrevolution' (colour revolution warfare) model
Basic principle	Strategic non-violence	Non-violence preferred but it is far from constituting a principle (inherent brutalization and miserablization)
'Common' Method [as seen by Russia]	(1) Military training of rebels by foreign instructors; (2) The supply of weapons and resources to anti-government forces; (3) The use of mercenaries and private military companies; (4) Reinforcement of opposition units with foreign fighters <i>(Gerasimov 2014)</i>	
Different Method	(1) non-violent protests (2) safeguarded legitimate support of international and domestic communities (3) international supervision of power transition (4) promotion and support of reforms (5) training of future leaders, etc.	(1) blurred boundaries between defence and attack, the strategy and tactics; (2) military operations are conducted mainly in urban areas and settlements; (3) military actions go beyond international law and take on the character of a war without rules; (4) colour revolution warfare actively involves criminal structures, terror becomes common; (5) extensive use of private military forces and special operations forces <i>(Zarudnitsky 2014)</i>
Legitimation basis / justificatory ideology	democratization, support of peaceful regime change	R2P Antifascism / Multiculturalism / Historical interpretations / Other arguments (complementing the missing coherent ideology)

Source: Author's own compilation based on Gerasimov (2013; 2014), Zarudnitsky (2014), and Bērziņa (2015)

Mirrored back to the Russian engagement in Ukraine since 2013, the 'colour counter-revolution (warfare)' method allows to better assess what is at stake for Russia in the 'Ukrainian issue' – *a largely preventive response to the perceived double threat merged with favourable circumstantialism (situational determinism)*. On the one hand, inasmuch as the creeping democratization wave, embedded in the current phenomenon of 'colour revolution', threatens the Russian domestic authoritarian rule, it also challenges, at the same time, Russia's effortful but unsuccessful claim for a respected great power status. The latter one can only be maintained, the Russian thinking dictates, by tightening the control within the (once imperial space and now) postcolonial periphery, embraced by highly popular and populist Russian notion of 'sphere of influence'. On the other hand, Russian modern military thinking on 'colour revolutions' feeds the traditional modus of Soviet/Russian foreign-policy action – seizing opportunities.

Towards a 'Hybrid Peace'? Ramifications of Russian Colour Counter-Revolution (Warfare) for International Security

Hybridity of Russian warfare in Ukraine, just as any possible sort of hybrid war, is virtually predetermined to breed hybrid results. The time when these results become apparent is also a very flexible and slippery variable. An extended nature of hybrid conflict is virtually endemic. U.S. Army Maj. John R. Davis Jr. (2013, 25) unambiguously posits that hybrid wars are anything but quick wars. In case of Russian 'colour counter-revolution (warfare)' in Ukraine (in fact, a hybrid war by its form and mode of conduct), the situation

is even more complicated as it does not represent a genuine bilateral war – it is embedded in much wider regional and international hybrid conflict between heavy-weight geopolitical rivals and definitely main contestants in the area concerned, Russia and the 'West' in its contemporary embodiment (US+EU).

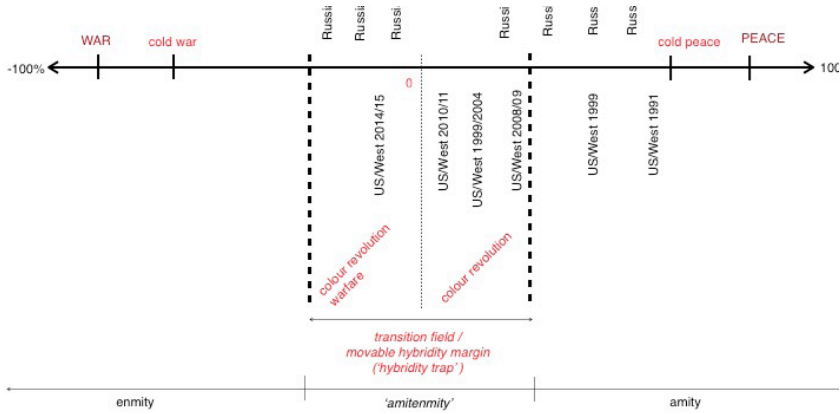
As a result, the causes and the consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian hybrid war exceed the boundaries of a two-states conflict and are fraught with much wider regional and international ramifications. Johnson (2015, 5-6) reduces these to three major and perilously complex implications: (1) instability and unpredictability, (2) ambiguity and the blurring of the line between peace, conflict and war, as well as (3) strategic ambiguity and collective defence.

The impossibility of quick and lasting peace in Ukraine is also informed by the reality of the 'battleground' itself and those 'invisible hands' that drive this hybrid conflict – Russia and the US. Gradually becoming more clearly outlined, this conflict reflects a stunningly permanent (although, issue- and country-specific as well as geographically varying) state of art in Russian/ American relationship after the end of the cold war, increasingly seen as a 'cold peace'. It was Sakwa's (2013, 203) pioneering piece that has defined the post-1989/91 era as one of a 'cold peace' or a 'mimetic cold war'. Prophetic as political science predictions may only be, Sakwa's (2013) perspective on 'cold peace' and its grave implication for stability of the international system has proved to be true with the *internationally sanctioned* (or internationally resistance-impotent) annexation of Crimea, and especially after Russia's increased and brutalized involvement in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine since late summer 2014. The danger of cold peace could also be observed, in a smaller but no less relevant scope, in casualties that have occurred between Egypt and Israel (Third Arab-Israeli War), India and Pakistan, Israel and Palestine. Be it a peace treaty (concluded in the latter cases) or gentlemen's agreement (allegedly concluded by the USSR/Russia and the US⁵) meant to end the war, the failure to enforce the deal by either party, or even a little suspicion of this cast by a defeated party, nearly inevitably cause the 'victor's peace' to trigger counterpart's domestic distrust and disgust (Tyushka 2015, 12-24).

Given Russia's assertive politics of *neo-revisionism* (Sakwa 2013, 211-218), conceived with the rise of Putin as a country leader and further consolidated since his second presidency term entered in 2012 (that is perceived to be challenged by creeping democratization along the Russian borders), it would be reasonable to buy Sakwa's (2013) 'cold peace' argument and see, through this perspective, Russian and US/NATO (and more distantly – the EU's) behaviour since the tectonic shifts of 1989/91 years. The following graphic maps the main turning points in Russo-Western politics along the cold war/cold peace line, including hybrid war/hybrid peace sections (cf. *Figure 1*):

⁵ As it has been since recently vocally maintained by the Kremlin; cf. Sarotte (2014) on the alleged Western 'promise' and its 'breach'.

Figure 1. Russia and the US along the (Cold) War / (Cold) Peace Line



Source: Tyushka (2015, 22).

Trapped by hybridity since early 2000s as shown above, the Russian-Western 'cold peace' started fading away and the relationship mode steadily approaches, through the hybrid conflict launched in the second decade of the new millennium, the old-new modus of a 'cold war'. Unsurprisingly, the literature abounds with cold war redux theses framed as 'new cold war', 'colder war', 'cold war II' or 'cold war 2.0', etc. (cf. eg.: Applebaum 2015; Lucas 2014; Trenin 2014).

Against this broader picture, it becomes apparent that the matter of peace in Russian-Ukrainian hybrid warfare is, to a substantial extent, embedded in, and thus conditioned by, a larger context of a failed peace, i.e. 'cold peace', between Russia and the US. The difficulty of peacebuilding in Ukraine is also determined by the very fact that Russia never admitted its (military and paramilitary) involvement in Ukraine nor declared a war against Ukraine. Although 'present' with special operation forces (SOF) and channelling its will and tactics through terrorist and criminal structures deployed in Ukraine, the fact that Russia did not declare war neither legitimates intervention of its regular forces and keeping soldiers on ground in Ukraine, nor will it allow Russia to claim a long-cherished victory in a genuine sense. For a neo-revisionist state seeking recognition and respect as well as strongly determined to establish 'historical justice', this may be a great problem.

Conclusions

Given the striking complexity in origin, definition, sources, composition, conduct and implications of the Russian hybrid warfare in Ukraine, peace, in its orthodox understanding, cannot be said to unfold in the nearest future. A sort of a 'hybrid peace' is what seems achievable, and is believed also to be wishful (or, maybe, even already being pursued) by directly and indirectly involved parties to this conflict on the verge of hybridity.

Richmond (2015, 50), one of the most prominent peace scholars, defines 'hybrid peace' as an immanent but dynamic structural confrontation driven by 'a juxtaposition between international norms and interests and local forms of agency and identity'. This sounds pretty much Mearsheimerian (Mearsheimer and Van Evera 1995) – *peace is war*, a thesis also advanced by Sakwa's (2013) 'cold peace' notion.

The new Russian military doctrine (*Voennaya Doktrina 2014*), upgraded on 26 December 2014, is explicitly vocal on this point – not only defines, in the paragraph (b), 'colour revolutions' as one of the main threats for the Russian Federation, but also openly and officially names the NATO as its main military threat (paragraph (a)). In June 2015, Nikolai Patrushev, the Secretary of the Russian Security Council, alarmed Russian elites to respond to the efforts to radically weaken Russia through 'Western-induced destabilization in Ukraine' (Patrushev 2015). Kremlin's obsessions with 'colour revolutions' seen as a double threat did not stop there. In July 2015, Russian officials proposed to introduce mandatory university course teaching students to fight 'colour revolutions'. Later on, the same year in September, Russia launched joint military exercises with Belarus and Serbia meant to train the countries' armed forces to counteract current and potential 'colour revolutions'. Hence, it has to be emphasized that the Russian stakes in its warfare in Ukraine are much higher and more encompassing than seen at the first glance. Moreover, these are essentially contradictory and incompatible with interests of Ukraine as a target of Russian warfare and the interests and values of the international community as watchdogs of the threatened international order. The best-case scenario for Ukraine as well as its neighbours (i.e. successful democratic transformation and Europeanization) is likely to be a worst-case scenario for the Russian authoritarian and rogue neo-revisionist state. Anything below Russia's optimal scenario for the moment being (destabilizing Ukraine for a long-term period and preventing its integration to the EU and NATO) may breed sub-optimal or even worst-case results for Ukraine and the regional system of security and collective defence. This assumption has been well evidenced by 'Minsk I' and 'Minsk II' 'unhappy' or 'mirage' ceasefires declared in September 2014 and February 2015, respectively. The first declared truce has been effectively used by Russia as a springboard for new offensives and land grabs (tactical push-throughs pursued by the local and 'tourist' Russia-supported terrorists, mistakenly referred to in the literature as 'anti-governmental rebels'). The second truce has been breached within the very first twenty-four hours after it was declared. Casualties continue to mount until the time of this writing, and may even transform in a more violent escalation given Kremlin's emboldening coarse power cocktailled with intrinsic grievance, paranoia and opportunism as proven policy guidelines.

A 'Minsk III' peace deal may well be soon continuing the tradition of hybrid truce in this hardly merely Russian-Ukrainian conflict – in fact, a Russo-Western proxy war. The question is how many truces will be needed to *end the war and resolve the conflict*. Hybridity's vicious circle breeds – not surprisingly – hybrid results. From this point of view, now a much-debated freezing of the conflict by creating a proto-type of Transdnistria regime in Ukraine's Donbas region would perhaps be a wishful but hardly achievable solution. This conflict may not and will not freeze unless its trigger fails and the hybridity's

embrace eventually brakes – thus paving the way to a genuine peace.

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FOUNDATIONS OF SOFT SECURITY IN THE FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS: FRONTIER OF NATO ENLARGEMENT OR EURASIAN ALTERNATIVE?

JASON STRAKES

List of Contents

Introduction
Analysis and interpretation
The Baltic states
East Europe/Slavic republics
South Caucasus
Central Asia
Conclusion
References

Introduction

During the past decade, the governments of all fourteen republics of the former Soviet Union have promulgated updated versions of their official national security concepts, while the South Caucasus states, long embroiled in unresolved civil and interstate conflicts introduced them for the first time. The ongoing process of revision or redefinition of national defense priorities undoubtedly reflects changes in the international climate and the evolution of global security conventions as well as domestic political debates. A particularly noteworthy feature of these documents is the increasingly common identification of non-traditional or “soft” threats (both internal and external) alongside conventional military contingencies across post-Soviet countries. On one hand, this development may simply signify the growing recognition of the potential dangers posed by hostile non-state actors and forces since the 1990s, which has become an established norm in the international community in the post-9/11 era.

Yet in the contemporary context, such innovations in defense policy are frequently associated with the expanding presence of NATO as it ostensibly advances from its classical role as a U.S.-dominated counterbalance to once-and-future Russian imposition on the Continent to a bona fide transnational security community – in effect, a direct auxiliary of the EU – that promotes and protects the values of the Western liberal democracies (Bjola 1999; Williams and Neumann 2000; Lucarelli 2002; Adler 2008). The logic of this premise links the implementation of NATO partnerships and structural reform programs

in non-member and aspirant states to doctrinal objectives of comprehensive defense against the social, political, economic, environmental and technological hazards that affect societies as a whole (NATO 2010a, 2010b). Thus, within this view, military preparedness is equally directed toward the domestic concerns of instituting good governance and civil protection in transitional states. Some observers have posited an essential disagreement between the strategic perspective adopted by Russia since the first Putin presidency, which prioritizes the protection of state interests and the legitimate use of force over new threats, and the globally-oriented strategy professed by Brussels, which does not recognize a division between “hard” and “soft” security issues (Makarychev 2010, 1-5).

Yet ironically, rather than transcending Cold War legacies, such assertions about fundamental differences between Russian and Euro-Atlantic security imperatives may contribute to the burgeoning discourse of renewed opposition between incompatible worldviews or “civilizations” reminiscent of the bipolar era (Berg and Mölder 2012). This dilemma has especially been underscored by the crisis that ensued in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea following the Ukrainian revolution of February-March 2014, which provoked the suspension of NATO-Russia relations, deployment of air forces, mobilization of troops, and plans for defense upgrades and renewed deterrence postures among several member states.

The occupation of the territory by Spetsnaz and other elite units and its subsequent annexation via irregular referendum have been portrayed by various observers as the geopolitical fault line of a new Russian irredentism in Eastern Europe. However, these actions might be more accurately understood as an essentially limited exercise utilizing elements of soft power, which exploited existing strategic levers such as popular support by the predominantly ethnic Russian population and networks of Diaspora and civil society organizations, the projection of influence by the previously established military and intelligence presence in the region (the Black Sea Fleet/*Chernomorskiy Flot*), and lingering resentment over the reduction of Crimean political autonomy by Kiev since the late 1990s. In addition, they were mounted in response to perceived non-military threats: in particular, an interim Ukrainian administration composed of center-right nationalists (All-Ukrainian Union “Fatherland”/*Batkiivshchyna*) and former neo-fascists (All-Ukrainian Union “Freedom”/*Svoboda* and Right Sector/*Pravyi Sektor*) committed to a policy of ideological hostility toward “Russian imperialism” (including language and culture), which views European integration as synonymous with zero-sum confrontation with Moscow.

Further, such strong characterizations of a progressive or “postmodern” European security doctrine beg the question of whether the EU and NATO share a wholly unified agenda concerning soft security, as well as to what extent non-traditional threats are manifest in current NATO logistics, training and force structures, especially in regard to the issue of further enlargement. It was only in August 2010 that the Emerging Security Challenges Division (ESCD) was established within the International/Military Staff, which comprises five previously existing divisions and units: counterterrorism, cyber attacks, energy security, strategic analysis, and the Weapons of Mass Destruction Non-Proliferation Centre (WMDC) originally founded in 2000 (ISIS Europe 2010). In contrast, given its

lack of experience or mandate as an independent security provider, the approach to these issues taken by the EU has reflected a lacuna in equivalent internal restructuring needed to address different types of emerging threats, limited pooling of resources and difficulties in achieving cohesive policy implementation among decision-making bodies and governments of member states (Hatzigeorgopoulos 2012, 3-4). Secondly, the introduction of ESCD has invoked concerns for whether a coordinated response to future non-military attacks affecting an individual state can be subsumed under the core NATO doctrine of collective defense, or if it outstrips its function as a conventional military alliance given the structural transformations necessary to implement non-military measures, including building partnerships with a wider range of actors such as international institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private firms (Shulte 2012).

Perhaps the most relevant NATO administrative structure concerned with non-conventional threats specific to the former Soviet area (including joint cooperation councils with Russia and Ukraine) is the Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme. SPS was consolidated into a single Committee staffed by civilian scientists and experts from partner countries in 2006, but was placed under the jurisdiction of ESCD after initially being discontinued in November 2010 (NATO 2011).

In addition, it is necessary to consider the diverse range of motives and preferences for cooperation with or membership in NATO, which, despite the assumptions of the “transitology” paradigm of the early 1990s or popular narratives of former communist states perennially gravitating toward Western institutions to escape from Russian influence, have varied widely both within and across the post-Soviet space (Ackerman and German 2003, 3-14; Japaridze and Roubanis 2013, 96-97).

For instance, all fourteen republics joined the former North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in 1992, followed by the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme initiated in 1994 (save for Tajikistan, where civil war and its aftermath delayed participation until 2002). This has included even Turkmenistan, which aside from the recent diplomatic opening pursued by current president Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov (as exemplified by his attendance of the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest) has adhered to the isolationist policy of “positive neutrality” (*baky bitaraplyk*), and Alyaksandr Lukashenka’s Belarus, despite its pursuit of formal integration with the Russian Federation via the Union State since 1997 and commitment to the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and its Rapid Reaction Force in 2002 and 2009. Similarly, Azerbaijan, while often characterized by observers as a “strategic ally” of the U.S., has exhibited a seemingly contradictory pattern of periodically voicing aspirations for deepening relations with NATO in its public diplomacy, while adhering to the Aliyevs’ “balanced foreign policy” doctrine of abstaining from formal alliances in favor of multiple flexible partnerships with regional and global powers.

Thirdly, there is a need to identify the actual intent behind the designation of new threat types by national leaders and defense establishments. The practice of the regular formulation and dissemination of a guiding concept of national security was first introduced with the U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) released in 1987 (Stolberg 2012, 14). This represents the institutionalization of a defense policy and planning process that has

been lacking in still-democratizing states such as Armenia, which holds both a 3rd NATO Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) and CSTO membership since independence (Giragosian 2005). To be sure, while in some states the drafting of such documents is a “whole of government” process that includes input from legislatures, agencies or interest groups, in others they are formulated solely at elite levels and are not publicly disseminated (Stolberg 2012, 4, 17). Thus, there is an attendant possibility that like other forms of domestic legislation pertaining to issues such as electoral processes or human rights, the formal acknowledgment of soft threats by certain post-Soviet governments reflects a strategy of seeking to acquire greater international legitimacy as well as attracting moral and material support from Western powers. Additionally, responses to certain forms of non-state threats such as religious extremism, terrorist groups or interdiction of WMDs in reality tend to manifest themselves in essentially conventional counterforce operations, which places little demand on national militaries to introduce new tactical approaches – or for that matter, security sector reform – despite their titular “soft” status.

Most importantly, in certain domestic political settings, particularly the enduring autocracies of Central Asia, the need to mount responses to soft threats may be interpreted in more traditional Soviet-era terms, in which governments prioritize the preservation of stability and the protection of incumbent elites from political opposition and popular unrest. In sum, these caveats suggest that rather than representing the inevitable inclusion of the erstwhile Russian/Soviet imperium into a liberal, post-national order, official definitions of new threats might be better recognized as an expression of sovereignty by post-colonial nations as they reach maturity as independent security actors, or, for those states which maintain an accommodative rather than antagonistic relationship with the Russian Federation and its subsidiary regional organizations (CIS, CSTO, EurAsEC and SCO), a distinctive Eurasian approach to security that does not recognize the hegemonic assumption of a global leadership role by Western institutions (Allison 2008, 185-202). These conditions thus indicate the need to address several empirical questions: first, what correlation if any exists between the bilateral relations of NATO and post-Soviet states and the identification of soft threats in their national security doctrines? To what extent do NATO policies account for the introduction of new threats in updated versions of strategic documents? How do these patterns compare and contrast across different sub-regions of the former Soviet Union, as well as between individual countries within them? The following section applies a framework for assessing the crafting of strategy documents developed by Stolberg (2012) to a comparative content analysis of the recognition of soft threats in the national security concepts of states in four geographic subregions: the Baltic States, East Europe/the Slavic Republics, the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Analysis and interpretation

The four regional summaries presented below examine the relationship between three variables: the chronology of each state’s bilateral relations with NATO since independence, including the year of accession to partnership instruments and programs and

the specific policies implemented; the complementary timeline of the introduction of soft threat types in successive versions of the national security concept; and the estimated level of influence of NATO policies and structures upon the evolution of soft security doctrines in each republic.

The Baltic states

As the first post-Soviet states to apply for and achieve NATO membership, the Baltic republics would presumably serve as a “test group” of most exemplary cases for determining the impact of bilateral relations with Brussels on regional soft security doctrines. The lack of inheritance of Soviet-era military forces would also seem to place them in a position for the direct transmission of defense policy innovations in a newly united Europe. Yet, save for recognition of threats to the ecological sphere in the Latvian case, the first strategy documents produced by the governments of Estonia (1996), Lithuania (1996) and Latvia (1997) respectively were distinguished by their almost exclusive emphasis on traditional threats to territorial sovereignty and national independence from Russia (Miniotaite 2003, 269-272). The concern for a perpetuation of hostile defense postures and potential commitment to a future confrontation with Moscow may have initially discouraged NATO representatives from offering membership during the first decade of independence, thus delaying their accession until the second post-Cold War enlargement in 2004 (Möller 2007, 158-160).

The first example of new threat conceptions among Baltic governments was the inclusion of Samuel P. Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” thesis in the Estonian concept in 2001. In addition to nuclear catastrophes, refugee flows, crime, substance abuse and narcotics and arms smuggling, this downplayed Russian aggression in favor of cultural explanations for security deficits. Estonia revised this document directly upon entering NATO in 2004, adding drug addiction, alcoholism, HIV/AIDS, fires and explosions, transport, radiation and chemical accidents, energy dependence and instability or breakdown of information systems. In contrast, Latvia and Lithuania introduced terrorism to their updated versions in 2002, while the latter acknowledged political extremism, energy dependence, uneven socioeconomic development, corruption, organized and financial crime groups and uncontrolled migration.

On the other hand, the Baltics are now widely recognized for their role in introducing cyber defense as a major feature of contemporary European security doctrines, as confirmed by the distributed denial of service (DDoS) and spamming attacks orchestrated by unidentified actors in Estonia during April 2007.

These events resulted in the establishment of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (NATO CDC COE) in Tallinn in May 2008, and were the only soft threat type added to its updated document the same year. Finally, Estonia produced the most recent update in the region again in 2010, which included unfavorable population processes, environmental pollution, financial crisis and anti-Estonian subversive activity.

East Europe/Slavic republics

Among the East European or “Western littoral” states, Ukraine exhibits the most intense level of interaction with NATO since independence. Between 1997 and 1999 alone, a total of three administrative bodies to govern bilateral relations were established, including the Charter on Distinctive Partnership/NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC), NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group On Defence Reform (JWGDR) and NATO Liaison Office, even in the heyday of the “multi-vector” foreign policy endorsed by second president Leonid Kuchma. The drafting of documents in direct consultation with NATO representatives – the first under the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan in 2003, and the second under the Ukraine-NATO Partnership Network for Civil Society Expertise Development in 2007 – thus provides the clearest evidence of a causal connection. The civil emergency assistance provided during the massive flood disaster in Kharkiv during June 1995 constituted the first major cooperation between Brussels and Kiev, while the JWGDR has played a prominent role in advisement on cyber security since 1998. The 2007 update included only four new threat types: internal political divisions, government ineffectiveness, energy dependence, and trans-border crime. The latest in 2012 added spread of social ills, including drug addiction, alcoholism, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS epidemics (Fluri et al 2013).

Conversely, Moldova has exhibited the most subdued soft security agenda in the region. The first document drafted under the PFP in 1995 identified primarily internal factors including attempts against constitutional order, provocation of social unrest, reduction of economic, technological and defensive capabilities, and domestic terrorism. An update recognizing international terrorism, inter-ethnic tensions, organized crime, natural disasters and social, economic and information-technology threats was produced after receiving an IPAP only in 2008, possibly due to recurrent debates surrounding the maintenance of neutrality and the management of the Transnistria conflict up until the electoral unrest and resignation of President Vladimir Voronin in 2009.

In contrast, the Lukashenka government in Belarus has experienced an intermittently antagonistic relationship with Brussels due to its domestic policies and adherence to the doctrine of mutually opposed alliances maintained by CSTO. Thus it began the PFP Planning and Review Process (PARP) only in 2004. After a confidential document was generated by the president and defense ministry in 1995, public updates were released following the 9/11 attacks in 2001, adding crime, contraband and other illegal activity of organized groups, spread of armaments, ammunition, drugs, psychotropic and other substances, potential emergence and provocative activity of extremist organizations, human trafficking and sexual abuse. This has been followed by initiatives such as the Global Partnership against Slavery and Trafficking in Human Beings in 2005, which culminated in the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking adopted at the 64th session of the General Assembly in August 2010. An updated concept released in 2010 named challenges to sustainable development, negative demographic trends, and shortage of scientific and technological resources. At the same time tensions with Brussels have not prevented implementation of various SPS programs related to non-traditional security issues, including grants for a total of 40 projects to Belorussian scientists related to flood monitoring, pro-

tection against residual radiation from the Chernobyl disaster and detection of explosive ordinance. Moldova has received funds for 18 projects and participated in 65 activities including seismic risk reduction and river monitoring.

South Caucasus

The three independent republics of the South Caucasus have the distinction of being the last of the former Soviet states to produce formal documents detailing a national security concept: Georgia in 2005, and Armenia and Azerbaijan in January and May 2007. This delay is generally attributed to the crisis of national security fostered by persistent patterns of state weakness, internal instability and the unresolved status of the Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts in all three states (Huseyinov 2003). Only Georgia has produced an updated version largely as a result of the 2008 South Ossetia War, which was publicly released in January 2012. The addition of new threat types such as low economic growth, challenges to civic integration and cyber attacks to the updated concept, which was approved by Parliament on 23 December 2011, might be attributed to the SPS conference hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the previous summer. Georgia also has the distinction of being the only former Soviet state to directly identify destruction of monuments as a national security threat.

While Azerbaijan's soft threat assessments are somewhat derivative of trends in the international community, they may have served as a trend-setter in its emphasis on sabotage of energy infrastructure. The Armenian document is also distinctive in its reference to isolation from regional infrastructure projects, decline of national and cultural identity in Diaspora, polarization and urbanization. SPS has also provided financing to implement a total of 38 projects related to environmental security, crisis management and counter-terrorism in Armenia, 30 on conversion of *mélange* (a highly toxic Soviet-era rocket propellant) and unexploded ordinance in Azerbaijan, and several on demilitarization of missiles in Georgia. The extended time frame of preceding NATO interactions with the region may therefore have contributed to a reverse causal effect. Thus, the inclusion of more distinctive types of soft threats in national doctrines reflects their use as a "strategic communications" tool, or a form of international advertising designed to solidify further Allied assistance and support (Stolberg 2012, 3, 13).

Central Asia

Since the dawn of the post-9/11 era, the five Central Asian republics have acquired a status as the frontier of Euro-Atlantic security in what was once viewed as being exclusively within the Russian sphere of influence. Local governments have granted essential logistical support via basing, transit and overflight rights to facilitate NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operations in Afghanistan, followed by their participation in the Northern Distribution Network since 2009. And yet, it is noteworthy that countries such as Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan were among the first post-Soviet states to refer to non-traditional security issues as threats in formal legislation, although the earliest laws were circulated within the presidential administration and defense establishments

and were not publicly released. While the first Concept ratified by the Uzbek Supreme Assembly (*Oly Majlis*) in 1997 emphasized external threats emanating from the Afghan and Tajik civil wars, the Indo-Pakistani rivalry and competition for influence by regional powers, it was among the first to identify the export of Islamic extremism and illicit weapons from outside the country's borders, even before the Tashkent bombings of 1999 (Pikulina 1999, 4).

This may have been influenced by the Karimov government's receipt of an Individual Partnership Programme (IPP) in 1996. In contrast, the first concept produced by Kazakhstan in 1998 that identified political extremism, environmental degradation, natural and man-made disasters, damage to economic security, and deterioration of the demographic situation, quality of education and food security, preceded its entry into the PARP in 2002. The 2012 update added loss of cultural and spiritual heritage, ethnic and religious tensions, organized crime, corruption, uncontrolled migration, dissemination of unreliable information, and weakening of protection of information space, without further substantive advances in NATO accession. As such, various observers have noted the emphasis of NATO security assistance in the region has been on increasing the technical capacity of existing military and police forces to conduct counter-terrorism or interdiction operations, rather than restructuring them in accordance with "soft" security norms (Boonstra et al. 2013, 14-17). However, SPS has also provided financing to implement a total of 20 projects related to environmental security, counter-terrorism and cyber defense in Kazakhstan, 8 in Turkmenistan, and a *mélange* conversion project in Uzbekistan, while civilian scientists have led 49 related activities in Kyrgyzstan.

Conclusion

The overview of the mutual evolution of soft threat assessments by NATO and its Eurasian partners presented above reveals a significant number of contrasts which call into question common generalizations about changing strategic doctrines in the post-Soviet space. First, while the Baltic States would seem to represent a natural laboratory for the development of post-Cold War European security policies, the maintenance of fundamental perceptions of possible future Russian challenges to sovereignty - most recently exemplified by their governments' insistence on a renewed commitment to collective defense under Article 5 of the NATO Charter during the 2014 Crimea crisis - delayed the recognition of soft threats until after the turn of the century, when they assumed a leading role in the institutionalization of cyber defense.

While the exemplary level of interaction between NATO and Ukraine has likely influenced its extensive adoption of soft security perspectives since 2003, Belarus and Moldova have exhibited more limited and independent definitions of soft threats given their contrasting foreign and domestic policies. In the South Caucasus, the delay in formalization of security doctrines, combined with Azerbaijan's adherence to independent foreign and defense policies, Armenia's membership in CSTO, and Georgia's unfulfilled NATO membership aspirations have fostered a strategic approach in which identification

of soft threats are designed to attract further Western support, while also reflecting national identity-related concerns. Lastly, it is the Central Asian republics that have led in the introduction of non-traditional threats into official doctrines, despite being farthest afield from the influence and policy agendas of Continental security institutions. These findings suggest the need for a more diversified understanding of post-Soviet soft security perceptions that takes into account significant variations in both self-images and external orientations across countries.

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EXPLORING NETWORK-CENTRIC WARFARE AND ITS ROLE FOR THE US IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

FILIP SVÍTEK

List of Contents

Contextualizing the Global War on Terror
Utilizing Network-Centric Warfare theory inductively
Elaborating the US position
Thinking about strategic culture and functional institutionalism
Risking overreliance on the human aspect of Network-Centric Warfare
Questioning the coherence of the Revolution in Military Affairs
Considering Fourth-Generation Warfare as an alternative perspective
Concluding Network-Centric Warfare

Contextualizing the Global War on Terror

The Global War on Terror (GWOT) has directly altered US national security and foreign policy. The slow drawl of a state-based, defined threat has been superseded by near-instantaneous, borderless threats of terror. The value of discovering enemy intentions, as during the Cold War, has been replaced by the need to quickly discover enemy capabilities. The need for expediency has pressed stakeholders for tangible results. Since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, the US has restructured its informational and technological priorities, and deployed its military forces equipped with updated models of engagement. And these changes have important consequences – American domestic liberties have been probed; enemy combatants have been subjected to extreme and unusual measures; hundreds of thousands of indirect and direct casualties have occurred in two major wars – all under a ticking time-bomb scenario. Whether or not US actions are the “least worst” approach is arguable. But the terms of war have shifted.

Preventing unconventional, modern threats such as Da'ish requires a modern approach. The US strategy, based on a historical strategic culture and securitized analysis, counters these threats by committing a “system of systems” integrated with networked fire-power (Manthorpe 1996). The US Department of Defense (DoD) is especially involved in this systematic process that is now identified as Network-Centric Warfare (NCW). NCW, however, is resource-consuming and offers a solution it may not be able to deliver. And the emphasis of constantly inputting relevant information risks securitizing the product of intelligence – if successful, allowing for extraordinary life-or-death, us-or-them solutions and indeterminate continuation of conflicts or wars (Buzan et al. 1997). This paper explores if NCW is a theory sufficient enough to utilize as means to an end.

Utilizing Network-Centric Warfare theory inductively

Previously, countering state-based actors such as the USSR prompted extensive negotiations with heads of government, deeply rationalized conceptions of deterrence, and an understanding of official and accepted dynamics of sovereignty. But now, adapting to known terrorist intentions, the US uses NCW to integrate technology and counter terrorist capabilities. NCW theory succinctly recognizes the function of modern information and communication exchange utilized in battle to identify and neutralize foes. Indubitably advantageous in conventional warfare, NCW promotes the interconnection of technologies and ultimate benefits of linking intelligence with military operations. NCW provides an endless stream of live data to compensate for the “moving river” of Heraclitus – change is eternal but NCW helps control it (Krygiel 1999). In a similar vein, NCW can be considered as a type of information warfare (Feaver 1998). The main beneficiary of these networks and information is the individual soldier, who is empowered with facts regarding the enemy, allies, and the entire operational environment. The military hierarchy is flattened and each individual combatant can make single, consecutively instantaneous decisions with the help of a finely integrated and sharpened Occam’s razor.

Adapting to this Information Age “centers around the ability of an organization or an individual to utilize information” (Alberts et al. 2001: xiv). Inductively, networks enhance information-sharing, information-sharing increases situational awareness, situational awareness allows for self-synchronization, and this all improves battle efficiency (Krygiel 1999). In other words, data and its sharing is presumed to enable success on the battlefield. The utility of this information requires technology, both to measure and to process before it can be cognitively filed. Simultaneously, as technologies get cheaper to produce and information spreads, more actors (both within the US military and others outside) are privy to utilizing it. Peer-to-peer activity is becoming easier and more widespread. And with enhanced information-sharing, a new, increasingly complex situational awareness and self-synchronization can theoretically increase mission effectiveness (Alberts 2002). Combat troops are expected to use this decentralization for additional freedom of action. Admiral William Owens, as former Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, cited intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; computer processing of command, control, communications, and intelligence; and the weapons systems involved as forming a “C4I-ISR” foundation of NCW – a lethal combination of sensors, computers, and weapons (Krygiel 1999, 10).

Elaborating the US position

The US DoD wholly embraces this idea of transformation, as it “shapes the changing nature of military competition and cooperation through new combinations of conceptions, capabilities, people and organizations that exploit our nation’s advantages and ensures protection against our asymmetric vulnerabilities, in order to sustain our strategic position which contributes to world peace and stability” (US DoD cited in Neag 2010,

313). This transformation remodels the military to new security challenges, and NCW is foundational to a successful transition. Greater emphasis is placed on front lines and lower-ranked units; military structure is shifting from vertical to horizontal organization. Beyond simple reform, the process is complex and evolutionary (Neag 2010). And the role of technology is considerably strong in this change, with the US military seeking to apply (and heavily invest in) it as a scientifically proven, indisputable theory, speculating the existence of NCW as a fundamentally positivist trump card. But relying steadfast on theories such as NCW can lead to issues such as groupthink or cognitive reactance, and “must be forever open to scrutiny in order that we may learn by discovering their weaknesses... The NCW thesis must be required to pass severe tests of rationality because our defense bureaucracies are spending billions of dollars towards it implementation” (Reid et al. 2005, 337-338).

Regardless, US military capabilities are unrivalled in this field, both in range and depth. No other state has the resources to challenge the US dominance of regional, not to mention global, implementation of NCW. Against a major state challenger, such as China, the US would dominate Beijing in the South China Sea with relative ease (RAND 2015). The budget of the US DoD’s Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) weapons research program alone – which contributes much of the technology used in NCW – at almost \$3 billion per annum is larger than a mid-sized country’s entire military budget. These advantages rely on technological superiority. Range and firepower are enhanced by integration and cross-communication not just through weapons’ personnel but by the application of highly technological weapons using informational communication firsthand. In the First Gulf War, for example, American technology in advanced targeting and GPS systems obliterated – with minimal casualties – a significant Iraqi defense (Press 2001). In the near future, the US is poised to preserve these advantages and in 2010 declared “full spectrum dominance” as imperative (US Joint Chiefs of Staff 2010). The US goal is to remove as much of the Clausewitzian “friction” in conflict as possible, clearing untidiness and dispelling chaos (Carvin 2010, 86). Even with this inductive battle efficiency, however, NCW appears to lack sufficient power to act as a strategic weapon.

Thinking about strategic culture and functional institutionalism

US strategic culture, including historical values, norms, organization, style, and input from both the public and political leaders – all relatively subjective and reliant on social context – impact US war-making (Katzenstein 1996). These cultures, such as Marine Corps “can-do” independence, or American “exceptionalism,” consequently influence the expectations of both the US public and political realms (George 2011). Ultimately, these traits come from general US successes in war, a missionary moral purity, and all-or-nothing mentality (Turner 2004). Thus, as the 11 September 2001 attack was an open assault on American values of neoliberal civilian control and geographic isolationism, it threatened core values – especially democratic institutionalism and US self-sufficiency – in turn galvanizing the GWOT (Turner 2004). The severity and trauma of 9/11 became a modern

Pearl Harbor and only enhanced public support for the US government's internalized strategic values and administration – President Bush, encouraged by a record approval rating, and both military and civilian intelligence services were effectively given a *carte blanche* to deal with terror as they saw fit.

Unfortunately, the gung-ho “can do” invincibility of US strategic culture, embodied in the Bush administration's invasion of Iraq, opened a second front for already strained assets, particularly weakened since the reduction of military resources after the end of the Cold War and later embroilment in Afghanistan. Evidence for the invasion, majority-supported by the US public – pending UN approval – according to USA Today poll reporting (Benedetto 2003), and loosely encouraged by inaccurate reports from the domestic coalition in the intelligence community (Silberman et al. 2005, 43), relied on overriding global popular opinion through the domestic support of functional factions and institutions. The securitization of WMD intelligence reports rallied the nation. However, in the securitization process, the 2002 National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq's WMDs was modified to exclude qualifiers and hesitations directly from the intelligence community, including questions of post-invasion occupation (Gombert 2014). The US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence later reviewed, and criticized the aberration – but not before a securitized intelligence product had been used to justify an expansion of the GWOT and the application of NCW.

Risking overreliance on the human aspect of Network-Centric Warfare

NCW puts a premium on information and technology – identifying and quickly neutralizing targets in closed systems. Information, however, is gathered through intelligence, which itself is often a judgment-reliant field and depends heavily on human input. By itself, NCW is ill-equipped to distinguish between combatants and civilians, and applying it liberally with disregard for the innocent can create blowback. Simultaneously, human factors in intelligence agencies can be distracted by issues of prestige and funding, creating domestic structures and coalition-building processes by amalgamating special interests into a functional base (Risse-Kappen 1991; Mitrany 1948). Competing civilian and military informational agencies are at risk of donning bureaucratic blinders and of compartmentalizing intelligence – intentionally or not – making the intelligence process less scientific and more political (Turner 2004).

Informational input from its many sources has the potential to be corrupted and interfere with NCW. Moreover: “the openness that is an inherent part of a representative democratic government clashes with the secrecy required by intelligence operations” (Lowenthal 2011, 18). Integrating these information sources with firepower can not only be politicized, but also securitized and applied again, in a vicious cycle.

After the US Intelligence Reform Act in 2004, the tradition of keeping US information-gathering fragmented will now see more centralization and the potential for some degree of subjective politicization (Lowenthal 2011; Turner 2004), on top of infighting since now “the concept of community is a work in progress” (George 2011, 336). Addi-

tional pressure to reduce risk for American personnel, as well as Congressional oversight, might also be putting the organization of information in a position to cater more directly to the whims of policy makers with less consideration for collateral damage. A perceptible “risk-aversion” in political dealings and fear of indictment compound this pressure (Thomas 2002). Budget cuts and a lack of new agent training, especially since the end of the Cold War, also add to a dearth of adequate intelligence capability (Kean et al. 2004, 88-93). Thusly, while NCW has the power to better aim the machine, it also relies on less external input (or safeguards) to fire it. And while at the moment the US intelligence process is competent enough⁶ and, more importantly, independent, another major reshuffle could shift the entire system towards deeper politicization and further dangers of securitization that misalign the whole war machine. Another large 9/11-type attack could galvanize this transition.

Questioning the coherence of the Revolution in Military Affairs

To fully confirm the assumption of an active Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) at all, three questions are relevant. Firstly, are the applied NCW *forces* different than forces used in the past (Cohen 2004)? Traditional war-fighting has involved masses of men aided by technology but limited by geography. A bottom-up transition in NCW, however, has implemented the use of technology on an individual scale and largely sidelined geographic features (Cohen 2004). Soldiers can test equipment in the field, usually from a safe distance, and provide case-by-case reporting on efficacy to superiors – an organizational change from the traditional vertical structures found in the military, spreading the power of influence on a horizontal level. Many of these changes involve processing information; much of the fighting in the Middle East has relied on digital intelligence, programmed air strikes, and networked special operations to combat scattered, furtive organizations. On a technological level, this has meant electronic communication channels, tracking technology, air precision guidance systems, and computer-processing power. Absent from the GWOT has been the useful application of mobile armored units (e.g. tanks), artillery, and nuclear deterrence – three critical components of conventional war. The mass of large armies has been replaced by select units, reinforced by the “system of systems” that act as the eyes and ears, and increasingly triggers of an interconnected, lethal war machine (Manthorpe 1996). The result thus seems indisputable, that yes, the forces used in NCW are different than forces used in engagements in the past.

Secondly, are NCW *battles* different than battles in the past (Cohen 2004)? To answer this question we can look at the battles in two recent wars waged with US involvement: Afghanistan and Iraq. Arguably, neither war has ended, but both were confronted

⁶ Intelligence publicized ex post facto indicated – correctly – both a threat from bin Laden prior to 9/11 and uncertainty regarding WMDs in Iraq before the 2003 invasion. See “Bin Laden Determined to Strike in US” President’s Daily Brief dated 6 August 2001 and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the US Senate’s “Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community’s Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq,” as well as a September 2002 CIA paper titled “The Perfect Storm: Planning for Negative Consequences of Invading Iraq.”

with relatively atypical battle approaches due to the atypical nature of the threats. Territory in this context is insubstantial; holding a position pushes the threat elsewhere but is not able to eradicate it – due to retreat by societal camouflage. What's more, strategic advantages have not been gained from controlling neither capitals nor national economies. By flattening hierarchies, NCW has put greater onus on lower ranking individuals. The average soldier, constrained by the deployment of fewer forces yet empowered by NCW, is expected to be able to fight a three-block war every day – actions that include facing military threats, maintaining peacekeeping missions, and assisting in humanitarian aid (Krulak 1999). The modern soldier is expected to utilize NCW to win the battle and rebuild the country. Additionally, war has been waged in a relatively limited capacity due to the asymmetric threat. Nuclear weapons, for example, are absent from the dialogue. Domestic audiences resist the additional deployment of even a limited contingent of ground troops, seen most vividly in the Western reluctance of contributing forces to the current Syrian campaign. Thus the battles do indeed appear different, especially when using NCW to counter terrorist tactics and make up for reduced national commitment.

Thirdly, are the *outcomes* of battles different due to NCW (Cohen 2004)? Temporally, this question is difficult to answer because of the enduring nature of the ongoing conflicts. Simultaneously, RMAs suggest complete and undisputed victory for the “RMA handler,” or the one with the RMA advantage, especially when the opposing force has no equivalent. For example, the Empire of Japan surrendered to US atomic power; the RMA toppled Japanese holdout and kamikaze tactics. The US lacks an equivalent, unambiguous victory in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Both the Taliban and other extremist groups such as Da'ish have been able to pose a resurgent insurgency. NCW, meanwhile, is increasingly ubiquitous. GPS technology and instant digital communication is easily accessible, and cheap. Insurgents are thus able to utilize the concept for their own advantage, especially in dense urban areas. The result, at best, has been stalemate; at worst, radical Islamist groups have splintered, coalesced, and continued to operate internationally, aided by lone wolf conspirators. Unfortunately for the US, employing NCW internationally costs orders-of-magnitude more than terrorists spend to maintain the status quo. As former US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (2003) surmised: “The cost-benefit ratio is against us! Our cost is billions against the terrorists’ costs of millions.” The NCW RMA is faster, more international, and more egalitarian than previous revolutions and yet not nearly as decisive for its handlers. Although NCW changes tactical battles, it appears to be failing to help the strategic war.

Considering Fourth-Generation Warfare as an alternative perspective

Strategic warfare is dynamic. There is evidence of a modern tendency to use Fourth-Generation Warfare (4GW) as a way to separate and distance belligerents while sporadically attacking enemy cultures. NCW theory as an RMA might not be sufficient enough as a revolution to defeat dispersed adversaries such as Da'ish, who rely on recruitment and mobilization as measures of success, or other guerilla groups – some with state

sponsors – that use hybrid warfare to keep conflict small, protracted, obfuscated, and localized (Lanoszka 2016). Earlier generations of warfare emphasized more as better on both sides of a conflict, and by allocating more resources, the greater the chance to overcome a challenge (Lind 1989). More connectivity, i.e. more NCW, has not had the same effect in 4GW when the enemy is dispersed and less defined (Lind 1989). Also, NCW can help fight the guerilla and peacekeep to some extent, but not to provide humanitarian aid or support reconstruction. The gap in effectiveness is further negated by “ownership” of the RMA. Once obtained, superiority is decreasingly proportion to advantage; if an enemy is able to utilize communication and positioning technology like GPS, enhancement of the same technology is not remarkably superior compared to already-existing versions.

Culturally, 4GW also points to radical changes that affect the structure of modern conflict. Conservative military culture, emphasizing order, is hard-pressed to counter the disorder and element of random chance inherent in terrorism. Battles have moved from clear front-rear designations to blurry targeted-untargeted relationships (Lind 1989). This type of warfare risks an all-expansive and all-inclusive battle for the homeland. Because of non-discriminatory targeting and a borderless enemy, NCW helps more with vengeance than self-defense. This advantage is not the typical payoff of an RMA, which instead is usually a contribution to preserving lives of the handlers; the NCW RMA is better at persecuting the enemy as a second-strike capability – even the utility of first-strike, preemptive “targeted killings” is moot. And the sheer amount of data involved in calculating how to identify and neutralize every potential aggressor, akin to a “fire hose” of information (Nye 1994), will inevitably involve automated processing, essentially putting the lives of humans increasingly under the supervision and judgment of autonomous, lethal weapons system. Space here does not permit discussion of the moral and ethical implications of robotic systems acting as sole judge, jury, and executioner.

Concluding Network-Centric Warfare

When we look “behind the Wizard’s curtain” at the people, processes, and information systems, we catch a glimpse of the intricate machinations that comprise NCW theory as the preferred US tool for waging war (Krygiel 1999). Properly applied, relying on theories such as NCW and other RMAs can work well for the West, such as NCW has in Bosnia and against Saddam Hussein. But relying solely on NCW can be illusory for its users – especially if buying it as a snake oil ointment. Applying modern war theory and declaring “Mission Accomplished” is not akin to strategic success. And participating in a NCW “arms race” neglects to acknowledge the revolutionary aspect of the RMA. Once the technology is acquired – even in its most basic forms – the revolution is over; nuclear weapons like the 10-kiloton (e.g. US “Little Boy”) or 50,000-kiloton (e.g. USSR “Tsar Bomba”) bombs carry equal weight as theoretical deterrents. Similarly, if two actors both utilize the communication networking of NCW, the advantage is neutralized.

Thus we can conclude that countering ideology such as radical Islam with technology and warfare, as we are witnessing, is not a panacea. NCW is relatively able to elim-

inate terrorists on an individual basis but relatively unable to deny the organization (or motivations) of terrorism. To its strategic detriment, the US is sacrificing significant blood and substantial treasure irrationally in its longest war campaigns to date. These resources are being misapplied to a war that is ideological and psychological, combining political, religious, and cultural roots. Future solutions must actually adapt to this challenge. Instead, terrorists respond by employing radicalization and, like Da'ish, can multiply in numbers in record time. In particular, these non-state groups are operating on a different abstraction than their enemies. While the US focuses on short-term objectives, terrorists are fighting for major geopolitical and cultural change. Until a more proper alignment of strategy, success will continue to appear elusive.

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THE BALKANS AND THE PHENOMENA OF “FOREIGN FIGHTERS”

ALEKSANDAR VANCHOSKI AND KRISTINA DODA

List of Contents

Introduction
Phenomenon of foreign fighters
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Kosovo
Macedonia
Serbia
Conclusion

Introduction

The 1990s have characterized the Balkan countries beside fierce ethnic conflicts, bloody civil wars, and radical nationalistic and religious rhetoric of the political elites, also with the appearance of the phenomenon of foreign fighters. Ethnic and religious extremism has grown after the fall of Yugoslavia and the collapse of Albania's isolationist communist regime. As a legacy of the Balkan wars, there came into being a “convenient climate” for radical activists and militants, eager to spread their ideologies into the countries where ethnic and religious divisions were frozen for decades. In recent years, these countries have become fertile ground for radical propaganda.

The war in Syria and in some extent the conflict in Eastern Ukraine made the concept of “foreign fighters” especially common in the Balkan countries. Because of the seriousness of eventual threats that these individuals can cause to the state and society and also because of the rising tendencies of the dynamics of this phenomenon, the Balkan countries were pressured to undertake some adequate legal measures for prevention and sanctioning of these kinds of radical and violent activities.

The majority of the Balkan states have officially declared their support for the US-led military coalition in Iraq and Syria to fight ISIS. Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia have joined that coalition as well. In the following sections the current situation with the phenomenon of foreign fighters in these four countries will be elaborated. Analysis will be done through data gathering from state officials' statements, a range of reports from state institutions, expert analysis on this topic and related articles in public media.

Phenomenon of foreign fighters

The term "Foreign fighter" in the past three decades is progressively becoming a catchphrase that "followed" all major armed conflicts in the world. It refers to a phenomenon which is extensively present in the media and academic discourse, especially connected to the foreign nationals or transnational insurgencies which are taking part in the armed violence in the conflict zone situated outside their domicile country. Although the phenomenon of foreign fighters is not considered new because its origin can be traced centuries back in the human history, after the beginning of the global war on terrorism which followed after the September 11 attacks on the USA, it become in some ways the primary stigmatized term used for labelling persons who have Islamist and Jihadist motives for becoming a fighter in a particular armed conflict abroad. Taking into consideration the complexity and dynamics of this phenomenon, there are few definitions that have common characteristics. For instance "foreign fighters" can be defined as "non-indigenous, non-territorialised combatants who motivated by religion, kinship, and/or ideology rather than pecuniary reward, enter a conflict to participate in hostilities" (Moore 2008, 412). According to Thomas Hegghammer (2011, 57) a foreign fighter can be defined "... as agent who: has joined, and operates within the confines of an insurgency and

- lacks citizenship of the conflict state or kinship links to its warring factions;
- lacks affiliation to an official military organization; and
- is unpaid."

The following characteristics of the foreign fighter concept can be emphasized: a) they are not overtly state-sponsored; b) they operate in countries which are not their own; c) they use insurgent tactics to achieve their ends; d) their principal objective is to overthrow a single government/occupier within a given territory; and e) their principal motivation is ideological rather than material reward" (Colgan and Hegghammer 2011, 6). Very often the dominant motives for individuals to become a foreign fighter are not financial, but religious and ideological in nature.

With the beginning of the Arab Spring, and especially with the escalation of civil war in Syria and the rise of power of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – ISIL (also known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria – ISIS), many persons from Balkan countries mainly of Muslim confession started individually or organized into groups to join different insurgent factions to participate in the armed conflicts against national security forces of Syria and Iraq. Therefore, the region of the Balkans is becoming a place of origin for foreign fighters, with most of the recruited persons fighting as members of the radical Jabhat al-Nusrah (or al-Nusra Front) and ISIS. "The Soufan Group (TSG) has identified reports suggesting that at least 875 fighters have traveled to Syria from the Balkans, with fighters coming from at least seven different countries in the region. Almost 800 of these fighters come from just four countries - Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia - all located in the Western Balkans" (The Soufan Group 2015).

Further escalation of the conflict in the Eastern Ukraine also reflected on the growing numbers of individuals from the Balkans, mainly from Serbia (Deutsche Welle 2014) – according to the estimation from 45 to 100 persons and in some small extend from Croatia more than 30 persons (Milekic 2015), who as volunteers take part in the armed activities either on the side of anti-government and pro-Russian groups or pro-Ukrainian paramilitary “territorial defence battalions”. However, it must be emphasized that the available data with regards to the recruited persons could not be considered accurate because many of the reports and analyses rely on the media or not so precise information from statements of state officials. Current trends are showing an alarming tendency concerning the foreign fighter phenomenon and the Balkans, which is turning the region into a transit hub for fighters who seek to join the radical terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq. The proximity of the Balkans to the conflict zones in the Middle East or Ukraine, existence of small but well-established networks of radical Islamist groups in these countries and skilled persons from ex-Yugoslav wars are good preconditions for indoctrination, recruitment, training and logistical support of individuals for becoming foreign fighters.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

BiH is still recovering from the devastating war in the early 1990s. The war left Bosnia’s infrastructure and economy in devastation. Around two million people, which is about half of the population, were displaced. The fragile and vulnerable post-war society was seen as a perfect base for potential staging ground of extremism. BiH received large monetary investment from Islamic organizations, some of which were publically suspected of being financed by Al Qaeda. The Balkan Investigative Regional Report (BIRN) has carried out few research studies on the investments coming from Saudi Arabia and other countries from the Middle East which showed that several hundred million US dollars have been invested only in mosques from 1992 until 2011.

BiH has become a destination country for foreign fighters during the Bosnian war and additionally in the period of conflicts in Kosovo and the Middle East appeared also as country of origin. The problem of foreign fighters is a hot issue for the Bosnian society taking into consideration the trauma brought about by the war experiences. Regarding the current problem of foreign fighters who are part of ISIS, many experts are finding the roots of this phenomenon in the “Bosnian mujahedeen”, fighters who actually after the war settled in the country and in some way contributed to the spreading of the radical way of practicing Islam.

At the International Conference titled “Foreign terrorist fighters - Challenges for South East Europe” which was held from 6 to 8 October, 2015 in Sarajevo, organized by the OSCE Mission in BiH, the Centre for Security Cooperation (RACVIAC) and the Ministry of Security of BiH, it was stated that around 220 people left BiH to foreign battlefields, 46 were killed and 50 people have returned. Currently, in Syria there are 120 to 130 citizens of BiH (Blic 2016). The average age of men who are most often recruited through social networks and who go to the frontline is 32 years, while for women it is 22. When it comes

to the main factors which are stated to influence the individuals' joining of the armed activities is socio-economic status, then the level of education and religion.

There were few major extremist events that have marked the rise of radicalism in Bosnia in recent years. A citizen from the Serbian southwest (mainly Bosniak populated) region of "Sandzak", attacked the US embassy in Sarajevo in November 2011, after having become involved with the Wahabbi community in Vienna. In 2015 a unit of the Bosnian special police forces "SIPA" arrested seven Bosnian citizens for allegedly planning to join the war in Syria on the side of ISIS. These arrests were actually the outcome of the new law introduced in 2014. BiH has proposed sanctions of up to 10 years of jail for citizens that will take part in foreign wars or recruit people for conflicts abroad, intending to discourage direct participation and prevent returnees coming back and posing serious threat to public security. The legal reforms regarding the sanctioning of this kind of activities consisted of introducing amendments to the Criminal Act of BiH, such as "Article 162b - Illegal formation and joining of foreign paramilitary or para-police formations" which penalize those who organize, manage, train, equip, or mobilize individuals or groups of people to join a foreign military, paramilitary or para-police formation that operates outside of BiH. Also sanctioned is the joining of such formations, as well as other activities, including incitement to commit this kind of criminal acts (Azinović and Jusić 2015, 54).

In October 2015 the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina passed the first verdict against persons directly connected with foreign fighter activities, according to which 4 citizens were jailed for taking part in, or mobilizing and transporting groups to take part in the fighting in Syria and Iraq. The Bosnian judiciary recently established even a special prosecution team to deal with these cases, given the rising number of persons who are believed to have been or still are in different militant groups in Syria and Iraq.

According to the report of "Atlantic initiative", a Sarajevo-based NGO, there is necessity for better coordination among Bosnia's fragmented police forces, still divided along political and ethnic lines, and for increased monitoring of the Internet and social networks, which have become the key outlets for radicalizing and recruiting young people. The "foreign fighters" phenomena and the rise of radicalism have made a huge negative impact on the BiH stability and reputation. According to data from the Tourism Community of the Sarajevo Canton for January 2016 announced for BIRN, the number of foreign tourists fell by 17.5% compared to the same month the previous year (Balkan Insight 2016).

Kosovo

Kosovo as a newest European state has been one of the most pro-American ones since the USA helped their secession from the Serbian authority. Still in a generational shift in this post-communist society, Islamic radicalization has had some influence on the young population. With a rate of over 16 fighters per 100,000 nationals, Kosovo's recruitment rate for foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq is the highest in Europe (Shtuni 2015).

From the data presented by the Kosovo Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2016, it is estimated that around 320 members of the Islamic State are from Kosovo and among

them women and children too. Also, official figures of the ministry showed that about 60 citizens of Kosovo were killed during the war in these two countries, while it is calculated that the highest number returned or moved away from the conflict zone (Cocoli 2016). Efforts by the law enforcement agencies have revealed that the extremist actors primarily comprise a new generation of local fundamentalist clerics trained in the Middle East and closely affiliated with a number of foreign-funded Islamic charities and cultural associations. Similar to the Bosnian case, after the end of the Kosovo war Saudi Arabia has made huge investments in Kosovo. Besides providing humanitarian aid and building schools and community centers, they also erected significant numbers of Wahhabi mosques (Gardner 2014) and a well-integrated network of extremist entities.

Kosovo, as the other Balkan countries has introduced sanctions for every citizen that joined a foreign war, but still there are many insufficiencies in the implementation of strategic plans and legal provisions. The legal provisions of the amendments to the Criminal Code adopted by Kosovo's authorities in 2014 stipulate that everyone who participates in or organizes the departure to foreign battlefields, will be penalized with a prison sentence from 5 to 15 years. In addition, Kosovo has adopted a "National Strategy to Prevent Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Leads to Terrorism" (Kosovo's National Strategy on the Prevention of Violent Extremism 2014).

From 2013 to the time of this writing, Kosovo's Police conducted investigation of 180 persons of which about 90 were arrested, leading to 40 indictments. According to the available sources, the majority of the persons are from the poorest municipalities of Uroševac, Kačanik, Đeneral Janković and Štimlja. What's more, "In November 2015, sixteen non-governmental organizations, which operate in Kosovo for years, did not receive permission to continue work, on suspicion of being involved in the recruitment of citizens in the Islamic State terrorist organization, funding of extremist activities and spreading propaganda." (Oroši 2016).

As a motive for Albanians joining as a foreign fighters in the units of ISIS, usually includes high unemployment rate and harsh social and economic conditions in Kosovo and well-established radical Islamist networks which through spreading radical ideology and indoctrination attract persons for recruitment.

Macedonia

The problem with foreign fighters is becoming a reality also in the Macedonian society. According to the statement given on 22nd November 2015 for one of the daily newspapers "Utrinski Vesnik", the President of the Republic of Macedonia, there are 110 persons from Macedonia that are foreign fighters in ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusrah. Of them 25 persons have been killed and approximately 69 probably have returned back to the country. With the escalation of the conflict in Syria and Iraq, news started to appear in the public media that in the armed activities in these countries there are certain numbers of Macedonian citizen who joined and participated in them.

Macedonian Parliament in September 2014 as a response to the increasing security threats with the appearance of this phenomenon, passed an amendments to the Criminal Code according to which participation in foreign military, police or paramilitary formations shall be punished with at least 4 years of prison time. In the amendments of the Criminal Code, it is stipulated that everyone who: *"...contrary to the law creates, organizes, recruits, transports, arranges transport, equips, trains or otherwise prepares person or group for participation in foreign military, police or paramilitary and para-police formations, organized groups or individually, outside the territory Macedonia will be punished with imprisonment of at least five years. Imprisonment of at least five years will apply to persons who directly or indirectly, offer, give, provide, collect or conceal funds, materiel or equipment which will be used to commit a crime of this kind"* (Official Gazette of R.M. 2014).

Further in the amendments, it is stipulated also that everyone who: *"...through written text, audio -visual recordings, social networks or any other form of communication calls for spreading or making in any other way available to the public a message, or recruits or encourages another to commit these kinds of crimes will be sanctioned with imprisonment of at least four years."* (Official Gazette R.M. 2014)

It is important to mention that in the amendments, attention is devoted also to the protection of children from these kinds of crimes, through sanctioning of the recruitment and training of children for participation in foreign military, police or paramilitary formations. These kinds of legal changes conducted in the Criminal Code were shortly followed by one big operation carried out by Macedonian law enforcement agencies, code-named "Cell" ("Келија" in Macedonian). In this police operation, 11 people were arrested under the suspicion of participating in foreign wars in Syria and Iraq or recruiting foreign fighters, while 23 people still remain at large, suspected of currently being in Syria or Iraq.

Criminalization unfortunately is the only developed approach in the prevention efforts of the phenomenon of foreign fighters in Macedonia. There is a need for adopting and implementation of efficient strategies and program activities for rehabilitation and reintegration into society of the persons who are radicalized and who are returning from the conflict zones.

Serbia

The past 4 years have confirmed that citizens of Serbia are participating in the armed conflicts both in the Middle East and Eastern Ukraine. However, Serbia has experienced both roles, as a destination country and as a country of origin of foreign fighters. The presence of foreign fighters was registered on both conflict sides in the Kosovo war. With the beginning of the Libyan Civil war in 2011, articles in public media in Serbia started to be published on the involvement of Serbian citizens who are fighting on the side of Gaddafi's forces (mainly because of financial reasons) (Global Voices 2011).

The case of first person from Serbia who went to the conflict zones in Syria and Iraq as foreign fighter was registered in 2012. The information of direct involvement of Serbian citizens in this conflict zone is officially confirmed by Director of the Security Information

Agency (SIA) of Serbia (Blic 2015). “Most people left Serbia in the autumn of 2013, when several families went to Syria.” Among them, the largest number is Bosniaks, followed by Roma and Albanians, coming from Serbia’s Sandžak region, Raska, Smederevo and South of Serbia (municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa). According to the presented data at the already mentioned International Conference “Foreign Terrorist Fighters - Challenges for South East Europe” in Sarajevo, most of them are men between the age of 20 to 30 years, and a few are women (Blic 2015).

Participation of Serbian citizens in the conflict in Eastern Ukraine was officially confirmed in 2015 by the Director of SIA. According to the information from public and social media in Serbia, several citizens from the radical nationalistic organization “Četničkog pokreta” have participated even in the annexation of Crimea in 2014 on the side of pro-separatist groups, for which they were awarded special medals of merit. Further, with the conflict’s escalation more Serbian citizens were recruited and participated in all major battles. Regarding the motives for joining, these individuals are “...ostensibly drawn by an ethnic and nationalist sense of solidarity with the region’s Russian Orthodox Christians and residual hostility towards NATO, regarding the Ukrainian government as its proxy” (Jackson 2014).

As a result of the increasing numbers of individuals participating in the conflict zones as foreign fighters, the Serbian government proposed amendments to the Criminal Code, according to which participation of volunteers in foreign armed conflicts was treated as a serious crime (Al Jazeera 2016). The amendments provide for prison sentences from 6 months to 5 years for individual fighters, up to 8 years for those leaving as an organized fighting unit and between 2 and 10 years for those found guilty of recruiting mercenaries or volunteer fighters (Vasovic and Jones 2014). “By March 2015, the Higher Prosecution Office in Belgrade questioned 8 individuals suspected of criminal offense via involvement in a war or armed conflict in a foreign country.

Main concerns regarding the new adopted amendments for preventing and sanctioning of the phenomenon of foreign fighters in Serbia is that these kinds of legal provisions actually do not offer much in terms of re-socialization of these persons and are insufficient, lacking to provide systematic solutions for overcoming entrenched difficulties in providing material evidence against the suspected persons.

Conclusion

The ongoing armed conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Eastern Ukraine among the other devastating effects resulted in hundreds of citizens from the Balkans who have joined different paramilitary, para-police and radical groups from these conflict zones. The current economic crisis, high rates of youth unemployment, political corruption and consequent desire for moralization among the young are all elements that have always been exploited by radical and extreme organizations or individuals in order to find more followers. Societies of the Balkan countries still find themselves in a fragile phase of recovery and democratic normalization of neighboring relations, and this kind of individuals or groups, can

pose a serious threat in the form of re-appearance of radical ethnic and religious divisions from the 1990s, re-hashing significant fear among the populations.

State institutions of BiH, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia have answered to the rising threat of this phenomenon almost at the same time and with similar measures. However there are some specifics in the conditions of every country, which are mainly related to the socio-economic or religious background.

In all 4 countries, legal amendments to the National Criminal Codes was one of the first steps the state authorities took towards preventing and sanctioning their citizens' participation in foreign conflicts. Nevertheless, the practice of law enforcement agencies shows that the phenomenon of foreign fighters is too complex to be settled just through the model of criminalization. Criminal charges and prison sentences could not successfully solve this problem if it is not tackled at the same time by combined measures of prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration. And this is exactly where the biggest failure of the analyzed Balkan countries lies.

The serious consequences this phenomenon can cause for the multiethnic and multi-religious society inevitably calls for the timely detection of persons involved in this kind of criminal activity in order to prevent them from carrying out their intentions. But, more importantly, at the same time they should be suitably re-socialized. The solutions to the current situation must be based on multi-dimensional approach and incorporate more professional and more efficient capabilities of law enforcement agencies, improved regional cooperation among countries. In addition, it will require more coordinated inter-ministerial cooperation between different state agencies from local to central level, far more efficient penitentiary system, with focus on re-socialization of the convicts, as well as development of efficient cooperation and partnership with civil society and different religious communities.

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BREAKING THE DUAL SPIRAL OF DIMINISHING CAPABILITIES

TAMÁS CSIKI

List of Contents

Introduction

The dual spiral of diminishing capabilities

Measuring change – or the lack of it: trends in defense expenditures in Europe

Pledges, political commitment and implementation in Eastern and Central Europe

Conclusions: Breaking the dual spiral of diminishing capabilities

List of abbreviations

C4ISTAR – Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance

MENA – Middle East and North Africa

NFIU – NATO Force Integration Unit

R&D – Research and Development

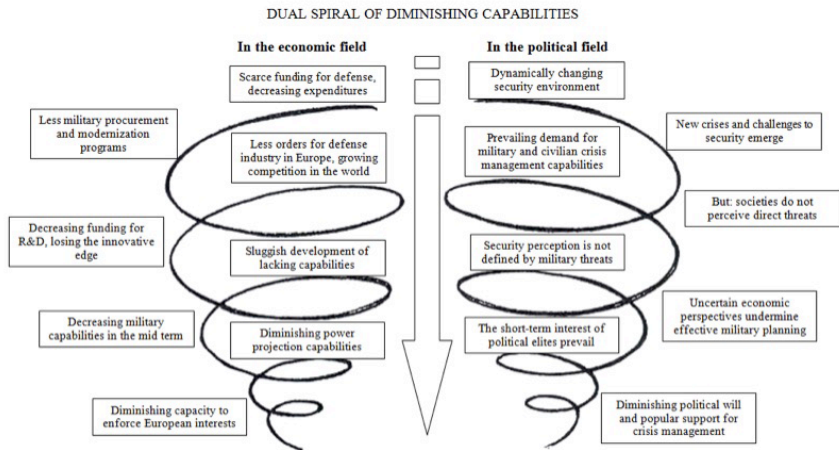
Introduction

In recent years, Europe has witnessed a dynamic deterioration of its security environment, while lacking both the political will and the necessary tools of power to counter this unfavorable trend. Despite observing these trends and emerging crises, Europe has remained unable to forecast strategic shocks such as the Arab Spring or the Ukraine Crisis, and remained incapable of managing crises in the European neighborhood (North Africa, the Middle East, the Caucasus and Eastern Europe). First, the paper provides a brief assessment of how the European strategic landscape has evolved since the 2008 financial crisis and what impact this had on defense spending across Europe. I argue that the strong limitations on European defense sectors were consequences of simultaneous negative economic and political processes, creating a ‘dual spiral of diminishing capabilities’ in these domains. The article further examines how it would be possible to break this ‘dual spiral of diminishing capabilities’ at a time when not even the Ukraine crisis was a trigger strong enough to overturn these negative trends throughout Central and Eastern Europe, and offers a ‘reality check’ of how European countries from the Baltics through the Visegrad Four to Romania and Bulgaria have so far implemented the decisions and pledges undertaken in Wales.

The dual spiral of diminishing capabilities

Rapid and dynamic changes in our security environment have characterized the strategic context both from within Europe and in the European neighborhood since the 2008 implementation report of the European Security Strategy. These changes, along with new emerging challenges have repeatedly revealed that Europe possesses only limited capabilities to react and to respond in order to pursue European interests, and to restore stability and peace in the European neighborhood, (Blockmans and Faleg 2015) that has unfavorably transformed from a 'Ring of Friends' to the 'Ring of Fire' (Economist, 2014), while Europe itself has been shaken by the effects of the 2008 financial and economic crisis (CSIS 2012, 3-8.; Larrabee et al. 2012; O'Donnell 2012).

Summing up the strategic developments of the period 2008-2013 (before the Ukraine conflict) that accompanied an overall scarcity of resources in the European defense sector, one could observe two parallel processes in the political and economic domains, bringing about the degradation of military capabilities and the weakening of the military tools of European power. These can be described as the 'dual spiral of diminishing capabilities' (Csiki, 2014 2-3).



In the economic domain the self-sustaining process of capability loss is triggered by scarce resources as a consequence of the 2008 crisis, which evolved from a primary (debt) crisis into a secondary (fiscal-monetary) crisis, bringing about deep societal and political consequences in several European countries, especially among Southern and Central European ones. Diminishing resources dedicated to the defense sector resulted in cutting armament modernization plans, R&D, as well as reducing procurements for national armed forces even in the short term. The reduced domestic orders and cut contracts for weapons systems and defense equipment increasingly forced European manufacturers

to turn towards the world market where they face increased competition from the arms manufacturers of emerging major powers, while their resources for cutting edge R&D are being diminished.

As a result, the missing crisis management capabilities – such as strategic enablers – either had not been or have not fully been developed or suffered delays and shortcomings due to lack of the technological background and/or financing. The resulting medium-term loss of military capabilities also limits crisis management capabilities, thereby reducing Europe's ability for both power projection and the assertion of foreign policy interests in the European neighborhood (Mölling and Brune 2011).

In the political domain, the loss of capabilities stems from the interaction of internal and external factors. The rapid and dynamic transformation (deterioration) of the security environment (emerging crises and new types of threats) resulted in a sustained demand for military and civilian crisis management. However, European societies did not perceive direct, imminent (military) threats triggered by these areas of regional instability and local conflicts. This lack of perceived threats in a time of resource scarcities obviously meant that it was difficult to advocate funding defense budgets at a sustainable level (not to mention increasing them), when the very same economic crisis turned people's attention towards the non-military dimensions of security. In this period, the economic and social dimension of security was brought to the forefront, prioritizing welfare and employment issues. In such an environment, the short-term interests of elected political representatives (the effective management of the financial-economic crisis) and economic uncertainties (the scarcity of resources) overruled long-term strategic planning, necessary for meaningful capability development. The overall consequence of this was the diminishing political will and popular support for sacrificing funds for the development of defense capabilities, and refraining from a more active foreign policy and involvement in the crisis management efforts in the European neighborhood.

The key factor in these processes is as follows: while the incentives for European defense policy are clearly present and accounted for both by the political and military elite, short-term necessities and interests almost always overrule the steps necessary for medium- and long-term planning and capability development. Thus these two parallel downward spirals had triggered the loss of military capabilities even before the Ukraine crisis began and the threat of the so-called 'Islamic State' (ISIS) emerged in the European neighborhood, the same neighborhood which had already been characterized by instability and insecurity.

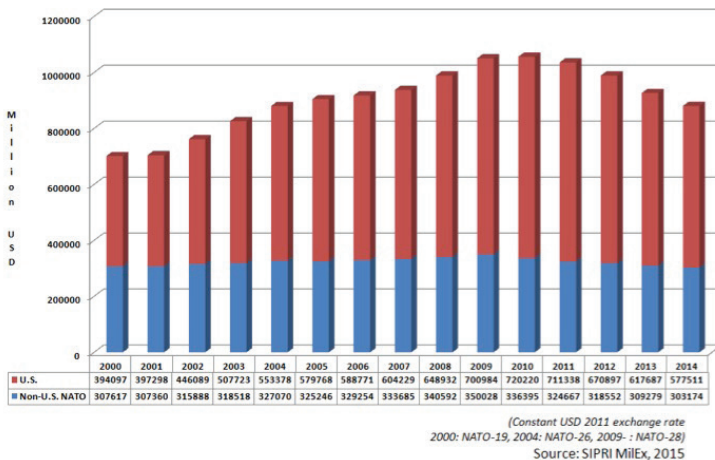
Measuring change – or the lack of it: trends in defense expenditures in Europe

The effects of the 2008 financial crisis within NATO could be measured, highlighting how the increased indebtedness and shrinking defense expenditures have been going hand-in-hand in most European countries. If we compare the data from a pre-crisis year (2006) with those from the post-crisis period (2012), we can see major increase in terms of national debt (74% increase for European NATO members in six years), coupled

with a significant decrease in defense spending (-11.8%). This has been the case especially in Central and Eastern Europe, where the national debts had risen by 92%, while defense expenditures shrunk by more than 23% in the period 2006-2012 (Csiki, 2013a 6).

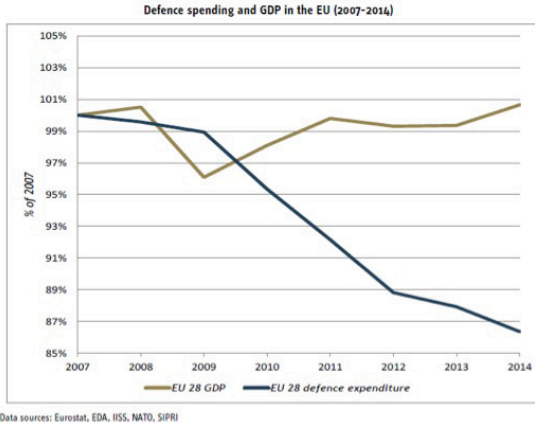
	Change in debt (2006-2012)	Change in defense expenditures (2006-2012)
NATO-28	+71.69%	-9.75%
NATO Europe	+74.00%	-11.80%
NATO Western Europe	+77.00%	-0.50%
NATO Central and Eastern Europe	+92.00%	-23.10%
NATO South Europe and Balkans	+65.00%	-14.00%

The uneven mid-term burden-sharing patterns within NATO are also alarming. If we observe the trends of defense spending for the alliance as a whole since the turn of the millennium, we can see that aggregate non-US military expenditures have only increased by about 15% at the height of the period (2009) when the most intensive phase of operations in Afghanistan began, and by 2014 have returned to the same level as in 2000 – despite the effects of the Arab Spring, subsequent crises in the MENA region and lately in Eastern Europe (SIPRI Military Expenditures Database, 2015).⁷



⁷ However, it is worth to note that U.S. defense spending increased to an irregularly high level as a consequence of the 9/11 attacks, fueling the global war on terror, and the high levels of U.S. defense spending have also been triggered by the global roles and responsibilities the country undertakes. The expenditure that had been higher than Cold War extremes naturally distorted burden-sharing, but the underperformance in this regard on behalf of other allies has made the situation even more unbalanced.

The unsustainable nature of this unbalanced situation has repeatedly been highlighted by various NATO officials over the years – but (maybe) surprisingly the downward trend of defense expenditures has not been reversed. Not even when the economic performance of the European countries has stabilized, and following the 2008-2009 recession returned to modest growth since 2010. European defense spending in real value has continued to decrease by more than 13% if compared with the last pre-crisis year, 2007 (Wolf 2015, 2).

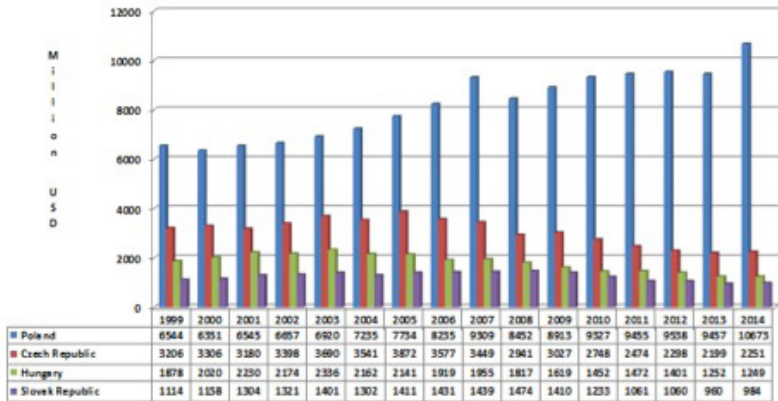


The Newport Summit of 2014 was hoped to bring the winds of change with regards to European defense efforts. Triggered by their changing threat perception, NATO members adopted the Declaration on the Transatlantic Bond and the Wales Summit Declaration in September 2014, renewing their commitment to boosting the development of military capabilities, and also committing themselves to the ‘defense pledge’ for increasing the defense expenditures. Such positive turn has been expected building upon the Defense Pledge as a consequence of emerging threats and new challenges in the European neighborhood in the East and South alike (NATO 2014 point 14). Heading towards the Warsaw Summit, we are still to see if the political commitment to move member states’ defense budgets towards the 2% threshold and provide 20% of the funds for procurement would be realized in the mid-term, as follow-up reactions have been varied (Raynova and Kearns 2015).

However, we cannot be overly optimistic with regard to defense expenditures in Europe for several reasons. The trends within NATO do not support the positive expectations: despite repeated calls since 2011 when Smart Defense has been initiated, the alliance-wide defense expenditure has been shrinking on average. Even though Brussels (and Washington) would expect 2% of the gross domestic product to be spent on defense by each member state, and the goal after the financial crisis was to keep defense expenditure leveled at least, and then gradually move towards the 2% threshold, we have witnessed exactly the opposite trend. In 2006 1.72% of the GDP was spent on defense by the then 26

NATO member states on average; in 2010 it was 1.65% by the 28 allies, while in 2014 it fell to 1.38 percent – according to the data provided by SIPRI Military Expenditures Database.

This trend can be observed in the case of the Visegrad countries as well. With the exception of Poland, defense expenditures begun to decrease practically from 2005/2006 on, thus by the end of the 1999-2014 period (since joining NATO) Hungary has nominally lost 33% of its defense budget, the Czech Republic has lost 30%, while Slovakia has lost 24% since its accession in 2004 (SIPRI Military Expenditures Database, 2015).



(Constant USD 2011 exchange rate)
Source: SIPRI MilEx, 2015

The key question remains: can the above trend be reversed in the spirit of the 2014 Defense Pledge? NATO estimates for 2015 were short of such commitment: not only uneven burden sharing, but the downward trend also seems to have persisted throughout 2015. These estimates – based on current prices in USD 2015 exchange rate – include a 5.32% decrease for the whole alliance compared to 2014, a 16.02% decrease for NATO Europe, with the United States mostly preserving its contribution to defense efforts with 0.66% decrease in its defense budget (NATO 2015, 4).

Pledges, political commitment and implementation in Eastern and Central Europe

When we examine the follow-up reactions to the Wales Summit decisions in the short-term – or we ask the question: to what extent did NATO members fulfill the Defense Pledge signed in Newport? On closer look, we get a mixed picture. Clearly, there is a major division within the European member states of NATO regarding the extent the Eastern Flank versus the Southern Flank should determine defense, deterrence and reassurance measures. Driven by diverging threat perceptions (Russia and the Ukraine

conflict vs. instability in North Africa and the threat of the 'Islamic State' in the Middle East) and fueled by weak economic performance, Western and Southern European countries have shown limited willingness to increase their defense expenditures. Criticism was strong especially towards great powers (Germany, France and the United Kingdom), triggering decisions for moderate mid-term increase only (Raynova and Kearns 2015, 2-4). The first news of planned meaningful change based on national priorities in Germany appeared first in March 2015, planning for an annual 2 billion euro increase beyond 2016 (Bloomberg 2015). Others, however, were lacking progress.

The situation has been fundamentally different among the Baltic states, Eastern and Southeastern European countries, which as a consequence of perceiving the threat of possible Russian activities aimed at the destabilization and ongoing militarization of Eastern Europe, began to realize the Defense Pledge already in 2014. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have contracted defense procurements for various equipment including tanks, missiles, anti-tank weapons, combat vehicles, and others worth more than 300 million euros, just in 2014. Moreover, Estonia reportedly planned to raise its defense budget to 2.05 percent of GDP; Lithuania to 1.1 percent from 0.89, while Latvia planned a one percent increase in 2015 from its previous 0.91 percent (Telegraph 2014). Lithuania undertook significant steps to boost its defense capabilities: strengthened its citizens' militia to 8,000 volunteers in 2014, decided to create a 2,500 strong rapid reaction force (Defense News 2014), and plans to reintroduce military conscription (BBC 2015). Latvia plans to grow its military to 6,600 members by 2018 from the current 4,600 and plans to increase the number of reservists to 12,000 by 2020 from the current 8,000 (Defense News 2015a). Beyond NATO's Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence Estonia hosted the first NATO Force Integration Unit (NFIU) in the region and is one of the few countries already meeting the 2% target for defense spending in terms of GDP.

Meanwhile, Central European countries have shown varied reactions to the Ukraine conflict and dissent regarding the suitable reactions to Russia's aggression. On the one hand, Poland, with defense expenditures already surpassing 2% of the GDP, has continued with its defense reform and sustained the momentum of the armed forces' modernization that had begun in 2009. Voicing strong concerns about the potential threat posed by Russia, Poland became a leading force for boosting defense efforts within NATO. Besides investing in high-profile equipment, like a missile shield, anti-aircraft systems, cruise missiles, armored personnel carriers, submarines, combat drones, multi-purpose helicopters and others, Warsaw has also attempted to harmonize regional defense cooperation efforts with the Baltic states (more successfully) and within the Visegrad countries (less successfully) (Defense News 2015b).

Other Visegrad countries, however, seemed to have perceived events in Eastern Europe in a somewhat different manner, seemingly neglecting possible military threats, and were less keen on voicing heated anti-Russian opinion. It was telling that unlike before the Chicago Summit in 2012, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia did not issue a joint V4 declaration with Poland ahead of the 2014 Wales Summit on shared defense policy perspectives. But the somewhat diverging perceptions did not mean the break-up

of Central European defense cooperation, and gradually the other three members of the V4 have also begun to move on a path of strengthening their defense efforts. We may argue that eventually the deteriorating security environment both in the East and South has triggered a response also in Prague, Bratislava and Budapest, providing an opportunity to argue for increasing national defense budgets and possibly kick starting the long-neglected modernization programs of the armed forces.

As part of these efforts, the Czech Republic had decided to increase defense expenditures by 0.1 percent of the GDP (4 billion Kč) a year from 2015 on, and the defense spending is slated to rise from 41 billion Kč in 2014 to 71.5 billion Kč in 2020 (a 74.4% increase in nominal value). What is more, in March 2015, senior government officials announced that the Czech Defense Ministry was working on a draft bill to restore conscription and a decision could be taken in June. In addition to that, plans have been drafted to expand the military from the current 16,600 troops to 24,000-27,000 troops by 2025 (Prague Post 2014; Defense News 2015c). Furthermore, major modernization plans have also been adopted, foreseeing the procurement of helicopters, armored vehicles and radars – all of them replacing Soviet-era Russian technology with NATO equipment (Defense News 2015d).

Slovakia, on the other hand had remained reluctant to announce the increase in defense expenditures for a long time, right until the Wales Summit. In Newport, President Andrej Kiska pledged to increase Slovak defense spending to 1.6 percent of GDP by 2020 and to commit to stemming the drop in spending, in addition to allocating 20 percent of the annual defense budget by 2016 for modernizing the Slovak military. Regarding modernization plans, a fighter acquisition or lease plan (possibly for JAS-39 Gripen) was announced to replace Russian-made MiG-29s; and UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters are to replace Mi-17 helicopters (Globalsecurity 2015; Defense News 2015e).

Hungary in recent years has succeeded in sustaining its defense expenditure at nominal value, and minor increases had been seen since 2013. In accordance with a 2012 government decision, a 0.1% increase of the defense spending in terms of GDP is expected and now planned for from 2016 onwards. During the parliamentary debate of the 2016 state budget, a request for 298.6 billion Forints has been filed – an increase of 19.2% from 2014, but only reaching 0.84% of the GDP forecast for 2015. As mentioned above, the government shall provide for additional 0.1% increase in term of GDP in subsequent years, moving towards 1.4% of the GDP in the period 2016-2022 (Csiki 2013b, 11). However, the increases in funding are not dedicated for modernization programs, but to fund a new military career model that had been introduced in 2015, thus to providing the funds necessary for increased personnel costs. Despite the worn-out condition of many major equipment types of the Hungarian Defense Forces, the only meaningful procurement program in place addresses the purchase of a number of multi-purpose helicopters, for which extra government funds would be provided beyond the planned defense budget (Hungary Today 2015).

Amidst the preparations to adopt a new defense strategy in 2015, Romanian parties committed themselves to increasing defense spending to 2% of GDP by 2017 and to

maintain it for a decade, until 2027 (Jane's 2015). Recent armed forces modernization programs have highlighted developing allied missile defense and completing the purchase of tactical transport aircraft, while the upcoming developments will include hosting a NATO Force Integration Unit and the Multinational Division South-East Headquarters in Bucharest, which will coordinate military command in Romania and the neighboring Bulgaria. The multinational headquarters will open in 2016 and become fully operational by 2018 (New York Times 2015).

Due to sustained financial constraints, Bulgaria – another country to host an NFIU in the region – is yet to follow the opposite path, reaching the lowest level of defense spending in ten years, spending 1.16% of GDP, or 979 million BGN in 2015 (Novonite 2015). A new development plan for the armed forces is currently under negotiation and increasing defense expenses that would allow for major procurements is planned from 2016 on (Sofia Globe 2015).

Conclusions: breaking the dual spiral of diminishing capabilities

The alarming trends of declining defense efforts described above as the dual spiral of diminishing capabilities – seems to have – changed in the course of 2014 when resulting from the two new crises (Ukraine, ISIS), the citizenry and governments across Europe alike began to perceive direct and indirect military threats. These threats took both symmetric (conventional armed conflict on European soil) and asymmetric forms (terrorism, or the threat of Russian-backed destabilization). Regarding the military conflict in Ukraine, the Baltic states, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria were the most concerned (Bugajski 2014), while regarding the 'Islamic State' and terrorism, primarily France and the United Kingdom were subjects to perceiving such threats (BBC 2014, Pierini 2014), even though warning calls have been issued in almost every European country.

These examples might have also shown us the possible ways to breaking the dual spiral of diminishing capabilities through changing the threat perception: through identifying direct, imminent or close threats in the military domain. This can be reinforced through intensifying political, media and societal discourse about defense matters. If coupled with the necessary support in the economic realm (increasing the defense expenditures), these changes may result in sustainable mid- to long-term strategic planning, boost in procurement and R&D, as well as more conscious and better-grounded crisis management efforts in the future.

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East and South East Europe

BALTIC AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN SECURITY AFTER THE UKRAINE CRISIS⁸

MATTHEW RHODES AND RUTA BUNEVICIUTE

List of contents

Introduction
The challenge of Russia
Euroatlantic response (“5 Ds”)
The way ahead
Conclusion

Introduction

The Seimas (parliament) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania and the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies co-organized an international conference on “Baltic and Central European Security” in Vilnius, Lithuania on 19-20 November 2014. Over 60 officials and scholars from the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, and the United States analyzed the impact of the Ukraine crisis and the renewed tensions with Russia on regional and Euroatlantic security.

This paper draws freely on discussions at the Vilnius conference in an attempt to capture and extend their major points. Russia’s aggression against Ukraine has profoundly challenged international order. The Euroatlantic community retains a significant edge in both present power and future prospects relative to Russia, but it will need to remain united in implementing agreed policy responses as well as develop effective means of countering Russian hybrid warfare. While Germany and the United States must continue to offer leadership in these tasks, geography gives Baltic, Central European, and Nordic countries a particular stake and role in their achievement.

The challenge of Russia

With bitter irony, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *annus mirabilis* of 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe turned into an *annus horribilis*. Russia followed seizure of Ukraine’s Crimean peninsula in February–March 2014 with increasingly “implausibly deniable” involvement in separatist conflict in eastern Ukraine. By the end of 2015, over 9000 people had been killed and more than a million had fled from their homes. Cold War-style

⁸ A version of this text has also appeared as a George C. Marshall Center Security Insights paper. The views expressed do not represent any official government policy.

military probes, jeremiads against the West, and hints of attacks elsewhere accompanied these moves.

Russia's acts shattered the perception that state-based territorial threats no longer menace Europe. President Putin and other leaders justified their moves with expansive claims over a distinctive "Russian world" of territories historically part of the Czarist or Soviet empires, particularly those with sizeable Russian or Russian-speaking populations. Romanticized nationalist themes also increasingly substitute for slipping performance legitimacy for an internal system of governance against the rule of law and other liberal values, which these officials view as decadent and weak.

Deepening the concerns, Russia's modus operandi has exemplified a concept of hybrid, non-linear, or "new generation" warfare. As described in a February 2013 article by Russian Chief of General Staff Valery Gerasimov as well as in the December 2014 military doctrine, this flows from a perception of permanent conflict with multiple, mutually reinforcing components or phases, only the higher end of which are explicitly military in nature. Earlier stages focus on penetration of a target society through such means as non-transparent business ties, appeals to pan-Slavic sentiment, and fanning of Russian minority grievances. This can progress toward espionage and infiltration of state structures, including political posts and security forces as was the case in Ukraine. A recent variant of this approach has lent financial and other support to anti-EU extremist parties in Europe. Such efforts are accompanied by comprehensive information operations as well. Slickly packaged propaganda celebrates President Vladimir Putin as a heroic leader standing against duplicitous foreign powers and their agents in the ranks of the Russian opposition. Complementary efforts exaggerate Western countries' internal flaws and counter critical views of Russia in external media with floods of online comments by hired trolls. Russian sources depict Ukraine's change of government in early 2014 as a Western-sponsored fascist coup and alternately deny Russia's subsequent involvement or justify it on grounds of self-determination and humanitarian assistance.

Finally, increasing investment in military modernization has included improved training and equipment for special forces such as the "little green men" operating in unmarked uniforms, who were deployed inside Ukraine. More technological examples have to do with cyber attacks, brandishing of Russia's nuclear arsenal, and research into "twenty-first century" biological, ecological, and radiological weapons.

Together these tactics seek to generate sufficient confusion and resignation to neuter any opposition to Russian goals. Parallel aims are division of the West and discrediting of democracy as "feckless pluralism."

Euroatlantic response ("5 Ds")

Despite partial precedents such as Russia's 2008 war with Georgia and President Putin's speech at the 2007 Munich Security Conference, NATO and the European Union were caught unprepared by Russia's moves against Ukraine. Different threat perceptions and economic interests left initial responses uncertain and reactive. Nevertheless, over the

course of the year, the Euroatlantic community took notable steps across five areas.

First have been efforts at *de-escalation*. Approaches have included direct discussions between individual heads of state or government and Russian President Putin; meetings of EU, Russian, Ukrainian, and American foreign ministers in Geneva in the spring; a trilateral “Contact Group” of representatives from Russia, Ukraine, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, who were also joined by eastern Ukrainian separatists for cease-fire negotiations in Minsk in the fall of 2014 and early 2015; and at times linked four-party “Normandy format” meetings talks among officials from France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine. All these fora have sought diplomatic “off-ramps” from at least the most acute phases of the crisis; the most notable outcome, the Minsk II agreement of February 2015, has at least temporarily scaled back the intensity of conflict and presented parameters for special status of the contested eastern regions inside Ukraine.

Second has been *de-legitimation* of Russian aggression. Although Russia’s veto has blocked measures by the United Nations Security Council, already in late March 2014 a General Assembly resolution condemned the annexation of Crimea. During the same period the United States State Department issued two top-ten style lists of Russia’s “false claims about Ukraine.” Western leaders boycotted a planned G-8 summit in Sochi in June, reverting to a G-7 format session in Brussels instead and remaining at that number a year later at Schloss Elmau in Germany. NATO officials also shared satellite images and other data on movements of Russian troops and materiel along and across the border with Ukraine; this included the role of a Russian-supplied Buk missile in the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight 17 over eastern Ukraine in July 2014.

Third has been *defense*, though only in a limited sense for Ukraine itself. Military assistance to that country has thus far entailed only non-lethal items (field rations, binoculars, body armor, cold-weather gear, etc.) as well as limited intelligence sharing, training, and defense reform advice. Calls for delivery of weapons such as Javelin anti-tank missiles have been resisted (or at least held in reserve) on grounds that these would fuel the Russian narrative of Western meddling without decisively shifting the balance of forces on the ground.

Additional measures have reinforced the system of collective defense within NATO. As part of efforts to reassure newer allies in particular, in March 2015 the United States doubled the number of jets in the Alliance’s air policing mission in the Baltic states (a level others have since doubled again), deployed an F-15 squadron to Poland, and initiated AWACs air surveillance flights over Poland and Romania. Though short of the permanent basing of two brigades called for by Poland in April 2014, the Americans and other allies have also increased rotational training exercises to maintain “persistent presence” of NATO troops along the Alliance’s eastern flank.

NATO’s Wales summit in September adopted a Readiness Action Plan for upgraded reception facilities and an expanded NATO Reaction Force with a quickly deployable, brigade-size “spearhead” component as well as a renewed pledge by allies to lift defense spending toward two percent of GDP. NATO also concluded host nation support agreements for enhanced cooperation with Finland and Sweden.

Fourth has been *denial* of strategic victory to Russia. The swift control of Crimea and display of revived military prowess further boosted Putin's popular support. Showing these to be "champagne effect" tactical gains with greater costs than benefits is meant to bring pressure for reversals and deter further aggression by Russia or other revisionist powers.

Most notable in this regard have been coordinated sanctions adopted by the European Union, United States, and others. Successive rounds have frozen assets and barred travel for dozens of officials and business figures, restricted investment and trade in energy and defense, and constrained Russian access to international finance.

Fifth has been support for the political and economic *development* of Ukraine. This is arguably both the most important and most difficult line of effort, as pervasive corruption and state weakness made Ukraine particularly vulnerable to Russian hybrid warfare in the first place.

International assistance to Ukraine has thus targeted both immediate needs and longer-term reforms, conditioning the provision of aid on the progress achieved on the ground. An early centerpiece was a \$17 billion loan package from the International Money Fund in April 2014. The European Union separately approved another €11 billion in loans and grants, concluded the Association Agreement with Ukraine that Russia had sought to stop, and launched a rule of law advisory mission for civilian security sector reform. The United States extended a \$1 billion loan guarantee as well as other financial and technical assistance. These partners also supported the organization of Ukraine's presidential election in May that was won by Petro Poroshenko, as well as the parliamentary elections in September that returned a coalition government headed by Arseniy Yatsenyuk.

The way ahead

At the start of 2016 the Ukraine crisis has faded from the headlines but remains unresolved. The combination of preexisting weaknesses, the collapse of the global price of oil, and the sanctions regime are all pushing the Russian economy into recession and the potential financial crisis. Nonetheless, political aspects of Minsk II remain contested, further diplomacy appears stalled, and fighting continues to flare in eastern Ukraine. Despite a partial write-down agreed with private creditors, Ukrainian leaders face at least a further \$15 billion of debt and have managed only halting steps toward internal reform. The situation thus continues to challenge the West's capacity to respond.

The essential starting point from here for the Euroatlantic community is unity and solidarity in the implementation of measures already agreed. This includes maintenance of sanctions until Russia clearly abandons confrontation. This has been tested as successive restrictions come up for renewal within the EU. It also means expeditious progress on operationalizing NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (and other aspects of the Readiness Action Plan) by the next summit in Warsaw in mid-2016 as well as on actually raising Allied defense spending. Similar follow-through must be shown on delivery of pledged assistance to Ukraine and rejection of diplomatic deals at its expense or

without its involvement; Ukraine cannot be traded off for prospective Russian cooperation regarding the Syrian civil war or Iranian nuclear program.

A related imperative is strengthening of capacities against hybrid warfare. Whole of government efforts to boost domestic detection and resilience should include specialized training and equipment for civil security agencies. Meanwhile, though Russian propaganda outlets such as RT television need not be blocked, greater effort should be given to engaging presentation of a truthful counter-narrative, including over the internet inside Russia. Decreased dependence on Russian energy and closer scrutiny of Russian business activities in the West would also lessen the risk of these becoming sources of leverage or disinformation. Finally, the West should play up its advantage of good governance, the best inoculation against hybrid-style pressure, by promoting shared recovery from the 2008 financial crisis, upholding liberal values, and concluding shared projects such as the European Energy Union and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

In the meantime, NATO and EU members should consider further steps in case the current measures do not stop Russia (which, unfortunately, still appears the case at the time of this writing) as well as if they do (which could take effect later). This will include difficult decisions regarding further financial and military aid for Ukraine, longer-term force structure in NATO's east (arguably consistent with the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act's expression of intent not to do so under "the current and foreseeable security environment"), and stepped up sanctions such as cutting Russian access to the SWIFT international financial system. All of these will involve balancing the value of Euroatlantic unity (a center of gravity for Russia) against the risk of drift toward lowest common denominators. Space can also be left for discrete cooperation and potentially different future relations with Russia.

Leadership from, and the working relationship between, Germany and the United States will remain critical across these issues. Under a de-facto division of labor, America has provided the bulk of vision and resources for military reassurance within NATO. Though both should be more broadly shared over time, given the psychological importance of visible Allied presence, the U.S. should work to develop a long-term basis for its regional deployments, which might include reevaluation of recent force structure decisions. Over the medium term, it could also authorize liquid natural gas exports to Europe as part of efforts to diversify allies' energy mix.

Meanwhile Germany has played the central role in both diplomatic engagement and EU sanctions toward Russia. This reflects Germany's increased strategic weight on the continent as well as the ability of Chancellor Merkel and President Putin to speak each other's native language. Given these roles, German leaders should resist lingering pressure for premature appeasement of Russia while raising their investment in Allied defense commensurate with recent acknowledgments of increased responsibility for international security. They should also be cautious to avoid perceptions of double standards regarding commercial proposals to double the flows of Russian gas to their territory via the Nord-stream route.

Euroatlantic response is not however simply a matter for great powers. Direct

exposure as well as deep connections to Russia and Ukraine give the countries of Central and Northern Europe a particular role to play. Given different priorities to their west and south, serious engagement by these states will be needed to maintain the community's focus on the evolving Russian challenge.

Several specific types of action would be constructive in this regard. First, regional states can share their insights on Russian behavior within the EU and NATO. Their opportunity to do so is now enhanced by the fact that the Secretary General of NATO is Norwegian and the President of the European Council is a Pole, as well as by Poland's role as host of NATO's next summit to be held in Warsaw. Second, with several countries spending one percent or less of GDP for defense, they can practice solidarity by raising defense budgets toward NATO's two percent goal. This might bring modest gains to Alliance military capabilities but would add moral credibility to pleas for further support from others. Third, regional leaders should avoid "politically schizophrenic" statements that echo Russia's narrative even as their substantive policies (mostly) support Euroatlantic lines. Likewise, differences over the surge in irregular migration to Europe seen in 2015 should not deliver Russia's goal of deeper continental division.

Finally, these states can take measures to strengthen their regional cooperation. For example, the Visegrad Four might build on military collaboration for their 2016 EU Battlegroup to offset strains of divergent political stances toward the present crisis. Scandinavian countries could further involve the Baltic states in Nordic Defense Cooperation, even if they are not ready to include them as full members or to rely on that framework for collective defense. Poland and Lithuania can ensure that contentious minority and historical property issues do not preclude closer Polish-Baltic coordination in areas ranging from intelligence sharing to support for Ukraine. All these measures would simultaneously strengthen the region's international standing and counter the divide-and-rule tactics pursued by Russia.

Conclusion

The immediate shocks of the Ukraine crisis in 2014 have ushered in an extended period of challenges to Euroatlantic security from Russia. The EU and NATO have moved beyond their initial confusion but will continue to be tested in providing effective responses for their members and partners. While other fora exist, conferences such as that held in Vilnius will remain important opportunities for building mutual understanding and networks among security professionals in the most affected countries who will be tasked with working through the issues described in this paper.

THE UKRAINE CRISIS AND THE FUTURE OF US TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN EUROPE: IS THERE A RATIONALE FOR DISARMAMENT?

TOMAS A. NAGY

List of contents

Introduction

The history & role of the U.S. TNWs in Europe's security

Crisis in Ukraine and the future of TNWs in Europe

TNWs' place in future nuclear disarmament

Introduction

The Russian invasion to Ukraine in 2014 has significantly changed the character of the European security via an effective restoration of Cold War-level mistrust and perceived insecurity. The altered nature of East-West relations has a significant effect on NATO's role as the prime security guarantor over the European continent. As much as during the Cold War era, the conflict between NATO and Moscow is mainly of political nature driven by the acute lack of mutual trust. While the renewed problems in East-West relations have yet to cause any change in the nuclear policy of each side, the Alliance and Russia represent the two greatest nuclear powers - possessing approximately 90% of global nuclear warheads - and their current problems have an impact on the global politics of nuclear security (Meier 2014, 5). This paper intends to present the context within which the U.S. forward deployed tactical nuclear weapons were introduced to the European theatre, the role they had played during the Cold-War era and how their relevance evolved over the course of previous two decades (represented by NATO enlargement and the political unification of Europe) until the Russian incursion into eastern Ukraine changed the security reality on the continent - affecting the both short-term and mid-term prospects for further NATO nuclear policy reform.

The history & role of the U.S. TNWs in Europe's security

Since the very moments of NATO's inception, nuclear weapons played a significant role in forming the security identity of the Alliance and given the very nature of the Cold War, shared nuclear capabilities in Europe were of particular importance in maintaining the existentially important balance of power over the "old continent". With the U.S. being the initial nation developing its own nuclear capability and defining the original postures and nuclear policy concepts, NATO essentially adopted the American

policies, as much as it adopted considerable part of the arsenal itself. In relation to nuclear threats and challenges, the Alliance applied the conventionally accepted strategic doctrine labeled as “massive retaliation” as its initial policy guideline for potential crisis scenarios (Nichols et. al. 2012, 9). After the world came to the brink of absolute nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union, during the Cuban missile crisis, NATO followed the American suit and (in 1967) adopted the nuclear doctrine of “flexible response” and altered the modality of the use of nuclear weapons, but also reiterated their initial role (Kristensen 2012, 29). With NATO strategic and tactical nuclear weapons playing the role of a substitute for conventional military forces in Europe, the number of nuclear warheads in Western Europe reached the level of 7,000 by the end of the 1960s and increased by another thousand of nuclear warheads within the following decade (Czulda 2014, 80). While the US played a dominant role in the formation of NATO nuclear forces, there never was any intent to exclude fellow Alliance members from sharing the burden in relation to the forward deployed nuclear capabilities.

The concept of burden sharing, though being objectively weakened by time, still exists today and has been aimed to address a whole series of concerns in relation to political challenges of maintaining and further developing nuclear forces and to neutralize potential ambitions of NATO European members (namely Germany and Italy) to develop their own national nuclear arsenals (Czulda 2014, 81). While this approach had an undeniably positive impact on restraining (a potentially destabilizing) nuclear proliferation within NATO itself, it also underlined an enduring trend in mutual relations among NATO member states, namely the significant dependence of the European members on the American nuclear deterrent – a trend that persists until today as well. The fact that there are two European states (namely: the United Kingdom and France) that possess their own thermonuclear arsenals, hasn’t substantially altered Europe’s one sided nuclear dependency.

France itself possesses a record of relatively turbulent relations with the U.S. over the role and structure of the Allied nuclear umbrella over Europe – culminating in French withdrawal from NATO’s integrated military structure in 1966 as an act of preservation of the independence of France’s nuclear deterrent from NATO’s America-defined concepts and postures (Woolf 2015, 14). French nuclear weapons are still outside NATO’s command even after the mutual military rapprochement initiated by President Nicolas Sarkozy in 2009. Even the position of UK’s nuclear forces lacks absolute exactness as while they are shared with fellow NATO allies, the UK never waived the right for a potential autonomous use in a crisis scenario (Czulda 2014, 82). The notion of (French and British) nuclear inclusion deficit is further visible in a number of past NATO strategic concepts that identified both French and British nuclear forces as ‘independent’ (Chalmers and Lunn 2010, 5).

Therefore, it is admittedly rational to identify the U.S. nuclear forces as the ‘spinal cord’ of NATO’s nuclear umbrella over Europe – since the Alliance has been predominantly relying on them in preserving its deterrent capabilities (Chalmers and Lunn 2010, 5).

The trend of upward spiraling in nuclear armaments (both at European and global scale) was reversed only during the 1980s. Reductions in nuclear forces happened in direct relation to three positive security development, namely: another round of arms control agreements (Intermediate-range Nuclear Force Treaty of 1987), NATO's internal policy reform process (Montebello decision of 1983), and most crucially the end of Cold-War and the consecutive change in the global security and geo-political paradigm. Quite rationally, as the intensification of tensions and rivalry during the Cold-War had a progressive impact on the number of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, the overall de-escalation of relations between the West and the East created the space and rationale for quantitative reductions in nuclear arsenals – not excluding NATO's forward deployed tactical nuclear capabilities (Blechman and Rumbaugh 2014). However, because the U.S. tactical nuclear weapons had been always perceived as NATO's own internal issue, every round of quantitative reduction took place as a result of political decision-making on the side of key NATO members and were never a subject to any conventional arms control agreement neither with the Soviet Union nor with the Russian Federation (Nichols et. al. 2012, 60).

While, the end of the Cold-War brought an effective pause in the geo-political rivalry in relations between the West and Russia, NATO found a novel *raison d'être* in contributing to the political unification of Europe by extending its geographical scope and maintaining its range of capabilities. Though the prospects of nuclear confrontation between NATO and Russia virtually vanished, the Alliance maintained its policy of sustaining an effective deterrence over the continent via 'an adequate nuclear force' with 'appropriate flexibility and survivability' at 'the minimum level sufficient to preserve peace and stability' (Czulda 2014, 82). This policy approach has constituted the basis for the continuous presence of the U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. The actual size of NATO's stockpile of TNWs has not been (to date) declassified, the scope of the arsenal is widely estimated to be between 160 and 200 (Burt et. al. 2012, 3). While from the numerical point of view, the scope itself would be big enough to exceed an entire nuclear stockpile of minor nuclear powers (India, Pakistan and Israel are estimated to possess comparable nuclear forces), such a scope still represents an approximate reduction by 95% - compared to the Cold-War peak levels (Dodge 2013, 1).

Crisis in Ukraine and the future of TNWs in Europe

Russia's use of military force to seize Crimea and its ongoing destabilization of the Donbas region constitutes a cardinal change in the European security architecture and its norms that have guided the security policies on the continent for decades. With Russia breaking the most crucial strategic rule: *no state should use military force to take territory from other states*, a new chapter in NATO-Russia relations has commenced (Bártha and Péczeli 2015, 1). Though a part of the ruling western political elites kept hoping for a complex restoration of political relations based on trust, cooperation and common interest garnered throughout most of the post-Cold War period, the crisis in Ukraine has essentially ended any hopes for an effective partnership based on trust. What is even more relevant

for the Alliance and its own members is that NATO's (quarter-century long) strategic holiday on the European continent is over (Woolf 2015, 41). For over twenty years, despite complicated political relations, the Alliance perceived Russia as a somewhat problematic partner but also as one posing no credible threat to allied countries. This perception has been undeniably altered. NATO can and should form long-term strategy to counter further Russian incursions and define appropriate thresholds stipulating the requirements for an eventual NATO action against acts of irregular warfare on NATO's territory.

While the nature of the means of Russia's aggression is purely conventional (meaning: non-nuclear), it has tough undeniable consequences for the future of the balance of power in Europe – which is partly based on nuclear deterrent capabilities of Russia and of the NATO members (Nichols 2015). With the reemergence of notions of (yet still relatively limited) Russian imperialism, the imminent prospects of any significant nuclear arms reductions have weakened significantly. Since the Russian Federation is America's (and thus NATO's) only peer competitor on the field of nuclear weapons, the Alliance should follow the trends in Russia's nuclear forces and to adjust its own posture to address the nature of the surfacing challenges. Both the size and the structure of Russian nuclear forces will have the primary effect on the scope of the U.S. nuclear forces – not excluding its forward deployed tactical weapons either (Pifer 2015). As widely acknowledged, the Russian Federation possesses a significant advantage in tactical nuclear capabilities (sometimes labeled as non-strategic or sub-strategic) over the U.S. or any other nuclear power on the European continent (Quinlivan and Oliker 2011, 36). The role of these weapons is given by Russia's current military doctrine as a counter measure against an aggressor in an eventual event of attack conducted by either nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. Alternatively, the Russian nuclear doctrine envisions the utilization of nuclear forces even in case of a complex conventional war – one that would objectively threaten the 'very existence' of the Russian state (Quinlivan and Oliker 2011, 19).

Naturally, NATO's tactical nuclear policy does not envision neither an initiative for nuclear attack against Russian targets (anywhere in the world) nor does it perceive nuclear forces in terms of support capabilities for a planned conventional war with Russia – as NATO never had even the least of intentions of doing so. The contemporary purpose of the U.S.-supplied NATO arsenal of tactical weapons is predominantly political – as it aims to materialize the American obligation to protect its European allies (Sokov and Pomper 2014). Given the role of U.S. forward deployed TNWs in Europe, the scope of the arsenal is sufficient for fulfilling its key purpose and given the sufficiency of arsenal, the Alliance itself has no objective need to match the (westward-oriented) Russian tactical arsenal in its size (Sokov 2002, 106). Moreover, the most significant nuclear buildup in Europe took place when NATO faced the Warsaw Pact with significant quantitative disadvantage in conventional forces.

Today, NATO has an advantage in conventional forces and faces Russia without its past Warsaw Pact allies. Given the objective lack of strategic purpose and the numerical sufficiency of NATO's TNWs scope, it is hard to articulate a realistic proposition for a potential deployment of additional U.S. TNWs in Europe – even in an environment defined

by Russian aggression against Georgia (in 2008) and Ukraine (2014/15). What has been undeniably altered is the (Russian) threat perception on NATO's Eastern flank. The Baltic states, Poland and other (non-member) NATO partners perceive the notion of assured stability only as a practical likelihood – far from an absolute certainty. Yet, any official proposal to base nuclear weapons east of Germany (for instance in Poland) would almost certainly be subjected to significant political opposition not only from Russia, but also within NATO itself (Sokov and Pomper 2014). With the numerous rounds of NATO enlargement, the Alliance have subjected its policy of no permanent stationing of substantial combat forces in new members to relevant reflection and reconsideration. Yet, to date, even despite significant changes in the European security, no NATO ally has ever questioned the policy of the three nuclear Nos that stipulate: *'no intention, no plans and no reason'* to place nuclear forces on the territory of new members (Dodge 2013, 7).

Moreover, placing nuclear forces on Russia's proximate neighborhood would be admittedly rightly perceived as an act of direct provocation – or at least a proof of complete disregard of Russia's sphere of privileged interest. In addition, the admittedly effective Russian public propaganda would easily portray such an event as the equivalent of the 1962 placement of Soviet missiles in Cuba - an event that constituted the very peak of the Cold War and probably the closest point in human history to ultimate global destruction. While this comparison doesn't automatically hold any water in terms of its merit, any contemplation of a policy that would likely produce an internal conflict within NATO itself and at least verbally infuriate Moscow can hardly be considered a rational option making real political and strategic sense (Chalmers and Lunn 2010, 12).

However, this doesn't (by any means) imply the need for strategic appeasement. Russian actions constitute a threat to the mid-term stability in Europe and clearly have a net negative effect on the security perception of a number of NATO allies. The Alliance thus needs to commit to bold measures to reinforce its deterrent and defenses – with both the Baltic and Central European region being at the center of such reinforcement. Such reinforcement, however, shall be based on the Alliance's conventional forces and on its clearly sufficient and effective nuclear deterrent. If NATO will seriously intend to tackle the significant internal deficiencies in the level of contributions and to level the distribution of roles among the allies, the Alliance might one day complete the expansion of regular presence of Allied military units in Central Europe and the Baltics (Sokov and Pomper 2014). However, before that point, the Alliance should consider options that would exploit the substance of the current policies.

TNWs' place in future nuclear disarmament

Despite the early enthusiasm produced by the massively tailored disarmament agenda of Barack Obama and the initial arms control rapprochement between Russia and the U.S., the international politics of nuclear security (most notably the disarmament part of it) has hardly even looked shadier than it does today. The Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference conducted last year in New York has raised serious concern about the fu-

ture state of nuclear security as it identified the approach of the five nuclear weapon states recognized by the Treaty (namely the U.S., Russia, U.K., France, and China) as inadequate compared to the nature and level of challenges that the international community is facing (Kristensen and Mount 2014). Yet the list of the challenges is substantial and is still being extended by emerging regional crises all around the globe.

Firstly, while certain progress has been made in the direction for the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), unless the key nuclear stakeholders decide to commit themselves to its provisions, the Treaty will not enter into force. Besides that, despite the undeniable success of the updated START Treaty of 2010, the U.S. and Russia failed to create the political atmosphere for another round of nuclear reductions negotiations, yet these two nuclear powers possess approximately 90 percent of the existing nuclear warheads and there is global understanding that there is a room for (at least) one more round of bilateral reduction process before other “minor” nuclear powers would be included to the disarmament process (Burt 2012, 1). Secondly, the last decade of global geo-politics has produced another wave of sensitive confrontations among the key powers – be it in the region of the Middle East, South Asian Peninsula or Northeast Asia – where the DPRK’s growing nuclear ambitions and capabilities slowly but surely mitigate the existentially relevant level of strategic stability.

And not lastly, Kremlin’s aggression toward Ukraine in 2014 and 2015 has produced an unprecedented level of uncertainty and increased the already present tensions in NATO-Russian relations. While the conflict in Ukraine is being waged solely within the realm of conventional (i.e. non-nuclear) confrontation, this crisis reminds the West that the dangers posed by an eventual nuclear confrontation between Russia and NATO are not exclusively of a distant theoretical possibility. It is thus and will remain in the mutual interest of both NATO and the Russian Federation to commit themselves to reducing and (ultimately) eliminating the threat posed by a possible nuclear standoff. While the current climate of East-West relations doesn’t constitute any reason for pronounced optimism, even the most recent history of cooperation over nuclear security-related challenges proves that mutual interests between NATO and Russia do exist and there are walkable paths to secure them (Kristensen and Mount 2014). Today, it is almost seven years since U.S. President Obama has presented his vision of a world free of nuclear weapons in the Hradcany square in Prague. Since then, the West and Russia took a number of steps (beyond the New START) to solidify nuclear security and to limit the potential for instability – the Nuclear Security Summit process and the key nuclear deal with Iran being the most visible ones.

Given the lowest point of trust in NATO-Russian relations since the end of the Cold War, any room and rationale for the immediate change of the Alliance’s nuclear posture is outside the realm of possibilities (Nichols 2015). Although despite the tensions, both Russia and NATO should contemplate mid-term options for cooperation in the area of mutual interest and make progress on issues of mutual concern.

The historical experience in arms control and the disarmament process during the Cold War proves that cooperation is possible despite the lack of definitive progress in

mutual relations (Rudesill 2013, 113). While Kremlin's policy vis-à-vis Eastern Ukraine seems to suggest that the US TNWs are needed as one of the ultimate guarantees of NATO's security to a greater extent than ever before – at least in the recent memory – this position, however, should not be accepted without certain limitations and caveats.

Firstly, the very (continuous) presence of these weapons hasn't objectively played any considerable role in Vladimir Putin's decision to deal with Russia's own regional geo-political challenges (i.e. westward orientation of Ukraine and Georgia) via the utilization of sheer military force (Sokov and Pomper 2014). Russia proceeded with aggressive military incursions despite the presence of TNWs in Europe and clearly defined NATO opposition to any military force-based "solutions" (Woolf 2015, 30).

Secondly, it is rather superficial to state that the presence of the US TNWs in Europe has played a significant role in reassuring the eastern flank of the NATO regarding its own security vis-à-vis Russia's imperialistic ambitions. Undisputedly, NATO members from the Baltic region and beyond are concerned about Russia's ambitions in the region ever more than in a quarter of century and are understandably actively seeking measures to enhance their own security. These measures are, however, of predominantly non-nuclear character. Arguably, the most acceptable reasoning why U.S. TNWs are not significantly relevant in this case is given by the fact that the threat level that NATO faces is not significant enough for (any kind of) nuclear weapons to play a substantial role in mitigating it (Kristensen and Mount 2014).

Thus, the Alliance shall assure its members on its eastern flank by enhancing and possibly re-allocating resources and defensive capabilities that will directly produce a positive effect in countering the threats NATO actually faces. The recent examples in the form of the establishment of NATO Response Force, cyber security and counter-hybrid warfare initiatives are clearly representing the need to enhance NATO members' security via the means beyond the ultimate nuclear deterrent (Sokov and Pomper 2014). Yes, NATO is to maintain its status of a nuclear alliance – as long as there are nuclear weapons around the globe. However, one shall not in any case disregard the fact that the "supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies is provided by the strategic (!) nuclear forces" of alliance members – as it is stated in NATO's Strategic Concept of 2010 (Kristensen 2012, 9). The US TNWs thus still represent a relatively positive contribution to NATO's nuclear umbrella, however, in terms of their existential importance are clearly in a residual position to the Alliance's strategic nuclear weapons. Given the scope of Russian nuclear forces, it is the US strategic arsenal (and not the US TNW arsenal, nor the British or French nuclear forces) that makes NATO a nuclear alliance with the state of absolute parity of nuclear forces vis-à-vis any potential nuclear challenger (Burt 2012, 7).

Given, the current economic and political reality in Europe, the continental allies (despite verbal commitments) might not be able to significantly increase the level of their defense spending in the foreseeable future (Kristensen and Mount 2014). Continuous doubts regarding the financial burden sharing within the alliance have implications for the future nuclear posture of the Alliance. Maintaining and modernizing the relatively costly TNWs in Europe could take away crucial financial resources from urgently needed mod-

ernization and solidification of conventional (non-nuclear) capabilities that are subjected to either significant ageing or shortage in required volumes (Nichols et. al. 2012, 369). If NATO would seriously intend to tackle the growing disparity in U.S. and European budgetary contributions to their defenses, a renewed emphasis on conventional capabilities must be at the center of its investment objectives. The U.S. tactical nuclear weapons themselves are not of decisive value added to the defenses of NATO members, do not play an indispensable role of NATO's deterrence and are not the main means of assurance against the current security challenges NATO faces (Chalmers and Lunn 2010, 14).

Ambitions to retain U.S. TNWs in Europe indefinitely might distract the Alliance from concentrating on the growing needs to invest in conventional military capabilities and potentially act to politically further divide the Alliance by deepening the disparity in Euro-American burden sharing. Moreover, numerous NATO members have repeatedly reiterated their commitment to the enhancement of global nuclear security – be it via embarking on arms control agreements, pursuing continuous nuclear disarmament agreements or contributing to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (Czulda 2014, 95). Both Russia and the U.S. have presented the New START Treaty as being both a tool of mutual trust-building and a positive signal to the rest of international community that positive trends in disarmaments can have a positive effect on the security of both parties at the expense of no one (Woolf 2015, 35). In order to keep the NPT regime viable and relevant, the strongest nuclear powers (both the U.S. and Russia) need to demonstrate their commitment towards the progress in the nuclear disarmament process.

If NATO was to adopt a policy of permanent TNWs retention, it would ultimately lose the chance to utilize its own most significant potential contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament – a considerable leap in the denuclearization of the western part of Europe (Nichols 2015). Maintaining the policy option for the withdrawal of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons with the simultaneous focus on non-nuclear defense enhancement in Europe would have a dual effect. Externally, it would send a signal that both the U.S. and other NATO members are serious and committed to sacrifice for the establishment of conditions for a world without nuclear weapons – or at least for a world with less nuclear weapons (Kristensen and Mount 2014). Internally, NATO members would be assured that the Alliance is placing its emphasis on capabilities that have both a direct and lasting effect on the security of the Alliance's most exposed members.

Conclusion

NATO is a nuclear alliance because its nuclear policy is an indispensable part of its identity and its *raison d'être*. As long as NATO possesses nuclear capabilities, it's in its highest interest to assure their utmost reliability, functionality and survivability. However, the core of NATO's nuclear deterrent is represented by its members' strategic nuclear arsenals. The U.S. forward deployed TNWs represent a constantly shrinking part of NATO's security provider toolbox - both in terms of size and overall utility. It is thus the ultimate recommendation of this paper for NATO to remain open to future reform, while concen-

trating on the enhancement of both conventional and unconventional capabilities that do objectively possess future mission potential and are generally recognized as permanent tools in the Alliance's security apparatus. In the future, the lasting presence of the U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Europe might pose a considerable internal political and financial challenge and thus should be subjected to continuous examination as for its usefulness and added value for the collective security of NATO members. While the seriousness of Russian actions in Ukraine at present does not objectively create a reduction-prone atmosphere, the future of US TNWs in Europe shall be decided on the basis of a considerably broader context than the current one – being significantly affected by the imminent impacts of renewed Russian imperial assertiveness - even as serious as it has so far proven to be.

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THE IMPACT OF RUSSIA-UKRAINIAN WAR ON INTERNAL PUBLIC DEBATE ABOUT FOREIGN POLICY IN UKRAINE

ANGELA GRAMADA

Contents

Introduction

- The Crimean crisis and the need to redefine the foreign policy priorities
- The foreign policy of Ukraine during Yanukovich presidency
- European integration as a tool for internal transformation
- The necessity to redefine the national interests after the Crimea annexation
- Diverging participants' interests in the Ukraine's foreign policy decision-making process
- Conclusions

Introduction

In the nearly twenty-five years of independence, the Ukrainian public's preferences for options and priorities of foreign policy have evolved somewhat differently, depending on the country's geography: in the west, the public is pro-European, while the eastern and south-eastern parts of the country are more pro-Russian. It was only in 2005 when the Ukrainian society changed from being a passive actor to an active one, assuming a greater role foreign policy decisions. Even so, Ukrainians remain little aware of their opportunities to influence their government's actions. Gradually, however, the civil society in Ukraine has become more responsible, much more organized and even willing to transfer its expertise and advice to public institutions.

Theoretical background

In order to analyze the implications of the Russian-Ukrainian war on the foreign policy priorities of the Ukrainian public, we need to define the public opinion and the role it assumed in the current political context. Hans Speier (1950, 1) suggests that opinions freely expressed in relation to matters of national interest and having the potential to influence government action or inaction can be considered public opinion. Michael Brecher (1972, 9) identifies three categories of interest groups that can influence the foreign policy decision-making process: institutional, associational and non-associational interest groups. If the institutional interests are promoted officially by representatives of public institutions, then the associational interests represent the interests of different social groups organized according to their social and economic objectives. Also, there are people that

can associate spontaneously to promote certain ideas or projects. They form non-associational groups. The tools they use to support their causes are different: protests, petitions or other means. Thus, for the purposes of this analysis, the public opinion may be associated with opinions freely expressed by the three groups mentioned above. Those opinions are connected to matters of national interest and have the potential to influence government action or inaction.

The Crimean crisis and the need to redefine the foreign policy priorities

Ukraine's new foreign policy priorities no longer refer only to the European integration processes, as it was mentioned in the law on domestic and foreign policy principles, adopted in May 2010. The new interests relate primarily to the restoration of territorial integrity, within the borders recognized by the international community in 1991, and assertiveness through diplomatic instruments with regard to non-recognition of the annexation of Crimea to the Russian Federation. The political crisis during November 2013 - February 2014 was based on a foreign policy pretext: former president of Ukraine Victor Yanukovich's refusal to sign the EU Association Agreement. The reason however, was of domestic nature: the need to implement reforms and fight against corruption. The question the public opinion in Ukraine is asking at the moment has to do with defining the country's mission, its means of communication with the international public opinion⁹ about the Ukrainian realities¹⁰, with respect to informing as accurately and correctly as possible on the struggles in Eastern Ukraine, but also the new challenges and threats to the state's security. The communication mission derives from the need to maintain, by any means, the support that Ukraine receives from the member states of the European Union and the United States in the territorial dispute with the Russian Federation.

The foreign policy of Ukraine during Yanukovich presidency

The foreign policy promoted by the former president of Ukraine, Victor Yanukovich, cannot be labeled as consistent. If at the beginning of 2010 most experts considered that Ukraine would maintain its multi-vector policy, with a slight advantage for Moscow, then at the end of 2012, the Ukrainian leader's priorities have changed considerably. After the parliamentary elections of October 2012, Yanukovich directed his foreign policy towards the European integration process. Consequently, the Ukrainian diplomacy efforts and those of the civil society will be redirected to accommodate the signing of the Asso-

⁹ The interviews cited in this study were conducted between March 23rd to 26th, 2015 within the research project titled "The Role of Russian Civil Society in Foreign Policy Decision-Making: A Comparative Analysis with the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine" implemented by the Association of Experts for Security and Global Affairs, Bucharest, with the support of the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation. In accordance with the research methodology of this project, experts will be cited anonymously.

¹⁰ Interview with a foreign policy expert, Kiev, 23 March 2015.

ciation Agreement, which would not have been anything but a guarantee that the internal affairs of the state will adopt a new philosophy – a European one.

One explanation for the oscillation between East and West during the period 2010 - 2013 can be found in the draining of the country's financial resources, but also a decline of Victor Yanukovich's image in less than two years since his election as head of state. Shortly before the Vilnius Summit, he had asked the EU to provide financial aid, so that the state he was leading would have been able to resist the Russian pressure. In the first year of his presidential mandate, Yanukovich has faced several dilemmas. On one hand, Moscow insisted on creating a Russian-Ukrainian joint consortium on energy, but also on taking control over other strategic resources in the economic sector. The second dilemma is related to the economic crisis in the euro zone that the European Union was facing, which had served to diminish Brussels' interest in Eastern Europe. As long as the Eastern Partnership seemed to work without major hang-ups due to its good start in 2009, the European officials were primarily concerned with the functioning of their European institutions. Ukrainian leaders on the other hand were concerned only with the bilateral relationship with the EU, in addition to the resources that they could receive as a result of this relationship: financial or technical assistance.

Given the lack of interest shown by both sides concerning deeper cooperation, Ukraine lost important ground in terms of democratization, rule of law and economic reforms. This is where Victor Yanukovich has dedicated his activity more toward changes of domestic nature: signing the agreement to extend the Russian Fleet stationing in Ukraine's territorial waters in the Black Sea until 2042 (Valasek 2010, 1), known as the Kharkiv Agreement, he made statements denouncing the foreign policy objective of NATO accession and amended the national legislation accordingly. He subsequently initiated the procedure for amending the Constitution to strengthen his grip on power. All these actions provided ample arguments for the advocates of Ukraine disintegration theory.

The assumptions about a possible split of Ukraine along regional or ethnic lines are not new.

A careful analysis of the events suggests that the public discussions which had added to the tensions were fueled from the inside, mostly by the political elite, which failed to reach a consensus on the country's direction and the need for implementing structural reforms. The fight between the government and the opposition finally resulted in a society's split based on ethnic, regional and economic criteria, and led to the gradual loss of the positive image gained during the Orange Revolution in late 2004, early 2005. The aim of this strategy promoted by the ruling elite was to distract the civil society from the really important issues Ukraine was facing. The effect, however, was the opposite and has degenerated into widespread protests at the end of 2013.

In just a year and a half since his election, President Viktor Yanukovich has managed to lose the support of both the European Union and the Russian Federation. While the downturn of the relationship with the EU was due to the delay in the implementation of processes that would result in economic reforms or caused by the imprisonment

of political opponents, like Yulia Tymoshenko¹¹, the cooling of the partnership with Russia was based on other causes. First, and foremost, it was about Ukraine's refusal to yield control over more economic resources. For the Russian side, this situation would have meant penetrating into the Ukrainian business environment, while for Ukraine it would have resulted in damage to its national security, without a direct military confrontation. And for the Ukrainian oligarchs, those processes would have resulted in the redistribution of hierarchies in business by accepting Russian investors. Secondly, Ukraine has refused to become a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), even as an observer in the so-called "3 + 1" format.¹² Without Ukraine in its structure, EEU did not have the necessary credibility to be promoted as a regional project.

Lacking support from the Russian Federation, Victor Yanukovich agreed to return to the most important foreign policy priority: European integration. Following the legislative elections in October 2012, the EU demonstrated its intention towards the authorities in Kiev to re-launch the bilateral cooperation relations. After the Ukrainian-European Summit, which took place in Brussels on 25th February 2013, where Victor Yanukovich was received with promises that he will obtain support to bring Ukraine back on the European track, the Ukrainian society has received the necessary impetus to take action for the state to evolve towards the EU.

European integration as a tool for internal transformation

In Ukraine, the European integration is not only a foreign policy priority (Ukrainian Parliament law 2010, a). For the Ukrainian public, the European integration processes are the best strategy to impose the qualitative transformation of state institutions and to access to tools for society's democratic development in a context where there is political elite who still does not have the will to change. According to a survey commissioned by the Razumkov Center in Ukraine, about 52% of the citizens of this country defined as a priority, in matters of foreign policy, the integration in the European Union (Liga News 2015). Furthermore, only 10% of Ukraine's population considers the development of relations with the Russian Federation as a priority, and 6.7% with other CIS countries. The popularity of European integration processes among Ukrainian citizens increased after the protests in November 2013 and has maintained positive trends (Razumkov Centre, 2015b).

This shows how the foreign policy options of the Ukrainian citizens have changed from the moment the signing of the Association Agreement by the European Union was first postponed (December 2011) until March 2015. The explanation for the decreased interest in European integration processes during the last year (Table 1) and

¹¹ The EU has repeatedly postponed the signing of the Association Agreement with Ukraine to the European Union. Each time the argument was due to the persecution of the opposition. Yulia Tymoshenko was arrested in August 2011 and was released in February 2014.

¹² The "3 + 1" format –Ukraine was offered the status of observer within the Customs Union.

greater appreciation of the relationship with the United States should be reflected in the strategy adopted by the elites after the annexation of Crimea.¹³

Table 1: Which foreign policy direction should be a priority for Ukraine? (2011-2015)

	EU countries	USA	Russia	Other CSI countries	Other countries	Difficult to answer or didn't answer
March 2015	47.7	6	10	6.7	9.1	20.5
April 2014	52.5	1.1	16.6	6.8	4.8	18.1
November 2012	40.8	1.2	35.3	4.8	3.6	14.3
February 2012	40.8	1	31	8.1	3.3	19.9
October 2011	38.2	1.2	35.3	7.7	2.7	14.8

Source: Razumkov Centre, March 2015 (Razumkov Centre, 2015c)

Returning to the content of the definition of Ukrainian public opinion and the analysis of the process of communication between different interest groups and the government, it should be noted that after EuroMaidan, the new leadership has understood that it needs the expertise of civil society representatives to achieve its foreign policy goals, especially regarding the European aspirations. Despite this finding, the initiative to organize debates on foreign policy topics still does not come from the central government, but from the civil society. The argument the new government gave to explain their apathy for participating in public debates is the Russian-Ukrainian war in its eastern regions. Hence, the communication between civil society representatives and authorities maintained its formal character, which it had in the previous period, even if the current government cherishes the principle of transparency more than the previous one, and the voice of public opinion has become more audible.

Nevertheless, the war¹⁴ has a dual mission:

offering the government excuses for inaction and delay on effective reforms;
avoiding a new wave of discontent and protests from the public.

In the fall of 2014 Kiev authorities have decided to postpone the implementation of the Association Agreement by January 2016. Once again, the situation in eastern Ukraine was used as a reason for adopting such a decision. The new leadership claims that in the meantime it will create the institutions necessary to implement the Association Agreement. And there is actual progress in creating the required institutions and government agencies. It is becoming clear that governmental authorities will not be able to request its cancellation in case of extreme external pressure from Russia or simply by using internal alibi. The civil society is closely monitoring how the authorities are approaching

¹³ The study was conducted by the Sociological Service of the Razumkov Centre from 6 to 12 March 2015. The sample consisted of 2,009 respondents aged 18 and over in all the regions of Ukraine except Crimea and the occupied areas of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts.

¹⁴ Interview, international relations expert, Kiev, 24 March 2015.

the adoption of this document, and the business community as well has shown to be increasingly interested in the benefits that it can bring: political pressure on the government – Enhancement of the rule of law economic advantages - standards, optimal conditions for business development, promoting the principles and rules of market economy, as well as respecting the right of private property.

The Association Agreement and DCFTA are vital for Ukraine, but not of particular interest for the EU, which is more concerned that the conflict does not escalate. Janusz Bugajski (2014, 62), believes that *“If the EU hesitates in this endeavor and its Association Agreement is more declarative than substantive, it will simply encourage Moscow to pursue its subversion.”*

To the Ukrainian public, including Moscow in the negotiations between the EU and Ukraine is a clear signal that in Brussels the interests relate to an entirely different type of security. However, both the public opinion and the Ukrainian governmental authorities believe that the purpose of those provisions should ultimately be Kiev’s submission of the application for EU membership. Under the circumstances of the ongoing war with Russia, this is extremely difficult or even impossible. Through the illegal annexation of Crimea and by supporting separatist militants in eastern Ukraine with weapons, Moscow has temporarily removed Kiev from its EU path. The decision, however, lies with Ukrainians and goes to the heart of the European integration process: do the Ukrainian citizens want only a membership status in order to have a tool to condition the political representatives or do they want functioning European institutions?

The necessity to redefine the national interests after the Crimea annexation

In 2010, Victor Yanukovich began his presidential term with speeches about the uselessness of promoting Ukraine’s integration into NATO, explaining that the will of the Ukrainian population registered a major change in this matter, compared with the previous period. And the will of the people must be respected. According to a study by the Pew Global Attitudes Project in 2009 *“... half of Ukrainians (51%) opposed their country’s admission to NATO, while only 28% favored such a step”* (Sprehe 2010). In fact, giving up the priority of joining this military alliance was one of the items on the election’s agenda. With regard to Russia’s actions, most Ukrainians believe that the Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea constitutes a declaration of war against their country. However, there are other opinions. Every fifth citizen of Ukraine claims that the events they are forced to witness are part of a confrontation between the United States of America and the Russian Federation for world supremacy, the east of the country being just a place where this fight takes place (Razumkov Centre, March 2015a).

Needless to say, Ukraine’s policy of non-alignment with the military blocs is outdated. The new leadership has adopted the law on introducing amendments to two other laws that are relevant for our foreign policy analysis: “The Law on Ukraine’s National Security” and the “Law on the Foundations of Domestic and Foreign Policy”. Under these new legislative amendments, Ukraine gives up the policy of non-alignment to military blocs

and introduces it as the main priority of foreign policy “*Deepening the cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to achieve the necessary criteria for membership in this organization*” (Parliament of Ukraine law, 2015b).

The government’s actions in promoting the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine coincide with the public’s preferences: Crimea should not disappear from the agenda of public debate. Many NGOs and analyst centers¹⁵ are addressing this issue in their projects, which they implement locally.

The same public debate about NATO has taken on a national character. The prevailing view held previously was that Russia was not perceived as a military threat. According to a Gallup poll, it was NATO, which had rather represented a threat to the Ukrainian public. The explanation for this phenomenon could be due to the fact that “*Ukrainians’ views of NATO in the past largely have been defined by their country’s relations and cultural ties to Russia, which opposes NATO expansion*” (Ray and Esipova 2014).

The results of a poll conducted by Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation in cooperation with the sociological service of the Razumkov Centre shows that almost 64% of Ukrainians are ready to vote in favor of joining NATO. Director of the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation Iryna Bekeshkina mentioned “... *that in June 2010 only 24.6% would have voted for joining NATO, 67.7% - against, and in June 2014 - 45.4% would have voted in favor and 36.4% against*” (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 2015).

The civil society is aware that NATO is not ready to accept Ukraine, but insists on the accession processes because it considers them extremely relevant in the context of military operations in the East. Ukraine’s admission to NATO is highly especially highly desired in Kiev. The country’s membership in the Alliance is understood to be important both from the domestic point of view, as well as in the international context. The domestic reasons represent the safest option for the country on its way to restoring territorial integrity and to ensure national security, while the international aspect, has to do with the future of West’s relations with Russia, including the need to negotiate the terms of a new architecture of European security. Most people understand that the process will be extremely complicated, given that Moscow has changed the system of international relations. However, Ukraine lacks sufficient time to initiate the debate on European security. What’s more, the means that it can muster at the moment are extremely limited and, without a sustained support from its partners it will fail to achieve the objectives it has set out in the respective regulations, which are also included in the country’s foreign policy priorities. Russia insists on preventing Ukraine from accession into Euro-Atlantic security structures. Thus, the public in Ukraine does not see other option than to insist on obtaining external assistance: financial, as well as military. In this context, Ukrainian politicians can no longer ignore the

¹⁵ During the study visit to Kiev organized within the research project mentioned in this article, the majority of interviewed experts, confirmed that they implement regional projects that relate to foreign policy priorities, included in the main documents regulating this field.

need for an internal approach that would require them to organize public discussion on NATO, either in the form of public debates or via a referendum. Thus, Petro Poroshenko clearly communicated during an official visit to France that a referendum on NATO admission cannot be avoided given the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war (UNIAN 2015a). If the interest groups forming the public opinion in Ukraine consider NATO integration as one of the most effective forms to settle the dispute with Russia, the political elite will have to first consult with voters on this matter.

Diverging participants' interests in the Ukraine's foreign policy decision-making process

Taking into account the typology of actors who can actually influence the foreign policy processes, their circle should not be reduced to political elites or to the political parties within the government. The civil society representatives or ordinary citizens, who are not organized to achieve specific objectives, may also participate in developing the content of the country's foreign policy. It is also very important to mention the role that the economic elite, the oligarchs, foreign investors or foreign economic dependencies can have on the content of a single- or multi-vector foreign policy. In this context, it is important to note that not all Ukrainian oligarchs agree with the European integration process or Ukraine's admission to the Euro-Atlantic structures. Their support is contingent on the deepening of trade relations with the Eastern states because a large part of their investments, markets and business partners are members of the Eurasian Economic Union. Oligarchs who represent this interest group will insist on promoting the strategic partnership with Russia, and will argue this position further with energy and economic dependency on Eastern markets or intentional degradation of the political and economic situation in the country attributed to the new leaders with the help of the West.

After the failure of the orange revolution in late 2004, early 2005, and the decline of the economic, political and social situation during the two different governments, the population of Ukraine decided that they must take a much tougher stance against corrupt governments whose interests did not coincide with the priorities of the Ukrainian society. Protesters in Kiev were and still are aware that Ukraine is a country that would not at all be easily accepted as a full member of the European Union. The necessity for the Ukrainian society was rather technical in nature and related to tools provided by the EU Association Agreement in building a rule of law and democratic institutions. The difference between the protests in 2005 and those in 2014 is significant. While in 2005 the reaction of the Ukrainian public was for the most part limited to condemning the forgery of the presidential election results, without sufficiently mobilizing the political class to enforce the rule of law, the last protest was characterized by the maturing of the public through its further involvement in policy-making processes or playing a role in the country's national security. EuroMaidan was just a manifestation of the capabilities that the civil society in Ukraine holds in this regard to achieve sufficient mobilization of the elites for the country's

transformation. Ultimately the lack of political will to meet the democratization needs of the Ukrainian society led to choosing this instrument.

The main message that the Ukrainian public is trying to convey is that of accountability of the government when it comes to building a truly democratic society. If the current government will not understand this message coming from the society at large, there is a risk that the international public opinion will witness a new reappearance of the protests. Unlike in 2005, the current civil society seems to be prepared to assume a greater role, including that of governing. This is also reflected in the increased level of responsibility already assumed over foreign affairs among the civil society participants, e.g. in the drafting of foreign policy, but also among interest groups with the potential to influence the country's foreign policy direction and options.

Conclusions

A multi-vector policy appears to be an increasingly less attractive option to the Ukrainian public. Even if sociologists continue to introduce in research questionnaires questions about the development of relations with Russia or the CIS and the Customs Union, the Ukrainian public opinion remains characterized by uniformity in terms of disinterest for the Eastern vector of foreign policy. Moreover, this has become a taboo subject and their approach has negative consequences for their originators.

In this article, the emphasis was put on how the Ukrainian public opinion has evolved and how it has transformed under the influence of internal political processes and of the foreign policy context. One of the first conclusions of this article refers to the still very different character in the foreign policy interests and priorities of the various stakeholders within the Ukrainian society, despite the fact that the country has to face military aggression from the Russian Federation.

The Ukrainian civil society has grown up greatly during the protests in the period of November 2013 - February 2014, becoming more responsible than the political elite. In Ukraine, no drastic changes have been registered in foreign policy during the Russian-Ukrainian war, i.e. from March 2014 to present. However, the support of the public for different models of regional integration has changed considerably. The Eastern model has fallen into disgrace and can only find supporters in the East. Most of the Ukrainian public opted for the European and Euro-Atlantic integration processes, i.e. democracy, European values and principles. Unfortunately, this preference on part of the Ukrainian public contravenes the Russian interests. Therefore, Ukraine finds itself in a position where promoting its foreign policy interests no longer means only increasing its role in the system of international relations, but primarily refers to the restoration of its territorial integrity and national security.

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RUSSIA'S MODIFIED FOREIGN POLICY AND THE DYNAMICS OF ITS MILITARY DOCTRINE

DALI KURDADZE

List of Contents

Russia's new Military Doctrine
The dynamics of Russian military thinking: 2000-2014
Military reform
The dynamics of Russian foreign policy
Conclusion

Russia's new Military Doctrine

Russia's new Military Doctrine of 2014 evidently listed national interests relating to the Russian military thinking and foreign policy priorities. The overall impression is that Russian military and security elite is trying to adapt to the new reality of a globalized, interdependent world and carry out the realistic approach to modern warfare. The doctrine differs from its 2010 predecessor mainly in tone and includes some new aspects of security such as economic and social dimensions.

As its predecessor, the 2014 Military Doctrine differentiates between “*dangers*” and “*threats*”: the former designates concerns, the latter possible sparks of conflict. According to the new military doctrine, despite a decreased probability of a large - scale war against the Russian Federation, a number of areas of military threats have come to the foreground. In particular, destabilization of countries bordering Russia and the deployment of foreign troops close to Russian border (Doctrine 2014).

Another interesting development is the strengthened connection between internal and external threat perceptions. Under the title of the main internal military dangers the “actions aimed at violent change of the Russian constitutional order, destabilization of the political and social environment, disorganization of the functioning of governmental bodies, crucial civilian and military facilities and information infrastructure of Russia” are noted (Doctrine 2014). The importance of joint efforts of the state, society and the individual for the protection of the Russian Federation is highly prioritized. The doctrine calls for a strengthened military-patriotic education and morale as well as improved security in the sphere of information. Presumably, these new trends indicate the growing concerns among the Russian military establishment with avoiding a new “Maidan” in Russia itself.

The new doctrine underlines the increased role of information and communication technologies in modern Russian security perception. Activities having informational

impact on the population, especially on the young citizens of the country, with the purpose of undermining the historical, spiritual and patriotic traditions in the field of defense of the Fatherland - are mentioned as a main internal military danger to the Russian Federation (Doctrine 2014). Freedom of the press in Russia has significantly deteriorated recently. Media outlets are highly controlled by *Roskomnadzor*, the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media. On March 12, 2014 Russian online newspaper Lenta.ru which is one of the most popular Russian language resources faced censorship and staff changes (Gorbachev 2015). Roskomnadzor also blocked the online publications EJ.ru, Grani.ru, Kasparov.ru and the LiveJournal blog of Russian activist Alexei Navalny (Soldatov and Borogan 2015).

The new Military Doctrine notes that the existing international security architecture does not provide equal security for all states (Doctrine 2014). The world is considered a more perilous and dangerous place. Likewise, the newest National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation also reflects tense relations between Russia and the West. According to the strategy – formation of a new polycentric model of the world is accompanied by the growth of the global and regional instability. New threats to national security are complex and interconnected in character and Russia's attempt to exercise independent internal and foreign policy causes counteraction from the US and their allies as they seek to preserve their dominance in world affairs (Security Strategy 2015, 4). Moscow still claims that it is to ensure the protection of Russian citizens abroad from armed attacks against them, which allows to launch military activities outside Russia's border (Doctrine 2014).

As for nuclear deterrent approach, Russia's arsenal is meant to deter both nuclear and conventional conflict, but nuclear forces can be used only in case of an existential threat (Doctrine 2014). However, what can be considered as an existential threat is not clear. Since the start of the conflict in Ukraine, Russian political elite including President Vladimir Putin started to make open nuclear threats. Such kind of political rhetoric is very dangerous especially when the decision to use nuclear weapons is made only by one person - the President of the Russian Federation.

The Arctic is considered a new region of strategic importance. In 2014, the Northern Fleet United Command (OSK Sever) was created, regular patrols over the Arctic Ocean were resumed, military bases reopened and military exercises are being held (Conley and Rohlhoff 2015). Since April, 2014, the Arctic border infrastructure has become the new strategic priority of FSB due to President Putin's order at the expanded collegium of FSB in Moscow (Nilsen 2014). Among the primary duties listed in the doctrine for the country's armed forces during times of peace is the protection of Russia's national interests in the Arctic (Doctrine 2014).

These are the most noteworthy aspects of Russia's new military doctrine (2014), and even more so when we analyze the overall dynamics of Russian military doctrines from 2000 to 2014.

The dynamics of Russian military thinking: 2000-2014

The Military Doctrine of 2000 was a document for a transitional period - the period of the formation of democratic statehood and a mixed economy, the transformation of Russia's military organization and the dynamic transformation of the system of international relations. In 2000, Vladimir Putin becomes the President of the former superpower. Russia's economy was stagnating, internal power struggles devastated state institutions and military capabilities had deteriorated. In addition, Russia was losing its reputation as a global or even a regional power.

The Military Doctrine of 2000 reflected this existing reality. The document was strongly defensive in nature and was based on the detailed assessment of the ongoing military-political situation. Its predominant element was to condemn the international community for continuous ignoring of Russia and opposing its strengthening as an influential center in a multipolar world (Doctrine 2000). Later, in the Military Doctrines of 2010 and 2014 such tone is also appearing, but not so sharply, which alludes to Russia feeling more vulnerable during this period of time marked by the country's transition.

The Military Doctrine of 2000 identified security threats in a broad and general way. Russia was more focused on its own internal weaknesses and flaws. Regarding nuclear power, the Military Doctrine of 2000 permitted it to counter aggression in critical situations for national security, although what would be considered "critical situations" was not clear (Doctrine 2000). Besides that, it also mentioned that the probability of such circumstances has diminished (Doctrine 2000). Obviously, Russia tried to balance its vulnerability in conventional strength with the emphasis on the nuclear deterrent. Focusing on nuclear capabilities also meant Russia's aspiration to be one of the major military players internationally. In the 2010 and 2014 Military Doctrines, Russia is ready to use its military power in cases where the "very existence" of the Russian state is threatened (Doctrines 2010; 2014).

As for military blocs and alliances, in 2000 Russia regarded them as a threat, not elaborating further. The document only assessed threats (*opasnost*) to Russian security. Unlike its predecessor, both the 2010 and the 2014 doctrines referred to *dangers* (*ugroza*) which are regarded as more important and explicitly defined. Specifically, in 2010, the Doctrine identified NATO expansion and the deployment of foreign military contingents on territories neighboring Russia or its allies as a danger (Doctrine 2010). It seems that Georgian and Ukrainian Euro-Atlantic aspirations as well as the American military contingents in Romania and Bulgaria were the main reasons for these changes.

The Military Doctrine of 2014 also referred to NATO expansion as a desire to provide the force potential of the Alliance with global functions violating the international law (Doctrine 2014). What's more, establishing a US-led anti-missile defense shield in Central Europe is viewed as an activity directly threatening Russia. Likewise, the Military Doctrine 2014 and the National Security Strategy also clearly note that "the determining aspect of Russia's relations with NATO remains the fact that NATO plans to extend the alli-

ance's military infrastructure to Russia's borders, and attempts to endow NATO with global functions that go counter to norms of international law, which is unacceptable to Russia" (Strategy 2015, 37-38). According to the document, the West's intention is to counter the integration processes and create hotbeds of tension in the Eurasian region. This is seen as having a negative impact on the implementation of Russian national interests. The US and EU's support to "anti-constitutional" Ukrainian Government has led to the conflict and deep split inside the Ukrainian society (Strategy 2015, 5).

Protecting Russian citizens abroad is a recurring theme in all doctrines. The 2010 Military Doctrine declares that Russian armed forces might be used outside Russia to protect the interests of Russian Federation as well as its citizens. The distribution of Russian passports to the citizens of Georgia's break-away regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the subsequent 2008 war between Russia and Georgia perhaps serves as the best example. The ongoing situation in East Ukraine where Russia claims to protect its citizens is also evidence that Moscow is following through on its right to use military force abroad. Furthermore, comparative analysis of the 2000, 2010 and 2014 Military Doctrines reveals Russia's progressive economic interests. Namely, the 2014 doctrine further broadens the reach of Russian strategic economic interests to the Arctic region.

In all the military doctrines, CSTO, Belarus, CIS countries and SCO remain strategic partners of Russian Federation in enhancing collective security and military-political cooperation. The 2010 military doctrine even defines EU and NATO as potential allies in the sphere of collective security (Doctrine 2010). However, unlike CSTO, Belarus, CIS and SCO, both the EU and NATO were excluded from the list of military-political cooperation (Doctrine 2010). This underlines the fact that these actors did not belong to the list of desired military partners. The 2014 Military Doctrine states that NATO affects international security architecture and considers CSTO a potential equivalent to it. This narrative is telling of how Russia attempts to replace the Western-led military bloc with Russian-led security alliance, creating a new regional security architecture providing more peace and stability.

According to all doctrines since 2000, ensuring Russia's security is becoming more multifaceted, complex and cautious. The 2010 and especially the 2014 Military Doctrine clearly demonstrated Russia's renewed attention to economic and social aspects, communication and information technologies as well as close linkage to external and internal threats.

Military reform

The centrality of the Military Doctrine in Russian military-political planning means that any changes in nuance and language are very important. All military doctrines since 2000 showed that the probability of large-scale conflict was lowered and Russia was more focused on regional or local conflicts. The military reform undertaken in 2008 proved that Russia was seriously preparing for regional and local threats. Transformation to brigade-based military system was more convenient for such kind of conflicts (Nichol 2011,

4-6).

Russian-Georgian conflict of 2008 revealed large-scale operational failures of Russian Military such as soldier discipline during the war, ineffective command and control systems, coordination issues, outdated technology, old-fashion artillery, lack of night-vision equipment and reliable communication (Bryce-Rogers 2013, 348-355). Russian Army needed restructuring into Western-type expeditionary forces, comprising well-equipped and trained troops with strategic air and sea lift capacities as well as professional non-commissioned officer corps.

In October of 2008, Minister of Defense Anatoly Serdyukov (the Minister of Defense 2007-2012) announced the launch of military reform. By 2008, Russian military system was enormous in size, disorganized, obsolete and cost-ineffective. It was absolutely insufficient for modern warfare. The combat readiness of the armed forces was necessary to be improved by abolishing the unit levels of division and regiment (Mazitans 2014, 5-37). In 2009, the National Security Strategy to 2020 also stated that “The restructuring, optimization and development of the military-industrial complex of the Russian Federation in the medium term corresponds to the resolution of challenges regarding the comprehensive and timely provision of modern armaments and specialized technology to the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, other troops, military formations and bodies” (Security Strategy to 2020). Hence, brigade-based organizational structure was intended for reaching permanent combat readiness. The systems of six military districts and seven armies were replaced with four new military districts and ten army systems (Mazitans 2014, 5-37).

The most important part of the reform was to rearm the Russian Military. The State Armament Program 2011-2020 (SAP) replaced previous ones which were not fully implemented. The reasons were the lack of finances, corruption and old-fashioned Russian defense industry. These reasons remain also the main stumbling block for SAP 2020. The program is a very ambitious undertaking and in case of its successful implementation, the Russian military will be transformed into one of the strongest modern and combat-capable armed forces. The report on the results of operations for 2014, introduced at the enlarged session of the board the Russian Defense Ministry claims that “in 2014 the operability of armament and equipment had been brought up to 85%, that is 5% more than in the previous year. This was achieved by restoration of repair bodies in units, rationalization of maintenance and repair planning. Such activities are hoped to allow reductions in costs of the SAP 2025” (Report 2014). SAP 2025 will be launched in 2016, replacing SAP 2011-2020.

However, Western sanctions, lower oil-prices and more pressure on civilian sector will be the factors which will definitely delay the program. Lack of professional workers and corruption at all levels as well as strained civilian sector remain the main risk factors. Besides that, the ability of Russian defense industry to produce new weapons and adapt to modern-day warfare is quite questionable. The rearmament program requires additional financial resources which will not be easy to find. If the Russian military cannot reach the sufficient level of professionalism, military reform may have negative future effects, not

only in terms of cost. In this regard, the current situation in eastern Ukraine is also threatening for Russia.

The dynamics of Russian foreign policy

If we compare the nowadays Russia to the 1990s one, we will see astonishing changes and transformation. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia experienced economic depression in the mid-1990. Financial collapse of 1998, two Chechen wars, rising of the oligarchs and erosion of state institutions had led to the political crisis which ended in Boris Yeltsin's resignation.

During 2000-2003, Vladimir Putin was primarily focused on the centralization and consolidation of power inside the country. Russia needed restoration of the collapsed economy and more stability at home in order to reemerge as a global player (Toroshelidze 2008, 40-44).

After Vladimir Putin's presidency and reforms undertaken by both Putin and later Dmitry Medvedev, Russia has reemerged as a wealthier, more stable and assertive actor on the global arena. At the same time, the process of democratization in Russia has been put on hold as the freedom of the media and civil society activities have been curbed over the recent years.

Today, Russia is trying to play the role of a powerful, assertive empire. Strengthening the status of Russia as one the premiere leading powers of the world is stated as its long-term national interest (Strategy 2015, 8).

Through this approach, the main function of Russia's foreign policy is to portray Russia as a country surrounded by enemies and enhance popular support among Russian citizenry. Russia's internal security policy is also mobilized against "foreign enemies". According to law passed in November 2012, NGOs that receive foreign donations are labeled as "Foreign Agents" in Russia (The Russia Monitor 2012). As a result, in 2013 organizations such as Amnesty International, Moscow Helsinki Group, Human Rights Watch were singled out for checks during massive raids by the representatives of the Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Justice of Russia. In May 2015, according to new legislative amendments, the Russian authorities can shut down "undesirable" NGOs without a court order if the prosecutor general determines they pose a threat to national security (The Guardian 2015).

As the military doctrines revealed, Russian military and political elite concluded that security in the 21st Century has become a broader concept and includes not only military, but also political, economic and social dimensions. Russian foreign policy reiterates this new trend and becomes more focused on "soft power" instruments. Information wars, increased communication at all levels, economic expansion, diplomatic networking, mobilizing of public opinion, strong personality cult of Vladimir Putin, rehabilitation of Soviet patriotism and more cynical rhetoric towards post-Soviet countries have become the new levers of a new Russian foreign policy. Since 2000, Russia has increased the prices of oil for post-Soviet states including its major transit countries - Belarus and Ukraine (Reuters

2012). Increased oil prices helped Russia to mobilize additional financial resources, boost Russian military capabilities and restore infrastructure.

Although Russia was always interested in its neighborhood, “Color Revolutions” in 2003-2004 made Russian foreign policy more active in post-soviet space. Boosting of military capabilities, strengthening economic and political presence in the “Near Abroad” and active energy policy represent the new character of Russian foreign policy. A case in point is the winter of 2009 when Russia left Ukraine without gas. Prior to that, in 2007 Alexander Lukashenko was forced to share half of the “Beltransgaz” with “Gazprom”. Furthermore, Russia improved relations with Azerbaijan which is the key country for Russia to preserve its influence in the Caspian and South Caucasian regions. The August 2008 war with Georgia demonstrated Russia’s robust return to the South Caucasus but also revealed its military weaknesses. Military reforms undertaken during 2008-2010 were the reflection of changes in Russian foreign policy priorities and military thinking.

Militarily, in 2010, Russia was quite different that in 2000 as the 2010 Military Doctrine demonstrated more assertive, confident Russia, extremely cautious of external threats. The doctrine reflected the fact that Russia was a much stronger, active political player which no longer regarded itself only as regional power. On 16 March of 2014, after “Ukrainian Maidan” and the subsequent events in Crimea, 97% of Crimean population voted to join Russia. Two days later, Russia’s President Vladimir Putin signed a bill to absorb Crimea into the Russian Federation (The Washington Post 2014). At the time of this writing, Russia is undertaking military operations in Syria but there are considerable doubts whether they are against IS or to help keep Assad regime in power.

The military doctrine of 2014 reflected the political-economic situation and Russia’s view of its future development. In 2013, Vladimir Putin approved the “Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation” which also repeats all of the above-mentioned trends in Russia’s self – perception. According to the new Foreign Policy Concept, international relations are in the process of transition where Russia’s goal is to be one of the influential and competitive poles of the modern world. Russia identifies itself as a nation with very specific identity. World becomes a place where various models and values start to clash and compete against each other thus global competition takes place on a civilizational level (Concept 2013). As George Kennan explained in his long telegram more than half a century ago, “At the bottom of Kremlin’s neurotic view of world affairs is traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity” (Kennan 1946). Nowadays, Russian rulers still fear foreign penetration, direct contact between Western world and their own, because “Russians may learn the truth about the world or foreigners will learn the truth about world within” (Kennan 1946). Russia’s increased concentration on its information insecurity is another manifestation of its attempt to isolate Russian people from the outside world. Not out of tune with this mindset, Russia’s Military Doctrines, its foreign policy in line with its Foreign Policy Concept inform the country’s ambitious goals to be an impressive regional as well as global actor.

Conclusions

Comparative analysis of the Russian Military Doctrines together with the practical developments in Russia's foreign policy revealed several implications. High correlation of doctrinal thinking with foreign policy points to the centralization of military doctrines in Russian political thinking.

The linkage between domestic and external threat perceptions have been strengthened, the role of information and communication technologies have increased and Russia is striving to mobilize its government and all its citizens in the protection of "Fatherland" with joint efforts, coordinated actions and heightened military-patriotic mood. As already mentioned above, in order to prevent armed conflicts the Russian Federation maintains the mobilization readiness of the Russian economy, public authorities, local governments and organizations (Doctrine 2014). Strict control over media and civil society is the practical implementation of this approach.

Today, Russian political and military thinking is focused on transforming Russia into a more influential and powerful global actor. Nowadays, Russia feels freer to assert its security interests elsewhere in the world, including its close neighborhood (Ukraine) as well as regions far away from Russia (Syria).

Despite the drop of oil prices by half, the decline in the value of the Ruble and western sanctions, Russia will probably attempt to realize its strategic military priorities and intentions identified in its military doctrines: Security Strategy and Foreign Policy Concept. As the doctrinal analysis together with the dynamics in foreign policy demonstrated, Russia always utilizes all possible ways to ensure its military and political interests and to eliminate security threats. Besides that, it has become more adaptable to new changes than ever before.

One of the questions that all decision makers from EU and post-Soviet space have to answer is how to respond to Russia's progressing ambitions and expansionistic foreign policy. If any of them hope to cooperate with Russia, they must be well aware of Russia's interests, goals and priorities. All of them are clearly listed in Russia's strategic documents even since 2000. Western leaders need to be well aware of these basic principles of Russian security perception and the way of decision-making process. The United States and NATO must act in a coordinated way to assist European allies to resist pro-Russian populist parties, intelligence operations and propaganda. As for post-Soviet countries, they have to pursue liberal-democratic principles in order to consolidate democracy inside their countries, unless Russia interferes in their internal affairs with the purpose of "protecting Russian citizens".

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RUSSIAN HYBRID WARFARE IN EASTERN EUROPE: CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

ROBERT PERSON

List of Contents

The concept of Hybrid War
Hybrid War in Russian military thinking
Russian Hybrid Warfare in practice
The spectre of Hybrid War in the Baltics
Conclusion

The concept of Hybrid War

While the concept of hybrid warfare is considered by many to be a relatively modern phenomenon, several scholars have noted that it shares many similarities with well-known strategies and tactics of warfare. This has led to comparisons and contrasts of hybrid warfare with concepts such as full spectrum operations, asymmetric warfare (McCuen 2008), irregular warfare (Deep 2015; Glenn 2009, 7), compound warfare (Hoffman 2009), comprehensive warfare, “whole of government operations” (Glenn 2009, 5), and a “contemporary form of guerrilla warfare” (Hoffman 2009, 1). Frank G. Hoffman, perhaps the preeminent scholar on hybrid warfare, offers the following definition that has been adopted throughout much recent scholarship: “Hybrid threats incorporate a full range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder. Hybrid Wars can be conducted by both state and a variety of non-state actors. These multi-modal activities can be conducted by separate units, or even by the same unit, but are generally operationally and tactically directed and coordinated within the main battlespace to achieve synergistic effects in the physical and psychological dimensions of conflict” (Hoffman 2007, 8). By contrast, retired U.S. Army Colonel John McCuen emphasizes the multiple battle spaces of hybrid warfare rather than the specific tactics used, noting that hybrid war involves “three decisive battlegrounds: the conventional battleground; the conflict zone’s indigenous population battleground; and the home front and international community battleground” (McCuen 2008, 107). Crucially, what makes the modern concept of hybrid warfare distinct from older concepts like irregular warfare is the degree to which hybrid operations are centrally coordinated and directed on both an operational and tactical level, a coordination that has been the hallmark of Russian hybrid warfare in Ukraine since 2014.

Hybrid War in Russian military thinking

Elements of the concept of modern hybrid warfare can also be found in Soviet and Russian military thinking and doctrine. Maria Snegovaya argues that Moscow's current operations have adopted the older Soviet military principle of "reflexive control," defined as "a means of conveying to a partner or an opponent specifically prepared information to incline him to voluntarily make the predetermined decision desired by the initiator of the action" (Snegovaya 2015, 10). A component of Soviet military thinking since the 1960s, the essence of reflexive control is the use of disinformation to cause the enemy to take actions favorable to one's objectives. Similarly, the Russian tactic of *maskirovka*, defined as a comprehensive action plan intended as a form of "camouflage, concealment, deception, imitation, disinformation, secrecy, security, feints, diversions, and simulation" against an enemy has been practiced in Russia's military and nonmilitary campaigns dating back to the Napoleonic Wars (Bartkowski 2015, 8).

More recently General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed forces of Russia has articulated a concept of "modern war" – referred to as the "Gerasimov Doctrine" by many – that bears a striking resemblance to the concept of hybrid warfare and to Russia's subsequent actions in Ukraine. Writing of this new form of war in 2013, Gerasimov asserts: "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 and force of weapons in their effectiveness. The focus of applied methods of conflict has altered the direction of the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other non-military measures – applied in coordination with the protest potential of the population. All this is supplemented by military means of a concealed character, including carrying out actions of informational conflict and the actions of special operations forces. The open use of forces – often under the guise of peacekeeping and crisis regulation – is resorted to only at a certain stage, primarily for the achievement of final success in the conflict" (Gerasimov 2013; Coalson 2014).

Gerasimov outlines a six-stage sequence of conflict development: 1) covert origins; 2) escalation; 3) start of conflict activities; 4) crisis; 5) resolution; and 6) restoration of peace/postconflict settlement. Each stage is characterized by a blend of overt and covert efforts, including military and nonmilitary actions. In the early phases of conflict, these actions can include the formation of coalitions and unions within the target state; formation of political opposition; economic sanctions and embargoes; a break in diplomatic relations; political and diplomatic pressure; information warfare; military strategic deterrence measures; strategic deployment of forces; and conduct of kinetic military operations (AOWG 2015, 5).

Writing under a well-known pseudonym just days before the Russian annexation of Crimea, Kremlin advisor Vladislav Surkov discussed of a new form of "non-linear war" that involves "everybody and everything, all aspects of life, while still remaining elusive in its main contours" (Racz 2015, 43:37). Similarly, Russian military theorists Ser-

gei Chekinov and Sergei Bogdanov elaborate a concept of what they call “new generation warfare” characterized by a multi-phase approach beginning with an “extremely intensive months-long coordinated non-military campaign launched against the target country, including diplomatic, economic, ideological, psychological, and information measures” in concert with a heavy propaganda campaign intended to demoralize the enemy population and forces (Racz 2015, 43-38). The second stage consists of large-scale reconnaissance and subversive missions in addition to full-scale electronic warfare. Finally, the overt military phase witnesses the use of ground forces to isolate and eliminate remaining military and civilian resistance (Racz 2015, 43-39).

The 2010 Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation echoes these themes and enshrines them in official Russian doctrine. Contemporary military conflicts, the document notes, are characterized by “the integrated utilization of military force and forces and resources of a nonmilitary character...the intensification of the role of information warfare...[and] the creation on the warring sides’ territories of a permanent zone of military operations.” Such conflicts increasingly entail “the presence of a broad range of military-political, economic, strategic, and other objectives...[and] the prior implementation of measures of information warfare in order to achieve political objectives without the utilization of military force and, subsequently, in the interest of shaping a favourable response from the world community to the utilization of military force” (*Presidential Admin. of the RF 2010*). The December 2014 update to the doctrine added the following telling elements to the list of features of the wars that Russia expects to fight in the future: “participation in military operations of irregular military formations and private military companies...use of indirect and asymmetric methods of operations...[and] employment of political forces and public associations financed and guided from abroad” (*Presidential Admin. of the RF 2014*). Thus, it is clear that the paradigm of hybrid warfare in Russia has made the leap from military theory to military doctrine and practice in Russia over the last several years.

Russian Hybrid Warfare in Practice

It is no accident that these descriptions of hybrid warfare in recent Russian military thinking resemble the form of warfare carried out against Ukraine since 2014, where Russia has enjoyed near-perfect conditions to execute hybrid warfare as a means of achieving its strategic objectives (Popescu 2015, 2). However, some doubt whether such favorable preconditions for Russian hybrid war can be found elsewhere, potentially limiting the application of a similar strategy against other adversaries (Kofman and Rojansky 2015).

Since the start of the conflict, Moscow has pursued an aggressive information war in an attempt to shape the narrative of events (Snegovaya 2015). This included accusations that the Maidan movement was comprised of fascists, and that the post-Yanukovich government presented a direct threat to the rights of Russian compatriots living in Ukraine (AOWG 2015, 40). The cornerstone of Russia’s information strategy in Ukraine has been the persistent, vociferous denial of any Russian involvement in the conflict waged by the “peoples’ republics” against Kyiv. Since the Russian-speaking populations in Crimea

and the Donbas already consumed media and news produced in Russia, they were easily reached and influenced by Russia's propaganda machine. Furthermore, broadcasting facilities were among the first pieces of critical infrastructure taken over by pro-Russian separatists, further cementing Moscow's ability to shape the conflict's narrative (Racz 2015, 81).

Native separatists in these regions have been central to Russia's hybrid warfare in Ukraine (Racz 2015, 78). These separatists (or their sympathizers) serve as targets for persuasion through propaganda efforts, they serve as coalition partners within the target country in the pre-conflict stages of operations, and – most importantly – they serve as “camouflage” for Russian military forces during the earliest stages of armed conflict. One reason the “little green men” in unmarked uniforms were successful is because they were able to operate under the cover of native separatists whom Kyiv was reluctant to suppress early on. This dose of plausible deniability injected just enough uncertainty and delay into the situation to allow Russia to complete its invasion and annexation of Crimea before the Ukrainian government and its international partners could mount an effective response.

Similarly, the presence of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Crimea allowed for easy importation of special forces under the guise of regular troop rotations through the naval base (Perry 2015, 15). Russia's border with the Donbas region also allowed easy infiltration into Eastern Ukraine. In both cases, special forces served as unmarked vanguard forces central to the seizure of key government buildings and critical infrastructure (Andras 2015, 60; Perry 2015, 15). This vanguard laid the groundwork for an eventual inflow of active duty Russian forces, all under Moscow's blanket denial of any direct involvement in the fighting. One February 2015 estimate suggested approximately 14,400 Russian troops on Ukrainian soil supporting approximately 29,000 separatists in the Donbas. This was in addition to the 29,000 Russian troops stationed in Crimea and anywhere from 55,000 - 90,000 Russian troops massed on the Russian side of the border with Ukraine (Johnson 2015; Sutyagin 2015). Russian military units involved in combat operations in Ukraine include forces from the motorized infantry, airborne and air assault, special forces, interior ministry troops, armored divisions, rocket and artillery brigades, and combat support brigades (Sutyagin 2015). These forces have been able to operate under ideal conditions thanks to Russia's control of the Ukrainian border.

Another key element of Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine has been the provision of weapons to separatists. An expert report prepared by the Atlantic Council utilizes a variety of sophisticated digital forensic methods to document Russian heavy weaponry present in Ukraine. This includes the Buk surface-to-air missile system that shot down Malaysia Airlines flight 17 in July 2014, as well as the 2S19 Msta-S self-propelled 152 mm howitzer system, the BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicle, the Kama-43269 armored reconnaissance vehicle, the Pantsir-S1 anti-air system, the 2B26 Grad rocket system, and the T-72B3 main battle tank. This is not to mention the avalanche of shoulder launched surface to air missiles, mobile rocket launchers, anti-tank guided missiles, land mines, and small arms that have poured into Ukraine (Czuperski et al. 2015, 8–11).

Perhaps the defining feature of Russia's hybrid warfare in Crimea and Ukraine

has been the “near perfect coordination” among the various elements of hybrid strategy and tactics (Popescu 2015, 2; Racz 2015, 51). While elements of irregular, asymmetric, compound, and informational warfare have long been part of the belligerent’s toolbox, it is the application of the full spectrum of measures in concert with one another that defines hybrid warfare in theory and in practice in Ukraine, and there can be little doubt that all of the main threads of the conflict lead back to Moscow. This effective coordination helps explain Russia’s success in controlling the parameters of the conflict, raising concerns that hybrid war may become a “likely model for future conflicts on Russia’s periphery” (Kofman and Rojansky 2015, 1).

The spectre of Hybrid War in the Baltics

Russia’s success in annexing Crimea, engineering a “frozen conflict” in Ukraine, and destabilizing the Ukrainian government has led to rising fears that the Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania may be Moscow’s next targets of hybrid war (Blank 2016). Indeed, fears that these NATO members might be the subject of a Russian attack prompted a recent study by the RAND Corporation simulating a surprise Russian conventional attack, given current NATO forces stationed in the region (Shlapak and Johnson 2016). Similarly, an October 2015 analysis prepared by the United States Army’s Asymmetric Warfare Group explored the degree to which the Baltics might be at risk of a Russian hybrid threat (AOWG 2015).

These fears are based on an implicit comparison with Ukraine: like post-Maidan Ukraine, the Baltic states have pursued unambiguously pro-Western policies. Similarly, Estonia and Latvia are home to large minorities of ethnic Russians living within their borders. Twenty four percent of Estonia’s population is comprised of ethnic Russians, while Russians make up twenty six percent of Latvia’s population and six percent of Lithuania’s population. Many Baltic Russians carry more than two decades of grievances over citizenship, language, and cultural policies that have left these communities marginalized from mainstream political and economic life in the countries that they call home. These grievances have raised concerns that Russia may try to use the Baltic Russians as an entry point to execute a strategy of hybrid warfare, much as it seized on separatist protest movements in Ukraine as a basis for military intervention.

Several elements of the “Gerasimov Doctrine” have appeared in the Baltics over the last year, stoking fears of a Russian hybrid threat. This includes an aggressive informational campaign in the Russian-language media consumed by most Baltic Russians. These media outlets, all of which are produced or broadcast from Russia, portray the Baltic governments as neo-fascist regimes bent on the economic and political subjugation of ethnic Russians (AOWG 2015, 31). Similar accusations were made against the Kyiv government and served to mobilize separatists in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, leading many to fear that Russia is attempting to spark similar protests as cover for a hybrid invasion.

Similarly, there are well-documented political and economic links between Moscow and pro-Russian NGOs and political parties in the Baltics. These organizations have

worked to spread similar propaganda about nazification of the Baltics and discrimination against the Russian-speaking population (AOWG 2015, 41). While some Russian parties in the Baltics have sought to advocate Russian minority interests through normal democratic channels, the lack of transparency in the financial links between these parties and partner organizations in Russia raise questions about their independence. While the European Centre for Minority Issues has documented recent instigations of separatism in the Baltic States by a variety of organizations, as of yet these efforts have failed to gain a following among the Baltic Russian populations (Kuklys and Carstocea 2015).

Finally, Russia has carried out numerous large-scale military exercises over the last several years in proximity to its borders with Estonia and Latvia. Writes the Asymmetric Operations Working Group, “Russia appears to be testing the full spectrum of processes and people required for large-scale mobilization and maneuver” (AOWG 2015, 53). Furthermore, recent exercises have been “snap” exercises, executed on command with no prior notice as would be required for a surprise invasion. Recalling that massive troop mobilizations and exercises on the Ukrainian border served as a launching point of Russia’s conventional tactics in the Donbas, some fear that these exercises are practice runs for future intervention in the Baltics.

Disturbing as these instances of Russian provocation are, it is important not to overstate the risk of a Russian hybrid invasion of the Baltic States: there are several critical factors that make full-scale hybrid warfare against the Baltics unlikely. First, we must consider Russia’s motives in launching such a war. In Ukraine, there were several motives for intervention. First, Russia was able to solve once and for all the status of the Russian naval base in Sevastopol, long used as a bargaining chip by Kyiv against Moscow. Second, the intervention reinforced the red line that Moscow has drawn against Ukrainian membership in NATO. With open territorial disputes arising from the still-simmering conflicts in the east, NATO is unlikely to extend membership to Ukraine in the foreseeable future. Finally, Moscow’s long-term strategy appears to use the simmering conflicts in the Donbas to destabilize the pro-western government in Kyiv in a bid to reinstall a pro-Russian government in Ukraine and thereby keep the country in Moscow’s orbit (Person 2015a).

None of these objectives are possible to achieve in the Baltics, calling into question what Russia would gain from invading. Unless access to the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad is threatened, Russia has no equivalent of Sevastopol to secure. Furthermore, unlike Ukraine, Moscow cannot veto or undo Baltic membership in NATO and the EU. That ship has sailed: a Russian attack on the Baltics would be met not with expressions of sympathy, outrage, and sanctions (as in Ukraine), but rather with a full NATO military response. This is a conflict that Russia simply cannot afford given its current economic woes. Nor could NATO shy from the fight: should the alliance fail to rise to the occasion for which it was formed, its relevance and credibility would disappear. Soon the alliance itself would follow. Finally, given the narrative of illegitimate Russian foreign occupation that has long been a strand of Baltic nationalism, it is hard to imagine Moscow (or its proxies) ever being allowed a seat of influence at the table in domestic Baltic politics. This is what Russia sought in Kyiv, but it is something that would never be allowed in Riga, Tallinn, or Vilnius (Person

2015b).

If clear motives appear to be lacking, so too are the “perfect conditions” absent in the Baltics. First, we have already noted that NATO membership is a crucial difference. Any hybrid threat, perhaps hidden under the guise of a separatist movement, would eventually require conventional military support. Sooner or later, Russia’s fingerprints would be found on that support, just as they were in Ukraine. This would inevitably provoke a response from NATO, the EU, and the United States far more severe than that in Ukraine given the interests at stake. Though we may dislike Putin’s policies, there is little question that he behaves rationally; any rational strategic thinker would think twice before picking a costly and devastating fight with NATO.

There is also reason to question whether the Baltic Russian populations themselves are ripe for manipulation and instigation of separatism. Despite legitimate political and cultural grievances, living standards for Baltic Russians have risen significantly since 1991, especially in comparison to their compatriots on the other side of the border. Most Baltic Russians recognize that they are materially better off in the Baltic States where they enjoy the benefits of EU membership as well. This orientation is especially strong among younger generations who have had an easier time learning native languages as required for socioeconomic upward mobility. Research has suggested that separatist sentiments, organizations, and movements have failed to take root in the Baltics to date (AOWG 2015, 47). Nonetheless, some would warn that it would only take a small separatist minority (perhaps imported from Russia) to provide the necessary cover for a larger Russian intervention.

Conclusion

Though Russia is unlikely to launch a hybrid war in the Baltics, we cannot assume benign Russian intentions in the region. There is little doubt that Russia will continue its provocations, its propaganda, and its military exercises. But rather than prelude to eventual warfare, these measures should be considered long-term disruptive and destabilizing measures that are unlikely to escalate given the constraints noted above. Though these provocations are part of the hybrid warfare toolkit, their use does not necessarily imply a path that ends in war. To believe otherwise without a careful, sober analysis of interests, motives, and context threatens a dangerous mis-assessment of risk and costly misallocation of otherwise scarce resources.

If not laying the groundwork for hybrid warfare, what is the purpose of Russia’s provocations in the Baltics? These measures are more likely motivated by a desire to keep the Baltic States, NATO, and especially the United States off-balance and distracted, thereby complicating and constraining American action in the region and around the globe. Indeed, the achievement of a “multipolar world” in which the United States is constrained in its ability to act unilaterally without regard to the interests of other great powers has been a hallmark of Putin’s foreign policy since his famous Munich speech in 2007. Provocations in the Baltics, like military intervention in Syria, force NATO and the United States to contend with Russian interests in a way that they have not for many years. In Putin’s eyes,

this forced deference to Russian interests is the essence of great power status.

However, there are serious questions as to how long Putin can afford this great power status that he has purchased at immense cost in Ukraine and Syria. With no end in sight to low oil prices, a weak ruble, western sanctions, and anemic economic performance, even the Kremlin chess master may have under-estimated the long-term costs of his hyper-assertive foreign policy strategy. This may prove a blessing to the Baltics and a curse to Russia in the long run, though only time will tell.

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HYBRID MAIDAN IN MOLDOVA: APPROBATION OF RUSSIAN METHODS OF INFLUENCE

SERGIY GERASYMCHUK

List of Contents

Historical context

“The affair with the billion” and its game-changing effect

Moldovan “Hybrid Maidan”?

The foreseen changes in the parliament of Moldova

“An elephant in the room”

Historical context

Until 2009, Moldova was a barely visible actor on the international stage.

Almost immediately after gaining independence, the country has been forced to deal with significant challenges, not least of which was the violent conflict over the separatist region of Transnistria - supported by the Russian military - which sought to break away in 1992. However since the cease-fire agreement signed that July by Moldovan and Russian authorities, the situation has largely remained frozen. Nonetheless, in the ensuing years, Moldova’s leaders experienced a certain degree of success in balancing the European Union (which reached the country’s borders with the accession of Romania in 2007) and Russia. Moldova, facing the challenge of separatism and pressure from Russia was developing its own “third way” which resulted in constitutional neutrality and years of balancing between the EU and Russian Federation (very often Moldova was following the Ukrainian multi-vector model and each warming of relations between Ukraine and the West or Russia was followed by similar changes in Moldovan foreign policy).

Vladimir Voronin, the country’s president between 2001 and 2009, benefited from certain neutrality of both external players (EU and Russian Federation) and used their non-interference for promoting his political power. This process was not supplemented with the economic reforms and the process of democratization and Europeanization was quite volatile. That could not last forever. On the one hand, there was a demand for changes within the Moldovan society. On the other hand the increasing level of competition between Russia and the West in the regions of Eastern Europe also caused the necessity to make a choice between Western (pro-European) and Eastern (pro-Russian) vectors of development.

After the PCRM’s defeat in the 2009 parliamentary elections (and the ensuing riots also know as Moldovan “Twitter revolution”) Voronin stepped aside, and the Alliance for European Integration comprised of former opposition parties gained power. The very fact of the revolution in 2009 proved that democratic citizenship has changed in nature,

and there has been a diversification of the range, forms and targets of political expression (Christensen 2011, 39) whereas youth was the driving force of these changes.

The new government was shaped by the group of Liberal, Democratic and Liberal Democratic parties who won the prevailing majority of seats in the parliament. European direction of the development of Moldova was unquestioned.

Paradoxically, the success of the pro-European forces in the election of 2009 highlighted significant weaknesses in the country's political system, as well as the vulnerability of the state as a whole. The inability of the member parties of the Alliance to reach agreement meant that for three years the parliament¹⁶ was unable to elect a new president. Relations among party leaders were tense, and the frequent emergence of new public corruption scandals only worsened the political environment. Although the EU was supporting the ruling alliance and in addition to signing the Association Agreement with the EU together with Georgia and Ukraine in June 2015, Moldova was also the only Eastern Partnership country whose citizens enjoy visa-free travel to the Schengen area, the ruling Alliance (while emphasizing its European ambitions) failed to implement domestic reforms and now the population's disappointment was growing. According to Transparency International Moldova, the legislature, the executive, the judiciary, the public sector, police, Central Election Commission, the ombudsperson, Audit Office, anticorruption authorities, political parties, mass media, civil society and private sector - are vulnerable to corruption, especially political parties, Parliament, and the judiciary branch (IPN Society 2014). More than once the ruling Alliance was balancing on the edge of political crisis and to some extent the politicians from ruling Liberal-Democratic Party of Moldova, Democratic Party of Moldova and Liberal Party of Moldova discredited not only their political brands but the idea of European integration *per se*.

The ongoing trend was expressed by the lack of trust towards the politicians who used pro-European rhetoric. As the outcome, the opposition forces which were using pro-Russian slogans could gain the support of protest electorate in the country whereas the disappointed supporters of Western-like democracy and European path of Moldova were abstaining from participation in the elections. Political forces appealing to re-launching of relations with Russia and the Customs Union (in particular the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova headed by Igor Dodon and Renato Usatii who is also at the head of "Partidului Nostru" party list) had the potential to become game-changers in Moldova. Besides, Russia was implicitly entering the game itself: spurred by frequent and long-lasting constitutional crisis, which made Moldova even more vulnerable to more interference in critical situations. However, Russia tried to convince the West that it is investing into a failing state (Варыханов 2014) (It is noteworthy to mention that the practice of labelling the states as "failed" via Russian sources is valid not only for the Republic of Moldova but for Ukraine as well).

¹⁶ Moldova did not have a directly elected presidency; instead, the president was chosen by Parliament, and had to obtain a super-majority vote of 61 out of 101 seats. The situation has changed after the March 4, 2016 decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova which enabled the voters to elect the country's president directly.

“The affair with the billion” and its game-changing effect

The affair with the theft of money from Moldovan banks started in November 2014 when Unibank, Banca de Economii and Banca Sociala received from the National Bank of Moldova a loan of about one billion dollars – the sum of money which is quite significant for the budget of this small republic (according to BBC assessment – creating a hole in the public finances equivalent to an eighth of GDP (Whewell 2015). Afterwards the money was transferred to offshore accounts through complex transactions, which has resulted in the banks going bankrupt.

The event itself was overshadowed by the parliamentary elections in Moldova in which the parties of pro-European Alliance for European Integration again managed to win a slight majority of seats in parliament and later on, pro-European parties shaped the government. But already in February 2015 the group of civil society activists declared the Manifest of Civic Platform titled “Truth and Dignity” in which they blamed the governmental officials for being involved in “one billion affair”. The Platform blamed the ruling Alliance for imitating reforms in the country (Platforma Civică Demnitate și Adevăr DA 2015). Although the Platform was not acting in the capacity of the political party, it attracted the attention of those citizens who were disappointed with the governing parties but still pro-European.

Despite the fact that the protestors did not get much attention from media and international partners of Moldova, they persistently organized protest rallies: in April 2015, May 2015, June and finally in September 2015. The main reason for the manifestation on September 6, 2015 was the hike in the cost of electricity. The leader of the platform, Vasile Năstase, demanded early elections and the resignation of the president, Nicolae Timofti. The protesters also made demands for the stripping of the MPs’ immunity, so they could stand trial.

Although the EU was not supporting the demands of the Platform directly, it certainly benefitted from its activities. Actually, the leaders of the Platform often voiced the same concerns regarding the developments in Moldova as the EU officials. Moreover, since the Platform was acting as a civil society actor and was articulating the shortcomings of the governmental policy, its role has become even more important. As Secrieru (2015) rightly points out “There was an acute deficit of publically manifested, bottom-up pressure on the government to tackle corruption. Until recently, specialised non-governmental organisations, funded by foreign donors, pushed for the rule of law and anti-corruption on behalf of the society. This approach, however, failed to generate the peaceful social discontent that would have forced the government to at least start listening. The Civic Action Platform Party protests filled this void.”

Indeed, the activities of the Platform alongside with some other internal and external drivers resulted in further investigation of the “one billion affair”. Moreover, on October 15 as the result of the investigation, former Prime Minister of Moldova Vlad Filat (often blamed for underperformance in Moldova’s reform process) lost his immunity and

was arrested for his alleged involvement in this fraud. However, simultaneously with some impact on fighting corruption in Moldova the Platform's protests gave impetus to the development of another kind of protests. Other political forces that tried to reap the benefits from the social unrest and protest mood of the electorate were on the pro-Russian side of the political spectrum: the Red Block, Socialist Party headed by Igor Dodon and "Partidului Nostru," a party headed by Renato Usatii joined the protests.

Moldovan "Hybrid Maidan"?

The growing pressure from the protestors aided by the left-wing parliamentary parties led to the collapse of the Moldovan government. Paradoxically, one of the demands voiced by the pro-reformist Platform was fulfilled on October 29, 2015 by members of pro-Russian Socialist party, Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova and Democratic Party of Moldova (which is often blamed for being one of the most corrupt political structures in the country). Moreover, the collapse of the government was greeted by both the Platform and its pro-Russian antagonists from "Partidului Nostru", as well as Socialists. All three players started to combine their efforts in organizing the protests. Whereas the Platform reached a degree of victory in its fight with the government which, in the opinion of protestors, was only espousing European values on a declaratory level, pro-Russian forces reached their goal in the struggle with the idea of European integration *per se*. It is worth to mention that under such circumstances the EU abstained from manifestation of any support for the protestors. We may assume that the initial intent on part of the EU was to promote the Platform and to convert it into the watchdog of Moldovan transformation. However when it turned out that the Platform could bring into power pro-Russian forces, the EU had to rethink its strategy.

Further developments in the Republic of Moldova were quite dynamic. On January 13, 2016 Vlad Plahotniuc (shadow leader of the Democratic Party) tried to solve the political crisis by his own means. In order not to give up power neither to the leaders of the Platform nor to pro-Russian forces, Democratic Party tried to nominate Plahotniuc himself as the new prime-minister. On the one hand such decision supported by the allegedly bribed members of various political parties (including part of the faction of the Communists) could lead to some sort of stabilization of the situation. But on the other hand, the EU was well-aware that by supporting Plahotniuc, Brussels would further compromise itself and the idea of European integration. Thus the president of Moldova Nicolae Timofti, after prior consultations with the ambassadors of the EU, the US and the representatives of Romanian leadership, agreed on the compromise – Plahotniuc was to appoint his proxy – Pavel Filip as prime minister but had to refrain from attempting to become the leader of the country himself. Since neither Plahotniuc nor the Western powers wanted early elections, which would most probably result in the majority of the seats in the parliament going to pro-Russian forces, they agreed to the proposed solution.

In order to show the gesture of good will on the eve of the voting in the parliament (January 19, 2016) the Assistant of the US State Secretary, Victoria Nuland while

on a visit in the neighboring Romania stated that both Washington and Bucharest will support the new government in Moldova. On January 20, 2015 the new government was shaped. The same day, the EU High representative Mogherini also issued a statement which indirectly expressed her support to the new government.

However, such a scenario was hardly acceptable for the pro-Russian parties and the Platform, and the protests escalated yet again. On January 24, 2016, despite the support the new government gained from the West, the leaders of the Platform together with Dodon and Usatii organized a meeting and demanded early presidential and parliamentary elections. Moreover, these political parties managed to get the support of pro-European forces e.g. European People's party headed by former Prime Minister Iurie Leanca and a popular former member of Liberal-Democratic party Maia Sandu who has launched her own political project.

Due to the support from the West, the new government has managed to stabilize the situation in the country. On the one hand, the government opened the dialogue with the protestors, promised to provide the opposition with the control over the Central Elections Commission of Moldova, persuaded Moldovagaz, the nation's gas distributor to lower the tariffs for the consumers and launched a promo-campaign aimed at whitewashing the image of the new government. That gives sufficient ground to assume that at least in the spring of 2016, no early elections will take place in Moldova and the new elected president will be at least declaratively pro-European (giving the EU some reason to believe that after the parliamentary elections the new government will not change the foreign policy course too dramatically). On the other hand, public demand for early parliamentary elections still remains high. It is quite probable that they will occur later this year and will bring new faces and political forces.

The foreseen changes in the parliament of Moldova

These are the main changes that can happen to the current parliamentary forces: *Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova* (member of the Alliance for European Integration) is on decline since the arrest of its leader Vlad Filat. The party will hardly reach the threshold in case of the parliamentary elections. It still has the administrative resources in the regions of Moldova – many mayors are its members. Also, the party has substantial financial backing, with key resources, including Filat's own assets (by some estimates as much as €1 billion) and former president Petru Lucinschi and his family (with assets estimated at over €500 million.)¹⁷ But even this would not be enough for decent results in the new parliament without visible changes to the strategy and rebranding. At the moment the party is too weak to be considered a strong individual political player and it is unlikely that it will have any significant representation in the coming governments. Rather, it is likely that its

¹⁷ Petru Lucinschi, former Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Moldovan SSR, and later second president of the independent Republic of Moldova, is still an influential public figure in the country. His son Chiril, meanwhile, is a media tycoon whose holdings include at least 3 TV channels.

members will move to other political parties and initiatives (there is a noticeable political flirt between the Liberal Democrats and Socialists which hints at the possible destination for some of the Liberal Democratic Party members).

Liberal Party of Moldova (another member of the Alliance for European Integration) is likely to get into the new parliament due to its conservative pro-Romanian electorate. But there is a low probability that in the new parliament the Liberals will receive more than 7-8% (or even less because at the next elections it will have to compete with the newly established pro-Romanian forces e.g. newly registered “Dreaptă” party) and thus will hardly play an independent role.

Democratic Party of Moldova (third member of the Alliance for European Integration) is another case. Notwithstanding the negative perception of Vlad Plahotniuc, the party has significant financial and media resources. Moreover, the representatives of the Democrats currently hold many of the governmental positions. Their voting for the government of Pavel Filip allowed the Democrats to bargain with internal players. Besides, despite the fact that almost no one trusts Plahotniuc in Brussels, he is believed to be less evil than Dodon and Usatii and it is safe to assume that unless he goes against Moldova’s European integration, he will be tolerated by the Western powers.

Besides, Plahotniuc can afford both to develop the Democratic Party and to invest in the alternative political forces. His strongest side at the moment is that it will be mostly he, who will influence who is to become the next president of Moldova and in case the Democrats create an ad-hoc coalition with the Communists, they will form quite a strong counter-balance for Dodon and Usatii and thus preserve some political balance in the country.

In their turn, Dodon and Usatii may try to cement their coalition with the Platform. But there is also a chance that some period of stabilization can be used for creation of new pro-European political force, which would be uncompromised, capable of assembling such pro-European political forces as Nastase, Sandu and Leanca. There is the likelihood that Nastase is bargaining with both sides.

“An elephant in the room”

Notwithstanding the fact that Russians, like the EU did not interfere in Moldovan domestic affairs directly, arguably the key challenge for Moldova is rooted in Russian foreign policy, specifically its *Русский мир* (Russian World) concept (Градиловский и Межуев 2003). The Kremlin considers Moldova – a state with a large population of ethnic Russians and Russian speakers (Index Mundi 2014) – to be an integral part of its geopolitical and cultural space, and thus invests a great deal in preserving and increasing its influence in the country. As Nicu Popescu and Andrew Wilson rightly mention (2009, 317-31), Russia exploits its soft power to gain control both of assets and of hearts and minds. Russian media – especially state TV channels rebroadcast in Moldova – serve as an instrument for the wider dissemination of Russian official propaganda.

The internal challenges for the political system in Moldova are strengthened by

the fluctuations coming from the external environment. Moldova's geopolitical neighborhood continues to be a turbulent one. Russia's annexation of Crimea opened a Pandora's box of challenges to the inviolability of state borders, while the hybrid war tactics seen in eastern Ukraine – arguably an explicit expression of Russian revolutionary expansionism (Tsygankov 1997, 247-68) – together with the Kremlin's policy of promoting “controlled chaos” in the region makes the stakes even higher for Chişinău.

Even if the EU and pro-European forces win the battle over the majority in Moldovan parliament and over the personality of the new Moldovan president, Russian Federation still has the levers to interfere in order to keep the Republic of Moldova in its orbit. In October 2014 the minister of foreign affairs of Russian Federation manifestly declared that if Chişinău repeals its non-bloc status, Transnistria will have the right to “decide its future independently”.

The same approach is being applied in Gagauzia. It should be mentioned that in contrast to Transnistria, Gagauzia is not a breakaway republic but a “national-territorial autonomous unit” per a resolution on its status taken in December 1994. However, recent developments in Gagauzia are reason for some anxiety. While Transnistria is a major factor inhibiting Moldova's integration into the EU, Gagauzia's status as an integral, yet autonomous part of Moldova may present its own unique set of problems. Gagauzia has been a relatively well-integrated part of Moldova for 20 years now. Nevertheless despite its formal and well-entrenched political status as an autonomous yet undisputed part of Moldova, the region has had a tendency to act in some ways reminiscent of an independent state (Rinna2014).

On February 2, 2014 the regional authorities in Gagauzia carried out two simultaneous referenda: while the first was aimed at defining the local population's attitude towards the country's integration either with the EU or with the Russian integrational project – Customs Union; the second referendum was intended to find out the population's attitude towards the draft law “On the Deferred Status of the Autonomous Region of Gagauzia”. The key point of the proposed legislation suggests that in case Moldova were to lose its sovereignty (for example, through the unification with Romania, or through further integration with the EU), the autonomous region would automatically become the independent Republic of Gagauzia. As expected, the outcome of the vote has shown overwhelming support for both the Customs Union and for the draft law. According to the figures released by Gagauzia's Central Electoral Commission, 98.5% of the voters supported Moldova's integration with the Customs Union, while 98% voted in favor of the ‘deferred independence’ bill (Calus 2014).

While in terms of political and economic levers the influence of Russian Federation is not as explicit as in the case of Transnistria and Gagauzia, Kremlin directly points out that Moldova's European integration would incur not merely political and economic, but also territorial costs. Russia's Deputy Prime Minister, Dmitry Rogozin who visited Moldova on September 2-3, 2013 openly declared that “Moldova's train en route to Europe would lose its cars” (Socor 2014). The growing tensions between pro-Russian population and so-called “unionists” – the supporters of re-union of Moldova with Ro-

mania are an additional cause of vulnerability for the Republic of Moldova, giving formal justification to additional Russian interference in the domestic affairs of the republic (e.g. by conducting military drills in Transnistria) and also proves the validity of the aforementioned assumptions.

Therefore, Russia will continue to question the European choice of Moldova -whether by means of “hybrid Maidan” or by putting on the pressure via the secessionist region of Transnistria and Gagauzia. The scenario that is being applied to Moldova should be perceived as the approbation of these methods. In case any of them, or their combination, will be effective in regaining control over the Moldovan establishment, Russia will spread the same strategies to a wider range of countries fraught with similar internal situation and vulnerabilities. Regrettably even EU membership can hardly prevent the threat of Russian expansionism if the membership is not accompanied with the reforms in the political sphere and in fighting corruption, in addition to efficient policies in the sensitive territories with high secessionist potential.

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SECURITY SECTOR REFORM AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTS IN UKRAINE: HUMAN SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

OLEKSANDR TYTARCHUK

List of Contents

Introduction

Human security concept

Legislative foundations and human security aspects

“Constructive ambiguities” in security sector reform planning

Impact of war with Russia

Conclusions

References

Introduction

Security sector reform (SSR) in Ukraine is now under way. Almost two years have gone since its beginning in stormy 2014. Many efforts have been carried out since then mainly focusing on repelling Russia’s aggression and strengthening the potential of all actors of the national security and defense sector (SDS) under the dominance of enemy-centric environment.

Basic areas of the national SSR were rather clearly identified upon the adoption of the new National Security Strategy of Ukraine, the revised Military Doctrine of Ukraine and the Concept of Ukraine’s Security and Defense Sector Development, wherein the latter came into force only in March 2016. Despite that, there is still a lack of major normative provisions and approved programs for practical creation of robust SDS capabilities for adequately addressing the identified threats and challenges to the national security whilst pursuing declared democratic values.

The process of SSR in Ukraine is characterized by own special features related to obtaining practical experience, both positive and negative, in addressing current threats and challenges to the national security as well as maintaining appropriate relationship between security and development policy. The above experience requires urgent consideration of the common practice of SSR, especially as it is adopted in other East European countries transiting to citizen-oriented security sector model.

Based on interim results, it is high time to take a general glance at the basic conceptual issues of SSR to better understand future perspectives for democratic developments in Ukraine amid its Euro-Atlantic and European aspirations.

Human security concept

There are the following three generally recognized goals (Schirch and Mancini-Griffoli 2015) that should be accomplished while executing successful SSR in a country transiting from an elite-captured to a citizen-oriented model, namely:

1. Improving democratic governance with an emphasis on civil oversight of SDS and multi-stakeholder processes that include civil society in shaping security policy and strategy.
2. Recognizing the relationship between security and development policy, and orienting security strategies toward human security for all people.
3. Professionalizing SDS, emphasizing an efficient and effective model that holds a monopoly of force over other armed groups in society and could effectively counteract external threats.

In the vast majority of cases, and Ukraine is not an exception, the third goal is the most visible and essential one in terms of providing urgent threat-centric counter-measures while putting little emphasis on democratic governance and human security. National efforts backed by broad international support remain crucial elements in accomplishing this task with some pros and cons, especially as far as “train and equip” approach is concerned. Foreign assistance in SSR sometimes could substitute for the reform and development process by providing formal SDS assistance, but not eliminate the core problems, or be fully accepted by ruling elites. Hence, the proper balance and interdependence between all abovementioned goals should be maintained in order to achieve the desired results. This is the second goal orienting security strategy toward human security that should be among current priorities in the national SSR maintaining the required balance (Tytarchuk 2016).

In general, human security is the conceptual framework for comprehensive civil society engagement with security forces. Human security is also known as multidimensional security and citizen security having a population-centric and not enemy-centric perspective. It is measured by the perceptions of whether local population feel safe, so that civil society is increasingly recognizing the importance of working together with SDS to find new ways of improving human security (Schirch 2015).

The level and effectiveness of comprehensive civil society engagement in SSR could be considered as an indicator of the transformation process from an elite-captured government to a citizen-oriented one. In a citizen-oriented government, society both is able to hold government to account and to collaborate with it to provide public goods. In a citizen-oriented state, the security sector serves the population. Peace and stability are relative to the degree that national SDS elements serve locally defined human security goals and are accountable to local communities. Building local ownership requires listening to the perceptions of security threats from diverse segments of society. In most democratic countries, society continues to push security sector development toward a human security model (Schirch and Mancini-Griffoli 2015).

Human security is distinct from, but may overlap with national security. National security prioritizes economic, geopolitical, or ideological interests of the state and, if necessary, the use of military force to protect them. Where national security overlaps with civil society's human security priorities, these dialogue, consultation and coordination forums may be productive (Schirch 2015). A state should come to understand that protecting civilians and prioritizing development or democratic governance is in its national security interests.

Legislative foundations and human security aspects

This chapter is dedicated to legislative foundations defining Ukrainian "road map" for SSR being created on the backdrop of repelling Russia's military aggression and restructuring new public authorities. According to available blueprints for conducting security and defense sector reforms in wartime (even though not officially declared), the following enemy-centric procedure usually is implemented by the state leadership in a country in transition, namely: concisely defining all types of threats, the resources available, and the strategy and tactics to be used; and finally developing all security and defense planning documents (Tytarchuk 2015, 356).

Therefore, it is not surprising that preliminary analysis of normative provisions contained in the new National Security Strategy and revised Military Doctrine of Ukraine as well as in the recently adopted Concept of Ukraine's Security and Defense Sector Development has revealed that the abovementioned enemy-centric procedure is also prevailing in the national SSR concept. This concept is mainly focused on identifying and addressing threats and challenges to national security stemming from some groups and countries (Tytarchuk 2015, 357). One could also find certain overlaps between declared national and human security interests related to protection of human values, human rights and freedoms, maintaining rule of law and prosperity. Citizen or human security as such is not properly defined in the above documents, primarily emphasizing public security, which has a more specific meaning as part of a broader human security approach.

Thus, the adopted Strategy outlines national security policy priorities to be implemented by the year 2020. Corruption and ongoing economic crisis were also identified as key security challenges in the Strategy (Parliament of Ukraine 2015). This document is considered to be the first one that contains detailed program of actions in terms of maintaining national security and providing a clear mechanism for its implementation by all public authorities responsible for tasks of security governance. According to Ukrainian experts, the main deficiency of the above document is the absence of a clear declaration for obtaining a NATO membership along with the creation of the professional armed forces (Badrak 2015). Nevertheless, this document could serve as a basis for establishing a new type of defense forces under the national SSR process.

In the abovementioned national normative provisions the main focus is given to improving democratic governance through strengthening civil oversight of SDS, involving civil society in shaping the security policy as well as on professionalizing SDS and pro-

protecting the rights of military personnel. National law enforcement agencies, including National Police and National Guard, State Migration Service and State Emergency Service of Ukraine are listed among those structural elements of SDS to be engaged in providing citizen security. At the same time, the National Guard is to be responsible for public security in Ukraine (Parliament of Ukraine 2015).

According to the revised Military Doctrine of Ukraine (President of Ukraine 2015), the main priority is on addressing actual military threats and political-military challenges to national security. The actual military threat is Russia's armed aggression, including temporary occupation of Crimea and aggression in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. There are also other threats posed by Russia that include its military build-up in close proximity to Ukraine's state border, deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in Crimea, militarization of temporarily occupied territories, presence of Russian military contingent in Transnistria, and intensification of reconnaissance and subversive activities by Russian special forces.

The Military Doctrine also stipulates the key tasks aimed at restoring state sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, presupposing a comprehensive SSR as a basic condition for gaining membership in the European Union and NATO as well as creation of effective SDS providing ample capacity to repel any armed aggression. As far as SSR is concerned, additional attention is paid to integrating paramilitary groups into national SDS, and strengthening coordination between governmental and local authorities, as well as non-governmental organizations and citizens, including volunteers, with the aim to eliminate a military conflict and rebuff a military aggression. New ethical standards for military personnel are to be implemented to respect the value of human life and protection of health.

Another broadly declared provision is the need for implementing NATO's standards towards effective SSR. These standards also should be built on reciprocal improvements to the relationship between civil society and SDS's actors. In particular, the New NATO Guidance on the Human Aspects of the Operational Environment emphasizes the increasing role of human dimension in handling current crises, especially within the margins of Alliance's Non-Article 5 Crisis Response Operations (NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence 2013).

NATO Comprehensive Approach to human security is often associated with civil-military-police co-operation (CIMIC) oriented on strengthening local ownership (NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence 2013). Having all these in mind, further steps should be envisaged to develop and broaden existing CIMIC under the framework of current SSR in Ukraine. Pre-dominant attention should be given to long-term developments supporting human security with active involvement of all SDS elements, not only the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF).

Main provisions of the newly adopted Concept of Ukraine's Security and Defense Sector Development are generally based on those initially outlined in the Draft Concept, which was prepared by the Ministry of Defense in 2015 (Ministry of Defense of Ukraine 2015). After initial analysis of the Concept, one could discover some positive differences

from the Draft, but systematic issues remain unresolved, including those clarifying the role and place of civil society in the national SSR process. Guaranteeing personal security, constitutional rights and freedoms of individual and citizen is declared as one of the purposes of the Concept (National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine 2016). From the first pages of the document, NGOs are mentioned to be actively involved in accomplishing tasks related to the national security and state defense interests. Involvement of civil society and independent expert organizations in decision-making process on strategic issues of national security as well as transparency and accountability to society are among the driving forces of the SSR envisaged in the Concept.

As far as SSR itself is concerned, there is a mere repetition of previously mentioned provisions aimed at improving democratic governance of SDS and its professionalization. There is also a broad array of different security concepts mentioned in the document, including public security, public order and safety, private and even mankind security, without any mention of human security as such with respect to democratic developments. According to the Concept, the main tasks of SDS, among others, are those related to the protection of citizens' rights from subversive activities of the foreign special services; providing public safety; prevention, detection and suppression of crimes against the peace and security of mankind (National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine 2016).

Generally, the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine (MoD) bears any responsibility for human security issues, as it should be recognized under the above-mentioned general human security concept and relevant NATO standards. In the Concept, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine (MIA) is responsible for protecting human rights and freedoms as well as supporting public security and order. The main mission of the National Guard of Ukraine, as a MIA subordinated structure in peacetime, is protecting and safeguarding life, rights, freedoms and legal interests of citizens, society and the state from illegal encroachments, providing public order and public security. Under the marital law, the National Guard of Ukraine will be subordinated to the MoD and will be responsible for direct interaction with the public. It is the National Police of Ukraine, which is tasked with providing public security as well.

A separate chapter in the Concept is devoted to the role and place of civil society in the National Security and Defense Sector Development (SDSD). The following main areas of SDS interactions with civil society are proposed, namely:

- Creating appropriate normative, organizational and financial conditions to support active involvement of civic organizations and citizens in elaborating and implementing state policy in SDSD;
- Creating conditions for effective civic oversight of SDS actors;
- Facilitating civic organizations' participation in improving preparedness of SDS actors for accomplishing allocated tasks.

The White Books and other publicly available reporting documents are recognized in the Concept as main sources for executing democratic civil oversight of SDS (National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine 2016).

In general, the new National Security Strategy and Military Doctrine of Ukraine deserve a degree of criticism, as they are the first, although enemy-centric, strategic security decisions of Ukraine, even though they clearly identify the country's Euro-Atlantic aspirations under the current wartime environment. Nevertheless, the adoption of these two documents certainly could be considered as both a positive step and necessary foundation for SSR. That said, the recent coming into force of the long-awaited Concept of Ukraine's Security and Defense Sector Development should not be overestimated because of its generalized and unsystematic patchwork-like nature. What's more, the Concept's provision of introducing common approach for elaborating targeted state programs for the development of SDS components is far from accomplished on the ground. The absence of further required SSR legislation of about three dozen normative acts and development programs, including the revised Law on National Security Foundations, the Law on Planning in SDS, and others could be regarded as a serious burden for practical implementation of above-declared strategic visions (Butusov 2015), including on strengthening human security aspects.

“Constructive ambiguities” in security sector reform planning

Foreign assistance in national security sector reform and development process sometimes might be likened to a lifesaver for the authority seeking (or pretending to seek) appropriate decisions corresponding to current requirements and international standards in SSR. But not all the prepared recommendations, even quite logical and reasonable ones, could be adopted due to various reasons, especially due to their political sensitivities. Therefore, so-called “constructive ambiguities” resulted in the selective approval and delayed implementation of the proposed recommendations, which constitute the basis for current elite-driven approach in national SSR process. Still pending case with recent recommendations on reforming UAF prepared by the Rand Corporation could only prove this conclusion (Butusov 2015).

As a result of the above efforts and formal comprehensive review of the Ukrainian SDS, two basic documents have been prepared, namely the Concept of Ukraine's Security and Defense Sector Development and the Draft Strategic Defense Bulletin of Ukraine. Hopefully, the latter has a chance to be adopted already this year (2016) following the example of the Concept of Ukraine's Security and Defense Sector Development, which entered into force in March of this year.

The Strategic Defense Bulletin of Ukraine (White Book) that has been recently prepared on the basis of the New National Security Strategy and the revised Military Doctrine of Ukraine is pending final approval. The main focus in the Bulletin is given to the reforming of the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces of Ukraine. It is quite remarkable that this document was brought to a wide public discussion, resulting in a series of critical recommendations and comments stressing a shift of division of responsibility within the framework of SSR process. In this particular case, the Ministry of Defense is recognized as the main responsible agency for executing defense sector reform, thus narrowing SSR's

parameters to internal ministerial endeavor instead of a state-level comprehensive activity, not to mention the wide concept of human security. Thus, development of defense forces is being currently considered separately from reforming of other six structural elements of the national SDS (Butusov 2016). Such separation could threaten the comprehensive nature of a successful SSR.

Reforming of the defense forces is officially declared as a priority task for the years to come. According to the 2016 State Budget, the level of defense expenditure for the first time since Ukraine's independence has reached a record of 5 per cent of the GDP, and comprises more than 92 billion UAH (approximately 3.6 billion USD). The SDS expenditure has increased from 16 billion UAH to 113 billion UAH (around 4.3 billion USD) in total. The vast majority of resources will be allocated for increasing military personnel salary. Modernizing and equipping the UAF and law enforcement agencies with new technology are declared among other priority areas (Glavcom 2015). Thus, there is almost zero budgeting allocated for carrying out vital structural reforms of the national SDS. What's more, another issue of national importance, especially for ordinary taxpayers, related to military budget cost control and combating of corruption remains unresolved. There is no reason to be engaged in substantive discussion on security sector budgeting without having any official SDS development programs at hand (Butucov 2016).

Despite the declared need for professionalizing of all security and defense forces, mere practical steps have been made to change the existing system of conscript service that proved its ineffectiveness. Truly professional security and defense sector could not exist within the framework of soviet type feudalism propagated by elite-driven mentality (Butusov 2015). Professionalizing of SDS is a very complicated process that should be strictly connected to comprehensive human security agenda, not only limited to providing adequate social package and salary for contractors. This issue is also relevant given the experience of using volunteers' services, which are not able to fully substitute/replace professional system of military and security management. Only professionals under reliable civilian oversight should be entrusted with accomplishing all these tasks.

Territorial defense is another crucial component of SSR, which is impossible to carry out without human security aspects. This is the local ownership of civil society to be a core element of maintaining sustainable territorial defense being capable to address existing and potential hybrid threats (Sungurovskij 2015).

To sum up, so-called "constructive ambiguities" in national SSR could be characterized by the absence of clear and thoroughly elaborated development programs for executing effective reforms in all elements of the Ukrainian SDS. The void of above-mentioned planning documents is the main obstacle for carrying out broadly declared public control over the increased budget expenditure on SSR. Such development programs also could be considered as a key instrument without which it is impossible to accomplish any systematic SSR oriented towards democratic values.

Impact of war with Russia

The immediate need for repelling Russia's incursion and requirements for establishing effective public authorities are directly influencing the process of SSR in Ukraine, making the enemy-centric approach inherent to the wartime period the dominating one. Hence, some obvious difficulties with this enemy-oriented approach could be observed in the form of urgent threat-centric countermeasures while putting little emphasis on democratic governance and human security. On the backdrop of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) appeared to be a central element within SSR to fulfill the frontline tasks of protecting Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The most substantial changes in reforming the defense sector occurred in the area of combat warfare tactics, maintaining of military equipment and recruitment policy. At the same time, many of them are purely quantitative in nature. It goes without saying that UAF are undergoing re-equipping at the time of this writing, but this process is far from completed. Reestablishment of the UAF with a declared strength of 280 000 servicemen mostly equipped with armed combat vehicles, tanks and artillery systems inherited from the former Soviet Union could not meet today's requirements for effective and adequate response in case of new military incursion. This task could not be achieved without coordination of the national defense industry activities under a new framework for military-technical cooperation to be developed (Tytarchuk 2016).

Problems not only in terms of hardware but also in personnel policy are becoming increasingly evident, being directly related to human security aspects. Successful application of the re-iterated NATO standards is impossible without changing the relations vis-à-vis the military personnel in terms of protecting their rights and freedoms and respecting human dignity based on human security values essential for citizen-oriented state. All these aspects have a direct impact on resolving the problems uncovered during the mobilization campaigns and are imminent in the existing recruitment process.

The following wartime features characterizing Ukraine's SSR are noteworthy (EESRI 2015), namely:

- Extensive use of the potential of volunteer and paramilitary units, which are essential subjects of modern hybrid warfare;
- Broad distribution of materiel by volunteer movement that has largely compensated for the shortcomings of existing public procurement system, and contributed to the establishment of democratic civilian control over the Armed Forces, other military formations, and law enforcement agencies;
- Formation of a new military elite with practical experience in countering proxy aggression;
- Developing new forms of partnership relations with NATO in receiving assistance for protection of state sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- Establishing initial elements of the civil-military-police cooperation in the affected areas, etc.

In general terms, the practical experience, both negative and positive, gained whilst countering Russian hybrid warfare is a crucial element to be taken into account under the current security environment. There is also a risk of attributing a large share of the ruling elites' incompetence to wartime difficulties in order to avoid public criticism amid ongoing Russian aggression, which is at times being used as an umbrella to conceal unprofessional actions. On the other hand, it was sound civic criticism, which could not be compared with a betrayal of national interests, that proved a driving force pushing the SSR process forward.

Conclusions

All existing conceptual approaches to national SSR are mainly oriented towards professionalizing of SDS as well as improving democratic governance through strengthening civil oversight and civic involvement in shaping the national security policy and strategy.

Bearing all these in mind, in short-term perspective it would be a tall order to expect any substantial changes in the national SSR strategy, given the lacking appropriate relationship between security and development policy and orienting state security toward human security. Despite minor overlaps, this conceptual gap still exists and does not contribute to fully effective and efficient SSR that should be based on two-way comprehensive engagement (not only involvement) with civil society inherent in a truly citizen-oriented democratic state.

The listed shortcomings prove the importance of human security aspects and its relationship with national security in terms of accomplishing effective SSR. Some of them could be defined as a kind of growing pains amid critical disturbances of democratic transition, if it were not for the third year of a lasting undeclared aggression by Russia. The lack of systematic approach to SSR has its specific price – high death toll, corruption and civil discontent leading to insufficient combat potential of the defense and security forces. Broad civic involvement and openness for sound criticism should be a priority area for the authorities to prove their readiness for executing real systematic changes in SSR aimed at building democratic society capable of resisting effectively any influence on it, both direct and proxy.

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NATO-UKRAINE RELATIONS: TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

SERGII TOLSTOV, IAROSLAV CHORNOGOR

The impact of contradictions between the West and Russia was an important factor that influenced international relations in the Eastern European region after the dissolution of the USSR. Over the 25 years of independence, the formation of Ukraine's foreign policy concept has passed several stages. The government made various attempts to adapt to the European security system being formed during the 1990s.

The first years of Ukraine's foreign policy formation were complicated by acute conflicts with Russia regarding the subordination of the armed forces, the status of the Black Sea fleet and nuclear arms control. In connection with Ukraine's nuclear disarmament and its accession to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the nuclear powers agreed to confirm 'negative' security assurances for Ukraine, provided for by UN Security Council resolution 255 (1968). However, the scope and nature of external security assurances have been substantially reinforced in the Budapest Memorandum of December 5, 1994 (Memorandum on Security Assurances 1994).

The main vectors of Ukraine's foreign policy were defined taking into account the real balance of economic and political interests and were considered more or less obvious. During the first term of Kuchma's presidency there were attempts of striking a certain balance between the two main foreign policy dimensions which covered relations with Russia and CIS countries on the one hand and relations with the US, EU and Western European institutions, on the other. The signing of the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership and agreements on the separation and conditions of the Black Sea fleet basing (1997) seemed to settle a number of controversial issues in relations with Russia. This opened the way to intensifying relations with NATO and revitalizing the dialogue with the EU. The specific character of relations with NATO was specified in the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership (1997) which identified Ukraine as a priority partner and provided for consultations in case of external threats. From the point of view of defining the ultimate objective of cooperation between Ukraine and NATO their relations kept on being uncertain even after the decision of the National Security and Defence Council (NSDC) "On the Strategy of Ukraine Concerning the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)" dated May 23, 2002. This document treated NATO as "the basis for the future pan-European security system". Membership in the Alliance was defined as the ultimate goal of Ukraine's European integration policy (Decision of the National Security and Defence Council 2002). The NSDC decision seeking Ukraine's accession to NATO was put into action by the secret presidential decree No. 627/2002 of July 8, 2002.

The attempt of resolving the issue of Ukraine's accession to NATO at the Bucharest summit of the Alliance (2-4. 4, 2008) turned unsuccessful due to objections from France and Germany. The issue of Ukraine's preparation for membership in the Alliance

was raised again at the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council on December 2-3, 2008. But the initiative of the US and the UK did not receive support from a number of European governments. The NATO member states have again reacted by declaring an abstract possibility of Ukraine's and Georgia's NATO membership in an uncertain future, and the US officials had to postpone attempts to settle this issue.

Under the presidency of V. Yanukovych, Ukraine's government officially abandoned the intent to achieve NATO membership. The unilateral declaration of military non-aligned status was executed as amendments to the Law of Ukraine "On the Fundamentals of Domestic and Foreign Policy" (2010) introduced by the parliament. However, the subsequent events showed that the non-bloc status, which stipulated military non-alignment, has not become a reliable guarantee against direct intervention and the use of force by Russia. Given the devastating consequences of the Crimea's annexation and the conflict in Donbas it is worth noting that issues of national security look too serious to be satisfied with abstract theses about the virtual perspective of NATO membership as a means of ensuring independence, territorial integrity and sustainable development of the state.

Assessment of the Ukrainian situation and the current political planning require a clear analysis of the status and trends of the international system and identification of available levers and resources that Ukraine can realistically expect amid the acute political crisis. The goal of ensuring the defence capabilities of the state and preventing a full-scale war with Russia are interdependent and interlinked. Having not recognized the annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, the Western partners of Ukraine do not intend to guarantee the return of those territories to Ukraine. Of course, formulating the problem in such a form brings it to the level of a conflict with a nuclear power like Russia. Under the continuing conflict in Donbas, an increase of Ukraine's defence capabilities should act similarly as a factor deterring new offensive operations with the direct participation of Russian military like those undertaken in Ilovaysk, Novoazovsk (in August 2014) and Debaltseve (in February 2015).

The problem of Crimea itself creates a strong barrier for Ukraine's accession to NATO, since Ukraine's membership in the Alliance will create obligations to protect the territory of the state, thus threatening to draw NATO into a direct conflict with Russia. The conflict in Donbas also creates a number of problems in Ukraine's relations with NATO and the EU. In 2014-2015 the NATO member states with very few exceptions refrained from providing Ukraine with the newest weaponry and military equipment, although the decision of the NATO summit in Newport (2014) envisaged the possibility of providing Ukraine with military assistance on a bilateral basis.

In the conditions of actual violation of the territorial integrity of the country, the issue of granting Ukraine the international security assurances is even more problematic. In this sense, the idea of turning the Budapest Memorandum on security assurances in connection with Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons into an efficient mechanism of ensuring state sovereignty and territorial integrity, which was outlined in a new version of Ukraine's National Security Strategy (2015), is just a unilateral political declaration (Decree of the President of Ukraine 2015).

First, the Budapest Memorandum provisions have been violated and its direct participants, the US, UK and Russia, have taken opposing positions. Failure to provide assistance to Ukraine from the US and the UK against Russia was explained by their apparent unwillingness to enter into an open conflict with Russia.

Secondly, any UN Security Council decision sanctioning pressure against Russia is impossible due to Russia's having a veto power. In this respect, the UN Security Council continues to fulfil its primary function, which lies in preventing international and legal validation of decisions on the use of force by one or more permanent members of the Council against the others.

As for Donbas, the full implementation of the Minsk agreements of 2014-2015 should envisage the withdrawal of illegal military forces and regaining of Kyiv's control over the whole section of the Russian-Ukrainian border. However, both the extent of implementing the Minsk arrangements and a possible settlement scenario depend mainly on Moscow's position. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine reflects the ultimate level of consent of the Russian Federation to the international presence in the conflict zone. In turn, the dialogue in the "Normandy format" allows Moscow to count on the internationalization of final decisions concerning the settlement in Donbas.

The probability of providing international guarantees to the final settlement scheme also looks doubtful. Referring to the non-membership of Ukraine in NATO, the West will abstain from promising direct military protection to this country. In turn, the effectiveness of possible 'political' assurances is extremely doubtful, because Moscow has broken the whole package of multilateral (the 1975 CSCE Helsinki Final Act) and bilateral obligations envisaged in numerous Ukrainian-Russian treaties. In this situation any security assurances to Ukraine may, firstly, be unilateral, and secondly, be conditional and/or indirect. Supposedly, any form of external support will be determined by references to the occurrence of certain extraordinary circumstances. However, in the event of aggravating the international crisis the Western partners of Ukraine will determine the form of their response or assistance unilaterally.

In connection with the internal crisis and Russia's aggression against Ukraine in February, March and April 2014, the NATO Secretary General and the North Atlantic Council (NAC) made several statements which were focused on the key role of sovereign, independent and stable Ukraine for Euro-Atlantic security. On February 27 the NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen urged Russia not to take any action that could escalate tension or create misunderstanding.

The North Atlantic Council condemned Russia's 'military escalation' in Crimea and Russia's President Putin's threats against Ukraine in the light of authorization by Russian Parliament of the use of the armed forces of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine (North Atlantic Council statement on the situation in Ukraine 2014). Another NAC meeting on March 4, 2014, was held at Poland's request to provide consultations within the framework of Article 4 of the Washington Treaty.

During March 2014 NATO's reaction to Russia's intervention in Ukraine was relatively restrained. Speaking at the 'Brussels Forum' on March 21, 2014 after the annexation

of Crimea, the NATO Secretary General concluded that the crisis in Ukraine has become a geo-political “game-changer” for NATO Allies who must strengthen their economic and military ties in wake of Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine.

Declaring their clear opposition to Russia’s illegal military intervention in Ukraine the NATO Foreign Ministers urged Russia to return to compliance with international law and its international obligations and responsibilities, and to engage immediately in a genuine dialogue towards a political and diplomatic solution that respects international law and Ukraine’s internationally recognized borders. The Alliance expressed solidarity with the member states in Eastern Central Europe and reiterated support for Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic integration. Under the emerging security challenges NATO headquarters substantially increased attention with regards to defence planning in Central Eastern Europe. Ukraine was offered a substantial strengthening of cooperation in different areas. At the meeting of NATO-Ukraine Commission in Newport (September 4, 2014) the Allies noted Ukraine’s requests for military-technical assistance.

The Joint Statement of the NATO-Ukraine Commission approved the tasks of ‘long-standing distinctive partnership’. Recognizing Ukraine’s intent to deepen its distinctive partnership with NATO, the NATO leaders outlined a number of forms of activities including stepping up strategic consultations in the NATO-Ukraine Commission and strengthening the existing programs on defence education, professional development, security sector governance, and security-related scientific cooperation. The Annual National Program remains the main framework for defence and security cooperation between NATO and Ukraine. It envisages a number of new capability development and sustainable capacity building programs with focus on command, control and communications, logistics and standardization, cyber defence, military career transition, and strategic communications. NATO and Ukraine will continue to promote greater interoperability between Ukrainian and NATO forces, including through continued regular Ukrainian participation in NATO exercises. The NATO leaders also suggested that the Allies may provide “additional support to Ukraine” on a bilateral basis, which Ukraine welcomes (Joint Statement of the NATO-Ukraine Commission 2014).

The main instruments of bilateral cooperation between NATO and Ukraine are bilateral Commission NATO – Ukraine and its working groups and the decision of the summit in Newport on the provision of trust funds. The key joint activities and events are being approved by the annual national programmes of cooperation between Ukraine and NATO and bilateral plans carried out with the participation of several individual members of the Alliance.

The Newport summit established the following five Trust Funds, which provide practical assistance to Ukraine’s defence sector.

- NATO-Ukraine Command, Control, Communications and Computers (C4) Trust Fund with an objective to help Ukraine modernize its C4 structures and capabilities, and facilitate their interoperability with NATO, thereby contributing to NATO-led exercises and operations, and enhancing Ukraine’s ability to provide for its own security;
- NATO-Ukraine Cyber Defence Trust Fund will help Ukraine to develop technical capa-

bilities to counter cyber threats.

- NATO-Ukraine Logistics and Standardization Trust Fund provides the reform of Ukraine's logistic system and increase its interoperability with NATO, notably through the adoption of NATO standards for the tracking and management of national military equipment and supplies.
- NATO-Ukraine Medical Rehabilitation Trust Fund promotes the appropriate rehabilitation of the injured Ukrainian servicemen and supplies local Ukrainian medical centres with proper equipment.
- NATO-Ukraine Military Career Management Trust Fund assists the Ukraine's Ministry of Defence with the development of a sustainable and effective resettlement programme for military personnel returning to civilian career (NATO's practical support to Ukraine 2015).

Since 2015 NATO reinforced its advisory presence in Kyiv. The Agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization on the Status of the NATO Representative Office in Ukraine signed on September 22, 2015 established a new type of mission which should facilitate Ukraine's participation in all spheres of cooperation with NATO and its relevant agencies and ensure the appropriate aspects of Ukraine-NATO cooperation programs.

The visit of NATO Secretary General J. Stoltenberg to Ukraine (September 21-22, 2015) marked the beginning of a new phase in bilateral relations. J. Stoltenberg took part in a meeting of the NSDC of Ukraine devoted to reforms in security and defence sectors. These aspects were reflected in the documents signed during the visit – the Roadmap of Partnership Program in the sphere of strategic communications and the Joint Declaration on the enhancement of defence-technical cooperation between NATO and Ukraine. Its provisions open NATO access to Ukrainian defence production technologies and anticipate supplies of military equipment and armaments.

J. Stoltenberg discussed the assistance of NATO advisors to Ukraine's defence ministry and the army General Staff. Furthermore, NATO and its member states increased material, technical, advisory and training aid for Ukraine's security and defence sectors. The NATO-Ukraine Commission established five Ukraine-NATO Joint Working Groups on Defence Reform, on Defence Technical Cooperation, on Economic Security, on Civil Emergency Planning and on Scientific and Environmental Cooperation. The NATO advisers were engaged in such activities as providing expertise for the new National Security Strategy of Ukraine, comprehensive assessment of Ukraine's security and defence sectors, enhancement of interoperability between Ukraine and NATO forces within the framework of Partnership Interoperability Initiative, implementation of NATO standards in the military sphere, introduction of the automated system of procurement in the Ministry of defence and others.

The Ukrainian government and NATO officials agree that assistance in enhancing Ukraine's defence capability corresponds with security interests of NATO member states. Support for Ukraine contributes to strengthening the Alliance defence and deterrence posture approved by NATO Defence Ministers at the Brussels 10-11 February 2016

meeting.

The new version of the Military doctrine of Ukraine (September 24, 2015) approved by President P. Poroshenko defined the status of NATO as the main external ally. In addition, the doctrine aims to ensure full adaptation of the Ukrainian Armed Forces to NATO standards by 2020. At the same time, Ukraine's political leaders understand the unrealistic prospect of gaining NATO membership due to the unresolved conflict with Russia and the violation of the territorial integrity of the state.

Therefore, in conditions of acute political and military confrontation with Russia, Kyiv again, returns to the concept of 'rapprochement' with NATO, proposed by many Western experts in the 2000s. However, Ukraine-Russia relations have moved from the phase of latent contradictions into a phase of territorial conflict and confrontation. The violation of the territorial integrity and a threat of military actions with Russia contained in Ukraine's Military doctrine linked Ukraine's perspective of membership in the Alliance with the outcome of confrontation between Russia and the West.

NATO considers the following priority areas of cooperation with Ukraine: command and control, logistics, cyber security, military-technical issues, exchange of intelligence data, restoration of Ukraine's military-naval forces, mine clearance and combating Russian propaganda. As to the conflict in Donbas, the NATO headquarters laid the blame on the Russian officials for creating the conflict in the East of Ukraine and for military support of separatists. Nevertheless, NATO senior staff gave preference to diplomatic methods within the continuing quest for a political solution. J. Stoltenberg presented a specific formula of NATO-Ukraine relations. Although the Allies acknowledged the possibility of new members joining, the prospect of Ukraine's membership will not be considered in the foreseeable future. At the same time deeper relations within the framework of distinguished partnership were considered possible and desirable. Such form of special cooperation with the Alliance was treated as a 'good' situational alternative to direct membership.

During his visit to the NATO headquarters (17.12.2015) President Poroshenko has noted the utmost importance of cooperation with the US and NATO to strengthen Ukraine's military capabilities needed for an efficient response to the ongoing Russian aggression and hybrid challenges. Poroshenko highly appreciated the political support and practical assistance provided to Ukraine by the US and other NATO members, including joint exercises and supply of military equipment. Ukraine and NATO signed the Defence-Technical Co-operation Roadmap aiming to develop Ukraine's capacity in the spheres of armaments and military equipment, improve interoperability with allied forces and assist Ukraine in transition to the technical standards determined by NATO Standardization Agreement (STANAG).

Within the framework of military and technical cooperation between Ukraine and NATO, some success has been achieved. According to the media reports, NATO experts approved the production of Ukrainian short-range armour-piercing missile R-2C, which was developed by the Kyiv state-owned design bureau *Luch*. Several German companies produced engines for the armoured vehicles assembled in Ukraine. In addition, the government increased budgetary allocations for development and manufacturing of

particular modern weapons. The Ukrainian defence industry state holdings started negotiations with the companies of NATO member states on joint production of high-precision weapons at the Ukrainian enterprises.

However, until the beginning of 2016, the defence ministry of Ukraine has not received from NATO Allies any modern lethal weapons highly needed to repel the aggression. In 2014-2015 the support of NATO member states mainly related to the training of military specialists, ammunition and non-lethal equipment supplies. The US Department of Defence permitted several American companies to supply Ukraine with portable radio devices (*Harris Corp.*), drones (*Aezovironment Inc.*), Humvees (*AM General*) and counter-artillery radars (*Raytheon*). The supply of military equipment in the amount of \$265 million included armoured vehicles, night vision devices, body armour and kits for emergency medicine. Furthermore, in November 2015 Pentagon transferred two AN/TPQ-36 longer-range Counter Mortar Radar systems to the defence ministry of Ukraine. However, according to the press reports, the effectiveness of these devices was supposedly weakened not to antagonize Russia (Barnes and Lubold 2015).

Escalation of the military conflict in Syria and the Russian-Turkish military incident on November 24, 2015 significantly influenced the change of NATO's strategy towards more active deterrence. The change in the US strategy, along with strengthening of defence of the countries of Central Eastern Europe, could result in more active support of Ukraine's defence potential. This position could reduce the threat of escalating the conflict in Donbas and increase the price of the war for Russian troops if Kremlin after all goes in for a large-scale massive intervention. The US defence budget for 2016 approved under the strong pressure of both chambers of the US Congress envisages \$300 million of military aid to Ukraine, including \$50 million intended for the supply of lethal weapons.

Review of recent developments gives an idea of the increasing cooperation between NATO and Ukraine. There has been a significant revitalization of the NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group on Defence Reform, which provides the institutional basis for NATO's cooperation with ministries and agencies engaged in implementing defence and security sector reform in Ukraine. These include the NSDC, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, National Guard, Border Guard Service, Security Service of Ukraine, the parliament and others. Activities of this group allow Ukraine to draw on Allied countries' experience and expertise (NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group).

The newly established NATO-Ukraine Regional Airspace Security Programme (RASP) aims to improve cross-border coordination of civil air security incidents and regional airspace cooperation between Ukraine, Turkey, Poland and Norway. RASP will provide permanent and real-time connectivity with Ukraine's neighbouring countries. It will give an opportunity of early notification and coordination on security incidents and suspicious aircraft, sharing of the air picture, and facilitate direct voice coordination including joint handling procedures (NATO-Ukraine Regional Airspace Security Program).

Another joint programme is devoted to meet Ukraine's border security challenges. Speaking at the NATO-sponsored workshop in Kyiv on 25-26 February 2016 Y. Bozhok, the Acting Head of the Mission of Ukraine to NATO, suggested that "border security of

Ukraine shall be considered in a wider context – as border security of the eastern flank of NATO.” According to M. Gaul, Senior Advisor in NATO’s Emerging Security Challenges Division, “current developments in the East are also a vivid example that NATO’s partnerships are key to Euro-Atlantic security.”

In March 2016 the NSDC of Ukraine presented the Concept of reforming the defence and security sector of Ukraine developed with the participation of NATO advisers. According to O. Lytvynenko, the Deputy Secretary of the NSDC of Ukraine, the new concept should allow “forming a holistic security and defence sector of the state.” It aims to determine ways of forming the national security and defence capabilities, “which will contribute to the restoration of territorial integrity of Ukraine within the internationally recognized state borders and guarantee the peaceful future of Ukraine as a sovereign, independent, democratic, social and law-governed state” (NSDC of Ukraine 2016).

The concept envisages creation of a consolidated national system of response to crisis situations, early detection, prevention and neutralization of external and internal threats to national security, guaranteeing personal security, constitutional rights and freedoms; ensuring cybersecurity and prompt joint response to crisis situations and emergencies. According to the Concept, the whole annual national security and defence expenditure is planned at the level not less than 5% of GDP including 3% of GDP for defence. The annual spending for Defence-Industrial Complex is forecast at 0.5% of GDP. The definition of objectives for deepening of cooperation with NATO in order to meet the criteria for membership in the Alliance was reflected in the Presidential decrees adopting the new editions of Ukraine’s National Security Strategy and Military Doctrine.

In light of new trends in Ukraine-NATO relations it seems appropriate to analyse the interests of the parties, which determine the development of mutual relations and their future perspectives. The interests of the Ukrainian government are determined by the political situation in Ukraine after the annexation of the Crimea and the outbreak of the armed conflict in Donbas.

1. In relations with NATO, the basic interests of the Ukrainian governmental institutions are as follows:

- Ensuring political support and economic assistance to Ukraine as the victim of aggression;
- Continuing the sanctions imposed by the U.S., EU and G7 on Russia for the longest possible period of time as a deterrent to Russian aggression;
- Obtaining the maximum military and military-technical assistance from NATO and its member States;
- Obtaining anti-tank guided missiles to repel a possible mass invasion of the separatists’ troops and Russian military forces.

2. NATO’s interests concerning Ukraine at the collective level lies in:

- Using Ukraine as a buffer state and a means of territorial containment of Russian revisionism in Eastern Europe;
- Ensuring time lag for strengthening the defence capabilities of NATO members in Central Eastern Europe to increase the robustness against potential Russian threats.

- Coordinating means and methods of improving the defence capabilities of NATO member-states in Central Eastern Europe.

- Preparing plans for the deployment of NATO's rapid reaction forces and their logistics in the case of aggravation of the Russian threat.

3. Peculiarities of interaction between Ukraine and NATO are defined by both the similarity and the difference of interests as well as by the specifics of the military-political situation on NATO's Eastern flank.

- Collective position of the West regarding the Ukrainian crisis and Russia's threat is formed as a result and on the basis of a dialogue between the US and Germany.

- Germany's position in the negotiations between Obama and Merkel stipulated the decision not to provide Ukraine with modern high-precision weapons being delivered to NATO member States in Eastern Europe.

- In relation to Ukraine, NATO headquarters intends to carry out a gradually intensifying policy aiming at the reform in security and defence sector, participation of advisers in the Ministry of Defence, the General Staff and the Security Service of Ukraine, supply of ammunition, moderate military-technical cooperation, programmes of personnel training and military exercises. At the same time, in relations with Ukraine the alliance does not provide for accommodation of permanent NATO military facilities in the country, including forward operating bases, air bases, stations of the air defence and missile defence.

- Existing divergences relate primarily to the evaluation of the Russian factor in European security system. Secretary General J. Stoltenberg noted that from NATO's point of view Russia is not considered as an immediate and direct threat to the member states of the Alliance. At the same time, Ukraine's new military doctrine (2015) identifies Russia as a military adversary and sets out the terms for liberation of the country's "temporarily occupied territories." The document presents national defence measures required to restore national sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the challenges of Ukraine's defence and security potentials as a pre-requisite for countering armed aggression.

4. The main goal and the main direction of cooperation between NATO and Ukraine emphasize attention on the reform in the defence and security sector. The areas of practical cooperation comprise the following sectoral segments:

- Approval of regulations concerning the use of confidential information and intelligence data;

- Development and implementation of military-technical programmes, including bilateral accords between Ukraine and individual NATO member states;

- improving communication systems in the Armed Forces of Ukraine;

- Development and implementation of programmes in the field of aviation safety and air-space control;

- Conducting thematic and command and staff exercises;

- Implementation of military education and training programmes for the personnel of the special forces, the National Guard of Ukraine, sappers etc.;

- Involving NATO and the OSCE in the implementation of the programme aimed at clearing mined areas in the conflict zone of Donbas, providing Ukraine with some demining

equipment.

Conclusion

In a particularly difficult situation in which the Ukrainian society found itself after the regime change in 2014, the Kyiv officials consider upgrading the level of relations with NATO as the main external factor allowing the national sovereignty and territory to be protected. According to P. Poroshenko, “we are not NATO members *de jure* but we are more than just partners *de facto*” (Censor.net 2015). A hotbed of the cold war emerged in Eastern Europe creates the situation of continuous political tension and military threat. Under such circumstances Ukraine’s power institutions will focus attention at closer coordination and defence cooperation with NATO and the EU. Depending on the circumstances and future developments, Kyiv will seek to improve the status of the country within the international system and join the Euro-Atlantic community exercising the role of an informal ally.

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THE CHANGE OF THE MILITARY BALANCE IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

HANNA SHELEST

List of Contents

Main changes in the security and naval balance in the Black Sea region
What is the future for navy cooperation (BLACKSEAFOR, Black Sea Harmony) and NATO's role in the region?
Russian-Turkish relations and the Montreux Convention

Main changes in the security and naval balance in the Black Sea region

Russian-Georgian war of 2008 has not changed the security and military balance. The reason was a small role that the Georgian navy played in the region, but also the perception that it was just an additional element to the ongoing protracted conflicts in Georgia, rather than a new challenge. Significant changes in the region could be triggered if Turkey had obliged the requested US ships to enter the Black Sea to support Georgia, or if legal cases and claims were started due to the use of the territory of Ukraine by Russian war ships as a starting point for the blocking of Georgian ports (according to the UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 the following act, regardless of a declaration of war, shall qualify as an act of aggression: "The action of a State in allowing its territory, which it has placed at the disposal of another State, to be used by that other State for perpetrating an act of aggression against a third State"(United Nations 1974)). However, even later militarization of Abkhazia and South Ossetia were mostly left to be faced by Georgia alone.

The annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014 has changed the security and military balance in the Black Sea region, not only by violating the basic principles of the international law (territorial integrity) but also by shifting the existing force deployments and frameworks. Some authors have already announced that: "Nowhere in the world has Russia reconfigured the balance of power over the last decade as effectively as it has in the strategic Black Sea region" (Coalson 2016), which should be considered as an exaggeration, as the process of transformation has not been finished yet, so any conclusions are premature. At the same time, certain things are already a reality: a new round of militarization, a potential nuclearization, the shifting of the region from cooperation to confrontation, and for the first time in a century, an attempt to re-draw the shoreline boundaries in the Black Sea.

As a contested geostrategic zone, the remilitarization of the Black Sea is seen by Moscow as a necessary policy to prevent Russia's containment and any limitation of its powers around its western borders (Bugajski and Doran 2016, 2). However, the whole idea of the illegal annexation was based on a fear that NATO ships can appear in the peninsula

harbors (Kremlin, 2014), even when Ukraine had had a “non-block status”. So, a Russian desire for naval and military control should be considered as a part of the wider strategy, considering absence of any other Russian navy bases in the south of the post-Soviet space. In May 2015, the European Parliament adopted a resolution in which it stated that “the change in the geostrategic landscape, the evolving military situation in the Black Sea Basin and the forceful annexation of Crimea by Russia are indicative of broader and systemic challenges to the post-Cold War, norms-based European security architecture” (European Parliament 2015). In its turn, in July 2015, the Russian Federation revised its “Maritime Doctrine 2020” (adopted in 2001, with a stated reason for the changes – “NATO enlargement and incorporation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation” (Meduza 2015).

The illegal annexation of Crimea has de -facto changed not only the Black Sea configuration, but had a direct influence on the Azov Sea, which is divided between Ukraine and Russia. For many years, countries could not agree on a final delimitation of the border through the Kerch straight, which has remained the main issue of annual negotiations. With the control over Crimea, Russia is closing the Kerch straight, making it impossible for Ukraine to protect the Port of Mariupol and its coastline in the Azov Sea. Protection of this zone is important not only from the economic point of view, but also from a strategic one, as currently there is no possibility to connect the Russian Federation and Crimea via land. Thus, the endeavors to seize Ukrainian Azov coastline is of the extreme importance and subject to Russia’s regular attempts.

At the same time, the projection of a possibility to capture Odessa via Snake Island (Zmiiinyi) presented by Aaron Korewa (2016) is very unlikely. The idea to seizing the island by Russian naval troops without insignia under the guise of “Odessan freedom fighters” to support possible “Odessan People’s Republic” and to send “humanitarian convoys” from Crimea under the “protection” from Russian naval vessels currently seems far-fetched. While this scenario looked viable from the geographical point of view, and considering the previous Russian actions in Crimea, it completely overlooks the issue of limited opening for navigation by land to the Snake island, the necessity to supply the combatants (there are no production capacities on the island), difficulties in taking it over due to the infrastructure and natural forms, and most importantly – the proximity of the Romanian territorial waters.

Korewa (2016) proposes a scenario whereby if “Russia seizes Zmiiinyi Island, it could be turned into a naval base from which fighters from the Odessa Underground could operate in motorboats armed with RPGs and Kalashnikovs, which would be a nightmare for merchant shipping”. While the possibility of establishing a full-fledged military or naval base given the limited supply and support are alluded to above, the possible role of Romania should be explored further. First of all, it should be considered of high interest to Romania in the Western Black Sea and its security, magnified by its old aspirations to regional leadership. After all, it was Romania in 2010 that expressed a negative stance towards the prolongation of the Russian Black Sea stationing in Crimea, deeming it a national security threat.

If Eastern Ukraine does not pose a direct threat to Romania, any adversarial actions in the Western Black Sea would provoke a reaction both to protect itself and its close ally Moldova. Romania, for example, is particularly concerned about threats to its energy platforms in the Black Sea, as well as about freedom of navigation there and control of the mouth of the Danube (Blank 2016). Experts stress that Romania being aware of the situation, has been working with NATO to create a rapid-deployment capacity in the Black Sea that is similar to what NATO already has planned for the Baltic region and Poland (Coalson 2016). Such rapid reaction forces can be difficult to establish but their task is clearly understandable, to prevent possible unexpected attacks like the one described above against Zmiinyi.

It is very difficult to make adequate calculations and comparisons of navy capacity in the Black Sea. While the figures can suggest approximate parity between Turkish and Russian fleet, such figures fail to account for the technical conditions of the ships, their age, maintenance and operability (Delanoë, 2016). The additional factor to be taken into account is that both Russia and Turkey are deploying their fleets only in the Black Sea, while the official statistics only present the total tonnage and numbers and the vessels can be redeployed in case of necessity. In the Turkish case, such redeployment can be made all the easier due to the control over Bosphorus. Moreover, since the Black Sea is rather small, big tonnage is not always an advantage, but maneuverability and armament can play a more significant role.

Most of the Georgian navy ships were destroyed by the Russian military at pier in Poti back in 2008, after that Tbilisi has mostly concentrated on the development of the commercial fleet infrastructure. While having quite-well trained army, completely interoperable with NATO forces and with NATO aspirations, Georgia cannot any longer be considered a navy power in the Black Sea. Moreover, in 2009 Georgian naval forces were merged with the Coast Guard under the auspices of the Border Guard.

NATO countries Bulgaria and Romania have largely outdated naval forces with poor striking capabilities and limited range (4 frigates, 2 corvettes and 1 missile patrol boat for Bulgaria; 3 frigates, 4 corvettes and 3 missile patrol boats for Romania) (Celac etc. 2016). In the opinion of RAND experts: Within the Black Sea littoral, the Bulgarian, Romanian, and Georgian navies are no match for the Black Sea Fleet, where one military option is to provide these countries with their own anti-access capacity; the EU and United States could provide them with ground mobile anti-ship missile and maritime surveillance capabilities (Larrabee, Wilson. 2015, 38).

In 2016, Romania's President Klaus Iohannis expressed the idea of the so-called "Black Sea Fleet", which could unite Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Ukraine's fleet. While Ukraine actively supported the idea of a new naval cooperation initiative, in Bulgaria it was backed by President Rosen Plevneliev and rejected by Prime Minister Boyko Borissov, based on worries of irritating Russia. The absence of the clear concept on how this initiative would look, made President Iohannis explain that an initiative designed for cooperation in the area of joint exercises and joint training and should be deployed under the NATO umbrella, because all the three Black Sea countries – Romania, Bulgaria and Tukey – are NATO allies (AGERPRES 2016).

Before the Ukrainian crisis, the USA had had troops stationed on a permanent basis in Turkey and Greece, and has been gradually deployed in Bulgaria and Romania. The latter, as well as Azerbaijan were actively used as a transit point for the US troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan. In 2010 Washington set up the Black Sea Rotational Forces including 250 marines and sailors. In Georgia as well as Ukraine, the US has a number of military advisors and conducts regular military and naval exercises. In the Black Sea, it has operated a quasi-permanent maritime presence since March 2014, and occasionally carries out naval drills with NATO countries and partners (Delanoe 2016). Thus it is relying on the Montreux Convention restrictions, which guarantee its ships presence for a short period of time. However, it is difficult to call such an activity an exact strategy, but a temporary policy for a period of transformation.

Ukraine, left without most of its functional ships after the Crimean annexation, needed to focus not only on modernization, but nearly the creation of whole new naval forces. In April 2014, Ukraine lost the bulk of its Navy including 75% of personnel and was left only with one major operational ship with no missiles (Ukrainian Navy 2015). In case it continues to experience shortage of funding, in 2 years Ukraine can lose all of its naval forces. Most of the vessels that have remained are mostly unarmed and are used to secure the coastline. In February 2016, two of the 18 planned new "Gurza-M" armored boats were tested with future tasks of patrolling in the coastal zone, securing the border, combatting small enemy ships, protection of the shore infrastructure, safety navigation, intelligence operations, etc. (Black Sea news 2016). The decisions to create new marine battalions as an integral part of Navy have also been taken. Currently it is still impossible to make any conclusions about the future of the Ukrainian navy and capabilities of the state in this regard. De-facto Ukraine has now less of an area under its control in conjunction with increased maritime challenges and decreased naval capabilities. Navy Headquarter has been moved to Odessa, which for more than two decades has not supported a naval base, so the infrastructure should be either renewed or constructed from scratch. At the same time, physically separated it from the Russian fleet (when the two fleets were based in the Crimea), it is becoming much easier to manage. So with appropriate financing and continual cooperation with NATO partners, it can be better reformed.

Nevertheless, the modernization of the Russian navy had started earlier than the annexation of Crimea. The first trigger was Ukrainian President Yushenko's statement made in 2005 that Ukraine was not going to prolong the agreement on Russian Black Sea Fleet stationing in Crimea beyond 2017. New options were searched for by Russia, including the Syrian Port of Tartus, Abkhazian harbors and the development of the navy harbor in Novorossiysk (Russia). As all options had their disadvantages, there were serious hesitations to commence actual construction, which was almost terminated in 2010 due to the President Yanukovich's decision to sign the Kharkiv agreements extending the Russian stationing till 2042. Later on, decisions were made to significantly enhance the military presence in Crimea by 2020 and to establish new military facilities in Abkhazia, while deploying additional mobile missile coastal forces. Russia plans to spend \$2.4 billion on the Black Sea Fleet by 2020, including the most modern surface ships and submarines, as

well as integrated air-defense and amphibious-landing capacities (Coalson 2016). These decisions included not only new ship construction but also development of port facilities, among other a full-fledged navy base in Novorossiysk, which can dock both surface ships and submarines. However, this new base in Novorossiysk, even after all the plans are realized, will be only able to supplement but not substitute the base in Sevastopol, which remains the main base (Тебин 2014). The modernization of the Black Sea Fleet is one of the most ambitious elements of the Russian State Arms Procurement program for 2011–2020. Up to 18 new ships are being commissioned for the fleet and new infrastructure developed. The purpose of this modernization is to build a combined arms force that can deny NATO access to the Black Sea and project power outward and threaten U.S. and NATO interests in the Mediterranean and Middle East (Bugajski and Doran 2016, 12). Opinions about the possible future superiority in the Black Sea diverge after both Turkey and Russia finish the modernization of their fleets. There are several conditions that can influence this situation and to decrease these countries' naval modernization capacity – orientation of Turkey to the Middle Eastern dimension and Russia's reduced financing due to the sanctions and other military spending. Moreover, Russia has already experienced delays in some ship construction caused by the necessity to substitute Ukrainian-made details (Delanoe 2016).

NATO officials have expressed concerns about Russia's deployment of anti-ship and anti-aircraft systems in the occupied Crimea. Moscow claims it is forced to develop countermeasures in response to an increased NATO presence in the Black Sea. It is also necessary to consider that militarization is continuing not only in Crimea, but in addition to the continuous military build-up in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where “military infrastructure of both defensive and offensive character, with its wide operational range, poses a serious threat to the whole Black Sea region” (European Parliament 2015).

According to Ukraine's military intelligence: as of May 2016, nearly 23.9 thousand troops (compared to 12,500 in 2014), 613 tanks and combat armored vehicles, 162 artillery systems (56 out of these are MRLS), about 101 fighter jets, 56 helicopters, 16 coastal missile systems, 34 ships (26 in 2014) and 4 submarines (two in 2014) are located on the temporarily occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine 2016).

In early March 2015, Putin suggested that Moscow deploy nuclear weapons in Crimea. The Iskander tactical ballistic missile has a 400-kilometer range and can reach not only the territory of Ukraine but also parts of Moldova, Romania and Turkey. Concerns were expressed by members of the United States Senate Armed Services Committee that the Iskander's arrival in Crimea violates the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty – as well as posing a threat to Europe (McDermott 2014). Unfortunately, such concerns did not get serious publicity and discussions within the international institutions responsible for the security and military cooperation in Europe. Only European Parliament noted with concern that Russia has bolstered its air and naval defences in the Black Sea Basin considerably, deploying new naval defence (anti-ship) missiles and ensuring that Russian fighter planes control about three quarters of the Black Sea Basin airspace (by practically tripling the number of airports in Crimea) (European Parliament 2015). It is worth mentioning

that deployment of such weapons is more of a political rather than tactical advantage. Iskander missiles can carry both conventional and nuclear payload, while the use of the latter is difficult to imagine without full-fledged war involving all littoral states.

What is the future for navy cooperation (BLACKSEAFOR, Black Sea Harmony) and NATO's role in the region?

For a decade, there have been two naval cooperation initiatives in the Black Sea region – BLACKSEAFOR - a multinational naval task force that includes Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Romania, Turkey and Bulgaria, and Black Sea Harmony – multinational naval operation initiated by Turkey, which includes Turkey, Russia, Ukraine and Romania. Both were aimed at cooperation in a specific sphere – navy, in a limited geography – the Black Sea, and were it was perceived as a positive element of military cooperation between the regional states, given that some participants had competing interests or conflicting views towards security.

Black Sea Harmony and BLACKSEAFOR had in many regards duplicated each other, rather than supplemented. For several years already, experts have been pointing to the necessity to unite efforts and capacities of the two initiatives. However, this process has not started, and in a current situation, its implementation will be beyond the possible. With the development of the Ukrainian crisis, it is possible to state that future cooperation in the current formats very unlikely at best, as Ukraine and Russia have been participating in both. The creation of a new format is not being considered yet, the Russian Federation excluded, so all the other states can concentrate on their cooperation within the NATO framework.

Turkey's views on maritime security in the Black Sea area were closer to Russia's than to those of the United States. Ankara essentially regarded the Black Sea as a "Turkish lake" and opposes an expansion of both the NATO and the U.S. military presence there (Larrabee, Wilson and Gordon IV 2015, 39). Turkish officials usually argued that the Black Sea security should be provided by the littoral countries of the Black Sea. Instead of increasing the U.S. or NATO military presence, Ankara de-facto blocked a U.S. initiative to increase the role of NATO's Operation Active Endeavor in the Black Sea in 2006, and proposed expanding of the BLACKSEAFOR and Operation Black Sea Harmony, which were almost copying Active Endeavor operation in the Mediterranean. In this regard, Russia and Turkey found a perfect compromise, preventing others from becoming involved in regional affairs. The Romanian disagreement to such a state was mostly ignored.

Turkish dominance in the Black Sea and desire to lead and have an overview of the region, resulted in a situation when in 2014 there was almost an absence of understanding of the threats and challenges in the Black Sea region by the NATO authorities. Despite the regular navy and military trainings, they have resulted neither in a strategy or in action plan in case of a crisis. Having three member-states in the Black Sea has not translated into the NATO presence in the region. In some way it suited the Alliance to rely solely on Turkey, delegating the responsibility for security, as no real threats or challenges

had been expected.

Changes triggered by the illegal annexation of Crimea raised awareness among many European states, which believed that the EU must have a security response and reconsider its foreign and security policies, which must be reflected in a reviewed European Security Strategy, European Maritime Security Strategy and the EU Strategy for the Black Sea (European Parliament 2015). No such reaction was noted within the NATO framework, which considered the Black Sea risks in a wider European context, emphasizing and enhancing security in the Baltics and at the Eastern flank, with the sea mostly left for the individual countries initiatives. The Allies failed to develop an effective Black Sea security architecture that could deter Russia's advances, which should be considered within the larger anti-NATO strategy in which naval forces play a significant and growing role (Bugajski and Doran 2016, 1).

On the eve of the NATO Warsaw Summit, more and more experts urged for greater NATO involvement in the Black Sea region. An Atlantic Council expert insists that NATO possesses economic and technological superiority over Russia, that does not translate into a regional military superiority that is sufficient to deter Russia, as it lacks an adequate policy, force structure, coordination, and command and control system in the Black Sea region (Cohen 2016).

Russian-Turkish relations and the Montreux Convention

Neither the Russian-Georgian conflict of 2008, nor the illegal annexation of Crimea had a serious influence on the Russian-Turkish relations. It has been Syria and conflicting interests of the two partners that shook and almost derailed their engagement. In the opinion of the Russian military analyst Pavel Felgenhauer, it seems clear that Putin was sure that the Turks would be amenable and somehow the two countries would divide things up, that was a fundamental mistake (Coalson 2016). Additional reason for such considerations was Turkish adherence to the Montreux Convention and previous behavior during the Russian-Georgian conflict in August 2008.

Ankara is strongly opposed to any initiative that might imply a change in the status of the convention or that could disturb the maritime status quo in the Black Sea region. In August 2008, Turkey declined entrance to the Black Sea for two U.S. Navy hospital ships, the USNS Comfort and the USNS Mercy, through the Dardanelles with humanitarian aid for Georgia, because their tonnage exceeded the limits allowed for foreign warships under the Montreux Convention. The United States eventually sent the aid aboard the destroyer USS McFaul, the USCGC Dallas, and the USS Mount Whitney, all of which were well below the tonnage limits allowed under the Montreux Convention (Larrabee, Wilson and Gordon IV 2015, 39).

Russia's build-up in the Black Sea occurred during a time of good relations between Moscow and Ankara, complemented with the personal relationship between Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The incidents with Russian military airplanes and different perception of the Syrian conflict had

changed these relations dramatically, and influenced not only the Middle East, but even more – the Black Sea region's possible scenarios.

Some experts suggests that with both countries prominently present in the Black Sea, the possibilities for more dangerous incidents are high (Coalson 2016). Considering the fact that Turkey is a NATO member, any serious incidents can involve the Alliance. Clear Turkish orientation and reliance on NATO (MacFarquhar and Erlangernov 2015) rather than searching for excuse from Russia, demonstrated Turkish security priorities. This rift in Russian-Turkish relations presented a chance for the deeper NATO involvement in the Black Sea region, and for search of new security configurations and partnerships in the region.

According to some opinions, in the case of the Black Sea, Russia can concentrate its forces in a relatively small area to gain advantage, whereas NATO has limited access to these waters largely because of the stipulations in the 1936 Montreux Convention, which limits the naval presence of non-littoral states in the Black Sea (Bugajski and Doran 2016). As a result, most of the research compares only Russian-Turkish military balance in the Black Sea region, not considering the cumulative efforts of three NATO littoral member states that have currently received stimulus for enhanced cooperation both on bilateral and multilateral basis. Despite the fact that according to the Montreux Convention, Vessels of war belonging to non-Black Sea Powers shall not remain in the Black Sea more than twenty-one days, whatever be the object of their presence there (Convention 1936), the NATO ships can engage in an operation based on a continuous rotation of the different states' ships. Another option can be the reinforcement of the littoral NATO members by additional ships and arms on, for example, a leasing basis, which will not be considered under the Convention's restrictions. Some experts propose the establishment of a NATO regional command capable of coordinating all defensive activities in the theater (Cohen 2016).

In addition, Ukraine and Turkey received a chance to add significant military and security component to their relations, which were mostly based on economic interests. According to Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council Secretary O. Turchynov, "Ukraine and Turkey have a unique historical opportunity to combine political, diplomatic, military-technical and economic resources for the efficient and coordinated response to the destruction of the balance of forces in the Black Sea region" (Censor 2016). This idea was supported by his Turkish counterpart Seyfullah Hacımüftüoğlu, stating that the two countries must play a leading role in creation of the efficient system of regional security, where the combination of their potentials can provide a very efficient synergy (Censor 2016).

As for the Russian Federation, the Black Sea region is not perceived as a separate region, but as a part of the Black Sea-Mediterranean zone, so the operation is impossible without smooth passage of Bosphorus and Dardanelle. Despite the demonstration of force by launching missiles from the Caspian Sea to reach targets in Syria (BBC 2015), possibilities of such operations are very limited and not very effective in the current combat situation. However, in the opinion of the US officials: "this launch from the Caspian Sea was more than just hitting targets in Syria; they have assets in Syria that could have handled

this. It was really about messaging to the world and us that this is a capability that they have and they can use it” (Cavas 2015). In some way, it was a response to the proposals to close the Black Sea straits to the Russian Fleet, so as not to allow the Crimean base to be used as a headquarters for the Syrian operation. Some experts explained it by citing high-cost and logistics that Russia would need to expend for deploying forces from the Northern Fleet navy bases, hoping it would either prevent or limit Moscow’s engagement in Syria. The strike from the Caspian Fleet against Syria proved that closing the straits is not an option, either from the legal point of view or the strategic one.

This incident demonstrated that the Black Sea can’t be considered anymore as a single-sea security system. For years, there were definitions of the Black Sea – Caspian cooperation, or the Black Sea-Mediterranean marine system, but in terms of security, it is time to consider the three seas as one geographic unit.

The Black Sea region is returning to the times of confrontation that has existed during the Cold War, but with a new paradigm of regional relations. Militarization of Crimea, the possibility for nuclear weapon deployment, changes in the spheres of navigation responsibility, navy modernization in Romania, Ukraine and Georgia, break in the Russian-Turkish relations are just a few elements of the new evolving order.

As all regional countries are currently considering the modernization of their navy and increasing training, one of the conclusions can be that most of the tasks can be accomplished by smaller ships but with a proper equipment and rapid reaction capability. The deployment of big warships within the Black Sea waters is more an issue of prestige rather than effectiveness. However, their existence should be considered in case the conflict spreads to the Mediterranean. The future acquisitions of new ships (type, tonnage, weaponry) will be the main indicator for the evaluation of the countries’ strategies, including the extension of their naval power beyond the Black Sea region.

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THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION IN KYRGYZSTAN: BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND STATE FRAGILITY¹⁸

10

GUILHERME MOREIRA LEITE DE MELLO

Introduction

Kyrgyzstan, despite being the smallest economy in Central Asia, adopted economic liberalization policies, envisioning the preservation of a sustainable policy in order to raise its economic development to decouple its internal and external instabilities. By focusing its foreign policy on domestic stability, ensuring its cultural identity and dodging excessive dependencies on its Central Asian neighbors, the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) strategy brought Kyrgyzstan closer to Central-Asian, Russian and Chinese markets, as an opportunity to widen its economic reach.

This article will evaluate Kyrgyzstan's entrance to the EEU as an integration process to escape state fragility and Russia's role as an important integration partner in this process, and as a result, if this symbiotic relationship creates a shift between development and state fragility. This fragility process, even if volatile, can be described across two periods. First, as a legitimate tentative to strengthen its sovereignty by engaging in the latest Russian-led integration process, and second, post-2010, marked by the nascent democratic experiment in Kyrgyzstan that brings security concerns, but represents a positive turnaround regarding the beginning of political and economic transformations, since the economic reform proposed by President Almazbek Atambayev is intended to produce the liberalization of its markets, opening up to economies such as Kazakhstan, Russia, China, Belarus and Central-Asian neighbors.

Free movement of goods, services and capital and major infrastructure system would provide easier access to broader markets. In this sense, we build up to the question: could Kyrgyzstan, after two civil wars, instability and fragility as measure by the indices of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and The Fund for Peace, recover from its status as a fragile state by joining the EEU?

In the first section, we will analyze Kyrgyzstan as a candidate for investment and development in Central Asia. The second section illuminates what determines state fragility in economic terms, allowing for Kyrgyzstan's fragility ranking and development over the past two decades to determine its future. The third section will observe the necessity of the EEU vis-à-vis the integration process within the Kyrgyz domestic policies. The fourth section will evaluate the criticisms and missed opportunities that the EEU has been facing

¹⁸ Guilherme Mello is an education counselor for UK affairs at Instituto Global Attitude in São Paulo, Brazil, a PhD candidate at Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal and a fellow researcher of the Marie Curie Fellowship between Perm University, Russia.

since its creation. The conclusion will merge each topic trying to elucidate the proposed question and reflect on what is to come for the international political economy of Kyrgyzstan in the light of the EEU membership.

Kyrgyzstan as a centerpiece for development

The EEU started in January 1, 2015, based on the Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and its natural leader, Russia. The defunct Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), now with a new configuration, was also joined later on by Armenia, which was perceived as controversial for the Azerbaijani and Turkish leaders, although the Russian pressure prevailed (The Moscow Times 2015). The integration project, with a firm and consistent perception of what it wanted to be, was launched to ensure the free movement of goods, services, capital and workforce within its borders and, as President Vladimir Putin stated at the U.N. General Assembly speech in September 2015, the EEU was an “integration ideal that was opposed to the policy of exclusiveness” (Putin 2015). Putin then added that the Russia-led project was [*sic*] “(...) the so-called integration of integrations based on universal and transparent rules of international trade” (Putin 2015). Although the EEU, institutionalized and created through a driving force inspired by the relative success of occidental models of integration, patterns of development and the removal of trade barriers to bring harmonized tariffs between members, and by *spillover* effect, other Central Asian and Caucasus neighbors have been facing premature shortcomings, still in its first year of its existence.

Firstly, with the demise of Moscow’s plans to form a common currency, a unified passport and codified defense alignment, Kazakhstan and Belarus seemed to be taking seriously the opportunity to stall Moscow’s growing influence in the post-Soviet space. Secondly, there is a pattern of resistance that shows more signs of regional and domestic protectionism than commitment to international integration. For Kyrgyzstan and Armenia, the protectionism is only hurting the economy, raising tariffs and export rates to incomprehensible levels and mistaking raising imports by de-inflating inflation and mobilizing free-movement of goods with sagging domestic prices with rampant tariffs (Michel 2015).

Bringing this level of regional analysis, firstly let’s ask why it was important for Kyrgyzstan to become an EEU member. Kyrgyzstan depends on traditional cross-border and domestic trade of services and goods for the development of its industries and local businesses. Also, by using its advantageous geographical position located on the Silk Road Economic Belt alongside low taxes and custom duties from Kazakhstan and major partners such as China, India and Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, especially after the break-up of the Soviet Union, has never before been seen as such a strategic country to invest in as it is after joining EEU.

Although Kyrgyzstan faced a significant rise in its economic relevance, the deal that formerly came with the adherence to the rules of the Customs Union, cut significantly the volume of imports to countries such as Kazakhstan and Belarus due to the rise of

import and customs tariffs. To acknowledge this situation, Kyrgyzstan was left with two options in order to move on its geopolitical strategy alongside a political decision that would impact the course of its development: a) continue to export goods and agricultural products, combining its natural resources to a smaller extent, with significantly less profit and therefore, register slower development, or; b) join the EEU to attract international investment by pledging allegiance to a new-founded integration project, that had the actual possibility to increase domestic production.

Kyrgyzstan's entrance to the EEU proves to be less of an international relations experiment in neoliberal theories, but more of a forced political measure to have equal conditions and rights with other participants in EEU and achieve specific preferences while it was still feasible. Another aspect of this strategy is due to Kyrgyzstan's natural resources, namely hydropower.

State fragility in Kyrgyzstan: a politico-economic matter

The international community has great difficulty in assessing and accurately identifying if a state is genuinely fragile. There is a clear dichotomy between stability and resilience or episodes of domestic crisis with potential factors of conflict and this is because there is a tendency to believe that any country facing periods of fragility, instability or failure in governance is categorically fragile or failed (Kaplan 2015). It is important to note that state fragility is often compared based on a system of hierarchy comparing the states that succeed and states that are essentially fragile and that even "fail or collapse".

Brock determines that fragile states are the result of power relations between national elites and a history of international domination, which after independence, means that states or regions become deeply dependent on the international community to validate their recent sovereignty (Brock 2012). Even though many of these characteristics could easily classify Kyrgyzstan as a weak state, or so to say, fragile, there are paradoxical counterpoints to this classification when it comes to Kyrgyzstan's participation in the international system, which makes the presence of fragility, questionable and debatable.

Unlike Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, despite being the smallest economy in Central Asia, adopts economic liberalization policies, envisioning the preservation of a sustainable foreign policy in order to raise its economic development to decouple its internal and external instabilities (Nichol 2013). Presenting a constant volatility in safety, justice and violence indexes, unfortunately, Kyrgyzstan has scaled indexes of development with difficulty through the years, although, this does not mean the country hasn't had any sign of development, which is a statement far from reality (Mankoff 2015).

History of fragility in Kyrgyzstan

By focusing its foreign policy on domestic stability, ensuring its cultural identity and dodging excessive dependencies on its Central Asian neighbors, this strategy brought Kyrgyzstan closer to Russia and China, since it is dependent on hydrocarbons and raw

materials, both provided in a meaningful extent by the two economic partners (The Economist 2014).

We can evaluate that the construction of fragility in Kyrgyzstan falls into three periods:

a) Firstly, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan's state context changed from dependent to independent, subjected to a post-conflict reconstruction policy where the priority was focused on international assistance funding for economic development, reduction of inflation and the legitimacy of its sovereignty (Paust 2014);

b) Secondly, by experiencing two great revolutions in 2005 and 2010, Kyrgyzstan's stabilization strategies were fragmented into high levels of political and parliamentary corruption, decline in exports and imports from China, Russia and Kazakhstan and increased tensions on the management of water resources with Tajikistan, following hitherto to the weakening of the state's social cohesion, resulting in the fall from the 65th position in 2005 to 31st in 2011, at the Fund For Peace ranking in state fragility (FFP 2011). Thus, there was the need for the political loss of two presidents in less than a decade, and the introduction of a recognition not only of a system of democratic governance but the strengthening of social cohesion, focused on the ethnic front with Uzbekistan, as Kyrgyzstan found itself submerged in high levels of corruption, violence and socio-cultural divisions between elites, ethnic groups and its own civil society (Malashenko 2012);

c) Thirdly, post-2010, the nascent of Kyrgyzstan's democratic experiment brings security concerns but represents a positive turning point regarding the beginning of political and economic transformations, since the economic reform proposed by President Almazbek Atambayev is intended to produce the liberalization of its market, opening up to economies such as Kazakhstan, Russia, China, Iran, and in certain terms, Afghanistan, thus, by joining EEU and taking a step back at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), might be a read into Atambayev neoliberal approach (Mankoff 2015).

So, as Kyrgyzstan, after colliding with two civil wars, stumbled in four of the six state fragility and development indexes, and also made believable to the international community to have given a step backwards in levels of social cohesion and self-identity, is it possible to categorize Kyrgyzstan as a fragile state? The answer lies in its multipolar governance method, because it is not only focused on endogenous factors of development but exogenous ones as well. Trade liberalization, as previously mentioned is a product of this connection to foreign markets in favor of the protection of their domestic development.

As Kyrgyzstan is mostly sustainable in natural resources, exports and the creation of pipelines transporting these resources, as well as most of Central Asia has become a priority, also including the industrialization of heavy metals and building large hydro-power for export of energy (Mankoff 2015). Although not a major energy producer, the geographical position of Kyrgyzstan is conducive to it acting as "transit state" or as it were, to be part of the silk route.

Another clear example of the attempt at economic expansion to dissolve the weaknesses in its historical route is the multilateral participation in organizations and cooperation agencies. As argued earlier, the statement of fragile states envisions this cooperation in an extent that development is understood in sociological terms, as vertical. That is

because development has objectified itself solely on economic partnerships, liberalization of markets, political strategies that involves integration methods and the expansion of a domestic foreign policy that attracts investors to the domestic and international agenda. By advocating only economic gains, which is nothing more than a neoliberal measure throughout the observation of Kyrgyzstan's international relations interplay, the applicability of this foreplay towards its development is a formula to dodge state fragility at its best, and most importantly, in its most trying times (Kaplan 2012).

Kyrgyzstan still has challenges on both domestic and regional levels. The political diversity that Bishkek offers with a parliamentary democracy is also a boost to the methodologies of cooperation to defragment the protectionism that internal crises can provide (Mankoff 2015). In this sense, when we analyze governance, resilience and economic development indexes, Kyrgyzstan not only jumped from 28th position in 2008 to 62nd in 2015 but also was protected by the same neoliberalism, which had once tabled the state as economically unstable (FFP 2015).

The EEU between criticism and missed opportunities

In a macro-level analysis, Central Asia has not been the most friendly or structured environment for integration methods of development of Kyrgyzstan. Its accommodation within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) has had different layers over the last two decades, especially with the involvement with Russia, political relations and decisions are directly attached to sectors such as economic development, energy resources, and security enhancement. However, these relationships are not limitless. The growth of Moscow in Central Asia, and Kyrgyzstan included, and its wielded influence around the borders and domestic extent, are counterbalanced by integration projects such as the SCO, as a way to interfere directly and indirectly with the Russian "leadership-led" propaganda (Freire 2011).

In a micro-level analysis, when it comes to Eurasian integration, initially strongly motivated by Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev and later in the 2000's, by President Vladimir Putin, the great projects seem to be a grand methodical idea but with feeble international capacity to become an "all-in-one" method of development (Rywkin 2006). There have been many difficulties in accommodating differences, even at the micro-level. For example, despite the fact that border control constitutes a relevant theme for all Central-Asian countries, conversations and tryouts for a free-visa zone has been minimally feasible at this moment, which shows, even to a broader extent, the lack of synergy between regional relations (Freire 2011).

Tightening the scope of this analysis, Kyrgyzstan's cooperation logic has been felt and propagated since the EurAsEC promise of economic rise. Therefore, after the membership of EEU and morphing itself to the Russian geopolitical pull, Kyrgyzstan faces multiple challenges that are equally equated by the international community, and as we analyze it, manifest themselves as missed opportunities and passive criticisms. We would categorize the country's downfalls in four main categories: the intermittence of the Russian ruble;

Russia being too vital to Armenia and Kyrgyzstan; the international community not being all-around invested; economic and political resistance of Belarus and Kazakhstan.

The first example is the fluctuation of the Russian ruble. With a decrease of 20 per cent at the end of fiscal year in 2014, consumers from Belarus and Kazakhstan faced cruel rate troubles, since domestic products in Russia became cheaper, therefore, harder for markets, such as Kyrgyz to compete fairly (Standish 2015a). It also created an economic strain for the 180-million-non-Russia markets, which would stagnate when it comes to stimulation of industries. The deflation of the Russian ruble also brings down exports and the value of the Kyrgyzstani som, in a spillover effect.

Michel (2015) argues also that Kazakhstan, although the most important Russian partner in Central Asia has not corroborated an easy negotiation and acceptance of EEU normative, hurting in a spillover cascade, Kyrgyzstan and the rest of its neighbors. As Kazakhstan depends considerably on oil commerce to finance the international budget, the decrease of export has hit hard the development of EEU economic relations. Nazarbayev had to devalue the state's currency by over 20 percent in one day due to falling oil prices not to fall down in a spiral of overnight decadence (The Economist 2014).

In order to establish an economic strategy, Russia did not consider that to create and to elevate a platform of transparency and open markets for its desirable members, it should behave better towards the international community. Instead of applying, Kyrgyzstan included, a 180 million market to its nationalist agenda it brought with it the worst geopolitical (un)necessities that caused the EEU to be another playful contract between partners. As a result, Kyrgyzstan finds itself polarized between development and state fragility; between a collapsing crisis and an opportunity at the end of the economic tunnel.

Conclusion

The objectives and goals of the EEU were clear since the very first draft proposed by Nursultan Nazarbayev back in 1994: to create a Eurasian version of integration that would freely and transparently broaden the concept of union and development superseding the challenges and the chessboard of definition of relations between regional neighbors and affiliates. By creating norms beyond the economic realm, the development would be propelled by the non-antagonic Russian agenda, revered with a deformed interplay of inclusive foreign policy that mixed, years later, geopolitical game-changer unnecessary annexations, decaying economic markets, and when it comes to relationships with Kyrgyzstan, a sense of jeopardy in political friendliness – required in a certain dose in integration methods, whilst being a main investor and aid benefactor.

A pattern is that Russia is and will continuously be the EEU mastermind and ruler, therefore a centerpiece for the expansion of a, as Freire (2011, 130-132) predicted, “Eurasianism” and “Russian supremacy in Central Asia”. However, as it has been discussed, this hegemony between Kyrgyz-Russian relations is built on many challenges, criticisms and as we observed, missed opportunities. Although the Russian-led project and therefore, foreign policy goes through its first year, measures are continuously being taken to diversify

fy the dimensions of politico-economic relations, especially when China and other Central Asian countries are being taken into consideration.

When it comes to categorizing Kyrgyzstan as fragile, there is a palpable dichotomy to what level this fragility is escalated and to what extent it is actually present. If looked to a securitarian margin, where inequality and austerity prevails, doomed to a constant participation in Russian financial aid and international cooperation to secure its borders, fragility is not merely a methodological hierarchized term, but a reality. If interpreted at the extent of the abundance of water resources – in which, there is room for major exploration, Kyrgyzstan is considered a centerpiece for development and a frontrunner for inter-regional supply.

In the process of taking its first steps, for now, EEU has proved to be a centerpiece for economic stagnation and difficulties imposed even prior to Kyrgyzstan's entrance into the project. As President Atambayev stated, it was the less bad option in a sea of political and economic uncertainty. If Kyrgyzstan was being led by Russian influence, maybe in the midst of a merger – yet to be unraveled and carefully taken into account, its future certainly lies in better hands if taken with its Sino-Russian variants, and that is certainly a promise that will bring, amidst initial difficulties, hope for future development and economic growth.

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TRANSNISTRIA: A GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGE WITHIN A CHANGED REGIONAL STATUS QUO

HANNA VASILEVICH

List of Contents

Introduction
Russian view on Moldova as a part of the Russian world
Ideological nature of the Transnistrian conflict
State creation: Chisinau version
State creation: Tiraspol version
Moldova's European integration and the factor of Ukraine
Conclusion

Introduction

A significant feature of the conflict around the Moldovan region of Transnistria is that numerous contestations and claims from both Moldovan and Transnistrian sides are framed in terms of self-determination. Transnistria claims independence, while in terms of Moldova's legislation the region is an autonomous territorial unit with a special legal status. The parties operate eclectic systems of arguments and appeal to the Soviet legacy (internal boundaries), ethnic territory and ethnic statehood (Republic of Moldova vs. Transnistrian Moldovan Republic) and the will of the population majority. Ultimately this complex interplay creates no grounds for reconciliation, but rather provides possibilities for geopolitical manipulations. During the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit of 2013 Moldova initiated the Association Agreement with the EU, while Transnistria once again raised the issue of self-determination, which implies separation from Moldova with consequent possible accession to Russia. After the Russian annexation of Crimea in March 2014, presented by Russia as a result of popular self-determination, similar claims came from Transnistria (both regions are regarded by Russia as parts of the 'Russian World'). Transnistria's striving for self-determination affects security and alliances in the region and can ruin a shaky regional military and political balance. This article seeks to examine this potential with regard to the ethnic and geopolitical dimensions of the self-determination claims of Transnistria, taking into account both Transnistrian-Moldovan dialogue and the capacities for the involvement of external actors.

Russian view on Moldova as a part of the Russian world

The Soviet period of the Moldovan history represents the key reason for the current divergence in the two constructs of Moldovan statehood which are represented by

the Republic of Moldova and the Transnistrian Moldovan Republic, as well as the role of Russian political and socio-cultural factor in it.

Being one of the union republics of the USSR, Moldova enjoyed at least formal autonomy. Moreover, similarly to other titular ethnic groups of the union republics, Moldovans were perceived as one of the Soviet nations and their national identity was institutionalized both at the territorial/political and at the social/personal levels.

As a result, the wide application of the Russo-centric historical canon resulted in the situation when after the collapse of the Soviet Union Russian elites and the majority of Russians do not perceive most of the ex-USSR states as “foreign” countries” (Kuzio 2006, 407). After the dissolution of the USSR this perception of Moldova by the Russian society largely remained, though it was not as acute as in cases of Belarus and particularly Ukraine largely due to the relatively small size of Moldova and lack of common border with Russia. At the same time, significant Russian-speaking populations in the post-Soviet countries became subjects of special attention of Russian politics and society who have often portrayed them as victims of nationalizing policies of the newly-independent states, as *Russians began increasingly to think about their larger ethnolinguistic community and of the way in which their co-nationals were being treated and castigated as ‘colonisers’ and ‘occupiers’* (Smith 1998, 12).

With this regard, until 2008 Russo-Georgian war and the recent 2014 Crimean conflict, Moldova was the only post-Soviet country where “*the Russian state went so far as to intervene militarily in support of the breakaway Russian-speaking enclave of TransDniester*” (Smith 1998, 12) in order to neutralize the attempt of Chisinau to defeat the separatist region.

Moreover, in the 2000s this interest vis-à-vis the Russian-speaking communities beyond Russia’s borders has evolved within the concept of the so-called “Russian world” (Russian: *russkiy mir*) which has become a dominant doctrine of both the Russian state and the Russian Orthodox Church.

Within the framework of this concept the notion “world” refers to “*a trans-state and transcontinental community which is united by its affiliation to a particular state and the loyalty to its culture*” (Tishkov 2008, 416).

At the state level, Russian authorities pay particular attention to the role of the Russian language which, according to Vladimir Putin (2007), is perceived as “*the language of the historic brotherhood of nations, the language of international communication. It preserves not only an entire layer of truly global achievements, but also the living space for the multimillion “Russian world” which, of course, is much broader than Russia itself.*”

The policies of the Russian Orthodox Church develop the attitude towards the Russo-centric concept of homeland and emphasize its multi-ethnic nature. Hence, according to the Moscow Patriarch Kirill (2009), *the Church is called Russian not on the grounds of ethnicity. This designation indicates that the Russian Orthodox Church performs the pastoral mission among the peoples which take Russian spiritual and cultural tradition as the basis of their national identity, or, at least, as*

a substantial portion thereof. That is why in this sense we also regard Moldova as a part of this Russian world.

Consequently, by means of common historical experiences and religious similarities Moldova is attributed to the Russian world. At the same time, this multi-ethnic nature of the Russian Orthodox Church complies with the primacy of Russian culture in it: though, the sovereignty of the states is not questioned and this space is declared not to be based on any hierarchy in relationship between the countries in question, it is obvious that this vision promotes a Russo-centric and hierarchical view on the history and culture of Moldova or any other country such as Ukraine or Belarus which is associated with the “Russian world” concept. In other words, though the dispersed Russian world consists of citizens of various backgrounds and citizenships, including Ukrainian, Belarusian, Moldovan or Kazakh, the Russian Orthodox Church seeks to play an active role in the new realities (DECR Communication Service 2010). It is claimed that this role should be two-fold: on the one hand resistance to the assimilation trends of “our people” is declared while on the other hand to assist these people in their integration into the life of the countries of their residence. This dichotomy is encompassed by a formula: *“compatriots should involve themselves in local life, know the traditions and culture, but they should preserve their indissoluble connection to the Russian world”* (DECR Communication Service 2010).

As a result, the “Russian world” view on Moldova merely reiterates one of the post-war Soviet national policies of rapprochement of the nations and culture, though it has incorporated two additional important components:

It does not question the sovereignty and independence of Moldova, putting it however into “natural” orbit of Russian foreign policies,

It emphasizes the special role of the Russian Orthodox Church in this context which was excluded from the Soviet concept.

Ideological nature of the Transnistrian conflict

The Transnistrian conflict can be seen as another result of the Soviet administrative division and legal status. It has significant differences from any other conflict in the post-Soviet states. Contrary to Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Crimea, the territory of Transnistria did not have clearly-defined territorial borders which would administratively unite them into one formation, as the region did not enjoy any special administrative status in the post-war Moldovan SSR. Similarly to most of the post-Soviet conflicts, the emergence of Transnistrian conflict is not related to any distinct historical statehood, but is deeply rooted in the history of development of the Moldovan statehood in the 20th century. The majority of today’s Transnistria (with the exception of the city of Bendery) was a part of an interwar Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the Soviet Ukraine. At the same time, during the same historical period the rest of Moldovan territory constituted parts of the Romanian state. In other words, the territory of today’s Transnistria is represented by those parts of the Moldovan ASSR¹⁹

¹⁹ Some parts of the former Moldovan ASSR territory remained parts of the Ukraine and were incorporated into the Odessa Region.

which were merged with the former Romanian territory in 1940 to establish Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic.

The emergence of the Transnistrian conflict is rooted in the transformations of the Moldovan SSR in the late 1980s. It was triggered by the policies pursued by the republican authorities aimed at nationalization of domestic legislation and policies and ideas of the unification of Moldova with Romania (Prina and Osipov 2014, 174). The predominantly Russian-speaking and ethnically diverse population of the region which accommodated the majority of the republic's industrial potential was reluctant and even hostile to the expressions of these nationalizing policies (Prina and Osipov 2014, 174). This aspect is related to the fact that the majority of the region's multiethnic population, with ethnic Moldovans, Russians and Ukrainians comprising each around 30% of it, Transnistria cannot be characterized by any kind of significant inter-ethnic tensions or conflicts within its borders (Wolff 2012, 40). That is why the emergence of the Transnistrian Moldovan Republic and the support of its authorities by the local poly-ethnic population allow concluding that the conflict is not of ethnic-nature (Troebst 2003, 440-442). Moreover, some commentators (Wolff 2012, 40-41) refer to the 1993 CSCE Mission to Moldova's Report No. 13 which contained the following provisions with regard to the local Transnistrian identity and its major components which are “

anchored in language (Russian), geography (natural separation from the rest of Moldova by the River Nistru), history (the Transnistrian region as part of the Russian empire, rather than historic Bessarabia), and a perception – rightly or wrongly – to have been at the receiving end of a Moldovan attempt to resolve the dispute by force in 1992. Further evidence for this shared sense of belonging is also the fact that those displaced during the brief spell of violence in 1992 have all been able to return to their homes, regardless of their ethnic identity.

Thus, the aforementioned elements of this identity provide grounds to measure geopolitical preferences made by the political regime in Tiraspol and have become embodied into its domestic and foreign relations. First, this identity is of Russo-centric nature which includes both a linguistic and historical component. Second, this identity refers to the multi-ethnic population which, as it has been shown above, is therefore compatible with those promoted by the Russian state and the Orthodox Church within the framework of the multi-ethnic and Russo-centric concept of “the Russian world.” This all determines policies of the Tiraspol authorities which can be summarized by the four major components:

Transnistria as a multi-ethnic nation-building project,
 Conflict settlement cannot be achieved by the annexation of the region by Moldova,
 Any Romanian direct or indirect influence in the Moldovan policies is dismissed,
 Lack of interest in strong and consolidated central authorities in Chisinau (Safonov 2012, 267).

Consequently, it is necessary to focus on nationalizing policies pursued by both Chisinau and Tiraspol and their contents with regard to geopolitical preferences and identity formation.

State creation: Chisinau version

On the eve of its independence Moldova differed from all other union republics by trying to deny its own national identity in favor of the Romanian one, while in the other Soviet republics political elites attempted to defend and promote independent views on their nations' histories, cultures and identities (King 2000, 224-5).

In other words, Moldova was the only ex-Soviet republic where its *"inhabitants continued to argue about the existence of the nation itself"* (King 2000, 5). That is why the Moldovan nation-building project is sometimes described as unfinished and reversible (Casu 2007, 244). Fluctuations between Moldovan and Romanian identities have determined both domestic and foreign policies of the country as well as its constitutional foundations.

The Moldova's Declaration of Independence adopted on June 23, 1990 contains neither references to ethnic foundations of the Moldovan statehood, nor mentions ethnic Moldovans (Prina and Osipov 2014, 133-4). At the same time, the Constitution adopted on July 27, 1994 refers to "the continuity of the Moldovan people statehood within the historical and ethnic framework of its growing as a nation", defines the people of the Republic of Moldova as both Moldovans and citizens of a different ethnic origin (Preamble) and proclaims "the Moldovan language based on the Latin alphabet" the state language of the country. Hence, the constitutional provisions refer to the civic concept of the Moldovan nation and contain no reference to any manifestation of Romanian identity. Such a configuration was largely a result of the state policies pursued since early 1994 by the then Moldovan president Mircea Snegur who started "to direct historians and linguists to concentrate on the scientific origins of Moldova's independent identity, rather than on the cultural commonalities between Moldova and Romania" (King 2000, 4).

Thus, the main dimension of the Moldovan self-perception was focused on internal self-determination and was highly inclined towards the factor of Romanian identity. In other words, it resembled a fluctuation between two conceptual discourses: pro-unionist "one nation – two states" and pro-independent "two countries – two nations" (Cojocari 2008, 238).

At the same time, the Russian factor was by far less important for the Moldovan identity, though retained its crucial role in the spheres of politics and economy. First, Moldova was one of the few post-Soviet countries which did not show much interest in Russian-led post-Soviet integration projects and *"abstained from any substantial military cooperation with Moscow"* (Devyatkov 2012, 184). Second, in economic terms Moldova is heavily dependent on Russian energy and raw materials. Moreover, all pipelines which deliver Russian gas and oil to Moldova run through the territory of Transnistria (Bugajski 2004, 101). Third, Moldova belongs to *"the top countries in the world in terms of remittances as a share of the GDP, most earned in Russia"* (Heleniak 2013, 162). Finally, the 5+2 format of the negotiations to solve the Transnistrian crisis brings Russia into play in any case. Therefore, the impact of the Russian factor on the Moldovan policies and society is two-

fold. On the one hand, the relationship of the Moldovan identity to the Russian culture and language is not a matter of the primary discourse in Moldova, i.e. the Moldovan society merely does not associate itself with the concept of “Russian World” driven by the official Kremlin. On the other hand, the Russian factor still heavily dominates the geopolitical capacities of the Republic of Moldova and largely represents a continuation of the economic ties formed during the Soviet times, including the involvement in the solution of the conflict in Transnistria. This format thus provides Russia with an opportunity to heavily influence the Moldovan society.

State creation: Tiraspol version

Transnistrian peculiarity is that this de-facto state is functioning as a not recognized one. Nevertheless, as it was mentioned before, it clearly represents a nation-building project. Another peculiarity lies in its official name – the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (as it is referred to on the website of the de-facto Transnistrian Foreign Ministry) – contains the word “Moldovan”. This implies that this form of quasi statehood can be seen as another form of Moldovan nation-building. Therefore it is necessary to focus on the contents of this nation building, both domestic and international.

The Constitution of this entity adopted on December 24, 1995 stresses the word “multinational” when referring to the people of Transnistria and stresses their unity “by the common fortune on our land”.

Another peculiarity of the Transnistrian nation-building is its clear stance towards pro-Russian geopolitical choices which has evolved from the perception of Russia as a guarantor of the settlement of the Transnistrian-Moldovan relations to the regional leader and the center of Eurasian integration which is defined as a priority of Transnistrian policies (Shtanski 2014, 10).

Moreover, the de-facto Transnistrian authorities link their geopolitical choice with the peculiarities of the region’s history. Thus, according to Evgeniy Shevchuk, the de-facto president of Transnistria,

Traditions of the orientation towards Russia and Russian culture have been established for centuries, starting from the end of the 18th century... when the Russian Empire came here. Later, ... the Transnistrians were always faithful to their historical choice, and here there have never been domestic interethnic conflicts. The war of 1992 demonstrated that Transnistrian Moldovans, Russians and Ukrainians are joined in one front for the liberty of our republic. For liberty and for the right to remain in the unity with Russia (Shtanski 2014, 10).

Furthermore, the Eurasian integration is often proclaimed as a de-facto “national idea” of Transnistria which, according to Nina Shtanski (Shevchuk), the then de-facto Minister of Foreign Affairs of Transnistria, does not have any other alternatives in the current geopolitical conditions as well as historical and socio-cultural realities (Shtanski 2014, 20).

Thus, the nation-building in Transnistria can be characterized by the following

features. First, it is closely linked with a state-building which is embodied by the reference to the “multiethnic people” in the region’s de-facto Constitution. Consequently, this multi-ethnic population is perceived as a “Transnistrian sub-ethnos” (Shtanski 2014, 5). Second, this nation-building is being accomplished within the imagined perspective of the geopolitical rivalry between “pro-Eurasian” and “Romanian-European” options, and thus as those opposed to the nation-building construct pursued by Chisinau. Third, it is entirely in line with the concept of “the Russian World” promoted by Kremlin, both in terms of contents and design. In other words, it unites people of different ethnic backgrounds within a de-facto state which is geopolitically oriented towards Russia and declares “*preservation of the Russian language space*” as one of its cultural priorities (Shtanski 2014, 5). Fourth, such a combination of the main elements of the de-facto Transnistrian nation-building provides somewhat marginal points of coincidence with the similar project pursued by Chisinau.

Moldova’s European integration and the factor of Ukraine

As a result of the frozen conflict, for over 20 years the two parts of the former Moldovan SSR – Moldova proper and Transnistria – have been developing differently. The pro-Russian geopolitical choice of Transnistria provided Russia with an opportunity to maintain its military presence in Moldova and to influence geopolitical configuration of Moldova’s alliances (Popescu 2010, 39-40).

The factor of Ukraine has always been important for Transnistria. First, according to the aforementioned 5+2 format of the Moldovan-Transnistrian conflict negotiations, Ukraine is one of its mediators along with Russia and the OSCE. Second, until recently the Ukrainian-Transnistrian relations could be described as functional which “involved a light border presence that excluded Moldovan personnel, relatively loose travel arrangements [...] and regular cross-border trade, all whilst maintaining support for Moldova’s territorial integrity” (Frear 2015). The Ukrainian-Russian conflict has largely changed this status quo. On the one hand, the Russian annexation of the Crimea was enthusiastically received in Tiraspol. In its official statement dedicated to the results of the Crimean referendum on March 16, 2014 the de-facto Transnistrian MFA addressed two important issues. First, it stressed that the right for self-determination is becoming “*an efficient principle of the maintenance of a just and secure world order*” (Shtanski 2014, 7). Second, it was compared with a similar referendum which took place on September 17, 2006 in Transnistria where more than 97% of those who cast their vote opted for independence with the subsequent joining of Russia. It was hence argued that “*such an eloquent coincidence of the people’s will of Crimeans and Transnistrians gives evidence that the Russian world is resurging and people’s will to unity is unstoppable*” (Shtanski 2014, 7).

On the other hand, this reaction largely triggered the reassessment of the role of Tiraspol by the authorities in Kyiv who “*began to view Transnistria as a possible entry-point for Russian Special Forces and provocateurs into Odessa Oblast*” (Frear, 2015). As a result, Ukraine tightened border-control and imposed restrictions on entering Ukraine for Transnistrian male Russian passport holders between the ages of 16-65. These endeavors of Kyiv

were interpreted by the de-facto Tiraspol authorities as Ukraine's moving away from being a guarantor in the Moldovan-Transnistrian conflict settlement (Shtanski 2015). However, the aforementioned qualitative changes in the Ukraine's stance towards Transnistria have not affected the pro-Russian policies pursued by the authorities in Tiraspol, nor contributed to the rapprochement of the region with Chisinau.

In its turn, the EU has always perceived Transnistria as a part of Moldova and thus maintained dialogue only with Chisinau. Combined with the reluctance of Tiraspol to accept the Moldovan association with the EU, this approach contributed to the lack of political mechanisms which could effectively include Transnistria into the Moldova-EU integration process (Shapovalova and Boonstra 2012, 67). At the same time, the available economic mechanisms provided grounds for a close interplay of Moldovan and Transnistrian economies and made it possible for Transnistrian economic entities *"to enjoy the same Autonomous Trade Preferences with the European Union as Moldovan ones for the past six years, provided they registered in the Moldovan capital, Chisinau"* (Wolff 2014). Therefore, the implementation of the DCFTA provisions are largely about retaining of the current status of the Transnistrian economic entities which seems to be mutually beneficial both for Chisinau and Tiraspol. At the same time, as Popescu concludes, *"Transnistria's call to Russia for integration, however, demonstrates the increasingly tense political situation between Russia, Transnistria and Moldova, and how Transnistria will situate itself remains unpredictable"* (Milevska 2014).

Despite this unpredictability, two aspects remain obvious. First, it is very unlikely that Transnistria would give up its pro-Russian geopolitical choice as it constitutes the foundations of its de-facto "national idea". Second, the nature of the current economic Moldovan-Transnistrian interaction seems to be mutually beneficial despite the effectively divergent geopolitical choices of Chisinau and Tiraspol. Therefore, it is unlikely that the Moldovan Association with the EU could provide the basis for qualitative changes in the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict.

Conclusion

The existence of Transnistria as a de-facto state pursuing a distinct nation-building process is linked both with the Moldovan nationalizing policies and the geopolitical developments in the region. Both Moldovan and Transnistrian nation-building projects at least formally bear the word "Moldovan" in their names. What's more, the foundations and major elements of the Transnistrian identity are fully compatible with the concept of "the Russian World" promoted by the Russian state and the Russian Orthodox Church and their development is impossible without this external factor which dominates their domestic policies. Therefore, it is this identity and its compliance with the Russian cultural space that determine the scope for Transnistrian self-determination. In other words, changes of this identity are possible only within this paradigm and their potential causes are largely of external nature.

With regard to the situation in Moldova, such a geopolitically determined stance

of Transnistria leads to the deadlock in finding the possible solution to the conflict by means of integration of the two parts of the country into a proper entity over which Chisinau would be able to effectively exercise control. Should Moldova follow any other than Eurasian geopolitical path, it would be immediately opposed by Transnistria. However, an apparent choice of Moldova towards a Russian-led post-Soviet integration process would hardly provide the territorial integrity of this country without significant concessions from Chisinau towards Tiraspol which would mean a reconfiguration of the bilateral relations between the center and a separatist region. Considering the economic dependence of Chisinau on Moscow and a de-facto paternalistic role that it plays vis-à-vis Tiraspol, the solution of the conflict would in any case require active Russian involvement which makes Kremlin the main actor in determining the region's future.

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THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT AND REGIONAL SECURITY: THE IMPLICIT INTERESTS OF REGIONAL PLAYERS

ARMEN GRIGORYAN

List of Contents

- Recent incidents on the line of contact
- Russia's attitude on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and wider regional interests
- Regional security implications of Armenia's EEU membership
- Armenian-Turkish relations and conflict resolution process
- Iran's approach to Armenia and Azerbaijan
- Conclusion

Recent incidents on the line of contact

Twenty-one years after an initial cease-fire agreement, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains far from resolution. Though often labelled 'frozen', the conflict has cost hundreds of lives in the recent few years. Sniper fire has been persistent despite international mediators' repeated calls to withdraw snipers from the line of contact. More recently, the use of machine-guns and other weapons has been recurrent.

Large clashes occurred between 30 July and 4 August 2014. They were followed by the downing of an Armenian helicopter during exercises on 12 November 2014, which was the first case of military activity in the airspace over Nagorno-Karabakh since 1994. Azerbaijan's ministry of defence claimed that the helicopter was about to attack their positions, and until late November, heavy artillery shelling prevented the Armenian side from collecting the bodies of crew members. Since January 2015, a series of clashes both on the line of contact in Karabakh and along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan occurred, with dozens of casualties. The summer of 2015 was relatively calm, yet in September, Azerbaijani army units shelled not only the Armenian positions on the line of contact in Karabakh but also villages in the north-east of Armenia, and Armenian forces launched mortar attacks firing on Azerbaijani army positions along the line of contact in Karabakh. The ongoing escalation of tensions has repeatedly raised warnings from regional and foreign experts of the increasing risk of 'war by accident' (Grigoryan 2015b).

It may be observed that most of the incidents in 2014 and 2015 immediately followed OSCE mediation efforts. A few days before the August 2014 incident, for example, on 22 July, the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs met separately with the ministers of foreign affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Brussels in order to discuss the possible agenda for a presidential meeting after a long break. Shortly before the Armenian helicopter was shot

down, on 27 October 2014, French president François Hollande hosted Ilham Aliyev, Serzh Sargsyan and the three OSCE co-chairs in Paris. And in September 2015, the escalation of tensions happened just weeks after a regional visit of the Minsk Group co-chairs and European Council President Donald Tusk, resulting in a preliminary agreement for another Armenian-Azerbaijani presidential meeting.

Russia's attitude on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and wider regional interests

The August 2014 incident became a cause for a trilateral presidential meeting promptly organised by Vladimir Putin on 8-9 August. As there were some suggestions about the possibility of deployment of Russian peacekeeping troops in Karabakh and adjacent territories, The Armenian Ministry of Defence made a statement before the Sochi meeting, rejecting the need for a peacekeeping operation. When Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov stated at the end of the meeting that the trilateral format would be applied to future meetings as well, Armenian politicians showed a cautious attitude, as the Minsk Group's principal role in conflict resolution is not questioned in Armenia. Besides, it could be argued that while President Putin attempted to be seen as a peacemaker and to alleviate the damage done to Russia's image by the downing of the MH17 flight shortly before that, Russia's sincerity could be questioned because of its contribution to the militarisation of the region and some other factors (Grigoryan 2014). Russia's ambiguous position was also noted by Armenia's ex-minister of foreign affairs, MP Alexander Arzumanyan, who said in an interview that large-scale war becomes more likely because of massive supplies of Russian weapons to Azerbaijan, and called Putin's objections against the suggested possibility to supply Ukraine with weapons from Israel 'the paramount of hypocrisy' (Papyan 2015).

Russia's position regarding the policy towards Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has also been questioned by foreign experts. As noted in an article published about two weeks before President Sargsyan's decision to join the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) instead of signing the Association Agreement with the EU:

Moscow's two abiding goals are to integrate the entire post-Soviet space under its domination and as part of that larger multi-dimensional process, ensure that it is the only security manager in the Caucasus. Not only is it now using energy blackmail against Armenia; it has consistently tried to maintain the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict at a simmering level by providing large-scale military assistance to both Armenia and Azerbaijan ...

Becoming ever more dependent upon Russia, Armenia will then be unable to move on its own accord either to break the impasse on Nagorno-Karabakh peacefully with Azerbaijan or to effectuate much needed domestic democratizing economic and political reforms (Blank 2013).

The conclusion of an article published by an influential Polish think tank, the Centre for Eastern Studies, after the decision to join the EEU was also quite characteristic: 'Armenia's room for manoeuvre is also diminishing as regards the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. It is quite likely that the Nagorno-Karabakh issue will be decided less and less by Yerevan's interests and more and more by the goals of Russian foreign policy'

(Ananicz 2014). Recently, the same author noted: ‘The unresolved Karabakh conflict gives the country the feeling of a permanent state of emergency, which the authorities use as an excuse for the difficult situation, and also to strengthen their own legitimacy’ (Ananicz 2015).

Since Russia views the South Caucasus as a zone of its exclusive interests, it is understandable why Moscow prefers the status quo that allows Russia to control Armenia. However, Russia has also been expanding cooperation with Azerbaijan, including arms sales. Since 2010, Russia supplied Baku with arms worth over \$4 billion, including S-300PMU-2 and Tor-2 surface-to-air missile systems, as well as offensive weapons such as 84 helicopters, 94 tanks, 100 armoured military vehicles, Smerch multiple rocket launchers, Msta-S and Vena self-propelled cannons (18 of each), and six TOS-1A thermobaric multiple rocket launchers (Lenta 2013).

Russian aggression against Ukraine and the following confrontation with the West, Moscow’s general perception of relations with the West, especially concerning influence in the post-Soviet area, as a zero-sum game, as well as Russia’s expanding relations with Georgia’s breakaway regions and ambiguous relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan (as Russia simultaneously acts as a mediator, the main arms supplier to both sides and a regional power with vital interests in the South Caucasus) probably indicate that the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the medium term is unlikely. As long as crucial decisions on Armenia’s behalf are made in Moscow, Russian mediation may hardly lead to an agreement, as Russia will continue pursuing its own geopolitical interests. While Russia is considered Armenia’s strategic partner,²⁰ Moscow’s preference for manipulating the conflict for its own interest (by means such as arbitrary manipulation of gas price and creation of obstacles for Armenia’s energy cooperation with Iran or for wider cooperation with the EU) is a major impediment for Armenia’s economic and social development, and a stimulus for mass emigration.

Regional security implications of Armenia’s EEU membership

Based on an assumption that despite assurances about the mainly economic nature of the EEU, it is first and foremost a political tool, and taking into account how Armenia’s dependence on Russia had already added to the growth of Russian military presence, it was possible to suggest immediately after President Sargsyan’s decision to join the EEU that Russia would again increase its military presence in Armenia and suggested that ‘Russian pressure in the region, particularly against Georgia, may intensify within a few months, coming to a peak soon after the Sochi Olympics’ (Grigoryan 2013). While actually Ukraine became Russia’s next target, probably because of the totally unpredictable Euromaidan protests and the revolution overturning Moscow’s plan to prevent Ukraine

²⁰ Armenia’s National Security Strategy and Military Doctrine mention the strategic partnership with Russia, including defence cooperation and participation in the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) as priority directions for military and military-technical cooperation.

from signing the EU Association Agreement, the timing estimation – beginning of an aggression immediately after the Olympics – was quite accurate.

About a month after that prediction, a plan to deploy battle helicopters and airborne troops to the Russian military base in Armenia, as well as to modernise 18 MIG-29 fighter planes, making them capable not only to intercept airborne targets but also to attack targets on the ground, was announced. According to that plan, the military base would develop a capacity to engage not only in defensive but in offensive operations, including the capacity to engage airborne troops within a range of 500 kilometres (Mukhin 2013).

After the annexation of Crimea by Russia, Svante Cornell noted: ‘the South Caucasus is a most likely area for Moscow to create further mayhem. [...] What if Moscow demanded a military corridor across Georgia to its bases in Armenia?’ (2014). More recently, Russian sources openly discussed such plans. In November 2014, Russian political analyst Mikhail Chernov discussed Moscow’s planned strategic partnership agreements with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. According to Chernov, both agreements would provide *de facto* integration of Abkhazia and South Ossetia with Russian and EEU structures, and so Russia would try to solve two critical issues: first, to prevent Georgia from the establishment of NATO military infrastructure and deeper economic integration with the EU; second, to get special transit rights to Armenia and thereby increase the potential of the Gyumri military base. Furthermore, Chernov suggested the possibility of Russian involvement in case of political destabilisation in Georgia following the ‘Ukrainian scenario’: ‘in such a case Russia will not only fulfil its responsibilities as an ally, but will also be compelled to guarantee stability, security of residents and functioning of the economy in Georgia’s regions. In such case, bilateral cooperation and integration agreements can also be concluded with regional authorities whose legitimacy is recognised by the local population and Moscow’ (2014). Recent large-scale military exercises of the Russian army’s Southern Military District in the North Caucasus, Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Goble 2015), and in Armenia (Grigoryan 2015a) also suggests that Russian pressure on Georgia will continue. Considering Georgia’s geographical location and the importance of pipelines and other infrastructure transiting Georgian territory, control over this country seems a prerequisite for control over the entire South Caucasus.

Moscow coerced Yerevan to join the EEU despite having no common border and doubtful economic rationale: the small size of Armenia’s economy and much lower per capita income than Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia, make Yerevan’s EEU membership hardly practical from an economic point of view. The Armenian government was totally unprepared to deal with a near full cessation of export to Russia in January 2015, immediately after EEU accession, while exports to some EU members, China and Japan grew considerably (Hayrumyan 2015). The sharp decline of export to Russia could be attributed partly to the depreciation of the Russian ruble in November–December 2014, resulting in a considerable decline of consumer demand, and partly – to insufficient EEU regulations concerning transit and other issues. However, the noticeable economic irrationality of EEU membership underlines the political, rather than economic, significance of it for Russia. It may therefore be argued that Armenia’s EEU membership increases potential

security risks in the South Caucasus.

Armenian-Turkish relations and conflict resolution process

There are many publications explaining why the Zurich Protocols signed in October 2009 did not deliver the desired result, i.e. normalisation of Armenian-Turkish relations and establishment of diplomatic relations. Generally, there is a shared agreement that linking bilateral relations with Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution was one of the main reasons of that failure. And while Turkey's then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had set that precondition even before signing the protocols, saying 'we will not sign a final deal with Armenia unless there is agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia' (Welt 2013, 208), Azerbaijan's reaction to the attempt of Armenian-Turkish rapprochement played an important role. Particularly, Zaur Shiriyev and Celia Davies described in detail the tensions that the 'football diplomacy' and the protocols caused in relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey (2013, 185–206). More recently, it has been summarised: 'Azerbaijan put considerable pressure on the Turkish government, including running a well-financed direct lobbying, PR, and media effort' (Hill, Kirişçi and Moffatt 2015, 132).

Opponents of an unconditional Armenian-Turkish normalisation do not believe that Armenia would become more willing to reach a compromise with Azerbaijan if Armenian-Turkish normalisation, including opening of the border, would occur first. However, Azerbaijan's and Turkey's approach has not let them persuade Armenia to make concessions either. So, an assumption made five years ago could remain valid: Armenia's excessive dependence on Russia is the main issue requiring a solution. The policy of isolating Armenia and the militaristic rhetoric of Azerbaijani officials have not resulted in concessions from the Armenian side. Instead, Russia's influence over Armenia has been growing continuously (Grigoryan 2011). Considering Russia's implicit involvement, senior analyst of the Yerevan-based Regional Studies Centre (RSC) David Shahnazaryan recently noted: 'The normalization of Armenia-Turkey relations and the opening of the border have never been in Moscow's geopolitical interest. There is no doubt that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution and the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border would make Russia's position in the broader South Caucasus untenable' (2014, 50).

Already in 2010, as the normalisation process halted, Russia easily persuaded Armenia to extend the deployment of the Russian military base in Gyumri until 2044. In 2013, Russian security guarantees vis-à-vis Azerbaijan and Turkey became a pretext for persuading Armenia not to proceed with the EU Association Agreement but to join the EEU. The following developments have indicated that Russian influence has grown across the entire South Caucasus, simultaneously with an intensive militarisation of the region, with potentially dangerous consequences.

Iran's approach to Armenia and Azerbaijan

Iran's approach towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict refutes the perception shared by some outside observers that the conflict was initially related to the religious difference between Christian Armenians and Shiite Muslim Azerbaijanis. Since the early 1990s, Iran established friendly relations with Armenia, and during the war in Karabakh even provided a temporary transit corridor when the Georgian civil war made shipping from Russia to Armenia unworkable: cargo was sent by the Caspian Sea from Astrakhan to Bandar Anzali, and then transported to Armenia by road. Cargo transit via Bandar Abbas, the Iranian port in the Strait of Hormuz, was also available. Until now, Iranian transit plays a considerable role in Armenia's cargo traffic, although the largest share of cargo, nearly 70 percent, is transported via Georgia.

Iran has been asking Armenia to cooperate on energy related projects for about a decade, and different possibilities in this sphere have not been opposed by the United States and the EU, despite their strained relations with Iran, as Armenia's limited access to energy resources has always been taken into account. However, Armenia has not used possible benefits from the cooperation with Iran. A proposal to consider the transit of natural gas from Iran to Europe via Georgia and Ukraine, for example, was rejected in 2005 by Armenian government, and then-Prime Minister Andranik Margaryan declared that the government could not neglect Russia's interests. Russian pressure compelled the Armenian government to reduce the Iran-Armenia pipeline diameter to 700 millimetres instead of initially planned 1400 millimetres; therefore, the pipeline's capacity was reduced fourfold, making it of no use for transit. Then, as the construction was completed in 2007, Armenia sold its share to Russia, causing further disappointment on the Iranian side. Since then, only about 35 percent of the pipeline's capacity has been used for supplying limited quantities of gas from Iran in exchange for electricity (Armenia has large capacity of thermal power plants).

Russia not only used the opportunity to impede the diversification of Armenia's gas supply but also manipulated the gas price arbitrarily, also as a political tool. In December 2013, Moscow demanded the sale of the remaining 20 percent of shares of Armenia's gas distribution network to Gazprom, making it the owner of 100% of shares, and forced Armenia to sign an agreement guaranteeing Gazprom's monopoly for 30 years in exchange for a gas price discount for five years. As the agreement awaited ratification, Iran's ambassador to Armenia, Mohammad Reyisi, told journalists that Iran could offer cheaper gas than Russia. Moreover, when energy minister Armen Movsisyan claimed during Armenian parliamentary debates that Iranian gas would be more expensive, Reyisi called for another press conference and stated that the Armenian government had not ever conducted talks about gas price with Iran, while gas prices would be subject to bilateral negotiations (Badalyan 2013).

During a press conference in Yerevan on 27 January 2015, Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif again proposed bilateral cooperation for construc-

tion of a railroad connecting Iran with Armenia, and also noted that Iran would be ready to start construction of a new gas pipeline with a larger diameter. Besides, he noted Iran's readiness to finance a joint hydroelectric plant project on the Arax River, while other project costs could be shared (Gabrielyan 2015).

In contrast to Iran's relations with Armenia, its relations with Azerbaijan used to be less cordial. Baku often accused Iran of attempts to introduce its fundamentalist approach to Islam in Azerbaijan and has also been concerned with Iranian military presence in the Caspian Sea, as ownership of some offshore oilfields was disputed. In turn, Tehran was disturbed by Azerbaijan's cooperation with Israel, including supplies of weapons and, allegedly, allowing Israel to run some intelligence operations. However, during a visit to Baku in April 2015, the two countries made a surprise decision to form a joint defence commission, and Iranian minister of defence Hossein Dehqa proposed selling arms to Azerbaijan. Threats coming from ISIS and Al-Qaeda, and the need to tackle religious fundamentalism were mentioned among common goals (Lomsadze 2015). Active discussions about the possibility of cooperation in transportation of natural gas and opening a railway link from Iran to Russia via Azerbaijan have been ongoing.

Considering Tehran's approach to conflict resolution, the principal issue is that Iran is against deployment of foreign troops, particularly NATO, U.S., or Russian, along its borders. Because of that, Iran has long preferred the status quo and would rather continue to do so, unless settlement without a peacekeeping operation becomes possible.

Conclusion

Armenia and Azerbaijan remain far from being ready to seek a compromise. Armenia insists that the right for self-determination must be the main principle, but also has limited room for manoeuvre because of Russia's dominance. In turn, Azerbaijan demands that the principle of territorial integrity must prevail and continues to focus its policy on the international isolation of Armenia. Both countries have been increasing their military spending, although Armenia cannot match Azerbaijan, whose military budget has been exceeding Armenia's entire state budget for several years.

The situation in the South Caucasus in general will likely remain unstable in a short-term perspective. The critical factors contributing to instability include Russian military engagement in Syria and the tensions in Russian-Turkish relations; the dropping oil prices resulting in economic decline that may potentially result in unrest in Azerbaijan and Russia; and hardly avoidable economic decline in Armenia because of a drastic decrease of the amount of remittances from guest workers in Russia – the most important source of revenues. In such an environment, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains a major factor that authorities of both Armenia and Azerbaijan may, in a rather habitual way, use to mobilise domestic support. At the same time, internal instability in Russia could result in a spillover beyond its borders.

Since both the U.S. and the EU lack influence on both Armenia and Azerbaijan, they cannot advance resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict directly. They are also

not capable to deter the incidents on the line of contact, particularly because Azerbaijan, being sure of its position of an important energy source, is withstanding diplomatic pressure. So, it is hardly conceivable that an OSCE mechanism for investigation of incidents on the line of contact proposed by the Minsk Group American co-chair, Ambassador James Warlick, will be adopted. However, American and European attitudes and existing leverage vis-à-vis Baku and Yerevan remain an important means to deter possible large-scale war. Making some decisive moves for securing Georgia from possible Russian aggression would also reduce Moscow's capacity to manipulate the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

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THE RISE OF THE ISLAMIC STATE IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS - REASONS AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES

TOMÁŠ BARANEC

Introduction

Dramatic rise of the so-called Islamic state (IS) in the Middle East is earning huge amount of media attention all around the world. The more surprising is the general lack of information on the IS swiftly taking over the militant insurgency movement in the North Caucasus, where already half the local leaders and militant groups left the Caucasus emirate (CE) and swore allegiance to much more radical and brutal IS. The main aim of this paper is to tackle the question whether North Caucasus will become a new frontline in the struggle against the IS. In order to do so, it is necessary to describe the rise of the IS in the North Caucasus, to analyse its root causes and to sketch possible scenarios for the foreseeable future.

Modern-day Caucasus and Islamic resistance

The roots of the current insurgency in the North Caucasus can be traced back to early 90's, as it presents a part of a wider wave of destabilization and separatism hitting Eurasia as a result of collapsing multinational socialist regimes. It is important to realize that the movement which advocated Chechen separatism prior to the first Chechen war was nationalistic in its core, with religion playing just secondary role as a part of wider national identity.²¹

Although imported, Salafi and Wahhabi ideas followed the suit soon after. First foreign mujahedeen headed by Fatahi al-Jordani marked their appearance on Chechen battlefields in 1995. As a result, not just were ranks of Chechen rebels filled by experienced veterans of the Russian-Afghanistan war, but also ideas of pan-Islamism started to take root in Chechen nationalist movement.²²

Despite its contradictory character to older Chechen traditions and *adat*²³ (Souleimanov 2007) especially, Salafism gained a foothold in the inter-war republic of Ichkeria. Well-funded foreign mujahedeen could offer impoverished Chechen youngsters money and material goods. Such material resources automatically brought prestige which is (to-

²¹ Even the leader of the separatist movement and the first president of Chechen republic of Ichkeria, Jokhar Dudaev didn't know how to pray in a proper manner.

²² Especially in the circle around infamous commander of separatists Shamil Basayev.

²³ Customary law shared by mountaineers in the North Caucasus, for more information about *adat* see: (Souleimanov, 2007)

gether with aura of manliness) crucial for young men in order to find a bride in many traditional regions, North Caucasus included. As a result, such organisations became extremely appealing especially for youngsters craving to establish family and status in such a constrained social environment.

Salafism gained the upper hand among separatists following the Russian victory in the Second Chechen war, when suddenly without official sources of income, insurgents became even more dependent on financial support from abroad, provided by various Salafi organizations. This trend (supported by other factors) led to the transformation of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria into pan-Islamic Caucasus Emirate (CE) in 2007.

However we should avoid the mistake of viewing this “Caucasian radical Islamism” as identical to the version advocated by Middle Eastern radical Islamic terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda or IS. Despite many brutal attacks and suicide bombings aimed against the civilian population around the Russian Federation, these remained generally limited, with radicals from CE preferably targeting representatives of security forces, rather than ordinary civilians.

This phenomenon is caused by three specific features of the region in comparison to Middle Eastern societies. The first lies in the older pre-Islamic layer of collective norms, which although diminishing, still influences the worldview of Caucasian societies. Such norms of pagan pre-Islamic origin, represented by *adat*, are often in direct opposition to Salafi interpretation of Islam. The second difference lies in the traditional dominance of Sufi Islam in the Caucasus, which is in strong contrast to its Salafi branch. Sufi Islam generally presents a mystic, syncretic and generally tolerant Muslim worldview (Matsuzato and Ibragiov 2005).²⁴ As a third factor we can identify the impact of Russian, and especially Soviet rule over the region, which besides many tragedies, led to modernization of a significant part of the population, especially in the lowlands and foothills.

Therefore local insurgents who still remain heavily dependent on the support of local population rarely pursued radical actions which can compare to the policy of IS (Souleimanov 2015). Methods of the CE softened even more after Ali Abu Muhammad (Kebekov) became its emir, following the assassination of former leader Doku Umarov in September 2013. One of his first actions in office was the prohibition of suicide bombings, attacks on civilians, while he especially condemned female suicide bombers (so-called black widows), which he described as contradictory to the Caucasian culture (Tuayev 2014).

Point 1: Caucasian societies influenced by adat, modernization and Sufism are generally refusing large scale violence against civilians. As a result local insurgents have yet avoided overly brutal methods in order not to alienate their local supporters.

CE went a long way from Chechen nationalism to pan-Caucasian, pan-Islamic organisation with cells operating from Kabardino-Balkaria to Dagestan. It wasn't a type

²⁴ In the last two decades Sufi Islam lost ground significantly in comparison to Salafism which became popular especially among youngsters in the region. This has been to significant degree caused by collaboration of official Sufi clergy with unpopular and corrupt governments.

of group suddenly rising up from chaos, but rather an organisation with a long record of evolution, with proper structure and a system of many self-sustaining groups. And still, such a well-established and by many locals respected group, suddenly lost its ground just in a couple of months, face to face the IS.

Islamic State in the North Caucasus

Due to its nationalistic roots, CE has always been a local isolated movement, rather than a part of global jihad, although there always have been limited contacts with Al-Qaeda and support from various volunteers originating mostly from Arab countries. Under such conditions, CE used to have a pool of potential recruits only for itself. This changed suddenly following the rise in prominence of various Islamist groups in the Syrian civil war, which as a result of a professional recruiting campaign in the media in combination with higher budget managed to attract youngsters from the Caucasus at the expense of the CE. In reaction, Doku Umarov discouraged the youngsters from the region from joining fights in Syria, claiming that they are weakening the struggle in their homeland (Vatchagaev 2013). Needless to say, his appeal was in vain and the numbers of Russian citizens (mostly from the North Caucasus) fighting in the Syrian war were increasing steadily. At last, Umarov had to retreat from his previous position and officially acknowledge his support to North Caucasians fighting in Syria.

Point 2: CE has always been a local movement with rather limited links to the “global jihad”. More global Islamic movements in Syria and Iraq have recently attracted many potential recruits of CE from the region of the North Caucasus.

Following the official split between the IS (called ISIL by that time) and Al-Qaeda backed al-Nusra Front in April 2013, representatives of the CE became quiet on the issue for a long time. Silence has been broken in July 2014 by new sheikh Abu Muhammad (Kebekov) who officially discouraged North Caucasians from joining the IS and advised them to create their own independent units (kavkazcenter.com, 2014). In reaction Umar Shishani²⁵ declared all fighters from the North Caucasus in Syria fighting in other groups than the IS as apostates (*murtads*) and advised Abu Muhammad Kebekov to “... stay there in the Caucasus and eat leaves” thus increasing tensions between both groups (Vatchagaev 2014 a).

Taking into account the numbers of North Caucasian insurgents fighting in its ranks, infiltration of the IS to the south of Russia has been expected by most experts. Few though have anticipated that it will gain foothold in the region from within and so rapidly. First oaths of allegiance to the IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi by middle and high

²⁵ Umar Shishani (Tarkhan Batirashvili), high ranking IS militant of Chechen origin from the Pankisi gorge in Georgia. Not to be confused with other militant in Syria Emir Salautdin Shishani (Feyzulla Margoshvili), who represents CE in the region. Another significant militant in Syria from the region is Muslim Shishani (Murad Margoshvili), once leader of the once-powerful Junud al-Sham. All three militants come from Chechen and Kist inhabited Pankisi gorge in Georgia and are related to some extent.

ranked militants from the CE started to appear in media in November 2014. Yet the process gained momentum after the emir of Dagestan, the most prominent and the strongest of all Vilayats,²⁶ Abu Muhammad (Rustam Aselderov) bandwagoned and gave oath of allegiance to al-Baghdadi together with other high ranking field commanders. In a couple of months, all border regions of Dagestan with Chechnya defected from the CE, splitting Islamic fundamentalist in the region in half. Most of the Chechen middle rank commanders have defected from the CE as well and only the highest commander Emir Hamzat stayed loyal to Kebekov. Ingush militants were rather unspecific in their statements, proclaiming their sympathies to IS, yet avoiding oaths of allegiance to al-Baghdadi. This may have been caused by the fact that in the last couple of years, Ingush Jamaat had been devastated by FSB and it has become increasingly dependent on Chechen Jamaat. Therefore, the decision of Ingush militants will most probably depend on the final decision of Chechen militants. Only Kabardino-Balkarian Jamaat remained adamant in its support for Kebekov. Although much smaller in numbers than Dagestani Jamaat, Kabardino-Balkarian insurgents earned respect among other insurgent groups for their good organisation and efficiency.

At this point, progress of the IS in the North Caucasus appeared to be halted, splitting the insurgency in half. However on the 20th of April 2015, the unofficial agency of the CE, the Caucasus Center, announced that emir Abu Muhammad (Kebekov) was killed during FSB operation in Dagestan's Buinaksk district (kavkazcenter.com 2015). Soon after, the IS loyalists suffered major setback following another successful operation by FSB, in course of which four important high-ranking IS militants have been killed (kavkaz-uzel.ru, 2015). After such an unparalleled assassination campaign, both groups have to undergo a process of reorganisation, the result of which is difficult to anticipate under the current circumstances. Yet if we want at least to outline the possible future course of action, it is crucial to understand the reasons behind a rapid spread of the IS throughout the North Caucasus and also why it failed significantly in some Jamaats.

Roots of IS success in the North Caucasus

While analysing the current split in the North Caucasian insurgency it is worth to note that inner conflicts sprung out in the past as well. Most notably in 2010, when three Chechen commanders and *Naibs*,²⁷ Aslambek Vadalov, Khusein Gakaev and Tarkhan Gaziev renounced their oaths of allegiance to Doku Umarov, who at that time was the head of the CE. A year-long rebellion followed Doku Umarov's statement from August 4 2010 in which he took back his resignation in favour of his three Naibs, announced in a video just two days earlier. As a result, on August 15 2010 Vadalov as a leader of the rebel wing officially renounced his *Baiyat*²⁸ to Umarov (kavkaz-uzel.ru 2010).

²⁶ Vilayat or Wilayah is an Arabic term referring to province. There are six Vilayats planned for CE, namely: Dagestan; Nohchiyocho (Chechnia); Galgayche (Ingushetia including Ossetia); Kabarda, Balkar and Kabarda; Cherkessia and Nogay steppe. Vilayat Iriston (Ossetia) has been abolished in 2009.

²⁷ Naibs (deputy in Arabic) are closest associates of Emir of the Caucasus emirate

²⁸ Bayat: oath of allegiance to the leader

Since all rebels were from Chechnya, speculations appeared that the whole split in the CE is a result of “nationalist reaction” of Chechen insurgents alarmed by anti-nationalist, jihadist character of the CE on behalf of the Chechen national question. However, soon after it became known that the mastermind behind the unsuccessful coup was the commander of Arab mujahedeen Yusuf Muhammad al-Emirate (Muhannad). Due to his background and background of most “Arab volunteers”, the whole split has rather been an attempt of al-Qaeda to gain indirect control of generally independent CE, by promoting loyal people to the top of the organisation. These attempts have been unsuccessful, since most of the commanders and especially those from Kabardino-Balkaria remained loyal to Doku Umarov. After nearly a year of split, the sharia court ruled in favour of Umarov. The road to reconciliation was finally paved by the death of Muhannad in April 2011.

Analysing the current split, the first important observation is that it copies the split over Doku Umarov’s succession. The seven-month period dividing the death of Doku Umarov in September 2013 and the proclamation of new emir Aliskhab Kebekov was a result of intense power-struggle in the CE, especially between Kabardino-Balkarian and Dagestani Jamaats over succession. Aliskhab Kebekov was chosen as a compromise following the pressure of the Kabardino-Balkarian insurgents yet he never appeared to be fully accepted by Dagestani insurgents (Vatchagaev 2014-b). Therefore it is no surprise that it was namely Rustam Aselderov, the leader of Dagestani Vilayat, who became the leader of pro-IS group challenging the Kabardino-Balkarian Jamaat which remained adamant in its support of Kebekov. In this respect, the ascent of the IS in the North Caucasus may be seen as a result of a succession crisis following the death of a long-term insurgent leader. However even this conclusion does not provide us with the full picture.

Issues surrounding funding may also be one of the factors leading to the split in the Caucasus Emirate. Generally two types of funding are being identified in a case of any insurgent movement: internal and external. External funding is often crucial for the success of insurgent movements, however internal funding and local supporters are often key to their sole survival. Three main sources of funding are usually mentioned in the case of the CE, namely: racketeering, funds from diaspora and funding from Middle Eastern donors (kavkasia.net 2013). Internal sources cover a much wider range and besides various forms of racketeering include also donations from sympathisers, extorts from local businessmen in the form of “religious tax” and other criminal activities. The structure of funding appears to be quite decentralized, with various Jamaats creating their own sources. It is also hard to assess the share of external sources on the general funding. Despite many speculations, there is no relevant evidence that support from Al-Qaeda has ever been significant in financial terms, and connection between both organisations waned following the death of Muhannad (Zelin 2011).

It is a matter of fact that despite the shift of direct power from Chechnya to Dagestan, all means of information and propaganda such as kavkazcenter.com and most means of foreign financing remained in the hands of Chechens abroad, thus providing them with significant influence over the CE. These helpers abroad who have settled in Istanbul directing the Caucasus Emirate’s fundraising activities have become the primary

point of contention between Kebekov and his subordinates in Dagestan, who later established the pro-IS branch. In the video shot by Aselderov on December 16 2014, he proclaimed that the new emir of the CE should have rid himself of all his advisers and aides residing abroad after Doku Umarov's death. It indicates that issues of funding present an important element in the introduction of the IS into the North Caucasus from within. In reality, some of those who joined the IS probably hoped for better funding once they gave their oaths to al-Baghdadi than could ever come through Chechen émigrés or from Al-Qaeda. Current reports show that insurgents are increasingly using homemade weapons, which might indicate persisting problems with funding and supplying (Vatchagaev 2015 b).

Two main factors suggest that it would be too simplistic to see the current split in the CE as a result of naïve idealism on part of some commanders caused solely by euphoria for a newly proclaimed Caliphate thousands of kilometres away. First of all, we can observe that the current line of split between the pro-CE wing and the pro-IS wing copies the line of split existing during the elections of the new emir following the death of Doku Umarov. In addition, a less evident factor leading to the current split in the CE, yet supported by many indications, is the conflict over possibilities of external funding. The 2010/2011 division of the CE illustrates a struggle of rather small and local Islamic insurgent movement, with roots in anti-colonial nationalism, face-to-face the rising global Islamic jihadi movements. Such movements are prone to capitalize on natural internal struggles in order to increase their direct influence over the local movements, and on the other hand there will always be discontent of commanders in local movements who are eager to use external support in order to increase their status in the resistance.

Point 3: The reasons for emergence of the pro-IS group "from within" in the North Caucasus is not ideological in nature. They rather copy the line of earlier conflicts over succession and funding.

North Caucasian insurgency at the crossroads

North Caucasian insurgency today has been split and paralyzed by inner strife on one hand and effective assassination campaign by federal forces on the other. As a result, the capacity of insurgents to act has become severely limited. Nevertheless, as long as factors forcing North Caucasians of all ages and social statuses to "flee to the forest" persist, the insurgency in the region will not be eradicated - no matter the limited successes hard power can offer. Therefore rather than on the brink of destruction, insurgency in the North Caucasus finds itself on the crossroads as many times before.

The first out of possible paths is a gradual rise of cooperation between the CE and the pro-IS group. Under current circumstances, such option does not appear likely. Those who renounced their oath of allegiance to Kebekov were publically lashed out against by most authorities of the CE (Vatchagaev 2015 a). Some of the influential field commanders declared their readiness to disallow physical penetration of the pro-IS cells into territories under their control. On the other hand, internal conflict among insurgents

has not yet developed into a feud which could be devastating in the Caucasian context (Bobrovnikov 2002, 55 – 61).²⁹ Therefore under the rising pressure from federal forces, both wings could start to co-operate, especially following Kebekov's death. Nevertheless, such a co-operation without clear victory of either side would remain fragile as long as factors causing it remain.

In the second possible scenario, the CE will re-integrate the pro-IS elements. At the moment the CE is significantly weakened and disorganized after the assassination of its emir Abu-Muhammad (Kebekov). Yet it does possess well-established structures and base of support and therefore much will depend on the swiftness with which its members will be able to agree on the new emir. Under current circumstances, CE is fighting for its sole survival and does not seem strong enough to re-integrate the pro-IS militants. However much may depend on the personality, charisma and skill of the new emir, who if capable enough, could provide the CE with a second breath. Death of Kebekov had weakened CE, however on the other hand it has opened a window of opportunity for ending the split by diplomatic means under a new leader.

Although weakened by federal forces as well, the pro-IS rebels appear to have an upper hand right now. As a newly established group, they lack rigid structure and therefore they are more resilient toward killings of top commanders. Needless to say, unlike CE, they did not lose the most important leaders. Under the circumstances, the pro-IS group may, thanks to the current prestige of the Islamic State, become more attractive for local youngsters, so it could rely on larger pool of potential recruits than the CE. Triumph of the pro-IS rebels could have two forms depending on the amount of support provided by al-Baghdadi. If the IS would be able and willing to provide tangible support to its (self-proclaimed) cell in the North Caucasus region, the pro-IS rebels could prevail as a result and re-incorporate former militants from the CE, thus creating a united insurgent movement in the North Caucasus once again. However under such conditions, insurgents in the region would become more dependent directly on the IS, becoming part of a larger jihadi movement. As a result, they would probably have to adopt more radical ideology and methods. As it has been shown above, such ideology and methods still remain quite alien to the North Caucasian societies, nevertheless hold considerable impact on the more radicalized and deprived younger generation. By adapting IS policies, local insurgents would paradoxically increase their external support which is often crucial for victory of insurgent groups, but simultaneously they would weaken their support from local population - which is crucial for the insurgency's sole survival.

If the pro-IS group prevails without significant help from the IS, it will remain highly dependent on support from the local population. Under such circumstances it would just use the IS affiliation as a means of its own propaganda and recruitment, yet

²⁹ Feud in the Caucasus still plays a significant role especially in the eastern part of the North Caucasus where it presents a significant trigger to the uprising. Generally once the blood feud starts in the Caucasus it is extremely difficult to break the circle of bloodshed. For more information on blood feud in the Caucasus see: Bobrovnikov (2002, 55 - 61)

it will not push for emulating the IS methods. Under such scenario, the North Caucasian insurgency would remain just the same local movement under a different name.

The last scenario, most likely in a short term perspective is one given to rivalry/coexistence of both groups. Since the underlying reasons for the split in the insurgency are about practical issues rather than ideology, this scenario should be understood as a transition period, length and character of which will depend especially on the swiftness with which the new emir of the CE will be elected and on his skill and the amount of support the pro-IS group may receive from the IS. A considerable factor in this equation is the possible return of high ranking militants from Syria and the approach taken by Russian security forces.

Point 4: Four factors will influence the possible course of action: (1) new emir of the CE (2) amount of tangible support from the IS (3) returning militants from Syria and (4) actions of Russian security forces.

Conclusion:

The north Caucasian insurgency has been by and large neglected by western observers. It is Islamic in name, but in fact it has remained local and specific in character despite contacts, albeit limited, with al-Qaeda. This could change as a result of successful incursion of the IS in the region. However the North Caucasus and local population are specific in many ways in comparison to the Middle Eastern societies, despite the significant respect the IS has earned among some of the most deprived local youngsters. Practices promoted by the IS would not be accepted even by many of the local fundamental insurgents. We could see that the rise of the IS has been sharp in the region, yet it halted at some point creating a split among the North Caucasus insurgents. An important conclusion of this paper is that reasons for such a split are not of ideological character, but rather triggered by practical issues of succession, power-sharing and financing. Several possible scenarios have been outlined in this paper with two possible long-term consequences: the north Caucasian insurgency may remain a local specific movement or it can become part of a more global jihadi movement. The result of the on-going split will be influenced by four factors: (1) swiftness with which the new emir of the CE will be chosen, including his character and abilities, (2) the amount of tangible support the pro-IS rebels will receive from the IS and (3) possible return of high-ranking militants from the battlefields of Syria and (4) actions of Russian security forces.

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KAZAKHSTAN AFTER PRESIDENT NAZARBAYEV - UNCLEAR FUTURE OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN SUCCESS STORY

PETER PLENTA

“Stability first” has become the main motive of the Kazakh policy in the previous two decades. President Nursultan Nazarbayev can be considered as the most successful leader in the Central Asian region. Kazakhstan has reached a higher level of stability and prosperity than its neighbours, due to the president’s leadership and the country’s natural resources. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan is still facing social and economic inequalities, ethnic clashes, as well as security threats. What’s more, harder measures against opposition and independent journalists suggest that stability of Kazakhstan may not be as unquestionable as it seems.

The actual bid to preserve the power status quo should be seen in this context. For instance, the early presidential election in April 2015 has secured the mandate for the president till 2020. The new leader will need to resolve not only problems within the state, but will also need to balance the interests of influential economic and political groups within the Kazakh political scene. The country’s elites as well as a part of the population are afraid of the change of leadership. The article focuses on the future development of the country as well as scenarios of a possible power transfer. To offer a comprehensive analysis, author used his interviews with Kazakhstan’s political scientists who had spoken under the condition of anonymity.

Introduction

The Kazakh Republic is a relatively rich and developed country with good international image. The country is led by 75-year old Nursultan Nazarbayev, the longest-serving president in the region. Economic growth and stable leadership are accompanied by a certain degree of prosperity for the majority of the population. Therefore, it is not a surprise that Isaacs (2010, 446) called Kazakhstan an island of stability. Similarly, Frigeiro and Kassenova (2013, 128) wrote about the country as a “successful story” because it is richer, more developed and it has a higher level of security than its neighbours.

When it comes to the character of the regime, there is no difference between the threats to the stability of the state and to the stability of the political system. Even though there are formal democratic institutions and procedures, such as the parliament, elections and political parties, the separation of powers and the Constitution which guarantee citizens’ rights. However, formal as well as informal powers are concentrated in the hands of the president. Needless to say, the issue of future development is not only an internal concern, but it holds also broader international consequences. Kazakhstan ranks as the most

stable state in Central Asia and an it is important supplier of natural resources. Due to this fact, the smooth succession process is not only in the interest of domestic population and the elite but also of international actors.

Analysts as well as the country's population stand in front of two elementary questions: will Kazakhstan function without Nursultan Nazarbayev? Who will be his successor? After more than twenty years in office, Nazarbayev continues to preside over a hyper centralized system that many believe cannot withstand the loss of its creator (Lillis 2014, 299). The issue of succession was postponed as a result of early presidential elections in April 2015 that guarantees another 5-year mandate for the president. If Nursultan Nazarbayev finishes his mandate by 2020, he will be 80, which is the reason why, among others, Dosym Satpayev, a Kazakh political scientist, says that the election may have been Mr. Nazarbayev's last. What's more, during this term, Nursultan Nazarbayev will organise the project of succession (Farchy, 2015).

Although, it is very hard to make any predictions for the future development of Kazakhstan, this contribution will strive to do so. It is divided into two parts: the first dealing with the heritage of Nazarbayev's reign and factors that influence the stability of the country and the regime; and second that examines possible scenarios for the transfer of power and the "heir of the empire."

Heritage of Nazarbayev's reign

When we compare the situation against the background of the often volatile political situations in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and the authoritarian regimes of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan looked as if it had its domestic situation under control (International crisis group 2013, 3). We can talk about three basic sources of stability in the country. 1. Kazakhstan is doing better economically than neighbouring countries; 2. President Nazarbayev personally is politically skilful and has a share on political stability as a political leader; 3. Passive political culture, where people are not politically active and civil society is not developed, which in this case contributes to stability (Political Scientist 1, 2013).

The disintegration of the Soviet Union meant that the economies of the new Central Asian states had entered the period of economic downturn, which led to a sharp decline in living standards. Kazakhstan has successfully dealt with these problems thanks to the abundance of its natural resources. The state control over the economy and mineral resources gives political leaders the opportunity to monopolize the distribution of income in their hands. Thanks to these sources, leaders can buy the opposition and maintain the loyalty of supporters. Various business groups depend on Nazarbayev's patronage and they indirectly control the parliament, government ministries, and major media outlets, while Nazarbayev himself appoints individuals to a range of top offices (Lillis 2014, 296).

Almost all analyzes link stability of Kazakhstan with the economic performance of the country and the living standards of its inhabitants. Many authors have emphasized some form of a social contract between the government and population, when the people

for the promise of increasing their living standards are accepting the power of the president and the actual ruling elites.

The successes in economic improvement and the transfer of benefits to the population have helped the president consolidate his personal power. The president's mantra of 'economy first and politics second' is often repeated by key supporters who conflate Nazarbayev's nation-building achievements as fundamental to the success and prosperity (Isaacs 2010, 440). The income from oil and gas plays the key role in the rising living standards. "Kazakhstan without natural resources, could not implement many of the projects that are used for increasing the popularity of the leader and to maintain economic stability. It is an important aspect of the regime survival" (Political Scientist 2, 2013). However, the country needs to deal with a wide range of economic problems like labour unrests, underdevelopment in several regions and corruption. If there is any tendency to instability it will be caused by economic reasons, especially in poor regions (Political Scientist 3, 2013).

At the beginning of the 1990s it was generally believed that Kazakhstan would become one of the countries with a high risk of instability due to heterogeneous society, economic decline, conflict among the elite and a possible rise of radical forms of Islam. However, the president featured the most emphasis on state-building at its beginning which made Kazakhstan the most stable of the Central Asian states, from an institutional point of view (Cummings 2002, 62). According to Nazarbayev's elite supporters, the perceived successes of economic growth, inter-ethnic stability, and nationhood itself would not have occurred without Nazarbayev (Isaacs 2010, 442). The official narrative that Nazarbayev is personally responsible for Kazakhstan's independence, stability, and prosperity has been skilfully woven, and public support for the president remains quite high (Lillis 2014, 298). The president received the title "Leader of the Nation" in 2010 that only highlighted his special status and position of founder of modern Kazakh state. The underlying purpose of the legislation may have been its guarantees of lifetime immunity from prosecution and other protections for the president and his family, including their business dealings (Nichol 2013, 2).

The stability is guaranteed by the president and in this context it is possible to see several initiatives during the last several years, for example the effort to extend the mandate of the president till 2020. President Nursultan Nazarbayev has constructed a hyper centralized political system designed to perpetuate the interests of the president, his family, and the ruling elite (Lillis 2014, 296). However "if something happens to the president, then no one can predict how the country would develop in the following days and weeks. It indicates that so-called stability has not deep roots" (Political Scientist 1, 2013). Currently there is no stronger political opposition as well as opposition on the civil society level or in traditional structures. On the contrary, Nazarbayev has the support of majority of the population, or at least, most of the inhabitants tolerate him.

The president has achieved a relatively stable circle of elite and potential opponents either co-opted or effectively excluded from political struggle, which has been achieved by two main methods: employment and policies. Pretenders have been co-opted or effectively banished as ambassadors (Cummings 2005, 108). Nazarbayev has created

a system where the position of the elite fully depends on him and implementation of independent policy at a higher level is impossible. The president is perceived as a broker balancing between the rising and falling power of different politico-economic groups (Rahmetov 2011). On the other hand, the elite circle was left by important people such as the former Prime Minister, one of the most prominent bankers or president's former son-in-law.

The existence of a strong presidential party helps the regime's survival — a strong president is complemented by a dominant “super party” in the national legislature as the result of “competitive” though well-managed elections“ (Heinrich 2010). Opposition parties are not prohibited, but their activities are heavily restricted. The political opposition in Kazakhstan were gradually weakened and with each parliamentary election lost more and more seats in the parliament. The ruling party Nur Otan is without an official ideology and it was established primarily because of the support of Nursultan Nazarbayev. “Nur Otan was created by the President and cannot exist without him. It is a formal system to legitimize the regime and a mechanism to formalize his decisions” (Political Scientist 2, 2013). However, the party has several other tasks in the political system.

As it was claimed by Isaacs (2011, 131-132) the main role of the party is to be a “cheerleader” of Nazarbayev leadership, which gives the president wider legitimacy vis-à-vis the public and it serves as a tool for the president's greater control over formal political institutions and public authorities. Another mentioned feature is that it allows people to get into better functions. Many people join the party, not because they want to support the regime, but because they want to make a career (Political Scientist 3, 2013).

One of the basic features of the regime in Kazakhstan is an absence of strong anti-government and anti-presidential demonstrations. “The Kazakhs are not politically active, especially if they should take the initiative. The idea of stability and prosperity is relatively strong and there is a fear that we might lose it. This prevents people from social mobilization” (Political Scientist 2, 2013). Protests against presidents usually have weak support and they are short-lived. However, this does not mean that Kazakhstan is immune to demonstrations, but these were mostly concentrated around economic demands.

Among the factors that should make transfer of power easier are relatively favourable economic conditions, relatively strong state with weak state institutions that would oppose a new president and the presidential party as well as honour and respect towards the function of the president. Nevertheless, one serious danger for stability of successor ruler persists in the form of possible disagreement among influential power groups and in managing economic and social disparities. “As a result, Nazarbayev is leaving his successor a rich country but one with gross inequities and no means of transparent governance. Economic and political stability have been largely dependent on the president's personal skills” (International Crisis Group 2013, 24).

Heir of the empire and the future of the country

Till now, there is no sign of a plan for succession, although it is one of the key

issues of Kazakh politics. Succession models from other post-soviet countries were predicted also for Kazakhstan. Prior to 2005, most Kazakhstanis assumed that Nazarbayev would be followed either by a “hand-picked” protégé, known locally as the Yeltsin model, or by a member of his own family, often referred to as the Aliyev model or the dynasty model (Roberts 2012).

Similarly, a view held by Ambrosio (2015, 57) who mentioned the ‘Yeltsin option’ of appointing a successor from outside his inner circle has bet also on building up the Nur Otan party so that the country functions like a more party-dominant system. Observers tend to agree that the lowest-risk succession model would involve Nazarbayev resigning and discreetly managing his hand-picked successor from the sidelines (International Crisis Group 2013, 21).

However, with the colour revolutions in post-soviet space, together with tensions inside president’s family, elite as well as inside the country, the succession issue starts to be viewed as a threat and instead of preparation for it, the elite has chosen to postpone this topic. After these events it seems that the president has little interest in picking a successor in the near future and most likely will seek to stay in power for life (Roberts 2012). The early presidential elections in April 2015 confirmed this assumption. It allows for the continuing of the status quo and postponing of the solution.

The speculations about Nazarbayev’s successor have become more frequent after his health problems. This has increased dramatically since 2011 following rumours about Nazarbayev’s health taking a turn for the worse, including reports of prostate cancer and a secret stay at a German hospital (Ambrosio 2015, 55). However, the president’s answer to such speculation was another presidential term. Nazarbayev highlighted two reasons for the early election and for “fresh” mandate: people, who wish for stability and unity inside Kazakhstan and external threats such as economic crisis. Nonetheless, the real reason for early election can be that “any of the possible successors will bring risk of conflict. He will not be in favour of some groups. This is how the system works” (Regnum 2015).

This topic was from time to time commented on by presidential advisors as well as by Nazarbayev himself, for instance in July 2013: “The president insisted that there should be a sustainable system put in a place that would be stable against the backdrop of a new leader’s arrival. The problem is that Kazakhstan does not have such a system” (International Crisis Group 2013, 21). Another issue is that institutions are not prepared for pluralistic opinions or fighting over power. Developments over the recent decade show that more and more power is concentrated in the hands of the president and a narrow circle around him. From one point of view, it can be seen as preparation for a potential successor. On the other hand, possible candidates were often removed from their positions as they fell out of favour with the president. It shows yet another tendency: Nazarbayev is very careful about the rise of a possible successor. The second possible explanation is that such a successor strategy exists, but is secret due to the reasonable desire to protect such a potential successor from public scrutiny or behind-the-scenes machinations that may compromise the candidate or weaken Nazarbayev’s authority (International Crisis Group 2013, 21).

There are two important factors that influence such a choice: first, strong interest groups in Kazakh politics, from which a successor is believed to come from, with the power through patron-client networks with their people in media, the government and the administrative branch. Secondly, the position of these groups and their leaders completely depends on the will of the president. Kazakhstan's major business groups, Nazarbayev's most powerful relatives, and influential individuals (in the administrative branch, presidential advisors) are likely to have a decisive say in shaping the balance of forces in a post-Nazarbayev Kazakhstan (Lillis 2014, 300).

In general, we can predict three possible variants of power transfer: a) transfer of power within Kazakhstan's most powerful groups; b) transfer of power within the family; c) transfer of power via system change. "Various influential figures within Kazakhstan are attempting to position themselves to rise to power after Nazarbayev. However, Nazarbayev's balancing act with the clans will make a transition problematic, as a change in leadership could disrupt the equilibrium Nazarbayev has created" (Stratfor 2013).

The most influential groups usually have a strong economic position, mainly in the energy circles. One of them is the Eurasia group or "Eurasianists," a triumvirate of powerful businessmen of non-Kazakh origins who dominate the mineral resource sector in the north (Rahmetov 2011, 4). Another important group is concentrated around the Samruk-Kazyna sovereign wealth fund that controls the income from natural resources. Security structures have one of the strongest positions in Kazakh policies mainly the State Security Service led by Nurtai Abykaev.

Some of Nazarbayev's relatives also have considerable influence in Kazakhstan. "Nazarbayev has three daughters - Dariga, Dinara and Aliya - and no sons. While this does not necessarily preclude father-to-daughter transfer of power, it is historically far less likely in hereditary republics. Despite all of this, it is possible that Nazarbayev is planning on at least keeping the hereditary option on the table" (Ambrosio 2015, 57). But rivalries and political ambition within his own family, especially from the husbands of Nazarbayev's daughters, have forced Nazarbayev to back off from plans to implement a familial succession line (Stratfor, 2013). For example, eldest daughter Dariga lost her position after conflict between her ex-husband and the president. However, she has received a parliamentary mandate for Nur Otan in the last elections. Another important person is Timur Kulibayev, husband of president's daughter Dinara, considered one of the most influential businessmen, although he was removed from the Samruk-Kazyna fund. After the exile of a rival son-in-law Rakhmat Aliyev, Timur Kulibayev's is the richest, most powerful and ambitious grouping in Kazakh politics (Rahmetov 2011, 3). According to Ermukhamet Ertysbaev, advisor to the president of Kazakhstan on political issues, president Nazarbayev's son-in-law Timur Kulibayev is the most likely successor to Nursultan Nazarbayev as president and a continuer of his political course should the president leave his post prematurely (Interfax-Kazakhstan 2015).

Another interesting character is the president's grandson Nurali Aliyev who has been appointed the deputy mayor of Astana. This is the first foray into politics by Aliyev, hitherto a prominent banker who has occupied top jobs in Kazakhstan's financial system,

including as chairman of the boards of Nurbank and the Development Bank of Kazakhstan (Lillis 2014b). Aliyev Jr. has long been considered a dark horse candidate to succeed Nazarbayev and his appointment to senior position will give him a chance to acquire some political experience under the tutelage of the mayor, a trusted Nazarbayev lieutenant (Lillis 2014b).

Other people believe that the successor will become nephew of Nursultan Nazarbayev - Samat Abish, who is in charge of Deputy Chairman of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, Малащенко (2013, 4) does not consider it as a probable possibility and information that Nursultan Nazarbayev presented Abish as his heir to Vladimir Putin is “duck” in his opinion.

The least probable possibility of the transition process is a change of the political system, for instance through the adoption of a presidential-parliamentary system of government with some presidential powers transferred to the prime minister. “However, given Kazakhstan’s geography and history, it is unlikely that such a transition would be smooth or successful. Kazakhstan’s history has shown that without a strong ruler to unite it politically, the country devolves into regional principalities” (Stratfor 2013). This option does not have the support of the president himself. “Tell me, does anyone here in Kazakhstan want a repeat of what happened in Ukraine, or in Georgia, or in Moldova? Does anyone want to see this here?” the president said while replying to a question about ceding some of his presidential powers to the parliament” (Peerson, 2015).

So who is the possible “Heir of the Empire”? Sean Robert’s (2013) predictions in terms of the most likely successors to Nazarbayev are not surprising: Nurtai Abykaev, a long-time confidant of Nazarbayev and head of the State Security Service, is considered the most likely successor. In the second place is Karim Masimov, who worked as Kazakhstan’s longest- running prime minister and now is the chief of the President’s office. Former important businessman Muhtar Ablyazov, now in exile, thinks that “there are several persons who can receive power. However, they need to guarantee safety for Nazarbayev family. The most probable person is Karim Masimov. He has become part of Nazarbayev, his flesh and blood” (Озоддогон, 2015).

Furthermore, in top positions are further the mayor of Almaty Akhmetzhan Yesimov and the speaker of the Senate Kasym-Zhomart Tokaev (Regnum 2014). Timur Kuli-baev, Nazarbayev’s son-in-law and a powerful figure in the oil and gas industry, is ranked third, followed by Imangali Tasmagambetov, who has successfully run the country’s two largest cities, Almaty and Astana.

The other family members of the president are in lower positions when it comes to succession. With the additional presidential mandate for Nazarbayev, the issue of age has become an important factor. Nurtai Abykaev is just 7 years younger than the president, which could mean a preference for a younger successor. What is clear from the list of potential candidates is that the next leader will be appointed by the president himself or will come from a narrow circle of most trustworthy persons and just additionally be confirmed by election, as it happened in Russia. What would be more complicated is the case of unexpected death of the president. In such a situation the most probable result is agreement

among the most influential groups in the country. However, it's too early to make any predictions at this point, but whoever he will be, analysts predict a very weak first term presidency for the successor in the shadow of the leader of the nation (Rahmetov 2011, 5).

Conclusion

President Nazarbayev has successfully dealt with threats to Kazakhstan as well as threats to his power and he helped keep his country together. He has created the most developed and the most stable country in Central Asia. Nevertheless, the issue of his successor put a shadow on these achievements. There are no doubts that the future of Kazakhstan depends on the choice of Nazarbayev's successor and his abilities. There are several challenges in front of him - firstly, to achieve a stable position within the leverage of strong interest groups, manage these conflicts, and secondly to handle the social, economic and security challenges the country faces. Due to relatively strong state, respect toward position of president and natural resources it could be a little bit easier than in other states in region.

There are two most probable models of transition – within the president's family or within the most influential groups in the country. The first one, the dynasty model, brings important advantage – it does not only guarantee access to power, but most importantly guarantees immunity for the family. During the whole period of the reign, the president as well as the members of his family, was condemned by opposition for crimes, including corruption or murders. The immunity for the president and his family is now guaranteed by law, but the law could be changed. The second, more feasible alternative, suggests a choice of successor from candidates connected to one of the interest groups on the Kazakh political scene, mainly from the energy sector or security services or someone from the administrative. It will be interesting to see what this process of succession will be and if it really spells the last mandate for President Nazarbayev.

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List of interviews

Political Scientist 1 (anonymously). Interview by author. Tape recording. Almaty, Kazakhstan, December 11, 2013.

Political Scientist 2 (anonymously). Interview by author. Tape recording. Almaty, Kazakhstan, December 11, 2013.

Political Scientist 3 (anonymously). Interview by author. Tape recording. Astana, Kazakhstan. November 29, 2013.

PERSPECTIVES OF THE KYRGYZ PARLIAMENTARY EXPERIMENT IN THE LIGHT OF TWO ELECTIONS (2010-2015)

PÁL GYENE

Introduction

Following Juan Linz's 1990 paper about The Perils of Presidentialism, which launched a debate in the literature of political science, a fruitful discussion has emerged about the effects parliamentary and presidential forms of government may have on democratic transition and the consolidation of democracy. The present paper uses the "neoinstitutional debate" theoretical framework to analyse the experience so far of the Kyrgyz parliamentary experiment" following the 2010 revolution. The Kyrgyz political system is characterised by a low level of political institutionalisation and party formation, strong person-centred political culture and the informal dominance of regional clans. In the long run, switching to the parliamentary form of government might have a lasting effect on these features: it may catalyse the process of party formation and lessen the person-centred character of Kyrgyz internal politics, while boosting cooperation between regional elite groups. Overall, it could make a considerable contribution to the success of the democratic transition in Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, under the Kyrgyz political conditions, parliamentary government may pose serious threats: if the role of program-based political parties cannot be strengthened at the expense of informal clans, then because there are no genuine political parties, mainly those effects of parliamentary government will be manifested that add to government's instability, and consequently might destabilise the whole Kyrgyz political system.

Framing the problem – Kyrgyzstan as a “deviant case”

According to the narrative regarded as dominant over the past two decades, the literature dealing with post-Soviet Central Asia has seen an independent Kyrgyzstan as unique, or in Lijphardt's terminology, as a “deviant” case” (Lijphardt, 1971: 691- 692) among the Central Asian political systems. Several studies in the 1990s described Kyrgyzstan as an “island of democracy” surrounded by authoritarian neighbours, referring primarily to the Akayev regime's certainly more liberal press policy (Anderson, 1999; Huskey, 1997). Since the second half of the 2000s, the development of the Kyrgyz political regime has been even more markedly divergent from those of the other Central Asian countries. According to international organisations' assessment, the authoritarian features of exercising power in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have clearly grown stronger; the extremely personality-centered Turkmenistan has survived the presidential succession surprisingly

without a hitch; even in Tajikistan, which in the 1990s was torn by civil war, the Rahmankov regime has been consolidated. In contrast, in Kyrgyzstan, the president in power was toppled in bloody riots twice: in 2005 and 2010. Moreover, the 2010 “revolution” was associated with violent ethnic clashes in the southern regions. The 2010 regime change was followed by major institutional reforms: it seems that the Kyrgyz political elite (or at least a part of it) seriously intended to break with the former personality-centred exercise of power. Thus, with a constitutional amendment supported by a referendum, Kyrgyzstan has been the only Central Asian soviet successor state to introduce the parliamentary form of government. According to *Samuel P. Huntington’s* much cited thesis, the best indicator that the consolidation of a democratic regime change has been successful is if the first, “regime changing” elections are followed by a second, free and multi-party election, or in other words, there is also a second peaceful transfer of power between political forces vying for electors (Huntington, 1991). Since the introduction of the parliamentary system in 2010, or at least since the regime changing turn, in October 2015 Kyrgyzstan had its second elections, which international organisations also acknowledged as free and multi-party. It may certainly be debated though whether the second free elections in Kyrgyzstan, and in fact in the whole history of post-Soviet Central Asia, have resulted in a government change. Nevertheless, the election is an important enough milestone to give us the background to assessing the Kyrgyz “parliamentary experiment” since 2010. The paper intends to do this by using the theoretical framework of the neo-institutionalist debate.

Theoretical frames - The neoinstitutional debate

There is a fruitful debate in political science about the effects of parliamentary and presidential forms of government on the democratic transition and consolidation of political democracy, which had been primarily triggered by *Juan J. Linz’s* by now classic paper about the “perils” of the presidential model (Linz, 1990). Linz argues that it is basically because of its “rigidity” that the presidential model is an obstacle in the way of consolidating multi-party democracy. This is because in the presidential system the mandate of both the president and the legislative branch is for a strictly defined period. Thus, the relatively frequent decision-making stalemate between the legislature and the president of the opposite party cannot be resolved either by the dissolution of parliament or by a no-confidence motion against the president. This is strongly associated with the unavoidable problem of “identical legitimation” in the relationship between the president and the legislature: both the president and members of parliament are directly accountable to the citizens, thus in decision making, perhaps due to their different party affiliations, there might be a permanent opposition between them. The contradiction is practically irresolvable as to which of them represents the electors’ will. (Linz, 1990: 63).

In a study focusing on the critique of the presidential form of government, the advantages of the parliamentary model are inevitably more pronounced. In a parliamentary system, exercising the executive power is divided between the (dynastic or elected) head of state holding primarily symbolic power and representing the unity of the political

community, and the government exercising the effective executive power.

Although the weight that the head of state carries within the government varies considerably from parliamentary system to parliamentary system, the relationship between the prime minister and the members of the government is more collegial than the relationship between the president and the ministers in the presidential system. Thus, Linz argues, policy making is less person-centered, and is more about the competition or coalition of parties and interest groups. From this Linz draws the conclusion that although parliamentary government may often appear unstable, applying the motion of no-confidence or, if necessary, early elections, and replacing the government in power, it is still better able to make corrections than the presidential model. Therefore, thanks to its “flexibility,” parliamentarism may be more successful at maintaining the legitimation and continuity of the political system, especially in ideologically polarised and religiously or ethically divided societies, than the seemingly stable presidential system, which is still less effective in easing political tensions (Linz, 1990: 55).

Empirical research by *Mainwaring and Shugart* seems to partially support Linz’s conclusions. Of 31 countries that in the 25 years between 1967 and 1992 had continuous political democracy, 24 were parliamentary and only four presidential systems³⁰ (Mainwaring and Shugart, 1993: 4). *Mainwaring* calculates that between 1945 and 1993, democratic governments in some fifty countries suffered civil war or military coup, 27 of which had presidential, while only 19 had parliamentary systems. Thus, the success rate of the parliamentary form of government³¹ (58.1%) is much higher than that of presidential systems (22.6%) (Mainwaring and Shugart, 1993: 4). In line with these findings, *Stepan and Skatch* establish that in their survey of 53 non-OECD countries, in over 60% of the parliamentary countries, democracy has proved to be lasting (i.e. continuously prevailing for at least ten years) while this was the case only in about 20% of presidential systems. Presidential systems are more than twice as likely to suffer military coups as parliamentary governments (Stepan and Skatch, 1994: 124.-125).

However, as *Donald L. Horowitz* points out, because Linz’s research is geographically rather limited, his conclusions are drawn primarily on the basis of Latin American countries. On the other hand, in a number of West African countries (former British colonies), the Westminster type of parliamentary government led to authoritarian solutions, while in Nigeria and Sri Lanka, among others, it was exactly by switching from the parliamentarian to the presidential system that they managed to consolidate democracy (Horowitz, 1990: 144-147). Although *Mainwaring* and *Shugart* partly agree with Linz’s conclusion, they emphasize the importance of distinguishing between the subtypes of presidential and parliamentary systems. They argue that the “winner takes all” logic depends much more on the given election system than on the form of government and, for

³⁰ Arend Lijphardt uses stricter criteria for defining a lasting democracy. Based on his definition, democracies that have continuously existed since at least 1945 are to be regarded as lasting. Thirty of the 36 lasting democracies he studied have parliamentary, while five have presidential forms of government (Lijphardt, 1999: 118).

³¹ The number of successful democracies in the given type of government divided by the sum of successful and failed democracies.

example, in the Westminster model this logic is stronger than in most presidential models (Mainwaring and Shugart, 1993: 9). Besides, the instability of some parliamentary governments in third world countries, such as Thailand, Sudan and Somalia, led to complete state failure (Mainwaring and Shugart, 1993: 12). The rigidity of presidential systems and problems arising out of the double legitimation can be remedied by a degree of limiting presidential rights (primarily his right to veto parliament, his right to start a referendum and his rights concerning the budget) as well as by strengthening party discipline and making the party less fragmented perhaps even through the election system (Mainwaring and Shugart 1993: 12-20). *Giovanni Sartori's* argument is that the low level of party penetration and the lack of disciplined parliamentary parties in parliamentary systems may lead to more serious functional problems than in the case of presidential models (Sartori, 1994: 112-114). According to *Mainwaring and Shugart*, the spectacularly higher success rate of parliamentary systems can be partly accounted for by the fact that most of them are developed industrial states, while except for the US, the majority of presidential systems are developing Latin American, African and Asian countries. We know that in the third world the failure rate of both types of systems is very high, which would suggest that the successful consolidation of democracy depends more on the socio-economic development of a given state rather than on its form of government (Mainwaring and Shugart 1993: 6). Relying on the criteria borrowed from the theoretical debate outlined above, the present paper intends to give a tentative answer to the question whether switching to parliamentarism in Kyrgyzstan may contribute to the success of the democratic transition, or on the contrary, it assists the return to an authoritarian exercise of power, or in the worst case scenario, may lead to a state failure similar to the Tajik civil war in the 90s. The analysis is not limited to introducing the changes that affect the constitutional system of institutions, because as the above debate demonstrates, the success or failure of parliamentary and presidential models is very much related to factors outside the constitutional system of institutions, primarily the structure of the party system, the character and depth of the social fault line and the quality of the given country's political culture.

The theoretical hypothesis is that in our days, the Central Asian political systems share a number of common features, whereby their similarities are more decisive than their differences. Therefore, the paper first tries to take stock of the characteristics of this "standard" Central Asian model. Next, the development course of the Kyrgyz political system is briefly outlined, with special focus on changes in the institutional and the party system, and on the fault line conflicts in the society. Finally, an assessment is made of how much the Kyrgyz political developments in the dimensions studied diverge from the "standard Central Asian model" and what perspectives all this offers for a successful parliamentary government.

General features of Central Asian political systems

Based on the literature dealing with the region, the following features of the political systems of the five Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan,

Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) are to be noted:

Excessive presidential power and person-centred politics: With the exception of Kyrgyzstan, the states studied are presidential republics with the preponderance of the executive branch. Parliament and the party system are typically controlled by presidential parties that may be regarded as successors of the former state parties. The high level of presidential power concentration is helped by the Central Asian societies' traditionally person-centred political culture. "The essence of this politics is that it is person-dependent. Politics is represented by certain persons rather than symbols or institutions" (Dobrovits, 2011: 9). This is why having a new president (because of a sudden death, displacement from office or any other reason)³² carries the danger of destabilising the whole political system.

Low level of political institutionalisation and the decisive role of informal "clan" structures: An almost uniform feature of Central Asian soviet successor states is the parallelism or even dominance of constitutional political institutions and informal networks of interest, i.e. clan structures, in everyday political decision-making. In the countries examined, the division of power between institutions of state power guaranteed by the constitution does not regularly happen in practice: typically, informal interest groups control public administration and police state organisations. Several authors draw attention to the decisive role of clans in post-Soviet Central Asia's political life.³³ According to Khalid, however, using the term "clan" may be misleading as it evokes associations of premodern tribal relations, while in fact, these are vertical networks of interest formed during the soviet era and operating on the patron-client logic. Although family and regional ties do play a part in their formation, economic and political interests are much more characteristic of their origins (Khalid, 2007: 90). "Clan-based politics" is a natural hotbed of corruption, which has been rampant since the Brezhnev era, and has become even stronger since independence (Dobrovits, 2011: 9). Collins argues that present-day Central Asian states can be defined as "clan-based" political systems, where regime stability is ensured by pacts between regional clans. Where such pacts are not made and the balance of the clans is upset, regime stability is usually fundamentally undermined, as demonstrated by the Tajik civil war or the Kyrgyz revolutions (Collins, 2006: 338 – 344).

Low level of party formation: This is characteristic of all the political systems in Central Asian republics. In most of the countries concerned, there is no or hardly any political competition. Because of the limited competition, political parties cannot exercise their genuine functions. In Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, the so-called political parties only serve to maintain a minimal facade of political pluralism, while even after gaining independence, Turkmenistan remained a one-party system up to 2010. In the countries where there was some space for multi-party political rivalry, even if only temporarily (as in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) it could be observed that parties rarely had their genuine polit-

³² It is noted that the heads of state in the five countries concerned have so far changed either because of death (in 2006 when Saparmurat Niyazov died) or due to violently forced displacement (in Tajikistan in 1992, and in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 and 2010).

³³ For the role of clans' decisive power, see Collins, 2006.

ical programs and their own coherent ideology; they tend to be organised around certain persons, and the regionally based clans function as a type of “cover organisation” (Engvall, 2011; Heathershaw, 2009: 20-26).

Perspectives of the Kyrgyz parliamentary experiment

In the twenty years of independent Kyrgyz statehood, to what extent has the Kyrgyz trajectory diverged from the “standard Central Asian model” represented by the other four republics?

Excessive presidential power and person-centred politics: In its constitutional set-up, thanks to the introduction of the parliamentary form of government, Kyrgyzstan is markedly different from the other, presidential Central Asian republics.

The government exercising the effective executive power is accountable to Parliament, the *Jogorku Kengesh*, and no longer to the president. At the same time, it is to be noted that the Kyrgyz head of state is not merely a high ranking officer with representative rights. He still receives his legitimacy through elections, directly from the people, independent of parliament. His term of office is six years, but he cannot be reelected. His right to appoint office holders is relatively broad, but in most cases he exercises this right in conjunction with parliament. In a practice that diverges from other parliamentary systems, appointing the defense minister is also his rather than the prime minister’s responsibility. In addition, if there is no party to come out of the elections with absolute majority in parliament, it is also the president’s role to instruct the politicians to form the government. Over the years since the 2010 revolution and in the parliamentary and presidential elections, it has been clearly seen that Kyrgyz voters still regard the head of state as the most important political leader of the country, and indeed, the informal power and prestige of the Kyrgyz president is still stronger than that of the prime minister.

For example, although the country has a parliamentary government, voters showed more interest in the 2011 October presidential elections than in the parliamentary elections. There were sixteen candidates running for presidency, and the prime minister in office, *Almazbek Atambayev* of the Social Democratic Party won a landslide victory (Kilner, 2011). *Atambayev* secured 63% of the votes, while his main rival *Kamchybek Tashiev*, the head of the *Ata-Jurt Party* received only 14% (Marat, 2011). Despite minor incidents, international observers declared the elections free and fair (Kilner, 2014; OSCE, 2014).

The main holder of executive power continues to be the president; the frequently changing prime ministers only seem to play second fiddle to him. Illustrative of this is that the prime minister elected in September (the former head of the presidential administration) is most likely to have been the president’s rather than the party candidate. Thus, even after the 2010 constitutional amendment the logic of the Kyrgyz government seems to be closer to semi-presidential systems³⁴ than to genuine parliamentarism. Nevertheless, the

³⁴ Lijphardt explains that the system which Duverger calls “semi-presidential” is a parliamentary system where if the pro-presidential parties hold majority in parliament, then typically the head of state becomes the prime guarantor of the executive. In case the parliamentary majority is in opposition to the president (in the so-called cohabitation period), this role has to be conceded to the prime minister.

practice of parliamentary government may eventually help in decreasing the significance of person-centred politics. As indicated by the rather unwieldy process of government formation in 2010 and the subsequent government crises, it is a huge drawback of Kyrgyz parliamentary government that because parties are fragmented, person-centred lacking discipline, they are usually rather unstable. In the first four-year parliamentary cycle after the revolution, the parties were taking turns in government as well as in opposition with the exception of the Social Democrats, who were always part of the government coalition. In the 2010 parliamentary elections, six parties received more than five per cent of the vote, and five parties made it to parliament. At first, three “northern” parties, the *Social Democrats*, *Ata-Meken* and the *Republic Party* intended to form a coalition, but when despite their parliamentary majority they were unable to elect *Omurbek Tekebayev*, the leader of *Ata-Meken*, to be the parliamentary speaker, the coalition collapsed (Kutueva, 2010).

Finally, to many observers’ surprise, in order to avoid civil war, the *Social Democrats* and *Respublica* formed a coalition with the southern *Ata Jurt (Homeland) Party*, with their Prime Minister *Almazbek Atambayev* a Social Democrat. Similarly to President Akayev, he was a northern politician close to the Russians. The post of the speaker of parliament went to *Ahmatbek Keldibekov* from *Ata Jurt*. The 2011 presidential elections repeatedly caused frequent rifts within the governing coalition, resulting in the *Ata Jurt Party* leaving for the opposition, while despite the reluctance of Ar-Namys Party leader Felix Kulov, *Ata-Meken* and Ar-Namys (Dignity Party) entered the government. In 2011, the Parliament elected the *Omurbek Babayev* from the Republic Party to replace *Atambayev* as prime minister, due to corruption charges. In September 2012, the Kyrgyz parliament elected *Zsantoro Satubaldiyev*, the former head of the presidential administration, to the post of prime minister. He was also from the Social Democrats and also with ties to the south, but was regarded as a technocrat (Dzubyenko, 2012). The new prime minister was most likely the candidate of the head of state rather than a nominee of the coalition parties. Apart from the Republic Party, the three other governmental parties continued to support the new ruling coalition. Their support was continuous until March 2013, when *Satubaldiyev* and head of *Ata-Meken* *Omurbek Tekebayev* had a huge conflict over the concession of the Kumtor gold mine, resulting in *Ata Meken* leaving the coalition once again. Eventually, in April 2014 the government coalition made up of the Social Democrats, Ar-Namys and *Ata-Meken* was reorganised, headed by another technocrat: Prime Minister *Jumart Otorbayev* (Trilling, 2014). He remained in office only for six months, due to corruption charges. Thus, the governing coalition was facing the 2015 elections with its fifth acting prime minister, *Semir Tariyev*.

The 2015 parliamentary election resulted in a major reshuffle of the Kyrgyz parliamentary scene. Six parties were elected to parliament (one more than before), three of which were new political formations (the Kyrgyzstan Party, Onuguu and Bir Bol). The governing Social Democrats were the largest parliamentary faction, while *Respublica*, which had been regarded as having northern associations, fused with the southern nationalist *Ata Jurt Party*. Consequently, the two parties now form the largest opposition block, together with the *Bir-Bol Party* (Let there be Unity), which was also founded in 2014 and has

southern affiliations (in Batken). Of the old parliamentary parties, not even Ata-Meken managed to remain in parliament. The formerly decisive Ar-Namys fell apart because of infighting, and in 2015 did not get into the parliament at all (Eurasianet.org, 2015). Finally, a wider government was formed made of a coalition of four parties: the Social Democrats, the Kyrgyzstan Party, Onoguu and Ata-Meken under the leadership of Temir Sariyev, the former prime minister. It is a major qualitative change from the previous cycle of government that the parliamentary majority of the four-party coalition is not threatened by the possible departure of any of its constituent parties, with the exception of the Social Democrats.

It has to be said that this continually changing coalition government, which has seen five prime ministers in five years is not very promising for the future stability of Kyrgyz parliamentarism. The likelihood of future governments' destabilisation is further exacerbated by a new Kyrgyz constitutional regulation that limits any party's excessive power: No party is allowed to obtain more than 65 mandates in the 120-member parliament, not even if it was entitled to more seats based on votes. Thus, the present Kyrgyz regulation makes it very hard to form a one-party government, allowing only for more unstable coalition governments. In this constellation, however, the president's informal prestige and the "quasi-semipresidential" logic of the political system may have a stabilising effect.

Parties or clans?

As it appears from the above, the process of party formation is the key to the future success of Kyrgyz parliamentary government. According to Sartori's convincing argument, parliamentary politics and parliamentary government cannot function properly without genuine, socially embedded political parties (Sartori, 1994: 112-114), but in 1995 and 2000 less than a quarter and a third, respectively, of the elected MPs were even nominally related to political parties.³⁵ In comparison, in the 2007 and 2010 elections the majority of Kyrgyz representatives received their mandate through political parties. This change is in part due to the fact that the former elections had individual candidates running in constituencies, while in 2007 and 2010 the candidates were on party lists. The spectacular formation of parties in the recent two elections is influenced by the need to meet the new election rules. Thus, this party formation is still more of a superficial phenomenon; the "deep structures" of political division are represented by regional, "clan" type networks of interest rather than parties with genuine programs and coherent ideology.

³⁵ Independent representatives were mainly office holders appointed by Akayev, thus loyal to the president: the so-called akims, as well as directors of kolkhozes. They are bureaucrats and business people without particular party preferences who can mobilise local interest groups in support of the president. In some cases they are leaders of criminal gangs, with immunity against prosecution as the main motivation for securing the mandate. The local embeddedness of these people is well indicated by the fact that in a number of constituencies they did not even have political rivals. It was characteristic especially of the regions of Narin and Talas that, similarly to the soviet one-party practice, the "village elders" would decide informally who should represent the area (Huskey, 1997, 247-264).

What's more, it can be stated about the current parliamentary parties that they are typically centered on charismatic leaders, rather than representatives of regions. In the Kyrgyz voters' party preferences, regional and ethnic identities, as well as personal ties, rather than ideological or socioeconomic factors (income, education, etc.) seem to take the primary role (Huskey and Hill, 2013, 238.). The only two parties that may be regarded as "genuinely" based on ideological and political programs are the Communists, who used to enjoy considerable support,³⁶ and Ak Sumkar, which in the 2010 campaign seemed to be more pro-western in its attitude and targeted the upper middle classes. It is symptomatic that neither of them got into parliament in 2010. The main driving forces were clearly regional and interpersonal relations.

The Kyrgyz political elite, similarly to the whole society, is deeply divided along regional fault lines. This was obvious already at the time of the internal party fights between factions in the perestroika period. However, the power struggle between northern and southern-bound elite groups was even more manifest in the 2005 and 2010 "revolutions." Analysts say that a civil war was a realistic danger in the days after Bakiyev's fall, when the president stripped of his power fled to his hinterland in the southern regions.

In the 2010 elections, the Ata Jurt Party, which was in favour of recalling the expelled President Bakiyev, gained most places (28) in parliament with 16% of the votes. The party received considerably more backing in the two southern regions, Osh and Jalalabad (The third southern region, Batken, was mainly the stronghold of the Butun Kyrgyzstan Party, primarily because of party leader *Adahán Mamadurov's* clan ties to Batken). On the other hand, the northern regions were certainly over-represented among the voters of the Social Democrats (26 mandates) and Ata-Meken (18 mandates). Ar Namys (Dignity – 25 mandates) and the Republic Party (23 mandates) produced regionally more balanced results. This is partly explained by the fact that these two political formations are not related to regions but to people: former Prime Minister Felix Kulov, and the affluent businessman Omurbek Babanov (who was also prime minister in 2011-12). The 2010 success of Felix Kulov's Ar Namys in the southern regions is also due to the party positioning itself as a protector of ethnic minorities, thus winning many of the ethnic Uzbeks' votes in Osh and Jalalabad. The relatively balanced results of the northern Omurbek Babanov and his Respublica Party in the northern and southern regions is due to the party's protest character: it was not part of the provisional government, which was very unpopular in the southern regions; but unlike Ata-Jurt and Butun Kyrgyzstan, it could not be regarded as the successor party of Bakiyev's Ak Jol either (Huskey and Hill, 2013, 238-248).

The rather unconsolidated character of the Kyrgyz party system is reflected in the landslide changes brought by the October 2015 parliamentary elections. Of the government coalition parties, the Social Democrats and Ata-Meken may still be regarded

³⁶ In the 2000 parliamentary elections, the Communists still obtained 5 mandates in constituencies and 1 list mandate, but in 2010 they did not get into parliament (Elections in Asia, 2001, 440-447). The Ak-Sumkar Party led by businessman Temir Sariyev had a market-friendly program in the 2010 election campaign, targeting urban middle classes, but eventually did not get into parliament (Huskey and Hill, 2013, 241).

as primarily associated with the north. The strongest force of the joint Ata Jurt and Respublica list, however, cannot be simply regarded as “southern”. We know, however, that several factions left Respublica over the past years, the *Intimak group* among them. This group, together with *Ikramjon Ilmiyanov*, *Atamayev’s éminence grise* and the “vodka oligarch” *Sarsenbek Abdikerimov* created the Kyrgyzstan Party, loyal to President Atambayev, which managed to get the third largest mandate after the Social Democrats and the joint Ata-Jurt-Respublica list. The *Onuguu* (Progress) Party also started as a faction leaving Respublica and managed to get into parliament. The voters of this more southern-oriented party are mainly secured from the provinces.

Following the 2015 elections, it would be hard to speak of a clear north-south divide in Kyrgyz internal politics, because both the government coalition and the opposition block contain northern and southern elements. Thus the pro-government versus opposition division seems to crosscut and weaken the traditional regional lines. This paper argues that the parliamentary form of government may be a suitable means for domesticating the power struggle of opposing elite groups, especially if we consider that since 2007, Kyrgyzstan’s parliamentary rule has been associated with a pure party list election system and a consequent multi-party system in parliament. Therefore, the emergence of Westminster type parliamentarism is not very likely. Thus, the parliamentary model may be successful at reducing the formerly standard “all or nothing” logic of the election struggle (Huskey, 2013, 253).

In summary, it may be concluded that several features of the Kyrgyz political system, primarily its weak institutionalisation, its person-centred character and the decisive impact of regional clans, are shared with the other four Central Asian republics, which may be more appropriately labelled as presidential dictatorships. Nevertheless, switching to the parliamentary form of government may cause lasting change in several important factors: it may enhance cooperation between regional elite groups, may make Kyrgyz internal politics less person-centred, and in the long run may boost the process of party formation. On the other hand, in order to turn the parliamentary experiment into a success story, it is necessary to strengthen the constitutional institutional actors and parties based on ideological programs against informal regional clans. Without these moves, only factors increasing government instability will have a more pronounced impact. As a result, Kyrgyzstan’s parliamentary experiment carries great possibilities and serious threats: if instability should get worse, after Tajikistan Kyrgyzstan may be the next failed state in the region. Conversely, if multi-party democracy can be stabilised in the parliamentary government framework, Kyrgyzstan could be a role model for the other post-Soviet Central Asian states.

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“MINSK AGREEMENTS” AND THE RUSSIAN MILITARY IMPLICATIONS IN THE POST-SOVIET AREA

NADIYA KOVAL

List of Contents

Introduction

Continuity and change in conflict-resolution principles in post-Soviet area

Conclusion

Sources

Introduction

The study of Minsk agreements only begins to receive scholarly attention, probably, because of their ongoing and unsettled status. Thus policy papers, policy briefs, and even journalistic materials dominate the discussion of the topic. Furthermore, the bulk of texts treat the state of art, the implementation progress, but not the legal or political nature of the agreements (e.g. Foxhall 2015, IRF 2015). An otherwise excellent book of Thomas D. Grant on legal dimensions of Russian aggression misses Minsk agreements, only tangentially noting their full collapse (Grant 2015, x). In Ukraine though, there is ongoing debate on the legal status of the Minsk agreements and obligations they entail as to Ukrainian law (Yaremenko 2016), but less so as to their correspondence to the international law (Zadorozhny 2014) and conflict resolution mechanisms.

This lack of theoretical and legal consideration is revealing as the Minsk Agreements' accentuated political importance and perceived irreplaceability contrasts with their questionable legal status and internal contradictions. Are they a real conflict resolution mechanism, a desperate try to slow down Russian advance or the next step in the Russian policy? To answer this question, I suggest taking Minsk agreements out of the vacuum and putting them into the regional and temporal context.

The idea of this article is to situate Minsk agreements within the general framework of Russian foreign policy, i.e. restoring Russian influence in post-Soviet territories. Thus I suggest looking for similarities and differences in discussed conflict resolution mechanisms. So far, the best work in this regard has been done by the Jamestown foundation analyst Vladimir Socor, which in a series of his papers for *Eurasia Defense Monitor* (e.g. Socor 2015a; Socor 2015b) coherently and convincingly places the conflict in Ukraine in the context of other frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet space, but prefers to analyze general tendencies, not the documents.

Chronologically, Russia's 1992 aggression against Moldova in Transnistria became

the "mother of frozen conflicts," initiated and then frozen (or heated up again as needed) by post-Soviet Russia. In many ways, the Transnistria conflict presaged the methodology of Russia's conflict undertakings in South Ossetia and Abkhazia against Georgia, and later in Crimea against Ukraine (Socor 2015b).

Indeed, the continuity between different episodes of Russian military involvement and conflict resolution in the post-Soviet space should be observed from different angles. These include (1) *the continuity of military actors*, like veterans of Transnistria helping out in Donetsk (Socor 2015a) and (2) *the continuity in international actors* (Heidi Tagliavini, one of the endorsers of the report on Russian-Georgian war became the head of Trilateral contact group, Leonid Kuchma, Ukrainian ex-president involved in Transnistria issues at the time, became the contact person in the Minsk group, Vladislav Surkov, Russian presidential aid for Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Ukraine taking over the Minsk negotiations etc.). Thus, the question if there is any continuity in proposed solutions seems legitimate.

As primary sources for the Ukrainian case I use two sets of documents, usually combined as the "Minsk agreements". First, the *Protocol on the Results of Consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group* (hereafter – "Minsk Protocol"), signed in Minsk on 5 September 2014 and detailed in the *Memorandum on the Implementation of Protocol* (hereafter – "Minsk Memorandum") of September 19, 2014 after the Russian military advance of the end of August 2014, which brokered a ceasefire and presented a political settlement. After the ceasefire collapsed and Russia launched a new massive advance in the end of January-February 2015, second diplomatic solution, namely *Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements* (hereafter "Minsk-2") and the accompanying *Declaration of the Heads of States* (hereafter – "Minsk-2 Declaration") were adopted. These "Minsk-2" documents were endorsed by the UN Security Council resolution 2202 (2015) on February 17, 2015.

In Transnistria's case, I analyze *Agreement on principles of a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict in the Transdnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova* (hereafter "Agreement on principles") of 1992, signed after the 1989-1992 war and two Russia-sponsored plans for subsequent conflict resolution: *Memorandum on the Basis for Normalization of Relations between the Republic of Moldova and Transdnistria* (hereafter "Moscow memorandum") of 1997 and *Russian Draft Memorandum on the Basic Principles of the State Structure of a United State in Moldova* (hereafter "Kozak memorandum") of 2003. They never came into force due to internal resistance in Moldova, but provide an exhaustive picture of what would conflict resolution mean from Russia's perspective.

In the Georgian case, relevant documents break down into two groups. Among the number of documents, adopted after the wars in the secessionist regions in the beginning of 1990s, I have chosen *Agreement on Principles of Settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian Conflict* (thereafter "Sochi Agreement") of December 1993 and *Declaration on Measures for a Political Settlement of the Georgian-Abkhazian Conflict* (hereafter – Declaration on Measures) of April 4, 1994 as these reflect mostly the political vision, not just military matters. The second set of documents relates to the Russian-Georgian war of August 2008

and includes *Protocole d'accord* (hereafter “Sarkozy-Medvedev Plan”) as of August 12, 2008 and *Implementation of the plan of 12 August 2008* (hereafter – “Implementation of the Plan”), signed on September 8, 2008. As of February 13, 2009, both these documents were hailed in the UN Security Council resolution 1866 (2009).

Continuity and change in conflict-resolution principles in post-Soviet area

The first ubiquitous feature, observable in all the documents despite some differences in time, scope and form, is the ineffectiveness of the proposed conflict resolution mechanisms and proliferation of further disintegration tendencies. In all the cases the conflict stayed frozen with Russian army in place as the tiring and fruitless negotiations went on for years and even decades. Early commitment to the territorial integrity of Moldova precluded the region's outright secession, although the mechanisms for such secession were promoted and the actual “referendum” took place in 2006, where 97.6% of the voters allegedly voted to unite with Russia. In Georgia, after years of rejecting any kind of compromise with the central authorities, recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as the “independent states” occurred, excluding the two “pseudo-states” as subjects of negotiations and thus rendering the diplomatic process void. Finally in Ukraine, one could see a hybrid variation, while the part of the Ukrainian territory, namely Crimea, is “recognized” and annexed, so that its fate becomes non-issue in the subsequent conflict resolution negotiations, and the other parts – several regions of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts – become the subject of negotiations.

The second trend observed is the gradually diminishing readiness of Russia to sign documents as a party combined with a constant attempt to be recognized as a guarantor, peacekeeper or mediator. In the case of Moldova, the 1992 “Agreement on principles” and Georgian “Sochi Agreement” were signed directly by the presidents of Russia and Moldova and Russia and Georgia respectively. Yet in two years, in Georgian case, the “Declaration on Measures” of 1994 was signed by the representatives of Georgia and Abkhazia, only “in the presence” of representatives of UN, Russian Federation and OSCE. In the similar way, Moscow memorandum was signed by the Moldovan president and Transnistrian “president”, whereby Russia and Ukraine signed as guarantor states in the presence of the Chairman in Office of the OSCE, adding also a “Joint Statement”. The Russia-sponsored “Kozak memorandum” was initialized by Moldovan and Transnistrian presidents. While working on the Sarkozy-Medvedev Plan in fact preceded shuttle diplomacy of Sarkozy between Moscow and Tbilisi, the Russian side continued to emphasize its mediatory role between Georgia on one side and Abkhazia and South Ossetia on the other. Also, the two ultimate successes of Russian diplomacy were the fact that Russia's involvement in the conflict was not mentioned and the notion of territorial integrity of Georgia was omitted (Volkhonskiy 2009, 232).

Finally, Minsk Agreements were signed by the representatives of the contact group (Russian Ambassador, Former Ukrainian president and OSCE representative with signatures from representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk “people's republics”. Still the need

to establish direct contact with the "representatives of Donbas" is constantly evoked in the declarations of the Russian leadership. Such a trick of balancing the direct participation in negotiations and determining their result on one hand and shifting the responsibility to the secessionist regions on another transpires through all the cases.

The third significant trend that connects all three cases is the shifting relevance of the international law. In both 1997 Transnistria-related "Moscow memorandum" and "Joint statement", the commitment to the international law is stated. Thus, the Statement proclaims:

"...the provisions of the Memorandum cannot contradict the generally accepted norms of international law, and also will not be interpreted or acted upon in contradiction with existing international agreements, decisions of the OSCE, the Joint Declaration of 19 January 1996 of the presidents of the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the Republic of Moldova, which recognize sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova".

Declaration on Measures in paragraph 2 contains clear references to UN Security Council resolutions. In general, all these "older" documents have a strong resemblance to the classic international treaties, with the preamble, reference to previous documents in the field, wording etc. As the time moves on, all these attributes of the international treaties vanish. We find no mention at all not only to the relevant international law in the field, but also of the respect and correspondence to the international law in either Sarkozy-Medvedev Plan or the Minsk documents, only blank listing of the agreed measures. Instead, both in Georgian and Ukrainian cases Russia used its position in the UNSC to give these documents the status of the international obligation of the states in question. Moreover, if in the Georgian case securing favorable UNSC vote took almost half a year, in Ukrainian, the corresponding resolution was voted on 5 days after the Minsk-2 agreements were signed.

The fourth distinction relates to the scope of the documents' content. In the cases of Transnistria and Georgia as of the beginning of the 1990s, ceasefire and peace agreements were only followed with peace plans and conflict resolution memoranda in a few years and normally these were different documents. The reason why the Medvedev-Sarkozy plan had nothing to do with constitutional changes was Moscow's recognition of independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, thus the task was rather to rule out any possibility of the discussion of the topic. Moreover, territorial integrity of Georgia has received no mention in the Medvedev-Sarkozy Plan, and according to Russian politicians, it was in the initial Sarkozy proposals, but was unacceptable to the Russian side and thus has been dropped from the final documents (Volkhonskiy 2009, 232-235). In this regard, Minsk agreements introduced a significant innovation, grasped by certain observers (Dempsey 2015; Socor 2015b): *the ceasefire-clauses were explicitly combined with the strictly political clauses*, aimed at the internal changes in Ukraine, and the clear causal relation was established between them. Still, I would like to state that this had been just a new form of the old principle. Both in Moldova and in Georgia, the link of taking out Russian military to the political solution of the conflict had already been present and revealed itself in the documents and statements (Lynch 2000, 110; Nygren 2007, 141). Full-scope political proposals appearing in Moscow Memorandum and Kozak Memorandum, which demanded

vast constitutional changes to the Republic of Moldova, were the prerequisite for taking the Russian Army out.

In Georgia, this connection survived in the form of Russian declarations and vague hints in original peace plans on the need for Abkhazia to have its own constitution, hymn, flag etc. and later UN and Russia peace plan that proposed federalization. Still, the point of the Minsk-2 agreements, which demand amnesty, constitutional changes and encompassing law on the self-rule of the secessioned regions as the prerequisite of giving back of the border control to Ukrainian state amounts to about all these previous attempts.

The desire to enforce constitutional changes as the path to conflict resolution stems from the strategy of framing the conflict as purely intrastate one, which is the fifth common feature of analyzed documents. An “internal conflict” allegedly induces external players to protect human rights and intervene on behalf of a minority in danger. This attribution of motives elegantly combines with the previously mentioned continuity, i.e. the proclivity of Russia to represent itself as a mediator or guarantor of peace. In all three cases Russia ostensibly supervises an essentially internal conflict, provides security, and enforces peace, which in its view, should be installed through the new constitutional arrangements of the state in question. It is crucial that deep constitutional changes were imposed in all the cases. Moreover, the basis for such constitutional changes was the demand of the various degrees of federalization of the target country.

According to the paragraph 6 of the “Declaration on Measures”, Abkhazia will have its own constitution and legislation and appropriate state symbols, such as anthem, emblem and flag. In plus:

At this stage, the parties have reached a mutual understanding regarding powers for joint action in the following fields: (a) foreign policy and foreign economic ties (b) border guard arrangements (c) customs (d) energy, transport and communications (e) ecology and elimination of consequences of natural disasters (f) ensuring human and civic rights and freedoms.

Both memoranda for Transnistria contain a federalization clause – in the Moscow Memorandum, it envisages a federation of two equal parts, while the “Kozak Memorandum” represents in fact a very detailed project of federalization and stops short of the actual constitution draft (including proposals on neutrality and demilitarization of the Moldovan State, state attributes for the Transnistria, delivering certain autonomy to Gagauzia, possibility of independent external economic relations by the subjects of the Federation, thorough distribution of federal, common and local responsibilities in the structure of Federation, status of the Russian language etc). The other significant detail is that the minutiae of this federalization are to be negotiated with the regions themselves: in the vague paragraph 7 of the “Declaration of Measures” it is stated that the parties held discussions on the distribution of powers with the understanding that any agreement on this issue is part of a comprehensive settlement and will be reached only once a final solution to the conflict has been found”. Thus any attempts at unilateral federalization projects were buried, like the proposals of Saakashvili in 2003-2004 played on deaf ears of both Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

In the Ukrainian case, the Minsk documents utilize the term “decentralization”,

but the extent of demands to this “decentralization”, outlined in the footnote to the paragraph 11 is revealing (general amnesty, linguistic self-determination, local control over public prosecution and courts, support of the state for social-economic development, transboundary cooperation with the regions of Russian Federation, organization of local people’s militia etc).

The analysis of common ideas in the discussed projects gives evidence that federalization as it is understood by the Russian part comprises active participation of the seceded region in the international relations, including economic ones. The Abkhazia document hints at this as the first question to discuss. “Moscow memorandum” states that Transnistria will participate in the conduct of foreign policy of the Republic of Moldova, with a right to unilaterally establish and maintain international contacts in the economic, scientific-technical and cultural spheres, and the other spheres by agreement of the parties. Independent foreign policy outlined in the “Kozak Memorandum” (paragraph 3.14, 3.15), as well as the possibility to leave the federation via referendum. Moreover, “Minsk-2” pre-supposes transborder cooperation of the seceded regions with the regions of Russian Federation. Another poignant question is the statute of the Russian language: “Kozak Memorandum” envisages two federal languages for Moldova, while “Minsk-2” – linguistic self-determination for the regions in question.

Next, the issue of Russian military presence looms in all the cases. Namely, it was the first instrument to achieve control and to shape the conflict itself. Moreover, both the use of direct military force and the instruments to secure Russian military presence on the ground proved to be diversified. In the case of Transnistria, the 14th army was already there, and thus the lack of common boundary with Russia was no practical problem. In addition, there was an agreement with Ukraine which helped to maintain armed forces in Transnistria for years. A similar case was with the preexisting military bases in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, while Russia refused to implement the decision of the Istanbul summit concerning closure of the Gudauta base by July 2001 and refused to negotiate with Georgia on closing the Batumi and Akhalkalaki bases. These bases were widely used for the August 2008 attacks on Georgia and remained there after the proclaiming of the republics’ “independence”. In Crimea, Russian army bases were the key to the success of annexation, and direct aggression was used in the Luhansk-Donetsk regions. Thus, each and every peacemaking document envisages a certain role for the Russian army, mainly as a security guarantee. As in Medvedev-Sarkozy original plan, point 5, let the Russian army stay on the Georgian territory to fulfill “additional security measures”, which hampered not only withdrawal of Russian soldiers from occupied Abkhazia and South Ossetia, but also from the other regions of the country.

While the peacekeeper’s paradigm featured prominently in early 1990s and still remains in place in Transnistria and Abkhazia, Russia is less and less willing to employ it as a conflict resolution instrument, based on its impunity of utilizing its army in Georgian (in a self-proclaimed peace-enforcement operation) and Ukrainian cases, where this notion is not utilized at all. This lack of peacekeepers is “balanced out” by the presence of Russian monitors in the OSCE SMM and by blocking all the possible decisions on deploying either

the EU or UN peacekeepers in the Donbas area. The trend goes in the direction of less and less discreet employment of the direct military intervention and no international agreement up to date has succeeded in driving the Russian forces out of the “separatist” regions.

Finally, the external actors’ role in the documents has also been evolving. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was progressively more and more engaged as the main security instrument, which fully corresponds with the general Russian vision of OSCE, where Russia has veto power, as the main security instrument in Europe and especially in the post-Soviet states. There is less and less room for UN in peace mediation – instead, as we have shown before: in Minsk-2 agreements, the UN disappears as an actor. The main role of the international organizations is monitoring, humanitarian and human rights-related missions, while Russia is trying to limit this monitoring to non-occupied territories of the target state, largely by denying them access and by precluding any non-Russian security missions via a self-imposed monopoly.

Conclusions

The twenty-five year timespan as well as different circumstances of the three mentioned post-Soviet conflicts (including internal ones, excluded from this analysis) do not permit to derive direct analogies. Still, relevant document analysis has shown the evolving instruments of Russian policy in its “near abroad”: formalizing the previously more subtle connection between military ceasefire and desired political change in the target country, gradual drive towards the categorization of the post-Soviet conflicts as purely internal ones, whilst trying different models of federalization on the target countries, endeavoring secession and even outright annexation in the latest cases, securing military presence at all costs and elevating the role of OSCE and bilateral negotiations at the expense of the UN and multilateral fora. What is more, its instruments have been polished and the Ukrainian case largely does not do justice to all the previous Russian efforts, but also presents additional inventions such as promoting elections in the occupied territory or demanding full restoration of socio-economic relations and financing the break-away regions (Minsk-2). In this regard I suggest that Russian revanchism in formerly dependent countries could only be confronted by acknowledging basic similarities across the region and developing comprehensive conflict resolution plans, based on respect for international law, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

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Middle East And Africa

TURKEY IN 2015: HOW ELECTIONS, KURDS AND A NEIGHBOURING CONFLICT SHAPED TURKEY'S SECURITY

LUCIA YAR

List of contents

Introduction

The second decade of the new millennium and the one party rule

Two parliamentary elections and triggers of unrest

Rebirth of the Kurdish issue

The leverage of Syria - a rise of Daesh, migration crisis and relations with Russia

Conclusion

Introduction

The Republic of Turkey, which in 2023 will celebrate its hundredth anniversary since the establishment of the modern and secular country, is undoubtedly located in one of the most significant political crossroads in the world: the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean of Europe, and the Black Sea, the Caucasus, and the Middle East. As the world's most influential and democratic Muslim country and a dynamic inspiration not only for the countries in the region, it is expected that the situation and transitions underway in Turkey will have an impact on a large geographical area stretching from Washington to Beijing.

The article Turkey in 2015: How elections, Kurds and neighbouring conflict shaped Turkey's security discusses the transformation of the domestic political and security environment in Turkey in 2015, influenced by both internal and external factors. The paper suggests that the country's development in 2015 has been primarily shaped by three main factors that resulted in the current state of unrest: two parliamentary elections, the peace talks with the left-wing military organization The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and growth of political and civil conflicts in the neighbourhood. This transformation thus had an effect on relations with the main global players, such as the EU, the U.S., and Russia. Therefore it is expected, that the year 2015 will be looked back at as a watershed year for Ankara's political renewal and thus one of the most significant years for adjustments in country's security.

The second decade of the new millennium and the one party rule

Since the new millennium, Turkey experienced tremendous development, which has put the country at the centre both economically and strategically. During the first term of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), between 2002 and 2006, Turkey became a regional star performer as its growth averaged 7.2 percent per year (Macovei 2009). Ongoing economic growth was one of the most significant reasons why Turks kept their trust in AKP, which then proceeded to win three consecutive parliamentary elections (in 2002, 2007, and 2011).

Many argue (Acemoglu, Ucer 2015; Hakura 2013) that 2010, might be the year when the positive curve began to stagnate. Influenced by turmoil in the Arab world, Turkey has started to indicate its intentions to rise as a global player by proclaiming itself “the leader of the Middle East”. Furthermore, the never-ending story of Turkey’s full accession to the European Union created a significant drop in the public’s trust in “the club” between Turks. Influenced by these factors, internal political development turned to rather nationalistic civic policies and more sectarian interpretation of the Islamic aspect of the country’s national identity. The ruling party was moving alongside those changes, incorporating and further enhancing them within their policies, on their own terms.

2013 was particularly a year of breakthroughs. Unexpected mobilisation of citizens, notably from bigger cities, in Gezi Protests shook AKP’s seemingly solid position. Many started to doubt that the rightist, religious and expenditure-oriented one-way street that Turkey has been embarking on was the only viable option. The protests were suppressed with tear gas and water cannons, albeit such action was heavily criticized by large number of foreign countries and international organisations. In addition to at least eleven deaths and over 8,000 injuries, more than 3,000 arrests were made (Amnesty International 2013).

The corruption scandal that (in-)directly followed, cost the seats of ten members of prime minister Erdoğan’s government. However, the backfire was not far along. The government dismissed or reassigned thousands of police officers and hundreds of judges and prosecutors, including those leading the investigation, and passed a law increasing government control of the judiciary (Cumhuriyet Gazetesi 2014). Media were subjected to prosecutions, resulting in hundreds of journalists being jailed. In the 2014 World Press Freedom Index, Turkey ranked as 154th out of 180 countries in media freedom (Reporters Without Borders 2014).

Protests, although much spread throughout the country and heavily attended, saved the Gezi park in the centre of Istanbul from felling, which was their initial trigger. However they failed to bring about further political changes, and thus caused strong frustration between those, who believed in a political or even a cultural revolution, in the form of *Turkey Spring*.

Consecutive local elections were to release the actual set of post-Gezi sentiments. Yet the ruling AK Party declared victory on March 31, 2014, gaining an overwhelm-

ing 42.89% of the votes (YSK 2014). The year of ballots continued with the Presidential elections. It was held on August 10, and for the first time in the country's history took place through a direct national vote. Almost no one doubted that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who had to step down as the leader of the AK Party due to internal party guidelines, would strikingly win over rather un-popular or unknown opponents. Erdoğan became president right after the first round of votes. When the AKP stumbled badly in the Parliamentary elections in June 2015, a shock came across the whole country.

Two parliamentary elections and triggers of unrest

Political campaigning culminated in Turkey at the beginning of summer. Besides the parliamentary fixed stars of the AKP, Kemalists of the Republican People's Party (CHP) and far-right Eurosceptics of the National Movement Party (MHP), a significant new player appeared on the political scene. Under the lead of Selahattin Demirtaş, by foreign media referred to as *Obama of Turkey*, a pro-Kurdish and pro-minority political party Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) gained such popularity that even inordinately high, ten percent election threshold seemed to be only a formality.

The general elections of June 7, 2015 were to be one of the most hotly contested elections in country's recent history. AKP, informally still led by president Erdoğan, was pushing for a large majority that would ensure constitutional amendments transforming Turkey from a parliamentary to a presidential system. Turkish opposition, on the other hand, strongly opposed this and needed to ensure that AKP would not be able to obtain such a majority.

Despite the aggressive campaigning, in which even the president – constitutionally bounded as impartial – played a major role, including attendances of his mother party's rallies, AK Party lost its parliamentary majority for the first time in thirteen years since it came to power. Although it won the election, the majority mandatory to secure parliamentary prevalence was not ensured, explicitly because pro-Kurds filled as much as 80 parliamentary seats (YSK 2015).

Ahmet Davutoğlu, the less charismatic and admired successor of Erdoğan in the AK, along with the prime ministry's seat, has begun negotiations for a coalition government. Observing the pre-elections atmosphere, post-elections negotiations between parties were doomed to fail. The constitutionally set deadline for Davutoğlu in order to reach an agreement with a possible coalition partner was fast approaching, and the president did not consider relieving him from such responsibility. Despite the common practice, the second strongest party, CHP, did not receive the president's mandate to create a parliamentary majority. Thus the new date for the elections was announced.

In the time between the two parliamentary elections, national security begun to face old-new challenges. Ensuing the continuation of three years of peace talks with the Kurdish rebels of PKK, unprecedented bombing in Suruç costing the lives of 33 people, while over 100 were reported injured (NTV 2015). The bombing, although killing many Kurds, was presented as a PKK-linked attack, despite the PKK never claiming it. Turkish

military responded by conducting waves of airstrikes against PKK positions not only within Turkey, but also in northern Iraq.

Notwithstanding, the inter-election period saw much more violence. Attacks on either party became daily occurrence, costing the lives of over 600 Turks, Kurds, policemen, soldiers, and civilians. The most significant of the attacks was the Ankara bombing in October 2015, during a peace rally, besides others organised by HDP, reached the death toll of 102. The attack was the deadliest of its kind in Turkey's modern history.

Such an atmosphere, enhanced by ongoing nationalistic campaigning, led to attempts by the AKP to re-gain its former electorate base. Instability created within the period of over four months, constructed an image that peace in Turkey without AKP leading it, was rather an abstraction. Approaching critical elections in November, Turkey looked ever more fragile.

The second round of elections ended up with an increase in AKP's votes by almost nine per cent and 59 more seats in the new parliament. Erdoğan's party easily ensured the majority at the expense of HDP, and even the nationalists of MHP, which compared to June lost 40 seats.

The new government was formed within a few days. The president, attempting to centralize all executive powers in the presidency in order to continue with his "New Turkey" project, was safe once again. However, the original goal to reach the constitutional majority did not materialize. And as it has been observed from then on, one party government would also not prove to lead to widespread security.

Rebirth of the Kurdish issue

During the past three decades, under the influence of such factors as globalization, the process of accession to the EU, expansion of public sphere and emergence of new Anatolian bourgeoisie, Turkey has been witnessing a rise of new interpretations and meanings of "being a Turkish citizen". As Ahmadi suggests, those transformations were exclusive and ethnic rather than inclusive and civil (Ahmadi 2015). Nationalism, one-and-only religion, language, and all in all "conventional" cultural and social behaviour have been extensively cheered. Furthermore, on a regional scale, this has led to pursuit of ethnic and sectarian policies in the face of ongoing crisis in Syria and Iraq.

The biggest ethnic minority in the world without its own state – Kurds – is, besides Turkey, spread throughout Iraq, Syria and Iran, creating a certain political burden for leaders in all four countries. In Turkey, various estimates of the actual size of the Kurdish minority vary from 15 to 25 percent of the whole country's population, making it the biggest population of Kurds in the region.

Turkish concerns that the Kurdish movement will seek to advance an independent state from north-east Iran, across the north of Iraq and Syria to the Mediterranean are grizzled. Historically, the Kurdish question has been the most important challenge to the modern Turkish Republic. Battling against a relentless insurgency since the 1980s, Turkey found itself at odds with its Kurdish population. Since 1984, Turkey-PKK conflict resulted

in some 45,000 killed, as well as two to three million displaced (Norwegian Refugee Council 2002).

Despite a peace process between the Turkish state and the PKK proceeding from 2013 to July 2015, tensions were continuously high. Nevertheless, the two-year-old cease-fire was holding, building on ten years of gradual reforms towards full rights for Turkey's Kurdish-speaking communities.

By the end of 2014, although on the regional scale, it was shown that the PKK and the Turkish state arguably needed each other to contain the threat of Daesh. The tension was particularly growing on the border with Syria. Kurdish militia in the region grew in power, backed by foreign support from the U.S. or even Russia (Coşkun 2015). On February 28, 2015, so-called Dolmabahçe agreement, a ten-point peace plan was announced by the government with a backing from the HDP. However, turbulent times in the region reached the tipping point. The dispute arose when Kurds accused Turkey of assisting Daesh during the Kobani siege. Following the bombing in Suruç mentioned above, both parties simply left the negotiating table. Particularly after the November elections, the conflict has escalated.

Political decisions directly influence the Turks and the Kurds living in the south-east of the country. According to the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, curfews have been imposed on at least 58 occasions in at least 19 different towns and districts across seven provinces of east and south-east Turkey since they were first introduced in August 2015 (HRFoT 2016). Amnesty International reports in those areas, many of which are still inaccessible to external observers by the beginning of 2016, extreme hardships faced on account of cuts to water and electricity supplies and the dangers posed by accessing food and medical care under fire. Operations by Turkish police and the military there have been characterised by abusive use of force. But on the other hand, PKK attacks have similarly resulted in the deaths of civilians (Amnesty International 2016).

By the end of 2015, Ankara claimed over 3,100 PKK terrorists were killed. "Turkish security forces annihilated terrorists in mountains and cities inch by inch," stated Turkish president (Anadolu Agency 2015). People's Defence Forces Press Office, the military wing of the PKK, similarly issued its balance sheet, claiming the lives of 1,557 soldiers, police, special operation forces and high-ranking officers. "In response to the all-out war concept, guerrillas retaliated for the attacks with effective reprisal actions, stepped up the resistance and defeated Erdoğan and AKP fascism in Kurdistan," reads the official statement (Hêzên Parastina Gel - BIM 2016).

According to Güneş, the main difficulty that has been blocking the process of political change and conflict resolution in Turkey is the lack of consensus on the appropriate measures that need to be taken (Güneş 2014). Thus it is largely forecasted that the level of public recognition that Kurdish minority is expecting, as well as the accommodation of Kurdish rights in Turkey will be a key area of disputes, with a significant impact on the future establishment of the relations between both parties, including the approaching process of new constitution writing. However, the regional context is growing in importance, and concessions that might have been viable in the past nowadays seem to be way too small

in order to ensure the stability.

The leverage of Syria - migration crisis, rise of Daesh, and relations with Russia

The conflict in Syria was expected to have a quick resolution by many, including Ankara's leadership. A consequence of the prolonged struggle affected not only Syria's own citizens but virtually the entire region, including Turkey.

Pre-war relations between both countries were based on understanding, although they historically have not been very close – due to a territorial dispute that occurred just after the end of the Ottoman rule, which has been imposed on Syria since the 16th century. In recent history things were on the mend with the foreign minister Davutoğlu often visiting Syria and Erdoğan and Assad establishing a close personal relationship. Both countries enjoyed visa-free regime, cross-border trade increases, joint cabinet meetings and even a joint military exercise. There was preliminary planning for a new Middle East free trade grouping spearheaded by the two countries. Syria became the crown jewel of Turkey's policy of “zero problems with neighbours” and opening to the Middle East (Bulent 2015).

Turkey's foreign policy, usually based on pragmatism, was therefore caught off guard after the outbreak of tensions in its southern neighbourhood. As Ozel Volfová and Valachová correctly suggest, Turkey's “zero problems with neighbours” policy marked a significant shift when the civil war in Syria erupted, initially finding itself caught between supporting terrorist organizations on one hand, and cooperating with countries considered former enemies on the other (Ozel Volfová and Valachová 2014).

The conflict had three main implications that influenced the domestic as well as foreign policy of Ankara: influx of refugees, expansion of terrorism and initially unexpected worsening of relations with Russia, Turkey's long term business and policy partner.

Over 4.5 million Syrian refugees are registered with the UNHCR, over 2.5 million of whom were in Turkey at the end of 2015 (UNHCR 2015). The problem of the conflict and the related issue of the Syrian refugees is a serious burden for the government in Ankara. It comes with huge financial price tag (according to government, up to €9 billion), security questions (due to the terrorist attacks, the feeling of rising criminalisation, and indirectly the conflict with the Kurds, the threat of escalation), social problems (the impact on the labour market, the cost of looking after the refugees, altering the demographic balance in many cities in southern Turkey), and other matters that so far saw only the absence of any real possibilities as for a positive solution. Reducing the number of refugees by failing to register them, and allowing, or even facilitating the refugees' departure from Turkey, is only a temporary solution to the problem.

The EU, facing now the direct costs of the war within its territory, does not seem to be pleased either. Although it has pledged to pay €3 billion to Turkey in exchange for help with dealing with European migration and a pledge to restart and speed up accession negotiations (including a promise to ease visa requirements for Turkish citizens visiting

Schengen area by October 2016), suspicion amongst EU-28 still runs high. No wonder, as only several days after the package was agreed on, Turkish President has threatened to send the millions of refugees in Turkey to EU member states: “We do not have the word ‘idiot’ written on our foreheads. We will be patient but we will do what we have to. Don’t think that the planes and the buses are there for nothing,” Erdoğan said denouncing Western policy in the refugee crisis (The Guardian 2016).

Secondly, as mentioned, Syrian conflict has bolstered a rise of even bigger threat than ever predicted: the emergence of Daesh has brought Western attention to the region once again. The terrorist organization, which is both a product and effect, and a major catalyst of historical, ethnic, religious, and political fault lines in the region, started to openly operate in Turkey. Particularly in the second half of the year, Turkey has witnessed the most destructive terrorist attacks in its modern history.

It took quite some time for Ankara to actually act against Daesh. The tipping point was Daesh’s bombings of Turkish border troops in July 2015 in the southeastern town of Kilis. Ankara then - for the first time - carried out airstrikes against Daesh in Syria. Ever since the country actively began to target the terrorist organization, Turkey has also come under attacks of proclaimed Islamic State.

The elimination of Daesh will strongly depend on Kurdish forces, as only PKK guerrillas both in Turkey and Iraq, as well as YPG (Democratic Union party) in Syria are, currently, the main forces actually fighting Daesh on the ground. Although the U.S. considers the PKK a terrorist organisation, the anti-Daesh coalition requires Kurds, including PKK, to cooperate tactically. In order not to undermine central governments in Iraq or in Turkey, support of the U.S. has never reached such degree, which would satisfy the fighters on the ground.

The U.S. and its allies in NATO need Ankara’s approval to use its military assets, most importantly the strategic Air Base in Incirlik. But Turkey’s own commitment to support the coalition has been questioned for obvious reasons. As Ankara may prefer Daesh over an independent Syrian Kurdistan, which might eventually become a trigger for Kurds in the region seeking sovereignty elsewhere, including Turkey.

Evidence of Turkey actually trading with Daesh, while undermining the ongoing operations of Kurdish forces, has been presented by Turkish media and even by Russian Ministry of Defence (while the two of the main contributors leaking the story are currently being prosecuted, charged with espionage after alleging that Turkey’s secret services sent arms to Islamist rebels in Syria).

Russia got involved in this regional issue, supporting the regime of Syrian president al-Assad. A deterioration of vital relations between Moscow and Ankara followed November 24, when Turkey downed a Russian jet in northern Syria. Russia rejected claims that the plane violated Turkish airspace and Ankara claimed otherwise. As a part of a blame game, Moscow openly accused Turkish President Erdoğan and his family of involvement in Daesh’s illegal oil trade: “Turkey is the main destination for the oil stolen from its legitimate owners, which are Syria and Iraq,” Russia’s Deputy Defence Minister Anatoly Antonov told journalists in Moscow on December 2 (Sputnik News 2015).

A downturn in bilateral relations between both countries has already affected the Turkish economy, becoming noticeable in tourism, trade of agricultural products and even construction and energy projects. It is expected that the commerce will be vastly affected in 2016 as well.

Conclusion

The security establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 2015 has been undergoing a significant reshaping. Describing the situation before 2015, particularly before the parliamentary elections in June, neither Gezi protests, nor the corruption scandal transformed the domestic concern for the daily security of citizens to such an extent as months that followed. It became clear that for Turkey, 2015 was a year of increasing domestic polarisation, geopolitical rivalries and confrontation on multiple fronts.

The general elections of June 7 were to be one of the most contested elections in country's recent history, but when the AKP experienced the first setback in thirteen years, shock-waves were sent throughout the whole country. As no coalition solution was created, a November date for "a remedy" was set. However, with the approaching critical elections in November, national security began to face old-new challenges. Just as many times in the past, the Kurdish question rose from the ashes from over a two-year-long peace process. Both Turkish government and the outlawed PKK simply left the negotiation table. By the same token, Ankara squandered the initial opportunity to fight Daesh and by opening its military Air Base for NATO forces, however alongside it, assembling resources to assemble against Kurdish armed forces.

The second round of elections led to an increase of AKP's votes, thus the party easily secured a majority and formed the new government. Yet security, integrity of domestic defence and general atmosphere of peace did not follow. By the end of 2015 in southeast Turkey, a sort of battleground has been created, bordering on civil war.

The conflict in Syria, as the third element of influence discussed in the paper, had three main implications that influenced Ankara's domestic as well as foreign policy: influx of refugees, expansion of terrorism and initially unexpected deterioration of relations with Russia, Turkey's long term business and policy partner. All three factors influenced not only the economy, trade and even demography, but also the country's security, inviting a nation-wide distress and apprehension.

Despite doubts, Ankara has always mainly relied on independent foreign policy removed from the influence of regional and great powers, yet its ability to utilize soft-power tools in order to create a long lasting positive impact has been questioned. Currently its steps suggest practical alternation. As the paper suggests, the elections, the Kurdish issue, and developments in Syria, had a strong effect on both domestic as well as external positions of Turkish politicians. Moreover, policies put into practice at the domestic, regional and international level, including an internal polarization of citizens have created a sensitivity which enabled terror acts to take place in a remarkably effective way. Thus it is possible to conclude that the year of 2015 was one of the most – if not the most – challeng-

ing years for Turkey in its recent history. The discussed indigenous and foreign threats, as predicted by many, may even be cultivated well into 2016 and beyond.

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SECURITY POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND ITS INTERESTS IN SYRIA

2

LUKÁŠ TICHÝ

List of contents

Introduction

Theoretical Framework: Conventional Constructivism and Rationalism

Russian Support for Assad's Regime in Syria: Interest and Norms

Russian Normative – Political Interests

Russian Security–Normative Interests

Russian Military–Economic Interests

Conclusion

Introduction

Whereas during the presidency of Boris Yeltsin in the 1990s, the Russian-Syrian relations deteriorated, in part because of Syria's inability to repay much of its estimated USD 12 billion debt to Moscow, in the first decade of the 21st century, during the Vladimir Putin and, later, the Dmitry Medvedev administration, the Russian-Syrian relations began to improve for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 led the Syrians to reevaluate the importance of upgrading Syria's ties with the resurgent Russia, particularly as Syria itself felt threatened by the U.S. presence in Iraq. Simultaneously, after the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004, concerns that Russia might lose some of the ports used by the Black Sea Fleet raised the importance of retaining the Tartus base, a concern that was reinforced by the 2008 clash with Georgia and the fear of "NATO encirclement" in the Black Sea. The perceived support of Israel for Georgia in its conflicts with Russia also led to a reappraisal of Moscow's ties with Syria. Last but not least, once Damascus signaled it was interested in again purchasing large quantities of Russian weaponry, Syria became a major customer of the Russian arms industry (Gvosdev and Marsh 2012, 315-316).

During the Arab Spring Revolution, when the protests against the Syrian government began in 2011, Russia politically supported President Bashar al-Assad's regime, backing its right to use force if necessary to prevent or put down an uprising. However, the RF, under the pretext of the fight against militants from the Islamic State, militarily intervened in Syria in favor of the Syrian President in September 2015, at a time when the rebels and anti-government forces in the civil war began to gradually gain the upper hand, and Assad was threatened with defeat. Currently, Russia is the power which has most prominently provided a diplomatic shield for the Syrian state, and bolstered it with arms supplies, although Moscow talks about the need to "balance" between the warring parties in Syria (Allison 2013, 795)

In this respect, the main aim of this paper is to analyse the motives of the security policy of the Russian Federation in its political and military support of President Assad against the background of Russian strategic interests and the influence of norms. The paper is based on the premise that rather than using a single argument, such as that the RF support for Assad's regime is based on the negative Russian attitude towards western-led military interventions, the RF support for Assad's regime in Syria can be explained by the accumulation of motives having to do with the (Russian) national interest and norms.

At the ontological level, this paper, when examining the Russian attitude and Russia's political and military motives for the preservation of Assad's regime, prefers an objective outside look over a subjective inside look. This means that the so-called "people lens" (the lens of the individuals that occupy the key posts of the Russian President, the Prime Minister, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence - in other words, the key persons that identify and interpret problems and take crucial decisions) is preferred over the lens of institutions. At the same time, in this paper, patterns (the culture in which key individuals live and to which they respond) have preference before problems; and, last but not least, the reason (why the particular policies of the Russian president and political representatives were chosen by them) is preferred over the process (what happened).

The structure of the paper is as follows. The first part is concentrated on briefly characterizing of the theoretical accesses. The second part analyses the main motives of the foreign-security support of Russia for the governing regime in Syria.

Theoretical Framework: Conventional Constructivism and Rationalism

At the theoretical level, the paper builds upon a combination of conventional constructivist and rationalist approaches (for more on this, see Kratochvíl and Tulmets 2010, 15–30). On the one hand, conventional constructivism causes much basic knowledge in relations to national interests and norms. According to Jutta Weldes (1996, 276) the national interests that are not pre-determined by external conditions are important to international politics in two ways. First, it is through the concept of the national interest that policy-makers understand the goals to be pursued by a state's foreign policy. It, thus, in practice, forms the basis for state actions (in this case, the motives for the foreign policy promotion of the RF in relation to Assad's government). Second, the national interest functions as a rhetorical device through which the legitimacy of and political support for a state action are generated (here, the justification of the support for the Russian positive stance in regard to Syria)..Alongside conventional constructivism argues that primarily ideas and norms are that, which create national interest as main motives of talks of foreign and security policy of state.

On the other hand, the rationalism is based on condition of strategic rationality of talks and performing of individual actors in relations to other actors. In this respect every rational actor promotes externally fixed national interests with whom they do not connect normative judgment and on their basis they chose the most preferred alternatives (Ocelik and Černoč 2014, 15). Rationalism proceeds from conviction that social actors

try to maximise their self-interest (which may be both material and ideational) and to use and observe the norms only, if they are useful for them, in order to do so. At the same time, these social actors rationally manipulate their environment (which may also be both material and ideational) to reach their interest (Kratochvíl and Tulmets 2010, 26).

In other words, while conventional constructivism is useful for explanation of process formation of national interest from actor's side, rationalism helps to clarify actor's observation of strategic interest and goals, which are based on required norms. In this paper, author uses knowledge both rationalism, when he considers the RF as a rationally negotiating actor, who observes own strategic interests in its foreign and security policy, and constructivism, because these Russian interests are not pre-determined by interaction with other participants, which are connected into solving of conflict in Syria, but they can change depending on needs of RF or after by force of ideational norms and values.

Russian Support for Assad's Regime in Syria: Interest and Norms

Compared to its previous engagement in the process of the Arab Spring, the type of involvement of the RF was completely different in the case of Syria, where, since March 2011, the violent clashes between the army of President Bashar al-Assad and his opponents escalated into a civil war. Russia took a significantly pro-active attitude and it has supported Assad's regime since the beginning of the unrest. The RF has thus become a sort of a protector of Syria at the expense of the worsening of its relations with the West (Nizameddin 2013, 13).

With the deterioration of the situation in Syria, the RF repeatedly tried to assume the role of a mediator in resolving the Syrian crisis in order to promote its influence and augment its importance in the Middle East and the Arab world. For example, in September 2013, Russia mediated an agreement that would have obliged Assad's regime to give up its chemical weapons stockpiles. The RF proposed this agreement after U.S. President Barack Obama had announced that the United States, together with other states, was considering the launching of a military attack against Assad's regime for having allegedly used chemical weapons against civilians in the district of al-Ghouta near the Syrian capital of Damascus in August 2013 (Allison 2013, 795). In order to avoid a military intervention, Syria finally accepted the agreement between the USA and Russia, which was signed by Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov and his U.S. counterpart John Kerry, on the transfer of chemical weapons under international control. However, this agreement came under criticism because it was unlikely that the Syrian regime would give up all of its chemical weapons, as well as because it did not address any guilt or responsibility on the part of Assad's regime for the attack (Stevenson 2014, 130-131). But rather than being a victory for Assad, the agreement between the USA and Russia was a significant victory for Putin. With it, the Russian President succeeded in achieving an objective that was missed in the case of Libya, namely to prevent an armed intervention by the Western states and keep an allied regime in power (Nizameddin 2013, 13).

The commitment of Russia to politically and diplomatically defend the Syrian

regime of President Assad has been evident also throughout 2014. Fearing a possible military intervention in Syria, the RF first threatened to block a draft resolution on humanitarian aid to Syria in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in late February. Even though this resolution did not contain any threat of imposing sanctions, it allowed for a vote on possible sanctions against those who would obstruct the humanitarian aid (Aljazeera America 2014). Subsequently, on May 22, 2014, the RF, together with China, vetoed a draft resolution of the UN Security Council calling for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate the war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria, which had apparently been committed by the regime of Assad and also by armed opposition groups. The Russian Ambassador to the UN, Vitaly Churkin, called the initiative a “gimmick” threatening the efforts to end the violence in Syria by political means (The Guardian 2014). In this case, the RF and China once again ignored the will to support the necessary measures of the remaining 13 members of the SC and 65 other countries.

Once during 2015 the situation began to deteriorate to the detriment of the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, the RF intervened in the Syrian Civil War began on 30 September 2015, following a formal request by the Syrian government for military help against rebel and jihadist groups. After all, Russia’s airstrikes in Syria are its first combat deployment away from its borders in decades (Saunders 2016). Putin defined Russia’s goal in Syria as “stabilising the legitimate power in Syria and creating the conditions for political compromise” (Interfax 2015). In the late February 2016, the Russian President Putin and his U.S. counterpart Obama announced a cease-fire³⁷ in order to end the fighting between Syrian President Assad’s forces and his political opponents (The Moscow Times 2016)³⁸, and on 14 March, Putin announcement, that Russia is beginning a withdrawal of specific military personnel and equipment from Syria (Reuters 2016).³⁹

The attitude of the RF towards the situation in Syria is determined by a number of factors. They are motivated by Russia’s political, security, economic, and military interests and the important role at formation of these interests play norms too.

Russian Normative-Political Interests

In the context of political interests influenced by international norms, the RF is determined to ensure that the UNSC remains the main authority in the resolution of international security crises, including the one in Syria, although, on the other hand, it is equally ready to prevent the UNSC from sanctioning an external military intervention in

³⁷ The cease-fire is due to begin on February 27, 2016.

³⁸ However, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has announced that the Russian Air Force will continue its counterterrorism air strikes against terrorist organizations (primarily Islamic State, al-Nusra Front) in Syria against during the cease-fire.

³⁹ Despite the presentation of the Russian announcement as a total pullout from Syria, Putin has made it clear that the Tartus port will remain open and that the airbases Russia has previously established and operated from will remain functional. Russia is also continuing to drop bombs on ISIS positions. Most likely, the Russian announcement was more politically based than anything else.

Syria (Allison 2013, 796). At the same time, Russia's political leaders are convinced that a number of Western military interventions since the Cold War, i.e. those in Kosovo, Iraq and Libya, which resulted in regime changes in these countries, represent a threat to the stability of the international system and potentially even for the regime in Russia itself and its autocratic allies. The Russian Federation has therefore never given the UNSC its official consent to these actions and it will never give its consent in similar cases where there is a suspicion on the part of Russia that the motive for the given military intervention is the removal of the ruling regime in the country that is subjected to the intervention. According to Samuel Charap (2013, 37), the notion that the Russian Federation itself could eventually become a target for such an intervention - although it may seem absurd to fear a possible U.S. military intervention in Russia - is rooted very deeply in the country. Russia therefore uses its power, especially its permanent seat in the Security Council, to avoid the setting of a precedent that could possibly be used against Russia itself.

Alongside in case of Syria, the Russian Federation is not convinced that, American motives for potential intervention are waged by only humanitarian misfortune in country. Instead, it sees sinister geopolitics: the United States moving to get rid of a government with a foreign policy that had long contradicted US interests, particularly by aligning with Iran. Last but not least by its behaviour in SC and attitude in relation to Syria, Russia is trying to make USA accepts it as equal partner, which RF gives de facto the power of veto over any kind of other American interventions of strategically intention here and elsewhere. In addition Russia via its role of intermediary of solving of Syrian crises tries to weaken influence of USA in Middle East and the other way around, the RF strives for renewal its position of no negligible superpower, so nothing would be solved without them in this area.

In other words, Russia's backing of President Assad supported by military intervention in Syria has sharply increased influence of the RF in the Middle East by confirming Russia's claim to a major role in shaping a political settlement in Syria. However, Moscow's influence in Damascus depends heavily on what Syrian leaders expect from Russia in the future. At the same time, Russia using intervention shifted some domestic and international attention from conflict in Ukraine to Syria (for more on this, see Saunders 2016).

Russian Security–Normative Interests

The Russian Federation also watches security interests in Syria, when it often justifies its pro-active position in the Syrian crisis by pointing to the fear of the collapse of the current Syrian state (not only the regime, but also the state), an expansion of transnational Islamist terrorist networks, a destabilization of the Middle Eastern region and the consequences that could accompany the collapse of Assad's Syria. The support for Syria by Russia is furthermore linked to the effort to keep the regime of the Russian state stable, as the Islamist threat might spillover into the Russian North Caucasus in case of a collapse of Syria (Malashenko 2013).

The Russian Middle East expert G. Mirskiy interpreted the Syrian conflict in its regional terms as an effort of Saudi Arabia and Qatar to overthrow an Alawite pro-Iranian regime. Against the backdrop of clashes between the Sunnis and the Shi'a Alawites, the Russian leadership presents the conflict in and around Syria as a microcosm of a broader security challenge, while the RF highlights the fact that the fighting in Syria is increasingly influenced by Sunni extremist groups, including Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups with similar ideological motivations, such as al-Nusra Front or the Brigade of Ahrar al-Sham, which encourages the Syrian opposition to rely on military solutions. Similarly, the Sunni Salafis outside of Syria are trying to mobilize armed militias to join the fight against the Syrian regime of Assad and the Lebanese Shi'a militant organization Hezbollah (Allison 2013, 810).

Threat of spillover military conflict into other countries and destabilization of Middle Eastern area became even more imminent in connection with influence of radical Islamist terrorist organization Islamic State (IS), which sooner under the name Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), declared on conquered parts of state Iraq and Syria independent Islamic state in 29. June 2014. Its leader becomes Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who aims to renew Caliphate on area of Iraq and Levant or other countries, which sometime in history were under Muslim dominance they aim at conquering all the territories that were once under Islam control (dar al-Islam).

Last but not least, the overthrow of the current Syrian regime would strengthen the Sunni bloc and further weaken Shi'a Iran. Iran could respond by trying to further increase its influence in Iraq, by restoring and expanding its own nuclear program or by encouraging the resistance of the Shi'a in Sunni Arab states (Enwerem 2016). The support for Assad's regime by the RF is significantly linked to the need for the recognition of Iran's preferences, not only because of the close trade and diplomatic relations between Moscow and Tehran, but also because of the potential influence and the threat that Iran could cause instability along the southern rim of the Russian border (Zikibayeva 2011).

In other words, under the pretext of the fight against militants from the Islamic State and other terrorist groups, Russia's intervention in Syria in favor of the Syrian President has had several benefits: increasing the credibility of any potential future threats to use force and strengthening Moscow's leverage over the Syrian government in absolute terms and relative to Iran. Simultaneously, as was above mentioned, "Russia is not only coming back global power politics but also have chance to use Syrian card as leverage in vital issues such as Ukraine and sanctions. One by one, in Ukraine case, West has been directly oppose Russian expansionism and legalizing sanctions against Russia include expelling Russia from G8" (Bagci 2015). However, Russia became one of the main allies of West against terrorism in Syria, so Putin put West in a contradictory situation and it make their arguments in Ukraine hypocritical. "In Ukraine and in the Middle East—in order to force the West to have to partner with Russia to "resolve" the crises it has created" (Kross and Mckew, 2015).

Russian Military–Economic Interests

In addition, Russia in its relations with Syria promotes its own military – economic interests, in particular the sale of arms and military equipment. These interests would be seriously threatened in the case of the fall of Assad’s regime.

The main bulk of the Russian arms supplies to Syria consisted primarily of sophisticated anti-aircraft missile systems, such as the medium-range, self-propelled anti-aircraft system Buk M-2 (NATO code SA-17 Grizzly) or the hybrid short-range, self-propelled anti-aircraft system Pancir-S1 (NATO code SA-22) (Gvosdev and Marsh 2013, 316). In May 2013, Russia decided to supply Syria with four batteries of the state-of-the-art anti-aircraft missile system S-300, despite U.S. and Israeli efforts to convince President Putin that the supply of these systems to Syria could destabilize the whole region of the Middle East (Stent 2014, 249). Last, but not least, in August 2015, “Russia has reportedly delivered six MiG-31 Foxhound interceptors to the Assad regime in Syria” (Defense Industry Daily 2015).

In addition, the Russian Federation is renting the Syrian port of Tartus, which is currently the only Russian naval base outside the territory of the former Soviet Union and which represents a convenient starting position for the resumption of the Russian military presence and a strengthening of its geopolitical influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, as laid out in a strategy of the Russian Ministry of Defense that applies to the period until the year 2015 (Allison 2013, 805; Sofer 2013).

In sum, intervention to Syria demonstrated Russia’s advanced military capabilities in a highly visible manner. “Similarly, regional and global assessments of the credibility of Russia’s military forces and weapons systems will ultimately depend on the outcome of Russia’s intervention. The Syrian government’s inability to make significant gains so far does not help in this respect. Russia’s attractiveness as an arms supplier is less reliant on military victories, so long as its systems perform as advertised — but helping Bashar al-Assad’s regime take back territory would likely produce more sales than facilitating a protracted stalemate” (Saunders 2016).

Conclusion

The main goal of this paper was to analyse the basic motives of support of the security policy of Russia towards Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad, which resulted in militarily intervention in favor of the Syrian President. The paper used the combination of conventional constructivism and rationalist approaches in form of theoretical framework, which reflects range of fundamental findings in relations to interests and norms as determinative factors of political and military support of governing regime in Syria from the Russian Federation.

In relations to regime of Syrian government, positive attitude of Russia is determined by range of factors, which are motivated by Russian strategic interests, which

are powered of rational decision (rationality) by rationalist and are influenced by norms by constructivist. Alongside these interests are not always rationally united and could change depending on individual states in international system. The strategic interest of RF connected with defence of regime of B. Assad are normative – political (negative attitude to western military interventions, which are outside the international norms by Russia), security – normative (in context of norms emphasis on international security, which is endangered by spillover of Syrian civil war in other countries and fear of destabilization of Russian North Caucasus from side of radical Islamist structure in Syria), and economic – military (effort to continue of sale of Russian weapons in Syria and maintaining of Syrian port Tartus) character.

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FROM INTERIM DEAL TO COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT: TWO CRUCIAL YEARS IN IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

MATEJ DROTÁR

List of contents

Introduction
Interim deal
Comprehensive agreement
Strategic foresight
Conclusion

Introduction

Whilst Iran's nuclear programme might have been regarded as an international concern for decades, only the last two years proved to be crucial for gaining what is today by many considered to be a successful long-term diplomatic outcome. Indeed, the nuclear talks between the P5+1 – the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – and Iran completed in Vienna in the summer of 2015 produced a written understanding and prevented Iran's nuclear programme from becoming the longest diplomatic engagement without actually producing a fruitful agreement – second only to the Middle Eastern Peace Process.

Based on vitally important intelligence gathering for many years, the P5+1 started to regularly engage with Iran on the issue in 2006. The P5+1 started united engagements with Iran as a follow-up to some early engagements of the U.K., France, and Germany with Iran over the same issue from 2002. However, it took almost a decade for a comprehensive agreement about Iran's nuclear programme to be finally reached. Some would argue that the change of Iran's President in 2013 and the implementation of multilateralism by the world powers were amongst the general enablers of deeper diplomatic interaction between the two sides. Others claim that the diplomatic campaign of the P5+1 with Iran is part of a great bargain which will finally enable Iran to keep its "undeniable" right to enrich uranium in exchange for helping the world to stabilise the precarious security and humanitarian situation in the Middle East. Thus, generous concessions in exchange for cooperation and courageous deadlines on its implementation characterise the final outcome of the talks.

This article has the ambition to provide as succinct an analysis as possible of two crucial documents produced by the talks – the Joint Plan of Action (hereinafter "JPOA") and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (hereinafter JCPOA) and what they might

mean for the region. With Israel being the most vocal critic of those documents, the issue of Iran's nuclear programme is far away from being fully resolved once and for all. The so-called possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear programme constitutes the core issue addressed by this paper for it represents a means of possible weaponization of Iran's nuclear programme.

Interim deal

Before analysing the very wording of the JPOA, it might be constructive to shortly mention what had preceded the process of its adoption. In 2007 the US Director of National Intelligence issued its flagship document – the National Security Estimate, a document considered by some to be the most authoritative written judgement on U.S. security issues in general. Moreover, the document issued in 2007 made history, for it declared that Iranian entities were at that time continuing to develop a range of technical capabilities that could be applied to producing nuclear weapons, subject to a political decision. Put differently, the U.S. Intelligence Community assessed in 2007 with high confidence that Iran had the scientific, technical, and industrial capacity to produce nuclear weapons (Office of the Director of National Intelligence 2007). It was only subject to approval of Iran's leadership and has remained so ever since. Put still differently, the ultimate would-be decision about “Iran going nuclear” remained dependent on a rather complex decision-making process geared in a significant way toward one human being – the Supreme Leader.

Iran's nuclear programme and its potential military projection ceased to be dependent on previously lacking technical capability and started to be rather an issue of political decision-making processes. The end result was the narrowing down of the final sum of independent variables about Iran's gaining nukes to a single decision of one autocratic, if rational, ruler, which has wedded the P5+1 to an almost unprecedented counter-coalition. Such was one of the rationales behind the international community headed by the U.S. in its launching of a diplomatic campaign whose first tangible outcome was the above-mentioned JPOA.

Thus in 2013 the so-called multilateral approach was given a chance and the U.S. declared that the JPOA was designed as a first step towards a peaceful and comprehensive solution to the international concerns about Iran's nuclear programme. Having underlined that Iran's nuclear programme was a global and not solely a regional issue, the P5+1 reiterated its commitment to multilateralism. Moreover, the P5+1 offered for a set of meaningful limits on Iran's nuclear programme only limited, targeted, and reversible sanctions relief for a six-month period (U.S. Department of State 2014). So far so good, one might argue. The missed point is that even if the JPOA might have been noble in its nature, it certainly omitted to deal with some significant issues. Regardless of the fact that Iran kept its “undeniable” right to enrich uranium, those who drafted the JPOA were not able to agree on several other issues, and the general language adopted in the document made clear that some key parameters remained unresolved, namely: the P5+1 and Iran were unable to come to terms on the final disposition of the Arak heavy-water reactor and

agreed only to later fully resolve concerns related to the issue (Einhorn 2014).

Another crucial issue still provoking discussion, which was not addressed in the JPOA, was that of the so-called possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear programme and their possible relation to the Parchin military complex. Surprisingly enough, the National Intelligence Estimate from 2007 did not fully address these issues either. Among them was for instance then-Iran's ballistic missile programme – a costly campaign which makes little sense unless missiles are armed with nuclear warheads (Phillips 2008). Moreover, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency (hereinafter "IAEA") and its Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolution in the Islamic Republic of Iran, issued immediately after the JPOA went into effect, there were ongoing concerns about the possible existence in Iran of undisclosed nuclear related activities involving military related organisations, including activities related to the development of a nuclear payload of a missile (IAEA 2014).

As far as for the Parchin military complex, in 2014 it still represented a key issue that the IAEA has placed at the heart of its concerns about Iran's past and possible on-going nuclear weapons work and other alleged military dimensions. It was assumed that in order to address Parchin with a satisfactory result, Iran was supposed to allow the IAEA inspectors to visit the Parchin military complex, provide other information, and permit visits to other sites. (Albright, Kelleher-Vergantini 2014).

That militarization of Iran's nuclear programme remained a burning problem in 2014 goes without saying. Even today, some would argue that its possible repercussions might be far more dangerous than was ever the case with Iran's chemical weapons programme. The Iran-Iraq war is case in point. At that time Iran attempted to develop a niche deterrent in wartime to counter a specific enemy battlefield capability. On the contrary, Iran's nuclear programme has been a dual-use prestige project since the very beginning and has been established to provide Iran with a nuclear weapon option in order to achieve self-reliance in all areas of national life – a value central to the ethos of the Islamic Revolution – and to project influence throughout the Middle East. Continuing blurry prospects of Iran's choice of munition, delivery systems, and C2 arrangements have only made the so-called possible military dimensions a conundrum of continuing concern (Eisenstadt 2014).

Comprehensive agreement

Thus, the pathway set up by the JPOA in 2014 appeared to be crystal clear – the incumbent U.S. administration as the leading nation of the talks would not accept anything than a good deal at the end of the day. It should be mentioned that the good deal was designed to be an outcome of a different foreign policy approach of the U.S. than was the case during the early 2000s – this time multilateralism was the buzz word. In his remarks before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee U.S. Secretary of State in 2015 declared that Iran's nuclear programme was not only a U.S. issue but an international concern and as such could only be addressed with robust diplomatic support of the P5+1,

security cooperation with Israel and close relations with the Gulf States. In other words, the only viable option to meet the challenges posed by Iran's nuclear programme was a comprehensive diplomatic resolution of the type reached in Vienna in July 2015 and known as the JCPOA (Kerry 2015). There is no doubt that involving the international community to deal with the issue was a good strategic decision. Equally important was the idea to submit the resolution endorsing the JCPOA to the United Nations Security Council for adoption after Finalisation Day.

Indeed, on the one hand the JCPOA showed some great leaps forward towards a non-nuclear Iran, comprising a series of internationally backed measures specifying the limitations on the enrichment of uranium and on the plutonium path, thus preventing Iran from gaining the fissile material needed for the production of a bomb (Evron 2015). Then again, some would argue that the JCPOA introduced a lot of questions, if not remediation-requiring loopholes. Given the limited scope of this article, only the possible military dimensions issue will be addressed. As arbitrary as this selection might appear, at the end of the day it deserves special attention for it represents the most dangerous aspect of Iran's nuclear programme.

As far as for the main provisions with regard to the possible military dimensions issue, the key part of the JCPOA is the C Section – Transparency and Confidence Building Measures. It explicitly requires Iran to fully implement the “Roadmap for Clarification of Past and Present Outstanding Issues” agreed with the IAEA, containing arrangements to address past and present issues of concern relating to its nuclear programme (White House 2015). In spite of good intentions, some would argue that the roadmap is a slippery slope in a way. Especially Paragraphs 1, 2, and 8 of the roadmap pose further questions. In a nutshell they say the following: that the IAEA and Iran agreed to address the remaining outstanding issues; that Iran will provide, by 15 August 2015, its explanations in writing and related documents to the IAEA, on those issues; and that by 15 December, the Director General of the IAEA will provide, for action by the Board of Governors of the IAEA, the final assessment on the resolution of all past and present outstanding issues. In the time of this writing it was not clear whether Iran cooperated sufficiently enough on those issues or provided satisfactory answers about its past nuclear work related to nuclear militarisation and the development of a missile payload for a nuclear weapon. In the past Iran fully denied working on nuclear weapons and claimed evidence to the contrary was based on forged and falsified information. If Iran cooperates, it would be a positive development. If it does not, Implementation Day and the deadline for presenting the final IAEA report, both set for 15 December, should be at least prolonged. Moreover, given the secretive nature of some of the arrangements of the roadmap, it is unknown whether the secret work plan includes access to possible military dimensions-relevant sites other than the Parchin military complex, the ability to interview key scientists in a non-iterative manner, or visits to companies and manufacturing centres reportedly involved in past military nuclear work (Albright 2015). That is why compelling Iran to cooperate on these issues might not be an easy task and the issue shall not be underestimated.

Whilst Iran's capability to deliver a nuclear device was not a core issue during

the talks, the language used in the new UN SC resolution – RES 2231 (2015) – might have consequences for the future of Iran’s ballistic missile programme and its possible military dimensions. For instance, the new resolution stipulates, *inter alia*, that Iran is called upon not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons. Given the language used – “Iran is called upon” – the provision is non-mandatory. In contrast, RES 1929 (2010), which established the existing missile ban, used stronger, legally binding language for it says, *inter alia*, that Iran shall not undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons. Whilst RES 1929 (2010) bans activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons, RES 2231 (2015) refers to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons (Chin, Lincy 2015). Since Iran may claim it has no intention to design any of its missiles to carry nuclear weapons, the provision might end up being a dead letter well before Implementation Day.

The next chapter will briefly comment on how the JCPOA might influence rapprochement between Iran and the U.S. and affect Israel’s strategic posture.

Strategic foresight

With regard to one of the most awaited historic changes in the Middle East – a *détente* between the U.S. and Iran – the envisioned realisation of the JCPOA cannot, however, be extrapolated to imply a significant shift in U.S. – Iran relations. True, fighting Islamic State and stabilising Iraq and Afghanistan offer some, if limited, common ground in a post-JCPOA environment for both Iran and the U.S. But such cooperation, if it ever materialises, will very probably encompass no intelligence sharing, let alone combined operational manoeuvres on the ground. Moreover, the U.S. does not plan to initiate lifting the “primary” sanctions related to human rights and/or terrorism. What might change, though, is the following. There might be an increase in people-to-people interactions. In the medium term, there are also proposals to establish an interest section in the Swiss Embassy that currently manages American interests or even to house a trade representative there (Kutty 2015). Put differently, normalisation of relations between Iran and the U.S. has yet to come and given Iran’s track record of a non-reliable NPT partner, such normalisation is very probably not going to loom on the horizon any time soon.

Whilst the U.S. does not perceive Iran as an existential threat, other states from the Gulf or broader Middle East differ in their threat perception. The case in point is the closest ally of the U.S. in the Middle East – the State of Israel. Israel admits that the agreement signed in Vienna contains some positive developments, namely: rolling back Iran’s nuclear programme to the point of a breakout time of one year or introducing much more invasive verification measures. But from the long run perspective the picture is far more ominous, for Iran remains a nuclear threshold state with a set of large nuclear infrastructure.

Some would argue that this status will be entrenched even further following the removal of the temporary limitations and once Iran is permitted to operate an unlimit-

ed number of advanced centrifuges and resume 20% uranium enrichment. Furthermore, with the influx of incoming assets of billions of dollars as a result of the lifted sanctions, Iran might boost its regional hegemony, technological abilities, and expertise in the nuclear realm, conventional military capabilities, as well as its continuous support of terrorist proxies in Lebanon, Syria, and elsewhere. The debate about what Iran will actually do with its de-frozen assets is still ongoing. Nevertheless, the risk of additional nuclear proliferation is another strategic issue Israel should be prepared to deal with. Moreover, the motivation of some Gulf States to equal Iran's post-JCPOA growing nuclear infrastructure might increase in the foreseeable future (Yadlin 2015). If this scenario proves real, Israel, or for that matter any other Arab/Gulf State, should be prepared to reconsider its nuclear ambiguity policy, for its military posture's basic tenets – quick victory; strategic depth; reserves; state-of-the-art capabilities – might not serve as a sufficient deterrent vis-à-vis Iran. For some, Israel is believed to be able to suitably and sufficiently integrate a clear nuclear deterrence posture with multi-layered active defences. The phased "Arrow" anti-ballistic missile programme might be an answer to Iran's first strike capabilities. But even the Arrow does not guarantee a fully zero leakage-rate of ballistic missile defence for such a zero rate is unattainable (Beres, Chain 2014). No wonder that the JCPOA is regarded as a very problematic deal in Israel. For Israel to keep up with the possible repercussions of the JCPOA, it is inevitable to cooperate more with the U.S and abstain from any possibly detrimental interventions into political discourse in the U.S. Dealing with Iran's nuclear programme is an issue of crucial importance where strategic cooperation rather than partisan skirmishes will be of need. Thus, Israel and the U.S. should continue in their high level dialogue and consult even more on how to make the JCPOA a positive game changer of what has with high probability become one of the most debated security issues of this decade in the region of the Middle East.

Conclusion

Dealing with Iran's nuclear programme has certainly left its mark on the international order. But make no mistake for the story has yet to play itself out. The final deal agreed upon in Vienna in July 2015 is but the beginning of yet another complicated endeavour – bringing Iran back into that very international order. Some would argue that the JPOA and JCPOA were both a means to do so by rolling back Iran's nuclear programme in crucial aspects and for that reason should be hailed as a success story of the P5+1 and Iran format. Then again, it should be noted that Israel and some Arab/Gulf States view the same deal as problematic for a number of reasons.

First of all, a successful resolution of the possible military dimensions – the most problematic aspect of Iran's nuclear programme – requires meeting a set of very sharp and courageous deadlines. At the time of writing, it has yet to be clear how would the IAEA address the issue in its final assessment.

In the meantime, Israel, as well as some Arab/Gulf states might feel more threatened and launch a proliferation campaign, ending the policy of nuclear ambiguity in the

case of Israel and a launch of covert military nuclear programmes in the case of Saudi Arabia and others. The reason for that is the difference in how the P5+1 perceive Iran, compared to how it is perceived by Israel and some Arab/Gulf States. These differences stem also from the fact that no P5+1 country is geographically part of the Middle East and therefore perceives no immediate or direct danger from Iran. Israel and Saudi Arabia, on the contrary, are both at the very heart of the region, which has a profound effect on their threat perception of Iran.

Throughout history Iran's nuclear programme has been a technical conundrum. This part has been widely, but not fully, addressed by the JCPOA. The rest lies with Iran's political ambition and the role it would like for itself in the Middle East. No doubt, once Implementation Day comes, much more will be revealed of that ambition. Till that date, there is hardly any significant reason for the P5+1 and their allies in the Middle East to abandon the policy of vigilance vis-à-vis the Middle East with Iran as a major power.

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SHIA MILITIAS IN IRAQ: BADR ORGANIZATION VS. THE “ISLAMIC STATE”- RECIPE FOR DISASTER OR SUCCESS?

TOMS RÄTFELDERS

List of contents

List of Contents

Introduction

History of the Badr Organization

Badr Organization versus the “Islamic State”: a viable counter-terrorism actor?

Conclusion

Introduction

The volatile security situation in Iraq and the fight against the “Islamic State” remain popular topics covered by the media. The world is following the progress of various security actors, which have taken up the fight with the group on the ground. One of them is Badr Organization - the oldest and the most powerful of Shia militias, which are supporting the Iraqi Security Forces. Badr has been present and successful in almost every major battle the anti-IS forces have fought and has amassed massive popularity among the Shia population. It is also one of the actors, which is ready (at least for the most part) to report to the authority of the central government of Iraq and agrees to its demands of fully liberating the country, not just protecting the southern Shia territories. However, despite major contribution to the fight, several experts and policy-makers have made claims that the Badr Organization is actually helping IS to stay in power and contributes to the challenges of the central government of Iraq in liberating the occupied areas. During the Tikrit counter-offensive in the spring of 2015, the main international ally of Iraq, the United States even demanded, that Badr and other militias leave the battlefield in exchange for air-strike support. General Lloyd Austin, the head of U.S. central command stated that he hopes that U.S. armed forces would never have to cooperate with Badr and other militia-men (Al Jazeera 2015).

The article seeks to shed light on this discussion by providing thorough analysis on the effectiveness of Badr in the fight against the “Islamic State”. Divided into two parts, the first focuses on the historical development of the organization and highlights the main milestones in its development, including its founding during the Iran-Iraq war, the continuous insurgency campaign against the regime of Saddam Hussein, its return to Iraq after the U.S. invasion in 2003 and the continuous struggle for power in the post-Saddam era. The second part seeks to analyse Badr’s involvement in the fight against the “Islamic State”,

by paying attention to its performance on the battlefield as well as actions in the occupied territories.

History of the Badr Organizaton

Historical roots of the Badr Organization (initially Badr brigade) can be traced back to Iran- Iraq war (1980-1988), which saw massive military confrontation between two regional great powers of the time in a fight for power and influence in the Middle East. Badr brigade was initially created by the initiative of the leader of the Iranian revolution- Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as the military wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), which served as one of Teheran's biggest allies in the fight against Iraq. The main purpose of Badr was to destabilize Saddam Hussein's regime by conducting low profile military operations across Iran-Iraq border, which would help to counter Baghdad's aggression in the beginning of war. Khomeini also hoped that the Badr brigade could help to root out one of the main groups opposing the Iranian revolutionary regime - Mujahedeen Khalq Organisation (MKO), (Global Security 2014).

Badr fighters were initially trained and equipped by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps- the most loyal and elite fighting force at the regime's disposal. The first wave of recruits mostly consisted of political refugees affiliated with the Islamic Dawa (political party, seeking to combat secularism and create an Islamic state in Iraq), who were forced to flee Iraq after the crackdown of Hussein's security forces following the unsuccessful assassination attempt in 1982. Many of the original fighters were also Iraqi military officers as well as soldiers from the Iraqi army who defected during the war. They played a crucial role in the later development of the brigade, as they took over training functions from the government of Iran (Global Security 2014). Shiite and Kurdish uprising in Iraq in 1991 and the following crackdown paved the way for the second wave of recruits. Refugees who fled to Iran became an easy prey for the movement, which advocated the fall of Saddam Hussein and the dissolution of his secular order (Global Security 2014).

It is estimated that during the eve of U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, Badr brigade fielded approximately 10,000 – 15,000 fighters, 3000 of them professionally trained by the former officers of Iraqi army. However, the core was formed by 1,500 ideologically committed men who had spent two decades working together with the International Revolutionary Guard Corps and had successfully formed contacts with the organisation's command structure (Global Security 2014). It should also be mentioned that Iran remained the main financial sponsor of Badr, by providing most of its financial assets.

From its establishment in 1983 to 2003 Badr mostly operated from the Iranian territory and waged resistance against Hussein's regime by using a three-pillar strategy: 1) establish secret resistance cells inside Iraq, 2) build military bases in safe areas, such as marshes of southern Iraq and Kurdistan in the north, 3) keep mobilising and training camps outside Iraq in the neighbouring countries, which would allow such activities (Global Security 2014). The first two pillars of this strategy proved to be very successful during the 1991 uprising, because the unique position of Badr allowed it to play an im-

portant mobilizing and coordinating role. It even decided to risk and send 3000 - 5000 of its fighters to support the rebellion, however they were forced to retreat back to Iran after Saddam Hussein managed to quell the resistance (Abedin 2005).

The new phase in the history of the Badr organization began with the already mentioned U.S. invasion of Iraq and its following occupation. Badr saw it as an opportunity to return to the country and gain unprecedented political influence. They mobilised their resources and sent several thousand men to Iraqi Kurdistan, which were hosted by the Kurdish political party – Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) (Wing 2015a). The military deployment caused fear among American leadership, which was concerned that Badr and its Iranian overlords seek to use internal chaos in the country to occupy parts of its territory. U.S. reacted by warning that any military deployment in the central parts of Iraq would be met with resistance. However, the warning was futile and soon around 10,000 of its fighters were in Diyala and Wasit governorates (Dreyfuss 2008). It clashed with Sunni tribes and several members of Saddam Hussein's Baath party (political party, which encompasses the ideologies of pan-arabism, Arab socialism and anti-imperialism and which had been in power in Iraq since 1968), (Wing 2015a), (Langley 2013). United States tried to mobilise special operation units, as well as friendly Kurdish "Peshmerga" forces, however this attempt was futile (Wing 2015a).

It seemed that Badr and U.S. relations were on the way to deterioration and the conflict was inevitable. However, as the invasion progressed and the regime of Saddam Hussein was toppled, the organization's political wing - Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq decided to change its initial policy towards U.S. incursion and seek a compromise. The leadership of the movement had decided that it stood greater chance of having a say in the politics of post-invasion Iraq if it takes part in the Western-led nation building process (Wing 2015a). As a result, SCIRI agreed to Washington's demands to disband all the independent militias. In May 2003, Badr made a statement in which it promised to give up its weapons and refrain from future violence (Beehner 2006). It was at this time when Badr received its current name - "Badr Organization" (officially Badr Organization of Reconstruction and Development). The name change was most likely done out of a desire to appease the American decision-makers, by trying to distance itself from its pro-Iranian militant past. However, this proved to be only the façade, as the Badr still continued to field considerable amount of weaponry and de-facto operate as a paramilitary organization (Shain 2015, 2-3).

In the following years of U.S. occupation, after the decision of SCIRI to "legalize" its military arm by incorporating it into the new state security structures, many members of Badr organization joined the newly formed Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). After the appointment of SCIRI politician Bayan Jabr as an interior minister of Iraq in 2005, Badr fighters were included in the newly formed commando units - Wolf, Volcano and Scorpio. They were accused of a number of abuses against Sunni tribes and Bath party members, such as kidnapping, torture and extortion (Wong and Burns 2005), (Roberts 2007). Commando units continued to operate freely until 2006 when as a consequence of the U.S. pressure Bayan Jabr resigned (Perito 2008).

Many Badr members also remained in the ranks of the organization and served in SCIRI's (since 2007 Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) armed fight for the influence in post-Saddam Iraq, which was characterised by a power vacuum. It frequently tried to assert its control over the heterogeneous Iraqi Shia community and clashed with other pro-Iranian militia groups, which had the same goal. One of them was the Mahdi army (the political wing of the Sadrist movement) led by cleric Ayatollah Muqtada al-Sadr. SCIRI and Sadrists see each other as deadly competitors for the support of Shia polity and their rivalry has led to many violent incidents. In 2006, the Iraqi government was forced to send 2,500 men to the city of Amarah (Maysan governorate) to stop the fighting, which had caused many casualties (Burns, 2006). When Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki launched his Charge of the Knights Campaign against the Mahdi Army in 2008, the militia saw Badr fighters as a major supporter of Maliki's policies. They decided to retaliate, resulting in clashes between the two groups in the Sadr city (Baghdad), Abu Dishr and elsewhere (Rubin 2008).

Badr Organization has also continued together with other pro-Iranian groups to serve as an agent to help shape post-Saddam Iraq according to Teheran's interests. Iran wished to clear its neighbouring country of potentially hostile supporters of Saddam Hussein, thus ordered Revolutionary Guard Corps to coordinate militia attacks on former Baath party affiliates and Sunni tribes in the north (Wing 2015a). For example, after the Iraqi parliamentary election in 2005 there was a wave of murders of the Saddam era officials (Parker 2015). There were also continuous attacks on Sunnis in Basra city (Moore 2005). Iran still also remains the main financial sponsor of the organization, by providing approximately 70 million dollars a year (The Guardian 2009).

The next important milestone in the history of the Badr began with the death of ISCI leader Abdul Aziz al-Hakim in 2009. He was replaced by his son Ammar Hakim, who was unpopular among the more conservative members of the both organizations, including Badr leader Hadi Ameri (Habib 2012). In 2012, Badr Organization left ISCI and became an independent political party of its own in addition to its capacity as a militia (Counter Extremism Project 2016). It started forming autonomous policy based on building a strong connection with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. It often served as his enforcer. For example, when Diyala governorate started demanding a greater level of autonomy, Hadi Ameri was dispatched to negotiate with the regional administration. His militiamen meanwhile took their presence to the streets in the biggest cities, as the force of intimidation (Wing 2015a). Badr also ran on Maliki's State of Law list in the 2013 provincial and 2014 national election. The party ended up winning 19 seats in the parliament, roughly 20% of State of Law's total (Visser 2014). These actions rapidly increased the political influence of the Badr Organization in Iraq.

When the civil war erupted in Syria in 2012, Badr Organization mobilised its forces and similarly as the other pro-Iranian militias went to protect the regime of Bashar al-Assad. According to the leadership, it was necessary to counter the unlawful coup staged by Saudi- Arabia. In July, Badr stated that it had approximately 1,500 fighters in Syria. There were also several reports that Hadi Ameri used his then held post of transportation minister to supply Badr militiamen using Iraqi air space (Gordon 2012). However, their

presence in Syria wasn't long. The growing influence of the "Islamic State" terrorist group forced the organization to relocate their militias back to Iraq. After the fall of Mosul in 2014, which resulted in a complete disintegration of the Iraqi National armed forces, Nouri al-Maliki put Hadi Ameri in charge of Diyala governorate and started providing weapons and supplies to his organization (Wing 2015a). In June 2014, the religious edict (fatwa) was issued by Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, calling on all Iraqi citizens to defend the country, its people, the honour of citizens and Shia sacred sites (Khatteeb 2015). Badr became a part of the newly formed People's Mobilization Forces (PMF) umbrella group, which is sponsored by the government of Iraq and consists of 40 Shia militia groups (Global Security 2016). Since that time, Badr Organization has been at the forefront of Iraq's fight against the "Islamic State" and has taken part in most of the major battles.

Badr Organization versus the "Islamic State": a viable counter-terrorism actor?

Analysis of the military performance of the Badr Organization in the fight against "Islamic State" shows that the militias have been very effective in inflicting strategic defeats on the terrorists. After the fall of Mosul in 2014, it has managed, either by supporting other military units or by acting autonomously, to stave off several offensives and even recapture many of the lost territories. First confrontations between the Badr Organization and the "Islamic State" on Iraqi soil took place in the summer of 2014 in Anbar governorate. Badr helped to stop IS advance on Baghdad from the west and actively participated in several government attempts to retake the city of Fallujah, which had fallen to the enemy in the beginning of the year (Radi 2014). Support of the militiamen was vitally important, because ISF were still recovering from their heavy defeat at Mosul, as well as continuously suffered from low morale.

In August 2014, Badr took part in the ISF-led counter-attack to break the siege of the city of Amerli, which was supported by the Kurdish "Peshmerga" units. The attack was successful and after several days Amerli was surrounded and then liberated. Iraqi forces then went on to recapture the nearby city of Suleiman Bek (Al-Akhbar 2016). Badr also fought together with the Kurds and the Iraqi army in the battle of Tuz Kharmato, which resulted in IS withdrawal and the recapture of strategically important territories on the border with Iraqi Kurdistan (Wing 2015a). Similar scenario came true during the liberation of Jurf al-Sakhar, Saadiya, Jalawla, Dhuluiya, as well as Baiji Oil Refinery (Wing 2015b), (Hameed 2014), (The Daily Star 2014), (Roggio and Weiss 2015). In all of the battles mentioned, Badr organization was on the forefront in the fight against IS and one of the key providers of the militia forces (Sowell 2015).

The indispensability of the Badr fighters and other Shia militia groups in Iraq security structures became apparent after the fall of Ramadi to IS insurgents in May 2015. The city had endured months of long siege, during which People's Mobilization Forces were prevented from participating in its defence, because of the U.S. pressure. Seeing the inability of ISF to resist IS advances, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi was forced to plea for

help to Badr leader Hadi Ameri and other prominent Shia militia figures (Sowell 2015). Soon after the Council of the PMF announced that Hadi Ameri would be the field commander in Anbar and lead the recapture of Ramadi. About 3,000 militia were amassed near the city and prepared for counter attack (Sowell 2015).

However, Badr and its lead militias didn't fully commit themselves to the capture of Ramadi, because Hadi Ameri decided to participate in the renewed attempt to liberate the city of Fallujah, which was again in the hands of IS during the summer of 2015 (Cockburn 2015). This was done without any initial coordination with the government of Iraq, which is considered to be in control of Badr and other People's Mobilization Forces. Relocation to Fallujah also had strategic consequences, as the armed forces of Iraq weren't able to proceed with the recapture of the city as planned (Sowell 2015). Similar situation also happened during the Tikrit counter offensive during the spring of 2015, where Badr Organization ignored the direct command from the Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi for all the Shiite militias to withdraw from the fight before the final capture of the city centre. It was the only group to do so (Al Jazeera 2015). These two situations illustrate that the Badr Organization is reluctant to answer to the government of Iraq and follows its own agenda and priorities, when fighting the "Islamic State". This can have the effect of reducing the level of cohesiveness of anti-IS forces on the ground, because militias might prove reluctant to coordinate their efforts with Baghdad and Kurdish local authorities. This can also make the Badr Organization very unpredictable in the eyes of Iraqi Security Forces and Kurdish fighters, reducing the level of trust in joint operations. Additional difficulties can arise by using Badr units as security providers in the liberated territories, because the central government might find it increasingly difficult to control their actions vis-à-vis the local population, which is predominantly Sunni. Finally, it should be mentioned that the ability to constrain Badr autonomy is limited, because most of its financial assets come from the external source - Iran, which holds the greatest influence over the actions of militiamen.

The relatively large autonomy Badr experiences in some occasions can not only reduce the level of cohesiveness of anti-IS forces, but even break it. This has become most apparent during the recent clashes with the "Peshmerga" units in the town of Tuz Khar-mato, which is disputed between the government of Iraq and Kurdish local authorities, as well as in Bashir village south of Kirkuk. There have been reports of intense gunfights between the two groups, which has been caused by Badr advances against the Islamic State. Militants had also unilaterally arrested several of "Peshmerga" fighters and had threatened to send them to Baghdad for trial (Rudaw 2014a), (Rudaw 2014b). This has flared up tensions between the Shia militias and Kurdish regional authorities (Wilgenburg 2015). The situation is very convenient for the "Islamic State" militants, because it opens a wide rift between counter-terrorism forces, which can be exploited both politically and militarily. What's more, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi can have a harder time ensuring continuous support of "Peshmerga" and sell the idea of having a common enemy, because of his government's strong associative ties with militia groups. Finally, should the clashes repeat, confrontation between Kurds and the Badr Organization can put unnecessary strain on the limited resources of the anti- IS ground forces, which can have long term negative

strategic consequences.

During its fight against IS, Badr has come to the centre of international attention with a massive amount of human rights abuses both in combat and on their occupied territories. For example, during the Amerli counter-offensive, the organization was one of the militia groups, which raided neighbouring Sunni villages, looted possessions of civilians who fled during the onslaught, burned homes and businesses and used explosives to destroy different public buildings. According to the information provided by the Human Rights Watch, there were also several kidnappings registered (Human Rights Watch 2015a). Similar situation took place during the liberation of Tuz Kharmato and Tikrit, where reports emerged that Badr together with other Shia militia groups is suspected to have killed, raped and kidnapped numerous civilians (Human Rights Watch 2015b), (Human Rights Watch 2016).

Furthermore, in January 2014, 72 civilians were killed in the city of Birwana, Diyala governorate, which was under the supervision of the Badr Organization. Hadi Ameri and the organization under his leadership are suspected of responsibility (Shain 2015, 15). Such violence plays right into the “Islamic State” hands, because it keeps the level of radicalization in the society high enough to swell the ranks with fresh fighters to effectively resist counter-terrorism operations launched by the government of Iraq. IS can have an easier time positioning itself as the best alternative for the Sunni tribes in the north, which have been marginalised for years during the rule of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Additionally, it doesn’t encourage Sunni uprising in territories held by IS, which was one of the pillars of the success in the fight against Al-Qaeda in Iraq (predecessor to the “Islamic State”) during the U.S. occupation.

The vast majority of human rights abuses are of sectarian nature and are targeted against Sunni population, further adding fuel to their radicalization. The rich history of cooperation with Iran, as well as good relations with former Prime Minister al-Maliki and his pro-Shia government inevitably places Badr Organization in the same camp as the supporters of sectarianism. Moreover, the organization’s long record of violence against Sunnis during the period of U.S. occupation, further underlines this perception. In the territories of the north, which are inhabited by Sunnis, the Badr Organization is often not seen as liberators, but as oppressors, trying to return the order, which existed before the rapid territorial advances of the “Islamic State”.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly the Badr Organization can be seen as an effective military force versus the “Islamic State”. Their support for the Iraqi Security Forces, as well as the unilateral offensives have helped to stabilize the security situation in Iraq after the fall of Mosul in 2014. Badr Organization has a rich history and experience in waging warfare, gained by fighting against the regime of Saddam Hussein and then participating in the local rivalry for the power and influence in the Post-Saddam era. It also enjoys considerable respect among other Shia militias, which have elected the leader of Badr - Hadi Ameri as the field

commander of People's Mobilisation Forces in 2015. The indispensability of the Badr fighters became especially apparent after the fall of Ramadi, when the Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi was forced to plea for their and other Shia militias' help to retake the city. Badr quickly helped to amass approximately 3,000 men, ready for combat.

However, the high level of autonomy the Badr Organization enjoys in the Iraqi state security structures and the limited possibilities to exercise central control over it, significantly reduces or even in some cases threatens to break the unity of anti-IS forces on the ground. Frequent clashes with the Kurdish "Peshmerga" units in the town of Tuz Kharmato, as well in the Bashir village south of Kirkuk, which are blamed on the government in Baghdad, puts Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi in a very precarious position and makes it hard to sell the idea of having a common enemy in the form of radical Islam. Moreover, the rift between "Peshmerga" and Badr can be exploited by the Islamic State using the *Divida et Impera* strategy. Finally, the readiness of the organization to ignore direct orders from the central command shows that Badr is ready to sacrifice coordination with other security actors for its own political interests.

The mounting human rights abuses of overwhelmingly sectarian nature, attributed to the Badr Organization both in combat and as the security providers in their occupied territories also plays right into the Islamic State's hands, because it is easier to convince local Sunni population that the current government in Baghdad seeks to return to the sectarian politics of Nouri al- Maliki era. This can further be underlined by its rich pro- Iranian past and massive violence against Sunnis during the U.S. occupation of Iraq. By taking all of the above into account, the author believes that the Badr Organization can't be seen as a viable counter-terrorism actor in the fight against the "Islamic State". Although it is a very efficient military force in helping to inflict significant defeats on the terrorists, at the same time, its actions have exposed many weaknesses, which can be exploited by the enemy. To sum up, Badr can be used to score short term victories, but in the long run, it will most likely help IS to keep its influence in Iraq and create obstacles for the group's defeat.

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THE END OF ARAB SPRING IN EGYPT: THE 'DEEP STATE' RECLAIMS ITS POSITION

KATARÍNA PEVNÁ

List of contents

The bases of the secular-Islamist division
Polarization after the 2011 revolution
The Muslim Brotherhood under pressure
Muslim Brotherhood fights back and fails
The 'deep state' reclaims its position
Sisi's regime after the coup
The challenges for current regime in Egypt
Conclusion

The bases of secular-Islamist division

Ever since the introduction of multi-party elections in Egypt, Mubarak's regime strived to divide the opposition through various institutional mechanisms (Lust-Okar 2004; Albrecht 2005). Integration of the secular opposition into a formal political framework and exclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood due to its illegal status since 1954 augmented these divisions. Tolerated opposition was kept under the radar of the authorities (pertaining to their finances, campaigns, personnel and discourse), while the Islamist movements sought to enlarge their presence beyond official politics, in the realm of civil society and professional associations. Combined with their anti-system character, aura of martyrs and extremely well organized and unified structure, Islamists in Egypt became the principal actors embodying resistance towards the authoritarian regime. The absence of collaboration of both camps beyond tactical issues (reform of electoral law, boycotts or push for more freedoms) has benefited the stability of the Mubarak regime (Cavatorta 2009).

First, a power asymmetry developed between the discredited secularists/liberals/leftists and the widely popular Islamists. Second, their ideological projects seem to be irreconcilable. Western-style liberal democracy is at least on a declarative level the demand of a secularist camp, while Islamic state with its special repercussions for rights of women and minorities is the primary demand of Islamists (Cavatorta 2009). Although Islamists in Morocco and Tunisia were able to cede from their demands in order to push for an effective alliance-building, Muslim Brotherhood never faced the need to compromise.

Polarization after the 2011 revolution

This polarization had only deepened after the revolution. After the dissolution of the regime's NDP party, the opposition was expected to regroup and present viable alternative to the previous authoritarian regime and reflect the popular demands for freedom. However, the transition in Egypt has been marked with strategic miscalculations of its newly emerging elite. The problems emerged right after the ouster of President Mubarak on 11th February 2011.

Countries struggling to transition to democracy need to have both an active civil society which helps to deconstruct authoritarian regime and a political society tasked with constructing democracy (Stepan 2012). In this sense, the Egyptian elites succeeded in the first condition mostly via street politics, however, failed in bringing opposition parties into agreement on such crucial issues as interim government, consensual constitution making and the generally agreed upon reform of electoral law, as well as timetable for elections. All of these issues can be traced back to the deep societal and political polarisation of the country, which facilitated the return of the 'old elites'.

Firstly, democracy activists have been very powerful mainly during the revolutionary phase. Due to their preference of informal networks and suspicions towards the organized political parties, they unfortunately failed in building upon their initial mobilisation successes. In the absence of these progressive forces, formal political parties assumed the leading position. After the revolution, the imbalance between secularists and Islamists became even more pronounced. After the 2011 parliamentary elections, Muslim Brotherhood's FJP party has been able to garner almost 46 per cent of the seats and Salafist al-Nour received 24 per cent, leaving the rest of the seats to secular parties. This intensified the conflicts between the Islamists and secularists and placed the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) in a position of referee.

Following the failure to gain presence in legislature, secular parties have rejected the composition of the National Assembly. Instead, they turned to non-elected institutions still occupied by the old elite and pushed for the dissolution of both Islamist-led National Assembly and Constituent Assembly tasked with preparing the constitution. They succeeded when the court mandated the dissolution of the parliament. Constituent assembly remained intact but under the threat of dissolution by interim government of military SCAF. Finally, the army has directed the transition from day one and due to its behind-the-scene manipulations is currently effectively in power. Egyptian army-run companies contribute to almost 20–40 per cent of the country's GDP (Debeuf 2014). What empowers the army is the lack of oversight by civil institutions regarding military tribunals, large financial exemptions and its budgetary and personnel independence. SCAF's strict hierarchy, strong sense of nationalism and seemingly non-partisan character legitimized its caretaker role during the Egyptian transition.

The Muslim Brotherhood under pressure

After the overwhelming victory of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in the parliamentary elections, in the June 2012 presidential contest, the Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohamed Morsi won only with a slight majority.⁴⁰ In the aftermath of these elections, however, the power was transferred from SCAF to the Muslim Brotherhood. To preserve dominance of the army and the 'deep state',⁴¹ SCAF issued the Constitutional Declaration, which stipulated that in the absence of parliament all major legislative decisions will be in the hands of the military. Since president Morsi seized the power, he had to deal with these regressive forces of the 'old regime'. One of his first decisions in office was to pronounce SCAF's Declaration null and void. He also replaced the head of SCAF Field Marshal Tantawi with General Abdel Fatah al-Sisi. Nonetheless, the challenge to the status quo was rather cosmetic. Sisi was chosen because he represented the middle ranks and himself was known for religious devotion. He was considered less dangerous for MB's interests than the old guard. As it turned out, MB deeply underestimated the loyalty of Sisi towards the army.

During the year-long rule of MB's Mohamed Morsi, two institutions of 'deep state', besides the army, seem to have prepared the ground for his ouster. First, state agencies responsible for providing electricity and gas supplies remarkably failed resulting in periodic power blackouts and unprecedented fuel shortages, which inspired anger and frustration among the population (Hubbard and Kirkpatrick 2013). Interestingly, following the coup in July 2013, all the supplies suddenly returned to more or less pre-Morsi capacity. Second, the majority of police officers rejected MB's mandate because they feared Morsi will push for a meaningful reform and restructuring of the security sector and police academy (Alsharif and Saleh 2013). Nonetheless, the reform of corrupt and brutal security services was one of the biggest priorities of the revolutionaries. Corporate interests of the police and the army however seem to play a more powerful role in Egypt than the ideals of the revolution. Secular opposition also continued to pressure Morsi by relying on remnants of the old regime in Supreme Constitutional Court. They repeatedly pushed for the dissolution of the Constituent assembly, Muslim Brotherhood and its Freedom and Justice Party.

Muslim Brotherhood fights back and fails

The efforts of 'deep state' in curbing Brotherhood's influence have led the movement to detach itself from the rest of the political spectrum and limited the cross-ideolog-

⁴⁰ In the second round of elections, Morsi secured 52% of the votes, while his opponent Ahmed Shafik secured 48%. The preference for largely unpopular Mubarak-era strongman Shafik shows that he was able to win votes of those secular-minded citizens who shared distrust towards MB.

⁴¹ In short, the deep state refers to non-elected leaders (bureaucracy, conforming judges, army officials, business cronies) controlling the key resources (financial or human) and resisting meaningful democratization which would naturally undermine their privileged position (El-Sherif 2012),

ical dialogue. One of the most controversial steps which tarnished MB's reputation and legitimacy was the process of adopting the constitution. Unlike in Tunisia, where both the secularists and the Islamists fought over every single article, in Egypt the non-Islamist forces withdrew from the process. This again points to Egypt's transition as being utterly commanded by the principles of zero-sum game and considerable degree of polarisation in the country. Afterwards, MB and Salafi parties with their illiberal ideology remained the only powers preparing the constitution. MB thus conceded to Salafi demands and inserted many illiberal clauses pertaining to women and minorities into the document. When finally approved by a slight majority⁴² the constitution took a more Islamist turn, which infuriated the secularists and privately owned media, while preserving the legal guarantees for the military.

Instead of reforming the system of bureaucracy, the MB replaced the leading cadres with more Islamist-friendly nominations. In the days leading up to the coup, Morsi also escalated his actions towards his opponents. He authorized the legal proceedings against the American and European NGOs working in Egypt (Debeuf 2014). Liberals and revolutionary activists systematically faced trials and demonstration participants were often accused of being counter-revolutionaries paid by the West (Gerbaudo 2013). His determination to install sharia law and illiberal rhetoric towards women and minorities, all contributed to a deepening resentment of the MB by the civil society.

Politics of identity is a first step towards democratic transition, as evidenced by the initial conflicts in Tunisia. However, monopolization of national identity by MB contradicts general public opinion as Egyptians want neither the secular nor the Islamic state (Hesová 2011). According to large sections of the population, Morsi's presidential performance started to reflect the authoritarian practices of the Mubarak regime. On the other hand, MB ascribed the mounting pressure on its government to a conspiracy of SCAF with oppositional secular elites, private media, judiciary and elites of the previous regime (Debeuf 2014). Nonetheless, Morsi's efforts to consolidate and enlarge his power at the expense of all of his opponents ran contrary to the development in Tunisia and to a successful democratic transition where all the major political forces shall be represented. After all, the Brotherhood's task was to unite and rebuild Egypt, not to divide and conquer it.

The 'deep state' reclaims its position

The last straw that led to the society-wide protests against the Muslim Brotherhood government was the adoption of Constitutional Declaration in November 2012. In the document, president Morsi bestowed upon himself legal immunity for all of his decisions. This step proved to be the only time secular parties were able to forge an alliance.

⁴² The 2012 Constitution was approved only by 64 per cent of the voters and the turnout only reached 33 per cent. The same process was repeated again in January 2014, when SCAF constitution received 98 per cent of the votes, while the turnout was slightly higher- 39 per cent or registered voters. Thus the electoral legitimacy of both regimes and overall acceptance of Constitution is rather questionable.

Under the umbrella of National Salvation Front, they organized demonstrations in major cities, which escalated in June 2013 into the massive protests demanding the president to step down. However, the credibility of these “spontaneous protests” is eroded by the fact that business cronies and other members of the ‘old elite’ invested huge resources to help fund the organizers from Tamarrod (Rebels).⁴³ Although the 2013 protests were attended by far larger crowds than the Egyptian revolution, Tamarrod’s claims that it had gathered 15 million signatures on a petition that called for Morsi’s resignation, were impossible to independently verify.

Framing the coup as a widely supported action was also necessary for building army’s popular legitimacy and negotiations regarding the resumption of US military aid to the country. When faced with clashes between anti- and pro-Morsi followers, police went against the president’s orders and protected the secular demonstrators. In the end, it was again the army who held the keys to the future political development. As the current president Sisi claimed in *al-Masry al-Youm*, “I told Morsi in February - you failed and your project is finished” (Alsharif and Saleh 2013). While MB succeeded in winning the elections, its success was reversed with the dissolution of the parliament. Declining economy and the inability to subordinate the armed forces under civilian control were the most imminent causes of MB’s downfall. After the 48 hours’ ultimatum expired, SCAF arrested president Morsi and ousted MB in a coup (Pioppi 2013). Elements of a ‘deep state’ therefore used the absence of progress in Egypt, which in some sense has more to do with the structural conditions in Egypt than political decisions, as a pretext for an overthrow of the first democratically elected president.

Sisi’s regime after the coup

The July 3 coup was not a progressive force *per se*. It reflected the tendency of military-dominated states, such as Algeria and Turkey, to pursue coup d’état when faced with Islamist movements winning the elections.⁴⁴ The army was motivated by the fears that Islamists may alter the current status quo in terms of civil-military relations, as their loyalty rests primarily in the project of Islamic state, not within nationalistic institutions (Cook 2007). The following protests of MB’s sympathizers at Nahda square in Giza and near to Rabia al-Adawiya mosque in Cairo escalated into violent clashes with the army and an exchange of fire, after which almost one thousand MB supporters were killed. Together with the imprisonment of the whole leadership, these were the largest repressions against the movement in its modern history. After the coup, the military council SCAF returned to executive power headed by its leader and appointed Minister of Defence Abdel Fatah

⁴³ For instance, army officials, former judge Tahani el-Gebali, former adviser Shawki al-Sayed, and Naguib Sawiris, an influential Mubarak-era billionaire and outspoken critic of MB were said to be amongst the donors (Hubbard and Kirkpatrick 2013).

⁴⁴ Similar coups occurred in Turkey in 1997 after the Refah party formed a coalition government and in Algeria in 1992 after Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) overwhelmingly won the first democratic elections.

al-Sisi. In May 2014, Sisi secured an overwhelming victory over his rival Hamdeen Sabahi in a presidential election.

While Sisi won 94 per cent of the vote, Sabahi secured only 3 per cent.⁴⁵ These elections were marked by significant voter apathy and electoral irregularities, which question Sisi's legitimacy. The beginning of Sisi's rule was marked by hundreds of deaths, around thousand death sentences, extremely harsh treatment of Muslim Brotherhood, oppression of secular opposition and almost non-existent freedom of press and protest. Eventually, Sisi gained an upper hand by stressing the need to stabilize the country both economically, politically and in terms of the security situation. However, in all of these areas the president has so far made only incremental gains, mostly given by the huge level of polarization and frustration of the populace, *jihadi* violence and continuous presence of corrupted 'old elites' in all ranks of the political system.

The challenges for the current regime in Egypt

The outlined Islamist-secularist divide has not faded away, quite the contrary. As numerous surveys suggest, there is a huge level of polarization not only in politics, but within the society as well. For instance, Egyptians are deeply divided in terms of the support for either the deposed Islamist president Morsi or current president Sisi.⁴⁶ The Sisi's framing of Muslim Brotherhood as an 'external threat' thus seems to be successful so far. As long as secularists and Islamists are busy fighting each other over influence in the opposition to Sisi, the current regime is safe. However, once they decide to bridge their differences, they may pose great danger to his rule.

Even though Muslim Brotherhood is currently illegal and the whole leadership is imprisoned, its sympathisers and local members continue their struggle to restore MB's rule. Constrained by the harsh protest law and omnipresent security forces, they stage their protests in various Egyptian cities under the umbrella of National Coalition for Supporting Legitimacy. Constant pressure of Islamists only exacerbates the animosity with the secular camp who frame them as terrorists or traitors. Second, even Salafi parties are split over support of the regime. While the most prominent party al-Nour affirmed its support to Sisi, the rest of the coalition has created the so-called Salafi Front unsuccessfully calling for mass demonstrations and 'Islamic revolution.' Secularists are also split between the supporters of the military or substantial democracy.

⁴⁵ Even though in the first round of the previous elections he garnered almost 21 per cent of the vote and was the third most successful candidate.

⁴⁶ The results of Pew Research in Egypt indicate that around 54 per cent of Egyptians support the ouster of Mohamed Morsi, while 43 per cent oppose it. Almost identical figures emerge when asked about disappointment with political leadership of both politicians (Pew Research Center 2014). Furthermore, around 42 per cent of respondents claimed that it is necessary to agree on a formula to include MB in politics. On the other hand, almost 50 per cent support the idea that MB should be banned from politics altogether (Zogby Research Services 2013).

The majority of formerly oppositional secular parties decided to boycott the latest legislative elections in 2015, which left the group of secular parties largely administered by the 'old elites' as one of the few contestants. This is evidenced by the sweeping victory of the newly established secular parties such as For the Love of Egypt coalition and the Nation's Future party which are close to Sisi and financed by the formerly Mubarak cronies. The Salafi al-Nour party stood in the election as the only Islamist party and largely fared way below their pre-election expectations. As anticipated, these elections were orchestrated in order to reproduce the former regime, where decision-making is hardly transparent and runs contrary to democratic transition (El-Sherif 2012). However, the election was met with extreme apathy of voters⁴⁷ and further eroded the confidence in democratic institutions.

Third, the secular civil society activists, who command large support in the Egyptian society, are not tolerated by Sisi's regime either. April 6th movement which led the 2011 revolution and Tamarrod which organised the protests against Morsi's regime were both denied permits to form a party. However, their activism has not vanished completely. After several jail sentences for the revolutionary youth and the subsequent acquittal of President Mubarak and his family of all the charges, secular groups reinvigorated their campaigns. The rest of the democratically-minded secularists will have to decide whether they love democracy more than they hate the Muslim Brotherhood.

Despite the lack of progress in the political sphere, Sisi consolidates his power through several other channels. First, in order to deter the popularity of MB, he legitimizes his rule through the 'official Islam' in line with the strategy of his predecessors. Sisi has put pressure on Al-Azhar scholars to propagate revolution in Islamic curricula towards a more liberal religious interpretation. He further sponsored the creation of Takfir Observatory as part of Dar al-Ifta (the main institution entrusted to publish *fatwas*- religious edicts), which aspires to counter religious extremism and dismissed 55 000 extremist *imams*. Paradoxically, the ultra-conservative Salafi Nour party is currently the only tolerated Islamist current in Egypt.

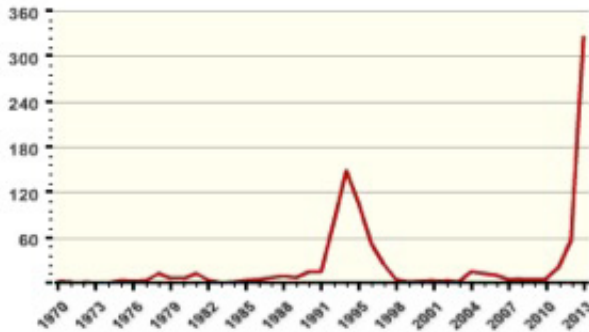
Second, his economic reform package is based on the primary role of the army. With the new waterway in Suez already finished, Sisi envisages further plans for construction of a nuclear plant, future energy self-reliance by means of solar and wind energy, and the resolution of critical housing shortages, which depend on money from GCC countries and regime cronies, while human capital in terms of building these projects is vested in several army-owned companies. However, the results of the proposed reforms are questionable, as the widespread corruption and inefficient bureaucracy still play an important role. Additionally, structural defaults of the Egyptian economy such as huge unemployment, the underachieving educational system, foreign exchange outflow, and enormous debt are therefore expected to persist.

Lastly, one of the biggest challenges for Sisi's regime comes from the deteriorat-

⁴⁷ Voter turnout was estimated to reach merely 26 percent of eligible voters.

ing security situation in the country since the July coup. Besides the current mishandling of floods, and the accidental killing of Mexican tourists, the Islamic State affiliate- Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, remains the biggest threat to Sisi regime. It has shown its capacity in the latest downing of the Russian plane and previously in killing hundreds of soldiers in the North Sinai cities of Rafah, Al-Arish and Sheikh Zuweid. Sisi's securitization of this neglected region may increase the support for extremists among the Sinai tribes. The same applies to his repressive policies against the civil society in general and Islamists of all sorts in particular. The volume of leaderless attacks carried out in large cities and populous areas is increasing. These are mostly targeting the tourism sector, international companies, Coptic institutions, and above all police and military forces⁴⁸ with the aim of destabilizing the current regime. These violent trends prove that Sisi will have to devise a new all-encompassing strategy for dealing with the mounting pressure of disillusioned youth taking up arms against the regime.

Graph 1: Trends in the number of terrorist attacks in Egypt



Source: Glob.

Conclusion

The roadmap for transition proposed by general Sisi on July 3rd included rewriting the constitution, institution of a transitional technocratic government, media reforms, inclusion of youth, introduction of a process of national reconciliation and a new electoral law together with democratic parliamentary elections. Out of these proposals, only the first two were successfully implemented. The biggest challenge to prospective democratization of Egypt currently rests not only in the authoritarian policies of president Sisi, but also in a declining level of trust in democracy and a shrinking optimism of the Egyptian society.⁴⁹ The current political stalemate offers limited prospects in terms of the emergence

⁴⁸ 66 per cent of all attacks

⁴⁹ Between the years 2013 and 2014, the level of confidence in democracy dropped from 66 per cent to 59 per cent, while the support for stability over democracy increased to 54 per cent. Compared to the revolutionary year 2011 when 16 per cent of respondents claimed to be pessimistic about the future of the country, in 2014 this number reached almost 34 per cent (Pew Research Center 2014).

of alternative leadership. Egyptians became disillusioned with political parties and largely depoliticized.⁵⁰ The lack of confidence in the president, the parliament and the political process in general may rally people around radicals, at least for the time being. Deliberate reinforcement of the ideological divisions in the society and politics is arguably the most important factor limiting the transitional efforts.

The political polarization may be beneficial in the long-term as the fatigue from struggle may result in a compromise on basic tenets of democracy (Rustow 1970). However, consensus on the rules of the game in Egypt is currently simply lacking. On the other hand, powerful non-elected forces continue to exert pressure on the political system and manage its outcomes. Certainly, the Muslim Brotherhood had its share of responsibility for the current state, as well as secular liberal parties which allied with Mubarak-era politicians, the army, media tycoons and the rest of the 'deep state' structures only to get rid of their rivals. Islamist-secular polarization creates serious dead-lock and long-term instability exhausting the Egyptian society and its revolutionary demands. Finally, there is a risk of replication of the cycle of perpetual turmoil, political stagnation and frustration, which previously led to the 2011 uprising. This is mostly because the military oligarchy and the deep state structures which are set to share power with religious right offer few ground-breaking solutions for the basic socio-economic and political demands of the Egyptian people. Either way, if the current reforms succeed in the long term, there is still a chance the regime will gradually open up the political system in a more inclusive fashion.

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⁵⁰ For instance, in the survey conducted by World Values Survey, when asked "Which party would you vote for" 68.9 % responded 'none'.

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WHILE THEY WERE NAPPING: OBAMA'S STRATEGY IN SYRIA 2011-2013

DUŠAN FISCHER

Introduction

Little to none of the world's attention was devoted to Syria, a regime with which the U.S. held a "trust but verify" relationship prior to 2011. Apart from the Iraq intervention 2003 where the two players did not see eye to eye and the recalling of the U.S. ambassador in 2005, the relationship was based on mutual interests. Syria was one of the Arab countries in the region addressed by President Barack Obama during his celebrated speech in Cairo, Egypt in which he stressed the need for an improvement of the relationship between the U.S. and other Arab and Muslim countries (Obama 2009). Apparently, the Syrian regime of President Bashar Assad did not hear the call. After the Arab Spring broke out in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the U.S. attempted to lend a helping hand to street movements in order to depose brutal dictators in Libya, Egypt, and eventually Syria. This did not go as planned in either of the mentioned states, but the situation in Syria had the worst outcome. The despotic regime stayed in power and the people continue to be oppressed, tortured, and killed.

After Libya and Egypt, thousands of Syrians joined the peaceful protests that had sprung across the Arab world. The situation in Syria was different than in the most countries taken by storm following the Arab Spring. For its demography, political history, governmental rule, complicated relationship with Israel, it cannot be successfully compared to Egypt or Libya, although the goals of the U.S. were practically the same as in the previous two countries: first, get rid of the oppressor running the country; and second, help the protesters to establish a functioning quasi-stable democracy. Unfortunately, the civil war in Syria escalated as the last of all Arab Spring countries and thus lacked the attention from the media. The ultimate argument for the U.S. is that the Syrian regime and the dismal situation there is up to the Syrians to resolve. Ajami (2012, 62) argues that "when consent and popular enthusiasm fell away, the state rested on fear, and fear was defeated. In Syria, the bonds between the holders of power and the population have been irreparably broken."

The presented paper analyses the steps of the Obama administration towards the escalating conflict and how successful the efforts were. The studied period stretches from the beginning of the 2011 revolution in Syria to the chemical weapons deal in 2013. The reason behind this chronological methodology is that by the summer of 2013 the United States administration lost the element of surprise and other players like Russia gained as much influence over the peace process. The paper also attempts to assess the Obama Doctrine based on the Syrian case.

The players

Bashar Assad, the Syrian president, is currently the most conveniently placed player in the region mainly due to his relationship with Russia. In 2000 Assad emerged as an unlikely successor to his father Hafez. Although he still controls a small portion of his country, mostly located around the capital city of Damascus, his approval rating among the Shia population remained strong. It was almost impossible to conduct an objective poll in a war zone, but a poll from 2011 showed Assad's popularity at 51% (Anderson 2014).

U.S. administration sought to cooperate with Assad on the level of intelligence gathering. Bashar Assad was meant to be a good source for the U.S. intelligence. “[Assad] had shared just enough intelligence about al Qaeda after the attacks of 9/11 that the United States considered him mildly useful” (Ghataas n.d., 283). Members of the Obama administration were reluctant to stand against Assad and call him a dictator or at least a non-democratic leader. Senator John Kerry in 2011 stated that “Assad has been very generous” with him during the talks they held. Kerry also expressed his hopeful expectations about cooperating with Assad on a peace process (Kerry 2011). When he joined the Obama administration in 2013 a peaceful resolution in Syria was at the top of the list of global challenges. Hillary Clinton also said something about Bashar Assad that would haunt her for a long time: “There is a different leader in Syria now. Many of the members of Congress of both parties who have gone to Syria in recent months have said they believe he’s a reformer” (CBS 2011).

In 2015 John Kerry was not such an optimist when referring to Assad: “Assad sent thugs to beat up the young people who were protesting in the streets and looking for jobs, looking for a future. That’s all they wanted. But the thugs went out and beat them up. And when the parents got angry at the fact that their kids were met with thugs, they went out and they were met with bullets and bombs. (...) Assad made war inevitable and he soon turned to Hezbollah for help, and Iran, and Russia” (Kerry 2015).

Assad receives significant aid from Iran and Russia, which makes them important stakeholders in the conflict. The relationship between Russia and Syria, or rather with Assad as its representative is based on common interest between the two players. They both seek stability and security of Syria. Assad enjoys the support he receives from Russia either at the diplomatic level (Russia as a UN SC member vetoes every single proposal aimed at ousting of Assad) or the military aid Russia provides to Syria. In return, Russia maintains a military facility in Tartus, Syria, their only connection to the Mediterranean Sea, and keeps their connection to the region. This *quid pro quo* partnership has caused dysfunction not only at the UN SC, but also in a bilateral relationship between the United States and Russia. By 2015, the Russian influence in the region has grown even stronger.

When debating second Syria's partner, the U.S., it considers the potential threat from a nuclear Iranian program to be greater than the civil war in Syria. Despite Assad using chemical weapons on his people and despite having publicly condemned the usage and drawing the famous “red line” by the U.S. government, the need for a deal with Iran was

stronger. It was also important for another reason. There was a multinational consensus among the permanent member states of the United Nations Security Council, including seasoned rivals to the West, Russia and China. Russian involvement in the process of getting a nuclear deal done was considered by the Obama administration as a great long-term achievement and the administration did not feel like damaging the relationship by invoking Syria and the public support Assad had received by then by the Russians.

The third actor of the Syrian conflict is the opposition to Assad's regime. The National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, a coalition which was founded in 2012 with headquarters in Idlib (Syria) is the main opposition against the Assad regime recognized by the United States with the proper diplomatic representation in Washington, D.C. It has its own vertical structure and so far has been recognized by the United States, the EU, the Arab League, and Cooperation Council of Arab States of the Gulf. However, since 2013 their voice has become irrelevant in the conflict (The Economist 2013). By December 2012, the Obama administration began to recognize the Syrian opposition by stating that the opposition is "the legitimate representative" of the Syrian people (BBC 2012). This, however, did not lead the U.S. government to support militant groups that had been fighting the Assad regime other than with rations and medical supplies. In April 2013, the U.S. pledged to support the opposition by USD 123 million of non-lethal aid. (McClatchy DC 2013), Rugh (2013, 149) recognize two reasons why the U.S. maintained solely political support to the opposition. First, there was a dangerous possibility that the weapons and other military materiel would end up in the hands of the radicalized fragments of the opposition. These weapons then could be used against the U.S., as it was done before in Afghanistan or in Iraq. Second reason was the fear of turning the conflict into a Cold War style proxy war with the Russian government supporting the Assad regime and the U.S. supporting the opposition. Since Assad is a recognized ruler of the country by the international community, Americans would pick the illegitimate and more fragile of the players. As Dueck points out, "in one of the ironies that often characterizes international relations, the very desire to avoid this specific outcome helped produce it" (Dueck 2015, 86).

One of the strongest opposition fractions in the region, which is certainly relevant is the so-called Islamic State (*Daesh* in Arabic). This group evolved from al Qaeda in Iraq and its territory stretches from Syria to Iraq. Another opposition to the Assad regime is the al Nusra Front or al Qaeda in Syria and the Kurds residing in the north. There are much more subdivisions, ethnical or religious, fighting for their survival in the fractured state, but they are mostly irrelevant to the broader geopolitical problem of Syria.

The options

There were three options Obama had on his plate – military intervention to oust Assad, support regime's opposition, and gather international coalition to gain a consensus. In 2007, as a presidential candidate, Obama stated "The President does not have power under the Constitution to unilaterally authorize a military attack in a situation that does

not involve stopping an actual or imminent threat to the nation,” (Savage 2007). The military option was possibly on the table based on suggestions by senior military advisors to the administration; it was never a real one. Unlike al Qaeda, Assad was in no way eager to attack the U.S. on its soil or its presence in the Arab world. Rather, he kept focusing on fighting his opposition and groups that were supported by the United States. Also, the sense of mission creep was vivid while discussing the possibility to send Special Forces. The lessons learnt from Vietnam where President John F. Kennedy sent Special Forces and later the war escalated into a large invasion influenced the administration's decision and Obama's thinking. As Miller (2013) points out “The United States is coming out of the two longest wars in its history, in which the standard for victory was never “can we win?” but “when can we leave?”

Obama changed his heart in 2013 after the alleged use of chemical weapons by Assad. In August 2013, Obama made a case before the UN Security Council for an intervention against Assad claiming that the red line had been crossed (Reuters 2013). Great Britain, America's closest ally in the Security Council failed to vote on military action against Syria (BBC 2013). Just before he started debating the possibility of an armed attack on Syria, the administration considered supporting the armed opposition with military equipment. It took the administration two years to vet the rebel groups properly to ensure that they do not arm their future enemies. The final deal was made in 2015 when the conflict resembled the “war of attrition” (Ford 2013).

Another part of the effort was to assemble the international community. Creating a broad coalition of regional and global partners on board to share the military, financial, and other costs of the solution be it a military or diplomatic proved to be more complicated than assumed earlier. First reason was that the global players (i.e. Russia) had their stake in the region and were not willing to give up Assad at any cost. Other reason was the division among the Arab countries. Ghattas reports that “[t]he Tunisians opposed arming the rebels. The Bahrainis said armament was premature. The rebels were not just an unknown quantity, they also held no territory. (...) But the key player here was Turkey, Syria's neighbor to the north. Ankara made vague reference to the need for a safe haven but stopped short of calling for one to be forcibly established” (Ghattas 2013, 311). Further, the rebel groups were hugely diverse. In her last attempt in 2012, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton sent Bill Burns, former ambassador to Russia to negotiate a transitional plan with the Arab League. The diplomatic trio – Clinton, Burns, and the White House chief foreign policy advisor Susan Rice could not get through the UN SC. Disunity of the international community had severe consequences. It helped the Assad regime to stay in power and the conflict escalating (Haas 2013, 60).

It seems like the Obama administration was simply waiting for a call and was reluctant in doing anything on its own, waiting for other countries to come up with a plan. “Well, if there were a coalition of the international community,” Hillary Clinton told CBS in March 2011, “if there were the passage of a Security Council resolution, if there were a call by the Arab League, if there was a condemnation that was universal, but that is not going to happen because I don't think that it's yet clear what will occur, what will unfold”

(CBS 2011).

UN Security Council was a no-go for the United States. Hillary Clinton attempted to get consent of the rest of the permanent UN SC member states: “If they (Russia, China) had joined us in the Security Council, I think it would have sent a really strong message to Assad that he needed to start planning his exit, and the people around him, who are already hedging their bets, would have been doing the same” (Clinton 2012). Furthermore, after the UN SC, Sanger concluded that the decision was not a “Libya-Lite; it was toothless” (Sanger 2012, 362). For Russia, the situation seemed like Libya 2.0 as the approach resembled an attempt to change the regime. Similar outcome of the regime change was not troublesome for Russia when it had been conducted in Libya. It was, however, more problematic when suddenly it was their geostrategic partner, Assad.

Syria as a case study of Obama’s strategy

There are steps that need to be taken in order to conduct a strategy, which should be created based in interests and values. It should also include communicating with allies, partners, and adversaries. The last step should be supporting the strategy with resources and a successful implementation. Obama’s approach was unsuccessful at two levels: he failed to combine his strategy of non-interventionism or “selective interventionism” and strategy of strong rhetoric.

There is an overwhelming consensus that during the Obama tenure his foreign policy has been lacking strategy and therefore appears weak and inconsistent. However, based on how the administration has handled the Syrian crisis, we can extract some elements of the Obama doctrine and define it through time. First, it is based on the tiresome effort to create as comprehensive and wide a coalition as possible, often including the regional players. Obama believes that the region is not only for the United States to win the fight and that the neighboring countries should play a more active role and invest both in military and non-military means to solve the crises. The second sign of this administration’s strategy is the non-interventionism or selective interventionism. Since his election campaign in 2007 Obama labeled himself as a “smart-power” politician and based his campaign on rallying against the Iraq war addressing the war in Afghanistan as “the war of necessity”. It left people to wonder how Obama would have reacted if the Assad regime had attacked the United States in a form that al Qaida did, but since the Assad regime has been struggling for survival ever since the revolution, there is no potential that the regime would be harmful to the United States or even to Europe.

Since 2011 Obama faced a wide range of bad options. First, if Assad had stepped down, there is no clear path for transition. Second, the sectarianism in the country was strongly evolving. Third, status quo is not an option. Assad staying in power would not suit American core interests in the region and its support for the revolutionaries and oppressed people against the regime. The other problem is Russia. Syria is the sole ally of the former Soviet Union in the region. Although Russia is not a strong supporter of President Assad, it still attempts to play the geopolitical role in the region by supporting the regime and pre-

ferring stability over democracy. Another option Obama was faced with was putting the ground troops in Syria which would end in a so-called “disastrous victory” when the U.S. and potentially another coalition of the willing would remove a dictatorial regime. In the light of the Iraq war in 2003 this option was off the table rather quickly, be it for both political and economic reasons. Another bad option that could escalate is the fragmentation of Syria. Many scholars and experts of the region argue that Syria no longer exists within the borders that the international community agreed on. But Obama knew that it was not his and the U.S. fight. “Obama’s reaction to the Libyan and Syrian uprisings (...) gave the world their first hard look at what the Obama Doctrine looks like on the ground” (Sanger 2012, 364).

The biggest flaw of the U.S. administration was the strong rhetoric without any tangible support. The determination to oust Assad may as well have been strong, but there was little action to show for it. World leaders should avoid talking about other leaders that have to go if they do not have a comprehensive strategy how to do it and, most importantly, how to deal with the consequences of such person stepping down (Fischer 2015, ZP). One of the strongest examples to support this statement is when Obama introduced a red line in 2012. “We have been very clear to the Assad regime, but also to other players on the ground, that a red line for us is we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized. That would change my calculus. That would change my equation, said Obama during the press conference on August 20 2012 (Obama 2012). “[T]hat that’s a red line for us and that there would be enormous consequences” (Obama 2012). However, the consequences never occurred. Ever since the statement Obama was pressed to act according to his ultimatum. Although the statement itself “change my calculus” is too vague to really expect any concrete action, he did not say anything else.

A dramatic change of pace occurred in 2013. During the press conference Secretary of State John Kerry answered a question on the Syrian chemical weapons. He said that the only way to prevent a military action would be for the Assad regime to give up its entire nuclear arsenal: “he could turn over every single bit of his chemical weapons to the international community in the next week - turn it over, all of it without delay and allow the full and total accounting (of it), but he isn’t about to do it and it can’t be done” (Kerry 2013). This response may have been overlooked by some, but it definitely resonated in Moscow as a potential solution to the crisis. In the attempt to save their only ally in the region, the Russians started to move forward by suggesting a weapons swap. That was the last point the U.S. administration had some window of opportunity to enter the conflict with a more robust force. Since 2013 the influence of Russia is increasing at the expense of the Americans.

Conclusion

Obama’s strategy, if we agree the administration has one, has been based on two pillars – strong rhetoric and seeking international consensus. By attempting to avoid the fate of his predecessor, Obama allowed a vacuum that other actors willingly filled. There is

no strong argument for military involvement in Syria. We do not know how the situation would have turned out if the U.S. government had engaged in the region militarily.

By addressing the issue and to look strong before the eyes of the international community and domestic audience, the Obama administration and the President himself often used a harsh tone but were later questioned when they withdrew their comments or did not change the outcomes. This paper offered enough evidence to support the thesis that the strategy of non-interventionism, diplomacy, and thorough vetting of the opposition to the regime, considering the geopolitical consequences and its own military limitations, is a viable one. However, such a strategy should be communicated better in the future. Any strategy with good message is better than the best strategy with poor message.

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THE ISLAMIC STATE: A TOTALITARIAN EXPERIMENT IN THE RUINS OF SYRIA AND IRAQ?

7

ONDŘEJ FILIPEC, MICHAEL BRTNICKÝ

List of Contents

Introduction
Monism
Ideology
Mobilization
Conclusion

Introduction

There is a long history of research focusing on totalitarian regimes bringing out many definitions. The most known is a definition of Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski formulated in their work *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (1956) which has been later developed and reformulated by Carl Friedrich (Friedrich 1969, 126). Friedrich highlighted six core aspects of totalitarian regime including (1) a totalistic ideology, (2) a single party committed to this ideology and usually led by one man, the dictator, (3) developed secret police, (4) monopoly of mass communication, (5) monopoly of operational weapons and (6) monopoly of all organizations including economic ones and thus involvement of centrally planned economy. However, for the aims of this article, there are many variables involved and thus further simplification has to be done. In this sense Juan Linz has chosen three structural dimensions of totalitarian regimes, which are at the centre of this article.

First, Linz (Linz 2000, 66-70) writes about a monistic but not monolithic centre of power while groups or institutions derive their legitimacy from that centre; second, Linz notes the exclusive, autonomous and more or less intellectually elaborate ideology which the ruling group or leader are using as a basis for policies or to manipulate to legitimize them. In his view, the ideology goes beyond a particular program and is shaping social reality; third dimension presented by Linz is a citizen participation and active mobilization for political and collective social tasks are encouraged, demanded, rewarded and channelled through a single party and many monopolistic secondary groups. Passive obedience and apathy, retreat into the role of “parochials” and “subjects” characteristic of many authoritarian regimes, are considered undesirable by the rulers. As Linz notes, we can find those elements separately in other non-democratic forms but only their simultaneous presence makes the system totalitarian (Linz 2000, 66). Other dimensions (such as violence) are secondary or accompanying, however not compulsory.

Based on Linz’s definition, the following parts will explore the monistic structure

of power within the IS⁵¹, reveal the main aspects and the nature of radical Islamist ideology, assess active mass mobilization and focus also on secondary features of totalitarian regime. The main focus is aimed at empirical reality which is mediated by journalists and researchers dealing with the IS.

Monism

Current institutional structure of the IS is rather weak and unconsolidated reflecting continuous violence and blurring frontlines of Iraq's and Syria's wars. Its institutional structure is likely to be more similar to "organized chaos" rather than strict institutional structure of the modern bureaucratic state. However, this does not mean that institutions created by the IS are incapable to exert influence on conquered territory. It is important to note that revealing official structure is very complicated due to many reasons. First, there is limited information about the official structure and thus detailed piecemeal. Second, it could be anticipated that the structure is developing over time as the dynamics of the IS is changing from the militant organization spreading terror to a more proper state-building actor. Then it could be expected that organizational structure has been flexible: appointments may change very fast due to capabilities or as a result of death caused by airstrikes and combat activities. Elites may simply rotate, overlap and several positions may be held at the same time. For this reason, our analysis is aimed only at the highest layer of the political structure.

The role of the leadership is crucial for the concept of totalitarianism. Similar situation can be found in the IS where Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared himself Caliph of the Muslims. He also claims to be the descendant of Hussein and the tribe of the Prophet (Dairieh 2014), which gives him the legitimacy in the eyes of his followers. General conditions on caliph eligibility and their fulfilment by Baghdadi were laid down already in July 2013 in the document titled "*Madd al-ayadi li-bay-at al-Baghdadi*" (March and Revkin 2015). Naturally Caliph is not isolated and is accompanied by his closest advisors, forming kind of a Cabinet (Al-Imara). Next to the Cabinet advisors, there are two deputies, directly subordinated to Baghdadi. One deputy is responsible for Syria and second for Iraq (Thompson and Shubert 2015). There are also several important institutions which may be placed on a horizontal line on the top of the structure. These include various councils, including Shura Council, Sharia Council, Military Council, Security Council, Sharia Commissions and other sectoral councils (compare Anjarini 2014 and Shubert 2015).

The Shura Council represents the main advisory body which is responsible for recommending candidates for governors and members of Military Council. Members of the Shura are chosen by Baghdadi himself and majority are believed to be Iraqi with for-

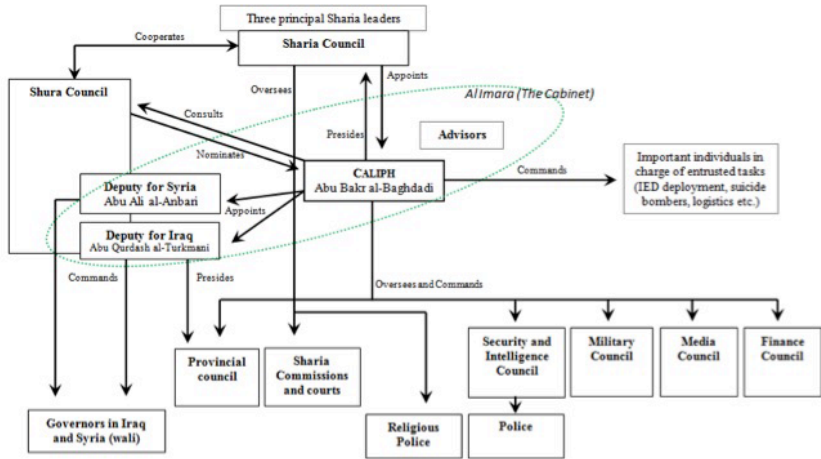
⁵¹ Linz's typology of totalitarian regimes is state-oriented. However, IS represents not a state in a proper sense but rather terrorist organization which was able to conquer territory, inhabited with some population, and develop there some political institutions in order to establish the rule. Most of the characteristics of the state are fulfilled. In this article regime is understood in its wider sense simply as the form of government.

mer ties to Baathist regime. It is likely that both Caliph's deputies are members of Shura Council (Barret 2014, 29). This council theoretically also approves Caliph's appointments and the choice of new Caliph. In a hypothetical situation Shura Council has the power to dismiss him (March and Revkin 2015) which is decided by Sharia Council (Barret 2014, 29). However, as loyalty to Baghdadi seems to be one of key aspect in all bodies, this step seems to be unlikely. In other words, Caliph is the most powerful subject in the system. He is responsible for appointing the heads of the councils and even when he consults Shura, final decision is on him (Anjarini 2014). It indicates that in some issues Shura council may overlap with Sharia council.

The Sharia Council is the most powerful council of the Islamic state and as such is chaired by Baghdadi himself. Sharia Council monitors the adherence of other councils to Sharia law – defined by Baghdadi and his peers – and represents Caliphate's religious monitor. Sharia council ensures that all actors in the system comply with the Sharia law according to the IS interpretation. With the help of Sharia commissions it ensures discipline and supervises Islamic police and courts. Sharia commissions also arbitrate disputes and carry out punishments. It has also been offering guidance, recruitment, preaching and handling of media affairs (March and Revkin 2015). Sharia council also oversees outreach (*dawa*) of the IS ideology and interferes to all situations which may have important impact on the society, including e.g. the executions of Western hostages (compare Barret 2014, 30; Thompson and Shubert 2015). As Sharia interpretation is important within the system in terms of legitimacy, there are three principal Sharia leaders with the capacity of mufti to expound Islamic law (Anjarini 2014). Crucially to the concept of totalitarianism, the judiciary system is not independent and possibly under political pressures of executive. For example some reports show that judges are executed or removed from their posts and face trial for voicing opposition to the legal ruling (March and Revkin 2015).

Very important role has been confided to the Security and intelligence Council which is responsible for the security affairs of the IS and also for personal security of the Caliph. It is charged with monitoring the work of security commanders on local levels. Its activities include also enemy group infiltration and playing a role in forming the suicide guerrilla fighter groups. Revealingly, no alternative opposition is tolerated within the IS. Security Council ensures that no other group may endanger the dominant role of IS. Due to exterritorial character of some threats, it closely cooperates with the Military Council, responsible for all military tasks, including strategic planning, raids, armaments and spoils (Mach and Revkin 2014). Similarly to modern bureaucratic structure, these councils are supplying the role of Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior. There are two separate police units in the IS. Next to the normal police which is enforcing ordinary law and safety there is Sharia police (*al-Hisbah*), serving as preventive and repressive tool to control people.

Diagram 1: The Structure of the IS



Note: This scheme is only approximate and may differ due to lack of information.

Source: Authors, based on Barret 2015; Thompson and Schubert 2015, March and Revkin 2015; Anjarini 2014 and others

There are other councils in the organization of the IS as Financial Council, Media Council or Provincial Council, which oversees the civilian administration of the IS. On the local level the institutional structure is mirrored from the central level, however in the case of some council (Shura, Military and Interior) there are independent offices with extended powers directly supervised by their central organizations (Barret 2014, 35). The Diagram 1 explores the organizational structure of the IS.

As noted earlier, the most important person in the system is the Caliph who holds the power over other institutions. While previous totalitarian regimes (especially the Soviet Union) tried at least to create the facade of democracy with institutional representation or manipulated elections, there is nothing democratic within the structure of the IS. All power rests in the hands of one leader and the executive penetrates the legislative and judiciary pillars. Functions are filled on a personal basis which is creating potential for chaos and discretionary overlaps and clashes. It is questionable whether Baghdadi directly issues orders to councils. For example Richard Barret notes that he lacks military experience (Barret 2014, 27) and thus intervention into military affairs seems to be unlikely. As it is impossible for one person to run the state, his commands may rather have the character of general directives, rather than detailed orders.

Noticeable is the role of Shura Council, which seems to be due its advisory function slightly similar to the role of Parliaments within absolutist monarchies. Moreover, the role of Sharia Council seems to be parallel to the Guardian Council of Iran which approves all candidates for presidential or parliamentary elections and serves as judicial authori-

ty similar to constitutional court (Kamrava, Hassan-Yari 2004, 506). The above-explored structure clearly represents a monist centre of power at the early phase of its existence.

Ideology

The second aspect of the totalitarian state noted by Linz is an exclusive, autonomous and more or less intellectually elaborate ideology which is used by the leader (or the ruling group) as a basis for policies, manipulation and legitimization. This ideology simply goes beyond normal political program but has ambitions to shape social reality and create a new world (Linz 2000, 66). From the historical point of view, totalitarian ideologies were closely connected to Nazism and Communism. As will be explored further, interpretation of the Islamic tradition by the IS has quite similar totalitarian characteristics in its nature.

We can broadly define Islamism by two basic characteristics, which are typical for all representatives of this political, social and cultural trend. First and foremost it is a fundamental, essential trait shared by all representatives of Islamism, a conviction that Islam – as a religious, political and social system – offers the answer to the serious political, economic, social and cultural challenges of post-colonial development. The second characteristic of Islamism's proponents is their tendency to develop normative system based on interpretation of the sacred texts of Islam. This mainly concerns norms and structures inspired by the Islamic tradition (or by what Islamists consider as Islamic tradition) where Sharia plays a central role. Importantly Sharia and its interpretations are even among Muslims themselves subject of intense controversies, so it is necessary to emphasize that this is not a codified, precisely defined legal system.

Both characteristics are represented in the ideology of the IS. However what is rather original and differentiates the IS from the majority of Islamist groups, parties and movements, is their emphasis on the revival of the Caliphate. Conditions for Islamism were created by European colonial expansion and the First World War could be considered as a catalyst. The demise of the Ottoman Empire affected the Middle Eastern "core" of the Muslim world and supported sentiments to restore the golden age of Islam. However, the subject of sentiment was not the Ottoman Caliphate, but rather utopian Medina Model created by the Prophet Muhammad and its precise reproduction under modern conditions (Mozaffari 2009, 5). In this sense the ideology of the IS is similar to historicism of Fascism and Nazism. Indeed the resurrection of caliphate is the main project of the IS and that is the difference of this group from Islamist mainstream.

The IS aims to create a new human society based on its own strict interpretation of the Islamic tradition. This revolutionary goal – creation of a new world – may be established by violence, which has been recognized as legitimate, permissible and desirable against all opponents of this vision (be them Shia Muslims, secularists, disloyal Sunni Muslims etc.). The legitimacy of violence is derived from the creation of new society, an unprecedented historic step and all opponents may be killed. In this sense, similarly to totalitarian ideologies, the IS has a Manichean vision of the world where some states, groups or individuals represent evil, while the followers are considered good. It is the individual

and collective duty of the IS partisans to defend and expand the Caliphate (the territorial domain of the “only true” Islam). Thus, the IS has expansive ideology, which comes from its revolutionary nature and also from the religious duty to promote, and under its own interpretation, to expand Islam. There is a clear distinction between Muslims (i.e. the IS partisans and loyalists) and infidels or apostates within this ideology. This distinction is the key element in Jaffrey Bale’s definition of Islamism, which can be defined as “*radically anti-secular and anti-“infidel” Islamic political ideology, based upon an exceptionally intolerant and puritanical interpretation of Islamist scriptures and Islamic law, which has both revolutionary and revivalist features*” (Bale 2009, 79). Even if this definition is misleading when applied for Islamism, it matches the core aspects of the IS ideology.

The concept of Islamic state (not the terrorist group) is not new and has been developed by Islamic scholars. Pakistani scholar Maududi defined Islamic state in his book *The Islamic Law and Constitution* (1960) as follows: “*A state of this sort [Islamic] cannot evidently restrict the scope of its activities. Its approach is universal and all-embracing. Its sphere of activity is coextensive with the whole of human life. It seeks to mould every aspect of life and activity in consonance with its moral norm and programme of social reform. In such a state no one can regard any field of his affairs as personal and private. Considered from this aspect the Islamic state bears a kind of resemblance to the Fascist or Communist states*” (Maududi 1960, 146). He claims, however, that Islamic state differs from the totalitarian and authoritarian states, because individual liberty is not suppressed and that there is no trace of dictatorship in it. According to Maududi, Islamic state represents the middle course and embodies the best that the human society has ever evolved (Maududi 1960). Similar stance is held by the Egyptian Sayid Qutb (Qutb, cited in Toth 2013, 129), who considers individualism and personal freedoms strongly linked to “barbarity” of the modern capitalist society, which thus must be limited by submitting to social norms presented by Sharia, which enables an individual to develop in a good way.

Their words are controversial due to touch of western values and core aspects of liberal democracy where the public or political and private or personal is separated and the latter protected. Maududi’s interpretation at least limits the thinking and behaviour of an individual, who loses his/her individuality and starts to behave like others, within clear boundaries of strict norms presented by Sharia. This tendency corresponds to thoughts of Hannah Arendt (Arendt 1958, 338), that one of the main features of totalitarian regimes is the disappearing distinction between personal and political life, and destruction of individual personality. In this sense, the Islamic state is anti-individualistic and it also shares anti-democratic attitude, as expressed by Qutb: “*True source of authority is God alone...*” (Qutb 2005, 14). The democracy in Qutb’s conception is only another man-made system of rules without God’s legitimacy (Toth 2013, 176). As Maududi pointed out, Islamic state is an ideological state and its objective is to establish that ideology (Maududi 1960, 146). In this sense Islamism is anti-democratic in its nature.

In the reality of the Islamic state, Sharia law covers every aspect of daily life from civil disagreements to economic and social life, including personal issues such as diet, prayer or public appearance. All signs of “western culture” are prohibited under strict

Hisbah supervision that is enforcing the law. Even slight violation of rules might be punished with whipping, capital punishment is often used extensively (Dairieh 2014). Islamic tradition in the interpretation of the IS represents clearly antidemocratic and anti-pluralistic ideology, which denies separation between what's public and what's personal. Radical religion penetrates to every aspect of daily life, which corresponds to the nature of totalitarianism. As was shown earlier, there are many signs similar to these two totalitarian ideologies. Even second aspect of Linz's definition has been revealed. However, as noted earlier, only combination of all three aspects makes a system totalitarian.

Active mobilization

One of the distinctions between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes is active mobilization of masses. While it is sufficient for authoritarian rulers that people are rather passive and not interested in public affairs the political sphere, there is active mobilization of people in totalitarian regimes. In both Communism and Nazism people were urged by the system to demonstrate their active support and encouragement for the leadership, regime and ideology. Active participants were rewarded and passivity was unwelcome or punished. In Linz's conception of citizen participation and mobilization for collective tasks is encouraged, demanded, rewarded and channelled through a single party and many monopolist secondary groups (Linz 2000, 66). It is important to note that Linz's concept is based on experience with Fascism and Communism, two ideologies which penetrated and were studied within the European cultural context. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, under both ideologies there was a division line between ideology and religion while the IS has a religious ideology. This distinction takes in the reality of IS a slightly different form of mobilization on both, societal and personal level.

As was shown in the documentaries which record ordinary life on territories captured by the IS, loyalty to the IS is widely pledged (Dairieh 2014). Children are indoctrinated in the Sharia camps where boys and girls under 15 learn about religion. Older children can attend a military camp and participate in military operations. At public events and celebrations, the IS is honoured as well as the personality of Caliph. Speakers highlight the establishment of the Caliphate and the rule of the IS. Their statements are supported by testimonies of respected Muslims, so it seems that nothing better may happen than establishment of the Caliphate (Dairieh 2014). Hand in hand with expressing positive attitude about the IS and its leaders goes a negative portrayal of the earlier regime. People on the IS-controlled territory –both civilians and captured soldiers –were forced to publicly criticize and convict Maliki and Assad governments (Masood 2014). This all takes place in an atmosphere of fear of being reported. From the early beginning Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has placed emphasis on spying and intelligence so nobody can feel secure (Reuter 2015). As a result, everyone pledges obedience to the IS and its leadership and people unnaturally express happiness that they live under Sharia inside the IS Caliphate. This was most visible with the arrested people awaiting their judgement and punishment. While some faced capital punishment, all expressed gratitude to live in a society based on God's law (Dairieh

2014).

Because the IS ideology is based on Islam, it is part of the social norm to demonstrate in public to be a proper Muslim. This has implications for personal mobilization by regime which needs more fighters to expand territories under its control. Possibly all men may become fighters for the cause of Islam (Mujahedins) and fight in Jihad, commit martyrdom operation and kill as many enemies as possible in a suicide attack. Both acts are committed in support of the ideology and for the expansion of IS. On the opposite side of the divide, opponents may be simply labelled as infidels, the enemies of the religion, the enemies of God as well as enemies of humanity (Dairieh 2014). There was no tolerance for secondary organization or political party to ensure mobilization and participation. In the case of IS it has just followed up the strict rules under Sharia law and the demonstration of public support. The IS mobilizes vis-à-vis ordinary behaviour (prayers, diet, celebrations, outfit...) and contributes to the support of its ideology and cannot be separated from its more diabolic elements. In this sense mobilization is rather implicit than explicit.

Conclusion

This article explored three aspects of totalitarian regime (monistic centre of power, ideology and active mobilization) as presented by Juan Linz in the application to the IS. The IS institutional structure presents a clearly monist centre of the power, where almost all power rests in the hands of one man who derives the authority from the religion. The article also explored several parallels of the IS ideology with the totalitarian concept, including antidemocratic and anti-individual nature, no separation between private and public dimension of life, and the interest of the state to control the behaviour of people. Moreover, the IS ideology is openly hostile towards religious minorities as well as towards any opposition. The IS has a revolutionary attitude towards the creation of a new society and justification of violence combined with its “romantic” conservative historicism (resurrection of the Caliphate) and an expansive nature. There is also active mobilization and participation under the rule of IS, which however does not fully match the concept as presented by Juan Linz due to its western cultural basis. Because all three key elements of totalitarian regime are simultaneously to a certain degree present, it can be concluded that IS represents a new totalitarian regime.

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THE STRUGGLE OF IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA OVER IRAQ

ROBERT CZULDA

List of Contents

Brief analysis of bilateral relations
Iran's approach towards Iraq
Saudi Arabia's approach towards Iraq
Conclusions

Brief analysis of bilateral relations

During the period of the 1990s and early 2000s, rivalry between the two major regional competitors, Saudi Arabia, that sees itself as a natural protector of Sunni community and main power in the Persian Gulf as well as in Levant, and Iran that considers itself as a legitimate hegemon in the region, was limited. Several reasons can explain this. Until 2005 moderate presidents ran Iran, Rafsanjani (1989-1997) and Khatami (1997-2005). Both of them focused on internal modernization and attempts to break international isolation. However, towards the end of that period, things began to change. Saddam Hussein was ousted from power in neighboring Iraq (2003) and right-winger Ahmadinejad was elected as president of Iran (2005). What's more, in 2002, United States added Iran to the "axis of evil". Several developments, including a political, economic and military implosion of Iraq, gave Iran an opportunity to become directly involved in that country.

This Shia offensive, or what Mohammad Fahad al-Harathi calls Iranian "imperialist designs" (al-Harathi 2015), in combination with Iran's ambiguous nuclear program, prompted Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, the king of Saudi Arabia in 2009, to urge the United States to "cut off the head of the snake" by launching a military operation against Iran (Ehteshami and Zweiri 2011, 147). Bilateral relations became even more tense in 2011, when Iran was accused of planning an assassination of Saudi Arabia's ambassador in the United States and of bomb attack plots on Saudi Arabian and Israeli embassies in Washington, D.C. The Arab Spring, which took place earlier the same year, created a new security environment across the region, which allowed Iran to try to expand its influence with "the Iranian model" which has ultimately failed (Fürtig 2013; Chubin 2012).

Hassan Rouhani, the elected president of Iran in June 2013, promised that improving bilateral relations with Persian Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia, a regional leader of the Arab world, would be a top priority of his foreign policy. Since that pledge, Rouhani had made several diplomatic moves aimed at warming relations with the GCC states. In regards to Saudi Arabia, Rouhani published an open letter in a Saudi newspaper in which he presented his foreign policy priorities and expressed his hope for stronger bilat-

eral cooperation. Later Hassan Rouhani accepted an invitation by Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud for a pilgrimage to Mecca. In December 2014 Rouhani, as a response to ISIS's offensive in Iraq, urged Arab states to jointly fight the extremists.

Despite some diplomatic efforts, tensions in bilateral relations have not been removed. Saudi Prince and a former director of intelligence, Turki bin Faisal al-Saud openly criticized Iran by saying that Tehran's "game of hegemony toward the Arab countries is not acceptable" (Erlanger 2013). Probably also as a result of Saudi pressure, Iran has not been added to an international coalition composed of the United States, Iraq, Jordan, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which since August 2014, has been bombing ISIS in Iraq. Iran was forced to act independently without any operational coordination with other states. Interestingly, in Iranian rhetoric, this is not a decision made by the United States and the Arab states but a conscious decision made by Tehran that does not want to "cooperate with fake anti-terror coalition" which has "a role in creation of the terrorist groups" (FARS News Agency 2014b). At the same time, Saudi interpretation of the current reality in the region is the opposite. As Faisal Abualhassan put it, Saudi Arabia's "plan foresees stability and prosperity for the nearly 360 million citizens of the 22 Arab states between the Sahara and the Gulf, while the Iranian plan foresees the creation of 22 Syrias, overseen via paramilitary proxies by Tehran" (Abualhassan 2015). Bilateral relations have definitely not been improved by a harassment incident in Saudi Arabia, which prompted Iran to suspend in April 2015 pilgrimages to Mecca, Saudi military operation in Yemen and a crisis al-Nimr's execution which led to cutting diplomatic ties.

	Saudi Arabia	Iran
Middle East	Preserving status quo ante the Arab Spring with Saudi-led Arab block in the Persian Gulf	Changing status quo in favor of Iran-led Shia Muslims
Sectarian division	Supporting Sunni dominance	Supporting Shia dominance
Iraq	Supports local Sunni groups, distrust towards the Shia government	Supports Shia-dominated Iraqi government and Shia political/military groups, alleged persecutions of Sunnis
Islamic State	Unclear support of ISIS, considered as a leverage against Syrian regime; Iranian influence, a threat if too close to Saudi borders	Fully against ISIS

Syria	Against Bashar al-Assad (funding and supplying Sunni rebels)	Supports Bashar al-Assad (funding and supplying national army and Shia militias, active military presence)
Bahrain	Against Shia majority pro-democracy protests, supports Sunni minority monarchy	Supports Shia community, criticizes Sunni monarchy
United States	Military cooperation, limited political cooperation	Anti-US policy
Israel	Covert intelligence cooperation against Iran	Extreme anti-Israel policy, supports anti-Israel political and military movements
Yemen	Against Houthi rebels	Supports Houthi rebels
	Direct military involvement	Indirect military involvement
Russia	Against Russia's policy towards Syria and Iran	Supports Russia's policy towards Syria and Iran

Table 1: Comparison of strategic choices of Saudi Arabia and Iran

Current tensions are generated on four geographic axes, on which both competitors are on opposing sides: in Bahrain, Syria, Iraq, and most recently also in Yemen. This “reflects a new foreign policy that assertively presses Saudi claims in the Middle East and even uses its own armed forces to ensure its interests” (Takeyh 2015). Initially a proxy war in Yemen, which brought bilateral relations to a level of, as Ray Takeyh put it, “a new cold war” (Takeyh 2015) resulted in the above-mentioned direct military intervention of Saudi Arabia, which was intended to, according to Faheem Al-Hamid, “save Yemen from Iran’s hegemony” (Al-Hamid 2015). Additionally, while Saudi Arabia wants to return to the status quo ante, which existed before the Arab Spring, Iran is interested in changing the Middle Eastern balance of power and influence in favor of Shias over Sunnis. Both states are competing for regional leadership as well. Their rivalry is also strengthened by structural differences and the fact that they have extremely different approaches to the United States and Israel as well as distinct composition in terms of ethnicity (Persians versus Arabs) and religion (Shias and Sunnis). Those fundamental differences have been strengthened in recent years, which marked the beginning of the above-mentioned Iran-led “Shia offensive”. This in turn has magnified tensions between Shias and Sunnis as demonstrated by the bomb attack on Iran’s Embassy in Beirut in November 2013, allegedly carried out by Sunni

rebels.

Iran's approach towards Iraq

Iran has been consistently supporting Prime Minister al-Maliki's (2006-2014) Shia government who had lived in exile in Tehran between 1982-1990. In the wake of Sunni ISIS surprise offensive in June 2014, Iranian president Rouhani officially warned that Iran is ready for a direct military intervention to protect holy Shia shrines in Najaf, Karbala, Samarra and Baghdad (Alalam 2014). Later the situation on the ground deteriorated further. "In Mosul, Shia shrines and mosques have been blown up," Patrick Cockburn wrote. "Simply to be identified as Shia or a related sect, such as the Alawites, in Sunni rebel-held parts of Iraq and Syria today, has become as dangerous as being a Jew was in Nazi-controlled parts of Europe in 1940" (Cockburn 2014). Although sectarian solidarity is an important driver in Iran's approach towards Iraq, this is not the only one. Iranian engagement in Iraq is influenced mainly by geopolitical pragmatism. Iran wants to destroy ISIS in order not only to protect Shias but also to degrade the power of the Sunni camp and thus Saudi Arabia as its leader. This would give Tehran an opportunity to increase Shiite political influence in the region.

Iraq is a vital bridge in this geopolitical game. It allows Iran to project its power to Syria and from Syria also to Lebanon, where Hezbollah, Iran's main ally, is permanently deployed. From there, via Iraq and Syria, Iran-led Hezbollah can threaten the arch-enemy Israel, while at the same time allowing Tehran to sting the United States for whom Israel is the "soft underbelly". What is more, a strong presence in Iraq allows the Iranians to control the Kurdish issue more closely and directly affect, if needed, Saudi security (it can do this, for example, by stirring up discontent of local Shia community inhabiting the oil-rich eastern province). From the Arabic point of view, as Saudi writer Khaled M. Batafri put it in *Saudi Gazette*, "The Persian wannabe-empire is spreading chaos, destruction and division wherever they operate. Their interventionist policies are not helping their own population and are diverting their resources from development. They should be made to stop" (Batafri 2015). Nevertheless, the scale of Iranian involvement in Iraq is unknown as Tehran downplays its role. From available media information, however, it can be assumed with a high degree of certainty that Iran trains not only Iraqi armed forces but also several local Shia militias. Apart from this, it is also believed that Iran deploys its own intelligence officers, unmanned aerial vehicles, arms and supplies and even Su-25 close air support jets. F-4 Phantom aircraft, likely Iranian, have been noticed over Iraq as well. The best illustration of Iran's military involvement in Iraq is that, according to General Martin Dempsey (Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff), about 2/3 of the 30,000-strong force fighting to retake Tikrit was made up of "Iranian-based" Shia militia fighters (Behzan 2015). Apart from that, Iran has a major influence on Iraqi economy.

It seems that the political change which occurred in August 2014 when Nouri al-Maliki was replaced by Haider al-Abadi (also Shia), did not bring any negative consequences to Iran, which still can influence Iraq's internal politics. According to Abdulrah-

man Al-Rashed, the only change was that when al-Maliki was removed, Iran decided to directly interfere in Iraq. Then, in order to secure its dominant position, it obstructed not only “the political reconciliation which Abadi pledged to achieve with Sunni Arabs and Kurds” but also the project to establish a National Guard force (Al-Rashed 2015). Although such claims cannot be confirmed, they seem likely, particularly the latter, as a strong National Guard would become a serious rival to Iran-controlled Shia militias.

Saudi Arabia’s approach towards Iraq

Like for Iran, also for Saudi Arabia Iraq holds a significant geopolitical significance. First of all Saudi Arabia, “one of the biggest traitors of the Muslim world” as the leader of Iran’s Islamic Coalition Party Mohammad Nabi Habibi called it (FARS News Agency 2014a), wants to prevent the rebuilding of the state of Iraq, which, over time, could again be a direct threat to the security of Saudi Arabia. At the same time Riyadh is unhappy with the current reality in which Iraq is too weak to resist domination by Iran. In the long term, permanent control over Iraq would allow Iran to increase political and military pressure on Saudi Arabia, which, if the situation continues to deteriorate in Yemen where Iran backs the Houthi rebellion, could be encircled by the Iran-led ring (with Iraq in the north and Yemen in the south). At the same time, for Saudi Arabia control over Iraq creates an opportunity to increase pressure on Syria, which could result in the collapse of the pro-Iranian regime of president Bashar al-Assad. In such a scenario Syria could be extracted from Iran’s sphere of influence, which would obviously serve the interests of Saudi Arabia.

Weakened Iraq could also pose threat to Saudi Arabia whose military intervention in Bahrain (2011) and in Yemen (2015) showed that the Saudi regime tries to keep all zones of chaos and destabilization at arm’s length from its borders. Riyadh needs to have a direct influence in Iraq to use it as a barrier against sectarian violence in Syria which, although can serve Saudi interests vis-à-vis Iran and Bashar al-Assad (ISIS weakens Iran-backed government and forces Tehran to use its resources there), could shake its own national security if it comes too close to its borders. In other words, although the tactical goals of ISIS, such as fighting against the secular regime of al-Assad, which involves both Iran and Tehran-controlled Hezbollah, are consistent with Riyadh’s interests, its strategic, long-term goals, such as the grand plan to establish a region-wide caliphate, constitutes a lethal threat to the Saudi monarchy and a challenges its security and foreign policy. In response to this challenge, in July 2014 Saudi Arabia deployed thousands of troops and set up additional barricades along its 850-km border with Iraq (Arab News 2014).

Saudi Arabia, which blamed al-Maliki for sectarian violence in Iraq, does not hide its opposition to Iran’s presence in Iraq. “The situation in Tikrit is a prime example of what we are worried about” – said foreign minister Saud bin Faisal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, who warned without any diplomatic precaution that “Iran is taking over the country”. What is more, Saudi Arabia did not support Barack Obama’s policy of seeking a nuclear deal with Iran, which aligned Riyadh closer to Israel than to the United States. It believes

that the White House approach to focus on a single objective (nuclear agreement) and its hope that it will serve as “the foundation of an overall rapprochement with Tehran” is wrong because it ignores, as Saud bin Faisal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud said, “the nature of the action and hegemonic tendencies that Iran has in the region” (Bandow 2015). However, ultimately Riyadh decided to publicly criticize the final and comprehensive nuclear agreement from Vienna of July 2015 (Cooper 2015).

In contrast to Iran, Saudi Arabia has very limited tools to influence the internal situation in Iraq. Although Saudi Arabia has much larger financial resources at its disposal, which Iran cannot match, Tehran has a better network of personal contacts, giving them more effective political and military influence. Despite some tribal links, Saudi Arabia seems unable to effectively infiltrate Iraq’s political environment, which is currently Shia-dominated. It does not have reliable and sufficiently strong allies, which it could leverage against Iran and the Shiites. What is more, Saudi Arabia – despite enormous arms spending and highly advanced military hardware – has very limited combat capabilities and therefore it could not support its allies in Iraq on the ground. The only thing that Saudi Arabia can do at a military level is to urge other Arab states to form a military block against Iran.

All political attempts to bring a diplomatic rapprochement between Iraq and Saudi Arabia have – so far – not brought any breakthrough. One of the major events, yet still only symbolic, was a visit by Iraqi President Fuad Masum to Saudi Arabia in November 2014. Apart from this, Saudi decision-makers announced a plan to finally re-open the embassy in Baghdad. Additionally, in March 2015 Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, the current king of Saudi Arabia, invited Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi to visit the kingdom. These moves can be interpreted as Riyadh’s acceptance of the reality and understanding that the Iraqi government will remain dominated by the Shiites and Saudi Arabia has just two options – either cooperate with it or ignore it. However, these rapprochement attempts seem to be too little, too late. Saudi Arabia lost the best opportunity to approach Iraq politically and militarily, which was mid-2014, when Riyadh was observing the ISIS offensive with pleasure, hoping that it would weaken the Shias and thus also Iran. However, this situation was seized by Iran, which as the first responder to the call from the government of Iraq has provided substantial assistance. As a consequence, it gave Tehran a legitimate opportunity to erect strategic bridgeheads in Iraq. At the same time, Saudi Arabia failed to support the Iraqi government and the Sunni minority as well, who have felt marginalized since 2003. It seems that it was the ideal moment because in mid-2014 the scale and direction of the ISIS offensive was unknown and the Iraqi government had every reason to feel threatened.

In such a threat scenario, indirect support from Saudi Arabia (ammunition, weapons) might have been welcomed with open arms. What is more, it is likely that Riyadh’s assistance would have been accepted also for the second reason: that it would have allowed Iraqi government, even Shia, to establish an alternative to relations with Iran. In other words, Saudi help would have given Baghdad a chance to increase its political and military position vis-à-vis Tehran. It is easy to see that Saudi Arabia had another advantage

– as an Arab country it would have been easier for the Arab government of Iraq to trust its Arab brothers than the Persians, who are generally approached with distrust.

Securing any political and military bridgeheads in Iraq by Saudi Arabia will be now very challenging. It is difficult to judge to what degree this missed opportunity was a result of poor Saudi foreign policy, which underestimated Iran's determination and skills; of the King Abdullah's sickness towards the end of his reign; or even a result of overestimating the power of the United States which had promised the Saudis that "Iraq would be an effective bulwark against Iranian influence" (al-Buluwi 2014). The new Iraqi prime minister did not change the situation on the ground either. Nouri al-Maliki, who was disliked by King Abdullah and who accused the Saudis of "siding with terrorism" (Daily Star 2014), was replaced by Haider al-Abadi, who did not stem Iraq's negative approach towards Saudi Arabia. For example, in April 2015 he criticized Saudi Arabia's bombardment of Yemen, which according to him only increases violence and chaos.

Conclusions

The current struggle between Saudi Arabia and Iran is a fact, but it is important to underline that this rivalry, although clearly delineated by the Shia and Sunni division, is driven mainly by the geopolitics and not the religious dogma, which is not a dominant factor in the political calculations underway. In other words, the Saudi-Iranian rivalry is geopolitical in nature and thus a pragmatic competition for power and influence across the Middle East. This clash of interests includes the fact that Saudi Arabia wants to keep all threats removed from its borders while Iran's interests require to push them to the Saudi border. Riyadh wants to keep the current status quo, while Iran wants to challenge it and replace it with a new system with itself at the center of it. However, Sunni-Shia sectarianism is relevant as it is a useful tool for stirring up some conflicts and obtaining tactical allies. This division is also important because it limits the scope of this geostrategic quest as neither side can fully dominate the Middle East due to the existing Shia-Sunni division.

This rivalry is manifested in many areas, mainly in Bahrain, Syria, Iraq and recently in Yemen that – just like in Syria – has sunk deeply into a proxy conflict in which both sides are escalating the war in order to weaken the other. Although "they did not create the crises in those places, they have exacerbated them considerably" (Beauchamp 2015). The same pattern applies to Iraq, which is the most important pawn in the geostrategic chess game between Tehran and Riyadh. Iraq is the security and influence key for both sides. If Iraq fully falls into Iran's sphere of control, then Tehran will be able to continue its offensive in Bahrain and Yemen. It would encircle Saudi Arabia and limit its regional power. If Saudi Arabia prevents Iraq from falling into Iran's hands, then Tehran will not only be able project its influence in Bahrain and Yemen, but also its link to Syria's Bashar al-Assad would be in danger. As a result, the whole policy of a Shia offensive would become doubtful.

Despite the comprehensive nuclear agreement reached in Vienna in July 2015, for Saudi Arabia Iran remains the biggest concern and a threat while for Iran Saudi Arabia

is the major obstacle to its expansion. The analysis of the press shows this. For example, in August 2015 Iran's Foreign Minister Zarif indirectly criticized Saudi Arabia by saying that regional peace required Riyadh to cooperate instead of using force (Tasnim News Agency 2015, #1). Ali Akbar Velayati, an adviser to Supreme Leader publicly criticized the United Nations over its inaction on the "Saudi-led aggression against the Yemenis" (Tasnim News Agency 2015, #2). Also, in August Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Marziyeh Afkham criticized "irrational" remarks made by Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, who allegedly said that "Iran continues with its destabilizing interference in the Middle East and is obviously seeking to develop a nuclear bomb" (Tasnim News Agency 2015, #3).

Iran's geopolitical position seems more favorable. Tehran is already well-placed militarily and politically in Iraq thanks to its own military capabilities, the Iraqi armed forces and loyal Shia militias. Current developments in Yemen are also more advantageous for Iran than Saudi Arabia which is, despite its limited military air campaign, on the defensive. Riyadh does not have any reliable local force to support to leverage against Iran. Abdulmajeed al-Buluwi suggests that "the only available option for Saudi Arabia appears to be to support tribal forces in Iraq to promote their capacities and influence in the conflict currently raging" (al-Buluwi 2014). But the open question is: do Sunni groups, which could become an effective force against Iran-led Shia dominance and ISIS, exist in Iraq? Al-Buluwi names several groups, mainly in the Anbar and Mosul area, such as the Shammar, al-Anza and Dalim tribes with members in Saudi Arabia and Iraq but so far lack any significant military power or influence. While this solution is disputable, one element is not: although a direct confrontation between Saudi Arabia and Iran is highly unlikely and despite Saudi Arabia is now run by King Salman who is "widely viewed as more diplomatic than his brother and predecessor, King Abdullah" (Cooper 2015), the current rivalry for political power will continue for years to come.

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NIGERIA'S BOKO HARAM – IT WILL BE A LONG WAR

VIKTOR MARSAL

Introduction

In the middle of 2014 the International Crisis Group published a report about the security of the Horn of Africa with the title of *Somalia's al-Shabaab – It will be a long war* (Crisis Group 2014b). The report underlined that despite military successes which African Union forces had reached the previous months against the Jihadist organisation, al-Shabaab remained a lethal and capable group which could continue its devastating terrorist and asymmetric warfare against the federal government and its supporters. The last twelve months have verified the fears of the Crisis Group's experts, and demonstrated that the one-way military approach without addressing the root causes – economic, social and historical dimensions – of the cannot succeed again such kind of insurgency.

The first half of 2015 demonstrated a parallel story on the other side of Africa, in Nigeria. The combat against the so-called *Boko Haram* (which is an Arabic-Hausa colloca-tion that means roughly “Western education is forbidden”)⁵³ Jihadist organisation could produce some military gains which were welcomed by both the international community and the local actors. But the overall picture is not so promising. Although Boko Haram lost territories similarly to al-Shabaab in Somalia, its basic structure, operational capabilities and the general security situation in the insurgency-affected areas were hardly affected. On the contrary, the response by the Jihadists brought a new wave of suicide-bombing and assault rifle-attack campaign not only in Nigeria (Umar 2015), but also in the neighbouring countries, mainly in Chad (News.Yahoo 2015), which took part in the offensive against the organisation.

This paper will examine how Boko Haram could rise in the north-eastern states of Nigeria; why it gets so much support from the local population in spite of its violent behaviour; how the miscalculated and brutal approach of the security services helped the transformation of Boko Haram from a mainly moderate group to a more radical one; and, because of the previous reasons, why the military solution alone cannot eliminate the movement.

The birth of Boko Haram and the social and economic background of the movement

Although Islam reached the current Northern Nigeria relatively early, the first

⁵³ Boko Haram's official name now is (Islamic State's) West Africa Province. Before the alliance with Islamic State they used the title Group of the People of Sunnah for Preaching and Jihad).

big state in the region, the Borno Empire (1380-1893) had limited intention only to practice its orthodox way and conquer new areas to the Prophet's teaching. It happened only in the 19th century that the so-called Fulani Jihad – the invasion of the empire by Fulani people from the West who backed their campaign by a religious ideology – brought a more radical approach of Islam to the territory. Their leader, Usman dan Fodio founded the Sokoto Caliphate – partly from the areas of the Borno Empire – which became the most powerful among the West African Muslim states. The Fulanis continued their expansion until the 1840s. The Caliphate's administration was well organised by Islamic scholars according to the system introduced in Medina by Mohammed (Fage-Tordoff 2004, 171-183). Although the British colonisation *de facto* terminated the independent existence of Sokoto and degraded the position of the *Sultan* to a symbolic one within the newly organized Northern Nigerian Protectorate, the heritage of the Caliphate survived not only in the structure of the local administration but also in the cultural and historical sense of the area (Crisis Group 2010, 3-5). Paradoxically, besides Islamic orthodoxy it was impregnated with anti-imperialist, anti-Western and anti-Christian sentiments – while the administrators of the territory and the descendants of Usman, thanks to the British way of colonization called “indirect rule”,⁵⁴ were the main executors of foreign invaders (Nugent 2004, 123-124).

As it was well demonstrated by the paper of the Crisis Group, Islam basically transformed the society of Northern Nigeria (Crisis Group 2010, 11-12), and ran a “Battle of Ideas” in the territory from the moderate and apolitical approach of the religion to a more radical concept of Islam. The first groups like the Izala Movement and the Maitatsine which demanded a wider political role for Islam and the implementation of the Sharia emerged in the 1970s and the 1980s. Some of them turned to violence like the clashes in Kano in December 1980, but none of them gained wider support (Crisis Group 2014a, 8-9).

Nevertheless, the new wave of radical Islamist ideology, which initially got support from the Jihad in Afghanistan against the Soviets and got a boost from the strengthening Wahhabist expansion from Saudi Arabia, reached Nigeria in the late 1990s. It led to the foundation of many new radical movements. The most impressive of them was led by the charismatic young scholar, Mohammed Yusuf. The members of the groups called themselves as Yusufiyya or Nigerian Taliban – and, from 2002, Boko Haram. As the Crisis Group cited, their principal goal was “*to create a strict Islamic state in the north that would address the ills of society, including corruption and bad governance*” (Crisis Group 2014a, 9).

The aims of Boko Haram were legitimate and justifiable, and the movement could have never risen so fast if the economic and social circumstances of the North-Eastern states in general and Nigeria in particular were different. Nigeria is usually taken as the model for the theory of “predatory state” (Ganesen-Vines 2004) which means that the

⁵⁴ Indirect rule means that the British colonial administration utilized the local administration to practice its rule over the conquered territories. It made it possible for the British Empire to be maintained by limited human resources.

ruling elite use the revenues of the state as its own. The winners of this game – mainly from the end of the '90s – were evidently the Christian politicians and businessmen of the South (Lewis 2004, 110-112), which had two consequences. First, it fostered the existing tension between the Islamic North and the Christian South and stoked old grievances between the different Nigerian ethnic communities, too. Second, rampant corruption, nepotism and the unconditioned rule of the Godfathers wasted the revenues of the country which had one of the biggest economies in Africa.⁵⁵ Oby Ezekwesili, the former Vice President of the World Bank for Africa said that Nigeria has lost more than \$400 billion to oil thieves since it attained independence in 1960. She also stated that *“20 percent of the entire budget for capital expenditure in Nigeria ended in private pockets annually, noted that whereas oil accounts for about 90 percent of the value of Nigeria’s exports, over 80 percent of the funds ends up in the hands of one percent of the country’s population”* (Nnochiri 2012).

Due to these circumstances, the Nigerian government was not able to narrow the gap between the elite and marginalized part of the society. The reestablishment of the democratic system did not change the situation. As the Crisis Group stated, *“since returning to civil rule in 1999, the state has suffered growing security, capacity and legitimacy gap, demonstrated in declining capacity of its institutions to develop public goods, including security, transportation, water, medical care, power and education”* (Crisis Group 2014a, 1). More than 70 percent of the population – in excess of 110 million people (!) – have remained under the poverty line, while in the North East the statistics were even worse. Without a functioning public education system many families are forced to send their children to Quranic schools far from their motherland. These children have practically no relations to their homeland anymore and are called *Almajiri*⁵⁶ in the local vernacular. These students try to survive on alms and temporary jobs – or criminal activities, organising cruel youth gangs both in the countryside and in big cities. The census which was taken in Kano state in 2006 found that there were at least 1.2 million *Almajiri* in Kano alone. One expert of the UNICEF estimated that more than 60 percent of the children never return home (Purefoy 2010). According to the data of the National Council for the Welfare of the Destitute, there were seven million *Almajiri* in Northern Nigeria in 2005 (Crisis Group 2014a, 4). This number increased to 9.5 million by 2013 (Elechi-Yekorogha 2013, 71).

Desperate *Almajiri* students contribute not only to social instability but they are the main targets of Boko Haram’s recruitment. Similarly to al-Shabaab in Somalia, street children without any perspective for job and better living conditions see the Jihadist organisation as a career opportunity (Botha-Abdile 2014). It also explains why Boko Haram is like a dragon, the head of which was cut off, but new heads are growing in its place: military operations can kill hundreds or thousands of fighters, but the millions of *Almajiri* from the Northern states provide a stable supply for the organisation. If the command

⁵⁵ In 2013, Nigeria became the biggest economy of the continent. Nigeria becomes Africa’s biggest economy (BBC 2014).

⁵⁶ The word comes from the Arabic *muhajir* = emigrant.

and control structure of the movement remains intact, it can reorganise its combat against the government and the “infidels”. This is also true for the general conditions of both the North and Nigeria as a whole: as long as most citizens feel that the wealth of the country is concentrated in the hand of a narrow elite, while others live in desperate need without education, healthcare, water and even food, the Boko Haram and other radical movements can easily utilise inequality and poverty to fuel tensions among the different religious, ethnic and social groups, and destabilise whole regions. Therefore, the military solution for the Jihadist insurgency can reach only a limited success – it can cure the symptoms only, and does not address the roots of the problem. As Chris Ngwodo said, *“the group itself is an effect and not a cause; it is a symptom of decades of failed government and elite delinquency finally ripening into social chaos”* (Sergie-Johnson 2015).

The death of Mohamed Yusuf and the radicalisation of Boko Haram

Although it is hard to imagine, Boko Haram originally was not a violent movement. Despite the fact that Yusuf did not believe in democracy, and he considered it a Western tool to jeopardise Islamic society and weaken the cohesion of *Umma* and he also rejected the use of violence to change the political landscape of the Muslim North. Yusuf thought that Islam could seize back its position through a step-by-step political struggle only, and while he spoke against corruption and bad governance, he tried to utilise the framework of the Nigerian political system to change it from within. His first goal was to introduce the Sharia in the northern states and re-establish the social services of the territory. To demonstrate that change was possible, Yusuf – thanks to the money which flooded to him by his wealthy supporters – usually donated food to the poor, and gathered Almajiri students to Quranic schools where they got food and shelter, and even organised an informal micro-credit system to support economic activities in Borno state (Crisis Group 2014a, 11-12). Ideologically Yusuf was a hard-core Salafist, who spent many years in Saud-Arabia and was indoctrinated with an orthodox Islamist ideology. Based on his studies, Yusuf presumed that all problems of the North originated from colonization and Western influence. In his mythical and idealized historical view, the Sokoto Caliphate was a perfect Islamic State without the problems of modern Nigeria like corruption, and others. He thought that the arrival of the British ended not only the independence in the North, but also brought the new administrative and political structure (democracy), religion (Christianity) and culture (education) of the West. According Yusuf this mixture of Western influence undermined the traditional – and ideal – Islamic society and contaminated it with corruption, greed and selfishness. Therefore, Yusuf refused everything which had any connection with the West in the wider sense.

As Owolade wrote, *“Boko Haram opposes not only Western education but also Western culture and science – a position Mohammed Yusuf revealed in an interview conducted by the BBC, when he stated that the belief that the earth is spherical in shape is a sharp contradiction to Islamic thought and therefore should be rejected along with Darwinism and the theory that rain comes from water evaporated by the sun”* (Owolade 2014).

Nevertheless, it should be underlined again that Yusuf disapproved of the use of violence in his struggle. It was not a simple choice because some members of the organisation backed the idea of starting a rebellion against the government. The leader of this fraction, which consisted of about 200 members, Abubakr Shekau split from the main group in 2002 and they conducted small-scale attacks against police stations. But their strength was limited, and the army almost totally eliminated the splinter group by 2004. Even Shekau could only narrowly survive the battle with the military (Crisis Group 2014a, 9-10).

Although Yusuf claimed that he had no connection with the uprising, in the atmosphere of the post 9/11-period and the “war on terror” his declarations did not convince the government. His trips to Saud Arabia and his Salafist ideology made him suspicious. In addition, Yusuf’s social teaching and his speeches against corruption and bad governance made him more and more uncomfortable to the government. Furthermore, radical members of the group who did not reject the use of violence caused yet another headache for Abuja. Until 2009, the police declared Yusuf “wanted” many times, but his high-level supporters and the fear from his charisma saved him. Nevertheless, in 2009 the mistrust against him and his movement increased so much that the security forces decided to act. The security operation called “Operation Flush” led to a full-scale uprising against the security forces in the North. Even Yusuf had come to support the revolt and he blamed the government with aggression and abuses (Smith 2014).

The circumstances of the rebellion are not clear: although it is evident that Boko Haram had a violent component, the organisation hardly resisted to the security operation: almost all of the 800 people who died during the clashes were the members of the organisation (HRW 2012). It seems the police wanted to destroy the whole organisation – both its moderate and radical wings. They arrested Yusuf, and what seems the most likely scenario, they executed him without a trial: although officially he was killed during an escape, the pictures of his bloody body were circulated in the social media and the internet, and it became evident that it must have been a cold-blooded murder (Duodu 2009).

The Taliban of Nigeria – the rise of terror

The death of Yusuf and the July 2009 uprising signalled a turning point in the history of the Boko Haram. The movement lost its charismatic, but more or less moderate leader, who became the martyr of the group. Furthermore, the brutal and indiscriminate violence of the security services bread similar answers from the survivors of Yusuf’s followers. In addition, the emerging new leadership under Abubakr Shekau got the proof that Abuja understood only the voice of weapons. Instead of eliminating the threat, the government only helped to create a monster.

The first attacks of the Shekau-led Boko Haram were low-scale assaults: the members of the movement stormed police stations and military barracks (HRW 2012, 41-42). But the group quickly improved its TTP (tactic, technique, procedure): at the end of 2010 it started to use IEDs (improvised explosive device), and during the elections in April 2011, Boko Haram exploded its first vehicle-borne IED (VBIED) (Crisis Group 2014a,

16). This method was used against the Nigerian Jihadists' first foreign target, the UN-compound in Abuja in August 2011. Two months earlier, in June, Nigeria's first suicide bomber set himself off at the gate of the police headquarters in the capital (Brock 2011). In the same year, the organisation extended its operation against Christians: one of the worst incidents was the bomb and assault rifle attack against a church on Christmas Day, which claimed 41 lives.

Such speed of development in their TTP was shocking. Boko Haram thrived and within two years exploded from a local, poorly equipped and organised insurgency group to a nation-wide – or at least regional – Jihadist movement using all the instruments of modern asymmetrical warfare (including IEDs, VBIEDs, suicide bombers). The main catalyst in this process was Boko Haram's foreign operations. The organisation sent fighters to Afghanistan, Somalia, Chad, Niger, Algeria, and Mali. Many members of the movement found shelter in these countries after the 2009 military crackdown. Some Jihadists were trained in the camps of Muammar Qadhafi. In practice it meant that the Boko Haram maintained connections with the core al-Qaeda and its affiliates the AQIM and the AQAP, the al-Shabaab in Somalia, the Taliban in Afghanistan, and the Ansar Dine and MUJAO in Mali (Crisis Group 2014a, 23-26). Besides these organisations, Shekau's group became part of the global Jihadist network, and by now it has gained a notorious reputation among them.

Despite its increasing and ever more sophisticated activity, Boko Haram was seen as a local problem. The attack against the UN-compound remained unique, and the organisation concentrated its assaults on their enemies within Nigeria: the government, the security services – and the Christians. Although the US declared Boko Haram a terrorist group in 2013 (BBC 2013), in fact it was operating more like an Islamist insurgency group than an international terrorist organisation. In spite of the fact that its attacks reached Niger, Chad and Cameroon, the expansion of its activities was attributed more to the geographical conditions, than to the intentions of Shekau to internationalise his movement. The forests and hills of the neighbouring countries provided food and shelter for the militias – and provided easy targets for kidnapping and looting. Neither Cameroon nor Niger were prepared for the infiltration of the Boko Haram, and it caused a great insecurity in its border territories (US Bureau of Counterterrorism 2013). Although Niger, Chad and Nigeria agreed to re-establish the Joint Multinational Task Force (JMTF), which originally had been formed to fight trans-border crime, and Cameroon also sought international cooperation (Irinnews 2013), it did not materialise in 2013-2014 (Crisis Group 2014a, 25), so Boko Haram could continue its campaign and maintain its safe heavens in the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa.

In 2013 at least one thousand people died because of Boko Haram activities, and in May the Nigerian President, Jonathan Goodluck declared the state of emergency in the three states (Botelho 2013). The army stepped up its operation against the Jihadists, but it reached only limited success. Furthermore, incidents like the Baga Massacre in which the army butchered 200 innocent civilians during the pursuit of Boko Haram members and burned 2000 building at the shore of Lake Chad (HRW 2013) did not add to the trust in the

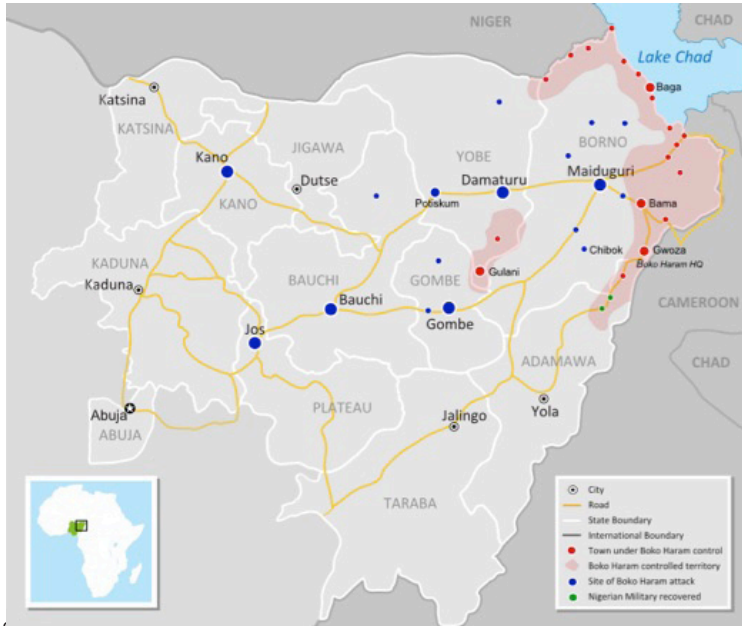
government. In their counter-insurgency operation the regular abuses by the Nigerian security forces against the population, including mass executions (HRW 2012, 58-73), alienated civilians from the government and contributed to the recruitment by Boko Haram, which also took advantage of the increasing tensions among different ethnic and religious groups. Jihadist terrorist attacks continued and hundreds were killed in suicide-bombings – mainly innocent civilians. While at the beginning the movement tried to select its targets and avoid assaults against Muslims, excluding government and security officials, by 2013 it had changed tactics: the explosions in Maiduguri, including a mosque (RT 2013), the Benisheik massacre, where militants indiscriminately killed almost 150 people as a revenge to the army's offensive (Reuters 2013) became proof of the group's radicalisation. Similarly to other Jihadist movements, not only "infidels" and the government employees have become targets, but everybody who did not give enough support to feed the spiral of violence: moderate imams, who spoke against murders, peasants, who sold their products in the markets under the control of the central administration, artisans who paid taxes to the government officials, and students who learnt "heretic" and "unholy" curriculum in governmental schools.

Hundreds of thousands escaped from the North, and thousands died. The intensity and brutality of the attacks was well demonstrated by the fact that the numerous assaults by the Boko Haram caught the attention of the international media. The organisation regularly appeared in the news (even, e.g., in the Hungarian media), and it has become one of the most infamous and feared terrorists groups in the world (National Interest 2014). Although al-Shabaab, the Hamas or the AQIM used more sophisticated methods, organisational structure and strategy, and they could show more successes both in their national and international operations, the raw brutality of the Boko Haram made it pale in comparison. The kidnapping of almost 300 Chibok school girls, which shocked the whole world and started an international protest campaign against the Jihadists organisation (Foxnews 2014) well symbolised the cruelty of the movement and the impotence of the government to hinder Jihadists' operations. In addition, in spite of a huge international indignation, Abuja got only limited foreign support against the Boko Haram.

Joint efforts against the Boko Haram: the African coalition force and the new government

Nevertheless, in some respects, the year 2014 seems a turning point in the fight against the Boko Haram. More than 10,000 people were killed in the insurgency by the Jihadists and the army alone in that year (Independent 2015). By August 2014, 650,000 inhabitants left their homes in the North to escape the movement (News24 2014). The numbers of the victims of the insurgency increased exponentially year to year, by 2014 reaching an unacceptable level. The noble ideas of Mohammed Yusuf about the rebirth of Sokoto Caliphate and the rule of the Sharia were over. Instead, the Boko Haram, which controlled an area the size of Belgium in the North with 17 governmental districts and 1.7 million citizens ushered in the era of terror and fear. As the Edinburgh International

wrote, “as well as seizing towns and villages, the group are still carrying out suicide bombings in urban centres and state capitals across northern Nigeria, including Kano, Gombe, Bauchi, Jos, Maiduguri and Damaturu. These mass-casualty attacks show little sign of abating and levels of violence are likely to rise as Boko Haram attempt to destabilise the country ahead of the February 2015 general elections” (Edinburghint 2015).



Areas Controlled by Boko Haram in January 2015 (Edinburghint 2015)

Nevertheless, the organisation became the victim of its own successes: it managed to conquer a territory of more than 20,000 square miles, but it had no capacity or administrative knowledge to hold on to it. Furthermore, its successes were not tolerable any more by the neighbouring states, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, the border regions of which had also become battlefields and the hinterland of the Boko Haram.

The last straw that broke the camel's back was the new Baga massacre in January 2015. The Boko Haram killed at least 2,000 people in the town, mainly the elderly, women and children who could not run fast enough to hide in the bush (Guardian 2015). Some days later the Chadian army, the most potent armed forces of the region entered Cameroon to help Yaoundé in the fight against the Jihadists (Reuters 2015a). By the end of January, Abuja also accepted the participation of N'djamena in the military offensive against the Boko Haram inside Nigeria (Cuddihy 2015). The hesitation of Jonathan Goodluck was understandable: the biggest economic power of the continent needed the support of its poor neighbours to cope with the Boko Haram insurgency.

The counter-insurgency offensive started with an air-strike, and in the first days of February, the allied forces invaded the Jihadists' strongholds. The African coalition forces comprised 7,500 soldiers from Chad, Niger, Cameroon, and Benin (Joselow 2015). The offensive liberated huge territories and inflicted heavy casualties for the Boko Haram which had no chance against the well-trained and equipped Chadian troops. The campaign was fostered by US intelligence and equipment (Flynn 2015). Nevertheless, after the first military gains the national pride of Nigerians emerged soon: Chadian soldiers complained that their Nigerian counterpart did not allow them to pursue and eliminate the surviving Jihadists fighters as they did it in Mali two years earlier (Flynn and Felix 2015). The speed of the operation slowed down, and the remaining groups of the Boko Haram withdrew to the Sambisa Forest, a dense jungle area covering 23,000 square miles. In April, the Nigerian army launched a new offensive in Sambisa, which killed hundreds of Jihadists and freed a large number of women and children held hostage by the militants: by May more than 700 people escaped (Reuters 2015b), while 400 Boko Haram fighters died (Maina 2015). Nevertheless, the tempo of the assault slowed down in May due to landmines, IED-s and the dense forest.

Although the Nigerian Army destroyed 20 training camps, despite the air support they had no capacity to clear the whole Sambisa, and most of Boko Haram fighters managed to escape (Foxnews 2015). It was also a bad omen that in spite of heavy casualties none of the movement's high ranking officials was captured or killed.

The post-election era – the Boko Haram strikes back

The campaign ahead of the presidential elections in 2015 was mainly framed by the fight against the Boko Haram. Both candidates, Jonathan Goodluck and Muhammadu Buhari promised the elimination of the movement. Nevertheless, it sounded less credible from the mouth of Goodluck who could not cope with the Jihadists during his five years of presidency. The international community and the locals alike were afraid that the elections would spur violence again, similarly to what happened in 2011 when at least 1,000 people died in the riots (Crisis Group 2014c). The prospects were not promising: it was highly debated whether it was possible to hold elections in the three states under insurgency, Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. After it became evident that the opposition's rainbow coalition, the All Progressives Congress (ACP) would not accept the calling off of the elections in these mainly Muslim-inhabited and ACP-supporter states, the government declared the postponement of the elections from February to the end of March to buy more time to bolster the stability in the North and to help the Independent National Electoral Commission to prepare for the voting. The decision raised tensions and mistrust between the political groups as well as alarm among foreign actors (Crisis Group 2015). Nevertheless, the elections took place relatively without a hitch, and the former military dictator, Buhari won the presidency. The behaviour of Goodluck, who congratulated his competitor and called on his followers to accept the results of the vote, played a significant role in that Africa's biggest economy avoiding new chaos (Breakingnews 2015).

Buhari tried to prove his military record which highly contributed to his electoral success. The attack against the Sambisa Forest and the decision by the Nigerian Army to move its operations centre to the North in Maiduguri for closer command and control of counter-insurgency operations, were carried out accordingly (Ibeh 2015). But events soon showed that military operations alone cannot provide a solution to the Boko Haram problem. Despite the military setbacks, the Jihadists have maintained their capacity for asymmetric warfare: although they could not resist regular forces face to face, they started a new wave of guerrilla attacks and devastating suicide bombings. Hundreds died in the new Boko Haram campaign. The most significant attacks were a Maiduguri mosque bombing and an assault-rifle attack against another mosque in Kukawa which together claimed almost 150 lives (Umar 2015). Furthermore, the organisation stepped up its activities in the countries which participated in the coalition forces. The twin suicide bombing which killed 24 people and wounded more than 100 in N'Djamena was the first such attack in the city (Ndtv 2015). In early August the Boko Haram took 135 hostages and killed eight others in a raid in Cameroon. As Reuters reported, *“more than 800 people have been killed in just two months in a surge of Boko Haram attacks, which began after Buhari took office on a pledge to defeat the militants”* (Kaze 2015).

The overall number of victims since the beginning of the uprising in 2009 reached more than 15,000. One week later, on 12 August another female suicide bomber exploded herself in the busy cattle market of Sabon Gari, killing at least 47 people and injuring another 52 (Hiiraan 2015). Although the five nations which were affected by the Boko Haram insurgency decided in February to form a more structured and capable regional military force with 8,750 troops against the Jihadists (BBC 2015), to be deployed in November, it has been delayed, despite Buhari's pledge that the force would be active by the end of July to back the African coalition force. Delays have been blamed on funding and the previously mentioned uneasy relations between Nigeria and its neighbours (Hiiraan 2015).

The prospects for Boko Haram's eradication

The military coalition against the Boko Haram could not eliminate the insurgency. First, its cohesion was weakened by the misunderstandings and limited trust among its participants. Second, because of the huge territories, dense forests and the lack of necessary counter-insurgency equipment, such as a considerable number of helicopters, even the planned capacities of the coalition forces would not be enough to efficiently destroy the military component of the Boko Haram. This was well demonstrated during the operations in February-June 2015: when the Jihadists met too strong pressure, they simply gave up the fight and retreated to their safe heavens. Coalition forces did not have enough soldiers to control every village and town, so militias often returned to the earlier liberated areas. The main operational territory of the Boko Haram, Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states cover almost 160,000 square kilometres, with more than 12 million inhabitants. The efficient control of this area would require tens, if not hundreds of thousands of troops. Third, ca-

sualties hardly touched the operational capabilities of the organisation.

Furthermore, none of Boko Haram's top commanders was eliminated in the recent offensive, and the organization could maintain its ability to conduct terrorist attacks across the whole of Nigeria. Even if its military wing was destroyed or significantly weakened, the organisation could continue its terrorist campaign – similar to what happened with al-Shabaab in Somalia (Bryden, 2014). Fourth, despite its increasing brutality and the widening gap between the ideas of Yusuf and the ideology and practice of Shekau, the movement could maintain its unity.

In 2012, a group of fighters and top leaders who distanced themselves from the indiscriminate killing of civilians by the Shekau-led wing declared their secession and formed a new movement called Ansaru. Among their ranks, they had many veterans from Afghanistan and Ansaru managed to establish a strong connection with other foreign Jihadists movements.

Many experts hoped that the split was the first step towards the disintegration of the Boko Haram. Nevertheless, the two groups forged a coalition within a year: Shekau appointed one of the leaders of the Ansaru his deputy, while the Ansaru provided access for the Boko Haram to international Jihadists networks (Crisis Group 2014a, 26-30). Although the separation between the two organisations remained, de-facto they have been operating together since 2012.

Last, but not least, as it was underlined earlier, the reasons for the Boko Haram insurgency lie in the social, economic and political circumstances of the North. Corruption, bad governance, poverty and other miseries of the area are the main contributors to the sudden rise of the Jihadists. Security forces can kill hundreds of Boko Haram fighters – but millions of Almajiri students and other unemployed young people are available for recruitment. This, compounded by the abuses of the military against both Muslim and Christian civilians, and ethnic tensions guarantee the continuous reinforcements for the organisation.

The only solution could come in a comprehensive way, which would combine military, social and economic aspects. It would take the change of the basic structure and everyday functioning of Nigeria, the transformation of the predatory state into a more responsible one. But it is a big question whether most Nigerian politicians and businessmen are ready for this change. The Boko Haram insurgency profoundly affects only three out of the 36 federal states of the country: although the group conducts terrorist attacks in many places, most of the territory of Nigeria is free from direct attacks. And while most people do not feel the direct threat from the Jihadists, it is hard to imagine a comprehensive solution.

To conclude, the chances of the Boko Haram surviving the current military offensive are good: the root causes of the insurgency and the organisation's basic infrastructure have remained untouched. Although it has suffered some setbacks and casualties, their bases are strong, and the Boko Haram is deeply embedded in the social and economic reality of the North. The declared alliance with Islamic State (Iacino 2015) was mainly a media bluff without significant achievements: Nigerian Jihadists have already formed their

international networks in recent years, and due to its geographical vicinity, the AQIM or al-Shabaab can provide more support for Shekau than the IS from Raqqa (which was recently also subjected to intense bombing). Furthermore, the real strength of the Boko Haram is in its local support. Therefore, what can be stated as the most likely outcome for the insurgency in Nigeria is that it will be a long war.

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MIGRATION CRISIS, NEGATIVE IMPACT OF MIGRATION - A CASE STUDY OF KENYA

LUCIE KONEČNÁ

List of Contents

- Introduction
- Existing research of negative impacts of migration
- Refugees and migration in Kenya
- The negative impacts of migration in Kenya
 - Social impacts
 - Political-security impacts
 - Economic impacts
 - Environmental impacts
- Conclusion

Introduction

Population migration is a phenomenon that has been evolving since ancient times. People migrated in order to obtain better living conditions, to get food, due to adverse weather and other reasons. It usually took place within one continent but at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries transoceanic voyages were widespread mainly due to gain of wealth. Refugeeism is also considered a form of migration. However, international law began to take note of the problem of refugees in earnest in 1948. In that year within the UN, the Refugee Convention was approved, signed in 1951 (UNHCR 2011). Ratifying countries (including Kenya) have committed themselves to respect the Convention, but in practice the principles are often violated. On the basis of that treaty, states are obliged to provide asylum to refugees and the principle of non-refoulement applies to all refugees.

Acceptance of refugees is from a moral and ethical point of view the right principle, but it can often have negative impacts on the hosting state. There are several exceptions under which asylum is not granted or refugees are deported. These exceptions include cases when refugees have committed a criminal act in home or host country or their presence is undesirable from a security standpoint and it could threaten the safety of local residents. When we do not take into account these cases even an influx of “ordinary” refugees who have not committed a criminal offense may mean for the hosting state a certain burden or risk. It always depends on how the country is prepared for the arrival of refugees, on the size of refugee flows, on the social status of refugees and their diversification. Kenya has been facing a mass influx of refugees since the 90s. Since those years, the country has undergone a long evolution on the issue of refugeeism, undertaken a number of changes

and adopted several measures on that issue. Even though there is extensive support from the international community and non-governmental organizations, statistics and surveys show that a mass influx of refugees into Kenya has more negative than positive impacts. This work describes the development of the situation since the 90s and analyses the most significant negative impacts of refugeeism on Kenya.

Existing research of negative impacts of migration

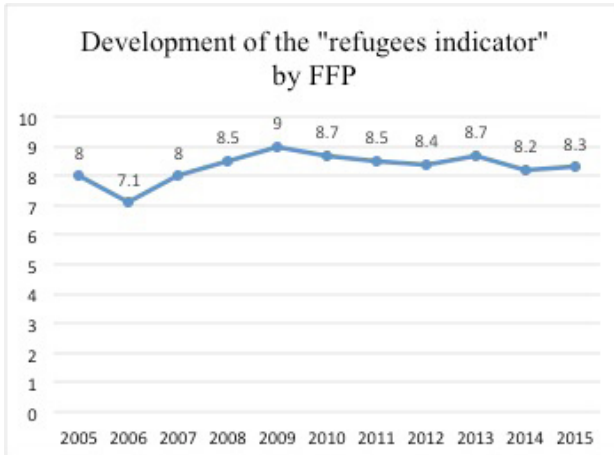
Migration and refugeeism are two concepts that share a lot in common, but there are distinct differences between them. For example, Dawson describes the migration as a change of residence for an extended period of time, which often leads to crossing the border (Dowson et. al. 2005, 16). The reasons for the migration are varied and can include natural disasters, overpopulation, religious persecution, etc. In contrast, a refugee under the Refugee Convention is everyone who due to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion is outside their national country, and it is impossible due to fear of the above reasons, to use the protection of their own state (Kirui and Mwaruvie 2012, 162).

Most experts who deal with the weakening or failing of states, consider migration (especially the mass one) one of the debilitating factors. We can mention Robert Rotberg or FFP (Fund for Peace), who measure Fragile State Index and who consider Massive movement of refugees and internally displaced persons as one of the significant social indicator which weaken the state (FFP 2015). The highest indicator value is 10, and since 2005 (the start of measurement) Kenya reaches a value of around 8 (seen in Annex No. 1). It means that the massive influx of refugees has been adversely affecting the stability of the country since 2005 and Kenya finds itself generally in Alert situation.²

Other scientist who described the impact of refugees on the host communities is Waswa, who categorized these impacts on Kenya, but failed to work with concrete data (Waswa 2012, 4-28). He determined the most significant of impacts as socio-economic impacts, which include changes in livelihood, employment and security measures. Enghoff et. al. formed a research team that studied the effects of one of the refugee camps in Kenya on the state itself. The negative impacts that they recorded were divided into the socio-economic, economic and environmental category (Enghoff et. al. 2010, 67-76). Gomez et. al. examined the impact of refugees on the local community (in several Asian and African countries but not Kenya), dividing them into economic, political-security, environmental and social (Gomez et. al. 2010, 7-20). Other authors who have conducted research of the impact of refugees on the Kenyan state have provided lots of examples of data and information, but they did not categorize it.

Their research shows that not only social, economic or environmental, but also political and security impacts negatively affect Kenya. In this work, four categories of impact will be described, because Kenya is affected by social, political-security, economic and environmental impacts.

The annex no. 1. Development of the “refugees indicator” by FFP.



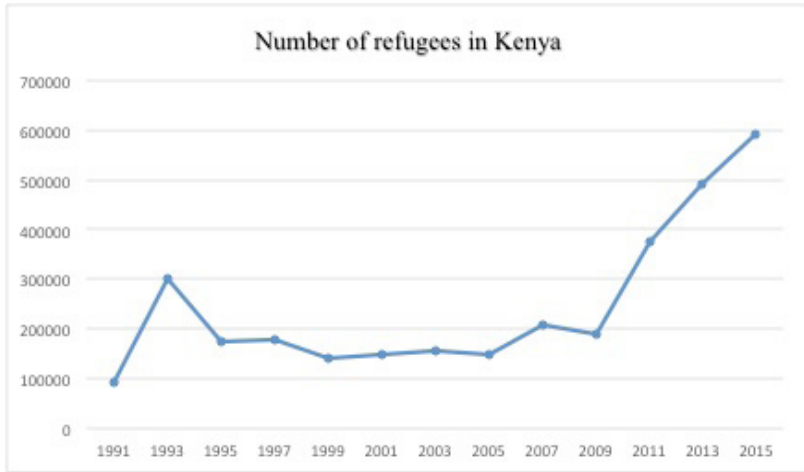
Source: Own graph, data available from FFP (2015).

Refugees and migration in Kenya

The massive influx of refugees into Kenya started in 1991. There was the fall of the Barre regime in Somalia, which sparked a Civil War, expelling thousands of people from their homes. Most of the Somali refugees headed to Kenya and impacted on the deterioration of the security situation during the '90s. Incidents between refugees and locals escalated and refugees were blamed for the worsened security and rising criminality. The Kenyan government responded by closing all refugee camps, except for two (Kakuma and Dadaab), which are operating to the present day (Kirui and Mwaruvie 2012, 166).

Currently, refugees can legally reside only in these two camps and in the suburban area of Nairobi called Eastleigh, which the authorities repeatedly attempted to close. The next big wave of migration occurred in 2006 when Ethiopian troops became involved in the fighting in Somalia. The third great migration wave of refugees began in 2011, when long-term drought continued in East Africa for an extended time period. Currently, 590,000 registered refugees are located in Kenya (UNHCR 2015). An estimate of all refugees, including unregistered ones is approximately a million (UNHCR 2015). The development of the refugees flows into Kenya can be seen in Annex no. 2

Annex no. 2. Number of refugees in Kenya.



Source: Own graph, data available from UNHCR (2015).

The largest group of refugees, about 74% are Somalis, the rest are Sudanese, Ethiopians and people from other African countries such as Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (UNHCR 2014). 85% of all refugees are illiterate, which is a very high figure compared with the Kenyans, because just 30% of them are illiterate (UNESCO 2015). Both refugee camps are overcrowded and the capacity has been exceeded several times.

Camps are marked by a number of deficiencies. Refugees have to build the dwelling itself, while they have the lack of material. There is also the lack of heating material and personnel.

A large part of the refugees does not have access to latrines, in Dadaab only 42% (Waswa 2012, 34). The security in the camps is very poor and sexual assaults, robberies, murders and attacks on humanitarian workers are common. What's more, grenade and bomb attacks are also frequent. Eastleigh is also plagued by a range of other issues brought on by the high density of refugees, such as high pollution and dysfunctional sewerage. Other problems are the high prevalence of illegal goods, high crime rate and the already mentioned growing number of bomb and grenade attacks.

Over the years, the government tried to solve the situation of refugees by various means. They closed the borders in 2007, closed border crossings, closed down most camps, stopped the registration of refugees for one year in 2012 and even tried to forcibly move all the refugees to Dadaab and Kakuma. All these measures have exacerbated the problems and led to hundreds of thousands of unregistered refugees in the country. Kenyan government, Somali government and the UNHCR signed a tripartite agreement on the repatriation of Somali refugees in 2013 (The Government of Republic of Kenya 2013). The agreement sets out the conditions under which the refugees can return to Somalia, and

which duties within this problem Kenyan and Somali government must meet. Repatriation was to be carried out on a voluntary basis, however the vast majority of the refugees did not use this option.

The negative impacts of migration in Kenya

Refugees may constitute a burden for the hosting state in many ways. Carmignani and Kler conducted research in 2013, at the end of which they issued a series of recommendations on how the state should deal with refugees. The key, according to these authors, is to prevent the militarization of refugees, which may pose a significant security risk. Recommendations on how to prevent this phenomenon are numerous. Do not build camps near the border and remote parts of the country, ensure monitoring of refugees, ensure enough police forces, camp cannot have a high population density and also should not be too large (Carmignani and Kler 2013, 10-11). If we compare these recommendations with the situation in Kenya, only one thing is fulfilled - monitoring of refugees, but even that is not sufficient due to the high overall number of refugees in Kenya. What's more, refugeeism has a variety of mostly negative impacts on Kenya. I divided these impacts into four categories - social, political-security, economic and environmental and described them in the following section.

Social impacts

The presence of refugees in host countries may have a potential impact on ethnic balance, social conflicts and provision of social services. Refugees represent roughly 3% of the population of Kenya (UNHCR 2015). Even though that the figure does not seem so high, there are conflicts every day between refugees and domestic population in areas where the refugee camps are located. It is because refugees in these provinces (Rift Valley and North Eastern provinces), represent more than 50% of the population (Sturge 2014, 16). Both areas are very dry and inhospitable. Residents there complain that due to extensive humanitarian assistance, which is primarily focused only on refugees the inequalities are growing larger and larger between them and the refugees. That is true to a certain extent. The locals are very poor and have to pay for school. However, refugees can attend school free of charge. The same applies to medical assistance and other services (Grindheim 2013, 36). In the vicinity of the camps there is an increase in crime, verbal conflicts and disputes between refugees and locals over wood and water are very frequent, because there is a shortage of fire wood in the area. All these problems lead to social tensions and conflicts.

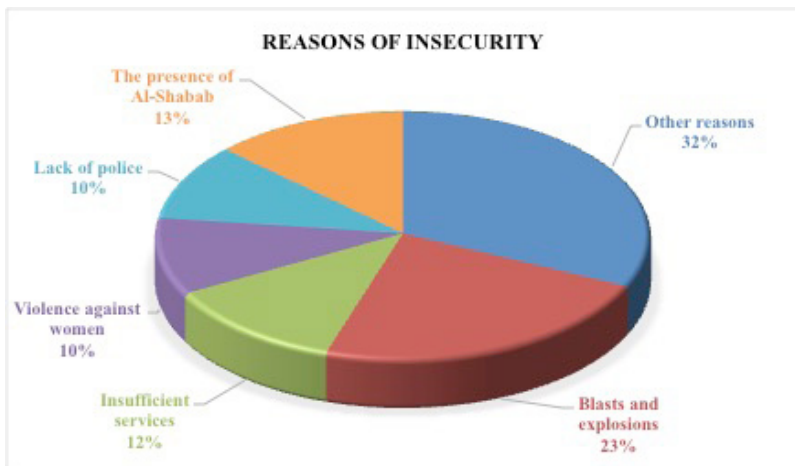
Another social problem that the presence of refugees in these areas has caused is the forced change of the way of life. Locals have always been pastoralists. However, with the arrival of refugees, maintaining the livelihoods began to get difficult, in some cases even entirely impossible. The reason is that a large portion of refugees are trying to subsist through the pastoral activity as well. The problem is not only that they create a competi-

tion but they massively degrade the surrounding countryside and deplete the scarce water resources. Pastoralists must migrate with the livestock over much greater distances (sometimes hundreds of kilometers), which is proving next to impossible. For this reason, some of them changed the way of life, others even moved to other Kenyan provinces (Waswa 2012, 40). As such refugees are affecting internal relocations of populations within Kenya. In 2013 and 2014 there was an increase of internally displaced persons compared to previous years. Most of these displaced people come from these two provinces. The reasons of relocations are inter-ethnic violence, the already mentioned lack of livelihood and a prolonged drought (IDMC 2014).

Political-security impacts

There are many problems within the category of political and security impacts. One of these problems has been already mentioned and involves disputes with local residents near the camps and Eastleigh. These disputes are often supplemented by violence. The most common reason for disputes is lack of wood and other heating materials (Enghoff et. al. 2010, 15). In the vicinity of the camps, but also directly in them there is an increase in violent attacks, murders and rapes. Waswa, (2012), but also Grindheim (2013) conducted dozens of interviews with local residents, who, in most cases, reported that they do not feel safe there. Refugee Consortium of Kenya also conducted an extensive research that included thousands of respondents, who were mostly refugees, rarely locals. Approximately 60% of them have expressed concerns over their safety, as is shown in Annex No. 3.

Annex No. 3: Reasons of insecurity



Source: Own graph (Refugee Consortium of Kenya 2012, 46).

Deteriorating security around the camps has been also confirmed by police reports. Police report of North Eastern provinces from 1994-1998 described the insecurity in the area caused by the influx of refugees. Second Report from 1998-2002 described the increase in banditry, generalized violence and weapons smuggling. The report for the 2004-2008 period stated that areas Dadaab and Jarajila are much more dangerous in comparison with others. The latest report from 2012 described an alarming situation. According to the report, refugees have been responsible for the unsuitable situation (Kurui a Mwaruvie 2012, 155-165). The same conclusions are also found in the security reports from Kakuma. Reports indicate a significant increase in the number of incidents in the camps and the surrounding areas. It also notes that the frequent outbreaks of violence occur without warning.

The influx of refugees affects not only the increasing violence around the camps, but the situation is exacerbated further also due to the lack of Kenyan police. The entire Kenya has a problem with a lack of police forces (Mkutu a Wandera 2013, 25). The government has been trying to resolve the situation by creating so-called Reserve Units that are built on the principle of voluntarism (like militia). The state provides to these units weapons and the Kenyan police should supervise them. In reality, it is often the case that the state furnished weapons get into the hands of criminals or terrorists. It so happens that a large portion of the Kenyan police has to be present in refugee camps, which in turn causes a shortage of police in other areas.

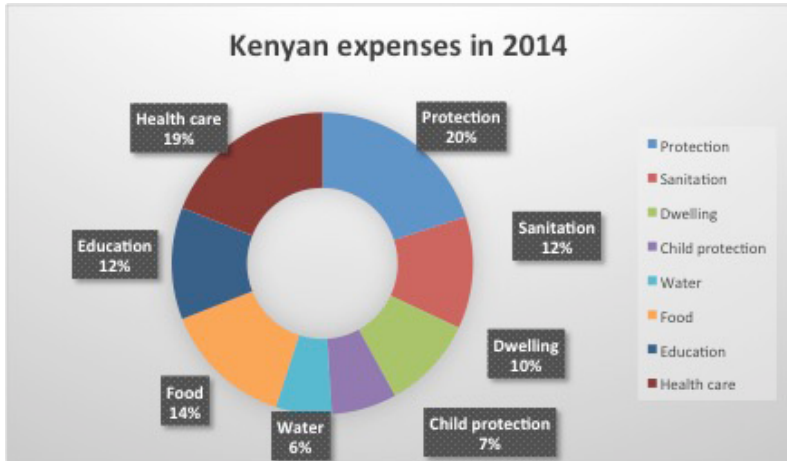
Another security impact is brought on by terrorists, particularly from the terrorist organization Al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam, who impersonate themselves as refugees. They exploit the porosity of the Kenyan-Somali border, which is in many places unguarded. Their presence in refugee camps is also confirmed in a survey of Refugee Consortium of Kenya (see Annex No. 3). 13% of respondents said they are worried about the presence of members of Al-Shabaab. Kenyan police themselves state on its website that there is a variety of evidence about the presence of members of Al-Shabaab in Eastleigh. Eastleigh is often exploited for arms trafficking and it is considered as a center for the coordination of terrorist attacks in Kenya (Kenya Police 2015).

Economic impacts

Influx of refugees often entails for the hosting state a major economic burden. Most of the refugees who come into the country are very poor. Thus, the state must invest own money to provide food, housing, education, sanitation and the costs of transport and communication facilities also increases. Although Kenya has been receiving substantial assistance from the UN, the EU, individual countries, the World Bank and various governmental and non-governmental organizations, Kenya must invest its own financial resources to cover the needs of refugees. In the years 2013-2014, the mere cost of meals in both camps Kakuma and Dadaab accounted for 122 million dollars, while Kenya received only 71 millions dollars through international and local aid. This implies that Kenya had to pay for food for all refugees in 2013-2014 with its own money in the value of 51 million (UNHCR 2014, 39). The amount that Kenya generally pays out mostly for refugees ranges

from tens to hundreds of millions of dollars per year. UNHCR calculated the percentage in the various areas Kenya had to pay from own resources in 2014, which came out to around 10%. The most expensive is the protection of refugees. It must be taken into account that a large number of them, especially in Eastleigh have a regular job. The percentage of expenditures are shown in Annex No. 4.

Annex No. 4. Kenyan expenses in 2014



Source: Own graph (UNHCR 2014, 31).

Yet another problem afflicting the Kenyan population is that refugees are driving down wages, often willing to work for much lower pay than Kenyans. Refugees in Kakuma work at the same jobs as the Kenyans for a monthly salary ranging from 23 to 71 US dollars and Kenyans for wage from 450 to 1,500 US dollars (Pavanello et. al. 2010, 15). Locals therefore often complain about refugees. Grindheim conducted research in the hospital complex in Kakuma, according to which the hospital itself employs 78 refugees and only 21 Kenyans (Grindheim 2013, 20). In addition, he conducted a series of interviews with UNHCR staff who had confirmed this trend. In areas with a high concentration of refugees, refugees get a job more easily because of their willingness to work for low wages.

The positive impact is that due to an extensive humanitarian assistance, the prices of essential commodities in camps and areas where these camps are located are lower than in other areas of Kenya. Prices of basic commodities such as corn, rice, wheat, sugar and cooking oil are at least 20% lower than in other cities of Kenya (Enhgoff et. al. 2010, 12).

Environmental impacts

The high concentration of refugees in one place has a great impact on the environment. Gathering wood and building materials in the vicinity of the camp caused the irreversible devastation, within a 10 km radius from the camp, visible damage within a radius of 10-20 km and less impact even at distances greater than 50 km (Waswa 2012, 20). The surrounding of the camp is almost felled and very dirty, because there is a huge waste production. Impacts on pastures and water sources are also noticeable. High water consumption of local resources meant that the surrounding rivers, for example river Tarach in Kakuma, are nearly dried up (Grindheim 2013, 4). Both provinces where refugees camps are located (Rift Valley and North Eastern provinces) are affected by the felling of large areas, environmental pollution, depletion of some resources, reduction of populations of animals, decrease in agricultural land, increased transmission of disease and loss of biodiversity (Oucho 2007, 13). The impact of refugees in Dadaab and Kakuma on the environment is also highlighted by the fact that environmental degradation is a direct consequence of policies that dictate to refugees living in large camps with strict restrictions of movement in the area.

An important point is also that of health and hygiene. Special attention should be paid to the issue because only 57% of refugees in Kenya have access to clean water (UNHCR 2014). This fact, together with the lack of access to latrines and a high concentration of refugees in one place facilitate the spread of diseases. Only 42% of the camps' population have access to latrines in Dadaab camp (Waswa 2012, 16). Based on research from 2014, the situation is better in Kakuma camp, where 80% of the camp's population have access to latrines (Médecins Sans Frontières 2014, 6). The influx of large numbers of refugees and poor sanitation cause an increase in communicable infectious diseases in the surrounding areas. For example, according to research carried out by Reynal-Querol, migration of large numbers of refugees causes malaria among the population in areas where refugees are turning (Collier 2007, 44). In addition, research among children in Dadaab's area revealed that the most common type of diseases among children were malaria and respiratory diseases. During the years 2012-2013, DGM monitored the spread of diseases in the Dadaab camp, during which time they recorded total of 8 periods together with outbreaks of disease. The following outbreaks were recorded: cholera, hepatitis E and malaria (DGMQ 2015). These diseases have been also spreading among Kenyans, who often visit camps for work or because of local markets. Moreover, refugees themselves often leave camps despite restrictions.

Conclusion

The massive influx of refugees always has a wide range of impacts on the host community, and it may represent a high burden for the country as a whole. The four described categories of impact confirm that they have a great influence on the functionality

and stability of Kenya. There are more and more refugees in Kenya and despite the efforts of the Kenyan government, no measures have been taken towards addressing this issue. It can be said that the situation has been relatively stabilised thanks to international aid. Without this help Kenya would not be able to handle the situation and would have failed.

Generally, there are three options for resolving the situation of refugees. The first option is repatriation back to their home states. Due to the principle of non-refoulement and the unwillingness of most refugees to return, this solution seems very unlikely. The second option is the resettlement of refugees to third countries, which has in practice been happening since the 90s, but the number of IDPs in comparison with the total number of refugees in Kenya is negligible. The last option is the integration of refugees amongst the host community. However, the Kenyan government has established camps in remote areas, issuing a strict ban on free movement, which makes integration almost impossible. It is clear that something has to change in the future for Kenya to be able to fulfill at least some of the principles outlined above.

FFP data show that the mass movement of refugees and internally displaced persons in Kenya is not developing in a positive direction, but the great impact of other factors such as demographic pressures and legitimacy of the state are also at play weakening the country. The question for the future is how the situation will evolve and if government changes the strategy regarding the treatment of refugees because their existing isolation in Eastleigh, Kakuma and Dadaab does not represent a long-term solution.

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Asia and Pacific

SIMON DRUGDA, FILIP SEBOK

Contents

- Introduction
- Shinzo Abe's Japan: Back to the past
- Contentious issues
 - Comfort women
 - History textbooks
 - Visits to the Yasukuni Shrine
 - Burden of apology
- History of Japan's foreign relations
- Conclusion

Introduction

Seventy years after the end of World War II in Asia, the puzzle over its historical legacy seems to be anything but an issue solely for historians. The way nations remember their past and how historical narratives shape their identity is deeply intertwined with the current regional relations. Nowhere has history been more controversial than in Japan, the wartime aggressor of the WWII and the colonizer of Asia. Tokyo has been continuously blamed for not facing squarely its history, at times even creating its own distorted version of the past and offering insufficient apologies for its misbehavior. These accusations have been mainly lifted by China and South Korea, who have had the most intimate experience with the traumatizing construction of the Japanese imperialist project in Asia.

This paper will analyze the position of Japan on the issue of its wartime legacy and the role of history in its foreign relations in Northeast Asia. Firstly, we will introduce the current Shinzo Abe government in Japan and its general outlook on a selected number of history issues, namely the comfort women issue, history textbook controversies, visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, and the question of Japan's apology. In subsequent sections, we will proceed to discuss these issues of contention as perceived by Japan and their importance within the triangle of relations between Japan, South Korea and China.

Shinzo Abe's Japan: Back to the past

While the controversy about historical issues in Japan is not by any means new, the interplay of various factors brought it to the foreground with the arrival of the administration of Shinzo Abe in 2012. Having decimated the Democratic Party of Japan in elections, Abe's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) returned to power with him becoming the PM for a second time after a brief stint in 2006/2007. Abe has ended a streak of revolving

doors at Kantei and stabilized the volatile political situation. Barring an unexpected turn of events, he may well stay in power until 2018. He has used this powerful position to promote his ambitious, yet controversial vision of Japan. This has manifested in heralding that “Japan is back”, ready to reinvigorate its stagnating economy and take a high-profile on the international scene, freeing itself from the shackles of a restraining constitution and abandoning the pacifist foreign policy, largely in reaction to the monumental rise of China.

Efforts to “bring Japan back” have attracted great attention to the controversial narratives of Japan’s past the government endorses, wondering, to what exactly Japan wants to return. Indeed, Abe has been a leading figure of the faction in Japanese politics that refuses to accept the prevalent narrative of Japanese history in the first half of the past century. In his 2006 book *Towards beautiful country*, he explains his vision for Japan, whilst failing to avoid controversial statements as for example that war criminals convicted before the Tokyo Tribunal are not recognized as such by Japanese law (Tisdall 2013). The stated goal of Abe has been to “break from the post war regime”, which he no longer deems suitable. Perhaps ironically, Abe, who professes to be the right person to move Japan towards future after decades of stagnation, is the one resurrecting the past and directing the world’s attention to Japan’s struggle with its contentious historical legacy.

Abe has been firmly embodied in the web of right-wing groups with controversial agenda on their slate. Among these, Nippon Kaigi supports visits to the Yasukuni shrine, lobbies for retraction of Japan’s apologies and seeks to return Japanese society to the pre-WWII traditional values, centered on the reverence of the Emperor. In the new Cabinet, formed by Abe after elections in 2014, 15 of its 19 members belonged to the group. Another powerful grouping close to Abe with a similar agenda, the Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership, heralds the growing importance of Shinto in the state politics. These high-profile groups are at the vanguard of the Japanese revisionist movement and demonstrate that controversial historical attitudes are deeply entrenched amongst the nation’s political elite.

It is misleading to claim that Abe has been placating the ultra-right wing voting base with his stance on historical issues. It is the PM and the governing leadership (mainly from the ranks of the LDP) who are the rightist conservative elements. Contrary to appealing to the prevailing sentiments for support, Abe’s priorities often diverge from those of the majority of the public, especially as far as the normalization of security policy and the abandonment of the pacifist constitution are concerned. This may in a long term, if the divide or the discontent of the populace grows larger, work to bring about an unexpected opponent to Abe’s policies in the Japanese public, with protests mounting against the controversial security legislation or the restart of Sendai nuclear reactors.

Contentious issues

What precisely is the discussion about history issues in Japan about and how has the Abe government contributed to it? In the following section, we will investigate a selected number of contentious issues, an inquiry to which will shed light on how history

became the focal point of contestation among countries in Northeast Asia. These issues are the comfort women, history textbooks, the Yasukuni shrine visits and the question of apology.

Comfort women

Comfort women is a Japanese euphemism that refers to women who were abducted and coerced to provide sexual services for the Japanese Imperial Army during WWII in military brothels, known as “comfort houses” set up in the occupied territories (Kingston 2011). Perhaps paradoxically, the reason for setting up the scheme was to prevent escalation of hostile sentiments between the occupying army and natives, by confining the sexual excesses of soldiers behind closed doors of comfort houses.

Native women from the Japanese controlled areas in Asia as well as a smaller number of captured women of European descent, were forcefully relocated and subjected to sexual exploitation in inhumane conditions, while constantly threatened with death or physical abuse. Although the exact number of women victims to sexual slavery cannot be conclusively proven (Japanese military burned most of its records), academics generally believe about two hundred thousand women were affected. Only about 25 percent survived this treatment (Brooks 1999, 98).

Japan has officially apologized for its conduct to the former comfort women (also discussed below). The most fundamental expressions of remorse remain the 1993 statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei (Kono statement) and later apologies made by the PM Tomiichi Murayama (Murayama statement) from 1995 onwards. In 1994, the Japanese set up Asian Women’s Fund (Soh 2003, 210) to compensate the affected women and more than two hundred received a signed letter of apology from the then PM Tomiichi Murayama.

Japan has made many subsequent apologies in years to come, however the issue remains open to controversy. Abe himself has repeatedly sparked international strife, when in 2007 he stated that there was no evidence that the Japanese government had kept sex slaves (Hirofumi 2008, 123), or when in 2014 he set up a committee to revise the Kono statement. Interestingly enough, its mission was to consider “concrete measures to restore Japan’s honor with regard to the comfort women issue.” Still, in a rather sudden turn of rhetoric, Abe later chose to “clarify” he had no intention of renouncing or altering the statement regardless of the result. The Abe government last year also requested, in an unsuccessful bid, a partial retraction of a 1996 UN human rights report on the women Japan forced into sex slavery (Fackler 2014).

History textbooks

The controversy over Japanese history textbooks’ content and school curricula has been periodically the cause of diplomatic outcry. Under the current system, each public and private school selects its textbooks from a list of 2-8 titles authorized by the Minis-

try of Education (Dore 1970, 550). To receive such an authorization, draft manuscripts are submitted to the Ministry for review. Government officials review them to make sure they follow the curriculum and note corrections to be implemented. At this point, publishers face a decision whether to revise the text and in the process asking what gives any one publication a higher chance of getting on the list is clear. For example in 1997, 6 in 7 textbooks included a mention of comfort women, in 2002 only 3 in 8 did, while none of the textbooks now in use does (Kingston 2015).

Legitimacy of this screening system has been challenged both internationally and domestically, but next to no avail. The content of Japan's government-censored textbooks makes the headlines approximately once every decade. It has been this way in 1982, 1997, in 2000-2001, or in 2007 and more recently, when the Ministry formulated a requirement for all textbooks to reflect the government's position on history and territorial issues with South Korea and China (Bukh 2007, 688). Needless to say, neither of them was pleased. The Chinese were especially enraged about the decision to use the word "incident" in some of the books to describe the Nanking massacre of December 1937.

Not only foreign audience, but also progressive and left-leaning Japanese politicians accuse the government of downplaying, sugarcoating, and whitewashing the Japanese aggression, while, the conservative right-wing backers on the other end of the aisle believe the textbooks simply avoid the tone of victimhood (Schneider 2011, 116). Unsurprisingly, PM Abe belongs to the latter group, openly advocating against the "self-torturing" way history has been taught in Japan. He argues this led to diminishing the country's pride, especially among the youth, who are now said to lack a sense of pride for their nation. In its manifesto for the 2012 election, LDP promised to restore "patriotic" values in education and labeled current textbooks "ideologically prejudiced expressions based on self-torturing views of history" (The Economist 2014).

Visits to the Yasukuni Shrine

The Yasukuni Shrine controversy is one of the chief issues that puts strain on relations between Japan and its neighbors. The Japanese statesmen have been long drawn to the connection of the Shrine to the country's imperial past just as other countries have been repugned by it. All the Japanese "history mischiefs" share in fact a common denominator, a grand theme of "normalization." This endeavor, propeled by PM Abe, encompasses three-prong ambition: revising Article 9 of the Constitution; reestablishing the state's right to mourn its war dead and reconstructing the country's lost self-esteem. Although the first aspect of "normality," had been traditionally paid the most attention to, as argued by Yongwook Ryu (2007, 706), one also has to take into account the other two in order to fully comprehend the significance of the recent political and social changes in Japan.

Yasukuni was established back in 1869 to commemorate the war dead in the Restoration War. The Shrine now enshrines approximately 2.5 million war dead, among them 14 Class A criminals of WWII (Kingston 2011, 157). Shortly after its establishment, it became closely linked to the construction of the Japanese nation state and State Shinto

which played a central role in pushing forward Japan's expansionist ambitions. Yasukuni today drags this corrupted past as its historical baggage, which is why the annual pilgrimages to the Shrine by politicians are so controversial. Apart from the enshrinement of the war criminals, the museum affiliated with the shrine adds to its infamy. The Yushukan Museum presents a twisted and unapologetic account of history, portraying Japan as a victim of WWII and blatantly distorting the facts about Japanese atrocities.

Due to the inherent political symbolism, visits by politicians to Yasukuni have been a perennial issue in diplomatic relations. After PM Koizumi, who made annual visits to the Shrine, this practice was discontinued only to be revived by Abe in 2013. This has been done despite knowing the costs attached to the visits and strong international pressure. Symbolism behind the Shrine has proven indigestible especially to China and Korea and the issue has become a scale by which to judge Japan's record on understanding its history.

Still, it is misleading to assume that there is a national agreement on these visits by politicians, let alone the general public. Polls indicate a glaring divide of opinion over the issue. A December 2013 survey, conducted right after Abe's visit to Yasukuni, showed majority of respondents concerned about PM's actions. 69.8 percent of respondents thought that diplomatic relations should be taken into consideration when deciding whether to visit the contentious shrine (Japan Times 2013). The seat of the Emperor maintains embargo on the visits since 1978 and the country's leftists, even New Komeito, a coalition partner in the current LDP cabinet, opposes them, too. Visits to the Yasukuni thus do not only antagonize foreign audiences, but also polarize the domestic one.

The burden of apology

Another crucial question lying at the heart of Japan's dealing with its imperialistic legacy and underlying the preceding discussion is the issue of apology. This issue specifically, has been accentuated in a build up before the recent and highly anticipated address by PM Abe on the 70th anniversary of Japan's surrender at the end of World War II. Japan has been repeatedly criticized for not giving a sincere and complete apology for its past conduct.

It needs to be said that Japan has expressed remorse or apology on numerous occasions and through various official channels since WWII. At the signing ceremony of the normalization treaty with Republic of Korea in 1965, Japanese foreign minister stated, that "in our two countries' long history there have been unfortunate times, it is truly regrettable and we are deeply remorseful" (Yamazaki 2006, 140). Similarly, the 1972 communique establishing normalized relations between Japan and PRC reads that "the Japanese side is keenly conscious of the responsibility for the serious damage that Japan caused in the past to the Chinese people through war, and deeply reproaches itself" (Yamazaki 2006, 140). The Kono and Murayama statements of the 1990s, in which Japan apologized for managing the comfort women system and its colonial rule and aggression, respectively, continue to form the basis of the official position of Japan on the most prominent of the history issues.

This list is far from exhaustive but illustrates the fact that Japan has not shunned apologizing per se. Still, the issue of specific language used in the apologies leaves considerable liberty for interpretation. Various words for apology as used in the Japanese language may put the statements in different context and an improper translation may venture beyond the intended meaning. It has been noted that prior to 1980s, Japan chiefly used the word *hansei* when apologizing, which only carries mild connotations of apology, and may not imply moral guilt and only later opted for stronger words like *owabi* (Bar-Siman-Tov 2004, 188).

In the Japanese political environment, burdens have been constantly put in the way of apologies. The conservative right has been concerned about tarnishing the memory of the Japanese war dead and wary that an apology would imply wrongdoing on the part of the sacred Showa emperor. Also, Japan's wartime behavior was allegedly in no way different from those of the other powers and blaming Japan for leading an expansionist policy is thus hypocritical.

As for the Abe government, it has from the start exhibited a schizophrenic stance towards the issue, opting for confusing steps and half-hearted measures. Thus, Abe has hinted at a revision of the official stances of the government on historical issues as the Kono statement, and later rescinded them, causing unnecessary damage. Furthermore, to this day PM failed to word a sufficiently clear apology of his own, despite many chances to do so, as during his address to a joint session of Congress in April 2015 or his statement on the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII. On the latter occasion, although echoing past apologies and even going as far as including words "remorse", "aggression", "colonial rule", or "apology" themselves in the statement, Abe stopped short of expressing one directly, adding that future generations should not to be "predestined to apologize" for the war which they themselves did not cause. Consequently, even as long-standing statements have not been retracted, constant flip-flops and controversial statements act to undermine the efforts of goodwill on part of the previous governments in Tokyo.

History in Japan's foreign relations

We have shown that Japan does have a serious "history problem". Yet how does this affect its international relations?

We must first state that in the case of foreign audiences, the magnitude of Japan's guilt is in the eyes of the beholder. On one hand, there are South (and North) Korea and China who are the harshest critics of Japan and where the history issue presents a major obstacle to normal political relations. On the other hand, on a global scene, Japan enjoys widely popular standing. Despite worldwide criticism that is regularly being flung at Japan for its treatment of history, it has not been a major impediment for its international image. Japan has been constantly ranked as one of the most positively viewed countries in the world, although falling somewhat behind in recent rankings (BBC Global Poll, 2014).

Naturally, experience of China and Korea with Japan in the first half of the previous century has been a chief factor explaining their widely negative views. Specifically,

Japan was comparatively the most brutal in its treatment of the Chinese and Koreans, in the case of the former exacting a staggering death toll of some 15 to 20 million in WWII. Even if numerous atrocities were undertaken against other countries, as against the Western POWs, it never reached such dimensions.

Still, there is a need to account for the role of differing national identities and perceptions of history as a contributing explanatory variable. Since history, as all other social facts, is contingent on subjective interpretations, it follows that no single country views the same experience in the same light. In this respect, it needs to be said that for both China and South Korea, grudges related to common history with Japan have only surfaced beginning from the 1980s, and were not a major political issue before. Then, the focus was on the present-day, pragmatic cooperation and history was not a deciding issue in their relationships (Shin 2014). The mere facts of history cannot thus explain everything, as their perception has been the key. A huge reason for the resurrection of these historical issues in these countries were the efforts to redefine the national identity.

As has been shown in Zheng Wang's (2012) study of national identity in China, the post- Tiananmen environment brought about the necessity for the Communist party to reinvent itself. Whereas the role of the Party as a leader of the socialist revolution was forsaken, the Party now positioned itself as a pioneer of nationalism to obtain a new source of legitimacy. For this end, the Chinese "century of humiliation" was given prominence in the outlook on modern Chinese history, with an emphasis on the role of the Party in ending it. Fostering popular nationalism went hand in hand with rising grievances towards those countries that have oppressed China, among them Japan playing a lead role. Despite the horrors that the Japanese perpetrated in China, the national humiliation discourse (while also present before) has only gained increased attention after 1990s (Zheng 2008, 789). In fact, in the post-war era, Japan was depicted as a victim of a militaristic regime.

As for South Korea too, the attitude towards Japan has markedly worsened after immediate post-war decades of pragmatic cooperation. Accordingly, since the 1980s anti-Japanese sentiments surged and historical memory was brought to the forefront of the political relations. This change has coincided with the democratization of South Korea, which also meant a search for a redefined identity. As claimed by Robert E. Kelly (2015), North Korea has hijacked the nationalist discourse in Korea and the South uses its opposition to Japan as a tool in this competition for who represents the guardian of the Korean nation.

These anti-Japanese identities of both China and Korea only add to the already complicated picture. While Japan's historical revisionism is indeed troubling, China and Korea are also guilty of using history to further their own domestic aims. The situation concerning historical issues has regularly caused crises in mutual relations. At the same time, Japan appears to be adamant against the Chinese insistence that it ought to get its history right, when China itself refuses to even discuss the tens of millions killed during the Cultural Revolution or Mao's Great Leap Forward.

Apart from the newly reignited territorial spats, the Abe government has added the unprecedented security reforms to the mix. Tokyo has been criticized for not sufficient-

ly explaining its motives which gave birth to fears of resurgent Japanese militarism. There was a period of a virtual diplomatic freeze between Japan and Korea and Japan and China, respectively, between 2012 and 2014, when leaders of China and South Korea refused to meet the Japanese PM and also other official contacts were cut. The mutual perceptions between the respective countries' citizens are at their historical low. The 2014 poll has shown that 93 percent of Japanese and 87 percent of Chinese have unfavorable view of one another (The 10th Japan-China Public Opinion Poll 2014). Similarly, the 2014 poll on Korean-Japanese perceptions shows 71 percent of South Koreans having unfavorable perception of Japan and 54 percent of Japanese with unfavorable perception of Korea (The 2nd Joint Japan-South Korea Public Opinion Poll 2014).

Conclusion

Contemporary Japan continues to reject the whole picture of its 20th century history. Controversial accounts of the past do not come from the fringe sections of the political spectrum – on the contrary, they are deeply ingrained in the fabric of the political establishment. PM Shinzo Abe has become a major voice for these views. Although Japan has repeatedly apologized for its conduct in the past, the fact that apologies are still needed means that they have been unsatisfactory. Japan's position on this issue is complicated by the unwillingness of the other side to accept Japan's apologies, which partly stems from domestic concerns in both China and South Korea.

The challenge remains how to surmount these huge obstacles to better relations in Northeast Asia. First of all, Japan needs to offer a complete apology for its wartime behavior in a clear language and the highest official capacity. This apology must not be undermined by subsequent mishaps on the part of the government officials, neither in words nor actions. A clear policy line must be erected within the highest echelons of Japanese politics that will resolutely reign in controversial statements, so that the voices coming from Japan are within acceptable bounds of official view on history. Significantly, Yasukuni visits should be stopped once and for all and other ways of remembering the country's war dead should be pursued. Secondly, there needs to be joint effort in achieving a closer accord of differing accounts of history. In this regards, joint history writing had a huge merit and should be followed upon. Such incremental steps may, in the long run, bring more understanding between the nations. Lastly, both China and South Korea should be prepared to accept the Japanese apology and resign upon taking advantage of the history question. It appears that under the current conditions, both would not be ready to trust Japan, no matter what measures it undertakes, partly due to domestic concerns not to appear too conciliatory towards their once enemy, Japan.

These requirements may seem far-fetched, yet this is what is necessary to finally overcome the history problem. Unfortunately, we do not believe that this will be achieved any time in the foreseeable future. The security reforms in Japan will further apprehension towards it in Korea and China. As China's power grows, geopolitical antagonism in the region will be on the rise, which will again contribute to the continuation of the relevance

of historical issues in regional relations. All thus depends on the political will in the three capitals, especially Tokyo, to address this issue head-on and bring about a slow process of reconciliation.

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SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE BORDERLAND AREAS: CHINA'S PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT ON THE MEKONG RIVER

RICHARD GRÜNWARD

Introduction

The water resources play an important role in International Relations. While the perception of water is becoming more controversial across the multiple disciplines, conflicts over trans-boundary water resources are globally increasing (Collier and Hoefler 1998; Toset et. al. 2000; Gleditsch and Urdal 2002; Hensel et. al. 2004; Vasquez 1993). Generally, Asia belongs to the world's most populous and water-stressed continents (Global Water Partnership 2013) where especially China has been facing increasingly severe water scarcities. With only 6% of the world's total water resources and 9% of the world's arable land, China feeds 21% of the world's population (Liu et. al. 2013). Moreover, the water shortage may have a worldwide impact if China's ability to produce sufficient food to feed a large and growing population will be restricted (Brown and Halweil 1998; Cai and Ringler 2007, Jiang 2009). And so, as more of China's demands for water and energy are rising, more pressure on over-exploitation of trans-boundary water resources are hampering the contemporary relations with Chinese neighborhoods, particularly in the Mekong River Basin. Despite a series of agreements between China and other riparian countries of Mekong River about hydropower development, flood information sharing, and other similar cooperative initiatives, the Mekong River Basin remains not as beneficial as is widely presented (Sadoff and Grey 2002). The conflict of national interests between six riparian countries, including China started in the early 1950s when the potential for hydroelectricity and irrigation system development had been discovered by Mekong River Committee, currently known as a Mekong River Commission (Yorth 2014, 54). Is it sustainable to be in peaceful co-existence with China's rise of demand for natural resources? Probably not, but China is not the only state that gradually pursues its interests at the expense of other countries.

The main aim of this article is to analyze hydro-political trans-boundary interaction between China and other riparian states of the Mekong River and to find out how these interstate relations constitute security challenges in the South-East Asia. Additionally, the purpose of this article is to clarify what type of hydro-political interaction dominates in the Mekong River Basin and why China does not present an imminent political-ecological danger itself.

The Mekong crossroads

The Mekong River belongs to one of 276 international river basins which globally cover approximately 47% of land surface, provides almost 60% of global freshwater flow and supports at least 40% of the world's population (Giordano and Wolf 2002). Its origin is at the China's Tibetan mountainous plateau and it terminates in the South China Sea. The Mekong River flows through six states – China, Burma, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. The upper Mekong Basin (UMB) consists of China and Burma, whereas the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) comprises Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam (MRC 2000; Radosevich and Olson 1999, 1-3). The whole river system is supporting the livelihoods of some 260 million people in these riparian states, where about 15 million people at the UMB and approximately 61.2 million people at LMB are exclusively dependent on Mekong River (Pearse-Smith 2012, 149). Whereas UMB states strongly support the hydroelectricity potential of Mekong in general, the most of LMB states still try to preserve agriculture and fishery sectors as long as possible. Since 1995, the Mekong River Commission provided the only semi-effective communication platform between riparian states, even though not all of the states have full membership. Proponents and followers of Mekong River cooperation often insist that peaceful hydro-political interaction can be ensured through mutual agreements and by an interconnected economic development, but is it really true?

Firstly, there is a questionable issue of independence which is disrupting the positive image of this institution, because the Mekong River Commission is still primarily funded by its member states, namely by Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. Secondly, the coordination of different political actors (Thailand as a free-wheeling society, Burma under the strict dictatorship, Laotian and Cambodian monarchies and communist regimes in Vietnam and China) are thwarting the complex agreement on essential principles of water management. Thirdly, the activities of each member state in the Mekong River Commission are significantly varying. While Vietnam and Cambodia are strongly blaming the UMB states for risky water utilization, Thailand and Laos are safeguarding their national and private enterprises which bring substantial economic output to the states' treasury. Fourthly, the Mekong River Commission is unable to cooperate with other non-state actors located in each riparian state. The main reason why the Mekong River Commission and other intra-state pro-environmental initiatives are strongly limited lies in the historical perception that all activities that could possibly thwart the potential economic development in the Mekong River Basin will be identified as "trouble-making" and [generally unacceptable for achieving the national interests] (Sneddon and Fox 2006, 195). Fifthly, supporting the cooperation in the Mekong River Basin at all cost is leading to miscalculation or even opposite results. The riparian states use the Mekong River Commission's data and information for enhancing own economic growth, which is consequently increasing the pressure on the environment and deepening the asymmetry between those states that are able to effectively exploit the trans-boundary resources and those unable to exploit the full potential of the Mekong River.

Need for speed

With the rising demand for energy consumption and the increasing rate of economic growth the “dam race” on the Mekong River will bring, it is bound to continuously adversely impact the environment. In 2005 the MRC (2010) forecasts that the demand for electricity will increase between two and seven times by 2020 (MRC 2010). Moreover, the population is rising faster than the water resources that could satisfy it. Even though there are much more alarming prospects for the Mekong River Basin, the riparian states are still trying to preserve their economic growth at all cost. While Thailand is generally worried about the potential reduction of water flows due to diverting of the water to its agricultural areas, Laos is concerned with dam development and has planned to build as many dams as possible. The main issue for Cambodia lies in Tonle Sap, which is the biggest fresh water lake in South East Asia and provides about 16% of all Mekong fish, whereas Vietnam is annoyed by the increasing salinization as well as increasing water pollution of the Mekong delta, where more than 50% of rice is produced (Yorth 2014, 16). While China’s “hydro diplomacy” remains unclear, China has signed up to a series of agreements with neighboring countries related to sharing of flood information, monitoring of water quality and environmental conservation in order to assure other riparian states that they should not worry about China. Although the cooperation in the Mekong River Basin is still based particularly on “dam development” where all six riparian countries are united in supporting the positive effect of building new dams (energy for populous cities, acceleration of economic growth, prevention of flooding etc.), they are simultaneously critical of the negative aspects of dam development built in other riparian states (i.e. reducing water flows, decreasing fish abundance, environmental degradation etc.) (Yorth 2014, 42). So why is the dam development so important?

The dam development provides its owners with cheap electricity, prestige in case of monstrous projects (e.g. Mekong Cascade, Xajaburi Dam etc.) and political-ecological leverage vis-à-vis the countries that are dependent on hydropower. Although China belongs to the biggest actors in hydropower energy, it seems that China’s primacy is challenged by Laos, which is among the most progressive countries in this field. Even though China is against all ambitious energy plans on the Mekong River Basin, Laos seems to be informally accepted by China. But why? Firstly, Laos is widely criticized for its own hydropower projects, which are not transparent, as well as for potential environmental impacts as is China. Again, instead of bringing “mutual benefits” for the whole Mekong River Basin, China and Laos “mutually benefit”. Secondly, Laos is highly dependent on direct investments and “good relationship” with China, which is fueling the Laotian hydropower dominancy over the other riparian states. Thirdly, Laos is also under China’s “patronage”, which does not only tolerate the trans-boundary environmental impacts of Laotian hydropower dams, it is also buying allegiance of the Laotian government in the Mekong River Commission, which is disrupting the potential coalition against China. Moreover, China could simply transfer the hostility to a comparatively much smaller actor like Laos and

vice-versa, which is also an important factor of this “pragmatic symbiosis”. It is also unclear how long the Laotian government will resist the trans-boundary environmental impacts caused by China’s hydropower dams as well as to mitigate the critical intra-state voices doubting Laotian water security.

Water security for who?

China’s growing demand for water and hydropower are transforming domestic environmental problems into geo-political conflicts in the whole river basin (Wolf 2007, Feng and He 2009; Wouters and Chen 2013). Thus, even though China is seen as having control over Southeast Asia’s water resources, China faces complex allocation problem (UNEP 2009). The most problematic issues are generally the environmental concerns over China’s dam construction projects on the mainstream Mekong River in the Yunnan province and China’s navigation projects (Yorth 2014, 41). While China’s large projects to clear rapids and shoals in order to improve Mekong’s navigability will inevitably change the water flows, more devastating environmental impacts will hit LMB countries when the Mekong Cascade becomes fully operational. In 2020, China will regulate about 30% of the mean annual flow volume that enters the LMB from Yunnan (MRC 2010, 58). Although, these observations are alarming, there is relatively limited feedback among the riparian nations how to deal with such “China’s peaceful development” strategy. As I have mentioned above, the only dialogue between the riparian states is held via the Mekong River Commission. Although Burma seems relatively a marginal actor on the Mekong River (2% of the total Mekong River Basin area lies in Burma), all riparian countries urged Burma as well as China toward wider participation and deeper cooperation with the Commission. Unfortunately, Burma is not willing, nor capable to break its international isolation caused by the decision-making of the Burmese military government. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that Burma as a “sino-satellite” (Stoett 2005, 17) will in the medium-term turn against China which supports Burmese hydropower potential (Schmeier 2009, 33-34).

It seems that China acts like a “bully” in South East Asia, triggering all sources of environmental impacts, when in fact the current situation in the Mekong River Basin is not all caused by one riparian state. Even though almost 40% of all the proposed tributary and mainstream hydropower dam in the Mekong River Basin are currently constructed by Chinese companies (Sinha 2011, 431), the dam development is also initiated by other riparian countries like Laos or Thailand. The rising concerns about China’s peaceful and development strategy led by “China’s thirst” are highly valid, but on the other hand, other riparian states are eager to maximize the benefits from the river too. Increasing demands for trans-boundary water resources driven by rising population in the whole Mekong River Basin, combined with the rising demand for electricity (since 2005 the demand in the Mekong River Basin expected to increase two to seven times by 2020 (MRC 2010) is putting pressure on states’ responsibility for its own citizens. Moreover, it seems that between all riparian states, at stake are not only the dignity, money, but also the vitality of the state itself.

Future of effective cooperation

The environmental insecurity and unsustainable development in the Mekong River Basin remains the key aspect of future confrontation between the six riparian states. The security issues over the trans-boundary water resources are more complicated than simply over-exploitation of water or water pollution – instead they lie in “hydro asymmetry”. In fact, there is much difference in which states benefit from what and in what ways from the Mekong River Basin. Whereas Cambodia and Burma are comparatively the smallest beneficiaries from the basin, the rest of the riparian states are trying to take as many advantages as possible (Yorth 2014, 57). In other words, the water asymmetry gives some riparian states more dominant positions to use trans-boundary resources in comparison to the other riparian states. Although the coexistence between the six riparian states has been historically “peaceful”, the scramble for the so-called “blue gold” is yet to go into full swing. The possibility of climate changes, dam development, navigation projects, increasing water pollution, deforestation and many other water-related impacts are imminent security threats where water resources will exceed its limits and may become a potential source of new conflicts. Even though most of the conflicts over water resources were in fact non-violent, the possibility of interstate or even intra-state conflicts cannot be excluded. The stability and sustainability of hydro-political interaction in the Mekong River Basin depends on three aspects: effective water management, preserving common interests, and re-formulating of mutual political attitude towards China’s hydro-policy.

In sum, the Mekong River Commission is toothless and its mandate to protect and contribute to stability in the region is very limited. On the other hand, the Mekong River Commission is nominally not accountable for any failure to ensure sustainable water management on the Mekong River Basin. To add to this, the unwillingness of all riparian states to coordinate the common utilization of trans-boundary water resources is imminent, but until China and Burma become full members of Mekong River Commission, there will be low leverage on keeping the hydro-political interaction in a non-conflictual mode. If the Commission does not become structurally reformed in terms of its mandate, finances and effective mechanism for meetings and enforcing justice, nothing will change. If this fails to happen, the riparian member states will continue to keep the Mekong River Commission as a toothless organization that identifies development projects and attracts external funds, and the control over the Mekong’s development will remain in the hands of states” (Backer 2006, 38).

Conclusion

The conflict of national interests between the riparian states in the Mekong River Basin is imminent, but there are also some common interests which are continuously enhancing the positive hydro-political interaction, such as the rising economic growth,

increase in living standards, preservation of food and energy security, support for mutual investments and of water integrated projects, reduction of the cost of trans-boundary water-related environmental impacts and sustainable navigability and transportability of the Mekong River. However, not all of these national interests are compatible, especially in political ecology terms, where the increasing over-exploitation of water bears significant impacts on water quantity and quality in the whole river basin. Additionally, the rivalry between upstream and downstream states over trans-boundary water resources is not related to geo-physical scarcity, but is rather due to asymmetrical opportunities. While “China’s peaceful development” strategy seems for many riparian countries an existential threat to their nominal independence as well as an environmental threat, China is involved in bringing new opportunities and investments to the complex development of the Mekong River Basin. So does China present a danger for other riparian states or is it a victim of its trans-boundary hydro-policy? What’s more, can China trigger armed conflicts over trans-boundary water resources? To seek the answer, we have to ask how China would benefit, when the other riparian states remain open-minded to its national interests. The simplicity of China’s peaceful development strategy is based on being as independent on the issue of domestic natural resource consumption as possible. Although China’s neighbouring countries proclaim that they are holding the reins in the context of exercising control on the decision-making, the opposite is true. Riparian countries which find themselves under China’s shadow have already lost their “independence”. In return, China is significantly promoting cross-border trade, investments and also keeping regional security under its patronage. In this spirit, even though China’s peaceful development strategy more or less helped the rise of interdependence, the cooperation still remains at a low level (Schmeier 2009, 49), especially thanks to the Mekong River Commission and the unwillingness of all riparian states to limit their hydro policies.

The effects on the Mekong river cooperation can be likened to a road that can be paved with good intentions, but only after we set foot on it, we can say how complicated our journey actually is. This metaphor is very similar to the actual progress on the Mekong River Basin, where every riparian state was internally or externally encouraged to “co-operate at all cost” without expectations what else this could bring. Without considering the degenerative progress of cooperation and the possibility that “not all types of cooperation are pretty” (Zeitoun and Mirumachi 2008), all riparian states blame each other for various reasons, most notably for the environmental impacts from Laotian and Chinese hydropower projects. But in fact, every riparian state with respect to cumulative effects on the Mekong River, contributes more or less to the environmental impacts. China doesn’t represent a significant danger yet, but the danger itself is caused by the willingness of other riparian states to “prostitute” their water resources for money or energy on the Chinese territory. The neighbouring countries need to coordinate their hydro-political attitudes via the Mekong River Commission in order to establish a unified stance towards China. Moreover, even when international water agreements are signed, it does not mean that the contracting states are actually cooperating, and the lack of agreement does not mean that riparian states are fighting (Warner and Zawahri 2012). And so the hydro-political relations among

the six riparian states in the Mekong River Basin remain conflictive despite the evidence of some form of institutionalized cooperation (Warner and Zawahri 2012).

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SOUTH KOREAN TRUST-BUILDING POLICY: IS RE-UNIFICATION AN UNREACHABLE DREAM?

LUCIA HUSENICOVA

List of Contents:

Introduction
Principles of the trust-building policy
Challenges of inter-Korean relations
Reading North Korea's position
Conclusion

Introduction

While Europe celebrated the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII on May 8/9, for Asia the commemoration events took place in August and September. When we talk particularly about the Korean Peninsula, August 15, the day Korea was liberated is the most significant as it ended Japanese colonial rule in the country. Unfortunately, August 15, 1945 did not bring the desired independence to the Koreans, to the contrary it brought occupation forces and division.

This paper aims to scrutinize the current South Korean administration's policy toward North Korea, referred to as the trust-building process. Originally, the policy was introduced as a middle-ground approach between the Sunshine policy of late 1990s and early 2000s and the rather hawkish policy of ex-president I Myong Bak. It is my aim to evaluate the state of inter-Korean relations at the time of this writing, regarding the adopted principles of mutual trust building. Is there a chance that the current policy can succeed vis-à-vis North Korean regime with its unpredictable young leader? At the same time, can it be successful when facing the internal political constraints of the South Korean regime?

Principles of the trust-building policy

The president of South Korea, Ms. Park Guen Hye has been talking about the need to build trust between the two Korean states already before she has run for the office. Being a daughter of former president who had initiated competition with the North, and whose mother was killed by an attack organized by North Korea, she is talking about the necessity for the North to take responsibility for its actions and as a result of it, is treated accordingly. At the same time, she is aware of the lack of trust that prevents any advances in inter-Korean relations. Her policy consists of a combination of the “carrots and sticks”

approach, willingness to provide incentives for the North, while reacting accordingly to the North Korean behaviour that is often so threatening to the South.

The official documents published by the administration of President Park on the webpage of the Ministry of Unification state that the aim of the policy is to build trust between the North and the South, in order to ensure national security and peace on the peninsula and to prepare ground for potential unification (Ministry of Unification, 2015). In essence, the policy is based on the expected trust-building process through dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation. The trust is to be built between the two Koreas - governments, peoples, and also with the international community. It is based on a three-thronged approach - international, inter-Korean and inner-South Korean.

Internally, at the level of the government, South Korea has to revise past North Korean policies and adopt a new approach. However, this is a rather long-term goal that needs the agreement of all the parties' involved to ensure continuity even after the presidential election in 2017. As the previous experience has shown, the five-year presidential term had posed limitations on all previous initiatives, with the only exception of the policy of late Kim Tae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun, whose policies are considered complementary.

The second level is the security situation on Korean Peninsula that needs to be resolved peacefully, including the neutralization of North Korean nuclear program. This goal is not an easy one to achieve, due to the realistic perception of international relations the North Korean regime espouses. At the same time, any expectation of establishing peaceful relations on the peninsula will require a peace treaty that would finally bring the Korean War into a *de jure* end. However, if the trust-building process presupposes upholding all previous agreements, then the negotiation on peace treaty should be pursued as stated in the declaration signed at the close of the second inter-Korean summit in October 2007.

On the third, international level North Korea needs to undergo a transformation to become a responsible player in the region and globally as well. North Korea has to be brought to a realization of all the benefits that it can enjoy once the regime stops to blackmail its neighbours as well as international institutions.

Besides these principles of trust-building, the initiative further elaborates on how the process should evolve and which areas of inter-Korean relations have to be dealt with from the start. The first precondition is normalization of mutual relations, with focus on humanitarian issues, enhancing the channels for regular dialogue, increased mutually beneficial exchanges, and promotion of the Vision Korea Project.⁵⁷ Second area of trust-building regards the sustainable peace on the peninsula, which is to be achieved via preventing provocations from North Korea, applying deterrence together with allies, resolution of the nuclear program issue, development of a Peace Park in the demilitarized zone

⁵⁷ Vision Korea is a project that compiles initiatives introduced by previous South Korean presidents and plans for creating an economic community on the Korean peninsula, with the internationalization of North Korean special economic zones such as Kaesong and Rajin/Sonbong.

(DMZ) and continuation in building military and political trust between both countries. In the third group of detailed principles, the trust-building policy plans to reinforce the structure for unification through revising the Korean National Community Unification Formula⁵⁸ as well as through the support from the citizens of South Korea and the promotion of better quality of life for North Koreans.

The fourth goal of trust building envisions peaceful unification of the Korean peninsula as a factor of peaceful cooperation in the region of Northeast Asia, where special section is dedicated to a three-way cooperation among two Koreas and China and two Koreas and Russia in the area of energy and logistics (Ministry of Unification 2015).

When analyzing these principles, we can find a strong indication of the carrot and stick policy vis-à-vis North Korea. As the president herself had stated several times, the trust-building policy aims to represent a middle ground between too conciliatory Sunshine policy and too assertive I Myong Bak's policy. The latter was based on conditioning inter-Korean relations on the denuclearization progress. What is new in the current administration's policy is that it chooses to refer to squarely as a unification policy instead of the usual North Korean policy. In addition, President Park has introduced the policy principles in a speech at an official visit in Dresden. This rather symbolic event has fleshed out the president's ambitions for her administration to lay down the groundwork for unification of Korea as the last remaining divided nation in the post-WWII period. From among the principles she emphasized, several may be viewed with suspicion in the North Korea as the leadership can see them as a threat to its existence.

What needs to be born in mind is that we are in the middle of the administration's term and the policy remains still in its declaratory level. Although, the documents as such re-iterate several times that the policy is envisioned as a long-term plan aiming to gain support from the all parties and citizens of South Korea. Whether this plan is too ambitious will become obvious before the presidential election in 2017 and when the new president introduces his/her vision on North Korean policy.

Challenges of inter-Korean relations

The challenges to the current South Korean policy are threefold. First of all, the political climate in South Korea poses one set of limits to the ambitious plan introduced by President Park. As mentioned above, in this regard the time frame is crucial, together with the ability of the President to gain overall support and all parties' acknowledgement. The second set of limits is rooted in the nature of the North Korean system and repeating cycles of provocations vis-à-vis its southern neighbor, coupled with the security emphasis that the regime has put on nuclear program in its April 1st (2013) Nuclearization Act. The last set of challenges is represented by the historical sensitivity of the Korean peninsula to the

⁵⁸ National Community Unification Formula is a principle first time introduced by Ro Tae Woo administration in 1989 and further revised by Kim Yong Sam in 1994. The process envisions three stages, first is the reconciliation and cooperation, second is the Korean Commonwealth and third is the unitary state.

external environment, more precisely to the desires and ambitions of surrounding powers.

Internal challenges

While looking at the current South Korean political environment, we can soon expect future presidential candidates to launch their campaigns, where the North Korean policy is always on top of the foreign policy agenda of every perspective president. As it was an important issue for Park's predecessor, we can expect the same from whoever will emerge as the next candidate, regardless of the political party. Constitutionally, the same person is eligible to run for presidency just once, a constitutional guarantee to prevent anyone from trying to become a dominant figure, as was the case the first 40 years of the existence of the Republic of Korea. It will be of great importance for the current president to ensure continuation of her policy by selecting a strong candidate from her own party who would preserve the policy, just as late Roh Moo Hyun once did when he elaborated on the Sunshine policy of his predecessor, late Kim Tae Jung. In a case a strong opposition candidate emerges in the run, the president has still a year or so to go through with her plan to gain all-party support for her vision and to secure a policy continuation. As she is combining the Sunshine policy with more sticks (but still less than her predecessor), she can count on the distinct possibility that this approach will appeal to the majority of politicians and the population at large.

However, as we know from the workings of democracies, the opinion polls change quite often and even radically, so it is difficult to envision what will happen in the late 2016 when the campaign will be in a full swing.

At the time of this writing, we can look at the positions of the public as expressed in an opinion poll taken towards the end of 2014 by the Asan Institute of Political Studies (Asan Report 2015). As the report suggests, majority of those asked do not see a big difference between previous administrations' policy and the current one. On a scale from zero to ten, where zero represents soft policy line, while ten stands for the hardline, the overall score for Park's policy was 5.7 (Asan Report 2015, 20-21). As for the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the trust-building policy, approximately 41% of the respondents were satisfied, while 44% were not. However, as the results of the poll suggest, in general the South Korean population prefers more hardline stance on North Korea, which may be caused by the fact that over 37% of those asked associate North Korea with war, nuclear program and military, while only 11% see themselves as part of the same nation with North Koreans (Asan Report 2015, 13). Additionally, it is interesting to look at the positions of population towards North Korea according to different age groups (those in their twenties, thirties, forties, fifties and sixties).

The group of twenty-something feels most distant from North Korea when compared with the other groups. What is interesting in this regard is, that those who identify mostly with North Korea are people in their forties, so those born in 1970s when the two Koreas were still comparable in performance of their economies. The differences in perception among age groups suggest that in may happen in the future, that South Koreans

will decide not to proceed with unification, as they will be too detached from the idea of a shared national identity and history. It is difficult to predict whether this trend may be changed by the current administration's policy and vision for future unification. (Park 2014)

The nature of the North Korean regime

The other set of challenges for the current South Korean policy of trust building, stems directly from the nature of the North Korean political system. There are several arguments to support this claim. From all the proposed principles and steps that should eventually lead to the re-unification under the trust-building policy, we will look at those, which the North Korean leadership may have the greatest problems accepting.

The first problem any policy put in place in South Korea will encounter is caused by the fact that North Korea still refers to representatives of South Korean government as traitors and collaborators with imperial forces, namely the U.S. government. At the same time, North Korean political representation still pursues the Juche idea based on the overall independence in such areas as economy, military and politics. Any principles that will imply a change in any of these three, will be seen as a threat to the survival of the regime. In addition, what is crucial for the regime's survival is the strength of its propaganda employed in an environment closed to any alternative and undesired information that could spread among the populace. Therefore, when we look at the three principles introduced by President Park Guen Hye in her Dresden speech, all of them may be seen as problematic for North Korea.

These principles concern two areas of people-to-people relations, where first one is the humanitarian issue connected to the suffering of separated families, and the second is related to the need to strengthen the integration of the persons on both sides of the 38th parallel as there are some differences in the language, habits and even culture. The third area focuses again on improvement of peoples' lives through projects in infrastructure, agriculture and economy (Korean Herald 2014).

When we look at these three principles through the North Korean lenses, the first one aimed at resolving the issue of separated families is the one that has the support of the regime. Even though it has been declared that the meetings of separated families should be renewed, North Korea has received a significant amount of money for those meetings under the Sunshine policy and is likely to expect it to continue. Concerning the second principle of bringing the ordinary people closer, while the meetings of families were taking place under supervision, any programs that would bring South and North Korean citizens together are most likely to be opposed by the North. The main reason for this was already suggested above.

To support this argument, we can use the example of Kaesong Industrial Complex and also the Mt. Kumgang resort visits by South Koreans. In the case of Kaesong, the North Korean workers are not allowed to interact with their employers directly; there was information about separate dining rooms, special floors for offices, etc. In the case of

Mt. Kumgang resort, South Korean tourists were isolated from the ordinary population, always under the watch by the North Korean military. It is believed that in the case of personal meetings and regular communication, the regime of North Korea will slowly start to loose control over its population and information in the country. Therefore, any attempt to strengthen mutual people-to-people connections can undermine the grip the regime in DPRK has over its people.

Regarding the third principle, it is difficult to assess the actual willingness of North Korean political representatives to start with reforms and allow South Korea to invest outside of Kaesong. This is due to the fact that this principle is based on the joint agricultural and infrastructure projects, as well as joint exploitation of natural resources. In this regard, the principle is unlikely to be supported by North Korean leadership and there are several reasons why. First of all, the ideology and the official propaganda emphasize the economic independence of the country, as expressed in the principle of *charip*.⁵⁹ Secondly, North Korea cannot allow South Korean companies to publicly invest in projects that would enhance the quality of life of its citizens. This would again be in contradiction to its official propaganda and the picture of South Korea as the enemy, which the state has been constructing for decades. Concerning the suggested exploitation of resources, we can, once again expect strong opposition to such an endeavor on part of the leadership of North Korea. Even if the country does not possess the capability to use the resources on its own, the leadership would never allow South Korean companies to profit from resources located in the North.

The above-mentioned obstacles and the expected North Korean opposition to the principles proposed is not influenced by the current, rather blurry political decision-making process in place in this country. Preserving the regime is deeply rooted in the governing principles that are part of North Korean politics since the mid-1950s. In particular it has a foundation in the combination of almost religious worshipping of the ruling family, filial piety paid to both of the previous leaders, authoritarian decisions of the ruling elite, and the control over and the organization of the life of its citizens. All these are strengthened by the state propaganda and represent a stepping stones of the ruling ideology that resembles state religion. In the situation where any sign of a reform in order to start the preparation phase for possible unification will require a previous change in these principles. It is highly unlikely that any leadership in North Korea will ever willingly adopt the necessary reforms.

International constraints

Regardless of the commitments both Koreas agreed to in the high-level meetings, among others that the inter-Korean relations and unification have to be guided inde-

⁵⁹ The Juche ideology is based on three areas where the country seeks to uphold independence, in military affairs (*chawi*), in economy (*charip*) and in political area (*chaju*). See Lee 2003.

pendently, without intervention from foreign powers, the reality is a little bit different. The development on the Korean peninsula is closely watched by all of the concerned powers in the region. First comes China, providing crucial support for the North Korean regime, mainly in terms of energy consumption, but also in food supply, machinery and other areas. At the same time, China is an important economic partner to South Korea and vice-versa. In addition, President Park has very good relations with her Chinese counterpart, president Xi Jinping. Advanced economic relations are important for both players, and South Korea is interested in not being left out of the emerging economic architecture China has begun to erect in Asia, whether it is the Silk Road Economic Belt or the AIIB project. At the same time, China is interested in preserving the status quo in the region in order to have a chance to concentrate on further economic development and sustaining its position. In this regard, the support to North Korea is fading and remains rather limited.

For the U.S., the support of its ally is undisputable; however Barack Obama's North Korean policy was rather reactive since the start of his administration. Even when the U.S. announced its rebalancing, or pivot to Asia, in the case of North Korea no strategy of clear policy line was introduced. So the question remains, is the U.S. interested in reunification? The answer is twofold. Firstly, if the administration, regardless of who is in the White House, follows the advice of traditional geopolitics and realism, the answer would be no. The problem-ridden peninsula would in the end keep China engaged in the region, not allowing it to so openly compete with the U.S. on the global level. In addition, the threat North Korea poses to the South Korea is one of the reasons the U.S. is keeping troops in the region. Secondly, if the administration is true to the principles of U.S. foreign policy, they should support the unification initiative and people-to-people exchanges in order to improve the quality of life and improve the human rights situation of the North Korean population.

To summarize, even if the unification is an issue of inter-Korean relations, any change on the peninsula will affect the situation in the whole region – economic as well as the geopolitical one. Therefore, the major powers will be affected and will have to take a standpoint that will depend on a number of factors, the state of China-U.S. relations being the most significant one.

Reading North Korea's position

In case of North Korea, every reaction to outside developments is twofold, at least. The official statement in the form of a speech or a media release is the first source of position of North Korean representatives. The second is the actions and events that are organized for the population at large. The 2014 New Year's Address was considered an important milestone for the North Korean position towards the reunification of the Peninsula. Kim Jong Eun has called for cancellation of the international initiatives to deal with the situation and urges Korean people in the north, south and abroad to work on reunification without any external involvement. Both sides should make efforts to make the relations better and further build on a favorable climate (2014 New Years Address).

Kim has elaborated in more detail in his 2015 New Year's Address where he stressed the coming 70th anniversary of the peninsula's division that has been the doing of foreign forces. He has complained that the proposals the North has made have not been addressed, but that the people should work on reunification in order to fulfill the dream of Kim Il Song. In addition, he has proposed a new slogan that should represent the policy of this year: "Let the whole nation join efforts to open up a broad avenue to independent reunification in this year of the 70th anniversary of national liberation!" (2015 New Years Address). Basically, he is calling on South Korea to stop the regular military drills conducted together with the U.S. troops that the North considers an act of war and direct threat to its security. In addition, he openly calls for the South to accept the existing ideological differences and stop pursuing a policy of system unification. In a more conciliatory part of the speech, he calls for dialogue, negotiations, and exchange, with the aim to work on reunification independently as agreed in the past. He specifically mentions documents that were signed as results of inter-Korean negotiations in 1972, 2000, and 2007. In addition, he accepts the possibility of resumption of high-level talks and even of a summit meeting.

Even if both of the statements may seem optimistic and fairly promising, Kim Jong Eun does not refrain from mentioning the importance of nuclear program for North as its security guarantee that is necessary for the regime's survival. As it seems, he acknowledges his will to further pursue existing policy patterns vis-à-vis South Korea and the region, while he does not hesitate to pursue new possibilities (Park 2015). However, learning from previous experiences with North Korean leadership, this may only be a strategic move with the aim to receive significant amount of South Korean aid, or even money.

Conclusion

Is the unification of the Korean peninsula going to happen in the upcoming future or is it just a dream? The fact is that Korea remains the last legacy of Cold War or better yet, a legacy of the state of relations as they were 70 years ago. Right now it is not important who decided on the division of the peninsula, how and why that happened. This years' anniversary should be taken as a moment of reflection, not only for the politicians but mainly, and especially for scholars. The question of how an ideological division can change the course of thousands of years of Korean history remains one of the most curious and ridiculous ones in modern international relations. Here we have racially, culturally, and historically a homogenous nation where the divided young generation does not feel empathy with their counterparts north of 38th parallel.

So what was done in order to bring the 2 peoples together? Military unification was the first attempt by North Korea. It did not succeed thanks to the United Nations operation. Since then, plans and visions were announced by the representatives of South Korea and the founder of North Korea, which still remains relevant for the current leadership of Kim Jong Eun, who is staying true to his grandfather's legacy. In the meantime, the two peoples across the 38th parallel grew more and more apart, living in two different societies and political regimes, their sense of mutual patriotism disappearing by the day.

So what should be done? Regardless of how utopic the vision of unification of the current president seems, mutual interactions and contacts of people are the key to the future of peace and unity on the Korean Peninsula. In the 21st century, people talk and share their views regardless of geographical distance, but not on the Korean peninsula. The North Korean regime is often called the Hermit kingdom with its people literally cut off from the rest of the world. However, in order to change this, the North Korean regime is in dire need of reform - that is another almost unimaginable task. Even if the latest development of purges of high-ranking officers and officials may suggest that the internal struggle for power is still ongoing and the youngest Kim does not enjoy the control his father and grandfather used to, the possible collapse of the regime is impossible to predict.

Will economic incentives help? It is hard to say, as they did not succeed within the Sunshine policy concept. To the contrary, as one book suggests, the North Korean leadership has violated the policy. It might have even helped to sustain the regime and prevent its collapse in the late 1990s. In this environment and with the experience with North Korea thus far, the only option left is to try and, if necessary, try again - even after several failures.

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DOMESTIC POLITICS AND PERSONAL BELIEFS IN TAIWAN'S TERRITORIAL CLAIMS: THE DIFFERING APPROACHES OF CHEN SHUI-BIAN AND MA YING-JEOU

MOISES LOPES DE SOUZA AND DEAN KARALEKAS

Introduction

Among international relations analysts, one of the most common assumptions is the axiomatic affirmation that the domestic environment influences, and is influenced by, international politics, with the state's foreign-policy prerogatives representing the ultimate result of this interaction. In fact, the internal dynamics originated by political struggles, economic groups' lobbying efforts, media and civil-society demands, electoral calculations, and other elements, are all channeled in the form of foreign-policy goals. At the same time, in the highly integrated global economy, all these elements are also equally influenced by the dynamics of the international environment. This mutual exchange has shaped the behavior of states in the international arena, but it also has determined the extent of states' power-projection capabilities to work in favor of national interests in the board game of international relations. Despite the limited diplomatic space afforded it in the global community of nations, the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan has not been any different in this regard.

The internal determinants of the behavior of the state's international politics have been widely discussed in the international relations (IR) literature. Domestic realities as drivers and influencers of the behavior of states were addressed in the classic works of Waltz (1954), Gourevitch (1978), Putnam (1988), and later Hill (2003), and by many other authors. Finally, Milner and Tingley (2012, 1-3) have noted that there is little space to believe that "politics stops at the water's edge." This way, it is natural to expect that "foreign policy looks similar to domestic policy" and it is often difficult to draw a "clear dividing line between foreign policy and domestic policy." Additionally, it is important to highlight that, typically, leaders of democratic states tend to use the diplomatic front as an escape valve of sorts for domestic pressure. Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) authors such as Rosenau (1961), Morgenthau (1967), Wittkopf (1990), Vertzberger (1990), Russett (1990), and Holsti (1996) have widely provided substantial data in this regard. Finally, the role of individual leaders and their character is discussed by Hudson (2007), who argues that these individuals are constrained by a series of variables such as expertise, regime type, leadership style and personal character.

The common feature in all these authors' analyses is the constant and uninterrupted channel of mutual interplay between the internal and external spheres of the state in such a way that any model of international insertion is fundamentally a product of this

dynamic. Consequently, the very formulation of foreign policy becomes the most concrete manifestation of this phenomenon.

One familiar with the domestic politics of Taiwan would be hard pressed to refute these theoretical assumptions. The historical consequences of the establishment of the Republic of China on Taiwanese soil resulted in a very peculiar political entity with unique characteristics in world affairs. The very cross-strait question that so consumes China hands and IR analysts, and the whole debate about Taiwan's identity and its international diplomatic status, are sufficient elements to support the assertion that Taiwan is indeed a unique occurrence. Along with these features, a fierce and seemingly irrevocable power dispute has taken root between the two major political camps in the country. Since the establishment—in more than just name—of democracy in the ROC, beginning with the lifting of martial law in 1987 and culminating in the holding of free and regular elections starting in 1996, the Chinese Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang (KMT), and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) have contributed to the stark polarization of Taiwan's political scene even as they alternated in holding national leadership positions and, with them, the purview for conducting international affairs. Despite the presence of more than 250 registered political parties in Taiwan, most have ideologically accreted around one of the two extremes on Taiwan's unique political spectrum, with the KMT being the standard-bearer for the *pan-blue* camp and the DPP leading the *pan-green* camp (Taipei Times 2014).

The next level of analysis brings the very personalities of the leaders themselves under scrutiny, and assesses how individual perceptions of their role and aspirations for the future of Taiwan have influenced their approach to leadership, especially as regards the island disputes. As we shall explore in this article, the DPP period (2000-2008) saw the focus on the South China Sea, and particularly Itu Aba (Taiping Island) for reasons that were influenced by President Chen Shui-bian's perception of the China threat, as well as his (and his party's) conception of Taiwan as a *de facto* independent nation. During the latter KMT period and the tenure of President Ma Ying-jeou, the focus has shifted to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands for reason that include Ma's aspirations for closer Taiwan/China ties and his conception of Taiwan's identity as part of a larger China, and therefore one with a historical animosity with Japan. Both men are experts in law—Chen a maritime lawyer, and Ma a constitutional lawyer—and both largely led policymaking by dint of personality, as is the norm for ROC presidents since the days of Chiang Kai-shek. This study is therefore illustrative of the role of leaders' personal idiosyncrasies in making policy, as much as or more so than the official position of their respective parties on such foreign-policy issues as maritime disputes.

The characteristics of Taiwan's claims: East and South China Seas

To put this inquiry into context, it is important to first establish a baseline, and to examine the limits as well as the prerogatives of policymaking on Taipei's maritime claims—claims predicated largely on historical assertions. Based on the extent of its territory as originally stipulated by its Constitution, the ROC demands sovereignty rights

over almost the totality of the South China Sea. The core of its claims is concentrated on the Spratly Islands (Nansha), Pratas Islands, Macclesfield Bank, and the Paracel Islands (Xisha). The ROC claims to be the first nation in the twentieth century to have declared its sovereignty over these islands (Wang 2010, 243). Essentially, the ROC's claims are based on a number of historical sources, though not without controversy.

While it is known that fishermen from Hainan Island have been visiting the SCS islands for hundreds of years in the course of practicing their profession, the official Chinese claims cite records of naval expeditions having visited the islands during the Han Dynasty in 110 AD and the Ming Dynasty from 1403-1433 AD. Evidence is scant, however, and many researchers hold—or rather, held—that the first official expeditions from China are variously dated to 1902 or 1909, and are based on archaeological evidence unearthed on the Paracel Islands themselves. No official records have been unearthed, however, to substantiate the veracity of these expeditions. Rather, evidence has surfaced of a secret expedition carried out in June of 1937, in which Huang Qiang, the head of Chinese military region No. 9, was sent to the Paracels to assert Chinese (in this case, the Republic of China) sovereignty and to check on Japanese activity there. Records show that the ship was loaded with 30 sovereignty markers; four dating to the Qing dynasty, and the rest to 1912. Huang's team buried the markers on the islands of the Amphitrite Group (Woody, Rocky, Ling Zhou, and Bei islands), making note of their locations for future discovery. This tactic of planting false archaeological evidence as a means of supporting sovereignty claims was likewise conducted on the Spratly islands, with evidence suggesting that sovereignty markers dated to 1946 were, in fact, put there a full decade later (Bonnet 2015, 3-5).

The contemporary version of the Chinese nationalist government's assertiveness pertaining to the South China Sea was in response to French actions in the area. France claimed the Spratly Islands and occupied some of the islands in 1933, and in 1938, French forces also occupied the Paracel Islands. Much of the French actions in this regard were on behalf of its colony of Vietnam. Meanwhile, the Kuomintang government had been mired in an endless civil war since 1927, and was also hampered by the occupation of Chinese soil by the Imperial Japanese army, and as such was not in any condition to respond to these occupations. Following the end of the Second World War, the Kuomintang government transferred the jurisdiction from Kwangtung provincial government to the ROC Navy by virtue of a map, produced in 1947, on which 11 dashed lines delineated a U-shaped territory covering almost the entirety of the South China Sea and claiming it in the name of the ROC. Later, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek aimed to establish ROC sovereignty over the area and in 1949, the ROC Navy transferred the jurisdiction of Spratly Islands to the provincial government of Hainan (Wang 2010, 243-244).

With the victory of the Chinese Communists and the Republic of China's consequent retreat to Taiwan, Chiang's cabinet maintained the ROC claims over the SCS islands—as it did over the entire Chinese mainland—and very similar versions of the 1947 “cow's tongue” map were adopted by both sides in the conflict, the ROC and the newly formed People's Republic of China (PRC). Thus it happened that the PRC essentially inherited the claims originally formulated by the Kuomintang, by this time administering

“Free China” from the new capital of Taipei. The ROC government in Taiwan made it the island's claims as well, making both sides of the strait support their arguments on the same historical basis and arguments (Tønnesson 2002, 9-11). In practice, these similarities have led different specialists to consider the ROC and PRC claims as identical, and sometimes even “*understood as one*” (Emmers & Tan 2011); (Joyner 1998).

Taipei's arguments to support its claims of sovereignty suffer from the same deficiencies as those of China, to wit, that they are predicated on historical sources. As classically discussed by Burghardt, international law has traditionally considered four modes by which a nation-state can claim sovereignty over a territory: 1) occupation, when a state establishes control over the territory that was not at that moment administered by any other state (*terra nullius* or *res nullius*); 2) prescription or the maintenance of effective control for a considerably long period of time; 3) cession, or transfer by treaty; and 4) accretion or growth of territory “through acts of nature” (Burghardt 1973, 226). Neither the ROC nor the PRC claims convincingly comply with any of these modes.

Regarding the disputes in the East China Sea, the ROC has been more confidently assertive, principally due to Taiwan's closer proximity to the claimed territories. This question of proximity has important implications for two basic reasons: the first is the claimant's greater capability to project power over the territory in question; and the second revolves around the fact that closeness can assure a stronger cultural and social connection to territories in dispute, which also can be an important asset in case of international arbitration or mediation. What the ROC completely lacks in the South China Sea, it has in the case of the East China Sea. Taiping Dao, despite its strategic importance, is 1,600 km from the southern city of Kaohsiung, and 1,150 km distant from the ROC-administered Pratas Islands. In the event of an armed conflict, such great distances would render the ROC (or any other claimant) incapable of properly protecting its claims, unless air and naval reinforcements can be provided in a timely fashion (Chen 2011, 5). In contrast, the Diaoyutai Islands are located a mere 102 nautical miles northeast of Keelung, the largest port city in Taiwan's north. This proximity, according to ROC official sources (MOFA 2013), has made ...[t]he waters surrounding the Diaoyutai Islands abound with bonito making it a popular fishing spot for fishermen from northeastern Taiwan (Taipei, Keelung and Suao). Due to its proximity and favorable climate, this area was also popular among fishermen who sought shelter on these islands during storms and repaired boats and equipment on their shores as well. In addition, the Chinese used to gather medicinal herbs on these islands, and salvage sunken boats in neighboring waters and then dismantle them on Diaoyutai Island, demonstrating China's traditional use of the islands.

Arguably, as the Senkakus appertained to the territory of Taiwan, they were ceded to Japan by the Qing court in 1895 as per the stipulations of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, after Japan defeated China in the First Sino-Japanese War. According to this argument, the islands should have been turned over to the allies following Japan's surrender in World War II, and occupied by the ROC as Taiwan proper had been. In practice, however, the Japanese continued to administer the islands—including, for a period, with hundreds of Japanese citizens living and working there, collecting coral, raising cattle, and manufacturing dried

bonito and canned goods—on the legal basis that Japan discovered and annexed them as *terra nullius* in 1895, before the Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed.

In brief, the position of the Japanese government is that the Senkaku Islands were incorporated into Japan's territory by acquisition through occupation, and have since remained as an integral part of the Nansei Shoto Islands; that the islands were placed under US administration under the San Francisco Peace Treaty; and that today the area has been under Japan's administration in accordance with the 1971 Agreement between Japan and the United States of America Concerning the Ryukyu Islands and the Daito Islands (Mote-ki 2010, 22).

Neither China nor Taiwan showed much interest in the Diaoyutai Islands until the late 1960s, when the islands were under the administration of the United States, as they had been since 1945, and neither of the governments on the opposing sides of the Taiwan Strait pressed any claims to them dating before the publication of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and Far East (ECAFE) report suggesting that the islands might be sitting atop a potent reservoir of oil (Smith 2013). This spurred a "Diaoyutai movement" in Taipei in 1970, in which the ROC suddenly became interested in claiming the islands.

DPP approach to territorial claims during the Chen Shui-bian era (2000-2008)

As mentioned previously, the DPP administration from 2000 to 2008 paid more attention to the South China Sea question than that of Diaoyutai islands. While this may initially seem counterintuitive—if the DPP administration is pro-Taiwan Independence, why would it support ROC claims over a faraway island with no connection to Taiwan or her people, and which is only held under the auspices of a flawed and anachronistic ROC Constitution? In fact, as we shall see, the Chen administration's focus on managing the SCS sovereignty issue fits well with the party's anti-KMT position. Moreover, the DPP does not share the KMT's conception of ethnic Chinese identity, and hence does not share its animosity toward the Japanese, so it is hardly surprising that there were so few flare-ups of tensions over the Senkaku/Diaoyutai islands.

It is important to highlight some personal aspects related to Chen's way of dealing with the Spratly question. His election in 2000 crystalized an increasing sense of assertion of a "Taiwanese identity," initiated during Lee Teng-hui's time in office. In his inaugural address, Chen referred to himself as essentially "huaren," understood as a term that encompasses all the people in Taiwan who have Chinese ethnicity independent of their background (Danielsen 2012, 140). Chen promoted a "Name Rectification Campaign" to localize names of companies and offices which had China or KMT in their title—the postal service, for example, changed from Chunhwa Post to Taiwan Post, and the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall was renamed the Taiwan Democracy Memorial Hall. Both, it should be noted, were swiftly changed back after the KMT regained power in 2008.

Again, Chen was a maritime lawyer, but he made his political mark representing anti-KMT dissidents, and had worked to support democratization and an end to the

KMT's one-party state. Years of political strife, a series of assassination attempts, and the crippling of his wife, forcing her to be confined to a wheelchair for the rest of her life in an accident that many suspected was politically motivated (she was hit by a truck and then run over three times) no doubt only contributed to Chen's anti-KMT worldview, and this ideological crusade also was present in the South China Sea question.

In 1988, the KMT had tacitly and explicitly allowed warships of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) to anchor for a week at Taiping Dao to receive food supplies during China's conflict with Vietnamese forces known as the Johnson South Reef Skirmish (Danielsen 2012, 256). This situation led the former Minister of Defense Cheng Wei-yuan to openly state that the ROC military would, if asked, cooperate with the PLAN in the advent of another conflict over the Spratly Islands (Elleman 2013, 277). This arrangement was supposedly designed to preserve "Chinese" sovereignty over the Spratlys (Danielsen 2012, 257). Thus the South China Sea question was double-edged sword in President Chen's hands: he could not only end this avenue of cooperation with Beijing predicated on a shared "Chineseness," but use the issue to promote a sense of Taiwanese identity and at the same time reinforce a clear-cut assertion of ROC sovereignty over those territories, in opposition to the Chinese claims, instead of just those of other nations. The symbolism was elevated to the next level when Chen himself became the first ROC president to personally set foot on Taiping Dao.

Chen's cabinet initiated a series of bold tactical moves during the DPP leader's second term from 2004 to 2008 designed to calm regional tensions while exercising ROC sovereignty. Most remarkable were those that were concluded or implemented at the very dawn of Chen's second term, including the replacement of the Marine Corps detachment stationed on Taiping Island with members of the ROC Coast Guard, and the construction of a 1,150 meter-long runway on the island (Lin 2000).

Moreover, in early 2008, the Chen administration launched a Spratly Initiative that, while reiterating ROC claims to the islands, called on neighboring countries in the South China Sea to "shelve sovereignty disputes and jointly explore resources based on the principle and spirit of the UN Charter, the UN Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS) and the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea" (MOFA 2008). The initiative sent the signal to the other claimant nations that Taipei was open to negotiation and dialogue as a means of peacefully resolving disputes. The proposals called for the substitution of the sovereignty issue with that of environmental protection and ecological preservation vis-à-vis resource exploitation, citing the threats posed by global warming and rising sea levels, and calling for the South China Sea to be designated as a marine ecological sanctuary, where environmental scientists and protection groups could conduct field research. Chen called on all claimant nations to cooperate in the realization of this vision.

Thus, even while acknowledging the important geostrategic considerations regarding the South China Sea and the ROC's claims there, with more than 70 percent of the population expressing disapproval of his administration, Chen Shui-bian attempted to leverage the issue in order to bolster his image as a) a peacemaker, rather than a trouble-

maker, b) a leader who would protect the nation's sovereignty, and c) someone who could raise Taiwan's international profile and develop ties abroad, notwithstanding the Chinese diplomatic blockade. Naturally, the administration could find some political shelter in the Spratly Islands issue, offering some spectacle to the public at home (Hsue 2007, 20). Or, as the *Washington Post* editorialized in its coverage of his 2008 trip to Taiping Island, Chen's "one-day round-trip voyage was designed to dramatize Taiwan's claim to the string of islands..."; dramatization fits well the description given to the military logistics involved in such an endeavor (Washington Post 2008).

Media reports at the time indicate that almost half of the ROC Navy's warships were utilized during the trip. Besides the Air Force C-130 transport plane which ferried Chen to Itu Aba, two submarines and two fleets of warships participated, using the AEGIS radar of the ROC's Kidd-class destroyers, which has a range of more than 400 km, to gather signals intelligence on the surrounding waters. Indeed, a combined intelligence task force with allied countries was developed in order to create an air corridor for the safety of Chen's travel (Taipei Times 2008).

The trip traces the final contours of a contradictory diplomatic line of action on the part of DPP leaders. Compared to other claimant-states, ROC policies toward the South China Sea disputes from the 1970s to the 1990s can be characterized as "self-restrained and moderated" (Lin 2008). However, during the DPP administration, it was rather more paradoxical. It starts with the decision to transfer responsibility for manning Taiping to the Coast Guard Administration instead of the Ministry of National Defense—a move that was interpreted at the time as a fig leaf being offered to Beijing, as well as to the other powers in the region. What could be seen as a demonstration of easing tensions was swiftly followed by the construction of a runway designed to increase the operational capabilities of the island as a potential forward-operating base, sparking widespread criticism among the other claimants, principally Vietnam. To complete the paradox, after his controversial visit, Chen proposed the Spratly Initiative aimed ostensibly to achieve multinational collaboration in exploring the resources of the South China Sea, and yet this invitation for joint exploration and ecological stewardship was preceded in its introduction by a classic, strongly worded reaffirmation of ROC sovereignty over the island territories. For an initiative aimed at shifting the focus from a "sovereignty trap" to environmentally sympathetic speech, and to easing tensions after the presidential visit and airstrip construction, it was contradictory at best. Consequently, there is little wonder that it gathered few supporters (Lin 2008).

Grandstanding or not, the importance Chen placed on the trip and on the Spratly issue in general illustrates how he was able to leverage the SCS claims (even though they were not beset by the high degree of tensions back then as they are today) into meeting his aims of promoting Taiwan sovereignty, attempting to engage China in dialogue, and of course shoring up political support back home.

KMT approach to territorial claims: Ma Ying-jeou (2008-2014)

Succeeding Chen Shui-bian as ROC president, Ma Ying-jeou and his new KMT administration in 2008 immediately set out to try to ease tensions with Beijing. Under the idea of “flexible diplomacy” (also sometimes called “viable” or “pragmatic” diplomacy), Ma’s cabinet wanted to make the country’s foreign affairs and diplomatic guidelines the very extension of the ROC’s domestic affairs, as interpreted by KMT ideology. In the perspective of Ma’s diplomatic body, an improvement in cross-strait relations was the only way for Taiwan to realize its economic potential and, at the same time, obtain permission from Beijing to stake out some international diplomatic space. Without having to cope with Beijing’s heavy-handed blocking of ROC diplomatic initiatives, and consequently eliminating the pressure from Washington not to threaten the *status quo*, Ma’s cabinet intended to focus on other diplomatic frontiers, which Taipei could explore to its own benefit (Anlin 2010, 6).

For this, Ma hammered out a “diplomatic truce” with the PRC, in which both sides tacitly agreed to stop trying to poach one another’s diplomatic allies. Ma intended to use the experience and gains accumulated with stable cross-strait relations to promote another pillar of his foreign policy, “proactive diplomacy”. According to this concept, the ROC should be “refocusing its resources to strengthen relations with its diplomatic allies, upgrade the level of contact with major countries in each region and integrate itself into the Asia-Pacific regional economy” (MOFA, 2008).

Regarding the territorial disputes, Ma focused more on the East China Sea disputes with Japan rather than the South China Sea disputes that so concerned Chen. Even though, in a speech in 2014, Ma listed a series of non-military facilities that had been developed on Taiping Dao and adjacent islands, many of which were planned or initiated during Chen’s tenure. These included: a) opening of an administrative office on Dongsha Atoll National Park in 2010 to promote the Pratas Islands as a center of maritime research; b) completion in 2011 of a geological exploration and marine survey in the Pratas and Spratly Islands; c) construction of photovoltaic system in order to reduce carbon emissions in the Spratly Islands; d) finalization of the construction of a communications network on Taiping Island, and the still ongoing improvements on transportation infrastructure (Want China Times 2014). However, undoubtedly the most concrete results have been achieved on the Diaoyutai Islands with Japan. The importance accorded to these islands by Ma and his cabinet has two dimensions: First, Ma’s personal feelings towards the disputes. The second involves a mix political-historical perceptions and the geostrategic importance of the territory.

The personal dimension has to do with Ma’s activism during the 1970s while a student in the United States. There, Ma was an active member of the Baodiao Movement (Protecting Diaoyutai Movement), a group created by Chinese and Chinese-American students at Princeton University that rapidly spread to other campuses, including Harvard School of Law where Ma was pursuing his PhD. The Baodiao developed an intense

campaign against the Japanese presence in the Diaoyutai islands in the form of manifestos, pamphlets (one titled “What you need to know about Diaoyutai”) in which they advocated: 1) Opposition to the revival of Japanese militarism; 2) Safeguarding China’s sovereignty over the Diaoyutai islands; 3) Opposition to the American support of the Japanese claims; and 4) Opposition to any joint development in the area before China’s sovereignty over these islands is recognized.

During this period, Ma was a persistent activist, even if not necessarily endorsing the Chinese claims, he developed an intense sensibility regarding Japan’s actions over the territories. A good example of this over-sensitivity took place in 2008 when the Taiwanese fishing vessel *Lianhe Hao* collided with a Japanese Coast Guard patrol ship, and subsequently sank. The *Lianhe Hao*’s three crewmembers and 13 passengers were rescued, and subsequently held by the Japanese Coast Guard for territorial violations. In a rare display of Taiwanese belligerence, Ma and KMT members of parliament emphasized their disposition to pay the “costs of war” to reassure the Taiwanese rights over Diaoyutai (Sahashi 2014, 239). The strong reaction to this incident illustrates the change in perception from the Chen to the Ma administration with regards to foreign policy, especially coming so early in Ma’s first term. While Chen tried to leverage the disputes in the South China Sea to answer calls for him to raise Taiwan’s international profile and display ROC strength to China, Ma has made the island disputes a factor in his larger foreign policy goal (designed to appeal to his political base) of rapprochement with Beijing, and the concomitant distancing with other powers in the region: in this case, Japan.

Despite the efforts made by the Ma administration to ameliorate ties with China, there was, after an initial ambiguity on the issue, a refusal on the part of Taipei to harmonize its South and East China Sea claims with those of Beijing, or to cooperate in any way on the issue, as has been pushed by the PRC. Indeed, two of the Ma administration’s most high-profile successes on the issue have been unrelated to the Chinese claims. First, in August 2012, Ma proposed an East-China Sea Peace Initiative, promoting such concepts as confidence-building measures, preventive diplomacy, and multilateral cooperation on the peaceful settlement of disputes (MOFA 2012). This effort, notwithstanding the fact that it was destined to be quashed by Beijing, was covered in the international media and shone a positive light on the administration, and domestic audiences were receptive. It also offered analysts a glimpse into some of the administration’s priorities. In addition to the aforementioned decision not to harmonize efforts on the island disputes with China, it revealed a desire to raise Taiwan’s international profile and align Taipei with Washington’s security interests in the Asia-Pacific.

Moreover, it boosted Taipei’s bargaining position in the negotiations for what would become the Ma administration’s second high-profile success after the peace initiative: a fisheries agreement signed with Japan in April 2013 (MOFA 2013). This agreement – which had been under negotiation for 17 years, and was inked only after pressure was exerted by Washington – likewise contributed to the administration’s priorities as described above, as well as playing well with the domestic audience, being as it is an international agreement of the type ROC citizens crave from their leaders, given the diplomatic block-

ade by China.

Conclusion

It is important to highlight that, unlike the South China Sea islands, Taiwan's sense of territoriality is more developed due to the proximity with the Diaoyutai Islands. Taiwanese fishermen have long plied their trade in these waters – the very name Diaoyutai means “fishing terrace” (Eto 1980, 726) – with the Japanese Diet granting fishing rights to Taiwan in the waters of the Senkakus and Yonaguni Island in recognition of the geographic and cultural proximity with Hualien (Moteki 2010, 22). This closeness not only saw the Yonaguni islanders share a time zone with Taipei, but in 1947 it witnessed a mayoral candidate run on a platform that included that island officially becoming part of Taiwan (Kurokawa 2013, 41). Generation after generation have created a strong sense of identity with that territory, and hence, the very potential of the area as fishery sanctuary and its energy potential has added to the disputes a mix of social and geostrategic importance (Hsu 2009, 6).

Ma, with his strong sympathy towards his Han Chinese ancestry, takes these perceptions to the next level being the leader of the KMT, which has the added baggage of once having been the ruling party of all of China; having fought the Japanese aggression in the Second Sino-Japanese War (known in the West as the Pacific Theatre of World War II); and carrying a lingering anti-Japanese sentiment as a result. In contrast, the DPP, which advocates a local Taiwanese identity and has often been called a pro-independence party, does not share this anti-Japanese sentiment. On the contrary, Chen Shui-bian alongside many DPP supporters views the ROC (via the KMT) as an occupying power, and one that is less benevolent than how they remember the Japanese behaving during that country's colonization of the island from 1895 to 1945.

Given these two almost diametrically opposed ideologies, it is instructive to view how the respective administrations of the KMT and the DPP made foreign policy that was driven by domestic concerns and personal beliefs on the issue of the littoral disputes. What is surprising is the level of congruence of these policies, leading to the conclusion that despite the ideological bent of the party in power, the Taiwanese electorate has certain well-defined concerns and expectations from their leaders: promote Taiwan's international profile; demonstrate independence (especially with regards to China) on issues of sovereignty; and protect the economic rights of the island's fishermen. While variances can be seen in the way these goals are achieved, the issues themselves remain the same across political administrations.

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THE U.S. PIVOT AND STRATEGY IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA DISPUTE

5

PETRA ANDĚLOVÁ AND MÁRIA STRAŠÁKOVÁ

List of Contents

Introduction
The U.S. pivot to Asia
Key components of the pivot
The U.S. interests in the South China Sea
Latest developments and the U.S. policy
Conclusion
References

Introduction

In his speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2014 the U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel emphasized several broad security priorities of the United States (U.S.) in advancing its partnership with allies throughout the Asia-Pacific. These included among others the peaceful resolution of disputes, upholding the freedom of navigation, building a cooperative regional architecture based on international rules and norms, enhancing the capabilities of the U.S. allies and partners and last but not the least strengthening the U.S. regional defense capabilities (Hagel 2014). On the occasion, Hagel also highlighted the importance of the South China Sea (SCS) by calling it “the beating heart of the Asia-Pacific and a crossroads for the global economy” (Hagel 2014). However, despite the above-mentioned objectives, since its initiation in 2009 the U.S. “Pivot to Asia” has become an object of much scrutiny and criticism (see Ross 2012). Thus, the aim of this chapter is double-fold: first, to shed light on the goals and key components of the U.S. pivot to the Asia-Pacific; second, to highlight the U.S. interests in the SCS and its policy towards the region.

The U.S. pivot to Asia

Even though the term “pivot” started to appear in the official U.S. discourse after 2011, when the Secretary of State Hilary Clinton published her article “America’s Pacific Century” in the Foreign Policy magazine (Clinton 2011), a heightened interest in the region had been demonstrated much earlier with the ascent of President Barrack Obama to the White House in 2009. Since then the region has become a priority of the U.S. administration, which can be understood as “only natural given to the transfer of the global political and strategic gravity from Atlantic to the Pacific” (Wei 2013).

However, as time passed the rather vague term “pivot” started to acquire more concrete contours and terms such as “rebalance” or “counterbalance” of a rising China dominated the debate. As Zakaria eloquently pinpointed in *Washington Post*: “The stability of the world will not rest on whether the Houthis win or lose in Yemen. (...) But how the world’s established superpower handles the rising one, China” (Zakaria 2015). In his article “Obama and Xi Must Think Broadly to Avoid a Classic Trap” Graham Allison concluded that in 11 of 15 cases since 1500 in which a rising power rivaled a ruling power, the outcome was war. Hence, the question is whether the U.S. and China will be able to escape the Thucydides Trap (Allison 2013). Given the fact that the “pivot” policy started leaning “heavily toward balancing through security alignment and military deployment” (Wei 2013, 151), the risks of an open conflict have also been increasing rather than contrariwise.

Key components of the pivot

According to Muni (2014, 10-11), the U.S. pivot to the Asia-Pacific encompasses five key components. First is the military re-deployment to the region. Since 2009 the Asia-Pacific has been a witness to the growing U.S. military presence. By August 2012 there were 40 000 personnel in Japan, 28 500 in South Korea, 5 000 in Guam and an additional 40 000 based in Hawaii (Mayborn 2014, 82). Worth mentioning is also the U.S. deployment of 2 500 marines to Darwin in Australia by 2016 (Wei 2013, 150). Further negotiations concerning new military bases or anchoring U.S. littoral combat ships are underway with a number of Southeast Asian states, such as the Philippines and Singapore.

Second is the systematic strengthening of alliances and building strategic partnerships. Even though traditionally the U.S. presence in the region has been resting on five pillars (Australia, Japan, South Korea, Thailand and the Philippines), the U.S. has ventured to build new alliances, of which the most important is the strategic partnership with India, a broader cooperation with Indonesia and other ASEAN countries, such as Vietnam. However, in this regard many authors warn against the so-called “Georgia Scenario”, which in connection with the pivot could repeat itself, e.g. in the SCS in the case of the Sino-Philippines confrontation (Goldstein 2011).

The third component of the pivot is the building of strategic architecture. Even though for a long time the U.S. presence in the region has been embedded in bilateral relations, the U.S. has also started paying more attention to regional institutions (e.g. East Asia Summit, ASEAN and other ASEAN-related organizations) to avoid isolation in the region and to impede Chinese dominance in these fora. The U.S. also seeks to transform these platforms into effective and decision-making bodies rather than impotent chit-chat sessions (Muni 2014, 11).

The fourth component entails economic resurgence. The Asia-Pacific has become a motor of world economy. In this context, the U.S. pivot strategy also seeks to help revive and expand its economic stakes. The Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), that the US has been negotiating with 11 countries in the Asia-Pacific (excluding China) since 2008, is envisaged to boost the US trade and investment prospects in the region and opportunities

for its companies as well as citizens by providing an increased access to markets of member states (Petri, Plummer and Zhai 2011, 51).

The fifth key component of the pivot is ideological assertion. The key objective is to create an ideological front promoting the significance of human rights and democracy as well as to diplomatically pursue countries that transgress or lack these norms (Muni 2014, 11). However, notwithstanding the “steadfast support and advocacy for universal values, including human rights and democracy” the U.S. has started cooperating with states that are far from the ideal of Western democracy, such as Myanmar or Brunei (Al Jazeera 2014).

Despite the inherent logic of the key components, as many scholars have underscored, the U.S. “pivot” has not yielded any positive results so far, as can be exemplified on the most contentious dispute of the region - the South China Sea.

The U.S. interests in the South China Sea

Chuck Hagel’s speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue 2014 among others also highlighted several key and interlinked interests of the U.S. in the region. These can be summed up as maintaining stability of and access to the region (Fravel 2014, 2). For Washington the freedom of navigation is crucial as the SCS has become a key junction of maritime trade - it is the shortest maritime lane between the northern Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean and an important route linking together the largest and most important ports in the region of Southeast and Northeast Asia. Secondly, free passage through the SCS helps to sustain the U.S. ability to project military power not only in Asia, but also globally. The SCS together with the Malacca and Singapore Straits represent a vital passageway for regular reinforcement of U.S. military presence in the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf. In addition, more than 1 trillion worth of world trade with the U.S. passes through these waters (Fravel 2014, 2).

However, since 2007 the unhindered U.S. access to this semi-enclosed sea has been threatened by growing tensions in the region. These were caused by several factors, which can be summed up as follows: 1) growing nationalism in claimant states; 2) strengthening of sovereignty and jurisdictional claims by disputing states either through national legislation or by making submissions to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS); 3) competition over resources; and 4) militarization of the conflict. In addition, the U.S. presence has also added further heat to the disputes as China often underscores (Storey 2013, 23-25).

Nonetheless, it has been the PRC’s behavior in the region that could be seen as a threat to the U.S. interests. One of the PRC’s objectives has been to build up its fleet so that it would be able to defend Chinese territorial claims throughout the entire SCS. This process has gained momentum in the past few years with the establishment of a naval base on the island of Hainan, the existence of which was revealed by aerial photographs leaking to the public in 2008 (Ciorciari-Weiss 2012, 63). China has also been building a number of military and quasi-military outposts on a number of Paracel and Spratly Islands in order

to enhance its power projection in the SCS.

The “Impeccable Incident” of spring 2009, i.e. an instigation of Chinese navy ships with the American submarine *USNS Impeccable*, can be viewed as another proof of the growing Chinese influence and its increasing assertiveness in the SCS. The incident highlighted the lack of trust in the Sino-American relations, aggravated the concerns of Sino-American competition in the SCS and had a negative impact on the stability in Southeast Asia. The incident also exposed the rarely highlighted problem of different interpretations of UNCLOS by China and the U.S. Although the U.S. has been appealing to the “international law” and the right to the freedom of navigation in “international waters”, the U.S. non-acceptance of UNCLOS casts a shadow on its engagement because China as well as other parties concerned are signatories of this above-mentioned highly important international norm. In addition, the rising number of incidents in the region, the latest being the HYSY 981 oilrig standoff between the PRC and Vietnam of 2014 and the PRC’s land reclamation activities in the Spratlys revealed in 2015 can also be perceived as a litmus test of the U.S. commitment to its allies as well as its capacity to maintain a stable and cooperative relationship with China.

Latest developments and the U.S. policy towards the SCS

Prior Obama’s “pivot” the U.S. policy towards the SCS encompassed the following five principles: 1) peaceful resolution of the dispute, 2) maintaining peace and stability in the region, 3) preserving the freedom of navigation to ships and aircrafts, 4) maintaining a neutral position over the question of sovereignty, and 5) respecting UNCLOS and other maritime norms (Fravel 2014, 4). The U.S. policy and actions concerning the disputes in this period have been rather reactive. Nonetheless, since the above-mentioned 2009 USNS Impeccable incident, the U.S. has started paying more attention to the issue. Subsequently, the U.S., represented by the Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, participated at the July 2010 meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Hanoi (Mc Devitt 2013, 23). At the meeting Clinton reiterated the U.S. interests stating that “The United States, like every nation, has a national interest in freedom of navigation, open access to Asia’s maritime commons and respect for international law in the South China Sea” (quoted in Mc Devitt 2013, 23). She also challenged China’s 9-dotted line map inciting an angry response from the PRC’s MOFA (Storey 2013, 43).

However, until 2012 the U.S. policy towards the South China Sea dispute did not undergo any substantial changes. Nonetheless, in 2012 several incidents contributed to the deterioration of relations in the region. In April 2012, a standoff between maritime law enforcement agencies of China and the Philippines was triggered over the issue of illegal fishing at Scarborough Shoal (Storey 2013, 25). Although the U.S. strove to negotiate an agreement for the withdrawal of forces in early June, China renewed its presence on the Shoal once the Philippine vessels had departed (Fravel 2014, 6). The heightened tensions culminated by ASEAN’s failure to issue a joint statement at the July 2012 Phnom Penh Summit. In addition, in June 2012, Vietnam passed a new maritime law, in which it

claimed jurisdiction over not only the Paracel but also Spratly islands (ICG 2012, 5). Vietnam also started conducting regular air patrols over the Spratly islands (Fravel 2014, 6). Simultaneously in June China also announced the establishment of Sansha City, based on Woody Island, which was to administer the Paracels, Spratlys and the Macclesfield Bank (Thayer 2011, 11-12).

With respect to these new developments the U.S. also clarified its posture towards the dispute by issuing a policy statement on 3 August 2012. It differed significantly from the previously released ones by openly identifying China's activities in the region (U.S. Department of Defense 2012). Within the statement the U.S. government re-emphasized the need to "lower tensions in keeping with the spirit of the 1992 ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea and the 2002 ASEAN-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea" as well as called for all the parties concerned to "pursue their territorial and maritime claims in accordance with international law, including the Law of the Sea Convention", "explore every diplomatic or other peaceful avenue for resolution, including the use of arbitration or other international legal mechanisms" and last but not least find "new cooperative arrangements for managing the responsible exploitation of resources" (U.S. Department of Defense 2012).

Notwithstanding the U.S. calls for a peaceful resolution of the conflict, tensions in the SCS continued to escalate. In summer 2013 territorial disputes led to a sharp deterioration in Sino-Philippine relations caused by a maritime confrontation near the Second Thomas Shoal, which was surrounded by Chinese law enforcement vessels. The PRC's establishment of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in East China Sea in November 2013 heightened concerns of a similar step to be undertaken in the SCS. In December 2013 the PRC renewed fishing regulations in Hainan province having legal force also in the SCS. In addition, in January 2014 China's widely publicized oath-taking ceremony aboard several Chinese naval ships at James Shoal close to Malaysia further accentuated China's perception as a threat to the stability of the region (Fravel 2014, 8)

As a reaction to these developments, the U.S. publicized its most detailed policy statement on the SCS in February 2014. Daniel Russel, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Asia, in a testimony before the House Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific on 5 February, demanded China to "clarify or adjust its nine-dash line claim to bring it in accordance with the international law of the sea" underscoring that "all maritime claims must be derived from land features and otherwise comport with the international law of the sea" (Santolan 2014). Russel's statements also reaffirmed the position of its ally, the Philippine government, which had drawn a legal case against China's maritime claims in the SCS at the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea in Hague on 30 March 2014 (Fravel 2014, 8; Santolan 2014).

Tensions culminated further in May 2014, after the Haiyang 981 oil-rig had been set up by the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) to explore for oil and gas in the contested waters near the Paracel Islands (also claimed by Vietnam). The move triggered sharp criticism from Vietnam, unleashed an unprecedented upheaval of nationalist ire resulting in mass demonstrations throughout Vietnam and caused probably the

worst blow to the Sino-Vietnamese relations since 1979. China unexpectedly withdrew the oil-rig from the disputed waters in mid-July, a month prior the initially announced deadline (Truong-Minh Vu and Nguyen Thanh Trung, 2014). The U.S. State Department condemned the deployment as “provocative and unhelpful to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region” (Brumitt, 2014). However, overall the U.S. restricted itself to merely “expressing its concern” with the situation and urged both sides to resolve the dispute in a peaceful manner.

The situation in the SCS further aggravated the following year, when in March 2015 images showing Chinese land reclamation activities in the Spratlys as well as the Paracels leaked into public heightening concerns of the claimant states and the U.S. Southeast Asian states that feared that the PRC would strive to turn these reefs into islands to gain the 200 nm EEZ, to establish great sovereignty over the SCS as well as set up an ADIZ in the SCS as it did in case of the East China Sea in 2013 (Broderick, 2015). The U.S. officials were also highly critical of Chinese terraforming activities and accused China of “changing the status quo in the South China Sea, intensifying the militarization of the dispute, destabilizing the region, undermining international norms and rules and violating the DoC” (Storey 2015, 8).

However, the Haiyang Shiyou 981 oil rig incident as well as China’s land reclamation activities in the Spratlys have posed a much more serious question, i.e. whether the U.S. has so far been able to create an effective strategy to counter China’s “salami slicing” tactics in the SCS (O’Rourke 2016, 42). Until the present, the U.S. has been pursuing a multifaceted strategy aimed at deterring the use of force and reducing the risk of escalating the disputes and clashes among all claimant states. According to Glaser (2014, 54), this strategy consists of nine features: 1) issuing a tougher rhetoric denouncing China’s assertive actions in the SCS; 2) mobilizing support for legal disputes mechanisms; 3) strengthening the U.S. presence in the region as well as its military capabilities; 4) enhancing military capabilities of allies and partners; 5) encouraging unity and cooperation among Southeast Asian states; 6) supporting multilateral frameworks for cooperation, risk reduction and conflict resolution; 7) proposing specific advice aimed at lowering regional apprehensions; 8) bolstering regional security and economic architecture; and last but not least buttressing ASEAN and U.S. ASEAN cooperation, and fostering ASEAN unity and centrality. However, many observers are convinced that this strategy has so far failed to counter China’s assertive behavior in the region (Dolven et. al. 2015, 21). Furthermore, the latest developments have also triggered a heated debate in the U.S. on “whether it should adopt a more hardline policy towards China” (Storey 2015, 10).

Hence, since 2015 the U.S. has stepped up its activities in the region. First, the U.S. Department of Defense highlighted the U.S. commitment to foster alliances and partnerships with Southeast Asian states as well as to increase America’s military rebalance to the region (Storey 2015, 9). Thus, the U.S. increased its security cooperation with Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia. In addition, it vowed to ameliorate Manila and Hanoi’s maritime capabilities by providing equipment and infrastructure support to the Vietnamese coast guard, by assisting the Philippines build a National Coast Watch System

to boost its maritime domain awareness, as well as conducting sea surveillance exercises with Indonesia (Dolven et. al. 2015, 21). Furthermore, at the 2015 Shangri-La Dialogue, the U.S. representatives announced a \$425 million “Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative” to provide further capacity-building sustenance for Southeast Asian partners (Storey 2015, 9).

In addition, concerning the SCS as the U.S. Secretary of Defense declared “United States will fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows, as we do around the world, and the South China Sea is not and will not be an exception” (van Ham, Montesano, and van der Putten 2016, 15). Hence, in October 2015, within the framework of “freedom of navigation” (FoD) exercises, the U.S. Navy guided missile destroyer, the USS Lassen, sailed within 12 nm of Subi Reef in the SCS to protest against Beijing’s sovereignty claims (Kim 2016, 48). The following month, the U.S. flew two of its B-52 bombers near islands in the SCS claimed by Beijing (BBC 2015). The incident took place a week ahead of the APEC Manila Summit, which was to be attended by both the U.S. President Barack Obama and China’s President Xi Jinping. Despite the fact that China’s President Xi Jinping stated that he would not discuss sovereignty of the region, President Obama raised the issue at the very beginning of the two-day meeting. He further called on the Chinese to halt the military build-up in the SCS and supported a process of arbitration to settle the dispute. In addition, he defended the right of free navigation through the SCS and also announced a \$250 million in military contributions to several Asian nations to support their efforts to resist China’s activities (The New York Times 2015). Obama concluded that “you can count on the United States to help protect the security of the waters of this region” (Valencia 2016). To match Obama’s rhetoric with action, the U.S. continued to conduct B-52 training missions in the SCS the following month leading to another breach with the PRC. Chinese officials yet again accused the U.S. of a “serious military provocation” after a B-52 bomber had mistakenly flown within 2 nm of Chinese-claimed territory in the SCS in mid-December (Ryan 2015).

Tensions in the region were further heightened in February 2016, when China deployed two batteries of eight Hongqi-9 surface-to-air missile (SAM) launchers to Woody Island in the Paracels (Heath 2016). According to observers, this may have been a reaction to the U.S. activities in the region. First, in December 2015 the U.S. approved a \$1.83 billion arms sale to Taiwan, which has drawn major criticism from China (Foxnews.com 2016). Second, in January 2016, the U.S. carried out another round of freedom of navigation exercises in the SCS, when a U.S. warship passed within 12 nm of the Triton Island within the Paracels (Ryan, 2016). Third, China also objected to South Korean interest in hosting the U.S.-provided Terminal High Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) missiles, as China feared the system would enable Washington to expand its military power (Jung 2016).

From a military perspective, the deployment of the missiles on the Parcel Archipelago increases China’s capacity to control the airspace around it and in the long-run, as Heath points out, can “threaten the safety of U.S. surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft that may pass by the islands, such as the U.S. Navy’s P-3 or P-8 patrol planes” (Heath 2016). In addition, the positioning of missiles could complicate surveillance patrols car-

ried out by U.S. and Japanese aircraft, flights by U.S. B-52 long-range bombers and thwart operations of Vietnam's expanding fleet of Russian-built SU-30 jet fighters. Furthermore, according to Bonnie Glaser, this build-up may also be a likely precursor to similar military deployments in the Spratlys (Torode and Rajagopalan 2016). Chinese officials have dismissed criticism of the deployment by other SCS claimant states by asserting that the deployment was a "defensive response" to the U.S. military activities in the region and mocked efforts to turn it into a "hot issue" (Heath 2016). Furthermore, in China's view, it has been the U.S. who has significantly contributed to the militarization of the dispute by projecting its power (Valencia 2015). The deployment of missiles signals that the PRC is determined to continue in strengthening its control over the SCS regardless of criticisms of other Southeast Asian states and the U.S. presence in the region. Furthermore, it seems that so far the U.S. strategy has not been effective in curbing China's ambitions in the SCS (Heath 2016).

Conclusion

Since its initiation in 2009 the U.S. pivot to the Asia-Pacific has become a focal point of much scrutiny and criticism of politicians as well as foreign policy analysts. Even though the strategy seems strong on paper, its implementation, especially in the SCS dispute, has been far from successful. At the same time the U.S. Pivot to the Asia-Pacific seems to be an attempt of the U.S. to bring Asian states to play along the "U.S. rules" but China has been unwilling to do so. Yet the U.S. has also been unwilling to accept any other rules than its own. Hence, the Thucydides trap looks unavoidable since the "game of chicken" between China and the U.S. has been evidently gaining speed.

As time passes, it also seems that the U.S. efforts to persuade Beijing to renounce its "salami slicing" strategy in the SCS have fallen flat. The positioning of Hongqi-9 surface-to-air missile (SAM) launchers on Woody Island in the Paracels also signals that China will not renounce its efforts to project power in the SCS. However, as the analysis above has shown, the deployment of missiles could have also been a reaction to the more assertive activities of the U.S. in the region creating an impression of a tit-for-tat action between the two powers. Thus, the unfolding events pose a strategic question whether and how the U.S. will respond to China's constantly growing assertiveness. The key issue is whether the U.S. will be capable of "matching its rhetoric with actions", be willing to intervene in the region to guarantee the freedom of navigation and overflight and prove its credibility as an ally to the Southeast Asian claimants. However, so far it seems that the U.S. strategy has failed to counter Chinese activities and as a result the situation is developing into a stalemate between the two countries. However, the status quo in the SCS is an uncertain one and the question is who will lose their nerve first and what will be the end result.

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NEITHER DETERRENCE NOR REASSURANCE, BUT BOTH: A DEFENSIVE REALIST ARGUMENT FOR JAPANESE SECURITY POLICY

SHUHEI TAKEMOTO

List of Contents

Introduction
 Conceptual Framework for Analysis
 Emerging Security Environment in the Asia-Pacific: an Empirical Analysis
 Chinese Growing Denial Capabilities
 Japanese “Rebalance”
 Results of the Empirical Analysis
 Implications for Japanese Security Policy

Introduction

Ever since Shinzo Abe returned as prime minister of Japan in December 2012, the Japanese government has been striving to revise its national security legislations. In the meantime, Japan has significantly enhanced its security and defense policies. Because of the matter of space, this paper will not go into the details of all the changes and revisions, but three seem to deserve attention. First is the so-called “cabinet decision to exercise the right of collective self-defense” on July 1, 2014, second is the more recent revision of Japan-US Defense Guidelines by the two governments on April 27, 2015 and the third is the cabinet decision to revise the security legislations on May 14, 2015.

Considering these historical achievements, one cannot resist in asking the obvious question of why Japanese security policy is in the midst of historical transition? What should be the method for Japan to strengthen its national security? Two contradicting arguments seem to be under debate in Japan today. One is that Japan and the US should take every necessary measure to deter and contain the military expansion of China. Anyone who has studied International Relations and Security Studies would find deterrence (*yokushi*) and containment (*fujikome*) a familiar term, but now it seems these academic concepts have become a very popular word even among the Japanese public. The other argument is that deterrence and containment through the Japan-US security alliance would only induce a counter reaction from China and thus would lead to vicious action-reaction spiral. The proponents of these arguments insist that Japan should focus more on providing reassurance (*anshinkyouyo*) to China. Reassurance, in general, tries to ameliorate adversarial hostility by reducing the insecurity of the opponent (Lebow and Stein 1994). Advocates of reassurance stress that Japan should enhance further economic interdepen-

dence with China and take steps to build a multilateral security institution in the Asia-Pacific (Ueki 2011).

This paper will not refute the significance of deterrence and reassurance, but instead present a defensive realist argument that the main causes of international conflicts are misperceptions and misunderstandings of the other's intentions. For defensive realists, deterrence and reassurance is not a matter of choice. Both are necessary policies for Japan to signal defensive status quo intentions. The paper will run as follows: first, by relying on the study of defensive realism, the next section will present a conceptual framework for analysis. Then, it will conduct an empirical analysis on the emerging security environment in the Asia-Pacific region with special focus on Japan, the US and China. Afterwards, it will argue that Japan and China are experiencing a typical security dilemma. But because it is a security dilemma game that Japan and China are playing it can be ameliorated with credible signaling of defensive intentions. This paper will conclude that the bilateral framework of Japan-US security alliance is the best option for Japanese security policy not only to deter China but also to reassure China of Japanese defensive intentions and capabilities.

Conceptual framework for analysis

Proponents who advocate either deterrence or reassurance fail to understand the essence of the security dilemma in international relations. As international relations take place in a self-help system, all sovereign states have the legitimate right to possess weapons for self-defense. But because weapons are essentially "ambiguous symbols," states suffer in detecting whether those weapons will be used for offensive or defensive purposes. This creates an unavoidable uncertainty of the other's true intentions. Thus, as carefully clarified by Booth and Wheeler (2008, Introduction), the security dilemma is a "two level strategic predicament." At the first level, states face a dilemma of not being able to be certain whether your opponent is a defensive status quo type or an offensive revisionist type. At the second level, because of this uncertainty of the other's type, states face another dilemma of not being able to choose deterrence or reassurance.

Advocates who stress the importance of deterrence or reassurance for Japan, although contradicting at the surface seem to have one thing in common: certainty of China's true intentions. In other words, it seems that for advocates of deterrence or reassurance the factor of uncertainty of China's intentions is irrelevant. Advocates of deterrence would argue that Japan should deter China from changing the status quo because China is certainly an offensive revisionist state. While advocates of reassurance would stress that Japan should emphasize reassurance and cooperation because China is certainly a defensive status quo state. The correct understanding of the security dilemma implies that true dilemma for Japan lies not in the choice between deterrence and reassurance, but the inability to choose deterrence or reassurance because of the uncertainty of China's intentions. Without being certain of China's true intentions both deterrence and reassurance will be necessary policies for Japan. As advocates of reassurance argue, too much of an emphasis on deterrence might decrease the chance for cooperation, while as advocates of deterrence argue

too much reassurance might induce offensive actions. Thus, as long as China's intentions remain uncertain, it must be the Japanese policy to have both options to signal Japan's defensive intentions.

It seems, then, that what is necessary is a close examination of the severity and the nature of the security dilemma between Japan and China. This is because without the correct understanding of the security environment deriving correct policy implications will be difficult. Thus, by relying on the two variables clarified by Jervis and Glaser (Jervis 1978; Glaser 1997) to check the intensity of the security dilemma, this paper will conduct an empirical analysis of the current security environment in the Asia-Pacific. The two variables: i) the offense-defense balance and ii) the distinguishability of offensive-defensive weapons and military missions. The offense-defense balance can be defined as the relative ease of taking territory compared with the ease of holding territory. When there is a defensive advantage, there exists a larger cost for the assumed aggressor to take a certain territory. On the other hand, when there exists a smaller cost for the assumed aggressor to take a certain territory, there is an offensive advantage. This paper will make one refinement to this definition. As Japan and China are obviously not in a situation of territorial conquests of each other's mainland, the concept "territory" will be expanded to incorporate the maritime supremacy or sea control in the Asia-Pacific region. Maritime supremacy or sea control refers to a condition that exists when one state (or a coalition of states) has the freedom of action to use an area for one's own purposes. Currently, the Japan-US alliance possesses the maritime supremacy in the Asia-Pacific region. This condition would make Japan and the US defensive status quo states and China the assumed offensive state.

From the two variables stated by Jervis and Glaser, we can derive two questions respectively to examine the severity of the security dilemma between Japan and China. The first is i) whether the offense-defense balance is in favor of China to challenge the status quo. The second is ii) whether Chinese defensive military weapons and missions can be distinguished from offensive ones. If there is an offensive advantage that favors China and Chinese offensive-defensive military weapons and missions cannot be distinguished, the security dilemma between Japan and China would be extremely severe. In this case Japanese security policy should emphasize deterrence. On the other hand, if there is a defensive advantage and offensive-defensive weapons are distinguishable, the severity of the security dilemma is low. In this case more emphasis should be placed on reassurance.

Emerging Strategic Environment in the Asia-Pacific: an Empirical Analysis of Chinese Growing Denial Capabilities

It is generally understood that China is on the verge of becoming a military giant in the region. Surely, China's defense expenditure has been rapidly increasing ever since 1990 and it marks the highest in the region. (Tellis and Tanner 2012, 386) It is, however, the Chinese military capabilities at sea and not China's military power per se that deserves attention. Without the correct understanding of Chinese military capabilities, one can easily misperceive China's true intentions as seeking to construct a regional hegemony that will

result in direct confrontations with the US.

It is worthwhile to recall that the bedrock of international order in the Asia-Pacific region for the past 70 years has been the US forward deployment strategy and its power projection capability. US hegemony significantly contributed in deterring any pursuit of hegemony in the region as well as maintaining the safety of the sea lines of communication. And the cornerstone of this power projection capability has been the Japan-US security alliance. The alliance has functioned not only as deterrence to the Soviet threat but also as a reassurance to Japan's neighbors, especially China, that Japan will not take any unilateral military measures to construct hegemony in the region. Thus, the alliance has significantly reduced Chinese traditional fears towards Japanese military potentials.

The one area in which the Japan-US security alliance would not provide reassurance to China is the Taiwan issue. After the end of the Cold War, the governments of Japan and the US started to redefine the role of the security alliance. The so-called "Nye initiative" in 1995 placed emphasis in strengthening Japan's commitment to support the US power projection capability in the Asia-Pacific. Furthermore, this "Nye initiative" came on top with the Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1995-1996. The crisis and the redefining of the alliance triggered Chinese fear that in case of a Taiwan contingency, the Japan-US alliance will function not only to defend Taiwan but also to make Taiwan independence unalterable (Christensen 1999).

In terms of the Taiwan issue, China is essentially a revisionist state. China fears the de facto independence of Taiwan becoming a permanent one. Still, neither the US nor China sees interest in initiating a direct war over the Taiwan Strait. President Clinton reaffirmed the US' three "noes" regarding Taiwan (no US support for Taiwan independence, for "one China, one Taiwan" or for "two Chinas," and for Taiwan's memberships in international organizations whose members are sovereign states) in 1998 (Steinberg and O'Hanlon 2014, 13). China is actually seeking to achieve strategic stability with the US through acquiring credible second-strike capability. Although the number is still far below that of the US, China possess mobile ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles) that could target major US cities (Tellis and Tanner 2012, 388-389). This would make US-China strategic parity not totally unrealistic.

Strengthening the strategic stability is the bilateral military and economic dialogues. For example, US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED) strengthen bilateral economic interdependence and communications. Also, PLA's first time participation in the RIMPAC naval exercises in 2014 is merely one example of numerous military-to-military contacts. Furthermore, Xi Jinping's proposal for a "new model of major powers relations" indicates China's willingness to seek peaceful coexistence with the US. Thus, the above indicates that China is strategically defensive in the Asia-Pacific and the likelihood that the US and China will pursue an all-out confrontation is extremely low.

Of course, one cannot dismiss the possibility that strategic stability between the US and China might induce more assertive behavior of China in the Asia-Pacific regions. As the "stability-instability paradox" implies, strategic stability between great powers can be a major factor of regional instability. In other words, the very assurance that an all-out

war between the superpowers is impossible would induce limited small-scale aggression by the aggressor in the regional front lines. Thus, under the current situation, skirmishes by the Chinese Navy in the East and South China Sea will likely to increase.

The US Department of Defense has also been increasingly concerned about the modernization of PLA's (People's Liberation Army's) A2/AD (anti-access/area denial) capabilities. "Anti-access" and "area denial" refer to capabilities to deter or counter adversary forces from deploying or operating in the Western Pacific with the combination of medium and short range ballistic missiles, cruising missiles, submarines and other conventional weapons including cyber capabilities. This implies that China is developing precision-strike capabilities to attack US bases or US vessels and submarines in case of contingencies. If successful, China can neutralize the forward deployment of the US military forces in the Asia-Pacific region. This specifically means that in case of contingencies the PLA can decouple the US and its allies. Simply put, the credibility of the US extended deterrent power is now in jeopardy.

Thus, Chinese maritime strategy can be understood as a mixture of strategic defense and tactical offense. It should be emphasized, however, that as Kotani (2015) argues China's A2/AD capability is fundamentally a sea denial capability. The aim of sea denial is to prevent the use of the sea in case of contingencies. It implies a more passive posture where the emphasis is on defense. Although they can be used for offensive tactical missions in case of contingencies, A2/AD itself is not intended or does not have the capability to control the seas in the Asia-Pacific region. Thus, the possibility that A2/AD will challenge the U.S. maritime superiority or sea control is still low.

In responses to these developments, President Obama has already declared that the US will "rebalance" its concentration and its resources to confront the Chinese A2/AD capabilities. The *Quadrennial Defense Review Report 2010* (hereafter *QDR 2010*) places strong emphasis on the forward deployment of U.S. military power in the Asia-Pacific region. The *QDR 2010* addressed a new concept called a "joint air-sea battle concept" to defeat adversaries with sophisticated A2/AD capabilities that is challenging US' freedom of action in the region. Thus, what seems to be occurring in the Asia-Pacific is a competition between assures access and access denial. (Kotani 2015, 46-47) The real danger is not so much that the US and China is competing for a hegemonic influence, but this competition for capabilities could be the cause of unintended accidents and crises that might escalate into larger conflict.

Japanese "Rebalance"

How has Japan responded to this emerging security environment in the Asia-Pacific? Will it be likely that Japanese actions could be the cause of tensions in this region? A state can pursue balancing behavior to the external environment in two ways: internal balancing and external balancing. Indeed, Abe's national security policy has been a combination of these two types. In terms of internal balancing, Abe understands that the primary source of national power comes from a strong economy. The "three arrows" of monetary

easing, stimulus spending, and growth strategy of “Abenomics” have all addressed the necessary reforms to bolster Japanese economy, which has led to the crucial decision to increase the Japanese defense budget.

Ever since the start of his second term in December 2012, Abe has also been striving to revise Japanese security legislations. To be fair, this process of revising security legislatures has started from the previous Noda administration (The Democratic Party of Japan). In 2010, National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) abandoned the “static defense force (*Kibanteki boueiriyoku*)” and adopted a new concept of “dynamic defense force (*Douteki boueiriyoku*),” emphasizing the defense of Southwestern islands (*Nansei shotou*) as well as high flexibility and mobility of JSDF (Japanese Self Defense Forces).

The significant changes, however, started from the Abe administration. In December 2013, for the first time in post war history, Japan has proposed a National Security Strategy (NSS). In this document, the Abe administration has set forth the concept “proactive contribution to peace,” which paved the road for the revision of Japanese security legislations. On the same day, the Abe administration made a cabinet decision to establish a Japanese National Security Council (NSC) in the prime minister’s office to make policy and decision making more effective. The administration has also made a new set of three principles on the transfer of defense equipment for cooperation with partners. The Charter of Japan’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) has also been revised enabling assistance in areas involving military. Furthermore, in the NDPG 2013, the Japanese government upgraded the “Dynamic Defense Force” by adding the concept “joint (togo)” to maintain maritime and air superiority in the Southwest islands.

Of course, the most significant and historical revision regarding the security legislations was the cabinet decision on July 1st 2014 to revise the traditional interpretation of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. Article 9 renounces war and the threat or the use of force to settle international disputes. One exception was the use of force to exercise the right of self-defense (an inherent right that all sovereign states possess under the United Nations Charter). The traditional three conditions to exercise the right of self-defense was i) there is an imminent unlawful infringement against Japan; ii) there is no other appropriate means available to repel this infringement; and iii) the use of force is limited to the minimum extent necessary. Based on these three conditions, exercising the right of collective self-defense was considered unconstitutional. The Abe administration changed the conditions to exercise the right of self-defense by revising the first condition to i) an armed attack takes place against a foreign country with which Japan has close relations and the country’s existence is threatened and there is a “clear danger” that the people’s right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness will be fundamentally undermined. This revision made Japan able to exercise the right of collective self-defense in a limited way.

It is worthwhile to note that the official title of the historic cabinet decision on July 1st is “Cabinet Decision on Seamless Security Legislature to Ensure Japan’s Survival and Protect its People.” There seems to exist a significant misunderstanding even in the Japanese public that the sole purpose of this cabinet decision was to exercise the right of collective self-defense, which would enable the JSDF to conduct overseas military opera-

tions. Too much emphasis on this point will blur the real purpose and direction of Japanese security policies. This cabinet decision should be considered as effort for Japan to bolster its deterrent capability with cooperation with the US in the so-called “gray-zone environment” of neither peacetime nor wartime, where unintended accidents and crises will most likely occur. This effort has led to the signing of the new Defense Guideline between the JSDF and the USAF (US Armed Forces) and a cabinet decision to revise the security legislations.

How these efforts in internal balancing have influenced Japanese external policies seems to be the more important point to consider, since this will directly affect China. As already mentioned, if we were to articulate one purpose for the internal balance policies that is to strengthen the deterrent capability of the Japan-US security alliance in “gray zone environment.” In other words, it should be emphasized that Japanese effort to strengthen its security policy posture and policy has been done under the bilateral framework of the Japan-US security alliance. Simply put, Japan is strengthening its security policies not in a unilateral way.

This fact seems to be more evident in the new Defense Guidelines signed on April 27th 2015 and the new Security Legislatures that was decided by cabinet decision on May 14th 2015. Under the new Defense Guideline the original geographical limits (the Korean peninsula), where the JSDF and the USAF will cooperate, is now abolished. It should be noted, however, the missions of JSDF will be significantly limited to providing combatant service support. This has been reaffirmed in the new security legislature. Furthermore, the three new conditions to exercise the right of self-defense were implanted into the revised Act on Response to Armed Attack Situations. This would mean that exercising the right of collective self-defense is still significantly limited to situation when there is a severe danger to Japanese national interests.

Results of the Empirical Analysis

It is possible to reach to the below conclusions regarding the intensity of the security dilemma from the above empirical analysis. First, the strategic stability between the US and China would imply that direct large-scale military confrontation in the Asia-Pacific is unlikely to happen. The bilateral cooperation through military-to-military contact as well as economic interdependence is even strengthening the strategic stability. This implies Chinese defensive intentions. In other words, China sees no interests in initiating an all-out war with Japan and the US to alter the status quo. Second, although the “stability-instability paradox” and China’s growing A2/AD capabilities might create conditions for Chinese offensive actions, A2/AD is essentially a denial strategy for contingencies. It is not designed based on offensive intentions to challenge the status quo. Furthermore, Japan and the US have been “rebalancing” to meet these challenges and they are determined to maintain their maritime superiority. This implies that it would be even more difficult for China to surpass the defense by the Japan-US alliance. Thus the first variable: i) the offense-defense balance, seems to be favoring defense. In other words, there exists a larger

cost for China to challenge the status quo.

The crucial factor that is making the security dilemma seem more intense is the second variable: ii) distinguishability of offensive and defensive military capabilities. Japan is still unclear of China's true intentions in the East and South China Sea. Because A2/AD capabilities incorporate accuracy and the mere fact that they are essentially counter-force weapons, they can neutralize the power projection capability of the Japan-US alliance. Thus regardless of China's true intentions, A2/AD can be perceived by Japan as a symbol of Chinese offensive intentions to challenge the maritime supremacy in the Asia-Pacific. This misperception can induce even stronger efforts by Japan to enhance its security and cause further misperceptions by China that Japan is returning back to unilateral militarism. The end result that one could easily imagine is a downward spiral between Japan and China. This is exactly why strengthening Japanese security policies through the bilateral framework of the Japan-US security alliance should have positive effects. The Japan-US alliance would not only send a firm signal of deterrence leaving no chance for China to challenge the status quo, but it will also increase the transparency of Japanese security policies to China and vice versa because of the fact that the US and China have mechanisms for military cooperation. The US and China understand each other's motives that they are status quo seekers especially in the Taiwan Strait. Through the Japan-US security alliance, Japan and China can reassure each other's defensive-status quo intentions, which will play a significant role in ameliorating the security dilemma in the Asia-Pacific region.

Implications for Japanese Security Policy

Still, as long as A2/AD capabilities can be used for offensive missions and can be seen as a symbol of offensive intentions, there is a chance of misperceiving China as a purely offensive nation that might result in increasing the severity of the security dilemma. Also, as we are seeing a competition for capabilities, unintended accidents at seas could be the cause of crises in the Asia-Pacific.

It is then possible to derive some policy implications for Japan. First, increasing the transparency of the military is necessary. Japan and China should construct a bilateral mechanism for military-to-military contact. Joint military exercises will also significantly increase the transparency of Japanese and Chinese military.

Second, although chances for direct conflict between Japan and China seem to be low, there is still the danger of unintended crises that might escalate into higher tensions. Thus, Japan and China should show effort in constructing a bilateral crisis management mechanism or a direct hot line between the two governments.

Finally, because of Chinese mistrust and fears towards Japan and Japanese military potentials, Japan should reassure China of Japanese defensive status quo intentions. Words will not be sufficient in this case and should be complemented by actions. And the best way to signal defensive status quo intentions to China is through the Japan-US security alliance. By using the alliance, Japan can signal deterrence with the US while signaling reassurance that Japan will not return back to unilateral militarism.

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New Threats

THE PRO-RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND SLOVAKIA

IVANA SMOLEŇOVÁ

Introduction

“Today, nobody questions the fact that Putin has waged an information propaganda war in our country,” explained Slovak activist Juraj Smatana, who in February 2015 published a list of websites that spread pro-Kremlin propaganda in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Both countries, with relatively small Russian minorities and only a handful of Russian-language media outlets, have been recently awakened by a new phenomenon – a pro-Kremlin propaganda campaign in the Czech and Slovak languages spread by media and websites that, despite strong rhetoric, claim no allegiance to the Kremlin. These pro-Russian media show a high level of similarity, using the same language and narratives. Individual disinformation campaigns appear to be spreading in a joint effort, re-posting the same articles, using identical arguments, citing Russian sources, and referring to the same pro-Kremlin public personalities. Their appearance correlates with the Ukrainian crisis, however, many were founded before 2014, suggesting that the system might have been many years in the making.

This paper provides an overview of the pro-Russian disinformation activities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, identifies frequently used narratives, and brings attention to the similarity of arguments and messages used by a pro-Russian media with no formal links to Russia, versus media that are founded and funded by the Russian Federation. Moreover, this paper will discuss the characteristics and strengths of this pro-Russian disinformation campaign in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

This paper assumes that the pro-Russian disinformation campaign in the Czech Republic and Slovakia seeks to promote Russian government and its policies in the West, however, its primary goal in the Czech Republic and Slovakia is to fuel public discontent and erode traditional western institutions, such as democracy, capitalism, the media in general. As a result, the narratives used by the pro-Kremlin media are directed to emphasize the vilification of the West rather than promote Kremlin, its representatives and policies.

Defining the “Pro-Russian disinformation campaign”

The Russian information warfare theory directly derives from *spetspropaganda*, first taught as a subject at the Russian Military Institute of Foreign Languages in 1942. It

was removed from the curriculum in 1990s and later reinstated in 2000 (Darczewska 2014, 9-10). Pomerantzev and Weiss (2014, 6) refer to Russia's assault on media and its disinformation activities as the *weaponization of information*, conducted alongside the *weaponization of money and culture*.

As this paper discusses, rather than openly promote Russia's cause, pro-Russian disinformation activities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia aim to weaken its opponents. Therefore, the term 'propaganda' is not frequently used in this text, however, other authors might use 'Russian propaganda' to refer to the similar type of activities.

In addition, the term 'pro-Russian', rather than a 'Russian disinformation campaign' is used, as the latter could imply direct involvement from the Russian Federation. With the exception of the recently launched Czech branch of Sputnik News, the majority of pro-Russian disinformation activities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia are conducted by sources with no direct organizational or financial links to the Kremlin. To date, only informal relations with Russian Embassies or Russian business elites are publicly known.⁶⁰

Likewise, the term 'information war' implies involvement by two sides in a conflict. Therefore, the term 'disinformation campaign' will be used hereafter to describe a set of activities that abuse information flows to confuse citizens and shift public opinion in the direction of predetermined policy objectives.

Pro-Russian network: new media, websites, social media and organizations

In Europe, Russia's approach to the manipulation of media and information is on a country-by-country basis, creating separate strategies for different regions and countries, while taking advantage of local infighting and weaknesses. As Nimmo (2015) pointed out, the Russian propaganda network is sophisticated, utilizing a network of officials, journalists, sympathetic commentators, and Internet trolls to deliver its messages. It is also built on the lack of transparency, where the public is unaware that various spokespeople, in fact, work for the Kremlin (Knezevic 2014).

Such is the case in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, where pro-Russian disinformation messages originate from multiple sources that are often supported by, and interconnected through pro-Russian public personalities.⁶¹ The frequent and most visible dis-

⁶⁰ Such as May 2014 Facebook picture of Mr. Rostas, founder of Zem & Vek Magazine, with the Russian Ambassador to Slovakia, Pavel Kuznetsov; or links of Jan Čarnogurský, founder of the Slovak-Russian Association, to Russian businessmen through the Pan-European University in Bratislava.

⁶¹ For example, Radka Zemanová-Kopecká is a founder of the new pro-Russian NGO Institute of Slavic Strategic Studies, which organized a public discussion in the Czech parliament and a demonstration at Prague Castle. In addition, Ms. Zemanová-Kopecká writes articles for Czech pro-Russian websites, Russian-language platforms, is active on social media and contributes to online discussions regarding published articles. Another example is the former Prime Minister of Slovakia, Ján Čarnogurský, director of the Slovak-Russian Society, who is frequently cited and interviewed by pro-Russian media outlets, such as the print Slovak magazine Zem & Vek and Czech Vědomí. In addition, he writes articles for various websites and has taken part in pro-Russian public discussions.

seminators of the pro-Russian disinformation campaign include: numerous pro-Russian websites; informal groups and communities on social media; several printed periodicals; radio broadcasts; and non-governmental organizations.⁶² In addition, the aforementioned media sources amplify their discourses through extensive social media activity and the organization of public events and gatherings. Examples include a protest that was recently initiated by the Institute of Slavic Strategic Studies, public discussions regularly organized by *Zem & Vek* magazine⁶³ and anti-NATO demonstrations supported by the Slovak-Russian Association.

Discussions regarding the pro-Russian disinformation campaign accelerated in February 2015, when a Slovak activist Juraj Smetana published a 'List of 42 websites that intentionally or unintentionally help to spread Russian propaganda in the Czech Republic and Slovakia' (Šnidl 2015). Since February, the list has grown and continues to grow as more and more like-minded websites are being discovered.

Over the last two years, a number of print periodicals began to appear, including the Czech magazine *Vědomí*, founded by the website AC24.cz (which also appeared on the aforementioned list) in 2014; Slovak *Zem & Vek* which began publishing in 2013, and radios like Slovak *Slobodný Vysielač* ("Free Transmitter") founded in January 2013. While spreading information to the benefit of Russia, their articles are frequently based on conspiracy theories and a mixture of facts, half-truths and outright lies.

Pro-Russian discourse in the mainstream media

The pro-Russian discourse has already entered Czech and Slovak mainstream media. In 2013, campaign called *Juvenile Justice* (*Juvenilná Justícia*) was described as a "Multinational system that brutally steals and unjustifiably takes children away from normal and healthy families. Using physical violence, the state social authority abducts children from their homes or kindergartens" (*Stop Auto-Genocide* n.d.). The campaign started with a 32-minute long YouTube video that accused France, Germany and the Nordic countries of "the most brutal tyranny in human history" (YouTube 2012). The video, later posted on a Slovak portal *Stopautogenocide.sk*, appeared to be of Russian origin, using the Cyrillic alphabet and referring to Russian sources.

The allegation, coupled with a petition against the aforementioned fabricated child abuse, soon spread throughout other websites and finally reached the mainstream media in May 2013, when the Slovak TV station *Markíza* reported the story.

A year later, a similar campaign appeared in the Czech Republic soon after protests against the current President Miloš Zeman, a strong supporter of Czech-Russian rela-

⁶² Often these groups have ties (through project cooperation and joint events) to Russian Embassies or Russian Centers of Science and Culture, local branches of the Federal Agency for CIS, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation, established by Russian government in 2008.

⁶³ According to their website and Facebook page, *Zem & Vek* organized more than 40 public events since 2013.

tions, took place in Prague and other Czech cities. In the days following the public unrest, provoked by a number of Zeman's controversial activities in the months preceding the event, Czech pro-Russian websites were quick to provide an explanation by accusing the American Embassy in Prague of organizing the demonstrations.

The story, or in many cases just the alleged Embassy's involvement, was reposted also by some other respected media, and later prompted the respective Foreign Ministries to actually inquire about it. Both the Embassy and the protest's organizer, Martin Příkryl, had to repeatedly refute these claims.

The media assault, however, goes beyond the Internet. Czech Television (CT), a public television broadcaster in the Czech Republic, recently reported an increased number of complaints regarding their foreign news coverage. "The pressure is enormous. I don't think the pressure on domestic coverage is different from what we are used to. This new phenomenon is placing pressure on our foreign affairs department," Michal Kubal, head of CT's foreign news editorial department, observed in April 2015. "It appears that somebody is purposefully trying to search for errors made by CT that fall in line with Russian propaganda – You don't have to trust the Kremlin, just don't trust anybody"⁶⁴ (Břešťan 2015a).

Similarity of arguments used by pro-Russian media

According to Russian activist Elena Gluško (Teraz 2014), Russia's information war entered a new era in 2013, when new types of media that claim no allegiance to Russia, were introduced to Russia's information war toolbox. In each country, different types of such media outlets are being invented and their content is created and selected locally. Therefore, it can be presumed that pro-Kremlin media in the Czech Republic and Slovakia will be somewhat different from other like-minded European media.

To determine the narratives used in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and compare the level of similarity between the arguments used by various disseminators of the pro-Russian campaigns, four different media outlets were chosen for analysis, three of which claim no connection or direct link to Russia, but appeared on the Smatana's list of pro-Kremlin websites from February 2015. First, a discussion of Zem & Vek, held on May 20, 2015 in the Slovak town of Žilina, second, the Czech-language news portal Aeronet, and third, the May print issue of Czech magazine Vědomí.

In order to compare new alternative media without formal links to Kremlin with Kremlin-controlled media, the Czech branch of Sputnik News, funded by the government of the Russian Federation in 2014, was included in the reference group.

Eight categories, selected for their high frequency of appearance in the pro-Russian campaign, were monitored. The messages were either in the form of direct statement, such as in the case of the discussion organized by Zem & Vek, or written opinion pieces,

⁶⁴ In April, CT was also facing an official complaint from The Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting for their coverage of the Ukrainian crisis, as during their report on Donetsk's rebels they failed to mention the Ukrainian presence in the conflict.

either cited from another source or in the form of an original interview.

The following table includes arguments and claims of the following: 1) Three speakers at the Zem & Vek Discussion; 2) Excerpts from articles pertaining to the foreign section of Aeronet's website (posted in April and May 2015); 3) Comments made in the May 2015 print issue of the magazine Vědomí; 4) Excerpts from the Czech Sputnik News website's sections "Politics" and "Czech Republic" (posted in May 2015).

TOPIC	ZEM & VEK DISCUSSION	PORTAL AERONET	PRINT MAGAZINE VĚDOMÍ	CZECH SPUTNIK NEWS
USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. plans to seize control of the entire world • It is in the U.S. interest to paralyze the world -> it has started parallel conflicts • It wants to seize all important and fertile regions (including Ukraine), • All colored revolutions were USA initiatives and plans • It has military bases everywhere • It spies on the whole world • Bombarded fellow Slavic country in '99 • It installed its companies in Europe through the Marshall plan • Its foreign policy is under the control of Israel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. is responsible for terrorism • Spoiled revolutions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya • Trains and support Nazis in the Ukraine • Destabilized Ukraine to seize fertile Ukrainian regions • Wants to remove the current government • Its wealth is built on genocide (Native American Indians) and two world wars • Its global financial system is collapsing • Is in preliminary phase of starting a conflict with Russia • Is supplying deadly weapons to Ukraine • USA (and the US dollar) are in decline -- trying to prevent the decline by waging wars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliances with Vietnam and Cambodia -> efforts to maintain power in Asia • With rise of China -> no more USA dictating to Asia • White House has been plotting for decades -> initiated many conflicts to prevent a Europe-Russia alliance • US Foreign Policy – occupation, creation of puppet regimes • Controls Europe, Asia, New Zealand, Australia, Africa (only BRICS and Iran were able to maintain sovereignty) • Tries to create totalitarian global order • Is constantly sowing the seeds of conflict -> controlling global order • Is trying to dictate to the world -has imperial intentions • Hybrid warfare was invented by the USA and is now used in all parts of the world (Russia is only responding) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High possibility of armed conflict between USA and China (WWIII) • Is behind all color revolutions (and is plotting many more in Asia) • Asian financial crisis was an American initiative to control regimes in Asia – it provoked it to gain control over the region • Cooperation with Russia is continuing • Negative tendencies in non-proliferation of nuclear weapons – USAs fault • Is dissatisfied with China's rise in Asia -> US preparing retaliatory measures • Its global hegemony is coming to an end • Its expansion to Asia is destabilizing the region: Korean peninsula and deteriorating China-Japan relationship • Iraq intervention might be responsible for IS
NATO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is controlled by economic interests of a small group of people • Wants to build a new military base in Slovakia -> Slovakia will be the center of offensive against Russia • Military Bases are an alien power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is provoking Russia at its borders -> followed by an invasion • Is ignoring the facts (that there was no invasion in Ukraine) -> initiating a conflict in eastern Ukraine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its problem is that American secret services are superior to other services. • Joining of NATO decreased Slovakia's defense capacity: reforms after joining NATO -> now unable to defend its borders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NATO needs to adopt structural changes in the future • Expansion to East (plus color revolution) -> decrease Europe's influence and security structure • Is unjustly accusing Russia of breaching the Minsk agreement

EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no freedom and democracy in the EU • Election are only illusory → people cannot control anything 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is in the midst of self-destruction • One of the largest collapses of all times • Cooperated with USA on sparking wars • Is threatened by conflict in the Ukraine - needs to leave it • EU leaders are under US control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be drawn into periods of conflicts and peace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern partnership is a failure • France triggered war in Libya (resulted in failure) • Morally responsible for deaths of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea (unethical asylum policies)
Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not known who started Maidan • Fascist are in power • Poroshenko and Yatsenyuk are foreign agents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No proof of Russian soldiers in Ukraine • Poroshenko and Yatsenyuk are US puppets • Yatsenyuk (under US influence and command) breached the Minsk agreement first • Yanukovich was a legitimate president • Is ruled by fascists and supporters of Bandera • Is being radicalized • Minsk agreements were adhered to by rebels (Kiev is breaching them) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no Russia's invasion • If USA does not succeed in winning over Russia in Ukraine through NATO, it will deploy nuclear weapons in 2017 • Cases of Kiev, Crimea and Donbas are part of West's effort to dominate the world (same goes for Balkan, Syria, Libya, Middle East). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is about to go bankrupt • Does not want to pay back loans from Russia • Wants to clear itself from communist history (by banning Soviet propaganda posters etc.) • Is not democratic: support for followers of Bandera, fascists and criminals • Is unable to repay its debt, is almost bankrupt (is the Czech Republic ready to accept such a country in Europe?)
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are venal and corrupt • Controlled by financial elites • They lie → we cannot trust them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative media are being silenced • Czech media is biased • Opinion poll agencies are biased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstream media silent about certain facts (victims of terrorism) • Media in US are using propaganda on its citizens • Are puppets of politicians • Mass media are heavily using propaganda and manipulation • Are creating a virtual reality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its coverage of crisis in the Ukraine is only marginal and biased
Politicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are dishonest • Are controlled by political marketing • Only after their own wealth • President Kiska is only a puppet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use democracy to steal • Controlled by corporations • Only interest is money • Will force citizens into military service in Ukraine • Are leading Czechs into a conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political elites in CEE (Havel, Walesa, Landsbergise) were bought by Americans in the '90s • Are manipulating public opinion • Everything they say is untrustworthy • People should not trust their sweet talk about a "better world," "morale" or "public welfare" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (does not attack politicians, however, room is often given to representatives of the Communist Party of Moravia and Bohemia, such as Vojtěch Filip or Jiri Dolejší, or pro-Kremlin views of president Zeman often presented)

Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is not perfect • It has solely its interests in mind • Started less conflicts than the USA -> is less aggressive and more peaceful • It also has capitalism, but more patriotic (in contrast with the globalized capitalism of the West) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be attacked by USA • Is not threatening any state in Europe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is being transparent about its interest – needs a neutral Ukraine (unlike USA, who sows the seeds of conflict to stay in power) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is being ignored by the G8 platform – a sign of Russian weakness • Is concerned about the presence of destabilizing external powers in Macedonia • Is open to deepening business ties with CR
Future prospects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The future lies with Russia & China 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank • The global Center is moving from USA to China 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising China • Only Russia and China can bring an end to American terror 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New global cold wars are coming (due to the conflict in Ukraine and the deterioration of USA-Russia relationship) • Clash of civilizations, spreading of extremism, nationalism, international terrorism • Deepened Czech-Russian cooperation
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We (Slovaks) do not live in peace and democracy • The world is lying to us • The socio-economic situation in the West is in the worst condition since 1945 • The West is morally empty and is about to collapse • NGOs are foreign agents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democracy does not work • Czech national culture is being destroyed • TTIP will lead to the legitimization of homosexual families, pedophilia and the destruction of churches and faith • Western system is bad • The basic right to a different opinion is now being violated • Czechs support fascists - security situation in the CR is deteriorating • The Czech security services are serving private entities • Czech Republic has many internal enemies (in the name of democracy) • CR is participating in the genocide in Donbas • Citizens need to say NO to war with Russia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democracy has developed more sophisticated forms of manipulation (in contrast with authoritarian regimes) • Nazi-like repression ended the moment Soviet troops entered the Protectorate of Moravia and Bohemia • Economic pressure and color revolutions are used to advance Western interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal immigration from North Africa is a problem – influx of terrorists into CR and Europe • Iran is the only country that is helping to fight IS • The West supported IS in the beginning • Western politicians and human rights activists are biased (in connection with the situation in Ukraine)

Table 1: Similarity of Arguments Used by Four Media

Common claims and arguments used by the monitored media outlets

The table above demonstrates that the three media outlets and one discussion cited used very similar arguments on the eight selected categories. A number of narratives appeared repeatedly in all four cases:

The United States:

- Wants to dominate the world, and aims to control every nation;
- Is constantly initiating and sowing the seeds of conflict globally, and is behind all color revolutions;
- Is in decline, and its global hegemony is collapsing;
- All interventions (e.g. Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya) were a failure; the USA is therefore responsible for global terrorism.

NATO and the EU:

- Are instigators of aggression;
- Are alien powers and are disadvantageous to the Czech and Slovak Republics;
- Are about to collapse.

Ukraine:

- Is not democratic, but ruled by fascists and Bandera's followers;
- Its government and president are US puppets.

Media and Politicians:

- Are manipulative and biased;
- Are controlled by business elites;
- Are using propaganda to manipulate public opinion.

Russia:

- Is not perfect, however, is less aggressive than the West;
- Is only responding to Western aggression.

The Future:

- Will be full of conflicts;
- Lies in the alliance of China and Russia, which will bring an end to American terror.

In all four cases, the arguments and narratives employed by the authors were similar, if not identical. That said, the pro-Russian platforms with no links to the Kremlin were more straightforward in delivering their anti-western messages, directly stating their opinions and accusations. An organization such as Czech Sputnik News, however, used a more informative and descriptive journalistic style, often citing experts or official sources. Making their messages appear more sensational and urgent, the pro-Russian platforms with no direct links to Russia were often utilizing conspiracy theories, and more frequently used provocative language and emotionally charged words and pictures.

Characteristics of the pro-Russian disinformation campaign in The Czech Republic and Slovakia

Common characteristics of the pro-Kremlin media and websites in the Czech Republic and Slovakia are as follows:

- They claim no allegiance to Kremlin;
- Are strongly anti-Western, most frequently targeting the United States, Ukraine and the West in general;
- To lesser extent are pro-Kremlin and pro-Putin;
- Heavily use conspiracy theories, and combine facts and half-truths;
- Make use of very similar messaging and arguments;
- Have negative undertones, usually depicting moral, economic, political and social degradation and predict a bleak future of collapse and civilization clashes;
- Frequently use loaded language and emotionally charged words, stories and pictures;
- Are interconnected and supported by various public personalities that give the campaign both credibility and public visibility.

The majority of the common characteristics found in the four monitored media apply to similar pro-Kremlin websites and social media that have emerged in the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic in recent months and years. Their history predates 2014, as many were founded in 2013 or before then, however, their rhetoric and activities were hardened and intensified by the crisis in Ukraine. This suggests that pro-Kremlin media and websites in the Czech Republic and Slovakia were many years in the making, which corresponds with Gluško's claim that such types of media were introduced to Russia's information warfare around 2013 (Teraz 2014).

Yet, the new pro-Russian platforms are also characterized by a high level of opacity – their motives, origins and organizational and financial structures are, in most cases, unknown. To date, all efforts by investigative journalists or activists have only resulted in finding indirect links and facts, however, no direct proof of Russia's involvement. This lack of transparency is one of their strongest assets, as any accusation of ulterior motives is depicted as an attempt to suppress 'alternative opinions' and any challenger is branded 'America's propaganda puppet.' Until they lose this opacity, thus losing their credibility, their messages will appear relevant for their followers in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The most important role of the new pro-Kremlin media, and especially their social media channels, is that they facilitate vivid platforms where similar criticism and discontent can be shared, spread and amplified to Russia's benefit. Their success is built on an already existing and growing public distrust towards the Czech and Slovak mainstream media and politicians alike, both of which are seen as plagued by corruption scandals and connection to oligarchs. Until the crisis of lack of credibility is addressed, such platforms of criticism and discontent will remain alluring.

Finally, the goal of the pro-Russian disinformation campaign is to shift public opinion against the West and its own institutions, entirely in line with Russia's "Divide and Conquer" strategy pursued by Kremlin throughout Europe. Pro-Russian media and platforms are thus creating a fictitious world where the United States intends to overrun the globe, every politician is corrupt, all media not of their persuasion is biased and the future is bleak, hopeless and full of conflicts. In such a world, Russia emerges as both the savior and the moral authority and the guarantor of political stability and peace. If the campaign were to succeed, as Smatana warns, it could facilitate the installation of anti-Western politicians in power and undermine EU unity (Šnidl 2015).

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NATO'S ADAPTATION TO CYBER DOMAIN AFTER THE WALES SUMMIT

MILAN HANKO

List of Contents

Adaptation to cyber domain
NATO in the environment of cyber strategies and policies
NATO Cyber Defense
Necessity of offensive cyber operations

Adaptation to cyber domain

Cyberspace resonates in today's international security debates. Man-made cyberspace is regarded as the fifth domain⁶⁵ of the operational environment in military classification which ultimately preoccupies the political and military world with a new agenda. In the rapid development "*Coercive cyberspace capabilities are becoming a new instrument of state power, as countries seek to strengthen national security and exercise political influence*" (IISS 2014, 19). Some in modern societies treat internet just as a simple communication and business platform. On the other hand, the global security community is absorbed in heated discussion about cyber security and the shape of future conflicts and wars. This is the beginning of an adaptation process that every state, business, organization and individual will have to undergo at some point.

The debates particularly revolve around principles of cyber war and how cyber warfare overlaps with conventional operations on the battlefield. The dependence of the society at large, including the economy, the military in terms of providing security in the cyber domain is already taken as an undeniable fact today. But still, cyber domain remains almost the unregulated game changer, which is approached with a lack of strategic vision and often even understanding among strategists of its scale, impact and the potential danger. Such opacity raises the question how to merge cyberspace with traditional models of business, security environment, and especially with national security and operational environment. The top tier of major cyber powers as the US, UK, France, Israel, Russia, China, India as well as organizations like NATO and EU are intensively developing and constantly refining their cyber strategies and cyber capabilities to adapt to a new reality which entails safeguards for the economy, preservation of security and status, as well as the acquisition of overwhelming deterrence over potential adversaries.

⁶⁵ The other four are land, sea, air and space.

Cyber domain introduces a new portfolio of cyber security threats throughout the global strategic environment. More than an exact list of cyber threats, the shape of political and military consciousness about its influence on society and national security is of paramount importance. That said, cyber domain can be defined as a decisive variable of today's global strategic environment. Nevertheless, most of national states' strategists remain uncomfortable with the highly classified and technically complex aspects of the cyber domain which they simply don't understand. What's more, "*cyber power blurs the traditional concepts of military and civilian security as it also blurs the meaning of national borders*" (Cederberg 2015). So there are some hard decisions to be made towards the adaptation process, including the definition of cyber security, identification of new capabilities that will be needed, and making cyber security more approachable to all the security and military experts.

NATO as the most powerful military alliance in the world had made its first serious adaptation steps to cyber domain in 2008 when cyber domain was recognized as part of a new strategic environment. Gradually, NATO has taken firm steps to protect itself and its allies within the cyber domain. With cyber provisions in the Wales 2014 summit, in the final declaration NATO defined cyber domain as a regular part of its operational environment. Such statement, however generates many questions that require answers not only at the strategic level, but also on the level of the practical everyday life. For example, how will NATO react to purely cyber aggression which can be an aggression without firing a single shot? "*We need to mature the way we think about cyber, the way we think about irregular warfare, so that we can define in NATO what takes it over that limit by which we now have to react*" (G. P. Breedlove 2014).

NATO seriously seeks to define its cyber strategy through the Cyber Defense Concept, Policy, and Action Plan, which are now being implemented. But the development on the ground of cyber domain and capabilities outpaces any strategy or plans. Therefore, the lifetime of any new strategy dealing with the cyber domain is short-lived and requires frequent refinement. Cyber requirements can be increasingly traced to and found already in NATO Defense Planning Process (NDPP). Through NDPP, NATO already reflects the cyber domain's existence and sets new cyber capabilities requirements for all 28 NATO ally members. But there still are a few principal questions that need to be answered in order to set the future NATO cyber strategy and cyber capabilities in order.

NATO in the environment of cyber strategies and policies

In 2015, the dramatic expansion of cyber domain continued to accelerate.⁶⁶ Such expansion brings a lot of positives to the economy but at the same time seriously affects the security at large. Cyber security became a serious new security sector in its own right

⁶⁶ Within the global population as of January 2015, there were 42% active internet users. Year-on-year growth increased by 525 million individuals (+21%) (Agency 2015).

which is still developing sharply. Cyber security deals primarily with the awareness of cyber threats across the spectrum of cyber domain users (from political to individual level) but it is also necessary to point out that cyber security awareness today does not keep step with the increased number of users and the sheer intensity of use. Thus the risks associated with the use of cyber domain increase in all spectra of society from individuals, through the economy to national security with severe implications for the critical infrastructure of the modern states. States and institutions are left struggling with adopting new frameworks and policies needed to handle the challenges of cyber domain more effectively.

The cyber domain at the geopolitical level is shaped by a few powers which strictly follow their entrenched interests which severely hampers any effective global commitments and solutions to promote global cyber security. Without broader geopolitical consensus, there will not be any effective and early improvement in global cyber security. The first milestone on the way to a more secure cyber domain with global rules is a consensus of powers on the geopolitical level.

On the national level, the political approach to cyber domain differs from state to state. Those mature actors have already understood the necessity to conform to the reality and refine legislation and the national strategy (including interests and tools) and secure the nation also on the level of cyber domain, taking a direct and comprehensive approach on the subject. Those states that are falling behind, for different reasons, lack a political consensus and comprehensive approach which would facilitate cyber domain's integration with the legislation and the national strategy. In such cases, changes are forced to the extent which is required by some third party (EU, NATO) with just minimal effort to change the current status quo of their own national security. In 2014 (before the NATO Wales Summit), over one quarter of NATO nations lacked a comprehensive and effective national cyber security strategy with effective implementation (IISS 2014). Such tardiness in the medium term can cause serious harm to some nations and their national security. In their effort to catch up, it is necessary to note that the impact of cyber domain on state's national security is sky-rocketing and the cyber domain is less amenable to state control than any other domain.

Strategic and operational-level security and the military realm already utilize cyber domain in its full extent "*In anticipation of hostiles, nations are already preparing the battlefield. They are hacking each other's networks and infrastructure, laying in trapdoors and logic bombs now in peacetime*" (Clarke, Knake 2010, 31). Currently, two different approaches to cyber domain are applied at the strategic level. The first is the compartmentalizing approach, which hands the responsibilities for cyber domain and cyber security to lower level of state authority (in multi-level governance) in order to build up resilience and responsiveness into highly decentralized and mostly privately owned critical infrastructure. The second approach is to keep development and governance of cyber security and cyber domain at the central government level.

The global nature of the cyber domain forces states to increase the demand for international cooperation. Traditional state commitments are under pressure when applied to cyber domain because they are not up to date. They need to be refined in order

to adjust to the new strategic environment. As one of the high ranking NATO officials said: *We are challenged with providing new answers to old questions*" (Ducaru 2015). Such refinement may require reassessment of even such a bedrock documents like the Vienna convention on the law of treaties, or the right to self-defense specified in Article 51 of the UN Charter, which includes the use of force. How would these provisions apply if a cyber attack reached the level of an armed attack? When can we consider a cyber attack the same as an armed attack?

Nevertheless, the reality of recent years showed that the major cyber powers are inclined to share interest in the context of the cyber domain only as far as it promotes and does not endanger their particular national interests. Otherwise, they are not willing to abide by whatever the necessary rewriting of the international rules might bring. This is probably the main reason behind the present UN's inability to bring new binding global international treaties on cyber security, even though in the last few years the UN group of governmental experts has provided a valuable forum for discussion on cyber security issues among the major powers. Needless to say, worldwide concerns about cyber security remain at the top of the international agenda. The inherent insecurity of the cyber domain remains, and is even increasing. That said, there is no quick and effective solution on the horizon, no binding mechanism, rules or treaties for the prevention of war and the regulation of conflict in the cyber domain.

NATO as an intergovernmental military alliance has recognized the importance of the emerging cyber domain already more than a decade ago when in 2002 at the Prague Summit, cyber security has been included into Alliance's political agenda for the first time. Since that time, NATO's cyber agenda has progressively modified its scope, intensity and focus. At the last summit in 2014 in Wales NATO declared that the Alliance looks to the future through possible cyber threats and decided to face this evolving challenge by endorsed an enhanced cyber defense policy and its action plan. NATO affirmed *"that cyber defense is part of NATO's core task of collective defense. A decision as to when a cyber attack would lead to the invocation of Article 5 would be taken by the North Atlantic Council on a case-by-case basis"* (NATO 2014). The way NATO wants to implement these commitments is to *"continue to integrate cyber defense into NATO operations and operational and contingency planning, and enhance information-sharing and situational awareness among allies."* Additional measures have been set anew, including cyber partnership, technological innovations and expertise from the private sector, improvements to the level of cyber defense education, training, and exercise activities, as well as the establishment of cyber range capability.

NATO sees cyber defense as one of the main capability goals that is vital for future operations and requires that capability as a sufficient assurance for collective defense of its members today and in the near future (at least until NATO Warsaw 2016 Summit). However, does this encompass a sufficient level of cyber capabilities which NATO should possess and seek? Meanwhile *"rapid evolution of cyber adaption at the nation state level from the routine establishment of national cyber emergency response teams to the development of cyber forces with potentially offensive capabilities is occurring globally"* (Jane's 2015, 65).

So, the frequently mentioned and analyzed possibility of cyber war is gaining ever more realistic contours. But to talk about cyber war requires at least a basic knowledge of the possibilities and effects of cyber capabilities themselves. Ignorance of this particular fact often leads to senseless debate. Another reason behind the misled debate on cyber warfare is the highly classified nature of the environment in which the cyber capabilities are planned, developed and used. But on the strategic level, there is enough information where NATO is heading today in the adaptation to cyber domain.

NATO Cyber Defense

The defense of national sovereignty is increasingly shifting to cyber domain and NATO allies are already, although slowly and with difficulty, beginning to prepare to carry out operations on this new battlefield. Cyber defense today is a part of NATO's core task of its collective defense, which means that cyber defense is a cornerstone of NATO's effort in the cyber domain. NATO's experience with cyber defense is relatively short but intensely evolving. Since 2010 when NATO's strategic concept was approved in Lisbon, cyber defense is presented as one of the NATO's top strategic interests and efforts. It begs a question whether NATO has already experienced any measurable success in building its cyber defense capability and what are the actual NATO cyber defense capabilities. Are they robust and well-paced with a new impulse after the NATO 2014 summit, or is the NATO rather running in place?

To get an answer, it is necessary to assess two different but directly dependent levels: NATO perspective and the ally member perspectives. As already mentioned, NATO had begun with the development of cyber defense in 2011, when first political commitments were made. From its perspective, NATO sees cyber defense as a means to secure and defend its own networks more quickly and effectively with significant effort towards its member nations and partners as well as cooperation with third parties focusing on better assistance in prevention, coping with cyber attacks and assistance with recovery.

So what are the practical results in 2015? *"Implementation had some visible successes as improved cyber defense governance and increasing heavily investments in the defense of its own networks"* were made (NATO 2015). Moreover, NATO established elements and bodies for the decision making and execution as the Cyber Defense Management Board (CDMB) responsible for coordination within the NATO, and NATO Computer Incident Response Capability's (NCIRC), capacity responsible for detection and handling of cyber attacks against NATO. There is no more uncertainty about whether a possible cyber crisis falls under Article 5 as the 2014 summit declaration had stated that it does. In NATO military structures it is also understood that incorporating multi-domain warfare into NATO has started: *"the understanding of capabilities and vulnerabilities in the cyber realm is an essential asset for the future of NATO"* (G. P. Breedlove 2014).

At the operational level, the security environment in which NATO exists today requires not only a clear understanding of the scope of the current threats in the context of cyber defense but also capabilities for practical use to ensure the collective defense of

NATO members. *“While conventional capabilities and methods are as important as ever, cyber attacks against information systems and infrastructure are a part of hybrid warfare. Therefore cyber defense is becoming increasingly important in our military arsenal”* (Terras 2014). The time has come when NATO must now rely on their cyber defense capabilities more heavily.

Despite the above mentioned, there are still some signs of opposition to the development of the joint NATO cyber defense. The latest NATO Cyber Defense Policy, approved after NATO 2014 summit, made only modest progress from operational and tactical perspective. How else could the continuing lack of unanimous support for the Rapid Reaction Team Concept within the alliance be explained? A patchy lack of interest in a common approach, or rather the inconsistency of views on the common cyber defense of the Alliance can be also read from the summit declaration which says among others *“The Summit Declaration underlines NATO’s fundamental responsibility for defending its own systems, while nations are expected to defend theirs. NATO will continue to integrate cyber defense into operations and planning and to enhance information sharing and situational awareness. NATO also intends to engage actively on cyber issues with international organizations, in particular with the EU”* (NATO 2014).

The reality of that declaration shows that allies cannot rely solely on NATO means and capabilities and the provision of collective defense in the cyber domain. All NATO allies are committed to introducing a national policy on cyber defense, a national cyber defense authority and an instant response capability to cyber threats. It is necessary to point out the difference among the ally members where the traditional thinking does not fully apply to the cyber domain. Usually collective defense is associated with collective action and response, while in the cyber domain allies can rely only on limited assistance from NATO and allies members. Nations are firstly obliged to build up and to have available its own cyber defense capabilities. NATO here stands rather in the position of a facilitator and coordinator.

There are a couple of obstacles, or rather reasons why the cyber defense does not enjoy faster, effective and more common development within NATO. The members have huge differences in the maturity of their cyber capabilities, and the exchanges of information about their cyber capabilities is limited and mostly only on a bilateral level. On the other hand, NATO gives the possibility to ally members to contribute and shape the understanding of cyber security through the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense Centre of Excellence with an option to receive premium access to the Centre’s products, trainings and events. It just depends on the ally member alone how much or little they want to get involved.

Ultimately, NATO’s Defense Planning (NDPP) in the cyber context can be regarded as NATO’s vital and effective step in the right direction towards clear minimum requirements for ally members in cyber defense capabilities. NDPP integrates not only military requirements, but brings together the civilian and military aspects of collective defense. Moreover, NATO ally members are forced to be more open on cyber matters which touch their national capabilities by the NDPP. Finally, NDPP integrates cyber de-

fense to allies' operational thinking and makes it more interoperable.

Since cyber domain provides possible operational capabilities for potential threats and enemies across tactical, operational and strategic level with an option to attack a powerful opponent, and are relatively inexpensive and possibly covert deployed under the rapidly and constantly changing strategic environment, NATO has no other option than to successfully integrate cyber defense to its routine operational capabilities. However, no matter how safe the formula of the NATO Cyber Defense sounds, the principal responsibility for defending Alliance members' CIS systems, networks and critical infrastructure remains on shoulders of individual alliance members.

As everything quickly develops in cyber domain, NATO Cyber Defense will be no exception in the near future. Probably the next significant requirement for change will be a greater involvement of alliance members in NATO cyber defense policy. Those smaller and less developed alliance members will probably believe and expect that NATO should take over more of a responsibility in the future for their defense within the cyber domain because for some of them the development of cyber defense capabilities will prove enormously costly, including the maintenance of collective security guarantees with the growing impact of threats from cyber domain.

Necessity of offensive cyber operations

While NATO is seeking strategic attitude towards adaptation to the new strategic environment which involves the cyber domain, the reality already has shown how acute a challenge cyber domain can be. A new era of cyber domain dawned with the Arab Spring. It now continues with Russia's efforts to restore its geopolitical power as well as with the actions of the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) using cyber domain as a vital tool to engage masses with the most brutal and sordid forms of violence. Finally, there was the suspected North Korean computer attack on Sony Pictures Entertainment which is regarded as a "*Serious national security matter with a necessity for a proportional response to the attack*" (The Washington Post 2014). All of the actors and cases mentioned above heavily utilized the cyber domain in its operations and objectives.

Let us pose a question: how long can NATO really afford to focus on cyber defense only? "*The mandate of NATO is cyber defense, not cyber security!*" (Ducaru 2015). But if we are willing to admit that today's reality resembles the ongoing intensive operationalisation (CCDCOE and Haaster 2014) of military cyber operations⁶⁷ gradually incorporated into the military doctrines, then NATO needs a new motion to determine new goals within the cyber domain. To focus solely on cyber defense is already out of date.

Not only the harsh reality of current incidents and attacks in the cyber domain, but also the art of war says that effective defense is not possible without at least a small portion of a counterattack or attack. NATO's response can therefore be called Active Cyber

⁶⁷ One of the possible spectrums of military cyber operations according the US ARMY consists of Cyber Defense, Enabling, Disruptive, Offensive Cyber operations.

Defense (ACD), with one of the characteristics potentially defined as follows: *“active Cyber Defense places emphasis on proactive measures to counteract the immediate effects of a cyber incident, either by identifying and neutralizing malicious software or by deliberately seeking to mask the online presence of target devices to deter and counter espionage”* (CCDCOE and DEWAR, *The Triptych of Cyber Security. A Classification of Active Cyber Defence* 2014).

Whatever opinion will prevail on what and how to classify NATO's ACD, it is clear that ACD extends several elements and actions, going slightly beyond a pure definition of cyber defense. ACD is only reflection of the daily routine where its units try to keep NATO infrastructure and networks secured and defended. Such effort today requires already some additional means and capabilities than only cyber defense, although NATO strategic documents and plans do not mention it. The use of certain techniques and measures of offensive cyber operations within the NATO is a reality, even if it has not been openly declared. But for the sake of an argument, let's say that NATO possessing and developing offensive cyber capabilities would be incorrect. Therefore, today we have the bridge the gap between cyber defense and attack operations in the so-called ACD which represents quite a different cyber defense as we have known just a few years ago.

Despite the fact that NATO does not declare possession of offensive cyber operation capabilities, there is another possible way how the organization could obtain them, at least in case of emergency. Some alliance member states have very sophisticated and well-developed offensive capability. This knowledge is tempting to lead us to conclude *“the next public iteration cyber capabilities would retain national control, but make these capabilities available to NATO in the event of aggression”* (CCDCOE and LEWIS, CCDCOE 2015). Although the fact that offensive cyber operations constitute a serious part of today's warfare and cannot be ignored by any advanced militaries, the mechanism for their incorporation into NATO will be complicated by national sensitivities.

There are few reasons why this is so: the risk of disclosure of the extent and effectiveness of their own cyber capabilities, have in recent years, cost some ally members billions of dollars. Another reason is that it is politically difficult for NATO to publicly embrace offensive cyber capabilities in its planning and exercising. Therefore, for the time being we cannot expect a quick and straightforward full adaptation of NATO to the cyber domain's reality.

Taking into account all the alleged facts, NATO may be confronted with new threats originating from the cyber domain without the possibility of rapid application of adequate operations and capabilities in the near future. Current experience of the cyber domain shows that the changes are taking place faster than expected. To keep step, NATO will have to focus on technological innovation in its adaptation and efficiency. To do so, it will be necessary to make sure that the money of NATO allies members spent on defense and security will be maximized and that all NATO allies and partners maintain a technological advantage over their perceived competitors across all domains, including disruptive technology areas such as cyber capabilities.

The slow tempo of adaption may result in loss of NATO's overwhelming operational and technological superiority which guarantees and ensures its members col-

lective defense, which in turn requires the ability to operate across the whole spectrum of domains and operations. To sum up, NATO needs to undergo a broader reflection and adaptation to today's cyber threats and to include global cyber development capabilities in its strategies and plans going forward.

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THE SPLIT OF NORDIC EUROPE OVER REFUGEE CRISIS: THE RISE OF EXTREMISM?

KATEŘINA LIŠANÍKOVÁ

Introduction

For many years, Europe has perceived its Northern region as one united whole offering an open-door policy towards refugees, having liberal basis and tradition in strong social democratic or conservative parties. Yet, these views are no longer true. Open-door policy is undergoing a very hard test in each country, especially in Sweden and Denmark. Liberal basis is being tested by an unprecedented number of incoming immigrants. The traditional government system is now being battered by far-right parties. Sweden alongside with Angela Merkel openly encouraged refugees to flee to Europe. But how does the situation look at the beginning of another expected refugee crisis in the summer of 2016? This comparison provides a comprehensive overview of Danish and Swedish government's steps on immigration and also discusses the secondary effect of immigration: re-emerging phenomenon of far-right parties, accompanied by hate speech and hate crimes. The refugee crisis produces more security issues than previously thought.

Sweden: censorship era?

Until very recently, Swedish government kept saying that the country is capable of accepting any number of refugees which may come.⁶⁸ This evolves out of the historical context: rich welfare system and refugee policy have already begun after the very end of the Second World War and Sweden is now standing as an isolated island in Europe with its concept of solidarity and open-door policy. The traditional parties: Social Democrats and Moderate Party keeps claiming that it is Swedish duty to help all refugees – what they did with Bosnia in 90's, now they are doing with Syria (Lolland 2015). Moreover, not only that it is Swedish duty, but if Sweden is accepting refugees, then also the whole Europe should do it. Swedish politicians insisted that each and every European Union state should take some number of refugees in order to accept as many people as possible (Lolland 2015; Witte 2015).

In the 2014 elections, Social Democrats won with 31 % of votes, but they were unable to create a majority government as the second party was the Moderate party (the

⁶⁸ Migration Minister, Morgan Johansson, stated in the interview that he is proud that Sweden can give protection to more than 100,000 refugees and that they do not see refugees as a burden, but as an asset. Moreover, he pointed out that they will continue to accept immigrants as long as possible even by providing tents as shelters (Witte 2015).

right wing) with 23.3 %. Thus Social Democrats formed a government with the party that placed fourth – the Green Party (6.9 %). The unanswered question remained the party that ended up in third place, which is now surprisingly occupied by Sweden Democrats, the so-called far-right and anti-immigration party (Election Resources n.d.). The party emerged from neo-Nazi roots in the 90's, however its leader Jimmie Åkesson came a long way to separate the party from history and currently Sweden Democrats focuses on nationalist ethos⁶⁹ (Löow 2011, 267). The experts agree that currently Sweden Democrats cannot be included in the extreme far-right party list (Jupskås 2011, 62). Nevertheless, other Swedish politicians see the situation differently and all parliamentary parties refuse to cooperate with Sweden Democrats. The representatives of Social Democrats and the Moderate Party refer to Sweden Democrats as racist, xenophobic and neo-Nazi party (see Witte 2015; Lidström 2014). On the other hand, Sweden Democrats is the only parliamentary party which builds its campaign on anti-immigration rhetoric and offers citizens similar measures as Denmark. This leads to a very interesting phenomenon in Sweden, which emerged only few years ago: the open discussion against immigration is not welcomed, hate speech and hate crime laws have been strengthened and everyone who appears to support Sweden Democrats is automatically marked as racist and xenophobic, or even neo-Nazi.

The hate speech and hate crimes laws have their basis in the early years after the Second World War when a Nazi activist published hate speech papers distributed from Germany. The first law against instigation of hate against ethnic groups was passed in 1950. Then the law was firstly extended in 1994, when hate crime was also included (Kaplan a Weinberg 1998: 112-3). The current Swedish Penal Code from 1999 includes hate speech fine or maximum two years of imprisonment (Swedish Penal Code 1999: 68). The law *Tryckfrihetsförordningen* (TF, Freedom of the Press) covers books and newspapers, whereas *Ytrandefrihetsgrundlagen* (YGL, Fundamental Right for Freedom of Expression) radio and television (Persson 2001: 14-29). TF in essence says that everyone has the right to freedom of expression in the press without any limitations, however everyone is responsible for his/her opinions and these will be punished according to the law on public order (furthermore, the punishment may include confiscation of disturbing materials). Moreover, another chapter states that if the Swede publishes anything in direct contradiction with Swedish law outside of Sweden but with the aim to spread the opinions within Sweden, it will be handled equally as having published directly in Sweden. Moreover, if a foreign citizen publishes disturbing content in Sweden, he or she will be treated as Swedish citizen (Hammarberg 2011); (The Freedom of the Press Act n.d.).

On the other hand, YGL does not include any such penalty for broadcasting racist, ethnic or religious undertones (The Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression n.d.). Nevertheless, we might state an example which proves that YGL is also uncompromising in this regard – at least in its consequences. In 2010 during the campaign period, Sweden

⁶⁹ There have been some scandals with the individual members of Sweden Democrats, who were caught with swastika symbols and hailing. These people were however immediately excluded from the party (BBC 2014).

Democrats launched their campaign video showing an elderly woman being chased by couple of women in burkas – they all tried to reach state budget emergency breaks and the spectators should decide whether the state budget should be targeted toward pensioners or immigrants. This television spot was suddenly pulled – and the televisions started to claim that the ban is racist (Brown 2013; Bulletproofcurier 2010).

Denmark: enough is enough

Danish immigration policy varies in the political and economic background. For ten years (2001-2011), the rules for granting asylum were very strict. It included stricter rules for family reunions as well as granting citizenships. In 2011, the proposal for stricter border controls was criticized by neighbouring Germany. Since that time, the election results of the ruling parties were the same during the 3 past elections in this order: Liberal Party (Venstre), Social Democrats and far-right People's Party. While Venstre kept a support of 26-29 %, Social Democrats remained at around 25 % and People's Party usually gained 12-13 % (Election resources n.d.). After the 2011 elections, the immigration policy was relaxed (in conjunction with plans to secure borders) – application fees were to be decreased, citizenship was to be granted to every child who is born in Denmark and the welfare rights would be made equal for all immigrants. Nevertheless, Denmark still suffered from the effects of the economic crisis, thus the unpopular austerity measures have been reflected in the 2015 election results. Social Democrats won with 26 %, followed up by People's Party with a surprising 21.1% and Venstre gained only 19.5 %. People's Party eventually refused to enter the coalition and instead remained in opposition claiming that they are more likely to enforce their programme there. However, they promised to support Social Democrats (Meret 2011, 245).

The predecessor of Danish People's Party was Progress Party which first entered the political scene in 1973 as an *ultra-liberal tax-protest party with strong anti-establishment and populist components* gaining 16 % of votes (Meret 2011, 245). Nevertheless, the party started to decline with time and taxes were no longer a popular topic unlike immigration during the 80's, so the party had changed coat and launched its new anti-immigration campaign (Meret 2011, 246). Its successor, People's Party whose founders had come from Progress Party (like former leader Pia Kjaersgaard), was very quickly replaced by old far-right party. The new party was built on normalisation and consolidation - Kjaersgaard introduced a new concept of "control from the top" in order to avoid any members' excess (Meret 2011, 248). After entering Danish parliament, People's Party had a very difficult position similarly to Sweden Democrats, however the then Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, agreed to being quietly supported by People's Party during key voting for budget etc. in exchange of keeping in consideration the country's migration policy – all of that despite at first strictly refusing any kind of cooperation with the party right after the elections (Downs 2012, 142).

When we take a look to the number of votes which People's Party won,⁷⁰ it is a

⁷⁰ Even though majority in Denmark sees immigration as positive factor for Danish society, around 55 % citizens perceives Islam as a threat to the unity of Danish society (Meret 2011, 246).

great success for radical-right and we may perceive this as a parallel to the neighbouring Sweden. Both radical-right parties catapulted themselves into high politics after the last elections with great support of voters. After the last elections in 2015, the new government launched emergency steps to slow down the immigration wave. The Danish government launched a campaign on Lebanese television to the effect that Denmark has cut its refugee benefits in half, as well as the rules for granting citizenships were strengthened, such as the right for family reunification, and border controls with Germany renewed. Even though some representatives in Danish government do not like the advertisement, they respect it (Euractive 2015).

Besides strengthening the law, Danes also proposed confiscation of refugees' property in order to handle the costs of refugee camps and benefits. The government clearly stated that they do not intend to take personal jewels of sentimental value as well as mobile phones. Other jewels and valuables should cover the expenses of Danish government so the refugees would also contribute to the system, not only receive benefits. Needless to say, the weight of criticism fell on the Danish government's shoulders (Yle 2015).

Denmark vs. Sweden: "Racism is politically correct in Denmark"

Danish government constantly criticizes the Swedish one. Moreover, Danes claim that Swedish government keeps fighting against its opposition by censorship (Brown 2013).

In 2005, Copenhagen became a target of worldwide Muslim anger: Jyllands-Posten published a cartoon depicting the Prophet Mohammad which resulted in riots and a terrorist attack. Danish court did not sentence the artist, stating that everyone is granted the freedom of expression, and moreover that the cartoonist published something in public interest, because Islam is, due to the immigration to Denmark, an inevitable part of Danish society and life (Response 2006).

Few years later, Swedish artist Dan Park launched his exhibition with cartoons targeting immigration. According to the above-mentioned Swedish Penal Code, the court issued a confiscation order on the pictures and sentenced Park to 6 months in jail (The Local 2014); (The Local 2015a). At the beginning of 2015, Danish café was a place of shooting during a happening which supported the freedom of speech and was organized by Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks, famous for his cartoons of prophet Mohamed in 2007 (Brown 2015). Though the shooting attack targeted freedom of speech, Denmark did not strengthen the hate speech laws – quite the opposite, political leaders with former NATO Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, supported the right for freedom of expression (Response 2006).

In 2015, young Sweden Democrats members were distributing leaflets in the Greek island of Lesbos in order to discourage immigrants from coming to Sweden, saying that there is nothing more for them in Sweden than a bed and a tent. This advert became a target of hate comments in Sweden and what's more cast a shadow of a racist party on Sweden Democrats (Mezzofiore 2015; Willits 2015). Comparing it with Danish ad on the

Lebanese television, there was no such backlash in Denmark. The gulf between Danish and Swedish politicians goes even further. In September 2015, representatives of Danish and Swedish politicians, journalists and historians met during one-hour-long television debate with the topic: who has the best solution to the refugee crisis: Denmark or Sweden? The debate took place just during the peak of the large influx of refugees (Lolland 2015).

Whereas Danish Minister of Immigration and Integration from Venstre Party, Inger Støjberg, defended the government's steps by saying that by launching the ad on Lebanese television the state gave people *sober information* and also wanted to discourage people smugglers and that Denmark took care of every immigrant that arrived, but enough is enough, her Swedish opponent Kristina Persson from Social Democrats called Støjberg *cynical* and kept saying that she is *convinced that Sweden may welcome even more refugees than today*. Moreover, Persson stated that Swedish demography is in protracted decrease, which may be compensated by immigrants. Further, she said that Sweden needs immigrants to help the economic situation in the country.

Interestingly, Persson's Danish colleague from Social Democrats didn't share in his view on immigration. Thomas Gyldal pointed out that his party has agreed that there is indeed the need to limit immigration in Denmark; therefore Social Democrats support Venstre party in its current steps. On the other hand, Jonas Sjøstedt from Venstre in Sweden claimed that *responsibility and solidarity is the more worthy alternative* and countered his opponent Martin Henriksen from Danish People's Party who highlighted the fact that Sweden constantly *ignores large number of its population by excluding the third biggest party, Sweden Democrats, from government*. Supposedly, many Swedes expressed an opinion to Danish politicians that the political elite in Sweden do not represent them.

Probably the most offensive approach was adopted by the Swedish historian and commentator Henrik Arnstad who stated that *racism is politically correct in Denmark*. Furthermore, that *Europe does not have a refugee crisis*, unlike Middle East or Africa, but a racism crisis. Moreover, he added that *Denmark is not a racist country – but there are racist norms and in this regard Denmark is further along than others* (Lolland 2015). The precisely same discussion and exchange of opinions via media goes on at the highest political representatives on both sides. Lars Løkke Rasmussen, Danish Prime Minister from Venstre Party, delivered a speech few days after the elections in 2015 about the immigration crisis: *The plan for Denmark is as simple as it is important: we need to move thousands of people from welfare into work and we need to move billions of kronas from excessive development aid and from asylum policy and instead spend the money on welfare for Danes* (The Local Denmark 2015).

On the other hand, his counterpart in Sweden, Stefan Löfven, criticized Eastern European states for their unwillingness to accept refugees and insisted on open-door policy. After the terrorist attacks in Paris and sexual attacks in Cologne and Stockholm, Löfven commented that terrorists will always find a way to attack Europe thus this is not related to the immigration influx and that it is not acceptable to tolerate sexual harassment. On the hand, he took great care when referring to sexual harassment, pointing out that there have always been such phenomena in Sweden and not all offenders are immigrants (CNBC

2016).

Last but not least, Jimmie Åkesson delivered a speech in one of his public appearances and he was very straight-forward on some issues. He highlighted that *Islamism is the greatest global threat to peace, security, democracy, equality and human rights. Islamism is our time's Nazism and Communism and must be met with same disgust and with a much stronger resistance than it is today* (Fredriksson 2015). Then he continued by giving examples of what his party would do, if they were in the government after the next elections: *To Swedish Islamists: if we gain influence after the fall elections, we will ensure that no further adaptation to your misanthropic religious dogmas will take place in the Swedish society. We will ensure that all your tax-funded functions are stopped. We will provide the Security Policy with more resources and authority to monitor you, to combat your war and democracy. We will work to make it illegal to travel to other countries to participate in the killings of civilians or to participate in terror trainings (...)*; (Fredriksson 2015).

The debate in the Swedish highest posts is getting tougher and tougher as Stefan Löfven twisted Åkesson words during parliamentary hearing and said that Åkesson had marked “Muslims” as *the greatest threat since the Second World War* (Lidström 2014). There is a need to say that there is a huge difference between Muslims and Islamism. While Muslims are people professing Islam as a religion (which includes most of the refugees currently), Islamism is according to Mehdi Mozaffari, professor emeritus at Aarhus University, *a religious ideology with a holistic interpretation of Islam whose final aim is the conquest of the world by all means* (which now includes only few extremist Muslims); (Mozaffari 2007, 21).

On one hand, we may discuss to what extent Åkesson would stay nationalist and non-extremist after potentially being elected new Prime Minister, on the other hand we must now point out that the top political leaders of current Swedish government are pointing to Sweden Democrats as neo-Nazis and racist by giving as an example their twisted-around versions of what the members of Sweden Democrats really had said.

Facts about immigration in Denmark and Sweden and related issues

In Sweden, the country of ten million, over 160,000 refugees applied for asylum during 2015. That is double compared with the year 2014 (Migrationsverket 2016). In comparison, Denmark with a population of 5.6 million accepted around 18,000 refugees in 2015 (The Local 2016). During 2014 r, Swedish police recorded absolutely the highest number of hate crimes: 6,270. One third consisted of xenophobia and racism mostly in threats and threatening behaviour⁷¹ (OSCE Sweden 2014).

Denmark has on the other hand lower hate crimes statistics: the number of hate crimes in the country is around 300 of which 25 % has racist motive or in case of 2013 – in

⁷¹ At the end of October 2015, a young man (21), stabbed to death an Iraqi teacher and Somali pupil at the Trollhätten school, where more than 90% of students are from immigrant families. Then he was shot to death by police. It was revealed that the youngster was a supporter of Nazism and Sweden Democrats and planned his attack for two weeks (Malm and Joseph 2015).

second place was politic motivation (OSCE Denmark 2013). This may seem to be a small number, particularly in comparison with Sweden, however it is also a huge increase when we take into consideration that in 1999, only 19 hate crimes were reported. According to Lindekilde and Sedgwick, the rise might be explained by terrorist attacks in London and cartoons with prophet Mohamed (Lindekilde a Sedgwick n.d.).

According to the GateStone Institute: in 2011, Sweden had around 6,500 cases of rape, whereas Denmark only 400. Unlike Sweden, Denmark has released the background of the offenders and it turned out that half of them are immigrants (Carlqvist and Hedegaard 2015). In March 2016, Swedish police in the city of Ostersund warned women against going home alone at night as the reports of rapes increased (Orange 2016). Due to the strict anti-discrimination rules in Sweden, public may only speculate as to how many of the attacks were committed by immigrants. Furthermore, the number of car larceny cases increased in Sweden since 2000 from 756 to 1372 in 2015 (Sweden report n.d.). On the other hand, several arson attacks against mosques appeared since 2014, as well as attacks on refugee camps (BBS 2015; The Local 2016b). At the end of January 2016, approximately one hundred masked men gathered in Stockholm to protest against Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, acted violently and threatened immigrants (Reuters 2016).

And yet we are confronted with the following paradox: Danish People's Party performed better during the last elections than their Swedish counterparts. People's Party's votes had increased from 12.3 % to 21.1 %, up by 8.8 %, while Sweden Democrats was able to gain only 7.2 %, accounting for a rise from 5.7 % to 12.9 %. On the other hand, in a long term perspective, Sweden Democrats performed better: while People's Party constantly held 12-13 % of votes in the past several elections and only the last one catapulted the Party to the fore front, Sweden Democrats had risen from nothing to 2.9 % in 2006, 5.7 % in 2010 to 12.9 % in 2014 (Election resources n.d.). This shows an unprecedented phenomenon which is worth noting because according to the latest polls in Sweden,⁷² the party may gain around 20 % of votes in the next elections. While most statistics show a decrease in support for the Moderate Party, currently the second-most represented in the parliament, it is more than possible that Sweden Democrats will assume its place.

But nothing is as predictable as it may seem. At the end of January, Sweden Democrats revealed on the party's Facebook page that regarding the latest polls, Sweden Democrats can form a government with the Moderate Party after the next elections. This came as a shock as a similar statement appeared on the site of the Moderate Party which is known for its anti-immigration rhetoric. The voters of Moderate Party of course feel betrayed because the Moderate Party has been known for its liberal policies; however, the voters of Sweden Democrats are not celebrating either. The Moderate Party is blamed for its open-door policy during their last period in the government, which according to them has caused the whole immigration problem in the first place.

⁷² This varies depending on the agency: YouGov gave Sweden Democrats 22.1 % in July and 26 % in November, Dagens Nyheter came out with results of 18.9 % in December.

Conclusion

The large influx of immigrants has had multi-fold impact on the Nordic society. Speaking in security terms, too quick and too large of an influx of refugees leads inevitably to socially-separated districts suffering from the mix of increased unemployment, frustration with living conditions, and in some cases to feelings of exclusion from the society as well as being mistreated by the security forces.⁷³

The tensions are rising on both sides, particularly the Swedish society has become divided over the immigration issue: part of the society supports the immigration policy; the other is opposed to it and votes Sweden Democrats as the only political party which offers some solution to the immigration crisis.

According to the numbers above, indeed Sweden has already taken as many refugees as any other European country except Germany. However, taking into consideration the number of citizens, which is similar to the Czech Republic or Portugal, the annual influx of 160,000-180,000 refugees cannot be handled in the long term perspective and cannot include successful integration and employment. Therefore, current steps taken by Sweden which include border controls and strengthening of the asylum policy are more than welcomed.

The security questions which arise from this large influx in the Nordic area are however unprecedented: first of all, without successful integration of the refugees, the segregation between suburbs and the rest of the cities will grow, with a commensurate rise of far-right extremist violence. The refugee crisis unquestionably connects far-right extremist parties which cannot normally cooperate, and leads to increases in targeted violence. Hand in hand with this phenomenon the struggle of immigrants for better living conditions will also continue and we may even expect another Husby.

Moreover, we must strictly distinguish between being neo-Nazi and racist and being a nationalist. Danish People's Party and Sweden Democrats have not currently crossed the law; otherwise they would be dissolved by the court for threatening the democratic values. Even though both parties have racist historical roots, the current face of the parties is more or less within the democratic boundaries.

Keeping the third biggest party from parliament and ignoring 13-20% of Swedish citizens would create the opposite effect: frustration and anger which would only result in greater support for Sweden Democrats. Furthermore, far-right young extremists will more likely vote for Sweden Democrats if this is the only party which fights for controlled immigration.

On the other hand, there is the People's Party which had a significant role in Danish parliament with a considerable "blackmail" potential, but arguably keeping the party close means controlling party, sharing its agenda and also voters and thus preventing

⁷³ In 2013, in the Swedish suburb Husby, riots had broken out, caused by police shooting. Security forces killed a young man with a machete. Afterwards, riots lasting several days started as youngsters of immigrant background complained about police brutality (Freeman 2013).

its further radicalisation.

To sum up, the Nordic region is divided into immigration supporters and anti-immigration protesters. What matters now is the ability to balance both groups and without saying, Denmark so far performs better.

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AFTER PARIS: THE BINARY MODEL TO INTERPRET THE ATTRIBUTION OF TRANSNATIONAL TERRORIST ATTACKS

ANETT ARANY – MÁTÉ SZALAI

List of contents

Introduction

The binary model of transnational terrorist attacks

The actual side of terrorism

The communication side of terrorism

Case studies

Conclusions

Introduction

As the overall threat posed by terrorism to the EU security is “likely to increase” in the following years (Europol 2015, 6), the importance of analysing strategies of Jihadi terrorist networks and drawing the right conclusions about their presence is also growing, especially following the events of 2015. However, recent public and academic discourse on terrorism usually oversimplifies fundamental questions regarding the *attribution of terrorist attacks*, handling “Al Qaeda” (AQ) and “Deash/Islamic State” (IS) as a whole unit while failing to differentiate between groups playing different roles in the multi-level and complex structure of such networks. Moreover, journalists, observers and even researchers tend to accept the claim of responsibility made by the members of the network, *the speech acts*, without examining hard proof which can only be produced by the investigating authorities. This way the public discourse and the society’s impression (and to some extent decision-making as well) regarding a given terrorist attack and the network’s strength and capabilities is sometimes shaped by these acts of speech, not by evidence. This is why it is crucial to separate the actual and communication side of terrorism.

In order to overcome this phenomenon, the authors of the article developed a more sophisticated model to describe the attribution of terrorist attacks. This binary model – which includes the actual and communication dimensions of terrorism – serves the better understanding of and the strategic thinking regarding terrorist networks in the EU. After sketching the basics of the model and describing the two sides of the binary framework, case studies will be presented to demonstrate the applicability of the model.

The present study intends to contribute to the ongoing academic debate regarding the obstacles in the way of improving the methodology of terrorism studies and to

cover the loopholes in the related literature (i.e. the severe neglect of the analysis of attribution). The described model also raises the importance of the communication side of terrorism and, accordingly, the vital role of government rhetoric and public discourses in counter-terrorism.

The binary model of transnational terrorist attacks

An effective model which can interpret the complex nature of terrorism should be based on the following three observations. First of all, *the transnational terrorist networks should be seen as a diffuse, decentralised group of entities* with variable internal links in terms of quantity and quality. Interpreting a terrorist attack, one has to pay close attention to the role and position of the perpetrator in the network in order to draw the right conclusions about the network core's strategy. Secondly, *claiming responsibility by a specific organisation for an attack should be regarded as a decision taken independently from the actual implementation*. As the communication activities of terrorist organisations are gaining priority in the 21st century, claiming responsibility for an attack – not necessarily committed by the group itself – serves as a speech act of terrorism. Thirdly, *blaming a terrorist organisation for the implementation of a specific terrorist attack by states and other actors should be examined as a political tool* and is not necessarily based on hard facts, especially if it is made directly after the attack.

Based on these statements, one can set up a two-dimensional framework which can distinguish between two aspects of terrorism: the *actual* and the *virtual/communication* side. The first one includes the effectual planning, preparations and implementation of an attack by the different members of a terrorist network. In this regard we can differentiate between five different categories (core, chain-of-command cells, guided cells, independent groups and lone wolves) described more thoroughly in the next part. On the other hand, the virtual/communication side of terrorism includes the notions of (1) *claiming responsibility* by one or multiple terrorist organisations, (2) *blaming* a terrorist organisation for an attack by the government(s) concerned, and (3) the *reactions* of third actors (other states, international organisations, etc.). As it will be described later, all three acts are taking place in the framework of international political discourse; therefore all should be regarded as political acts.

Table 1: The binary model of terrorist attacks

Dimensions	Variables				
Actual	Core	Chain-of-Command Cells	Guided Cells	Independent Groups	Lone Wolves
Communication/virtual	Responsibility claimed by one or multiple terrorist organisations		Terrorist organisations blamed by the government(s) concerned		Reactions by third actors

Using such a binary model will help us to better understand terrorist acts. Firstly the model helps decision-makers and the general public to avoid drawing early and false conclusions and to counter the social anxiety caused by terrorism. Secondly, comparing the results of the two sides facilitates the interpretation of the military and communication strategy of terrorist networks on the one hand, and the political motives and counter-terrorist considerations of the states concerned on the other. In the following pages, the two dimensions will be examined separately and then revealing examples will be highlighted to show the applicability of the model.

The actual side of terrorism

The general public tends to consider transnational Jihadi networks as single organizations or at least assume a clear chain of command and hierarchical relations between their members, nonetheless evidence indicates that such entities have a much more diverse and multi-level structure. First, the history of such networks – and primarily that of Al Qaeda and the Islamic State – shows that they have never been purely monolithic organizations but served also as a brand which included loosely cooperating entities and independent ideological followers as well (King's College 2007, 20-22). After coalition forces wiped the Al Qaeda Core out of Afghanistan in 2001, the network got even more decentralised and dispersed (Saltman and Winter 2014, 21). In this regard, ideology became much more important than actual collaboration (Burke 2004, 14), making the actual nature of the relationship between the members uneven (Hoffmann 2013, 639). That is why after 2011, the communication of the AQ turned to propagate “individual Jihad”, namely terrorist attacks committed by “unaffiliated” individuals or groups under AQ banners (Europol 2014, 22). Second, empirical data shows that this process took place in Europe as well – especially after the Madrid bombing (Jordan 2014) – as the influence of the core and the primary affiliates of the AQ network diminished and cells became more independent. Between 2008 and 2013, the command and the control of an outside organization was only proven 19 times out of 49 Jihadi terrorist attacks (Nesser 2014, 452).

Consequently, one has to analyse carefully the alleged position of the perpetrating organization before arriving to final conclusions. The role of a group can vary in the case of different terrorist attacks so one has to consider them separately. From the point of view of the network core, the differentiation between the main roles should be based on four variables: the existence of a distinct institutional identity; access to the network's resources; operational independence or strictly ordered operations; and whether the group maintains institutional or only personal relations with the network. Based on these variables (and the literature, i. e. King's College 2007), one can create five theoretical categories.

Table 2: Possible roles of perpetrators in a transnational terrorist network

Type of cell	Core	Chain-of-command cell	Guided cell	Independent cell	Lone wolf (ind. or group)
Operations solely on the command of the core	X	X			aria
Access to the network's resources	X	X	X		aria
Institutional/personal relations to the network	X	X (institutional)	X (institutional)	X (personal)	aria
Distinct institutional identity from the core		X	X	X	X

From the perspective of counter-terrorism, three major consequences can be drawn. First and foremost, one has to differentiate between efforts against the core and the local cells. Defeating one does not necessarily mean the defeat of the other. Secondly, after separating the local and the network-level dimensions of anti-terrorist activities, it is important to come to the right conclusions from the circumstances of a given terrorist attack. If we consider Al Qaeda or the Islamic State as a single organization, every detail should serve as clue to find out what is going on in the core's leaders' mind and every solution would have to include attacking the core in Pakistan or Syria. Nonetheless, since this model fails to describe the reality, we have to try to identify which decisions were attributable to the local cell and to the levels closer to the core itself. For example the circumstances of an attack of a lone wolf should constitute the basis for local counter-terrorist efforts only, while the way in which the network managed to facilitate the perpetrator committing an attack should be investigated in order to fight the core. Thirdly, since the exact network position of the perpetrator could often only be determined as a result of months-long investigation, it is questionable whether countermeasures taken only a few days after the attack are a result of rational calculation or the political and social pressure.

The communication side of terrorism

In the traditional concept of terrorism, an actor which *perpetrates* an attack automatically *claims responsibility* for it and will also be *blamed* by the international community. Therefore, the perpetration, the claim and the blame should go hand in hand. Since the actual investigation and gathering of hard proof takes time, public discourse tends to rely on the claim by a terrorist organization which usually comes within a short period

after the attack. Nonetheless, by differentiating between the actual and the communication dimension of terrorism, one can easily question the necessity of correlation between perpetration, the claim and the blame.

Firstly, communication has always been “*at the heart of terrorism*” (Seib and Janbek 2011, 44). By definition, terrorist activities are not limited to perpetration of attacks; they have political and social aims which terrorists want to achieve by violent means. The achievement of these goals is dependent on verbally framing the given terrorist attack and affecting the political discourse afterwards. As Saunders (2015, 428), put it “*the terrorist’s act by itself is nothing*” while “*publicity is all*”. Claiming responsibility and being blamed for a terrorist attack can play a role in achieving the regular aims of terrorism communication – i.e. dissemination of propaganda, intimidation, fundraising, recruitment or enlarging the strength of the organization (Seib and Janbek 2011, 43-61; Bockstette 2008, 11-12). As such, according to Charles Krauthammer (cited by Saunders 2015, 432), “*terrorism became a form of political advertising*” in which plots serve only as tools and claiming responsibility for them can play different roles in different marketing strategies.

Secondly, one should take into consideration the theoretical and practical possibilities deriving from the differentiation of committing and communicating terrorist attacks. On the one hand, a core of a network can enlarge its importance and intimidate the outside world by claiming responsibility for attacks without actually committing them. This is basically easy and goes without any expenses in case of lone wolf attacks when no other organizations claim responsibility. But even if they do, contested claims and speculations about the perpetration can also be beneficial for a network by itself. On the other hand, it is also imaginable that it serves the better interests of a terrorist organization if they commit an attack but do not claim responsibility for it. The lack of clarity can multiply instability questioning the ruling government’s capability to maintain order.

Thirdly, as we discussed previously, it is important to investigate which part of a given network claimed responsibility. The number of terrorist websites has grown exponentially in the last decades (Seib and Janbek 2011, 46) making it many times impossible to verify the origins of a given statement. Moreover, due to the limited sharing of information between terrorist organizations, it is questionable and suspicious at best if not the perpetrators but other parts of the network are the ones which make the claim.

Fourthly, one should bear in mind that the claim usually comes in a highly politicized discursive framework after a terrorist attack. In such cases, the attacked country’s government and other actors can have special interests and communication strategies (censorship, disinformation, manipulation of terror threat, other political gains, etc.) (Saunders 2015, 435), which creates different scenarios and possibilities for terrorists in which the claim of responsibility is not an automatic or self-explanatory step.

All in all, one should not automatically accept the claim for responsibility by terrorist networks. Both the announcement of the claim or the lack of it should be regarded as an internal part of terrorism activities serving the goal of a given network, possibly independent from actual perpetration. Consequently, with regard to the communication

side of terrorism, one should investigate the following questions separately:

- Who *claimed responsibility* and for what possible motive?
- Did the attacked state's government *blame* someone for the act and for what possible motive?
- Did “*neutral actors*” blame someone for the act and for what possible motive?

Case studies

The Charlie Hebdo attacks (January 7, 2015)

Actual side: the main perpetrators of the attacks – namely the Kouachi brothers and Amedy Coulibaly – were members of a Paris-centred group called Butte-Chaumonts (B-C) network. Previously, they were connected to two AQ affiliates – the one in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and in Iraq (which later became the core of IS) (Channel 4 News 2015a). Evidence (The New York Times 2015) suggests that through Chérif Kouachi, B-C received guidance and resources from Yemen but were not fully integrated to the network, which makes them a guided cell. Nonetheless, IS also had connections to the group, primarily through Coulibaly – who made the oath of loyalty to its leader (Groll 2015). Due to the lack of any further clues, we can assume that B-C was either an independent or guided cell in the IS network. According to some, the Charlie Hebdo attacks can be considered two separate attacks, one by Coulibaly (IS) and one by the Kouachi brothers (AQ), nonetheless due to their close friendship, they arranged them on the same day (The New York Times 2015). Consequently, the plots were most definitely inspired and partly subsidized by one or both of the networks, maybe allowed but probably not ordered directly by them.

Communication side: two days after the attacks, the Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula claimed responsibility for the attack in a video statement published by the al-Malahem Media, the main outlet of the AQAP group (The Guardian 2015a). Nonetheless, on the same day, Abu Saad Ansari also claimed responsibility during the Friday prayer in Mosul for Daesh (Channel 4 News 2015b). Later on, both organizations used the attacks in their propaganda in their English-language magazines, Inspire and Dabiq (Long War Journal 2015a, 2015b). While the media quickly named AQAP as the one responsible for the attack, French authorities did not name either of the networks as perpetrators while several analysts doubt that AQAP was in charge of the operation (Telesur 2015).

Lessons for counterterrorism: due to the multilevel structure of terrorist networks and the importance of personal relations, seemingly coordinated, simultaneously happening terrorist attacks might be organized separately with different organizational background. While from a wider perspective, the two largest Jihadi brands are competing with each other, their followers might interact and cooperate which shows a severe distance between the core's strategic thinking and the perpetrators' operational considerations. In the schedule of a plot, personal relations might have a bigger role than institutional affiliation.

Ankara bombings (October 10, 2015)

Actual side: according to the investigation, the suicide bombings were perpetrated by two attackers – a Turkish national Yunus Emre Alagöz, whose brother committed the Suruç attack, and an unidentified Syrian citizen (The Turkey News 2016) – and was ordered by İlhami Balı, the IS main leader in Turkey (Hürriyet 2015c). Balı seems to have close relationship with the core of the network – he is usually considered to be the organization's leading figure. They all are linked to the Dokumaci Cell also called as the “Constantine Battalion” led by Mustafa Dokumaci. The group has close connections to the IS elite in Raqqa where Dokumaci lives (Blaser and Stein 2015). Both the closeness of Balı and Dokumaci to the core suggests that the Ankara bombing was ordered by the inner circles and therefore committed by a chain-of-command cell.

Communication side: no organization claimed responsibility for the attacks yet. On the day of the bombings, Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu named four terror organizations as possible perpetrators: the Islamic State, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), and two other organizations, the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C) and the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (MLKP) (Hürriyet 2015a). While the ongoing investigation indicated the role of IS in the attack, on the 22nd of October Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called it “a collective terrorist act, in which Daesh, the PKK, the Mukhabarat and the PYD in northern Syria each played a role” (Hürriyet 2015b).

Lessons for counterterrorism: due to the lack of a definite claim and the inconsistency of government rhetoric and despite of the investigation, 28% of the Turkish population believed that the PKK was involved in the attack (Bloomberg 2015). The anti-Kurdish sentiments benefited both the IS and the Turkish governing party before the elections. The example shows how a government is able to alter the discourse regarding a given terrorist plot based on its political interests.

The Crash of a Russian passenger flight above the Sinai Peninsula (October 31, 2015)

Actual side: hard proof about the crash only surfaced publically in January 2016, when four people – including a mechanic – were arrested under the suspicion of carrying a bomb to the plane (Reuters 2016). They had ties to the so-called Sinai Province (SP), the local affiliate of IS. This organization was created in 2011 under the name Ansar Bait al-Magdis independently before the rise of the IS network (BBC 2015a). Given its local evolution, it is not clear whether SP can be called a purely chain-of-command cell or rather a guided one; consequently we cannot prove whether the attack was ordered by Raqqa yet.

Communication side: the Sinai Province claimed responsibility on Twitter and on the Amaq News Website on the day of the attack; nonetheless Russian and Egyptian authorities definitely denied any terrorist involvement at the time (The Guardian 2015b). After weeks of investigation – and Western intelligence information suggesting the participation of SP (CNN 2015) – the first official Russian statement calling the incident an act of terror arrived on the 17th of November (BBC 2015c). The Egyptian side denied any illegal intervention even in December and only accepted terrorist involvement in late February,

2016, which was only acknowledged by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on 24th February (BBC 2016).

Lessons for counter-terrorism: by not accepting the claim made by SN on the day of the accident, the investigating authorities and political leaders made it harder for the IS to use the attack in their propaganda. Although later they accepted terrorist involvement, the official statements on the day of the attack played a crucial role in the formation of public discourse. In this way, the terrorist group was not able to fully control the arising narratives regarding the attack which weakened the effectiveness of the Islamic State. Nonetheless, it is not clear whether this denial was made due to counter-terrorist or other political motivations.

The Paris attacks (November 13, 2015)

Actual side: investigating authorities identified Belgian-Moroccan Abdelhamid Abaaoud as the mastermind of the attack, guiding the three separate groups committing the massacre. After growing up and being radicalised in the Molenbeek area of Brussels, he was known to visit Syria at least once since 2011, where he joined the IS-affiliated Kati-bat al-Battar battalion (probably a *chain-of-command cell* operating mainly in Deir ez-Zor and Mosul with Belgian and Libyan ties) and had close personal relations with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as well (Van Vlierden 2015; Al-Tamimi 2014). After coming back to Europe, Abaaoud is thought to have played a key role in connecting the core of IS to European cells and networks, including Sharia4Belgium (Asia Times 2015). Consequently, Abaaoud was close to the inner circles of IS, and his group should be regarded as either a chain-of-command cell or part of the core itself.

Communication side: French President Francois Hollande blamed the Islamic State for the Paris attack, approximately an hour *before* it was published by the international media that IS circulated its claim for responsibility on Twitter (BBC 2015b). Other world leaders – including Russian President Vladimir Putin and Syrian President Bassar el-Assad – quickly joined Hollande. The attack's quick and self-explanatory link to IS led to the growing political and social urge to intensify the military campaign against the core organization in Syria as well as to question the current migration policies of the EU.

Lessons for counter-terrorism: although the strategic aims of the Paris attack were not identified since, the IS achieved provoking the West into getting deeper into Syria and to spur further European debates about migration. These goals were accomplished not by the attack itself but by influencing the arising public debate in Europe. This example shows how vital the role of the attacked government is in shaping the evolving narrative. After Paris, the main theme for counter-terrorism did not focus on security measures and the effectiveness of information-sharing among European authorities but rather on the Syrian civil war and the Islamic State's behaviour. This notion is particularly visible in comparison with the Belgian authorities' communication after the Brussels bombings in March 2016, after which the political agenda was shaped by proposals for domestic security measures.

Conclusions

Terrorism, by definition, has always been a highly politicized issue and a sensitive topic of both public and scientific discourse. Nonetheless, that is exactly why the academic community and the media should pay very close attention when it comes to blaming a terrorist organization for a given plot. After the highly tragic and turbulent year of 2015, under- or overestimating the capabilities of core organizations, accepting the claims of responsibilities by different cells automatically or oversimplifying the multi-level structure of terrorist networks can be particularly dangerous.

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EU'S ENERGY UNION: FEW NOTES ON THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE⁷⁴

MATÚŠ MIŠÍK

List of contents

Introduction

The development of the Energy Union proposal

Energy Union as one of the priorities of Juncker's cabinet

Main challenges of the project

Conclusion

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to provide a description of the development of the Energy Union, the European Commission's proposal aiming to integrate all aspects of energy policy under the community "roof" and in this way (basically) to create a common energy policy of the European Union. This text aims to offer a few notes on the Central European perspective – i.e. it discusses the possibilities and the challenges the Energy Union holds for the region, but also the EU in general. It focuses on the dimension of energy supply security of the Energy Union's proposal as this aspect can be seen as the most important one from the Central European EU member states' position. These countries are therefore especially keen to develop this dimension of the Energy Union, although as the text will try to show, there is a lack of consensus on the tools that should be used to reach this goal.

The paper starts with a general overview of the Energy Union proposal and its development until May 2015 when this text was written. Although the Energy Union was officially launched in February 2015, it was first proposed already in April 2014 by the current president of the European Council Donald Tusk. Moreover, roots of the project can be even found in previous initiatives of the European Commission, but also other actors within the EU. The paper discusses the main challenges of the proposal and tries to look at those from the Central European EU member states' point of view. The text concludes that in spite of the proposal's few shortcomings, and anticipated difficulties it will likely face in its implementation phase, the project represents the main development in the energy area at the EU level at least since the start of liberalization agenda in the 1990s. The proposal has the potential to contribute to the creation of a functioning single EU energy policy by

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providing a unifying framework within which further energy integration at the EU level will take place.

The development of the Energy Union proposal

Although the Energy Union as a Commission's initiative was proposed on 25 February 2015, the project itself was first mentioned (officially) almost a year ago. Then Polish Minister and the current president of the European Council Donald Tusk proposed creation of an energy union in order to improve the position of the EU towards Russia in the *Financial Times* at the end of April 2014 (Tusk 2014). The idea was influenced by the critical situation between Russia and Ukraine that highlighted the dependence of the EU on Russian energy supplies. Tusk claimed that “[E]xcessive dependence on Russian energy makes European community weak” which is especially troubling taking into consideration situation in Ukraine in general and in Crimea in particular (Ibid.). Therefore he proposed the creation of a single authority (as a part of an energy union) that would be responsible for joint purchase of natural gas for the whole European Union. This was supposed to improve the position of the EU and its member states as a united approach was expected to increase the negotiation capacity vis-à-vis Russia. The proposal was straightforward on the energy mix issues – Tusk claimed that fossil fuels (especially coal) are essential for maintaining energy security for many member countries and therefore EU states should not be limited in their utilization as long as this is done in a “sustainable way”.

Among other elements of the proposal was community support for infrastructure projects, further improvement of energy solidarity among member states, diversification of energy supplies and strengthening of Energy Community (Tusk 2014). The common denominator of all the dimensions in Tusk's proposal was to help EU member states to improve their energy security. The proposal was thus focused on the external dimension of energy security (security of energy supply) and diversification while the market approach to the energy security presented, for example, within the Third Energy Package was not in the centre of the proposal (Lis 2014). The original proposal by Donald Tusk was further developed into “Roadmap towards an Energy Union for Europe”, a non-paper on Energy Union by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA 2014). It strengthened the initial arguments while at the same time showed full support of the Polish government. One of the main aims of Tusk's proposal that was later developed within this non-paper was to propose a mechanism for equalizing the natural gas prices within the EU through joint purchases, which was supposed to lead to increased energy security. Before analysing the Energy Union itself we have to look into another initiative that is closely related to joint purchases of gas.

After a meeting with Tusk on 2 May 2014, the then Commissioner for Energy Günther Oettinger claimed that “the game of ‘divide et impera’, or a game of this type proposed by Moscow cannot be and will not be accepted by EU member states” (euractiv 2014a). Therefore he supported joint purchases of gas by the member states in order to limit such Russian practice that is so negatively perceived by the leaders of the European

Union and some of its member states. Common purchases of natural gas by the member countries were supposed to improve the position of the European countries vis-à-vis Gazprom (Russia) and decrease the prices of gas in general. However, the member states' attitudes concerning this issue were not very positive and the mandatory joint purchases of gas were soon after its introduction changed to optional. For example the UK and the Czech Republic expressed already in May 2014 their negative position towards obligatory joint purchases of gas and at the same time supported voluntary cooperation in this area among European gas companies (UK and Czech Republic non-paper 2015).

Also, another strategic document of the European Commission – European Energy Security Strategy introduced in 2014 (European Commission 2014) – deals with the question of joint purchases of gas. It focuses on the development of new energy infrastructure and identifies 33 projects within the EU that are essential for improvement of energy security and further development of internal energy market. However, the strategy also presented an idea for joint purchases of gas within the EU and described “collective purchasing mechanism” of the Euratom Supply Agency that was supposed to be a blueprint for similar gas agency (European Commission 2014, 18). However, the document is rather cautious on this idea and only suggests a discussion on this topic with the member states and stresses its voluntary nature.

While the original projects dealing with joint purchases concerned only natural gas, the Energy Union as proposed by the European Commission is, however, much broader when it comes to energy issues as well as energy sources. It basically covers all areas of energy – including efficiency, internal market, climate change, etc. as well as different energy sources – gas, oil, fossil fuels, renewables and nuclear energy (to a limited degree).

Energy Union as one of the priorities of Juncker's cabinet

The high priority of the Energy Union for the Juncker Commission was underlined by the creation of the position of the Vice-President for the European Union that was filled by Maroš Šefčovič. This was considered to be a success especially for Slovakia that nominated him. Although Šefčovič was originally nominated for the position of Commissioner for Transport, he later changed portfolios and become responsible for the development of the Energy Union. Within the new Commission the vice-presidents have much stronger position than in the previous ones. Since they are responsible for the development of a given policy (there are five vice-presidents responsible for five priorities of the Juncker Commission and two vice-presidents responsible for other areas) only they, and not individual Commissioners, are presenting propositions to the Commission's meetings. Therefore they have become de facto gate-keepers and have the tools to stir the propositions in required direction. So, for example, Šefčovič as a Vice President for Energy Union has in his portfolio 14 Commissioners responsible for different issues. His duties include finding common ground among individual commissioners on issues connected to the Energy Union and present the outcome to the Commission.

Jean-Claude Juncker introduced his agenda for the new European Commission

in July 2014 when he presented himself as a candidate for President of the Commission in the European Parliament (Juncker 2014). Deepening of integration in energy area within Energy Union was one of his top priorities. He argued that the EU needs common energy policy because of the situation the community has to face in connection to its significant dependence on external energy supplies. Juncker stressed the crisis between Russia and Ukraine as one of the main factors behind the proposal claiming that the “current geopolitical events have forcefully reminded us that Europe relies too heavily on fuel and gas imports” (Juncker 2014, 5). Juncker further argued that “if the price for energy from the East becomes too expensive, either in commercial or in political terms, Europe should be able to switch very swiftly to other supply channels” (Juncker 2014, 6). And only further development of energy policy at the EU level would enable the European community to do this. However, the security of energy supply was not the only dimension he put emphasis on in his speech – he also accented renewable energy and energy efficiency.

The Energy Union put forward by the European Commission was officially introduced on 25 February 2015. On this occasion Maroš Šefčovič called the proposal the “most ambitious energy project since the coal and steel community” (EUobserver 2015). The Energy Union consists of five mutually interwoven dimensions that cover all areas of energy: a) energy security, b) internal energy market c) energy efficiency, d) decarbonising the economy, and e) research, innovation and competitiveness (European Commission 2015). The proposal identifies the main contemporary energy-related challenges within the EU and proposes concrete goals. The document advances “fifteen action points” that create a list of actions necessary to fulfil these objectives of the Energy Union. The action points thus in essence create a road map for the finalisation of a common EU energy policy.

European Council approved the Energy Union on 19 March 2015 (European Council 2015). Although the Council supported the document in general, and the proposed increase of transparency in energy deals with third countries in particular, it also stressed that “the confidentiality of commercially sensitive information needs to be guaranteed” and confirmed that “the right of Member States to decide on their own energy mix is respected” (European Council 2015). In this way the Council reacted to the most ambitious points of the proposal that invited criticism even before the official introduction of the Energy Union proposal. The Council’s decision to support Energy Union did not, however, mean the creation of a common energy policy at the EU level. Heads of states have only approved the Commission’s proposal for the preparation of new energy legislation (based on the action points attached to the Energy Union proposal) that has to be yet drafted and approved. Therefore, there is still a long way to go until the new energy rules will come into effect and there is also the question whether at the end a new energy legislation will emerge at all.

Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič started to promote the idea of Energy Union even before the proposal was officially launched and further intensified his effort to promote the idea since May 2015 when he began an “Energy Union tour”. Its main aim was to discuss the initiative not only with representatives of individual member states, but also with energy business, NGOs, social partners and other stakeholders (European

Commission 2015c). Understanding the willingness of the member states to keep the rest of their competences in the energy area in their own hands, Šefčovič stressed the key position of the states in the process when he presented his plans in the European Parliament just before the tour commenced. He claimed that the Energy Union “cannot and shouldn’t be imposed from Brussels” (Politico 2015) and for this reason the Vice-President focused rather on the “the new opportunities the Energy Union can bring” for the individual member states (Politico 2015). However, pointing to the Lisbon Treaty that included energy within the shared competences between the Union and its member states, he also claimed that mutual cooperation between these actors will be necessary to fulfil common goals in the energy area.

Main challenges of the project

The idea of the Energy Union was initiated by the Ukrainian crisis that exposed European dependence on Russian energy sources. In fact, many documents published in this period (including proposals for Energy Union by the European Commission and Polish non-paper) have stressed the high dependence of the EU on Russian imports and the price the member states are paying for energy sources imported from third countries. Previous energy crises influenced EU’s thinking about energy supply security in particular and energy in general, but often did not translate into concrete political proposals and actions. A good example is the 2006 gas crisis that inspired the European Commission to introduce the Green Paper: A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy in 2006 that proposed development of Common External Energy Policy, but was later that year rejected by the European Council (Mayer 2008). Between 2006 and 2009 the European Commission proposed a series of initiatives and strategic documents focused on improving energy supply security by fostering EU’s position in external energy issues. However, such effort did not lead to any significant changes in the energy area mainly due to member states’ unwillingness to transfer competences to the EU. Only the 2009 gas crisis caused a change in EU’s approach to security of the energy supply when new rules and tools were developed in this area to prevent further crises (Mišík 2015). These focused on internal energy issues while the common voice of the EU in external energy area “may be difficult to achieve” (Lis 2014, 23) due to some member states’ reluctance to cede competences in this area to the EU level (Harsem and Claes 2013).

The challenging nature of proposing new legislation in the energy area and the reluctance of member states to cede competences to the community level can be illustrated on the process of adaptation of the European Council conclusions on the Energy Union. Although the Council conclusions draft gave the European Commission formal veto power over bilateral deals between energy companies from EU’s member states and non-EU countries, this clause was removed from the final version of the conclusions (european 2015a). Such position of the member states goes hand in hand with their effort to keep competences in connection with the energy mix and external energy relations under their control. And this is also the case with CEE countries that consider energy mix to be

their key domestic competence and do not want to transfer it to the EU level.

Even today, the European Commission has the possibility to check whether an intergovernmental agreement between a member state and third non-EU country in energy area follows internal market rules. However, the Decision No 994/2012/EU of 25 October 2012 establishing an information exchange mechanism with regard to intergovernmental agreements between Member States and third countries in the field of energy gave European Commission the competence to check only existing contracts while it cannot interfere with the new ones. And although this competence concerns only intergovernmental agreements, member states can still voluntarily communicate to the commission also commercial agreements (Lis 2014).

Over the past period, the EU has focused on several energy areas more deeply, for example, the Energy Union framework was included into the climate change policies of the Union and its priorities for the Paris conference in December 2015 (European Commission 2015a). Further development of the climate change dimension of the Energy Union depends precisely on the outcomes of this conference, as the new European legislation will be drafted on the basis of its results. Further developed were also the ideas presented within the Energy Union in the area of diversification in electricity (Energy Commission 2015b). These two initiatives are part of the Energy Union and were presented by Arias Cañete, Commissioner for energy and climate action. Although these issues are important also for the Central European Countries (especially Poland when it comes to the climate issues due to its reliance on coal power plants to generate electricity and in light of the building of new electricity interconnections for all countries of the region), they do not present the key issues for improvement of their energy (gas) supply security.

For this reasons it, can be claimed that current development in the area of energy policy and the above-mentioned first two proposals for concrete EU initiatives reflect the original proposal presented by Donald Tusk only marginally, as he put forward the idea of the Energy Union predominantly with energy (gas) supply security in mind. Also the Vice-President of the European Commission Maroš Šefčovič stressed especially the energy supply security dimension of the Energy Union (see for example his statement at the launch of the Energy Union Tour – European Commission 2015c). However, individual member states have diverging positions when it comes to energy supply security. While most of the new member states (2004 and 2007 entrants) are very keen to cede most of the energy supply security issues at the community level (Mišík 2015), this is not the case with so-called old member countries that often rather vehemently oppose further transfer of energy-related competences to the EU. For example, Danish representative claimed that they wanted to focus on different issues than energy security – they see sustainable energy and energy efficiency as the most prominent energy-related issues today (euactiv 2015a). Moreover, neither of the newcomers share the same position towards the Energy Union and differ in the opinion whether to use the Energy Union to (forcefully) improve their position towards the third countries or not (Nosko and Mišík forthcoming).

Moreover, while energy diversification represents the main challenge for the Central European countries, also other dimensions of Energy Union can have a signifi-

cantly positive effect on the security of their energy supply. Energy efficiency that has been underestimated in the region can significantly support strengthening of energy security in general as it decreases the amount of energy needed by national economies. However, only one Central European country (the Czech Republic) pushed for energy efficiency to be a part of the Conclusions of the European Council on May 19 together with other ten member states and the European Commission (euractiv 2015).

Conclusion

The original proposal by Donald Tusk to deepen integration in external energy area reflected much more the main energy challenges of the Central European region than the project of the Energy Union prepared by the European Commission several months later. Energy supply security is one of the key topics for the region plagued by a very high reliance on Russian gas and oil and although this issue is a part of the Energy Union proposal, it no longer plays a central role in it. Moreover, energy (supply) security is just one of five dimensions of the proposal. However, it has to be noted that the countries of this region have been rather passive when it comes to energy supply security for the most part in spite the importance of this issue represents for them. Only very slowly did they start to actively approach issues connected to energy supply security after the 2009 gas crisis, although the issue of high dependency on energy imports was on the table already since the 1990s. Moreover, these countries have been implementing only those infrastructure projects aimed at decreasing their overall energy dependency on Russia, which are supported by the EU budget – for example within the European Energy Programme for Recovery or current projects of common interest (European Commission 2014a).

Besides, the Energy Union offers an all-in-one approach that covers basically all areas of energy policy and thus de facto creates a common European energy policy. However, this is also its main challenge – since the Energy Union project encompasses proposals from almost all member states in order to meet their energy preferences and makes the project feasible for every member country, it is also very vague and too broad. Therefore, the document itself does not establish any new rules in the energy area at the community level or bring any new commitments for the member states. This strategic document just proposes the direction the European Commission wishes to follow in the energy area in the future. It will be the potential legislative jumping-off point from the Energy Union project that will set new rules in the energy area at the EU level. And such rules have to be first proposed and adopted by the member states.

So, while on the one hand the Energy Union does not bring any new energy rules to the EU table, on the other hand, the proposal marks an important improvement in the development of EU's energy policy since it sets very concrete (although ambitious) goals in this area for the community level. It can be thus understood as a framework aiming at the development of a real and fully functioning internal energy market respecting Union's climate goals and providing secure supplies of all types of energy from domestic sources, as well as from abroad. In other words, it can be understood as a basis for the development of

a common European energy policy. The proposal itself presupposes that such goal will be achieved in small steps. This is rather slow, but on the other hand, a feasible way to deepen integration in the energy area at the community level. Although the concrete progress in the energy integration brought about by the Energy Union is yet to be seen, it can be claimed that this project is the main change in energy at the EU level – at least since the inception of the internal energy market program in the 1990s.

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NEW WAVE OF JIHADI TERRORISM IN EUROPE: WINNING BATTLES BUT LOOSING THE WAR?

RYSZARD M. MACHNIKOWSKI

Introduction

Since its proclamation on 29 June 2014, the Islamic State influenced the global jihadi movement in an unprecedented way, dwarfing even *Al Qaeda* – the previous leader of this post-modern Islamist insurgency. The establishment of the Caliphate, first in the Levant region, then in Libya and Nigeria and even beyond, truly has been a “quantum leap” in the development of modern jihadi extremism. Its significance should be considered on par with the establishment of the *Muslim Brotherhood* in 1928 and *Al Qaeda* sixty years later. It should be regarded as the greatest (so far) achievement of the Islamist global social movement in the XXI Century. It should come as no surprise that this historical success resulted in an enormous boost to their abilities of influencing and attracting the public, and helped an enhanced recruitment of newcomers. The sudden and largely unexpected rebirth of the Caliphate has touched the mass imagination of parts of a largely scattered Muslim *ummah*, particularly in the Western world. The number of foreign volunteers ready to join and support the Islamic State today is far greater than the number of volunteers willing previously to fight against the West in Afghanistan and Iraq after the US invasions of these countries more than a decade ago (Greene and Torre 2014). Thousands of mostly young men and women, including teenagers, from all over the world travel to Syria and Iraq to join the Islamic State (Burke 2015). Leaders of similar jihadi organizations pledge allegiance to its leader, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi. “Remaining and expanding” propaganda slogan seems to be true, and the influence of IS transgresses the MENA region where it is located.

This is due to the three most important factors: 1) Extremely attractive ideological message currently spread by IS, based on the resurgence of the ancient Islamic institution, which clearly shows the new factor of political effectiveness and success, so absent in IS predecessors’ actions, focused on destruction (terrorism, insurgency) rather than construction (creating the state, administration); 2) extremely attractive ways of spreading this message via vast array of modern means of electronic social communication – IS campaigns to win the “hearts and minds”, especially of young Muslims worldwide, are impressive indeed and, so far, pretty efficient; 3) the ability of IS not only to wage war and spread barbaric havoc, but also to keep and administrate conquered lands and populations. Contrary to the contemporary common Western belief – Islamic State actually is a kind of *quasi-state*, involved in every day administrative and management duties and actions (Shubert 2015) and not a *mere* terrorist entity. The message of the Caliphate is warmly received by some parts of Muslim populations worldwide – there is a fertile social ground

prepared by its predecessors. In this way the West has only recently gained an enemy in the form of a state, not a nebulous “organization” like it was previously with Al Qaeda(s).

This growing ideological influence on the fresh cohorts of youngsters in the West brings the level of the “terrorist” threat there to an unprecedented degree. As I have claimed almost ten years ago: “[The jihadists] intend to rip the delicate social fabric of the multiethnic and multireligious European communities. They want to force states to introduce more harsh and discriminative countermeasures (like ethnic profiling) designed to enhance security, but at the same time decreasing the level of personal equality and freedom – they want to make modern Western open societies more closed and divided. They want to instigate fear and mistrust among its members, detach them and make the life for the Muslim Diaspora in Europe even more difficult. They want to attract more public attention, polarize Western societies along religious and ethnic lines (Muslims versus non-Muslims) and further separate the Muslim ummah from the rest of the society. Finally, they want to increase their influence and control of the Muslim populations and radicalize them” (Machnikowski 2007, 171).

So far, the jihadists from the Islamic State are pretty successful in this ability to grow the radicalization of the European Muslims, particularly youngsters. Clear signs of symbolic support for ISIS should have been a final warning to the security institutions in Europe that the acts of violence would inevitably follow. And this happened soon.

IS-linked actions in Europe

In many European countries, police and security services tried to prevent the bloodbath and carried out numerous coordinated preventive raids on suspected fighters returning from Syria/ Iraq and other sympathisers of the Islamic State. On 21 September, 2014 Dutch and Belgium media reported that a man and a woman who had returned from the war in Syria were plotting an assault on the European Union’s main offices in Brussels, including the Berlaymont building. Though the EU Commission spokeswoman denied specific knowledge of such a threat, the arrest of the couple was confirmed by the Belgian police. They were of Turkish origin and believed to be the residents of The Hague in the Netherlands. The couple was arrested at Brussels airport after returning from Syria via a flight from Turkey. A subsequent fire at a synagogue in the Brussels district of Anderlecht in September 2014 was also believed to have been the work of arsonists, with possible IS links. That Belgium is under significant terrorist threat has come as no surprise as a French-Moroccan, Mehdi Nemmouche, was placed under arrest in this country, awaiting trial after killing four people with an automatic weapon in the Jewish Museum in central Brussels in May, 2014. He had also spent more than a year fighting with ISIS militants in Syria.

On 1 October, 2014 French Minister of Internal Affairs announced the high-level anti-terrorist alert in France and warned of the possibility of terrorist attacks in the country. Next day, the PST, Norwegian security service, informed about enhanced terrorist threat in this country, coming from the activity of the IS jihadist networks and Syria and

Iraq war veterans returning to Norway. On 18 October, 2014 German Attorney General informed of the detention of two suspects – 39 year old Tunisian Kamel Ben Yahia S. and 29 year old Russian Josip G. as a result of a vast police search operation. They were suspected of fund-raising for IS in Germany and human-trafficking of IS supporters to Syria. On 29 October, 2014 Austrian press informed about police arrest of the 14 year old Austrian citizen of Turkish descent, planning a terrorist attack on the main railway station in Vienna – *Westbahnhof*. This teenager was extremely active on the Internet, seeking contacts with Islamic State activists and technological expertise to build a bomb.

On 5 November, 2014 a 39 year old German Denis Cuspert, a former rapper (nicknamed *Deso Dogg*) and convert to radical Islam who called himself Abu Talha al-Alemani, appeared in an ISIS beheading video and was seen holding the severed head of a man who received the “death penalty”. Cuspert, dubbed “Goebbels of ISIS” reappeared in an IS propaganda video on 19 April, 2015, issuing a warning of terrorist attacks directed against the Western states, including Germany, Britain France and the US, ahead of the World War I commemorative events to be held in these countries.

On 21 November, 2014 a Dutch teenager who allegedly travelled to Syria to marry an Islamic State fighter but was later rescued by her mother appeared in court on terror charges. Sterlina Petalo was a blond-haired and blue-eyed Catholic who converted to Islam and renamed herself Aicha. She used to live in Maastricht but decided to travel to Syria to marry a Dutch-Turkish jihadist fighter Omar Jilmaz, whom she saw on television and contacted via the Internet. Jilmaz, a former soldier in the Dutch army, travelled to Syria where he had been training fighters for the IS. On 28 November 2014, Austrian police have arrested thirteen people suspected of recruiting fighters for Islamic groups in the Middle East. The operation involved 500 police officers and was the largest anti-terrorist raid in Austria since World War II. On 6 December 2014, police in Bremen searched a mosque – from the organization *Masjidul-Furqan*, which had become the hotbed of Islamic extremism, and which had been de-legalized by the German authorities a day earlier.

On 20 December 2014, police officers killed a Muslim convert from Burundi who tried to stab a policeman at a police station in a town near Tours in central France. The Burundi-born French national Bertrand Nzohabonayo, a former rapper who had been known as Bilal since his conversion, has been described as “mentally unstable”. Nzohabonayo had previously committed petty offences but was not on a domestic intelligence watchlist, although his brother was known for his radical views and once pondered going to Syria. A day later, on 21 December 2014, a lone assailant shouting “Allahu Akbar” rammed French pedestrians with his car in the town of Dijon, central France. The attacker shouted that he was acting on behalf of “the children of Palestine”. He appeared to be around 40 years old and had been receiving psychiatric treatment. Finally, he was arrested after driving his car into five separate groups of people during a half-hour period, injuring eleven people, including two seriously. Only a day later, on 22 December 2014, a similar incident took place in France: a van driver rammed shoppers at a Christmas market in Nantes, injuring seventeen people. The driver, who stabbed himself in the chest after the attack, was identified as a 37 year old white Frenchman Sebastien S, with a history of petty

crime. As a result of this incident a 25-year-old man succumbed to his injuries in the hospital.

Finally, on 7 January 2015 two brothers, Saïd and Chérif Kouachi, armed with assault rifles and other weapons, entered the offices of the French satirical weekly *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, killing eleven people and injuring other eleven in the shooting. After leaving, they killed a French National Police officer outside the building and escaped from the scene. Later, while on the run, the brothers Kouachi took hostages at a signage company in Dammartin-en-Goële on 9 January 2015 and were finally shot dead by the GIGN Gendarmerie Nationale assault unit when they emerged from the building firing at special forces members. On 7 January 2015, a few hours after the *Charlie Hebdo* attack, a third assailant in the attacks, Amedy Coulibaly, shot a 32-year-old man who was out jogging in Fontenay-aux-Roses. On 8 January 2015, Coulibaly also shot and killed a municipal police officer in Montrouge and critically wounded a street sweeper. On 9 January 2015, Coulibaly entered a *Hypercacher* kosher supermarket at Porte de Vincennes in east Paris and killed four people inside, taking several hostages. Police RAID assault unit stormed the grocery store later that day, killing Coulibaly and freeing the hostages. International investigation following the Paris events in Belgium and Spain was aimed at trying to establish whether there was foreign support for the Paris terrorist cell.

On 15 January, 2015 two people had reportedly been killed during a police counter-terrorism raid in Verviers in Belgium. Thirteen suspects had been arrested and four AK-47 Kalashnikov assault rifles and hand grenades were reportedly found in this police operation in and around Brussels and Molenbeek, Vilvorde and Verviers, as a result of a surveillance campaign that had lasted several weeks. Terrorists allegedly had discussed attacking police patrols in the streets as it was revealed in wiretapped phone conversations. The discovery of police uniforms after the raid suggested this possibility.

The Belgian police had also been looking for possible links between a suspected arms dealer previously arrested in the southern town of Charleroi and Amedy Coulibaly. Neetin Karasular, a Belgian suspected arms dealer allegedly linked with ISIS and suspected of providing weapons to Amedy Coulibaly, knew Coulibaly's wife, Hayat Boumeddiene, who was a terror suspect in France. In connection with this event, police arrested other two suspects in France and discovered a small suburban safe house recently rented by Coulibaly and used as a storage for a weapons arsenal, which included three Kalashnikov AK-47 assault rifles and a rocket-propelled grenade launcher.

Still yet on 17 January 2015, the Greek police arrested at least four people in Athens, as part of an international investigation into a terrorist plot foiled in Belgium. However, those arrested did not include Abdelhamid Abaaoud, a 27-year-old man of Moroccan origin whom the Belgian authorities believed to be the mastermind of the terrorist cell behind the foiled plot.

On 15 January 2015, Austrian police in Vienna detained once again the very same Austrian teenager of Turkish descent who had been arrested in October 2014, when he disappeared from his home. On 16 January 2015, German police had arrested two men following raids on a man suspected of leading an extremist group of Turkish and Russian

nationals. The group was suspected of preparing serious acts of violence in Syria. Their leader, identified only as a 41 year old Ismet D, was accused of organising the group to fight against “infidels” in Syria. On 19 January, 2015 police in southern France detained five Russian citizens of Chechen origin on suspicion of preparing an attack. One suspect was arrested in the city of Beziers and another four were detained near Saint-Jean-de-Vedas, close to Montpellier. A cache of explosives was found in an apartment in Beziers near the local football stadium - *le Stade de Sauclières*.

On 24 January, 2015 four suspected members of an Islamist militant network were arrested in the Spanish territory of Ceuta, which borders Morocco. Two Moroccans and two Spaniards were arrested in raids on two properties by Moroccan and Spanish police. Spanish police said the men were prepared and willing to carry out a terror attack in Spain. The men arrested on Saturday were two pairs of brothers who according to Spanish Interior Minister Jorge Fernandez Diaz were “highly radicalised and highly trained”. A pistol, combat uniforms, machetes, number plates, documents and computer equipment were seized in the raids.

On 14 February 2015, in Copenhagen a documentary film director, Finn Norgaard was killed and three police officers were wounded in a shooting at the event titled “Art, blasphemy and the freedom of expression”. It was organised by Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks, who caricatured the Prophet Mohammad in 2007 and faced death threats from Islamists. An attacker fired a series of shots at a café *Krudttønden*, attended at that time by the French ambassador to Denmark Francois Zimeray and Dutch politician Geert Wilders. Vilks, along with the late Charlie Hebdo editor Stéphane “Charb” Charbonnier were both on Al-Qaeda’s most-wanted list for “insulting Islam”, but he was not injured at the spot. In the second similar attack the same day in Copenhagen, a Jewish man was killed and two police officers were wounded near the city’s main synagogue. The perpetrator of these two deadly attacks has been shot dead when police officers approached him in the Nørrebro district and he opened fire on them. The gunman was identified as Omar Abdel Hamid El Husein, a 22 year old born in Denmark. He was known to the Danish police in connection with criminal gangs and had previous convictions for violent offences and dealing in weapons. He had not travelled to Syria or Iraq, but was released from prison two weeks before the attack, after being convicted of stabbing another young man with a knife on a commuter train. El Husain had expressed sympathy to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in a post on his *Facebook* page just before the weekend shooting spree. His post pledges “allegiance to Abu Bakr in full obedience in the good and the bad. And I won’t dispute with him unless it is an outrageous disbelief”

On 19 April 2015, almost a dozen notes threatening a new terrorist attack have been found in the same Copenhagen district where El Husain resided. Eleven notes have been discovered at the café *Krudttønden* and around the district of Østerbro warning of a new terror attack: “Denmark will soon be hit by a terror attack that will make what happened on February 14 look like a prank – look forward to it.” It’s worth mentioning that Kurt Westergaard, the 79-year-old cartoonist who drew the famous caricatures, has spent the past decade living under a death threat and narrowly escaped an attempt on his life at

home on 1 January, 2010, where he had to lock himself into a panic room after a Somali militant armed with an axe and a knife broke in in the city of Aarhus.

On 9 March 2015, French police arrested four people linked to Amedy Coulibaly, a French policewoman, who was among the four taken into custody, allegedly worked at the Fort de Rosny Sous Bois, northeast of Paris, which is the location of an important police intelligence center. On 13 March, 2015 Spain police reported the detention of eight suspects involved in the recruitment of fighters for ISIS. Arrests took place in apartments in Barcelona, Girona, Ciudad Real and Avila.

On 18 March 2015, twenty European tourists have been killed in a terrorist attack on Bardo National Museum in the capital of Tunisia, Tunis. On 10 April 2015, Spanish police disbanded an Islamist terrorist cell wanted in Spain. Eleven suspected jihadists, ten men and a woman, from Spain, Morocco and Paraguay were arrested in various towns in Catalonia, with grenades, guns and knives and materiel for making bombs seized in police raids. The group, which was led by a hairdresser had planned its victim to be clad in an orange jumpsuit and killed in front of cameras in the Islamic State's style. They also wanted to kidnap a bank director and ask for ransom. On 22 April 2015, French police have arrested a man suspected of planning an attack on "one or two churches" in a Paris suburb. Sid Ahmed Ghulam, a 24 year old Algerian national, was detained after he apparently shot himself by accident and called an ambulance. Several military weapons, hand guns, ammunition and bullet-proof vests were found in his car and home as well as documents linked to al-Qaeda and Islamic State. A contact in Syria had advised Ghulam to target churches.

United Kingdom is not any different from the rest of the European continent as far as arrests and police raids on Islamist suspects and hideouts are concerned. On 4 November 2014, a 26 year old man, a Bangladeshi national has been arrested in Cornwall on suspicion of a terrorism offence linked to Syria. On 13 November 2014, British police arrested a 27 year old man suspected of financing terrorist acts. The arrest was made in Slough, west of central London. Moreover, on 18 November 2014, UK police was investigating reports of an aspiring medical student from Cardiff who allegedly appeared in an Isis video showing the mass execution of 17 Syrian servicemen and an American hostage. Nasser Muthana was thought to be one of the Islamic State militants seen in a 16-minute video showing the brutal execution of US aid worker Peter Kassig. On 4 December 2014, five men were arrested in Cardiff and the nearby town of Barry in south Wales on suspicion of terror offences. They were detained for the support of banned organisations. Separately, two people in south-east London were arrested by Scotland Yard counter-terrorism unit. Still the same day, a 33 year old man was arrested in London, suspected of commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism, and a 40 year old man was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to possess and supply fraudulent documents.

On 7 December 2014, three men aged 28, 33 and 30, were arrested by anti-terrorism officers on suspicion of supplying forged documents. On 16 December, 2014 two men in Luton, aged 37 and 61, were arrested by counter-terror police, suspected of supporting a banned organisation.

On 19 February 2015, a teenager who tried to emulate the killing of Fusilier Lee

Rigby in the streets of London has been found guilty by a British court. Brusthom Ziamani, aged 19, was on his way to carry out his plan when he was arrested in east London in 20 August 2014, carrying a knife and a hammer in a backpack. Ziamani, who had “reverted” to Islam just months earlier had previously researched the location of army cadet bases in the south-east of the capital. His arrest came after he showed his ex-girlfriend his weapons, referred to Rigby’s killer Michael Adebolajo as a legend and told her he would kill soldiers. On 26 February 2015, a British man Mohammad Emwazi had been ultimately identified as the IS militant who appears in videos claiming responsibility for the beheadings of US, British and other hostages. He was a 26-year-old Londoner and university graduate, and had been given the nickname “Jihadi John” by a group of his hostages, who described him as part of an Isis cell they called “the Beatles”. Emwazi arrived in Britain as a young boy, aged 6, after being born in Kuwait. He grew up in west London and graduated in 2009 in information technology studies.

On 15 May 2015, Scotland Yard assistant commissioner Mark Rowley said that terror-related arrests in England, Wales and Scotland reached record levels last year, when 338 people were detained. More than half of those arrests were related to Syria (BBC 2015).

Conclusions

This above enumeration of selected terrorism-related “incidents” across Europe clearly shows the rising tide of the jihadi terrorist activity there.* New wave of terrorist actions and recruitment necessarily lead to the increase of terrorist plotting, a result of which is a new wave of terrorist “actions” in Europe. As Thomas Hegghammer and Petter Nesser rightly note: “(...) IS appears to have succeeded more than al-Qaida in triggering so-called “individual jihad” operations by unaffiliated sympathisers in the West. Al-Qaida tried to do this in the early 2010s through *Inspire* magazine and other messages, but the call was only seriously heeded by a limited number of people. By contrast, IS has managed to thus far inspire an average of two sympathiser attacks per month since al-Adnani’s call for individual jihad was issued in September 2014” (Hegghammer and Nesser 2015, 26).

As far as *modi operandi* of IS-linked “actions” in Europe are concerned, they in their majority tend to be rather simple attacks (including stabbings or even car assaults) organized by a very limited number of perpetrators, often so called “lone actors”. More complex attacks like in Paris are still pretty rare. This should come as no surprise as bigger plots need more preparation, communication and reconnaissance, which makes them easier to detect by a vigilant European security forces. The problem whether these simple scenarios would be superseded, or supported, by more sophisticated and bigger ones is still under discussion – only the future can bring us the answer to the terrifying question whether Islamic State organizes “something big” in the West, possibly in Europe, trying to dwarf Al Qaeda “achievements” in this field (Sciutto 2015).

* For a meticulous analysis of ISIS/IS-linked “plots” in the West since 2011 see Thomas Hegghammer and Petter Nesser 2015. The authors also propose the typology of ISIS/IS “influence” on these plots.

Nevertheless, the increasing level of social interest and even open support for the Islamic State expressed in the social media by the European Muslims reveals a still unsolved problem of the growing ideological impact of this Islamist call and its attractiveness for the younger generation of Europeans. Western impotence in limiting jihadists' ability to attract new recruits shows the deeper nature of the problem we are all facing today. Interestingly, the appeal of the radical jihadi ideology is not limited to the uneducated, poor and relatively "new" immigrants – on the contrary, it attracts effectively part of the second or even third generation of immigrants' descendants, who are prone to alter the promising opportunities, provided to them by the recipient society. As I have quite rightly noted almost a decade ago: "(...) the nature of the problem the West, most notably Western Europe, faces today is based on its growing social non-cohesion and the growing inability to socialize people living together and at the same time belonging to vastly different cultures. (...) If we assume that radical Islam gives certain [Muslims] a set of, often pre-modern, rules of behaviour (the sense of what is right and what is wrong, ways of coping with growing social tensions, which are so in demand by those people), its growing popularity and influence reveals a deeper and even more serious crisis haunting contemporary West – the question of cultural identity, social belonging and communal values (...) So if we want to go to the roots of the problem of Islamic extremism in Europe, which leads to the acts of violence and terrorism, we should seriously address the process of identity-formation in contemporary European societies" (Machnikowski 2007, 174 - 175).

It seems that Western governments focused their attention on the immediate danger of terrorist attacks and primarily supported institutions directly responsible for state's security – police force and security services, arming them with new powers, budgets and staff. At the same time, Western governments clearly neglected the need to bolster all these social institutions which enable them to limit the influence of radical Islamist ideology (primarily schools, but also local communities). Though pretty successfully combating terrorists and their infrastructure, western states were absolutely not able to find effective tools to fight the rogue ideology behind their actions. Despite still winning the "street battles" with terrorist entities, the West is clearly losing the "hearts and minds campaign" aimed skilfully at its own population. It does not possess the power to cut off the jihadists from the massive influx of new willing volunteers, which should be the key to effective and long-term terrorism prevention.

This, quite a massive influx of the devoted supporters of the Islamic State from Europe we can observe today must be of a great concern and careful analysis. That "ideological shift" may transform the nature of the conflict in the future when western states might stand against the significant number of "rebels" rather than few "mere" terrorists. This "long war" on terror will be much longer than we are willing to acknowledge and certainly will bring new victims on both sides. It should be seen as a dynamic, developing social process instead of a series of unrelated incidents, and the "dynamism" of this struggle in the last two decades clearly shows the West is becoming more and more vulnerable to the actions of the jihadists, who recently managed to achieve success in the form of the established "Caliphate" and its far-reaching influence. IS's ability to attract a mass of new

volunteers is almost unprecedented and should not be recklessly disregarded. As long the West remains impotent in its abilities to de-radicalize the new generations of its own citizens, it should expect even deadlier rounds of hostilities, as this wave of jihadi warfare in Europe is not about to vanish soon.

P.S. On 13 November 2015 three groups of jihadi terrorists attacked six targets in Paris. *Stade de France* in Saint Denis, *Bataclan* theatre in the 11th arrondissement and restaurants and cafes in the 10th and 11th arrondissements. They killed 130 people and wounded almost 400, the perpetrators died in action. In the aftermath Western Europe witnessed one of the biggest manhunt in history and French authorities introduced the nation-wide state of emergency. In November 2015 in Paris the jihadists attacked and killed civilians – the number of victims could have been much higher but terrorist bombings around *Stade de France* killed three perpetrators and only one bystander – before they detonated their bombs one of the attacker unsuccessfully attempted to enter the Stadium during the Germany – France football match. Unfortunately, this terrible event provided a „positive” answer to the question whether jihadi fighters would have been interested in organizing „something big” in Europe – much more sophisticated and complex attack which deserves separate detailed analysis.

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PHENOMENON OF “FOREIGN FIGHTERS” - COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ISLAMIC STATE AND PRO-RUSSIAN SEPARATISTS IN EASTERN UKRAINE

7

NATALIA WOJTOWICZ

Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence

The article aims to analyze the phenomenon of “foreign fighters” by recognizing its force structure within the framework of creation of force, the obstacles to force, the use of force and the trial of force. The comparative analysis of Islamic State and pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine includes the political, military and ideological objectives of the described organizations. The paper contains the comparison of operational and tactical aspects of armed conflicts, which engage foreign fighters. The conclusions allow for the assessment of the impact of the phenomena on different security environments. The article presents the analysis of foreign fighters within the timeframe of 2014-2015.

The phenomenon of foreign fighters has been increasingly approached specifically within two ongoing conflicts – the emergence of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and ash Sham) and pro-Russian separatists battling Ukrainian government in eastern border territories. The following article aims at comparative analysis of the foreign fighters in strategic framework proposed by Martin van Creveld regarding modern wars: creation of force, obstacles to force, the use of force and the trial of force (Van Creveld 1991, 98-113). Above-mentioned categories allow a structured comparison within two extremely different security environments, therefore leading to the conclusion on the nature of the phenomenon – unique and newly emerged or as old as the war itself. The elements taken into account include the recruitment, size of the forces, the objectives, territory, tactics and opposing forces.

An extensive literature has been devoted to the understanding of “why” people join armed groups abroad. This analysis is focused on the collective impact of the foreign fighters on the ongoing conflicts. The emergence of the phenomena followed the dissemination of governance within disputed areas, implying a scene of several actors struggling for influence.

The use of “foreign” to classify an individual within the armed forces implies the prioritization of nationality as a defining characteristic on a battlefield. The redirection of traditional comprehension of war as state-organized violence to movements with agendas proves the necessity to recognize a broader perspective for the analysis of impact of the phenomenon.

The effort to contain violence within collective structures – rules, laws, norms

and institutions – has been an ongoing struggle throughout human history (Avant 2005, 3). The proliferation of armed groups active in wars has prompted the discussion on the emergence of neo-medievalism – sovereignty fragmented among different political actors; non-state centric and multipolar world order characterized by overlapping authorities and allegiances (McFate 2014, 6). As the name suggests, the reality of clashing interests within armed groups has been present in the strategic environment at least since the Middle Ages. According to Thomson, the marketization and internationalization of violence began with the commercialization of war in Northern Italy as early as eleventh century (Kinsey 2006, 34).

So should we treat foreign fighters as a new, catchy phrase describing the old mechanism of fragmented control over violence? In the realm of polemics, one man's freedom fighter is often somebody else's terrorist. Also, one can hardly label that kind of fanatic a "soldier of opportunity", even if he is paid for his efforts (Venter 2006, 8). The optimal way to test whether the phenomenon is an emergent concept is through a comparison of two different environments and the group within the conflict. The first element of the analysis is the creation of force – attempting to recognize which factors lead to the gravitational core pulling the foreign fighters to join the conflicts.

1. The creation of force

The monopoly of violence has been traditionally prescribed as the state prerogative. The emergence of armed groups of non-governmental origin within a territory is usually linked to power vacuums resulting from revolution (Arab Spring, Maydan protests) leading to the loss of control by local national structures. The creation of force can start with top-down initiative (first forming hierarchical foundations) or ground-up (first gathering fighters, then establishing command) (Simpson 2012, 6).

Several sources have been reporting well-executed organization of ISIS from the decision-makers to tactical units within villages, suggesting a top-down initiative. The case of pro-Russian rebels has more layers in its origin – the evidence has shown both the involvement of Russian military and the struggle for power within particular provinces (Quinn-Judge 2015). Depending on the main initiative (top-down, ground-up) the recruitment patterns differ accordingly to the audience which is targeted in the campaigns. The means to encourage foreign fighters to join the cause are shown in the table below:

	ISIS	Pro-Russian rebels
Methods of recruitment	Al-Hayat Media Center – responsible for creating a coherent message on social media sites and ISIS magazine (Massi 2014)	Vast support from Russian Federation State Media
	Facebook targeted campaign – communication with chosen individuals and offers of payment for the trip, new identity and role in the conflict	On-line via VKontakte (Russian version of facebook) – setting up a meeting with potential candidates
	Through local offices set up in Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, etc. (El Arabya 2015)	Through local offices set up in major Russian cities (Arutunyan 2015)
		Recruitment points within cities in conflict areas (Euronews 2014)

Table no 1. Main methods of recruitment within ISIS and pro-Russian rebel forces.

Comparing the efficiency of the recruitment through the means above can be based on the size of the forces and estimates of the involvement of foreign fighters in both conflicts.

	ISIS	Pro-Russian rebels
Estimated number of foreign fighters	ISIS foreign fighters estimates: 3000 Tunisians, 2500 Libyans, 1200 Moroccans, 500-1000 Algerians, around 7000 of various nationalities (Inkster 2015, 30). (15,000 of 80 different nationalities)	6500-11,000 (Sciutto, Crawford and Carter 2015) Russians, small numbers of different nationalities (less than 10): French, Serbian and Spanish.
Total number of fighters	CIA estimates 10,000-31,500, Kurdish estimates go up to 200,000 (Cockburn 2014). The most accurate and objective number is approximately 50,000.	50,000
% of foreign fighters in the armed groups	Approximately 30%	Up to 22% (taking into account the highest known number of foreign fighters).

Table no 2. Size of the ISIS and pro-Russian rebels forces with percentage of foreign fighters.

As the table above shows, the percentage of foreign fighters reaches 30% for ISIS and 22% for pro-Russian rebels in Ukraine. It proves that the impact of the phenomenon will be increasing due to growing numbers of new recruits within ranks of armed groups. As the foreign fighters constitute up to 1/3 of the armed groups, what is their role in the conflict?

Sources inside Islamic State confirmed that foreign fighters are recruited with the purpose of using them as martyrs, not foot soldiers (Malet 2013, 195). Within the ranks of ISIS as pointed out earlier in the article – the structure has been agreed long before the influx of foreigners. The main command posts have been assigned to influential families within territories of Iraq and Syria. In the pro-Russian rebels the pattern is similar – the commanders have been chosen mostly from former Special Forces and Russian soldiers. Foreign fighters are trained and integrated into existing units of rebels' forces with the aim to use them in the most difficult operations. The principal questions of the how and where do the foreign fighters come from were shortly answered – the last issue remains – what are they fighting for?

Objectives

	ISIS	Pro-Russian rebels
Estimated number of foreign fighters	Territorial gains	Territorial gains
	Power originating from religious beliefs	Power originating from separatist beliefs
	Assuming the leadership role in extremist-Muslim community	Unification with Russian Federation
Secondary objectives	Enforcing own vision of Islam	Following the precedence argument for self-termination of Russian minorities abroad
	Fighting the minorities and "infidels"	

Table no 3. Objectives of ISIS and pro-Russian rebels.

With the table presented above, the first and most recognizable difference between the two groups is the core of the organization. The objectives reveal the religion-based gravity of ISIS and the separatist-based gravity of pro-Russian rebels. The actions executed by both armed groups are far from the envisioned campaigns, but lead to the end-goal of territorial gains and power struggle within confined areas.

Treating the emerging armed groups as escalating threat, a concept of counter-force comes to mind. What are the "natural antagonists" for non-governmental violence within a territory?

2. Obstacles to force

The main obstacle to the emergence of violent force is traditionally the government presiding over the territory. The power void caused by revolutions puts the local population in vulnerable position, especially if there already exist visible divisions within communities. The second element which can suppress armed groups is the air strikes executed by neighboring countries – unfortunately accounting also for civilian deaths.

The local population can be both an enabler of violence and the biggest obstacle for an emerging crisis. The factor of resilience of population to extremism has been proven to be decisive. Both described armed groups have been targeting minorities within the occupied territories in order to create homogenous, subdued communities without leaders able to mobilize resistance (i.e. Kurdish villages, Ukrainian Tatars). The issue of internal and external violence determines the use of force by armed groups.

3. The use of force

Recognition of the shift in power over disputed territories has been vastly supported by violence against civilians. Both armed groups have been employing brutal tactics for largely local ends - establishing the power over population by threatening its existence in the case of opposing the new laws.

ISIS had aggressively linked jihad to the acquisition and administration of territory. Territorial project ties the group to a vision of society that makes dealing with “bad Muslims” more fundamental than attacking the West, if not more essential to the mission of ISIS (Inkster 2015, 22). Jihad’s inward turn has been part of the *modus operandi* – campaign against Yazidis, anti-Shia, Christians (Inkster 2015, 24). The highly reported incidents of destroying cultural heritage shows that religious fanaticism can be a justification of total destruction of occupied areas.

Pro-Russian rebels have been known to run not only offensive operations against Ukrainian military units, but also revenge missions against non-supportive population. The tactics of ISIS and pro-Russian rebels are concentrated along the mostly urban warfare – and have proved to lead to a massacre of the very population the groups were supposedly governing.

The resources which ISIS and pro-Russian rebels possess are sufficient to burn the cities to the ground over months of fighting. ISIS controls oil fields, counts among its vast arsenal M1A1 tanks, up-armoured hummers and at least three MIG-21 and MIG-23 aircraft (Inkster 2015, 27). The international outrage caused by shooting down a civilian Boeing has brought the attention to the spectrum of weapons in pro-Russian rebels possession – ranging from artillery and tanks to rocket-launchers.

The Line of Contact started at the Russian border directly east of Luhansk city, wrapped around Donetsk city and ended near Shyrokyne, on the Sea of Azov. Along the line, both sides reinforced their positions and regrouped, while a series of checkpoints were fortified with trenches and concrete blocks.

The constant support from external sources guarantees further destabilization and casualties. According to UN the violence in Donbas has resulted in deaths of approx-

imately 5000 and the wounding of 10 000. The casualties of ISIS have not been estimated, but the communities, which they have attacked had been decimated by thousands. The heavy casualty count shows that the proclaimed mission of sovereign governance is highly flawed – the population which is supposed to be governed is being massacred, showing the race to power instead of self-determination. The main objective is the territorial governance. Both conflicts are shown below on the maps presenting territories under ISIS and pro-Russian rebels' control:



Map no 1. Territory controlled by pro-Russian rebels (BBC 2015).



(Maps of World 2015)

ISIS-ruled territories belong to two countries, whereas pro-Russian rebels have been operating within one state. Both disputes are concentrated along major cities in the region, resources-rich areas and most populated sites. The ongoing expansion of conflicts has prompted the question of cession of hostilities within disputed regions. However, continuous influx of resources and foreign fighters does not indicate a resolution of the described wars. The remaining question to be answered is whether the foreign fighters' involvement has become a constant element of forces?

4. Trial of force

As Charles Tilly wrote: War made the state and the state made war (McFate 2014, 61). The center of the resolution has to lie within the governmental intervention or the governments will collapse with the loss of monopoly of force. The neo-medievalism remains a strong trend within territories lacking a national control.

The separatism and religious fanaticism have a common trait – they can be used to destabilize an area in order to create a new power within the territory. In the Russian minority context it can be extended to further regions:

The triumph of nationalism has brought about a situation where people do not occupy a piece of land because it is valuable; On the contrary, a piece of land however remote or desolate is considered valuable because it is occupied by this people (Van Creveld 1991, 215).

Meaning that the campaign could be used in other areas densely populated by Russian minority.

In the ISIS case, the establishment of armed cells outside the occupied area can be accomplished using recruitment outside the controlled territory. The emergence of armed groups leveraging states in transition can be seen as a sign of neo-medievalism – several actors clashing over the territory. The objectives of the new armed groups don't follow the modern model of governance – returning to the classical definition of the first duty of any social entity, which is to protect the lives of its members (Van Creveld 1991, 224).

The shift in power must be understood as the new actor fragmented to different fractions – a population suffering from internal violence. It has been stated that for the first time since the emergence of the nation-state, more military weapons are in the hands of private citizens than in the hands of national armed forces (Mandel 2002, 7.) The perception needs to be shifted to the decisive power of population over violence, not the state.

Conclusions

The phenomenon of foreign fighters in ISIS ranks and pro-Russian rebels units extends over the classical mercenary definition. The described gravitational pull is mainly religion- and separatist-based. The advantage of emerging armed groups is the lack of accountability in both external and internal security environment.

The force structure within ISIS and pro-Russian rebels shows the involvement of

foreign fighters at 30% and 22% respectively. Although the number of foreigners reaches up to 1/3 of the structure, the presented strategic objectives and tactical level shows that they are mostly in the role of foot soldiers.

The shift in power requires the shift in perception – the population needs to be recognized as a decisive actor within the security environment. The emerging violence is to be countered by “natural antagonists” – communities capable of defending themselves against extremism and escalation of conflicts. In the end, that would be the self-determination both groups are claiming to be executing.

Although there are several differences in security environments (ISIS operating in several countries, pro-Russian rebels in a confined area) the similarities are also striking. The tempo of ascending occupation implies a continuous support from external actors leading to a long-term destabilization campaign. Taking into account all of the distinct characteristics of gravitational pull, the endgame is still the establishment of territorial power. With that in mind, the conclusion regarding foreign fighters must be unambiguous: nationality is not the predominant attribute to be used in order to assess a combatant in a battlefield.

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THE 'AUDACITY' OF DRONE OPERATIONS: OBAMA'S COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

KENNEDY G. ONDIEKI

Introduction: Al-Qaeda Inc.

The invention of drone and predators was initially the brain-child of the French, Israeli, and America military forces. The drones and predators were invented to be used purposely by military forces to collect intelligence information and conduct surveillance and reconnaissance activities against actual and potential adversaries. But, after the terrorist attacks of 2001, the drones and unmanned predators were weaponized into drone warfare to counter terrorist groups—al-Qaeda incorporated (Grossman 2013; Byman 2013; Goppel 2013; Brennan 2013; Baker 2013).

Although the drone warfare now conducts surveillance and performs surgical precision strikes which usually are zero-risk (as opposed to boots on the ground) and have been able to eliminate America's most wanted terrorists, individuals and groups, the drone warfare operations, however, have become controversial within the US and the world pertaining to its legality, constitutionality and morality. Immediately after the US attacks, Congress passed US Patriot Act including a clause Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) that legally authorizes the US President to use force against terrorists linked to 9/11 (Byman 2013).

Besides the Congressional authorization, the secrecy of the drone operations, has killed and maimed thousands of innocent civilians in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia and even targeted American citizens abroad. The DOs lack proper Congressional Review and transparency as drone operations and strikes are authorized by the President alone with the knowledge of a few top US officials—the Directors of National Intelligence, CIA, Secretary of State, Vice President, and National Security Advisors, as exemplified by the killing of Osama bin Laden. The “need to know” and “need to share” of intelligence and the secrecy surrounding the DOs are causing a labyrinth of debates within the US and the world (Grossman 2013; Byman 2013).

For decades, drones have been instrumental in disrupting al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but in recent years, predators have become the weapon of choice against al-Qaeda affiliates in the Islamic states of Iraq, Syria, Somalia and Yemen (ISISY) by eliminating America's most wanted terrorist leaders and organizations. The drone operations, however, have become controversial within the US and global landscapes regarding its legality, constitutionality and legitimacy (Crowley 2013). This article examines the controversies, positions and implications of Obama's DOs.

In the aftermath of 2001 attacks, Congress passed the US Patriot Act and Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) that empowered the president to employ all necessary and appropriate force against terrorist individuals, groups and nations that were linked to 9/11 attacks to safeguard America's homeland (Byman 2013).

The consensus among academia, military personnel, state officials and the Obama administration, is that targeted killings by Dots constitute cost-effective, legal and legitimate counter-measure tactics for self-defense. However, the drones' secrecy and casualties in Pakistan, Afghanistan and ISISSY's strongholds raise contestations and questions the audacious justifications of drone strikes (Raja 2012).

Obama's audacious defense rationale

In 2012, the controversy of the Dots forced Obama to assure Americans and world leaders that drone operations were "a targeted, focused effort at people who are on a list of active terrorists trying to go and harm Americans...that hasn't caused a huge number of civilian casualties"(Grossman 2013). He stated that as the US troops were withdrawing from Afghanistan, drone warfare would replace American troops in counterterrorism strategy as the campaign would be cost-effective against the return of Taliban and al-Qaeda (Rod 2007; Byman 2013).

In Afghanistan, the drone operations are conducted by the US military and the operations are usually authorized and overt (common knowledge). Elsewhere in Yemen, Pakistan and Somalia, the Dots are carried out either singularly and/or jointly by the CIA. The operations are mostly covert—meaning the US government does not fully admit these operations are conducted by state officials (Grossman 2013). The controversies over the ethics, efficacy and justifications of the Dots and extrajudicial killings have forced the Obama administration to defend the use of drones as lawful instruments that are permitted by the US Constitution (Brennan 2013). Regarding the AUMF, Obama argued that the Congress empowers the President to use all means necessary and appropriate to safeguard Americans from imminent threats. Constitutionally and legally, the President is authorized to employ any means necessary to protect America—as nothing under the AUMF restrains his use of military force, drones strikes, and extrajudicial killings against al-Qaeda operatives (Blum and Heymann 2010).

From a domestic and international law purviews, Obama has stated that since the US is at war with Taliban and al-Qaeda (Tali-Qaeda) operatives, the use of drones is an inherent right to national defense. He argued that there is nothing in the international law that prohibits the US application of drones and other means necessary against its enemies outside of an active battlefield if there is consent or foreign countries are unable to take actions against al-Qaeda (Brennan 2012).

Obama especially stated that as much as drones cause collateral damage and result in some civilian casualties, drone operations, however, have killed and disoriented al-Qaeda's capabilities to threaten America and the rest of the world to ensure that Tali-Qaeda does not return and establish safe havens in Afghani and Pakistan borders (De

Young and Miller 2013).

Defending his counter-terrorism strategies, Obama, has publically acknowledged that since drones cause deaths, and he has unveiled new reform guidelines to ensure drones would only target terrorists abroad who cause imminent threat and cannot be captured (Baker 2013). He particularly stated that “It is a hard fact that US strikes have resulted in civilian casualties...these deaths will haunt us. But as Commander-in-Chief, I must weigh these heartbreaking tragedies against the alternative. To do nothing in the face of terrorist network would invite far more civilian casualties” (De Young and Miller 2013).

The civilians killed since inauguration of DOs is not exactly known in Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia. Non-state groups, for instance, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism (UK) and the New America Foundation have estimated that at least 2,500 to 4,000 civilians have been killed by the drone attacks in Pakistan alone (Grossman 2013; Kenneth et. al. 2012). Drone casualties in Afghanistan and other ISISSY's strongholds remain undisclosed under the guise of national security rationale.

Consequently, the UN's Commission on Human Rights complained that drone strikes violate the international humanitarian laws and thus requires Obama administration to “clarify its position on the legal and factual issues...to declassify...information relevant to its lethal extraterritorial counter-terrorism operations...together with information on the evaluation methodology used” (Owen 2013). The legality, morality and collateral damage caused by the secrecy of drones have engendered admixed views among supporters and detractors of drone operations (Kenneth et. al. 2012; Hamilton 2011).

Conflicting views: the proponents' position

The audacity, morality, and legality of the US drone operations under the Obama administration continue to stir bitter debates. Proponents, counterterrorist officials, the CIA Director, John O. Brennan and officials in the Obama administration argue that the drone operations or strikes are legal under the 2001 authorization that empowers the president to use force against those terrorists and affiliates responsible for 9/11 attacks (Brennan 2013).

According to *John O. Brennan* (2012), “these platforms...are an advanced tool that provides in certain cases a clear perspective on what's happening on the battlefield and are what allows us to be precise. He specifically noted that “...the goal of all our operations: to put pressure on al-Qaeda, to take people off the battlefield here that's been deemed necessary and, of course, to avoid any collateral damage wherever possible” (Brennan 2013).

Despite Obama's recent call to minimize US's reliance on drone operations, they still remain Obama's weapon of choice (Byman 2013). Compared to George W. Bush, who signed off less than fifty drone strikes during his tenure, Obama has authorized over four hundred drone programs making the program the center-piece of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy (Byman 2013).

Proponents of the drones operations further assert that the drones have performed an important function by killing key al-Qaeda leaders and denying terrorists safe

havens in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia and even Mali (Grossman 2013). Advocates also assert that the drone strikes have devastated and disoriented al-Qaeda and thus minimized threats. Besides, drone strikes are viewed as being cost-effective—blood and treasure (less risk on soldiers and minimal collateral damage compared to military intervention and less taxpayers' money (Obama 2013; Grossman 2013).

Supporters also argue that in the age of information technology and accessibility of lethal weapons in the hands of terrorist individuals and groups, the employment of DOs assists America and allies to be better prepared and precise against terrorists. Advocates note that the use of drone operations is part and parcel of the global security agenda (Byman 2013; Grossman 2013).

Obama insists that the audacity of the drone operations has worked because more than three thousand al-Qaeda, Taliban and jihadist leaders and disciples have been killed. Specifically, more than fifty senior leaders of al-Qaeda, Taliban and al-shabab (bomb makers, recruiters and fundraisers) have been eliminated. Obama employs both "signature killing" and SEAL operations to destroy America's most wanted enemies as the "Operation Geronimo" that killed Osama bin Laden exemplified.

In essence, Obama and those under his administration generally argue that the DOs have undercut terrorists' ability to train new recruits and harm America because terrorists fear being targeted by drones. This is because the drones have denied terrorist leaders their recruiting narrative as al-Qaeda and Taliban operatives now avoid using electronic devices. Due to the rapid use of drone operations, the jihadist militants, including those in Mali, have been advised by their leaders to "maintain complete silence of all wireless contacts and avoid gathering in open areas" (Byman 2013). In other words, drones have made it difficult for terrorists to communicate, recruit, congregate, train and conduct large-scale attacks.

Notwithstanding, the drones' functions and benefits, the audacity, legality and legitimacy of Obama's drones, still continue to stir heated debates within the US. Major proponents of the DOs under the Obama administration, insist that drones are legitimate because they are Constitutional and empower the president to use any means necessary including force and extra-judicial killings to safeguard America.

Despite recent drone reforms, the strikes remain Obama's weapon of choice (Byman 2013).

Obama has authorized over four hundred strikes, making drone operations the center-piece of the US counterterrorism strategy. The drones are seen as cost-effective compared to actual military intervention (Sledge 2014). The efficacy of DOs is that it has undercut terrorists' ability to recruit, train and harm America for fear of being targeted by drones (Byman 2013). Dissenters, however, differ over the use of drone strikes.

Dissenters' perspectives

Dissenters claim that drone operations kill thousands of innocent civilians, alienate American allies and illegally target American citizens. Amongst the critics is the

director of American Civil Liberty Union who argues that the audacity of Obama's DOs has gone beyond the scope of the 2001 Patriot Act and AUMF authorization (Grossman 2013).

Critics assert that the use of DOs against potential terrorists and American citizens is unconstitutional. Specifically, Obama's "targeted assassinations" are unconstitutional and illegal from the standpoint of *Presidential Executive Order 12324*. Detractors argue that the US is setting a dangerous precedent that would be used by irresponsible and unstable regimes to harm Americans. America's dissenters also are supported by the UN report that noted that "If other states were to claim the broad-based authority that the United States does, to kill people anywhere, anytime, the result would be a chaos" (Grossman 2013).

According to Congressman Ron Paul, the Obama's DOs are violating Constitutional liberty and freedom cherished by America. Paul noted that targeting US citizens abroad and keeping evidence that justifies their assassination secret, violates legal guarantee of due process procedures for US citizens. Rep. Paul called for the reform of drones and in particular AUMF because the law that allows the president a "blanket prerogative to single-handedly issue authorizations to kill whoever he deems a terrorist at home and abroad is disgraceful" (Byman 2013).

The reason behind Paul's argument on the audacity of Obama's drone operations was wrought by the killing of Anwar Awlaki (an American born in New Mexico) by the DOs in Yemen in 2011 and the uproar and rallying cry among critics of drone strikes. The killing of Awlaki stirred-and-still-stirs domestic debates in Congress as Awlaki was killed without being charged with a crime nor designated as a terrorist operative. Paul also warned that "If the American people accept this blindly and casually, that we now have an accepted practice of the president assassinating people he thinks are bad guys, I think it's sad" (Byman 2013).

From an international perspective, the legality and legitimacy of the drone operations has been questioned. For example, in 2013, the UN commenced a special inquiry into civilian deaths caused by DOs as collateral damage, causing both domestic and global uproar. This was because the Obama administration declined to provide the rationale behind the target and failed to provide the exact number of deaths caused by the drones. Furthermore, the Obama administration disallowed public scrutiny and investigations, basing it on national-security argument on the disclosure of the operations and deaths.

The decision to authorize drones in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia have further motivated terrorists to attack America and its allies—the Kenya's Nairobi Westgate Mall and the routine attacks in churches, schools, universities and other civilian establishments have been viewed as a stepchild of Obama's DOs that target al-shabab in Somalia. Furthermore, the use of drone operations in Pakistan and Yemen is promoting anti-American sentiments and radicalizing groups bent on harming America in the Middle East—the Islamic States in Syria, Iraq Yemen and Libya serve as backdrops (Cronin 2013).

Specifically, dissenters of drones (civil rights and human rights activists, media and Congressmen) question Obama's extrajudicial killings and consider such acts assassinations that violate Constitution and International Law (Blum and Heymann 2010).

Critics strongly maintain that the drone warfare lacks proper Congressional Review to ensure its transparency and accountability as the strikes are authorized by the President alone with the knowledge of a few top state officials (Grossman 2013).

Generally speaking, dissenters' dispute over drone strikes revolves around Obama's 'audacious extrajudicial killings in disregard of civilian casualties; Constitutional due process mandate and international law (Stone 2012). Dissenters claim that drone strikes kill and maim thousands of civilians, alienate American allies, and illegally target American citizens abroad. For the dissenters the extrajudicial killings have gone beyond the scope of the 2001 AUMF authorization (Grossman 2013). They claim that these 2013 concerns and contestations over the bold use of drones has necessitated routine Congressional oversight committees that examine and determine the legitimacy and legality of the Obama's drone operations.

Congressional oversights on Drone Operations

If there is any consolation to the opponents of the use of drones, the audacity, legality and morality of the drone strikes is coming under US bipartisan Congressional scrutiny as public debate is playing a greater role in pushing for the drone warfare reviews and reforms to ensure greater transparency and public accountability. Even Obama has recognized the significance of the uproar and thus has allowed disclosure of the drones to minimize fierce bipartisan politics to get support and consensus from the Congress on domestic policies and agendas.

Although some of the criticisms against drone warfare is reasonable and valid, given the reality that American troops have withdrawn from Afghanistan, the audacity of drone operations would still remain a necessary instrument to counter terrorists and the return of the Taliban and al-Qaeda. What critics downplay is the reality that without the drone strikes, some of the worst terrorists would still be orchestrating lethal attacks on America and its allies.

Besides, the critics fail to consider that other alternative strategies available for fighting global terrorists are either too risky or unrealistic given the financial tsunami that the US and EU are confronting. Therefore, it is less likely that the drone warfare will decline. Besides, if counting the limbs and costs of invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan for the last fourteen years is any indication, the drone strikes seem a pragmatic instrument against global terrorism.

This is because the drone operations offer a much more practical and comparatively low-risk method of counter terrorism whilst minimizing the so-called collateral damage. However, by improving the drone policy guidelines and spelling out clear rules of engagement—extrajudicial and extraterritorial killings are critically necessary to ensure that other tyrannical states such as Iran, Syria, North Korea and unstable regimes would

find it harder to point at drone operations to justify attacks against their own political opponents and/or direct their fury against the US and western establishments (Byman 2013; Cronin 2013).

Counterterrorist experts, however, think that just as the new strategy of unmanned interventions is necessary in countering global war on terror, the very convenience of drone attacks poses the risk of damaging the US reputation and dragging the country into conflicts it could otherwise avoid—Yemen, Somalia, Mali and Kenya where American drone strikes are applied. Scholars think that even if al-Qaeda leaders are dead, the group is still resilient and continues to recruit, train and orchestrate attacks (Cronin 2013).

Congress across the board have raised concerns and at times complained against Obama's drone strikes, exemplified by statements by Congressmen *Bean Hamilton* and *Ron Paul*, who have publically argued that Obama's administration and DOs violates constitutional liberties and freedoms cherished by Americans. In particular, Paul stated that targeting US citizens abroad and keeping evidence that justifies their assassinations secret violates due process procedures (Baldino 2010).

Under these circumstances, Congress and critics of DOs have advocated reforming the AUMF and drone programs to ensure proper transparency, accountability to engender the drones' legitimacy (Hamilton 2011; Blum and Heymann 2010; Baker 2013).

Other congressmen have also argued that extrajudicial killings in Afghanistan, Pakistan and now the Islamic States of Iraq, Syria, Somalia and Yemen promote anti-American sentiments and radicalize groups bent on hurting America and its allies throughout the world, as the Kenyan attacks demonstrates (Zenko 2013).

Currently, Congress has been allowed to examine the drone strikes' targets and rationale before actual authorizations are permitted. With Congressional thorough scrutiny of drone operations, the White House and the president's prerogatives have somewhat been constrained to ensure the rules of engagement are clearly applied to ensure transparency and accountability of the strikes. Consequently, the Obama administration is required to yield to routine Congressional oversights and particularly permitted the Intelligence Committee to view and review all the targeted persons, groups and areas of interest to ensure that the drone strikes are within the domestic and international laws to ensure that human casualties, the law enforcement secrecy, domestic and international uproar on the controversies and violations are minimized (Hamilton 2011; Zenko 2013).

Nowadays, intelligence information on terrorist individuals and groups that would be targeted with drones has to be shared with Congressional members of the Intelligence Committee. Hence, there has been a significant change in the way drone strikes are directed and conducted as Congress has a right to know and examine the rationale, legality and legitimacy of the drone strikes before and after the operations. Whenever Congressmen lack proper information, they usually call upon the CIA Director and other state officials to testify before Congress to answer any questions and/or clarify any concerns.

Implications and conclusions

Proponents argue that in the absence of DOs, the US power to capture and eliminate enemies would be a risky and costly endeavor. Using drones costs less in blood and treasure than putting boots on the ground to hunt down terrorists. Ignoring the role of drone operations on global terrorism is a gross miscalculation, as the worst terrorists would still be alive and orchestrating lethal attacks that threaten peace and stability in the world. Moreover, considering that alternative strategies available for fighting terrorists are either too costly or unrealistic especially in the aftermath of global financial downturn, the proponents' advocacy of the drone operations makes sense as an effective mechanism capable to battle non-traditional threats (Byman 2013).

Critics disagree by arguing the Navy Seals and not the drone strikes killed bin Laden. Any practical arguments provided by the proponents become less convincing because the US Constitution legally prohibits any type assassinations and/or targeted killings of leaders and individuals that allegedly pose a threat to America where civilians would be harmed. Critics contend the unprecedented power of the US President to hunt down American citizens abroad under the aegis of the global war on terror causes domestic uproar and divisions as blacklisting Islamic individuals or groups and subsequently targeting them leads to an increased sense and sensibility of Islam-phobia.

A much more nuanced multifaceted approach to pragmatically engage terrorists and perhaps minimize terrorist threats should also take into consideration the respect of human rights; preservation of fundamental freedoms, and the fight against poverty in regions where terrorists originate. The excessive application of drone strikes would in the long run contribute to anti-US and western sentiments (Cronin 2013).

Reasonable considerations of the above approaches would likely contribute to the dwindling of the current controversies and contestations over the drone operations if they were no-longer as audacious and removed from the scrutiny of oversight committees and public knowledge. In other words, if drone operations were transparent and/or authorized by the President and the Congress, it is possible to balance security and liberty and at the same time ensure their constitutionality, legality and legitimacy.

But, if critics of drone operations were to borrow President Benjamin Franklin's wisdom: "Those who give up their liberties for a little security deserve neither", the logic behind and advocacy of drone operations would be muted. In essence, if the drone operations were overt rather than covert, respected civil liberties, were transparent and had the legal and moral backings, the audacity of drone strikes under the Obama administration would be embraced as a viable counter-terrorism method. Failing to consider the aforementioned thinking, the drone operations would in the short-term eliminate today's terrorists and create tomorrow's ones in the process.

All things considered, drone strikes can be a reasonable and cost-effective counter-terrorism strategy pertinent in engaging al-Qaeda and its latter-day jihadists and Islamist operatives in the states of Iraq, Syria, Somalia and Yemen. Now that the American

troops have supposedly withdrawn from Afghanistan and Iraq, Obama's audacious DOs remain a necessary instrument capable of countering terrorist threats in the future (Zenko 2013). Should Obama's counter-terrorism strategies and drone operations be mindful of the domestic and international concerns and fears, his audacious drone warfare might be justifiable.

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DIGITAL COUNTERINSURGENCY: CONFLICT BETWEEN ANONYMOUS & ISIS

DUŠAN MADAJ

List of Contents

Introduction
Digital counterinsurgency
Structures and hierarchies of ISIS and Anonymous
Analyzing the conflict: strategies, tactics, and tools
Anonymous and the digital counterinsurgency strategies
Conclusions

Introduction

In this article we will analyze the conflict between Anonymous and ISIS. Our article is based on an article by Jared Cohen published in *Foreign Affairs*, who writes about the digital counterinsurgency against ISIS. We will look at what the term digital counterinsurgency means. Then we will describe ISIS and Anonymous structures and hierarchies in cyberspace. To analyze the conflict, we will look at the strategies, tactics, and tools both of these organizations are using. After that we will analyze the conflict in the light of Cohen's digital counterinsurgency strategy.

Digital counterinsurgency

Jared Cohen (2015) is probably the first author to use the term digital counterinsurgency in his *Foreign Affairs* article. What exactly does the term digital counterinsurgency mean and why we have chosen the term counterinsurgency instead of counterterrorism? We start with the second part of the question. Milton (2014, 36) writes that ISIS created a unity of effort in its operations, making it more akin to an insurgent organization than a terrorist organization. Ingram (2014, 4) describe ISIS as a striking example of modern insurgency, where information operations play a central role in group's strategy. Some politicians on the other hand see ISIS as a cult, an idea that is exploited by Gaub (2016), which describes how the group works and make some advisee on how to fight it.

By the term digital counterinsurgency, we understand the government's application of countermeasures that should lead to the suppression of the influence of an insurgency group in the digital sphere or cyberspace. In other words, we marginalize their activity in the digital sphere where they spread their propaganda, recruit followers, get money etc. Cohen (2015) uses the example of FARC, and how the group was marginalized over

the years, but was not disbanded or entirely defeated. The pallet of tools that can be used varies. Walker and Conway (2015) describe state counter-measure tactics that should stem the impact of extreme ideologies. We have “positive” measures like counter-narratives and education, and “negative” measures like the deletion or restriction of violent extremist online content, then we have discretionary state activity such as counselling of vulnerable individuals, or disruptive counter-measures like taking down of extremist internet sites (Walker and Conway 2015, 156-157). In literature, we also come across terms like online counterterrorism or counterinsurgency.

Structures and hierarchies of ISIS and Anonymous

Anonymous is a brand like ISIS, and in the domain of cyberspace there is a big problem of attribution. Simply said, we can't be sure who was behind each cyber attack. Because the perpetrators are using these brands, there are various groups we can distinguish. When we speak about Anonymous, we will specifically refer to groups that are publicly claiming to use the name Anonymous, or are cooperating with them in the fight against ISIS. In the case of ISIS, we will discuss groups, which support ISIS and are pro-ISIS in cyberspace, or are directly part of ISIS.

Jared Cohen (2015) sees ISIS more as a corporation and not a cluster of isolated cells. ISIS hierarchy is replicated online, where it has a pyramid of four types of digital fighters: at the top is ISIS' central command for digital operations, next is ISIS' digital rank and file, after that there is a vast number of radical sympathizers, and finally we have nonhuman digital fighter (Cohen 2015). The best strategy in the online sphere is marginalization, and Cohen suggests that the group would be forced to operate in dark Web (Cohen 2015). A pyramidal ISIS structure is also suggested by other studies.

Milton (2014, 47) writes that Islamic State's media proficiency exists because of an extensive media infrastructure with a multi-level organizational structure, and that Islamic State has a long history of organizing its media efforts. The central hub for all creation and distribution of official content is the Ministry of Media and is made of four components: al-Furqan, al-I'tisam, al-Hayat, and Ajnad Foundation (Milton 2014, 47-49).

Stalinsky and Sosnow (2015) review hacking activities by ISIS, pro-ISIS elements, and ISIS supporters. In the activities of ISIS there are mainly cases of defacement hacks. Among ISIS supporters are for example Arab Anonymous, which showed support for ISIS in a video, whose authenticity could not be verified, and then we can see individual hackers as is the case of a hacker calling himself “Dark Master” and “MrDanger”, who purportedly hacked the French website Opalic.com (Stalinsky and Sosnow 2015). Among the pro-ISIS elements are for example hackers known as Team System DZ (or Team DZ), the hacking group ISIS Cyber Army, or “El Moujahidin Team”, but special attention is given to the groups ISHD (The Islamic State Hacking Division), and The CyberCaliphate (Stalinsky and Sosnow 2015). Other hacking groups affiliated with ISIS include Darkshadow (known as Arab Security Team), and ISIS Cyber Army (ICT Cyber-Desk 2015a, 30-35). This is not a complete list of all the hacking groups and individuals.

ISHD has no apparent official link to ISIS, but sometimes it is reported that they are officially affiliated with them, and it was thought that ISHD was headed by Junaid Hussain (Stalinsky and Sosnow 2015). Some speculated that he was also the leader and founder of CyberCaliphate. Hussain, who was previously a member of a hacktivist group TeaMpOisoN, was likely a solo member of ISHD (Franceschi-Bicchierai 2015). Social media accounts administered by Hussain stated that CyberCaliphate is an independent hacking group that supports ISIS and is not its official hacking group (McBride 2015). US Overseas Security Advisory Council also claims that there are no indications that ISIS and CyberCaliphate are tied (Gertz 2015). This supports the thesis that there is no connection between them and that Hussain is not the leader and founder of CyberCaliphate.

Now we will describe Anonymous. Cyberkov (2015), an IT security firm from Kuwait, distinguishes the first generation of Anonymous, which hacked governments, corporations etc., and the new generation that has undergone ideological changes. They criticize the new generation, because they started to attack websites that hosted religious, political or other content, because they were owned by Muslims (Cyberkov 2015). A considerable number of attacks by Anonymous against ISIS that get media coverage actually come from the groups called GhostSec and GhostSecGroup. Cyberkov (2015) claims that GhostSec emerged from a new generation of Anonymous during the Charlie Hebdo attacks, and suspects them to include officers of counter-terrorism and intelligence, adding that Michael Smith, the co-founder of Kronos Advisory, revealed that law-enforcement agencies were using GhostSec to disrupt ISIS operations.

A Twitter status from TorReaper, a member of GhostSec explains the structure of the group. The first group was GhostSec, with members who wanted to focus on destroying the online presence of ISIS, but after their success the government has contacted the group for intel which became a commodity (Raincoaster 2015). After that almost all original members left and a new group called GhostSecGroup was founded, because the government didn't like the connection with Anonymous and they didn't control the website ghostsec.org (Raincoaster 2015). A recent post by Anonymous also illustrates this conflict, when they criticize the cooperation with government agents and intelligence contractors, and are advising to release information to the public and operate in their interest (Anonymous 2015). Digita Shadow a member of GhostSecGroup stated that there is no affiliation between GhostSecGroup and Anonymous, and with GhostSec, and that they are collaborating with government officials (Raincoaster 2015).

On the other hand, Ransacker a member of GhostSec said that they are a subgroup of Anonymous and are part of the Anon family (Raincoaster 2015). Furthermore, a member of GhostSec, at the time of cooperation with the government, using a pseudonym of Mikro, had said that they and CtrlSec despite their origin are no longer affiliated with Anonymous, which is a non-hierarchical organization that prohibits its members receiving financial support from outsiders, and that CtrlSec, which he has founded, has a structure and leadership in contrast to them (Cottee 2015). This all explains why Cyberkov believed that GhostSec included officers of counter-terrorism and intelligence, but the truth seems to be that they had rather cooperated with them, even when they were not a part of them.

TorReaper wrote that the old members of GhostSec came back and reformed it to work on the original goal of working for no money (Raincoaster 2015).

Analyzing the conflict: strategies, tactics, and tools

When analyzing ISIS strategy in the conflict against Anonymous, we have not found a specific strategy in place. In light of the previous chapter and the available information, we can see that the hacking groups or hackers are mainly operating in the name of ISIS, but are not directly controlled or given orders from them. Bat Blue (2015, 8) report states that ISIS's hacking strategy empowers its followers to establish successful, creative groups on their own, and is similar to social media strategy. One of the significant aims of ISIS cyber activity is to go after the group's main opponents (Stalinsky and Sosnow 2015). The purpose of Islamic State's information operations campaign is to polarize the support of audiences and shape the perceptions via messages that interweave appeals to pragmatic and perceptual factors (Ingram 2015, 1; see Ingram 2014).

What can be seen as ISIS tactics is the use of social media for propaganda, recruitment, discrediting of rival groups, dissemination of information about cyber-warfare and security, or posting of information about ISIS cyber-attacks (JWMG Desk 2015). Bat Blue report (2015, 6) writes that many tactics used by ISIS are unsophisticated but effective, and rely on easily learned skills, and that ISIS is coordinating other hacker groups and lone wolves. Coordination of other hacker groups seems to be unlikely because of the evidence suggesting no direct control over the hacking groups described in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, a degree of coordination can be seen in ISIS cyber operations and counter operations – a case in point is the #opFrance operation.

A number of hacktivist groups were involved in this operation: Mauritania Attacker, AnonGhost, Middle East Cyber Army (MECA), Fallaga Team from Tunisia, the United Islamic Cyber Force, the C7 Crew, and CyberCaliphate (Stalinsky and Sosnow 2015). They launched an operation against French websites, with mostly DDoS attacks (Stalinsky and Sosnow 2015). This happened in a similar manner as in the case of Anonymous operations #opISIS, #opParis, where different hacktivist groups and individuals targeted ISIS.

After Anonymous declared “total war” against ISIS, ISIS had offered guidance to prevent cyber attacks from Anonymous, which appeared on Khilafah news channel and was discovered by International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and included five points of advice (Iyer 2015). The article doesn't credit the author and the guidance is not technical and nature and rather simple. When discussing the tools ISIS is using, we should distinguish between the internet and offensive cyber techniques. Terrorists' use of internet is cyber enabled rather than cyber dependent (see Gill et. al. 2015, 35). The cases of ISHD publishing hit lists of 100 U.S. military personnel and Italian officers shows that the information was evidently retrieved online with the help of open source intelligence gathering methods, which is a standard procedure for cyber-vigilantes and hacktivists (Stalinsky and Sosnow 2015).

Stalinsky and Sosnow (2015) in their study identify five types of hacking used by ISIS connected attacks: defacement of websites, DDoS, data theft, website disabling, and data breach. The attacks date back to October 2014, and the study shows that website defacement was among the most often used hacks (Stalinsky and Sosnow 2015). These types of attacks can be classified as offensive cyber techniques. We must however exercise caution when labeling them as data theft, due to the possibility that the information could have been obtained from open sources or individuals. Overall, the offensive cyber techniques do not exhibit a high degree of sophistication.

An example of a sophisticated attack is the case of TV5 Monde hack by Cyber-Caliphate. But it could be a possible “false flag” operation of a Russian group called Pawn Storm. Ferguson (2015) from Trend Micro highlights the problem of attribution in this case with the possibility of Pawn Storm involvement, without explicitly stating that it was them. Some of the pro-ISIS hackers may have no affiliation with the group, and the reason for this could be “false flag” operations or to create havoc and confusion (Stalinsky and Sosnow 2015).

With regard to the news about ISIS, there is a great deal of misinformation published by various websites. The recently published magazine called *Kybernetiq* in German, was thought to be produced by ISIS. Nevertheless, the Twitter account that published this magazine stated that they are not ISIS (*Kybernetiq* 2016). The magazine’s design looks professional, and even the content is among the more technical ones. Something similar took place with the so-called ISIS OPSEC Manual, which was uncovered and translated by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, and published by WIRED, but in the end it was authored by Cyberko, which made it a guide for Gaza activists and Journalists, and was not written by ISIS (News 2015).

It is believed that after Anonymous attacked ISIS websites, they have moved to Cloudflare. This can be seen as another tool they are using. Cloudflare is a company that provides services for websites, helping them to stay online during overwhelming traffic, and can also protect them from DDoS attacks. This company was accused by Anonymous for protecting ISIS websites, but the CEO of Cloudflare said that he is willing to stop protecting the websites, if they are approached by US legal channels, but it is more often the case that the investigators want him to keep the sites up (Prabhu 2015). This brings us to the issue whether it is better to shut down the websites and accounts, or to leave them online for information gathering.

Besides attacks, ISIS is using various websites for posting their messages. Just-Paste is used to publish lists of websites to target, screenshots of defaced websites of statements, and Aljyosh, an online forum for Arab hackers, is used to claim responsibility for stealing personal information (Bat Blue 2015, 8). Today, the intelligence services around the world often encounter the problem of use of encrypted communication by terrorists. But the problem of using encrypted communication was here for many years. Stalinsky and Sosnow (2014) wrote an impressive historic study about the use of electronic technologies and social media by Al-Qaeda and its affiliates, and ISIS. Younis Tsouli is a good example showing how jihadi groups promote these technologies. He was the infamous al-Qaeda

hacker known as 'Irhabi 007', who provided security tips for avoiding online detection, use of proxy servers, or distributed anonymizing software, and wrote "The encyclopedia on hacking the crusaders' and Zionists' Web sites, drafted by Irhabi 007" (Labi 2006). Politicians and others talk of ISIS using anonymizing software TOR, the applications like Telegram, Kik etc., allowing them to communicate using encrypted messages. Currently there is so-called 'crypto war' underway in many countries in which one side wants access to strong encryption and the other argues for governmental access to encrypted messages.

The framework of operations by Anonymous can be seen in two axes: the first one against those who help ISIS and the countries considered to be ISIS supporters, the second one against online activity attributed to the ISIS (ICT Cyber-Desk 2015a, 35-36). Cyber-attacks against ISIS began already in June 2014, when TheAnonMessage posted a video titled "Anonymous: Operation #NO2ISIS" with targets of government owned websites of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Qatar (ICT Cyber-Desk 2014, 37). The second axis encompasses attempts to disable ISIS online activity, which is seen in #OpISIS, where many ISIS Twitter accounts were published so that they could be monitored or shut down (ICT Cyber-Desk 2015a, 36). The GhostSec has published within #OpISIS a guideline for finding ISIS Twitter accounts and report them to Ghost Security with the use of #CtrlSec (ICT Cyber-Desk 2015b, 59-60). As mentioned above, CtrlSec was founded by a member of GhostSec at a time of cooperation with government, and according to the organization's own statement, with no affiliation to Anonymous. From the above, it is probable that at that time GhostSec was operated by individuals who are now in GhostSecGroup, because they are now using #CtrlSec (see Raincoaster 2015). The mission of #CtrlSec is to eliminate pro-ISIS accounts on Twitter (Cottee 2015). Besides this operation, Anonymous were shutting down ISIS-affiliated websites and forums (ICT Cyber-Desk 2015a, 2). Before #OpISIS there was an operation called #OpIceISIS which was announced in August 2014 on Anonymous-affiliated Twitter account with the goal of combating ISIS influence in social media and to shut them down (Cottee 2015).

A new tactic in Anonymous fight can be seen in its universal call for a "day of trolling" Friday, that should mock ISIS through social media (Brown and Gerstein 2015). Cyberkov (2015) is criticizing Anonymous and GhostSec (the one that cooperated with government) for mistakes in their analysis like for example inaccurate targets of Twitter accounts, the location of CyberCaliphate, which according to their analysis was run from Kuwait, but which was later changed to Qatar, or the methodology used.

The conflict between Anonymous and ISIS supporters is from some points of view nothing new in the digital domain. Following the events of 11 September 2001, many private groups and individuals tried to disrupt 'terrorist' websites. For example, 'The Dispatchers' group wanted to target nations that support terrorism and destroy web servers and internet access in Afghanistan (Conway 2007, 111). Sophistication of web page defacements remained rather low, but the terrorists' homepages have been under DoS and other hack attacks even before 2001 (Conway 2007, 112). Again, we can see that groups are targeting nations that support terrorism, as was the case with Anonymous targeting for example Turkey or Saudi Arabia. What is new is the use of social media, and the fact that

ISIS supporters or hacking groups are trying to attack back.

Anonymous and the digital counterinsurgency strategy

Cohen's (2015) countermeasures involve three steps: first is the separation of human-run accounts from the automated ones, next target is ISIS' digital central command, and final step is that the whole digital society should push out the remaining rank and file.

Anonymous attacks are looking rather chaotic than coordinated. Their operations run along two axes. The first one against those who help ISIS and the countries considered ISIS supporters; the second one against online activity attributed to the ISIS. The goals of the operations are rather simple in the form of shutting down websites, forums and accounts. This is seen as a disruptive-type counter measure or in the case of reporting of Twitter accounts, we can see them as a negative measure. When we consider the fact that a lot of the accounts are automated and can be quickly replenished by new ones, this leaves us with little impact on the actual influence of ISIS. Trying to seek out and separate human and automated accounts could be a better idea. Even the work of GhostSecGroup can be considered more effective in this regard as they attempt to infiltrate ISIS and gather intelligence. This can help to identify ISIS' digital central command, which can have the effect of weakening the organization. What we see instead is the application of the third step proposed by Cohen. We see in the example of trolling day against ISIS how Anonymous are trying to mock them with the help of digital society. This can have some effect, but we can hardly say whether it will help to decrease the overall ISIS influence. The problem of all countermeasures is that it is very hard to measure the actual impact of these policies.

Conclusions

The analysis of the structure and hierarchies of the organizations shows that a lot of the groups are just supporting ISIS, without being a part of them or controlled by them. But in the case of ISIS media image, it follows a pyramid-type of hierarchy. Nevertheless, the sophistication of their cyber attacks remains rather low. When we look on Anonymous we see the internal problems due to their cooperation with governments in exchange for money. This led to the split of GhostSec into GhostSecGroup, which continues cooperating with the government.

When we look at the actual conflict, we see that ISIS is able to bring into the fight various hacking groups as in the case of #opFrance, and is using social media for various tactics. A big problem with regard to ISIS is its great capability for disinformation like in the example of magazine *Kybernetiq* or ISIS OPSEC Manual. Another problem is posed by attribution of cyber attacks, as was shown in the case of TV5 Monde hack. The attacks by Anonymous share the same fingerprint: After 11 September 2001, there have been cyber attacks against terrorists, as well as after the Charlie Hebdo attacks and after the second Paris attack. Even the use of encrypted communication was seen before, but now the governments are fighting an entirely different crypto war. By using Cohens' countermeasures

from his digital counterinsurgency strategy we see that Anonymous are far from adhering to it. What's more, the impact of their attacks is difficult to measure.

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MODERN AUTHORITARIANISM AS A SECURITY THREAT TO CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

MICHAL MOCHŤÁK

List of Contents

Introduction
Modern authoritarianism on the rise
Modern authoritarianism as a security threat
Rebirth of authoritarianism in Central and Eastern Europe
Conclusion

Introduction

With the end of the Cold War and the acceleration of the process of transformation in post-communist Europe, a general euphoria spread throughout the region. People believed that political change towards democracy would result in a general uplift of political culture that would define the patterns of basic human interaction for decades (Carothers 2002; Diamond et. al. 2014). Soon after, reality struck. The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, the Balkan Wars, the rise of authoritarian leaders in Belarus, the Russian Federation and the Ukraine, and the general disillusion with economic reforms across the region showed politicians and ordinary people “the dark side of the moon”. As a reaction to this democratic disenchantment, political leaders (domestic as well as foreign) realized that transformation is a complicated and often challenging process that needs to be supported internally as well as externally. With this realization, massive programmes for democracy assistance/promotion were initiated with the primary goal of supporting democratic institutions and democratic order as the “only game in town”. However, this vision was soon confronted by reality when democratic ideals were corrupted either by authoritarian leaders or by western democrats themselves (Bridoux – Kurki 2014).

In the early 2000s, the process of political hybridization began to emerge and influence transformation all around the world. It gave rise to new kinds of authoritarian regimes which incorporated a democratic framework into systems of authoritative rule, modified democratic ideals and utilized the outcome. Modern authoritarian regimes started to pretend to be functioning democracies with some “flaws” that ought to be tolerated. It was not odd when these kinds of regimes permitted political opposition, organized elections and accepted the existence of alternative sources of information. Modern autocracies realized what was expected from them to be tolerated and they act in accordance with that. They started to perform a sophisticated deception game where the truth was no longer black and white. The strategy where “the devil’s finest trick is to persuade everyone that he

does not exist” was born (cf. Shevtsova 2001; Diamond 2002).

This chapter tries to analyse the influence of so-called modern authoritarianism on democratic regimes in the region of Central and Eastern Europe and to formulate implications for the security environment and political stability. We follow a simple structure wherein modern authoritarianism is defined and characterized by empirical evidence and then interpreted in terms of possible negative influences. Chapter presents a brief overview of “deconsolidating processes” in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. It also focuses on the influence of the Russian Federation as one of the main deconsolidating factors, a most viable source of modern authoritarianism in the region. The time scope covers the period from early 2000s when the process of hybridization in the region of Central and Eastern Europe began to accelerate. We analyse the situation in countries where authoritarian tendencies have been reported and continuously evolve. The conclusion then sums up the implication of these processes and describes the effect on regional stability.

Modern authoritarianism on the rise

Beginning the discussion about modern authoritarian regimes, we have to address the basic facts about the political nature of this phenomenon. In 2008 and 2009, Freedom House (together with Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Asia) convened experts for a series of workshops to analyse the ways in which five influential countries – China, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, and Venezuela – are impeding democratic development both within and beyond their borders. As a result, the consortium published a report on the rise of new forms of authoritarian regimes that modify their basic coercive strategies into well-designed informal systems of oppression where political will is enforced mostly non-violently (Freedom House 2009). In 2014 the findings were amended with a warning that authoritarian regimes tend to revert to old strategies of coercion if it is necessary. Today we can see a trend copying back-and-forth logic, applying various strategies according to current needs. In this context, modern authoritarianism is defined as a hybridized form of authoritative rule in which a regime cultivates economic openness supported by extensive connections with the outside world, creating a system of flawed freedom and prosperity. This is backed by state-owned businesses and co-opted tycoons who define and re-define the terms of economic participation for other companies, local entrepreneurs and external investors. Moreover, the regime tries to redefine the concept of democracy and change the public understanding of it, internally as well as externally (Royslance 2014).

The fabricated illusion of prosperity is supported by allegedly pluralistic media where the elites and state authorities retain significant control over the news coverage while limiting alternative journalism on the margins of the information landscape covering newspapers, television, radio and internet. It is related to controlled political competition where opposition parties are fabricated, subordinated, or intentionally fractionalized in order to allow the regime to keep control over the monopoly of power.

Modern authoritarianism often tolerates the existence of some kind of civil society although its position is not supported or protected. The non-governmental or-

ganizations standing in opposition to an incumbent regime have to compete with the state-sponsored groups that regime pulls strings for (so-called GONGOs). Public health or educational organizations often receive less scrutiny than human rights activists who are often portrayed as foreign agents and traitors to the state (cf. the situation in the Russian Federation, Belarus or Hungary). Even though modern authoritarian regimes have abandoned most of the massive coercive strategies such as martial law, curfews, mass arrests, and summary executions, the utilization of force has not disappeared entirely. The truth is that violence tends to be used selectively. As a result of this strategy modification, the general population has rarely experienced state brutality or any of the other coercive strategies that were common in the past. Opposition leaders and activists are usually confronted within the legal system where vaguely worded laws together with political demand define the results of a potential trial. If extensive violence is used, state involvement is hidden or not acknowledged (Freedom House 2009).

These settings are accompanied by authoritarian foreign aid that is based on soft-power methods utilized to follow the regime's interests internationally, usually presented as "no-strings-attached" development aid. Together with an illiberal education based on strongly nationalistic or extremist interpretations of history and politics, modern authoritarian elites support the hostile attitudes towards the outside world (cf. Gerrits 2010; Badera, Grävningholta and Kästnera 2010).

Modern authoritarian regimes in this context follow a learning curve which helps them to preserve the political realm of 20th century with methods of 21st century. As Freedom House notes, this form of authoritarianism is distinguished by a recognition that absolute control over information and economic activity is neither possible nor necessary. The elites employ methods that allow them to "guide" and "manage", selectively suppress or reshape news and information; and squelch, co-opt, or parasitize the most important business entities. The highest priority is assigned to political dominance that is preserved and maintained. Any actor willing to acknowledge this supremacy in the political arena is allowed to operate with limited autonomy. Loyalists are rewarded for their support, enemies are punished for their criticism; who is who is decided arbitrarily by the ruling elite (Freedom House 2009).

Modern authoritarianism as a security threat

If we think about modern authoritarian regimes in the 21st century we have to be aware that the concept has changed significantly. Autocracies are living entities which evolve together with democracies and interact with them. As we showed in previous paragraphs, modern authoritarianism does not have to be exclusively repressive or extensively hostile, and can be economically prosperous and politically stable. Modified strategies apply manipulation and deception that are selectively mixed with coercive strategies which allow the construction of 'governed' or 'managed' democracy as a possible alternative to existing western models (Levitsky and Way 2002). These approaches can be observed in domestic as well as international arenas where the modified strategy of the "carrot and

stick” underlines the soft and hard forms of power. If we talk about security and threats, it is important to identify the referential object whose interests are concerned as well as the form of threat. When we focus on Central and Eastern Europe we apply a traditional state-centric perspective where the political regime within national borders is identified as the key unit of analysis. The threat is the authoritarianization of politics and the introduction of illiberal values into the everyday interactions of the political realm as well as into society. The object of this authoritarianization (our referential object) is the democratic political system as a political setting for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections, where the active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life is encouraged, protection of the human rights of all citizens is ensured and the rule of law, in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens is upheld (Diamond 2004).

To better portray the security implication of the activities of modern authoritarian regimes we have to go back to their initial criteria. Similar to the promotion of democracy, authoritarian regimes possess the ability to export their value-oriented policies that try to affect the situation in targeted countries. The logic is similar to the programmes that deal with democracy promotion although the core values are replaced with illiberal policies. If we consider democracy promotion as an attempt to install or assist in the institution of democratic governance in states outside one’s own and redefine the concept of “democratic governance” as modern authoritarians do, the result is a reversed programme that goes against key democratic values such as freedom of speech or political freedom (Hobson and Kurki 2012; cf. Carothers 2006). These strategies can be seen as a security threat to democratic regimes causing authoritarianization of a political system that becomes a copy of its prototype and acts exactly like it (cf. Brownlee 2007; Ambrosio 2008). In other words, the democratic system is modified or destroyed while the new one is introduced as its replacement (see section on characteristics of modern authoritarianism).

In this context, we can apply a parallel strategy to programmes for support of democracy labelled as “autocracy promotion”. It is based on authoritative and illiberal ideas that become part of foreign policy spread to neighbouring countries (cf. effects of the Russian Federation in Central Asia in Jackson 2010; Bader, Grävingshølt and Kästner 2010). Modern authoritarianism tends to influence democratic regimes in order to become more prone to or tolerant of alternative definitions of democracy or how it is understood. Economic ties often stand at the frontline of this strategy when external pressure is combined with punishment in a dual scheme of soft and hard policies of coercion. Together with promotion of nationalistic and illiberal values often accompanied by internal struggles (as an outcome of crisis or shock), the democratic regime starts to be threatened and is called upon to change, be modified or “eased”. As a reaction it may resort to counter-measures which redefine the political framework of functioning democracy that may hurt the democratic system from inside (the system is getting stronger at the expense of democracy; see concept of militant democracy in Müller 2012).

Even more threatening is the authoritative turn that implements political standards which redefine the everyday rules of politics with greater insecurity for any individual

inside the system that is under the control of authoritarian rule. Either way, it creates an opportunity for conflict inside the society that may escalate to open hostility and/or destabilization of the whole system. In this context, democratic leaders as well as their challengers become true enemies as the conflict escalates and radicalises. Moreover, implementation of illiberal strategies enables the setting of otherwise unattainable goals. Through massive mobilization, modern autocracies can raise demands that are, according to them, justifiable for solving the grievances of the past or push for legislative changes in order to protect, maintain or support something (cf. situation in Belarus, the Russian Federation or Hungary). Typical is the nationalistic appeal that defines an external enemy who needs to be fought and defeated. Declared goals may then be pursued by any means necessary, including violence. Escalation of conflict is then portrayed as a reaction to external threats that must be defended against. Neighbouring countries are, in this context, put in danger that is proportional to the risk of confrontation between the authoritarian regime and its enemies. The highest stage is an open conflict that, according to authoritarian elites, follows “just cause” with fatal implications for regional stability and peace (cf. Svoblik 2012).

Rebirth of authoritarianism in Central and Eastern Europe

As has already been said, the political transformation that occurred after the fall of Communist regimes in Europe was excessively optimistic. Political actors as well as scholars slipped into a mindset in which virtually every opening of the authoritarian regime was interpreted through the lens of democratization (Carothers 2002). This misleading assumption omitted the fact that transformation does not equal democratization (Schmitter and O’Donnell 1987). Although the 1990s were seen and interpreted as a decade of victory for democracy worldwide, recent developments in Eastern Europe may provide an alternate view of those processes. It is a perspective that sees some countries’ alleged (democratic) openings as a period of unprecedented authoritarian crisis where the weakness of incumbent elite was falsely interpreted as democratization. Insufficient resources, supportive allies, or reliable institutions with coercive capabilities caused autocracies to fall into severe crisis rather than initiated genuine transformation. The result was widespread “pluralism by default,” in which competition was a product of the inability to suppress emerging challenges rather than an outcome of genuine democratic change (Levitsky and Way 2014, 49-50).

In this context, the rise of modern authoritarianism in Eastern Europe is not a signal of backsliding transformation, but rather an evolutionary stage of non-democracy when an authoritarian government regains its dominant position. Alexander Lukashenko built a system of controlled economy in the late 1990s which allowed him to starve his opponents of resources. A similar strategy was introduced by Vladimir Putin in the Russian Federation and by Leonid Kuchma in Ukraine. This stabilisation gave rise to political superiority that was accompanied by the re-establishment of the monopoly of violence. The turnover has further progressed as the learning curve of authoritarian leaders who reacted to calls to democratize while they modified the general idea of democracy. Modern

authoritarian regimes got smarter, richer, and became more diversified.

Economic stabilisation and conciliatory international acceptance – especially towards Russia – allowed the regimes to consolidate and prosper. It was further supported by high prices of natural resources (mainly oil), globalisation and technological advancement. A combination of economic development and the stabilisation of power brought back the old authoritarian tendencies, advanced with modern approaches based on “manage & control” principles rather than “enforce” principles. With the stronghold at home secure, foreign interest started to change as well. The results can now be observed elsewhere in the region (Ukraine, Georgia, Western Balkans) as well as worldwide (towards NATO and the EU). Putin, in his famous speech at the security conference in Munich in 2007 clearly stated that although Russia was holding back it did not need, nor did it intend to take, lessons from the West about how to behave in the international arena. While maintaining the image of Russia as a functioning democracy with a successful transformation, the western world was pictured as decadent and hypocritical (see full transcript in Washington Post 2007).

Vladimir Putin, as a new type of leader, set the course of politics that significantly affects the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The most interesting thing is how this happened. His re-election in 2012 was democratic, constitutional and generally welcomed. No other candidate was able to compete with the man who had orchestrated the previous decade of Russian politics and hindered the activity of civil society, opposition parties and businesses that stood against him. There were no massive arrests, killings or widespread oppression. Illiberal nationalistic strategies worked like a charm. They affected the form of the regime, activated the masses and gave rise to unprecedented support. We can even claim that modern authoritarianism in Eastern Europe was reborn on the pillars of the democratic scam which Vladimir Putin and his allies performed and maintained. A similar scenario occurred in Belarus in the early 2000s when Alexander Lukashenko took control of national politics and modified it to his personal taste. Viktor Yanukovych in Ukraine was less successful. He started to implement the Russian model in Ukraine after the presidential election in 2010, however, with different results. Needless to say, all of these leaders had the support of Moscow.

If we look at the rest of the region we can see that the effort to export the authoritarian model designed by Putin's Russia and other modern autocracies is on the rise. Orban's politics of domination is accompanied by hostility to political opponents, civil society and western influence in the country. Similar to Russia, the Hungarian government uses nationalistic rhetoric with potential implications for neighbouring countries which causes diplomatic conflicts and misunderstandings. Moreover, Orban openly expresses his admiration for illiberal politics in the Russian Federation and Turkey while he envisions a similar future for Hungary. This loyalty is repaid. Russian ambassador to Hungary Sergey V. Nikolaevich recently announced that Hungary could be granted the right to serve as the regional hub for the distribution of gas, which raises the country's importance in the field of energy security. Russia's support for Hungarian territorial claims should also raise attention.

What's more, nationalistic and autocratic tendencies can be spotted in Greece, Macedonia and Montenegro as well, where local governments use the state apparatus to secure their positions in the system and maintain the status quo while claiming pro-western and pro-EU orientation. Russian influence can be further illustrated in Serbia where, in October 2014, the Serbian government willingly changed the celebration date of the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Yugoslavia in order to accommodate the guest of honour – President Vladimir Putin. This gesture was hugely symbolic in a Cold-War-style East-West split over Ukraine that strongly resonates in Serbian society. In turn, Putin, during his visit, pledged continued support for Serbia and its interests. He promised that Russia would stand firm over the divisive issue of Kosovo and stressed Russian friendship is not an object of trade-offs. President Nikolic, in his payback gesture, declared that Serbia sees in Russia a great ally and partner, and the country won't compromise its morals with any kind of bad behaviour towards Russia (Radio Free Europe 2014).

Less vital but still observable is the adoration for managed top-down style of government in Slovakia and the Czech Republic where a number of politicians, including Czech President Milos Zeman and Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, reluctantly acknowledge the illiberal nature of Putin's regime and other similar "democracies with flaws". Their pro-Russian arguments are strongly affected by the economic harm brought about by the sanctions regime, maintaining their implication for national export interests. This leveraging can hurt a democratic regime more than some politicians are willing to admit. To be tolerant of what appears to be "unimportant flaws" in the Russian-style democracy is part of a strategy which defines modern authoritarian regimes today.

These trends date back to the mid-2000s when Russian economic influence in Central Europe began to consolidate and nationalistic and populist movements were on the rise. Concerns further deepened after the conflict in Georgia and the announcement of the Medvedev Doctrine stating that protection of the rights and dignity of Russian citizens (wherever they are) will be an "unquestionable priority" of Russian foreign policy. In 2009, a group of Central European intellectuals sent an open letter to President Obama in which they expressed serious concerns about the threats to transatlantic solidarity and ties to Central and Eastern Europe. They pointed out Russia's intimidation tactics and use of energy resources as a political weapon causing the erosion of independence and regional peace (Radio Free Europe 2009).

In this context, Putin's Russia can be seen as the main source of modern authoritarianism in Europe, while Belarus and Ukraine are the playgrounds where this influence is executed. The latest example supporting this claim is the situation in Ukraine, annexation of Crimea and escalating tension between Turkey and Russia. Similar trends can be identified in Hungary, Greece and some Western Balkan countries where political representation supports (openly or secretly) Russian claims and interests. Especially in the case of Serbia and Hungary, alienation is strongly affected by historical ties and socio-cultural commonalities. Neither Serbian nor Hungarian representations are satisfied with the externally defined borders and their implications for their geopolitical position (Hungarian minority; independence of Kosovo). With the rise of authoritarian tendencies and support

of Russia, those countries may challenge the existing status quo in Central and South-East Europe with potentially disastrous effect on regional stability.

A parallel development can be identified in the recent months in Poland where several controversial steps of the newly elected president and the lower chamber of Parliament (Sejm) raise concerns about the future of liberal democracy in the country. Although direct Russian influence can be downplayed here, the style and strategies are very similar, fuelled by nationalistic, conservative and populist agenda. After the election of Andrzej Duda president and the success of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS) party in the legislative election in October 2015, the country has started to introduce major changes that challenge its democratic integrity. One of the most visible is the constitutional crisis caused by controversial appointment of five judges to constitutional court, a move condemned by the President of the European Parliament as having the “characteristics of a coup” (Day 2015). Tense situation accompanied by popular protests and international criticism was further escalated by an amendment approved by the PiS-controlled Sejm requiring the 15-member constitutional court to pass most of its rulings by two-thirds of votes with at least 13 judges present. As a direct consequence, it forces to include the five judges chosen by the PiS-controlled parliament in the court’s composition or leave the court deadlocked - a decision highly criticized for breaking the principle of separation of powers. Other examples of controversial decisions made in the first two months after the election include a pardon for the former head of the security services, who was appealing a three years sentence for abuse of power during the previous term of PiS in the government; threats to ‘impose control on the news media; unprecedented effort of the government and the Ministry of Culture to control the programming and operation of state-owned televisions and radios through the law on “national media”; and abolishing the requirement that senior position in civil service must be put out to tender, which critics say will allow the government to put its loyalists into key bureaucratic posts (Cienski 2015).

Although a different context of the potential illiberal turn can be observed here, the strategies and effects in Poland follow the patterns identified in other countries of the region. Rise of nationalism and populism is accompanied by the systematic effort to control media, judicial system and the key public offices. It raises public discontent, international criticism and causes political crisis. As a result, it disturbs the democratic integrity and political stability of the country which may affect the overall situation in the region – a trend previously discussed together with the process of *authoritarianization*.

Conclusion

The comeback of authoritarianism to Central and Eastern Europe can be explained on one hand by the consolidation and rise of the political regime in the Russian Federation and on the other by the renaissance of nationalism, populism and conservatism in Europe. Vladimir Putin, together with his allies and admirers, successfully created an alternative system of influence where economic ties and dependency dictate the relationship between modern authoritarianism and democracy in present-day world. This chapter

argues that new forms of authoritarian rule pose a serious threat to democracy which is weakened by economic dependency and nationalistic mobilization. Authoritarianism is a source of both personal and collective threat to democratic political system. It can be expressed as a part of a nationalistic tendency, defining external or internal enemies, or stigmatizing and blaming its opponents. It gives rise to the escalation of conflicts that are not solved deliberatively but rather coercively, ranging on a scale of varying intensity with a tendency to use sophisticated strategies and deception.

The major threat to democratic regimes in Central and Eastern Europe can be seen in attitudes valuing social conformity over autonomy, the kind of system authoritarian regimes try to build and maintain. In this context, strongly held and rigorously enforced norms and values are needed to enforce social cohesion and order. It is driven by the desire to support social conformity and punish the nonconformists – the “social deviants”.

According to Freedom House’s 2013 Nations in Transit report, only two out of ten Central and Eastern European countries – the Czech Republic and Latvia – have improved their democratic performance after becoming NATO and European Union members. The rest of the region dropped in ratings of corruption, media freedom, judicial independence or electoral processes (Freedom House 2013; cf. Freedom House 2014). This decline strongly correlates with the extent of Russian economic and political engagement in these countries. Bulgaria is an extreme example where one-third of the economy is owned by Russian subjects, especially energy, financial and media sectors – all of which are strategic for Russian interests (Conley 2014). We should be aware that the unqualified success of Central and Eastern Europe’s transformation from communism to liberal democracy is not immutable as we sometimes falsely expect. At least the development in Hungary and lately also in Poland shows that a backlash against liberal democracy is already in progress.

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ANNEXES

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Petra Andělová Petra Andělová is Senior Lecturer at the Department of Asian Studies at Metropolitan University Prague. Her research interests include Chinese contemporary politics and international relations as well as current human security issues in Asia Pacific and political geography of this region. Her recent publication is *South China Sea Dispute in International Relations* (Prague: MUP Press), which she co-edited with Mária Strašáková. She can be reached at petra.andelova@mup.cz.

Evi Baxevani is a doctoral candidate at the Department of Shipping, Trade and Transport at the University of the Aegean in Greece. She has an interdisciplinary and multicultural academic background specialized in geopolitics, arctic shipping and the law of the sea. She has participated in several academic conferences and authored a host of academic publications.

Dr. **Michael Brtnický** is Associate Research Fellow at the Institute of International Relations in Prague. He graduated from the Department of Politics and European Studies, Palacky University, Olomouc, where he also defended his dissertation thesis on European Foreign Policy in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean and received his Ph.D. His main fields of research include the EU's foreign policy and political Islam.

Shubhra Chaturvedi is a PhD student at the Centre for International Politics, Organisation and Disarmament (CIPOD) at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. Her areas of interest include dynamics in South Asia, arms race, concept of Nuclear Learning and the existence of norms in International Relations. She completed her Masters in International Politics and from there began her journey to understand the nuances of international decision-making. She has worked at the Institute of Peace in Conflict Studies (IPCS, New Delhi) and the Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR) and during that time realized the importance of going beyond the peripheral understanding of South Asia. She is currently working on her thesis titled "India and nuclear weapons: Role of learning in the evolution of norms".

Iaroslav Chornogor, PhD, born 1979 is Senior Researcher at the Department of Transatlantic Studies (Institute of World History, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine). His research interests include European history and politics since 1945.

Tamás Csiki is a research fellow specializing in Euro-Atlantic defense at the Centre for Strategic and Defense Studies in Budapest, providing inde-

pendent analysis on international security to the Hungarian Ministry of Defense. He is also a recurring lecturer at the Faculty of International and European Studies of the National University of Public Service in Budapest. E-mail address: csiki.tamas@uni-nke.hu

Robert Czulda, PhD is a specialist in international security, Iran and the Middle East, assistant professor at the University of Lodz, Poland. He is an alumni of the Young Leaders Dialogue of the US Department of State (2010 - 2011), visiting lecturer at universities in Iran, Ireland, Lithuania, Turkey and Slovakia, as well as the National Cheng-chi University in Taipei and also a freelance defense journalist and contributor to IHS Jane's. He travels to Iran regularly.

Kristina Doda is currently enrolled in ERMA Regional Master's in Democracy and Human Rights program at the University of Sarajevo and University of Bologna. She is a graduate of the International law and International Relations at Faculty of Law in Skopje Macedonia. She is a research fellow and human rights assistant at the Institute for Human Rights, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia.

Dr. **Ondřej Filipec** is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Trnava, Slovakia and Faculty of Law, Palacky University in Olomouc, Czech Republic. He holds a Ph.D. in political science from the Department of Politics and European studies, Faculty of Arts, Palacky University in Olomouc. His research interests cover international security with special focus on WMD and terrorism.

Dušan Fischer, is the head of the International Security Program. Dušan graduated from the Program on Advanced Security Studies at the George C. Marshall Center, he also graduated from the University in Heidelberg, majored in American Studies. Dušan joined RC SFPA in 2014 and in his research he focuses on U.S. domestic and foreign policy, Euroatlantic relations, international security, and defense and security policy of Slovakia.

Sergiy Gerasymchuk has the experience of working for the Secretariat of the Parliament of Ukraine, institutions under Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, International Renaissance Foundation, GfK Ukraine etc. Sergiy is Board member at Strategic and Security Studies Group and at Foreign Policy Council "Ukrainian Prism" He graduated from Kyiv-Mohyla Academy as MA in Political Science and is a graduate of the Estonian School of Diplomacy.

Pál Gyene PhD. The author is Assistant Professor of Budapest Business School Faculty of International Management and Business. His main field of research is the comparative analysis of post-soviet Central-Asian political systems.

Armen Grigoryan is an Armenian political scientist, the author of several book chapters and journal articles. He is an analyst for the Eurasia Daily Monitor and IHS Global Limited, as well as an affiliated expert for the European Geopolitical Forum (Brussels) and an associate expert for the East European Security Research Initiative (Kyiv). At the time of chapter submission he was a visiting scholar at the Central European University (Budapest).

Lucia Husenícová Ph.D. works at the Department of Security Studies, Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. Since the summer of 2014, she is Director of Institute of Asian Studies. She has received her Ph.D in 2009 after defending a thesis titled "North Korea as a Geopolitical Focus." Lucia teaches courses on international relations theories, and Security Complexes focusing on analysis of security strategies of powers (US, Russia, China) and on the security environment of East Asia. In her research she deals with the security situation on the Korean Peninsula and broader Northeast Asia region. Currently she is a member of research team engaged with the South Korean Embassy in Czech Republic.

Lucie Konečná was born in Brno. In 2011 she began studying political science and security studies at Masaryk University, where she successfully completed her studies. She has worked as an intern in Demagog, a fact-checking organization, The Green Party and National Cyber Security Center. At present, she pursues her master's degree in Security Studies at Masaryk University.

Nadiia Koval is a board member of Foreign policy council "Ukrainian Prism". Her main research interests are conflict resolution and reconciliation issues at the outer fringes of the European Union.

Zdeněk Kříž is Associate Professor of Political Science at the Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. He has authored several monographs and more than 30 scholarly articles. His research interests focus on security policy issues and civil-military relations. He has co-operated on numerous grant projects.

Martin Kudrec is a graduate of Faculty of Political Science and International Relations, Matej Bel University (2007) and also of Security Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague (2012). He currently works in the business sector, doing business with several Ukrainian companies.

Dali Kurdadze holds an MA Degree in International Affairs at the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA). Since 2009, she was actively involved in various academic activities including essay competitions, scholarships and conferences. Ms. Kurdadze won annual fellowship at the MA Program of International Affairs in GIPA and was also the first winner of the grant program of the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi Public Affairs Office to participate in Troy (U.S. Alabama) University International Education Week. Currently, Dali Kurdadze works as an analyst and project coordinator at the Media Development Foundation (MDF), a non-governmental organization operated in Georgia, aiming to support open and inclusive society; facilitate full integration of minorities; ensure free media environment and promote active citizenship as well as youth activism.

Marek Lenč is lecturer at the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations, Matej Bel University, research fellow at JM Centre of Excellence in European Studies, Kyiv, Ukraine and associate expert at East European Security Research Initiative. Conducted a 6-month long post-doctoral research at NaUKMA, Ukraine and was awarded 2015 research visiting fellowship at the University of Vienna, Austria. He is co-author of the 1st comprehensive analysis of post-unification German foreign policy published in Slovakia, political commentator for newspapers Denník N, television Ta3 and Radio and TV Slovakia

Kateřina Lišaníková received her Bachelor degree in European Studies and Security and Strategic Studies at the Faculty of Social Studies at the Masaryk University in Brno and currently has been continuing her Master's in Security and Strategic Studies. In her Diploma thesis, she is focusing on the issue of the radical-right in Sweden and Denmark. Among her other research area belongs EU-NATO relations in term of security. She worked for CENAA in 2014-2016 as a Junior Project Manager, where she lead Georgians' and Ukrainians' projects as well as the project Panorama 2015-2016. She was also an editor of Euro-Atlantic Area on student website Security Outlines, where she participates in publishing monthly news from Euro-Atlantic Area, particularly about NATO and EU

activities and Western states fight with so called Islamic State. For two years, she was working in Jagello 2000 company as a Deputy of IT Manager during organizing the yearly biggest security show in Europe called NATO Days in Ostrava & Czech Air Force Days.

Ryszard M. Machnikowski, Ph. D. hab., associate professor at the Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz, Poland. He specializes in terrorism and security studies, transatlantic relations, problems of globalization, and has authored three books, 48 scientific articles, chapters and reviews.

Dušan Madaj has graduated in a bachelor program in Political Science, and Security and Strategic studies, the Faculty of Social Science of Masaryk University in Brno. In his bachelor thesis he had analysed the term cyber war. Currently he is studying Security and Strategic studies in a master program. He works in CENAA since 2015 as the assistant in the cyber security program.

Guilherme Mello is specialist in International Law and is a last year M.A. student in International Relations at the University of Coimbra, Portugal. His major research interest is comparative politics within the post-Soviet regimes, Central Asia and Russia, focusing on the security complex build-up and integration processes as well as border conflicts such as the Uzbek-Kyrgyz and Sinai-Gaza-Israel. He is also a fellow researcher at the Marie Curie project in Russia. He can be contacted at guilhermelorenzetti@live.com

Matúš Mišík is Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science at Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. He deals with energy issues within the EU, perceptions among the EU member states and relations between Scandinavian countries and the EU. He published a book on energy policy in the enlarged EU [Institute of International Affairs: Prague, 2013] and articles in *Comparative European Politics* and *Asia Europe Journal*.

Michal Mochťák is a Ph.D. Candidate and a specialist at the Faculty of Social Studies Masaryk University. He also works as a researcher at the International Institute of Political Science in Brno, the Czech Republic. His research interests cover hybrid regimes and their paths to democracy, electoral violence and the research of conflicts.

Kennedy G. Ondieki is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Languages & Liter-

ature at National Chengchi University, Taiwan. His areas of research interests include: Non-traditional security issues, Conflict & crisis management, Terrorism, Critical theory of IR; China-Africa relations, US-Africa ties and diplomatic negotiations. He can be reached via E-mail: kentawn@yahoo.com.

Dr. Robert Person is an Assistant Professor of International Relations at the United States Military Academy (West Point). He holds a PhD in political science from Yale University, an MA in Russian & East European studies from Stanford University, and a BA in international relations and Slavic language & literature from Stanford. The views expressed here are the author's and do not represent the official policy of the United States Army.

Mgr. Katarína Pevná, PhD. (Slovakia) is assistant professor at the Department of Political Science at the Faculty of Philosophy, Comenius University in Bratislava. She defended her dissertation thesis on the moderation of Islamist movements in Morocco and Egypt and received her PhD. degree in 2014. During her studies she also travelled to both countries for research. Her main areas of interest are political Islam, terrorism, representation of women in the Middle East, authoritarianism and democratization in the Arab countries. She teaches and assists several courses at the Comenius University.

Peter Plenta received his PhD degree from Comenius University in Bratislava, the Slovak Republic. He is an assistant professor of international relations at International University of Sarajevo, specializing in Central Asia studies, foreign policy analysis and cross-border cooperation issues.

Toms Rātfelders holds a BA degree in International Relations - European Studies from Riga Stradiņš University (Latvia). He is currently an intern at the Latvian Institute of International Affairs. His research interests include security issues in the Middle- East, such as regional wars, terrorism and counter-terrorism, humanitarian interventions and proliferation of WMDs. His BA thesis covered the topic of increasing power of Iran in the Middle East after the beginning of the "Islamic State" crisis.

Hanna Shelest, PhD, Editor-in-chief at UA: Ukraine Analytica. Prior to this, she had served as a Senior Researcher at the National Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of Ukraine, Odessa Branch. Her main research interests are conflict resolution, security and cooperation, especially in the wider Black Sea Region and the Middle East, foreign policy of Ukraine. She has published more than 50 academic papers and 100 articles

worldwide.

Shuhei Takemoto is currently a Lecturer of Akita International University in Japan where he teaches International Relations, International Security, US Foreign Policy and Japan-US Relations. He is also a Doctoral Candidate at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. He has worked as a research fellow at the Research Institute of Peace and Security in Tokyo from 2012 to 2014.

Jason E. Strakes received an M.A. in International Studies and PhD in Political Science from the Department of Politics and Policy, Claremont Graduate University. His research interests include foreign policy analysis, defense and security policy, Central Eurasia, and the international relations of developing and former Soviet states.

Mária Strašáková is Senior Lecturer at the Department of Asian Studies at Metropolitan University Prague and Department of Asian Studies at Palacký University Olomouc. Her research interests include Vietnamese history and foreign policy in the 20th century and current security issues in the Asia Pacific. She is currently finishing a co-edited volume with Dr. Alfred Gerstl on the topic of Unresolved Border, Land, and Maritime Disputes in Southeast Asia (Leiden: Brill). She can be reached at maria.strasakova@mup.cz.

Mgr. et Mgr. **Lukáš Tichý**, born 1982. A Ph.D. candidate at the Metropolitan University Prague in cooperation with the Institute of International Relations Prague in the Czech Republic. He works as a researcher at the Institute of International Relations Prague. His field of interest includes energy security, the EU and Russian foreign and security policy, and the theories of international relations.

Sergii Tolstov, PhD, born 1955 is Head of the Department of Transatlantic Studies at the Institute of World History, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. His research interests include European security, international relations and international systems' evolution.

Oleksandr Tytarchuk, Associate Research Fellow, Foreign Policy Research Institute at the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine (FPRI). Since November 2013 – FPRI representative to the OSCE Network of Academic Institutions and Think Tanks. Co-Founder and Member of the Board, East European Security Research Initiative Foundation (Velyka Zhytomyrska 2, Kyiv 01001, Ukraine, <http://eesri.org>, ogtytarchuk@gmail.com). Holds PhD in

pol-mil science; Master's degrees in military management and international relations. Army colonel in reserve. Author of more than 50 scientific articles and co-author of 10 applied scientific researches on European security-related issues.

Aleksandar Vanchoski has graduated from the Police Academy in Macedonia. Currently he is enrolled with the Master's program called European territories: Identity and Development at "Charles University" Prague, Czech Republic and "Eötvös Loránd University" Budapest, Hungary. Also he has graduated from "Budapest Academy of Diplomacy" at "National University of Public Service" in Budapest, Hungary. He is a researcher and member in several NGOs in the Republic of Macedonia.

Hanna Vasilevich is a project research associate at the European Centre for Minority Issues (Flensburg, Germany).

Natalia Wojtowicz - Ph.D. Candidate at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Institute of Political Studies and International Relations. Her publications include the European energy market, security issues, military planning process and armaments.

Lucia Yar received her post-gradual (PhDr.) degree in Political Science at the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences at the Comenius University in Bratislava, researching on European Union's External Action Service in Turkey. After spending several months working at the European Commission in Brussels, she relocated to Istanbul. Since 2012 she has been an active blogger and analyst, focusing on Turkey, Middle East, European Neighborhood Policy and security. In 2015, back in Bratislava, Lucia Yar joined the team of the Secretariat for the Slovak Presidency at the Council of the European Union at the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic.

