# BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

No. 1/2023

ISSN 2284-936X
eISSN 2284-9378

Publication founded in 1937

SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION HIGHLY ACKNOWLEDGED IN THE FIELD OF "MILITARY SCIENCES, INFORMATION AND PUBLIC ORDER" OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ATTESTATION OF ACADEMIC DEGREES, DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES, INDEXED IN INTERNATIONAL DATABASES EBSCO, CEEOL, GOOGLE SCHOLAR, INDEX COPERNICUS, PROQUEST, DOAJ & ERIH PLUS

"CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY PUBLISHING HOUSE
BUCHAREST, 2023

The articles published in the Bulletin of "Carol I" National Defence University, ISSN 2284-936X, L 2284-936X, are also found – title, author, abstract, content and bibliography – in the Romanian version of the journal, ISSN 1584-1928.

# Content

*No. 1/2023*

BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

# Considerations on the role of information (-psychological) operations in Russian military thinking

**Eveline MĂRĂȘOIU, Ph.D. Candidate***

*National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: eveline.marasoiu@gmail.com

## Abstract

Russian military thinking and strategic documents attribute information warfare (and its associated concepts) to external authors only. This creates a vacuum in terms of how Russia actually implements itself information-psychological operations and how this fits into the broader Russian military thinking. This article looks at how information (-psychological) operations (IOs) are applied pragmatically through the prism of specific and well-established Russian concepts, such as Reflexive Control, Asymmetry and Initial Period of War, with a specific focus on the current conflict in Ukraine. It also looks at specific capabilities and formation in the field of IOs, as pertaining to the military field.

**Keywords:**
psychological operations; Russian thinking; reflexive control; Asymmetry; Initial Period of War.

When talking about Information Warfare and its associated concepts, Russian (RU) military theory and strategic documents only recognize this phenomenon as an external one – activities undertaken exclusively by the adversaries – against RU or against third parties (Pallin 2019). This leaves a gap in understanding how information activities are integrated into Russian military thinking and practice. This article aims, therefore, to highlight the role of information (-psychological) operations in Russian military thinking, by addressing, in particular, its relevance in the context of specific Russian military concepts, such as *Reflexive Control (RC)*, *Asymmetry* and *Initial Period of War* (IPW). To better understand this, the article offers some brief illustrations, especially in reference to the current (2022-*ongoing*) war in Ukraine. Furthermore, this article will also present certain elements related to formation and capabilities in this area.

The specification *information (-psychological) operations* derives from a bi-dimensional understanding of *information* in Russian strategic culture, which encompasses an information-technical dimension (cyber, EM, etc.) and an information-psychological dimension (referring to the communicated part of information, which has the potential of triggering psycho-social or cognitive effects). This form of conceptualization can be observed, *inter alia*, in the *information warfare* definition, provided in the 2011 Conceptual Views on the Activities of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in the Information Space: *"a confrontation between two or more States in the information space with the purpose of inflicting damage to information systems, processes and resources, as well as to critically important structures and other structures;* ***undermining the political, economic and social systems; carrying out mass psychological campaigns against the population of a State in order to destabilize society and the government, as well as forcing a state to make decisions in their interests.****"* (Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation 2011). To be more specific, *"information-psychological warfare affects the unconscious, irrational states of people, their emotions, feelings, instincts, prejudices, preconceptions, and the mythological constructs of the population of a potential enemy… This is achieved through the mass introduction to people's awareness of a multitude of false stereotypes of perception and thought, and of perverted notions about views dominating their environment as well as about events occurring in the world"* (Sitnova and Polyakov 2018, 8).

For the purposes of this article, the author shall use the following working definition of information (-psychological) operations (IOs), which excludes the information-technical dimension: *Information Operations (IOs) are integrated, non-kinetic actions manipulating the Information Environment, coordinated by a state (or the military apparatus of a state), targeting either foreign governments or segments of foreign population, aimed at (a) influencing or paralyzing the decision-making process (either directly or through shaping the domestic public opinion) of another international actor, or (b) inflicting damage to that actor, with the strategic aim of consolidating the relative power of the state conducting IOs.*

It is worth noting that Russian military theory distinguishes between *standard* and *strategic information war*. The former refers to the use of deception within a military operation (i.e., the use of camouflage), while the latter is more widely associated with information-psychological operations. Accordingly, the attributes of IOs (strategic information warfare) are (1) asymmetry, (2) attacks upon multiple layers of society, and (3) attacks upon the same target by multiple attackers, aiming at different areas of cognition (Pynnöniemi 2019).

The following sections will (1) analyse the role of IOs within the framework of key concepts of Russian military thinking and science – RC, asymmetry and IPW, and will (2) address certain characteristics of formation and capabilities on IOs in the Russian military-security complex.

## Information Operations as part of Reflexive Control (RC), Asymmetry, and Initial Period of War (IPW)

**Reflexive Control** plays a key role in Russian military art and thinking and it is applied in a wide spectrum of areas. Russian military science provides several definition of this concept, the most recent dating from 2017: *"The method (technique) of reflexive control of an enemy is the devices and techniques for implementing measures and actions that incite the enemy to act in a corresponding way that is advantageous for our side… Reflexive control can make it possible to change the enemy's goals and his methods of operation in favour of one's own forces, i.e., to contribute to the creation of favourable conditions to accomplish the assigned mission"* (Chausov 2017, 52). While describing the reflexive control techniques (intended to produce information-psychological effects), Chausov includes the dissemination of false information, with the aim of inducing the adversary to generate new objectives and operating methods (Chausov 2017, 53).

Thomas, who has studied in depth Russian military thinking and RC, offers an aggregated definition of the latter concept based on RU military body of knowledge: *"The term is defined in general as providing a stimulus (information, an action, etc.), to make an opponent to do something for himself (organize in a specific way, develop certain weaponry, manoeuvre, etc.) that he is doing for the initiator of the action. To utilize the concept, the proponent must know how an opponent things and processes information, and what his prejudices, likes, and dislikes are. Targeting can be as detailed as a psychological profile of specific officers in command positions"* (Thomas 2019, 4.1). The same author further explains how, while not explicitly stated, the RC concept is deeply embedded in the definition of information warfare provided by the RU Ministry of Defence in the 2011 Conceptual Views on the Activities of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Information Space (Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation 2011, 5) – *"forcing the state to make decisions in the interests of the confronting party."*

The main elements of RC include: distraction; information overload; paralysis; exhaustion; deception; division; pacification; deterrence; provocation; suggestion; pressure (Thomas 2004).

Information Operations are an essential feature of Reflexive Control, complementing intelligence, cyber measures, electronic warfare and electromagnetic actions. To better understand the application of RC, this sub-section shall offer some concrete examples, both from a theoretical perspective and from a pragmatic point of view, in so far as they involve the use of IOs.

- *Distraction:* In the context of the current (2022-ongoing) war against Ukraine, Russia attempted to instil the perception of a real threat to the flank of the targeted country – from Belarus, with the aim of forcing Ukraine to change its plans (Intelligence Online 2023).
- *Overload of information:* The 2008 invasion of Georgia offers a good example of how RU inflated the information environment with various narratives about the current situation on the ground, including through blaming the Georgian authorities for their aggressive actions (Fraser 2022).
- *Paralysis:* The threats issued by Russia on cutting off energy supplies to Europe in 2022, after invading (again) Ukraine (Lawson 2022) were meant to paralyse the West from offering additional military support to the attacked country by creating the perception of a threat to a vital European interest / weak spot.
- *Exhaustion*: As the war is still ongoing, it is hard to access or assess public information concerning the potential attempts of RU to exhaust UA armed forces by forcing them into useless operations. However, one potential illustrative scenario has been identified by the Institute for the Study of War (ISW): *"Russian President Vladimir Putin may be setting conditions for further Russian cross-border raids into northeastern areas of Ukraine, likely in an effort to further domestic information operations and pin Ukrainian forces against northern border areas. […] The threat of cross-border raids from Belgorod, Bryansk, and Kursk oblasts into northern and northeastern Ukraine is likely an attempt to force Ukraine to deploy limited elements to these areas to protect against such attacks, thus dispersing Ukrainian troops to an extent in advance of a likely Russian offensive operation in the coming months. ISW has previously reported similar Russian distraction and dispersion operations in Zaporizhia Oblast"* (Stepanenko, et al. 2023).
- *Deception:* In the early stages of the latest Russian-Ukrainian war, Moscow attempted to deceive Kyiv into keeping its armed forces far away from the capital, with the strategic aim of rapidly conquering the key-city (Zabrodskyi, et al. 2022).
- *Division:* Russia's decision to further cultivate energy ties with Hungary, by speeding up the construction of two new nuclear reactors in the middle of its full-blown war against Ukraine (Davies 2022) is one of the leviers employed by the Kremlin to sow division among the Euro-Atlantic partners – especially given its interest to avoid further adoption of sanctions at the EU level.

➢ *Pacification:* The period leading up to the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine is a clear example of how RU aimed to use this element to persuade Ukraine and the West that its large military build-up in the proximity of UA's border were there only for training purposes (Reuters 2021). At the same time, Moscow was engaging in *overload*, claiming that it is Ukraine that amasses troops at the border and suggested that Kyiv intends to conduct a military offensive operation against the separatist regions (Reuters 2021).
➢ *Deterrence:* Kremlin's threats to potentially using nuclear arms (tactical or strategic) against Ukraine (Crawford 2022), including by noting that the recently acquired/occupied (Ukrainian) territories fall under the protection of the nuclear umbrella, pursued a double-deterrent objective: on the one hand, it aimed at displaying its military superiority towards Ukrainian armed forces, military leaders and broader population, thus aiming at discouraging and deterring further military operations by Ukraine; on the other hand, it targeted the West – attempting to scaremonger Euro-Atlantic political leaders and population, in order to limit the politico-military support granted to Ukraine.
➢ *Provocation:* One might argue that certain actions conducted by Russia in the Initial Period of War, such as the recognition of breakaway regions in Donbass on the 21st of February 2022, alongside the deployment of "peacekeeping troops" in these areas (DW 2022) had as one of its aims to provoke an overreaction from Ukraine. In case Kyiv had decided to send its troops to the breakaway regions, it is likely that it would have lost some of the support of its Western partners, thus leading to a disadvantageous situation.
➢ *Suggestion*: The Kremlin has been engaged in a coordinated defamation campaign against Ukraine and its leadership, meant to discredit the country's international reputation, as well as decrease morale. Examples include false claims about alleged poisoning by UA of RU soldiers (Reuters 2022) or accusing UA for the *"destruction of the population of Donbass"* (Zakharova 2022) – the latter constituting also a basis for an alleged legal justification for RU's invasion. RU also engages in information activities aimed at *humanizing the assailant*, with the purpose of obtaining support and sympathy from the broader international community (especially the Global South) (Benabid 2022).
➢ *Pressure:* RU also attempted to discredit the President of Ukraine, Volodymir Zelenski, and the military leadership in the eyes of the population, in attempts to undermine unity and support for the continuation of defence of the homeland. By way of illustration, false narratives were spread about the President allegedly fleeing the country, commanders abandoning troops or widespread capitulation of troops (Bergengruen 2022).

**Asymmetry** is another core element in Russian military thinking – embraced not only at the level of the military establishment (MoD), but also the Kremlin. Given that Russia rejects the idea that it conducts hybrid warfare (reserving the use of

this term only for actions conducted by other parties – the West primarily), the asymmetric concept is better suited to understand Russian military views. Most recently, the 2021 NSS explicitly proclaims (in Art. 99) the legitimacy of both symmetric and asymmetric measures to respond to and prevent unfriendly actions from other states (President of the Russian Federation 2021).

The basic idea behind the concept of asymmetry is that a weaker power (from an economic and/or military standpoint) shall exploit vulnerabilities in the opponent and employ asymmetric and cost-efficient tools and strategies (Thomas 2019). Nonmilitary means, including information operations and reflexive control, represent an important tool in asymmetry. By way of illustration, IOs (and RC) can be used to achieve *surprise*, to *disorganize* the opponent (i.e., disorganizing the military control and command, the state administration, achieving psychological effects over the opposing forces and population), and during *indirect operations* – which can often be conducted through nonmilitary organizations (forms) (Thomas 2019).

Even in the context of the current war waged by Russia against Ukraine, Russia still considers itself in a broader confrontation – with the West (led, in Moscow's view, by the U.S.). In this sense, RU can be perceived as the weaker party. RU has used IOs in an attempt to induce surprise in the broader Western world by denying firmly any intentions to invade Ukraine and engaging instead in a *maskirova* – under the false pretence of negotiating new security arrangements with the U.S. and NATO prior to the invasion (Roth 2021). Moreover, the narratives about potential escalation – either through the use of nuclear arsenal (explained above) or through hinting at the possibility of extending the geographical area of operation to NATO Allies in the event of delivery of certain military equipment to Ukraine (Al Jazeera 2023) – are meant to disorganize the West by instilling fear in the Euro-Atlantic societies and, thus, diminishing the support at the level of population for maintaining the course on helping Ukraine.

The **Initial Period of War** also plays an essential role in Russian military science and art. IPW covers the situation when *"warring states conduct operations before the start of war to achieve objectives or to create favorable conditions for committing their main forces. Outer space, information warfare, and new weapon capabilities all help inform the shape needed for the IPW. These weapons enable sides before the start of operations to conceal the status and intent of their armed forces and the nature of any planned attacks"* (Thomas 2019, 8.5). It is noteworthy that *"nearly every Russian and Soviet deployment over the past half century, with the notable exception of this year's [2022] invasion of Ukraine, opened with soldiers appearing first in civilian clothing or unmarked uniforms"* (Kramer 2022) – a type of deception that aims to foster advantages in the combat theatre during IPW.

Some analysts argue that, in the context of the current war against Ukraine, RU either deviated from its doctrine concerning IPW (Boulegue 2022) or simply failed

(Massicot 2023). In terms of information-psychological operations, as described above, RU attempted to hide its invasion intentions, discredit the Ukrainian political leadership and provoke Kyiv to make strategic mistakes. However, coordinated and consistent declassified intelligence from Allies, especially from the U.S. and the UK, revealed RU's true intentions and countered (sometimes, pre-emptively) operations in the information environment (both during and after the IPW) (Dilanian, et al. 2022).

Other analysts argue that the use of the nuclear scaremongering (which pre-dated the February 24th, 2022 invasion) had a deterrent effect on Western support actions in Ukraine's benefit: *"Pervasive anxiety about Russian nuclear use has inhibited Western relief efforts, e.g., the campaign for a no-fly zone or for sending Ukraine aircraft. Western restraint has encouraged repeated and unrestrained Russian threats of nuclear use that are taken as inherently credible ones, even as Western deterrence is not seen as credible"* (Blank 2022).

## Formation and capabilities

One of the most notable official statements in this regard belongs to the Russian Minister of Defence Sergei Shoigu, who, in February 2017, claimed that RU developed an information war force which, judging from the statement, puts an emphasis on the information-psychological component. *"The Information operations forces have been established, that are expected to be a far more effective tool than all we used before for counter-propaganda purposes. […] Propaganda should be smart, competent and effective,"* the Minister declared (TASS 2017).
Even prior to that point, Russian military scientists (Kazakov and Kiriushin 2015, 39) were affirming the need for commanders to have a dedicated group of qualified personnel in the information-psychological area, who can ensure the integration and execution of IOs as part of the RC tasks.

Russian analyst Alexander Perendzhiyev observed that *"according to information on the Defense Ministry official website, there are several subunits in the department's structure for now whose zone of responsibility can include information operations. Above all this is the Main (Intelligence) Directorate, the Main Directorate for the Development of Information and Telecommunications Technologies […], as well as the Press Service and Information Directorate […]. The General Staff Eighth Directorate's 5th Scientific Company located in Krasnodar probably also plays a certain part"* (Latsinskaya, Braterskiy and Kalinin 2017).

A presidential decree in 2018 established a new structure within the MoD – the Main Military-Political Directorate of the Armed Forces (GVPU) – headed by a Deputy Minister. According to the laws regulating the work and organization of the MoD, the tasks of GVPU related to the organization of the military-political work of the MoD, promote the activities of the Russian Armed Forces (RAF), strengthen the

legitimacy, prestige and authority of the MoD and the military service, and maintain and consolidate the patriotic tradition (President of the Russian Federation 2018). More specifically, GVPU is directly responsible, *inter alia*, for:

> *- "the organization of information and propaganda work and state-patriotic education of the personnel of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation;*
> *- organization of military-special, psychological and cultural-leisure work in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation;*
> *- creation of conditions for the exercise by the servicemen of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation of the constitutional right to freedom of religion, taking into account the characteristics of military surveillance" (GlobalSecurity.org 2018).*

The structure and functions of the new GVPU are similar to its Soviet predecessor, while ideology is based on the history, culture and values of the Russian Federation (Thomas 2019, 8.23-8.24).

The high significance of GVPU can be observed in the context of RU's war against Ukraine (which started on February 24, 2022) and, in particular, through a look at its leadership. While Col. Gen. Andrey Kartapolov was responsible for setting up the new Directorate and led it for over three years (30 July 2018 – 5 October 2021), his successor, Col. Gen. Gennady Zhidko was able to remain in this position for less than a year (12 November 2021 – 28 July 2022). The official reason for the latter's dismissal was the lack of preparedness of the RAF to execute combat missions in Ukraine (Luzin 2023). The new Deputy Minister in charge of the GVPU (as of the 28 July 2022) is Col. Gen. Viktor Goremykin, believed to have been a counter-intelligence officer who subordinated to the FSB (ibid.).
The Russian General Staff Academy offers a training module on information conflict (Thomas 2019).

In RU military thinking, full government control over media is critical to achieve information superiority over the enemy. Chekinov and Bogdanov evoked, in this context, the potential of the media realm for stirring up chaos, confusion and demoralization at the level of the targeted public (Chekinov and Bogdanov 2012, 25-27). This trend was further amplified within the context of the Ukraine war: *"Russia has tried to restrain the access of Russian people to messages produced by Western actors by manipulating the content available on its TV channels, banning access to Western social media platforms, and even passing a bill that motivated the withdrawal of Western journalists from the country. Furthermore, Vladimir Putin 'warned' Russian citizens to not trust the information reported by American and European 'politicians, political scientists, and journalists' because what they write and say allegedly is an 'empire of lies'"* (Buarque 2022).

A 2016 study of the U.S. Army emphasized that RU *"uses a style of mission command with their IO campaigns,"* while the use of technological advances, especially electronic warfare allows the Kremlin to target individuals directly and specifically

(for instance, by sending personalized text messages to UA soldiers, threatening their loved ones while using credible details), which *"can have a tremendously negative psychological impact on young soldiers that are out of direct contact with their loved ones"* (U.S. Army Asymmetric Warfare Group 2016).

This method, however, is part of the *whole-of-government* (or even *whole-of-society*) approach that Russia is applying to information operations, thus also relying on capabilities outside the purview of the military. *"The whole-of-government approach has important consequences for the nature of the Russian method. While the American military tends to focus on the capabilities of a foreign military, this approach underestimates Russia's information warfare capabilities as most of them are not organic to the Russian armed forces"* (Tashev, Purcell and McLaughlin 2019, 139-140).

## Conclusion

As Russian strategic culture does not recognize information warfare/IOs as something internal, attributing these activities exclusively to external actors, this article aims to bridge this gap by exploring how IOs are actually embedded in well-established concepts of Russian military art and science. To gain a better understanding of the way these elements of thought are applied in practice, this research focuses on their concrete application, with a focus on the ongoing war in Ukraine. However, as hostilities are still unfolding, it is expected that more information will surface at later stages. It also remains to be seen if the elements presented above will remain the same or undergo significant modifications in Russian military thinking, given certain failures.

The research also examines concrete capabilities and formation processes related to information(-psychological) operations in Russia. A key element in this regard is the whole-of-government/whole-of-society approach, which, primarily due to full state control over the media, offers Russia a distinct advantage compared to Western/democratic countries. However, the opaqueness of public information available regarding Russian security and defense architecture makes it difficult to offer a comprehensive account of Russian capabilities and formation processes in this area. As additional information surfaces in the public sphere, further research in this area will offer value-added insights, better informing Euro-Atlantic decision-making processes.

## References

**Al Jazeera.** 2023. *'A whole new level' of war if NATO arms Ukraine, Russia warns.* January 19. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/19/a-whole-new-level-of-war-if-nato-arms-ukraine-russia-warns.

**Benabid, Mohamed.** 2022. "Communication Strategies and Media Influence in the Russia-Ukraine Conflict." *Policy Brief.* Policy Center for the New South. April. https://www.policycenter.ma/sites/default/files/2022-04/PB_25-22_Benabid%20EN.pdf.

**Bergengruen, Vera.** 2022. *How Putin Is Losing at His Own Disinformation Game in Ukraine.* February 25. https://time.com/6151578/russia-disinformation-ukraine-social-media/.

**Blank, Stephen.** 2022. *Information Series*, June 15. https://nipp.org/information_series/stephen-blank-russian-nuclear-strategy-in-the-ukraine-war-an-interim-report-no-525-june-15-2022/.

**Boulegue, Mathie.** 2022. *We must think Russian deterrence outside the box.* March 21. https://thehill.com/opinion/international/598982-we-must-think-russian-deterrence-outside-the-box/.

**Buarque, Beatriz.** 2022. *Russia has tried to restrain the access of Russian people to messages produced by Western actors by manipulating the content available on its TV channels, banning access to Western social media platforms, and even passing a bill that motivated the withdra.* March 9. https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/political-perspectives/2022/03/09/true-fake-news-or-conspiracy-theory-a-look-inside-the-ukrainian-information-war/.

**Chausov, F.** 2017. "Command and Control of Battle on the Basis of a Reflexive Analysis of the Situation." *Morskoi Sbornik (Navy Journal)* (17).

**Chekinov, S. G., and S. A. Bogdanov.** 2012. "The Initial Period of Wars and their Impact on a Country's Preparations for Future War." *Military Thought* 11.

**Crawford, Stuart.** 2022. *Nuclear Scaremongering.* August 24. https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/nuclear-scaremongering/.

**Davies, Alys.** 2022. *Russia to build two nuclear reactors in Hungary.* August 27. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-62695938.

**Dilanian, Ken, Courtney Kube, Carol E. Lee, and Dan De Luce.** 2022. *In a break with the past, U.S. is using intel to fight an info war with Russia, even when the intel isn't rock solid.* April 6. https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/us-using-declassified-intel-fight-info-war-russia-even-intel-isnt-rock-rcna23014.

**DW.** 2022. *Russia recognizes independence of Ukraine separatist regions.* February 21. https://www.dw.com/en/russia-recognizes-independence-of-ukraine-separatist-regions/a-60861963.

Fraser, Cameron. 2022. *How Russian disinformation tactics were utilised in the context of the 2008 5-day war.* November 3. https://idfi.ge/en/how_russian_disinformation_tactics_were_utilised_in_the_context_of_the_2008_5_day_war.

**GlobalSecurity.org.** 2018. *Main Military-Political Administration (GVPU).* https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/mo-gvpu.htm.

**Intelligence Online.** 2023. *Russia ramps up strategic disinformation campaign north of Ukraine.* January 17. https://www.intelligenceonline.com/government-intelligence/2023/01/17/russia-ramps-up-strategic-disinformation-campaign-north-of-ukraine,109902674-art.

**Kazakov, V.G., and A.N. Kiriushin.** 2015. "All-Inclusive Command and Control of Combat Operations." *Journal of the Academy of Military Science* 4.

**Kramer, Andrew E.** 2022. *Phantom Retreats and Stolen Bones: The War of Deceit in Ukraine.* November 9. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-weapons.html.

**Latsinskaya, M., A. Braterskiy, and I. Kalinin.** 2017. "Russia Sent Troops onto the Internet: Shamanov Explained Why Information Troops are Necessary." *Gazeta.ru.* February 22.

**Lawson, Alex.** 2022. *'Gas blackmail': how Putin's weaponised energy supplies are hurting Europe.* July 15. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/15/gas-blackmail-how-putins-weaponised-energy-supplies-are-hurting-europe.

**Luzin, Pavel.** 2023. *The Political Considerations Behind Russia's Military Command Chaos.* January 26. https://jamestown.org/program/the-political-considerations-behind-russias-military-command-chaos/.

**Massicot, Dara.** 2023. "What Russia Got Wrong Can Moscow Learn From Its Failures in Ukraine?" *Foreign Affairs.* https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/what-russia-got-wrong-moscow-failures-in-ukraine-dara-massicot.

**Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation.** 2011. "Conceptual Views on the Activities of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in the Information Space." ens.mil.ru/science/publications/more.htm?id=10845074@cmsArticle#1.

**Pallin, Carolina Vendil.** 2019. "Russian Information Security and Warfare." In *Routledge Handbook of Russian Security*, edited by Roger E. Kanet, 203-213. London: Routledge.

**President of the Russian Federation.** 2018. "Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of July 30, 2018 No. 454 "On Amendments to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of August 16, 2004 No. 1082 "Issues of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation" and the Regulation." *Official Internet portal of legal information.* July 30. http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001201807300078?index=1&rangeSize=1.

**—.** 2021. *Decree of the President of the Russian Federation on the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation.* Moscow, July 2.

**Pynnöniemi, Katri Pauliina.** 2019. "Information-psychological warfare in Russian security strategy." In *Routledge Handbook of Russian Security Policy*, edited by Roger E. Kanet, 214-226. London: Routledge.

**Reuters.** 2021. *Russia accuses Ukraine of troop build-up, starts its own winter drills.* December 1. https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-starts-regular-winter-military-drills-region-bordering-ukraine-2021-12-01/.

—. 2022. *Russia accuses Kyiv of poisoning some of its soldiers in Ukraine.* August 10. https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-accuses-ukraine-poisoning-some-its-soldiers-2022-08-20/.

**Roth, Andrew.** 2021. *Russia issues list of demands it says must be met to lower tensions in Europe.* December 17. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/dec/17/russia-issues-list-demands-tensions-europe-ukraine-nato.

**Sitnova, I., and A. Polyakov.** 2018. "Fourth-Generation War: Priorities, Principles of Strategy, and Tactics." *Army Journal* 9.

**Stepanenko, Kateryna, Karolina Hird, Riley Bailey, Layne Philipson, Nicole Wolkov, and Frederick W. Kagan.** 2023. *Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, February 1, 2023.* February 1. https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-1-2023.

**Tashev, Blagovest, Michael Purcell, and Brian McLaughlin.** 2019. "Russia's Information Warfare Exploring the Cognitive Dimension." *MCU Journal* (U.S. Marine Corps University) 10 (2): 129-147.

**TASS.** 2017. *Russia's defense chief to mobilize new cyber army.* February 22. https://tass.com/defense/932439.

**Thomas, Timothy L.** 2004. "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and The Military." *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17: 237-256.

—. 2019. "Russian Military Thought: Concepts and Elements." *MP190451V1.* Prod. The MITRE Corporation. McLean, Virginia: The MITRE Corporation.

**U.S. Army Asymmetric Warfare Group.** 2016. "Russian New Generation Warfare Handbook." December 1. https://info.publicintelligence.net/AWG-RussianNewWarfareHandbook.pdf.

**Zabrodskyi, Mykhaylo, Jack Watling, Oleksandr V. Danylyuk, and Nick Reynolds.** 2022. "Preliminary Lessons in Conventional Warfighting from Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: February–July 2022." *Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies.* November 30. https://static.rusi.org/359-SR-Ukraine-Preliminary-Lessons-Feb-July-2022-web-final.pdf.

**Zakharova, Maria.** 2022. *Archive Today.* February 28. https://www.facebook.com/maria.zakharova.167/posts/10227769395810054.

BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

# Public diplomacy during military international conflicts. The Ukraine war case

**Assistant Professor Hlihor Ecaterina, Ph.D.***

*"Carol I" National Defence University, Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: hlihor.ecaterina@myunap.net

## Abstract

Nowadays, warfare is characterized by a huge intensity of fight, large investment in military technology that led to new ways of combat and increased its visibility. While the changing strategic, social and cultural features of this environment have forced governments and armies to add new fight strategies including public diplomacy, the public diplomacy itself transformed. Therefore, this article reviews current research in this field and presents a theoretical approach of the actual war. In this regard, the topic discussed is the battle between the Ukrainian and Russian military for image and legitimacy in the international public opinion. In the information age in which we live, the activities and capabilities of public diplomacy can have a significant impact on how people, organizations, and governments perceive this war. The purpose of the article is to examine the management of public diplomacy in the case of both actors involved in this war.

**Keywords:**
public diplomacy; Russian aggression over Ukraine; security interest; strategic communication; enemy image; public opinion.

The President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, declared on February 24, 2022 that his armed forces launched a "special military operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine" (Putin 2022). Following the initial invasion, media outlets in different parts of the world portrayed the war in drastically different lights. Western mass-media (CNN, Fox News, New York Times, etc.) labelled the "special operation" a "war crime" spawned by an "unprovoked invasion" by the Russian government. The Russian mass-media (Sputnik News, Russia Today, etc.) in turn largely denied any war crimes, stating that these reports are part of Western propaganda (Hanley, Kumar and Durumeric 2022).

The emergence of a deeply fractured image of the war in Ukraine was hardly a surprise for analysts and communication specialists. When a war breaks out, the mass-media are also mobilized, they are part of the military (Hlihor and Hlihor 2010; Thussu and Freedman 2003; Pavlik 2022, 1-17; Kirat 2014, 1-12), because the information transmitted by the mass-media has effects not only on the "audience", public opinion, but also on those potentially and effectively involved in the conflict. Shaping the perceptions of opponents, supporters, and neutral groups influences whether and how a target audience will engage and participate. Thus, mobilization, information and persuasion are an integral part of the conduct of war (Brown 2003, 87). There is thus a vast and intense "battlefield" for winning the "minds and hearts" of people outside the fields of military operations, by also engaging other actors such as those using public diplomacy. This fact is also observable in the case of the war on our border, both in Russia and in Ukraine and in the states that support them.

The belligerents, using channels and means specific to public diplomacy, seek to impose two antagonistic interpretations of the events on the international public opinion. Moscow insists on convincing, despite the evidence, that this is not a military aggression against Ukraine, but a *spetsial'naya voyennaya operatsiya* – "special military operation" - or *spetsoperatsiya* – "special operation (Lazareva 2022). The Ukrainian side claims that there has been an invasion of its national territory. As early as the morning of February 24, "*a few hours after the first strikes by the Russian Armed Forces in Kharkiv, Kyiv, Lutsk and other cities, the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, addressed Ukrainians with a statement that Russia had started the war. On the same day, the Verkhovna Rada introduced martial law in Ukraine*" (Bilousenko 2022), which legally established the existence of a state of war.

In most states of the world, both mass-media and governments perceived the name given by the Russians to define the war in Ukraine as a euphemism for military invasion and aggression. The conflict has been condemned in Europe and North America, both at the governmental and social level, and has led, on the one hand, to the imposition of tough and "unprecedented" sanctions, according to US President Joe Biden, against Russia, and on the other hand, to the provision of logistical and military aid to Ukraine to defend itself. In Europe, an exception

to this pro-Ukraine trend "*was observed in several countries, including Belarus – Ukraine's northern neighbour and a close ally of Moscow*" (Mudrov 2022, 273). Few states and international organizations refrained from cataloguing/defining the conflict triggered by Putin on the morning of February 24, 2022. Relevant, in this regard, is the position adopted by India and China, which both in public discourse and in that the mass-media have "*shown reluctance to criticize the Russian invasion. The Chinese and Indian governments have both been reserved on the issue*" (Roy and Paul 2022).

The communication of facts and actions that take place in this war, through distortion, exaggeration or mitigation, associated with divergent representations of events, tends to deeply structure the discourses of the conflicting actors – who accuse each other of waging an "information war" and of not conducting public diplomacy activities, as happened in previous crises that took place in this space (Audinet 2018, 171-204). In such a context, where the use and access to different means and channels of communication, be they classic or new media, constitute an essential strategic issue in the conflicts of the 21st century, it is necessary to research and analyze how diplomacy public can be "mobilized" by the belligerents to *pre-determine* the perception of events in the sense in which each of the parties wants it.

The main purpose of our research is therefore to discuss whether or not public diplomacy can also be useful in the context of a military conflict, and if so, what differentiates information warfare from public diplomacy – conceptually and in terms of practice in the field. The "public diplomacy" expression was in circulation during the Cold War as an American euphemism for propaganda (Hlihor 2017, 71-78).

If the distinction between public diplomacy and propaganda could be questioned on these historical grounds, so could the distinction between public diplomacy and information warfare? Is it relevant to distinguish between engagement in public diplomacy and engagement in information warfare, especially in the current climate of hostility between Russia and the West? Is Russian public diplomacy essentially a rhetorical tool to combat Western attempts to influence international public opinion? Russian specialists are trying to demonstrate that their public diplomacy activities are not the products of the intoxication of a target audience, as they are presented in the West. To answer these questions, we need to see if there are major differences in the language used to describe international communicative influence – in the case of "public diplomacy" as opposed to "information warfare". Although the overlap in how information warfare and public diplomacy are defined and practiced is largely acknowledged, our hypothesis starts from the assumption that public diplomacy may represent distinct ideals for international communication worth defending, even (especially) when the climate of the international politics is tainted by the existence of an armed conflict.

## Public diplomacy – part of a „media warfare toolbox"?

The press has been used as a tool to promote one's own image in the event of an armed conflict since the second half of the 19th century, but only during the World War II did the international media – press, radio, television – have become real "weapons of war" for the belligerents (Hlihor and Hlihor 2010, 127-141). In the East-West rivalry of the Cold War, interposed radio propaganda - and its corollary, radio jamming - became a tool of the ideological struggle between the Western and the USSR, between the BBC World Service, the Voice of America, Radio Liberty, Deutsche Welle, on one side, and Radio Moscow, on the (Hlihor and Melinescu 2021, 53-106). The ideological and technological competition, the Soviet-American one in particular, constituted the fertile ground for the development of public diplomacy in the world (Wang and Hong 2011, 345-346).

Today, when the threats to contemporary society are no longer only of the classic type, generated by wars and armed conflicts, although they were not absent from international politics after the Cold War, public diplomacy tends to turn into a weapon in the fifth generation wars (hybrid, informational, cognitive, etc.) (Hammes 2007, 14). This fact is visible in almost all nations that have sought to attract and make use of other resources besides the classical ones of the military profile (Hlihor and Hlihor 2021, 392-413; Kent 2015, 1341-1378), and the means of communication, especially those of the new media type, can become an effective weapon (Szostek 2020, 27-28; Corman, Trethewey and Goodall 2007, 7). Public diplomacy possesses effective means to influence the thinking and behaviour of political leaders and ordinary people in other countries. In fifth-generation warfare, the means of public diplomacy are used not only to "win hearts and minds", but also to establish effective lobbying channels for the defence of the state's national interests among a target audience to be "won".

More than a decade ago, Judith A. McHale, then Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (2009), referring to the importance of public diplomacy in advancing the security interests of the USA, stated that it must be developed because "*much of our national security strategy depends on securing cooperation with other nations, which in turn depends in large part on the extent to which our efforts abroad are seen as legitimate by their public*" (McHale 2009). Matthew Wallin, in a research report entitled *The National Security Need for Public Diplomacy*, published in October 2012 by the **American Security Project**, considered that public diplomacy is a vital aspect of US national security strategy (Wallin 2012). And in the Russian Federation, the interest in promoting foreign policy goals has grown considerably, but public diplomacy is seen rather with negative effects, since it is considered "*a powerful political resource, the scope and effectiveness of which in the 21st century becomes not only quite comparable to state resources, but already exceeding them, because they include (unlike the 20th century) resources coming not only from the state, but also from businessmen, civil society and even the resources of other*

*countries*" (Podberezkin 2017, 41). The Chinese, in order to have effective public diplomacy, build infrastructure, cultural centres around the world, develop long-term relationships in Africa, Latin America and other parts of the globe. Iran's public diplomacy network in the Middle East and beyond includes multilingual television and radio satellite networks, over 100 newspapers and journals, and thousands of websites and blogs. And understandably, al-Qaeda and other extremists continue to engage aggressively, using a range of new and old mass-media means (McHale 2009).

During times of war and crisis, public diplomacy actions are carried out by structures of the ministries of foreign affairs, by civil society organizations, but there were not a few situations in which the military were also involved. The American specialist in communication studies and public diplomacy, Bruce Gregory, notes that, in fact, "*Americans discovered public diplomacy in times of war*" (Bruce 2007), and the involvement of the military factor in practicing of this type of activity is not a novelty, only the tools and methods are different compared to previous stages. Since the beginning of *Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan* (October 2001 - December 31, 2014), military spokespersons were been primarily those who communicated with the American public on matters of interest coming from the field of operations. The same thing happened in the case of the Iraq War, when the military communications structures had to find the most effective ways to communicate to the public opinion in the Arab societies of the Middle East and other areas around the world that the US is not fighting a war against Islam, but against a dictatorship regime in the Islamic world (Hlihor 2017). For the Kremlin, information warfare is a key facet of Russia's version of public diplomacy. With minimal (sometimes no) concern for the truth, Russia's messages to the world public emphasize self-justification. Western governments responded assertively to Russia.

Thus, the United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM) has undertaken a massive effort to create an "informational ring around Russia", offering information programs designed not only for Russians, but also aimed at audiences in countries such as Belarus, Moldova, Kazakhstan and other neighbours of Russia. "*Since the invasion began in February 2022, the agency has also introduced a new Ukrainian- and Russian-language satellite channel that reaches all of Ukraine and parts of Russia. As the Kremlin silences independent media voices in Russia, demand for content from abroad is growing. In the first three weeks after the Russian invasion, USAGM checked more than one billion video views of its Russian-language programs on social media platforms. The agency reports that interviews with grieving Russian mothers whose sons were killed in combat are among the most watched*" (Seib 2022).

Since Russian public diplomacy efforts in the West have largely failed (Åslund 2022), the Kremlin has turned to some NGOs in Western countries to promote its image. One of these is the public organization *People's Diplomats of Norway*, led by former left-wing politician Hendrik Weber. This is how he describes Moscow's occupation of Crimea and the sanctions that the West has imposed on the Russian Federation:

"*With the information blockade in the foreign media, a distorted picture of the current situation in Crimea is going around the world, so it becomes most important for us to be able to tell the truth. We are making efforts to dispel mistrust and myths that have been propagated in Western countries about Crimea* (Weber 2020, 234). Another case is that of the American journalist George Eliason, who since the beginning of the war against Ukraine appeared several times in Russian propaganda media shows (Olhovskaya 2022), where he exactly repeated the Russian disinformation about the war against Ukraine and promoted fake news. Currently available information about Eliason proves that the Kremlin uses him as a "Western journalist to legitimize disinformation and anti-Ukraine propaganda" (FactCheck 2022). Another Kremlin propagandist is Dutch citizen Sonja van den Ende, called a "Western journalist" by the Russian press. In her comments, she repeats and confirms the main ideas of President Vladimir Putin's speech (FactCheck 2022). Another employee of the pro-Kremlin disinformation apparatus, referred to as a "Western expert", is John Mark Dugan, a US-born former police officer and marine officer. Dougan was convicted of illegal wiretapping and tax fraud in Florida and fled to Russia in 2016, where the Russian government granted him asylum-seeker status. From May 18-21, 2022, John Mark Dougan, along with other "Western journalists", visited territories occupied by the Russian military on a "press tour" organized by Russia and promoted numerous false claims about the large-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia (FactCheck 2022).

The Kremlin has a long history of using foreign figures as part of its public diplomacy efforts. The Soviet Union at one time had "*more than 25,000 different scientific, cultural and educational organizations and bodies*", and "*maintained contacts with 7,500 organizations, public figures and representatives of scientific and cultural circles in 134 countries*" (Burlinova 2022, 113-114). This shows that, although the Russian Federation does not have such a long tradition of conducting public diplomacy activities, its actions in this field should in no case be underestimated. Public diplomacy can be an effective weapon as any other and must therefore be treated as such. It should also be taken into account that public diplomacy is used in external and internal conditions that are hard to predict and changeable in order to achieve the goal with the necessary efficiency. From this perspective, it is necessary to use in the action of planning and conducting public diplomacy an adaptive management to the situations that may arise, to resort to techniques and means that have proven their effectiveness in peacetime. The monitoring and feedback of activities provide crisis and wartime public diplomacy management structures with data for analysis and prediction of future situations.

## Ukraine war. The battle for image in international public opinion

Even before military operations were launched on February 24, 2022, a war for image, credibility and legitimacy began. A battle of narratives from the two protagonists

began. Vladimir Putin described his actions as *"self-defence" and emphasized that truth and justice are on Russia's side. Putin insisted that Moscow had no intention of occupying Ukraine. A few minutes later, heavy artillery strikes began in Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Missiles were fired at all major areas and military bases in at least half of Ukraine* (Lupescu 2022). The credibility of this speech was extremely low, with marginal effects among conservative audiences in Western countries. The impact was not what Vladimir Putin expected, because the mass-media serving conservative circles have a niche audience already convinced by the Kremlin's rhetoric. "*They have little power to sway publics reluctant to this discourse and are dependent on the volatility of opinion, as the Ukrainian crisis tends to demonstrate. Finally, they do not participate in curbing anti-Russian beliefs in Poland or the United States, for example*" (Breil 2022).

All leaders of Western states and most of the non-European world condemned the Kremlin's aggression against Ukraine. US President Joe Biden announced to international public opinion that "*The world will hold Russia accountable*" (Macias, Wilkie and Taylor 2022), which led to the formation of a broad coalition of support of the Ukrainian people. The invasion of Ukraine almost instantly shattered the means that Russian power had put in place in Western countries for years. Some media outlets, such as *Russia Today* and *Sputnik,* were immediately banned, Western companies gradually abandoned the Russian market, and political figures, who did not hide their admiration for Putin's pragmatism, joined the general boycott. Public diplomacy entered the fray from the very first moments of the Russian-Ukrainian war. From this point of view, the Ukrainians were not taken by surprise, as they had at that time well-established institutions, with people trained and instructed in the great centres of public diplomacy in the West (Bureiko 2021). After the start of the war, in March 2022, Kyiv developed a *Public Diplomacy Strategy* (Bureiko 2021). This establishes the general guidelines, the financial and human resources, as well as the objectives to be achieved for the coming years. The efficiency and realism of the objectives set in the Strategy are also confirmed by international institutions that measure the soft power of states. Before the war, Ukraine was not in one of the leading places of soft power (number 61 out of 120, in 2021), according to *Brand Finance's Global Soft Power Index*. Perception of Ukraine improved after the Russian invasion, with a whopping 44% increase in influence and 24% in reputation (Ellwood 2022).

All tools in the toolbox of public diplomacy were used with maximum efficiency. An edifying example is that of the English language newspaper *Kyiv Independent* that experienced a phenomenal rise in popularity, being perceived in English society as "*an amazing symbol of Ukrainian national resistance, another Ukrainian David and Goliath story. Its Twitter account increased from 30,000 followers to 1 million in 2 days, then to 2 million in a month. Its website, which only launched in January, with 1,000 daily users, had 7.5 million unique views in March. The team frequently submitted stories to English-speaking journalists around the world*" (Ellwood 2022).

Public diplomacy in Ukraine used strategic humour (Chernobrov 2021, 1-20) to more easily "win over" the target audience in dramatic situations, such as those generated by the battles that are taking place on Ukrainian territory today. Ukraine sends various humorous images and narratives about the invading Russian troops to the liberal Western public to maintain the idea that they are invincible and to secure their support for the war they are waging and to convey for a potential membership in the Euro-Atlantic community (Budnitsky 2022). A caricature of Putin likened to Hitler particularly resonated with Western audiences and "*aligned perfectly with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's comparison of the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine to Nazi Germany's 1939 invasion of Czechoslovakia*" (Sirikupt 2022). Through the *@Ukraine* platform, many Twitter users were encouraged to join the trolling effort and reproduce anti-Kremlin humour. Just a month after the start of the war, the Ministry of Defence released videos showing, for example, Ukrainian farmers shooting Russian military vehicles, with Western music playing in the background, to indicate that Ukraine was part of the West (Elrisala 2022). In addition to the irony against the Russian military, the Ukrainian military emphasizes its care and compassion for animals to emphasize the humanity of its soldiers, and memes and videos show soldiers evacuating pets and zoos, along with scenes of Russian brutality. Another example of a social media platform is *Ukrainian Forces Meme* on Twitter, which has over 330,000 followers and regularly posts satirical responses and memes related to news coming out of Ukraine (Ukrainian Memes Forces 2022).

Despite some successes considered resounding only a few years before, Russia's reaction in using public diplomacy to promote its interests was, in the opinion of Western specialists, often inadequate and especially not credible (Seib 2022), although in recent years, Russians "*acted to reform the RIA Novosti news agency, the Voice of Russia radio station, created Russia Today Channel TV and the Russkiy Mir Foundation specialized in popularizing the Russian language and culture in the world. In addition, "Rossiyskaya Gazeta" publishes monthly inserts for the Washington Post, The Daily Telegraph, Le Figaro, as well as leading publications in Argentina, Bulgaria, Brazil, India, Spain and Italy, with a total circulation of several million*" (Bartosh 2017). As the events of the last months of the war in Ukraine show, any propaganda efforts undertaken by Russia through public diplomacy means and institutions outside its own borders are virtually "drowned" by the incredibly effective messaging of Ukraine and its supporters around the world (Ball 2022). The failures suffered show that Russia's information operations were never on the scale that Western specialists once perceived. Russian specialists, faced with the impossible task of presenting an unprovoked invasion as a peacekeeping operation, hit a wall. Instead, after some months of conflict, Ukraine has a huge, energized supporter base ready to promote its success narratives and images. It can minimize its losses and increase its victories - by posting pictures of vehicles or tanks abandoned by the Russian invaders, with civilian heroism, or with inspirational quotes.

## Conclusions

The war in Ukraine highlights that information warfare will be a significant factor in future conflicts. Among the lessons learned from this war should be that: an unprepared public is dangerously susceptible to misinformation. Manipulated communication expands during a conflict. In response, global audiences will need to embrace mass-media literacy, which encourages healthy scepticism as people weigh the information they receive. This presupposes the existence of some forms of "media literacy" in the school programs of education systems in contemporary society. Some nations, Finland for example, already do this, but most countries lag far behind.

## References

**Åslund, Anders.** 2022. "Why Vladimir Putin is losing the information war to Ukraine." https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/why-vladimir-putin-is-losing-the-information-war-to-ukraine/.

**Audinet, Maxime.** 2018. "Diplomaties publiques concurrentielles dans la crise ukrainienne. Le cas de RT et Ukraine Today." *Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest* (no.2): 171-204. https://www.cairn.info/revue-d-etudes-comparatives-est-ouest-2018-2-page-171.htm.

**Ball, James.** 2022. "Don't be fooled by Russian TV, Putin is losing the information war. There are limits to what the Russian president can get his people to believe in an interconnected world." *The New Statesman.* https://www.newstatesman.com/comment/2022/03/dont-be-fooled-by-russian-tv-putin-is-losing-the-information-war.

**Bartosh, Aleksandr Aleksandrovich.** 2017. "Publichnaya diplomatiya Zapada kak katalizator gibridnykh voyn i tsvetnykh revolyutsiy (Diplomația publică a Occidentului catalizator pentru războaie hibride și revoluții colorate)." https://nic-pnb.ru/vneshnepoliticheskie-aspekty-bezopasnosti/publichnaya-diplomatiya-zapada-kak-katalizator-gibridnyh-vojn-i-tsvetnyh-revolyutsij/.

**Bilousenko, Olga.** 2022. "Chy povynna bula Ukrayina «ofitsiyno oholosyty viynu» Rosiyi? („Ar fi trebuit Ucraina să declare oficial război Rusiei?")." *Media Sapiens.* https://ms.detector.media/manipulyatsii/post/29569/2022-05-27-chy-povynna-bula-ukraina-ofitsiyno-ogolosyty-viynu-rosii/.

**Breil, Louis Du.** 2022. "Guerre en Ukraine : que va-t-il rester du soft power russe en France?" *Conflits, Révue de géopolitique.* https://www.revueconflits.com/guerre-en-ukraine-que-va-t-il-rester-du-soft-power-russe-en-france/.

**Brown, Robin.** 2003. "Spinning the War: Political Communications, Information Operations and Public Diplomacy in the War on Terrorism." In *War and the Media. Reporting Conflict 24/7*, by Daya Kishan Thussu and Des Freedman. London: SAGE Publications.

**Bruce, Gregory.** 2007. *Public diplomacy as strategic communication.* Vol. I, in *Countering Terrorism and Insurgency în the 21st Century. Strategic And Tactical Considerations*, by James J.F. Forest. London, Westport: Praeger Security International.

**Budnitsky, Stanislav.** 2022. "Global disengagement: public diplomacy humor in the Russian–Ukrainian War ." *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy.* doi:https://doi.org/10.1057/s41254-022-00291-1.

**Bureiko, Nadiia.** 2021. "Ukraine's public diplomacy enters a new phase." *Hot Topics* (Issue no. 4). https://neweasterneurope.eu/2021/06/23/ukraines-public-diplomacy-enters-a-new-phase/.

**Burlinova, Natalia V.** 2022. "The Role of NGOs in International Relations and Public Diplomacy ." *Journal Of International Analytics* vol. 13 (no. 1).

**Chernobrov, Dmitry.** 2021. "Strategic humour: Public diplomacy and comic framing of foreign policy issues ." *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* vol. 24 (no. 1).

**Corman, Steven R., Angela Trethewey, and Bud Goodall.** 2007. *A 21st Century Model for Communication in the Global War of Ideas: From Simplistic Influence to Pragmatic Complexity.* Report #0701, Consortium for Strategic Communication, Arizona State University. https://csc.asu.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf/114.pdf.

**Ellwood, David.** 2022. "Narratives, Propaganda & "Smart" Power In The Ukraine Conflict, Part 2: Inventing A Global Presence." *USC Center on Public Diplomacy.* https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/pd-wartime-narratives-propaganda-smart-power-ukraine-conflict-part-2-inventing-global.

**Elrisala.** 2022. "Ukraine's newest weapon of war... digital jokes." https://www.elrisala.com/2022/09/20/ukraines-newest-weapon-of-war-digital-jokes/.

**FactCheck.** 2022. *The Kremlin's "Unbiased Western Journalists" – New Instrument for Propaganda Promotion.* https://factcheck.ge/en/story/41213-the-kremlin-s-unbiased-western-journalists-new-instrument-for-propaganda-promotion.

**Hammes, T. X.** 2007. "Fourth generation warfare evolves, Fifth Emerges." *Military Review* 87 (3): 14-23.

**Hanley, Hans W.A., Deepak Kumar, and Zakir Durumeric.** 2022. "«A Special Operation»: A Quantitative Approach to Dissecting and Comparing." https://arxiv.org/pdf/2210.03016.pdf.

**Hlihor, Constantin, and Ecaterina Hlihor.** 2010. *Comunicarea în conflictele internaționale. Secolul XX și începutul secolului XXI.* București: Editura Comunicare.ro.

**—.** 2021. "Russia's strategy for influence operations through public diplomacy: The Romanian case." In *The Russian Federation in the Global Knowledge Warfare. Influence Operations in Europe and Its Neighbourhood*, by H. Mölder, V. Sazonov, A. Chochia and T. Kerikmäe. Springer.

**Hlihor, Constantin, and Nicolae Melinescu.** 2021. *TvR. Actor și martor la prăbușirea comunismului și la nașterea democrației.* București: Editura Eikon.

**Hlihor, Ecaterina.** 2017. *Diplomația publică în politica internațională.* București: Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I".

**Kent, Randolph.** 2015. "The future of warfare: Are we ready?" *International Review of the Red Cross* vol. 97 (900).

**Kirat, Mohamed.** 2014. „From News Pools to Embedded Journalists: How Media Frame Wars and Conflicts?" *Journalism and Mass Communication* Vol. 4 (No. 1): 1-12.

**Lazareva, Ekaterina.** 2022. "Polkovnik: pochemu sobytiya na Ukraine — spetsoperatsiya, a ne voyna (Colonel: de ce evenimentele din Ucraina sunt o operațiune specială, nu un război)." *URA.ru.* https://ura.news/articles/1036284034.

**Lupescu, Anca.** 2022. *Discursul lui Vladimir Putin care a anunțat războiul din Ucraina. A fost înregistrat acum 3 zile?!* https://playtech.ro/stiri/discursul-lui-vladimir-putin-care-a-anuntat-razboiul-din-ucraina-a-fost-inregistrat-acum-3-zile-477131.

**Macias, Amanda, Christina Wilkie, and Chloe Taylor.** 2022. "U.S., allies gear up to hammer Russia's economy after Putin launches attack on Ukraine." *CNBC.* https://www.cnbc.com/2022/02/23/putin-says-russia-open-to-diplomacy-as-moscow-hit-with-fresh-sanctions.html.

**McHale, Judith A.** 2009. *Public Diplomacy: A National Security Imperative.* https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/remarks/2009/124640.htm.

**Mudrov, Sergei A.** 2022. "We did not unleash this war. Our conscience is clear. The Russia–Ukraine military conflict and its perception in Belarus." *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe* 30 (2): 273.

**Olhovskaya, Iuliya.** 2022. *Na zapade nazyvayut predatelyami teh kto ne soglasen s isteriey protiv Rossii.* https://www.1tv.ru/news/2022-03-06/422828-na_zapade_nazyvayut_predatelyami_teh_kto_ne_soglasen_s_isteriey_protiv_rossii.

**Pavlik, John V.** 2022. "The Russian War in Ukraine and the Implications for the News Media." *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications* no.8: 1-17.

**Podberezkin, A. I.** 2017. "Vzaimodeystviye ofitsial'noy i publichnoy diplomatii v protivodeystvii ugrozam Rossii." In *Publichnaya diplomatiya teoriya i praktika*, by M. M. Lebedevoy. Editura „Aspect Press".

**Putin, Vladimir.** 2022. *Address by the President of the Russian Federation.* The Kremlin. Moscow. Februarie 24. http://en.kremlin.ru/catalog/countries/UA/events/67843.

**Roy, Abhishek, and Pompy Paul.** 2022. "Indian Televisual News Discourse on the Russia-Ukraine War." *DiscourseNet Collaborative Working Paper Series no. 8/2, October. Special Issue: Discourses of War The influence of the war against Ukraine on discourses worldwide.* https://discourseanalysis.net/sites/default/files/2022-10/Roy_2022_DNCWPS_8-2.pdf.

**Seib, Philip.** 2022. "Why Russia is Losing the Information War." *USC Center on Public Diplomacy.* https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/why-russia-losing-information-war.

**Sirikupt, Chonlawit.** 2022. "What's so funny about a Russian invasion? Here's how Kyiv is wielding humor in its information war against Moscow." *The Washington Post.* https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/04/07/ukraine-russia-memes-satire-humor/.

**Szostek, Joanna.** 2020. "What Happens to Public Diplomacy During Information War? Critical Reflections on the Conceptual Framing of International Communication ." *International Journal of Communication* (no.14).

**Taylor, Philip M.** 2013. *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Era.* 3rd ed. Manchester University Press.

**Thussu, Daya Kishan, and Des Freedman.** 2003. *War and the Media. Reporting Conflict 24/7.* London, Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

**Ukrainian Memes Forces.** 2022. https://twitter.com/uamemesforces.

**Wallin, Matthew.** 2012. "The National Security Need for Public Diplomacy." https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep06026?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

**Wang, Shaojung Sharon, and Junhao Hong.** 2011. "Voice of America in the post-Cold. War Era: Opportunities and Challenges to External Media services via new information and communication technology." *International Communication Gazette* vol. 73 (no. 4): 345-346.

**Weber, Hendrik.** 2020. *Our Crimea.* Business and Cultural Center of Republic of Crimea: N.Orianda.

BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

# The Nagorno-Karabah conflict – zero point of future conflicts?

**Col. advanced instructor Cătălin CHIRIAC, Ph.D.***

*"Carol I" National Defence University
e-mail: catalin_chi@yahoo.com

## Abstract

The 44-day war between Armenia and Azerbaijan from September to November 2020 was the latest escalation of unresolved tensions in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The war gained widespread attention, particularly due to the extensive use of unmanned aircraft systems. These systems, regardless of their country of origin, were assigned various missions, from reconnaissance to artillery fire support or even missions to destroy military targets or equipment. Analyzing the preparation process of the Azerbaijani army and their approach to the conflict, through the use of a wide range of technologies and systems that often did not require the physical presence of soldiers, allows for the detection of important trends and perspectives on how future conflicts will be shaped by the widespread use of missiles, unmanned aircraft systems, and artillery.

**Keywords:**
Nagorno-Karabakh; air defence; unmanned aircraft systems; drone; missiles; UAS; technology.

How a state wins a war is a complex problem, combining the tangible aspects (forces, means, technique available) with the intangible ones (decisions). If we add here the frequent technological revolutions, where the main point is information, surveillance, recognition and communications, then we will see that the answer to this question increases in complexity (Dahlgren 2022).

With the eyes of the world fixed on Ukraine, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan carried out in 2020 has come again to the attention of military analysts, primarily due to its approach by the two belligerents which both started from a shortage of air assets. The second reason is Turkey's involvement in the conflict, especially in the role of ally, equipment supplier and strategist. As usual, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan for the control of the Nagorno-Karabakh region, which began in late September 2020 and lasted for 44 days, has generated extensive analysis among journalists, academics, politicians and military experts, each of them trying to identify lessons according to their own fields of activity.

Both this conflict and the ongoing one in Ukraine have shown that victories on the battlefield are not always related to the amount of equipment or the numerical ratings of the armed forces in various journals. The ability to obtain information ahead of the adversary or to overrun the adversary's decision-making speed is only part of the ingredients of military success. In Nagorno-Karabakh, the Azerbaijanis were aided technologically and doctrinally by the Turks and managed to destroy or neutralize an impressive amount of Armenian military equipment. The painful defeat of the Armenians demonstrated to military leaders in Yerevan that war is won by developing, innovating, and acquiring the latest technology. At the same time, it showed military leaders around the world that modern warfare is rapidly evolving, and the binomial of unmanned aircraft systems and artillery missile systems becomes predominant and extremely difficult to counter. Currently, the conflict in Ukraine demonstrates this trend with each passing day.

Since several terms will be used throughout the article to denote what is generically known as a *drone*, further I have chosen to present a brief terminological delimitation. Thus, the terms *unmanned aircraft* and *drone*, as well as their variations, *unmanned aerial vehicle* or *remotely piloted aircraft* are often used interchangeably, both in the military and civilian environments. At the same time, it should be noted that in the military field these terms are distinctly defined, subject to a certain taxonomy and have a concrete use.

Within NATO, the term UAV is out of use, but it can still appear in civilian environments, in articles or even in the names of institutions that debate this topic. The terms used in the military environment are *Unmanned Aircraft – UA*, respectively *Unmanned Aircraft System – UAS*, having precise classifications, missions and characteristics, existing in the doctrines and specialized manuals.

The term *drone* is widely used and accepted in the civilian environment for all types of unmanned aerial systems, whether commercial or military. In the military field, the same term is sometimes used for certain systems whose size and complexity are comparable to those of commercially available models. It should be noted that, at the national level, the military field applies and implements the provisions and the existing standards at NATO level[1].

Considering the above, throughout the article, both the name *unmanned aircraft system/UAS* and the one of *drone* will be used, since the information taken comes from both the military environment and from online publications or sources available on websites.

[1] N.A.: For more details, see *A Comprehensive Approach to Countering Unmanned Aircraft Systems*, developed by Joint Air Power Competence Centre, *Regulamentul delegat (UE) 2019/945 al Comisiei din 12 martie 2019 privind sistemele de aeronave fără pilot la bord și operatorii de sisteme de aeronave fără pilot la bord din țări terțe* și *Regulamentul de punere în aplicare (UE) 2019/947 al Comisiei din 24 mai 2019 privind normele și procedurile de operare a aeronavelor fără pilot la bord.*

## South Caucasus

Armenia and Azerbaijan are located in the South Caucasus region, a region that also includes Georgia, all of which are ex-Soviet republics. For the three republics in the south of the Caucasus Mountains, the dissolution of the Soviet Union brought both independence and the resumption of old ethnic disagreements, generating bloody conflicts and loss of human lives. Over time, Azerbaijanis and Armenians have historically intermingled, but have maintained their ethnic and religious identities (Azerbaijani are mostly Muslim, Armenians mostly Christian), fighting each other in violent wars.

In order to understand the motivation of the belligerents in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts, some key elements regarding their geographic positioning, as well as their past or future ambitions, must be understood[2]. First of all, the history of conflicts in the Caucasus is not recent, the territories of the Caucasus being disputed, conquered and claimed over many centuries. In the 20th century, a key role in creating tensions and then starting conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh was played by Joseph Stalin. He, as commissioner of nationalities, "*oversaw the creation of maps and administrative boundaries, in some cases arbitrarily drawing borders that intentionally divided communities, with the aim of diluting the political power of ethnic groups*" (Europa Liberă 2020).

[2] N.A.: More details are available at *Cinci lucruri-cheie de știut despre conflictul din Nagorno-Karabah, URL: https://romania.europalibera.org/a/cinci-lucruri-cheie-de-%C8%99tiut-despre-conflictul-din-nagorno-karabah/30894640.html*

Stalin's strategy was to keep the small nations absorbed by the Soviet Union and to hold them captive in the long term after the breakup of the Russian Empire in 1917, for strategic, commercial or energy reasons, at the same time wanting to suppress any nationalist or religious manifestations or feelings, which could create discomfort in the future. The brutal way in which Stalin presented this in the late 1920s is eloquent in this regard, as Hélène Carrère d'Encausse highlights in the book *Imperiul Eurasiei, o istorie a Imperiului Rus de la 1552 până astăzi*: "The Caucasus is important for the revolution,

because it is a source of raw materials and food products. It is also important due to its geographical position, between Europe and Asia, between Europe and Turkey, and due to the existence of trade routes that are of considerable economic and strategic interest" (Fati 2020).

Regardless of the means, the feelings could only be dimmed and not repressed, so that on the territory of the arbitrarily formed enclaves (Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia) bloody conflicts broke out in the early 1990s, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Later, they were frozen as a result of fragile agreements guided by Russia, which had an interest in perpetuating such conflicts in order to exercise control over regions that were considered strategic (Fati 2020).

The Nagorno-Karabakh enclave is an internationally recognized territory belonging to Azerbaijan, but it is controlled by ethnic Armenian separatists, supported by Armenia. The first military clash in the modern history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict took place in February 1988, amid the glasnost and perestroika policies initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev. The first major war between the two sides broke out in February 1992 (Europa Liberă 2020). The ceasefire of May 1994 approved the Armenian occupation of almost all of Nagorno-Karabakh and several districts around the region, which was considered humiliating for the leadership in Baku. The future status of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the fate of the neighboring areas constituted an impediment to the peaceful resolution of the conflict and made the ceasefire an unstable one.
The defeat of Azerbaijan led the political class to accept and begin a large program of modernization of the armed forces, which political analysts interpreted as the first step towards a new conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

## The year 2020 – a new conflict, a new approach

In the fall of 2020, a six-week war in the South Caucasus brought the disagreements between Azerbaijan and Armenia back to the forefront of public opinion and the memory of ethnic Armenians and Azerbaijanis. As expected, the dispute centered on the Nagorno-Karabakh region and surrounding territories, internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, but populated predominantly by Armenians following the 1994 ceasefire. Azerbaijan's strategic objective, which later proved to be achievable, was to recover the occupied territory, or large portions of it.

Military analysts believe that this second conflict was not a surprise. With peace talks deadlocked, Azerbaijan had been threatening a new conflict for over a decade and had been ostentatiously arming itself to do so. At the same time, the outcome of the war was not a surprise either. The Azerbaijan's army, better equipped, staffed and heavily supported by Turkey, overwhelmed the smaller and outdated neighboring Armenian army (Reynolds 2021).

The reality on the battlefield proved that the joint level planning of the Azerbaijani armed forces, training and equipping of the forces proved decisive in comparison with the Armenian opponent. Thus, it should be emphasized that the success of the Azerbaijani forces was possible due to the Turkish military assistance carried out over an extended period of time, the acquisition of capabilities that later made a difference on the battlefield or the sustained professionalization of military institutions (Lt.Col. Erickson 2021, 1).

Military analysts have assigned much of this victory to the technical and financial component of the war: Azerbaijan allowed itself to change its mindset and equipment/ endowment at the level of armed forces and wanted (and at the same time benefited from) the technological support of Turkey and Israel. The technological support provided at that time was superior to that of the Armenian armed forces. But the conclusions of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war brought to the fore rationales and arguments that overshadow the real and deserved success of technology acquisitions. It is universally recognized that the success of the Azerbaijanis was largely due to the existence, but above all, to the way in which the unmanned aircraft systems were used. However, it should not be forgotten, that the careful balancing of ends, ways and means at the operational level ensured the achievement of strategic objectives and the achievement of the desired end state, thus proving that the Azerbaijani military strategy was the winning one.

The end of the war established Azerbaijan's control over much of the territory it had lost to Armenia in previous clashes and had not dominated for three decades. Armenians retained control of the remaining territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, including the urban center of Stepanakert. The ceasefire agreement, intermediate by the Russian Federation, led to the introduction of Russian peacekeeping forces (about 2,000 troops), who established observation posts along the cease fire line and in the Lachin corridor to monitor the ceasefire, ensuring the residents' safety and the security of transit between Armenia and Stepanakert (Welt and Bowen 2021, 15).

The local and regional consequences of 2020 war are still visible. The war accounted for more than 6,000 combatant deaths and another 150 civilian deaths, and displaced tens of thousands of people from both countries. The war also led to political disturbances in Armenia, strengthened the influence of the Azeri government, and allowed regional powers Turkey, Russia, and potentially Iran to grow in influence in the area (Welt and Bowen 2021).

The conflict attracted the attention of public opinion through the unique way in which Azerbaijan used the technical and technological capabilities of defense, correlated with the resources at its disposal and with the establishment of drones as an indispensable element of the military strategy. Before this war, at the tactical level, the Armenian army was superior in the quality of officer training, motivation of soldiers and much more dynamic leadership, things that proved decisive in all

previous conflicts with Azerbaijan. But Azerbaijan found a way to counter these advantages, primarily through the acquisition and use of drones, which at least solved the problem of identifying the positions of Armenian troops and reserves and bombing them (Gressel 2020). During the fighting, Azerbaijan relied on the use of drones for a wide range of missions, thus demonstrating technological advantage over the air defense systems of the Armenian forces. This way, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan may go down in history as the first modern war decided primarily by unmanned aircraft systems.

Military analysts agree that three factors were behind Azerbaijan's success on the battlefield in 2020, unlike the war almost 30 years ago, when it lost to Armenia: technology, tactics, and Turkey (Synovitz and Popescu 2020). The synchronization of new weapons systems (e.g., drone – artillery or drone – missile systems in the case of Azerbaijan) have made the operating environment much more lethal than the individual use of the same systems. Perhaps this was best expressed by Matthew Bryza, former US ambassador to Azerbaijan and former US mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, who believed that this conflict "*demonstrated that Russian weapons systems, whether they be the S-300 air defense missiles or the T-72 tanks, even those with reactive armor, are of a different era when you have this combination of modern Israeli and Turkish drones*" (Iddon 2020).

The first piece of information about the acquisition of drones in Azerbaijan dates back to 2008-2009, when the country acquired a number of Israeli UAVs (Hermes 450, Aerostar and Orbiter M), while domestic production was launched in March 2011, when the Azerbaijani president inaugurated *Azad Systems*, a joint venture between the Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defense Industry and the Israeli drone manufacturer *Aeronautics Industries* (Garibov 2016). By comparison, Armenia's drone program was quite modest compared to the extraordinary effort of the Azeri. Existing information shows that Armenia began indigenous drone production in 2011, in parallel with importing drones from Russia, its traditional arms supplier (Garibov 2016).

At the same time, the intention of the Azerbaijanis to acquire combat drones was not hidden, with Zakir Hasanov, the Minister of Defense of Azerbaijan, declaring this in the summer of 2020, the only unknown element being their type. However, Turkish sources stated that the Azerbaijanis were interested in the Bayraktar TB2, a medium-altitude long-range tactical UAV (Bekdil 2020). Regarding the Bayraktar drones, Fuad Shahbazov, an Azeri analyst at the Center for Strategic Communications in Baku, stated that they proved their effectiveness against Russian combat equipment in the conflicts in Libya and Syria, and "*in Syria, these drones destroyed a lot easily the Russian anti-aircraft systems, such as S-300 and S-400*" (Synovitz and Popescu 2020).

It is already known and recognized that Azerbaijan was supported in this war by its powerful ally, Turkey. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, stated in a press conference that "*the famous Bayraktar which is made by the Turkish*

*defense industry, was a gamechanger and played an important role in our success*" (Ostrovsky 2021). It is no longer news that the president was referring to the drones made available and already being used quite successfully in Turkey's campaigns in Syria. The fact that the drones provided by Israel and Turkey proved decisive for Azerbaijan was confirmed, if needed, by the same president, who glorified his country's drones responsible for the destruction of a 1 billion dollars' worth of Armenian military equipment (Iddon 2020). What could Armenia, or another country with Armenia's military capabilities, do in this situation? One answer may be that of Matthew Bryza: "*if you want to be equipped for this modern battlefield, and if you're Armenia, you might eventually want to get that type of equipment*" (Iddon 2020).

The number of drones lost by the Turks in Syria, Libya or the South Caucasus is not known or made public, and may not be of much concern to military commanders, if the country's prestige is increasing. During the fighting in the South Caucasus, Turkish experts even spoke of the "*dronization of war*", stating that they had developed a revolutionary war concept that would be implemented from one military theater to another (Urcosta 2020). If it was necessary, the war theater in Ukraine proves this once again.

The Turkish analyst Can Kasapoglu appreciates that the entire campaign of using drones in Azerbaijan was very similar to Turkey's *Operation Spring Shield* against the Syrian Arab Army, from the beginning of 2020, because it seems that "*Ankara has not only transferred unmanned aerial systems (UAS) to its natural ally in the South Caucasus, but also a complete robotic warfare doctrine and concept of operations (CONOPS)*" (Kasapoglu 2020). The same analyst identifies at least three common elements between *Operation Spring Shield* and the drone campaign in Azerbaijan[3]:

- The artillery of the land forces was used in close coordination with the unmanned aircraft systems (UAS' missions were *gathering information, establishing targets and BDA*[4]);
- Systematic hunting of the enemy's mobile air defense (within two weeks, 60 components of Armenian ground-based air defence systems, most of OSA and Strela-10 and at least one S-300 component were destroyed by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces). It is important to mention here the role of the old Russian An-2 biplanes, transformed into drones, a novel and daring approach, with the help of which the exposure of Armenia's anti-aircraft defense was achieved[5];
- Execution of information operations (the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan published daily footage of drone actions on its YouTube and Twitter accounts).

Two years after the end of the conflict and after the last turmoil that took place in the region, it is unanimously accepted that Turkey helped the traditional

[3] N.A.: The presented elements are detailed in Can Kasapoglu, *Turkey Transfers Drone Warfare Capacity to Its Ally Azerbaijan*, URL: https://jamestown.org/program/turkey-transfers-drone-warfare-capacity-to-its-ally-azerbaijan/, accessed la 06.01.2022

[4] Battle Damage Assessment.

[5] N.A.: More details on the use of Russian An-2 biplanes in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict can be found at ANALIZĂ Tehnologie, comando și Turcia. Cum a câștigat Azerbaidjan în Nagorno-Karabah (europalibera.org) and The 'Magic Bullet' Drones Behind Azerbaijan's Victory Over Armenia (forbes.com)

ally Azerbaijan, not only by supplying drones, but also through the assistance offered by the Turkish military advisers, with experience in training and fighting battles. Furthermore, there are opinions that Turkey has not only participated in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with drones, military advisors or special forces commandos, but there is also evidence suggesting that the Ankara' government played an important role in Azerbaijan's decision to launch the offensive in September. Several high-ranking Turkish officials met with their Azeri counterparts throughout the summer of 2020 to discuss the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, and Turkish arms sales to Baku exploded in the months leading up to the September offensive (Episkopos 2020a). Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's participation in Azerbaijan's victory parade held in Baku presented a rather significant picture in this sense: the two leaders sat side by side, and behind them was a row of Turkish and Azerbaijani flags, equal in number. The omnipresence of Turkish and Azerbaijani flags could also be seen on the streets of Baku (Episkopos 2020b).

There are opinions that Azerbaijan's concept of operations is far from revolutionary, resembling the AirLand Battle doctrine of the United States, but scaled to the defence budget of about $2 billion (Dr Watling and Dr Kaushal 2020). What is worth noting is that, from a strategic point of view, a country like Azerbaijan has been able to carry out precision strikes deep in the theater of operations (a capability once reserved only for the great powers), using a type of equipment relatively cheap to make up for the lack of robust air power (Dr Watling and Dr Kaushal 2020). We should therefore not be surprised at the end result, given that the conflict was fought between the 21st century tactics of Azerbaijan and the 20th century army of Armenia.

## Conclusions

The conflicts of the last decade were decisive in terms of the importance of the use of drones, regardless of the category or weaponry used. Thus, the new battlefield tactic that has proven successful in recent regional conflicts has been the use of relatively inexpensive missile-equipped drones against armored or ground-based air defense forces. This new tactic has changed the strategic perception around Turkey and Russia, as Turkish-built drones with affordable digital technology have destroyed armor and air and missile defense systems of Russian protégés in conflicts in Syria, Libya and Azerbaijan. The same drones have also become effective against Russia's own systems in the conflict in Ukraine.

In the short time since its completion, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has become perhaps the best ambassador of how small and relatively inexpensive UAS can bring about change in conflicts once dominated by traditional air power and large-scale land battles. The increasingly diverse range of UAS and their affordable prices can give countries an air advantage at a much lower cost than maintaining a traditional air fleet. The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh has shown how drones can suddenly

change the outcome of a conflict that seemed lasting and can contribute decisively to the achievement of the objectives of a military campaign.

The brief analysis of the allies of the two belligerents should not be overlooked either. Judging today, during the course of the conflict in Ukraine, it can be said that Russia has learned nothing from the mistakes of Armenia, at least in terms of the threat posed by the use of drones in military actions and the ways to combat it so as to obtain and maintain control over the airspace in the theater of operations. On the other hand, Turkey has achieved both immense commercial success with drones provided to Azerbaijan and later Ukraine, as well as international recognition for its military capabilities.

## References

**Bekdil, Burak Ege.** 2020. *Azerbaijan to buy armed drones from Turkey.* https://www.defensenews.com/unmanned/2020/06/25/azerbaijan-to-buy-armed-drones-from-turkey/.

**Dahlgren, Masao.** 2022. *How advanced technology is changing deterrence.* https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2022/08/23/how-advanced-technology-is-changing-deterrence/.

**Dr Watling, Jack and Sidharth Dr Kaushal.** 2020. *The Democratisation of Precision Strike in the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict.* https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/democratisation-precision-strike-nagorno-karabakh-conflict.

**Episkopos, Mark.** 2020a. *Has Russia Paved a Path for Turkey to Capitalize on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict?* https://nationalinterest.org/feature/has-russia-paved-path-turkey-capitalize-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-172812.

**—.** 2020b. *Nagorno-Karabakh and the Fresh Scars of War.* https://nationalinterest.org/feature/nagorno-karabakh-and-fresh-scars-war-174690.

**Europa Liberă.** 2020. *Cinci lucruri-cheie de știut despre conflictul din Nagorno-Karabah.* https://romania.europalibera.org/a/cinci-lucruri-cheie-de-%C8%99tiut-despre-conflictul-din-nagorno-karabah/30894640.html.

**Fati, Sabina.** 2020. *Ce se ascunde în spatele conflictului dintre azeri și armeni. Ce vrea Rusia.* https://romania.europalibera.org/a/ce-se-ascunde-%C3%AEn-spatele-conflictului-dintre-azeri-%C8%99i-armeni-ce-vrea-rusia/30862733.html.

**Garibov, Azad.** 2016. "Karabakh: A New Theater for Drone Warfare?" *Eurasia Daily Monitor.* https://jamestown.org/program/karabakh-a-new-theater-for-drone-warfare/.

**Gressel, Gustav.** 2020. *Military lessons from Nagorno-Karabakh: Reason for Europe to worry.* https://ecfr.eu/article/military-lessons-from-nagorno-karabakh-reason-for-europe-to-worry/.

**Iddon, Paul.** 2020. *What's Next For Armenia's Military After Devastating Nagorno-Karabakh Defeat?* https://www.forbes.com/sites/pauliddon/2020/12/09/whats-next-for-armenias-military-after-devastating-nagorno-karabakh-defeat/?sh=596be53036bc.

**Kasapoglu, Can.** 2020. *Turkey Transfers Drone Warfare Capacity to Its Ally Azerbaijan.* https://jamestown.org/program/turkey-transfers-drone-warfare-capacity-to-its-ally-azerbaijan/.

**Lt.Col. Erickson, Edward J.** 2021. "The 44-Day War in Nagorno-Karabakh, Turkish Drone Success or Operational Art?" *MILITARY REVIEW* (Army University Press). Accessed september 03, 2021. https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/Online-Exclusive/2021-OLE/Erickson/.

**Ostrovsky, Simon.** 2021. *How Azerbaijan Won the Karabakh War And how Russia won the peace, if it can keep it.* https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/how-azerbaijan-won-the-karabakh-war/.

**Reynolds, Michael A.** 2021. *Confidence and catastrophe: Armenia and the second Nagorno-Karabakh war.* https://warontherocks.com/2021/01/confidence-and-catastrophe-armenia-and-the-second-nagorno-karabakh-war/.

**Synovitz, Ron and Andrei Luca Popescu.** 2020. *ANALIZĂ Tehnologie, comando și Turcia. Cum a câștigat Azerbaidjan în Nagorno-Karabah.* https://romania.europalibera.org/a/analiza-tehnologie-comando-turcia-azerbaidjan-nagorno-karabah/30950259.html.

**Urcosta, Ridvan Bari.** 2020. *Drones in the Nagorno-Karabakh.* https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/drones-nagorno-karabakh#_ednref20.

**Welt, Cory and Andrew S. Bowen.** 2021. *Azerbaijan and Armenia: The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict (No. R46651, CRS report).* Congressional Research Service. https://crsreports.congress.gov/search/#/?termsToSearch=R46651&orderBy=Relevance.

BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

# Lessons to be learned from the Nagorno-Karabah conflict

**Col. advanced instructor Cătălin CHIRIAC, Ph.D.***

*"Carol I" National Defence University
e-mail: catalin_chi@yahoo.com

## Abstract

The new threats of modern warfare compel the thinking and development of a credible air defense capability based on early warning systems, surface-to-air missiles, fighter aircraft and associated command and control systems. Ground-based air defence, largely neglected in the air campaigns that dominated the last years of military conflicts, where the air threat was quite low, is once again examined by military analysts. The combatants involved in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are responsible for this.

**Keywords:**
Nagorno-Karabakh; air defence; drone; ground-based air defence; surface-to-air missiles; anti-aircraft artillery; GBAD systems; unmanned aircraft systems.

https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-04

The war between Armenia and Azerbaijan for the control of the Nagorno-Karabakh region, which took place between September 27 and November 10, 2020, is currently returning as a benchmark for any potential conflict on the world map, in view of the decisive role of drones and the low efficiency of measures to combat them. The conflict took place between two countries whose lack or insufficiency of air assets had to be quickly compensated and managed in order to attract the attention of military specialists by the unique way in which unmanned aircraft systems were used in aerial reconnaissance, strike or neutralization missions, missions that used to be specific to the military aircraft.

The asymmetric threats generated by the use of *Unmanned Aircraft Systems*/ UAS, popularly known as *drones*[1], which are becoming increasingly present in the arsenal of many states, require a regaining of the relevance of ground-based air defense structures/GBAD in combating them. Looking at factors such as quantity, availability, cost or influence of weather conditions, we find that GBAD structures are much better suited to combat these threats than fighter aircraft.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has provided, and still provides, enough analysis, lessons and experiences for military planners, regardless of country or color of uniform, to ensure the use of air defence systems in an integrated and effective manner against non-conventional air challenges, that exist or may arise in the near future. It is possible that some lessons learned from this conflict are not so innovative, or that others have already been implemented at the level of states with strong development in the field, where the concept of integrated air defence is understood and applied, and the capability inventory contains sufficient systems that can combat or neutralize unmanned aircraft systems. However, their existence and use on an ever-increasing scale is and, logically, will be a critical problem for any air defence.

The reality of the battlefield has demonstrated that the threat posed by the use of UAS is not singular. Air defence challenges start with *classic* aircraft, to which there must be added the *ubiquitous* UAS/drones, the *familiar* ballistic or cruise missiles and the *new* hypersonic missiles.
The purpose of the article is to show the importance of air defense during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and to bring to the fore a series of observations, in the form of identified lessons, that can help to better understand the consequences of the conflict and contribute to the effectiveness of using air defence in actions to counter UAS.

## Why Unmanned Aircraft Systems?

The ability of air power to influence the planning and conduct of joint operations has led to its definition as representing "*the ability to use air*

[1] N.A.: In the military field, the term used is *unmanned aircraft system/UAS*, while the term *drone* is predominantly used and widely accepted in the civilian field for all types of unmanned systems, commercial or military. Under these circumstances, the two names will be used interchangeably throughout the article, because the information is taken from military sources, free to publish, or from various articles, publications or websites. For more details, you can consult *A Comprehensive Approach to Countering Unmanned Aircraft Systems*, a study developed by the Joint Air Power Competence Center.

*capabilities to influence the behavior of actors and the course of events*" (NATO Standardization Office 2016, 1-2). However, air power represents more than the operational capability of a country's air forces and must be seen as a compound of specific equipment, factors and systems, more or less tangible, but equally important, of which no defence industry, research and education in the field, mindset, doctrinal development, characteristic infrastructure and leadership commensurate with requirements and ambitions must be lacking. Adding to this the power to adapt to the challenges of the operating environment, the proficiency of the users, the daring in execution and the practical combat experience, it can thus be explained why some air forces are simply better and more effective in combat than others.

In the absence of an efficient, robust and resource-consuming air power, the states tried to augment, or more correctly said, supplement it with a series of equipment that could replace, to the greatest extent possible, the combat aircraft. The most accessible solutions have turned out to be unmanned aircraft systems/UAS or drones. The cost-effectiveness ratio in favor of UAS makes their use increasingly common in future conflicts, especially for states that do not have a well-developed air power component (the aviation component being the best example). This approach to air warfare by Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict amply proved this.

Considering what has been presented, however, a brief clarification is necessary. The attraction for unmanned aircraft systems is well known due to a number of operational and technical advantages. Eliminating the vulnerability of crews, their command and control is carried out from outside the combat space, production and personnel costs are greatly reduced compared to manned aircraft (while the production rate is high), flight duration and range have a permanently increasing trend, use in increasingly complex missions, or use by all categories of forces are the advantages that recommend their purchase. At the same time, a series of disadvantages related to the use of air space, the reduction or elimination of the involvement of the human factor at the place of action, the dependence on satellite communication systems, increased vulnerability in the event of discovery by GBAD systems must also be taken into account.

However, the use of drones has shifted the balance of power in a war that has placed two state actors against each other. Bayraktar, Turkish drones, along with other Israeli weapon systems acquired by Azerbaijan in recent years, have categorically counterbalanced the advantage of Armenia's ground forces. Since neither country had a sufficiently developed air power, and most of the fighting took place on the ground, having high-performance drone systems made the difference between victory and failure.

It should also not be omitted the fact that unmanned aircraft systems, which have proven to be able to perform some of the missions of tactical aviation or of

correcting the fire of artillery systems, may become favorites for countries that cannot afford modern and expensive weaponry. The same situation can also be found in countries that own aircraft of different origins (East-West) and generations, some of which are outdated both physically and morally. It is thus quite obvious that unmanned aircraft systems can provide the advantage of air power through the possibilities of use, at a much lower price, compared to the costs of manned aircraft. At the same time, the spread of UAS, through the prism of the advantages presented, will surpass that of air defense systems and accelerate the elimination of obsolete systems.

Gaining a degree of control of the air remains, *in the future*, a desire of the modern conflict. The fact that the opponent, the alliance with Turkey, the terrain and the weather conditions allowed Azerbaijan to achieve this by much less expensive methods, is just another face of this conflict.

What must be considered in solving the *manned aircraft or UAS* alternative is the(further) need to ensure a degree of control of the air, because "*command of the air will remain a prerequisite for all operations, with or without aircrew*" (Mason 2014, 228). As the air power theorist John A. Warden III observed, since the German attack on Poland in 1939, "*no country has won a war in the face of enemy air superiority, no major offensive has succeeded against an opponent who controlled the air, and no defence has sustained itself against an enemy who had air superiority* " (Warden 1988, 13).

## Missiles, drones and artillery

Armenia's missile arsenal at the start of the conflict[2] consisted entirely of missiles of Soviet or Russian origin, through the inheritance of Tochka and Scud missiles from the Soviet Union and purchase of Iskander missiles from Russia in 2016. Armenia's drone fleet consisted of small-scale indigenous systems, whose main mission was reconnaissance (Shaikh and Rumbaugh 2020). During the 44 days of the conflict, the Armenian unmanned aircraft systems proved inferior to the Israeli or Turkish models purchased by the Azerbaijanis, thus unable to replace the role of military aviation.

On the other hand, Azerbaijan possessed a more diverse and modern arsenal of missiles, artillery and drones. Apart from the systems and equipment of ex-Soviet or Russian origin, the Azerbaijanis have acquired other, much more effective systems (one such example being the short-range ballistic missile – LORA). In terms of drone inventory, Azerbaijan has developed and completed an impressive arsenal of UAS: Turkey's Bayraktar TB2 and

[2] N.A.: As a rough guide of the military forces of the two countries can be obtained at Michael Kofman, Leonid Nersisyan, *The second Nagorno-Karabakh War, two weeks in,* War on the Rocks, URL: https://warontherocks.com/2020/10/the-second-nagorno-karabakh-war-two-weeks-in/, accessed 09/02/2021 and Shaan Shaikh, Wes Rumbaugh, *The Air and Missile War in Nagorno-Karabakh: Lessons for the Future of Strike and Defense*, Center for Strategic & International Studies, URL: https://www.csis.org/analysis/air-and-missile-war-nagorno-karabakh-lessons-future-strike-and-defense, accessed on 09.09.2021

numerous Israeli *loitering munitions*[3] known as *kamikaze drones*, including Harop[4], Orbiter and SkyStriker UAVs (Shaikh and Rumbaugh 2020).

Even though Azerbaijan had an undoubted advantage in terms of the number of combat aircraft and helicopters, which were little used in the conflict, both countries had ground-based air defense systems that, could theoretically be responsible for heavy losses among manned aircraft (Kofman and Nersisyan 2020). A surprising element was the conversion of old Antonov An-2 aircraft, a versatile single-engine biplane, to be used as single-use drones (Kofman and Nersisyan 2020), mainly for locating ground-based air defenses.

The robustness and consistency of the fleet of unmanned aircraft systems of the Azerbaijan Air Force is also evident from the information presented by *Jane's World Air Forces* and taken by the *Military Review* (Lt. Col.Erickson 2021, 4)[5]:

- thirty-six Bayraktar TB2 unmanned aircraft systems, armed with Roketsan MAM-L laser-guided munitions;
- forty-eight Israeli HAROP loitering munitions;
- a large number of Israeli Orbiter 1K loitering munitions, Elbit Hermes 450/900, SkyStriker and Aerostar UAs.

Azerbaijan's conversion of old Russian An-2 biplanes into drones was a novel approach, as their low-altitude flight revealed the positions of ground-based air defence structures, thus providing targets for Turkish drones (Hambling 2020). Using this tactic allowed the Azerbaijanis to destroy/disable the vast majority of Armenian air and missile defense systems and achieve tactical air superiority, with minimal risk to their own forces. This tactic is not exactly new, it is reminiscent of the *Wild Weasel* or *Hunter-Killer* concepts of the Vietnam era, where a bait aircraft would fly at low altitude in an attempt to force air defenses to open fire, so that another aircraft could engage exposed enemies (Thomas, et al. 2021).

The priority that the two countries gave to military development and modernization was reflected in the differences identified by military analysts at the beginning, and especially during the conflict. Thus, a SIPRI analysis (Wezeman, Kuimova and Smith 2021) showed that:

- in 2020, Armenia's military expenditures represented 4.9% of its gross domestic product (GDP), and Azerbaijan's represented 5.4%;
- military spending levels differed significantly between the two countries: Armenia spent in 2020 $634 million, while Azerbaijan, in the same year, spent $2,238 million;
- because neither country has a significant arms industry, both of them relied on external suppliers to expand, complement or develop their arsenals. The analysis of imports shows that they were asymmetric:

[3] N.A.: More details on loitering munitions can be found at https://dronecenter.bard.edu/loitering-munitions-in-focus/

[4] N.A.: A description of the HAROP system can be viewed at https://www.airforce-technology.com/projects/haroploiteringmuniti/

[5] ***, Azerbaijan, Air Force, in Jane's World Air Forces (Coulsdon, UK: Janes, 10 December 2020), 11–12, APUD Lt. Col. Edward J. Erickson, *Nagorno-Karabakh, Turkish Drone Success or Operational Art,* Military Review, Army University Press, URL: https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/Online-Exclusive/2021-OLE/Erickson/, accessed on 06.01.2022.

https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-04

in the period 2011–2020, the volume of Azerbaijan' arms imports is estimated by SIPRI to be 8.2 times higher than that of Armenia.

*Lessons Identified:*

*1. Establishing an inventory of forces and capabilities (to be prepared, acquired or developed) necessary to fulfill the established objectives or the perspective configuration of the armed forces;*

*2. The clear establishment of military priorities and the identification of that cooperation partner to support the modernization effort of the armed forces;*

*3. Development of new air defense concepts, doctrines and strategies to respond to threats generated by the use of UAS.*

## Implications for modern warfare/future conflicts

The existence of UAS in a country's inventory and their smart use provides a viable alternative to compensate for the poor effectiveness of manned aircraft. In the case of equal combatants in terms of military power, the orientation towards the acquisition and use of UAS provides an asymmetric advantage, which can be reflected in:

- targeting support;
- multiplying the effects by executing SEAD[6] missions, considering that a GBAD system cannot counter every air threat;
- increasing the research distance in proportion to maintaining a low risk level.

[6] Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses

The support of the Azerbaijani armed forces with unmanned aircraft systems was an important element in achieving the operational objectives set at military campaign level. Using a different flight profile than manned aircraft, difficult to detect by radar stations, UAS helped to exploit the vulnerabilities of the systems that provided their early warning and combat. The design of Azerbaijan's campaign ensured harmony between the campaign's objectives (the operational objectives set at the joint level), the ways of achieving the objectives and the means used[7].

[7] N.A: A well-argued view of Azeri campaign planning is provided by Lt. Col. Edward J. Erickson in *Nagorno-Karabakh, Turkish Drone Success or Operational Art?,* Military Review, URL: https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/Online-Exclusive/2021-OLE/Erickson/, accessed on 03.09.2021

On the first day of the Azeri offensive (27.09.2020), unmanned aircraft systems targeted Armenia's mobile short-range air defense systems (OSA/SA-8 and STRELA-10/SA-13), the systems' launchers S-300/SA-10 and KUB/SA-6 and long-range air defence systems radars (Roblin 2020). Their neutralization created the conditions for the full use of the entire UAS fleet. The equipment at the disposal of the Armenians was slightly used in combating air threats, the S-300 system, along with other systems manufactured in the 1970s and 1980s, proving ineffective against ballistic missiles and small UAS. Armenia's

recently acquired Russian Su-30 fighter jets, the most advanced in its air force, were not used in the conflict. This, coupled with the inability of Armenian air defence systems to counter Azeri UAS, allowed Azerbaijan to dominate the airspace and effectively engage opposing ground forces.

Overall, in the absence of a solid air defense architecture and in relatively permissive airspaces, drones have proven effective in SEAD-type missions (Kasapoglu 2020), *still considered* to be the responsibility of aircraft dedicated to such missions. SEAD operations conducted with UAS are ideal against those adversaries that do not have a layered air defence, supported by a command-and-control system to provide early warning, air picture of the battlefield or deconfliction of complex defence situations.

Azerbaijan's use of drones has proven to be a tactical success, although there are numerous examples in recent history of the devastating force of air power against a ground force with poor air defenses. The use of unmanned aircraft systems represents in this case rather a natural evolution of the use of air power than a revolution of it, as was warmly appreciated during the conflict. There is an ongoing concern for military analysts to identify lessons from contemporary conflicts, especially when new or modern weapon systems are used. At the same time, there is the danger of hasty generalizations starting from the study of isolated or poorly representative cases. The conclusion that in the future only unmanned aircraft systems will be used does not have a solid basis, given that the future combatants will approach the possibilities and vulnerabilities of new systems much more sharply. It is also unlikely that the exclusive use of UAS can provide adequate solutions against an experienced adversary with A2/AD[8] capabilities supported by electronic warfare and anti-drone systems (Kasapoglu 2020).

*Lessons Identified:*

*4. Acquisition or development of integrated SHORAD /VSHORAD[9] systems or revitalization of anti-aircraft artillery systems;*

*5. The integration of all air defense capabilities into a layered, balanced and robust system that ensures the assigned defence missions;*

*6. The development of technologies that can solve the problem of continuous detection and tracking of UAS, given the smaller and smaller dimensions and the characteristics of the manufacturing materials (plastic or composite materials).*

Open-source reports suggested that the drones helped to disable a large number of Armenian tanks, combat vehicles, artillery units and air defense systems. Their use also contributed to the disorganization of the supply and logistics system of the Armenian troops, which was the basis of the subsequent successes of the Azeris (Shaikh and Rumbaugh 2020)[10]. However, it should be noted that damage attributed to drones in this conflict has provoked,

[8] Anti-Access/ Area-Denial.

[9] SHORAD /VSHORAD - SHort Range Air Defense /Very SHort Range Air Defense.

[10] N.A: Shaan Shaikh și Wes Rumbaugh refer to The Fight For Nagorno-Karabakh: Documenting Losses On The Sides Of Armenia And Azerbaijan - Oryx (oryxspioenkop.com), where the authors, Stijn Mitzer and Joost Oliemans, present a detailed list (justified by photo and video captures) of vehicles destroyed and captured by the two countries involved in the conflict.

and continues to provoke heated debate, with many of the estimates likely to be exaggerated. An eloquent example of this is a Sputnik report in the Azerbaijani language, from which it follows that the number of tanks destroyed by drones is greater than the total number of tanks owned by Armenia (Gressel 2020).

While ground-based air defence is increasingly subject to criticism regarding the difficulty of combating UAS (the conflicts in Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh and more recently in Ukraine being the most conclusive), there must not be forgotten the context, the generation of GBAD systems, their mode of operation and their role in the overall military campaign. The first lesson learned from the Azerbaijani-Armenian clashes is "*the vulnerability of traditional ground units – armored, mechanized and motorized formations, in front of advanced drone combat concepts and capabilities*," said Can Kasapoglu, Director of Security and Defense Studies Program at EDAM (Center for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies, Istanbul)[11]. If the inherent vulnerabilities of some systems are something that can be accepted within certain limits, the lack of their protection to prevent their exploitation by the adversary is unthinkable.

Equally, it should not be overlooked that UAS are not invincible, with Turkey losing many of its TB2 drones in the Syrian conflict. An important aspect that should not be neglected is the fact that, when the Armenian ground units had no longer air defence provided by the air defense systems made available, the losses were considerable. Thus, Armenia's loss in the first days of the conflict of 84 tanks, along with numerous multiple launch rocket and artillery systems, compared to only 13 to 15 ground-based air defence systems, suggests an availability rather low of air defence relative to the size of the armored force (Kofman and Nersisyan 2020).

The need for air defence of the surface forces is a commitment for all military leaders, and achieving an advantageous ratio between the units to be defended and those providing the defense is the way to achieve it. Needless to say that a ground force lacking air defence is inherently vulnerable. In a situation where air threats are more and more serious and air protection is more and more difficult to achieve, the lack of it is simply an invitation to disaster.

*Lessons Identified:*

> *7. Obey and employ the specific principles of using ground-based air defense in operations. Particularly for this situation, massing, mixing and mobility*[12] *are the most important principles that were not, or could not be applied. The application of these principles must be correlated with the technical and tactical possibilities of each weapon and sensor system and the relevant factors regarding the mission received, the adversary and the operating environment, the support provided and the time available, the particularities of the troops and the objectives to be defended in relation to the priorities of the defence structures with the ground base involved.*

[11] ***, Ron Synovitz, Andrei Luca Popescu, „Tehnologie, comando și Turcia. Cum a câștigat Azerbaidjan în Nagorno-Karabah", URL: https://romania.europalibera.org/a/analiza-tehnologie-comando-turcia-azerbaidjan-nagorno-karabah/30950259.html, accessed on 06.01.2022

[12] N.A: The principles of ground-based air defense are: mass, mix, mobility, integration, flexibility, and agility. These are detailed in *FM 3-01, U.S. Army Air and Missile Defense Operations*, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., 22 December 2020, pp. 1-4÷1-6, URL: https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/Details.aspx?PUB_ID=1021420

It is possible that after this conflict there will be voices proclaiming the end of the era of tanks, armored structures and GBAD systems. This hypothesis must be analyzed both, from the perspective of the Azerbaijanis, who chose the winning option, with allies experienced in the use of drones, and the Armenians who, apart from the fact that they failed to keep the advantages obtained in the previous conflict, suffered from the uninspired decisions of the political-military leadership. It is difficult to argue that the era of tanks is over, but it is obvious that tanks, as well as other traditional land warfare platforms, will be easy targets for unmanned aircraft systems, if there are no short-range air defense structures in their organic structure, electronic warfare systems or systems dedicated exclusively to combating UAS (Kasapoglu 2020).

Logically, any armored or GBAD system, no matter how advanced, can turn into the same piles of scrap metal that paraded in Baku's Azadliq Square[13], if there is no disciplined, trained and prepared crew or combat team. In the video images available online, it can be seen how the Armenian armored vehicles do not maneuver, but move in tight formations, as if they are on a routine movement and not a combat one, and in the situation where they are in training areas or standby does not use any form of camouflage (Bateman 2020).

The conflict needs to be studied carefully and I think it is a big mistake to approach it only through the lens of the military power of the two countries and its outcome. The trend of stagnation or even elimination of anti-aircraft artillery systems is especially visible after the end of the Cold War, and the new SHORAD/VSHORAD systems, oriented more towards threats generated by helicopters, ground attack aircraft and cruise missiles have little chance to combat small drones or swarms of drones. It is probatory that, in the recent war in Nagorno-Karabakh, "*more MANPADs were destroyed by drones than they could shoot down drone*s themselves" (Gressel 2020). This must be both thought provoking and worrying.

And yet, the specialists' opinion is that the Azerbaijani UAS operated against an opponent who was unprepared or who had not learned anything from the 1994 conflict. In the absence of a layered air defense, the existing structures were mostly arranged on fixed mountain positions, thus constituting relatively easy targets. The air defence systems at Armenia's disposal (of Soviet origin and from the early 1970s) were not developed to engage targets such as drones or swarms of drones, loitering munitions, artillery projectiles. More advanced air defense capabilities, such as the Tor-M2, were intentionally kept in reserve, and the older S-300 PS systems appeared to have played no role in the conflict (Kofman and Nersisyan 2020).

*Lessons Identified:*

*8. Training of forces taking into account the lessons learned from previous confrontations and the permanent volatility of the operating environment;*

[13] N.A: Azerbaijan celebrated its victory in Nagorno-Karabakh with a grandiose military parade in Baku's Azadliq Square. 2,783 soldiers participated in the parade, that is, the number of Azerbaijani soldiers who died in the war. What attracted attention was the display during the parade of various weapons or weapon systems, damaged or not, captured from the Armenians.

https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-04

*9. The existence/presence of modern capabilities does not guarantee success, if they are not supported by training, organization, support and compatible leadership;*
*10. Reconsidering the importance of passive defense (early warning, dispersal, camouflage, concealment and deception, adopting a policy to control electromagnetic emissions, etc.) with a role in increasing the probability of survival.*

Combating UAS may prove difficult, but not impossible. In the case of the famous TB2s, the micro munitions on board[14] have a range (stated online) of about 15 km[15], which makes them difficult for most SHORAD air defence systems to combat. At the same time, TB 2 is an example of a target for which medium-range surface-to-air missile systems have not been developed, their purpose being mainly to combat much faster aircraft or missiles.

[14] Smart Micro Munition MAM-L
[15] https://www.roketsan.com.tr/en/products/mam-l-smart-micro-munition, accessed on 15.10.2022.

Even though drones have played an important role in this conflict, their capabilities should not be exaggerated, given that they present vulnerabilities that can be exploited by a well-prepared, layered ground-based air defense. Unfortunately, however, Armenia did not have the necessary number of GBAD systems to annihilate the advantage created by the use of drones, and the Russian-supplied *Polye-21* electronic warfare systems, succeeded in disrupting the use of drones, but only for four days (Shaikh and Rumbaugh 2020). Russia, which supported Armenians during the conflict, used the *Krasukha* electronic warfare system deployed in the Armenian city of Gyumri, only in the last days of the war to interdict reconnaissance missions carried out by Azeri drones deep into Armenian territory (Gressel 2020). Electronic countermeasures or kinetic and non-kinetic systems can offer solutions for combating drones, but the big question is whether it is possible to produce them in the necessary quantities, requested by the strategic, operational and, above all, tactical level echelons.

**In conclusion**, the conflict demonstrated that the traditional approach to war, through the prism of the use of traditional systems, is still relevant. The traditional operations of attack and counterattack, block, delay, deny, etc. remain crucial to the achievement of the assumed objectives, while UAS or drones have now become an integral part of the planning and conduct of modern warfare.

Electronic warfare and short-range air defense systems can be the primary option to combat loitering munitions or unmanned aircraft. Between expensive interceptors, intended for typical threats to achieve strategic and operational level effects (aircraft, ballistic, cruise or hypersonic missiles), and the previously presented options, the latter are preferable and must be developed to maintain a balance between the threat generated of UAS and combating it. It is essential to understand that the projection of military power in a modern battlefield begins with the elimination of threats posed

by relatively inexpensive systems, but with a high capacity to jam or saturate the systems designed to counter them.

Nations and armies are required to modernize their air defense systems to recover the gap between the threat and its elimination, looking for methods, revitalizing systems, rethinking air defence so that combating UAS does not become much more expensive than manufacturing them. Last but not least, perhaps the most important aspect: failure to heed the lessons of this conflict may be the most painful lesson that history has to offer. Free for us, but tragic for the South Caucasus.

## References

**Bateman, Robert.** 2020. *No, Drones Haven't Made Tanks Obsolete.* https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/15/drones-tanks-obsolete-nagorno-karabakh-azerbaijan-armenia/.

**Gressel, Gustav.** 2020. *Military lessons from Nagorno-Karabakh: Reason for Europe to worry.* https://ecfr.eu/article/military-lessons-from-nagorno-karabakh-reason-for-europe-to-worry/.

**Hambling, David.** 2020. *The 'Magic Bullet' Drones Behind Azerbaijan's Victory Over Armenia.* https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidhambling/2020/11/10/the-magic-bullet-drones-behind--azerbaijans-victory-over-armenia/?sh=762b36f5e571.

**Kasapoglu, Can.** 2020. *ANALYSIS - Five key military takeaways from Azerbaijani-Armenian war.* https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis/analysis-five-key-military-takeaways-from-azerbaijani-armenian-war/2024430.

**Kofman, Michael and Leonid Nersisyan.** 2020. *The second Nagorno-Karabakh war, two weeks in.* https://warontherocks.com/2020/10/the-second-nagorno-karabakh-war-two-weeks-in/.

**Lt. Col.Erickson, Edward J.** 2021. *The 44-Day War in Nagorno-Karabakh, Turkish Drone Success or Operational Art?* https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/img/Online-Exclusive/2021/erickson/Erickson-the-44-day-war.pdf.

**Mason, R. A., Air Vice Marshal.** 2014. "The Response to Uncertainty." In *European Air Power*, by John Andreas Olsen. Potomac Books.

**NATO Standardization Office.** 2016. "Allied Joint Doctrine for Air and Space Operations." North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

**Roblin, Sebastien.** 2020. *What Open Source Evidence Tells Us About The Nagorno-Karabakh War.* https://www.forbes.com/sites/sebastienroblin/2020/10/23/what-open-source-evidence-tells-us-about-the-nagorno-karabakh-war/.

**Shaikh, Shaan and Wes Rumbaugh.** 2020. *The Air and Missile War in Nagorno-Karabakh: Lessons for the Future of Strike and Defense.* https://www.csis.org/analysis/air-and-missile-war-nagorno-karabakh-lessons-future-strike-and-defense.

**Thomas, Nicole, Matt LTC Jamison, Kendall CAPT(P) Gomber and Derek Walton.** 2021. *What the United States Military Can Learn from the Nagorno-Karabakh War.* https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/what-united-states-military-can-learn-nagorno-karabakh-war.

https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-04

**Warden, John A.** 1988. *The Air Campaign, Planning for Combat.* Washington, DC: National Defense University Press.

**Wezeman, Pieter D., Alexandra Kuimova and Jordan Smith.** 2021. *Arms transfers to conflict zones: The case of Nagorno-Karabakh.* https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgrounder/2021/arms-transfers-conflict-zones-case-nagorno-karabakh.

BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

# The Survival of NATO in the Post-Cold War Era: A Comparative Analysis of Neorealist and Constructivist Theories

**Petar MURGINSKI, Ph.D. Candidate***

*Military Academy "G. S. Rakovski"
e-mail: murginski@yahoo.com

## Abstract

This scholarly article examines the continued existence of NATO after the end of the Cold War. Despite the disappearance of its primary adversary, the Soviet Union, NATO has continued to exist. The conventional neorealist explanation for the alliance's longevity, which states that NATO was established as a counterbalance to the Soviet Union and thus should have been dissolved upon its collapse, is challenged by the constructivist perspective. Constructivism argues that NATO persists as a result of the desire of liberal democracies to cooperate for the sake of peace and the influence of member states' collective identities. However, this constructivist explanation is criticized for being predicated on a specific understanding of NATO and for neglecting the crucial role of the United States in sustaining the alliance. This study contends that offensive neorealism, which takes into account the role of the United States in a value-neutral way, offers the most comprehensive explanation for NATO's persistence after 1991.

**Keywords:**
NATO; Cold War; neorealism; constructivism; international relations; Soviet Union; United States.

The end of the Cold War presented an existential crisis for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), whose raison d'être[1] for over forty years had been to safeguard Western Europe from a potential Soviet invasion. Despite this, NATO is set to mark its seventy-fourth birthday on April 4, 2023. This has posed a challenge to the conventional neorealist perspective on NATO's persistence, which maintains that the alliance was created as a means of balancing against the Soviet Union and could have thus dissolved with its collapse. Kenneth Waltz himself stated that *"NATO's days might not be numbered, but its years are"* (Waltz 1993, 71). The inadequacy of Waltzian neorealism to show why NATO has survived created a gap in the NATO literature, which constructivism has attempted to fill. From this perspective, NATO's survival is explained by the fact that it is more than a military alliance. NATO endures because of the "urge of liberal democracies" to cooperate for peace (Thies 2009, 238). The collective identities of the member states are a critical variable as they guide them to actions consistent with those identities (Risse-Kappen 1996). However, a good theory must be value-neutral. Constructivism's explanation for NATO's survival after 1989 derives from a particular conception of what NATO has been and therefore what it should be. By contrast, neorealism does not suffer from this bias. Crucially, constructivism is also criticized for overlooking the essential role of the United States in maintaining the alliance.

[1] A phrase meaning "the most important reason to exist".

To provide clarity on the choice of neorealism and constructivism as the two theories for this analysis, it is worth noting that the persistence of NATO after the end of the Cold War is a complex issue that can be approached from a variety of theoretical perspectives. Neorealism and constructivism were selected for this comparative analysis because they offer fundamentally different explanations for why NATO has continued to exist, despite the end of the Cold War. Neorealism views NATO as a product of power relations and the balance of power, while constructivism focuses on shared values and collective identities. By contrasting these two perspectives, this analysis intends to contribute to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the factors that have enabled NATO to persist beyond the Cold War.

This article aims to demonstrate that the theoretical framework of offensive neorealism is the most appropriate for understanding the continuation of NATO after the end of the Cold War. In order to accomplish this, the paper will proceed as follows. Initially, the literature that is influenced by constructivism in regards to the persistence of NATO will be examined. Subsequently, the primary counterargument to the thesis will be outlined and its limitations will be highlighted, specifically its narrow interpretation of NATO's history and disregard of the role played by the United States. Ultimately, the offensive neorealist argument will be developed to demonstrate that it is the theory that best explains the persistence of NATO after 1991 as it considers the vital role of the United States in a manner that is impartial and value-neutral.

## Analyzing the Constructivist Approach to NATO's Survival: An Examination of its Assumptions and Limitations

Initially, it may appear that constructivism offers a more comprehensive explanation than neorealism for the persistence of NATO following the end of the Cold War. Constructivists argue that NATO, from its inception, has been more than a military alliance, with a specific design as an international institution that differentiates it qualitatively from previous military alliances (Risse-Kappen 1996).

Building on Karl Deutsch's concept of a "security community"[2], Thomas Risse-Kappen posits that the democratic nature of members' domestic politics has been externalized to NATO, mediating power asymmetries within the alliance and creating a self-reinforcing democratic identity (Ibid., 380). For instance, NATO's "consultation norm" which Britain and France did not abide by during the Suez Crisis in 1956 caused a rift in transatlantic relations because such actions disregarded the collectively shared principles of NATO (Ibid., 385). The United States was much more upset by the fact that core NATO partners had acted unilaterally without alliance agreement than the use of force itself (Ibid., 386). Therefore, from its very inception, NATO was designed to be more than a military alliance as the member states were predominantly democracies.

[2] Karl Deutsch defined the "security community" as a group of states that had become integrated to the point at which there is "real assurance that the members of that community will not go to war, but will settle their disputes in some other way" (Adler and Barnett 1998, 6).

In turn, how NATO has dealt with crises over the years is different from conventional alliances. Indeed, the history of NATO has been described as one of perpetual crises, the next always labeled as a greatest threat to date (Hoffman 1981).

The crucial difference with previous military alliances is the democratic identity of the member states. According to Wallace Thies, in democracies, changes of government are regular occurrence, thereby providing opportunities to examine old polices and develop new ones. Usually alliances collapse at first sight of disagreement, but NATO's shared values makes the bond stronger than a marriage of convenience (Thies 2009). The alliance has endured because of this understanding between the democratic member states.

Therefore, by 1989, NATO had developed an established democratic collective identity. This collective identity meant that what kept NATO together was not only the need to defend against the Soviet Union, but the common understanding between the member states. The ending of the Cold War was not the end for NATO, and it survived because, over the course of its existence leading up to 1991, it had developed a collective democratic identity that ensured its coherence. This meant that NATO had become entrenched into the social structure of international relations as an idea of what democracies can achieve when they work together.

However, this explanation of NATO's continual existence is hampered by several significant flaws. Firstly, by focusing on the domestic identities of the member states, this argument neglects the crucial role of the United States in keeping the alliance together. This distorts the role of the structure of international relations in NATO's persistence. Secondly, constructivism offers a particularistic reading of NATO's history, which means that the theory is no longer value-neutral. These critiques will be further examined in the following section.

## The Flaws of Constructivism in Explaining NATO's Survival: A Critique of its Selective Reading of History and Lack of Neutrality

The theory of constructivism is flawed due to its biased interpretation of NATO's history prior to 1989. It fails to acknowledge the crucial role of the United States in maintaining the alliance. While it may be true that democracies treat each other differently, when the objectives of security and democracy clashed, the former certainly was more influential. For example, Risse-Kappen's claim that the United States was more concerned about the failure to consult with Britain and France during the Suez Crisis than the potential escalation of the Cold War in the Middle East ignores the severe realities of the bipolar struggle.

Additionally, the lack of consistency in regards to democracy within NATO is difficult to ignore. For instance, when Portugal joined NATO, it was initially not a democracy, and Greece and Turkey went through significant democratic setbacks in the 1960s (Best 2014, 150). Their geopolitical importance to the Western security order was clearly more significant than their domestic political systems, which led to their inclusion in NATO based on strategic considerations rather than democratic values. In particular, the need of the US to form a core set of allies against the Soviet Union during the bipolar struggle for dominance made maximizing Western security the chief objective of NATO. Therefore, it was the hegemonic leadership of the United States, not the democratic identity of the member states that held the alliance together.

From this, it can be inferred that constructivism's explanation for NATO's longevity ignores the role of the material structure of international relations. NATO is a product of the Cold War. The circumstances surrounding its creation prioritized security over a shared democratic identity. This trend continued into 1991, even after the Cold War ended, as states still prioritized survival over other objectives. To only focus on the externalization of member states' domestic identities is to overlook the fact that NATO is primarily a military alliance.

The perspective of the Cold War persisted even after it ended. The world remained uncertain and Europe remained a volatile region. Constructivism assumes that security

in Europe can be shaped by factors beyond material considerations. In reality, when it comes to security, values and identities have limited explanatory power.

Second, constructivism does not provide a neutral explanation for the survival of NATO. A sound theory must identify a dependent variable, the independent variable, and the mechanism linking the two. For constructivists, state behavior is caused by shared ideas about what democratic states should act like. Crucially, this constructivist explanation suffers from inconsistencies over the democratic identities of the member states. Its particularistic reading of NATO's history through the lens of democratic peace theory[3] endows it with a specific perspective of what NATO was during the Cold War and therefore what NATO should be after the Cold War. This explanation overlooks the inconsistencies in the democratic identities of the member states in order to justify a particular view of NATO. Therefore, the constructivist explanation is not independent of their beliefs about NATO. A good theory should be based on how the world actually is, not how it should be.

[3] Wallace Thies explicitly refers to democratic peace theory in his explanation of NATO's survival (Thies 2009, 33). Democratic peace theory is the idea that democratic countries are less likely to go to war with one another and tend to have more peaceful relations compared to non-democratic countries.

Having shown that constructivism is flawed on two fronts, it will now be demonstrated that offensive realism provides a more accurate explanation for NATO's survival after 1989 by properly accounting for the critical role of the USA and doing so in an objective manner.

## Understanding the Persistence of NATO: A Neorealist Perspective

According to Kenneth Waltz, neorealism is based on three key concepts (Waltz 2010). The first is that the international system is characterized by anarchy, meaning that there is no higher authority governing relations between states. Second, because of this anarchy, states are constantly concerned about the potential threat of other states and must focus on their own self-preservation, which creates a security dilemma (Waltz 2010), given that security is a zero-sum game, where efforts to increase security for one state decrease security for others. The third concept is that the distribution of capabilities among states determines their behavior. For example, during the Cold War, the bipolar distribution of power led states to align with one of the two hegemonies or to try to balance against them.

Applying this theory to understand the creation of NATO, it becomes clear that it was a means for Western European states to ensure their own survival. During the Cold War, NATO played a central role in the American-led security strategy in Western Europe. Up until 1989, the main reason for NATO's existence was to deter a potential Soviet invasion from the East. By 1991, this reasoning became less obvious. From a neorealist perspective, NATO should have dissolved as there was no longer a need to balance against a threat.

However, NATO was not only created to defend Western Europe, it also served as a tool for American foreign policy. The shift from a bipolar to a unipolar world, in which the US was the sole dominant power, did not change the logic behind NATO. It remained a means to ensure the security of the American-led Western order. Therefore, the persistence of NATO after the Cold War and its subsequent use reflects a strategy of "offensive dominance" through which the US sought to maintain the status quo in Europe in its favor (Hyde-Price 2014). NATO continued to exist because it was in the interest of the new global hegemon for it to do so.

In an anarchical world, states make trade-offs between security (defensive neorealism) and power (offensive neorealism) according to their circumstances. While until the end of the Cold War, NATO can be understood as a means to counterbalance the Soviet Union, after the Cold War it became a means to dominate the European security architecture. Depending on their material position, states decide whether the chances of their survival are increased through security or power.

Importantly, this explanation addresses the bias towards maintaining the status quo in defensive neorealism. Waltz's neorealism suggests that states only need enough power to feel secure against rivals, so once the Cold War was over, maintaining NATO was not necessary.

According to offensive neorealism, hegemony is the best strategy to remain secure. When given the opportunity, states will prioritize power over security as a way to ensure their survival (Mearsheimer 2012). From this perspective, international institutions like NATO are secondary – they exist only to support the power of a dominant state (Mearsheimer 1995).

The theory of constructivism is flawed in its understanding of international institutions like NATO, as it argues that they can reflect something other than the interests of states, such as an identity. However, offensive neorealism posits that states will always prioritize power over security, and that international institutions like NATO are simply tools for the dominant state to further its own interests. This is evident in the United States' continued dominance of the European security architecture through NATO even after the end of the Cold War, as seen in the adoption of the 1991 NATO Strategic Concept[4] which emphasized the preservation of the strategic balance in Europe. This concept suggested the need to *"preserve the strategic balance in Europe"* as a fundamental task of NATO (Stent 2014, 6).

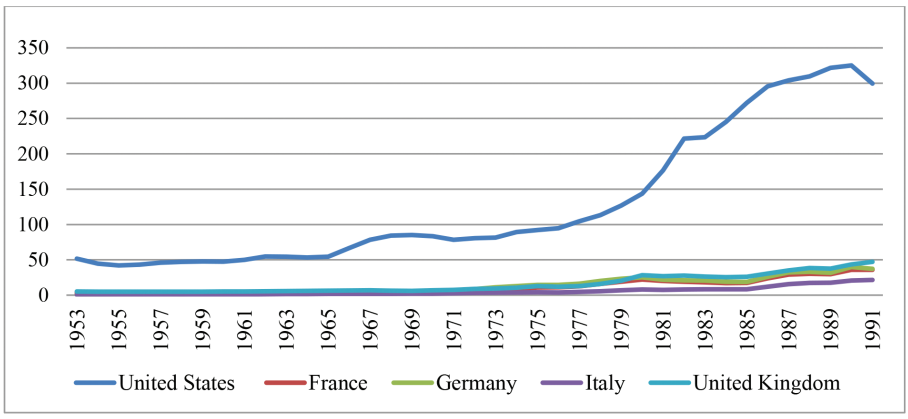
More importantly, in 1991, even though the Cold War had ended, there was still a sense of uncertainty about the future and what it would bring. NATO's importance did not disappear with the Cold War. It was important for American

[4] In November 1991, just days before the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO Heads of State and Government adopted The New Strategic Concept to guide the alliance's transition from the Cold War era to a post-Cold War world. This Concept confirmed the defensive nature of the alliance and the determination of its members to protect their security, emphasizing the continued importance of collective defence and deterrence, while also recognizing the need for cooperative security measures and promoting democratic values. Additionally, it called for contributing to conflict prevention and crisis management in areas of potential instability.

grand strategy because it consolidated the international primacy of the US. Simply because the Soviet Union and subsequently Russia were weakened, this did not mean that NATO should stop worrying about the potential of a resurgent Russia (Murginski and Tonkov 2022, 32). As Margaret Thatcher put at the time: *"You do not cancel your home insurance because there have been fewer burglaries in the last 12 months"* (Martin și Martonffy 2019). This is mirrored by Angela Stent who has suggested that *"The US-Russian agenda in 1992 was limited. President George H.W. Bush and his key advisors, General Brent Scowcroft and Secretary James Baker, were realists who generally viewed foreign policy through the prism of US interest"* (Stent 2014, 10). This sense of uncertainty about the end of the Cold War showed that the security dilemma had not been resolved and the potential for conflict remained.

According to constructivism, the alliance of democratic states within NATO has altered the balance of power and led to a collective decision-making process. However, this is unlikely as Table 1 quickly reveals.

**TABLE 1. Military Expenditure by Country (1953-1991, US$ Billion)**




Source: SIPRI[5]

The data of military expenditure between 1953 and 1991 clearly shows that none of the key allies – United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Italy – came close to the military expenditure of the United States. The material structure of the alliance has a significant impact on the decision-making process, including the ending of the Cold War and the future of NATO, with the US being the dominant force in the alliance rather than an equal member.

Offensive neorealism explains the continuation of NATO in a value-neutral way, without attempting to theorize about what it should or could be. Instead, it is based on the historical context and objective realities of the Cold War and its end. Unlike constructivism, it explains the behavior of states based on the material structure of the international system. The American patronage was crucial for the development of NATO (Best 2014, 30) since its beginning

[5] *The SIPRI Military Expenditure Database* includes data for 173 countries for the period 1949-2021. The database has been newly extended, having in the past only covered the period beginning in 1988 (sipri.org n.d.).

and this guarantee the security of Western Europe during the second half of the 20th century. Even with the end of the Cold War, the security of these countries was still dependent on the United States.

## Conclusion

In this scholarly article, I have examined the reasons for NATO's persistence in the post-Cold War era from the perspectives of constructivism and neorealism. My findings suggest that while constructivism provides valuable insights into the role of shared values and collective identities, it fails to fully explain the reality of international relations. On the other hand, offensive neorealism, which takes a value-neutral approach and considers power relations, offers a more comprehensive explanation for NATO's persistence after 1991.

It is important to acknowledge that different theoretical frameworks can explain NATO's continued existence. My comparison of constructivism and neorealism was motivated by a desire to explore different perspectives on NATO's survival and to assess their explanatory power. In this regard, I chose offensive neorealism as the most appropriate lens through which to understand NATO's continued existence, given its emphasis on power relations and its ability to explain the crucial role played by the US in sustaining the alliance.

In conclusion, this paper suggests that NATO's survival after the end of the Cold War is best explained through the lens of offensive neorealism, which emphasizes the role of power relations and the hegemonic leadership of the United States. While constructivism may offer valuable insights into the role of shared values and collective identities in sustaining the alliance, it falls short of providing a complete explanation of NATO's persistence in the post-Cold War era. This analysis aims to offer a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex forces that have shaped the institutional order in Europe, and may provide valuable insights for policymakers and scholars interested in the ongoing evolution of the respected transatlantic alliance.

## References

**Adler, Emanuel, and Michael Barnett.** 1998. *Security Communities.* Cambridge University Press.

**Best, Anthony.** 2014. *International History of the 20th Century.* London: Routledge.

**Flockhart, Trine.** 2014. "Understanding NATO Through Constructivist Theorising." In *Theorising NATO: New Perspectives on The Alliance*, by Mark Webber and Adrian Hyde-Price. London: Routledge.

**Hoffman, Stanley.** 1981. "Nuclear Weapons in the 1980s: NATO and Nuclear Weapons: Reasons and Unreason." *Foreign Affairs* (2).

**Hyde-Price, Adrian.** 2014. "NATO and the European Security System: a neo-realist analysis." In *Theorising NATO*, by Adrian Hyde-Price and Mark Webber, 50-64. London: Routledge.

**Martin, Garet, and Balazs Martonffy.** 2019. "NATO turns 70 this week. Here's how the alliance stays relevant — despite Trump." *The Washington Post.*

**Mearsheimer, John.** 1995. "The False Promise of International Institutions." *International Security* 19 (3): 5-49.

**—.** 2012. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics.* New York: Norton.

**Murginski, Petar, and Preslav Tonkov.** 2022. "An Attempt to Explore the Potential for Change in Russia's Domestic System and Its Foreign Policy: Lessons on the Cold War End." *Bulletin of "Carol I" National Defence University* 11 (3): 30-37.

**Risse-Kappen, Thomas.** 1996. "Collective Identity in a democratic community." In *The Culture of National Security:Norms and Identity in World Politics*, by Peter Katzenstein, 50-83. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

**Stent, Angela.** 2014. *The Limits of Partnership.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

**Thies, Wallace J.** 2009. *Why NATO Endures.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Waltz, Kenneth.** 1993. "The Emerging Structure of International Politics." *International Security* 18 (2): 75-76.

**—.** 2000. "Structural Realism after the Cold War." *International Security* 25 (1): 5-41.

**—.** 2010. *Theory of International Politics.* New York: Waveland Press.

No.1/2023, JANUARY-MARCH
https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-06

BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

# Transborder Crimes and the Challenges of Regional Integration in West Africa: Insights from the Nigeria-Benin Republic Borders

**Luqman SAKA, Ph.D.***
**Adebola Rafiu BAKARE, Ph.D.****
**Humphrey Chinedu NWAORGU*****
**Sherifdeen Adeoye OLADEJO******

*College of Arts and Sciences, University of the Gambia;
Department of Political Science, University of Ilorin, Nigeria
e-mail: l.saka@utg.edu.gm; sakaluqman@unilorin.edu.ng
**Department of Political Science, University of Ilorin, Nigeria
e-mail: bolaonboard@yahoo.com; bakare.ar@unilorin.edu.ng
***Department of Political Science, Federal University Wukari, Nigeria
e-mail: humphrey@fuwukari.edu.ng
****Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria
e-mail: oladejosherifdeen@gmail.com; oladejo.adeoye2288@fcesoyo.edu.ng

## Abstract

Transborder crimes and the operation of criminal syndicates have emerged as major threats to security and efforts to advance integration in West Africa. The proliferation of transborder criminal syndicates and rising criminal activities has made member states take steps to curtail these growing challenges, sometimes with unintended consequences on the free flow of factors of production as enshrined in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol on Free Movement. Informed by the need to understand the challenges that transborder crimes pose within a specific context, this study examines transborder criminal activities across the Nigeria-Benin Republic border. The study assesses three forms of criminal activities along the two countries' borderlands and their implications for the security of the two countries concerned. The qualitative method was adopted, and data for the study was derived from mostly secondary and less primary sources. These criminal activities affect the national security of the two countries and impact efforts to advance integration in the sub-region. The study recommends the implementation of joint border security reforms.

**Keywords:**
Transborder crimes; criminal syndicates; borderland; security; Nigeria; Benin Republic.

ECOWAS was established in 1975 with the objective of promoting cooperation and advancing development in economic, political, social and cultural relations among member states. Four decades after, the organisation can be said to have achieved relative successes in the areas of economic integration, enhancing social relations among member's citizens, evolving a security architecture and striving to advance democratic governance (Jaye and Amadi 2011, 3-6; Dokubo 2009, 149; Adeniyi 2000, 16). Despite these, the sub-region is still confronted with number of challenges of which transborder crimes and the activities of transborder criminal syndicates remain significant (Darkwa 2011, 7).

Given the nature of transnational migration among people in the sub-region, ECOWAS has had to contend with the activities of transborder criminal syndicates (Dokubo 2009, 150; Adepoju 2005). This is despite efforts by member states to secure their borderlands. Due to several factors, such as porous borders, weak state institutions, and the cross-cutting nature of ethno-linguistic affiliations in the sub-region, criminal syndicates have found it easy to maintain their networks of operations (Williams and Haacke 2008, 122). Indeed, transborder criminal activities remain an important business enterprise in West Africa (Constanze 2014, 3). Syndicates that operate through borderlands deployed numerous tactics in the conduct of their business of which corruption and monetary compromise of officials of state institutions and the use of force remain pre-eminent (Oche 2009, 249).

Several efforts such as anti-crime border patrol, joint border security measures and anti-human trafficking modalities have been adopted by member-states in collaboration with international organisations to curtail the incidence, but with little success (Akinsuyi 2002, 47). In his study, Omoniyi also revealed that the government has taken various measures both at national, bilateral and at multinational levels to respond to the challenges of the criminal activities of some undesirable elements in the society but all the efforts of the government have not yielded the desired results (Omoniyi 2023, 19).

Giving credence to this position, the United Nations Office for Drug and Crime (UNODC) in its 2015 report notes that, 'the use of the African continent as a trans-shipment region for cocaine trafficking to Europe continues, with countries in West Africa being reported as transit countries (UNODC 2015, 56). The report also notes that West Africa appears to have become an established source of the methamphetamine smuggled into East and South-East Asia via Southern Africa or Europe (UNODC 2015, xiii). Stressing the debilitating effects of trans-national drug trafficking, the report notes that, "the vulnerability of Africa to drugs trafficking and crimes remains a grave concern because the illicit flows bring with them other forms of organised crime, and undermine security, health and development in an already fragile region (UNODC 2015, xiii; UNODC 2013, 3). It was found that the weak border security in sub – region had attracted international criminal networks to Nigeria (Omoniyi 2023, 13).

The Nigeria-Benin Republic borderlands can be said to be the most important in West Africa as it connect Nigeria, the largest economy in term of GDP, manufacturing base, volume and weight of external trade with the rest of ECOWAS member states to the West (Hoffman and Paul 2015, vii); (Constanze 2014, 3). The borderlands between the two countries run from south to north along a roughly 700 km stretch. At the Nigeria end, the borderland runs through six subnational units.[1] Although there is no accurate data, however, the extent of unrecorded and informal transborder trade transaction between Nigeria and its neighbours notably Benin Republic is enormous and staggering (Hoffman and Paul 2015, 16); (Constanze 2014, 4). While the State losses huge revenue as a result of informal trade that is legal, the most troubling dimension of informal trade network between the two is the increasing rise of illegal transborder criminal activities. The most notable are drug trafficking, human trafficking, armed robbery, car snatching, trade in contraband items, trafficking in weapons among other criminal ventures (Constanze 2014, 5-6).

Given the importance of the Nigeria-Benin Republic borderlands to trade, commerce, and other forms of transborder activities in West Africa, it becomes important to conduct a context specific study on the menace of 'select' transborder crimes and their implications on security to both states and the sub-region in general. We also examine the security implications of such criminal activities on the two countries and how it impacted regional integration.

This study adopted qualitative research using the case study method. Primary and secondary sources of data were employed. The three criminal activities selected for consideration were smuggling of contraband goods, transborder armed robbery and car snatching, and human trafficking. The method of data analysis entailed content discussion of the documents gathered as they relate to the three transborder crimes. The study was divided into five sections. Following this introduction is the conceptual and theoretical issues on regionalism and integration. This is followed by review of literature on transborder crime, criminality and criminal syndicate. Then comes the discussion of the dynamics of transborder crime along the Nigeria-Benin Republic border areas with specific focus on human trafficking, smuggling, armed robbery and car snatching. The study then examines the effects of these transborder crime on Nigeria and Benin Republic, their impacts on integration in West Africa and then comes the conclusion.

## On Integration: Definition and theoretical position

As Sakyi and Osei Opoku (2014, 1) note, literature and reality have made it clear that economic, geopolitical, and socio-cultural relationships across the globe are changing rapidly. These changes have resulted in the dramatic rise in the number of regional trade agreement institutions since the end of the Cold War. These new economic integration mechanisms are expected to drive economic growth and

improve the living conditions of citizens in member nations. Attempts at integration in Africa date back to 1910 when the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU) was formed. As states in Africa achieved political independence, the call for the formation of regional organizations to drive economic cooperation and political unity was strongly echoed by early political leaders. Their efforts culminated in the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. The 1985 Lagos Plan of Action and the recognition of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as veritable sub-regional structures for advancing economic cooperation and integration represent further attempts by the OAU and later the African Union (AU) to advance the course of integration in Africa. Thus, African leaders have consistently promoted the idea of regionalism mainly because of its potential socio-political, economic, and other allied benefits (Hartzenberg 2011).

It is important to note that while the concepts of regionalism and economic integration are often used interchangeably, the two are not necessarily the same in meaning and in practical manifestations. Regionalism is much broader and involves forming entities of countries with shared political, economic, social, cultural, and geographical demarcations. On the other hand, economic integration is often considered within the framework of economic theory especially as it relates to its contribution to understanding the economic aspect of regionalism and integration in its broader sense (Sarkyi and Osei-Opoku 2014, 4). The elusiveness of what constitutes regionalism, its relationship with economic integration and their link with integration have been well captured by Mansfield and Milner (1999).

Ravenhill in Odijie (2022) also, recognized different types of integration in Africa since independence, but he distinguished between political regionalism and economic regionalism. He defined political regionalism as involving institutions whose primary goal is to promote a sense of collective identity to enhance the voice of a group of states in global affairs. He also identified a second form of regionalism in Africa, economic regionalism, which he conceptualised as collaborative action by states to remove barriers to the flow of goods and services, migration, and capital (Odijie 2022).

At the beginning when the theories of integration were developed, there was much discussion on how to conceptualise integration. If integration is conceived both as a process and an end product, then it could be defined as a process that leads to a predetermined state of affairs (Laursen 2008, 4). Arising from this, Deutsch et al conceive integration as the 'attainment, with a territory, of a 'sense of community' and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a 'long time', dependable expectation of 'peaceful change' among its population (Deutsch, et al. 1957, 5-6). Thus, when a group of people of states have been integrated this way, they can be said to constitute a 'security community'. Hass in his classic work on the European Coal and Steel Community, define integration as "the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded

to shift their loyalties, expectation and political activities to a new centre whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over pre-existing national states (Hass, 1958, 16).

The logic of political integration was first systematically theorised using the lens of neo-functionalism by Hass in his seminal work on the European Coal and Steel Community, 'the Uniting of Europe (Burley and Mattli 1993, 53). According to Haas (1970, 610), neo-functionalism as a theory of integration is concerned with 'how and why nation-states cease to be wholly sovereign, how and why they voluntarily mingle, merge, and mix with their neighbours so as to lose the factual attributes of sovereignty while acquiring new techniques for resolving conflicts between and among themselves. Much as reality has shown that integration is on full course noting the differential in the process, coverage and depth of cooperation and integration across regions of the world, issues of sovereignty remain a major challenge to advancing integration in terms of depth and substantive issues that states engage in integration are willing to submit to the authority and institutions above the nation-states. As Mwanawina (2011, 465), notes the greatest dilemma facing states relates to how far they have to shed their ability to control and dictate the internal affairs of their countries in favour of agreement and treaties they have voluntarily entered into. This dilemma is clearly apparent and reflects in the way and manner states in West Africa have stalled the process at advancing the depth of the process of integration giving the states continued hang-over on the issue of sovereignty (Mwanawina 2011, 481; Nzewi 2009, 5). Notwithstanding the dilemma of sovereignty and other criticisms that have been levied against regional integration, neo-functionalism remains relevant in explaining the processes and progress of integration within ECOWAS.

## Transborder crimes, criminality, and criminal syndicates: A review of extant literature

Transborder crimes are set of criminal activities whose perpetrators, perpetration and repercussions extend beyond territorial borders (Sunday, Oji and Okechukwu 2014). United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) notes that crimes are said to be transborder if: they are committed in more than one state; they are committed in one state but a substantial part of their planning, direction or control takes place in another; they are committed in one state but involve an organized criminal group that engages in criminal activities in more than one state and finally, they are committed in one state but have substantial effects in another state. Crimes including human, drug and arms trafficking, armed robbery, money laundering, mineral resources and contrabands smuggling amongst others constitute transborder crimes when they transcend national borders (Addo 2006). Aside contravening laws and conventions, these crimes constitute major threat to democracy and undermine security and regional integration (Ening 2011; The Sun 2007).

Transborder crimes are perpetuated when capability, opportunity and motivation coalesced (Sunday, Oji and Okechukwu 2014, 50). The capability upon which crimes are committed across borders includes the criminal syndicates and the materials by which these crimes are perpetuated. Studies have shown that opportunity for transborder crimes is enhanced where there are some ease of transportation and communication, porous borders that guarantees easy movement of people and commodities, lack of mechanism to monitor movement across borders and weak governmental institutions (Onuoha 2013; Wakili 2009, 89). Likewise, transborder crimes have the tendency to be committed in states characterized by widespread poverty, corruption and transborder trade liberalization arising from integration process (Wakili 2009, 89). This is the situation in West Africa where the adoption of Structural Adjustment Programme had rolled back the states thus accentuating poverty and creating the enabling environment for rising criminalities and the emergence of criminal syndicates (The Punch 2012, 3). In his study, Omoniyi (2023) asserted that criminal activities across Nigerian borders are high and have been identified but the responses towards addressing them both at national and sub- regional levels have simply fallen short of creating a secure, stable and peaceful environment for Nigeria economic development and socio-political advancement" (Omoniyi 2023, 19).

Demonstrating how failing economies and poor governance aided the proliferation of transborder criminal syndicates and rising crimes Alemika, notes that:

> unscrupulous economic factor manifests in ineffective managerial decisions; regulations distorting link between supply and demand; weak economic regulation incapable of preventing illicit market; large informal sector impairing trade regulation in and across state borders and deprivations such as mass poverty, unemployment, low income and wide economic appetite for foreign-made goods. Harsh political factor includes weak regulatory capability over economic activities; political instability; armed conflicts and war and political corruption facilitating collaborations between criminal gangs and government officials. Weak legal factor includes ineffective legal platform and excessive prohibition of goods and services needed by majority of the population without corresponding effort at industrialization (Alemika 2009, 15).

Dokubo (2009) and Adepoju (2005) note that transborder crimes have the opportunity to be committed in regions with protocol for free movement of persons among member-states especially where there exist relative differences in economic endowment. It is argued that such condition will prompt citizens from the economically disadvantaged member-states to always want to move to member-states with economic advantage thereby leading to illegal migration. This was the case between Nigeria and its neighbours, notably Benin, Chad, and Niger Republics and Ghana in the 1980s.

Importantly, transborder crimes do not just happen. Transborder criminal gangs are driven by mirage of motivations. Although there is no consensus among authors

on what motivate transborder syndicates as motivation is largely informed by policy ends. However, most literature affirmed that transborder criminals are often motivated by financial benefits, and other socio-political inducements (Alemika 2009, 10). Besides, other inducement includes the get-rich-quick syndrome, insatiable appetite for foreign made goods, pecuniary interest and the mentality of the border communities that participation in transborder economic activity whether legal or illegal is their own birth right (Oche 2009, 249; Flynn 1997).

## Human Trafficking, Smuggling, Armed Robbery and Car Snatching along Nigeria-Benin Republic Borderlands

Nigeria-Benin Republic border has become major theatre and centre of attraction for criminal syndicates and route for high level transborder crimes in West Africa. Transborder crimes have become fundamental social problems and heighten security concern between the two countries. The most prominent of the social concern relates to the operations of criminal elements engaging in human trafficking business. Their activities have become a fundamental security threat to the citizens of the two countries. Human trafficking thrives in West Africa because of the significant presence of Nigerian traffickers with operational bases in Benin, Togo, Ghana, Guinea, Mali and South Africa (Ikoh 2013). Study revealed that the targets of trafficking in West Africa are mainly children, women and economic migrants (Akinyemi 2019, 48).

While the root causes of human trafficking are complex and interrelated, poverty is a primary factor. Other identifiable push factors include traditions and cultural values, gender discrimination, social changes altering migratory patterns, labour requirements, among others. These factors are worsened by situations of instability or conflict in some regions, especially West and Central Africa. However, increasing demand also seems to be a crucial factor in the rising incidence of human trafficking in Africa. Trafficking victims often become prey not only to sexual exploitation and economic exploitation, but also forced participation in conflict. Whereas trafficked girls feed prostitution rackets in Europe, boys are often enlisted in the illicit sale of arms and drug trafficking (Aning 2007, 5; Ndiribe 2006).

Even though there is no accurate data on women and child trafficked, a general trend shows increase in human trafficking, especially in Central and West Africa (Andrés 2008, 210-211; Aning 2007, 5; UNODC 2005, 12). Nigerians were right at the heart of the human trafficking business in West Africa as perpetrators and victims. The fact that reported cases of rescued victims by government agencies and those deported from abroad are rife attest to Nigeria's centrality to the human trafficking business in West Africa (Oche 2009, 258). For instance, the National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons, NAPTIP rescued 777 Nigerians trafficked to Benin Republic in 2014 (United States Department of State 2014). In the same vein, Nigeria

Immigration Services rescued 25 victims trafficked outside Nigeria who were handed over to NAPTIP at Seme border in 2014 (News Agency of Nigeria 2014).

The United Nations International Children and Education Fund, UNICEF rescued 7,800 children trafficked from Togo, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Niger at Porto-Novo and Parakou in Benin for child labour in 2013 (United States Department of State 2014). A 33-year Nigerian woman was arrested by the Nigeria Immigration Services while trafficking eight Nigerians across Seme border in 2012 (Olatunji 2012). Similarly, NAPTIP rescued 1,257 persons trafficked across Nigeria-Benin Republic border in Benin between 2003 and 2006. Stressing the depth of the crisis of human trafficking in Nigeria, Mr Josiah Emereole NAPTIP Intelligence Officer disclosed at the third International Conference for women and children in Lagos that a population of 750,000-1 million are trafficked within and across Nigeria borderland yearly and 80 percent of Nigerian ladies so trafficked are forced into prostitution in Italy and Southern Europe (Onanuga and Adepoju 2013, 4; UNODC 2015, 27).

Aside its many implications on the national and human security, human trafficking has become a major source of worry, embarrassment and ridicule to Nigerian embassies abroad. In an interview with the European Correspondent of the News Agency of Nigeria, NAN, the Nigeria's ambassador to Russia, Asam disclosed that:

> the major consular challenge in Moscow is the influx of trafficked persons from Nigeria. No fewer than 200 girls are trafficked every month and we have many of them exposed to danger… we have deported over 240 girls since 2012. You will be shocked at the extent of resistance from the girls. These girls are not tourists, students or government officials, yet they were given visas from the Russian Embassy in Abuja (The Nation 2013, 19).

Relating a similar story, the Nigerian Ambassador to Mali, Mr Iliya Nuhu in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria lamented that:

> an average of 30 Nigerian girls are being trafficked into Mali daily. The problem had grown in magnitude and sophistication, a "kind of modern-day slavery" with Nigerians going to their villages or towns to recruit young girls. Traffickers are taking advantage of Nigeria's economic problems to lure their victims with the promises of setting them up in "very lucrative businesses abroad". They go to Nigeria to source these girls and sell them off to their cronies not only in Mali but other countries. Since August, we have assisted not less than 30 of these girls to return to the country (The Punch 2012, 13).

Meanwhile, more cases of repatriation of trafficked victims by anti-trafficking agencies have been reported from Nigeria and Benin Republic (Olayinka 2011, 47). There continued to be consistent reported cases of Nigerians rescued from traffickers within Nigeria's borders with its neighbours notably Benin Republic and outside the country notably Europe. Likewise, officials of relevant agencies notably NAPTIP continue to raise alarm in relation to the fate of Nigerians trapped in countries in

the Sahel and North Africa (Idoko 2009, 7; Busari 2008, 27). Officials of NAPTIP also continue to sensitize the public about the agency's efforts at repatriating and rehabilitating victims of human trafficking in particular children that were trafficked for forced labour within the sub-region (Nwokolo 2008, 4).

While human trafficking has serious implications on human and national security, smuggling of contra-band goods across Nigeria borders with Benin Republic impact the economy of the Nigerian state. By-passing official routes, criminal syndicates on a daily basis smuggled banned and unbanned goods from Benin Republic into Nigeria deriving the Nigerian state billions in revenue from duties. From the Nigerian side, refined petroleum product is daily smuggled into Benin Republic. Smugglers engage in the use of numerous illegal border routes, forgery of official documents, and corruption of borders officers to get ease of passage for their goods. The porous and ungovernable nature of the Nigeria-Benin Republic borderland greatly aid the thriving of smuggling business between the two countries and the rest of the sub-region (Addo 2006, 1).

The Nigeria border security agencies and the Nigerian Police Force are doing their best at curtailing the activities of smugglers as indicated by the consistent reports of seizure of smuggled goods. For example, it was reported that the Federal Operations Units (FOU) a special branch of the Nigerian Custom Service, Ikeja Unit impounded 195 Vehicles including 95 scraps worth N228.2 million, with payable duty valued at N79.6 million between January and June 2015 (Ebosele 2015, 40b). The special unit was also reported to have impounded 22,742 bags of rice valued at N113.5 million and with a payable duty valued at N34.1 million. The unit also impounded assorted general merchandise including new and used textiles, new and used shoes, vegetable oil, insecticide, wine, spaghetti and noodles, soaps and detergents valued at N119.8 million with payable duty of N24.2 million. The number of seizures recorded by the unit between January and June of 2015 was put at 1,030 valued at N592.6 million (Ebosele 2015, 40b). Similar accounts of seizures of goods were reported for 2014. Giving the breakdown of the activities of the Unit, controller of the FOU, Ikeja, Turaki Adamu disclosed that the Unit recorded 2,914 seizures valued at N2.065 billion between January and December 2014 (Oseghale 2015, 44). For the year 2012, the Special Unit recorded seizures put at 3,313 with duty paid value estimated at over N1.2 billion (Ebosele 2013, 38).

The activities of smugglers have serious detrimental effects on the Nigerian state in relation to revenue loses. On rice smuggling alone, available statistics from the Nigerian Custom Service revealed that 5.5 million metric tons of rice are consumed yearly in Nigeria. Of this 1.8 million are produced locally while 3.7 million tons are imported and of this figure nearly 50 percent are smuggled into the country. The revenue loss arising from this is put at N3.3 billion yearly (Dada 2014; Ezem 2013, 18). The figures above exclude revenue loss arising from smuggling of textiles, frozen poultry products, used tires, fairly used cars, pharmaceutical products, assorted wines and spirits among others (Ogundare 2008, 14; The Comet 2004, 23). While

the concerted efforts of the Nigerian Custom Service to combat smuggling had yielded appreciable results as indicated by the increase in revenue generated by the agency for the Nigerian state in recent time, yet the activities of smugglers continued unabated on the stretch of borderlands between Nigeria and Benin.

Transborder armed robbers and carjackers complete the dangerous quartet of transborder criminals whose heinous activities had constituted security threats in Nigeria and Benin Republic. While their criminal activities had proved worrisome for the two countries, it had been more troubling for Nigeria that bears the greatest brunt of the consequences of their operations (Nigerian Tribune 2003, 10). Nigeria and Benin Republic have witnessed series of armed robbers' raids on banks, other financial institutions and business outlets and the snatching of exotic cars at gun point perpetuated by transborder criminal syndicates operating from the two sides of the borderland. For example, it was reported that the Nigeria Police Force arrested a gang of eight-man armed robbers from Nigeria who carted away N100 million when they raided a bank in Port-Novo, Benin Republic in 2014. The gang was reported to have been involved in many robbery operations in Mali, Benin Republic, and other West African countries. Items recovered from them include two AK-47 rifles, 11 AK-47 loaded magazines and a Toyota Sienna bus used in their operation (Usman and Onyegbula 2015).

Of the forms of transborder armed robbery, the snatching of luxury cars especially from Southwestern Nigerian cities for onward sales in Benin Republic is the most widely reported. Reports about gunpoint snatching of cars worthy millions of Naira that often vanished into thin air once they found their way into Benin Republic territory are not only numerous but legion (Olisah 2003, 1). For instance, it was reported that a top-of-the-line Range Rover Utility Vehicle belonging to the Managing Director of Socopao Nigeria Limited was snatched at Agege, Lagos state by a four-men gang in 2013 (Alade and Igbokwe 2013; Oseghale 2013). In the same manner, a 2006 Range Rover Sport belonging to a popular Nigerian Yoruba musician was snatched at gun point also in Lagos, taken to Cotonou where it was sold off. While there have been numerous reports of arrest of such gang members within Nigerian border many still manage to evade arrest by escaping to Benin Republic where they seek sanctuary (Alade and Igbokwe 2013; Oseghale 2013). While the Nigerian authority had sought the cooperation of Benin Republic government for the arrest and extradition of identified car snatchers such has not easily come forth. Reports attribute this reluctance to the allegation that leaders of some of the car-snatching syndicates have links with politicians and top government officers in Benin Republic (Alli 2003, 7; Williams 2003, 1).

The foot dragging and inability of security agencies from Nigeria to secure the cooperation of their counterparts in Benin Republic was reported to have informed the decision by the Nigerian government under former President Obasanjo to order the total seal off of Nigeria border with Benin Republic in August of 2003 (Nigerian

Tribune 2003, 10; Okoro 2003, 9). The hard stance of the Nigerian government under President Obasanjo forced the Beninoise authority to expedite action on their investigations of suspected syndicates. The border closure and shuttle diplomacy between Obasanjo and Kerekou that arise thereof resulted in the signing of a bi-lateral agreement between Nigeria and Benin Republic in which the latter commit to extradite all suspects to Nigeria and returned all stolen vehicles that can be traced to have been stolen from Nigeria. This agreement led to the extradition of a Beninoise, Ahman Tedjani that reports noted to be leader of a notorious car-snatching syndicate (Akinmade 2003, 1; Olisah 2003, 1).

## Implications of Transborder Crimes on Nigeria and Benin Republic

Transborder crimes did impact negatively on nation's economy, social relations, distort policy, compromise governance process, undermine national and human security among others. Transborder crimes that is prevalent in the borderland between Nigeria and Benin Republic did impact on various facet of policy and governance process in the two countries and posed challenges to regional integration in West Africa (The Punch 2005, 16; UNODC 2005, 6-9; Ening 2011, 77-79). Of the three transborder crimes considered in this study, Benin Republic can be said to be negatively affected by two which are; transborder armed robbery and human trafficking while smuggling of contrabands affects it positively. On the other hand, Nigeria's is negatively impacted by the three criminal activities. Available statistics notes that the citizens of both countries are victims of human trafficking (UNODC 2013, 24-31; UNODC 2005, 25-27; Andrés 2008, 10; Addo 2006, 8).

Victims trafficked from Nigeria and Benin Republic are forced into child labour, prostitution and domestic servitude within the sub-region, South Africa, Europe and Middle East (Ogundare 2008, 14). Noting the serious implications of human trafficking on Nigeria and victims of the illicit human flesh trade, the Nigerian Tribune argued that trafficking of women for prostitution has given the country a very bad name. The paper however, notes that the shame and stigma, associated with the illicit trade in human for Nigeria though worrying were less so than the health implications. This is because many of the girls deported were diagnosed with HIV, the paper notes. Many of them had been taken through the Republic of Benin to a very demeaning life of sex slavery in Europe (Nigerian Tribune 2003, 10).

Nigeria and Benin Republic have both been affected by the activities of transborder armed robbers and car theft gangs. For instance, it was reported that between the year 2000 and 2002, over 2000 exotic vehicles were stolen from Nigeria by a gang of robbers led by Tidjani Hamani whose sanctuary is Dirin, Benin Republic (Ahmed and Chilaka 2013). Besides, the two countries have been largely affected by the activities of transborder armed robbers who have carried out series of daring

attacks on banks, bureau de change operators, business outlets and on members of the public. Security personnel notably officers of Nigeria Police Force have lost their lives through attacks by transborder armed criminals. Reports of robbery operations in which Nigerian security personnel have lost their lives while trying to combat the criminal elements abound (Oseghale 2013).

The thriving smuggling of goods banned by the Nigerian state into the country through Benin Republic also impacted government policy directed at promoting local production and self-sufficiency in the production of certain goods in Nigeria. Aside this, smuggling results in the loss of revenue as smugglers' principal motive is that of evading the payment of duties aside contravening national laws on the importation of goods. The smuggling of petroleum product across Nigeria borderland into Benin Republic distort government policy and create artificial scarcity of product in cities closer to border areas. All of these negatively impact government policy, people's lives and living, threaten human and national security and often lead to strained relations between Nigeria and Benin Republic.

Indeed, the activities of transborder criminal syndicates is constraining efforts at enhancing the depth of integration in West Africa (Adetula 2009). This is because the activities of criminal gangs is forcing states in the sub-region to enact policy position and take steps to protect their borders from the incursion of gangs and thus protect national security. While this might be deemed as necessary and in line with the tenets of sovereign right of state, such steps might constrain free flow of people, trade and finances and thus be in direct contravention and violation of ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of People, Goods and Services and the Protocol on the Rights of Residency and Establishment which all the 15 member states adhered to be bound by (Dokubo 2009, 151). The continued maintenance of security check-points along the highways linking Nigeria with Benin Republic and with Niger and Chad Republics to the north and the closure of Nigeria border with Benin Republic in 2003 to curtail upsurge of car-snatching represent some of such steps taken by Nigeria directed at strengthening national security and protecting sovereignty but which constrain integration efforts (Adeola and Oluyemi 2012, 5; Nigerian Tribune 2003, 10); In their study, Agwu & Nte (2023) also recommend that Nigeria should adopt strict border control measures as it is done in USA and Western Europe. Joint Border patrols by Nigeria and Benin Republic security agents should also be fully implemented to curb criminalities and reduce smuggling within the region (Agwu and Nte 2023).

Indeed, the issue of sovereign right of state to take certain steps to protect national security often runs contrary to the spirit of integration, especially when members of such integration efforts have not evolved into a strong institution and governance process that can adequately address some of the likely fall-outs of borderless border among members as it relates to free flow of persons, goods, service and the right of residency and establishment. This is the stark reality confronting ECOWAS

as it strives to advance and deepen integration in West Africa and countries like Nigeria have found it difficult to balance the need for sovereignty and promotion of integration process.

## Conclusion

Like all national boundaries in Africa, the Nigeria-Benin Republic borderland was arbitrarily drawn, forcefully imposed and artificially created by the colonial authorities at the turn of the century. The nature of state formation in Africa and corresponding boundaries delimitation have resulted in the partitioning of ethno-national and linguistics groups, environmental belts, natural resources areas and water basins between and among contemporary sovereign states on the continent. One of the implications of this is that borderlands on the continent are a space of contestation and confrontation. At the same time, borderland on the continent but especially in West Africa is becoming space for cooperation. Through bilateral arrangements, institutions and structures of ECOWAS and initiatives of communities that straddled border areas, cooperation in solving common challenges is fast becoming the norm for communities and states interaction on borderlands and border related issues in the sub-region.

Notwithstanding growing optimism about transborder cooperation, the activities of transborder criminal syndicates are undermining human security in borderland communities, straining state relations on border issues, and undermining ECOWAS integration efforts. This is particularly the case along the stretch of borderland that connects Nigeria and Benin Republic, one of the most important borderlands in the sub-region. While the Nigeria-Benin Republic border region is renowned in West Africa for the volume of transborder trade it handles annually, it has also become a major hub for transborder crime, with criminal syndicates whose bases and reach traverse the continent and beyond. While numerous transborder crimes are perpetrated in this all-important borderland, this study focuses on human trafficking, smuggling, and armed robbery/carjacking. The study assesses the dynamics of these crimes, their implications for bilateral relations between Nigeria and Benin Republic, and their impact on integration.

The study finds that human trafficking, smuggling, armed robbery, and car snatching have negative impacts on the Nigerian economy, distort policies, result in revenue loss, undermine social cohesion, and pose a threat to national and human security. Although Benin Republic benefits economically from revenue obtained from port and duties on goods smuggled into Nigeria, it is negatively affected by all other forms of transborder crimes prevalent along its border with Nigeria. Both governments have initiated efforts aimed at curbing transborder criminal activities. In 2003, the Federal Government of Nigeria enacted the Trafficking in Persons Law Enforcement and Administration Act, which established the National Agency for

the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Related Matters (Tsokar 2015, 22). The Nigerian government has partnered with international organizations in its fight against human trafficking, and ECOWAS has also initiated policies and programs aimed at fighting the scourge of human trafficking in the sub-region (Sylvester 2010, 6; Daily Champion 2006, 11). Nigeria and Benin Republic have signed bilateral trade agreements and evolved joint initiatives aimed at improving trade relations and curtailing the activities of smugglers (ThisDay 2014, 15; The Nation 2008, 10; Ugwoke 2005, 3). The two countries have also agreed on a border security arrangement and evolved joint border patrol initiatives directed at strengthening security and curbing the activities of transborder criminal syndicates (Adams 2003, 19; Kehind and Komolafe 2001, 32).

Despite these efforts, transborder crimes and activities of criminal elements continue to be a major challenge along the Nigeria-Benin Republic border areas. Therefore, it becomes imperative for Nigeria and Benin Republic to double their efforts in their fight against transborder criminal syndicates. They need to strengthen bilateral trade and work to curtail the smuggling of goods banned by the Nigerian government from Benin Republic. Harmonization of policies on port clearance, standardization, and disclosure is necessary to aid revenue collection on goods coming from across the border. Improving bilateral cooperation and working on strengthening the ECOWAS platform on the fight against human trafficking and child labour is also essential. Nigeria and Benin Republic need to strengthen existing security arrangements on joint border patrols and develop new security frameworks to combat transborder crime. There is a greater need to deepen and strengthen all ECOWAS initiatives, policies, and programs directed at curtailing human trafficking, drug trafficking, smuggling, transborder armed robbery and car snatching, and other transborder crimes in West Africa.

**Notes**

It stretches from the Atlantic in Lagos state with Seme as the most important official crossing point. From Lagos it goes through Ogun state with Idiroko as an important official border post, then to Oyo state, Kwara state, Niger state ending at Kebbi state in North-West Nigeria.

## References

**Adams, I.** 2003. "Why smuggling thrives across Nigeria-Benin border." *The Punch.*

**Addo, P.** 2006. *Cross-border criminal activities in West Africa: Options for effective response.* KAIPTC Paper. No. 12, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre.

**Adeniyi, O.** 2000. *Essays on Nigeria foreign policy governance and international security.* Ibadan: Dokun Publishing House.

**Adeola, G.L. and F. Oluyemi. 2012.** "The political and security implications of cross border migration between Nigeria and her Francophone neighbours." *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow* (Society for Promoting International Research and Innovation) 1 (3). https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/32225834.pdf.

**Adepoju, A.** 2005. "Migration in Africa ." A paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration.

**Adetula, V.A.O.** 2009. "The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the challenges of integration in West Africa." In *ECOWAS: Milestones in Regional integration*, by U.J. Ogwu and W.O. Alli (eds.), 39-45. Lagos: Printserve Ltd.

**Agwu, N. U. and T. Nte. 2023.** "Assessment of the Security, Economic Impact and Factors Affecting The ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Goods Residence and Establishment ." *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 6 (1): 17-24.

**Ahmed, L.E. and F.C. Chilaka.** 2013. "The political economy of criminality along Nigeria-Benin Republic border and worsening insecurity in Nigeria." *Journal of Social Sciences and Public Policy* 5 (2): 56-78.

**Akinmade, K.** 2003. "Benin Republic to hand over Suspects, Stolen Cars." *Nigeria Tribune.*

**Akinsuyi, Y.** 2002. "Nigeria/Benin joint anti-crime border patrol: One year after." *This Day.*

**Akinyemi, O.** 2019. "Porous Borders and Increasing Human Trafficking in West Africa: Issues and Challenges." *International Journal of Social Science Research* 7 (2): 45-52.

**Akwei, B.** 2020. "The Dilemma of the Process-Oriented and Spillover Effects of Regional Economic Integration of West Africa: ECOWAS Intra-Regional Trade and Trade with Key External Trading Partners." *South Asian Research Journal of Business Management* (2): 49-58.

**Alade, A. and C. Igbokwe.** 2013. "Transborder car snatchers return in Lagos." *The Sun.* www.sunnewsonline.com.

**Alemika, E.E.O.** 2009. "Nature and pattern of transnational organized crime in West Africa." In *Transnational crime and security in West Africa*, by O.A. Onafowokan and O.D. Oche (eds.), 9-26. Lagos: Foreign Service Academy.

**Alli, Y.** 2003. "Benin Republic returns eight stolen vehicles, hands over suspects." *The Punch.*

**Andrés, A.P. de.** 2008. "West Africa under attack: Drug, organized crime and terrorism as the new threats to global security." UNISCI Discussion Papers, No. 16.

**Aning, K.** 2007. *Africa: Confronting complex threats.* Coping with Crisis Working Paper Series, International Peace Academy.

**Burley, A.M. and B. Mattli.** 1993. "Europe before the court: A political theory of legal integration ." *International Organization* 47 (1): 41-76.

**Busari, T. 2008.** "Father of 10 arrested with 12 Children says: Human Traffickers deserve Severe Punishment." *The Punch.*

**Constanze, B.** 2014. *Cross-border flows between Nigeria and Benin: What are the challenge for (human) security.* Peace and Security Series, Abuja: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

**Dada, A.** 2014. "Smuggling: Industrialists ask FG to shut Benin Borders." *The Punch.*
**Daily Champion.** 2006. "Human trafficking: ECOWAS-NAPTIP initiative."

**Darkwa, L.** 2011. *The challenge of sub-regional security in West African No. 69.* Discussion Paper, The Nordic Africa Institute.

**Deutsch, W.K., A.B. Sidney, A.K. Robert and M.Jr. Lee.** 1957. *Political community and the North Atlantic Area: International organization in the light of historical experience.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

**Dokubo, C**. 2009. "ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment: The challenges of implementation." In *ECOWAS: Milestones in regional integration*, by U.J. Ogwu and W.O. Alli (eds.), 149-174. Lagos: Nigerian Institute of International Affairs.

**Ebosele, M.** 2013. "Between challenges and effect of smuggling ." *The Guardian.*

**—.** 2015. "FOU impounds 195 Vehicles, 22,742 bags of rice." *The Guardian.*

**Ening, S.O.** 2011. "Transborder crimes and its socio-economic impacts on West Africa." *Journal Sociology and Social Anthropology* 2 (2): 73-80.

**Ezem, F.** 2013. "Rice smugglers still on the Prowl." *National Mirror.*

**Flynn, K.D.** 1997. "We are the border: Identity, exchange and the state along the Benin-Nigeria border." *American Ethnologist* 24 (2): 311-330.

**Gottschalk, K.** 2020. "African Peacekeeping and African Integration: Current Challenges." *Vestnik RUDN International Relations* 20 (4): 678-686.

**Hartzenberg, T.** 2011. *Regional integration in Africa* . Staff Working Paper, ERSD-2011-14, World Trade Organization, Economic Research and Statistics Division.

**Hass, E.** 1970. "The study of regional integration: Reflection on the joy and anguish of pretheorizing." *International Organization* (24): 607-646.

**—.** 1958. *The uniting of Europe: Political, social and economic forces, 1950-1957.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

**Hoffman, L.K. and M. Paul.** 2015. *Nigeria's booming borders: The drivers and consequences of unrecorded trade.* Chatham House Report, London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs.

**Idoko, C.** 2009. "Trafficking: 10, 000 Nigerians trapped in Libya, Morocco-NAPTIP." *Nigerian Tribune.*

**Ikoh, M.U.** 2013. "Organised crime in the Gulf of Guinea with a focus on Nigeria." In *The Impact of organised crime on governance in West Africa*, by E.E.O. Alemika (ed.), 22-33. Abuja: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

**Jaye, T., and S. Amadi.** 2011. "Introduction." In *ECOWAS and the dynamics of conflict and peacebuilding*, by T. Jaye and S. Amadi (eds.), 3-11. Dakar: Codesria.

**Kehind, D., and Y. Komolafe.** 2001. "Nigeria, Benin launch hi-tech border patrol against crime." *The Comet.*

**Laursen, F.** 2008. *Theory and practice of regional integration.* Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series 8, No. 3, Miami-Florida: European Union Center of Excellence.
**Mansfield, D.E., and V.H. Milner.** 1999. "The new wave of regionalism ." *International Organization* 53 (3): 589-627.

**Mwanawina, I.** 2011. "Regional integration versus national sovereignty: A Southern African perspective ." *Verfassung und Recht in Ubersee VRU* (44): 465-481.

**Ndiribe, O.** 2006. "Human trafficking: Africa tackles evils of modernized slave trade." *Vanguard.* July 12.

**News Agency of Nigeria.** 2014. "NIS deports 433." *The Punch.* Available at www.punchng.com.

**Nigerian Tribune.** 2003. "The Benin border closure." *Tribune Editorial.*

**Nwokolo, E.** 2008. "NAPTIP rescues 384 children in Ogun." *The Nation.*

**Nzewi, O.** 2009. *The challenges of post-1990 regional integration in Africa: Pan-African Parliament* . Policy Brief, No. 57, Centre for Policy Studies.

**Oche, O.** 2009. "ECOWAS and the challenge of transborder crimes." In *ECOWAS: Milestones in regional integration*, by U.J. Ogwu and O.W. Alli (eds.), 247-262. Lagos: Nigerian Institute of International Affairs.

**Odijie, M.E.** 2022. "Tension between state-level industrial policy and regional integration in Africa." *Third World Quarterly* 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2022.2107901.

**Ogundare, T.** 2008. "Between human trafficking and slavery." *Daily Champion.*

**Okoro, C.** 2003. "Politics of cross-border crimes." *Daily Champion.*

**Olatunji, S.** 2012. "Women arrested for human trafficking." *The Punch.* June 7. Available at www.punchng.com.

**Olayinka, C.** 2011. "NAPTIP repatriates 93 trafficked Nigerians from Mali." *The Guardian.*

**Olisah, U. 2003.** "IG recovers 80 Vehicles, 30 robbers from Benin." *Nigeria Tribune.*

**Omoniyi, K. S. 2023.** "Evaluation of Transborder Crimes in Nigeria ." *American Journal of Society and Law* 2 (1): 13-20. doi:https://doi.org/10.54536/ajsl.v2i1.1137.

**Onah, E.I. 2015.** "Transborder ethnic solidarity and citizenship conflicts in some West and Central African states." *African Security Review* 24 (1): 63-74.

**Onanuga, A. and W. Adepoju.** 2013. "How to tackle trafficking, by Experts." *The Nation.*

**Onuoha, F.C. 2013.** "Porous borders and Boko Haram's arms smuggling operations in Nigeria." *Vanguard.* February 24. Available at www.vanguardngr.com.

**Oseghale, C.** 2013. "I sold Pasuma's Rover Sport for N950,000." *The Punch.* www.punchng.com.

**—.** 2015. "Smuggling remains an attractive venture for border communities." *The Punch.*

**Sarkyi, D. and E.E. Osei-Opoku.** 2014. *Regionalism and economic integration in Africa: A conceptual and theoretical perspectives.* Occasional paper No. 22, African Capacity Building Foundation.

**Stambøl, E.M.** 2021. "Borders as penal transplants: Control of territory, mobility and illegality in West Africa." *Theoretical Criminology* 25 (3): 474–492.
**Sunday, O.V., O. Oji and R. Okechukwu.** 2014. "Cross border crimes in West African sub-region: Implications for Nigeria's national security and external relations." *Global Journal of Human and Social Sciences* 14 (3): 45-57.

**Sylvester, A.** 2010. "FG, EU unite against human trafficking in Abuja." *Daily Champion.*

**The Comet .** 2004. "Smuggling, smuggling unlimited."

**The Guardian.** 2013. "Stiffer penalties for human traffickers."

**The Nation.** 2008. "Importers, agents partner to fight smuggling at ports, borders."

**—.** 2013. "To Russia with whores: The wave of Nigerian prostitutes takes a new dimension."

**The Punch.** 2012. "30 Nigerian girls trafficked into Mali daily-Envoy." *The Punch.*

**—.** 2005. "Disturbing wave of smuggling ." *Editorial, the Punch Newspaper.*

**The Sun.** 2007. "Transborder crime threat to democracy-Okiro." *The Sun.* November 27. Available at www.sunnewsonline.com.

**ThisDay.** 2014. "The challenges of human trafficking."

**Tsokar, K.** 2015. "Immigration, NAPTIP in fresh onslaught against traffickers, custodians of child labourer." *The Guardian.*

**Ugwoke, F.** 2005. "Nigeria, Benin move to combat smuggling." *ThisDay.*

**United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.** 2000. "From Human Trafficking to Human Rights: Reframing Contemporary Slavery." Naples Declaration.

**United States Department of State. 2014.** "Trafficking in Persons Report - Benin." https://www.refworld.org/docid/53aaba2414.html.

**UNODC.** 2005. *Transnational Organized Crime in the West Africa Region.* United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations Organization.

**—.** 2013. *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa.* United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, New York: United Nations Organization.

**—.** 2015. *World Drug Report.* United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, New York: United Nations Organization.

**Usman, E., and E. Onyegbula.** 2015. "Police in Lagos smashed transborder robbery gang, arrest eight." *Vanguard.*

**Wakili, A.** 2009. "The challenges of transborder crimes: Smuggling, crime constraints and challenge." In *Transnational crime and security in West Africa*, by O.A. Onafowokan and O.D. Oche (eds.), 89-102. Lagos: Foreign Service Academy.

**Williams, D.P., and J. Haacke.** 2008. "Security culture, transnational challenges and the Economic Community of West African States ." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 26 (2): 119-136.

**Williams, R.** 2003. "Kerekou bows to FG, returns stolen vehicles this week ." *The Punch.*

No.1/2023, JANUARY-MARCH
https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-07

BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

# Cyber and space domains – Impact on the development of the multi-domain operations

**Commander Alexandru CUCINSCHI, Ph.D. Candidate***

*"Carol I" National Defence University
e-mail: cucinschi.alexandru@gmail.com

## Abstract

The recognition of two new operational environments/domains, the cyber environment and the space environment, has led to the imagining of several "asymmetric" possibilities of engaging an adversary, with the aim of creating multiple dilemmas for the adversary, which it must take into account. This approach to military operations is currently associated with the new concept of multi-domain operations. However, it should be noted that not only the recognition of the two new environments, in addition to the three classic environments, constitutes multi-domain operations, but also the future operating environment as a whole is a triggering factor. Thus, in this article, my aim is to identify the extent to which the two new operational environments contribute to the development of the new multi-domain operations concept, with the aim of highlighting possible ways forward in terms of implementing the multi-domain operation concept and developing specific actions in and from the cyber and space environments. Following the analysis carried out, it was noticed that the cyber and space domains are gradually losing relevance within the phases of the multi-domain operation, while the actions are being fragmented and decentralized. This fact must be taken into account in the development of multi-domain formations.

**Keywords:**
security environment; multi-domain operation; cyber domain; space domain.

Although the cyber and space domains are generally seen as environments that enhance or support actions in the air, on land, and at sea, I believe that, in the current security environment, their relevance is no less important than that of the conventional domains. This is primarily due to the fact that they can affect the combat power of a potential adversary or own forces to such an extent that the percentage of forces affected by them can be decisive in the outcome of a conflict, even before a conflict reaches the stage of open conflict.

I believe that this is, in fact, the typology of the new type of conflict, in the sense of the achievement of objectives by means that do not exceed the limit considered to be a trigger for the planning and conduct of conventional military action, such as the initiation of a conventional war. Thus, the two new domains seem to lend themselves to a large extent to what is circulating in the present and future security environment. This is also the reason why I consider that an analysis of the developments in the cyber and space environments is relevant nowadays.

However, we must admit from the very beginning that these environments influence, in the previously stated idea of fulfilling objectives without triggering an open conflict, a greater extent of the state's instruments of power other than the military, such as diplomatic, informational, and economic instruments. The military instrument of power is influenced to a greater extent only during the time frame in which the open conflict is triggered.

We observe a lack of linearity, in the sense that two domains attached to the classical domains and subordinate to the military instrument of power have a direct influence on the diplomatic, informational, and economic instruments of power, serving less the military instrument of power in what the multi-domain operations catalog as the competition phase. This complexity can be difficult to manage. However, it is necessary to analyze the elements that the two new environments introduce in their relationship with the classical environments and within the military instrument of power as a whole. This can lead to an awareness of the possibilities for the innovative use of armed forces in military operations.

Starting from the premise that the cyber and space domains aim, within military actions, to enhance and support actions from other environments (they can be categorized as force multipliers), I propose verifying the following research hypothesis: cyber and space domains will lead to the deduction of new tactics for the services operating in classic environments (including their innovative combination by the operational level) and will influence the way of achieving strategic military objectives. To draw pragmatic conclusions that confirm or refute the established research hypothesis, I will highlight the correlations established between the two new domains and the multi-domain operations as a whole, considering the data supposed to be used in this work.

The limitations of the research I am conducting, considering the fact that I am referring to a concept currently under development (multi-domain operations), are as follows:

- The multi-domain operations concept is not yet fully validated through war games and simulations, after which it can be refined;
- The interpretation of the relationships between the elements under study should be done from the perspective of the author's experience, given the novelty of the subject and the insufficient studies in this field.

The article is structured in three parts. In the first part, I will identify the elements considered defining for the two environments (cyber and space). Then, I will summarize the relevant aspects of multi-domain operations. In the last part, I will identify the correlations established between the two new environments and multi-domain operations.

## 1. Cyber and space domains – evolution and constituent elements

Elements from the cyber and space domains have been used since the 1950s, as follows:

- Computer tools were developed to store and process information, which could be used for offensive purposes but also needed protection.
- The first artificial satellite, Sputnik 1, was launched (International Institute for Strategic Studies 2015).

These developments have led to the identification of new options for engaging adversaries, generated by the emergence of innovative technologies that continue to develop today. However, since the end of the Cold War, military applications of these technologies have ceased to represent a priority due to the relaxation of the geostrategic situation. The interdependence and association between the two domains have been observed since the appearance of their basic elements. Currently, it is impossible to dissociate the cyber and space domains, and actions from one environment cannot be carried out without potentiation from the other environment.

Through longitudinal analysis, it can be observed that the cyber domain has undergone a more accelerated evolution than the space domain, most likely due to its accessibility for a diverse range of international actors through the advent of the Internet. However, this trend does not guarantee that the two domains will develop at the same pace in the future, and it is possible that opportunities identified in the cyber field will be exhausted while those in the space field represent greater interest for the development of new technologies and doctrines.

Next, in order to analyze how the two environments impact multi-domain operations and the military instrument as a whole, I will identify the essential elements of each environment as they are currently perceived.

***1.1 Cyber domain***

Although cyber actions, both offensive and defensive, have their origins in the 1950s with the emergence of information systems, their official recognition at the NATO level did not occur until 2016. At that time, the cyber domain was defined as an operational domain that must be defended as effectively as the air, land, and sea domains (NATO 2016). However, all actions in the cyber environment, as presented in the aforementioned document, are stated to be defensive in nature.

It is widely recognized that the majority of activity in the cyber domain (approximately 90%) is carried out in the private sector (Crowther 2017). This fact highlights the difficulties that the military faces in managing actions in and from this environment, given the multiple possibilities for action by various actors who are not bound by generally accepted rules. This contrasts with the clear rules that govern military operations.

While the military does operate in the cyber domain, their missions within this domain are not clearly defined. The actions that the military can perform or must be able to defend against are difficult to summarize under a certain classification. An approach to this issue, which I consider comprehensive and pragmatic, based on reference documents of the US and NATO that regulate general policies in this environment, was carried out by Dr. Glenn Alexander Crowther, a researcher in the field of cyber policies at the Institute National Center for Strategic Studies at the US National Defense University. It groups all of the military's actions with cyber implications into four categories centered around a set of common cyber actions (information and communications technologies, network operations, and defensive cyber operations) that represent baseline conditions for the identified categories.

The four categories identified in the mentioned study (Crowther 2017, 63-78) are, in fact, the implications of the cyber domain within the possible mission areas of the military, namely:

- Cyber information operations – within the missions in the information field;
- Cyber operations – within the framework of conventional and special operations carried out by the Armed Forces;
- Cybercrime – within missions that aim to reduce crime (the defence system usually has under it units that have such missions);
- Intelligence through cyber actions – within actions of interpretation/ processing of information.

Examples in support of the identified categories are presented in the aforementioned work, but the extent to which these categories lend themselves to use in smaller

militaries than the US is, in my opinion, difficult to quantify. Thus, I believe that with regard to developments in the cyber domain, it can be stated that the protection, manipulation, evasion, and use of information, aspects that summarize the categories presented, represent a sophistication of the basic mission identified since the emergence of this space in the 50s, that of information management.

As a result, although this elaboration of the core mission is not without foundation, given that technological developments have provided an increasingly wide range for the identification and innovative use of the tools that this environment can provide, I believe that it is important to remember that it is the information itself that directs developments in this environment.

***1.2 Space domain***

As in the case of the cyber domain, the space domain, although it has its origins in 1957, with the launch of the first satellite, Sputnik, by the USSR, it was designated by NATO as the fifth operating environment in December 2019, at the meeting of the leaders NATO member states (NATO 2022), thus recognizing the importance of this domain in issues related to the security of the Alliance.

The main threats that NATO has identified in this environment are related to physical effects in outer space and actions directed at capabilities in space:

- space is becoming an increasingly crowded and competitive environment, satellites being vulnerable due to interference;
- some states, including Russia and China have developed a wide range of anti-space technologies – NATO condemned Russia's testing of anti-satellite missiles on November 15, 2021 (NATO 2022).

Yet, I think it is much more important to highlight, from a military point of view, the fact that from this domain actions in all other domains can be influenced, so as a result, space is seen more as a potentate factor for actions in the other domains, without which the actions of the armed forces may be deprived of the advantage of complete information about a potential adversary. In this sense, the main concerns are represented by:

- the fact it represents an integrative environment for communications;
- it enables gathering, interpreting information in support of operations and missions;
- with the help of satellites, crises can be monitored and NATO can intervene effectively and in a timely manner (NATO 2022).

Thus, I consider that actions in the space domain can be divided into physical actions that take place in space on spatial means and actions that are directed towards the other four domains. The latter directly influence the activity of the military. However, it is evident that the development of capabilities to destroy satellites launched in this environment is envisaged to prevent the second category of missions in this

environment. NATO divides space actions into actions to, from, and in space. "NATO has recognized that attacks to, from, or in space represent a clear challenge to the security of the Alliance and could lead to the invocation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty" (NATO 2022).

Regarding the solutions identified for gaining an advantage over a potential adversary in this domain, the actions identified as needing to be undertaken are represented by the ability of a space system architecture to provide persistent support for mission success despite hostile actions (Comparinni 2022). These include deterring the enemy from detecting and targeting space services or capabilities, ensuring reconstitution capabilities by launching new capabilities or activating reserve capabilities in orbit or on the ground, and supporting technologies such as quantum communications, continuous surveillance, advanced information algorithms based on artificial intelligence, and space robotics (Comparinni 2022).

It can be observed that the financial effort required to implement such solutions can be considered sustainable only by states or international organizations with a developed economic level and that possess advanced technologies or ongoing projects in this regard. Thus, I consider that in the case of the space domain, as with the cyber domain, information (obtaining, using, and prohibiting the use of information to the adversary) is what triggers the development of capabilities that will likely be directed to physical actions (such as jamming or attack) against the adversary's capabilities in the near future.

From what has been presented regarding the two domains, it can be stated that we are currently witnessing a "modernization" of the military instrument with regard to managing information through the use of innovative technologies, and that information itself can become a state policy. The two new domains, although not comprehensively controlled by the military, can decide the fate of a conflict from the early stages through specific actions in or towards them, just as a degree of airspace control greatly facilitates the success of operations in maritime and land environments. To verify the research hypothesis stated at the beginning of the article, the concept of multi-domain operation will be briefly described to subsequently determine the extent to which the two new domains contribute to the development of this concept.

## 2. Relevant aspects of multi-domain operation

The multi-domain operation is currently in the concept development stage, with an implementation horizon of 2028 for the USA (TRADOC 2018) and 2032 for the Romanian Armed Forces (presidency.ro 2020). This stage involves conducting war games to test the principles of this new type of operation, studying how to implement it, and refining the concept before starting the process of developing the necessary capabilities for implementation.

The development of this concept is necessary due to technological advancements that have made some aspects of classic joint operations impossible to implement. This is due to the increased precision and range of weapon systems, which have resulted in larger restricted areas (A2/AD) that prevent the support relation between services. Multi-domain operations aim to achieve favorable conditions for military actions and deter adversaries from triggering an open conflict. These aspects are included in the first phase of the operation (competition) and are dependent on the management of information in the two new domains. This can be seen in Table 1.

Thus, based on the defining elements of multi-domain operations presented in the TRADOC document, the concept can be divided into three main elements that contribute to understanding the new concept:

- information management (especially in the first and fifth phases – competition and return to competition in favorable terms) – actions that do not depend solely on the military instrument;
- addressing the A2/AD issue (phases two and three – penetration and disintegration);
- conducting joint operations adapted to the new conditions in the operational environment, through support between services (exploitation).

In the following section, I will explore the relationship between the main elements of the cyber and space environments and the defining elements of the multi-domain operation, as the integration of these new domains is important to gain strategic depth.

## 3. Relationships between cyber and space domains, multi-domain operation and strategic objectives

As the elements related to the two new domains as well as the summary description of the multi-domain operations were presented in the first two parts, I will briefly present some aspects related to the strategic depth, considering the fact that, mainly, the purpose of an operation, in our case multi-domain operations, is to contribute to the achievement of strategic level objectives. However, it should be noted that the multi-domain operations are very likely to be carried out at a strategic level due to the scope and diversity of the actions involved (not being entirely under the command and control of the military instrument of power) and that is why they must be taken into account.

I believe that strategic depth largely reflects what the strategic military level aims to achieve, proving its viability throughout history, achieving or maintaining it being an objective for military strategists of all time. Strategic depth refers to the distances inside a state, from its defended border to what can be considered the center of gravity of that state, to considerations related to the vulnerabilities of the center of gravity in case of war in relation to the size of the space available to stop the enemy advance, counterattack and restore balance (Khan 2015).

**TABLE 1. The US Army in multi-domain operations – logic figure – from TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, The US Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028 (TRADOC 2018)**

| |
|---|
| **OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT**<br>- contested in all domains<br>- increasingly lethal, expanded battlefield<br>- increasingly complex environment<br>- challenged deterrence |
| **RUSSIAN AND CHINESE ANTI-ACCESS AND AREA DENIAL SYSTEMS CREATES MULTIPLE LAYERS OF STAND-OFF**<br>**Competition** – creating stand-off by separating the U.S. and partners politically with:<br>- regional and national forces;<br>- unconventional warfare;<br>- information warfare;<br>- long-, medium- and short-range conventional forces;<br>in order to fracture alliances and win without a fight.<br>**Armed conflict** – confrontation by separating the joint force in time, space and functions with:<br>- regional and national forces;<br>- long-, medium- and short-range conventional forces;<br>- unconventional war;<br>- information war;<br>in order to win quickly with a surprise „fait accompli" campaign. |
| **TENETS OF MULTI-DOMAIN OPERATIONS**<br>**Calibrated force posture:**<br>- forward presence forces;<br>- expeditionary forces;<br>- national capabilities;<br>- authority (to operate in all areas, especially within the competition).<br>**Multi-domain formations:**<br>- conduct independent maneuver;<br>- employ cross-domain fires;<br>- maximize human potential.<br>**Convergence (time, space, capabilities):**<br>- cross-domain synergy;<br>- layered options;<br>- mission command/disciplined initiative. |
| **COMPETE, PENETRATE DIS-INTEGRATE, EXPLOIT AND RE-COMPETE**<br>**Competition** – to expand the competitive space<br>- supports the defeat of informational and non-conventional war;<br>- gathers information and counters the enemy's reconnaissance actions;<br>- demonstrates credible deterrence.<br>**Penetration** of strategic and operational confrontation:<br>- neutralization of the enemy's long-range systems;<br>- challenging the maneuvering forces of the enemy;<br>- maneuver from operational and strategic distances.<br>**Disintegration** of enemy A2AD systems:<br>- defeat/destroy the enemy's long-range systems;<br>- neutralization of the enemy's short-range systems;<br>- performing independent maneuvers;<br>- conduct deception.<br>**Exploiting** freedom of maneuver to defeat the enemy:<br>- the defeat/destruction of medium-range systems;<br>- neutralization of the enemy's short-range systems;<br>- maneuvers to isolate and defeat the maneuver forces of the enemy;<br>**Re-compete** – to consolidate and extend the advantages obtained<br>- ensuring/securing (physically) the land and the population;<br>- facilitating lasting solutions together with partners;<br>- establishing the conditions for long-term deterrence;<br>- recalibration of the forces' position;<br>- maintaining the initiative. |

The problem we face, in the current security environment, is the fact that strategic depth no longer refers only to the physical (geographical) space and can have different forms that have appeared as a result of the ways of managing information and the increase of precision and strike range of the weapon systems. This is the reason why a new type of operation was needed to respond to the new developments of the concept of strategic depth, in the sense of a new idea that summarizes the current reality and what is expected to happen in the near future.

We can observe in Figure 1 above the following:
In Phase I, three of the four categories identified as elements of the cyber environment with implications in the activities carried out by the military can be found in full:

- Cyber information operations – missions in the information field - support the defeat of the information war;
- Cybercrime – crime reduction – supports the defeat of...and unconventional war;
- Facilitating the interpretation/processing of information – gathering information and countering enemy reconnaissance actions.

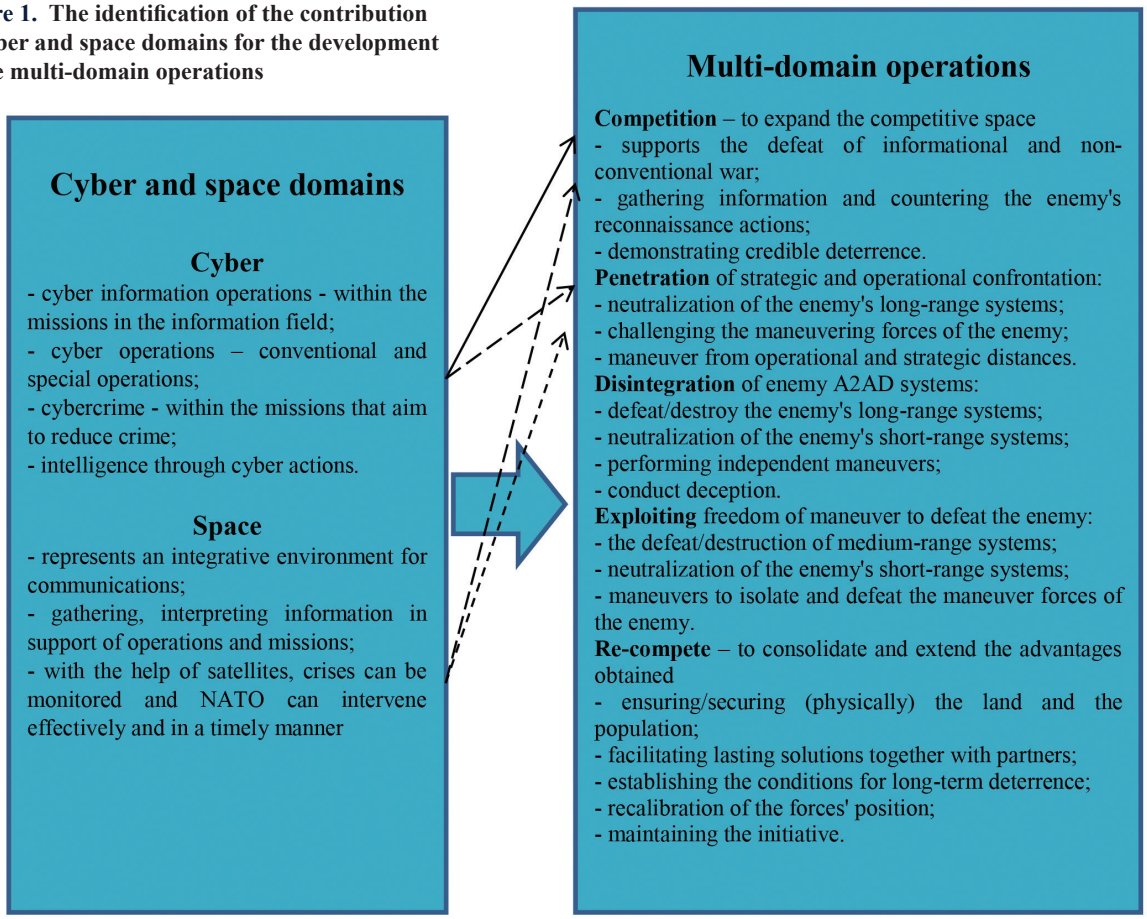
In Phases II and III, only one category (cyber operations - conventional and special operations) is found in the elements described in the two phases. In Phase II, within the maneuvers from operational and strategic distances, I consider that these cyber operations can be carried out. Later, starting with Phase III, due to the difficulties in predicting the evolution and beginning of independent maneuvers, the only aspect that can run at a centralized level from the cyber environment is deception.

The result can be interpreted from the perspective of the fact that all the elements taken into account were viewed from the perspective of the military instrument of power, the other instruments of power not being detailed, a fact that limits the analysis to the aspects managed by the military, thus the cyber instrument representing for them a force multiplier in the early stages of a conflict but which cannot substitute services or compensate for their deficiencies.

Regarding the limitation of actions in the cyber domain to the early stages of a conflict, a conclusion can be reached, which is identified in the TRADOC document in the form of the principle of the multi-domain operation – multi-domain formations – they must have elements from the cyber and space domains to converge towards the echelon, so that once the actions of the forces involved in the multi-domain operation are fragmented, they retain their coherence.

I therefore believe that what should concern the military who are in charge of the development of this concept is the identification of the ways of using the cyber and space domains within the actions specific to the services or the derivation of new tactics by the services, tactics that take into account the possibilities of using technologies from the two new environments. In this way the joint operation will be able to gain an operational advantage over the enemy even in the case of conducting

**Figure 1. The identification of the contribution of cyber and space domains for the development of the multi-domain operations**




disruptive actions from the two new environments. In the case of the space domain, comparing the elements in Figure 1, it becomes even clearer than in the case of the cyber environment that gradually, within the phases of multi-domain operations, as actions become fragmented and decentralized, the relevance of actions in this environment decreases.

Regarding the last phase of multi-domain operations, I believe that its objectives can be achieved to a small extent by the military instrument of power, with other instruments of power being more suitable for this stage. Therefore, I consider that the research hypothesis that I set out to verify is partially confirmed, with the following additions:

- Actions clearly defined as belonging to the cyber and space domains are more relevant in the early phases of multi-domain operations.
- To be a determining factor in phases of open conflict, new ways of utilizing the possibilities offered by the two new environments must be identified, taking into account the specifics of each service.

However, I believe that further developments in the concept of multi-domain operations will largely depend on the willingness of state actors to engage in a new arms race.

https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-07

## Conclusions

By conducting the research presented in this paper, my goal was to determine the impact of two new operational environments on the development of a new concept called multi-domain operation, which aims to synthesize reality through an idea. In this regard, I described the elements that comprise the two environments and concluded that innovative technology-enabled information management represents an update of the military instrument of power, enabling the military to influence the outcome of a conflict from the early stages.

Thus, just as airspace control is essential for conducting military actions in maritime and land environments, the control of the cyber and space environments is also crucial for multi-domain operations, as all these actions represent a multi-domain operation. The fact that multi-domain operation is currently a concept under development, with an implementation horizon of 2032 for the Romanian Armed Forces, requires us to identify possible implementation methods and shortcomings.

Therefore, I believe that the multi-domain operation can be divided into three defining elements that contribute to the understanding of this new concept:

- Information management (Phase I and Phase V).
- Addressing the A2/AD issue (Phase II and Phase III).

The third issue that I introduced in this paper is the concept of strategic depth, which in my opinion is the strategic level objective that the multi-domain operation must be able to achieve, taking into account the fact that the strategic depth of the information era differs from what it represented in World War II.

Following the analysis, I noticed, first of all, the fact that the cyber and space domains gradually lose their relevance within the phases of the multi-domain operation, with the fragmentation and decentralization of actions. Later, by analyzing the correlations among the three elements, we came to the conclusion that, for the military instrument of power, the exploitation phase of the multi-domain operation is the key factor for its success. Corroborating the two conclusions, we reached the issue of implementing elements from the cyber and space environment within the services, which must be able to support the joint operations (exploitation phase). This aspect should concern the military responsible for the development of this concept, and it should lead to refining the tactics of services to include the elements that the two new environments offer.

As a result, I consider that the cyber and space domains have not yet reached their maximum potential within multi-domain operations, and the extent to which they will reach this potential is determined by the possibility of a conflict between major military powers who are willing to invest in the military applicability of new technologies specific to these two domains.

## References

**Comparinni, Massimo Claudio.** 2022. "Space Domain: A Global Vision." https://www.japcc.org/articles/space-domain-a-global-vision/.

**Crowther, Glenn Alexander.** 2017. "The Cyber Domain." *The Cyber Defense Review* 2 (3): 63-78. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26267386.

**International Institute for Strategic Studies.** 2015. "Evolution of the Cyber Domain: The Implications for National and Global Security." https://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-dossiers/evolution-of-the-cyber-domain/chapter-one-the-1960s.

**Khan, Khalid Masoon.** 2015. "The strategic depth concept." https://www.nation.com.pk/16-Oct-2015/the-strategic-depth-concept.

**NATO.** 2022. "NATO's approach to space." https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_175419.htm.

**—.** 2016. "Warsaw Summit Communique." https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm.

**presidency.ro.** 2020. „Ședința Consiliului Suprem de Apărare a Țării." https://www.presidency.ro/ro/presa/securitate-nationala-si-aparare/sedinta-consiliului-suprem-de-aparare-a-tarii1601904261.

**TRADOC.** 2018. "TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1 – The US Army in multi-domain operations 2028." https://adminpubs.tradoc.army.mil/pamphlets/TP525-3-1.pdf.

No.1/2023, JANUARY-MARCH
https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-08

BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

# The chinese vision of *soft power*. General considerations

**Diana-Elena VEREŞ, Ph.D. Candidate***

*"Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca
e-mail: diana.veres@ubbcluj.ro

## Abstract

In the last half of the century, public diplomacy has gained great popularity worldwide, becoming one of the basic components of diplomatic practices. From this perspective, it is important to study how the concept of soft power is currently perceived and understood in China at the national level as well as by civil society and the target of China's public diplomacy. Various Chinese scholars from major Chinese universities concerned with the issue of soft power have published numerous articles systematically describing China's perspective on the concept and where their country stands at the beginning of the 2000s, with the intention of defining the concept and charting a trajectory for their country. Looking at the Chinese sources and comparing them with the general notions of soft power presented by Joseph Nye, we can state that we are witnessing a new process of assimilation and adaptation in China of a theory that does not originate in Asia. This article aims to illustrate how China defines soft power and how it has implemented this new tool of the new diplomacy by analyzing the specialized materials published in China during the period 2005-2017.

**Keywords:**
China; cultural diplomacy; soft power; new diplomacy.

## Public diplomacy, new diplomacy and soft power

Public diplomacy is defined as the influence that public opinion or attitude has on foreign policy (Nye 2004, 8). In other words, public diplomacy goes beyond traditional diplomacy by conveying to the public the state of affairs regarding international decisions. A term frequently associated with this concept is communication. Being conceived more in terms of a propaganda movement carried out by diplomats, the term has been replaced in the literature by the new public diplomacy. A relevant example is the growth in the number of non-governmental organisations involved in this process. There has been a shift from the traditional style of approach, which was aimed at actors and people, which is also due to the development of technology and involves the propagation of not only national but also international information in a rapid way, to the new, innovative style, where communication takes place between people. However, in order not to undermine the credibility of the networks and inter-human connections created with the help of NGO structures, governments should limit their role to that of promoting their activities and not of exercising control over them.
With regard to the *new diplomacy*, the focus is on the concept of soft power. The term soft power was first mentioned in 1980 and developed by Joseph Nye in a paper he called *Soft Power, The Means to Success in World Politics*.

As defined by the author, the term refers to the ability to shape the behaviour and opinion of other actors, with the ultimate goal of achieving a desired outcome. Being in antagonistic relationship with the concept of hard power, which implies achieving a goal by means of coercion, soft power rather resorts to co-opting and attracting individuals in order to make them embrace the final goal. According to Nye, *a country's soft power consists of the combination of three elements: the culture of that country, especially its main points of attraction, the aspects that differentiate it from other countries and make it unique, its specificity, its political values and its foreign policy* (Nye 2004, 15). These elements, being represented and presented as a model of a society that functions on their grounds, can lead other countries to aspire to its level of prosperity and be willing to follow its example. However, soft power can be a difficult tool to understand, which would make it difficult for governments to control and direct it, and last but not least, as it is an indirect way of driving towards the desired outcome, its evolution could be very slow. There is a suite of elements of the *new public diplomacy* that are elementary and equally necessary to be promoted for the achievement of the goals that a given country has.

## Chinese cultural diplomacy

The most important component of China's current foreign policy is cultural diplomacy. This type of diplomacy brings together the totality of exchanges of ideas, values, traditions and other aspects of socio-cultural exchange. The aim of

implementing this type of cultural diplomacy is to create international links and promote a positive image of China.

We encounter in China an example of a soft power strategy that has been used since ancient times. More specifically, there are reports that as early as the Ming Dynasty, an expression of soft power can be traced back to the period between 1400 and 1433, when a Chinese eunuch named Zheng He, in imperial service, set out on naval expeditions to far-flung destinations such as India, Java, and Africa, telling foreigners about the greatness of the people of the *middle country*, Zhongguo. Zheng He was often caught talking about the virtues of the Chinese and tried to win over foreigners with gifts brought from China, in order to create a positive image of the country he came from and to some extent succeeded in arousing the interest and curiosity of foreigners about China. Moreover, Admiral Zheng He invited foreign leaders to travel to China to see for themselves what he had to say, to visit fascinating China and to have a cultural exchange between China and other countries he had travelled (McCarthy 2005, 5).

China's definition of soft power is somewhat different from Nye's valence of the same concept, this difference being that for the Chinese, soft power and its applicability include absolutely all measures that could be taken to achieve its goals, namely building a strong image and increasing its influence globally, excluding from this reasoning only those elements that have to do with military force (Zhu 2015, 56). Of course, cultural diplomacy is closely linked to exchange diplomacy, which creates a reciprocal relationship between different countries that receive and send their citizens abroad for study and intercultural experiences.

The term public diplomacy has been described and defined differently depending on the area to which we refer. We can thus consider that depending on the purpose that each country has in terms of the activities associated with public diplomacy, the definition of the term is subject to different interpretations, changes or transformations.

In the US, public diplomacy is defined in the dictionary of international relations terms as a government-supported program that seeks to influence public opinion in other countries. Its basic tools are publications, films, cultural exchanges, radio and television stations (Zheng 2009, 6). Joseph Nye argues that public diplomacy is the political form of what he later called soft power in the early 1980s (Nye 2004, 9).

In China, as early as 2007, with the Seventeenth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, the importance of highlighting Chinese culture internationally through soft power was emphasised, in order to guarantee, as Chinese experts claim, the basic right to culture and at the same time to support the interests of the people. A year before the Seventeenth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2006, a Chinese academic in Shanghai proposed the use of the panda bear as a symbol of China,

rather than the dragon, which would blur any association with the use of hard power, violence or military force. However, his proposal has long been criticized on the grounds that replacing China's national symbol could lead to a process of cultural uprooting and could face the opposition of the Chinese population (Wu 2012, 5).

Analyzing this, it can be inferred that despite China's desire to integrate and assimilate soft power to implement it in as many areas as possible, and given its lack of experience with the perception, assimilation and implementation of soft power principles, it could commit serious errors that would attract the disapproval and skepticism of Chinese civil society, which might view these errors as an attempt to Westernize and a renunciation of its own value sets.

In China, the term *public diplomacy* is perceived as 外宣传 (waixuan chuan = foreign propaganda), although there is also the translation 公共外交 (gonggong wai jiao = public diplomacy), which is still not suggestive or sufficiently relevant to the Chinese. Although public diplomacy is perceived as propaganda, this term does not have, as it is perceived in Romanian, a negative connotation for the Chinese people.

China believes that a nation that is strong and large enough will implicitly gain both the respect and attention of other countries. Looking at the model of Northern European countries, however, we can confirm that this Chinese belief that a country's popularity and positive image is directly proportional to its size and economic or military power is unfounded. Another example of this is the image of the United States, which, despite its popularity, is viewed with scepticism by many countries in the world. At present, Chinese diplomacy is pragmatically oriented, neglecting its international image and more concerned with its position among the great powers (Glaser and Murphy 2009, 10-12). To confirm this point, we can note China's tendency to establish economic cooperation first, followed by cultural cooperation. Even in the situation of cultural diplomacy, China's position is still a traditional one, emphasizing the propagation of Chinese culture and not putting much emphasis on cultural exchange.

With regard to civil society, and taking into account the opinion of most Chinese scholars that public diplomacy involves both Chinese civil society and that of the target countries equally, a misconception has been created among the Chinese people which, according to Wang Yiwei, assumes that both China and the Chinese people, by default, should be recognised and respected worldwide because of their thousands of years of history, culture and civilisation, disregarding the theory that history is not a guarantor of influence in contemporary times (Wang, Wang and Zhang 2009, 95). Despite the country's growing interest in the concept, China needs to develop a transparent, coherent strategy that eliminates the fears the rest of the world may have about it, namely that once it achieves its goal of peaceful rise - 和平发展 (heping fazhan), China will not impose the Chinese socialist model on the rest of the world.

https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-08

## Chinese soft power

The first Chinese scholar to write an article on soft power was Wang Hunying, a close associate of former President Jiang Zemin. In an article published in 1993 in the Journal of Fudan University, Wang analyses Nye's theories and argues that in the case of China, the main source of soft power should be culture, reasoning that a country with a vast and ancient culture and a functioning ideological system should not resort to hard power, which is not only ineffective but also costly, because by presenting its culture, other countries will be won over by the Chinese model (Wang 1993, 24).

Although, as in the case of China throughout history, it has been and still is receptive to theories coming from the non-Asian space that concern the political sphere and not only, for example in the case of the sinicisation of Marxism, in the present situation we can also speak of the existence of soft power with Chinese traits. One of the possible reasons for China's growing interest in soft power may be that the use of non-violence, of attraction rather than coercion, is a feature that we find in Confucian philosophy, a philosophy according to which a sovereign must rely on moral rather than physical force. At the same time, another argument that can strengthen the veracity of this theory is the trend that China has been showing in recent years, namely a revival of Confucianism, including Confucian virtues among politicians who are in leading positions in the country's leadership and adding to the criteria for choosing them for various positions the attributes that Confucius claimed a good leader must possess.

However, at the government level, there is disagreement about the source of China's soft power, how this strategy should be used to best effect, and at the same time, to what level China should make use of soft power. The Chinese side, though, sees culture as the fundamental value underlying soft power. Cultural diplomacy works according to the principles of justice, equality, interdependence, cultural diversity, promoting values such as the protection of international human rights or global peace. Of course, cultural diplomacy is closely linked to exchange diplomacy, which creates a reciprocal relationship between different countries that receive and send citizens abroad for study and intercultural experiences. As we can deduce, the main reason for studying and discussing the phenomenon is China's desire to counter the stigma attached to it internationally, namely that of the new threat.

Jiangnan Social University published in 2012 an article written by Professor Wu Zelin entitled: *Report on Chinese Public Diplomacy Research* which presented a perspective offered by Chinese academics on the development theory of public diplomacy in China. According to the author, Chinese academics have three perspectives on the subject of public diplomacy research. First, they consider that the subject of public diplomacy can only be the government of a country. Second, the government considers the inclusion of civil, non-governmental diplomacy in the field of public

diplomacy. The third perspective makes a synthesis between the two and considers that any action under the guidance of the government can function as a part of public diplomacy and gives public diplomacy as an example as a way to engage in exchange activities organized by civil society (Wu 2012, 7).

Metaphorically, however, public diplomacy is called behind-the-scenes encouragement or personal involvement according to the government's determination towards external activities. Some diplomacy scholars have different perspectives on what object or partner Chinese public diplomacy should focus on. Zhang Qinmin believes that the public should be the target of public diplomacy (Zhu and Ma 2010, 14) referring to the word public in this structure and explaining that this new form of diplomacy should be presented and explained to the public, the population, who should be guided and trained in this direction. Qu Xing also believes that the focus should be on communicating with both the population inside the country and the communities outside, with the emphasis on the new period of Chinese public diplomacy and its specific features.

However, more and more Chinese scholars concerned with the issue of public diplomacy have come to the conclusion that the object of public diplomacy cannot be the Chinese public, but only the foreign public, foreign media, foreign scholars and foreign specialists, refuting the two theories and considering that the means of information transmission, communication between the government and the Chinese people has nothing to do with the target and objectives of public diplomacy. Li Yongzhi, one of the scholars who advocate the theory that Chinese public diplomacy should be directed and focused exclusively on the external environment, says that both external and internal exposure of public diplomacy goals can lead to confusion about its origins. The author notes that, in terms of the methods of Chinese public diplomacy, its approaches have been developed and improved in tandem with the development of the phenomenon of globalisation. In this vein, Zhong Longxuan believes that one of the methods of public diplomacy is the dissemination of news from abroad, along with foreign cultural exchanges, with the emphasis on the propagation of news from abroad (Zhu 2015, 57).

For a better understanding of the phenomenon and objectives of public diplomacy, he differentiates among three categories of public diplomacy:

> *1. All official government communication channels addressed to foreign audiences;*
> *2. Government public relations, media relations, marketing, individual roles;*
> *3. Cultural exchanges, educational exchanges, popular culture, music, movies* (Zhu 2015, 57).

This three-level differentiation made in order of importance, relevance and level of effectiveness from the Chinese perspective leads to the conclusion that the tools available to the government for the implementation of public diplomacy are increasingly numerous.

https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-08

From a technological point of view, social media has experienced increasing development and popularity among the Chinese people, playing an important role in the rapid spread of news about government activities abroad. The main purpose of public diplomacy is considered by Chinese scholars to be serving the interest of the country. These, in turn, have been divided into several categories.
Guo Hairu, for example, advocates promoting friendship and friendly contacts between China and other countries and transforming the political economic system and understanding the cultural values of the target country (Li 2009, 53). Thus, he believes that the purpose of public diplomacy differs depending on the country of reference and one cannot speak of identical purposes as long as there are larger and smaller countries.
Large countries focus on changing the global image or rebuilding the brand to gain sympathisers and protectors, while for smaller countries, the focus is on attracting media to promote understanding and perception of other countries with which the population might be interested in building friendly relations.

Zhu Liqun, a professor at Shanghai University, outlines in a comprehensive scholarly article called New International Doctrine and Chinese Diplomacy the ten attributes of Chinese soft power strategy (Zhu 2015, 21-25):

*1. Soft power refers not only to institutional and cultural power, but also includes national identity, discourse practice and the art of diplomacy.* In other words, the ability to promote the country's development, to internationalize civilization, and the ability of large countries to shape their own international image are all components of soft power. From this first point, drawing a parallel with the definition originally given by Joseph Nye, we can point out that in China, soft power serves more than just the propagation of a positive image among other countries, this objective being stated after the one referring to the harmonious development of the country.

*2. Soft power has both a degree of independence and a degree of dependence.* It has to rely on hard power and often uses hard power to enhance its features, but soft power can also act independently, having an impact on hard power itself. From this perspective, depending on the percentage in which the two are used, power can be a progress or an obstacle for the country. This second point also conflicts with Nye's theory, which proposes soft power as a much more effective and less costly alternative to hard power. In this situation, there is a paradox, a contradiction in the ideas put forward by Xi, who really does want China to rise, to revive the Chinese people through peace, for the peace of the whole world. According to Nye, we are currently witnessing a conversion of power, which is closely linked to evolution, in terms of technology, and at the same time implying that using force directly would be useless.

*3. Soft power has both universality and specificity, but it must retain its universal character.* Soft power requires links to the recognition of the international community

through certain methods and mechanisms. In other words, by stating the third feature of Chinese soft power, the author suggests that from China's perspective, soft power must have a universal perspective, but at the same time, the government's attention turns to how this feature is reflected in the propagation of Chinese culture in the rest of the world.

*4. Soft power is the current source of power for any country establishing international relations with other countries.* Large countries are not the only ones to face difficulties in linking hard and soft power, but small countries face the same problem, but at a lower level. The author gives the example of the Vatican which, despite its size and low GDP, has used the soft power strategy to promote its spirituality and to manifest its influence in the religious field worldwide.

*5. The objective nature of hard power is force, power, and the strength or strength of soft power is social construction.* Various actors in international relations have a strong support for hard power, which is why soft power is also used to a very high degree. Thus, the author points out that it is necessary to quantify the use of soft power in relation to hard power in order to avoid ambiguity.

*6. Increased use of soft power is sustainable.* The author gives as a hypothetical example the example of a country which he does not name directly, but which he claims to excel in the field of engineering, but which, because of its negative influence at international level and in terms of diplomacy, has little economic influence.

*7. Soft power is both endogenous and exogenous.* The two complement each other, with endogenous power being the basis on which, through exogenous power, new positions can be opened up and new perspectives identified. Through this feature identified by the Chinese author, he suggests the open character of soft power, later stating that soft power is built in an open world by the whole international community.

*8.* With the eighth feature, the author makes a comparison between soft and hard power, stating that *the influence of soft power, especially among the world's major powers, is growing,* due to both the progress made in the political sphere and even in the civilisation of countries, and the culture of international relations, which has acquired a social nature, and is also constantly developing.

*9.* The author believes that in the case of large countries, including China, *soft power and hard power must be built at the same time.* Hard power cannot be a priority, nor should soft power be left on the back burner, but the two must be in sync and complement each other.

*10. Soft power and hard power are inseparable and each can transform into the other.* The author gives the example of military forces, which belong to hard

power, but from his point of view, legal strategies for the use of military power belong to soft power.

The Chinese government thus believes that the realisation of the Chinese dream will only be possible by improving soft power strategies. The Chinese Dream is a concept launched by Xi Jinping in 2012 that sends out a nationalistically charged message in response to China's century of humiliation. Xi Jinping has repeatedly illustrated that the Chinese dream, 我的中国梦(wo de Zhongguo meng), is an alternative to The American dream, suggesting that his country is ready to take over global leadership, assuming the role of one of the world's greatest powers and competing with the US, at least in theory, for first place in terms of foreign preference.

The Chinese dream refers to the international recognition of the importance of Chinese culture, of the Chinese people, seen as a return, a revival of the Chinese nation. Moreover, while retaining a socialist flavour, the Chinese Dream, in Xi's view, represents the collective dream of the people through which each individual is given the opportunity to fulfil their own dream (Peters 2017, 8).

## Conclusions

In contemporary society, especially in the last twenty years, the foreign policy of the great powers has been oriented towards replacing hard power with the new trend in public diplomacy, namely soft power. From studying the Asian space, we can see that in China, diplomatic figures are concerned with the evolution of the instrument called soft power，软实力(ruan shili), seeking to find new approaches and different perspectives to make the most effective use of the potential benefits gained from applying its principles.

At the same time, we can see that, just as in the last century, when China took up Marxist philosophy and dialectical materialism, once adapted to its needs, today, discovering the commonalities of soft power in terms of its foreign policy, it is passing it through the filter of its own culture, building a functioning made-in-China soft power strategy that, with the passage of time, allows China to establish ties with both the world's great powers and the rest of the world.

Nowadays, Chinese culture and civilization are becoming more and more known, including in Romania, which is why we can say that, although new, China's soft power approach is starting to deliver the results that the Chinese government expects.

However, the concept of soft power is a difficult tool to understand, which can make it difficult for the Chinese government to control and direct it, as it is an indirect way of achieving the desired result, so that its development could be very slow.

## References

**Glaser, Bonnie S., and Melissa Murphy.** 2009. "Soft Power with Chinese Characteristics, The Ongoing Debate." *Chinese Soft Power and Its Implications for the United States* 10-26. https://www.csis.org/analysis/soft-power-chinese-characteristics.

**Li, Qingsi.** 2009. "Comparative study of the application of soft power in China and the US: case study, South Asia." *Institute of International Relations of Renmin University of China, Beijing.* https://www.zhangqiaokeyan.com/academic-journal-cn_teaching-research_thesis/0201220475612.html.

**McCarthy, Michael.** 2005. "Zheng He and the Great Southland: the context for the belief that he may have voyaged there." *Chinese Overseas Discussion Forum* 388-401. https://www.academia.edu/15784141/Zheng_He_and_the_Great_Southland_the_context_for_the_belief_that_he_may_have_voyaged_there.

**Nye, Joseph.** 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* . New York: Public Affairs.

**Peters, Michael.** 2017. "The Chinese Dream: Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era." *Educational Philosophy and Theory.*

**Wang, Huning.** 1993. "Culture an National Power: Soft power." *Fudan Daxue Xuebao* (No. 3). https://xueshu.baidu.com/usercenter/paper/show?paperid=486ea8b723bec0e9ee2cc2f913552dcb.

**Wang, Qifeng, Zhizhang Wang, and Yin Zhang.** 2009. "Study on National-level Soft Power Construction from the Perspective of China's Peaceful Development." *Journal of Yunnan Institute of Social Sciences.*

**Wu, Zelin.** 2012. "Report on Chinese Public Diplomacy Development Research." *Journal of Jiangnan Faculty of Social Studies* vol. 14 (No. 3). https://cn.usp-pl.com/doc/58382.html.

**Zheng, Denise E.** 2009. "China's Use of Soft Power in the Developing World: Strategic Intentions and Implications for the United States." *Chinese Soft Power and Its Implications for the United States* 1-9. https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/media/csis/pubs/090403_mcgiffert_chinesesoftpower_web.pdf.

**Zhu, Konglai, and Zongguo Ma.** 2010. "Summary of the Present Situation on Soft Power in Both the Country and the World and Prospects for the Future." *Journal of the Faculty of Management of Jinan University, Jinan, Shandong.* http://www.cqvip.com/qk/82359a/201006/35955086.html.

**Zhu, Li Jun.** 2015. "The New International Ideology and Chinese Diplomacy." *Comments on Public Diplomacy* (No. 5). http://qqhyjs.cupl.edu.cn/__local/E/5A/8A/1CAB8E652C3135CD0AB21D21117_48756612_68579.pdf.

No.1/2023, JANUARY-MARCH
https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-09

BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

# Military intelligence issues in declassified articles of the CIA's professional journal Studies in Intelligence (1955-1989)

**Dan ROMAN***

*Romanian Academy – "George Barițiu" History Institute Cluj-Napoca
e-mail: danroman2012@yahoo.com

## Abstract

The CIA began publishing the journal "Studies in Intelligence" in the mid-1950s. This journal contains both classified and unclassified materials, with the latter being available to the public. Its initiator, Sherman Kent, the director of the analysis office within the CIA, aimed to support an "intelligence literature". The journal, which is still published today, covers various topics in the field of intelligence. One of its main areas of focus is military intelligence, where it has helped pave the way for modern practices still in use.

**Keywords:**
CIA; Cold War; military intelligence; Soviet Russia; studies.

Enrolled in the operational responsibility of various structures within the American Armed Forces (Office of Naval Intelligence, Sixteenth Air Force, Marine Corps Intelligence, Military Intelligence Corps), or the Department of Defense (Defense Intelligence Agency), the area of military intelligence held a fundamental importance during the Cold War, with the main objective of monitoring and evaluating the capabilities of the USSR in the field.

As an integrator of intelligence products in a strategic plan, the CIA paid due attention to this domain, in accordance with its institutional attributions, mainly through the estimates and the various information materials transmitted to the American policy makers. Moreover, the efforts at the Agency level highlight constant concerns, as evidenced by a series of declassified documents, available in the American electronic archives, in order to implement and standardize an appropriate terminology of intelligence activities. Of course, one of these concerns was military intelligence.

Along with this dimension, which is related to the fulfillment of the Agency's usual activities, the area of military intelligence represents a constant and varied presence in the pages of the CIA journal, Studies in Intelligence. With a common denominator represented, in the vast majority of them, by the Soviet threat that manifested itself, mainly from the perspective of its nuclear capabilities, these studies cover a wide spectrum, from historical, technical and "philosophical" themes, to various assessments and analysis of military doctrine and strategy. Prepared as classified documents (usually, secret or confidential) for the benefit of the American Intelligence Community, these materials can currently be accessed in the Studies in Intelligence collection (from the first issue, published in September 1955, to 1992 including) available online in the catalog offered by www.nationalarchives.gov, another valuable resource being www.cia.gov.reading-room.

This article aims to show how military intelligence was reflected in the CIA journal during the Cold War. It starts with a brief description of this publication, by revealing its role in the American intelligence community; a portrait of the initiator of this journal is also made. Next, the main military intelligence topics identified in the CIA journal are presented, including some data about their authors, as far as this was possible. The last part contains the conclusions drawn from the research carried out on this topic. At the same time, in order to substantiate an adequate image on the dimension of the military intelligence in the CIA journal, we added an appendix that presents the titles of these materials.

## *Studies in Intelligence:* Its founder, role and relevance

The founding of the CIA's professional journal, *Studies in Intelligence*, and, subsequently, the directing, to a large extent, of the editorial policies in the first decade of its existence is due to Sherman Kent, director of the Office of National

Estimates (ONE), which was at that time the entity responsible for the production of integrated analytical materials within the Agency.

Former history professor at Yale University, and member of the elitist "Ivy League", Kent was active, during the Second World War, in the Office of Strategic Service (OSS), where he performed several functions, among which that of "*office director*" for Europe and Africa, held in the final part of the conflagration. From that position, he contributed, according to one of his collaborators in the CIA, and, later, one of his main biographers, to the development of "*major projects, including studies that helped to establish governmental structures in Germany after the war*" (Davis 2002, 35). Back at the Yale University, Kent affirmed, this time in an academic place, his competences in the domain of intelligence, by publishing the book (initially, rejected by several publishing houses) *Strategic Intelligence for the American World Policy* (1949). It gained, very quickly, the most favorable appreciations. For example, the prestigious journal *Foreign Affairs* noted, in a review, that Kent's work was "*a first-class analysis of our record during the recent war and a concrete statement of what we must do in order that our Intelligence Services perform their cardinal function*" (*Foreign Affairs*, October 1949). Even more pointedly, the aforementioned biographer qualifies Kent's book as "*probably the most influential book ever written on US intelligence analysis*" (Davis 1992, 91).

The high impact that *Strategic Intelligence...* registered both in the academic area and in the American intelligence circles brought Kent back in a short time in this domain, through his transfer to the CIA, where he was appointed deputy director of ONE, at the end of 1950. After only two years, following the retirement of the director of this structure, William Langer, who decided to return to academia, Kent took over the leadership of ONE (Steury 1994).

Along with the special merits related to the conceptualization and development, within the CIA, of the intelligence analysis, whose founder he is, indisputably, considered, the director of ONE also acted for the foundation of a specialized literature that would support the professionalization of the new field of intelligence. His major achievement in this direction was represented by the appearance of the CIA professional, in house, journal *Studies in Intelligence*, in September 1955.

According to the opening material, "The Need for an Intelligence Literature", signed by Kent, the American field of intelligence had succeeded in the ten years that had passed since the end of the Second World War to assert itself as a genuine profession. More than that, says Kent, "*like most professions it has taken the aspect of a discipline: it has developed a recognized methodology; it has developed a vocabulary; it has developed a body of theory and doctrine; it has elaborate and refined techniques*." What it lacked in this direction was a specialized literature, a dimension that Kent intended to achieve and support by establishing this new publication, which he qualifies in the same text as "*the institutional mind and memory of our discipline*" (Kent 1965, 3).

Emerged under the auspices of CIA Office of Training, *Studies…* was to include thematic texts, in accordance with its initial presentation as a "*monograph series*". However, it maintained this form only during the following year, 1956, when it recorded two new issues: the first with two studies on military intelligence related to capabilities and estimates on the enemy (January), and the second with two other studies this time on economic intelligence (May).

After a break of almost a year and a half, about which, unfortunately, no mention was made, *Studies...* reappeared with notable changes, which gave it all the characteristics of a journal, through various materials on the components of the professional activity to which a relatively rich section on the editorial appearances of interest for the intelligence area was constantly added. The change occurred in the fall of 1957, with a new appearance of *Studies...,* marked as "*volume 1, number 4"*.

In the following years, the CIA journal established itself as a valuable publication in the American Intelligence Community, both through the topics it addressed in its contents, and through the high level of expertise possessed by their authors, in the vast majority decision-makers in different intelligence structures. Moreover, by publishing, from 1958, an unclassified part, it crossed the borders of the intelligence community, and became available to the American public.

From this perspective, *Studies…* acted as the main vehicle for creating an intelligence literature, in order to legitimize, according to Kent, this field as a discipline. In carrying out this mission, it includes, as noted on the 50th anniversary of its first appearance, one of the members of the editorial board and of the CIA Historic Staff, "«the best thinking» of intelligence thinkers and practitioners" (Dujmovic 2005). In doing these, the CIA journal has successfully accomplished its stated goals – and continues to do so today.

## The CIA journal and military intelligence

*Studies in Intelligence* contains a rich theme regarding the domain of military intelligence, with articles on various historical aspects, evaluative studies, or of a technical nature, including an exotic text about the investigation of unidentified flying objects. Instead, there is a complete absence of any concerns about defining the term - or, at least, an articulate presentation from the perspective of its evolution in the American establishment. A plausible explanation for each of the two situations mentioned above could be, in the first case, that the meaning of the term had settled enough in the usual meaning, without highlighting difficulties regarding its delimitation and circumscription in a conceptual plan – as it happened, however, regarding the term "economic intelligence" within the CIA. Moreover, even if such a clarification had been deemed necessary under the conditions of the time, the main expertise in this matter was, of course, at the defense institutions, represented at the highest level by the Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Military intelligence was covered in the CIA journal in the very first issue of the "monograph series" (Smith 1956), which is devoted entirely to these aspects. It contains two studies (one on capabilities and the other on estimates), to which is added a review of a paper, in manuscript (*The Hazard and Advantages of Estimates of Enemy Intentions*, written at the Air War College, Air University, by Col. Sanfort H. Kirtland Jr.).

Among these we will refer to the first study, "Notes on «Capabilities» in National Intelligence", signed by Abbot E. Smith, the main collaborator of Sherman Kent in his manifestations of strengthening ONE. The author approaches the relevance and specificity of "capabilities" in the areas of "national intelligence", and highlights that the CIA frequently borrowed military terminology. However, caution is needed, because its use must be carefully accompanied by its adaptation to the Agency's role and functions. Based on a parallel between what an Estimate of the Enemy Situation is, in which aspects of the enemy's capabilities – what he can do – hold the most important part, and represent "*the ultimate goal or at least the penultimate goal of military intelligence*", and a National Intelligence Estimate prepared by the CIA, the author shows that "*the borrowing of military terminology was sometimes a little too enthusiastic*", which inevitably led to its incorrect use in the Agency's materials (Smith 1956, 14).

But the perspective showed by Smith is an optimistic one, suitable for any beginning of the road. He expresses his confidence that "*things will improve through experimentation*", which he wants to exemplify in the widest possible framework, highlighted by some substantive enumerations he presents below: "*through trial and error, through discussion and argument and, perhaps, from time to time, through purely theoretical and doctrinal investigations*" (Smith 1956, 18). These mentions that signal a series of milestones or tests that must be overcome, complete, in an anticipatory manner, no doubt based on rich experience, the perspective displayed by the author. In fact, it can be considered that the approach of the deputy of ONE primarily outlines the concerns expressed by the CIA for the foundation of an appropriate terminology. Moreover, it suggests the need for a common effort, to be carried out by the entire American Intelligence Community, as an efficient way to overcome this situation.

Another concern in the area of military intelligence was that of war-gaming, also early found in *Studies in Intelligence* Such an example is offered by the text "Developments in Air Targeting: the Military Resources Model" (Leavitt 1958). The study clearly proves the perpetuation of the CIA's interest in developing procedural tools, by establishing techniques that facilitate the proper evaluation of the enemy. Also, the affiliation of the author, Robert E. Leavitt, to the US Armed Forces (most likely, to 16 AF, considering the fact that following the establishment of the DIA he was active within this institution) highlights the CIA's practice of capitalizing on a series of elements from the area of military intelligence, beyond terminology, in order to integrate and use them in the whole of their own activities.

The main operational characteristics in the reference area of this work are revealed in the study „Combat Intelligence: A Comparative Evaluation" (Kirkpatrick 1961), that presents – in a historical perspective, related to the Second World War – the most important methods of data collection by the G-2 military intelligence structure, within the American Armed Forces.

The author, Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, himself an exponent of this entity, carried out a vast investigative approach at the level of the command structures of the G-2 units, on the basis of which he classified and exposed five representative categories of informational resources, the first of which was "*prisoners of war",* regarding which he points out that it is "*by far the most profitable source of intelligence for all levels of command*"; in second place is "*aerial reconnaissance*", followed by "signals intelligence"; obtaining documents ranks fourth and only last is "*the use of agents*" (Kirkpatrick 1961, 45-49).

Regarding this last source of information, which has proven itself not infrequently throughout history to be of major importance for obtaining adequate knowledge of the enemy's bellicose intentions and plans, as well as their movements on the battlefield, the author also makes some statements to explain a situation encountered at that time in the military intelligence entities of the American armed forces. In this regard, he notes directly that "*the use of agents was unquestionably the intelligence collection technique least well understood by military personnel*". Additionally, Kirkpatrick shows that there was "*inadequate forward planning for placing agents in key spots*" (Idem.).

Although he presents a classification that is based on the evaluation of past events, in this case during the Second World War, the author's approach is not without relevance. The assessment he makes regarding the informational resources used in the war is useful both for understanding the current situation and for future projections. It is to be expected, as he himself admits, that the perspectives of "combat intelligence" will not, at least for the foreseeable period, experience fundamental changes.

The launch by the Soviets, in October 1957, of the first artificial Earth satellite, Sputnik 1, which marked the beginning of the race to conquer space between them and the Americans, determined the publication in the CIA journal of a substantial number of studies on "air intelligence" and „air targeting" (not less than six materials in three consecutive issues – see the Appendix), Each of these underlines the particular importance of this field in the new context of (in)security. Beyond the particular or general, applied or theoretical aspects to which they refer, the relevance of these studies for the American military establishment is also given by the "weight" of the authors, through the positions held within it.

The first, *Strategic Thinking and Air Intelligence*, which opens the winter 1958 issue of the CIA journal, is signed, naturally, by a senior representative of US Air Force,

namely Major General James H. Walsh, at that time deputy assistant chief of staff for intelligence. In a brief assessment of the changes in the military area after the Second World War, the author notes that "*atomic air power has become the dominant military force*" (Walsh 1958, 8). In the face of the Soviet nuclear threat, raised to a new level after the launch by the USSR of the Sputnik 1 satellite, Walsh places "air intelligence" among the main resources that can be used to obtain the necessary knowledge. It also pays special attention to the technological development, which he considers the key to victory in a possible war.

A no less extensive and relevant study, published in the same issue of the CIA journal, presents several concepts for the foundation of a "philosophy" of the new field of "air intelligence". The author, Lewis R. Long (most likely a pseudonym this time), lists 11 such concepts, which he presents mostly in the form of commandments ("*intelligence should be used as an offensive weapon*", "all *intelligence must be considered dynamic, kept under constant review, and revised to meet changing world situations");* above all, however, he places in front of them, as a guiding principle of the activities in the field, the following statements*: "air intelligence is geared to nuclear power in a nuclear age", and "it has the same predominant characteristics as has the air force – range, speed, mobility, flexibility, and penetrative ability"* (Long 1958, 31).

The problem of the estimates made at the level of the American Intelligence Community, regarding Soviet military capabilities and perspectives in the context of the arms race, is also a theme reflected in the content of the CIA's professional journal. This topic, highlighted, in particular, by two complementary contributions published at mid '70s, attest and explain the overestimations transmitted during the '60s, followed, in fact, by a constant underestimation regarding the development of the Soviet strategic forces.

Through a systematic research of CIA materials from that period, Jack H. Taylor confronts in his study, entitled *Wohlstetter, Soviet Strategic Forces, And National Intelligence Estimates*, the issues presented in an article on the arms race, published by Albert Wohlstetter in *Foreign Affairs* (Taylor 1975), reaching the same conclusions.Taylor's exclusively quantitative approach is criticized in the next issue of the CIA journal. Ross Covey, Taylor's collaborator in the documentation activity for that study, criticizes him, in the More on the Military Estimates study, for the sequential presentation of the results, by limiting them to the numerical, quantitative elements, without taking into account other aspects less important, regarding which CIA estimates proved to be correct and could substantiate effective decisions of the American establishment.

Chronologically, among the materials in the CIA journal, which include various aspects of military intelligence, *Strategic Arms Limitation and Intelligence* (Helms 1973), signed by Richard Helms, the Director of the Agency at the time, also deserves attention. In fact, as marked at the very beginning, it represents a speech

the CIA director gave at the National War College in October 1971. In its content, Helms directly names the issue of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) as "*one of our major intelligence problems*" and then try to illustrate some aspects of "*how we cope with it in practice*", emphasizing that the significant role belongs primarily to the activities carried out through satellite reconnaissance (Helms 1973, 1-2).

In his speech addressed to young members of the American Intelligence Community, the director of the CIA emphasizes the involvement and major role of the Agency in establishing the coordinates regarding SALT. Beyond the various operational aspects, he states that the CIA elaborated several definitions regarding a series of terms in the area of military intelligence to ensure standardized understanding.

Finally, for the part that can be considered the beginning of the end of the Cold War, characterized by a progressive de-tensioning of Soviet-American bilateral relations, along with the commitment of the colossus of the USSR on the path of reforms, through its new leader Mikhail Gorbachev, the CIA journal stands out for two other studies on the Soviet military component, both under the signature of G. Murphy Donovan, director of Research and Soviet Studies, a structure with analytical activities, created within the United States Air Force Intelligence Agency.

The first study, „Deciphering Soviet Military Doctrine" (Donovan 1985), is an exploratory approach on the topic, based on the way this is revealed and supported in the Soviet military literature, respectively received and evaluated by some exponents in the area of American military intelligence. The elements analyzed by the author from the perspective presented in the title of his study reveal both the relationship between the political and the military leadership of the state, as well as a series of peculiarities found within the Soviet military system. Admitting the party's institutional control, Donovan believes that this could change in the future. In this direction, he argues through the existence of two categories of Soviet military doctrine works. The first one consists of "*collaborative projects, usually attributed to relatively unknown (albeit compliant and ambitious) officers, and they are probably written at the behest of a military-political organ*" (Donovan 1985, 84). In essence, such works, the author of the study shows, have a predominantly educational purpose, "*and are intended to convey the approved political and military line to the officers' corps*" (Ibidem). On the contrary, the second category of Soviet military literature is attributed to the officers at the top of the army and has it aims "*more prestigious audience*"; at the same time, it *"may also, implicitly or explicitly, test the boundaries of property and policy"* (Idem).

On these basis, Donovan points out a significant feature that stands out regarding the leadership of the USSR army, as he notes that "*Soviet marshal believes that military doctrine controls the future of military development;"* this statement is, clearly, of utmost importance, since such a belief grounds and supports a behavior, which shows that senior Russian officers build their careers and reputations in the

military in a special way, "*tying their stars not so much to weapons systems as to the advancement of theories that are based on military science*" (Idem). As the author further claims, *"At what point these theories change or challenge doctrine will always be arguable*" (Idem), but the knowledge of these perspectives proves to be useful, necessary and relatively easy to achieve, through the books the high-ranking Russian officers publish during their careers.

Along the lines of this study, the second one, „Soviet Military Vulnerabilities" (Donovan 1987) reveals another surprising conclusion, qualified by the author as "*a final irony*"; in this regard, he does not hesitate to affirm in a quite bluntly and clear manner: *"What is best understood, Soviet weapons and forces, is probably the least exploitable; what is understood less, Soviet doctrine and military art, are probably the most vulnerable*" (Donovan 1987, 17).

## Conclusions

Military intelligence is a recurring theme in the CIA's professional journal, which matches and illustrates its great importance for the American Intelligence Community during the Cold War. As an example, the so-called "monographic series" in *Studies in Intelligence* are inaugurated in the first issue from 1956 by two texts devoted to military intelligence, highlighting its prioritization from the very beginning. This is all the more relevant, considering the fact that this field has been traditionally the (almost exclusive) remit of the US armed forces and the Department of Defense.

The systematic approach in the CIA bulletin, from multiple perspectives including the didactic one, reflects the efforts of the Agency, in its role as the central entity in the intelligence sphere, to constantly generate better practices and results not just for itself, but also for all the parties involved in the gathering and analysis of military intelligence.

A mapping of the texts concerning these activities published in the reference period in the CIA journal, carried out by using as an index the predominance of the military theme, reveals the following main points:

1. such articles are a relatively constant presence, with a series of relevant studies usually concentrated in a few consecutive issues or, for broader subjects, in several of them (as in the case of air intelligence);
2. their distribution corresponds to the probability of open military conflict: based on their division into a first block representing the second half of the 1950s, and later in units of ten years each, it immediately becomes clear that military intelligence is a most relevant theme during 1960-1969, when the military threat is highest, with no less than 20 occurrences (compared to nine in 1955-1959, six in 1970-1979 and only four in 1980-1989).

By constantly publishing relevant studies concerning military intelligence, written by specialists at the top of the American intelligence hierarchy, the CIA journal substantially contributed to the understanding and consolidation of this topic and, last but not least, to the general knowledge in this field.

## References

**Adams, Robert H.** 1958. " Developments in Air Targeting: The Air Battle Model." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Anderson, Dwayne.** 1965. "Yesterday's Weapon Tomorrow, Fall." *Digital Public library of America.* http://catalog.archives.gov/id/7282804 .

**Berkowitz, Bruce D.** 1985. "A New Role for Intelligence in Arms Control." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Borowy, Stefan.** 1958. "Military Intelligence Behind Enemy Lines." *Studies in Intelligence* vol. 2 (no. 3).

**Brandwein, David S.** 1968. "Interaction in Weapons R&D." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Brown, Richard G.** 1960. " Anti-Soviet Operations of Kwantung Army Intelligence." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Clinard, Outten J.** 1959. "Developments in Air Targeting: Data Handling Techniques." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Conlon, Thomas F.** 1960. "Portuguese Timor: An Estimative Failure." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Cowey, Ross.** 1975. "More on the Military Estimates." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Davis, Jack.** 1992. "The Kent – Kendall Debate in 1949." *Studies in Intelligence* vol. 36 (no. 5 ).

**—.** 2002. "Sherman Kent and the Profession for Intelligence Analysis." *Occasional Papers* vol. 1 (no. 5). https://www.cia.gov/static/aa47b490ac1c52c04c467a248c5cbace/Kent-Profession-Intel-Analysis.pdf.

**Donovan, G. Murphy.** 1985. "Deciphering Soviet Military Doctrine." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**—.** 1987. "Soviet Military Vulnerabilities." *Studies in Intelleigence.*

**Dujmovic, Nicholas**. 2005. "Fifty Years of Studies in Intelligence." *Intelligence Studies* vol. 49 (no. 4).

**Finnegan, J.P.** 1998. *Military Intelligence.* Center of Military History, United States Army Washington DC.

**Finnley, James P.** 1995. *US Army Military Intelligence History: A Sourcebook.* Arizona: James P. Finley. U.S. Army Intelligence Center & Fort Huachuca.

**Fishel, Edwin C.** 1966. "Military Intelligence, 1861-1863, ." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Gates, Robert M.** 1973. "The Prediction of Soviet Intentions." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Gorman, Paul F.** 1979. "Measuring the Military Balance in Central Europe." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Gray, William A.** 1968. "Crystal Balls and Glass Bottles (How Soviet Electronic R&D Can Point to Future Military Systems ." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Helms, Richard.** 1973. "Strategic Arms Limitation and Intelligence." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Herman, Isadore.** 1961. "Estimating Aircraft Performance." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Johnson, Kenneth T.** 1959. " Developments in Air Targeting: Progress and Future Prospects ." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Johnson, Loch K.** 2010. *Intelligence.* Routledge.

**Quintanilla Jr., Hector.** 1966. "The Investigation of UFOs." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Kahn, David.** 1977. "Intelligence and the General Staff (How Military Information Became Institutionalized) ." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Kehm, Harold D.** 1956. "Notes on Some Aspects of Intelligence Estimates." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Kent, Sherman.** 1965. *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy, 2 edition.* Hamden, Connecticut: Princeton Legacy Library.

**Kirkpatrick, Lyman B.** 1960. " Unrecognized Potential in the Military Attaches." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**—.** 1961. "Combat Intelligence: A Comparative Evaluation." *Studies in Intelligence* vol. 5 (no. 4).

**Kovner, Milton.** 1968. " Pricing Soviet Military Exports." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Leavitt, Robert W.** 1958. "Developments in Air Targeting: The Military Resources Model." *Studies in Intelligence* vol. 2.

**Long, Lewis R.** 1958. "Concepts for a Philosophy of Air Intelligence." *Studies in Intelligence* vol. 2 (no. 1).

**Lowenthal, Mark M.** 2022. *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy, Ninth Edition* . Washington DC: CQ Press.

**Mattingly, Robert E.** 1982. "Zdravo Purvi Americanec (With the Chetniks in a Three-Way War) ." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Miles, Vice-Admiral Milton E.** 1968. " A Different Kind of War: The Unknown Story of the U.S." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Oldham, Max S.** 1968. " A Value for Information (Intelligence About Strategic Forces)." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Payne, Randolph.** 1962. "Production at an Aircraft Plant (Estimating the Quantity of a Particular Kind of Airframe Produced at a Particular Soviet Plant) ." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Rhodri Jeffrey-Jones, Christopher Andrew.** 1997. *Eternal Vigilance. Fifty years of the CIA, .* Routledge.

**Rothenberg, Herbert C.** 1968. "Identifying the Future Threat (Possible New Enemy Weapons Systems." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Seide, W.E.** 1964. "Intelligence for Defense Planning." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Smith, Abbot E.** 1956. "Notes on «Capabilities» in National Intelligence." *Studies in Intelligence* vol. 1.

**—.** 1983. "A man of integrity." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Steury, Donald Paul.** 1994. *Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates: collected essays.* Washington D.C.: History Staff, Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency.

**Tauss, Edward.** 1968. "Foresting a Soviet ABM System." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Taylor, Jack H.** 1975. "Wohlstetter, Soviet Strategic Forces, and National Intelligence Estimates." *Studies in Intelligence* vol. 19 (no. 1).

**Vandaveer, Robert.** 1963. "Operation Lincoln." *Studies in Intelligence.*

**Walsh, James H.** 1958. "Strategic Thinking and Air Intelligence." *Studies in Intelligence* vol. 2.

No.1/2023, JANUARY-MARCH
https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-10

BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

# A comparison of artificial intelligence models used for fake news detection

**Ștefan Emil REPEDE, Ph.D. Student***
**Remus BRAD, Ph.D.****
*"Lucian Blaga" University, Sibiu, Romania
e-mail:stefan.repede@ulbsibiu.ro
**"Lucian Blaga" University, Sibiu, Romania
e-mail: remus.brad@ulbsibiu.ro

## Abstract

This article aims to compare current state-of-the-art natural language processing models (NLP) fine-tuned for fake news detection based on a set of metrics and asses their effectiveness as a part of a disinformation management structure. The need for a development of this area comes as a response to the overwhelming and unregulated spread of fake news that represents one of the current major difficulties in today`s era. The development of AI technologies has a direct impact over the creation and spreading of misinformation and disinformation as a result of the multiple uses that technology may have. Currently, machine learning techniques are used for the development of large language models (LLM). These developments in science are also used in disinformation campaigns. Related to this matter the concept of disinformation management has arisen as a cybersecurity issue integral in the current cyber threat landscape.

**Keywords:**

fake news; misinformation; disinformation management; natural language processing; NLP; artificial intelligence; machine learning; cybersecurity.

## 1. Introduction

Fake news is a serious problem that can mislead and manipulate people into believing false or biased narratives. Fake news is a term that refers to false or misleading information that is presented as factual news. Fake news can have serious consequences for society, such as influencing public opinion, spreading misinformation, and undermining trust in journalism. Therefore, it is important to develop effective methods for detecting and combating fake news. The automatic detection of fake news is a challenging task that requires advanced artificial intelligence (AI) methods to analyze the content and source of news articles. In this research article, we compare different AI methods applied for fake news automatic detection. We use various metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall and F1-score to evaluate the performance of different methods. We review supervised learning techniques such as support vector machines, naive Bayes and decision trees that use labeled data to classify news articles as fake or real. We also discuss deep learning and transformer models such as convolutional neural networks (CNNs), recurrent neural networks (RNNs) and BERT that can capture complex features and semantic relations from text data. Furthermore, we explore unsupervised learning techniques such as clustering, topic modeling and anomaly detection that can identify fake news without prior knowledge or labels. Moreover, we examine some rule-based systems that use predefined rules or heuristics to detect fake news based on linguistic or stylistic features. Finally, we present hybrid models that combine different AI methods to achieve better results in fake news detection. The datasets used for testing and validation will focus on the ISOT fake news dataset (University of Victoria 2017) or similar ones. We also discuss the strengths and limitations of each class and provide suggestions for future research directions and usage.

## 2. A comparison of AI methods applied for Fake News automatic detection

Various AI methods have been used for binary classification tasks concerning the automatic detection of fake news (Kaliyar, Goswami and Narang 2021c). The performance evaluation for fake news datasets is measured using established metrics (Ozbay and Alatas 2020) that enable researchers to compare the performance of different models and identify which methods are most effective at detecting fake news.

## 3. Metrics used for evaluation

Accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score are the metrics commonly used to evaluate the performance of classification models (Liu, Ott, et al., RoBERTa: A Robustly Optimized BERT Pretraining Approach 2019), and are described as follows:

***3.1 Accuracy*** – It measures the proportion of correctly classified instances out of the total number of instances. It is calculated as (True Positives + True Negatives) / Total Instances. It is a useful metric when the classes are balanced (Kaliyar, Goswami and Narang 2021c).

***3.2 Precision*** – It measures the proportion of true positives among all instances classified as positive. It is calculated as True Positives / (True Positives + False Positives). Precision measures how accurate the positive predictions are and how often the model correctly identifies true positive instances (Devlin, et al. 2019).

***3.3 Recall*** – It measures the proportion of true positives among all instances that are actually positive. It is calculated as True Positives / (True Positives + False Negatives). Recall measures how well the model can find all the positive instances in the dataset date (Kaliyar, Goswami and Narang 2021a).

***3.4 F1-score*** – It is the harmonic mean of precision and recall, providing a balanced measure between the two metrics. It is calculated as 2 * (Precision * Recall) / (Precision + Recall). The F1-score is a good overall measure of the model's performance, especially when the dataset is imbalanced. In binary classification, true positives (TP) are the number of instances that are correctly classified as positive, false positives (FP) are the number of instances that are incorrectly classified as positive, true negatives (TN) are the number of instances that are correctly classified as negative, and false negatives (FN) are the number of instances that are incorrectly classified as negative (Ozbay and Alatas 2020).
The current state-of-the-art AI methods used in researching this topic may be split into the following categories:

## 4. Supervised learning techniques used in fake news detection

Supervised learning is an AI method that has been used for fake news classification in different ways. It involves training a machine learning model on a labeled dataset of news articles that are classified as either real or fake. The model learns to identify patterns in the data and generalize to new, unseen examples. The choice of machine learning algorithm depends on the specific characteristics of the dataset, but popular algorithms include methods such as logistic regression, support vector machines, and random forests (Ozbay and Alatas 2020). The following methods are considered for comparison:

***4.1 BayesNet*** – Bayesian network, also known as a Bayes net, is a probabilistic graphical model used for reasoning under uncertainty. It is named after the Reverend Thomas Bayes, an 18th-century British statistician who developed the Bayes theorem. In a Bayesian network (Langley, Wayne and Thompson 1992, 223-228), variables are represented by nodes, and the relationships between them are

represented by directed edges. The nodes can represent either observable or hidden variables, and the edges represent conditional dependencies between them.

***4.2 JRip*** – Jumping Rule-based Information Processing was developed by W. W. Cohen (Cohen 1995, 115-123). and is a decision tree-based classification algorithm used for machine learning tasks, particularly for classification tasks. It works by creating a set of rules that form a decision tree for the classification of data. The algorithm „jumps" between the rules by selecting the best rule at each node to classify the data. JRIP differs from other decision tree-based algorithms in that it employs a rule-based approach rather than a pure decision tree approach. This means that instead of relying solely on the branching structure of the decision tree, it generates a set of rules that guide the classification process more specifically (Jijo and Abdulazeez 2021, 20-28).

***4.3 OneR*** – Also called One Rule, it is a simple and interpretable classification algorithm proposed by Holt (Holte 1993, 63-90), and it is used for machine learning tasks. It works by identifying the single most significant attribute or feature in a dataset and using it to create a rule for classification. OneR is called „one rule" because it uses only one rule to classify data, making it easy to interpret and explain (Chantar, et al. 2020).

***4.4 Decision Stump*** – A Decision Stump classifier is a simple binary classification algorithm that is often used as a building block for more complex machine learning models (Sammut 2017). Funcționează prin crearea unui arbore de decizie cu un singur nivel, numit „ciot", în. It works by creating a decision tree with only one level, called a „stump," where each node is a decision rule based on a single feature or attribute (Jijo and Abdulazeez 2021, 20-28). The Decision Stump classifier is called a „stump" because it consists of only one level, unlike more complex decision trees with multiple levels (Sammut 2017).

***4.5 ZeroR*** – The ZeroR classifier is a simple, baseline algorithm for classification that always predicts the most frequent class in the training dataset (Devasena, et al. 2011). It is called „ZeroR" because it does not use any input features to make predictions, and instead relies solely on the class distribution of the training data. The ZeroR classifier is often used as a baseline model to compare the performance of other, more complex classifiers.

***4.6 SGD*** – The Stochastic Gradient Descent classifier is an algorithm for training linear classifiers and regression models in machine learning (Chollet 2017, 48-50). It is particularly useful for large datasets, as it updates the model parameters using small batches of data at a time, rather than the entire dataset, which can lead to faster convergence and lower memory requirements. The SGD classifier is commonly used for tasks such as text classification, image classification, and natural language processing.

***4.7 CVPS*** – CV parameter selection (CVPS) refers to the process of selecting the best hyperparameters for a machine learning model using cross-validation (Varma and Simon 2006, 1-8). This technique involves splitting the training data into k folds, training the model with k-1 folds and validating it with the remaining fold. This process is repeated for each fold, and the average performance is used to select the best hyperparameters.

***4.8 RFC*** – The Randomizable Filtered Classifier (RFC) is a machine learning algorithm that combines the concepts of feature selection and classification. It is designed to select a subset of relevant features from the input data before training a classification model (Alam, Ubaid, et al. 2021). By selecting a subset of relevant features, the algorithm can improve the efficiency and accuracy of the classification model (Alam, Ubaid, et al. 2021). Additionally, by training multiple models on different subsets of the data, the algorithm can provide more robust predictions and reduce the risk of overfitting.

***4.9 LMT*** – The Logistic Model Tree (LMT) combines decision trees with logistic regression to build a classification model. It was developed to address the limitations of standard decision trees, which can suffer from overfitting and may not capture complex interactions between input features (Chen, et al. 2017).

***4.10 LWL*** – Locally Weighted Learning (LWL) is a supervised learning algorithm that uses a non-parametric approach to learn the underlying relationship between the input features and output variables (Tuyen, et al. 2021). This allows LWL to capture complex, non-linear relationships in the data while avoiding overfitting.

***4.11 CvC*** – Classification via Clustering is a semi-supervised learning method that uses clustering algorithms to create labels for unlabeled data (Bergsma, et al. 2013). The method works by first clustering the labeled data into different groups based on their features. Then, the unlabeled data points are assigned to the same clusters as the labeled data points. Finally, the most common label within each cluster is assigned to the unlabeled data points within that cluster.

***4.12 WIHW*** – The Weighted Instances Handler Wrapper is a machine learning technique that adjusts the class distribution of a dataset by assigning weights to each instance based on its class label (Khosravi, Khozani and Mao 2021). The WIH Wrapper works by fitting a classifier to the original dataset and then modifying the dataset by assigning weights to each instance based on its class. Instances that are misclassified are given higher weight, while instances that are correctly classified are given lower weight. This process is repeated until the classifier's performance on the modified dataset converges.

***4.13 Ridor*** – This model is a decision tree-based classification algorithm that uses the concept of rule-based induction to improve classification performance

(Lakmali and Haddela 2017). It works by constructing a decision tree in which each node represents a test on an attribute, and each branch represents the outcome of the test. The Ridor model differs from standard decision trees in that it uses a set of rules to determine when to stop partitioning the data into further subgroups. These rules include a minimum number of instances per leaf and a maximum number of rules to be used (Jijo and Abdulazeez 2021, 20-28).

***4.14 MLP*** – The Multi-Layer Perceptron (MLP) algorithm is a type of feedforward neural network that is commonly used in supervised learning tasks such as classification and regression and was proposed by Rosenblatt in 1950 (Ozbay and Alatas 2020). It consists of multiple layers of nodes or neurons, with each neuron in a layer connected to all neurons in the previous layer. The input layer receives the input data, and the output layer produces the final output or prediction. The hidden layers between the input and output layers perform non-linear transformations of the input data to extract meaningful features (Botalb, et al. 2018, 1-18).

***4.15 OLM*** – Ordinal Learning Model (OLM) is a type of supervised learning algorithm used for ordinal regression problems proposed by Ben-David et al. (Ben-David, Sterling and Pao 1989, 45-49). In an ordinal regression problem, the target variable has a natural ordering, such as a rating from 1 to 5, rather than being nominal or binary.

***4.16 SimpleCart*** – Simple CART (Classification and Regression Trees) was first proposed by Leo Breiman in 1984 (Breiman, Friedman, et al. 2017) and it is a decision tree algorithm that recursively partitions the data into subsets based on the values of the input features to minimize the impurity of the target variable (Loh 2011, 14-23).

***4.17 ASC*** – The Attribute Selected Classifier (ASC) is a supervised learning algorithm that combines feature selection with a classification algorithm to improve classification accuracy and reduce the computational complexity of the model (Gnanambal, et al. 2018, 3640-3644). ASC works by first selecting a subset of the most relevant features from the input data using a feature selection method such as information gain, gain ratio, or chi-squared test.

***4.18 J48*** – This algorithm is regularly the favored model for classification applications. J48 is a decision tree algorithm and an implementation of the C4.5 algorithm (Bhargava, et al. 2013). It works by recursively partitioning the data into subsets based on the values of the input features to minimize the entropy or information gain of the target variable.

***4.19 SMO*** – Sequential Minimal Optimization (SMO) is an algorithm mainly used to strengthen the training of support vector machines (SVMs) for binary classification tasks (Ozbay and Alatas 2020) and was initially introduced in 1998 by Platt (Platt 1998).

***4.20 Bagging*** – Is short for Bootstrap Aggregating and is an ensemble learning technique for improving the stability and accuracy of machine learning models. It works by training multiple instances of the same algorithm on different subsets of the training data, and then combining their predictions through a voting or averaging mechanism (Breiman 1996, 123-140).

***4.21 Decision Tree*** – It is a type of supervised learning algorithm used for both classification and regression tasks. It is a non-parametric model that recursively splits the data into subsets based on the values of input features to predict the value of the target variable (Jijo and Abdulazeez 2021, 20-28).

***4.22 IBk*** – The "IBK" algorithm (Instance-Based K-Nearest Neighbor) is a machine learning algorithm used for classification and regression tasks that belongs to the family of lazy learning algorithms, where the model is trained by storing the entire training dataset and making predictions based on the similarity between new input data and the stored training instances (Moayedi, et al. 2019).

***4.23 KLR*** – Kernel Logistic Regression (KLR) is a supervised learning algorithm used for classification tasks. It is an extension of the traditional logistic regression algorithm that uses a kernel function to transform the input data into a higher dimensional space, allowing for the modeling of nonlinear relationships between features (Zhu and Hastie 2005, 185-205).

***4.24 Performance comparison:*** Without getting into more detailed specifics on how the models were fine-tuned for fake news detection, the performance of the described

**TABLE 1 Claimed performance of the supervised AI algorithms described in chapter 3.2, trained and evaluated using the ISOT Fake News data set according to FA Ozbay and B. Alatas (Ozbay and Alatas 2020). The highest scores are underlined.**

| Model | Accuracy | Precision | Recall | F-measure |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BayesNet | 0,586 | 0,587 | 0,586 | 0,586 |
| JRip | 0,607 | 0,611 | 0,588 | 0,599 |
| OneR | 0,559 | 0,567 | 0,560 | 0,547 |
| Decision Stump | 0,564 | 0,574 | 0,564 | 0,549 |
| ZeroR | 0,501 | 0,501 | **1.000** | 0,667 |
| SGD | 0,589 | 0,590 | 0,583 | 0,586 |
| CVPS | 0,501 | 0,501 | **1.000** | 0,667 |
| RFC | 0,526 | 0,525 | 0,534 | 0,530 |
| LMT | 0,607 | 0,604 | 0,616 | 0,610 |
| LWL | 0,570 | 0,573 | 0,570 | 0,566 |
| CvC | 0,553 | 0,556 | 0,526 | 0,541 |
| WIHW | 0,501 | 0,501 | **1.000** | 0,667 |
| Ridor | 0,557 | 0,563 | 0,558 | 0,549 |
| MLP | 0,565 | 0,565 | 0,571 | 0,568 |
| OLM | 0,516 | 0,540 | 0,516 | 0,430 |
| SimpleCart | 0,604 | 0,607 | 0,586 | 0,597 |
| ASC | 0,588 | 0,598 | 0,534 | 0,564 |
| J48 | 0,558 | 0,558 | 0,563 | 0,560 |
| SMO | 0,534 | 0,536 | 0,489 | 0,512 |
| Bagging | 0,598 | 0,603 | 0,576 | 0,589 |
| **Decision Tree** | **0,968** | **0,963** | 0,973 | **0,968** |
| IBk | 0,551 | 0,551 | 0,551 | 0,550 |
| KLR | 0,606 | 0,605 | 0,614 | 0,609 |

supervised AI algorithms has been compared using the ISOT Fake News Dataset by a research team from the Department of Software Engineering of Firat University from Elazig, Turkey (Ozbay and Alatas 2020), with the results shown in Table 1.

As highlighted in Table 1, the Decision Tree algorithm returns the best metrics (96.8% accuracy score) when confronted with fake news binary classification tasks. The result is also confirmed by other authors that achieved an accuracy score of over 95% (Lyu and Lo 2020). The basic idea behind a decision tree is to create a tree-like model that represents a set of decisions and their possible consequences. The reason why the decision tree model performed better than the other supervised models for a fake news may be that it can handle high-dimensional and sparse data effectively. Decision trees can handle categorical data in a precise way, which is common in NLP tasks, where words or phrases are often used as features multiple (Jijo and Abdulazeez 2021, 20-28).

## 5. Deep learning and transformer models used in fake news detection

Deep Learning is another popular AI method for fake news classification. Deep learning and transformer models can contribute to fake news detection by allowing machines to learn complex patterns and features from large amounts of text data (Young, et al. 2018, 55-75). These models can handle the complexity and variability of language, and can identify the subtle linguistic cues and patterns that distinguish fake news from real news. Such models involve training a neural network model on a large dataset of news articles with labels indicating whether each article is real or fake (Chollet 2017):

***5.1 XLNet*** – Called eXtreme Learning NETwork model, it a state-of-the-art pre-trained language model that was introduced in 2019 and it is claimed to have achieved high metrics in binary tasks involving fake news balanced datasets (Gautam, Venktesh and Masud 2021). The model is based on the Transformer architecture, which is a type of neural network that is well-suited for natural language processing tasks. What sets XLNet apart from other pre-trained models is its use of an autoregressive method that allows for bidirectional context modeling, which helps the model to better understand the context and relationships between words in a sentence. This approach allows XLNet to achieve state-of-the-art performance on a wide range of natural language tasks, including language modeling, question answering, and sentiment analysis (Gundapu and Mamidi 2021). Take for example a text like „The President made an announcement that the new policy would benefit all Americans, but experts have criticized the plan as harmful to the economy." This contains several linguistic cues that are associated with fake news, including the use of positive language („benefit all Americans") followed by negative language („criticized the plan as harmful"). An autoregressive model like XLNet captures

these subtle patterns by considering the bidirectional context of each word in the sentence, allowing it to identify the relationships between words and phrases that are indicative of fake news.

***5.2 BERT and ALBERT*** – Other models have been based on Google`s BERT (Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers) model (Devlin, et al. 2019), which is a pre-trained deep learning model that has achieved state-of-the-art performance on a wide range of natural language processing tasks, including question answering, sentiment analysis, and language translation. BERT is a transformer-based model that is trained on a large corpus of text data, allowing it to learn rich representations of language that can be fine-tuned for specific tasks. BERT or variants like ALBERT (A Lite BERT model) (Gundapu and Mamidi 2021) have been claimed to be highly effective in tasks such as natural language understanding and text classification, tasks similar to fake news binary classification.

***5.3 RoBERTa*** – The Robustly Optimized BERT Approach (RoBERTa) model was introduced in 2019 (Liu, et al. 2019) and is based on the BERT (Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers) architecture but was trained on a much larger corpus of data than BERT, with an extended training duration and improved training techniques. This allows RoBERTa to better capture complex relationships and patterns in natural language text, resulting in improved performance on a wide range of NLP tasks, including fake news classification. RoBERTa is fine tuned for entity classification and has been claimed to have superior metrics when applied on fake and real news datasets (Liu, et al. 2019).

***5.4 FakeBERT*** – One of the earlier models based on BERT and fine-tuned for fake news detection tasks was called FakeBERT (Kaliyar, Goswami and Narang 2021c) and it uses a data augmentation technique called back-translation. This involves translating real news articles into another language, and then translating them back into the original language using a machine translation system. This process helps to generate additional training data and increase its diversity, which can improve the model's accuracy and ability to detect subtle variations in the text. Back-translation can be useful for fake news detection by generating synthetic data for training models. This synthetic data can be used to augment real datasets of labeled news articles, helping to improve the performance of NLP models trained for fake news detection.

***5.5 DeepFakE and EchoFakeD*** – Other authors used a DNN model, or Deep Neural Network model and fine-tuned it for fake news classification tasks. Models like DeepFakE DeepFakE (Kaliyar, Goswami and Narang 2021a, 1015-1037) or EchoFakeD (Kaliyar, Goswami and Narang 2021b, 8597–8613), which were trained on BuzzFeed and PolitiFact fake news datasets, have been claimed achieve accuracy scores between 88% and 98%. A DNN is a type of artificial neural network that is composed of multiple layers of interconnected nodes, or neurons. These layers

allow the network to extract and learn increasingly complex features from the input data, enabling it to make more accurate predictions or classifications. DNN models consist of an input layer, one or more hidden layers, and an output layer. The hidden layers contain the majority of the neurons and are responsible for processing and transforming the input data. Each neuron in a DNN model receives input from multiple neurons in the previous layer, and uses an activation function to transform the input before passing it on to the next layer (Kaliyar, Goswami and Narang 2021c, 11765–11788). By training on a domain-specific dataset (like fake news), DNNs can learn to identify patterns and features that are specific to that domain or language, improving their accuracy and effectiveness for detecting the different classes.

***5.6 LSTM-RRN and BiLSTM-RNN*** – Some researchers (Bahadad, Saxena and Kamal 2019) experimented with architectures based on Long Short-Term Memory Recurrent Neural Networks (LSTM-RRN) or Bidirectional Long Short-Term Memory Recurrent Neural Network (BiLSTM-RNN) with some degree of success after fine-tuning it despite the fact that a LSTM-RNN model is a type of deep neural network architecture that is designed to process sequential data, such as time-series data or natural language text. The LSTM layer allows the network to retain information from previous inputs over a long period of time, making it well-suited for tasks like fake news detection that require understanding of the context or history of the data. Previously, LSTM-RNNs have been claimed to be effective for tasks such as language modeling, sentiment analysis, and machine translation, but have only recently been used even for fake news classification (Bahadad, Saxena and Kamal 2019, 74-82).

***5.7 CNN*** – The models used include CNN (Luan and Lin 2019) or Convolutional Neural Networks which represent a particular type of deep neural network architecture that is commonly used for image and video recognition tasks. The key innovation of the CNN is the use of convolutional layers, which apply a set of filters to the input image, allowing the network to learn important features and patterns at different spatial scales. In addition to convolutional layers, a typical CNN also includes pooling layers, which reduce the spatial size of the feature maps, and fully connected layers, which perform the final classification. CNNs are able to identify patterns and features in text data by convolving a set of filters over the input text sequence. This process allows the network to capture local dependencies between adjacent words and phrases in the text, which is important for detecting subtle linguistic cues that distinguish fake news articles from real news articles (Luan and Lin 2019).

The claimed performance of the above presented models has been compared using the same metrics as the supervised learning techniques, with the results shown in Table 2.

**TABLE 2 Claimed performance of deep learning and transformer models for automatic fake news detection tasks on ISOT, BuzzFeed and PolitiFact fake news datasets. The highest claimed scores are underlined.**

| Model | Accuracy | Precision | Recall | F-measure |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ROBERTa** | **0,9996** | **0,9997** | **0,9994** | **0,9996** |
| LSTM-RRN | 0,9697 | 0,97 | 0,97 | 0,97 |
| BiLSTM - RRN | 0,9875 | 0,97 | 0,97 | 0,97 |
| ALBERT | 0,9780 | 0,9781 | 0,9781 | 0,9780 |
| FakeBERT | 0,9874 | 0,99 | 0,99 | 0,99 |
| DeepFakE | 0,8864 | 0,8210 | 0,8460 | 0,8404 |
| EchoFakeD | 0,9230 | 0,9047 | 0,8636 | 0,8837 |
| BERT | 0,9813 | 0,9813 | 0,9813 | 0,9813 |
| XLNet | 0,9785 | 0,9787 | 0,9789 | 0,9785 |
| CNN | 0,9698 | 0,9698 | 0,9698 | 0,9698 |

***5.8 Discussion:*** According to the selected metrics, The RoBERTa model has the best results across the table, with the mention that, for such binary classification tasks, machine learning models seem to achieve high metrics all around, The RoBERTa model achieves high accuracy on fake news detection by leveraging its strong language representation capabilities and the ability to effectively capture semantic relationships between words and phrases. For example, consider the following headline: "Scientists discover new treatment for cancer that works in 100% of cases". A human reader may immediately be skeptical of this headline, as it seems too good to be true. However, a machine learning model that is trained on bag-of-words or simple word embedding representations may not be able to capture the nuances of the language and may incorrectly classify this article as real. In contrast, the RoBERTa model is able to analyze the full context of the headline and identify the subtle cues that suggest that the article is fake, such as the use of hyperbolic language and the lack of scientific evidence to support the claim.

## 6. Unsupervised learning techniques used in fake news detection

Unsupervised learning is an AI method that can be used for fake news classification when labeled data is not available. Unsupervised learning techniques for fake news detection do not require labeled data to train the model, but instead rely on identifying patterns and relationships in the data to classify new instances as either real or fake news false (Gangireddy, Deepak, et al. 2020, 75-83). One common unsupervised approach is clustering, where similar news articles are grouped together based on their content and language patterns. This can help identify clusters of news articles that are similar in style and content, which can help distinguish between real and fake news (Celebi and Aydin 2018, 164-170). Another unsupervised approach is topic modeling, which identifies topics and themes within a corpus of text (Li, et al. 2021). Topic modeling can help identify topics that are common in fake news articles, such as conspiracy theories, clickbait headlines, and sensationalism. Anomaly detection is another unsupervised technique, where the model learns to identify instances that deviate significantly from the norm (Celebi and Aydin 2018, 23-28). This can be useful in detecting fake news articles that contain unusual

language patterns or syntax. Such methods have achieved when trained and tested on the PolitiFact dataset (PolitiFact 2017) accuracy scores between 0.81 and 0.82 (Gangireddy, Deepak, et al. 2020).

***6.1 Discussion:*** Unsupervised techniques may prove crucial in identifying ongoing disinformation campaigns on social media or similar online platforms and can be combined with supervised techniques to improve performance (Celebi and Aydin 2018).

## 7. Rule-based systems for fake news detection

Rule-based systems are another AI method that can be used for fake news classification. Rule-based systems involve defining a set of rules or heuristics that can be used to identify fake news articles based on specific characteristics, such as the use of emotionally charged language or the presence of logical fallacies. Rule-based systems can be less accurate than supervised or deep learning methods, but they can be effective when the task is relatively simple and labeled data is not available (Yuliani, et al. 2019).

These AI methods are useful for fake news classification because they are effective at identifying patterns and structures in the data. For example, a Rule-based Model used to detect Arabic Fake News propagation during Covid-19 achieved a 79,7% accuracy (Alotaibi and Alhammad 2022), which was trained on a dataset of 5015111 tweets and is quite a great success keeping in mind the limitations arising from the difficulty of processing Arabic language.

***7.1 Discussion:*** Rule-based systems seem to be less effective than other techniques in identifying more nuanced or complex forms of fake news that do not fit neatly into pre-defined categories and should be used in combination with models that use labeled data in order to achieve great reliance in a disinformation management model.

## 8. Hybrid models used for fake news detection

Hybrid models are a combination of two or more AI methods. For example, a rule-based system can be combined with a supervised or unsupervised learning method to improve the performance of the classification task. Hybrid models can be more accurate and effective than single-method models because they can leverage the strengths of multiple methods.

***8.1 Hybrid CNN-RNN*** – A hybrid CNN-RNN model was proposed by Nasir et all. (Nasir, Khan and Varlamis 2021), with limited success (0.5 accuracy). Such an architecture should combine the strengths of both CNNs and RNNs to capture both the local and global context of the input data, while also modeling the temporal

dependencies and context of the input sequence. The CNN component extracts high-level features from the input data, while the RNN component models the temporal dependencies of the sequence. The final hidden state of the RNN component is then used for classification (Nasir, Khan and Varlamis 2021).

***8.2 CSI*** – Another hybrid model called CaptureScoreIntegrate (CSI) (Ruchansky, Seo and Liu 2017) that used datasets gathered from Twitter and Weibo achieved promising success. The model is composed of 3 parts: Capture (includes capturing the news article content and features using an RRN), Score (which computes the score for the source of the article) and Integrate (which classifies the results).

***8.3 SVM-RNN-BI-GT*** – Another study proposed a hybrid model where SVM and RNN with bidirectional GRUs are incorporated in leveraging news content and user comments in fake news (Albahar 2021) on a PolitiFact dataset (PolitiFact 2017).

***8.4 HAN*** – Another proposed hybrid model for fake news detection is HAN (Hierarchical Attention Network) (Albahar 2021). and has a hierarchical structure that mirrors the hierarchical structure of the news presented in the dataset and has two levels of attention mechanisms applied at the word and sentence-level, enabling it to attend differentially to more and less important content when constructing the false/true text representation (Yang, et al. 2016, 1480-1489).

***8.5 HSA–BLSTM*** – Abbreviated from the Hierarchical Social Attention–Bidirectional Long Short-Term Memory was tested on datasets gathered from Twitter and Weibo (Albahar 2021) after being initially used to detect rumors by leveraging hierarchical representations at different levels and the social contexts (Guo, et al. 2018, 943-951).

***8.6 TCNN–URG*** – the Transfer Convolutional Neural Network– User Response Generator (TCNN–URG) is usually used to improve the quality of responses generated by social media chatbots or virtual assistants (Qian, et al. 2018, 3834-3840). It is composed of a CNN and a conditional variational autoencoder and was also tested for fake news automatic text detection on a PolitiFact fake news dataset (Albahar 2021).

***8.7 The results for hybrid models*** claimed by the above-mentioned research teams are presented in Table 3, using the same metric system as in Tables 1 and 2, in order to provide a comparison between similar types of approaches on a binary fake news detection task.

***8.8 Discussion:*** As shown in Table 3, according to the accuracy, precision and F-measure metrics, the best model performing model seems to be the CSI model on a Weibo (a Chinese microblogging site similar to Twitter) dataset (Ruchansky, Seo and Liu 2017). The CSI model is separated into 3 parts, which allows CSI to output

| Model | Accuracy | Precision | Recall | F-measure |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CNN-RNN hibrid | 0,5 | 0,5 | 0,5 | 0,5 |
| CSI-Twitter | 0,892 | 0,9 | 0,8 | 0,894 |
| **CSI-Weibo** | **0,953** | **0,953** | 0,953 | **0,954** |
| SVM-RNN-BI-GT | 0,912 | 0,910 | **0,961** | 0,932 |
| Han | 0,837 | 0,824 | 0,941 | 0,810 |
| TCNN–URG | 0,712 | 0,711 | 0,860 | 0,860 |
| HSA-BLSTM | 0,846 | 0,894 | 0,868 | 0,881 |

**TABLE 3 Claimed performance of hybrid models for automatic fake news detection tasks on ISOT, PolitiFact, Twitter and Weibo fake news datasets. The highest claimed scores are underlined.**

a prediction for users and articles independently while combining the information for classification. The experiments were conducted by the research team on two real-world obtained datasets (Weibo and Twitter), which demonstrated the accuracy of the CSI model in classifying fake news articles.

Because fake news detection is a complex task that requires the analysis of various features such as linguistic, temporal, and user-related information, hybrid models may overcome the limitations of a single approach and achieve better performance even if at the current date they are behind other models in their metrics. In order to apply such research in a real, daily operating system, one should take into consideration that deep learning models such as BERT or CNN can capture complex patterns in the text, but they may not consider the temporal or user-related features that are important in fake news detection (Kaur, Boparai and Singh 2019, 2388-2392). Similar, rule-based systems can leverage domain knowledge to detect suspicious patterns in the news, but they may not generalize well to unseen examples and thus making them less accurate than supervised learning approaches that have been previously trained on a large variety of examples. Since fake news detection is a constantly evolving problem and new techniques or models may be required to detect emerging types of fake news, future hybrid models can be flexible and adaptable, allowing the integration of new models or features as they become available, leading to more accurate and robust fake news detection (Thaher, et al. 2021).

## 9. Conclusion

As shown in the article, different AI machine learning methods return a wide range of metrics when dealing with a binary classification task involving real and fake news. This shows that there is still enough room for improvement in this area. After the comparison of the metrics shown in tables 1, 2 and 3 and taking into consideration the accuracy scores of the unsupervised and rule-based models, the fine-tuned ML model "RoBERTa" claims to achieve the best metrics on a ISOT fake news dataset (99,96% accuracy score, 99,97% precision, 99,94% recall and 99,96% F-score). The model has been developed by Facebook AI. It is based on the BERT model but it

is trained on a larger corpus of text data and includes additional pre-training techniques to improve its accuracy. RoBERTa's performance on fake news makes it a strong candidate for inclusion within a broader disinformation management integrated system. Additionally, RoBERTa can be fine-tuned for specific domains, such as politics or health, which is important in disinformation management, where the subject matter can be highly specialized.

We must point out that RoBERTa is one of the models that has a large and active community of users and developers, which means that it is well-supported and frequently updated with new features and improvements. This makes it easier to integrate into a larger system and to stay up-to-date with the latest research in the field of NLP. Because, RoBERTa's pre-trained weights and associated models are freely available, it is accessible to a wider range of users, regardless of their resources or technical expertise granting it a combination of high performance, flexibility, and accessibility for being included in a complementary software system.

## References

**Alam, M.T., S. Ubaid, S.S. Sohail, M. Nadeem, S. Hussain, and J. Siddiqui.** 2021. "Comparative Analysis of Machine Learning based filtering techniques using MovieLens." *Procedia Computer Science 194* 2010-2017.

**Albahar, Marwan. 2021.** "A hybrid model for fake news detection: Leveraging news content and user comments in fake news." *IET Information Security.* doi:https://doi.org/10.1049/ise2.12021.

**Alotaibi, Fatimah L, and Muna M. Alhammad.** 2022. "Using a Rule-based Model to Detect Arabic Fake News Propagation during Covid-19." *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications.* doi:10.14569/IJACSA.2022.0130114.

**Bahadad, Pritika, Preeti Saxena, and Raj Kamal.** 2019. "Fake News Detection using Bi-directional LSTM-Recurrent Neural nETWORK." *Procedia Computer Science 165*: 74–82. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2020.01.072.

**Ben-David, A., L. Sterling, and Y.H. Pao.** 1989. "Learning and classification of monotonic ordinal concepts." *Computational Intelligence* 5 (1): 45-49. doi:https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8640.1989.tb00314.x.

**Bergsma, S., M. Dredze, B. Van Durme, T. Wilson, and D. Yarowsky.** 2013. "Broadly improving user classification via communication-based name and location clustering on twitter." *Proceedings of the 2013 conference of the North American chapter of the association for computational linguistics: human language technologies.*

**Bhargava, N., G. Sharma, R. Bhargava, and M. Mathuria.** 2013. "Decision tree analysis on j48 algorithm for data mining." *Proceedings of international journal of advanced research in computer science and software engineering.*

**Botalb, A., M. Moinuddin, U.M. Al-Saggaf, and S.S. Ali.** 2018. "Contrasting convolutional neural network (CNN) with multi-layer perceptron (MLP) for big data analysis." *International conference on intelligent and advanced system (ICIAS).* 1-18.

**Breiman, L.** 1996. "Bagging predictors." *Machine Learning* 24 (2): 123-140. doi:10.1023/A:1018054314350.

**Breiman, L., J.H. Friedman, R. A. Olshen, and C. Stone**. 2017. *Classification and regression trees.* New York: Routledge. doi:https://doi.org/10.1201/9781315139470.

**Celebi, M. Emre, and Kemal Aydin.** 2018. *Unsupervised Learning Algorithms.* doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-24211-8.

**Chantar, H., M. Mafarja, H. Alsawalqah, A.A. Heidari, I. Aljarah, and H. Faris.** 2020. "Feature selection using binary grey wolf optimizer with elite-based crossover for Arabic text classification." *Neural Comput. Appl 32* 12201–12220. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s00521-019-04368-6.

**Chen, W., X. Xie, J. Wang, B. Pradhan, H. Hong, D.T. Bui, and J. Ma.** 2017. "A comparative study of logistic model tree, random forest, and classification and regression tree models for spatial prediction of landslide susceptibility." *Catena.* http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1016/j.catena.2016.11.032.

**Chollet, François.** 2017. *Deep Learning with Python.* New York: Manning.

**Cohen, William W**. 1995. "Fast effective rule induction." *Machine learning proceedings, 12th anual conference.* Morgan Kaufmann. 115-123.

**Devasena, C.L., T. Sumathi, V.V. Gomathi, and M.Hemalatha.** 2011. "Effectiveness evaluation of rule based classifiers for the classification of iris data set." *Bonfring International Journal of Man Machine Interface 1.*

**Devlin, J., M.W. Chang, K. Lee, and K. Toutanova.** 2019. "BERT: Pre-training of Deep Bidirectional Transformers for Language Understanding." doi:https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.1810.04805.

**Gangireddy, Siva Charan Reddy, P. Deepak, Cheng Long, and Tanmoy Chakraborty.** 2020. "Unsupervised Fake News Detection: A Graph-based Approach." *Proceedings of the 31st ACM Conference on Hypertext and Social Media (HT '20)* 75-83. doi:https://doi.org/10.1145/3372923.3404783.

**Gautam, Akansha, V. Venktesh, and Sarah Masud.** 2021. "Fake news detection system using xlnet model with topic distributions: Constraint@ aaai2021 shared task." *Combating Online Hostile Posts in Regional Languages during Emergency Situation: First International Workshop, CONSTRAINT 2021, Collocated with AAAI 2021, Virtual Event.*

**Gnanambal, S., M. Thangaraj, V.T. Meenatchi, and V. Gayathri.** 2018. "Classification algorithms with attribute selection: an evaluation study using WEKA." *International Journal of Advanced Networking and Applications* 3640-3644.

**Gundapu, Sunil, and Radhika Mamidi.** 2021. "Transformer based Automatic COVID-19 Fake News Detection System." *International Institute of Information Technology.*

**Guo, H., J. Cao, Y. Zhang, J. Guo, and J. Li.** 2018. "Rumor Detection with Hierarchical Social Attention Network." *Proceedings of the 27th ACM international conference on information and knowledge management.* doi:https://doi.org/10.1145/3269206.3271709.

**Holte, Robert C.** 1993. "Very simple classification rules perform well on most commonly used data sets." *Machine learning 11.* 63-90.

**Jijo, B.T., and A.M. Abdulazeez.** 2021. "Classification based on decision tree algorithm for machine learning." *Journal of Applied Science and Technology Trends (JASTT)* 20-28.

**Kaliyar, Rohit Kumar, Anurag Goswami, and Pratik Narang.** 2021a. "DeepFakE: improving fake news detection using tensor decomposition-based deep neural network." *Journal of Supercomputing* 77 (2): 1015-1037. doi:10.1007/s11227-020-03294-y.

**—.** 2021b. "EchoFakeD: improving fake news detection in social media." *Neural Computing and Applications* 33: 8597–8613. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s00521-020-05611-1(0123456789().,-volV)(0123456789(). ,- volV).

**—.** 2021c. "FakeBERT: Fake news detection in social media with a BERT- based deep learning approach." *Multimedia Tools and Applications* (80): 11765–11788. doi:10.1007/s11042-020-10183-2.

**Kaur, Prabhjot, Rajdavinder Singh Boparai, and Dilbag Singh.** 2019. "Hybrid Text Classification Method for Fake News Detection." *International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology (IJEAT)* 8 (5): 2388-2392.

**Khosravi, Khabat, Zohreh Sheikh Khozani, and Luca Mao.** 2021. "A comparison between advanced hybrid machine learning algorithms and empirical equations applied to abutment scour depth prediction." *Journal of Hydrology.* doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhydrol.2021.126100.

**Lakmali, K.B.N., and P.S. Haddela.** 2017. "Effectiveness of rule-based classifiers in Sinhala text categorization." *National Information Technology Conference (NITC).* Colombo, Sri Lanka. doi:10.1109/NITC.2017.8285655.

**Langley, Pat, Iba Wayne, and Kevin Thompson.** 1992. "An analysis of Bayesian classifiers." *Proceedings of the Tenth National Conference of Artificial Intelligence.* California. 223-228.

**Li, Dun, Haimei Guo, Zhenfei Wang, and Zhiyun Zheng.** 2021. "Unsupervised Fake News Detection Based on Autoencoder." *Access.* doi:https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2021.3058809.

**Liu, Yinhan, Myle Ott, Naman Goyal, Jingfei Du, Mandar Joshi, Danqi Chen, Omer Levy, Mike Lewis, Luke Zettlemoyer, and Veselin Stoyanov.** 2019. "RoBERTa: A Robustly Optimized BERT Pretraining Approach." *ArXiv.* doi:https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.1907.11692.

**Loh, Wei-Yin.** 2011. "Classification and regression trees." *WIREs Data Mining Knowl Discov* 14-23. doi:10.1002/widm.8.

**Luan, Yuandong, and Shaofu Lin.** 2019. "Research on Text Classification Based on CNN and LSTM." *International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Computer Applications (ICAICA).* doi:https://doi.org/10.1109/ICAICA.2019.8873454.

**Lyu, Shikun, and Dan Chia-Tien Lo.** 2020. "Fake News Detection by Decision Tree." *SoutheastCon.* doi:https://doi.org/10.1109/SoutheastCon44009.2020.9249688.

**Moayedi, H., D. Tien Bui, B. Kalantar, and L. Kok Foong.** 2019. "Machine-Learning-Based Classification Approaches toward Recognizing Slope Stability Failure." *Applied Sciences* 9 (21). doi:https://doi.org/10.3390/app9214638.

**Nasir, J.A., O.S. Khan, and I. Varlamis.** 2021. "Fake news detection: A hybrid CNN-RNN based deep learning approach." *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights.* doi:10.1016/j.jjimei.2020.100007.

**Ozbay, Feyza Altunbey, and Bilal Alatas.** 2020. "Fake news detection within online social media using supervised artificial intelligence algorithms." doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physa.2019.123174.

**Platt, John.** 1998. *Sequential minimal optimization: A fast algorithm for training support vector machines.* Technical Report MSR-TR-98-14, Microsoft Research.

**PolitiFact.** 2017. https://www.politifact.com/.

**Qian, F., C. Gong, K. Sharma, and Y. Liu.** 2018. "Neural User Response Generator: Fake News Detection with Collective User Intelligence." *Proceedings of the Twenty-Seventh International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence.*

**Ruchansky, Natali, Sungyong Seo, and Yan Liu.** 2017. "CSI: A Hybrid Deep Model for Fake News Detection." *Proceedings of the 2017 ACM on Conference on Information and Knowledge Management (CIKM '17).* doi:https://doi.org/10.1145/3132847.3132877.

**Sammut, C., Webb, G.I. (eds).** 2017. "Decision Stump. Encyclopedia of Machine Learning." In *Encyclopedia of Machine Learning*, by C., Webb, G.I. (eds) Sammut, 262–263. Boston, MA.: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-0-387-30164-8_202.

**Thaher, T., M. Saheb, H. Turabieh, and H. Chantar.** 2021. "Intelligent Detection of False Information in Arabic Tweets Utilizing Hybrid Harris Hawks Based Feature Selection and Machine Learning Models." *Symmetry 13* 556. doi:https://doi.org/10.3390/sym13040556.

**Tuyen, T.T., A. Jaafari, H.P.H. Yen, T. Nguyen-Thoi, T. Van Phong, H.D. Nguyen, and B.T. Pham.** 2021. "Mapping forest fire susceptibility using spatially explicit ensemble models based on the locally weighted learning algorithm." *Ecological Informatics.* doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoinf.2021.101292.

**University of Victoria.** 2017. „ISOT Fake News dataset." https://www.uvic.ca/ecs/ece/isot/datasets/fake-news/index.php.

**Varma, Sudhir, and Richard Simon.** 2006. "Bias in error estimation when using cross-validation for model selection." *BMC bioinformatics 7.1.*

**Yang, Z., D. Yang, C. Dyer, X. He, A. Smola, and E. Hovy.** 2016. "Hierarchical attention networks for document classification." *Proceedings of the 2016 conference of the North American chapter of the association for computational linguistics: human language technologies.*

**Young, T., D. Hazarika, S. Poria, and E. Cambria.** 2018. "Recent trends in deep learning based natural language processing." *ieee Computational intelligenCe magazine* 13 (3): 55-75. doi:10.1109/MCI.2018.2840738.

**Yuliani, S.Y., M.F.B. Abdollah, S. Sahib, and Y.S. Wijaya.** 2019. "A framework for hoax news detection and analyzer used rule-based methods." *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications.*

**Zhu, J., and T. Hastie.** 2005. "Kernel logistic regression and the import vector machine." *Journal of Computational and Graphical Statistics* 14 (1): 185-205.

No.1/2023, JANUARY-MARCH
https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-11

BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

# Higher military education focused on quantifiable learning outcomes

**Captain (Navy) Professor Lucian-Valeriu SCIPANOV, Ph.D.***
**Colonel Alin BODESCU, PhD****

*"Carol I" National Defence University
e-mail:shcipio@yahoo.com
**"Carol I" National Defence University
e-mail: bodescu.alin@unap.ro

## Abstract

This article proposes potential solutions for adapting higher military education to the trends of education centered on learning outcomes. These solutions are based on specific military competences captured by national specialized institutions and aim to meet the requirements of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The analysis and proposed model are based on the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for the Military Officer Profession (SQF-MILOF), which was proposed by the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) and recognized by the Military Committee of the European Union in 2021. This approach is relevant because the ESDC system will serve as the basis for developing a model based on learning outcomes, adapted to the national framework for training future commanders and staff officers. The authors intend to promote this solution as one aligned with European standards.

**Keywords:**
higher military education; learning outcomes; the resilience of the higher military education system.

In this paper, we aimed to identify potential solutions for adapting higher military education to the trends of education cantered on learning outcomes. These solutions are based on specific military competences captured by national specialized institutions and aim to meet the requirements of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) (CEDEFOP 2017). We will use the Sectoral Qualifications Framework – Military Officer Profession – SQF-MLOF as a benchmark for the development of this approach (Sectoral Qualifications Framework – Military Officer Profession – SQF-MLOF) proposed by the European Security and Defence College/ ESDC (European Security and Defence College-ESDC 2021) in two volumes, volume 1 (ESDC 2021b, Vol. I) and volume 2 (ESDC 2021c, Vol. II).

Higher military education primarily aims to prepare individuals for the officer profession, but the sectoral qualifications framework primarily focuses on lifelong learning for specialist military officers in security and defence-related fields. The relevance of this approach derives from the fact that this European system will serve as the basis for developing a model based on learning outcomes, adapted to the national framework for training future specialist officers. This approach aims to align with European standards in the higher military education system.

The novelty of our approach is proposing a learning model to achieve competences specific to a particular spectrum of manifestation and capitalization of work skills relevant to the joint operational level and leadership. This field corresponds to the profile of our master's degree graduates and postgraduate leadership courses. Our aim is to follow the guidelines of the European Qualifications Framework applicable in the education system of the European Union and NATO, suitable for all forms of lifelong learning and officer career. The argument underlying this approach is reinforced by the results of a comparative analysis of several models used by other European member states (MS) in the higher military education process. Beyond comparability with models from other European military education systems, we believe that implementing our proposed model offers several benefits.

The first benefit is aligning with a European trend for developing higher military education and achieving harmonization. This will facilitate compatibility and comparability with similar higher military education programs developed by various allied or EU MS.

The second benefit is capitalizing on education and training opportunities provided in different countries through the Erasmus programs, which are currently not utilized by the higher military education system at the master's level. Recognition of equivalent training carried out in another EU MS will be facilitated.

The third benefit is the contribution of this model to creating a common security and defense culture. We advocate for creating a national school of thought that gives our future graduates the opportunity to demonstrate competences developed

as a result of the skills acquired during basic training and continuous training throughout their careers.

## Sectoral Qualifications Framework – Military Officer Profession – SQF-MLOF

SQF-MILOF was developed by a working group under the auspices of the ESDC at the request of the Military Committee of the European Union and attended by representatives from 21 MS and numerous experts belonging to European institutions, non-affiliated higher education institutions, non-governmental or independent organizations. This product package has been evaluated by a team of international experts, validated by the MS, and recognized by the Council of the European Union which tasked the ESDC to *develop, maintain and promote* the SQF-MILOF (EUR-Lex 2020, art. 4 (m)).

SQF-MILOF is not just a taxonomy of learning outcomes (although this is the main product) but a package of products available to institutions responsible for human resource management or military education and training. SQF-MILOF, through the competence profile it proposes, helps human resource managers to develop occupational standards and the beneficiaries of educational programs to write the graduate profile. Through the core curriculum (MILOF-CORE), vocational education and training institutions can develop learning outcomes for various programs using a standardized language agreed upon at the EU level.

SQF-MILOF is perfectly aligned with the EQF, the SQF-MILOF descriptors being an adaptation to the military officer profession of the EQF descriptors. Considering its limited scope (officer profession only), the framework has been developed on four levels of complexity corresponding to EQF levels 5-8.

Thus, SQF-MILOF level 1 corresponds to EQF level 5, SQF-MILOF level 2 corresponds to EQF level 6, SQF-MILOF level 3 corresponds to EQF level 7 and SQF-MILOF level 4 corresponds to EQF level 8. Similar to EQF, SQF-MILOF is a framework that covers learning that takes place continuously, throughout life and in any context: formal, informal or non-formal.

However, what SQF-MILOF brings in addition to EQF, due to its sectoral character, is the decomposition of learning outcomes into operational levels (from tactical to strategic) through the core curriculum (MILOF-CORE). In this way, the comparison of two qualifications is much more precise and is carried out not only on the basis of the SQF-MILOF level (1, 2, 3, or 4) but also of their military focus (tactical, operational, or strategic) described by MILOF- CORE. For example, it is irrelevant to compare two master's programs based only on SQF-MILOF level 3 (EQF 7), as long as one program is tactically oriented and the other operationally oriented.

The main aim of the project (SQF-MILOF) was to provide MS with an inclusive tool, a benchmark against which their military qualifications could be compared. This ambition will be achieved when all the military qualifications of the MS are "levelled" and uploaded into the ESDC's dedicated database.

## Learning outcomes

In this chapter, our aim is to identify particularities of learning outcomes as expressed in national and international literature and law. Learning outcomes are "what a person knows, understands, and is able to do upon completion of the learning process" (Parlamentul României 2011). The EQF defines learning outcomes as those statements about what a learner knows, understands, and is able to do on completion of a learning process, and which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy (EUR-Lex 2017). In this context, it can be understood that learning outcomes are defined in the form of knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility following an educational teaching-learning process.

The learning outcomes underpin the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which enables the recognition, measurement, and reporting of all learning outcomes acquired in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts and ensures the consistency of qualifications and certified titles (Parlamentul României 2011). In other words, qualifications are the formal result of an assessment and validation process by a competent authority and indicate that the learning outcomes correspond to specific standards. Learning outcomes are the basis of the recognition of previous learning: experiences, knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies that a person has acquired as a result of formal, non-formal or informal learning, which are evaluated by reference to a certain set of norms, objectives or learning outcomes" (Parlamentul României 2011; Parlamentul României 2021).

From the analysis of the two concepts (learning outcomes and qualifications), it is evident that they interrelate through a complex process of assessment, validation, and certification. Assessment of learning outcomes is the process that confirms the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Validation is the process of confirming that the learning outcomes achieved have been assessed and meet the specific requirements for a learning unit. Certification of learning outcomes is the process of formally confirming a particular qualification, signifying that knowledge, skills, responsibility, and autonomy have been acquired following an assessment process. As a result of this process, a proof, such as a certificate or diploma, is acquired, issued by an authorized, nationally or internationally recognized institution. In summary, learning outcomes can only be identified following the learning process, through evaluation, validation, and certification; the process is completed by matching the learning outcomes with the competences demonstrated at the workplace.

In this context, the existence of the formal framework through which learning outcomes are recognized at the international level, by applying a common set of evaluation and mutual recognition criteria, represents an important step towards the interoperability of skills at the European level. "The learning outcomes form the basis of the common European diploma, which is proposed to be awarded at the national level and which certifies the learning outcomes obtained in the framework of transnational cooperation between several institutions, such as European university alliances, based on a common set of criteria." (Comisia Europeană 2021) The value of learning outcomes can be also revealed in the context of quality assurance. Thus, "quality assurance includes information about situations, inputs, processes, and outcomes while emphasizing effects and learning outcomes." (Guvernul României 2000)

On the basis of the references presented, we can note that the generalization of the principles of student-centred education calls for the large-scale introduction of learning outcomes as a key element of curriculum design, learning assessment, and program accreditation. This paradigm dissociates from objective and content-based education, where the teacher is central and the measure of student outcomes.
In conclusion, learning outcomes do not suggest the way, the modality, or even the content, but the measurable conclusion of the learning process. How that finality is reached may differ from teacher to teacher, school to school, and even student to student.

## A possible model of study program

The proposed model is based on the following elements captured by SQF-MILOF, in accordance with the ESCO classification system (*European Skills, Competencies, Qualifications and Occupations*) (ESDC 2021a, 10-12):
1. Organizational context/ level of operations: joint, operational.
2. Graduate Model: In this organizational context and at this level of operations, officers lead units and large joint or combined units, provide advice and support to senior commanders in the planning and conduct of joint operations at the tactical and operational component levels, plan logistical support, conducts and supervises training, oversees troop welfare and equipment administration and management.
3. Audience: Officers of all services who are promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel.
4. Key competence areas at the joint operational level (we have highlighted the relevant competencies to the model we analysed in this paper):

- **Member of the military profession: plans and conducts military operations; identifies security threats**; ensures information security; cooperates with civil organizations, agencies, and partners; **assesses risks**; ensures compliance and implementation of policies and concepts; **advises on force capabilities and limitations; analyses potential threats to national security**.

• **Military technician**: **plans the force**; manages administrative systems and budgets, supervises the maintenance of military equipment and technique; tests safety strategies, **supports logistics activity**.
• **Leader and decision-maker: leads and commands military structures; advises superiors on military operations;** delegate powers; manage change**.**
• **Combat-role model: upholds ethical and moral imperatives**.
• **Communicator: drafts and presents military communications; negotiates and mediates conflict situations; communicates with various audiences**; interacts, communicates, and collaborates through digital technologies.
• Learner/Teacher: oversees troop training and human resource management.
• Critical thinker and researcher: scientifically research the military field; articulates information needs, identifies and obtains digital data.
• International security actor and diplomat: cooperates with international organizations, agencies and partners; advise superiors on the development of international security policies.

The competence profile presented above is an exhaustive one, encompassing all the competencies of an officer capable of operating at this level, but it can be adapted and configured for the target audience by the beneficiary. For our model, we **have highlighted** only those skills that will be the subject of the graduate's profile.
Based on this competence profile, the educational institution develops the learning outcomes, grouped by subjects or modules and which form the curriculum.

For the proposed model, we developed a program, which from a functional point of view is organized into 11 disciplines: (1) the employment of forces on the full spectrum of operations, (2) the decision-making process, (3) operational planning, (4) national and international security strategies and policies, (5) force support, (6) C4ISR, cyber security, (7) military leadership, (8) ethics of the use of force, rules of engagement and protection of civilians, (9) military history, 10) gender and (11) cultural issues. The learning outcomes described in the table have been selected from the tabular framework on page 34, SQF-MILOF vol.1 (*SQF-MILOF Proper*) and are written at the program level. At the subject level, learning unit, learning outcomes can be detailed using the tabular framework (MILOF-CORE) on pages 31-54 of SQF-MILOF vol.2. Temporally and organizationally, the program is carried out in four phases: initial, intermediate 1, intermediate 2 and final.
The program is levelled at the SQF-MILOF level 2, and the military focus is OPERATIONAL/JOINT. Determination of SQF-MILOF level and military focus is based on a levelling process described on page 39 of SQF-MILOF vol. 1.

We analysed, as a benchmark, a similar program organized by an educational institution in Italy (Centre for Defence Higher Studies). In this example, the Centre for Defence Higher Studies (CASD) – Joint Services Staff College Italy (ISSMI) followed the five steps of the process of levelling to SQF-MILOF and defining the military focus (Levelling national military qualifications to SQF-MILOF and defining the military focus), for the Advanced Joint Staff Course, as described below:

Step 1 – Identify the National Military Qualification (NMQ) and its constituent elements.
Step 2 – Identify NMQ Key Learning Outcomes (KLOs) in core competence areas to achieve the overall NMQ objective.
Step 3 – Match the NMQ KLOs to the learning outcomes in the relevant learning areas in the MILOF-CORE focus and at the corresponding SQF-MILOF level.
Step 4 – Determine the SQF-MILOF level of the NMQ.
Step 5 – Determine the military focus of the NMQ.

As a result of this process, the Advanced Joint Staff Course organized by the Centre for Defence Higher Studies (CASD) - Joint Services Staff College (ISSMI) has been levelled at SQF-MILOF level 2, focused on the OPERATIONBAL/JOINT level.

Building on the previously presented analysis and as a result of our experience in the educational field, we will elaborate on a potential model for the development of learning outcomes correlated with specific competences gradually acquired, from the tactical to the strategic level.

In the presented model (Table 1), the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy), are distributed by phases (from 1 to 4) and within phases, by levels of operations (from tactical to strategic) and levels of complexity (from 1 to 3). It follows from this that, although the overall level of the program is level 2, the program will also include sessions of higher complexity (e.g. level 3 in phases 3 and 4) but also of lower complexity (e.g. level 1 in phases 1 and 2) and which will have an introductory, informative or general character and a smaller weight in the economy of the program. Learning is done progressively, incrementally, to fix and gradually increase the complexity of learning. At the program level, the complexity is expressed by the attributes of the results (comprehensive, advanced, or

**TABLE 1 Competency-based learning outcomes development model**

| Level SQF-MILOF | | Phase | 1 Initial | 2 Intermediar 1 | 3 Intermediar 2 | 4 Final |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Comprehensiv | Focus MILOF-CORE | **Tactical** | **Operational** | | |
| | | Learning outcomes: -Knowledge -Abilities -Responsibility and autonomy | • The comprehensive and specialized knowledge<br>• A comprehensive set of cognitive and practical skills is needed to develop various options and plans for implementing military tasks and actions at the level of...<br>• Limited exercise of command and control functions of military activities in a fluid, unpredictable, ever-changing environment. | | | |
| 2 | Advanced | Focus MILOF-CORE | | **Tactical** | **Operational** | **Strategic** |
| | | Learning outcomes: -Knowledge -Abilities -Responsibility and autonomy | | • Advanced knowledge of the level ... involving a critical understanding of the theory and principles of military science and art.<br>• Advanced skills that demonstrate the innovation necessary to solve unpredictable complex problems in the application of military science and art.<br>• Exercises command and control of complex tactical and technical activities and tasks, assuming responsibility for decision-making under unforeseen circumstances. | | |
| 3 | Highly specialized | Focus MILOF-CORE | | | **Tactical** | **Operational** |
| | | Learning outcomes: -Knowledge -Abilities -Responsibility and autonomy | | | • Highly specialized knowledge of the level ... as a foundation of original cross-force categories and multi-domain thinking.<br>• Specialized problem-solving skills are required to advise and develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different arms/specialties and force categories.<br>• Manage and transform complex military tasks and activities in unpredictable contexts with strategic consequences. Assumes leadership and management responsibilities of units and large military units. | |

highly specialized). At the level of the discipline or learning unit, the complexity of learning is expressed by action verbs that help measure the student's behaviour at the end of the learning process (describe, examine, analyse, elaborate, etc.)

In phase 1 (initial), the student learns various subjects focused on tactical level, introductory/comprehensive level (SQF-MILOF level 1). In this phase, the student will acquire a series of skills specific to the functions of a tactical-level command and functional modules on operating environments, including support. The student is able to explain the principles of employing subunits and units in combat belonging to a specific service at the tactical level, in accordance with national doctrine, on a broad spectrum of operations.

In phase 2 (intermediate 1), the student learns various subjects focused on an operational level, introductory/comprehensive level (SQF-MILOF level 1), and tactical level, advanced level (SQF-MILOF level 2). In this phase, the student will acquire a range of analysis skills of the operating environment and complete the acquisition of combat support procedures specific to various operating environments at an advanced level. They are able to describe the capabilities of different services and military specializations and can analyse the factors that produce effects at the operational level.

In phase 3 (intermediate 2), the student learns various disciplines focused on an operational level, advanced level (SQF-MILOF level 2), and tactical level at a highly specialized level (SQF-MILOF level 3). In this phase, the student will acquire a series of skills to integrate the planning procedures at operational/ joint level. He/ she should be able to apply the principles of employing units and structures at the operational level in a multinational joint context, in accordance with national and multinational doctrine, on a wide spectrum of operations.

In phase 4 (final), the student learns within the various disciplines focused at the strategic level, advanced level (SQF-MILOF level 2), and at the operational level, highly specialized level (SQF-MILOF level 3). In this phase, the student will acquire a range of skills to integrate the planning processes and functions in combat and operations at the tactical and operational levels in a strategic level planning context. He/ she should be able to critically evaluate the specific capabilities of the services, land, naval, and air, their contribution to the conduct of the joint operation, allocate resources appropriately and propose ways to implement the objectives in coordination with all relevant actors. They apply the principles of the joint-level planning process to a wide range of operations.

Starting from this model, we will present, in the following chapter, a model for the development of learning outcomes, at the level of a discipline/functional unit, which will represent a starting point in the higher military institutional approach of harmonizing analytical programs on these criteria.

## A possible model for developing learning outcomes for a discipline

At this stage of our approach, we will present an example of developing learning outcomes for a discipline (Employment of forces - Full Spectrum Operations).
We will capitalize on the milestones on which the curriculum is built and based on learning outcomes, as presented in the previous section.

Based on the model described in the previous section, the model below is based on the four phases and 3 levels of learning complexity, which reflects the gradual increase in the level of skills, from initial to final skills, in correspondence with the level of complexity of the teaching-learning process, from complexity level 1 to complexity level 3. The learning outcomes are derived from the core curriculum (MILOF-CORE) from pages 31-54 of SQF-MILOF vol.2.

From the analysis of the four phases, it can be inferred that learning along the program follows a progressive course, both in terms of learning complexity (vertically, from 1 to 3) and operational focus (horizontally and diagonally, from tactical to strategic level). Horizontally, it is observed that the approach to the level of operations is increasing, from tactical to operational and strategic, at the same level of learning complexity. Vertically, the level of learning complexity increases with each phase, and the level of operations alternates.

It is important to note that at the discipline/learning unit level, the learning outcomes are no longer formulated on the three domains (knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy) because it is difficult to differentiate in which category a learning outcome falls, which would unnecessarily complicate the planning of the training for

**TABLE 2 A potential model for developing learning outcomes for a discipline (Employment of forces - Full Spectrum Operations)**

| SQF-MILOF Level | | Phase | 1 Initial | 2 Intermediate 1 | 3 Intermediate 2 | 4 Final |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Comprehensive | MILOF-CORE Focus | Tactical | Operational | | |
| | | Learning Outcomes | Discuss the organisation and basic principles of employing forces at the service level. | Describe the possibilities of the different services, equally the composition and force enablers and multipliers at the operational level. | | |
| 2 | Advanced | MILOF-CORE Focus | | Tactical | Operational | Strategic |
| | | Learning Outcomes | | Explain the principles of employing combined arms forces at the tactical level in accordance with national /multinational doctrine, across the full spectrum of operations > Explain the tactics, techniques and procedures specific to the particular service for the full spectrum of operations at national /multinational levels with realistic consideration of the possibilities of the different branches. | Explain the principles of employing units and formations at the operational level in a joint multinational context, in accordance with national / multinational doctrine, across the full spectrum of operations. | Analyse the strategic employment of armed forces as part of an integrated crisis response architecture at national and multinational levels. |
| 3 | Highly Specialised | MILOF-CORE Focus | | | Tactical | Operational |
| | | Learning Outcomes | | | Explore the requirements / conditions of integrating the effects of fire, influence and manoeuvre in joint operations > Balance own resources, the environment and the opponent to achieve the assigned tasks within a tactical framework, ensuring freedom of action for subordinate formations. | Critically assess the service-specific (land, maritime, air) forces capabilities, organization and specific activities that they conduct as part of a joint force, apportion / allocate resources accordingly and propose ways to implement objectives in coordination with all relevant actors > Apply the principles of operational art throughout the full spectrum of operations. |

the instructor/teacher. Furthermore, from the point of view of learning assessment, differentiating learning outcomes across the three domains does not help, as they are often combined (CEDEFOP 2017).

It is worth noting the construction of the learning outcomes. The complexity of the learning is reflected by the verb, the context, and the standards described in the statement of the learning outcome, and the military focus is expressed by the specific conditions of the intended operational level.

## Conclusions

The lifelong professional training of officers is closely related to the relationship and correspondence between ranks, age, the type of training they access, the level of the structure for which they are preparing, and the skills required for the specific form of training. As our officers prepare to become staff officers and commanders, from tactical to operational/joint level, with a higher-level horizon of planning (Brigade, Division, Corps, component commands, joint staff, multinational staff, etc.), they require minimal preliminary training. The types of training required for this target audience include command and staff courses, master's programs, postgraduate studies, strategic leadership courses, and the National Defence College.

The training model presented in this article has a generic relevance and can be used both as a component of a master's degree program and as a component of an operational-level career course.
Based on this approach, in which we intended to highlight the correlation between competences and learning outcomes, but also the division of labour in the development of these elements of career and learning planning, we would like to highlight a series of conclusions and proposals aimed at contributing to the resilience of the higher military education system and harmonization of the joint-level course curricula.

**1.** There is a need to distinguish between competences and learning outcomes. Competences are set by the employer and learning outcomes are set by the education system, based on the competencies. We found that, in general, curricula refer to competences and not to learning outcomes. This aspect requires the establishment of an organizational framework necessary to update the curricula so that the current competences are translated into learning outcomes, based on the model proposed by us.
**2.** It is necessary to standardize the national higher military educational process by facilitating the acquisition of specific competences according to the European trend of developing military education. Here we support the introduction, with effect from 2024, in the command master's program of some topics and in the joint operations course of a distinct discipline in the field of EU defence, as a requirement derived from the European EU War College project.

**3.** The adoption of the proposed model can facilitate the recognition of the qualification of staff officers at the joint level and the exchange of students between institutions in NATO and EU member states with similar programs.
**4.** Adopting this way of developing study programs, regardless of level and academic value, can contribute to the formation of a student-oriented national school of thought through learning outcomes and contribute, on a European level, to the creation of a common culture of security and defence.
**5.** The model proposed by us contributes to satisfying the beneficiary's requested qualifications and aligns the national higher military education with the requirements of a modern European military education of the future.

## References

**CEDEFOP.** 2017. "Defining, writing and applying learning outcomes. A European handbook." https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4156_en.pdf.

**Comisia Europeană.** 2021. „Comunicarea Comisiei către Parlamentul European, Consiliu, Comitetul economic și social european și Comitetul regiunilor privind o strategie europeană pentru universități." https://www.cdep.ro/eu/examinare_pck2015.fisa_examinare?eid=676.

**ESDC.** 2021a. *Sectoral Qualifications Framework for the Military Officer Profession – SQF-MILOF.* https://esdc.europa.eu/documentation/the-sectoral-qualifications-framework-for-the-military-officer-profession-sqf-milof-package/.

**—.** 2021b. *Sectoral Qualifications Framework for the Military Officer Profession – SQF-MILOF Volume I.* https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2871/37724.

**—.** 2021c. *Sectoral Qualifications Framework for the Military Officer Profession – SQF-MILOF Volume II.* https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2871/352713.

EUR-Lex. 2017. *Recomandarea Consiliului din 22 mai 2017 privind Cadrul european al calificărilor pentru învățarea pe tot parcursul vieții și de abrogare a Recomandării Parlamentului European și a Consiliului din 23 aprilie 2008 privind stabilirea Cadrului european al calificărilor pentru învățarea de-a lungul vieții.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615(01).

**—.** 2020. *Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/1515 of 19 October 2020 establishing a European Security and Defence College, and repealing Decision (CFSP) 2016/2382.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020D1515.

**Guvernul României.** 2000. „Ordonanța Guvernului nr. 129/2000 privind formarea profesională a adulților, republicată, cu modificările și completările ulterioare." https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/24105.

**Parlamentul României.** 2011. „Legea educației naționale nr. 1." https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/legea-educatiei_actualizata%20august%202018.pdf.

**—.** 2021. „LEGEA nr. 164, din 18 iunie 2021 privind acceptarea Convenției globale pentru recunoașterea calificărilor din învățământul superior, adoptată la Paris la 25 noiembrie 2019." https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/243387.

BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

# The attack of the Russian Federation on Ukraine – Approach regarding the land logistics support of military actions

**Lt. Robert-Cristian TRIF***

*"Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy, Sibiu
e-mail: trif_robert_cristian@yahoo.com

## Abstract

The current conflict on Romania's border is a genuine threat to national and European security, but above all to world security, given that one of the two belligerents possesses nuclear weapons and has always taken a hostile stance towards democratic circles. The Russian Federation's unprovoked and totally unjustified invasion of Ukraine will radically change the entire geopolitical and security environment both nationally and on NATO's eastern flank. Although the conflict is still ongoing, Russian logistical support to the war in Ukraine requires further approaches and is a critical area of research for several reasons. First, a thorough understanding of Russian logistical support can help develop effective strategies to counter Russian aggression in Ukraine. Second, an understanding of Russian logistical support can help policymakers assess the effectiveness of economic sanctions and other measures aimed at reducing Russian involvement in the conflict. Third, understanding Russian logistical support can provide insights into Russia's broader geopolitical strategy in the region, which could help to resolve the conflict diplomatically and promote stability in the region.

**Keywords:**
invasion; military actions; logistical support; NATO; logistics; special military operation.

On February 24, 2022, just after 2:00 AM Ukraine time, Vladimir Putin, the President of the Russian Federation, announced in a pre-recorded TV address that he would initiate a so-called "special military operation" in Ukraine (Bloomberg 2022). In Vladimir Putin's view, this operation was one of stability and peacekeeping, but in the view of the whole world, this operation meant war. Within minutes, the bombing began, the sky brightened, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine had begun.

For many Ukrainians, however, this was perceived not as a beginning, but a continuation of the conflict that began some eight years earlier, in the spring of 2014 (Dyukarev 2018, 2496-2507). Since Russia and the rebels it supported overran Crimea and areas of eastern Ukraine, the country has maintained an extensive and active military presence along the borders of Ukraine. In 2017, for example, Russia re-established the famous but disbanded 8th Combined Arms Army in Novocherkassk (Wikipedia 2022b).

Revived under the pretext of being a defensive measure, this army has seen a significant increase in combat capabilities, including the addition of artillery, missile subunits, and, according to some analysts, the integration of separatists into its own ranks (Jałowiec 2021, 37-48). This is not a singular occurrence. Since 2014, Russian bases, staging posts, and overall military infrastructure have multiplied in number, gradually surrounding Ukraine, from Sevastopol at the southern tip of Crimea to Clints along the northern border.

This expansion of the Russian army starting in 2014 on the border with Ukraine (see fig.1) could only be possible by confiscating land from individuals, land where military bases appeared later. This military build-up along the border has been justified by the Kremlin as a response to NATO's aggressive expansion and a possible retaliation by Ukraine to regain territories previously occupied by Russia (Posen 2021, 7-34).


**Figure 1. Development of Russian military bases from 2014 to 2022** (RadioFreeEurope 2022)

This expansion also paved the way for Russia to deploy 70% of their main combat units within a short distance of the border with Ukraine (NATO 2019; The Guardian 2022b). On November 3, 2021, the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense announced that 90,000 Russian soldiers surrounded the country's borders and occupied territories (New York Times 2021), the Russian forces that were in the region for alleged

exercises were simply not leaving, and their numbers were increasing by the day (Coleman 2022). A satellite image outside the Russian city Yelena, shown in figure no. 2, from September, only showed us an empty field, while the exact same place, on November 1, became the waiting area of the Russian 41st Combined Arms Army (Wikipedia 2022a), with its headquarters approximately 3,000 kilometers away (Plokhy 2018, 111-126).
The 41st Arms Army deployed from the Central Military District 1,200 tanks, howitzers, self-propelled artillery and support vehicles.

**Figure 2. The military base near the town of Yelena. First photo from September 2021/ Second photo from November 2021**
(RadioFreeEurope 2022)

The month of November 2021 marked only the beginning of major activities organized by the Russian Federation. Satellite images and social media posts tracked soldiers and supplies arriving in southwestern Russia in December of that year. But what alarmed the military analysts the most was the fact that, along with soldiers and supplies, there were field medical units, these being also equipped with blood reserves, numerous tents (Reuters 2022) for hospitalizing the troops and considerable reserves of fuel, so the forces massing the entire range of logistical support necessary to initiate a large-scale invasion on the border with Ukraine, thus minimizing the chances that preparations for a so-called exercise would drop dramatically (King 2021, 27).

In January 2022, Russian forces entered Belarus for joint exercises. Weeks later, it was announced that soldiers would remain in the exercise areas to reinforce and deter a NATO offensive (The Guardian 2022a). Settlement areas, such as Yelena, expanded further, while new ones emerged, forming an increasingly ominous arc around Ukraine. What made possible this massive internal mobilization of troops, weapons and supplies was Russia's vast railway network (see fig. 3). The expansion of this rail network, gaining its status as the third largest in the world (Wikipedia 2022c), is a by-product of the country's size and the convoluted nature of the road network (Mitzer and Janovsky 2022). Meanwhile, the degree of state control over the public transport system is very high, with the government owning around 20,000 of the country's 21,000 locomotives, a legacy of the Soviet era.

This combination of control and expansion reveals that the Russian military is able to rely heavily on rail ground transportation. Trains were the primary means of logistics that transported troops, tanks and trucks to and from Yelena, into Kursk and across the Bryansk and Smolensk regions, but, as in previous cases, OSINT (Open-Source Intelligence) information showed that all it was the trains that moved supplies from

**Figure 3. Railway map of the Russian Federation** (Wikipedia 2022c)


eastern Russia to Belarus, a country close to the Kremlin regime, which was used as an access point and logistical hub for the Russian military (Gould-Davies 2022, 5-12). Thanks in large part to these trains, or Russia's dependence on them, foreigners were able to document the military build-up so precisely because dashcams were able to film the tanks in transit at railroad crossings, videos that then made their way onto social media and the Internet, from where they travelled around the world, proving that the trains only set the stage for what would be initiated on February 24, 2022 (Gould-Davies 2022, 5-12).

## Initiation of special military operation. The Russian Federation, the invading state of the 21st century

In the first weeks of February 2022, the military base in Yelena was emptied while military equipment, troops and supplies began to move south. As these Russian forces moved closer and closer to the Ukrainian border, tank divisions appeared in Kursk, just 220 kilometres from Kharkiv, while additional troops and equipment were massed near Gomel in Belarus, 32 kilometres away from the border with Ukraine (Gould-Davies 2022, 5-12).

In the early hours of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the invading forces initiated operations primarily to cripple Ukraine's military infrastructure (Aljazeera 2022). Some of the first targets engaged by Russian artillery and aviation involved strikes on Ukrainian air bases in an effort to help Russia quickly gain air superiority without strong resistance (Berkowitz and Galocha 2022). Eleven were destroyed in the first day of hostilities. By midday Ukrainian forces had shifted their line of effort from line defence to recapturing key points of interest, as dozens of Russian helicopters landed at Hostel Airport (New York Times 2022). just a few kilometres from Kiev. The effort was focused on creating an air bridge to take control of the airport to allow planes to bring in more troops to continue the offensive towards Kiev. An aerial supply

line could provide some level of logistical support regardless the ground conditions. However, recognizing this as well, Ukraine tasked the 4th Rapid Reaction Brigade to reseize the airport, which it successfully did by 20:00 of the same days (Watling and Reynolds 2022, 3-4).

On the same day, as fighting reached the exclusion zone of the Chernobyl plant and troops came from all directions, logistical support activities continued behind the front lines to support the invasion to continue. In the Brest area of Belarus, Russian forces could be seen unloading supplies from wagons and gathering in a convoy formation facing south towards the war zone. However, despite all the well-planned war infrastructure built around Ukraine, military actions inside the area of operations are proceeding far below the level of expectation that Russian military leaders anticipated (Korniichuk, Shkatula and Smaga 2019).

Russian tanks were observed running out of fuel and ammunition, these being left abandoned especially in the area of operations in the north near Kiev (Telegraph 2022), the invading troops were seen looting shops and houses for food, possibly due to the lack of it (Mitzer and Janovsky 2022). Open source information has shown that Russian military rations are unavailable and existing ones have expired since 2015 (Twitter 2022). Stories have emerged of Russian forces asking Ukrainian civilians for supplies and directions, seemingly unaware of what the average person thinks of them in the country they are trying to conquer.

As Russian troops advanced into urban areas that can only be taken with the best tactical coordination, the Russian army demonstrated itself to be disorganized and unconnected, with only a few scattered units advancing with the task of breaking through Ukrainian lines to induce a quick and effortless surrender. The Ukrainian defence concentrated its offensive actions on what the invading forces appear to have neglected in this specific military operation: the significance of logistics (Dalsjö and Jonsson 2021, 160).

## Military logistics. Achilles' heel for the Russian Federation

In the famous words of General John J. Pershing, "Infantry wins battles, logistics wins wars," Ukraine has been banking heavily on striking Russia's logistics targets. On social media platforms adapted to organize the country's guerrilla-style defence, posts circulated emphasizing the value of destroying the fuel trucks. Ukrainian forces also destroyed two key bridges in Kiev, allowing them to focus on defending fewer key points, and similar tactics were used in other parts of the country. The Ukrainian military also destroyed all connections between the Russian and Ukrainian rail networks to prevent the invading force from using them and then being able to use them to augment their own supply lines. The logistics forces of the Russian army are not designed for a large-scale land offensive away from railways

(Barnes 2022). Within manoeuvre units, Russian logistics support units are vastly undersized compared to their Western counterparts (Watling and Reynolds 2022, 2-4).

Only brigades have an equivalent logistics capability, but it is not an exact comparison. Russian formations have only three-quarters the number of combat vehicles of their American counterparts, but almost three times as much artillery. On paper, not all brigades have a full number of battalions, Russian brigades have two artillery battalions, one missile battalion and two air defence battalions per brigade, as opposed to one artillery battalion and an attached air defence company per American brigade (see fig. 4). As a result of additional artillery and air defence battalions, Russian logistical requirements are much greater than those of American counterparts.

**Figure 4. Equivalent logistics support structures between NATO and the Russian Federation** (Warontherocks 2021)

| Training manoeuvres | NATO support units | F. Russian support units |
|---|---|---|
| **Battalion** | Company | Platoon |
| **Regiment** | Battalion | Company |
| **Brigade** | Battalion | Battalion |
| **Division** | Brigade | Battalion |
| **Corps** | Brigade | - |
| **Army/Joint Army** | N/A | Brigade |

The logistical challenges faced by the Russian army were not unexpected, but rather a longstanding problem. When examining the disastrous Soviet-Afghan War of the 1980s, inadequate logistical performance is frequently cited as a reason for the USSR's inability to meet its goals (Hilali 2005, 198). According to experts, the logistical support units were rigid and ill-equipped, resulting in the combat forces being insufficiently supplied to carry out their duties.

Naturally, owing to their extensive railway system, which is nearly entirely controlled by the government, the Russian military possesses an extraordinary capability for internal mobilization. In reality, roughly 30,000 military personnel work in the Russian railway troops, whose responsibility is to defend, operate, and construct railways for military applications (March 1996, 120). This force, which is larger than that of many nations, demonstrates how essential this infrastructure is to their military might. Nonetheless, this domestic advantage, this dependence on trains and carriages, is also a vulnerability when conflicts arise beyond the country's borders.

When the war extends beyond the support lines that have the railroads as their strong mode of action, Russian military logistics capabilities are mediocre at best. In the case of this invasion, the advanced rail yards used are in Belarus and Russia itself, so for any other supply lines, especially any stretch into Ukraine, Russia had to resort to trucks, and simply put: Russia does not have enough trucks (Warontherocks 2021; Forbes 2022). In a study conducted by Global Firepower in the year 2020, it was

shown that Russia benefits from 4,000 logistics transport trucks, an extraordinarily small number compared to the support needs. In comparison, the United States has 100,000 trucks specialized in logistics transport, containerization and evacuation tasks (March 1996).

The Russian military does not have enough trucks to meet its logistical requirements more than 130 kilometres beyond the supply points. To reach a range of 300 kilometres, the Russian army would have to double the allocation of trucks to 400 trucks for each of the logistics support brigades, each of these brigades is composed of about a thousand soldiers operating about 408 vehicles of transport capable of transporting 1,870 tons of cargo. In addition, the Russian army does not have enough support brigades, or material-technical support brigades, as they call them, for each of their armies. A look at the military balance sheet (International Institute for Strategic Studies 2023, 205), published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, shows 10 materiel support brigades supporting 11 armies, one tank army and four army corps. Russia's Western (Wikipedia 2022d) and Southern Commands (web.archive.org 2010) each have three armies and three materiel support brigades to support them. The Russian Federation's strength is its 10 railway brigades, which have no equivalent in Western militaries. The brigades specialize in railway security, construction and repair, while rolling stock is provided by state-owned civilian companies.

The intense conflict characterized by rocket and artillery fire, which accurately depicts this war in Ukraine, requires even more resources from logistical support forces, as each individual missile requires a dedicated truck for transport to the launcher. With the frequency of artillery fire in the first days of the invasion, much of the capacity of the Russian material support brigade was certainly limited in providing ammunition to the launch sites. This general inability is apparently reflected in Russia's strategy in Ukraine. Currently, the prevailing view is that Russia believed that through a combination of air and ground attacks in the opening hours and days of the invasion, the Ukrainians would capitulate quickly. They would either surrender or Russian forces would quickly reach Kiev, overthrow the government and install a puppet government, a belief that was held by almost all independent analysts before the conflict began. The analysis suggests that when invading, Russian forces can operate largely autonomously without logistical support for about three to five days. So, when the conflict did not end in that time frame, the Russians had to regroup and resupply.

At the moment, most Western forces which are generally much better equipped logistically, operate on a demand-based (drag) logistics system where combat forces request supplies as needed based on what it actually happens in the field. This way of operating logistics offers flexibility, speed and receiving support based on real operational needs. Meanwhile, the Russian military operates predominantly on a push system, where forces are replenished on a more predictable basis, as is

https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-12

determined by management. This leads in practice to strategic decision-making and prioritization regarding the forces that most need or warrant resupply and which materials are the most important to resupply, thus creating inefficient, stagnant, inflexible and which does not provide the necessary material support in the field.

So, in Ukraine, ammunition is likely to be prioritized over fuel for tanks in less strategically important directions. In the context of perpetual logistical constraints, as is the case with the Russian military, this is probably the more effective approach, but in the grand scheme of things, it is certainly less effective than the Western approach, which focuses on flexible logistics that adapt to actual conditions in land. So, Western forces let strategy drive logistics, while Russian forces let logistics drive strategy.

The only criterion that can best decide these issues is time. The Russian military has the capabilities to establish a war zone for a longer conflict. Its materiel support brigades include tactical pipeline battalions, for example, which can quickly build networks in Ukraine to bring fuel and water closer to active frontlines without the need for burdensome supply convoys. Russia's rail troops can do the same with rail infrastructure, repairing or building networks to support a long-term conflict or occupation. Russia can take a page out of the Soviet playbook by harnessing the full power of the public and private sectors to support military operations by requisitioning private assets needed to support the invasion. Regarding the area of Russian military logistics in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, there is a significant amount of information available, but much of it is limited and controversial.

Some studies and reports by international organizations have focused on analysing the logistical capability of the Russian military and how it has influenced the conduct of operations in Ukraine. They revealed that Russia has been able to significantly improve the logistical efficiency of its military by modernizing its transport and supply infrastructure, but also by using advanced technologies such as communications and military movement monitoring systems.

Despite these reports, there is a continuing need for research in this area, as much of the available information is contradictory and not verifiable. Also, the exact impact of Russia's logistical capability on the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is still debatable given the ongoing nature of the conflict.

The problem described in the present article, namely the analysis of the land logistic support of military actions in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, has not been approached in the same way, and it can make an important contribution to understanding the evolution of the situation in the conflict. It is important to note that analysing such an issue can be difficult due to the dynamic nature of many aspects of Russia's logistics capability, especially in an ongoing conflict.

## Conclusion

Logistics capabilities are undoubtedly a major strategic advantage of many Western militaries, particularly NATO, whose global network of military bases and large sea and air transport capabilities enables it to properly supply a conflict anywhere on earth. With this invasion, the Russian army lost one of the greatest strategic advantages it had until now. Russia unleashed its dreaded "Red Army," which, according to propaganda and Vladimir Putin, was capable of winning over Ukraine in no more than 24 hours. However, the entire military and analysis community could see the reduced logistical support capability and the dependence of the Russian army on the national railway system. Any future adversary of the Russian Federation within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization can hope that conventional military operations will not be carried out on its territory at the moment.

Russian logistics in the war in Ukraine played a critical role in determining the outcome of the conflict. The Russian military was able to capitalize on its logistical advantages, including superior military equipment, advanced communication systems, and well-trained troops, to gain the upper hand in many battles. However, it's important to note that the conflict is ongoing, and the exact impact of Russia's logistical capabilities on the conflict is still debatable.

However, the logistical challenges facing Russia in Ukraine cannot be overlooked. Supply lines are vulnerable to attack, and the Russian military must navigate complex terrain and difficult weather conditions. In addition, Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine have brought significant international pressure, including economic sanctions and political isolation, which have further complicated Russia's logistical situation. Overall, the logistics of Russia's military operations in Ukraine have been a critical factor in the ongoing conflict. While Russia's superior logistical capabilities have allowed it to gain the upper hand in many battles, logistical challenges have also placed significant obstacles in the way of Russian operations in Ukraine.

In conclusion, Russia's poor logistics in the Ukraine war had a significant impact on the current situation on the ground. Limitations in logistical support led to inefficient deployment of resources, inability to sustain prolonged operations, and vulnerabilities in supply lines, making it easier for Ukrainian forces to disrupt Russian operations. The ultimate outcome of the conflict will depend on a wide range of factors, including military strategy, diplomacy and logistics.

## References

**Aljazeera.** 2022. *Mapping Russian attacks across Ukraine.* https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/24/mapping-russian-attacks-across-ukraine-interactive.

**Barnes, J.E.** 2022. *U.S. Exposes What It Says Is Russian Effort to Fabricate Pretext for Invasion.* https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/03/us/politics/russia-ukraine-invasion-pretext.html.

**Berkowitz, Bonnie, and Artur Galocha.** 2022. *Why the Russian military is bogged down by logistics in Ukraine.* https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/03/30/russia-military-logistics-supply-chain/.

**Bloomberg.** 2022. *Transcript: Vladimir Putin's Televised Address on Ukraine.* https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-24/full-transcript-vladimir-putin-s-televised-address-to-russia-on-ukraine-feb-24.

**Coleman, Alistair.** 2022. "Ukraine Crisis: Russian News Agency Deletes Victory Editorial." *BBC News.* https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-60562240.

**Dalsjö, Robert, and Michael Jonsson.** 2021. "More than Decorative, Less than Decisive: Russian A2/AD Capabilities and NATO." *Survival* 63 (5): 160.

**Dyukarev, Andrey.** 2018. "Logistical Support of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces in Ukraine." *Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities and Social Sciences* vol. 11 (no. 10).

**Forbes.** 2022. *The Russian Army Doesn't Have Enough Trucks To Defeat Ukraine Fast.* https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2022/01/13/the-russian-army-doesnt-have-enough-trucks-to-defeat-ukraine-fast/?sh=2dfb0ad83075.

**Gould-Davies, Nigel.** 2022. "Putin's Strategic Failure." *Survival* 64 (2): 5-12.

**Hilali, A.Z.** 2005. *US-Pakistan relationship: Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.* Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Co.

**International Institute for Strategic Studies.** 2023. *The Military Balance.* Routledge. https://www.iiss.org/publications/the-military-balance.

**Jałowiec, Tomasz.** 2021. "Military logistics - from military sciences for the science of management and quality." *Military Logistics Systems Institute of Logistics* (Faculty of Security, Logistics and Management) 55: 37-48. doi:10.37055/slw/145822.

**King, Anthony.** 2021. *Urban Warfare in the Twenty-First Century.* Cambridge: Polity Press.
Korniichuk, Yurii, Oleksandr Shkatula, and Vladislav Smaga. 2019. "Outstanding NG Issues of Military Logistics in Ukraine." doi:10.37055/slw/129237.

**March, G. Patrick.** 1996. *Eastern Destiny: Russia in Asia and the North Pacific.* Praeger: Greenwood Publishing Group.

**Mitzer, Stijn, and Jakub Janovsky.** 2022. *Attack On Europe: Documenting Russian Equipment Losses During The 2022 Russian Invasion Of Ukraine.* https://www.oryxspioenkop.com/2022/02/attack-on-europe-documenting-equipment.html.

**NATO.** 2019. "Allied Joint Doctrine for Operations, AJP 3." Edition C, Version 1.

**New York Times.** 2021. *As Russia's Military Stumbles, Its Adversaries Take Note.* https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/07/us/politics/russia-ukraine-military.html.

**—.** 2022. *Russian helicopters attack an airport near Kyiv.* https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/world/europe/russian-helicopter-attack-video.html.

**Plokhy, S.** 2018. "The Return of the Empire: The Ukraine Crisis in the Historical Perspective." *South Central Review* 35 (1): 111-126.

**Posen, Barry R.** 2021. "Europe Can Defend Itself." *Survival* 62 (6): 7-34.

**RadioFreeEurope.** 2022. *In Photos: New Images Capture Russia Massing Weaponry Around Ukraine.* https://www.rferl.org/a/satellite-photos-russia-ukraine-troop-buildup/31662944.html.

**Reuters.** 2022. *EXCLUSIVE Russia moves blood supplies near Ukraine, adding to U.S. concern, officials say.* https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/exclusive-russia-moves-blood-supplies-near-ukraine-adding-us-concern-officials-2022-01-28/.

**Telegraph.** 2022. *Ukrainian farmers tow away abandoned Russia tanks and missile launchers worth millions.* https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/03/13/ukrainian-farmers-seen-towing-abandoned-russia-tanks-missile/.

**The Guardian.** 2022a. *Harsh conditions mean Russian troops near Ukraine will need to be moved soon.* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/23/harsh-conditions-mean-russian-troops-near-ukraine-will-need-to-be-moved-soon.

**—.** 2022b. *Ukraine crisis: Russia has in place 70% of military needed for full invasion – US officials.* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/06/ukraine-crisis-russia-has-in-place-70-of-military-needed-for-full-invasion-us-officials.

**Twitter.** 2022. *NEXTA.* https://twitter.com/nexta_tv/status/1498409763171885062.

**Warontherocks.** 2021. *Feeding the bear: a closer look at russian army logistics and the fait accompli.* https://warontherocks.com/2021/11/feeding-the-bear-a-closer-look-at-russian-army-logistics/.

**Watling, Jack, and Nick Reynolds.** 2022. *Operation Z. The Death Throes of an Imperial Delusion.* https://static.rusi.org/special-report-202204-operation-z-web.pdf.

**web.archive.org.** 2010. „Decretul președintelui Federației Ruse din 20.09.2010 N 1144 cu privire la diviziunea militară și administrativă a Federației Ruse." https://web.archive.org/web/20120331181836/http://graph.document.kremlin.ru/page.aspx?1%3B1298267.

**Wikipedia.** 2022a. *41st Combined Arms Army.* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/41st_Combined_Arms_Army.

**—.** 2022b. *8th Guards Combined Arms Army.* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/8th_Guards_Combined_Arms_Army.

**—.** 2022c. *Rail transport in Russia.* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rail_transport_in_Russia.

**—.** 2022d. *Western Military District.* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Military_District.

No.1/2023, JANUARY-MARCH
https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-13

BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

# Romania – A resilient state in the regional security equation. NRRP implementation

**Lt. eng. Bogdan-Constantin PAGNEJER, Ph.D. Student***
**Lt. Delia-Alexandra MAGRAON****

*"Carol I" National Defence University, Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: bogdan.pagnejer@yahoo.com

**"Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy, Sibiu, Romania
e-mail: deliamagraon@gmail.com

## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak at the beginning of 2020 strongly affected the global economic, social and budgetary area, requiring an urgent and coordinated response both at the Union and Member State level to cope with the direct and indirect effects of the pandemic. In this article we pay particular attention to the evolution of the concept of resilience and the ways to strengthen the European states' resilience in the face of threats, especially following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, while analyzing the implementation state of the objectives outlined in Romania's National Recovery and Resilience Plan. The aim is to define the concept of resilience and to highlight the methods for increasing the European states' resilience, as well as to present how Romania applies European instruments to strengthen its national and regional resilience. Analyzing the preliminary data on the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, it can be stated that Romania is making considerable efforts to strengthen its resilience and is on track to comply with the European Recovery and Resilience Mechanism measures.

**Keywords:**
resilience; NRRP; COVID-19; Repower EU.

The concept of resilience can be defined as the ability of a society or state actors to withstand significant crises or shocks, protect critical areas, develop methods to counteract negative influences, and come back stronger. High resilience requires flexibility, resistance, and durability. Even though resilience is often associated with unforeseen situations, good planning and anticipation can lead to better results. A comprehensive analysis of vulnerabilities, risks, and threats to organizations, states, and citizens is necessary to avoid being unable to respond to them. Given the dynamic nature of the regional security environment, Romania is compelled to take all necessary measures to ensure political, economic, and security stability and to protect its citizens.

The strategic objectives for ensuring resilience in Romania are defined in the National Defence Strategy for the period 2020-2024: "*more than ever, resilience-building efforts must be calibrated to respond to new types of threats – subtle and subversive – including from technological developments. A central role is therefore given to multi-level collaboration: public-private, citizen-community and civil-military, aimed at strengthening societal resilience and critical infrastructures, a responsibility at the intersection of the social and individual, institutional-public and private spheres*" (Presidential Administration 2020).

Therefore, our analysis focuses on key aspects related to the concept of European and regional resilience, as well as the ways in which Romania demonstrates its resilience as a state in the face of regional security threats, especially in response to the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
Given the purpose of our research, we accept the following hypothesis as the starting point of our study:

- ✓ *Romania is making considerable efforts to build resilience and it is on track to complying with the European Recovery and Resilience Mechanism measures.*

## European Union Recovery and Resilience Mechanism

The outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic in early 2020 severely affected the global economic, social and budgetary area, requiring an urgent and coordinated response at both Union and Member State level to address the direct and indirect effects of the pandemic. Following the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, on 27 May 2020, the European Commission proposed the creation of the temporary NextGenerationEU recovery instrument and the consolidation of EU funds for the period 2021-2027.

On 19 February 2021, the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism, the main instrument of the NextGenerationEU initiative, entered into force. This mechanism, proposed by EU officials, comes as a solution against the negative impact of the COVID-19

pandemic, and is intended to help Europe recover and increase the resilience of Member States.

The scope of the mechanism covers policy areas of European importance structured around six pillars (European Parliament 2021):

- Pillar I, Green Transition, covers investments in the area of biodiversity, energy efficiency, building renovation in line with the Union's climate and energy security objectives.
- Digital transformation aims to develop digital infrastructures, digitise services and create data centres, encouraging the development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
- The area of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth aims at the recovery of the Union's economy. This pillar promotes entrepreneurship, sustainable infrastructures and industrial development.
- Based on social and territorial cohesion, Pillar IV aims to increase the quality of life, combat poverty and unemployment and lead to job creation, support and integrate disadvantaged groups or develop social protection systems.
- Pillar V, health and economic, social and institutional resilience, brings improvements in the area of public services, accessibility and capacity of the health system, effectiveness of national administration, judiciary.
- Pillar VI, policies for the next generation, children and youth, aims to achieve conclusive results on: digital skills, retraining, investment policies for children and youth on education, health and jobs, the generation gap.

The Recovery and Resilience Mechanism aims to improve the resilience, crisis response, and adaptation of Member States, as well as promote economic, social, and territorial cohesion through the green transition and digital transformation. The Mechanism's role is to provide financial support to achieve qualitative and quantitative results based on reforms, investments, and cooperation among EU countries.

Under this EU instrument, Member States have developed national resilience and recovery plans that outline specific measures, reforms, and investment projects needed to mitigate the negative effects of the crisis. To benefit from the support provided through the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism, these reforms and investments must be implemented by 2026.

## Implementation of Romania's National Recovery and Resilience Plan

In the current global geopolitical context, where unpredictability and dynamism are predominant, we believe that Romania must respond promptly to new security challenges, take the best measures to counter them and adopt anticipation as its main line of action.

The National Defence Strategy for the period 2020-2024 states as follows: "*The concept of Romania's resilience is addressed in two key aspects: the inherent capacity of entities – individuals, communities, regions, state - to resist and adapt articulately to violent events, causing stress, shock, disasters, pandemics or conflicts, on the one hand, and the capacity of these entities to quickly return to a functional state of normality, on the other hand*" (Presidential Administration 2020).

It can therefore be said that our state is treating this concept responsibly, and it is necessary to continue to work towards economic, social and political stability, in conjunction with limiting the latest risks and threats generated by the realities of the 21st century, marked by various crisis situations, so that its citizens are protected.

In application of EU measures and directives on resilience, Romania developed Romania's National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) in April 2021, a strategic document "which *underpins the reform priorities and investment areas at national level for the establishment of the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism*" (Romanian Government 2021) through timetables, targets, indicators, detailed budgets and implementation charts. The plan has been broken down into several components, in line with the directions for action outlined by the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism, as shown in the table below:

**TABLE 1 PNRR Components**
**(Achieved according to the data obtained from NRRP Monitor, accessed on 09.12.2022, https://monitorpnrr.eu/)**

| Co no | Pillar | Component |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Transition to a green economy | Water management |
| 2. | | Forests and biodiversity protection |
| 3. | | Waste management |
| 4. | | Sustainable transport |
| 5. | | The wave of renewal |
| 6. | | Energy |
| 7. | Digital transformation | Digital transformation |
| 8. | Smart, sustainable and inclusive growth | Tax and pension reform |
| 9. | | Support for the private sector, research, development and innovation |
| 10. | Social and territorial cohesion | Local fund |
| 11. | | Tourism and culture |
| 12. | Health and institutional resilience | Health |
| 13. | | Social reforms |
| 14. | | Good governance |
| 15. | Education | Education and skills for children and youth |

In this context, we asked ourselves whether Romania is capable of fulfilling the tasks assumed in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan. Upon analysing the document, we can see that Romania has addressed all the objectives outlined in the European Recovery and Resilience Mechanism, including green transition, investments in the digital process and smart growth, health, economic and institutional pillars, as well as care for future generations. This has resulted in a detailed analysis of the identified problems and proposals for short- and medium-term solutions covering each area.

https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-13

The European Union has set 507 targets and milestones under this instrument, translated into measures, reforms and investments under this instrument, which Romania must meet by 2026. The funds earmarked for our country amount to €29.18 billion, with grants accounting for €14.23 billion and loans for €14.94 billion.

The European Commission's Recommendation from May 2022 on Romania's National Reform Programme for 2022, which includes a Council Opinion on Romania's Convergence Programme for 2022, acknowledges the progress Romania has made in this respect and proposes that Romania should continue its efforts to (European Commission 2022a):

- implement its Recovery and Resilience Plan in line with agreed milestones and targets;
- implement fiscal-budgetary policies with a view to ending Romania's excessive public deficit;
- reduce dependence on fossil fuels;
- develop renewable energy sources;
- modernize transport networks;
- interconnect with neighbouring EU countries;
- set more ambitious targets for energy efficiency.

According to data released by the Romanian Government[1], Romania has already received two pre-financing tranches for the implementation of the NRRP, totalling approximately €3.79 billion in December 2021 and January 2022. Romania reached all 21 targets and milestones set for 2021, and the first payment request of €2.6 billion was paid by the European Commission on 22 October 2022.

[1] Press releases of the Ministry of Investments and European Projects and of the Romanian Government, accessed during September-December 2022, at: https://mfe.gov.ro/ and https://gov.ro/.

In the first half of 2022, Romania had 51 objectives and milestones to meet, which were successfully achieved, meaning that on 15 December 2022, the second payment request, amounting to €3,227,690,000, was sent to the European Commission for approval. At the same time, the third payment request, worth €3.1 billion, will be submitted by Romania in the first quarter of next year, based on the 79 milestones and targets with deadlines in the third and fourth quarters of 2022. In total, Romania committed to achieving 151 targets and milestones from the start of the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan till the end of 2022.

In the same vein, the European RePowerEU instrument (European Commission 2022b) should also be mentioned, which is of major relevance in the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans drawn up by the EU Member States. In the context of the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine at the beginning of 2022, European energy security is strongly affected, so the European Union has created this mechanism with a view to

achieving energy independence (bearing in mind that many European countries are dependent on Russian gas). The plan aims to save energy, produce green energy and diversify energy sources, and includes short and medium-term measures.

One of the relevant measures adopted under this plan, to be completed by 2027, concerns the integration of the *RePowerEU* facility into the National Recovery and Resilience Plans. Given that the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism is the European Union's main instrument for accessing *RePowerEU* funds, the need has arisen to update Member States' Recovery and Resilience Plans in line with the measures required by the *RePowerEU* plan, so that each country must include a chapter dedicated to *RePowerEU* in its National Recovery and Resilience Plans.

The Ministry of Energy's press release of 28 November 2022 states that "*The Ministry of Investment and European Projects, as national coordinator of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, together with the Ministry of Energy and other relevant institutions in the field, is focusing its efforts on the development of a new chapter of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, REPowerEU, aimed at ensuring Romania's energy independence through the use of energy produced from renewable sources [...] to increase its energy independence, Romania will receive non-reimbursable financial support of around €1.4 billion*" (Ministry of Energy 2022). Thus, we can see that Romania respects and promotes European values and directives, while constantly working to make the most of these opportunities and achieve the highest possible take-up of European funds.

At the European Parliament sitting of 14.02.2023, the *European Parliament Legislative Resolution of 14 February 2023 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 2021/241 as regards the REPowerEU chapters of the Recovery and Resilience Plans and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 was adopted, Directive 2003/87/EC and Decision (EU) 2015/1814 (COM(2022)0231 - C9-0183/2022 - 2022/0164(COD))* (European Parliament 2023), it has therefore become official that within two months of the entry into force of the regulation Romania must submit to the European forum its chapter related to the RePowerEU instrument within the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, a rather short deadline, which remains to be seen whether our state is able to meet.

Romania must consider in the drafting of the chapter dedicated to RePowerEU the recommendations of the European Parliament which have as their main objective the fight against energy poverty for the vulnerable and the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as the reduction of energy demand. This should ultimately result in lower costs for households and small businesses. Another important measure provides for transparency of final recipients, so that Romania will have to publish twice a year a list of "*the 100 final recipients receiving the highest amount of funding for the implementation of measures under the mechanism*" (European Parliament 2023).

https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-13

Therefore, we can say that the new directions of action regarding the update of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan are a challenge for the decision-makers in the Romanian government. There is a need for a general mobilization among politicians at both central and local level to achieve these objectives imposed by the European Parliament, otherwise Romania risks losing an important opportunity to attract new European funds.

## Conclusions

In essence, we believe that in order to strengthen national resilience, both economically, socially and in terms of ensuring national and regional security, it is necessary for Romania to practice public policies and adopt necessary measures against hostile actions orchestrated by various state and non-state actors, to facilitate partnership between the authorities and the population and to take steps such as:

- supporting and introducing new educational programmes to raise awareness of the dangers of spreading false information;
- a sustained effort on the part of central public authorities to reveal the sources of misinformation and to explain in detail, in a comprehensible manner, the negative aspects of the dissemination of data obtained from these sources, and subsequently to expose publicly the factors behind these sources;
- increasing public awareness of hostile activities in the online environment and stopping fake news with the hidden role of undermining regional security, by promoting and developing methods of educating the population in both the public and private spheres (courses, dissemination of official information, cooperation between the population and government institutions, etc.);
- educating the population from an early age about actions that destabilise national and regional security and their negative effects;
- reducing the 'brain drain' and creating attractive working environments for intellectuals;
- promoting information activities at both institutional and public level on the importance of critical infrastructure in ensuring security (medical system, water supply, electricity, transport, etc.) and the need to protect it more effectively;
- building and developing policy instruments and decisions in line with national security interests and objectives;
- complying with and promoting European measures on methods of ensuring a balance between the socio-economic aspect and the efficient management of natural resources;
- stimulating economic performance and ensuring Romania's financial stability;
- supporting the proper functioning of the fundamental systems for the protection of citizens and national security;
- developing the education and research system to ensure international performance.

We believe that it is necessary to develop this concept because the recent evolution of the types of threats runs counter to past times characterised by a more or less sustainable security, in which the risk of major crises was relatively low, in the sense that a concrete solution to limit the negative impact is resilience.

On the current issue, we believe that the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism proposed by the European Union will help to repair the damage caused by the crisis and prepare a better future for the next generations. The Mechanism must ensure Europe's sustainable development and build a more resilient society in the face of new challenges. At the same time, it should be recalled that so far Romania has successfully met the requirements for the realisation and implementation of the NRRP, having the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment as regards state resilience by also completing the directives on the RePowerEU chapter on time.
Considering what is listed in this study, we consider that the **hypothesis established is validated**, namely: *Romania is making considerable efforts to strengthen resilience and is on track to comply with the European measures on the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism*.

In our opinion, it is of paramount importance to develop the political dialogue between all the entities involved in order to assess and analyse the recovery and resilience plans. As long as each state actor has an integrated approach, aligned with the Union's objectives, the common effort will be rewarded and the desired results will certainly be achieved.

## References

**Bogzeanu, Cristina.** 2017. "Resilience: concept, approaches and implications." *Impact Strategic* (nr. 3/4): 43-54.

**European Commission.** 2016. *Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection - Building Resilience: The EU's approach Factsheet*. https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/thematic/EU_building_resilience_en.pdf.

**—.** 2021. "Presentation to the Council of Romania's recovery and resilience plan, A Recovery plan for Europe: The Recovery and Resilience Facility – Romania, Financial Counsellors Working Party (FICO)."

**—.** 2022a. *COM(2022) 624 final, Council's Recommendation on Romania's National Reform Program for 2022, delivering a Council opinion on Romania's Convergence Program for 2022.* https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2022-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_en.

**—.** 2022b. *REPowerEU Actions Factsheet.* https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_22_3133.

**—.** 2022c. *COM(2022) 75 final, Commission's Report to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism.*

**—.** 2022d. *NextGenerationEU: Commission disburses first payment of €2.6 billion to Romania under the Recovery and Resilience Facility.*

**European Parliament.** 2021. "Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility." https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0241&from=EN.

**—.** 2023. *The European Parliament's legislative resolution of 14 February 2023 on the proposal of regulation of the European Parliament and Council of ammending (EU) Regulation 2021/241 as to chapters on REPowerEU of the recovery and resilience plans and ammending (EU) Regulation 2021/1060, (EU) Regulation (UE) 2021/2115, Directive 2003/87/CE and Decision (EU) 2015/1814 (COM(2022)0231 – C9-0183/2022 – 2022/0164(COD)).* https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0036_RO.html.

**Ministry of Energy.** 2022. *Press releases of the Ministry of Energy.* https://energie.gov.ro/ministerul-energiei-si-ministerul-investitiilor-si-proiectelor-europene-au-demarat-procesul-de-elaborare-a-capitolului-repowereu/.

**Presidential Administration.** 2020. "The National Defence Strategy for 2020-2024. "Together, for a safe and prosperous Romania in a world marked by new challenges"." https://www.presidency.ro/files/userfiles/Documente/Strategia_Nationala_de_Aparare_a_Tarii_2020_2024.pdf.

**Romanian Government.** 2021. "The National Recovery and Resilience Plan."

BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

# Legal and ethical aspects of the synchronization of military and non-military activities in multi-domain operations

**Luiza SÎRBU (RADUSLAV), Ph.D. Student***

* "Carol I" National Defence University
e-mail: sirbu.luiza@yahoo.com

## Abstract

The evolution of war and armed conflicts in contemporary society and in the foreseeable future requires deep reflection not only on the physiognomy of the confrontation but also on rethinking the ways of adapting the forms and procedures of military action to the requirements of international law, principles, and norms concerning the protection of victims, different categories of persons, and material and cultural assets. "Multi-domain operations" have a considerably increased potential for generating combined destructive effects achieved with means of combat based on new technologies. By synchronizing military and non-military activities, this mixing can, in turn, generate consequences that may fall under the law of armed conflict. In this context, our aim in this material is to identify some aspects that reflect the need to synchronize multi-domain operations with the legal regulations and ethical conditions necessary for conducting contemporary military conflicts.

**Keywords:**
war; operation; multi-domain; law; legal; moral; synchronisation.

Armed conflict involves the use of violence, which generates endless suffering, loss of human life, and material damage. Large populations, including children, women, the elderly, and helpless persons, caught in conflicts, are forced to go through these tragedies. Military actions implemented with increasingly destructive means of combat often defy reason and rationality. The character of the conflict is always changing, propelled by cultural, military, and technological evolution. In the past 20-25 years, the pace of change has accelerated, largely due to the emergence of new technologies that transformed the way conflicts are conducted and the operating environment in which they take place. Against this backdrop of continuous change, international humanitarian law, the law of military conflicts, and military ethics during armed conflicts of various natures must be subject to increased scrutiny.

The hybrid component of the war waged by the Russian Federation in Ukraine expands the battlefield by exploiting multiple military and non-military domains and dimensions. Culture, information, economy, technology, and society as a whole have become battlegrounds in this context. The demonstrative hybrid warfare on the Ukrainian battlefield would pose a particular challenge to Europe and to the crisis management and defense of both NATO and the EU if waged against European countries.

Countering hybrid actors and activities requires a comprehensive and coordinated response across multiple domains and battlespaces, and multi-domain operations appear to offer a solution in such scenarios. Therefore, there is a need to synchronize multi-domain operations with legal regulations and ethical conditions necessary to be met during the conduct of contemporary military conflicts. Thus, multi-domain operations are seen as representing "*the orchestration of military activities, in all domains and environments, synchronized with non-military activities to enable the Alliance to deliver convergent effects at relevant speed*" (NATO Standardization Office 2022, 3) and having greater destructive potential than the combined use of the categories of armed forces, the issue of compliance with the norms of international law becomes imperative.

Moreover, engaging in confrontation with the adversary simultaneously in one or more of the operational domains identified in the NATO Allied Joint Doctrine, namely maritime, land, air, space and cyber, along with the integrated use of capabilities of military and non-military organizations, results in transformations not only in the character of the fight itself but also in the increased legal and moral responsibility of decision-making regarding the organization of a great diversity of connected activities. This includes those related to the protection of direct and indirect victims from the effects of combat, which, in our opinion, requires a multi-domain approach to operations from this perspective as well.

## The need for legal and ethical synchronization of multi-domain operations

Today, in the third decade of the 21st century, the evolution of the security environment has undergone profound transformations in political, economic, technical-scientific, social, and knowledge terms under the impact of the globalization phenomenon. With this evolution, new forms of crises and armed conflicts have emerged, and new means of combat have appeared in the theaters of military operations, posing multiple legitimacy challenges from the perspective of public international law and in terms of the incidence of international humanitarian law.

Even if it contains the norms of behavior during armed conflicts, international law cannot represent a substitute for peace, but "*a bulwark of humanity in the face of bloody provocations, a unique testimony of reason and hope to master force and mercy in the face of murderous aberration*" (Uscoi and Oprea 1999, 5). The same observation is also valid for military ethics as a set of rules of conduct that must be respected during armed conflicts.

The issue of the legal and moral aspects of synchronizing military actions with non-military activities in multi-domain operations must be contextualized, in our opinion, primarily in the discussion regarding the obligation imposed on states by contemporary international law to settle differences between them exclusively by peaceful means "*We, the Peoples of the United Nations - stipulates the UN Charter -, determined to free future generations from the scourge of war which, twice in the course of a human life, has caused untold suffering... And for these purposes let us practice tolerance and live in peace with each other ... and to establish methods to ensure that armed force will be used only in the common interest …*" (Organizația Națiunilor Unite 1945, 1).

Even though the precision of weapons has been perfected, they are now widely used on civilian targets, war as a whole affecting an increasing number of people and material, cultural and spiritual goods, calling into question the present and future of its development. However, while vast changes are taking place in the way war is waged, its human dimension still remains fixed – war has ethical limits. As some military specialists have noted, "*Battle on several fronts represents an intrinsic ethical dilemma for the combatant's ability to apply combat power in accordance with the principles of Jus ad Bellum and Jus in Bello inherent in the law of war*" (Hedrick 2018). Therefore, as strategies and tactics evolve, it is imperative to consider the legal and ethical ramifications of their military use. In addition, armed conflicts, whether international or internal, are often accompanied by other anomic phenomena such as hunger, disease, migration, and environmental destruction. These issues are often discussed but little action is taken due to the absence of universally accepted international regulations and rules, which must be respected and enforced through effective sanctions directed against those who violate them.

Furthermore, a study by the Rand Corporation states that "*revisionist approaches to just war theory challenge the legal definition of combatants because new types of cross-domain operations do not take into account the ethical intentions of individuals who are parties to the conflict. In this sense, non-combatants may be exposed to harm if their actions support an 'unjust war'*" (Retter, et al. 2016, V). Cyber and autonomous systems have also been considered to present challenges to a number of principles underlying traditional moral and legal frameworks.

Cyber-attacks, the use of drones as strike weapons, armed robots, fully autonomous weapons, not to mention the resumption of the rhetoric of the possibility of using, under certain conditions, weapons of mass destruction, are military actions against which, at the time, there are no specific covering regulations in international law and therefore in most cases reference is made to texts with general coverage, most often to the Charter of the United Nations, art. 36 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 or other existing international regulations. Moreover, according to the concept of multi-domain battle "*cyber-attacks against national economic interests represent an attack on a state's sovereignty, thus justifying lethal retaliation*" (Hedrick 2018, 42). While legal justification may protect such actions, moral and ethical justification is much more ambiguous.

The difficulty of categorizing this type of actions from the perspective of international law also arises from the challenge of identifying the perpetrator due to regulations being based on the classic form of war, with physical operations in real space and areas of contact more or less closely. However, contemporary armed conflicts involve operations that heavily rely on actions where the identity of the aggressor, their location, and the true beneficiary of the effects are difficult or impossible to identify.

Moreover, taking advantage of the inadequacy of some provisions of the documents that criminalize the violation of the principles and norms of international law, including international humanitarian law, to the transformations produced in society and in the phenomenon of conflict, in all armed conflicts there have been and are taking place reprehensible acts and actions from a legal and moral point of view, for which one has rarely been called to account in front of justice, although theoretically "*the populations and belligerents remain under the protection and under the empire of international law, as they result from the established usages among civilized nations, the laws of humanity and the exigencies of public consciousness*" (A patra convenție de la Haga 1907, Preambul).

All these must find solutions in the near future, taking as an example the regulations in the field of cyber warfare contained in the Tallinn Manual on the International Law of Cyber Warfare, but many other forms of manifestation of political-military conflict await the finding of appropriate ways of relating them to the principles and specificities of international law, because "*emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, hypersonic, machine learning, nanotechnology and robotics lead to*

*a fundamental change in the character of warfare ... their impacts have the potential to revolutionize the battlefield unlike anything since the integration of machine guns, tanks, and aviation that began in the age of combined arms warfare*" (Milley 2018, i). In response to the transformation of the character of war and the need for a comprehensive approach to the need for global peace and security, the multi-domain operation was developed, which is "*carried out during three phases of operation: competition, crisis and armed conflict*" (DefenceNews 2022).

At NATO level, as the definition presented above also showed, the concept is based on the orchestration of military activities in all fields and spaces of the operating environment, coordination with non-military activities, which allow the production of convergences with a relevant speed, the fields representing entities from the operational environment in which synergistic actions to confront the adversary are organized and executed. At the same time, it combines actions from the physical environment with those from the informational non-material space or that act on the human psyche.

While at the NATO level the concept of multi-domain operations is visualized as an evolution, a higher form of development, of joint operations, from the US perspective, multi-domain operations are not differentiated from joint operations, being considered as representing the "*combined use of joint military and non-military weapons and capabilities to create and exploit comparative advantages to defeat enemy forces and consolidate victory*" (US Department of the Army 2022, 1-2).

Some doctrinal elements of the concept of multi-domain operations appeared in 2017 under the name "Concept Version 1.0 for Multi-Domain Battle", renamed in 2018 "Multi-Domain Operations" and presented in Pamphlet 525- 3-2, *The US Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028*. The concept was built "*on the basis of the US Army doctrine of the 1980s 'Air-Ground Battle', designed in response to the threat posed by the Soviet Army in the European theater*" (Leon 2021, 92) at that time.

At the level of the British military, in 2020 the concept of "multi-domain integration" is being discussed, seen as "posting military capabilities in line with other national instruments of power, allies and partners; configured to perceive, understand and prevent threats in optimal time, across all operational domains and levels of war" (UK Ministry of Defence 2020, 3). Later, in 2021, multi-domain integration is developed in the "integrated operation concept" (UK Ministry of Defence 2021) seen as a way to counter adversary strategies aimed "*to undermine cohesion, erode economic, political and social resilience and compete for strategic advantages in key regions of the world*" (UK Ministry of Defence 2021, 3).

In the specialized literature, there are authors who claim that the new conception regarding the organization of confrontation with the adversary is based on three fundamental principles: *the calibrated posting of forces obtained by combining their*

*positioning with the ability to maneuver them at strategic distances; the existence of multi-domain force structures that have the necessary capacity, capability and resilience to operate in multiple domains in volatile situations; the convergence of effects achieved through the rapid and continuous integration of capabilities in all physical domains, as well as in the non-material electromagnetic, informational and psychic space* (Milley 2018, 17-24) which, other authors claim, "*solves the problem of contested domains and Anti-Access/Aerial Denial (A2/AD) threats presented by Chinese and Russian operations during periods of conflict*" (Garn 2019, i).

The cultural, technological, and military attributes that shape multi-domain operations, the ethical dilemmas created by emerging technologies, including those caused by the implementation of disruptive technologies, and the operational implications and strategic military actions in dense urban environments are key areas to consider on the multi-domain battlefield.

This new paradigm of military operations requires rethinking the ways of synchronizing military and non-military actions. This involves identifying appropriate solutions to the kinetic and non-kinetic problems that may arise in each of the confrontation domains, while also achieving the operational military objectives aimed at the support, assurance, and multidimensional protection of the forces, civilian population, environment, cultural heritage assets, and various categories of persons who must benefit from appropriate treatment according to the principles and norms of international humanitarian law.

## National efforts towards conceptualizing the regulation of multi-domain operations

Romania has aligned itself with the efforts of the states of the world undertaken in the legal field, both legislatively and institutionally, capitalizing on "*the humanitarian traditions of the Romanian people, in general, of the armed forces, in particular, as well as the experience accumulated by the responsible structures in this field, especially as a result of participating in various international missions*" (Guvernul României 2005, Preambul).

Responding in a specific manner to the wishes deriving from the concept of multi-domain operations about to be imposed within NATO, Romania's Military Strategy introduces the concept of the **Integrated Combined Force** operation on the basis of which "*the Armed Forces of Romania, in an expanded inter-institutional format, will carry out assigned missions and tasks*" (Ministerul Apărării Naționale 2021b, 26). Also, in the Defence White Paper, reference is made among the specific requirements for the Romanian Armed Forces to a *"performing decision-making process, effective command-control system and the development of multi-domain and multi-domain response capabilities*" (Ministerul Apărării Naționale 2021a, 32). However, as noted

by Romanian military specialists, "*the multi-domain operation refers, in addition, to the clearly defined conventional military aspects, to non-conventional aspects, which is, in fact, one of the reasons why it was distanced at the doctrinal and conceptual level by the joint operation*" (Cucinschi 2021, 144).

Multi-domain operations are conducted during three operational phases: competition, crisis and armed conflict. They address the challenge of competitors using layered capabilities at a distance to deter, requiring Romania and its partners and allies "*to use ground-based capabilities to eliminate or diminish threats from enemy intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance networks*" (DefenceNews 2022).

At the level of the Romanian Armed Forces, as presented by Romanian military specialists, "*the development of the MDO concept is still in the phase of study and doctrinal deepening, to be implemented in the period 2026 - 2032, during the second stage of the Program for the transformation of the Romanian Armed Forces until in 2040 – the implementation of new technologies and the reorganization of the armed forces for multi-domain actions. Until the end of the first quarter of 2022, measures were taken at the level of the Ministry of National Defence for the participation of experts and scientific researchers in various activities organized in the field of multi-domain operations and some scientific events were organized and carried out for the doctrinal analysis of the need to realize such a concept*" (Ioniță 2022, 72). Therefore, unlike other countries, such as the USA or the United Kingdom of Great Britain, which have moved to the implementation phase of the concept, Romania shows a slower evolution, which is primarily due to the need to *"develop multi-domain and multi-domain capabilities of response"* (Ministerul Apărării Naționale 2021a, 32) that use advanced technologies such as "*those incorporated in several military applications, namely: intelligence, surveillance and research (ISR), logistics, cyber operations, command and control (C2), semi-autonomous vehicles and autonomous in totality and the provision of optimal multi-annual investments for research-development-innovation activities*" (Ioniță 2022, 43). Also, training and preparing for multi-domain operations is undoubtedly a challenge for the Romanian Armed Forces, especially trying to keep up with the developments of allies and partners, as well as potential adversaries. The reality is that it is incredibly difficult to bring together air, land, naval and space personnel and assets in a cyber-secure environment, even more so when it needs to be done quickly, consistently and cost-effectively.

## Conclusions

The rules of war have changed, and with the emergence of hybrid conflicts, the role of non-military means in achieving political and strategic objectives has increased. In many cases, they have surpassed the power of weapons in their effectiveness. Thus, the focus in terms of combat methods applied in the conflict has also changed

towards the widespread use of economic, informational, humanitarian policies, and other non-military measures.

The concept of multi-domain operations has become dominant in military standards, defence discussions, concept papers, and opinion articles, as it is seen as the integrative and comprehensive solution for national and collective defense against hybrid threats. Multi-domain operations also create multiple legal and moral responsibilities stemming from the specificities of their application in the respective domains. Thus, it is necessary to better contextualize the principles and norms of the law of armed conflicts in relation to the new challenges of political-military conflict and the development of forms, methods, and mechanisms intended to repress the violation of these regulations.

Future conflicts will involve the use of all five combat domains (land, air, sea, space, and cyber). Therefore, it is increasingly important for the Romanian Armed Forces to continue developing and deploying new weapons and technologies that will ensure the successful completion of future national and allied missions. In short, the force structure must be transformed to meet future warfighting requirements.

## References

**A patra convenție de la Haga.** 1907. "Convenția privind legile și obiceiurile războiului pe uscat." 18 oct. https://www.arduph.ro/files/articles/Conven%C8%9Bia%20(Regulamentul%20)%20referitoare%20la%20legile%20%C5%9Fi%20obiceiurile%20r%C4%83zboiului%20pe%20terestru,%20Haga,%2018%20octombrie%201907.pdf

**Congressional Research Service.** 2022. "Defense Primer: Army Multi-Domain Operations (MDO)." November 21.

**Cucinschi, Alexandru-Lucian.** 2021. „Impactul operației multi-domeniu asupra strategiei militare." *Gândirea Militară Românească* 144.

**DefenceNews.** 2022. *Multidomain operations concept will become doctrine this summer.* March 24. https://www.defensenews.com/land/2022/03/23/multidomain-operations-concept-will-become-doctrine-this-summer/.

**Garn, Alex R.** 2019. *Multi-Domain Operations: The Army's Future Operating Concept for Great Power Competition.* Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College.

**Guvernul României.** 2005. *Strategia națională a României de aplicare a dreptului internațional umanitar.* București.

**Hedrick, Bryan.** 2018. "First to Fight for the "Right": The Ethical Dilemma Inherent Within the Multi-Domain Battle Concept." *Small Wars Journal.* https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/first-fight-right-ethical-dilemma-inherent-within-multi-domain-battle-concept.

**Ioniță, Crăișor-Constantin.** 2022. *Societatea postindustrială și inteligența artificală. Provocări și oportunități din perspectiva securității naționale și a NATO privind dezvoltarea conceptului operație multidomeniu.* București: Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I".

**Leon, Jose Diaz de.** 2021. "Understanding Multi-Domain Operations in NATO." *The Three Swords Magazine* (NATO Joint Warfare Centre) (37): 91.

**Milley, Mark A.** 2018. "The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028." *TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1* i. https://adminpubs.tradoc.army.mil/pamphlets/TP525-3-1.pdf

Ministerul Apărării Naționale. 2021a. *Carta Albă a Apărării.* București.

**—.** 2021b. "Strategia militară a României." București.

**NATO Standardization Office.** 2022. "AJP-01. Allied Joint Doctrine." Edition F, Version 1. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1128191/AJP-01_EdF_V1.pdf.

**Organizația Națiunilor Unite. 1945.** *Carta Națiunilor Unite.* San Francisco.

**Retter, Lucia, Alex Hall, James Black, and Nathan Ryan.** 2016. *The moral component of cross-domain conflict.* Cambridge: Rand Corporation.

**UK Ministry of Defence.** 2020. "Joint Concept Note 1/20 Multi Domain Integration." https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1014659/Integrated_Operating_Concept_2025.pdf

**—.** 2021. "Integrated Operating Concept." https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1014659/Integrated_Operating_Concept_2025.pdf

**US Department of the Army.** 2022. "FM 3.0. Operations." https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/fm3-0.pdf

**Uscoi, Nicolae and Gabriel Oprea.** 1999. *Introducere în Dreptul Internațional Umanitar.* București: Editura Cartega.

No.1/2023, JANUARY-MARCH
https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-15

BULLETIN
OF "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

https://buletinul.unap.ro/index.php/en/

# The security of United Nations personnel in peace missions and operations

**Marius Vasile MANGA, Ph.D. Student***

*"Carol I" National Defence University
e-mail: mangamarius77@yahoo.com

## Abstract

The personnel of international organizations and bodies are exposed to a variety of risks and threats, not only in existing conflict situations in collapsing states where peacekeeping missions and operations are carried out, but also due to a complex security environment dominated by new conceptual mutations and an alert pace of technological development. The trend of casualties among United Nations (UN) employees in recent years remains high, indicating that armed violence is still widespread in mission areas and peace operations. The process of mitigating risk is complex and based on the need for a permanent assessment of the security situation in an adaptive manner, as well as a permanent correlation of these risks with the level of available capabilities.

**Keywords:**
conflict; risks; armed attacks; collapse; threats; blue helmets.

The total number of classic, traditional conflicts has decreased since the early 1990s, and the current emerging ones are occurring in regions with high-risk potential. The fragmentation of states, due to ineffective government control over territory and population, ethnic and religious divisions, and low levels of social services, contributes to the collapse of states, generating insecurity. The reconstruction of these states is not possible without the intervention of the international community through available tools such as peace missions and operations.

The study aims to systematically observe security developments within United Nations (UN) peace missions and operations, and their impact on the security of UN personnel. We will diagnose the structural deficiencies that affect these missions, considering the evolution of the security concept within the UN, as well as the range of threats and risks that those responsible for ensuring security must address. In this sense, the assessment of the level of security for UN personnel in peace missions and operations relies on the processing and interpretation of data collected from the organization's statistical documents, as well as on systematic observation and interpretation to issue conclusions for the study.

A crucial aspect of this issue is not that conflict situations have become more numerous or violent in recent years, but rather that personnel of international organizations, especially the United Nations, have become increasingly exposed to security risks in conflict areas. The increased risk exposure is closely linked to several factors, including the multitude of mandates that peace missions and operations need to fulfill, the diverse range of threats characterizing the actual security environment in the risk areas where such missions are conducted, and the competitive commitments for implementing various projects by funds, programs, agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in high-risk areas.

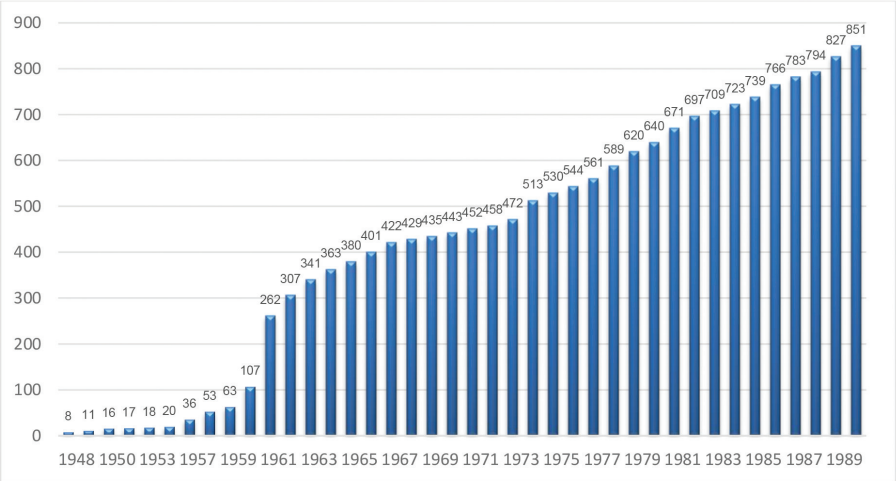
Moreover, the proliferation of weapons has had a significant impact on the political and security environments, leading to a direct impact on actual conflicts. Different groups operating in such environments can quickly arm themselves and create active armed groups. With minimal preparation, these groups can engage in conflict with other groups, militias or government forces. In this context, the United Nations becomes a direct target for groups that see its presence as contrary to their interests and objectives.

## The impact of the evolution of peace operations and missions on the security of own personnel

The classic peacekeeping operations meant, among other things, in the vision of the first Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold, *"the prohibition of any initiative regarding the use of force, except for self-defense"* (United Nation 1958). The UN forces had, therefore, to be neutral, without positioning themselves on one side or the other of the parties in the conflict, this approach becoming a basic principle that lasted

until the end of the Cold War. However, as it can be seen from the figure below, the number of casualties among the personnel of peacekeeping missions and operations continued to increase until the year 1990, which required a stronger posture from the organization.

**Figure 1. Casualties of UN personnel (peacekeeping missions) 1947-1990 (cumulative)**
Source: author's calculations based on DPKO data, (UN Peacekeeping Department 2022b)




A programmatic document of the organization from the beginning of the 90s, *"Agenda for peace"*, assumed by the UN Secretary General at the time, Boutros Ghali, determined a change of vision in what the use of force means for the blue helmets. The concept of *peace enforcement units)* (United Nation 1992), appears with clearly defined circumstances in which they take place.

The end of the Cold War marked the emergence of new conflicts on the global stage and implicitly an increased number of UN missions. Thus, the number of UN employees in peacekeeping or political missions increased more than sevenfold between 1991 and 2022, reaching more than 75.000 (UN Peacekeeping Department 2021).

At the same time, there is a diversification of the mandates of these missions and peace operations, the tasks regarding the reconstruction and development of collapsed states being supplemented with actions of prevention, mediation, and conflict resolution. This has led to higher mobility of international organization staff, particularly in conflict zones, thus increasing the degree of risk and exposure. At the same time, there was an increase in the number of deaths of UN personnel because of violent actions. Thus, in 1993, 252 employees of peacekeeping missions lost their lives, compared to 59 victims the previous year (UN Peacekeeping Department 2021), this being, moreover, the highest number of deaths recorded in a year in UN peacekeeping missions.

The concept of "peace enforcement", which was addressed in the "Agenda for Peace" document, has been implemented. However, the graph above shows that the trend of personnel deaths in peace missions continues to rise due to the deterioration of the security situation in the areas where they operate. The subsequent global events,

such as outbreaks of conflict in countries like Angola, Rwanda, Somalia, and the former Yugoslavia, as well as the atrocities committed, have made it clear that there is a need to reset these peace operations, as they are unable to cope with these types of conflicts.

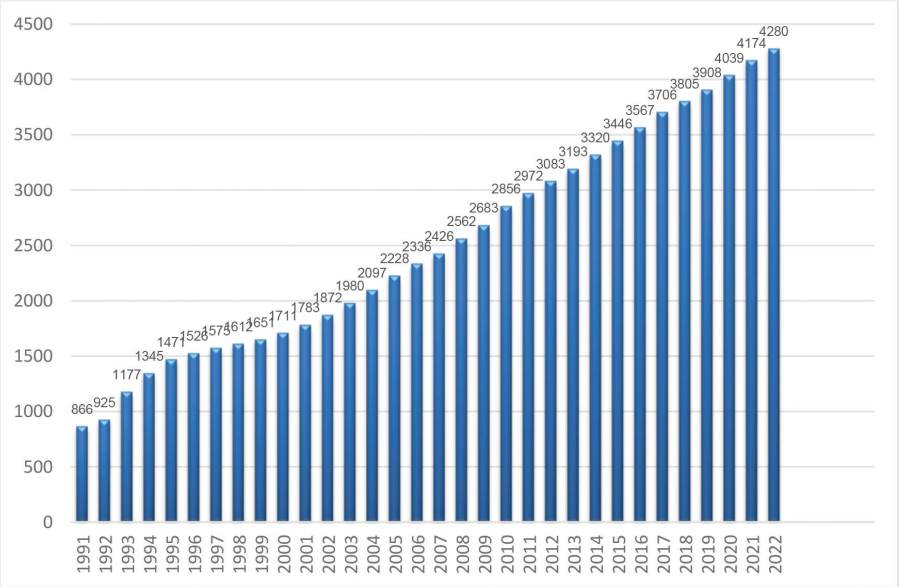



**Figure 2. Casualties of UN personnel (peacekeeping missions) 1990-2022**
Source: author's calculations based on DPKO data, (UN Peacekeeping Department 2022b)

In 1995 the General Secretary issued a supplement to the initial document (United Nation 1995), in which the approach to the use of force in peacekeeping operations was much more explicit. The importance of protecting civilians caught in a conflict between two or more belligerent parties increased significantly, and the use of force would be carried out under the auspices of Chapter 7 of the Charter to fulfill the mission received by the contingents. Thus, the peacekeeping forces no longer had a merely reactive role, but by taking the initiative, they adopted a proactive approach to the use of force.

In the 2000s, there was a change in approach regarding the security of civilian personnel in these peacekeeping missions and operations. The 2000s mark a change in approach regarding the security of civilian personnel existing in these peacekeeping missions and operations. If the security system of the 90s was coordinated through an Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD), appointed by the Secretary-General, in 2001, the General Assembly authorized the creation of a UN Security at the level of Assistant Secretary- General and in 2002, the number of security officers posts in the territories reached 300 (100 international employees and 200 local recruits) (United Nations Department of Safety and Security n.d.). In addition to UNSECOORD, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) had its own security structure in place for civilian personnel in peacekeeping operations.

We assess that the evolution of peace missions, especially after the end of the Cold War, the increasing number of troops contributing to the missions, the diversification

https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-15

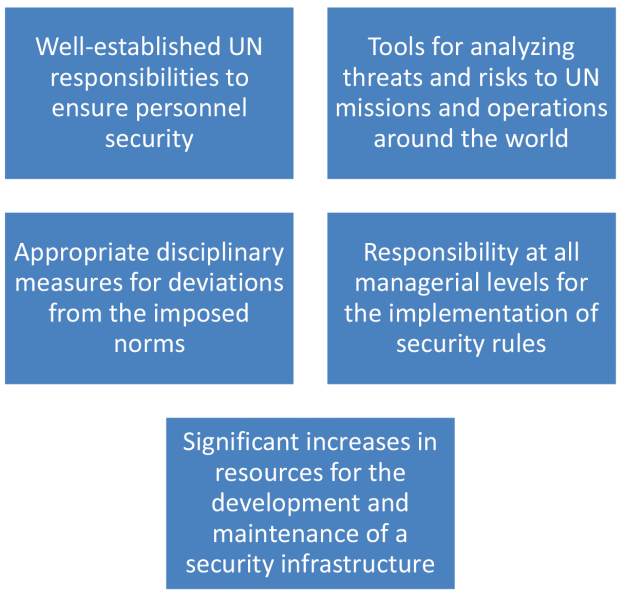
of mandates in the line of conflict prevention, mediation and resolution, have affected the security level of UN own personnel. At the same time, the changes related to the typology of conflicts and the emergence of new types of threats (hybrid, asymmetric) have shaped the operational environment specific to risk areas. The number of victims, increasing from year to year, has led to major changes in meaning for the concept of security in the UN framework.

## Establishment of the Safety and Security Department (*DSS- Department of Safety and Security*) – a turning point regarding the concept of security within the organization

Despite growing concerns about the concept of security, the historic moment in the security of UN personnel was the suicide truck bomb attack on the UN headquarters at the Canal Hotel in Baghdad on 19 August 2003, which killed 22 of UN employees (including the Special Representative of the Secretary General in Iraq) and more than 150 people were injured. Just a few weeks after the August 19 explosion, the UN was once again the target of another attack at the Canal Hotel, resulting in 2 deaths and 19 injuries, including 2 UN staff.

Following the investigation of the attack, *the report of the Independent Committee on Safety and Security of UN personnel*, led by Martti Ahtisaari, the former Finnish president, known as the Ahtisaari committee, made the following assessment, defining for the future of the concept of security within the Organization:

> *"The UN could, theoretically speaking, be the target of attacks anywhere and at any time, from Baghdad to Kabul, Jakarta, Nairobi, Geneva or New York. There is no indication that the perpetrators of the Baghdad attack will refrain from attacking other UN targets around the world."* (United Nations 2003, 24)



The Ahtisaari Commission therefore called for a new revised security strategy for the UN, with five essential pillars (United Nations 2003, 26-28). As a result of this approach, in 2004, the UN Secretary General presented, during the 59th session of the General Assembly, the report A/59/365 of October 11, 2004, under the title *"Strengthened and unified security management system for the United Nations"* (United Nation 2004), which concluded the actual state of the security system of the United Nations Organization and proposed radical measures to strengthen this important part of the organization.

This led to the adoption of the Resolution by the General Assembly (A/RES/59/276, XI, 7-23 December 2004) by which the *Department of Safety and Security* was created, to effectively coordinate UN missions, from the security point of view, by ensuring a coherent, efficient and timely response to all threats to UN personnel. During a strategic-level review initiated in 2014-2015, DSS *(Department of Safety and Security)* seeks to adapt to the global security environment with new challenges and types of threats by better integrating existing security resources (United Nation 2015).

Thus, the security department initiated the integration project within the United Nations Secretariat (UNSSSIP - United Nations Safety and Security Secretariat Integration Project (UNDSS 2016) to integrate the security resources (personnel and capabilities) of the DPA *(Department of Political Affairs, since 2019 the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs)*, DPKO *(Department of Peacekeeping Operations, since 2019 the Department of Peace Operations)*, DFS *(Department of Field Support became from 2019 Department of Operational Support)* and DSS *(Department of Safety and Security)*, all under the management and responsibility of DSS.

DSS achieves, through the integration of safety and security personnel within the Secretariat, a greater efficiency in the provision of security services. Thus, within a comprehensive security strategy, all UN entities involved in a certain conflict zone implement common standards and strict security procedures. But what happens to the contributing troops of the member states that are deployed in peacekeeping missions with a role in ensuring the security of UN bases and personnel?

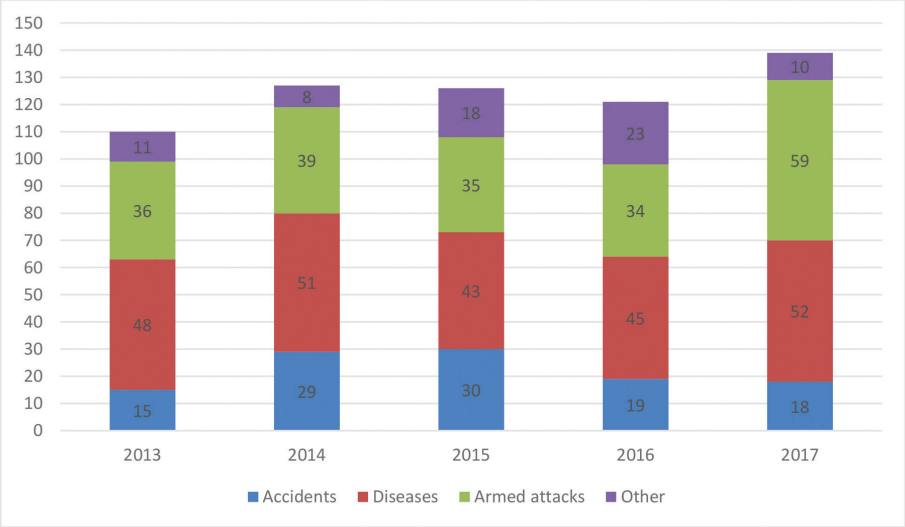
If the early years of peacekeeping missions entailed missions under Article VI of the UN Charter, as I have shown above, the range of asymmetric threats, characteristic of this beginning of the millennium, constitutes a major challenge. We can say that the UN flag and the blue helmet no longer provide *"protection"*, and a much more decisive approach is needed to counter these threats.

Out of the total number of casualties (4,266) among UN employees since 1948 to the present (UN Peacekeeping Department 2021), 1108 (UN Peacekeeping Department 2021) lost their lives due to armed attacks on UN personnel and bases or convoys. The military, police and security personnel who died in such missions constitute the highest percentage of the 4266 - 77% (from various causes – armed attacks, accidents,

https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-23-15

diseases, others). The negative trend has unfortunately continued, even closer to the present day. 2013-2017 saw the highest number of deaths over a five-year period: 623, with an upward trend in armed attacks (203) (UN Peacekeeping Department 2022c).

**Figura 3. The number of casualties among UN personnel (peacekeeping missions) in the 5 (five) year period 2013-2017 with the most deaths in the history of the UN**
Source: author's calculations based on DPKO data (UN Peacekeeping Department 2022b)




This is because military and police contingents are most exposed to accidents, disease and armed attacks, often carrying out missions outside UN bases, in the community area, in high-risk conditions. The attackers have a diverse repertoire of ways to carry out attacks on UN personnel: attacks on locations with firearms, ambushes; installation of improvised explosive devices; the use of trap machines, etc. Most of the time, inadequate staffing, insufficient training specific to risk areas, non-compliant operational procedures during missions and the poor quality of information and data received during security assessments lead to delayed reactions or lack thereof.

## Conclusions

Regarding the strengthening of the concept of security of UN personnel, a rethinking of the military-type response to armed attacks carried out on UN bases and personnel of the organization is necessary. Peace operations have both military and civilian personnel from countries with different levels of development, which implies a range of varied challenges for these types of missions.

The origin of peace mission personnel from economically less developed countries can influence the level of equipment of the military personnel as well as the low level of training and preparation in the field of multinational missions. The risks and threats must be seen in a broader framework because insecurity does not take into account the borders drawn on the map. Factions and rebel groups have a monopoly on violence and act across borders, with the aim of increasing influence in the region. Armed conflicts exist because there are weapons within the reach of these organized crime groups. Given that the proliferation of weapons is a distinct goal of these

non-state actors, the organization must identify and develop a well-defined strategy on the phenomenon of organized crime. These criminal groups do not only operate in one state but also export insecurity to neighboring states, perpetuating the spiral of violence at the regional level.

In conclusion, the set of hostile actions and the instability factors that determine the volatility of the security situation, endangering the life and integrity of personnel in the theaters of operations, constitutes an issue of major relevance. Identifying solutions to reduce the risk for these personnel is vital, given the need to implement the mandates of these peace missions and operations to achieve the goal of the international community, which is to promote peace and security around the globe.

## References

**Lehaci, Niculai-Tudorel.** 2017. *Operații multinaționale:curs universitar.* București: Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I".

**Seaman, Kate.** 2016. *The United Nations, Peacekeeping and Global Governance.* New York: Routledge.

**UN Peacekeeping Department.** 2021. "Fatalities by year up to 31 Oct 2021." https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/stats_by_year_1_68_october_2021.pdf.

**—.** 2022a. "Contributions of Uniformed Personnel to UN by Country and Personnel Type." https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/01_contributions_to_un_peacekeeping_operations_by_country_and_post_55_october_22.pdf.

**—.** 2022b. "Fatalities by Year up to 31 Jan 2022." https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/stats_by_year_1_71_january_2022.pdf.

**—.** 2022c. "Fatalities by year and incident type up to 11/30/2022." https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/stats_by_year_incident_type_5_81_november_2022.pdf.

—. 2022d. "Troups and Police Contributors." https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors.

**UNDSS.** 2016. "UNDSS launches integration project for Safety and Security." https://www.un.int/news/undss-launches-integration-project-safety-and-security-0.

**United Nation.** 1958. "Summary study of the experience derived from the establishment and operation of the Force." Document A/3943, General Assembly, New York. https://undocs.org/A/3943.

**—.** 1992. "An Agenda for Peace." Security Council. http://www.un-documents.net/a47-277.htm.

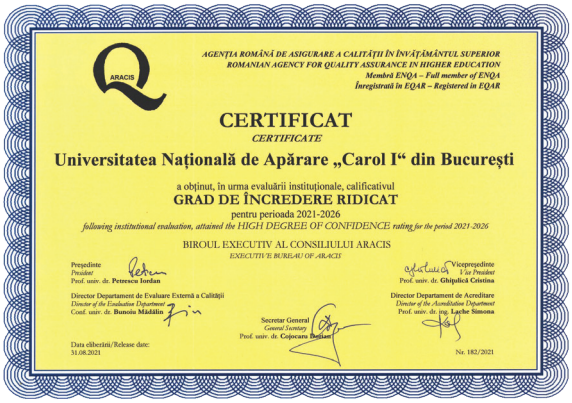
**—.** 1995. "Supplement to an agenda for peace." A/50/60, General Assembly, New York. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/168325.

**—.** 2003. "Ahtissari Report." Independent Panel on the Safety and Security of UN Personnel in Iraq, New York, 24. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/529406?ln=en.

**—.** 2004. "Strengthened and unified security management system for the United Nations." Report of Secretary-General, General Assembly, New York. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/532572?ln=zh_CN.

**—.** 2015. "Safety and security of humanitarian personneland protection of United Nations personnel." A70/383, General Assembly, New York. https://undocs.org/A/70/383.

**United Nations Department of Safety and Security.** n.d. "History of UNDSS." Accessed June 12, 2020. https://dss.un.org/About-Us/-History.



AGENȚIA ROMÂNĂ DE ASIGURARE A CALITĂȚII ÎN ÎNVĂȚĂMÂNTUL SUPERIOR
ROMANIAN AGENCY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION
Membră ENQA – Full member of ENQA
Înregistrată în EQAR – Registered in EQAR

CERTIFICAT
CERTIFICATE

Universitatea Națională de Apărare „Carol I" din București

a obținut, în urma evaluării instituționale, calificativul
GRAD DE ÎNCREDERE RIDICAT
pentru perioada 2021-2026
following institutional evaluation, attained the HIGH DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE rating for the period 2021-2026

BIROUL EXECUTIV AL CONSILIULUI ARACIS
EXECUTIVE BUREAU OF ARACIS

Președinte
Prof. univ. dr. Petrescu Iordan

Vicepreședinte
Prof. univ. dr. Ghițulică Cristina

Director Departament de Evaluare Externă a Calității
Conf. univ. dr. Bunoiu Mădălin

Director Departament de Acreditare
Prof. univ. dr. ing. Lache Simona

Secretar General
Prof. univ. dr. Cojocaru Bertalan

Data eliberării/Release date:
31.08.2021

Nr. 182/2021

Institutional Evaluation Programme
Performance in Research, Performance in Teaching – Quality, Diversity and Innovation in Romanian Universities Project

"CAROL I - NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY"
BUCHAREST-ROMANIA

**EDITOR**
„Carol I" National Defence University Publishing House
(Highly appreciated publishing house within "Military science, intelligence and public order" of Titles, Diploma and University Certificates Awards National Council)
Adress: Panduri Street, no. 68-72, Bucharest, 5th District
e-mail: buletinul@unap.ro
Phone: +4021.319.48.80 / 0365; 0453

Signature for the press: 07.04.2023
The publication consists of 182 pages.