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EDITORIAL

THE WAR IN UKRAINE

The year 2023 is an important year for the Contemporary Military Challenges. In September 1999, the first issue of the then named Slovenian Armed Forces Bulletin was published. As a rule, the first year of publication is counted from the first issue published, which means that the 25th anniversary is in autumn.

It is clear from the address of the then first editor that a great deal of motivation, creative drive and expectations for the future have been laid in the cradle of the publication. Many of these aspirations and ambitions were realised in the following years. All the efforts of the Slovenian Armed Forces, the Ministry of Defence and other Government line ministries of the Republic of Slovenia were directed towards a secure and stable future, which will bring prosperity for all. Joining the European Union and the Alliance has only strengthened our shared vision of a better future. Moreover, progress in all spheres of life was increasingly evident and it seemed that we were living in a promised land. In the meantime, Slovenian society has somewhat forgotten and abandoned some of its tried and tested habits, knowledge, procedures and views in the fields of military, security and defence. It seemed that there would be no future danger of military conflicts near the borders of the European Union, which could also affect our security.

The members of the first Editorial Board certainly could not have imagined 25 years ago that the articles in the first issue in the anniversary year would be directly or indirectly related to the war in Ukraine. Unfortunately, the reality is often different from our ideas and expectations. Despite some efforts by the international community, the clashes between Ukraine and the Russian Federation are still ongoing, and so far there are no signs of an end in the near future.

We, the Member States of the European Union, support Ukraine's efforts to defend its territory, its population, their homes and their way of life. Many initiatives have been taken in the Union to this end. So far, they have not borne fruit to the extent

that we can expect an end to the war. We can only hope that we will continue to persevere in finding new solutions to this problem in a way that does not cause further casualties and devastation to homes. However, we in the Union could not give in to despondency and leave Ukraine to an aggressor who uses violence and wants to change the borders in Europe. This way of pursuing national interests is unacceptable for 21st century Europe, and we can see in the support for Ukraine a determination that was not possible for the leaders of the countries of more than 80 years ago, when another country set about changing international borders and, consequently the international (European) security order.

The war in Ukraine has revived some conventional ways of fighting, using new (advanced) technologies, and using military capabilities that we were sure would no longer be part of modern armed conflicts. At the same time, it has demonstrated a wide variety of civilian and military means and ways of achieving the different objectives of the two sides involved.

In this issue, **Anže Rode**, **Lojze Pavič** and **Rok Ravnak**, in their article *Military intelligence – a look into the future in the light of the war in Ukraine*, conclude that military intelligence needs to be reorganised on the basis of the lessons learned from the specific case of Ukraine. This actually is not a major change in organisational terms. The change proposed by the authors may bring about significant substantive progress in the functioning of military as well as civilian intelligence.

The impact of armed conflicts on the environment is just one of the many challenges facing Ukraine. As **József Padányi** and **László Földi** write, military conflicts, wars and armed conflicts cause many casualties, extensive material and economic damage and devastation of nature. The latter is reflected in the many changes that occur in nature and in the living environment. Some of the impacts and consequences will be felt by many younger generations. In Ukraine, the living conditions of several cities, provinces and rivers have changed over the last year as a result of the war.

What is driving and motivating the Russian Federation in the conflict with its neighbour Ukraine was of interest to **Mark Kogoj**. His research focused on the *Strategic culture and the Russian Federation's engagement in the Russia-Ukraine conflict*. According to the author, it is characterised by territorial expansionism, a predilection for offensive military action, a view of the use of military force as an appropriate means to achieve political ends, a paranoid perception of threat - the image of the besieged fortress and distrust of the West, fear of colour revolutions, and the idea of Russian greatness and the pursuit of great power status. More on how these are reflected in practice is can be read in the article.

The European energy crisis is a consequence of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. But is it really? **Tamás Kun** unveils some of the aspects of this phenomenon on European soil over the last year in his article *Social engineering in Europe's energy crisis*. Based on a comparative analysis, he concludes that this crisis is not just an energy

problem. It is accompanied by various manipulations, provocations and obfuscations of real events and facts for the benefit of the many who benefit from them. The truth is still out there somewhere and is an inspiration to all those who are curious and think critically on the basis of facts.

The war in Ukraine has raised a number of questions about the provision of national and international security, and in a sense returns us to a starting point that was somewhat neglected in a time of security optimism. That is that wars are a consequence of human nature, that the nature of war does not change with it, and that there will continue to be wars in the future. Therefore, to be lax or to neglect efforts to strengthen our own and our common defence is irresponsible and harmful, or, as Ben-Gurion said after the first defensive war faced by an independent Jewish state: “The most dangerous enemy of national security is the intellectual inertia of those who are responsible for security”. In the Contemporary Military Challenges we will continue our efforts to provide a space for all those who seek answers to questions concerning our security and to contribute to the consolidation of Slovenian security, defence and military thought.