

# Sodobni vojaški izzivi

Contemporary Military Challenges

Znanstveno-strokovna publikacija Slovenske vojske

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## Dragi bralci!

Letos praznujemo dve pomembni obletnici v zgodovini Republike Slovenije, 20-letnici članstva v Evropski uniji in zvezi Nato. Z današnje perspektive lahko potrdimo, da je bila za uresničevanje zunanjepolitičnih in nacionalnovarnostnih interesov vključitev v evro-atlantske integracije ena najpomembnejših odločitev takratne mlade države. Pri uresničevanju omenjenega cilja se je politika poenotila, z veliko podporo pa so ga na posvetovalnem referendumu 23. marca 2003 podprli tudi Slovenke in Slovenci, državljanke in državljani Republike Slovenije. Začetnim političnim usmeritvam in aktivnostim v 90. letih prejšnjega stoletja so ob več kot desetletje dolgem procesu približevanja sledili postopne spremembe, prilagoditve, posvetovanja, učenje, pridobivanje izkušenj, dogovori in reformni koraki. Skupna prizadevanja, ukrepi, jasno postavljeni cilji in načrti ter osredotočenost pri njihovem uresničevanju so omogočili, da smo se na koncu zahtevne poti pridružili klubu razvitih držav v Evropski uniji in Severnoatlantskem zavezništvu, torej skupnostima, ki temeljita na demokratičnih vrednotah, vladavini prava ter spoštovanju človekovih pravic in svoboščin ter ozemeljske celovitosti in suverenosti. Tako smo dodatno okrepili ohranjanje in varovanje enakih vrednot, za katere smo si prizadevali pred nastankom lastne države, med njenim razvojem in pozneje.

Številni izzivi, s katerimi se spoprijemamo po hladni vojni, kot so podnebne spremembe, različni učinki globalizacije, prebojne tehnologije, multipolarnost in spodkopavanje mednarodnega prava v mednarodnih odnosih, družbene ter demografske spremembe, ekonomska nepredvidljivost in hibridne grožnje ter oboroženi konflikti, so večplastni, spremenljivi in kompleksni. Narava sodobnih mednarodnih izzivov in tveganj zahteva skupen pristop. Nobena država jih ne more reševati sama, zato sta nujni sodelovanje in povezovanje idej, metod, pristopov, znanj, virov in zmogljivosti. Velika dodana vrednost je prav v mednarodnem sodelovanju in članstvu v evro-atlantskih integracijah, kar omogoča iskanje sinergij in rešitev ter oblikovanje predlogov za ukrepanje pri omenjenih izzivih, za blaginjo in varnost državljanek ter državljanov držav članic oziroma zaveznic. Sloveniji je članstvo omogočilo sooblikovanje politik na različnih področjih družbenega delovanja, dostop do zahtevnih in dragih znanstveno-tehnoloških rešitev, širše gospodarske možnosti ter vire, obrambno-vojaško sodelovanje in skupna varnostna zagotovila.

Zgodovinsko gledano so preoblikovanje varnostne arhitekture ter širitev in integracija institucij, predvsem Evropske unije in Nata, pomembno prispevali k večji predvidljivosti ter stabilnosti na območju vzhodne, jugovzhodne in srednje Evrope ter tudi v širšem mednarodnem okolju. Načelo mirnega reševanja sporov je temelj vzajemnega sodelovanja držav v skupnosti. V teh okoliščinah sta Sloveniji kot mladi državi na mednarodnem parketu, ki si je morala samostojnost zagotoviti z orožjem ter je hkrati spremljala pomembne družbene spremembe v svoji sosesčini in širše, varnostni dežnik Nata in vpetost v institucionalni okvir zavezništva predstavljala pragmatično in tudi eksistencialno pomembno politično prizadevanje za razvojno prihodnost države in njenega obrambnega sistema. S približevanjem in vstopom v zvezo Nato smo razvoj ekonomsko-političnega in obrambnega področja namreč v določeni meri sinhronizirali z demokratičnimi zahodnoevropskimi in severnoameriškimi državami oziroma standardi. Ob drugačni odločitvi bi si morali nacionalno varnost zagotavljati sami, in sicer na druge načine, z dogovori zunaj te skupnosti. Da je bil vstop v Nato pravi korak, kažejo številni konflikti po svetu – vojna na evropskih tleh, nove kandidatke za

članstvo v zavezništvu ter odločitev za pristop tradicionalno nevtralnih držav, Finske in Švedske.

Zveza Nato letos praznuje 75. obletnico ustanovitve. Da je obstala kot učinkovito in enotno politično ter obrambno zavezništvo, se je morala nenehno prilagajati na spremembe v notranjem in zunanjem okolju. Pri tem je pomembna zmožnost realne samorefleksije in posodobitve zavezništva, kar je pokazal tudi proces Nato 2030. Vsebine, kot so več političnega posvetovanja in usklajevanja, krepitev obrambne ter odvračalne držbe, spodbujanje tehnoloških inovacij in sodelovanje z zasebnim sektorjem, krepitev odpornosti v zaveznicah, politika odprtih vrat, sodelovanje ter pomoč pri vzpostavitvi zmogljivosti partnerjev v sosesčini, prilagajanje na podnebne spremembe in zmanjšanje emisij, kažejo na širino Natovega poslanstva v novi dobi. Prav zaradi širine in zmožnosti prilagajanja novim okoliščinam ostaja Nato še vedno zelo relevanten akter v mednarodni skupnosti in tudi v odnosu do držav, ki si želijo članstva.

Sodobne grožnje so vojaške, pa tudi varnostne, politične, tehnološke, socialno-družbene, okoljske in druge. Za uspešno spoprijemanje z njimi so potrebni učinkovite obrambne zmogljivosti, celovit družbeni pristop in odpornost različnih področij družbe. Tveganje je vse večje zaradi odkritih ali prikritih delovanj različnih akterjev na neprekinjeno delovanje kritične infrastrukture, dobavne verige, komunikacijsko-informacijske sisteme, na delovanje oblasti, javno mnenje in varnost zračnega ali kopenskega prostora. Zveza Nato v teh okoliščinah prilagaja svojo obrambno in odvračalno držo, krepi zagotovila izpostavljenim zaveznicam, spreminja odzivnost ter strukturo sil, obnavlja vojaške zaloge in spodbuja obrambno industrijo, sodeluje v mednarodnih operacijah in s partnerji ter spodbuja civilno pripravljenost in odpornost zaveznic. Od ustanovitve do danes ostajajo kolektivna obramba in varnostna zagotovila, v okviru 5. člena Severnoatlantske pogodbe, ključno vezivo za ohranjanje vrednost in vzajemne solidarnosti med zaveznicami.

Sloveniji sta desetletna pot približevanja v okviru Partnerstva za mir in 20-letno članstvo v Natu v političnoinstitucionalnem, zakonodajnem, pravnem, gospodarskem, varnostnem in obrambno-vojaškem smislu pustila velik pečat. Šli smo skozi zahteven in koristen proces sprememb v obrambnem sistemu, skozi prilagoditev ter priprave strateških zunanjepolitičnih, nacionalnovarnostnih in obrambno-vojaških dokumentov, opredelitve ter uresničevanja načrtov in ciljev, poročanja, dogovarjanja ter pogajanja, profesionalizacijo in opremljanje Slovenske vojske ter sodelovanje v različnih zavezniških aktivnostih, kot so vaje, mednarodne operacije in misije ter delovanje v strukturi zavezniških sil. Obrambni sistem s Slovensko vojsko je po sprejetju Akcijskega načrta za članstvo v Natu od leta 1999 še intenzivneje izvajal predvidene aktivnosti za članstvo. Slovenija se je zavezala sprejemu zavezniških strategij in standardov, delitvi bremen skupne varnosti ter kolektivne obrambe, k zagotavljanju sil in zmogljivosti ter finančnih virov za uresničevanje obveznosti. Vsi ti koraki so omogočili, da je Slovenija 29. marca 2004 postala polnopravna članica zavezništva. Za skupno mizo smo pridobili enakovreden glas pri posvetovanjih in odločanju o evropski ter globalni varnosti, postali povezljivi pri delovanju z zaveznicami, kot enakopraven partner delovali z ramo ob rami v mednarodnih operacijah, na vajah in v Natovi štabni vojaški strukturi, pridobili dostop do naprednih in občutljivih informacij ter tehnologije, razširili možnost vojaškega izobraževanja in šolanja ter drugo.

Za Slovensko vojsko pomeni članstvo v zavezništvu obsežen proces prilaganja, preoblikovanja, integracije in profesionalizacije in zato tudi najpomembnejši transformacijski učinek, ki nenehno poteka. To se opazi tudi v aktualnem času precejšnjih sprememb zavezniške države, regionalnih načrtov, pripravljenosti in odzivnosti sil, v skupnih vajah in podpori obrambni industriji. Ni skrivnost, da je pri modernizaciji Slovenske vojske v teh dvajsetih letih prihajalo do zastojev pri vzpostavitvi zmogljivosti in upada ter upočasnjene rasti obrambnih izdatkov in investicij, kar ni mogoče nadoknaditi čez noč. V zadnjem času se stanje sicer postopoma izboljšuje, vendar so potrebna dodatna prizadevanja na kadrovske, finančne, materialne in drugih področjih. Lani so bile sprejete ključne strateške usmeritve za opremljanje in razvoj Slovenske vojske v obdobju do leta 2040. Za dobrobit Slovenije je treba sprejeta določila tudi dosledno uresničevati preko mandata več vlad in sklicev Državnega zbora. Tako si bomo zagotavljali ustrezno raven varnosti ter podpirali varnost zaveznic, krepili kredibilnost in ugled države ter imeli razvojno naravnano in modernizirano Slovensko vojsko.

Zveza Nato je družina enako mislečih partnerjev, ki si želijo blaginje, miru, stabilnosti in spoštovanja demokratičnih vrednot. Za Slovenijo je sobivanje v tej družini, v kateri imamo ugodnosti in obveznosti, izjemno pomembno. V mednarodne povezave država vstopa kot celota, zato je to tako politični kot obrambno-vojaški proces. Verjamem, da ob 20-letnici članstva v Natu ni prostora za dileme, ali je bila odločitev prava. Bila je. Državljanke in državljani, Slovenke in Slovenci smo se odločili pravilno. Zaradi te odločitve smo danes varnejši – o tem ni dvoma. V nasprotnem primeru bi brez kolektivne obrambe ostali izoliran otok na zemljevidu, ki bi bil brez varnostnih zagotovil ali posebnih strateških partnerstev izpostavljen precej večjim tveganjem ob različnih spremembah na območju jugovzhodne Evrope in širše. Tudi nauki iz zgodovine, geostrateška lega in omejene demografske, gospodarske ter druge zmogljivosti govorijo v prid večji nacionalni ranljivosti. Vzpostavitev alternativnega samozadostnega obrambnega sistema bi brez dvoma zahtevala več finančnih, materialnih in infrastrukturnih resursov ter široko družbeno angažiranost. Na pomen varnosti in vzpostavitve zmogljivosti nas opozarja več kot 50 oboroženih konfliktov po svetu, med njimi tudi spopadi na Bližnjem vzhodu in vojna v Ukrajini. Varnost je dobrina, ki je nujna za delovanje vseh drugih podsistemov, zato je ne smemo nikoli dojemati kot samoumevno. Za to skupno zavarovalno polico moramo vsi pravično in uravnoteženo prispevati. 75 let po ustanovitvi Severnoatlantskega zavezništva še kako velja starogrški rek »Združeni stojimo, razdeljeni pademo«. Republika Slovenija bo zato v sodelovanju z drugimi, o tem sem prepričana, ostala trden člen v zavezniški verigi.

*Dr. Nataša Pirc Musar,  
predsednica Republike Slovenije,  
vrhovna poveljnica obrambnih sil*





## Dear readers!

This year marks two important anniversaries in the history of the Republic of Slovenia: the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of its membership of the European Union and of NATO. From today's perspective, we can confirm that joining the Euro-Atlantic structures was one of the most important decisions of the then-young country in order to pursue its foreign policy and national security interests. The pursuit of these objectives was a unified political process and was overwhelmingly supported by the Slovenes, citizens of the Republic of Slovenia, in the consultative referendum of 23 March 2003. Initial political guidance and activities in the 1990s were followed by gradual changes, adjustments, consultations, learning, experience, agreements and reforms spanning over a more than decade-long process of accession. Joint effort, actions and clearly defined objectives and plans, together with a focus on their implementation, enabled our challenging journey to culminate in our joining the club of developed countries of the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance – communities based on democratic values, the rule of law, respect for human rights and freedoms, territorial integrity and sovereignty. This has further strengthened the preservation and safeguarding of these same values that we have pursued before, during and since the creation of our own country.

The numerous challenges we face in the post-Cold War era – including climate change, the manifold effects of globalization, disruptive technologies, multipolarity and the erosion of international law in international relations, social and demographic changes, economic unpredictability, hybrid threats and armed conflicts – are multifaceted, volatile and complex. The nature of contemporary international challenges and risks calls for a common approach. No single country can tackle them alone; cooperation and the integration of ideas, methods, approaches, skills, resources and capabilities are required. This is why international cooperation and the membership of Euro-Atlantic integrations offer great added value. The latter allows for the identification of synergies and solutions and the development of proposals for action to address these challenges, for the benefit of the well-being and security of the citizens of the Member States or allies. Membership has enabled Slovenia to participate in policy-making in various areas and to have access to sophisticated scientific and technological solutions, broader economic opportunities and resources, defence and military cooperation, and common security guarantees.

Historically, the reshaping of the security architecture and the enlargement and integration of institutions, notably the European Union and NATO, have contributed significantly to increased predictability and stability in Eastern, South-Eastern and Central Europe, as well as in the wider international environment. The principle of peaceful settlement of disputes is at the core of the mutual cooperation of the countries in the community. In these circumstances, for Slovenia, as a young country on the international stage which had to secure its independence by force of arms while at the same time witnessing significant societal changes in its neighbourhood and beyond, the NATO security umbrella and its integration into the Alliance's institutional framework represented a pragmatic and, to some extent, existentially important political endeavour for the progressive future of the country and its defence system. In fact, by approximating to and joining NATO, we have to a certain extent synchronized the development of our economic, political and defence spheres with the democratic Western European and North American countries and standards. If we had decided otherwise, we would have had to guarantee our national security ourselves in other ways, through arrangements

outside this community. The fact that Slovenia's joining NATO was a step in the right direction is supported by the many conflicts around the world – including the war on European soil, the new aspirants to membership in the Alliance, and the decisions of traditionally neutral countries, such as Finland and Sweden, to join NATO.

This year, NATO celebrates its 75th anniversary. To survive as an effective and unified political and defence alliance, NATO has had to constantly adapt to changes both within the organization and beyond. The ability for real self-reflection and the modernization of the Alliance is important in this context, as has also been demonstrated by the NATO 2030 process. Themes such as more political consultation and coordination, strengthening the defence and deterrence posture, promoting technological innovation and cooperation with private sector, building resilience in allies, the open-door policy, cooperation and assistance in building partner capabilities in the neighbourhood, and adaptation to climate change and emission reduction, show the extent of NATO's mission in the new era. It is precisely because of its breadth and ability to adapt to new circumstances that NATO remains a highly relevant actor in the international community and in relation to the countries aspiring to membership.

Modern threats include not only military ones, but also security, political, technological, social, environmental and other threats. In order to successfully tackle them, it is important to have effective defence capabilities, a holistic societal approach and the resilience of different segments of society. There is an increasing risk of overt or covert activities by various actors on the continuity of critical infrastructures, supply chains, communication and information systems, the functioning of government, public opinion and the security of air or land space. In these circumstances, NATO is adapting its defence and deterrence posture, strengthening assurances to security concerns of its allies, changing its responsiveness and force structure, replenishing military stocks and promoting the defence industry, participating in international operations, including with partners, and promoting the civil preparedness and resilience of its allies. From its inception to the present day, under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, collective defence and security assurances remain a key bond for the preservation of common values and mutual solidarity among the allies.

Slovenia's 10-year path of accession within the Partnership for Peace, and its 20-year membership of NATO, have undoubtedly left a sizable mark in political, institutional, legislative, legal, economic, security and defence-military terms. We have gone through a challenging and rewarding process of changes in the defence system; adjustments and preparation of strategic foreign policy, national security and defence-military documents; the implementation of plans and objectives, reporting, arrangements and negotiations; the professionalization and equipping of the Slovenian Armed Forces; participation in various allied activities, such as exercises, international operations and missions; and participation in the allied force structure. Since 1999, following the adoption of the NATO Membership Action Plan, the defence system, including the Slovenian Armed Forces, has intensified the implementation of the envisaged membership activities. Slovenia has been committed to adopting allied strategies and standards, to sharing the burden of common security and collective defence, and to providing the forces, capabilities and financial resources to implement its commitments. All these steps enabled Slovenia to become a fully-fledged member of the Alliance on 29 March 2004. Consequently, we gained an equal voice at the common table in consultations and decision-making on European and global security. We became interoperable in our

engagement with allies; worked shoulder to shoulder as an equal partner in international operations, exercises and NATO's military staff structure; gained access to advanced and sensitive information and technology; expanded military education and training opportunities, and much more.

For the Slovenian Armed Forces, Alliance membership represents a comprehensive process of adaptation, transformation, integration and professionalization, and is therefore a key transformational effect that is continuously underway. This is also evident in the current period of significant changes in the Alliance's posture, regional plans, force readiness and responsiveness, joint exercises and support to the defence industry. It is no secret that the modernization of the Slovenian Armed Forces over the past 20 years has been characterized by some difficulties regarding capability building, as well as by a decline and slowdown in the growth of defence expenditure and investment, which cannot be overcome overnight. While the situation has been gradually improving in recent years, additional efforts are required in the areas of personnel, finance and equipment, among others. Last year, key strategic guidance for the equipping and development of the Slovenian Armed Forces in the period up to 2040 was adopted. For the benefit of Slovenia, the adopted provisions should be consistently implemented through the mandates of several governments and convening's of the National Assembly. In this way, we will ensure an adequate level of our own security, support the security of our allies, strengthen our credibility and have modernized and efficient Slovenian Armed Forces.

NATO is a family of like-minded partners who believe in prosperity, peace, stability and respect for democratic values. For Slovenia, coexistence in this family, in which we have both benefits and obligations, is of the utmost importance. It is a country as a whole that joins international alliances, so it is both a political and a defence and military process. It is my firm belief that, on the 20th anniversary of NATO membership, there is no room for dilemmas as to whether this was the right decision. It was. We, the citizens, the Slovenes, made the right decision. We are safer today because of that decision – there is no doubt about that. Otherwise, without collective defence, we would have remained an isolated 'island' on the map, subject to far greater risks in the face of various changes in the region of South-Eastern Europe and beyond, without security guarantees or special strategic partnerships. The lessons of history, geostrategic location and limited demographic, economic and other capacities also argue in favour of greater national vulnerability in this case. Building an alternative self-sustaining defence system would undoubtedly require more financial, material and infrastructural resources and a very broad social engagement. More than 50 armed conflicts around the world, including the conflicts in the Middle East and the war in Ukraine, remind us of the importance of security and capability building. Security is a commodity that is necessary for the functioning of all other subsystems of the society and should never be taken for granted. Seventy-five years after the establishment of the North Atlantic Alliance, the ancient Greek saying "united we stand, divided we fall" still holds true. I am therefore convinced that the Republic of Slovenia will, in cooperation with others, remain a strong link in the chain of the Alliance.

*Dr. Nataša Pirc Musar*

*President of the Republic of Slovenia  
Commander-in-Chief of Defence Forces*



## Dragi bralci!

Devetindvajsetega marca bomo zaznamovali 20. obletnico vstopa v Nato. Slovenija je bila takrat edina kandidatka, poleg Estonije, Latvije, Litve, Slovaške, Bolgarije in Romunije, ki je izvedla referendum, in na katerem je članstvo v Natu podprlo dobrih 66 odstotkov državljanov.

Prizadevanja in aktivnosti za vstop so se začeli že leta 1994, ko je Slovenija postala članica Partnerstva za mir in se vključila v proces planiranja in ocenjevanja z določitvijo ciljev poveztljivosti. Kljub pričakovanju povabila za članstvo, ko se je Nato prvič po koncu hladne vojne razširil na Češko, Madžarsko in Poljsko, smo leta 1999 ostali praznih rok. Nadaljevali smo prizadevanja za izpolnjevanje političnih, gospodarskih in vojaško-obrambnih reform ter drugih zahtevanih Natovih standardov. Trud je bil nagrajen in na vrhu Nata v Pragi leta 2002 smo prejeli povabilo v zavezništvo.

Izjemnega pomena je, da nam je v času mirovne dividende po koncu hladne vojne in osamosvojitvene vojne za Slovenijo uspelo doseči politični in družbeni konsenz za včlanitev v vojaško-politično organizacijo, unikatni kolektivni klub, ki nam jamči največjo, najmočnejšo in najboljšo mogočo obliko kolektivnega varnostnega in obrambnega zagotovila, pri katerem se napad na eno izmed zaveznic šteje kot napad na vse. Z vidika majhne države, kot je Slovenija, je dosega tovrstnega ključnega zunanjepolitičnega cilja, poleg članstva v EU istega leta, nedvomen dosežek, saj si zgolj z oporo na lastne zmogljivosti ne bi mogli zagotoviti tolikšne nacionalne varnosti in obrambe. In trenutno poslabšanje varnostnih razmer – bolj kot kadar koli – potrjuje pravilnost takratne odločitve.

Pri tem smo se zavedali, da Republika Slovenija potrebuje vojsko, ki bo v sodelovanju z zavezniškimi vojskami zmožna obraniti državo, sodelovati pri zagotavljanju varnosti države in državljanov ob naravnih in drugih nesrečah ter sodelovati v prizadevanjih za zagotavljanje ali vzpostavitev miru v svetu. Prizadevali smo si za čim večjo poveztljivost z zavezništvom ter zagotoviti systemske, statusne, finančne, materialne, kadrovske, doktrinarne in druge pogoje za razvoj celotnega obrambnega sistema, pri čemer smo bili glede na zastavljene cilje in sprejete politične zaveze relativno uspešni.

Članstvo v Natu nam omogoča skupno naslavljanje in reševanje (globalnih) varnostnih groženj in izzivov, delitev izkušenj, dobrih nacionalnih praks. Nato nam služi tudi kot posvetovalni forum in organizacija, v kateri ni razlik med zaveznicami in se vse odločitve sprejemajo s konsenzom, in ne preglasovanjem. Z gotovostjo lahko trdimo, da smo si s članstvom v Natu utrdili mednarodni ugled in prepoznavnost Slovenije kot demokratične, miroljubne in v povezovanje usmerjene države.

Učinki transformacije in smeri razvoja, ki jih sooblikujemo v okviru Nata, so se odražali tudi v nacionalnih strateških dokumentih, razvojno-usmerjevalnih dolgoročnih in kratkoročnih obrambnih načrtih. V njih smo določili cilje, vire in najpomembnejše usmeritve delovanja in razvoja obrambnega sistema ter prednostna področja razvoja obrambnih zmogljivosti v posameznem načrtovalnem obdobju. V tem okviru smo nacionalni proces obrambnega planiranja sinhronizirali tudi s procesom planiranja v Natu.

S članstvom v Natu niso pridobili samo Slovenska vojska in obrambni vidiki države, večje varnostne stabilnosti sta deležni celotna država in družba. Naložbe v slovensko

gospodarstvo so varnejše in zanesljivejše, več je priložnosti za obrambno industrijo, akademsko sfero ter možnosti za raziskave in razvoj, tudi novih tehnologij.

Mednarodno varnostno okolje se je v dvajsetih letih drastično in v temeljih spremenilo. V obstoječih strateških nacionalnovarnostnih dokumentih je verjetnost, da bi vojaški konflikt ogrozil nacionalno varnost, sicer opredeljena kot zelo majhna. Po nelegalni ruski aneksiji Krima leta 2014, ko smo bili priča destabilizaciji vhodnega dela Evrope, so se hibridne aktivnosti pod pragom oboroženega spopada in ne meji legalnosti ter s kaskadnimi in multiplikativnimi učinki odražale tudi v civilni družbi, tako z razmahom dezinformacij, sejanjem dvoma v odločevalce, spodkopavanjem demokratičnih temeljev države in družbe ter izvedbe pravičnih volitev kot tudi s kibernetскими napadi, instrumentalizacijo migracij ipd. Po brezkompromisni ruski vojaški agresiji na Ukrajino februarja 2022, ko so se vsestransko zaostрили odnosi med Zahodom in Rusijo, se je v Evropi realno povečala tudi možnost oboroženega konflikta zelo velikih razsežnosti.

Znatne spremembe varnostnega okolja so zaznane tudi na Bližnjem vzhodu ter v Severni in Podsaharski Afriki, od koder prihaja vse več množičnih migracij. Teroristični napadi v evropskih prestolnicah so postali stalnica. Vse bolj prevladujejo lokalne in regionalne ter asimetrične grožnje, ki so vir varnostnih groženj za Evropo. Prav tako se zaostrojuje varnostne razmere v Aziji.

Vse to je vodilo do spoznanja, da bo nujen preobrat v miselnosti, okrepitvi odvrčanja in obrambe ter izvedbi institucionalnih in transformacijskih sprememb tako na skupni, kolektivni kot tudi na nacionalni ravni ter komplementarno s prizadevanji EU in strateškimi partnerji. Slovenija je kot članica Nata in EU zagovornica krepitve partnerstva ter tesnega sodelovanja med obema organizacijama – s ciljem izogibanja podvajanja, zagotavljanja usklajevanja in ustvarjanja sinergij med njunimi aktivnostmi.

Novo varnostno realnost je opredelila in načine za njeno naslavljanje že predvideva tudi osnutek nove obrambne strategije Republike Slovenije. Pospešena vojaška transformacija Nata in zaveznic se tem trendom ustrezno in pravočasno prilagaja, s spremenjenim operativnim planiranjem in posodobljenim kriznim upravljanjem. Ravni pripravljenosti, odzivnosti, vzdržljivosti, agilnosti in robustnosti zavezniških sil so se prav tako močno dvignile.

Med ključne spodbujevalce in kazalnike transformacije oboroženih sil ter neprimerljivo izkušnjo za več kot 15.000 pripadnikov Slovenske vojske v dvajsetih letih spada tudi sodelovanje v mednarodnih operacijah in na misijah (MOM). Sodelovanje v MOM je potekalo pod vodstvom Nata, EU in OZN. V vseh teh letih je bilo usmerjeno predvsem na Zahodni Balkan (npr. leta 2007 je bil v Kfor napoten kontingent velikosti bataljona) kot strateško pomembno regijo za Slovenijo, ki ji izjemen pomen za varnost in stabilnost celotnega zavezništva pripisuje tudi Nato. V zavezništvu smo nadaljevali dejavno podporo zavezniški politiki odprtih vrat in izpostavljali potrebo po jasni evro-atlantski perspektivi držav Zahodnega Balkana.

Slovenska vojska je sodelovala v MOM na Bližnjem vzhodu (npr. v Isaf je v letih 2002–2014 skupno sodelovalo 1273 pripadnikov), v Sredozemlju in podsaharski Afriki. V duhu solidarnosti in enotnosti zavezništva smo z okrepljeno prednjo prisotnostjo od leta 2017 vključeni tudi v izvajanje varnostnih zagotovil zaveznicam na južnem in vzhodnem krilu zavezništva.

Pohvalno je, da se je obseg sodelovanja sil Slovenske vojske v MOM in deklariranih odzivnih silah in silah v visoki pripravljenosti Nata ter EU ves čas ohranjal nad šestimi odstotki kopenskega dela Slovenske vojske, medtem ko je bil delež Slovenije v Natovih operacijah glede na vse kazalnike v zavezništvu vedno nadpovprečen.

Hkrati je Republika Slovenija na območja, kjer je delovala Slovenska vojska, ali v Natova poveljstva in povezovalne pisarne napotovala tudi civilne (funkcionalne) strokovnjake za podporo odločanju ter izvedla več projektov v okviru pomoči lokalnemu prebivalstvu (Isaf, Kfor, BiH, Gruzija).

S širitvijo Nata ni pridobila zgolj Slovenija, temveč so se povečali tudi skupna varnost ter območje miru zavezništva in širšega evroatlantskega prostora. Prav tako geostrateški položaj, ki ga ima Slovenija, z vidika trenutne varnostne situacije vse bolj pridobiva na pomenu, saj predstavlja strateško povezavo med zahodno in srednjo Evropo ter Zahodnim Balkanom oziroma Jugovzhodno Evropo oziroma leži na križišču dveh pomembnih prometnih in za vojaško mobilnost ključnih koridorjev.

Sorazmerna delitev bremen in tveganj kolektivne obrambe obsega tudi vplačila v Natove proračune ter izpolnjevanje Valižanske zaveze o obrambnih investicijah 2014, s katero smo se vse zaveznice zavezale, da bomo v naslednjih desetih letih namenile najmanj 2 odstotka BDP za obrambne izdatke ter od tega 20 odstotkov za investicije v glavno opremo. Trenutno je v Natu aktualna razprava o storjenem napredku na vrhu v Vilni 2023 prenovljene zaveze, ki 2 odstotkov BDP za obrambne izdatke ne postavlja več kot zgornjo mejo, temveč minimalno izhodišče. Vse bolj realna so tudi pričakovanja, da bodo na letošnjem julijemskem vrhu Nata v Washingtonu voditelji držav in vlad intenzivirali razpravo o nujnosti nadaljnjih vlaganj v obrambo.

V Sloveniji so (realizirani) obrambni izdatki leta 2023 znašali 1,33 odstotka BDP. Za primerjavo, v času vstopa v Nato leta 2004 so obrambni izdatki znašali 1,43 odstotka BDP, dosegli najnižji odstotek BDP leta 2015, in sicer 0,93, ter najvišjega leta 2010, 1,60 odstotka BDP.

Desetletje nezadostnih obrambnih vlaganj, tudi na račun solidarnega prispevanja obrambnega resorja k reševanju gospodarsko-finančne krize in stabilizacije javnih financ, ni več opravičilo, da smo z vstopom v Nato prejeli več varnosti za manj denarja. Žal nam v dvajsetih letih ni uspelo doseči nacionalnega političnega konsenza za izgradnjo ključnih zmogljivostih (bataljonske bojne skupine in izvidniškega bataljona), ki jih Natu obljublamo že od vstopa in ki bi pomenile ključen nacionalni prispevek v skupno varnost in obrambo ter jeziček na tehnični kredibilnosti drastično obrnile v prid Slovenije.

Glede na varnostne razmere je zato toliko pomembnejše, da za Slovensko vojsko zagotovimo neprekinjen in predvsem stabilen vir financiranja. Načrtovano je sicer postopno približevanje 2 odstotkoma BDP do leta 2030, pri čemer cilj 20 odstotkov obrambnih izdatkov za investicije v glavno opremo, vključno z raziskavami in razvojem, že dosegame.

Poleg financ in opreme posebno velik izziv ostaja popolnjevanje in zadrževanje kadra za Slovensko vojsko. Z odločitvijo o ukinitvi naborništva leta 2003 in popolnjevanju Slovenske vojske s profesionalnimi, poklicnimi vojaki in pogodbeno rezervo smo ostali



brez jedra pripadnikov z opravljenim temeljnim vojaškim usposabljanjem. V strokovni javnosti je sicer razprava o ponovni uvedbi vseh sestavin obrambnih dolžnosti vedno prisotna, glede na mednarodne varnostne razmere pa vedno bolj aktualna in realna, vendar bi bilo o naborništvu, kot smo ga poznali nekoč, vseeno preuranjeno govoriti.

Pri nadaljnjih nacionalnih in zavezniških prizadevanjih, še posebno če bomo hoteli ohraniti tehnološko prednost, ne bomo mogli mimo razvoja in uveljavljanja novih naprednih in prebojnih tehnologij (umetne inteligence, kvantne tehnologije, biotehnologije, hipersoničnih zmogljivosti ipd.) ter relativno novih operativnih domen delovanja, to je kibernetike in vesolja, pri čemer bo treba upoštevati tudi tako imenovani multidomenski pristop k vojskovanju ter poleg kinetičnih še razvoj nekinetičnih zmogljivosti, ki imajo lahko marsikdaj odločilen vpliv. Pri tem bo ključno slediti načelom odgovorne rabe ter ohraniti človeški nadzor nad njimi.

V okvir zavezniških prizadevanj spadajo tudi spodbude Nata zaveznicam, naj okrepijo odpornost na področju civilne obrambe, kar bi morale izpolnjevati po 3. členu Severnoatlantske pogodbe. Ministrstvo za obrambo, kot upravitelj obrambnega načrta države, je v letih izvedlo številne medresorske aktivnosti za nadgradnjo civilne obrambe ter prilagodilo proces obrambnega načrtovanja v državi. Ogromno dela je še pred nami, predvsem v delu samozadostnosti, dobavnih verig, redundanc, prioritizacije zmogljivosti in storitev v kriznih situacijah, izrednem stanju ali vojni, krepitvi odpornosti in zaščiti kritične infrastrukture, zoperstavljanju hibridnim grožnjam in podobnem.

V okviru prispevanja Slovenije v izpolnjevanja tretje ključne naloge Nata – kriznega upravljanja – nam je uspelo Natov sistem ukrepov kriznega odzivanja sinhronizirati z nacionalnim procesom odzivanja na krize. Aktivnosti so aktualne tudi z vidika spremljanja in prilagajanja zavezniških in nacionalnih aktivnosti od ruske vojaške agresije na Ukrajino februarja 2022.

Imeti lastno državo je privilegij, ki s seboj prinaša tudi odgovornost na varnostnem in obrambnem področju. Ne glede na izzive z obrambnimi izdatki, oborožitvijo in kadri, se zavedamo, da bo ključno usmeriti napore v prihodnost in se nenehno prilagajati nepredvidljivemu varnostnemu okolju.

Danes je nujna odgovornost biti v vojaškem in širšem smislu pripravljen na realno možnost različnih oblik varnostnih groženj in tveganj, ki lahko imajo ne le civilne, temveč tudi vojaške implikacije, zato je prav tako nujna sprememba miselnosti, kar nas ne nazadnje učijo zgodovinske izkušnje.

Pri tem nismo sami, saj se lahko opremo na zaveznike v Natu. Nacionalna odgovornost ostaja določitev ustrezne in trajne zagotovitve virov, usmerjenih v vzpostavitev ključnih zmogljivosti, ki bodo zagotavljale potrebno raven obrambne sposobnosti države ter hkrati omogočale kredibilen prispevek v skupno varnost in kolektivno obrambo. Pri tem bo najpomembnejši večji politični in družbeni konsenz. Verjamem, da nam bo uspelo, saj smo že večkrat združili moči in dokazali enotnost.

*Marjan Šarec,*  
*minister za obrambo*



## Dear readers!

On 29 March, Slovenia will mark the 20th anniversary of its accession to NATO. Slovenia was the only candidate, alongside Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, to hold a referendum, in which over 66% of citizens voted in favour of NATO membership.

Accession efforts and activities started as early as 1994, when we became a member of the Partnership for Peace and engaged in the planning and assessment process by setting interoperability targets. Despite the anticipation of an invitation to join when NATO expanded for the first time since the end of the Cold War to include the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, we were left empty-handed in 1999. We continued our efforts to meet the political, economic and military-defence reforms and other required NATO standards. Our efforts were rewarded and we received an invitation to join the Alliance at the NATO Summit in Prague in 2002.

It is of the utmost importance that, in the peace dividend period after the end of the Cold War and Slovenia's war for independence, we managed to achieve a political and social consensus to join a military-political organisation, a unique collective club that provides us with the largest, strongest and best possible form of collective security and defence guarantee, where an attack on one of the allies is considered an attack on all. From the point of view of a small country such as Slovenia, achieving such a key foreign policy objective, in addition to EU membership in the same year, is an unquestionable strategic achievement, as we would not be able to guarantee our national security and defence to the same extent by relying solely on our own capabilities. More than ever before, current deteriorated security situation confirms the correctness of that decision.

In doing so, we were aware that the Republic of Slovenia needs an armed force capable of defending the country in cooperation with allied armed forces, contributing to the security of the country and its citizens in the event of natural and other disasters, and participating in peace support efforts in the world. We have strived to maximise our integration with the Alliance and to ensure the systemic, status, financial, material, personnel, doctrinal and other conditions for the development of the overall defence system, and have been relatively successful in this respect, given the objectives set and the political commitments made.

NATO membership enables us to address and resolve relevant security threats and challenges together, to share experiences and good national practices. NATO also serves as a forum for consultations and an organisation where there are no differences between allies and all decisions are taken by consensus. We can say with certainty that our membership in NATO has strengthened our international reputation and recognition as a democratic, peaceful and integration-oriented country.

The effects of the transformation and the developments we are co-shaping within NATO have also been reflected in national strategic documents, development-oriented long-term and short-term defence plans. In these documents, we have defined the objectives, resources and the most important directions for the operation and development of the defence system, as well as the priority areas for the development of defence capabilities in each planning period. In this context, we have also synchronised the national defence planning process with the planning process in NATO.

NATO membership has not only benefited the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) and the defence aspects of the country, greater security and stability is provided to the whole country and society. Investments in the Slovenian economy are safer and more secure, there are more opportunities for the defence industry, academia and research and development, including new technologies.

The international security environment has changed dramatically and fundamentally in the last twenty years. Existing strategic national security documents define the likelihood of a military conflict threatening national security as very low. Following Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, when we witnessed the destabilisation of the eastern part of Europe, hybrid activities below the threshold of armed conflict and close to illegality, with cascading and multiplying effects also reflected in civil society, through the spread of disinformation, sowing doubt in towards decision-makers, undermining the democratic foundations of the state and society and the holding of fair elections, cyber-attacks, the instrumentalization of migration, etc. Following the uncompromising Russian military aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, when relations between the West and Russia were strained across the board, the possibility of a very large-scale armed conflict in Europe has also increased in real terms.

The Middle East and North and Sub-Saharan Africa are also experiencing significant changes in the security environment, with increasing mass migration. Terrorist attacks in European capitals have become a frequent feature. Local, regional and asymmetric threats are becoming more prevalent and are a source of security threats for Europe as well. The security situation in Asia is also deteriorating.

All this has led to the realisation that a shift in mindset, a strengthening of deterrence and defence, and the implementation of institutional and transformational change is necessary, both collectively and nationally, and in complementarity with EU efforts and strategic partners. Slovenia, as a member of NATO and the EU, is an advocate of strengthening partnership and close cooperation between the two organisations, with the aim of avoiding duplication, ensuring coordination and creating synergies between their activities.

The new security realities have already been identified and ways to address them are already envisaged in the draft of the new Defence Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia. The accelerated military transformation of NATO and its allies has been adapting to these trends in an appropriate and timely manner, with revised operational planning and modernised crisis management. The levels of readiness, responsiveness, resilience, agility and robustness of allied forces have also been significantly raised.

Participation in international operations and missions (IOM) has been one of the key drivers and indicators of the transformation of the Slovenian Armed Forces and an unparalleled experience for more than 15,000 SAF members over the past 20 years. Slovenian participation in IOM has been mainly led by NATO, the EU and the UN. In all these years, the focus has been on the Western Balkans (e.g. a battalion-sized contingent deployed to KFOR in 2007), as a region of strategic importance for Slovenia, which is also considered by NATO to be of paramount importance for the security and stability of the Alliance as a whole. In the Alliance, we have also continued to actively support the Alliance's open-door policy and to underline the need for a clear Euro-Atlantic perspective for the countries of the Western Balkans.

The Slovenian Armed Forces have also participated in IOM in the Middle East (e.g. a total of 1,273 personnel in ISAF in 2002-2014), in the Mediterranean and in sub-Saharan Africa in the Sahel/North Africa. In the spirit of solidarity and unity of the Alliance, we have also been involved in providing security assurances to allies on the southern and eastern flanks of the Alliance with an enhanced forward presence since 2017.

It is commendable that the participation of the Slovenian Armed Forces in the IOM and declared NATO and EU response and high readiness forces has consistently remained above six per cent of the SAF's land component, while according to all Alliance indicators Slovenia's share in NATO operations has always been above average.

At the same time, the Republic of Slovenia also deployed civilian (functional) experts to provide support in decision-making in the areas where the Slovenian Armed Forces were operating or to NATO Commands and Liaison Offices, and implemented several projects in the framework of assistance to the local population (ISAF, KFOR, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia).

NATO enlargement has not only benefited Slovenia, but also the common security and peace area of the Alliance and the wider Euro-Atlantic area. Additionally, Slovenia's geostrategic position is becoming increasingly important in terms of the current security situation, as it represents a strategic link between Western and Central Europe as well as the Western Balkans and South-Eastern Europe, or better, is located at the crossroads of two important transport corridors that are crucial for military mobility.

Proportionate burdens and risks sharing of collective defence also includes contributions to NATO budgets and compliance with the 2014 Wales Summit Defence Investment Pledge, which commits all Allies to spending at least 2% of GDP on defence over the next ten years, of which 20% on investment in major equipment.

The current debate in NATO is about the progress made on the commitment, renewed at the Vilnius Summit in 2023, to make 2% of GDP for defence spending no longer a ceiling, but a minimum starting point. There are also expectations that at this July's NATO Summit in Washington, Heads of States and Governments will intensify the debate on the need for further investments in defence.

In Slovenia, (realised) defence expenditure in 2023 has been 1.33% of GDP. By comparison, at the time of NATO accession in 2004, defence expenditure was 1.43% of GDP, reaching a low of 0.93% of GDP in 2015 and a high of 1.60% of GDP in 2010.

A decade of underinvestment in defence, including at the expense of the defence sector's solidarity contribution to tackling the economic-financial crisis and stabilising public finances, is no longer an excuse for having received more security for less money by joining NATO. Unfortunately, in twenty years we have not been able to achieve a national political consensus to build the key capabilities (Medium Infantry Battalion Group and Medium Combat Reconnaissance Battalion) that we have been promising to NATO since accession, and would have represented a key national contribution to common security and defence, and drastically turned the balance of credibility in Slovenia's favour.

Given the security situation, it is therefore all the more important to ensure a continuous and, above all, stable source of funding for the Slovenian Armed Forces. While a gradual approach to 2% of GDP by 2030 is planned, the target of 20% of defence expenditure on investment in major equipment, including research and development, is already being achieved.

In addition to finances and equipment, the recruitment and retention of personnel for the Slovenian Armed Forces remains a particular challenge. With the decision to abolish conscription in 2003 and to man the Slovenian Armed Forces with professional, career and contract reserve soldiers, we are left without a core of soldiers with completed basic military training. While the debate on the reintroduction of all the components of defence duties is ever present in the expert community and, in the light of the international security situation, increasingly topical and realistic, it would be premature to talk about reintroduction of conscription system as we used to know it.

In our future national and allied efforts, especially if we want to maintain our technological edge, we will not be able to bypass the development and deployment of new advanced and disruptive technologies (artificial intelligence, quantum technology, biotechnology, hypersonic capabilities, etc.) and relatively new operational domains of action, i.e. cybernetics and space, which will also need to take into account the so-called multi-domain approach to warfare and the development of non-kinetic capabilities in addition to kinetic ones, which can sometimes have a decisive impact. The key will be to follow the principles of responsible use and to maintain human control.

NATO's encouragement to allies to strengthen civil defence resilience, in the context of the fulfilment of Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty, is also in the framework of the Alliance's efforts. The Ministry of Defence, as responsible entity for coordination and guidance of the country's defence plan, has over the years carried out a number of inter-/ministerial activities to upgrade civil defence and to adapt the country's defence planning process. However, a lot of work still remains to be done, especially in the areas of self-sufficiency, supply chains, redundancy, prioritisation of capabilities and services in crisis, state of emergency or war, building resilience and protecting key and critical infrastructure, countering hybrid threats, and so on.

As part of Slovenia's contribution to NATO's third key task - crisis management - we have succeeded in synchronising NATO's crisis response system with the national crisis response process. The activities are also relevant in terms of monitoring and adapting allied and national activities since the Russian military aggression against Ukraine in February 2022.

It is a privilege to have your own country, but this also brings with it security and defence responsibilities. Notwithstanding the challenges with defence expenditure, weapons and personnel, we are well-aware that it will be crucial to look ahead and continuously adapt to the unpredictable security environment.

Today, the responsibility to be prepared, both militarily and more broadly, for the real possibility of various forms of security threats and risks, which may have not only civilian but also military implications, requires a change in mindset, as we have also learned from historical experience.

We are not alone in this, but we can rely on our NATO allies. The national responsibility remains to determine the appropriate and sustainable provision of resources that will be directed towards building key capabilities that will ensure the necessary level of national defence capability while allowing a credible contribution to common security and collective defence. Greater political and societal consensus will be key to this end. I am confident that we will succeed, as we have already joined efforts and demonstrated unity on several occasions before.

*Marjan Šarec*  
*Minister of Defence*



## 20 LET ČLANSTVA V NATU

*»Vse bolj postaja jasno, da je naše Atlantsko zavezništvo najdragocenejši instrument za zaščito in spodbujanje naših skupnih vrednot in varnostnih interesov.«*

*Generalni sekretar Nata Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,  
Portorož, 28. september 2006*

## 20 YEARS IN THE ALLIANCE

*»It has become even clearer that our Atlantic Alliance is a most valuable instrument for protecting and promoting our common values and security interests.«*

*NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,  
Portorož, 28 September 2006.*





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## UVODNIK

### 20 LET V ZAVEZNIŠTVU

**Uvod** V času priprav na neformalno srečanje ministrov za zunanje zadeve držav članic Nata, ki bo 30. in 31. maja 2024 v Pragi, je generalni sekretar Nata Jens Stoltenberg izrazil zadovoljstvo, da bo to prav v mestu, v katerem je bilo leta 2002 dogovorjeno, da bo zavezništvo v svoje vrste povabilo sedem novih članic (Nato, 2024). Leta 2004 smo se zavezništvu pridružili skupaj z Bolgarijo, Estonijo, Latvijo, Litvo, Romunijo in Slovaško. Dva meseca pozneje smo postali še članica Evropske unije. Kar nekaj držav ima letos razlog za praznovanje, vendar hkrati tudi povečano skrb za svojo varnost. Države na vzhodnem krilu zavezništva so v bližini vojnega območja. Ob obletnicah, ki nas veselijo, so tudi take, ki so nesprejemljive z vidika kulturnih, pravnih in demokratičnih vrednot. Mednje zagotovo spada druga obletnica vojne v Ukrajini, ki nas postavlja pred veliko preizkušnjo o tem, katere so naše vrednote, kako čvrsto smo predani svojim ciljem in medsebojnemu dogovorom ter koliko smo jih pripravljeni uresničiti in kako. Obletnice in njihovo praznovanje lahko razumemo tudi kot protokolarni dogodek ter priložnost za druženje, vendar gre v primeru Nata za zelo pomembno mednarodno politično in varnostno organizacijo, ki je pomemben akter v mednarodnem varnostnem okolju. Kaj natančno to pomeni za državo in njen razvoj na obrambno-varnostnem področju, je razvidno iz prispevkov, objavljenih v tematskih številkah Sodobnih vojaških izzivov v časovnem razmiku petih let v zadnjih dvajsetih. Namen primerjalne analize, ki je bila narejena na njihovi podlagi, omogoča vpogled v povzetek vsebine raziskovanja posameznih avtorjev s poudarkom na njihovem razumevanju in izkušnjah, ki so jih v tem obdobju pridobili.

## 1 OBLETNICE KOT MEJNIKI IN PRILOŽNOST ZA NAPREDEK

Ob peti obletnici v zavezništvu leta 2009, ki jo je zelo zaznamovala tudi peta obletnica v Evropski uniji, je imela ta za države članice, ki so bile precej nove, povsem drugačen pomen kot za tiste, ki so bile ustanoviteljice Nata (Jelušič, 2009).

Avtorji so ugotavljali, da smo se kot država v prvem petletnem obdobju zelo veliko naučili, se prilagodili in dodatno vključili v različne mednarodne dejavnosti, v katerih smo pridobili dragocene izkušnje. Pregledu po razvoju zavezništva od njegovega začetka pa vse do šestdesetletnice delovanja (Jazbec, 2009) in slovenski poti do članstva (Bebler, 2009) je sledila analiza izkušenj iz obrambnega načrtovanja (Šavc, 2009), mednarodnega vidika zagotavljanja financiranja zavezništva (Giegerich, 2009) in integracije Slovenske vojske v mednarodne vojaške strukture (Humar, Mikuš, Zanoškar, Groff, Holc, 2009). Ustrezna pozornost je bila namenjena transformacijskim izzivom (Šteiner, 2009) in dejavnostim mednarodne skupnosti v Afganistanu (Grizold in Zupančič, 2009) ter na področju obveščevalno-varnostne dejavnosti (Črnčec, 2009) in zmogljivostim omrežnega delovanja (Svete in Jankovič, 2009). V prispevkih so vidni navdušenje, motiviranost, zadovoljstvo in ponos, da smo del pomembne mednarodne varnostne organizacije. Takratna tematska številka je bila zanimiva za države v regiji Jugovzhodne Evrope, ki so se odpravljale na pot v zavezništvo po stopinjah Republike Slovenije in so jih zanimali pridobljene lekcije, priporočila in opozorila (Brožič, 2014).

Ob deseti obletnici v zavezništvu so bili prispevki avtorjev osredotočeni na spremembe v mednarodnem varnostnem okolju in v zavezništvu (Lampret in Novak, 2014), na politični (Jazbec, 2014) in vojaški vidik (Osterman, 2014), na obveščevalno-varnostno področje njegovega delovanja (Črnčec in Urbanč, 2014), na priprave na umik zavezništva iz Afganistana (Selan, 2014) in na kibernetško obrambo njegovega delovanja (Dvoršak, 2014). V prispevkih je mogoče zaznati spremembo v podtonu pisanja. Avtorji niso delili z bralci samo vidika pridobljenih izkušenj, temveč tudi poskus iskanja prihodnjih rešitev v zavezništvu. Začetne navdušenje, zadovoljstvo in ponos so zamenjali strokovnost, izkušenost, zavedanje o zahtevnosti, ki ga prinaša delitev bremen. Vloga države mentorice drugim državam, ki so si želele v zavezništvo, je postala izrazitejša in odgovornejša.

Ob petnajsti obletnici Republike Slovenije v zavezništvu so tematsko številko zelo zaznamovale posledice svetovne finančne krize, ki se je na obrambnem področju v naši državi še kar nadaljevala, čeprav smo bili že leta 2019. Njene posledice smo najbolj zaznali z nizkim deležem, ki smo ga namenjali za obrambne izdatke. Skupina avtorjev v zadnji številki, posvečeni zavezništvu, je bila raznovrstna in je vključevala poglede na slovensko članstvo z vidika tujih avtorjev iz drugih držav članic.

Spremembe v mednarodni politiki in s tem na mednarodnem varnostnem področju so precej vplivale na zavezništvo in njegove države članice, posledično pa tudi na Evropsko unijo in njeno Skupno zunanjo in varnostno politiko. Države zavezništva so se, kot že tolikokrat poprej, ponovno povezale in okrepile svoje vrste z novimi državami članicami, ki so se različno odzivale na spremenjene varnostne trende (Rutar, 2019), v Sloveniji pa smo evalvirali svoje članstvo in obojestransko zadovoljstvo, ki iz njega izhaja (Lampret in Grilj, 2019). Varnostna situacija se je še posebej spremenila za članice, ki mejijo na Rusko federacijo (Veebel in Ploom, 2019; Falkowski, 2019). Posledično se je z novimi izzivi spoprijela tudi Slovenska

vojska (Osterman, 2019), ki so jo pretekle izkušnje okrepile in je z leti postala še bolj profesionalna (Šteiner, 2019). Objavljena je bila tudi primerjalna študija med projekcijo stroškov, ki bi jih država imela za obrambo, če ne bi bila članica zavezništva, in tistimi, ki jih je imela v času zavezništva. Članstvo v Natu je za Slovenijo cenejše, kot bi bilo zagotavljanje lastne obrambe brez njega (Furlan in Barjaktarevič, 2019). Pogled na petnajsto obletnico je bil zaznamovan s poudarkom na pomanjkljivem financiranju države, ki za obrambne izdatke namenja premalo virov, s čimer ne slabi samo nacionalne varnosti, temveč tudi mednarodno in posledično celotno zavezništvo (Čehovin, Grayston, 2019), pa tudi z vidika tistih, ki si članstva želijo (Kožljak, 2019).

Avtorji so bili za razliko od prejšnje tematske številke v prispevkih bolj stvarni, kritični in pošteno do varnostne situacije in obrambnih zmogljivosti v svetu, v zavezništvu in na nacionalni ravni. Izrazitejše je bilo zavedanje o tem, kaj zavezništvo in njene članice potrebujejo in kaj je treba še narediti, da bi bilo to učinkovitejše. Kot že velikokrat je bilo izpostavljeno dejstvo, da mora Republika Slovenija nameniti za svojo obrambo več zato, da bo lahko v zavezništvo prispevala, kot je obljubila že na vrhu Nata v Walesu leta 2014.

## 2 POGLED V PRIHODNOST

Po letu 2019 je Republika Slovenija postopoma začela dvigovati delež obrambnih izdatkov, ki je leta 2021 znašal 1,23 % BDP, dve leti pozneje 1,33 % BDP in bo leta 2025 znašal 1,36 % BDP. Povečan je tudi delež sredstev v obrambnih izdatkih, ki je namenjen za raziskave, razvoj in inovacije. Ta je leta 2021 znašal 0,2 %, dve leti pozneje 1,5 % in bo leta 2025 znašal 2,4 %. Tako želimo tvorno prispevati k povečanim aktivnostim zavezništva in Evropske unije ter k večji skupni varnosti in obrambnim zmogljivostim, ki jih potrebujemo.

V tokratni tematski številki, posvečeni dvajseti obletnici Republike Slovenije v Natu, v prispevku *Putinova dilema: Rusija in slovanska dimenzija Natove širitve* **Andrej Benedejčič** odstira nekatere vidike slovanstva z vidika zgodovine in sedanjosti, ki so enkrat bolj drugič manj, pa vendar trajno, prisotne v kulturi in politiki slovanskih držav s poudarkom na Rusiji.

**Fritz Rademacher** v poglobljeni analizi z naslovom *Nato@75 – prihodnost Atlantskega zavezništva v turbulentnih časih* preučuje fenomen uspešnosti zavezništva kljub nemiru v mednarodnem varnostnem okolju in stalnim spremembam, ki jih to prestaja. Kaj je ključno in povezuje države članice v vsej njihovi različnosti ter transformacijskih aktivnostih posameznih držav in zavezništva kot celote, je osrednje vprašanje, na katerega avtor išče odgovor.

*20 let Republike Slovenije v Natu: nekateri vtisi o koščku in celoti* je naslov prispevka **Igorja Kotnika**, ki se je osredotočil na Natove dosedanje izkušnje, spreminjajoče se varnostno okolje in njegovo vlogo v njem, na pot Republike Slovenije v okviru

zavezništva s poudarkom na instrumentih nacionalne moči. Pravi, da moramo biti pri teh vsebinah iskreni zato, da bi lahko bili boljši. Bo to dovolj ali bomo morali narediti še kaj?

**Hanna Samir Kassab** v prispevku *Prestiž, ponižanje in ohranjanje obraza: nacionalna identiteta in politika velikih sil* izhaja iz predpostavke, da močnejša, kot je država, bolj si lahko prizadeva, da bi preteklo ponižanje odpravila z agresivnimi dejanji, s katerimi si prizadeva za prestiž. Tako želi ponovno potrditi svojo moč in status, da bi izbrisala preteklo ponižanje in dosegla prestiž tudi na račun drugih. Vse to je raziskal na primeru treh držav in dosegel zanimive ugotovitve. Ena izmed teh držav je tudi Ruska federacija in njena zgodovina skozi čas. Ali gre za prizadevanja, da spet postane velika in mogočna država na račun drugih ter doseže prestiž na račun Ukrajincev?

Kako primerjati moč in učinkovitost vojaške moči posameznih držav in pri tem raziskovati načine, kako vzpostaviti ravnovesje med njimi, je tema raziskovanja **William Lipperta**. Poti in metodologije so na preizkušnji prav v Ukrajini in na nekaterih konfliktnih lokacijah. Nove izkušnje usmerjajo k razmisleku o drugačnih vidikih vzpostavljanja ravnovesja. Avtor svoj predlog predstavlja v prispevku *Vojaško uravnovešanje za prihodnje sporazume o konvencionalnih silah v Evropi*.

V času praznovanja različnih obletnic v zavezništvu smo spremljali začetek in konec vojne v Afganistanu. Morda bo naslednjo obletnico zaznamovalo prenehanje vojnih aktivnosti v Ukrajini, ki ne bo posledica dolgotrajnih vojaških izčrpanj, temveč bo to zmaga razsodnosti, človekoljubja, demokracije, inteligence in političnih ter diplomatskih sposobnosti.

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Liliana Brožič

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## EDITORIAL

### 20 YEARS IN THE ALLIANCE

#### Introduction

In the run-up to the informal meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Prague on 30-31 May 2024, the NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, expressed his satisfaction that it would be in the same city where it was agreed in 2002 that the Alliance would invite seven new members to join its ranks (NATO, 2024). Slovenia was one of them; in 2004, we joined the Alliance along with Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia. Two months later, we also became a member of the European Union. This year, several countries have cause for celebration, but also for increased concern for their security. The countries on the eastern wing of the Alliance are close to a war zone. Alongside the anniversaries at which we rejoice, there are also those that are unacceptable from the point of view of cultural, legal and democratic values. This certainly includes the second anniversary of the war in Ukraine, which is a major test for all of us as to what our values are, how firmly we are committed to our goals and to our mutual agreements, and to what extent and in what way we are prepared to implement them. Anniversaries and their commemorations can be seen as a protocol event and a social occasion, but in the case of NATO, it is a very important international political and security organization, a key actor in the international security environment. What this means for the country and its development in the field of defence and security can be seen from the articles published in the thematic issues of Contemporary Military Challenges every five years over the last twenty years. The purpose of the comparative analysis based on these contributions is to provide a summary of the content of each author's research over time, with a focus on their understanding and the lessons they have learned and gained during this period.

## 1 ANNIVERSARIES AS MILESTONES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS

The fifth anniversary of our joining the Alliance, in 2009, which was also very much marked by the fifth anniversary of our joining the European Union, had a very different meaning for the relatively new Member States than for those who were founding members of NATO (Jelušič, 2009). The various authors noted that we as a country had learned a great deal during the first five-year period, had adapted and further integrated ourselves into various international activities, and had gained valuable experience in them. An overview of the development of the Alliance from its inception to its 60th anniversary (Jazbec, 2009) and Slovenia's path to membership (Bebler, 2009), was followed by an analysis of the experience in defence planning (Šavc, 2009), the international aspect of securing Alliance funding (Giegerich, 2009) and the integration of the Slovenian Armed Forces into international military structures (Humar et al. 2009). Due attention was paid to the transformational challenges (Šteiner, 2009), the activities of the international community in Afghanistan (Grizold and Zupančič, 2009) and in the field of intelligence and security (Črnčec, 2009), and networking capabilities (Svete and Jankovič, 2009). The enthusiasm, motivation, satisfaction, and pride of being part of an important international security organization were recognized in the contributions. The thematic issue at that time was of great interest to the countries in South-Eastern Europe which were embarking on a path to the Alliance following in the footsteps of the Republic of Slovenia, which were very interested in the lessons learned, recommendations and warnings (Brožič, 2014).

On the occasion of the Alliance's tenth anniversary, the authors' contributions focused on the changes in the international security environment and in the Alliance itself (Lampret and Novak, 2014), on the political (Jazbec, 2014) and military aspects (Osterman, 2014), on the intelligence and security aspects of the Alliance's activities (Črnčec and Urbanč, 2014), on the preparations for the Alliance's withdrawal from Afghanistan (Selan, 2014), and on the cyber defence of the Alliance's activities (Dvoršak, 2014). A change in the undertone of the writing can be detected in the contributions. The authors shared with the readers not only the perspective of lessons learned but the attempt to find future solutions within the Alliance. The initial enthusiasm, satisfaction and pride were replaced by professionalism, experience, and awareness of the complexity of burden sharing. The role of a mentor country to other aspiring countries became more pronounced and responsible.

On the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Republic of Slovenia in the Alliance, the thematic issue was very much marked by the consequences of the global financial crisis, which were still present in the defence sector in our country despite the fact that we were already in 2019. Its consequences were felt most acutely in the low allocation we had given to defence expenditure. The range of authors in the previous issue dedicated to the Alliance was very diverse, and included views on Slovenia's membership from the perspective of foreign authors from other Member States. Changes in international politics, and thus in the sphere of international

security, had had a significant impact on the Alliance and its Member States, and consequently on the European Union and its Common Foreign and Security Policy. The Alliance, as so many times before, had come back together and strengthened its ranks with new Member States reacting differently to the changed security trends (Rutar, 2019), and in Slovenia we had been evaluating our membership and the mutual satisfaction that had resulted from it (Lampret and Grilj, 2019). The security situation had changed, especially for members bordering the Russian Federation (Veebel and Ploom, 2019; Falkowski, 2019). As a consequence, the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) had also faced new challenges (Osterman, 2019), and had been strengthened by past experience and become even more professional over the years (Šteiner, 2019). A comparative study between the projection of the costs that a country incurred for its defence as a member of the Alliance and in the event of not being a member was published. NATO membership was cheaper for Slovenia than it would be to provide its own defence without it (Furlan and Barjaktarević, 2019). The view of the fifteenth anniversary was marked by a focus on the underfunding of the state, which was allocating insufficient resources to defence expenditure, thus weakening not only national but also international security and, consequently, the Alliance as a whole (Čehovin and Grayston, 2019), including from the point of view of those who wanted membership (Kožljak, 2019).

Unlike in the thematic issue of 2014, the authors' contributions were more realistic, critical and honest about the security situation and defence capabilities of the world, the Alliance and at the national level. There was a greater awareness of what the Alliance and its members needed and what was still required to make it more effective. As many times before, the fact that the Republic of Slovenia needed to spend more on its defence in order to be able to contribute to the Alliance as promised at the NATO Summit in Wales in 2014 was highlighted.

## 2 A LOOK AHEAD

Since 2019, Slovenia has gradually started to increase its share of defence spending, which was 1.23% of GDP in 2021, 1.33% of GDP two years later and will reach 1.36% of GDP in 2025. The proportion of defence spending allocated to research, development and innovation has also been increased. This was 0.2% in 2021, 1.5% two years later and will reach 2.4% in 2025. In this way, we want to contribute constructively to the increased activities of the Alliance and the European Union towards the greater common security and defence capabilities that we need.

In this thematic issue dedicated to the twentieth anniversary of the Republic of Slovenia's membership of NATO, **Andrej Benedejčič**, in his article *Putin's dilemma: Russia and the Slavic dimension of NATO enlargement*, reflects on some of the aspects of Slavicness, from the perspective of history and today, which may be less obvious but nevertheless are permanently present in the culture and politics of the Slavic countries, with an emphasis on Russia.

In his in-depth analysis *NATO@75 – The future of the Atlantic Alliance in tumultuous times*, **Fritz Rademacher** examines the phenomenon of the Alliance's success in the face of the turbulence in the international security environment and the constant changes it is undergoing. What is the key that binds together the Member States in all their diversity and the transformational activities of individual countries and the Alliance as a whole? This is the central question to which the author seeks an answer.

The title of **Igor Kotnik**'s contribution is *20 years of the Republic of Slovenia in NATO: some impressions about a tiny part and the whole*. It focuses on Slovenia's experience in NATO's so far, the changing security environment and NATO's role in it, and the path of the Republic of Slovenia within the Alliance, with an emphasis on the instruments of national power. He says that we need to be honest about these issues in order to improve. Will that be enough, or will we have to do more?

**Hanna Samir Kassab**'s paper *Prestige, humiliation and saving face: national identity and great power politics* begins with the premise that the more powerful a state is, the more it can seek to redress past humiliation through aggressive prestige-seeking actions. The state seeks to reaffirm its power and status in order to erase past humiliation and achieve prestige at the expense of others. He explores this through the example of three countries and comes to some interesting conclusions. One of these countries is the Russian Federation and its history through time. Is it making an effort to become a great and powerful country again at the expense of others, to achieve prestige at the expense of the Ukrainians?

How to compare the strength and effectiveness of each country's military power and, in doing so, explore ways of striking a balance between them, is the subject of **William Lippert**'s research. Existing pathways and methodologies are being tested in Ukraine and in some other conflict locations. New experience suggests a reflection on different aspects of striking a balance. The author presents his proposal in the paper *Military balancing for future conventional arms control agreements in Europe*.

During the various anniversaries of the Alliance, we have watched the beginning and the end of the war in Afghanistan. Perhaps the next anniversary will be marked by the cessation of hostilities in Ukraine, not as a result of prolonged military attrition, but as a triumph of reason, of philanthropy, of democracy, of intelligence and of political and diplomatic skills.

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Andrej Benedejčič

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## PUTINOVA DILEMA: RUSIJA IN SLOVANSKA DIMENZIJA NATOVE ŠIRITVE

## PUTIN'S DILEMMA: RUSSIA AND THE SLAVIC DIMENSION OF NATO ENLARGEMENT

**Povzetek** Morebitna naorožitev slovanstva je slabo raziskana tematika v literaturi o hibridnem vojskovanju kljub slovanski dimenziji zveze Nato po nekaj krogih širitve. Deloma gre za posledico tradicionalno zadržanega odnosa ruskih oblasti do slovanske ideje, ki je v nasprotju z idealizirano nadnacionalno naravo Rusije in lahko spodbudi domači etnični populizem. Čeprav Moskva do zdaj še ni posegla po tem orodju, zgodovinske izkušnje kažejo, da bi kaj takega lahko storila kdaj pozneje, če bi bil pod vprašajem njen obstoj. Instrumentalizacija slovanske identitete zato zahteva pozornost, pri čemer ne le kot grozeča nevarnost, temveč tudi kot mogoč katalizator sprememb na ruski strani.

**Ključne besede** *Hibridno vojskovanje, slovanstvo, Nato, širitev, Rusija.*

**Abstract** The potential weaponization of Slavdom is a poorly researched topic in the literature on hybrid warfare, despite the Slavic dimension of NATO after several rounds of enlargement. Part of the reason is the traditionally reserved attitude of Russian authorities to the Slavic idea, which runs counter to the idealized supranational character of Russia and can incite domestic ethnic populism. Even though Moscow has not used this instrument so far, the historical record shows that it could do so at a later stage if its very existence is at stake. The instrumentalization of Slavic identity therefore requires attention, not only as an impending threat, but also as a potential catalyst for change on the Russian side.

**Key words** *Hybrid warfare, Slavdom, NATO, enlargement, Russia.*



**Introduction** Hydra, in Greek mythology, was the gigantic snake-like monster with several heads that became one of the labours of Hercules. Once the legendary hero engaged the creature, he discovered that as soon as a head was cut off, two new ones would emerge in its place. It was only with the help of his loyal squire Iolaus, who immediately cauterized the fresh wounds, that Hercules finally prevailed – only to succumb to Hydra after all: since he had dipped his arrows into the dead beast’s venomous blood, he ended up accidentally dying from its poison.

This mythical story succinctly encapsulates the paradox of Russia’s hybrid activities since its annexation of Crimea. The spectre of a possible weaponization of Slavdom began to haunt some of the front-line NATO states early on. Estonia thus organized an exercise in 2015 which included the scenario of a separatist attempt in its north-eastern region, around the town of Narva, with the support of a neighbouring state, the fictional “Aslavia” (Salu, 2015). However, even though this bogus Slavic entity ended up launching a full-scale attack against Estonia, Moscow itself has yet to resort to such an explicit approach. In 2014, the two self-declared states in eastern Ukraine, the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Lugansk People’s Republic, drew inspiration from the Soviet era, eschewing any overt ethnic references in their public iconography (Šmíd and Šmídová, 2019, p 547). It is almost as if the Kremlin, which has been accused of behaving “in a 19th century fashion” by invading Ukraine, is wary of activating the Slavic option, which was otherwise closely associated with Russia during that historical period (Epstein, 2014).

In this sense, it is not surprising that in 2015, when the NATO Defence College published a collection of analyses entitled *NATO’s Response to Hybrid Threats*, not one of the expert contributions mentioned the potential Slavic aspect of Russian hybrid activities (Lasconjarias and Larsen, 2015). This was despite the fact that by then the Alliance had already acquired a Slavic dimension of its own, through several previous rounds of enlargement. However, while seemingly paradoxical, Moscow’s reluctance to engage in identity politics reflects the historically ambiguous approach of Russian authorities to the Slavic idea, which has been mostly perceived as potentially subversive – although not always. It is these exceptions to the rule that warrant a consideration of the potential of Slavdom for hybrid warfare. This article therefore makes a contribution to the field by identifying the possible challenge of Slavic-themed influence operations and the trigger points that could lead Russia to use the option, with a view to undermining stability in the Euro-Atlantic area.<sup>1</sup> It also explains the reasons behind Moscow’s cautious approach to such a possibility so far, and highlights why Slavism is perceived as a double-edged sword that could also turn around to haunt the Kremlin itself.

<sup>1</sup> According to NATO’s new Strategic Concept: “The Russian Federation is the most significant and direct threat to Allies’ security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. It seeks to establish spheres of influence and direct control through coercion, subversion, aggression and annexation. It uses conventional, cyber and hybrid means against us and our partners” (NATO, 2022).



## 1 SLAVIC NATO

Alfred Rambaud, the respected French expert on the Slavic world, once said that “the Slavs occupied a greater place in the geography of Europe than in the history of Europe” (Waskovich, 1962, p 84). It seems that this also extends to the process of NATO enlargement. Even though it has been analysed at length and sometimes even subjected to extensive criticism, NATO’s Slavic dimension has never really been highlighted. This is despite the fact that it was precisely the events in the Slavic-speaking world that made the post-Cold War rounds of expansion possible in the first place. Russian *perestroika* and the consequent dissolution of the Warsaw Pact created a new reality on the ground in Central and Eastern Europe. It was the conflict in the territory of former Yugoslavia that led NATO to engage for the first time in an out-of-area operation. The annexation of Crimea and subsequent Russian aggression against Ukraine has also had a profound impact on the Alliance.

The enlargement rounds of 1999, 2004, 2009, 2017 and 2020 brought a total of eight Slavic countries into NATO. This new dimension of the Alliance is all the more relevant today, almost four decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall. As it can be seen in Figure 1 (see page 120), altogether there are thirteen Slavic countries in Europe, including the Russian Federation, which geographically extend from the Adriatic and the Baltic Seas in the West to the Pacific Ocean in the East, covering more than one eighth of the Earth’s surface. Table 1 shows that the Slavs number almost 300 million, with nearly a third of them now members of NATO and the European Union, while the remainder represent the bulk of the Euro-Atlantic neighbourhood.

**Table 1:**  
Basic data  
on Slavic  
countries  
(The World  
Factbook,  
2024)

COUNTRY	EU	NATO	AREA (km <sup>2</sup> )	POPULATION
Belarus			207,600	9,383,853
Bosnia and Herzegovina			51,187	3,807,764
Bulgaria	✓	✓	110,879	6,827,736
Croatia	✓	✓	56,594	4,169,239
Czechia	✓	✓	78,867	10,706,242
Montenegro		✓	13,812	602,445
North Macedonia		✓	25,713	2,133,410
Poland	✓	✓	312,685	37,991,766
Russian Federation			17,098,242	141,698,923
Serbia			77,474	6,693,375
Slovakia	✓	✓	49,035	5,425,319
Slovenia	✓	✓	20,273	2,099,790
Ukraine			603,550	43,306,477
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18,705,911</b>	<b>274,846,339</b>

Attention to the possible implications of this development was initially limited to academic circles. In 1993, a Slovenian linguist, Milan Dolgan, published a Declaration on Mutual Language-Cultural Awareness among Slavic Countries, Nations and Minorities. He based his initiative on the following assessment:

We live in a time of intra-Slavic confrontation. We do not accept the leading position of Russia and the Russian language. The most at odds with each other are the neighbouring Slavic peoples: Czechs and Slovaks, Russians and Ukrainians, Bulgarians and Macedonians, Slovenes and other Yugoslavs, Serbs and Croats, etc. A savage fratricidal Slavic war is going on. Terrible devastation is taking place in the political, economic and spiritual (cultural) spheres, as well as in private life (Dolgan, 1993, p 193).

Despite this prescient analysis, the appeal fell on deaf ears. It seems as if, due to the disappearance of the Soviet Bloc and the desire to join Western institutions, there was uneasiness in the general public in referring to all things Slavic. This, at least, was the assessment of the then Czech President, Vaclav Klaus (1995), when addressing the School of Slavonic and East European Studies in London on the occasion of its 90th anniversary:

To proclaim openly one's affinity to Slavism was always a symptom of having an alternative, substitute political programme (Ersatzprogramm) to civic freedom, to political democracy, to Czech patriotism, to our pro-European orientation, etc. The adjective "Slavic" does not deserve it, but its fate has been rather complicated. At least in our part of the world. So, to summarize, I like being a Slav but I feel being a Slav more as an object of inquiry than being a Slav as a subject of history.

And yet, the question of agency remains, partly due to the developments in the largest of the Slavic countries, the Russian Federation.

## 2 NEW (OLD) RUSSIA

The establishment of Russian identity after the collapse of the Soviet Union was a complex process. This was not only due to the confusion following the loss of the superpower status in which the Russians played the role of a "master nation". The Russian Federation is a quarter smaller than the Soviet Union, but territorially still the largest country in the world. More importantly, the proportion of the ethnic Russian population in the territory controlled by Moscow rose from 50% to over 80% (Rupnik, 1999, p 194). In comparison with the Soviet Union, therefore, today's Russia is a relatively homogeneous entity. The dilemmas triggered by this new fact were most clearly evident in the uncertainties and debates over Russian national symbols.

The consensus that ultimately prevailed among the elite emphasized the focus on great power continuity, which is particularly evident every year on May 9, at the beginning of the traditional Victory Day military parade in Red Square. The event, reinstated in 1996, begins with a procession of standard-bearers before the honour tribune at Lenin's Mausoleum, carrying in succession the modern Russian tricolour and the battle flag of the 150th Infantry Division of the former Red Army, which was hoisted over the German Reichstag in Berlin in the final operation of World War II (Godzimirski, 2008, p 21). All of this runs to the sounds of the Preobrazhensky March, the elite military formation of former Imperial Russia.

It therefore seems that not only official Moscow but also the broader population draws direct parallels between the situation of today's Russian Federation after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the position of former Imperial Russia in the period following the painful defeat in the Crimean War in 1856. Renowned Russian historian Radzinsky (2007, p 7) even dubbed this part of the 19th century as the "first Russian *perestroika*". It is perhaps for this reason that such importance is attributed in official Russian foreign policy circles to Prince Alexander Mikhailovich Gorchakov, the legendary Foreign Minister during the reign of Tsar Alexander II, known in Russian diplomatic history for his call for the systematic restoration of the country's international status as a great power, and his associated statement: "They say that Russia is angry. No, Russia is not angry. It is pulling itself together" (Trenin, 2007, p 64).

Such shaping of national identity and drawing of inspiration from a specific historical period automatically raises questions about Moscow's attitude towards some prevailing themes of that time. Among these, Slavic identity stands out, as it was one of the central domestic and foreign policy issues of Imperial Russia in the 19th century, especially in the form of "Pan-Slavism", which represented a convenient response to the Russian dilemma after the Crimean War, seeing in relations and cooperation with the European Slavs not only the possibility of compensating for defeat, but also ensuring an appropriate response to the challenge posed to the Russian side by the emerging great national states of the West (Hosking, 1997, p 368). In this sense, the Slavic idea, through the activities of influential Slavic committees in many Russian cities, and with the unprecedented mobilization of public opinion in support of Serbian and Bulgarian insurgents in the Balkans, was also an undeniable catalyst for the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 (Tuminez, 2000, p 79; Stone, 2006, p 131). The question that poses itself is, therefore, will Russia play this card again?

### 3 HYBRID HORIZONS

Hybrid challenges to security appeared on the Euro-Atlantic horizons in 2014 with the Russian annexation of Crimea and intervention in eastern Ukraine. At that time, they were defined by the former NATO Deputy Secretary-General, Alexander Vershbow, as "combining military intimidation, disguised intervention, the covert supply of weapons and weapon systems, economic blackmail, diplomatic duplicity and media

manipulation, with outright disinformation” (Topychkanov, 2015). The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, which was established in 2017 in Helsinki under the auspices of the European Union and NATO, treats them as “a wide array of harmful activities with different goals, ranging from influence operations and interference all the way to hybrid warfare” (Hybrid CoE, 2024). Nonetheless, many analysts caution that despite the attractive name, the concept of hybrid operations is not fundamentally new. The legendary Chinese general and strategist Sun Tzu (2004, pp 31, 37) emphasized as early as the 6th century BC that “all warfare is based on deception” and that “supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy’s resistance without fighting”.

The conclusion that during the hybrid era the focus of multi-layered operations lies precisely in influencing target populations is also something that General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, emphasized in his well-known paper of 2013.<sup>2</sup> His analysis of the causes, course and consequences of the Arab Spring led him to the following conclusion:

The very “rules of war” have changed. The role of nonmilitary means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness. The focus of applied methods of conflict has altered in the direction of the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other nonmilitary measures – applied in coordination with the protest potential of the population (Gerasimov, 2013).

This immediately raises the question of whether Slavic identity is also one of these “nonmilitary measures”, which Moscow could utilize with the aim of exploiting its “protest potential”. The issue is all the more pertinent as the Russian side, with actions such as the sabotage of an ammunition depot in the Czech Republic in 2014, the use of nerve agent Novichok against arms dealer Emilian Gebrev in Bulgaria in 2015 and its former agent Sergei Skripal in the United Kingdom in 2018, as well as a similar attempt on the life of political dissident Alexei Navalny in 2020, has already shown its readiness to go to the extremes. Commenting on these events in the light of the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis and the subsequent cooling of relations between the West and Russia, Galeotti (2021) stated:

Since then, a Russian leadership convinced it is fighting an underground yet existential struggle for its country’s place in the world and true sovereignty, has adopted a wartime mentality, willing to take risks, accept tactical defeats and bear the burdens of sanctions and censure alike in the name of the struggle.

The situation thus raises the possibility that, due to this heightened sense of vulnerability, the Russian side will also resort to appeals to Slavic unity and

<sup>2</sup> Some have even named this approach after him, styling it the “Gerasimov Doctrine”. However, his article actually represents the Russian interpretation of the modern Western way of war (Galeotti, 2018).

weaponize them, in the same way it has weaponized information in the new hybrid Cold War reality (Waltzman, 2017, pp 3-4).

#### 4 PUTIN'S CRITERION

Ironically, the Russian President Vladimir Putin has already addressed the issue in December 2014, during his annual press conference. At that time, he received a rather direct question from a participant, who first stated that the sanctions and hostility of certain countries towards Russia are one thing, whereas “it is frustrating that Slavic nations that we always considered friendly have joined in” (Kremlin, 2014). He therefore asked: “Do you think Slavic nations . . . could establish some sort of a friendly union, not necessarily even a formal alliance?” Putin responded to the provocative inquiry as follows:

As for the Slavic countries, you probably know that they operate in a tough economic environment, and are consequently subject to a lot of pressure. Even the Russian economy is influenced by the foreign economic landscape, and to a certain extent, by sanctions, let alone those small countries. They are highly dependent and face many challenges in ensuring their sovereignty. However, I strongly believe that deep down, there is an aspiration among Slavic nations to preserve cultural and spiritual, if not political, unity. This aspiration is still there and will always be there, it cannot be uprooted (Kremlin, 2014).

This answer is interesting for a number of reasons, as it contains not only a principled recognition of intra-Slavic kinship, but also a clear demonstration of confidence in Russian uniqueness: on one side “those small countries”, and on the other, Russia. The former are not only “dependent”, but barely maintain their “sovereignty”, while for Russia, international economic trends and sanctions are primarily a matter of cognizance, as it is immune to pressures. On one side, therefore, are weak principalities; on the other, a powerful tsardom. However, in the end, Putin does acknowledge their “cultural and spiritual” affinity, which cannot be denied and cannot be eradicated, although primarily because of the peoples themselves and despite their state formations, which are apparently not even capable of real foreign policy independence.

The reason for this duality in approach is the official vision of Russian identity and mission. An important document on this topic is the article “Russia: The National Question,” which then-Prime Minister Putin published in January 2012 as part of his campaign for the presidential elections. In it, he emphasized from the outset that the issue of identity is important for Russia precisely because of its “diversity of languages, traditions, ethnicities and cultures” (Putin, 2012). According to him, historically, Russia is neither an ethnic entity nor an American melting pot, but a multinational state. This, he claims, is evidenced by ancient chroniclers, who noted that on Russian soil, some spoke “in the Slavic language”, while others spoke “in their own languages” (Putin, 2012). The stem and connecting fabric of this unique

civilization are Russian culture and the Russian people, who emerged from the fusion of various Slavic tribes. Putin specifically mentions the Polyans, Drevlyans, Novgorodians, Polotskians, Dregoviches, Severians and Buzhans. Therefore, those who seek to uproot this stem from Russia with entirely false arguments about the right of Russians to self-determination and their racial purity are actually attempting to force people to destroy their own homeland with their own hands. In this regard, Putin (2012) emphasizes the following:

I am deeply convinced that attempts to preach the idea of building a Russian “national” mono-ethnic state are contrary to our entire millennia-old history. Moreover, this is the shortest path to the destruction of the Russian people and Russian statehood, as well as any effective and sovereign statehood in our country.

According to Putin, the Russian people long ago self-identified as a multi-ethnic civilization, connected by a Russian cultural core. This means that the Russian people are primarily and above all state-forming, and their statehood derives from the very existence of Russia. Outside this context, there is no Russian identity, as evidenced most clearly by the fact that ethnic Russians have never formed enduring national diasporas in emigration. The great mission of the Russians is thus to unite and strengthen their own civilization through language, culture and universal engagement: “Such a civilizational identity is based on the preservation of Russian cultural dominance, the bearers of which are not only ethnic Russians but also all other bearers of such an identity, regardless of nationality” (Putin, 2012). In this sense, Russia has long surpassed the model of a contemporary nation-state which is in crisis, as well as the American assimilationist model, which has also failed under the pressure of multiculturalism. According to Putin, the unique Russian experience of state development must therefore be nurtured and preserved through a national policy based on civic patriotism.

## 5 SLAVDOM CRIMINALIZED

Putin’s argumentation to a large extent explains the current Russian reservations towards ethnic Slavdom, as well as the fear of Russian nationalism. As a rule, modern Slavic states and societies are predominantly mono-ethnic, with the exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina, held together by the Dayton Accords, and North Macedonia, dependent on the Ohrid Agreement. However, this contemporary Slavic ethnic principle is directly at odds with the great power ideal of the Russian elite. As a result, scepticism and suspicion towards Slavic identity and the Slavic idea in today’s Russia also extend to law enforcement agencies, such as the Russian Ministry of Justice.

In 2004, both the “Asgardian Slavic Community” and the “Slavic Community of Temples of the Wisdom of Perun” already found themselves on the official Russian list of extremist organizations (Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, 2018).



In 2006, they were followed by the “Krasnodar Orthodox Slavic Community” and in 2010 by the “Interregional Social Movement Slavic Union” and the “Primorsky Regional Social Organization for Human Rights – Union of Slavs”. Given that the “Group Jamat of Muvahids” was only banned in 2007 as the first Muslim organization, it means that in contemporary Russia, an individual is almost more likely to be suspected of extremism if they are interested in Slavdom than in Islam.<sup>3</sup>

While the Russian authorities pre-emptively targeted organizations emphasizing Slavic identity, their crackdown on Russian-oriented associations was no less thorough. According to the Russian Ministry of Justice, the first one to be banned was the “Assembly of the Kuban Land and the Spiritual-Tribal State of Rus” in 2006. It was followed by “Russian National Unity” in 2009, and the “National Socialist Workers’ Party of Russia” and the “Army of People’s Will” in 2010. The “National Socialist Initiative of the City of Cherepovets”, the “Spiritual-Tribal State of Rus”, the “Russian All-National Union” and the “Movement against Illegal Immigration” followed in 2011. The turn of “Blood and Honour” and the “Northern Brotherhood” came in 2012, while the “Patriotic Club of the White Cross” was blacklisted in 2015. The “Ethnopolitical Association Russians”, the “Russian National Association Attack” and the “All-Russian Political Party Freedom” were banned in 2016, with the “Autonomous Organization of Youth Education Northern Boundary” following in 2017. The “National Bolshevik Party,” which is essentially nationalist, was already sanctioned in 2007.

In light of these measures, it seems as if the biggest threat to Russia comes from – the Russians themselves. As Ransel and Shallcross (2005, p 3) pointed out: “In the Russian context, with its emphasis on the supremacy of the state and dynasty (or Party), the type of ethnic and linguistic nationalism that had developed in the West could not but seem subversive, even when used to mobilize ethnic Russians themselves”. Due to this fear that identity politics could have on their citizens, Russian authorities vigilantly monitor activities of political parties. National-oriented ones are subject to special treatment, usually a combination of carrot and stick. A good example is the story of the “Motherland” party and its leader, Dmitry Rogozin. In 2003, it received over 9% of votes in the State Duma elections, which means that 5.5 million voters identified with its “national-patriotic” platform. As a result, Rogozin even became the Deputy Speaker of the Russian parliament. In light of his increasing popularity and the fact that the party had become the second-largest in the country, the Kremlin intervened just before the local elections to the influential Moscow City Council in 2005 and banned “Motherland” from participating, ostensibly because of the chauvinistic nature of its anti-immigrant television commercials (Jack, 2004, p 327).

<sup>3</sup> This also explains the story of a young female student who was charged in 2012 with publicly promoting Nazi iconography simply because she had been carrying a plastic bag with the depiction of the ancient, swastika-like Slavic symbol of “kolovrat” (Korol, 2013). This was not an isolated incident, as similar legal proceedings were also started in other cases.

Rogozin was later co-opted and sent to Brussels as the Russian Ambassador to NATO. However, even there, he ultimately proved to be an annoyance to the authorities, both for nationalist and Slavic reasons. In 2011, for instance, he launched the idea of establishing Slavic military units in the Russian army, modelled on the French Foreign Legion: “Why couldn’t we create, for example, a similar ‘Slavic battalion’ of Serbs, Bulgarians and representatives of other nations – those who would like to serve in the Russian Armed Forces?” (Kostyukova, 2011) He further suggested granting Russian citizenship to the interested Kosovo Serbs and settling them in abandoned Russian villages beyond the Urals. The response was immediate, with then-President Dmitry Medvedev publicly warning – at a meeting with representatives of civil society from North Ossetia – against “nationalistic outbursts using offensive nationalist rhetoric” and emphasizing that in the Russian Federation, “where 180 nations live, this must not be allowed under any circumstances” (Samarina, 2011).

## 6 HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

Although seemingly paradoxical, this reaction is actually in line with the historical record. Contrary to the often-held misconception, Slavism as a philosophical and social phenomenon was not born in Russia, but in Central Europe (Kohn, 1961, p 323). While the kinship of Slavic peoples was already noted in the oldest Slavic chronicles, including that of Nestor of Kyivan Rus’, the first worked-out proposal of Slavic cooperation was addressed to the Russian Tsar by a Kajkavian Croat.<sup>4</sup> A Jesuit by training, who arrived in Moscow in 1659 of his own accord, Juraj Križanić hoped for Slavic unification and Church unity, which he thought would protect the smaller Slavic nations from both Germanization and Ottomanization (Benedejčič, 2016, p 1146). He therefore lobbied for the opening up of the tsarist administration to all Slavs; for the exclusion of non-Slavic merchants from Russia; for the expulsion of foreign diplomats and military advisers; and for putting an end to wars with other Slavic nations, including Poland: “Today the Turks and the Crimean Tatars wish to the Poles, while the German emperor and the Swedes wish to us – nothing better than what a wolf wishes to sheep. Still, some manipulate – us, while others – them, just as they want” (Križanić, 2003, p 239). However, his Slavic righteousness was perceived as a disruptive fundamentalism that went against the tsarist *realpolitik*. As pointed out by Rupnik (1999, p 46), Muscovite princes “fought more often with their own Slavic brothers than with traditional non-Slavic enemies; furthermore, in battles against ‘their own’, they often forged alliances with Tatar khans”. Consequently, Tsar Alexis exiled Križanić to Siberia, where he spent a full fifteen years, despite

<sup>4</sup> The reference to other Slavs is found in the opening pages of the Primary Chronicle from the early 12th century: “Among these seventy-two nations, the Slavic race is derived from the line of Japheth, since they are the Noricians, who are identical with the Slavs. Over a long period, the Slavs settled beside the Danube, where the Hungarian and Bulgarian lands now lie. From among these Slavs, (6) parties scattered throughout the country and were known by appropriate names, according to the places where they settled. Thus, some came and settled by the river Morava, and were named Moravians, while others were called Czechs. Among these same Slavs are included the White Croats, the Serbs, and the Carinthians” (Nestor, 1953, pp 52-53).



numerous pleas for clemency, leading Petrovich (1956, p 8) to conclude: "This first program of Panslavism found no fertile soil at all in the Tsar's domains."

This hard-headed and unsentimental approach was maintained by successive Russian rulers. A good case in point is Tsar Nicholas I, who witnessed the emergence of Slavophilism. This was born out of the Moscow society salons of the 1830s, and represented a response to Westernism by attempting, for the first time in Russian history, to explain the uniqueness of Russian identity. It also required addressing the question of how it differs from that of other Slavic nations. The answer was found in the claim that it is only the Russians who have managed to preserve a direct connection with genuine Slavic roots.<sup>5</sup> However, the resulting choice of name caused early Slavophiles considerable trouble with the Russian authorities. It almost seemed as if their love for genuine, Slavic Russia was taken for subversive activity. According to Desyaterik (2002, p 348), the suspicious attitude of the powers that be towards their activism was vividly demonstrated by the Tsar's own handwritten remarks in the margins of the responses of the renowned Slavophile Ivan Aksakov on the questionnaire of the Third Section of the Imperial Chancellery, that is, the Russian secret police:

Supposed concern for the imaginary oppression of Slavic tribes conceals within itself the criminal thought of rebellion against the lawful authority of neighbouring and partly allied states, and of a common union, not expected from God's grace, but from resentment, which is disastrous for Russia! . . . And I regret this, for it means mixing the punishable with the sacred.

After some thought, Tsar Nicholas I also added the following in writing: "Only God can determine what will happen in the distant future; however, if circumstances were indeed to lead to such a union, it would be the death of Russia" (Desyaterik, p 353, 2002).

In this sense it might appear strange that his son, Tsar Alexander II, is associated with the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, which was ostensibly fought on behalf of the oppressed Southern Slavs against the Ottoman Empire. In reality, the episode bears witness to the impact that public opinion can have on Russian rulers in times of reforms, in this case the Great Reforms of the 1860s. The Tsar himself was actually reluctant to start the hostilities. In fact, in his meeting with the German Ambassador in early August 1876 in Saint Petersburg, he confided to him in French that he did not wish for complications with other major European powers, only "pour les beaux yeux des Slaves", that is "for the beautiful eyes of the Slavs" (Geyer, 1987, p 69). In this he resembled his contemporary, the great Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky (1919, p 897), who wrote in his diary the following thoughts: "According to my inner, my fullest and now irresistible conviction, Russia has never had such haters,

<sup>5</sup> In 1848, one of the founders of the Slavophile movement even wrote that Czechs and Poles are lost for Slavdom, because "the German-Roman damage . . . has gnawed into their bones and brains" (Khomiakov, 1900, p 177).

enviers, calumniators and even open enemies as she will have in these Slavic tribes – just as soon as Russia has liberated them and Europe has consented to recognize their liberation!”

## 7 FUTURE PROSPECTS

Is Slavism, then, a spent concept, an incongruous Chimera, a figment of imagination?<sup>6</sup> One would be inclined to think so, were it not for the persistent ambiguity from the Russian side. The self-same Dostoyevsky (1919, pp 900-901), while railing against the “narrowness”, “obstinacy”, “bad habits” and “betrayal” of smaller Slavic nations, also stated that Russia is still obliged to protect them, “perhaps, occasionally, even drawing her sword in their defence”. Why? Because it is only thus that Russia can live for a loftier purpose. In other words, according to Dostoyevsky, Russia must remain pro-Slavic primarily for its own good, for its higher mission, its all-human purpose, which, according to him, is also the essence of the Russian idea. It is therefore not unimportant that even though he publicly dismissed the other Slavs as belonging to weak statelets, President Putin nonetheless emphasized their cultural closeness with Russians, which “will always be there and cannot be uprooted” (Kremlin, 2014).

These mixed messages are important, especially in the light of the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine, which has opened up a number of dilemmas. In addition to sanctions, a significant part of the Western response to Moscow’s actions has been the adoption of a number of deterrent and defensive measures. In practice this means that soldiers from all the Slavic members of NATO are present in multinational commands and battle groups on the Alliance’s eastern flank.<sup>7</sup> To be sure, this is not the first time that the Russian side has been directly confronted by soldiers from other Slavic nations. Poles represented a good sixth of Napoleon’s Grande Armée, which marched towards Moscow in 1812, and several thousand Slovenes were also directly involved in the campaign as members of the Illyrian Regiment (Gieysztor et al., 1982, p 338; Švajncer, 1992, p 73). A similar situation occurred at the outbreak of World War I, when the Russian side in Galicia faced representatives from practically all the Slavic nations of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A quarter of a century later, both Tiso’s Slovakia and Pavelić’s Croatia were militarily engaged against the Soviet Union, the latter with a reinforced regiment.

The World War II episode is especially instructive. Faced with a momentary existential crisis, Moscow did the unthinkable and actually publicly appealed to Slavic solidarity. In August 1941, the All-Slavic Committee was founded in

<sup>6</sup> Udovič (2011, p 47) went as far as claiming “that Slavism is passé and that its relevance in the today’s world is obsolete”.

<sup>7</sup> In 2023, soldiers from Czechia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia were stationed as part of the multinational NATO battle group in Latvia. Czech soldiers were also stationed in Lithuania, while Croatians joined Poles in Poland, where they monitor the vulnerable one hundred kilometre stretch between the Kaliningrad Oblast and Belarus near the town of Suwałki (NATO, 2023). Bulgarians are present in Poland within NATO’s multinational command element in Bydgoszcz (NATO, 2024).

Moscow, and simultaneously, an All-Slavic Congress was organized, attended by representatives from all the Slavic nations (Benedejčič, 2021, p 155). The Committee itself was based in the building of the SovInformBureau, which was responsible for Soviet propaganda, including in the countries of occupied Europe (Hosking, 2006, p 207). As can be observed in Figure 2 (see page 120), the latter began regularly incorporating Slavic-themed posters into its mass production, with messages such as “Brother Slavs! All rise against the common enemy – fascism!” and “To arms, Slavs! – Let’s destroy the fascist oppressors!” The Committee primarily relied on communists from other Slavic countries in its work, who were actively involved in preparing its informational programmes and propaganda activities, which had a global reach. As such it represented the apotheosis of “the ideologues of the Slavic revival of the 19th century about establishing a community of Slavic nations” (Dostal, 2000, p 185). However, its existence came to an abrupt end in 1948, with the breakdown in relations between Belgrade and Moscow.<sup>8</sup>

It follows that while the Russian state as such has had a historically reserved attitude to Slavic cooperation, there are important exceptions to this rule. These are associated with periods of democratic populist reforms, and instances of severe national danger.<sup>9</sup> Otherwise, in the official circles, Slavism has been mostly regarded as a relatively dangerous and basically undesirable phenomenon, which runs contrary to the idealized supranational character of Russia and which could unleash destructive ethnic populism. And herein lies Putin’s dilemma: to resort, or not to resort to Slavism? It is therefore interesting that while in 2013 the “Slavic Corps” became the first ever Russian private military company to be unceremoniously abolished, in 2015 Russia hosted the “Slavic Brotherhood” military exercise, which brought together, for the first time at the tactical level, elite units from Russia, Belarus and Serbia, with Russian used as the language of communication (Spearin, 2018, p 44). The turning point between these two episodes – one “anti-Slavic” and the other “pro-Slavic” – was the outbreak of the crisis in and around Ukraine in 2014. In the following years, the “Slavic Brotherhood” drills became a regular occurrence, with those in 2017 even interpreted by some Western analysts as a prelude to the extensive manoeuvres “Zapad 2017”, which were supposed to threaten the Baltic states and Poland (Sukhankin, 2017). When in 2019 the exercise took place in Serbia, its participants were addressed by Brigadier General Miroslav Talić, commander of the 72nd Brigade for Special Operations of the Serbian Army, with the following

<sup>8</sup> As emphasized by Kohn (1960, p 325): “The Pan-Slav programme of a union of all Slavs into a powerful whole, shaping the political and cultural destinies of mankind, has never come near realization except in the brief period from 1945 to 1948, when for the first time in history it became part of the official ideology of a powerful government.”

<sup>9</sup> In fact, even Tsar Nicholas I, when faced with the pressure of the Crimean War, toyed for a while with the idea of activating the Slavic option. In distress, he even contemplated inciting unrest in Austria, which kept holding up part of his forces by maintaining its military presence on the Russian border. Thus, he sent the following message to his ambassador in Vienna: “It is highly likely that our victories will lead to Slav revolts in Hungary. We shall use them to threaten the heart of the Austrian Empire and force her government to accept our conditions” (Figes, 2010, pp 167-168).

words: “We are not only descendants of brothers in arms, but also brothers by blood!” (Grozni, 2019)

A Slavic “imagined community” is thus not merely an analytical construct, but an objective reality.<sup>10</sup> As already observed by editors of *Osteuropa*, a specialized German monthly on Eastern Europe, “in the many manifestations of the Slavic idea over almost two centuries, the flexibility and openness of this ideology are evident” (Sapper and Weichsel, 2009, p 6). In that sense, parallels can be drawn with Arab collective identity and the persistent tensions between pan-Arabism on the one hand and state-centric models on the other. Barnett (1996, pp 401, 404) thus highlighted that although “Arab leaders routinely paid lip service to the ideals of pan-Arabism while engaging in power-seeking behaviour”, they also understood that “pan-Arabism represents both a force to be reckoned with and a potential threat to other Arab regimes by challenging their legitimacy, sovereignty and internal stability”. This is also why “the waxing and waning of pan-Arabism has had a profound effect on military alliances in the Middle East” (Jepperson et al., 1996, p 64). In similar vein, the waxing and waning of Slavism has the potential to either threaten the stability of the Kremlin or affect the unity within Euro-Atlantic structures. It is therefore deeply symbolic that the new Slovak Prime Minister, Robert Fico, marked the second anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine by criticizing the collective West with the claim that its “only plan is to continue supporting the mutual killing of Slavs” (Fico, 2024). It was, after all, a Slovak, by the name of Ján Kollár, who in the first half of the 19th century not only formulated the very concept of “Slavic reciprocity”, but also provided a programme of action with the aim of deepening mutual cooperation (Benedejčič, 2016, p 1147).

**Conclusion** The seamless annexation of Crimea by Russia and its insidious intervention in eastern Ukraine in 2014 not only shook the international rules-based order to the core, but also led to a focus on the role of hybrid techniques in achieving military objectives. Instead of developing further its Afghanistan-acquired know-how in expeditionary warfare and becoming the hub of a global security network, NATO turned back to the basics of deterrence and defence. Yet, as the enlarged Alliance strengthened its posture on the eastern flank, the subject of its newly acquired Slavic dimension and its possible security implications was not addressed. This was despite the fact that the current confrontation between the West and Russia is in many ways an intra-Slavic one, and is therefore fraught with historical complexities that extend from episodes of interventionism to periods of collaboration.

<sup>10</sup> In the revised and expanded edition of his pioneering bestseller on the origins of nationalism, Benedict Anderson (2006, p 211) had this to say about the “geo-biography” of the book *Imagined Communities*: “In the US, which has never had a ‘quality press,’ it was scarcely noticed. The academic journals were no different. It was only in the early 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the violent breakup of Yugoslavia, and the rapid rise of identity politics on the domestic front, that this situation changed.” The success of one of today’s standard references in the study of nations and national identity was thus linked to developments in the Slavic world.

The main reason why the potential instrumentalization of Slavic identity has not been particularly highlighted in the burgeoning literature on hybrid threats is because the Russian side has not really reached for it. This is in line with the historically reserved attitude of Russian authorities to the Slavic idea, which has the Hydra-like potential of causing unpredictable consequences, including on the domestic front in Russia proper in the form of ethnic nationalism. However, it would be wrong to assume that the relatively reserved stance of Moscow with regard to Slavism will continue in the future. The fact that the Russian state has not used this instrument so far during the new crisis period with the West does not mean that it will not do so at a later stage. The historical record shows that this could happen if the Kremlin were to conclude that its very existence is at stake.

Acknowledging such a possibility is the first step to addressing it. As pointed out by Kohn (1960, p xvii), although the Slavic idea “has so far not become a political or cultural reality”, it has not only “moved many Slavic minds”, but also “enthused the Slav masses” and “become an instrument of Russian imperialism”, and as a result “preoccupied and frightened the statesmen and political observers of other nations”. It would therefore make sense for NATO to update its hybrid toolbox by openly identifying this potential challenge to its internal cohesion, with a view to having it addressed by the Allies, if necessary. This would not require reinventing the wheel, just updating the institutional memory by reaching back in history. A principled position on this issue was most clearly formulated at the Slavic Congress in Sofia in 1910 by Karel Kramář, the Czech founder of the Neo-Slav movement in Austria-Hungary: “No Slav may oppress another Slavic nation” (Benedežič, 2021, p 139). This was true then and it is true now. NATO’s International Secretariat and its Public Diplomacy Division could thus engage with the Allies by increasing awareness of Ukrainian ethnogenesis and its political history. This would go a long way towards dispelling numerous misconceptions and misunderstandings, especially among those members of the public in Slavic members of the Alliance, who tend to approach the ongoing conflict by projecting their own, language-based understanding of identity onto a country and a people, who first and foremost base their self-perception and trace back their origins to Kyivan Rus’.<sup>11</sup>

While taking into account the potential challenges of identity politics, the collective West should not only acknowledge, but also try to make use of its newly acquired Slavic dimension. After all, the original Slavic practices and traditions, unlike those of Muscovy, are in their essence deeply democratic, as evidenced by “the old city democracies of Novgorod and Pskov” (Banac, 1987, p 46). Putin, on the other hand, believes that what other Slavs lack in actual subjectivity is what the Russians

<sup>11</sup> The translator of the Slovenian edition of the acclaimed history of Ukraine, *The Gates of Europe* thus explains at the very outset to the reader that “in the Slovenian language the ethnonym Rus’ (Русь) and its variants are usually equated with the expression *Kievan Russia*” (Plokhy, 2022, p 27). This is also true of a number of other Slavic languages, and goes a long way towards highlighting a persistent gap in mutual awareness and understanding, even though a very clear distinction in form and meaning between the terms Rus’ and Russia exists in both Ukrainian and Russian.

have supposedly achieved by transcending their Slavic identity through a powerful state and a civilizational mission. In this sense, the struggle that the Ukrainians are waging today is also a battle over Putin's disparaging assessment of other Slavs. It is therefore imperative to make him not only face his dilemma but, even more importantly, to have him witness its consequences through the emergence of what the late democracy advocate Alexey Navalny envisioned as "the beautiful Russia of the future" (Noble and Petrov, 2024).

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**email:** [andrej.benedejcic@gov.si](mailto:andrej.benedejcic@gov.si)

**ORCID:** 0000-0002-9905-7423



Fritz Rademacher

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## NATO@75 – PRIHODNOST ATLANTSKEGA ZAVEZNIŠTVA V TURBULENTNIH ČASIH

## NATO@75 – THE FUTURE OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE IN TUMULTUOUS TIMES

**Povzetek** Članek poglobljeno obravnava Atlantsko zavezništvo, ki se približuje 75-letnici svojega obstoja. Analizira prevladujoče strateško okolje, v katerem Nato deluje, s številnimi tveganji ter rivalstvi, in obravnava glavne elemente Natove agende pri obvladovanju številnih sedanjih in prihodnjih izzivov evro-atlantske varnosti in obrambe. V ta namen omogoča vpogled v Natova glavna prizadevanja na področjih, kot so odvrčanje in obramba, Ukrajina, partnerstvo, širitev, čezatlantski odnosi, odpornost, ohranjanje in zaščita mednarodnega reda, ki temelji na pravilih, nastajajoče in prelomne tehnologije ter podnebne spremembe in varnost.

**Ključne besede** *Nato, evro-atlantska varnost in obramba, Rusija, Ukrajina, odpornost.*

**Abstract** This article takes an in-depth look at the Atlantic Alliance as it is approaching its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It analyses the prevalent strategic environment in which NATO operates, with its multiple risks and rivalries; and addresses the main elements on its agenda as it manages the numerous challenges to Euro-Atlantic security and defence of today and tomorrow. To this end, it offers insights into NATO's main efforts in such areas as deterrence and defence, Ukraine, partnership, enlargement, transatlantic relations, resilience, upholding and protecting the international rules-based order, emerging and disruptive technologies, and climate change and security. .

**Key words** *NATO, Euro-Atlantic security and defence, Russia, Ukraine, Resilience.*

**Introduction** At their summit meeting in Washington in July 2024, NATO Heads of State and Government will commemorate the Alliance's 75th anniversary at a critical time for Euro-Atlantic security and international peace and stability. They will reaffirm NATO's essential and enduring purpose of safeguarding the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means, and the enduring and, in the eyes of most, essential transatlantic bond. They will also, in the words of the 1999 Washington Summit Declaration on the occasion of NATO's 50th anniversary, "declare [...] our mutual commitment to defend our people, our territory and our liberty, founded on democracy, human rights and the rule of law" (Washington Summit Declaration, 1999, para. 1).

In addition, 2024 marks an important anniversary for NATO Allies. Slovenia, together with six other Allies, is celebrating the 20th anniversary of her accession to NATO, another three their 25th, and two their 15th anniversaries.

This article takes a close look at NATO's current state of affairs and analyses the Alliance's main efforts in key areas, including deterrence and defence, Ukraine, partnership, enlargement, transatlantic relations, resilience, the international rules-based order, technology, and climate change and security. It identifies the sources of the Alliance's strength and its value to its members, and offers possible pathways to ensure its continued success into the future. It is based on an in-depth review of NATO primary sources, selected key literature, and the author's own experience in the organisation.

## 1 THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Given the unpredictable state of current international affairs, undue exuberance on the occasion of the Washington summit meeting would seem out of place, for "Europe and North America stand today at a historic inflection point, between a fading era of relative stability and a volatile, dangerous age of disruption that is global in nature and broad in scope. Challenges include, but go beyond, persistent confrontation with a revanchist Russia and competition with a militarily powerful and technologically advanced China. They extend to emerging technologies that are changing the nature of competition and conflict, and digital transformations that are upending the foundations of diplomacy and defense. The scale and complexity of critical economic, environmental, technological, and human flows, as well as the dependency of many societies on such flows, have increased dramatically," as an astute observer of transatlantic affairs and respected colleague, Dan Hamilton, noted after the NATO Summit in Madrid in 2022 (Hamilton, 2022, p 141).

What characterizes this strategic environment, and what is NATO's major challenge over the next decade and perhaps beyond? As so aptly described in the report of the 2020 NATO Reflection Group (NATO 2030, 2020), it is the consolidation of the transatlantic community for an era of strategic simultaneity, in which numerous interconnected threats and challenges all face the Alliance at the same time, including

two systemic rivals, the enduring threat of terrorism, instability along the southern periphery, a dramatically changing technological landscape, numerous vexing non-state threats, and man-made as well as natural risks, including climate change or pandemics such as Covid-19.

## 2 WHAT MAKES NATO SO SUCCESSFUL?

Against this background, it is worthwhile taking a brief look at what makes NATO such a successful and unique alliance, which has stood the test of time for three-quarters of a century, and which continues to deter aggression, secure peace, and help create the conditions for prosperity. Why is it that so many nations wanted to join the Alliance, and why are there still more who aspire to membership, as demonstrated most recently by Finland and Sweden?

The fact that the Alliance remains wedded to its foundational values is probably the single most important factor in ensuring its durability. Moreover, NATO's longevity and success are rooted in its remarkable ability to adapt to an ever-changing security environment. It has been said that strategic adaptation was the means by which NATO survived, and the means by which it showed its value to its members (Johnston, 2017).

In their final analysis, the Allies continue to recognize that they are better off remaining within NATO than attempting to safeguard their freedom and security on their own.<sup>1</sup> Neither Europe nor North America, for all their strength, are powerful enough to manage the present and future threats and challenges alone, while at the same time dealing with the growing array of non-traditional issues that affect their societies. Given Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its far-reaching consequences for Euro-Atlantic and international security and stability, the fundamental purpose of NATO is more demonstrably clear today than it has been for decades, certainly since the end of the Cold War.

One could add other factors: that the Alliance remains the only transatlantic framework that brings Europe and North America together on a daily basis to address vital issues of security and defence through continuous political and military consultation, coordination, cooperation and planning; that NATO's integrated military structure is a unique tool which no other international organization or group of nations possesses; and that it manages to preserve its unity, solidarity and cohesion despite the manifold national interests at play and the occasionally harsh political differences between its members. This is and will remain the Alliance's centre of gravity and the source of its strength and credibility.

Another important element is NATO's consensus principle. This ensures that the voice of every Ally is being heard and that any agreement reached is acceptable

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<sup>1</sup> This reflects the author's own experience based on his involvement in Alliance affairs since the 1990s.

to all the Allies. It has fostered habits of cooperation whereby Allies are willing to go along with decisions that do not fully reflect their national positions because they know that there is a greater good at stake which in turn meets their respective fundamental national security interests.

### 3 STRENGTHENING DETERRENCE AND DEFENCE

Russia's unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, with its second invasion of her neighbour in February 2022, led the Alliance to underscore and re-emphasize NATO's primary task of collective defence at the Madrid and Vilnius Summit meetings in 2022 and 2023, and in its new Strategic Concept. NATO leaders recognized Russia as the "most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area" (NATO 2022 Strategic Concept, 2022, para. 8).

Strengthening the Alliance's deterrence and defence has been at the forefront of NATO's transformation and adaptation since the events of 2014. A remarkable array of political decisions was taken, ground-breaking conceptual and planning work was done on the civilian and military sides of the house, and far-reaching changes to NATO's posture were introduced at the operational level. Moreover, European Allies and Canada began to invest more in their security and defence (Defence Expenditure, 2024).

Russia's brutal assault in 2022 forced the Alliance to accelerate and intensify its adaptation efforts in terms of pace, scale and scope, in order to ensure continued credible deterrence and defence in response to a fundamentally changed Euro-Atlantic security environment.

It has also led to a fundamental and far-reaching change in the Scandinavian security environment. Within a matter of weeks, public opinion in Finland and Sweden turned from a deeply engrained, traditional preference for military non-alignment to support for the bold and truly historic step of applying for NATO membership. Their accession undoubtedly strengthens further the Alliance's deterrence and defence posture across NATO's northern and north-eastern flank, and particularly in the Baltic Sea region, not least by creating a contiguous space. Both countries are security providers and have been close partners to NATO for a long time. They are militarily and technologically advanced, and each country's regional expertise on Russia enhances NATO's understanding of northern European security challenges. The two countries' total defence concepts are models for how to build resilience in Allied societies against disruptive threats (Hamilton, 2022, Wieslander et al., 2023).

On the eve of the Madrid summit in 2022, Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas succinctly captured the security situation and what it meant for NATO's posture by stating that in the event of a Russian invasion, her country would be wiped from the map under existing NATO plans (Hankewitz, 2022). A modest forward presence at

the Eastern flank to be reinforced over time was recognized as a losing proposition in view of the horrific devastation unleashed by Russia on Ukraine (Hamilton, 2022).

As a consequence, at Madrid the Allies agreed on a new baseline for their deterrence and defence posture, including defending “every inch of Allied territory at all times” (Madrid Summit Declaration, 2022, para. 9). Hence the Allies’ commitment at Madrid and Vilnius to further strengthen NATO’s military posture, including by augmenting forward defences and the ability to reinforce any Ally coming under threat. To this end, NATO has put or is putting in place:

- A new generation of comprehensive regional and functional defence plans intended to improve the Alliance’s ability and readiness to deter and defend against any threats from anywhere;
- A larger pool of dedicated combat-capable forces at a higher level of readiness and responsiveness, while harnessing regional expertise and geographic proximity, including additional in-place combat ready forces on NATO’s Eastern flank;
- A more agile, resilient and sufficiently resourced command and control structure;
- A “Defence Production Action Plan” to help promote sustainable defence industry capacity (Vilnius Summit Communiqué, 2023, para. 39).

These far-reaching changes were underpinned by the Allied leaders’ commitment to invest at least 2% of GDP annually in defence, and their affirmation that in many cases expenditures beyond 2% would be needed in order to remedy existing shortfalls. The Allies also committed to investing at least 20% of their defence budgets on major equipment, including related R&D (Vilnius Summit Communiqué, 2023). This trend must be maintained and grown, despite the ever-present other demands on Allied countries’ budgets (Defence Expenditure, 2024).

In January 2024, the Chair of the NATO Military Committee, Admiral Rob Bauer, emphasized “the need for a warfighting transformation of NATO”, as the Alliance was entering into “an era in which anything can happen at any time” (Bauer, 2024). Militarily, the adaptation and transformation of the Alliance’s deterrence and defence posture, in particular the implementation or “executability” of NATO’s new defence plans, will require:

- More troops at higher readiness;
- Capability building and development;
- Better enablement, e.g. logistics, host nation support, military mobility, and replenishment and repositioning of stocks;
- More training and collective exercises to stress test the new plans (Bauer, 2024).

The war in Ukraine is a clear demonstration of large-scale conventional warfare remaining a mix of quality and quantity, of innovation in its means and in how it is being utilized, and of mass that continues to matter. For NATO and its Allies, this poses the double challenge of keeping the technological edge and of reconstituting

their military and defence industrial base at the same time and in a meaningful manner (Cakirozer, 2023).

In response, NATO is pursuing its Defence Production Action Plan to help promote sustainable defence industrial capacity (NATO – News, 2023b); the U.S. government published its National Defence Industrial Strategy in 2023 (U.S. DoD, 2023); the EU is intensifying its efforts in this regard; and many Allies are ramping up production and reforming their acquisition processes, including through multilateral formats, and supported by such players as the NATO Support and Procurement Agency, which has already agreed contracts worth roughly 10 billion US dollars (NATO – News, 2024a). It is key for the Allies to create economies of scale and provide clear demand signals to incentivize investment by industry by working together, while ensuring standardization, interoperability and interchangeability.

At the same time, additional momentum is required to fill long-standing capability gaps, in particular in areas such as integrated air and missile defence or long-range fires. Various multilateral projects are underway to address these issues, very prominently in the shape of the European Sky Shield Initiative which, however, has also shown the political delicacies that can surround such efforts.

Robust exercises, such as Steadfast Defender 2024 (Steadfast Defender, 2024), are an important stress test of the Alliance's ability and capacity to defend its territory and populations against attack, in particular in such areas as readiness, logistics, infrastructure, military mobility, host nation support, and doctrine, and to conduct multi-domain operations and manoeuvre warfare in large(r) formations.

The Alliance must be able to deter threats to its members from all directions and from whatever source, across all domains, while being prepared to defend all parts of NATO territory. This means not only countering challenges from Russia – which are not limited to the East, either geographically or functionally – but also addressing pressures emanating from NATO's south and south-east, as well as coping with transnational threats, and guarding against malevolent disruption of the critical functions of Allied societies.

All this requires major whole-of-government and whole-of-society efforts which go beyond the purely military, as they involve significant political, economic, diplomatic, informational, and societal resources.

#### **4 SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE, PARTNERSHIP AND ENLARGEMENT**

NATO leaders are united in their view that Russia's brutal war of aggression has shattered peace and gravely altered the Euro-Atlantic security environment; that Russia has violated the norms and principles that had contributed to a stable and predictable European security order; and that a strong, independent Ukraine is vital to the stability of the Euro-Atlantic area (Madrid Summit Declaration, 2022, Vilnius



Summit Communiqué, 2023). German Chancellor Scholz expressed the concern of many in the Alliance and beyond when he wrote recently that “[a] Russian victory in Ukraine would not only be the end of Ukraine as a free, democratic and independent state, it would also dramatically change the face of Europe. It would deal a severe blow to the liberal world order. Russia’s brutal attempt to steal territory by force could serve as a blueprint for other authoritarian leaders around the globe” (Scholz, 2024).

For these reasons and others, there is currently no alternative to continued support for Ukraine politically, economically, militarily and otherwise. At Vilnius, Allied leaders declared that they “remain[ed] steadfast in [their] commitment to further step up political and practical support to Ukraine as it continues to defend its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, and will continue [their] support for as long as it takes”. They also welcomed “the efforts of all Allies and partners engaged in providing support to Ukraine,” (Vilnius Summit Communiqué, 2023, para. 10).

NATO’s package for Ukraine at the Vilnius Summit comprised three elements: firstly, a new multi-year assistance programme to help enable the transition towards NATO standards, training and doctrine, to rebuild the security and defence sector and to cover critical needs; secondly, the establishment of a new format for crisis consultations and decision-making was offered – the NATO-Ukraine Council; lastly, NATO leaders reaffirmed that Ukraine would become a NATO member, with the requirement of a membership action plan withdrawn and with an invitation for Ukraine to join the Alliance when the Allies agreed and conditions were met (Vilnius Summit Communiqué, 2023, paras. 10-13, NATO – Opinion, 2023).

At its forthcoming Washington summit and beyond, NATO must determine the what, how, and when of its future relationship with Kyiv. For the time being, there is no fundamental shift discernible in the Alliance’s position towards Ukrainian membership of NATO (McElvoy and Chiappa, 2024). In other words, instantaneous, or almost instantaneous, accession, as in the case of Finland and Sweden, does not seem to be in the cards. This would suggest that the Alliance will continue to bring Ukraine closer to NATO and to strengthen the partnership in every way possible short of Article 5 commitments to help the country resist Russian aggression and continue with its reform efforts. In parallel, several Allies have reached or are in the process of negotiating bilateral security arrangements with Kyiv following the G7 declaration of July 2023 (Gotkowska et al., 2024). Also, the efforts of “capability coalitions” in the context of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group currently led by the United States are ongoing, with more capability areas being covered (Vincent, 2024).

Stronger ties with and support for the other aspirant countries, Moldova and Georgia in the Black Sea region and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Western Balkans, are of significant importance in order to help them and other partners withstand Russian aggression and destabilization attempts. In this sense, NATO’s partnership policies

in the Euro-Atlantic area would benefit from a sharper and more targeted focus (Kamp, 2024).

At the same time, NATO's door will remain open in accordance with Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, and there are no indications that NATO would wish to modify its long-standing policy.

## 5 TRANSATLANTIC BURDEN AND RESPONSIBILITY SHARING

A strong transatlantic bond between the North American and European Allies remains the bedrock of the Alliance. Achieving fair burden and responsibility sharing across the Atlantic has been a perennial problem for NATO, with every U.S. administration since the late fifties/early sixties voicing their concern.

Since 2014, the European Allies and Canada have begun to reverse the trend of underinvesting in their defence – a true paradigm shift following twenty-five years of shrinking budgets. Defence expenditures have increased and continue to rise across the Alliance (Defence Expenditure, 2024). This reflects the old truism that nations do react, albeit slowly, to changing security environments and consequential threat perceptions. The fact that Russia's war of aggression has actually deepened strategic dependence on the United States (Hamilton, 2022) is not a contradiction, but merely underscores the extent to which European Allies have underinvested, including by neglecting their defence industrial base.

It is another truism that significantly more needs to be done by the European Allies in this regard – out of enlightened self-interest given the security situation on the continent and beyond, and because transatlantic pressures are bound to grow. This should include Europe's (and Canada's) ability and willingness to shoulder at least half of the military burden required to deter and defend against a revisionist and belligerent Russia; to conduct crisis prevention and crisis management in Europe's vicinity; and to support the United States in safeguarding the international rules-based order, including and perhaps in particular in the Indo-Pacific (Hamilton et.al., 2022). Building European strategic responsibility, however, will be a process, not a one-time event.

An important part of the European effort will be to incentivize and realize NATO-EU synergies in capability development and infrastructure programming in such areas as strategic enablers, military mobility, and enablement. Also, continued multinational efforts in capability development by groups of Allies, together with partners where possible, to address specific regional or functional requirements are useful and increasingly important in order to build the capabilities required, which could then be used nationally, by the EU, and by NATO to bolster the deterrence and defence posture and in support of the other core functions.

## 6 ENHANCING RESILIENCE

NATO has a long history when it comes to building resilience through civil preparedness. In fact, under Article 3 of the Washington Treaty, with its obligation to develop and maintain the capacity to resist armed attacks, the Allies committed to building national resilience, which is understood by NATO as the combination of civil preparedness and military capacity. The Allies recognized that resilience in this sense depends on the Alliance's military capacity, on the state of civil preparedness of each Ally, and on the coordination and integration of the two (NATO – Topic, 2023b).

Moreover, resilience has a deterrent effect by denying the adversary the ability to achieve its objectives, or at least reducing its chances of doing so. Resilient societies have fewer vulnerabilities which could be leveraged or targeted by their enemies, and can absorb strategic shocks or withstand disruption better. Article 3 and Article 5 on collective defence are thus closely interrelated.

The sophisticated resilience ecosystem that the Alliance built and maintained during the Cold War, however, withered away in the 1990s following the epochal paradigm shift of 1989/90, it being actually one of the first peace dividends, as an astute observer remarked (Meyer-Minnemann, 2016). With the events of 2014 and 2022 and NATO's subsequent efforts to adapt to the new security environment by strengthening its deterrence and defence posture, this lacuna becomes painfully obvious.

Consequently, NATO began to lay the groundwork for a systematic and ongoing effort to improve resilience across the Alliance based on a whole-of-society approach in which all actors, civilian and military, public and private, academia, and civil society would work in synergy in order to be able to anticipate and pre-empt disruptive challenges to its critical functions, and to absorb, respond to, and recover effectively from shocks of every nature across the full spectrum of potential crises.

In 2016, baseline requirements for the Allies were defined in key areas of continuity of government, continuity of essential services, and civil support to military operations.<sup>2</sup> Civil preparedness was again recognized as being central to Allies' resilience.

As part of their Strengthened Resilience Commitment, adopted at the 2021 Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government underscored that national and collective resilience were an essential basis for credible deterrence and defence and for the effective fulfilment of the Alliance's other core tasks of crisis prevention and management and cooperative security, and were vital in safeguarding Allied societies,

<sup>2</sup> These include (1) assured continuity of government and critical government services; (2) resilient energy supplies; (3) ability to deal effectively with uncontrolled movement of people; (4) resilient food and water resources; (5) ability to deal with mass casualties; (6) resilient civil communications systems; and (7) resilient civil transportation systems.

populations, and shared values. Resilience is seen as being key to countering the use of military, political, economic, and other instruments of power by potential adversaries and malign actors to undermine the security of the Allies. While resilience is, and remains, primarily a national responsibility, it is also a collective commitment (NATO – Official Text, 2021a).

The 2022 Strategic Concept underscored the importance of resilience as being critical to NATO's three core tasks. Moreover, the Allies agreed resilience objectives which are meant to strengthen NATO and Allied countries' preparedness, and to guide the development of national goals and implementation plans (NATO 2022 Strategic Concept, 2022, Vilnius Summit Communiqué, 2023, para. 61).

NATO recognizes that the Alliance's military instrument of power now depends to a large extent on civil sector support, infrastructure, and expertise, especially in times of crisis and conflict. Consequently, NATO will continue to step up its efforts to secure and diversify supply chains; ensure the resilience of critical infrastructure in all domains and key industries; address the impact of emerging technologies; secure next-generation communications; protect technology and intellectual property; meet challenges to energy security; deal with natural hazards and other effects exacerbated by climate change; and last but not least, ensure its ability to consult, decide and act together.

All this requires comprehensive approaches, vertically and horizontally, including cooperation and coordination between international actors, the whole-of-government and society, the private sector, academia and other centres of expertise. It necessitates public communication strategies and other informational and educational efforts down to the level of the individual citizen, and also investment in resilience-building at the respective local, national and international levels, the exchange of best practices, and the regular and continuous stress testing and exercising of these mechanisms.

Most importantly, it must focus on the strengthening of the democratic resilience of an open society, for the foundation for resilience lies in the NATO Allies' shared commitment to the common values of democratic governance, individual liberty, and the rule of law. Protecting these democratic values and enhancing Allied countries' resilience are inextricably linked, and civil society plays a pivotal role in this process. Disinformation campaigns, interference in electoral processes or other efforts to undermine the credibility and legitimacy of democratic institutions and practices have a direct impact on citizens. Societal resilience begins at the level of the individual and their trust and confidence in the democratic institutions. To this end, engaging, educating and empowering them remains key, including by ensuring access to transparent, timely, accurate and verifiable information, by recognizing their role in support of national and collective defence, and by involving them in and making them a central part of national resilience and civil preparedness strategies,

as the initiatives and experiences in a number of Allied and partner countries with whole-of-society and total defence concepts have shown (Sanchez, 2021).

Resilience in such a strategic sense is also an excellent example for an area where the closest possible cooperation between NATO and the European Union is particularly valuable and necessary, given the comparative advantages the two institutions can bring to the table, with the EU having the power of regulation and NATO being a leader in standardization. On the basis of the Joint Declarations on NATO-EU Cooperation of 2016, 2018 and 2023, ever closer interaction, coordination, and intensification of information-sharing efforts have ensued in a number of key areas, including cyber security and defence, countering disinformation and other malign grey zone activities, counter-terrorism, military mobility, and fighting the Covid-19 pandemic, and increasingly on technology, climate change, the growing strategic competition, and space. Initiatives such as the Euro-Atlantic Centre for Resilience, established in Romania in 2021, which is pursuing a similar business model as the Helsinki European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, are of importance. They help build strong and vibrant ecosystems and communities of interest, benefitting their members as well as enhancing NATO-EU interaction and cooperation more broadly.

## 7 UPHOLDING THE RULES-BASED INTERNATIONAL ORDER

In their 2022 Strategic Concept, NATO leaders set out their vision of a rules-based international order very clearly, i.e. “to live in a world where sovereignty, territorial integrity, human rights and international law are respected and where each country can choose its own path, free from aggression, coercion or subversion” (NATO 2022 Strategic Concept, 2022, Preface).

Alliance Heads of State and Government have recognized that the “systemic competition” (Madrid Summit Declaration, 2022, para. 6) from assertive, authoritarian, or simply revisionist powers is posing a growing challenge to the international order. Increasingly, the actions undertaken at various levels and in different guises by these actors, state and non-state, are aimed at undermining this order and the liberal and open societies which support it. Russia’s unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine is but one example.

The strategic competition with Russia and China, both materially and ideologically, will stay at the top of the list. Russia remains the primary military threat to NATO and Euro-Atlantic security and stability for the foreseeable future, whereas the rise of China is probably the single most consequential change in the strategic environment of NATO and the international community.

The rise of China as a defining global issue shows the complexity of the challenge for the Alliance to formulate a coherent strategy and policy. From NATO’s perspective, China is on its way to becoming one of the largest, if not the largest, economy in the

world. Beijing is an important trade and investment partner to many Allied countries and Alliance partners across the globe. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China plays an instrumental role in dealing with the important issues of our time, including global governance, international trade, or indeed climate change.

At the same time, China has embarked upon ambitious programmes in order to match her military power to her economic might, including the significant expansion of her nuclear arsenal with more warheads and a larger number of more sophisticated means of delivery. Beijing does not share the values on which liberal societies are founded, as evidenced by her actions against her ethnic and religious minorities, developments in Hong Kong, or moves towards creating the systematic surveillance of her own people. China is challenging the international rules-based order by openly threatening Taiwan, coercing neighbours in the region, and hampering freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. There is concern that unimpeded access to other parts of the global commons could also be increasingly jeopardized, in particular, space.

Furthermore, Beijing is acquiring, building, and managing critical infrastructure and strategic resources in Europe and around the world, which in itself is creating dependencies. Additionally, China is actively engaged in international organizations and bodies, with a view to attempting to shape norms, standards and regulatory frameworks to its liking (NATO – Opinion, 2021).

Allied leaders have underscored that NATO's ability to address traditional and unconventional threats in Europe is becoming intertwined with related challenges to Alliance security interests posed by China. While they stated that they were "open to constructive engagement" with Beijing, they pledged to work more closely together to address the "systemic challenges" posed by China to Euro-Atlantic security, including through enhanced shared awareness, resilience and preparedness, as well as by standing up to China's "coercive tactics and efforts to divide the Alliance" (NATO 2022 Strategic Concept, 2022, para. 14).

Allied leaders have also expressed concern over the deepening strategic partnership between China and Russia, and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut the rules-based international order; they specifically called on Beijing to act responsibly as a Permanent Member of the UNSC and refrain from providing any lethal aid to Russia (Vilnius Summit Communiqué, 2023).

While NATO remains a regional Alliance for Europe and North America, it is a – if not the – key platform on which to create convergence in responding to the security implications of China's rise, in particular where and when it affects Euro-Atlantic security and stability.

To this end, NATO will want to engage more with its partners across the globe, as this is the best way to help protect the rules-based international order and safeguard



security. The Alliance has stepped up its dialogue and cooperation with like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific, namely Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea, for instance in such areas as emerging security challenges and innovation, arms control, maritime security, space, supply chains and resilience in the case of Japan (NATO – News, 2023a), or arms control, new technologies and cyber defence with South Korea (NATO – News, 2024b).

NATO and the Allies have long recognized that their security can be directly affected by instability and conflict in their neighbourhood. Hence the considerable political and material investment in partnerships with neighbouring countries in terms of political dialogue, practical cooperation and crisis management over the past decades. As in the past, the challenges lie in the allocation of required resources, the coordination and harmonization of the Alliance, other international, and national efforts, and the partners' absorption capacity. Furthermore, such assistance efforts must be inherently part of NATO's broader bilateral plans and regional strategies, including by properly balancing Alliance interests and partner demands, not least as aspects of geopolitics and geoeconomics are increasingly becoming a factor.

## 8 PRESERVING THE TECHNOLOGICAL EDGE

We live in an era of far-reaching and disruptive technological change and advancements which are affecting our societies profoundly and comprehensively. Seen through the prism of security and defence, they can be characterized by four mutually reinforcing developments: (1) contrary to previous periods, defence is now reliant on civil developments, with the process mainly being the preserve of the private sector; (2) the reliability, availability and decreasing costs of the technologies in question; (3) the combination of technologies and their effects, which can be exponential in some areas; and (4) the drastically reduced timescales of the innovation and development cycles (NATO Science and Technology Organization, 2020, NATO Science and Technology Organization, 2023).

Emerging and disruptive technologies are changing, or have already changed, the character and the nature of warfare, and are enabling new forms of attacks – hypersonic weapons being a case in point. Critical areas include, inter alia, artificial intelligence, especially in combination with big data; quantum-based or enabled technologies; autonomous systems; bio- and nanotechnology; hypersonic systems; space; novel materials and manufacturing; energy and propulsion; and next generation communications networks (NATO – Topics, 2023a, Ricart, 2023).

Historically, NATO's superiority has been based on the Allies having the technological edge. There is a risk that without concerted efforts Allied nations and like-minded partners could be falling behind in certain key areas at a time when there is a clear 'first adopter' advantage which malign actors – state and non-state – are today already attempting to exploit, while feeling little or no inhibition to challenge or disrespect

international norms and standards in the process. NATO must redouble its efforts to help the Allies maintain their edge.

Far-reaching steps have been taken by the Alliance in recent years. Individual strategies are under development for the aforementioned priority areas as part of an integrated and comprehensive response to the challenges and opportunities these technologies pose to Allied security and defence. Examples include the AI strategy, which integrates artificial intelligence into such areas as data analytics, imagery, and cyber defence (NATO – Official Text, 2021b), and the quantum technology strategy, with its focus on sensing, imaging, precise positioning, navigation and timing, underwater detection, and cryptography (NATO – Official Text, 2024). In this context, the Allies have committed to the principles of responsible use in accordance with their values, norms and international law (NATO – Official Text, 2021b). Their collaboration and cooperation efforts take place with the support of NATO’s strong institutional base, including, *inter alia*, NATO’s Science and Technology Organization with its network of several thousand scientists and researchers and world class research institutes, the NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCIA), and NATO’s warfare development command, Allied Command Transformation (ACT), with the affiliated Centres of Excellence, to name just a few of the entities.

Important initiatives in the field of technology were agreed at NATO’s 2021 Brussels Summit and subsequent summit meetings, and include the establishment of the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA), a mechanism meant to energize transatlantic cooperation on critical technologies, promote interoperability, and harness innovation in the civilian sector by engaging with academia and the private sector, including small and medium enterprises and start-ups. DIANA consists of regional offices, hubs, test centres and accelerator sites hosted by Allies, and runs competitive industry challenges on specific defence and security issues. A second major step was the decision to set up a NATO Innovation Fund, which is open to multinational funding by Allies on an “opt-in” basis to invest in promising ventures pursuing dual-use and/or emerging and disruptive technologies in areas critical to Alliance security. As of 2023, 23 Allies are participating in the 1 billion euro venture capital fund, which will invest its funding over a 15-year period (Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom) (NATO – Topics, 2023c).

NATO’s overarching aim is to enable the Allies and the Alliance as a whole to adapt more quickly, strengthen the existing industrial base – (re)establishing it where necessary – in and across Allied countries, and bridge innovation gaps. This will require new partnerships, vertically and horizontally, additional resources, and a great deal of creativity. Ensuring and enabling interoperability, interchangeability and standardization will become ever more important in view of the pace of technological change. Internally, the orchestration and “synergizing” of the multitude of efforts



across the NATO enterprise and its ecosystems is a perennial challenge that needs to be properly managed.

## 9 COMBATING AND ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change, apart from being a truly existential global threat, is already today a crisis or threat multiplier. For NATO, there are at least three dimensions to consider. Firstly, NATO and the Allies must understand the security implications of climate change and what they mean for Alliance security and defence. Secondly, it is clear that climate change will have an impact on how NATO does business. From infrastructure to equipment, training and exercises, or logistics, NATO must look into how to adapt to these challenges. Lastly, NATO as a responsible international actor will wish to make its contribution to the goal of reducing emissions. While this is primarily the responsibility of each of the Allies, NATO is identifying best practices and should set standards.

At their 2021 Brussels Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government agreed an ambitious action plan on climate change and security (NATO Climate Change and Security Action Plan, 2021). The leaders recognized that NATO was not – nor can it be – the first responder to the challenges related to climate change, but that it has a role to play in a comprehensive response, and it must take into account the impact of climate change on Alliance security in order to fulfil all of its core tasks. They also agreed to significantly reduce the footprint of military activities and installations, without impairing personnel safety, operational effectiveness, and the Alliance's deterrence and defence posture.

The action plan consists of four strands: (1) to increase Allied awareness, inter alia through annual climate change impact assessments; (2) to adapt to climate change by incorporating the outcome of its assessments across the entire spectrum of its activities; (3) to contribute to the mitigation of climate change by developing mapping and analytical methodologies on emissions from military activities and installations; (4) to enhance outreach by strengthening exchanges with partner countries and organizations, and by increasing dialogue with civil society, academia and industry. The first reports to track the progress made, review the level of ambition, and inform the way ahead were submitted to the Madrid and subsequent NATO summit meetings (NATO Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment, 2023; NATO Climate Change and Security Action Plan – Compendium of Best Practices, 2023; NATO Greenhouse Gases Emission Mapping and Analytical Methodology, 2023).

**Conclusion** It has rightly been said that NATO's longevity and success are rooted in its remarkable ability to adapt to an ever-changing security environment while remaining wedded to its foundational values and preserving its unity, solidarity, and cohesion despite the manifold national interests at play. This is and will remain the source of its strength and credibility. In an age of uncertainty, disruption, and looming existential threat, these qualities will be severely tested, as the strain on the Alliance is bound to grow.

Yet, it is precisely this reality that leads the NATO countries, in the sober analysis of their individual national security interests, to the conclusion that the Alliance frame continues to offer the best possible way of organizing their security and defence.

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#### **Author's disclaimer:**

The views expressed in this article are his own and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of the Marshall Center, the German Government or NATO.

**email:** [fritz.rademacher@marshallcenter.org](mailto:fritz.rademacher@marshallcenter.org)



Igor Kotnik

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## 20 LET REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE V NATU: NEKATERI VTISI O KOŠČKU IN CELOTI

## 20 YEARS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA IN NATO: SOME IMPRESSIONS ABOUT A TINY PART AND THE WHOLE

**Povzetek** Pametne države z zavezništvu medsebojno krepijo sposobnost, pripravljenost, odzivnost, odpornost, vzdržljivost in povezljivost instrumentov nacionalne moči. Nato se nenehno večdimenzionalno odziva na spreminjajoče se varnostne grožnje in okoliščine delovanja, tudi s posodabljanjem in izpopolnjevanjem konceptov, načrtov in ukrepov. V zavezništvu je tudi priložnost za samorefleksijo, ne zato, da bi sodili za nazaj, temveč zato, da bi preprečili napake v prihodnosti. Iskreno moramo razpravljati o tem, zakaj smo morda drugje, kot smo si želeli biti in smo to načrtovali, hkrati pa bi lahko kljub majhnosti pogumneje uveljavljali drugačne in izvirne rešitve.

**Ključne besede** *Instrumenti nacionalne moči, majhne države, obrambne zmogljivosti, naraščanje vojske, Slovenska vojska.*

**Abstract** Smart states, through alliances, synergistically enhance the capacity, readiness, responsiveness, resilience, sustainability and interoperability of their instruments of national power. NATO is constantly continually responding in a multidimensional way to changing security threats and operational circumstances, including by updating and upgrading concepts, plans and measures. The Alliance is also an opportunity for self-reflection; not to judge in retrospect, but to prevent mistakes in the future. We need to discuss honestly why we might be elsewhere, as had been desired and planned, but at the same time, despite our small size, we could be more courageous in pursuing different and original solutions.

**Key words** *Instruments of national power, small states, defence capabilities, military build-up, Slovenian Armed Forces.*



“But in war more than in any other subject we must begin by looking at the nature of the whole; for here more than elsewhere the part and whole must always be thought of together.”

**Carl von Clausewitz**

“The trouble with most of us is that we would rather be ruined by praise than saved by criticism.”

**Norman Vincent Peale**

## Introduction

Anniversaries are not necessarily just a time of celebration, as the Dictionary of Slovene Standard Language (Fran/SSKJ, 2024) suggests, but above all a time of remembrance. They are also an opportunity to reflect on the event or happening being commemorated, and the time and processes before and after it. They invite us to reflect on what we have and have not done in the intervening time. Anniversaries, especially ‘big’ anniversaries, benevolently encourage us to reflect deeply and, if we are mature and courageous enough, to be self-critical.

It was on 29th March 2004, 20 years ago, that the Republic of Slovenia (RS) became a NATO member state. The accession of a country to any integration is accompanied by different opinions – as in a wedding, to joke a little – some aunts are absolutely delighted, others are vehemently against it, and there are a few relatives who manage to remain rational and prudent and understand that any new relationship and commitment is a tangle of positive effects and less pleasant obligations that somehow have to be balanced.

When the RS joined NATO, some of us were happy, even joyful, while a minority of others who had opposed membership were disappointed. The feelings in these two groups were exactly the opposite of those in the four years before 2004, when we supporters of membership were deeply disappointed that the RS had not joined NATO in 1999 in a group with Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Today, after two decades of membership, these two groups of people still exist, but with at least slightly changed feelings – most of the opponents have become somewhat lethargic, and many of the supporters have become less optimistic and more realistic. We have realised that NATO does not offer easy answers; still less magic solutions.

NATO membership is about firm commitments, hard work and the constant adaptation and innovation required by a changing security environment and security threats. It is a complex and intricate interaction of building blocks and the whole. Each of the parts has its own limitations and weaknesses, but at the same time influences its own dynamics and performance and that of all the others. This article will highlight and discuss some of the interesting challenges in this interplay between the RS and NATO. It is quite extensive, simply because we feel that it is maybe not too late, even for those less interested or even opposed to our membership of NATO, perhaps just to be informed in a comprehensive and one-stop-shop way with the circumstances and processes in the international community and in the Alliance which not only still, but increasingly, justify its relevance and value.



In the two decades of RS membership of NATO, our defence system and the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) have not had the opportunity to develop in a stable and predictable social environment – during this time, we have had four Presidents of State, nine Governments, nine Defence Ministers and seven Chiefs of the General Staff of the SAF, and we have been confronted by the consequences of the great financial crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic. There was too much utopian idealisation in NATO, too much self-aggrandisement by the big, which the small abused to hide behind the backs of the big; too much non-fulfilment of agreed commitments both in substance and, above all, in time; too much permissive experimentation, and not enough leading by example. Before I am accused of too pessimistic a retrospective, despite the opening quote, let me confide in you that many of the problems and side-quests of our coming of age in NATO have already been described by other authors (Čehovin, 2019; Grayston, 2019) in the previous anniversary issue of Contemporary Military Challenges on the occasion of 15 years of NATO membership. Over the past five years, however, the geopolitical and social circumstances of our defence-military maturation in NATO have not changed for the better; on the contrary, many issues have become more acute, some with a clear trend of further deterioration.

## 1 THE FOURTH TURNING AND SECURITY TRENDS

According to the “generational theory”, modern history unfolds in cycles, each of which lasts about as long as a human lifetime. Each cycle consists of four periods of about twenty years, four “socio-political seasons” – growth, maturation, entropy and rebirth. The original concept was introduced by Strauss and Howe in 1997, and updated by the latter in 2023 in a book with the meaningful title “The Fourth Turning is Here”. Western societies are therefore now supposed to be somewhere between entropy and rebirth.

It seems that we are particularly “lucky” with this fourth turn – it seems to coincide with a depression, the fourth economic phase according to the theory of the Soviet economist Kondratiev. The theory states that in addition to short and medium-term economic cycles, there is also a long-term economic cycle, lasting about 45-55 years, in which economic growth, peak, decline and depression follow one another. The previous coincidence of a depression and a fourth turning point was witnessed in the ominous 1930s.

Once again, we are living in very challenging times. The things that are important for security in the world are becoming less every day – less social stability, fewer natural resources available, less willingness to dialogue, less biodiversity, less strength of values, less common sense and so on. On the other hand, the bad things are becoming more every day – more armed conflicts, more natural disasters, more public debt, more economic differentiation and social polarisation, more organised crime, more populism and authoritarianism, more pollution, more illegal migration, more wars...

Almost all of the security threats listed above have been known before; what is new is their frequency and intensity, both of which are increasing. Security developments in our natural and social environment are increasingly complex, dynamic and unpredictable. The different dimensions of (in)security are increasingly intertwined and interdependent. This makes the provision of security an increasingly complex process which, like the Cold War, once again requires the engagement of enormous societal resources. Despite our best efforts, we are not succeeding in eliminating security risks and threats, but are at best limiting them and reducing their negative consequences.

Security threats are increasingly global. We are witnessing a massive change in the geostrategic architecture of the international community. Migration flows and pressures towards Europe are not easing, and in some segments and directions are even intensifying. The end of the war in Ukraine is not (yet) on the horizon, and its consequences are becoming more and more widespread and fatal, not only for the countries in direct conflict, but also for Europe and, gradually, more and more for the whole world. The conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis in Gaza is intensifying and threatens to spill over not only into Lebanon but also into other countries in the Middle East. The escalation of tensions in the Red Sea has already led to an attack by the US-led coalition on Houthi rebel positions in Yemen.

The international community is being further polarised by the complete deterioration of relations between Russia and the West and the intensified rivalry between China and the West. All this is further destabilising the already unstable regions of the Balkans, the South Caucasus, the Middle East, and North and Sub-Saharan Africa. Traditional security threats are being complemented and reinforced by hybrid operations and advanced technologies.<sup>1</sup>

These negative security trends represent a huge burden on the global economy, which is showing signs of serious decline. This time, it is no longer just a case of individual countries or regions in recession – for the first time, it is an economic crisis of global proportions. The combination of pandemic stresses, broken supply and production chains, economic and financial sanctions and geopolitical tensions has led to economic deglobalisation, and since modern economics is based on the assumption of constant growth, we are getting closer and closer to breaking point.

## 2 SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES TO PEACE AND SECURITY

The unipolar world under American leadership is being transformed into a multipolar one, with challengers no longer willing to abide by the existing rules but trying to impose their own and even change the nature of the game: not only by challenging

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the importance and value of space, distance and time in military operations have changed dramatically, at the strategic level due to hypersonic missiles and at the tactical level due to the plethora of drones.

the right of the strongest to the exclusive use of (military) power and force, but also by returning themselves to the foundations of “realpolitik” and the struggle for power in the international community.

As was heard at the recent BRICS meeting in South Africa, the enlargement of the grouping “strengthens the struggle for a new international order”, because “the world system is dominated by Western countries and institutions that do not serve the interests of developing countries” (MMC, 2023).<sup>2</sup> This heralds a serious departure from the institutional theory and practice of international relations that has prevailed in recent decades, according to which subjects are equal in the international community, except when they are not (to be a little facetious). This is when “realpolitik” comes into play, in which decisions are taken by individual great powers or, at best, by the so-called concert of great powers, for whom (military) force is an effective instrument of (foreign) policy.

For small states, this is always an uncertain and dangerous period. They can only reduce their vulnerability by strengthening all their instruments of national power in a timely and comprehensive manner. These are defined by the acronym DIME-FIL, which consists of the first letters of the English words for diplomacy, information, military, economy, finance, intelligence and law enforcement. In the context of a reawakened “realpolitik”, military power is particularly important, primarily as a deterrent.<sup>3</sup>

Smart states synergistically enhance the capacity, preparedness, responsiveness, resilience, sustainability and interoperability of the instruments of national power through bilateral partnerships and, above all, alliances; not only for mutual security assurances, but also because alliances make it easier to keep pace not only with modern trends in the development of the military instrument of power, but also in ensuring conceptual interoperability.

### 3 NATO'S CONCEPTUAL ADAPTATION TO CHANGING SECURITY THREATS

Every organisation is a dynamic structure, constantly changing under the influence of internal and external factors. This dynamism is inherent, but it can also be more or less stimulated and directed. The extent and intensity of organisational dynamics depend on the situational awareness, vision and ambition of the intra-organisational actors with regard to the need for the organisation to adapt to changes and challenges from the environment. Where such organisational awareness is at a high level, the

<sup>2</sup> The key to analysing such statements is the use of strategic empathy, which means being able to take into account and understand our opponent's interests and accept that they are as important to them as ours are to us.

<sup>3</sup> It is important to understand that DIME-FIL is a comprehensive concept – we should not rely on military instruments alone but orchestrate all the instruments in a balanced way.

adaptation is proactive and anticipatory, while at an even higher level the organisation seeks to shape the environment and its processes to its own desires and needs.

NATO, like any responsible organisation, continually responds to changing operational circumstances in a multidimensional manner, including by updating and upgrading concepts, plans and measures to address changing security threats as effectively as possible. The following is not a detailed presentation of the content of each of the NATO documents, but rather a general overview which seeks to present the dynamics of their development and to enable a wider audience to understand the relationships between them and their key themes.<sup>4</sup>

At the Madrid Summit in June 2022, NATO leaders approved a new Strategic Concept (NATO, 2022a), which replaced a previous one of 2010. It describes the changed security environment facing the Alliance and identifies NATO's core tasks: deterrence and defence, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security.<sup>5</sup> This is in line with its 360-degree approach against all threats and challenges across the land, air, maritime, cyber and space domains. Enhancing the resilience of member states' societies is an integral part of NATO's deterrence and defence posture.<sup>6</sup>

The dynamic strategic environment led the Alliance to agree on a new NATO Military Strategy (MS) in May 2019. It formalised a significant change to the Alliance's mindset, recognising strategic competition, and initiating a renewed approach which sets out the Alliance's military- strategic objectives and the ways and means to implement them. The Allies continue to support and implement NATO's MS with two military concepts that set the direction for NATO's continual adjustment:

- In 2020, the Allies approved the Concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area (DDA), focused on force employment to deter and defend today;
- in 2021, the Alliance agreed the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept (NWCC), offering a vision to guide the Alliance's long-term warfare development (Covington, 2023; NATO, 2021, 2022b, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Some of the documents in question are of a confidential nature, so I have drawn on four publicly available online sources to prepare my review: Berti, 2023; Covington, 2023; NATO, 2022b, 2023.

<sup>5</sup> The Strategic Concept states that Russia is the most significant and direct threat to the Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. It also states that terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, is the most direct asymmetric threat to the security of the Alliance's citizens and to international peace and prosperity (NATO, 2023a).

<sup>6</sup> Adapting and upgrading NATO concepts is an ongoing and never finished process. Thus, NSC 2022 builds on (1) the Readiness Action Plan (RAP), launched at the Wales Summit in 2014, and (2) a strengthened deterrence and defence posture, approved at the Warsaw Summit in 2016, which resulted in an enhanced Forward Presence in the eastern part of the Alliance (EFP) in 2017, when four NATO multinational battlegroups were deployed in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. At the 2018 Brussels Summit, a NATO Readiness Initiative was launched to enhance the Alliance's rapid-response capability, to bolster the Alliance's readiness, responsiveness and reinforcement to respond to threats in a 360-degree approach. It consisted of providing 30 heavy or medium manoeuvre battalions, 30 kinetic air squadrons, and 30 major naval combatants at a readiness of 30 days 'or less. These forces are being organised and trained as larger combat formations.

The DDA is a strategic redesign of the Alliance's approach to deterrence and defence that has been relied upon. As the first major redesign of Alliance deterrence and defence in the three decades since the end of the Cold War, the DDA shapes the Alliance's approach to deterrence activities<sup>7</sup> and defence operations<sup>8</sup> (Covington, 2023).

The NWCC represents a vision in support of maintaining and further developing NATO's decisive military advantage, and continually adapting the military instrument of power through to 2040. The NWCC proves NATO's dedication to a proactive and anticipatory approach to military adaptation, providing five warfare development imperatives<sup>9</sup> and putting forward an ambitious set of six decisive improvements to the military instrument of power design which aspire to out-think, out-excel, out-fight, out-pace, out-partner and out-last adversaries.

In conclusion, the 2019 NATO MS, the 2020 DDA and the 2021 NWCC provide NATO military authorities with a new baseline on which to guide the development and the use in deterrence and defence of NATO's *military instrument of power*.

This may seem self-evident and unnecessary to point out. However, it is extremely important, because in the RS even some defence experts are still reluctant to accept and apply the concept of "military instrument of power", saying that it could be perceived as too militaristic or as an exaggeration compared to the limited military capabilities of a small state like the RS. They simply do not understand the importance of conceptual interoperability in the Alliance, which we are also trying to enhance with this article. It may help to challenge such scepticism to note that Josep Borrell, in his foreword to the EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence (2022), stresses the importance of instruments of power: "The essence of what the EU did in reacting to Russia's invasion was to unite and use the full range of EU policies and levers as instruments of power" (EEAS, 2022). Sometimes, indeed, it is easier for some people to accept a concept if it is offered not only in a NATO package, but also in an EU package.

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<sup>7</sup> *Operationally in deterrence, the DDA emphasises that preventing the transition to conflict begins in peacetime, not in crisis, and it requires timely and robust, purpose-driven military deterrence activity to contest attempts by an adversary to accrue military advantages over the Alliance. Deterrence in peacetime also requires the integration of multiple instruments of power to contest destabilisation and intimidation, and to prevent its widening.*

<sup>8</sup> *Operationally in defence, the DDA holds that the employment of NATO forces in response to aggression requires the integration of mutually reinforcing, robust, multi-domain operations on an operational-strategic scale across the totality of the Alliance area.*

<sup>9</sup> *Cognitive Superiority (Understanding the operating environment and potential adversaries relative to the Alliance's own capabilities, capacities and objectives); Layered Resilience (The ability to absorb shocks and fight on, across all layers, military, civil-military and military-civilian); Influence and Power Projection (Shaping the environment positively to the Alliance's strengths, including generating options and imposing dilemmas on adversaries); Cross-Domain Command (Revitalizing and enabling commanders' ability to understand the multi-domain operating environment and to act rapidly and effectively); Integrated Multi-Domain Defence (Protecting the Alliance's integrity to decide and act against threats in any domain, regardless of their origin or nature).*

## 4 THE CONCEPTUAL INTEROPERABILITY OF THE RS WITH THE NATO

With regard to the issue of the conceptual interoperability of the RS with NATO, the situation is fortunately not as bad as one could conclude from the ending thoughts of the previous section. In fact, we are not only there, but we are co-creating these processes and outcomes in the form of concepts and other Alliance documents.

Not only that, in the past few years the RS has been in the intensive process of reviewing, updating and upgrading a large number of national defence and military documents, programmes and plans to follow the processes in the Alliance and to adequately respond to the changing security environment and rising security threats. The key basis for guiding the development and operation of the national security system, defence system and the SAF are strategic, doctrinal and planning documents.<sup>10</sup>

Among the **strategic (development and guidance) documents** are the two basic documents in the field of national security and defence, respectively:

S1) The Resolution on the National Security Strategy, last amended in September 2019;

S2) The Defence Strategy – the current version was adopted in December 2012 and an updated and upgraded version is currently under preparation. The Defence Strategy is expected to be adopted in the first half of 2024 in a “strategic triple”, together with two new documents written for the first time:

S3) The Military Strategy;

S4) The Civil Defence Strategy.

The Military Strategy is the highest military document of the country. It has been being prepared at expert level in the SAF since as early as 2021. It has been approved by the SAF Chief of General Staff, but it has not yet been adopted by the Government. It is currently being updated to reflect changes in the strategic security environment and to align it with the Civil Defence Strategy, which was prepared in 2023 and also has not yet been adopted at Government level.

**Doctrinal documents** set out the fundamental principles by which the various subsystems of the defence system operate in pursuit of national interests and objectives.

<sup>10</sup> In preparing my review of these documents, I have drawn on the working document “Hierarhija dokumentov na področju nacionalne varnosti in obrambe v Republiki Sloveniji” (Direktorat za obrambno politiko and Vuk, 2023).

D1) Military Doctrine is the highest military professional document and is the basis of the organisation and mode of operation of the SAF. It was adopted in 2006 and, as almost the oldest of the documents under consideration, it is in need of a thorough overhaul and upgrading, which is fortunately already underway. In this context, it is worth mentioning the Initial Concept for the Military Defence of the RS, which was drafted in 2022 and will certainly influence the content of the new Military Doctrine.

D2) The Doctrine of Civil Defence, adopted in 2002, as the oldest of the documents under consideration, is in need of a comprehensive overhaul, including on the basis of the new Civil Defence Strategy, which is already in the process of being adopted.

D3) The Doctrine of the Military Strategic Reserve dates from 2012 and will also be updated, probably in 2024, on the basis of more modern system solutions from the Strategic Triple and updated versions of the Military Doctrine and the Civil Defence Doctrine.

**Planning (development and guidance) documents** concretise and implement strategic guidelines by defining measures and allocating financial, human and material resources to fulfil the development objectives of improving the state's defence capacity within specified time periods.

P1) The Resolution on the General Long-Term Development and Equipping Programme of the SAF (ReGLDEPSAF) is the highest of the documents defining the long-term development of the SAF; it is amended as a rule every four years. The current ReGLDEPSAF2040 was adopted in 2023.<sup>11</sup> It will be implemented through medium-term defence programmes.

P2) The Medium-Term Defence Programme of the RS (MTDP) was adopted in 2023. It concretises the guidelines given in the ReGLDEPSAF2040 and sets the main orientations for the operation and development of the RS defence system and defence capabilities in the medium-term period; it is usually amended every two years. The MTDP constitutes an important link with the NATO defence planning process, especially in terms of planning the implementation of the NATO Capability Objective Packages for the RS.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The ReGLDEPSAF is the only one of the national defence documents which has a legal basis in the National Defence Act and (besides the Resolution on the National Security Strategy) requires a broader consensus in the form of approval in the National Assembly. The document defines the level of ambition with regard to the required level of SAF readiness.

<sup>12</sup> The MTDP also forms the basis for the preparation of national responses to the NATO and EU Capability Development Questionnaires (DPCS and EUMCQ) and for various other MoD implementation plans.



P3) The Strategic Defence Review (SDR)<sup>13</sup>, last conducted in 2016, is primarily an analytical document designed to review the adequacy of the organisation of the defence system and the suitability of its capabilities and forces.<sup>14</sup>

P4) Guidelines for the planning of operational, material and organisational preparations for the use of the armed forces are issued by the Minister of Defence to the General Staff of the SAF, as a rule on an annual basis.

Another special feature is the White Paper on Defence<sup>15</sup>, which was prepared for the first time in the RS in 2020. This is an analytical and presentational document and can serve as the basis for complementing strategic, doctrinal and planning documents.<sup>16</sup>

In parallel with the upgrading of allied and national strategic, doctrinal and planning documents, **operations military documents and plans** are also being upgraded – in NATO these are regional plans, and in the RS the SAF Response Plan, which combines crisis response measures, organisational and mobilisation development, mobilisation plans and SAF operations plans. Logically, due to the confidential nature of these documents, it is not possible to write about the details.

As you have probably already noticed, the sequence in which individual documents are produced or updated in the RS does not necessarily follow their hierarchy, which is of course not optimal. Nevertheless, it is sometimes better, or even necessary, to produce or update a document before a hierarchically higher document, rather than waiting for a favourable resolution of possible political disagreements or even blockages, which are usually more numerous and stronger in the case of hierarchically higher documents.

As proof that the MoD and the SAF are concerned that all the mutually agreed and accepted principles and development guidelines in the NATO and EU allied strategic documents are and will be adequately reflected in the national strategic defence and military documents, we offer a brief analysis of the frequency of use of individual words in the considered national and international documents (see Table 1).

<sup>13</sup> The SDR goes beyond the content of pure planning documents and has some of the (development and guidance) characteristics of strategic documents.

<sup>14</sup> A SDR is carried out in the event of major changes in the international security environment or in the event of a need to adapt the defence system to the changed circumstances; it can be the basis for changes to existing normative, strategic, doctrinal and planning documents in the field of defence.

<sup>15</sup> It showed the level of development of the defence system (military and civil defence) with related measures to improve the state of the defence capacity of the RS.

<sup>16</sup> In recent years, as security threats have intensified, countries have been moving away from White Papers to strategic development and guidance documents (for example, the FRG, which for the first time produced a National Security Strategy).



**Table 1:**  
Frequency of  
use of each  
word in the  
considered  
RS national  
and NATO  
documents  
(The table  
was prepared  
by Colonel  
Bensad  
Šiniković as  
part of the  
process of  
aligning the  
Defence  
Strategy and  
the Military  
Strategy of  
the RS.)

RS national documents					NATO documents			
NDA <sup>17</sup> 1994	DSRS <sup>18</sup> 2012	Re SNV-2 2019	Draft DSRS 2023	Draft MSRS <sup>19</sup>	NMS 2019	DDA 2020	NWCC 2021	NSC 2022
<b>Resilience</b>								
0	0	18	30	22	25	13	65	13
<b>Deterrence</b>								
1	3	6	14	32	102	22	45	31
<b>Instrument(s), Instruments of Power, Military instrument of Power</b>								
0	1	1	1	29	186	15	12	0 (tools 4x)

In the revision of all these national security, defence and military documents, we have also taken into account other relevant national documents<sup>20</sup> and all the key strategic, doctrinal and planning documents of NATO and the EU, incorporating their intent into our national documents as much as possible. In doing so, we have tried over the years to ensure, with a high degree of prudence, the highest possible degree of coherence in content. These have generally been implemented very successfully, but we face major difficulties in putting them into practice. In the following sections, we will a) discuss some of the current challenges of strengthening the defence capacity of the RS as a NATO member (Section 5), and b) present some of the national systemic and organisational specificities of the re-discovered necessity of the military force build-up process (Section 6).

## 5 THE CHALLENGES OF STRENGTHENING THE DEFENCE CAPACITY OF SLOVENIA

On our 20-year development path in NATO we have achieved a great deal, but we have also misplaced and missed some things along the way. Like any other societal process, the performance of the RS and the SAF in NATO is an oscillation. It must, therefore, be carefully monitored and steered, and efforts must be made to keep the

<sup>17</sup> National Defence Act.

<sup>18</sup> Defence Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia.

<sup>19</sup> Military Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia.

<sup>20</sup> Strategic and planning documents which are the responsibility of other ministries and also have an impact on the activities of the defence sector were also taken into account (e.g. the Resolution on the National Programme for Protection against Natural and Other Disasters; the Strategy for the Development of Slovenia; the Strategy for the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Slovenia; the Strategy for the Participation of the Republic of Slovenia in International Operations and Missions; the Strategy for Cyber Security, etc.).

oscillations in this process to a minimum and the general trend, despite occasional difficulties and setbacks, to a largely positive one. It is important to keep under review whether the development of defence capacity and military capabilities is where it should be in the light of NATO agreements and commitments, normative, development and planning documents, and geostrategic and societal realities. We need to be honest about why we might be elsewhere, not to judge in retrospect, but to prevent mistakes being made in the future. We need to remain properly vigilant and committed before we finally become accustomed to some of the inconsistencies, shortcomings and discrepancies highlighted below.

### **5.1 NATO membership – a thrust or an obstacle to the SAF's professionalism?**

In April 2002 the government of the RS decided to abolish conscription, which effectively ended in 2003, with the ambition of making the SAF fully professional by 2010. It is true that in the RS, in the years before 2003, we had considerable problems due to the rapidly growing trend of conscientious objectors. Nevertheless, it is hard not to feel that the rapid transition to an all-volunteer force was at least partly influenced by the desire to convince the Alliance of our alignment with modern military trends and standards. However, there were no immediate expectations or demands from NATO in this respect. Grayston (2019, p 164) takes a similar view, pointing out that in 2000 conscript armies were not unusual in NATO, and that “there was no particular pressure from NATO for Slovenia to develop fully professional armed forces”.

The project “Transition to a Professional Army, Complemented by a Voluntary Reserve”, abbreviated as PROVOJ, was launched in 2003 and prematurely finished at the end of 2007. According to the final report of the PROVOJ project (Ministrstvo za obrambo, 2009, p 15), the professionalisation of the SAF was to comprehensively address the issue of the creation of a professional army through the implementation of seventeen areas, or sub-projects. Those familiar with the various aspects of the transition from conscription to the volunteer forces understand that five years is really too short a time to declare the process successfully completed. It is, therefore, not surprising that the project's final report (ibid, pp 42-90) listed the following objectives as unmet:

PR3.19 – Satisfied SAF members;

N4.2 – Recruitment and selection of candidates will be carried out in such a way as to achieve the target manning levels of the SAF Standing and Reserve Forces;

N4.7 – Units manned by contract reservists will be manned by former members of the standing forces;

N5.20, PR5.19 – We will adopt agreements with other ministries and major employers on the employment of former SAF members;

PR5.6 – Ensured conditions for the replenishment of SAF units and commands with an adequate number of the personnel required;

PR5.18 – Establishment of an organisation of former SAF members;

ID 651 – Medical care;

N6.3, PR6.3 – Self-help system for family members developed and implemented;

N6.6, PR6.5 – Basic healthcare in the military health service will be provided for family members of SAF members, as feasible;

PR8.5 – The rights acquired to issue public documents/certificates, as the acquired education and qualification will be on a par with related civilian professions;

PR8.6 – Education and training acquired during courses in the SAF may be used to obtain employment when service in the SAF ends;

N11.7 – Adaptation/construction of housing units for single servicemembers according to priorities;

ID 378 – Preparation and verification of educational programmes for the attainment of standard skills for occupations;

PR13.5 – Ensured regulated state of affairs – certificates and licences awarded to all SAF personnel.

When we evaluate these aspects of military service today, we find that most of them are still insufficiently regulated. This is proof that we have still failed to provide the comprehensive conditions for an effective professional army. This is in no way the responsibility of the SAF and the MoD alone; it is also the responsibility of other ministries and Slovenian society as a whole, which has a negative impact on the position and functioning of the military organisation. In any case, we do not want this to be seen as a retrospective accusation, but above all as an incentive to complete unfinished tasks in the future.

Is then NATO membership an incentive or a hindrance to the professionalism of the SAF? Undoubtedly, membership has, at least in part, encouraged and accelerated professionalisation at both the institutional and the individual level. At the individual level, NATO membership has had a strong impact on professionalism. Conversely, at the institutional level, it has gradually become not only a hindrance but even a justification for lower ambitions, not directly but indirectly. Many understood, and still believe, that as NATO members we can lean on the Alliance without, or at least with a limited need, to be fully responsible for our own security. This is because (too) many people still refuse to understand (1) the deeper message and meaning of the

sequence of Articles 3 and 5 of The North Atlantic Treaty (1946)<sup>21</sup>, and (2) that there is hardly any independent NATO force on which to rely, as NATO is primarily a synergistic combination of the military capabilities and forces of the member states.

## 5.2 Inadequate acceptance of combat burden and risk

The professional SAF is still not a sufficiently combat-oriented military organisation, primarily focused on the development of military power and a combat ethos, alongside which its stabilisation and humanitarian potentials would be developed as a mere complement; rather it is the other way around. In the long term, this may have an extremely negative impact on the self-image of the SAF and its members, as well as on the country's defence capacity. In this context, the phenomena of marginalisation of the more combat-oriented members of the professional armed forces, and even their self-exclusion from the military organisation due to the frustrations stemming from the now three-decade-long non-involvement of SAF formations in actual combat operations, are not negligible.<sup>22</sup> The fundamental mission of any army is to provide a real military force with which a state can protect, promote and defend its national interests in times of need, when the use of other instruments of national power does not produce adequate results.

There is a strong reluctance on the part of Slovenian politics and the public to use the professional armed forces in more risky international operations and missions. They behave as if the RS had not made the transition from a conscript army, which is understandably extremely sensitive to potential casualties, to a diametrically different format of professional army. Since entry into the professional army is voluntary, and since it is not territorial in nature, but primarily expeditionary, a higher level of risk for members of the professional army is already assumed by default. We do not want to be misunderstood here; no one wants to suffer casualties. However, political and public fear of casualties should not have a negative impact on the pursuit of national interests, or on the professional military adequacy of SAF formations in international operations and missions. This marked reticence on the part of Slovenian politics and the public is also reflected in the structure of SAF equipping projects, where the procurement of more capable combat systems and platforms is persistently and firmly opposed, while equipping with non-combat and dual-use capabilities is much more acceptable.

Slovenian politics and the public must be aware that such covert civilianisation of the SAF and the prolonged prevention of the verification of the training and

<sup>21</sup> Article 3 points out that "... the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack." It is important to note that "separately" is written before "jointly", and "individual capacity" is placed before "collective capacity". But only then comes Article 5, which is devoted to the well-known and more familiar concept of collective defence.

<sup>22</sup> This can be argued on the basis of several examples of SAF members who, after leaving the standing military, found employment in foreign private military companies, as well as on the basis of their statements and the opinion of some commanders.

readiness of the professional army in real combat situations are preventing its normal development and undermining its institutional integrity. This also exposes us to the possibility of criticism that the RS does not accept an equal sharing of burdens and risks in ensuring peace, security and stability in the international community. This increases the possibility that, even if required to carry out national or collective defence in war, the SAF will not be sufficiently effective.

In this respect, honest self-observation and self-evaluation are indispensable. We need to be brutally honest in assessing our own attitude towards the Alliance – it is the only way to avoid getting ourselves into a situation in which we have a misconception of who we really are, in terms of the quantity and quality of our own military capabilities and forces, and how we are perceived by our allies. It certainly does not help if (too) many have still not internalised the fundamental principle of the Alliance: “one for all, all for one”. Indeed, it is still possible to hear, unfortunately not only from some politicians and officials, that in the event of Article 5 being activated, our declared forces will not actually leave the national territory. If they do, they will come home after completing their six-month rotation, and our obligation to the Alliance will thus be fulfilled. It is estimated that they may return earlier if they suffer losses such that our forces lose operational capability – nothing, therefore, about replacing losses and ensuring their continued operational capability on an ongoing basis, and preferably nothing about meeting our commitments to the Alliance after the first deployment, nothing about continuous re-deployment.

This is not fair at all; first it is not fair to ourselves, then it is not fair to our allies. This is because alliances are not only about benefits but also, once again, about fair burden and risk sharing. As simple as that!

It is not just about showing the flag, being a member of the Alliance and being an actor on stage, but about active and responsible participation in all allied activities and processes, in accordance with our actual capabilities and limitations. In my country, at least in the region where I come from, nobody likes those who join us in the pub only until the bill has to be paid, and then suddenly and mysteriously disappear. This is why we must never behave in the same way when it comes to the fair sharing of the burden and risk in the Alliance.

### **5.3 (Un)fulfilment of the Defence Investment Pledge**

Over the years, the RS has developed into a credible and respected ally, capable of providing peace and security in numerous peace support operations and other similar NATO missions. Unfortunately, in some aspects, notably defence expenditure and the pace of building capabilities, we are not a model worth following.

It is very likely that, in the context of the war in Ukraine, the Alliance’s future capability and force development ambitions will have to be (even) greater than before, not only in terms of scope, but also in terms of quality and the time available to build them up. The logical consequence of this is that there is likely to be (even

more) insistence on delivering on commitments with regard to defence capabilities and defence spending.

The Allies have made considerable progress in increasing defence spending, including investment in major equipment, and have taken steps to share the burden more equitably within NATO. At the Vilnius Summit in 2023, the Allies agreed on a renewed Defence Investment Pledge, committing to invest at least (!) 2% of GDP in defence, rather than just 2% as agreed at the Wales Summit in 2014. This is a minimum, on the basis of which members will be able to establish and maintain the agreed and necessary defence capabilities and forces. This is particularly true for those members who are late in meeting their agreed and accepted commitments and have not yet closed the development gap (NATO, 2024).

With 1.34% of GDP spent on defence expenditure in 2023, the RS is, according to the NATO Press Release on Defence Expenditure of NATO countries (2014-2023) (NATO, 2023b), at the tail end of the Alliance, in 26th place (out of 30 member states), and in the same position in terms of the proportion of defence expenditure on investment and R&D (just over 23% of defence expenditure). Interestingly, the RS plans to achieve 2% of GDP on defence at the latest by 2030 (!) (Resolution on the General Long-Term Development and Equipping Programme of the SAF 2040, 2023). All this, of course, has a negative impact on meeting the agreed capability targets, both from a quantitative and qualitative point of view.

Inadequate defence spending and some significant delays and postponements, mainly due to financial constraints, for example in the procurement of the 8x8 armoured platform, have not been beneficial for the professional development of the SAF. Čehovin (2019, p 83) even pointed out years ago that “Budgetary malnutrition, in combination with malfunctioning human resources management, has pushed the defence system into a spiral quest for the lowest point. By failing to fulfil its commitments on the level and structure of defence spending, Slovenia has lost much of its credibility in the Alliance ...”

#### **5.4 Defence planning – is it driven by capability goals or a whole spectrum of national security interests?**

Grayston (2019, p 165) notes that “NATO’s own approach to force planning did not help with Slovenia’s development of its defence plans. NATO’s approach to defence planning is derived from the policies and plans of its larger members. Many of the smaller NATO nations endeavour to shape their entire defence force structure around NATO requirements. However, the leading NATO nations, notably the USA, Great Britain and France, all derive their force structure plans from national defence strategies and then commit to NATO those forces they consider appropriate. This works to the disadvantage of smaller nations, sometimes producing unrealistic defence plans”.

We can agree with Grayston when he describes the defence planning methodology of the leading NATO countries. However, we cannot support his view that this methodology is not suitable for smaller states, which, in his view, should only focus on meeting agreed force targets. If this were to be the main driving force in the development of the armies of the smaller states, it would mean that we would be expecting them to act only in accordance with Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, rather than developing and acting in accordance with Article 3 at the same time. We therefore firmly believe that it is also inevitable for small states to derive their force structure plans from a national defence strategy and, before that, from the full spectrum of national security interests. Limiting military development plans to NATO capability objectives alone is short-sighted and potentially dangerous, not only for the national interests of any member state, but also for NATO itself. This does not mean that we believe that “the small must have everything the big have”. No, but even small NATO member states still need to develop comprehensive national military instruments of power which can support the full spectrum of national interests in the context of collective defence. They should therefore exercise prudent restraint in the development of strategic offensive military capabilities and, while developing agreed capability objectives, also focus on the development of capabilities and forces sufficient in size and sustainability for the tasks of Host Nation Support (HNS) and Safe and Secure Environment (SASE) on national territory.

Finally, we must acknowledge that in the defence planning process, both some member states and NATO as a whole are not agile enough due to organisational inertia and stubbornness. Too often we feel that changing unfulfilled plans which were probably too ambitious or simply wrong is a sign of weakness and lack of determination. In the past, this may have been true, but in today’s multi-dimensional and extremely fast-changing strategic environment, we need to understand and accept that changing plans and solutions on the fly is a sign of agility and wisdom.

## 5.5 (Mis)understanding of the limitations of all-volunteer armed forces and the Alliance

Over the past two decades, NATO has been adapting to a changing reality, driven by the rise of near-peer states and, after Russia’s occupation of Crimea in 2014 and the war in Ukraine, by the imminent challenge from the East over the boundaries of spheres of influence. At least some misunderstanding and confusion about the new reality has emerged, even in the leading member states. This is why some of the changes in NATO and in the member states over the past decade have proved to be right, and others wrong. The problem for the smaller member states is that they lack the confidence to assess which changes are fully acceptable, which are partially acceptable, and which are not suitable for copying.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> As I wrote in one of my articles (Kotnik, 2023), “Američane je treba kapirati, ne kopirati!”. This is a play on words in lower colloquial Slovene, where two key words differ by just one letter, but that completely changes their meaning. The translation is: “Americans are to be understood, not copied!” In German this could be “Amerikanen sollten kapiert werden, nicht kopiert!”.



It is an undeniable fact that the professional SAF is sufficient only as a peacetime military instrument of the RS. This does not mean, however, that it should be supplemented only by unmodernised conceptual or structural solutions along the lines of the former Territorial Defence. We are living in a new defence-military reality that allows only for the meaningful application of past and foreign experience, not for its transposition.

This does not mean, of course, that we doubt the concept of collective defence, nor do we believe unquestioningly and uncritically in its omnipotence. It is important to understand that collective defence is, by definition, merely a synergistic set of national defences. Each country must therefore be able to guarantee its own basic military security, and at the same time contribute to the collective military security of its allied and partner states. Since no state can meet this objective with a professional army alone in the event of an exceptional deterioration of the security situation in the international community, NATO member states must also put in place appropriate systemic and organisational arrangements through which, if necessary, more comprehensive military capabilities can be built up to meet potentially larger, more intense and more protracted military threats.

## 6 MILITARY FORCE BUILD-UP, A RE-DISCOVERED NECESSITY

Over the past three decades, some positive changes and trends in the international community have allowed for downsizing and change in the structure of the SAF, including the transition from a conscript to a professional army supplemented by a contractual reserve. The key milestones that provided a rational basis for the reduction of the RS's military potential were the integration into NATO and the EU. With its full membership of NATO, the RS abandoned the system of self-sufficient national defence and joined the system of collective defence, which, in the current political and security situation in the international community, remains the most appropriate mechanism for ensuring not only the military security of the RS, but also the promotion and defence of its national interests.

Although the RS will always rely to the greatest extent possible on the support and assistance of allied and friendly states in the pursuit and defence of its national interests, it must never give up an adequate degree of its own defence capacity and preparedness, and a reasonable degree of independence and autonomy in the defence and military spheres. The RS has the right to defend its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity at all times by all available means and methods consistent with the provisions of international and humanitarian law. Therefore, while strengthening the collective defence capabilities which it is building on the basis of the agreement with other NATO members and the resulting commitments, it must also maintain and develop those complementary defence concepts and doctrines which have proven, on the basis of its own and foreign experience, to be the most appropriate and effective for the military defence of spatially small countries with limited resources. This logic is literally imposed on us by history, which is full of examples of turning points



when, due to a combination of unfavourable circumstances, alliances have not yet been able to fulfil their mission, or after a while were no longer able to do so.

In conceptual terms, the downsizing and restructuring of the SAF culminated in 2010 with the abolition of the compulsory military reserve and the Military Territorial Commands (MTCs). This was a reflection of the peak of utopian idealism about transforming the military organisations of developed industrialised countries into post-modern expeditionary forces. The various fashionable concepts of stabilisation, peace enforcement, peacekeeping, peace support and the like have literally strangled the more fundamental concepts of military deterrence and military defence. In practice, all this has led to negative assessments of the SAF's combat preparedness, which the President of the Republic, as Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces, has been forced to inform us about for almost a decade now.

People are very different in their attitudes towards novelty, and can be placed on a continuum from uncritical enthusiasts to stubborn deniers of all that is new. I would describe myself as a rational sceptic, which I think is a strength rather than a weakness for someone working in the defence-military field. This personality trait of mine is the basis for the now two-decade-long warnings that we should not move too quickly and completely to a professional army only; that the option of voluntary military service (VMS) should be retained; that the concept of the Military Strategic Reserve (MSR) should be developed; that the abolition of the MTCs was a bad decision; that at least after 2014 and the Russian annexation of Crimea, it would have made sense to build on the MSR concept with a structured force; and that the Voluntary Contract Reserve (VCR) does not offer enough choice to citizens. It is now indeed high time to internally differentiate the current single VCR into three sub-forms: 1) deployable also abroad, 2) mobile throughout the whole national territory, and 3) restricted in use to a province/region. This would of course be followed by status differences between members of the different sub-forms of the VCR, in particular the level of monetary compensation, and training standards, while armaments and military equipment would have to be uniform for the entire composition of the whole SAF.

A larger reserve force could at least partially mitigate the trend of the declining RS military potential. It is not only the number of soldiers that is being reduced, both in the standing forces and the VCR, and that the compulsory reserve is no more. It is also a matter of reducing some aspects of the quality of our soldiers – while in some competences they are quite comparable to those of allied countries, the competences of some branches are almost extinct due to the retirement of a substantial number of experienced specialists and a limited number of younger ones with adequate skills and competences. Given the unstoppable rise in the average age, it is logical that their psycho-physical fitness is deteriorating on average over the years. The combat power of the SAF is also declining, not only because of the decreasing number of soldiers and their increasing psycho-physical limitations, but also because of the decreasing availability of weapon systems, on average. Some of them are decades old and therefore difficult to maintain; some need to be upgraded; we are far behind

schedule with planned acquisitions of new ones, such as a basic armoured combat platform for battalion battle groups, not necessarily 8x8, because tracked platforms proved more useful in the war in Ukraine; and we have no plans to procure more modern weapon systems, such as armed drones and remotely operated ground-based unmanned weapon systems.

It seems as if the reduction of the military potential of the RS is fully socially acceptable – as if it has become a social norm, as if it has become embedded in the muscle memory of this state and society, as if it has completely permeated the collective mind and deprived it of the ability to think rationally and to make a realistic assessment of the geostrategic and defence-military trends and developments in the international community. I am a rational sceptic about the latter too; the tensions between the West on the one hand and Russia, China and whoever else on the other will not be short-lived, and their escalation and the spread of war in Ukraine and the Middle East is also possible. I am therefore convinced that we will have to strengthen and accelerate the growth of the military instrument of the RS's power and its military potential.

Particularly for small countries with limited resources, it is extremely difficult and risky to predict what their national security, defence and military needs will be in the somewhat more distant future. In this regard, it is important to take into account both our own and foreign experience, which shows that, particularly in the case of smaller countries or social communities, the synergistic effect of a combination of adverse circumstances can leave them relatively alone in providing military security and defending national interests at crucial historical moments. Experience shows that in such cases they can rely mainly on their own strength and abilities, as happened to the Slovenes three times in the 20th century, in 1918-1919, 1941-1945 and 1990-1991.

There is a lack of understanding in Slovenian society and politics that social developments are not linear, much less constantly improving, but are defined by oscillations and cycles. Therefore, established solutions, even if they are currently producing excellent results, must always be subject to constant evaluation and a healthy portion of scepticism, to protect us from complacency and idealistic optimism.

The Covid-19 crisis and the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, for example, have proved again and very strongly that the concept of “just-in-time logistics” in national security and defence systems is a misconception. The storage and long-term management of sufficient ammunition stockpiles has proven to be crucial to a state's ability to conduct effective deterrence and prolonged defence. We must therefore constantly maintain sufficient reserves and stockpiles of material to enable us to be rationally self-sufficient, at least for a limited period of time, and to be dependent on the support of others only to a limited extent thereafter. Much is already happening, albeit still at the conceptual and planning level, but the trend is positive, as is evidenced by the more frequent use of the term “build-up” in relevant defence-military literature and documents in recent times.

The Defence Act (1994/npb8), the SAF Service Act (2007/npb1) and the Military Service Act (2002/upb1) do not use the term “build-up”. In the Military Dictionary (2002), the term “build-up” does not exist. In the Military Doctrine (2006), “build-up” is found only once in the context under discussion. Also, in the ReGLDEP SAF 2025 (2011), the term “build-up” was not used in the above sense. The same applies to the Defence Strategy (2012)<sup>24</sup> and the Resolution on the National Security Strategy (2019). In contrast, the draft revised Defence Strategy (December 2023) uses the term “build-up” six times and the ReGLDEP SAF 2040 (March 2023) uses the term “build-up” in the sense discussed 13 times.<sup>25</sup> This is undoubtedly a direct influence of the process of writing the draft Military Strategy of the RS (2023), in which the term “build-up” is used 24 times in the context of increasing the defence power of the RS or strengthening the SAF.

On the basis of the presented data, it can be concluded that this type of use of the term “build-up” in defence-military documents is not new; it appears as early as 2006 in the Military Doctrine (2006) and the English-Slovenian Military Terminology Dictionary (Brinc et al., 2006). Although it does not appear in the Military Dictionary (Korošec et al., 2002), it is true that in the past it was rarer, probably due to the more frequent use of the phrase “increase in size and structure”. The gradual increase in usage can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2:**  
Frequency  
of use of  
the term  
“build-up”  
in defence-  
military  
documents (in  
chronological  
order)

Defence-military documents	Year of publication/ adoption	Frequency of use of the term „build-up“
Defence Act (1994/npb8)	1994	None
Military Service Act (2002/upb1)	2002	None
Military Doctrine	2006	Yes, 1x conditional
SAF Service Act (2007/npb1)	2007	None
ReGLDEP SAF 2025	2011	None
Defence Strategy of the RS	2012	None
Resolution on the National Security Strategy	2019	None
ReGLDEP SAF 2040	2023	Yes, 13x
Defence Strategy of the RS – draft revised	2023	Yes, 6x
Military Strategy of the RS – draft	2024	Yes, 24x

<sup>24</sup> The Defence Strategy mentions the increase in the size and combat power of the SAF or the defence power of the RS seven times.

<sup>25</sup> In the ReGLDEP SAF 2035 (2022), the term “escalation” was used more often, no less than 18 times.

In the Military Doctrine, “build-up” is limited only to the quantitative aspect, but according to the dictionary the term includes not only the quantitative aspect, but also the qualitative aspect. The understanding of “build-up” as an increase not only in quantity, but also in quality, is also suggested by the American definition, or its Slovene translation in the English-Slovenian Military Terminology Dictionary (Brinc et al., 2006), which does not speak only of numerosity, but also of the strength of the units, which is undoubtedly a qualitative category. A similar logic is also introduced, at least indirectly, by a proposal in the Military Strategy, which envisages that, as the peacetime composition of the SAF grows, it is gradually not only increased, but also transformed into a wartime composition, which again presupposes a qualitative change or upgrade of the SAF’s combat power, or the defence power of the RS, as the case may be.

## 7 DISCUSSION

Traditionally, defence and military affairs have always been on the side-lines in the RS, except in times of national emergency, most recently before, during and for several years after the 1991 War of Independence. In the late 1990s, we saw a decline in interest in the military, especially in the context of the growing resistance to conscription and the definitive abolition of compulsory military service in 2003. This decision was at least partly supported and justified by Slovenia’s admission to NATO in 2004. Despite the constant and direct explanation that NATO membership was only an upgrade of our deterrence, defence and security, it was misunderstood as a substitute, or even a complete replacement, for our own national defence capabilities.

Unfortunately, this kind of misperception is still present and strong, not just among the uninformed public but even within some political parties and quite a number of politicians. Thus, it is still not possible to experience the indisputable and coordinated support of political elites all around the political spectrum to defence and military developmental plans, and accordingly high enough defence spending. A Slovenian proverb says: “For a little money, a little music!” The last thing we would ever wish for in this context is for there to be no national “music” at all, for it to be deafeningly quiet when our own cannons should be thundering. In such a case, the likelihood of having to dance to someone else’s music (again) would increase enormously!

The RS needs to work not only at the level of the state, but also at the level of society as a whole, to develop concepts and plans for the transformation and build-up of peacetime to war-relevant defence and military capabilities. The specific relationship between the professional military and civil society requires special attention to be paid to the comprehensiveness of societal efforts.

Clausewitz described war in holistic terms as a paradoxical trinity comprised of the tendencies of the people, the commander and his army, and the government (Cole, 2020). It is difficult to function and develop well in an environment where the military is observed and perceived with suspicion, mostly not among the people, but

among certain political parties and politicians. Following some of Cole's arguments, one could suggest that the perception of the military as something alienated is held by those political parties and politicians who do not understand war as a rational tendency in the form of an extension of politics, but as an irrational tendency emanating primordial violence and hatred.

This kind of misunderstanding of war and the military by some political parties and politicians, which is occasionally also expressed through military-unfriendly public statements, is unlikely to have a positive impact on the already low level of interest of citizens not just in active military and reserve service, but also with regard to strengthening the overall defence capacity and the multi-layered resilience of society.

The negative security trends presented here call for a coordinated and reinforced response from as many actors in the international community as possible. This, enabling synergies, is the main objective of all alliances. Unfortunately, we are losing cohesion in NATO, which is probably the very essence of any alliance. This weakening of cohesion is not only perceptible at the strategic level, as Hungary and, more recently, Slovakia have openly expressed reservations about NATO's approach to the war in Ukraine; in addition to strategic incoherence, some member states are experiencing a further lack of coherence at the tactical level in their societies. Increasing political and economic stratification and polarisation in some member states is reducing their internal strength and resilience, which is having a negative impact on our common deterrence and defence posture.

Being in the Alliance is a privilege and a responsibility, not only in delivering on commitments and sharing burdens and risks in a balanced way, but also in self-reflection. In addition to highlighting our achievements and successes, we all need to reflect freely and unencumbered on what we are not doing optimally in the Alliance and on what we are doing wrong. In this respect, the small countries could be more vocal and, above all, more heard, if we were, of course, consistent in delivering on the agreed commitments and more balanced in sharing the burdens and risks in the Alliance.

In NATO, while the member states are formally equal, in reality there are of course major differences in terms of actual influence – small members tend to follow the big ones, both conceptually and in action. In this respect, it would be useful, at least occasionally, if there was more courage to assert more forcefully the different and original solutions of the small member states. The causes of our problems and too many of our side-traps are not, as a rule, outside us, even if we like to put ourselves in the role of victim. After 20 years, it really is time to take responsibility for our own actions and our own destiny – honest self-evaluation is required, not self-pity.

Whatever our size, we need to learn from each other and from all of us together – we are not unique as small countries, but in some ways, we are really in a different position. Slovenia, for example, should be more ambitious and confident in developing

some non-kinetic niche capabilities that are game changers, such as intelligence capabilities, artificial intelligence, STRATCOM, PSYOPS, EW and CYBER. As a small member state with limited resources, we are still expected to strike painfully if necessary. This does not mean hitting very hard, but rather unexpectedly striking from an inconspicuous direction, hitting where it hurts the most. However, we need to be balanced in our approach, so the “old-fashioned” kinetic capabilities and forces are still absolutely necessary.

In terms of the development of SAF capabilities and forces, two centres of gravity seem logical for the future: (1) the implementation of capabilities goals, with a clear priority for the two battalions, medium and combat reconnaissance; and (2) the establishment of a structural and organisational framework capable of 2a) carrying out the build-up process from a peacetime to a wartime size and structure of the SAF, including 2b) additional capacity to perform/enable compulsory military service in the event of such a political decision, initially preferably in a selective rather than a generalised form. In the event of a further deterioration in the security situation and an escalation of military threats, it is obvious that on the one hand we need a highly professional force to fight on the eastern periphery of the Euro-Atlantic area, and on the other hand an additional non-deployable force of significant numbers, mainly to perform host nation support (HNS) and safe and secure environment (SASE) tasks.

The latter is of paramount importance to prevent, contain and suppress a) terrorist threats, b) illegal mass migration, c) extremely violent organised crime, and d) unconstitutional and unlawful civil unrest and insurgencies that could escalate in our strategic depth and support the strategic objectives of our enemies. Protracted war is about multi-layered resilience and maintaining the will of societies to fight, and we must prevent enemies from penetrating our physical and cognitive space. In this respect, non-deployable territorial forces are as important as state-of-the-art frontline combat capabilities.

NATO is not without its limitations and mistakes, but it is nevertheless an irreplaceable catalyst of defence-military processes for all member states, especially small ones. It really is easier and more effective to face extremely dangerous security challenges not individually or one by one, but together. This does not mean that we will tackle the same type of threat with less input from each individual, but that with the sum of the correspondingly large individual inputs, we will tackle the same type of threat (1) sooner, (2) with less risk of failure, (3) with less cost due to fewer losses, and (4) with less time spent. The initial surplus of forces is therefore not an unnecessary expense, but means that we will be left with more unspent forces after the conflict, which will then be a more effective basis for starting a new build-up process to deal with the next threat.

**Conclusion** Deterrence, defence, resilience, sustainability and interoperability are still not given the attention they deserve in the media, the public and in part of politics in the RS, despite the very clear negative security trends presented at the outset. It is as if we are



permeated with utopian idealisation and the hope that we are so small that somehow all this will pass us by, or jump over or overlook us. If anything, it will touch us only very slightly and very lightly. It is as if the concept of AI is at work, not in the sense of Artificial Intelligence, but in the sense of Arrogance and Ignorance.

Taking informed, prudent and timely decisions, including the less popular and unpopular ones, is key to managing national security risks. However, there is always a high price to pay for failing to take the necessary national security and defence-military response measures. Those political actors in the RS who, despite the general unpredictability of developments in the international community, the growing rivalry between the major players and the extreme escalation of military threats in Eastern Europe, are still opposed to investing in the development of Slovenia's defence capacity and military capabilities, and thus to strengthening them, can be considered to be completely lost in time and space. Having one's own state is not only a privilege and a prestige, but first and foremost a responsibility, not only economic and social, but above all a national security responsibility, especially at crucial historical junctures.

In recent years, much has been missed in the area of defence and military preparations and preparedness, due to the excessive optimism that pervades. We have not made sufficient use of the period of peace and stability in Europe. The developments in Ukraine will make up for what has been missed in a shorter time and under less optimal conditions. In particular, it will be necessary to accelerate the strengthening of the RS military instrument of power and the capacity, preparedness, readiness, sustainability and interoperability of its military capabilities, including the ability to build them up.

We in NATO need to prepare for an uncertain future, each member state for itself and all of us together. Member states must take care of their own military and defence capacity as much as possible, and first, and on this basis, NATO encourages, directs and coordinates all of us together in collective deterrence and defence efforts to maximise the common good. Some still cannot understand or refuse to accept this. To return to the joke in the introduction, on the 20th anniversary of our "marriage" there are still too many sceptical aunts among us who are still vehemently against this relationship. Twenty years ago, I carefully weighed up the arguments for and against NATO membership and concluded that there were many more positive aspects and effects. A similar weighing-up now leads me to the same conclusion.

However, I must confess that I personally expected the path in the Alliance to be easier, less winding, more level, less slippery, constantly inspiring and less (self-) limiting. In the process of managing such frustrations and disappointments, I often recall the key paraphrased message from JFK's famous Moon speech: "We are walking this path not because it is easy, but because it is hard". Walking this challenging path in NATO is not too difficult, at least for me, because we are walking it primarily for ourselves; but if it is ever hard, it is mainly because of us!

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email: [igor.kotnik@mors.si](mailto:igor.kotnik@mors.si)



Hanna Samir Kassab

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## PRESTIŽ, PONIŽANJE IN OHRANJANJE OBRAZA: NACIONALNA IDENTITETA IN POLITIKA VELIKIH SIL

## PRESTIGE, HUMILIATION AND SAVING FACE: NATIONAL IDENTITY AND GREAT POWER POLITICS

**Povzetek** Članek zagovarja tezo, da je dinamika prestiža in ponižanja sila na sistemski ravni, ki oblikuje vedenje držav. Če psihološki dejavnik povežemo s strukturnim realizmom, ugotovimo, da močnejša, kot je država, bolj si lahko prizadeva, da bi preteklo ponižanje odpravila z agresivnimi dejanji, s katerimi si prizadeva za prestiž. Tako želi ponovno potrditi svojo moč in status, da bi izbrisala preteklo ponižanje in dosegla prestiž tudi na račun drugih. Obravnavani bodo trije zgodovinski primeri: izbris versajske pogodbe s strani nacistične Nemčije, kitajsko stoletje ponižanja in širitev Severnoatlantske zveze v Vzhodno Evropo proti Rusiji. V prispevku bo nato opredeljeno vedenje, ki omogoča tekmeču, da ohrani prestiž in se izogne ponižanju kot način za deeskalacijo napetosti.

**Ključne besede** *Teorija, varnost, vojna, konflikt, konstruktivizem.*

**Abstract** This paper argues that a prestige-humiliation dynamic is a systems-level force that shapes state behavior. Connecting psychological factors to structural realism, we observe the following: the more powerful a state becomes, the more it could seek to overturn past humiliation through aggressive prestige-seeking acts. This is done to reassert its power and status to erase past humiliation and achieve prestige even at the expense of others. Three historical examples will be discussed: Nazi Germany's erasure of the Treaty of Versailles, China's Century of Humiliation, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's expansion into Eastern Europe against Russia. The paper will then define face-saving behavior, allowing a competitor to preserve prestige and avoid humiliation as a way to deescalate tension.

**Key words** *Theory, security, war, conflict, constructivism.*

**Introduction** Past national humiliation drives prestige-seeking behavior, creating the psychological mechanisms driving international systemic change. Joslyn Barnhart's article "Humiliation and Third-Party Aggression" describes increased French imperialism in Tunisia as a response to the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany. She asks the question: "Why would a state respond to territorial loss with such acts of aggression?" (p 532). She finds that states seeking to recover from humiliation are 84% more likely to become aggressive on the world stage (Ibid.). Her article is a large-n, quantitative study of the past. What of today? In a competitive international system, is it likely that state efforts to overturn past humiliation and increase national prestige serve as a central guiding principle of great power behavior? Will this be at the expense of others' prestige? This paper suggests studying the changing structure of the international system order through the psychological-motivational lens of a prestige-humiliation dynamic.

There are psychological issues which must be understood as part of states' motivations determined by systems-level forces (Hymens, 2010). The prestige-humiliation dynamic is one of these systems-level forces. This article incorporates the prestige-humiliation dynamic into structural realism, a theory of international relations that posits a systemic, rational explanation of state behavior (Waltz, 2010). To this end, we should observe the following: the more powerful a state becomes, the more it seeks to overturn past humiliation through aggressive prestige-seeking acts. This is done to reassert its power and status to achieve this prestige even at the expense of others. Hence, revisionist states seek prestige at the humiliation of status quo powers as an inherent part of state interests. Similarly, status quo states seek to protect their prestige at the humiliation of revisionist or subdued powers. Hence, building on the world of Robert Gilpin (1981), this paper submits a psychological framework simplifying the causes of systemic war.

To further observe and understand the proposed psychological dynamic, three historical examples will be discussed: the rise of Nazi Germany, China's Century of Humiliation, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's expansion into Eastern Europe against Russia (Wang, 2020; Sharafutdinova, 2020). To justify the choice, Nazi Germany's prestige-pursuing foreign policy culminated in World War II. This serves as a benchmark to describe a humiliated state's resurgence resulting in a push to eradicate past misdeeds in an international system. As Nazi Germany grew in power (and Great Britain and the west declined), it demanded to be recognized as a great power, tossing aside the source of its humiliation: the Treaty of Versailles. This case serves as a standard to compare challenger behavior (China and Russia) within the contemporary international system.

China and Russia provide more contemporaneous examples, showing that similar patterns of the behavior that defined Nazi Germany's experience are being repeated. As China and Russia increase in power, they will attempt to overturn past humiliation through prestige-seeking acts. China is pursuing this strategy as it attempts to push for dominance in the South China Sea and regain Taiwan, overturning its "Century

of Humiliation” and regaining its rightful place in the world (Wang, 2020; Hussaini, 2020; Mayer, 2018). Russia has successfully annexed Crimea in an attempt to stop further encroachment into its sphere of influence by the Europeans and the United States (Sharafutdinova, 2020). Scholars must then try to reconceive international relations theory by underscoring psychological components that are explicitly tied to the systems level of analysis.

## 1 HIGHLIGHTING STATUS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

Structural realism submits that the anarchical international system produces state competition (Waltz, 2010). International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power; not simply for the sake of power alone, but for power to control outcomes that serve state interests (Morgenthau 1985). Kenneth Waltz (2010), the founder of structural realism, borrows from Stanley Hoffman’s understanding of a system: “...a pattern of relations among the basic units of world politics” (1961, p 90). Hoffman here is referring to behavior between states. Waltz builds on this further by arguing that it is the structure of the system that drives state behavior (Waltz, 2010, p 81).

The international structure is determined by the distribution of capabilities across states, specifically the great powers of the era. Great powers balance against one another through military power or alliances forming the structure of the international system. States need to defend their position in the system through power to achieve security. Remaining secure is part of a state’s interest in terms of survival as an independent political unit. In other words, defending interests as determined by power is necessary for national security and maintaining autonomy in a system without government (Wolfers, 1952).

Structural realists tend to focus on material military capabilities, specifically the “size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence” (Waltz, 2010, p 131), as the main components of systems-level analysis. The distribution of capabilities, along with anarchy and security-seeking behavior, form the structure of the international system. Competence stands out from the rest because it has to do with the quality of leadership rather than something material that can be counted, such as the number of fighter jets, tanks, and soldiers. However, there is a psychological systems-level component missing which forms the main contribution of this paper: status.

Part of state behavior is the need or desire of states to defend or increase status. Status is not evenly distributed throughout the system. It is also not defined in a vacuum, but in contrast with competitors (Dafoe et al., 2014). It is not simply to see yourself as great; others must recognize your greatness and treat you with the respect you think you deserve. Any violation of this may result in an insult to your status and possibly lead to humiliation (Ginges and Atran, 2008). These are psychological factors, and whether the system’s structure is unipolar, bipolar, or multipolar, psychological factors shape human reason and action. Human reason and action then produce state

behavior (Kahneman, 2011, p 139). These calculations are an inherent part of the international system.

Further, states do not just compare their relative power (Grieco, 1988), but also their relative status (Dafoe et al., 2014). From this, one might recognize there is a psychological and emotional need for states to be recognized for greatness, something the state and its citizens can 'feel good' about. So, even though status is an essential part of systems-level calculations, as a psychological factor it is ignored by structural realism due to its so-called irrational and immaterial characteristics.

Status has more to do with identification and cannot be measured objectively, but only through studying narratives and the perceptions of those narratives by the subject and others. The self-esteem of a nation is thus crucial, as it shapes the behavior of a state. Entire state or national belief systems exist that construct this identity which is inherently tied to self-esteem (O'Neill, 2006). To attack or alter self-esteem is an attack on the state itself (Chwe, 2003). Psychologically speaking, then, states seek to defend their status by overturning any humiliation or slight and, in doing so, they defend their prestigious status (Frevert and Bresnahanm 2020; Fontanm 2006; Ginges and Atran, 2008). These are emotional and cognitive functions that help form the international system.

Emotions are often omitted from international relations theory, specifically structural realism, due to the need to remain simplistic (Kahler, 1998). This is because they assume rationality, which posits that actors defend interests and an order of preferences (Golman et al., 2017). Others may add complexity to the theory to add nuance and sophistication. So, while a reasonable starting point, materialist theories like structural realism may benefit from adding layers of cognitive analysis to accurately hypothesize on the current world order. This article intends to do this through an emotional/psychological analysis of great power status.

Structural realism argues that states behave rationally to achieve security in a self-help system (Waltz, 2010). Emotions are seen as dichotomous to rationality, interrupting the coherent process of rationality in the decision-making process (Mercer, 2005). In neuroscience, it is argued that emotions actually play a crucial role in the formulation of rationality and thus decision-making (Damasio, 2005; 1999). Human emotion can be reduced to two states: positive, pleasant feelings such as joy and exuberance; and negative emotions like anger, sadness, and fear (Shaver et al., 1987). Emotions are produced in the brain and help manage the thinking process by determining "...the deployment of attentional resources, systemic mobilization, approach and defensive behaviors, and the formation of conditioned associations fundamental to the survival of individuals" (Lang and Davis, 2006, p 4). Decision-making is thus a subjective process, a result of specific experiences and an understanding of history and politics. Consequently, decision-making is "...influenced by cultural ideas and images, and refracted through roles and relationships" (Hochschild, 2009, p 30). Given the physical processes of the human mind, it cannot make decisions independent of

emotions. An individual may perceive or understand the world based on emotions rather than a purely scientific explanation. This perception includes comprehension of oneself and others, of one's own national identity, and that of others. States behave similarly, as they are governed by the international system's determination of status. Therefore, the role of humiliation and prestige in world politics is as feelings that undergird the understanding of self and other.

Humiliation is a feeling, a "...deep dysphoric feeling associated with being, or perceiving oneself as being, unjustly degraded, ridiculed, or put down—in particular, one's identity has been demeaned or devalued" (Hartling and Luchetta, 1999, p 264). This particular definition is a deeply personal one, focusing solely on a specific negative experience of one person. A deep experience may impact one's personality permanently, as the humiliation may alter the person's identity (Hymans, 2006). It is also possible for humiliation to be suffered across a population. This is very similar to trauma. Trauma may also be shared by an entire group of people (Fierke, 2007). Like national trauma, humiliation may take on a national dimension if an insult is leveled at the nation, the state itself, or some part of national identity (Masterson, 2020, p 23).

Humiliations and losses are based on the perceptions and understandings of identity (Frevert and Bresnahan, 2020). This means that calculations of power may not exactly be materialist in nature, as Waltz (2010) suggested, but rather must take on a cognitive sense. As a result, any calculation is subject to the misperception of a state's actual, material power (Jervis, 2017). The result could be disastrous, as states may take any perceived weakness as an opportunity to declare war (Wohlforth, 2010; Jervis, 2017). This could be particularly dangerous in a hypothetical multipolar order, as states (whether status quo or revisionist) may attack either to gain or regain lost prestige or to humiliate/avoid humiliation (Wirth, 2020).

National humiliation may stem from an event such as a major defeat so intense that it led to a lowering of state status (Barnhart, 2017, p 536). In other words, the loss or insult harms prestige. Examples of national humiliation could be an embarrassing loss to a weaker state or non-state actor (the United States in Vietnam/Afghanistan), loss of influence (loss of Russian influence and NATO expansion into Eastern Europe), or loss of sovereignty (China's Century of Humiliation). One seeks to humiliate to gain prestige, which is associated with revenge attempts. Thus, states seek to avoid humiliation by increasing prestige and, in a zero-sum world, humiliating others. Research suggests that humiliation may drive conflict. For instance, Barnhart (2017) argues that "states—and great powers in particular—are more likely to engage in status-seeking acts, such as territorial aggression against weaker states, when they have experienced a humiliating event in which they fail to live up to international expectations" (p 533).

From this, we can borrow from Robert Gilpin's definition of prestige, which has everything to do with power and feeling powerful. It has to do with a specific



“reputation for power and military power in particular. Whereas power refers to the economic, military, and related capabilities of a state, prestige refers primarily to the perceptions of other states concerning a state’s capacities and its ability and willingness to exercise its power ... prestige involves the credibility of a state’s power to achieve its objectives” (1981, p 31). While Gilpin may distinguish between power and prestige, it is important to note the reciprocal relationship between the two due to the notion of credibility. Credibility is the recognition of power by others, enhancing deterrence and thus security capabilities (Ibid., p 31). Powerful states with status are more likely to succeed without using force as “the bargaining among states and the outcomes of negotiations are determined principally by the relative prestige of the parties involved” (Ibid.). If a state’s power is recognized, it is more likely to succeed in diplomatic negotiation due to the threat of force (which comes from power). Thus, there is a reciprocal relationship between the two, because power feeds recognition and credibility, and recognition and credibility feed power. Power and credibility are thus tied together in terms of reputation, and therefore status.

National humiliation is a negative emotion that states seek to avoid. Humiliation from weakness brings reductions in status and further perceptions of weakness. At the opposite end of this emotional spectrum is the feeling of prestige. Prestige is primarily about high status within the international system. A great power, for instance, demands respect from others. To treat a great power like any other entity is insulting and may elicit responses, including a show of force, to garner that respect. Barnhart (2017) argues that states seeking prestige, or seeking to win back prestige from humiliation, may conduct an aggressive foreign policy (Wirth, 2020). The prestige-humiliation dynamic may also explain imperial overstretch (Kennedy, 1987), because a state may over-extend itself regardless of whether or not it has the material means to defend newly acquired territory; the state prefers to avoid being humiliated and will do whatever it takes.

States suffer from a deadly fear of losing status, so much so that they would rather continue a losing conflict, regardless of the cost, just to avoid losing (Renshon, 2015). As a consequence, great powers want to remain great powers and to be recognized as such. This is important not only for a state’s self-esteem, but also for how the state believes it should be treated by other states, “collective beliefs about a given state’s ranking on valued attributes”, which may be manifested in international politics either as membership in a “defined club of actors” or as “relative standing within such a club” (Larson et al., 2014, p 7). Without prestige, a state accepts a demotion of status. This is equated with humiliation, taking a backseat in the global order, becoming a follower, and accepting the leadership of a competitor, possibly the very state which humiliated it. In other words, prestige is about the relative position of states in the international system (Wirth, 2020). Specifically, it has to do with recognition, power, and admiration in the international system. To observe these processes, three cases will be analyzed: Nazi Germany, China, and Russia.

In summary, this paper discusses the psychological mechanisms governing humiliation and prestige as part of the competitive, self-help, anarchic international system described by structural realism (Waltz, 2010). Consequently, this study argues that cognitively preparing for the humiliation-prestige dynamic is essential to avoiding war. This contribution is particularly important because it offers a cognitive explanation of state conflict. The proposed dynamic is often ignored by scholars seeking to address state conflict, with the psychological impetus for choosing war remaining unexplained. Adapting to this systemic component must be on the agenda, especially given specific prestige-seeking behaviors. Without respect for another state's status, the chances of war become more and more real.

States that have been humiliated in the past are likely to violently strike out against others. This dynamic must be understood if the international system is to change. By understanding the centrality of the humiliation-prestige dynamic, the paper makes a recommendation: allow face-saving behavior. Allowing a competitor to preserve prestige and avoid humiliation is a way to deescalate tension and avoid conflict. Hence, the system must be able to adapt to the behavior of Russia and China. Saving face is an essential contribution which fits into the cognitive explanation provided. Thus, the importance of this study follows that understanding the impact humiliation and prestige have on state behavior could help to predict and ultimately prevent conflict.

## 2 OBSERVING THE HUMILIATION-PRESTIGE DYNAMIC

Humiliation and prestige are systems-level factors that shape state behavior. Along with the distribution of capabilities, the distribution of status across actors impacts the decisions of states in the international system. This psychological factor motivates states to behave in specific ways, that is, avoiding humiliation through acts of prestige. At times, these behaviors are disruptive, as status is relative (based on the status of others). This makes the humiliation-prestige dynamic part of a zero-sum game, as explored through the following historical studies.

After the humiliating collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States emerged as the victor. As the international system's sole superpower; the most prestigious position in the system was given to the United States (Brooks and Wohlforth, 2008). This gave it the ability to transform the international system as it saw fit (Layne 2012). Working through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international regimes and institutions, the United States was effectively able to dictate foreign policy outcomes for the rest of the world (Woods, 2007). Those states that did not fit the mold, that is, so-called rogue and Axis of Evil states, had to be deposed to fit into the vision of the new American century. Neoliberal economic foreign policy was the main objective, and China was its main target (Ikenberry, 2012).

It was thought that with increased economic transactions with China, eventually, it would transform into a democracy. However, this did not happen, and China has

grown by leaps and bounds (including in military power) since its admittance into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001.

China now has a global presence and boasts the world's largest navy, with sophisticated anti-aircraft missile defense systems (Toje, 2018). Its overall grand strategy protects the homeland (militarized artificial islands) while tying the economies of the developing and developed world through the One Belt, One Road initiative. Now, China is seeking to overturn the past humiliation referred to as the "Century of Humiliation" through disruptive acts of prestige, such as pushing into parts of the South China Sea it sees as historically its own. China is also seeking to reunify with Taiwan and, if necessary, to do so by force (Hussaini, 2020; Mayer, 2018; Thies and Nieman, 2017).

Russia is also on a path to overturn past humiliation. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Russian influence in Eastern Europe (seen as vital to its security) has been reduced by the expansion of NATO (Sharafutdinova, 2020; Mearsheimer, 2014). This all came to a head in 2014, with Ukraine seeking closer ties with the European Union. The invasion of Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea by Russia is an attempt to protect itself against further encroachment. This act was deemed an egregious violation of Ukrainian sovereignty by the United States, who preferred to protect the international political status quo from violent alterations such as this. However, the United States was unable to stop Russia from annexing Crimea.

From this analysis, it is clear that there is competition between the great powers of the international system (Brooks and Wohlforth, 2016; O'Hanlon, 2019; Haass, 2017). It is interesting to note that rising states (Russia and China) are not suddenly appearing on the scene as great powers; they remain 'resurgent' or 'rising' powers. Nevertheless, Russia and China were once great powers. From the Russian and Chinese perspectives, they suffered humiliation at the hands of western powers. The United States is perceived to have played an important part in these humiliations.

The next section will apply the humiliation-prestige dynamic to the cases of Nazi Germany, Russia, and China.

## 2.1 Nazi Germany

The creation of the German Empire was a direct threat to the British Empire (Calleo, 1978). Since the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the British Empire had acted as the world's foremost power. As the global hegemon, Britain facilitated the international economic system ushering in Pax Britannica. Under Pax Britannica, the industrial revolution boosted the economic growth of most European powers, including Germany. The more powerful Germany became, the more it sought international prestige. Germany began to increase its global presence around the world, seeking colonies in Africa and demanding a say in global governance (the Balkan and Moroccan crises). Germany was seeking to become a great power on a par with

Britain. This became even more obvious with Germany's expanding dreadnaught ambition as a naval power. Britain took this as a test of its dominance on the seas, which resulted in worsening tensions (Ibid.). Germany's prestige-seeking behavior was a direct challenge to Britain, leading to the solidification of the balance of power in Europe and World War I.

When Germany surrendered in 1918, it was under false pretenses; Germany thought it would sign an armistice among equals. What happened was what Ellis Dresel, then American Diplomat to Berlin, called betrayal: "The people had been led to believe that Germany had been unluckily beaten after a fine and clean fight...that happily President Wilson could be appealed to and would arrange a compromise peace satisfactory to Germany" (Macmillan, 2003, p 493). Many Germans, civilians and those in leadership, thought that they would be offered an honorable surrender, embracing a new world order under Wilson's 14 Points. The 14 Points of Wilson promised self-determination and a new international community dedicated to open diplomacy, with a specific commitment to democracy (Wilson, 2001, p 4). Instead, Germany was forced to sign (under threat of the bombardment of Berlin) the Treaty of Versailles.

It is interesting to note that no major German officials wanted to sign the Treaty of Versailles. No one wanted to have their name on that document. Herman Müller, one of the officials (a lower level one) who signed the treaty, describes an emotional feeling: "A cold sweat such as I had never known in my life before broke out all over my body – a physical reaction which necessarily followed the unutterable psychic strain. And now, for the first time, I knew that the worst hour of my life lay behind me" (Macmillan, 2003, p 477). This inner turmoil expresses national humiliation as the Treaty of Versailles forced the Germans to give up 65,000sq kilometers of territory and with it seven million citizens. Germany went from being one of the largest continental powers pre-1914 to one that had no real standing army. They also had to pay \$132 million in gold marks in war reparations (Bell, 1997, p 20). To have policies dictated to Germany elicited a severe response from the German people.

The Nazi Party promised a swift return to greatness; to destroy those who had humiliated them and then to dominate the world. Adolf Hitler set about overturning the humiliating Treaty of Versailles. During this time, Great Britain, France, and the United States were reeling from the Great Depression (1929). These states are also demilitarized. On the other hand, Nazi Germany was faring a bit better, and began the process of remilitarization. From the remilitarization of the Rhine to the annexation of Austria and the invasion of Poland, Hitler, with the approval of many of the German people, sought to regain lost prestige. Overturning the humiliation was perceived as the only method, as Joachim von Ribbentrop, the German foreign minister in 1939 wrote: "The Fuhrer has done nothing but remedy the most serious consequences which this most unreasonable of all dictates in history imposed upon a nation and, in fact, upon the whole of Europe, in other words, repair the worst mistakes committed by none other than the statesman of the western democracies"

(Macmillan, 2003, p 482). In other words, for many Germans, the path to erasing humiliation was through gaining prestige at the expense of other states.

In sum, Hitler aimed to overthrow the humiliating Treaty of Versailles to achieve the prestige that he thought the German people deserved. In separate writing and speeches, Hitler expounded on the faults of the Treaty of Versailles and how it kept down Germany from its rightful status on the world stage. In a April 17, 1923 speech, he stated:

With the armistice begins the humiliation of Germany. If the Weimar Republic on the day of its foundation had appealed to the country [and said]: “Germans, stand together! Up and resist the foe! The Fatherland, the Republic expects of you that you fight to your last breath”, then millions who are now enemies of the Republic would be fanatical [supporters of the Republic]. Today they are the foes of the Republic not because it is a Republic, but because this Republic was founded at the moment when Germany was humiliated because it so discredited the new flag that men’s eyes must turn regretfully toward the old flag (quoted in Slavicek, 2010, p 96).

Two years later, he wrote in *Mein Kampf* (1929):

Without consideration of traditions and prejudices, Germany must find the courage to gather our people, and their strength, for an advance along the road that will lead these people from its present, restricted living space to new land and soil, and, hence, also free it from the danger of vanishing from the earth, or of serving others as a slave nation. For it is not in colonial acquisitions that we must see the solution to this problem, but exclusively in the acquisition of territory for settlement, which will enhance the area of the mother country, and hence not only keep the new settlers in the most intimate communion with the land of their origin but secure for the entire area those advantages which lie in its unified magnitude... (Hitler, 1939).

The power of this humiliation was so great for Hitler and the German people that when France surrendered in 1940, Hitler forced France to sign its surrender in the same train car Germany signed its surrender to France after World War I.

It is important to note that Nazi Germany’s defeat did not bring the same sense of humiliation as in 1919. The feelings of Germans were that of shame (Masterson, 2020). Shame and humiliation are similar negative feelings but are quite different. While humiliation is seen as something undeserved, shame is the feeling one gets when the wrong-doing is known by the person (Klein, 1991).

Like Nazi Germany, China might be now seeking to overturn its own experience of humiliation, labeled the “Century of Humiliation” by the Communist Party of China (Wang, 2020). This term was first used after the “Twenty-One Demands” placed on

China by Japan during World War I. Callahan's 2004 article "National Insecurities: Humiliation, Salvation, and Chinese Nationalism" explores the *Atlas of the Century of Humiliation in Modern China*, a textbook used by the Chinese Communist Party to document and teach this particular history to China's citizens. Further, Callahan notes the various textbooks, novels, museums, songs, and parks that surround the Century of Humiliation.

## 2.2 China

The Century of Humiliation is a term used by the People's Republic of China to document the years of subjugation of China by western powers, Japan, and Russia before the rule of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (Scott, 2008). The specific historical events used to personify this period of unequal treatment are as follows:

- China's defeat in the First and Second Opium Wars (1839-1842; 1856-1860);
- China's defeat in the Sino-French War (1884-1885);
- China's defeat in the War with Japan (1894-1895);
- Defeat of the Boxer Uprising and the aftermath of occupation and destruction of Chinese culture;
- War with Japan before and during World War II (1937-1945).

These losses led to harsh outcomes, such as loss of territory, reparations, terror, and crimes against humanity (the Rape of Nanjing). The Boxer Rebellion is a particularly dark moment in Chinese history. Rebels attempted to drive out European powers from China. Several European nations and Japan invaded and destroyed the rebellion. The victors then marched to the capital city and forced a treaty, the Boxer Protocol, on China (Lee, 2009). This treaty forced China:

1. to pay war reparations (450,000,000 taels of silver);
2. to destroy twenty-five Chinese forces, including those defending Beijing;
3. to allow foreign troops to be stationed at strategic points, including Beijing;
4. to refrain from investing in arms;
5. to allow Russia all of Manchuria (Ibid.).

So powerful were these years that Mao Zedong vowed to overcome: "Ours will no longer be a nation subject to insult and humiliation. We have stood up" (Zedong, 1977, p 17). According to Zedong and following leaders, it is the responsibility of the CCP to overturn past humiliations and claim China's position of esteem (Callahan, 2004).

Today, past humiliations find themselves in China's political discourse (Hussaini, 2020; Mayer, 2018). In his October 1, 2019 "National Day" address, President Xi Jinping focused on history, looking back at China's historical experience as a global power and its relationship with the western world. Some key phrases:



The founding of the People's Republic of China completely changed China's miserable fate of being poor and weak and being bullied and humiliated in over 100 years since the advent of modern times...The Chinese nation has since then embarked on the path of realizing national rejuvenation...Chinese people of all ethnic groups have made great achievements that amaze the world, over the past seven decades through concerted efforts and arduous struggle...No force can ever shake the status of China, or stop the Chinese people and nation from marching forward...We must uphold the principles of 'peaceful reunification' and 'one country, two systems', maintain lasting prosperity and stability in Hong Kong and Macao, promote the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations...The Chinese People's Liberation Army and the People's Armed Police Force should always preserve their nature, purpose, and character as the forces of the people, resolutely safeguard China's sovereignty, security, and development interests, and firmly uphold world peace...China's yesterday had been inscribed in human history while China's today is being created in the hands of millions of Chinese people. China will surely have an even brighter future (in *China Daily*, 2019).

President Xi here frames his speech by first acknowledging the Century of Humiliation. He then explains that the CCP was and remains the main vehicle for China's success (Callahan, 2004). He points to the status of China and describes the ability of the armed forces to safeguard the state and its sovereignty from outside intervention, sparing citizens from another humiliation.

Xi points to future reunification with Taiwan, uniting all of China. China today is a global force, boasting the world's largest navy and army, and building islands in the South China Sea to defend its historical 9-dash line claim (Hussaini, 2020; Gao and Jia, 2013). China's One Belt, One Road initiative hopes to bring the world together and provide an alternative to the American Bretton Woods system (Ferdinand, 2016). Hence, for China to recover from 100 years of humiliation, it must overturn the injustices suffered at the hand of western powers and Japan (Wang, 2020; Hussaini, 2020; Mayer, 2018). To undo humiliation is to embrace conflict, if necessary, to return to prestigious status. Another power, Russia, demonstrates a similar *modus operandi*.

## 2.3 Russia

NATO expansion may have humiliated the identity of Russia as an exceptional power (Martin, 2020; Radchenko, 2020). This feeling of humiliation finds its beginnings in NATO and EU expansion. Russia sees itself as a prestigious power and demands some level of respect as a great power. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought on decades of Russian weakness which, according to Russia, gave rise to an expansionary American foreign policy. By 1999, states once considered within the Russian sphere, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and the Baltic States (among others), were firmly in the American camp. In 2014, during the height



of the Crimean conflict, Vladimir Putin described the Russian perspective during the period of NATO and European Union expansion, and connected it to Russia's actions in Ukraine:

We understand what is happening; we understand that these actions were aimed against Ukraine and Russia and Eurasian integration. And all this while Russia strived to engage in dialogue with our colleagues in the West. We are constantly proposing cooperation on all key issues; we want to strengthen our level of trust and for our relations to be equal, open, and fair. But we saw no reciprocal steps.

On the contrary, they have lied to us many times, made decisions behind our backs, and placed us before an accomplished fact. This happened with NATO's expansion to the East, as well as the deployment of military infrastructure at our borders. They kept telling us the same thing: "Well, this does not concern you." That's easy to say... they are constantly trying to sweep us into a corner because we have an independent position, because we maintain it and because we call things like they are and do not engage in hypocrisy. But there is a limit to everything. And with Ukraine, our western partners have crossed the line, playing the bear and acting irresponsibly and unprofessionally (Address by President of the Russian Federation, 2014).

When Putin took power in December 1999, he promised to throw off Russian humiliation and regain prestige: "Belief in the greatness of Russia. Russia was and will remain a great power. It is preconditioned by the inseparable characteristics of its geopolitical, economic, and cultural existence. They determined the mentality of Russians and the policy of the government throughout the history of Russia and they cannot but do so at present" (Putin, 1999). From Russia's perspective, Russia had been humiliated (Whitehall Papers, 2008). Mearsheimer (2014) described Russia's perspective:

NATO enlargement is the central element of a larger strategy to move Ukraine out of Russia's orbit and integrate it into the West. At the same time, the EU's expansion eastward and the West's backing of the pro-democracy movement in Ukraine—beginning with the Orange Revolution in 2004—were critical elements, too. Since the mid-1990s, Russian leaders have adamantly opposed NATO enlargement and in recent years, they have made it clear that they would not stand by while their strategically important neighbor turned into a Western bastion. For Putin, the illegal overthrow of Ukraine's democratically elected and pro-Russian president—which he rightly labeled a "coup"—was the final straw. He responded by taking Crimea, a peninsula he feared would host a NATO naval base, and working to destabilize Ukraine until it abandoned its efforts to join the West (Mearsheimer, 2014).

For Russia, the annexation of Crimea had more to do with defending Russia and avoiding yet another humiliation. Winning Crimea back (in the Russian mind) increased the prestige of Russia, as western media began discussing the Russian resurgence. Russia's invasion of Ukraine (2022) seems to be a continuation of this endeavor. However, as of time of writing (February 6, 2024), it remains difficult to ascertain whether or not Russian efforts will be successful. If Russia fails to achieve its aims, it will suffer another grave humiliation.

## 2.4 Synthesis: Illustrating psychological contributions

From these examples, there is a direct connection between humiliation and prestige making them seem to act as a dynamic, working together to describe state behavior or even to convince the population that any aggressive state strategy may be pursued to overturn a past misdeed. Avoiding cherry-picking but focusing on two major contemporary cases (and one past case), the prestige-humiliation comes alive. State leaders must actively choose to go to war. This is simply not a rational choice, a decision to go to war or not or to hold a territory or not. These decisions are also emotional in nature and thus must have a cognitive approach. Wendt's line "anarchy is what states make of it" (1992) is a good one but possibly incomplete: anarchy is what emotions make of it. Cognitive and psychological factors, and emotions like humiliation and prestige, add an emotional layer to the study of international relations.

To summarize, humiliation is costly to a state's perception of itself and others. Losing prestige and suffering humiliation may cause the state to lash out and seek to overturn the humiliation and return to prestige. They fear they may be seen as weak. Emotions are at the center of this argument as this fear follows, hurting deterrence and increasing the likelihood of further attack. This article applied three major examples: Germany after World War I, the Russian loss of influence over Eastern Europe, and China's undoing of the Century of Humiliation.

To avoid humiliation is to embrace conflict, which might be able to explain intractable and never-ending conflicts, for instance, the United States being unable to withdraw from Iraq/Afghanistan due to fear of humiliation. No cost is too great to avoid being humiliated. The introduction of emotion into the decision-making process may help us understand the reasons great powers seek and defend their prestige while avoiding humiliation. What may seem like a rational choice is hindered by emotions, preserving identities, and saving face (saving face to be discussed later). Great powers function to survive, but also to protect self-esteem by pursuing prestige and avoiding humiliation. These are thus dichotomous:

Prestige vs. humiliation

Strength vs. weakness

Winner vs. loser

## Demand vs. accept

## Leader vs. follower

There is thus an inverse or opposite relationship: humiliation for one may mean prestige for another. However, a weak state may accept being the weaker partner, but that weaker partner knows and accepts its weakness. For a great power to accept weakness would be an eradication of its great power status. One positive for weaker states in the international system is the fact that great powers give aid and preferential loans (Wolf et al., 2013; Essex, 2013). To be an aid donor is a sign of prestige and an important part of being a leader. In the international system, this aid is not a sign of benevolence, but rather part of the state's grand strategy to gain some control of the weaker state's sovereignty. In other words, these states may become dependent; vassals to a great power; and vassals are important for prestige.

Leaders need followers, and vassals are necessary to show the world that they are indeed prestigious states. Competition over spheres of influence may generate the need to humiliate the opponent by further encroaching into disputed territory. The three history-making case studies explored in this paper serve to illustrate the humiliation-prestige dynamic. The first example is Germany. Adolph Hitler sought to overturn every facet of the Treaty of Versailles to undo the humiliation wrought upon Germany at the end of World War I. Nazi Germany strove to recover its lost prestige as a great power. Today, China is seeking to recover from its "Century of Humiliation" in the 19th century by seeking the prestige it sees itself as deserving today (Wang, 2020). Chinese leaders are specifically using historical narratives that describe these humiliations to justify and legitimize their expansionary foreign policy (Mayer 2018). The same can be said about Russia, in the light of the collapse of the Soviet Union (Sharafutdinova, 2020).

The humiliation-prestige dynamic is fundamental when examining the international system. There is a human, psychological and emotional element that impacts state behavior. Connecting this systems-level force to the state, and studying the behavior of Nazi Germany, China, and Russia described here, helps us observe the centrality of status. The aggressive action by these actors is caused by their need to overturn humiliation and gain prestige. By identifying these as motivating factors, international relations theory must try to incorporate these psychological factors into the analysis. Knowing these factors could assist the state to develop better foreign policy as they interact with others and shape their own foreign policy choices.

The next section tries to break the cycle by offering up a suggestion already forwarded by Hans Morgenthau: allowing a humiliated state to save face. Saving face is a term we use to describe social settings to allow an embarrassed person or state the courtesy of retaining respect and honor. A classic example of saving face in international relations is during the Cuban Missile Crisis, where the United States and the Soviets both compromised in secret to de-escalate the situation (see Graham and Zelikow, 1999). While the problem of status reassertion is the core of the article,

the author finds it necessary to provide a solution. The next section explores the term 'saving face' as an attempt to problematize or understand the central importance of psychological factors in international politics.

### 3 SAVING FACE: AVOIDING HUMILIATION, DEFENDING PRESTIGE

The distribution of power (and status) across states tends to ebb and flow with time. Why are states so resistant to changes in power distributions? E.H. Carr wrote on the eve of World War II: "...we cannot return to the pre-1939 world any more than we could return to the pre-war world of 1919" (2001, p 238). Carr here calls for some accommodation: if status quo powers do not appease revisionist powers, the two forces will come to blows. Applying this to the prestige-humiliation dynamic, states are less likely to back down. Backing down may bring humiliation for one and prestige for another (Wirth, 2020). States do seek to defend their interests, defined in terms of power and security; however, this is complicated by cognitive variables. It could be argued that it was not in the interests of either party (Great Britain and France and Nazi Germany) to go to war as neither side was ready (Martel, 1986). Forcing an opponent to back down in the international system might be construed as a sign of weakness. Appeasement is also dangerous to maintaining deterrence, that is, remaining credible and capable (Mearsheimer, 2001). It is thus important for great powers to avoid humiliating others. The challenge is in allowing states to save face.

Saving face is the ability to maintain dignity and status in the light of losing power and prestige. It is about avoiding embarrassment, which may lead to a violent response and attempts to embarrass the initial humiliator (Barnhart, 2017). One historical example is when Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain appeased Hitler in the annexation of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain saved face by showing the world that he was responsible for establishing world peace by getting Hitler to sign a treaty that would effectively stop its expansion. By allowing Chamberlain the ability to proclaim responsibility for the peace accord, Hitler allowed Great Britain to save face. In other words, an actor must give a challenger the ability to show that there were some gains allowed in the light of appeasement.

In his seminal work *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (1946), Hans Morgenthau devoted many pages to diplomacy and the idea of saving face. Writing during World War II and at the beginning of the Cold War (and experiencing the war firsthand as a person of German Jewish origin), for Morgenthau there were "Four Tasks of Diplomacy" which underscore an appreciation for all the states involved in the conflict. He stated the following:

1. Diplomacy determines objectives in terms of power;
2. Must understand the objectives of other nations;
3. Must understand how different nations' interests are compatible;
4. Must employ means at its disposal (power). Failure to do so will bring no peace and war (p 419).

Morgenthau was mindful that compromise is essential for longer-term peace and security, so understanding the objectives of others, especially how there might be compatibility, is key to solving international crises. To this, Morgenthau added what he called the “Four Prerequisites of Compromise”, which elaborates on the previous four points:

1. Give up the shadow of worthless rights for the substance of real advantage; (meaning ignore the letter of the law to embrace strategic benefit).
2. Never put yourself in a position from which you cannot retreat without losing face and from which you cannot advance without grave risks.
3. Never allow a weak ally to make decisions for you.
4. The armed forces are the instrument of foreign policy, not its master (pp 441-442).

To combine point two from the “Tasks” and point two from “Prerequisites”, we can conclude that a major objective of all states would be to never lose face. Morgenthau stated that diplomacy is made more difficult because of this humiliation factor. There must be an allowance for saving face. In this way, diplomacy might be able to make “the peace more secure than it is today...” (Ibid., p 445). This not only minimizes the chances of a possible violent clash, but provides competing states with the acknowledgment of the prestige they seemingly crave. Thus, acknowledging greatness and saving face is necessary to keep the peace by providing a sort of balance of status in the international system. However, establishing this balance could be difficult if an actor feels that it needs to act aggressively to defend prestige and avoid humiliation. This requires diplomatic finesse. The United States must now deal with other great powers, China and Russia, with serious power potential. These two powers seem determined to overturn past humiliations. It may be necessary to placate their need for prestige and status through the recognition of their spheres of influence.

Some recognition of Chinese and Russian greatness may be necessary to maintain a balance of power to secure international stability. This might be achieved by advocating a spheres of influence model. As defined, a sphere of influence is any “geographic region characterized by the high penetration of one superpower to the exclusion of others and particularly of a rival superpower” (Kaufman, 1976, p 11). Etzioni (2015) suggests dividing the world into three spheres of influence:

- The United States: Central and South America and the Caribbean;
- Russia: Eastern Europe and the Caucasus;
- China: South-East Asia, the South and East China Seas (p 126).

He justifies this by looking at two main factors: geographic proximity and history. By acquiescing a specific area for a specific power, states will recognize one another for their power and prestige. Mutual recognition of spheres of influence, especially if deemed necessary to a state’s security, may be beneficial in order to stabilize status,

specifically limiting any feelings of humiliation and thereby eliminating the need to seek prestige aggressively.

Ignoring the humiliation-prestige dynamic disregards the identity of states that have specific historical circumstances driving their contemporary behavior. Russia, the United States, and China all have exceptional histories and think of themselves as exceptional powers. To admit that these states are indeed behaving in an anachronistic manner may allow scholarship the ability to explain and understand what is at stake: international peace and security. It takes courage to allow competitors to save face and to do something that is indeed humiliating but in the state's best interests. There is little marginal benefit at stake save great power pride.

By understanding the systemic importance of psychological/emotional feelings of humiliation and prestige, states will be better prepared to deal with one another. Appreciating that states behave in this way allows us to explain and predict aggressive or expansionist behavior. By adjusting structural realism slightly by adding the psychological/emotional variable to the analysis, one might see the benefit of face-saving behavior. It seems clear that humiliation causes the state to hurt, and this hurt may lead to future aggression, as prestige-seeking behavior may be perceived as the only real solution.

Prestige-seeking behavior may be destructive, as states use military and other forms of power to humiliate others to gain higher status. It could be useful to start tracing the psychological histories of states to understand the potential destructive ramifications of a possible rise to power. By documenting the prestigious rise and humiliating fall of great powers, we could extract patterns of behavior reflected by the prestige-humiliation dynamic. If this psychology did not matter, then why did the leaders of the cases discussed (Nazi Germany, China, and Russia) put so much emphasis on moments of humiliation, with hopes of future prestigious recognition? It seems clear that states are focused on their own identity, and in particular their status. They seek to avoid humiliation and win recognition from others.

**Conclusion** Thousands of years may separate humanity, yet state behavior seems similar. Words like humiliation and prestige are better suited for the 19th century. Withdrawal signals weakness and humiliation. Emperor Aurelian of Rome had to withdraw from Dacia, once a gold and silver-rich province of Rome conquered by Trajan, a beloved emperor. By Aurelian's time, much of that gold had been depleted (MacKendrick, 2000, p 132). Dacia had little material benefit, but to withdraw was to signal weakness. The problem was worsened by the fact that Dacia was difficult to defend and easy to attack. Aurelian made the difficult decision to withdraw, fending off much criticism for it. The United States has similar considerations. Mitch McConnell, in the light of President Trump's sudden partial withdrawal from Afghanistan, said: "As several former officials and ambassadors recently stated, 'The spectacle of US troops abandoning facilities and equipment, leaving the field in Afghanistan to the Taliban and ISIS, would be broadcast around the world as a symbol of US defeat and



humiliation, and a victory for Islamist extremism” (McConnell quoted in the *New York Post*, 2020). A United States withdrawal would mean humiliation for the United States and a much-admired victory for terrorist networks. McConnell compared it to another humiliating withdrawal: Vietnam. As a result, a state needs to save face: defending one’s reputation by avoiding humiliation and shielding prestige (Frevert and Bresnahan, 2020). Thus, this paper argues that there is a dichotomy between prestige and humiliation.

There is a negative, zero-sum relationship which drives prestige and humiliation: one state’s prestige is based on the humiliation of another. These are psychological forces that form part of the international system. These forces shape state behavior and must be included in any structural realist analysis. Even though these forces are immaterial, humiliation and prestige are major drivers of international relations. Saving face is a policy that avoids feelings of humiliation. A humiliated state may lash out, leading to conflict. We must thus understand the importance of the psychological aspects of state behavior.

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**email: [hskassab@gmail.com](mailto:hskassab@gmail.com)**

**ORCID: 0000-0002-2706-3226**

William Lippert

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## VOJAŠKO URAVNOVEŠENJE ZA PRIHODNJE SPORAZUME O KONVENCIONALNIH SILAH V EVROPI

### MILITARY BALANCING FOR FUTURE CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS IN EUROPE

**Povzetek** Kvalitativna ocena konvencionalnega vojaškega ravnovesja med Natom in Rusijo je lahko podlaga za morebitne sporazume o nadzoru nad konvencionalnimi silami (CAC) v Evropi. Članek obravnava metode za ocenjevanje zmogljivosti sil in vojaškega ravnovesja; sledijo predlogi za posodobitev metod, ki izhajajo iz spoznanj o nedavnih spopadih, trendih in razvoju vojaških zmogljivosti. Pri tem predstavlja model ponderirane statične analize sil za oceno vojaškega ravnovesja, ki se lahko uporabi za sporazume CAC, t. i. kvantitativni pristop k nadzoru nad konvencionalnimi silami (QuACAC). Ta lahko pripomore k zmanjšanju nesoglasij med pogajalskimi stranmi in omogoči prilagajanje sporazumov CAC.

**Ključne besede** *Vojaško ravnovesje, nadzor nad konvencionalnimi silami, rusko-ukrajinska vojna, pokonfliktne sporazumi.*

**Abstract** A qualitative assessment of the conventional military balance between NATO and Russia may form a basis of any potential conventional arms control (CAC) agreement in Europe. Article discusses methods to assess force capability and military balances, and then suggests updates to the methods based on insights from recent conflicts, military capability trends and developments. The article offers a weighted static force analysis model to assess military balances, that can be used for CAC agreements, called the Quantitative Approach to Conventional Arms Control (QuACAC). This approach may help narrow areas of disagreement between negotiating parties, and provide a basis for CAC agreement adaptation.

**Key words** *Military Balance, Conventional Arms Control, Russo-Ukraine War, Post-Conflict Agreements.*

**Introduction** The Russo-Ukraine War is the most significant and cataclysmic event in post-Cold War Europe. While there are numerous causes, one of them is likely the failure of conventional arms control (CAC) agreements in Europe (Lippert, 2024). Specifically, Russia invaded Ukraine in part because it was dissatisfied with the relative balance of conventional military power between it and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and Moscow's efforts to address this through CAC agreements had failed. While an agreement between Russia and Ukraine might bring an end to that conflict, a bilateral agreement may not successfully address the war's structural causes. Rather, a broader, European-wide CAC agreement is more likely to resolve Russia's long-standing complaints and establish a more stable, secure military balance, which may in turn prevent another major conflict in Europe.

Military balance is an important concept for states' assessments of their own relative power (Levy, 1998; Van Evera, 1999); it determines states' interests in entering CAC agreements, and is often a principle consideration for the agreements' design. Military balance is the comparison of states' or blocs' conventional military forces, based on their military equipment, personnel, readiness, logistics, command, control, and communications (C3), intelligence, and other relevant factors (Skypek, 2010; Zanella, 2012). While military balance is an important determinant of power and a driver of CAC agreements, the question of how to measure military balance remains. During the Cold War, for example, NATO and the Soviet Union entered into an open dispute about their military balance, with each side accusing the other of being more threatening. While imprecise assessments of one another's military balances may be sufficient for the purposes of strategic planning or public communications, CAC agreements require a greater precision, because most CAC agreements result in specific, quantitative limitations (including prohibitions, or quantities of zero).

This article discusses several methods for quantitatively assessing military balance and proposes a specific methodology for CAC agreements. This methodology, the Quantitative Approach to Conventional Arms Control (QuACAC), is not intended to predict conflict outcomes. Rather, it is a tool to assess and calculate military balances to determine which mixes of forces could be reduced, limited, or prohibited to reach a CAC agreement.

## 1 STATIC AND WEIGHTED MEASUREMENTS COMPARISONS

Two commonly used methodologies to compare military power are static counts and weighted static counts (Rohn, 1990, tbl. S1). Each offers advantages and disadvantages for CAC.

Static measurements generally divide military equipment into categories and count personnel as equal. A basic count could consider that a second-generation fighter aircraft may be counted the same as a fifth-generation aircraft, and a 105 mm World War Two-era towed howitzer could be counted the same as a precision-munition firing 155 mm self-propelled cannon. To what extent one separates the categories

– for example, air superiority aircraft from ground attack aircraft, or wheeled armoured personnel carriers (APCs) from tracked infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs) – will vary from one report or analysis to another. Static measurements can also divide comparisons into within-equipment type categories, for example by aircraft or tank generation, artillery type (tubed versus rocket), and short versus long-range surface-to-air missiles (SAMs). Personnel tend to be counted equally as one equal unit per person.

There are two advantages to static count approaches for CAC: the counting requires few subjective judgements, and it can be done relatively quickly, provided that the necessary information is available. At the same time, static approaches fail to capture important differences. While many military vehicles fall into generations, the evolution is more continuous and iterative than incremental; thus, there may be different assessments as to whether or not a given system falls into one or another generation. Categorizing by performance capability poses similar challenges, as the “dividing line” between categories can be arbitrary. For example, the definition of short, medium, or long range for artillery or SAMs is arbitrary; or in the case of naval ships, the number of vertical missile launch tubes may be more relevant than the size (water displacement) or named class (frigate, corvette, destroyer, aircraft carrier, etc.).

A third complication may arise from weapon systems that straddle multiple categories, such as a wheeled vehicle with a large cannon (such as the US Stryker-based M1128 Mobile Gun System). Static measures do not account for any qualitative differences between weapon systems which could be similar in key physical aspects. For example, an M1-A1 Abrams tank with thermal sights, advanced targeting capabilities, and thicker armour would be counted the same as a T-72 which lacked thermal sights, had a comparatively poorer targeting system, and thinner armour – even though these differences were decisively significant in the 1991 Gulf War (Zaloga and Laurier, 2009). Military personnel are treated equally regardless of differences in training and equipping.

Thus, a static count minimizes the number of subjective analyses and permits rapid assessment, but it ignores important details, particularly qualitative differences. One important consideration of static counts is that most CAC agreements apply static limitations (rather than weighted or qualitative). For example, the 1990 Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and Adapted CFE (A/CFE) Treaties designated all weapons systems within the 5.5 categories (battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, artillery, combat aircraft, attack helicopters; collectively referred to as treaty limited equipment (TLE), and armoured vehicle-launched bridges (which are not considered a major TLE category) as equal for counting purposes. Whether a tank was produced in 1955 or 1990 did not matter from the treaty’s compliance perspective.



## 2 WEIGHTING FORCES

A weighted value is the assigned value of an item relative to other items being calculated or compared in the same context. For assessing military capabilities, and particularly CAC, this means that one tank does not necessarily have the same value as another. A modern MBT has a higher value or score than a 1950s tank, because a modern MBT has a number of advantages and improvements in comparison. There is no single, accepted, and accurate method to weigh military forces, in part due to inherent subjectivity. However, as most CAC agreements focus on personnel and equipment rather than units (due to the difficulty of measuring a unit and the wide variety of unit compositions), this section will discuss some of the factors and issues to consider in weighing the capability points of various military systems and supporting capabilities. The Russo-Ukraine War provides important insights – but these are all tentative as the data is incomplete and unverified. As a launching point, this article will discuss the five major CFE TLE categories. Whether or not these would again be the focus of a CAC agreement, these systems remain the backbone of NATO and Russia's militaries, and could still be credibly considered offensive in nature because of the ability to mass them, and their battlefield affect when massed. The QuACAC methodology uses a rhetorical standard infantry soldier as the baseline, with a military capability score of 1.

Main battle tanks, often over fifty metric tons of steel sporting a 120 mm cannon or larger, remain relevant and likely remain a key enabler of offensive, manoeuvre operations, although the Russo-Ukraine War suggests that they enjoy less freedom of movement than in the past (Zabrodskyi et al., 2022). Tanks' qualitative differences may include the quality of thermal sights, data connectivity, and possibly the possession of active defences, artificial intelligence (AI), optionally manned configuration, and drone integration. Some of these technologies are emerging and unproven, although the quality of thermal sights and gun accuracy may be among the tank's most important features.

Artillery has seen less development than tanks in the past several decades, with the greatest advances being in guided munitions. The guided rockets fired by MLRS/HIMARS have proven their effectiveness in Ukraine, striking logistics nodes, command and control centres, and bridges, among other targets. Computing and drones add significant capability to artillery accuracy, and integrated targeting systems on an otherwise half-century old artillery system can significantly improve its performance. Artillery comes in several different configurations or types, including towed, self-propelled, tube and rocket. Each has their advantages and disadvantages, with capability points likely being determined by a combination of accuracy, range, and explosive power.

Armoured combat vehicles include wheeled armoured personnel carriers and tracked infantry fighting vehicles. These vehicles are often primarily designed to transport infantry, and it is generally accepted that these vehicles are essential for



conducting a major offensive in a large-scale modern conflict because the armour offers some protection compared to a civilian or unarmoured military vehicle, attacking solely by foot is nothing short of suicidal, and infantry need to keep up with tanks in order to provide mutual, combined arms support. Many armoured combat vehicle models evolved to serve a variety of missions, with some vehicles such as the US M114, the US Stryker, the Soviet/Russian BMP-2, and the Soviet/Russian BTR-80 modified over time to incorporate additional functionality such as carrying large mortars, rockets, lasers, SAMs, anti-tank weapons, and anti-aircraft guns. The simplest and cheapest versions tend to have minimal weapons but are sufficient to transport soldiers to the combat area, if not to provide direct fire support. With greater firepower they can inflict greater damage, although sometimes at the cost of troop-carrying capability, at some financial cost, and potentially presenting themselves as a more vulnerable target depending on how they are used. Capability points would likely be based upon some combination of armour, wheeled vs. tracked (with tracked being more valuable), and firepower.

Attack helicopters are generally more similar to one another than armoured combat vehicles or tanks, making comparisons much simpler. Examples of this weapon category include the US AH-64 Apache and the Russian Mi-28 Havoc. Attack helicopters are usually armed with a variety and mix of rockets, guided missiles, and guns. Capability points would likely be based on the weapons that the helicopter could employ, the number of weapons, targeting capabilities such as long-distance thermal imaging and data sharing, range, and speed.

Aircraft are complicated to assess, and the CFE approach was to simply count any kind of combat aircraft as a single unit subject to TLE, despite their differences. For example, an A-10 Warthog, an F-15A Eagle, and an F-111B bomber have little in common with one another (close air support, air superiority, and medium bombing, respectively). This presents a significant challenge in assessing capability values. For example, in the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, air superiority aircraft were of marginal utility when the enemy no longer had aircraft to fly. Similarly, the viability of dedicated ground-attack aircraft in airspace denied by enemy fighters and anti-aircraft weapons is uncertain. As most of the US's adversaries have learned in recent conflicts, most types of aircraft have no value due to US air superiority. Aircraft may also vary significantly in cost and age. One might argue that an old, inexpensive land vehicle may still be useful in combat, either as a static defence or, in the case of a personnel carrier, still able to perform that role; but an outdated aircraft will have little utility in a conflict, being vulnerable to SAMs and superior fighter aircraft.

Counting military personnel can be complicated. First, there is the question of whether to count all military personnel, combat personnel only, or combat and combat support personnel (logistics, communications, etc.). For example, personnel in an education or diplomatic setting might not be counted. Second, there is the question of whether or not to limit the applicability by service. CFE-1A, for example, only limited ground and air – not naval – personnel. Finally, today many military functions that were

once performed by uniformed personnel are carried out by contractors, including cooking, guard tasks, construction, and rear area facility security. NATO forces do not use private military companies (PMCs) for major combat operations, such as combined arms operations, although Russia uses the PMC Wagner Group for tasks traditionally conducted by uniformed forces (Axe, 2022).

Most naval forces were not included in the CFE or A/CFE Treaty, although there are some restrictions on naval ships entering the Black Sea as part of the 1936 Montreux Convention. There are several reasons why naval forces were not limited in the CFE or A/CFE Treaties despite the Soviet Union's desire to include them in the CFE Treaty due to a perception of NATO's naval superiority, including the ease with which naval forces could move, which could make verification difficult, and NATO's view that naval forces were essential to secure the Atlantic sea route vital to European defence (Wilcox, 2020).

Naval forces pose several problems for calculating capability points, aside from verification. The first is when to count them in the Area of Application (AoA). While a fully equipped mechanized brigade may require days to weeks to move several hundred or thousand kilometres (Shurkin, 2017; Gustafsson et al. 2019; Hodges and Lawrence, 2020; CEPA Task Group, 2021), naval vessels can make the journey much quicker, fully equipped and prepared to fight. This is especially true of NATO naval forces, which operate around the world outside the existing CFE AoA. On the other hand, certain naval forces outside the AoA may play a marginal role in certain conflict scenarios such as surprise attacks. On the other hand, calculating naval forces' capability scores with the ship as the central counting unit should pose less of a problem. Ships can be categorized by mass (water displacement) and class, with ships of the same mass and class and of approximately the same age tending to have similar capabilities. Ships may have a specialization such as air defence, ballistic missile defence, or anti-submarine warfare (ASW), but these can still be equally countable capabilities. Moreover, most ships above a certain size (corvette and larger) can perform multiple missions even if they are more capable in one area, and the mission focus can be modified with changes to missile loadout. The number of vertical launch tubes is one way to count and compare many types of combat vessels. Aircraft or assault troops carrying capacity is another basis of calculation for these types of vessels.

Heavy bombers were not limited in the CFE or A/CFE Treaties, although some of them are or were controlled by US-Russian nuclear arms control agreements, and Russia sought to impose limits on the aircraft in its 2021 proposal to the US (Russian Foreign Ministry, 2021). Another reason not to limit heavy bombers is that, as with naval vessels, heavy bombers can travel long distances relatively quickly, complicating compliance. Some aircraft are also capable (with in-flight refuelling) of flying almost halfway around the world, dropping their payloads, and returning to their base of departure without ever landing (Tirpak, 1999). For Russia and the US,

for example, this means they could keep their heavy bomber forces far out of range of most enemy weapons and potentially outside the AoA.

Some of the differentiating characteristics of heavy bombers include speed, stealth, payload, and range. Experience with stealth aircraft since the 1991 Gulf War suggests that stealth may be the most important feature for a heavy bomber, enabling it to fly into contested enemy airspace with a high chance of survival, especially when other measures, such as the suppression of enemy air defences (SEAD) and other counter-radar operations, are taken. Heavy bombers have relatively large payloads (compared to fighter-bombers), and can, in certain circumstances, account for a high proportion of air-dropped munitions (Tirpak, 1999; Butowski, 2022).

Given their speed and range, it is not unreasonable to include a state's entire heavy bomber force in any capabilities scoring. The highest points would be assigned to stealth bombers, with other characteristics being considered. Heavy bombers are higher-cost aircraft produced in lower quantities, making them more valuable than fighter aircraft and thus reasonably credited with a higher capability score.

This section has only analysed some categories of weapons and weapon systems, due to space limitations (for example, SAMs have not been included). The QuACAC methodology, however, enables the inclusion of any weapon system. There are other approaches to both weighing and comparing military forces and modelling conflict outcomes to determine the impact of CAC agreements. These are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1:**  
Methodology  
Comparison

Name/Source	Methodology Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
QuACAC	Weighted Static	Accounts for and calculates weapons, personnel, and overall systems in great detail.	Substantial subjectivity in the scoring.
Meisel et al. Military Equipment Index (MEI) (Meisel, Moyer et al, 2020)	Weighted static	Scores weapon systems.	Does not account for force enhancers or detractors, and it is not clear whether it accounts for differences within models such as minor upgrades, as its focus is on generations. No inclusion of personnel.
Global Firepower ( <i>Military Strength Comparisons for 2022</i> , no date)	Multi-method	Calculates an overall power score to compare between countries.	Includes population, economy, and other variables that are not relevant to CAC.

Name/Source	Methodology Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Lowy Institute Asia Power Index ( <i>Lowy Institute Asia Power Index</i> , no date)	Weighted static	Includes quantified qualitative variables such as training, readiness, command and control, number of military personnel, and weapons and platforms. The data provided goes down to medium detail, e.g. for land warfare firepower it counts the number of armoured vehicles, but aggregates tanks and IFV; and for aircraft it seems to merely provide a raw count. In the category of “signature capabilities” it includes intelligence and cyber, as well as some weapons. It is unclear how the sub-measures are aggregated or calculated to determine a military capability score.	Limited to Asia, and may overly aggregate some areas.
US weapon effectiveness index/weighted unit value (WEI/WUV) (Watts, 2017)	Weighted static	Based on micro-level firepower and the capabilities of individual systems.	Does not account for personnel nor for non-lethal force enhancers such as command and control systems.
Forward Edge of the Battle Area (FEBA) Attrition Model (Posen, 1984)	Dynamic Conflict Model	Attempts to calculate advance rates based on several variables such as force size, force quality, airpower, and reinforcement rates.	While it can be useful to assess the potential of a surprise attack (its application during the Cold War), it only applied to a single scenario of a surprise attack along a straight front. Some, if not many, of the variables are highly subjective, such as Armoured Division Equivalents (ADEs).

### 3 FORCE MULTIPLIERS AND SUBTRACTORS

Force multipliers are “a capability that, when added to and employed by a combat force, significantly increases the combat potential of that force and thus enhances the probability of successful mission accomplishment” (Joint Publication 3-05.1: Joint Special Operations Task Force Operations, 2007). In a NATO-Russia conflict, these could be command, control, communications, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C3ISR), logistics, transportation infrastructure, morale, medical

support, cyber capabilities, electronic warfare, space-based capabilities, and other factors.

A force subtractor is a characteristic of a military force which could decrease its force effectiveness, including low morale, poor integration between units (such as in a coalition environment where units are not used to working together), and a poor command structure (such as a multinational command structure like NATO where there are multiple and conflicting lines of command).

The methodology can work with a given capability being accounted for only on one side as a net advantage (for example, if NATO is considered as having better logistics it could be given a ten-percentage point advantage); or each side could account for the capability (for example NATO might get an increase of five percentage points, while Russia gets a decrease of five). The advantage of the latter approach is that capability changes are easier to incorporate and calculate.

## 4 THE QUACAC EQUATION

The QuACAC methodology uses a single soldier as the baseline for military capability to simplify the equation, which aggregates equipment and personnel. From a single soldier (for example, a standard US dismounted infantryman) having a baseline score of one, other weapon systems are assessed against this baseline. The equipment does not need to have a weapon to count; rather, the score considers its contribution to the battlefield. For example, an unarmed transport vehicle such as an unarmed Humvee may be given a score of 5, as it contributes to the battlefield as a general utility vehicle. The advantage of this approach is that having a single baseline simplifies calculations (compared to having a baseline score for each category of weapon systems). The disadvantage is that there is a significant arbitrary and subjective judgment in comparing a battle tank with rocket artillery or a soldier with a naval surface combatant.

This article proposes the following equation to calculate force capability for CAC, and is equally applicable to a single or a group of states, or an entire alliance such as NATO (see Table 2 for explanation of the variables).

**Table 2:**  
QuACAC  
Variables

Abbreviation	Variable name	Explanation	Method of determination
T	Total capability points	This is the total military capabilities score which reflects one state or alliance's net, calculated military capability.	This calculation is a real number determined by the equation which measures personnel and equipment.
E	Military equipment capability total score	This is the sum capability of all military equipment, including logistics vehicles, command and control, and combat systems.	This is obtained by determining a score for each piece of relevant equipment (as determined by agreement), and then adding up all the individual points. The baseline of the score is a single, generic infantry soldier.
Em	Equipment force multiplier (percentage)	This is the total equipment force multiplier, which might consider intangible factors such as maintenance levels, supplies, and interoperability.	A percentage is determined by considering to what extent the equipment is more than the sum of its individual components. Some possible contributors to assigning a positive percentage could include good maintenance records, close interoperability, relatively uniform equipment, and substantial support from outside the area of application (such as satellites).
Es	Equipment force subtractor or disadvantage (percentage)	This is a calculation of detracting factors for all equipment, such as low maintenance, poor supply chain, and non-interoperability.	A percentage is determined by considering to what extent the equipment is less than the sum of its individual components. This might be an overly burdensome variety of weapons, poor maintenance and logistics support, non-interoperability of weapon systems, or lack of munitions.
P	Personnel (quantity)	This is a calculation of the number of relevant military personnel.	This can potentially include contractors, especially if these contractors perform traditionally uniformed roles and/or the roles are performed and counted for other states and alliances when performed by government personnel. The number of personnel are added up with a relatively simple one person equals one point. However, a person may count for less than one if, for example, they are a reservist with infrequent training.

Abbreviation	Variable name	Explanation	Method of determination
Pm	Personnel multiplier (percentage)	This modifier accounts for e.g. high morale, high quality training, longer periods of service, combat experience, and level of individual equipping (kit).	A percentage is determined by considering to what extent the personnel are more than the sum of the individuals. This could include very modern and expensive personal equipment such as night vision devices and digitally aimed rifles, high quality training and readiness, and a high average number of years of service.
Ps	Personnel subtractor or disadvantage (percentage)	This modifier accounts for factors that reduce the capabilities of the personnel, such as low morale, poor health, poor training, language barriers, internal political problems, and interoperability issues (e. g. substantial differences between alliance members).	A percentage is determined by considering to what extent the personnel are less than the sum of the individuals. This could include linguistic barriers between units or alliance members, poor training, low quality personal equipment.

$$T = \left( E \times \left( \frac{100 + E_m - E_s}{100} \right) \right) + \left( P \times \left( \frac{100 + P_m - P_s}{100} \right) \right)$$

While the equation is simple, its implementation admittedly faces many challenges. First, an accurate assessment of each variable requires a large dataset of information. Second, scoring each model and version of equipment and assessing troop quality requires in-depth knowledge and subjective judgment. One person could assess a Russian T-14 Armata tank as being worth 105 points, while another would assess them as 125. Similarly, different analysts may give different weights and make different judgments about morale, political unity, command unity, logistics, and so on. Third, the workload to inventory every piece of relevant equipment is substantial. Fourth, which capabilities to include or exclude could be a substantial area of dispute (Kulesa, 2018).

## 5 QUACAC AND CAC AGREEMENTS

This methodology is not intended to predict conflict outcomes, but can be used throughout the CAC lifetime from conception through negotiation to implementation. Prior to any negotiations, this tool permits scholars and practitioners to quantify the military balance and determine what the needs for CAC may be and what goals any CAC may have. During CAC negotiations, this methodology is a way for parties to discuss one another's existing military capabilities, develop proposals by quantifying trades, and aim for a common end-state. The methodology can suggest possible trades of different weapons systems, such as Russia agreeing to a limit of 1500 tanks



and 200 combat aircraft for a NATO limit of 700 tanks and 400 aircraft. Such an agreement would not just be based on the number of TLE, but on their quality. This methodology can also deal with vehicles which do not comfortably fall into a single category, such as armoured combat vehicles with a heavy gun, or a vehicle which takes on the characteristics of artillery and a tank. The methodology can also support ratio-based treaties, wherein military systems are limited at a certain ratio while taking into account qualitative differences.

The methodology allows interested parties to observe changes in the military balance, which may be necessary throughout the implementation phase, as any number of factors, including major shifts in force structure, technology advances, equipment upgrades, and alliance changes, could affect the military balance. Geopolitical and other changes, for example, clearly altered the military balance following the CFE Treaty's signature, but the treaty itself was unable to adjust to take the wave of changes into account. Another advantage of this methodology is that it can relatively easily consider changes in blocs and alliances by adding or subtracting states' capability points and adjusting the force multiplier and subtractor variables as necessary.

By quantifying, however imperfectly, the military balance using the QuACAC, negotiating sides can have a dialogue based on concrete, quantitative assessments rather than opaque simulations, intuition, or a complicated series of mathematical models. This can serve to narrow differences by establishing a common understanding of the military balance, potential TLE, and prohibited systems.

**Conclusion** Symmetric or proportional CAC agreements may have many approaches and outcomes. If the goal is merely to have some agreement, in the belief that some agreement is better than none, then choices and negotiations may not be difficult, because such an approach is not likely to impose substantive restrictions. An example of this might be the prohibition of forces in a small geographical area. Yet a sweeping agreement which seeks to resolve major instabilities in a security relationship, especially between NATO and Russia, are likely to require substantial CAC measures. Ideally, measures should increase stability by resolving the security dilemma, preserving deterrence, and promoting defensive capabilities while hampering offensive capabilities. At the same time, NATO and Russia need to establish and preserve a military balance that is mutually acceptable least one side or both feel threatened, resulting in a cycle of arms racing, mistrust, threats and accusations, and ultimately conflict.

It is uncertain whether it is possible to have a CAC agreement between NATO and Russia in which deterrence is preserved, the security dilemma is resolved, defensive capabilities are superior to offensive ones, and there is a harmonious military balance. One side or both may have to accept compromises in these areas, but this methodology helps to lay out clearly what is being agreed to, and can serve as a common metric for substantial changes in the military balance and international security environment, possibly by a dedicated, neutral international organization

(IO) which is charged at the least with monitoring and assessment, but which may also have a substantial inspection role on a par with that of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (Lippert, 2023).

The creation of a new IO focused on a new Europe-wide CAC agreement which applies the QuACAC methodology could go a long way towards increasing the likelihood of any agreement succeeding, as some data suggest that the more states delegate authority to a CAC agreement executor, the more likely the agreement is to succeed. Recent successful agreements with a high delegation to IOs include the 1996 Sub-Regional Arms Control Agreement for the Balkans (a Balkans CFE Treaty), which had the close involvement of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the 2008 Six-Point Peace Plan for Georgia, which was implemented in large part by the European Union. However, the 2015 Minsk Agreements were an abject failure, despite a massive effort on the part of the OSCE (Lippert, Forthcoming). Another approach to increase the probability of agreement success is the inclusion of third-party states as signatories and/or implementers. In brief, third-party states may serve as neutral, objective arbiters in negotiations and implementation, and they may raise the diplomatic cost of violations and defection (Lippert, Forthcoming).

In the near-term, a QuACAC-based CAC agreement could lock in the existing military balance between NATO and Russia when the Russo-Ukraine War ceases, or the two sides could negotiate an agreement which takes other approaches, such as holding one side's levels at the current state (which would likely mean a relatively weak Russia due to significant losses), or holding one side's forces in the present state while the other decreases or is permitted to increase up to a ceiling as applicable. Russia may seek security guarantees from NATO through CAC if Moscow seeks to retain its post-Russo-Ukraine War military at the levels and capabilities at the cessation of hostilities, perhaps because of a desire to avoid an expensive rearmament or due to a change in leadership. This would echo the impetus for the CFE Treaty wherein then-General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev sought to lock in force reductions with NATO linked to the unilateral Soviet force reductions motivated in part by the desire to improve the Soviet economy and decrease tensions with the West (Foerster, 2002, p 43).

The Russo-Ukraine War began in part because of disputes and interpretive misunderstandings about the military balance between NATO and Russia. First, Russia viewed NATO's military capabilities as threatening, while NATO did not view itself as threatening. Second, neither side could agree on what a stable balance should be – which was manifested in the failure to maintain the existing and establish new CAC agreements. The QuACAC methodology is a tool which could assist in resolving some of the issues which drove the dispute. First, it can offer states a yardstick to measure one another's military capabilities to see to what extent there is or is not parity or, at least, a mutually perceived fair distribution of military capability. With a transparent tool that, ideally, both sides could use to measure force capability,

the path is open to a CAC agreement like the CFE Treaty. An arms control agreement based on and then managed by the QuACAC methodology would reduce the risk of conflict, because state parties and blocs would have a means to both negotiate and fix relative power at a certain ratio. At the same time, it offers states a tool to assess and potentially adapt to changes in military system capabilities and alliances (unlike the CFE Treaty).

The Russo-Ukraine War is the most destructive and calamitous event in Europe since World War Two, although it is only a sample of the destruction that could rain upon Europe were a conflict to erupt between NATO and Russia. CAC may be one of the key instruments to prevent such an outbreak of annihilation. Preventing such a war, which the QuACAC methodology can contribute to through CAC agreements, is imperative. While the obstacles to drafting a mutually acceptable agreement are substantial, the high costs of conflict of which we are daily reminded of may compel parties to overcome resistance to cooperation.

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email: [w.e.lippert@fgga.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:w.e.lippert@fgga.leidenuniv.nl)

ORCID: 0000-0001-6546-6109



Slikovno gradivo

Figures

**Figure 1**  
The Slavic world  
on global scale  
(Historical  
MapChart,  
2024)



**Figure 2**  
Soviet interwar  
posters with  
calls for  
Slavic unity  
(Inozemtsev,  
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Avtorji

Authors



Liliana Brožič

**Izred. prof. dr. Liliana Brožič** je doktorirala na Fakulteti za državne in evropske študije Nove univerze. Na Ministrstvu za obrambo je zaposlena od leta 1996. Od leta 2009 je bila odgovorna urednica, od leta 2022 pa glavna urednica Sodobnih vojaških izzivov (prej Bilten Slovenske vojske), ki jih izdaja Generalštab Slovenske vojske. Na Novi univerzi je habilitirana za področje varnostnih študij.

**Associate Prof. Liliana Brožič, PhD**, gained a doctorate from the Faculty of Government and European Studies of the New University. From 1996, she has been employed at the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Slovenia since 1996. From 2009 she has been the executive editor, and from 2022 editor-in-chief of Contemporary Military Challenges (formerly the Bulletin of the Slovenian Armed Forces), published by the General Staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces. She is habilitated at the New University in the field of security studies.



Andrej Benedejčič

**Dr. Andrej Benedejčič** je diplomiral na Univerzi Harvard, doktoriral pa na Univerzi v Ljubljani. Trenutno je stalni predstavnik Republike Slovenije pri zvezi Nato. Z varnostno tematiko se je poklicno ukvarjal vso svojo diplomatsko kariero, med drugim kot državni sekretar za nacionalno in mednarodno varnost kot tudi kot veleposlanik v Moskvi ter stalni predstavnik pri OVSE in drugih mednarodnih organizacijah na Dunaju. Je avtor knjige *Rusija in slovanstvo: med velikodržavnostjo in vzajemnostjo*.

**Dr Andrej Benedejčič** has a BA from Harvard University and a PhD from the University of Ljubljana. Currently, he is the Permanent Representative of Slovenia to NATO. He has dealt with security issues throughout his diplomatic career, including as State Secretary for National and International Security, as well as being the Ambassador to Moscow and Permanent Representative to the OSCE and other international organizations in Vienna. He is the author of the book *Russia and Slavdom: Between Statism and Reciprocity*.



Fritz Rademacher

**Fritz Rademacher** je magistriral iz političnih ved, zgodovine ter mednarodnega in javnega prava na Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn. Trenutno je profesor mednarodnih in varnostnih študij na Evropskem centru za varnostne študije Georgea C. Marshalla v Nemčiji. Pred tem je opravljal visoke funkcije v Natu in EU, kjer se je ukvarjal s številnimi strateškimi in politično-vojaškimi vprašanji. Njegovi raziskovalni interesi vključujejo Nato in čezatlantske odnose, evropsko varnost in obrambo, sodelovanje med Natom in EU ter nastajajoče in prebojne tehnologije in inovacije.

**Fritz Rademacher** holds an MA in Political Science, History, and International and Public Law from Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn. He currently serves as Professor of International and Security Studies at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Germany. Previously he has held senior positions at NATO and the EU dealing with a wide array of strategic and politico-military issues. His research interests include NATO and transatlantic relations, European security and defence, NATO-EU cooperation, and emerging and disruptive technologies and innovation.



Igor Kotnik

**Dr. Igor Kotnik** je doktor obramboslovnih znanosti (2000) in diplomant Kraljevega kolidža obrambnih ved v Londonu (2011). Vojaško znanje in izkušnje je pridobil kot kadet in inštruktor v Šoli rezervnih oficirjev pehote Bileća (1984–1985) in rezervni častnik v TO (1986–2002); je veteran vojne za Slovenijo. Bil je raziskovalec/asistent na obramboslovju Fakultete za družbene vede (1991–2000). Bil je svetovalec trem obrambnim ministrom (2000–2005, 2008–2010), petim načelnikom GŠ SV (od 2012) in tudi poveljniku NHQ Sarajevo (2014–2015).

**Igor Kotnik, PhD**, holds a PhD in Defence Studies (2000) and is a graduate of the Royal College of Defence Studies, London (2011). He gained his military knowledge and experience as a cadet and instructor in Reserve Infantry Officers' School Bileća (1984-1985) and as a reserve officer in the Slovenian Territorial Army (1986-2002); he is a veteran of the War for Slovenia. He was a researcher/assistant professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences (1991-2000). He has served as an advisor to three Ministers of Defence, five Chiefs of the General Staff of the SAF (from 2012 onwards) and also to the Commander of the NHQ Sarajevo (2014-2015).



Hanna Samir Kassab

**Dr. Hanna Samir Kassab** je doktoriral iz mednarodnih študij in magistriral iz političnih ved. Je docent za politične vede na univerzi East Carolina. Njegovi najnovejši deli sta članek »Geographically small but not weak: comparing the national security policies of Israel and Singapore«, objavljen v zborniku *Defense and Security Analysis*, in knjiga »Post-Cold War Predictions: Politicism in Practice«, objavljena pri založbi Routledge. Raziskovalno se ukvarja z nacionalizmom, terorizmom, organiziranim kriminalom, geopolitiko in državnimi konflikti.

**Hanna Samir Kassab, PhD**, holds a PhD in International Studies, and a MA in Political Science. He is an assistant professor of political science at East Carolina University. His most recent work is an article "Geographically small but not weak: comparing the national security policies of Israel and Singapore" in journal *Defense and Security Analysis* and a book "Post-Cold War Predictions: Politicism in Practice", published by Routledge. His research interests are in the fields of nationalism, terrorism, organized crime, geopolitics, and state conflict.



William Lippert

**William Lippert** je diplomiral iz mednarodnih odnosov in psihologije ter magistriral iz varnostnih študij. Je obrambni analitik, zaposlen je bil med drugim tudi na Ministrstvu za obrambo ZDA in na Interpolu. Trenutno je doktorski študent na Inštitutu za varnostne in globalne zadeve pri Univerzi v Leidnu (Nizozemska). Pri svojem raziskovalnem delu se osredotoča na področje nadzora nad konvencionalnimi silami v Evropi.

**William Lippert** holds a bachelor's degree in international studies and psychology and a master's degree in security studies. He is a career intelligence analyst, having worked for the US Department of Defense and then INTERPOL. He is currently a PhD candidate in the Institute for Security and Global Affairs at Leiden University, Netherlands. His research focuses on conventional arms control in Europe.

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Navodila za avtorje

Instructions to authors

## NAVODILA ZA AVTORJE

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<b>Naslov prispevka</b>	Navedbi avtorjev sledi naslov prispevka. Črke v naslovu so velike 16 pik, natisnjene krepko, besedilo naslova pa poravnano na sredini.
<b>Povzetek</b>	Prispevku mora biti dodan povzetek, ki obsega največ 800 znakov (10 vrstic). Povzetek naj na kratko opredeli temo prispevka, predvsem naj povzame rezultate in ugotovitve. Splošne ugotovitve in misli ne spadajo v povzetek, temveč v uvod.
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<b>Kratka predstavitev avtorjev</b>	Avtorji morajo pripraviti kratko predstavitev svojega strokovnega oziroma znanstvenega dela. Predstavitev naj ne presega 600 znakov s presledki (10 vrstic, 80 besed). Avtorji naj besedilo umestijo na konec prispevka po navedeni literaturi.
<b>Strukturiranje besedila</b>	Posamezna poglavja v besedilu naj bodo ločena s samostojnimi podnaslovi in ustrezno oštevilčena (členitev največ na 4 ravni). <i>Primer:</i> 1 Uvod 2 Naslov poglavja (1. raven) 2.1 Podnaslov (2. raven) 2.1.1 Podnaslov (3. raven) 2.1.1.1 Podnaslov (4. raven)



## Oblikovanje seznama literature

V seznamu literature je treba po abecednem redu navesti le avtorje, na katere se sklicujete v prispevku, celotna oznaka vira pa mora biti skladna s **harvardskim načinom navajanja**. Če je avtorjev več, navedemo vse, kot so navedeni na izvirnem delu.

*Primeri:*

*a) knjiga:*

Priimek, ime (začetnica imena), letnica. *Naslov dela*. Kraj: Založba.

Na primer: Urlich, W., 1983. *Critical Heuristics of Social Planning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

*b) zbornik:*

Samson, C., 1970. Problems of information studies in history. S. Stone, ur. *Humanities information research*. Sheffield: CRUS, 1980, str. 44–68. Pri posameznih člankih v zbornikih na koncu posameznega vira navedemo strani, na katerih je članek, na primer:

*c) članek v reviji*

Kolega, N., 2006. Slovenian coast sea flood risk. *Acta geographica Slovenica*. 46-2, str. 143–167.

## Navajanje virov z interneta

Vse reference se začenjajo enako kot pri natisnjenih virih, le da običajnemu delu sledi še podatek o tem, kje na internetu je bil dokument dobljen in kdaj. Podatek o tem, kdaj je bil dokument dobljen, je pomemben zaradi pogostega spreminjanja [www.okolja](http://www.okolja.si).

*Primer:*

Urlich, W., 1983. *Critical Heuristics of Social Planning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, str. 45–100. <http://www.mors.si/index.php?id=213>, 17. 10. 2008. Pri navajanju zanimivih internetnih naslovov v besedilu (ne gre za navajanje posebnega dokumenta) zadošča navedba naslova (<http://www.vpvs.uni-lj.si>). Posebna referenca na koncu besedila v tem primeru ni potrebna.

## Sklicevanje na vire

Pri sklicevanju na vire med besedilom navedite priimek avtorja, letnico izdaje in stran. *Primer:* ... (Smith, 1997, str. 12) ...

Če dobessedno navajate del besedila, ga ustrezno označite z narekovaji, v oklepaju pa poleg avtorja in letnice navedite stran besedila, iz katerega ste navajali.

*Primer:* ... (Smith, 1997, str. 15) ...

Pri povzemanju drugega avtorja napišemo besedilo brez narekovajev, v oklepaju pa napišemo, da gre za povzeto besedilo. *Primer:* (po Smith, 1997, str. 15). Če avtorja navajamo v besedilu, v oklepaju navedemo samo letnico izida in stran (1997, str. 15).

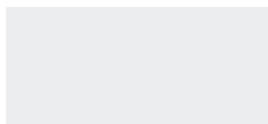
## Slike, diagrami in tabele

Slike, diagrami in tabele v prispevku naj bodo v posebej pripravljenih datotekah, ki omogočajo lektorske popravke. V besedilu mora biti jasno označeno mesto, kamor je treba vnesti sliko. Skupna dolžina prispevka ne sme preseči dane omejitve.

Če avtor iz tehničnih razlogov grafičnih dodatkov ne more oddati v elektronski obliki, je izjemoma sprejemljivo, da slike priloži besedilu. Avtor mora v tem primeru na zadnjo stran slike napisati zaporedno številko in naslov, v besedilu pa pustiti dovolj prostora zanjo. Prav tako mora biti besedilo opremljeno z naslovom in številčenjem slike. Diagrami se štejejo kot slike.

Vse slike in tabele se številčijo. Številčenje poteka enotno in ni povezano s številčenjem poglavij. Naslov slike je naveden pod sliko, naslov tabele pa nad tabelo. Navadno je v besedilu navedeno vsaj eno sklicevanje na sliko ali tabelo. Sklic na sliko ali tabelo je: ... (slika 5) ... (tabela 2) ...

Primer slike:



Slika 5: Naslov slike

Primer tabele:

Tabela 2: Naslov tabele



## Opombe pod črto

Številčenje opomb pod črto je neodvisno od strukture besedila in se v vsakem prispevku začne s številko 1. Posebej opozarjamo avtorje, da so opombe pod črto namenjene pojasnjevanju misli, zapisanih v besedilu, in ne navajanju literature.

## Kratice

Kratice naj bodo dodane v oklepaju, ko se okrajšana beseda prvič uporabi, zato posebnih seznamov kratic ne dodajamo. Za kratico ali izraz v angleškem jeziku napišemo najprej slovensko ustreznico, v oklepaju pa angleški izvirnik in morebitno angleško kratico.

## Format zapisa prispevka

Uredniški odbor sprejema prispevke, napisane z urejevalnikom besedil MS Word, izjemoma tudi v besedilnem zapisu (text only).

## Naslov avtorja

Prispevkom naj bosta dodana avtorjeva naslov in internetni naslov ali telefonska številka, na katerih bo dosegljiv uredniškemu odboru.

## Kako poslati prispevek

Na naslov uredništva ali članov uredniškega odbora je treba poslati elektronsko različico prispevka.

## Potrjevanje prejetja prispevka

Uredniški odbor avtorju pisno potrdi prejetje prispevka.

## Korekture

Avtor opravi korekture svojega prispevka v treh dneh.

**Naslov  
uredniškega  
odbora**

Ministrstvo za obrambo  
Generalštab Slovenske vojske  
Sodobni vojaški izzivi  
Uredniški odbor  
Vojkova cesta 55  
1000 Ljubljana  
Slovenija

Elektronski naslov uredništva:  
[svi-cmc@mors.si](mailto:svi-cmc@mors.si)

**Prispevkov, ki ne bodo urejeni skladno s tem navodilom, uredniški odbor ne bo sprejemal.**

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE AUTHORS OF PAPERS FOR THE CONTEMPORARY MILITARY CHALLENGES

### Content-related instructions

#### General

**The Contemporary Military Challenges** is an interdisciplinary scientific expert magazine, which publishes papers on current topics, researches, scientific and expert discussions, technical or social sciences analysis from the security, defence and military field, as well as overviews of professional and science monographs (book reviews).

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We publish papers, which have not been previously published or sent to another magazine for publication. The author is held responsible for all eventual copyright violations. If the paper has already been printed elsewhere, sent for publication or presented at an expert conference, the author must notify the editor, obtain the publisher's consent (if necessary) and indicate the reasons for republishing.

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The papers should consist of 16 typewritten pages or 30,000 characters with spaces, at a minimum they should have 8 pages or 15,000 characters and at a maximum 24 pages or 45,000 characters.

Overviews of science or professional monograph (book presentation) should not have more than 3.000 characters with spaces.

#### Reviews

The papers are reviewed. The review is anonymous. With regard to the reviewer's assessment, the editorial board or the editor either accepts the paper, demands modifications if necessary or rejects it. After the reception of the reviewers' remarks the author inserts them into the paper.

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The translation of the papers or abstracts is provided by the organizational unit competent for translation or the School of Foreign Languages, DDETC.

<b>Indicating the authors of the paper</b>	<p>The authors' name should be written in the upper left corner, aligned left.</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p> <p>Name 1 Surname 1, Name 2 Surname 2,</p>
<b>Title of the paper</b>	<p>The title of the paper is written below the listed authors. The letters in the address are bold with font size 16. The text of the address is centrally aligned.</p>
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>The paper should have an abstract of a maximum 800 characters with spaces. The abstract should present the topic of the paper in short, particularly the results and the findings. General findings and reflections do not belong in the abstract, but rather in the introduction.</p>
<b>Abstract in English</b>	<p>The authors must also submit the translation of the abstract into English. The translation of the abstract is likewise limited to a maximum of 900 characters with spaces (12 lines).</p>
<b>Key words</b>	<p>Key words (3-5 also in the English language) should be bold with a justified text alignment.</p>
<b>Text</b>	<p>The authors should submit their papers on a A4 paper format, with a 1,5 line spacing written in Arial and with font size 12. At the upper and the bottom edge, there should be approx. 3 cm of space, the left margin should be 2 cm wide and the right margin 4 cm. Each page consists of approx. 30 lines with 62 characters. The text should have a justified alignment, without indents at the beginning of the paragraphs.</p>
<b>A brief presentation of the authors</b>	<p>The authors must prepare a brief presentation of their expert or scientific work. The presentation should not exceed 600 characters (10 lines, 80 words). These texts should be placed at the end of the paper, after the cited literature. The author's photo should be at least 600 kb or 200 dpi in size.</p>
<b>Text structuring</b>	<p>Individual chapters should be separated with independent subtitles and adequately numbered.</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p> <p>1 Introduction 2 Title of the chapter (1<sup>st</sup> level) 2.1 Subtitle (2<sup>nd</sup> level) 2.1.1 Subtitle (3<sup>rd</sup> level) 2.1.1.1 Subtitle (4<sup>th</sup> level)</p>

## Referencing

In the bibliography only the authors of the references you refer to in the paper have to be listed alphabetically. The entire reference has to be in compliance with the **Harvard referencing style**.

*Example:*

Surname, name (can also be the initial of the name), year. *Title of the work*. Place. Publishing House.

*Example A:*

Ulrich, W., 1983. *Critical Heuristics of Social Planning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

At certain papers published in a collection of papers, at the end of each reference a page on which the paper can be found is indicated.

*Example B:*

Ulrich, W., 1983. *Critical Heuristics of Social Planning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 45-100.

## Referencing internet sources

All references start the same way as the references for the printed sources, only that the usual part is followed by the information about the internet page on which the document was found as well as the date on which it was found. The information on the time the document was taken off the internet is important because the WWW environment constantly changes.

*Example C:*

Ulrich, W., 1983. *Critical Heuristics of Social Planning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p. 45-100. <http://www.mors.si/index.php?id=213>, 17 October 2008.

When referencing interesting WWW pages in the text (not citing an individual document) it is enough to state only the internet address (<http://www.vpvs.uni-lj.si>). A separate reference at the end of the text is therefore not necessary.

*More on the Harvard referencing style in the A Guide to the Harvard System of Referencing, 2007; <http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.thm#1.3>, 16 May 2007.*

## Citing

When citing sources in the text, indicate only the surname of the author and the year of publication. *Example:* ..... (Smith, 1997) ...

If you cite the text literary, that part should be adequately marked »text«...after which you state the exact page of the text in which the cited text is written.

*Example:* ...(Smith, 1997, p 15) ...

## Figures, diagrams, tables

Figures, diagrams and tables in the paper should be prepared in separate files that allow proofreading corrections. The place in the text where the picture should be inserted must be clearly indicated. The total length of the paper must not surpass the given limitation.

If the author cannot submit the graphical supplements in the electronic form due to technical reasons, it is exceptionally acceptable to enclose the figures to the text. In this case the author must write a sequence number and a title on the back of each picture and leave enough space in the text for it. The text must likewise contain the title and the sequence number of the figure. Diagrams are considered figures.

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As a rule at least one reference to a figure or a table must be in the paper.

Reference to a figure or a table is: ... (figure 5) ..... (table 2) .....

Example of a figure:

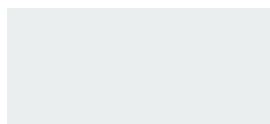


Figure 5: Title of the figure

Example of a table:

Table 2: Title of the table



## Footnotes

Numbering footnotes is individual from the structure of the text and starts with the number 1 in each paper. We want to stress that the footnotes are intended for explaining thoughts written in the text and not for referencing literature.

## Abbreviations

When used for the first time, the abbreviations in the text must be explained in parenthesis, for which reason non additional list of abbreviations is needed. If the abbreviations or terms are written in English, we have to write the appropriate Slovenian term with the English original and possibly the English abbreviation in the parenthesis.

## Format type of the paper

The editorial board accepts only the texts written with a MS Word text editor and only exceptionally texts in the text only format.

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Each paper should include the author's ORCID, address, e-mail and a telephone number, so the editorial board could reach him or her.

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**The editorial board will not accept papers, which will not be in compliance with the above instructions.**





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**e-mail:** [liliana.brozic@mors.si](mailto:liliana.brozic@mors.si)

**Izred. prof. dr. Liliana Brožič** je doktorirala na Fakulteti za državne in evropske študije Nove univerze. Na Ministrstvu za obrambo je zaposlena od leta 1996. Od leta 2009 je bila odgovorna urednica, od leta 2022 pa glavna urednica Sodobnih vojaških izzivov (prej Bilten Slovenske vojske), ki jih izdaja Generalštab Slovenske vojske. Na Novi univerzi je habilitirana za področje varnostnih študij.

**Associate Prof. Liliana Brožič, PhD**, gained a doctorate from the Faculty of Government and European Studies of the New University. From 1996, she has been employed at the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Slovenia since 1996. From 2009 she has been the executive editor, and from 2022 editor-in-chief of Contemporary Military Challenges (formerly the Bulletin of the Slovenian Armed Forces), published by the General Staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces. She is habilitated at the New University in the field of security studies.

ORCID: 0000-0002-0508-2477

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e-mail: [andrej.benedejcic@gov.si](mailto:andrej.benedejcic@gov.si)

**Dr. Andrej Benedejčič** je diplomiral na Univerzi Harvard, doktoriral pa na Univerzi v Ljubljani. Trenutno je stalni predstavnik Republike Slovenije pri zvezi Nato. Z varnostno tematiko se je poklicno ukvarjal vso svojo diplomatsko kariero, med drugim kot državni sekretar za nacionalno in mednarodno varnost kot tudi kot veleposlanik v Moskvi ter stalni predstavnik pri OVSE ter drugih mednarodnih organizacijah na Dunaju. Je avtor knjige *Rusija in slovanstvo: med velikodržavnostjo in vzajemnostjo*.

**Dr. Andrej Benedejčič** has a BA from Harvard University and a PhD from the University of Ljubljana. Currently, he is the Permanent Representative of Slovenia to NATO. He has dealt with security issues throughout his diplomatic career, including as State Secretary for National and International Security, as well as being the Ambassador to Moscow and Permanent Representative to the OSCE and other international organizations in Vienna. He is the author of the book *Russia and Slavdom: Between Statism and Reciprocity*.

ORCID: 0000-0002-9905-7423

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**e-mail:** [fritz.rademacher@marshallcenter.org](mailto:fritz.rademacher@marshallcenter.org)

**Fritz Rademacher** je magistriral iz političnih ved, zgodovine ter mednarodnega in javnega prava na Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn. Trenutno je profesor mednarodnih in varnostnih študij na Evropskem centru za varnostne študije Georgea C. Marshalla v Nemčiji. Pred tem je opravljal visoke funkcije v Natu in EU, kjer se je ukvarjal s številnimi strateškimi in politično-vojaškimi vprašanji. Njegovi raziskovalni interesi vključujejo Nato in čezatlantske odnose, evropsko varnost in obrambo, sodelovanje med Natom in EU ter nastajajoče in prebojne tehnologije in inovacije.

**Fritz Rademacher** holds an MA in Political Science, History, and International and Public Law from Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn. He currently serves as Professor of International and Security Studies at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Germany. Previously he has held senior positions at NATO and the EU dealing with a wide array of strategic and politico-military issues. His research interests include NATO and transatlantic relations, European security and defence, NATO-EU cooperation, and emerging and disruptive technologies and innovation.

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**e-mail:** [igor.kotnik@mors.si](mailto:igor.kotnik@mors.si)

**Dr. Igor Kotnik** je doktor obramboslovnih znanosti (2000) in diplomant Kraljevega kolidža obrambnih ved v Londonu (2011). Vojaško znanje in izkušnje je pridobil kot kadet in inštruktor v Šoli rezervnih oficirjev pehote Bileća (1984–1985) in rezervni častnik v TO (1986–2002); je veteran vojne za Slovenijo. Bil je raziskovalec/asistent na obramboslovju Fakultete za družbene vede (1991–2000). Bil je svetovalec trem obrambnim ministrom (2000–2005, 2008–2010), petim načelnikom GŠ SV (od 2012) in tudi poveljniku NHQ Sarajevo (2014–2015).

**Igor Kotnik, PhD**, holds a PhD in Defence Studies (2000) and is a graduate of the Royal College of Defence Studies, London (2011). He gained his military knowledge and experience as a cadet and instructor in Reserve Infantry Officers' School Bileća (1984-1985) and as a reserve officer in the Slovenian Territorial Army (1986-2002); he is a veteran of the War for Slovenia. He was a researcher/assistant professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences (1991-2000). He has served as an advisor to three Ministers of Defence, five Chiefs of the General Staff of the SAF (from 2012 onwards) and also to the Commander of the NHQ Sarajevo (2014-2015).

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**e-mail: [hskassab@gmail.com](mailto:hskassab@gmail.com)**

**Dr. Hanna Samir Kassab** je doktor mednarodnih študij in magister političnih ved. Je docent za politične vede na univerzi East Carolina. Njegovo najnovejše delo je članek »Geographically small but not weak: comparing the national security policies of Israel and Singapore« v zborniku *Defense and Security Analysis* in knjiga »Post-Cold War Predictions: Politicism in Practice«, objavljeno pri založbi Routledge. Raziskovalno se ukvarja z nacionalizmom, terorizmom, organiziranim kriminalom, geopolitiko in državnimi konflikti.

**Hanna Samir Kassab, PhD**, holds a PhD in International Studies, and a MA in Political Science. He is an assistant professor of political science at East Carolina University. His most recent work is an article “Geographically small but not weak: comparing the national security policies of Israel and Singapore” in journal *Defense and Security Analysis* and a book “Post-Cold War Predictions: Politicism in Practice”, published by Routledge. His research interests are in the fields of nationalism, terrorism, organized crime, geopolitics, and state conflict.

ORCID: 0000-0002-2706-3226

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**e-mail:** [w.e.lippert@fgga.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:w.e.lippert@fgga.leidenuniv.nl)

**William Lippert** je diplomiral iz mednarodnih odnosov in psihologije ter magistriral iz varnostnih študij. Je obrambni analitik, zaposlen je bil med drugim tudi na Ministrstvu za obrambo ZDA in na Interpolu. Trenutno je doktorski študent na Inštitutu za varnostne in globalne zadeve pri Univerzi v Leidnu (Nizozemska). Pri svojem raziskovalnem delu se osredotoča na področje nadzora nad konvencionalnimi silami v Evropi.

**William Lippert** holds a bachelor's degree in international studies and psychology and a master's degree in security studies. He is a career intelligence analyst, having worked for the US Department of Defense and then INTERPOL. He is currently a PhD candidate in the Institute for Security and Global Affairs at Leiden University, Netherlands. His research focuses on conventional arms control in Europe.

ORCID: 0000-0001-6546-6109

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