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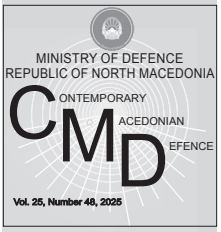

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RECONSIDERING DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF SOVEREIGNTY

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Abstract: *This article critically reevaluates the conceptualization of democracy in Africa, highlighting the disconnect between Western liberal models and the continent's unique socio-political contexts. It argues that externally imposed, Eurocentric democratic frameworks have often perpetuated elite dominance, hindering genuine sovereignty, justice, and development in postcolonial Africa. Drawing upon a wide spectrum of intellectual traditions—from Ibn Khaldun's proto-democratic insights to the critical perspectives of Kenneth Arrow, Amartya Sen, Edward Nell, Edgar Morin, Noam Chomsky, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Raymond Aron, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Samir Amin, Jeffrey Sachs, Jacques Attali, and Omar Aktouf, among others—this article advances a reimagined, pluriversal conception of democracy. This model emphasizes collective agency, locally grounded governance, and transformative development, aligning with Africa's historical, cultural, and political realities. The article highlights Boutros-Ghali's focus on international cooperation and sustainable development, particularly in his* Agenda for Peace *(1992), which counters the often isolationist and top-down nature of Western models. Additionally, Boutros-Ghali's developmental perspective, which frames development as a multidimensional transformation, aligns with Edward Nell's theory of transformational growth, where development is not mere economic growth but a process that reshapes social relations and enhances human agency. In collaboration with Nell, Mayor, and Errouaki, this work demonstrates that such a vision requires equity, education, and environmental stewardship for sustainable progress. Challenging the assumption that electoral democracy inherently leads to economic growth, the article advocates for a context-sensitive approach focused on justice, sovereignty, and participatory governance. By addressing the failures of Western models, this article contributes to the ongoing discourse on democracy and development, proposing a framework that is both inclusive and rooted in Africa's socio-political realities.*

Keywords: *Democracy, Africa, Postcolonialism, Sovereignty, Development, Governance, Western Models, Participatory Democracy, Collective Agency, Pluriversal Models.*

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Introduction: Reconceptualizing Democracy in the Context of Africa's Political Evolution

The historiography of democracy traditionally traces its origins to 5th-century BCE Athens, where the establishment of mechanisms such as the ekklesia (Assembly) allowed a segment of the male citizenry to participate in governance. The term "democracy," derived from the Greek *demos* (people) and *kratos* (rule), epitomizes the ideal of popular sovereignty. However, the Athenian model, while foundational to democratic thought, was deeply exclusionary, systematically marginalizing women, slaves, and non-citizens. Despite these limitations, Athenian democracy provided a conceptual framework that would be revisited and reinterpreted in subsequent intellectual movements, notably during the Enlightenment. Thinkers such as John Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau redefined democracy through the lenses of individual rights, the separation of powers, and the social contract, laying the intellectual foundation for modern liberal democracies.

Yet, the modern liberal democratic project cannot be understood solely through its normative principles. Critical scholarship has increasingly exposed the disjunction between democratic ideals and their practical application, particularly in postcolonial societies. In numerous African nations, liberal democratic frameworks—often introduced through colonial legacies or external impositions—have perpetuated new forms of dependency and elite domination rather than facilitating genuine democratic transformation. The gap between the idealized principles of democracy and the socio-political realities of postcolonial Africa presents a profound challenge. This raises the critical question: how can democracy, as a normative ideal, be reconciled with the unresolved issues of sovereignty, dignity, and equitable development within African governance?

This article critically engages with the evolution and contradictions of democratic theory, focusing particularly on its application within the African context. It critiques Western democratic paradigms, examining their limitations when applied to African political realities. The central argument of the article is that democracy, as conceptualized in Western thought, fails to address the unique socio-political dynamics of Africa. Authentic democratic development, the article argues, must be grounded in Africa's own historical, cultural, and social contexts, acknowledging both the legacies of colonialism and the aspirations for self-governance. Drawing from diverse intellectual traditions—including the contributions of Ibn Khaldun—the article challenges the dominant liberal orthodoxy and proposes a pluriversal reimagining of democracy, one that is firmly rooted in justice, collective agency, and sovereign development.

This comparative framework not only evaluates Western models of democracy, but also interrogates their applicability and relevance in postcolonial Africa. It contends that democracy in Africa must be conceived as a dynamic process of continuous reinvention, deeply embedded in the region's historical experiences and shaped by the aspirations of its peoples for self-determination, social justice, and collective agency. By rethinking democracy in this way, the article challenges the notion of a universal and static democratic ideal, advocating instead for a pluralistic vision that acknowledges the diverse political traditions and experiences across the globe.

The end of the Cold War marked a crucial juncture in the evolution of global governance, necessitating a profound shift in how international relations and development were conceptualized. In this context, the vision advanced by Edward J. Nell, Federico Mayor Zaragoza, and Karim Errouaki offers a compelling reimagining of democracy and governance. Their collective framework emphasizes a transformative approach to development—one that is human-centered, equitable, and sustainability-driven. The contributions of Nell, Mayor, and Errouaki converge around the need to adapt governance models to meet the realities of postcolonial regions like Africa, where external models often fail to resonate with indigenous socio-political structures.

In this framework, the integration of peace, development, and democracy is viewed not as comprising isolated goals, but as encompassing interconnected elements that mutually reinforce each other. The "Nell-Mayor-Errouaki vision" plays a pivotal role in this discourse by advocating for policy innovations that center on transformative growth, equitable economic structures, and human-centered development. This integrated, forward-thinking vision emphasizes that true democratic transformation in Africa must prioritize local sovereignty and development, aligning governance structures with values of justice, equity, and collective empowerment. By engaging with this vision, the article proposes a dynamic, context-sensitive model of democracy, offering an alternative to the often prescriptive and one-size-fits-all solutions that have historically been applied to Africa's political development.

The Problematic and Contribution

The central problematic addressed by this article revolves around the tension between the liberal democratic models inherited from colonial legacies and the indigenous political realities of African societies. While liberal democracy is often framed as a universal ideal, this article contends that its historical and ideological roots in Western contexts render it ill-suited to address the unique challenges faced by African nations. The failure of externally imposed democratic frameworks is not only theoretical but manifest in their inability to catalyze substantive political and economic transformations in Africa. In practice, these frameworks frequently serve to reinforce the existing power structures, marginalize local communities, and fail to deliver on the promises of sovereignty, dignity, and justice.

The contribution of this article is twofold. First, it critiques the inadequacy of Western democratic models in addressing the socio-political complexities of Africa. The article argues that these models, while theoretically attractive, are insufficient for resolving Africa's most pressing challenges, such as political instability, economic underdevelopment, and social inequality. Second, it offers a reimagined vision of democracy—one that is deeply rooted in Africa's historical, cultural, and social contexts. By drawing on indigenous epistemologies and alternative intellectual traditions, the article proposes a dynamic understanding of democracy that transcends Western paradigms. This reimagined model of democracy focuses on justice, collective agency, and the affirmation of Africa's sovereignty, allowing for a more inclusive and equitable conception of governance.

In advancing this reimagined vision, the article incorporates insights from influential scholars such as Kenneth Arrow, Jacques Attali, and others, whose work critically examines both the formal limitations of democratic decision-making and the necessity for a more flexible, historically grounded understanding of democracy. Arrow's *Impossibility Theorem* highlights the inherent contradictions in formal electoral systems, while Attali's systemic approach emphasizes the need for a democracy that is adaptive and contextually sensitive to the realities of different societies. This comparative framework allows for a broader, more inclusive conceptualization of democracy, one that is capable of addressing the unprecedented challenges of globalization, ecological crises, and systemic inequality.

Thus, the article contributes to the ongoing discourse of democracy by emphasizing the need for a more pluralistic and contextualized approach, particularly in the African context. It challenges the notion of a universal, static democratic model and advocates for a reimagined, dynamic vision of democracy—one that can meet the shifting realities of Africa's political evolution and engage with global interdependence, national sovereignty, and social justice.

Article Structure

The article is organized as follows:

1. **Contours of Postcolonial Democracy:** Examining the intersections of development, dignity, and the quest for sovereignty in Africa.
2. **Sovereignty and Dignity:** Analyzing Africa's true political challenges and barriers to democratic consolidation.
3. **Shaping Africa's Future:** Proposing frameworks for embracing sovereignty and dignity in the pursuit of democratic self-determination.
4. **The Boutros-Ghali Triad Reconsidered:** Rethinking global governance structures with a focus on Africa's agency.
5. **Redefining Globalization:** The Nell-Mayor-Errouaki Vision for Equitable Growth, Policy Innovation, and Africa's Transformative Future.
6. **Democracy, Sovereignty, and the Future of Guinea:** A call for clarity and commitment in the context of Guinea's political developments.
7. **The Sahel: Military Interventions Rooted in Popular Sovereignty:** Investigating the Sahel region's political upheavals as expressions of sovereignty and the failure of civilian governance.
8. **Democracy, Governance, and Term Limits in Western and African Contexts:** A comparative analysis of the role of term limits in Western and African political landscapes.

The article draws on the intellectual contributions of a diverse range of scholars, including Ibn Khaldun, Kenneth Arrow, Jacques Attali, Noam Chomsky, Michel Foucault, Edgar Morin, Amartya Sen, Pierre Bourdieu, Edward Nell, Samir Amin, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Federico Mayor, Jeffrey Sachs, Omar Aktouf, Karim Errouaki, Kwame Nkrumah, Amílcar Cabral, and others. Through these contributions, the article critically examines the complex interplay between formal institutional structures and the socio-political contexts in which they operate. By advocating for a context-sensitive, dynamic model of democracy, the article seeks to offer a comprehensive vision of governance that reflects the specific needs and aspirations of African societies.

In conclusion, this article contributes to the broader discourse on democracy by critically analyzing its contradictions, particularly in the context of postcolonial Africa. It challenges the notion of a universal, static democratic model and offers a compelling reimagining of democracy—one that is rooted in justice, collective agency, and sovereign development. By engaging with the intellectual contributions of key scholars and integrating diverse perspectives, this article advocates for a more inclusive, dynamic, and context-specific conception of democracy that can better address the challenges of globalization, national sovereignty, and social justice in Africa and beyond.

1. Democracy: Unmasking the Political Narrative

The origins of democracy are traditionally traced to ancient Athens in the 5th century BCE. The etymology of "democracy" derives from the Greek *demos* (people) and *kratos* (rule), denoting governance by the people. Under the leadership of Cleisthenes, Athens implemented reforms that expanded citizen participation through institutions like the *ekklesia* (Assembly), where eligible male citizens directly debated and voted on public matters (Ober, 2008).

However, this democratic model was highly exclusionary, limited to a minority of the population—excluding women, slaves, and foreigners. Despite these constraints, Athenian democracy established a conceptual framework that informed later democratic theory and practice.

The revival of democratic ideals during the Enlightenment period, through the works of John Locke (1689), Montesquieu (1748), and Rousseau (1762), emphasized natural rights, separation of powers, and the social contract. These principles underpinned revolutionary transformations in the United States and France in the 18th century, leading to modern representative democracies.

Nevertheless, as scholars such as Chantal Mouffe (2000) and David Held (2006) have pointed out, liberal democracy is neither ideologically neutral nor universally applicable. Its promotion as a global standard often masks geopolitical interests and reproduces neocolonial structures in the Global South. In Africa, the imposition of electoral models has frequently coincided with weakened state sovereignty and external dependency (Mamdani, 1996).

2. Prosperity, Autocracy, and the Democratic Pathway to Development

The relationship between democracy and development remains one of the most contested debates in political economy and development studies. While mainstream liberal discourse often posits democracy as both a catalyst and a condition for sustainable development, empirical evidence presents a more nuanced picture. Indeed, numerous cases—from South Korea and Taiwan to Singapore and China—suggest that significant economic growth can occur under non-democratic regimes. This has led scholars such as Fareed Zakaria (2003) to caution against equating electoral processes with genuine liberal democracies and to highlight the prevalence of "illiberal democracies" where institutional frameworks remain weak or manipulated by elites.

In contrast, Amartya Sen (1999) argues for a normative and practical linkage between freedom and development. For Sen, democracy—conceived not merely as periodic elections but as a broader system of freedoms, public reasoning, and participatory capabilities—is integral to human development. He contends that political freedoms and democratic accountability are not only valuable ends in themselves but also instrumental in preventing catastrophes such as famines and in promoting policies that reflect the interests of marginalized populations. Thus, for Sen, development without democracy is ultimately unsustainable because it lacks the ethical foundation and feedback mechanisms necessary for inclusive progress.

This dichotomy becomes even more complex in the African context. Post-colonial democratic transitions, while initially promising, have often failed to produce robust institutions or broad-based economic transformation. As Thandika Mkandawire (2001) emphasizes, donor-imposed structural adjustment programs and externally driven democratic reforms have created what he terms "choiceless democracies"—nominally pluralistic regimes that are severely constrained in their economic and policy sovereignty. In such contexts, democracy becomes performative, while economic and social development remain elusive.

Jeffrey Sachs (2005, 2008) similarly critiques the overreliance on market orthodoxy and liberal electoralism in development paradigms. He advocates for a holistic and global approach to development that integrates institutional reform with investments in health, education, and infrastructure—areas often neglected under autocratic growth models or austerity-driven democratic regimes. Sachs warns that without addressing global structural inequalities and creating mechanisms for meaningful international solidarity, neither autocracy nor democracy will deliver sustainable development for the Global South.

Nell (1998) and Nell, Mayor and Errouaki (2025), advance a transformative economic framework grounded in social values, long-term planning, and developmental justice. Nell (1998)'s theory of "transformational growth" challenges the idea that markets alone can generate inclusive prosperity. Instead, he argues that developmental success requires democratic participation in shaping economic priorities and a reimagining of institutions to serve collective well-being rather than elite accumulation (Nell, Zaragoza & Errouaki, 2025). Federico Mayor Zaragoza (2000) reinforces this point by calling for a "new social contract" rooted in democratic ethics, intercultural dialogue, and the democratization of knowledge and power.

Samir Amin (2004) goes further by critiquing the liberal democratic model itself as an instrument of global capitalist domination. He argues that in the peripheries of the global economy, liberal democracy often masks structural dependency and reinforces imperial forms of governance through transnational institutions and economic coercion. In place of this, Amin advocates for delinking from neoliberal globalism and constructing sovereign developmental pathways based on popular participation and economic redistribution—a form of "people's democracy" that transcends the narrow confines of electoralism.

Similarly, Omar Aktouf (2002) calls for a radical critique of Western management and development paradigms, especially in the African and Arab worlds. Drawing from postcolonial theory and critical management studies, Aktouf emphasizes the importance of culturally grounded governance models that prioritize social cohesion, ethical leadership, and endogenous knowledge systems. According to Aktouf, replicating Western liberal institutions without contextual adaptation risks perpetuating dependency, alienation, and institutional fragility.

Taken together, these perspectives underscore the importance of rethinking the presumed causality between democracy and development. The African experience demonstrates that democratic forms devoid of substantive content—such as participatory governance, economic justice, and institutional autonomy—can become hollow, even counterproductive. As such, the challenge is not to choose between autocracy and democracy in a binary fashion, but to reimagine democracy itself in ways that are historically grounded, socially inclusive, and developmentally effective.

In this regard, the path forward requires moving beyond the imitation of Western liberal models toward the creation of **pluriversal** frameworks of governance that reflect local histories, needs, and aspirations. Democracy, then, must be rediscovered not simply as a political system, but as a *civilizational project* that fuses freedom with justice, participation with redistribution, and autonomy with global solidarity.

3. Ibn Khaldun's Timeless Wisdom: Governance, Leadership, and Proto-Democratic Thought

The 14th-century North African polymath, **Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406)**, stands as one of the earliest and most original thinkers on **state formation**, **leadership**, and **historical cycles**. In his *Muqaddimah* (1377/1967), he developed a systematic and empirical theory of society that rivals modern sociological and political frameworks. His concept of **asabiyyah** (social solidarity or group feeling) serves as the central mechanism through which states rise, consolidate power, and eventually fall due to internal decay and the loss of cohesion.

While Ibn Khaldun did not explicitly argue for **democracy** in the modern liberal sense, several of his ideas bear resemblance to foundational democratic principles, including:

Shura (consultation): Rooted in Islamic governance, this principle aligns with deliberative elements of democracy. Ibn Khaldun emphasized the value of leaders who rule

through **collective counsel** and **moral legitimacy**, rather than coercion or divine right (Ibn Khaldun, 1377/1967).

Justice as the basis of governance: He argued that oppressive rule leads to social disintegration and economic decline. This focus on **justice as the foundation of legitimacy** resonates strongly with democratic ideals (Rosenthal, 1967).

Skepticism of dynastic power: Ibn Khaldun's cyclical theory warned against the **corruption of dynastic power** over generations, highlighting the danger of political elites becoming detached from the common good—an enduring critique echoed in contemporary democratic theory.

Contemporary Reinterpretations of Ibn Khaldun

Modern scholars have increasingly turned to Ibn Khaldun to broaden the **epistemological base** of political thought beyond Eurocentric canons. Several notable works engage with his ideas in innovative ways:

Syed Hussein Alatas (2006)

In *Ibn Khaldun and Contemporary Sociology*, Alatas argues that Khaldun anticipated core elements of modern sociology and political science—particularly theories of state decay, elite behavior, and the relationship between economy and governance. Alatas stresses that Khaldun's insights can serve as a **foundation for indigenous intellectual renewal** in postcolonial societies like those in Africa. "Ibn Khaldun's concept of asabiyyah provides a sociological explanation of political solidarity, one that avoids the ethnocentric bias of many Western theories." — (Alatas, 2006, p. 345)

Ali Mazrui (1986)

The Kenyan scholar Ali Mazrui examined Ibn Khaldun's thought in light of **African political development**, suggesting that his cyclical theory helps explain post-independence crises in African states. Mazrui argued that rather than embracing imported models, African nations should **revive historical traditions of governance** like those hinted at in Islamic and precolonial African political systems.

Muhammad Asad (1980)

Asad viewed Ibn Khaldun as a precursor to **Islamic democratic thought**, emphasizing that *shura* and **accountable governance** in early Islamic societies provided functional alternatives to Western liberalism. For Asad, Khaldun's vision suggests a **moral and participatory framework** that could inform governance in contemporary Muslim-majority nations, including those in Africa.

Aziz Al-Azmeh (1993)

Al-Azmeh, in *Ibn Khaldun in Modern Scholarship*, cautions against romanticizing Khaldun, but also acknowledges his profound impact on both Islamic and Western social theory. He underscores how Ibn Khaldun's **methodological historicism** and emphasis on power structures offers a valuable tool to **critique modern authoritarianism and elite capture**, particularly in the Global South.

Relevance to Contemporary African Governance

Ibn Khaldun's legacy offers **a counterpoint to liberal democratic dogmas** that dominate global governance discourse. By privileging **social cohesion, moral leadership, and just rule**, his thought opens space for imagining democracy not as periodic elections but as **a system rooted in community solidarity and moral accountability**.

For African countries grappling with elite-dominated electoral systems and postcolonial state fragility, Ibn Khaldun provides a language to **reframe political legitimacy**:

Not in terms of procedural democracy, but in **effective and just governance grounded in the social fabric** of society.

Furthermore, his model encourages a **bottom-up conception of power**, akin to participatory and deliberative democratic models, rather than externally imposed top-down liberal institutions.

Conclusion

Far from being a relic of the past, Ibn Khaldun's work continues to resonate with today's pressing questions about leadership, legitimacy, and collective governance. Engaging with his thought—alongside scholars like Alatas, Mazrui, and Al-Azmeh—offers African intellectuals and policymakers a **rich alternative tradition** from which to rethink both **democracy and development**. Democracy in Africa must be decoupled from externally imposed models and reimagined through a lens of sovereignty, dignity, and endogenous development. Drawing from both Western and Islamic intellectual traditions, this article contends that a pluralistic and context-sensitive approach to governance offers a more viable pathway forward. Democracy, understood not merely as periodic elections but as meaningful participation, justice, and collective decision-making, should reflect Africa's unique socio-political history and aspirations.

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DOMAINS OF LOBBYING IN THE U.S. – FROM THE ARMS INDUSTRY TO ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract: *It is increasingly clear that many of the issues that affect citizens in democratic societies are not under the full control of national governments. A large part of the essential issues belongs to interest groups. It is enough to refer to the arms industry and exports, through climate change and fossil fuels to the Internet, to conclude that transnational regulation, international solutions and greater control are necessary. As the world became increasingly globalized, multinational corporations were obliged to transnational regulation in more countries. For example, Coca-Cola is headquartered in Atlanta, but it produces and sells all over the world. In some countries, taxes on carbonated drinks are different and therefore the company seeks to adapt its business activity through lobbying. However, compared to the arms industry or the polluters who are responsible for the excessive use of fossil fuels that threaten the environment, lobbying by interest groups reaches astronomical figures. Lobbying is also more prevalent in the area of arms sales, although the figures for legal arms sales (excluding arms trade) are difficult to estimate precisely. First, because contracts in this area are not always public. Second, because sales can combine equipment with military aid or training. Depending on the source, estimates can therefore vary greatly. It is an open secret that the main polluters in the United States spend ten times more on lobbying than green environmental groups. A disproportionate financial influence on US policy by lobby groups is aimed at playing down climate legislation. Such an evolution is not surprising when it comes to the United States, which has developed lobbying as an integral part of democracy, but also as a comprehensive scientific discipline. The purpose of this paper is first to analyze the history of the development of lobbying by interest groups in the United States, then to highlight the basic characteristics of this activity, which is often criticized as "suspicious" and "illegal" over which citizens have no control. The analysis of lobbying will indicate the main aggregates and specificities that are present in this domain, with special reference to lobbying in the domain of the arms industry and lobbying by the largest polluters in the United States. It seems that the basic problem for analysts who fight for the "transparency of lobbying" begins precisely with the question: "Where is lobbying?", "How do we find out who is lobbying and where?"*

Keywords: *United States, History of lobbying, Domains of lobbying, Arms industry, Polluters' lobbyists*

Introduction

In the United States, lobbying occurs at all three levels of government: local, state, and federal. The term lobbyist is an important one. It is understandable to define a lobbyist simply as "someone who lobbies." This definition would include any citizen who votes, belongs to an organized interest based on membership, or writes a letter to their member of Congress. Since not all people are lobbyists, a general definition would be that a lobbyist is a person who lobbies on behalf of an organized interest or a number of organized interests. This definition is broad enough to encompass the full spectrum of lobbyists, but narrow enough to exclude ordinary citizens who appeal to government officials on their own behalf. Recent surveys indicate that between 10,000 and 90,000 lobbyists work in Washington, D.C. Many more lobbyists work in states and localities throughout the country. The presence of so many lobbyists begs the question: What types of organizations engage in lobbying? The short answer to this question is: all types. Specifically, political scientists have found that 12 basic types of organized interests engage in lobbying. First, many business firms lobby the government. Business firms are commercial enterprises that exist primarily to make money. Many of the world's largest companies, including Citigroup, ExxonMobil, Microsoft, and Walmart, lobby extensively. Many medium-sized and small business firms also lobby. Second, many trade associations lobby the government. Trade associations are organized groups of business firms. Among the most prominent trade associations in the United States are the United States Chamber of Commerce, which is an umbrella trade association representing more than 3 million businesses of all types and sizes, and the National Association of Manufacturers, which is a trade association of more than 14,000 manufacturing firms. There are also a number of more specialized trade associations, such as the Association of American Railroads and the Illinois Manufacturers Association. Many business firms that have lobbyists also belong to trade associations. In this way, their interests are "dually-represented" to the government. Third, many professional associations lobby the government. Professional associations are organizations that represent the interests of people in a particular profession. Professional associations represent high-status professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and dentists. Two of the most prominent professional associations in the United States are the American Bar Association (ABA), which represents lawyers, and the American Medical Association (AMA), which represents medical students and physicians. There are many professional associations in the United States, including lesser-known groups such as the Professional Innkeepers Association and the Association of Professional Chaplains. Fourth, civic groups lobby. Civic groups are membership-

based interest organizations that are open to virtually anyone who wants to join. Examples of such organizations include AARP, the lobbying giant that boasts approximately 35 million members and had revenues in excess of $750 million in 2005; the NRA, the well-known civic group representing gun enthusiasts; the Sierra Club, one of the leading environmental groups in the United States, with a membership of 750,000; and the diverse neighborhood associations that operate in locations across the country. Civic groups are active on a wide range of public policy issues, including abortion, the environment, gay and lesbian rights, gun control, and women's rights. Civic groups are also very active in land use policy. Labor unions lobby the government. Labor unions are organized groups of workers united for the purpose of collective bargaining. Among the most prominent unions in the United States are the International Brotherhood of Flight Attendants, which represents 1.4 million workers in various industries, including transportation, and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), which represents more than 1 million government employees. It is interesting to note that perhaps the most well-known union in the United States is not a union at all. The AFL-CIO, which many people think of as a union, is actually a conglomerate of unions, a kind of trade association of unions.

Historical roots

Etymologically, "lobby" comes from the Old High German word louba, meaning hall or roof. It began to be used in 18th-century British theaters, where a "lobby lounge" became a common sight. President Ulysses S. Grant was someone who came not to see a play, but to chat with the well-connected Londoners who strolled through the lobby just outside their boxes. Lounges in the lobby also appeared in American theaters and provided the basis for the term political version. The shift to political use of the term "lobby" began in the 1810s, in government buildings in the northeastern United States. In 1817, a newspaper called William Irving a "lobby member" (as opposed to an elected member) of the New York State Legislature. This was the first known use of the term in print. It must also be a recent coinage, for in 1818 another writer helpfully defined a lobbyist as someone who is "employed to advocate through the influence of others" petitions before the legislature. Later, newspapers added the variations "lobbying" (1820), "lobbying" (1824), and "lobbyist" (1846). Thompson, Margaret S. (1985) *The "Spider Web": Congress and Lobbying in the Age of Grant* on 1870s The right of citizens to petition the government has long been considered a protected and fundamental aspect of the citizen-government dynamic. Long before the founding of the United States, English common law granted citizens the right to petition the Crown for grievances.

Following its English heritage, the United States used a similar structure. The right to petition the government came with the colonists to the New World and became ingrained in colonial life. The right to petition the government was so deeply rooted in American life that it was included in the Bill of Rights. In the early years of the Constitution, the right to petition the government was highlighted in several debates. For example, in January 1790, Benjamin Franklin sent a petition to Congress "requesting the Federal Government to immediately put an end to the African Slave Trade."[1] His petition sparked an intense debate on slavery in the House of Representatives. The right to petition was also noted by the French scholar Alexis de Tocqueville during his travels through the United States in the 1830s, where he noted that political associations could provide individuals with a voice in society and government that they would not otherwise enjoy. (Coutant, A. (2008) *Tocqueville et la constitution démocratique*, Paris, Mare et Martin, 2008, 680 p.

Lobbying and Public Policy

When it comes to establishing a precise definition of lobbying, there has never been a universally accepted definition of lobbying. Two major experts in this field, Frank R. Baumgartner and Beth L. Leach, as well as many other researchers, note that "the word lobbying has rarely been used in the same way by those who study the subject." (*Baumgartner*, *Frank R*., and *Beth L. Leach*. 1998).[2] After analyzing several definitions, Baumgartner and Leach proposed the following simple definition: "Lobbying is an effort to influence the policy-making process." (Hojnacki, M. 2012)[3] This definition also includes the "policy-making process," which can sometimes cause confusion. As Paul Sabatier notes, the policy-making process "involves an extremely complex set of elements that interact over time." According to this author, a general definition of lobbying is that it is "the process by which a government and its institutions are influenced by data that relate to the public policy agenda." Lobbying is also the art of political persuasion. The public policy agenda does not consist only of the legislative branch and the administration. The entire lobbying campaign will also have to influence executive agencies, regulatory institutions, local government, the media, social networks. Finally, these are groups that dictate the public policy agenda, seek to inform and influence them. All of this falls within the scope of lobbying.

1 "Remarks on Signing the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 and an Exchange With Reporters" pp2203 https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/WCPD-1995-12-25/pdf/WCPD-1995-12-25-Pg2203.pdf

2 *Baumgartner*, *Frank R*., and *Beth L. Leach*. (1998). Basic Interests: The Importance of Groups in Politics and in Political Science. Princeton

3 Hojnacki, M. (2012) "Studying Organizational Advocacy and Influence: Reexamining Interest Group Research"

Lobbying in the domain of the arms industry and environmental pollution

From the point of view of Europeans, one of the most controversial issues is that of free access to firearms in the USA. It is precisely because of such freedom of access to weapons that an average of nearly 9200 people die annually. (Homicides by firearms UNODC. Retrieved: 28 July 2012.) In the USA, citizens have a total of 929 million pieces of weapons, or 90 out of 100 citizens own some kind of weapon. (Small Arms Survey, The Largest Civilian Firearms Arsenals for 178 Countries," in Small Arms Survey 2007: Guns and the City, Geneva: Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, August 2007. As of January 8, 2018: http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/A-Yearbook/2007/en/Small-Arms-Survey-2007-Chapter-02-annexe-4-EN.pdf This is because the gun lobby is extremely well-established, both in the spheres of federal power in Washington, and at the state level, with the famous National Rifle Association (NRA) at its head as the Most Powerful Lobby in the World. This association, founded in 1871 (making it the oldest civil rights association in the United States), is at the head of the gun lobby in Washington. It does not hesitate to spend several million dollars a year with members of the US Congress to secured their support, so that no law allowing for stricter gun control could be accepted favorably. The NRA, whose president since 2015 is Republican businessman Alan D. Kors, is one of the largest associations in the country and can count on the support of 5 million members, some of whom are better known than others (for example, Chuck Norris or Whoopi Goldberg). The organization's budget was about $ 350 million in 2013, an increase over previous years, thanks in part to the increase in individual donations. In 2014, these reached $ 22 million, while in 2006 they were only $ 11 million. The reason? Fear of stricter controls by the Obama administration, which has made no secret of its desire to regulate the legal sale of firearms. Donations increased especially after the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in December 2012, in which 20 children and six adults were killed, and the shooting also occurred after the re-election of Democrats in the White House. The fear that the federal government will exploit the emotions caused by these repeated tragedies is beneficial to the NRA, which is the target of a portion of Americans who support the right to bear arms and want to defend this constitutional rightward shift. The association is also extremely present and responsive in the US Congress, where the legislative game is played. After the shootings in San Bernardino, which killed 14 people in late 2015, Democratic senators introduced an amendment to ban the sale of firearms to people who are prohibited from traveling to or from the United States. The New York Times then recounts how Chris Cox, the NRA's chief lobbyist, along with a dozen

other lobbyists, immediately activated their networks, exchanging numerous emails and phone calls to ensure that Republican senators would reject the measure. The NRA also called on its 5 million members to contact their senators and ask them to reject any new proposals regulating gun ownership. Not surprisingly, the Senate overwhelmingly rejected the Democratic proposal, along with another that sought to expand background checks on buyers, even though it was supported by 90% of Americans in polls. The same proposals returned to the table after the shooting that killed 49 people in Orlando on June 12, with the same results: near-unanimous rejection by Republican senators. (Ellis, R. , Fantz, A. , Karimi, F, McLaughlin, E.C. 2016)[4]. In the US environment, trends are also not encouraging when it comes to lobbying spending on behalf of the biggest polluters. This spending dwarfs that of environmental groups and the renewable energy sector, which together accounted for about a tenth of the funds raised by sectors with significant greenhouse gas emissions. "The vast majority of climate change lobbying spending comes from sectors that would be most affected by climate legislation," says Dr Robert Brulle of Drexel University. The environmental sociologist conducted the study using mandatory lobbying reports available on the website OpenSecrets. "Spending by environmental groups and the renewable energy sector was dwarfed by spending by the electricity, fossil fuel and transportation sectors," says Dr Robert Brulle. He analyzed spending information on related issues between 2000 and 2016, a period in which climate change was a key issue in national politics. The electricity sector spent the most on climate change lobbying during this period—$500 million, or a quarter of all spending. The fossil fuel sector followed with $370 million and the transportation sector with about $250 million.(Brulle, R. J., & Antonio, R. J. 2015)[5]. The efforts of environmental groups and the renewable energy sector pale in comparison, accounting for just 3 percent of total funding each. Overall, this meant that fossil fuel-dependent sectors spent ten times as much as green interests over the 16-year period. These findings were published in the journal Climate Change.[6] "Lobbying is conducted away from the public eye. There is no open debate or rebuttal of the views offered by professional lobbyists who meet privately with government officials," Dr Brulle concludes. "Control over the nature and flow of information to government decision-makers can be significantly altered by the lobbying process and creates a situation of systematically distorted communication." "This process can limit the transfer of accurate scientific information into decision-making, as

4 (Ralph Ellis, Ashley Fantz, Faith Karimi and Eliott C. McLaughlin, (2016) Orlando shooting: 49 killed, shooter pledged ISIS allegiance,CNN, https://edition.cnn.com/2016/06/12/us/orlando-nightclub-shooting)

5 Brulle, R. J., & Antonio, R. J. 2015). The Pope's fateful vision of hope for society and the planet. Nature Climate Change, 5(10), 900-901. https://www.nature. com/articles/nclimate2796

6 https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/climate-change-fossil-fuels-lobbying-usa-transport-renewable-energy-environment-a8452941.html, 2017

lobbying by environmental groups is often a short-term effort, Dr Robert Brulle states. It cannot compete with the considerable firepower wielded by professional lobbyists. (Brulle, R. J., & Roberts, J. T. 2017)[7].

Interest Groups and Election Funding: Money is Key

To secure support from Congress, the NRA and other gun rights groups invest millions of dollars in lobbying each year. The National Rifle Association's spending, which has been steady since 1998, has increased significantly since Barack Obama took office in 2009, according to figures compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that tracks lobbying spending in Washington each year. In 2009 and 2013, after the election and reelection of a Democratic president, those spending jumped by just under $500,000. In 2015, the NRA spent a record $3.6 million on lobbying. The NRA is not the only gun rights organization influencing the legislative process. The lesser-known but highly influential National Rifle Association and the National Shooting Sports Foundation also invest heavily. Together, these organizations spend almost seven times more money on lobbying than associations that advocate for strict gun control ($9.3 million versus $1.4 million in 2014). Faced with the numerous victims, several American politicians have tried to oppose the legal framework for the right to own weapons regulated by the Second Amendment to the US Constitution. However, the abolition of this amendment is an impossible mission.[8] Article 5 of the United States Constitution details the process of amending the Constitution. To propose an amendment, the following is required: • a two-thirds majority of each house of Congress (House of Representatives and Senate), or 357 seats out of 535 Or • a national convention proposing the amendment and requested by at least two-thirds of the states in Congress, which must then decide by vote, winning by a two-thirds majority. To adopt such an amendment, a three-quarters majority of the state assemblies voting for the amendment or ratifying the proposed national convention is required. Such a majority is politically unattainable today on a topic as divisive as gun control. In 2016, only 11 of 51 states provided for increased controls on the issuance of firearm licenses. The US Congress, under Republican control, has rejected all proposals, no matter how small, that were intended to limit citizens' right to bear firearms in any way.

7 Brulle, R. J., & Roberts, J. T. (2017). Climate misinformation campaigns and public sociology. Contexts, 16(1), 78-79. https://journals. sagepub. com/doi/ full/10.1177/1536504217696081

8 https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2016/08/12/pourquoi-le-lobby-des-armes-est-il-si-puissant-aux-etats-unis_4981862_4355770.html .

Lobbying Disclosure Act and system anomalies

On December 19, 1995, President William Jefferson Clinton signed the Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA) (2 U.S.C. §1601, et seq.). In his signing remarks, President Clinton identified a central issue that continues to be a problem for lobbying laws: how can the rights of individual citizens be balanced against the desire to regulate and potentially control the access of special interests to government? President William Jefferson Clinton supported lobbying as a fundamental American right, and he also provided context for why such a law is necessary for transparent and open government. As lobbying laws in the United States have developed, the balance between the right of "ordinary Americans" to petition the government and the access that professional lobbyists can have to members of Congress and executive branch decision-makers has been at the forefront. President William argues: "Lobbying has its rightful place in our system. I believe every member of Congress here and every member of Congress who voted for this bill understands that and understands the valuable role that lobbying can play in the American system. At one time or another, almost every American citizen has wanted to lobby Congress on one issue or another. But ordinary Americans also understand that organized interests can too often have too much influence in the halls of power. They know that in Washington, the lobbying industry too often operates in secrecy and enjoys special privileges that are not available to most Americans. Backroom lobbyists secretly rewriting laws and looking for loopholes in the law have no place in a democracy. All people should know what people are doing who influence public decisions." The four major federal lobbying laws—the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) of 1938, the Lobbying Regulation Act (RLA) of 1946, the Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA) of 1995, and the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act (HLOGA) of 2007—were enacted in response to changes in the practice or perception of lobbying.(Hauff, K. (2018) [9] In most cases, the enactment, repeal, or amendment of lobbying laws was in response to multiple contextual changes that provided a policy window in which change was possible. From a modern perspective, advocates argue that this legislation has led to further changes in lobbying practices and by title. These include: Shadow lobbying, which is when an individual who is paid to lobby public officials on behalf of clients does not register as a lobbyist. Shadow lobbying can raise questions about which practices and activities should trigger lobbyist registration requirements. Local lobbying is when an attempt is made to persuade government decision-makers and influence policy outcomes by changing public opinion and motivating citizens to take action, often by contacting representatives and senators. Local lobbying is generally unregulated, although

9 Hauff, K. (2018) "The Honest Leadership and Open Government Act" pp. 1, The Bryce Harlow Foundation May 17, 2018.

legislation has been introduced in the past that would require local activities to be registered and disclosed. It is a revolving door when federal employees leave the government for private sector employment or the government hires former private sector employees for government jobs. There are a number of post-employment restrictions that impose restrictions on federal employees transferring to the private sector or former lobbyists transferring to the public sector. An analysis of whether current restrictions strike the right balance, whether they are too restrictive or too permissive, can be instructive. As these issues develop, the U.S. Congress has many options available to it to potentially amend existing lobbying laws. These include options to: • change the definition of lobbying; • change the disclosure thresholds for registered lobbyists; and • adjust the resources available for implementation and enforcement. In addition, Congress may choose not to amend existing lobbying laws and maintain current standards. Commenting on the distinction between the right of "ordinary Americans" to petition the government and the access that professional lobbyists can have to members of Congress and executive branch decision-makers, President Clinton identified a central question: how can the rights of individual citizens be balanced against the desire to regulate and potentially control the access of special interests to the government?[10](Balogh, B.,2023)[11]

Lobbying Regulation

The tension between the right to petition the government and the regulation of access to policymakers has played a crucial role in the way lobbying is governed. In an attempt to balance these needs, Congress has historically created limits on the right to petition that have required registration of individuals representing interest groups before Congress and the executive branch. This registration requires public disclosure of certain lobbying activities. In addition, Congress has focused on ensuring that no group has an undue advantage over other groups by creating rules prohibiting government officials from accepting gifts from certain individuals (e.g., lobbyists) and placing limits and restrictions on the post-congress activities of members of Congress and senior staff. Specifically, in the United States, the tension between the right to petition the government and the regulation of access to policymakers has played a crucial role in the way lobbying is governed. In an effort to balance these needs, Congress has historically created limits on the right to petition that require registration of individuals representing interest groups before

10 https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/climate-change-fossil-fuels-lobbying-usa-transport-renewable-energy-environment-a8452941.html, 2017

11 Balogh, B (2023) "'Mirrors of Desires': Interest Groups, Elections, and the Targeted Style in Twentieth-Century America," in Meg Jacobs, William J. Novak, and Julian Zelizer, eds. *The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political Theory,* (2003), 222–49

Congress and the executive branch. This registration requires public disclosure of certain lobbying activities. In addition, Congress has focused on ensuring that no group has an undue advantage over other groups by creating rules prohibiting the acceptance of gifts by government officials from certain individuals (e.g., lobbyists) and by placing limits and restrictions on the activities of members of Congress and senior staff after Congress has ended. All lobbyists working with the United States Congress are required to register with both the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate. Within 45 days of being hired or hired to lobby on behalf of a new client, the lobbyist must register his or her agreement with that client with the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives. As of 2015, more than 16,000 federal lobbyists were registered under the LDA. Yet, simply registering with Congress has not been enough to prevent some lobbyists from abusing the system to the point of outright disapproval of their profession. Professor Mark Rohm of Georgetown University talks about the so-called "fences" that define boundaries. "We're always testing where those boundaries are, where those rules are," Rohm said. "Here's the thing: giving money to get something done — that's illegal. Talking to someone to get things done — that's not illegal. But there are so many ways that money enters the political process that it's hard to define those boundaries. And they're always open to dispute."[12]

Government Entities as Lobbyists

Government entities are organized interests that lobby one government or part of a government on behalf of another government or part of a government. For example, many states regularly lobby the national government, as do many cities, counties, towns, public utilities, regional governments, and foreign governments. Seventh, think tanks lobby. A think tank is an institution that conducts and disseminates research designed to influence government decisions. It is essentially an organized group of smart people, usually academics and/or former government officials, who study issues and issue research reports. Many think tanks do not have members per se, but are made up of researchers, called "fellows" or "scholars," and supporters. Among the most prominent think tanks in the United States are the American Institute for Public Policy Research, a conservative group that produces research reports designed to achieve its goal of "preserving and strengthening the foundations of limited government, private enterprise, vital cultural and political institutions, and a strong foreign policy and national defense," and the Heritage Foundation, which disseminates research intended to "promote conservative public

12 Young, J. (2010)"Lobbying Regulated to Prevent Abuse in US" https://www.voanews.com/usa/lobbying-regulated-prevent-abuse-us

policies." [13]As these two examples suggest, many think tanks are openly biased toward a particular political ideology and conduct research that supports that ideology. Eighth, charities lobby. Charities are organizations that exist primarily to help those in need. Charities work primarily to help people, but many charities also lobby extensively. The Alzheimer's Association, for example, has long advocated for greater federal funding for Alzheimer's research. Similarly, the American Cancer Society lobbies for funding for cancer research and stricter regulations on tobacco products. Lobbying is present in many universities and colleges. Universities and colleges are institutions of higher education. Many universities and colleges, state universities, for example, are government entities that rely heavily on government funding to stay in business and are therefore very interested in government decisions. Private universities and colleges also benefit from government-funded student loans and research support. Many large universities and colleges have full-time lobbyists on staff, and many smaller institutions also employ lobbyists. Tenth, many coalitions lobby. A coalition is a "loose collection of organizations" and individuals "working together to achieve common goals." Among the prominent coalitions actively lobbying today are the Tax Relief Coalition, a national alliance of more than 1,000 businesses and trade associations that advocate for tax relief for businesses, and the Sustainable Energy Coalition, a national alliance of business, consumer, and environmental groups that advocate for federal support for "clean energy." Many coalitions are temporary and designed to act on a specific proposal before the government. Some hospitals are also involved in the lobbying and influence battle. Hospitals are nonprofit or for-profit institutions that provide medical care. Because the federal and state governments are actively involved in the healthcare industry, hospitals of all types lobby to ensure that their interests are represented before the government. Not surprisingly, churches and church associations are also among the most prominent lobbying interest groups. Churches are organized groups of believers and believers. Many local churches, for example, lobby on social issues, often using volunteer "citizen lobbyists." In addition, many large religious denominations have their own church organizations that attempt to influence government decisions. Like charities, churches and church organizations do not exist primarily to lobby government. However, many churches and church organizations do engage in lobbying.(Liénard, C.G.(2021)[14]

13 J. Nownes, J.A. (2012) "LOBBYING AND LOBBYISTS IN THE UNITED STATES: A PRIMER" https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/total-lobbying/lobbying-and-lobbyists-in-the-united-states-a-primer/EEEB196ADDCDEBF16B5613CB2E62D14B

14 Liénard, C.G.(2021) Un lobby très efficace des Églises, Espace de libertés | Juin 2021 (n° 500)

Conclusion

Lobbying is present all over the world, and in almost all walks of life. The United States, as the cradle of lobbying, treats this phenomenon as one of the fundamental dimensions of every liberal democracy. As the title of this article shows, lobbying is present in the arms industry, in the protection of the largest polluters of the environment, but also in universities, hospitals, government organizations, church associations and other institutions. However, due to the dizzying numbers of victims, everyone is aware of the dangers of weapons and the question is often asked: why doesn't the United States ban the free purchase of weapons? The National Rifle Association (NRA) is the leading voice of gun advocates in the United States. Charged with blocking any legislative progress that would limit Americans' access to firearms, its influence is enormous. Americans own approximately 45% of the world's civilian firearms, despite representing just over 4% of the world's population. After every mass shooting in the United States, all eyes turn to the NRA. Weakened by numerous scandals and fiercely criticized by Democrats, the National Rifle Association (NRA) has considerable influence in both political and economic circles. In the United States, four things can be identified that would limit Americans' access to firearms and the export of weapons. I). Defending the Second Amendment is its credo: Founded in 1871 to promote shooting, the NRA is often presented as the oldest civil rights organization in the United States. Its real political turning point came in 1975: "Recognizing the critical need for a political defense of the Second Amendment, the NRA created the Legislative Action Institute." The NRA presents itself as a non-profit organization that then transformed itself into a political lobbying machine to defend the Second Amendment, which allows gun ownership in the United States. A constitutional right dating back to 1791 leaves a lot of room for interpretation: "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." II). It has five million "members with credentials": The NRA claims to have more than five million members - without disclosing the list - and has a wide range of activities. In addition to lobbying, it offers training courses, organizes hunting trips, publishes magazines, raises funds, broadcasts its own television programs, and even opened a museum at its headquarters in Virginia. The organization also assigns grades to candidates in various elections and to congressmen, from A (the highest grade) to F, based on their positions on guns. It conducts fierce campaigns against those who do not respect its slogans and spends approximately $ 250 million a year. Despite some setbacks in recent years, it retains dominant influence among elected officials, especially in the US Congress. From 2000 to 2012, the NRA and individual gun

manufacturers contributed $80 million to influence elections for the Senate, House of Representatives, and the White House. For example, in the 2016 presidential election, the NRA spent $20 million on negative advertising campaigns against Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton and $10 million on her then-Republican rival, Donald Trump. III). The NRA is an ally of manufacturers. The association plays a key role with firearms manufacturers. The industry produced 139 million guns in the two decades since 2000, including 11.3 million in 2020 alone, according to official data that does not include complete weapons and weapons that cannot be traced. According to the Small Arms Survey, 393.3 million guns were in circulation among American civilians in 2017, or 120 guns for every 100 people. Firearms cause tens of thousands of deaths in the United States each year. In 2020, the country recorded 19,350 gun homicides, a "historic" increase of almost 35% compared to 2019, and 24,245 deaths from gun suicides. Texas, where the Uvalde shooting occurred, was the state with the highest number of gun deaths in 2020. IV). It is weakened by legal cases. Recent years have been turbulent for the NRA, especially on the legal front. The organization has been weakened by a fierce power struggle at its top, which pitted Wayne LaPierre, at the helm since 1991, against the controversial former officer Oliver North. There is no doubt that orthodox adherence to some provisions of the US Constitution, which dates back to 1776, is a profitable business for some and a costly obligation for others, both in terms of the number of victims and the finances spent.

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THE YALTA CONFERENCE – 80 YEARS LATER

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Abstract: *This 2025 is a jubilee year, marking 80 years since the end of World War II, the largest war in the history of humanity. In this regard, it is also 80 years since the Yalta Conference was held 4-11 February 1945. At this conference, decisions were made that shaped the history of Europe and the world in the second half of the 20th century. Today, in the third decade of the 21st century, in terms of current events in Europe and the world, especially the situation in Eastern Europe, the echoes and consequences of the decisions made at this conference are still felt. Yalta or Crimea - is a word that is still strongly present in the current geopolitical discourse in Europe and the world. It is worth taking this opportunity to recall what “issues” were resolved at the “green table” in Crimea. To this day the Crimean Conference continues to attract the attention of historians, political scientists, international relations scholars, the media, etc.*

Keywords: *World War II, Yalta Conference, Europe, World, New International Order*.

Introduction

Starting in 1941, after the German attack on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 and Japan’s attack on the USA on 7 December 1941, the leading countries of the Anti-Hitler coalition, the Soviet Union, the USA and Great Britain, held regular conferences and consultations at which they most often discussed combat operations to defeat Germany militarily. Towards the end of World War II in Europe, when a military defeat of Germany on the ground was imminent, the leading countries of the Anti-Hitler coalition began preparations for a conference to discuss the post-war order of Europe and the world.

After consultations among the leading states of the Allied Coalition, Crimea was selected as the location for the Conference. Thus, this place will be inscribed in world diplomatic history as the place where the “fate” of Europe and the world will be decided. The Yalta Conference was held from 4 – 11 February 1945 in Crimea at the Livadia Palace, the summer residence of the Russian imperial family. It is therefore also known as the Crimean Conference or the conference of the “Big Three”, the leaders of the Anti-Hitler coalition, the Soviet Union leader Joseph Stalin (1878 –

1953), the U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882 – 1945), and the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (1874 – 1965).[1] The conference was held at a time when the war was still ongoing. To the West, the Allied forces were on Germany's borders and to the East the Red Army was some 60 kilometers from Berlin. Germany's defeat in the war was certain.

The Conference is also significant because it brought tectonic, dramatic and fundamental changes in European and world geopolitics, as well as in the global international relations. It also led to the creation of a new political map of Europe and the world. New state borders were drawn on the European and world map. The Yalta Conference ended the dominance of France and Great Britain in world politics and international affairs. The Yalta Conference also marked the end of the dominance of Western European countries in international issues. Especially for France, because for the first time in many centuries this country was not present at the conference that decides the fate of Europe and the new structure of the international political system. In this way, France lost the status of a traditional great power that solves European and world issues. Great Britain participated in the Conference, but its influence and positions were limited. The weak position of France and Great Britain also would accelerate the process of disintegration of their colonial empires, which would begin the process of decolonization and the creation of "inflation" of the new states in the world especially in Africa, Middle East and South-East Asia. Two new superpowers, the USA and the Soviet Union, (relatively "young countries") appeared on the international scene. These two new superpowers would decide the fate of Europe and the world in the next decades. These two superpowers would divide the world into two large blocs - Western and Eastern.

The topics, questions, discussions, and decisions of the conference created the so-called "Yalta myth", or "Yalta shadow" which continues to cause controversy to this day.[2]

Each of the three participating states had its own positions and interests at the conference. For the Soviet Union and Stalin, the issue of Poland, retaining the territories annexed from Eastern Poland in 1939 with compensation for those territories to the west, i.e. by moving the new west Polish border towards Germany and influence in Eastern and Central Europe was of particular security importance. The Soviet Union and Stalin were also interested in the Far East and the territories lost to Imperial Russia during the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-1905. For the USA and President Roosevelt, the situation in Europe was clear and settled. Their main concern was the Far East and ending the Pacific war with Japan and the inclusion of the Soviet Union in the United Nation. President Roosevelt wanted the Soviet Union to enter the Pacific War against Japan. At that moment, the Soviet Union and Japan were not in a state of war, since the Neutrality Pact concluded on 13 April 1941, was in force. Stalin agreed to the Soviet Union's entry into the UN after determining the voting formula and the veto right of the permanent members of the Security Council.

1 The Yalta Conference, 1945 https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/yalta-conf. (Accessed: 20 December 2024).

2 Plokhy, S. M. (2010) Yalta: The Price of Peace. New York: Viking; Yalta casts its shadow 60 years on, 7 February 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4241863.stm. (Accessed: 1 February 2025).

For Great Britain and Prime Minister Churchill, the situation and the return of pre-war regimes and original governments in Poland and the most of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the involvement of France in the process of creating the post-war Europe and the world, and British interests in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Near and Middle East, were the main focus.

The different interests and positions of the parties involved clearly show the complexity of the situation. The big question was: How the interests and positions of the "Big Three" would be achieved. The stakes were high, the "pie" was the majority of the world. The big question was: how would it be divided and would all parties be satisfied? That is why the manner in which the issues were resolved at Yalta causes controversy to this day.

During the Crimean Conference from 4 to 11 February 1945, eight sessions were held to discuss the issues on the agenda.[3] At the Crimea Conference of the heads of the USA, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union, several documents and decisions were adopted: Communiqué issued at the end of the Conference, Protocol of Proceedings, Protocol on German reparation, Agreement regarding entry of the Soviet Union into the war against Japan, Agreement between the USA and the Soviet Union concerning liberated prisoners of war and civilians.[4]

Participants on the Conference came to the following conclusions focused on four main "dossiers": World Organization (United Nations), Germany, Poland and Japan. Most of the decisions made at Yalta were confirmed and expanded at the Potsdam Conference with the Potsdam Agreement in July–August 1945.[5]

World Organization (United Nations)

The first dossier concerns the formation of a new world organization to be called the United Nations. The purpose of this organization would be to maintain international peace and security. According to the agreement, the procedure was established and conditions under which other states would be invited to attend the conference in San Francisco where the Charter[6] of the United Nations would be prepared. The agreement determined the

3 The Tehran, Yalta&Potsdam Conferences. Documents. (1969) Moscow: Progress Publishers; Foreign relations of the United States Diplomatic papers. Conferences at Malta and Yalta 1945 (1955). Washington: Government Printing Office. https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Malta. (Accessed: 15 January 2025).

4 Communiqué Issued at the End of the Conference, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Malta/d500. (Accessed: 15 January 2025); Protocol of Proceedings, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Malta/d501. (Accessed: 15 January 2025); Protocol on German Reparation, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Malta/d502. (Accessed: 15 January 2025); Agreement Regarding Entry of the Soviet Union into the War against Japan, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Malta/d503. (Accessed: 15 January 2025); Agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union Concerning Liberated Prisoners of War and Civilians. https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Malta/ch10subch3. (Accessed: 15 January 2025).

5 Potsdam Agreement, Protocol of the Proceedings of the Berlin Conference, August l, 1945, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Berlinv02/d1383; https://www.nato.int/ebookshop/video/declassified/doc_files/Potsdam%20Agreement.pdf. (Accessed: 20 January 2025).

6 The Charter of the United Nations was signed on 26 June 1945 in San Francisco. It came into force on 24 October 1945. That date has been declared United Nations Day.

voting procedure in the United Nations Security Council:

„1. Each member of the Security Council should have one vote.

2. Decisions of the Security Council on procedural matters should be made by an affirmative vote of seven members.

3. Decisions of the Security Council on all matters should be made by an affirmative vote of seven members, including the concurring votes of the permanent members."[7]

The treaty established a new international institution for trusteeship territories. This new institution replaced the previous mandate model of the League of Nations. The agreement also defines other territories, apart from mandates, which would be under trusteeship.[8]

Germany

The second dossier of the conference was Germany. The Allies reaffirmed their determination to end the war with the military defeat of Germany. It was decided to intensify the mutual coordination of military forces for the final blow to the heart of Germany. It was agreed that Germany would surrender unconditionally under conditions to be set by the Allies after the definitive destruction of resistance by German military forces. With regard to German territory, the decision previously taken within the European Advisory Commission[9] was confirmed and amended, the decision of the Allies to divide Germany into occupation zones Soviet, American and British with the formation of a French occupation zone.

„The United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall possess supreme authority with respect to Germany. In the exercise of such authority they will take such steps, including the complete disarmament, demilitarization and the dismemberment of Germany as they deem requisite for future peace and security."

„It is our inflexible purpose to destroy German militarism and Nazism and to ensure that Germany will never again be able to disturb the peace of the world."

A decision was made on the reparations that Germany would have to pay for the damages caused during the war. The reparations protocol was approved:

1. Germany must pay in kind for the losses caused to the Allied nations in the course of the war.

The models, method, organization, amount and duration of the payment of

7 Communiqué Issued at the End of the Conference, Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Malta/d500. (Accessed: 15 January 2025). Protocol of Proceedings, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Malta/d501. (Accessed: 15 January 2025).

8 The United Nations Trusteeship Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, established to help ensure that trust territories were administered in the best interests of their inhabitants and of international peace and security. The Trusteeship Council was established in 1945. Its work was suspended in 1994 when the last Trust Territory, Palau, became a member of the United Nations.

9 European Advisory Commission (EAC) established at the Moscow Conference on 30 October 1943 between the foreign ministers of Great Britain, Anthony Eden, the USA, Cordell Hull, and the Soviet Union, Vyacheslav Molotov. The EAC had its headquarter in London. The EAC ceased to function following the establishment of the Council of Foreign Ministers at the Potsdam Conference July – August 1945.

reparations were determined.[10]

Poland

The third dossier of the conference was Poland or the "Polish question". According to the agreement, a declaration on Poland was adopted, which determined two main issues: the organization of the new government in Poland and the territorial question, i.e. the new state borders of Poland.

„The Provisional Government which is now functioning in Poland should therefore be reorganized on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad. This new Government should then be called the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity... This Polish Provisional Government of National Unity shall be pledged to the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot…" „…reaffirm common desire to see the establishment of a strong, free, independent and democratic Poland."

„The three heads of Government consider that the eastern frontier of Poland should follow the Curzon Line[11] with digressions from it in some regions of five to eight kilometers in favour of Poland. They recognize that Poland must receive substantial accessions in territory in the north and west".[12]

The territory and borders of Poland had changed significantly. The territory of Eastern Poland, which was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1939, remains within the Soviet Union (until 1991), i.e. as part of today Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania.

Japan

The fourth dossier of the conference was Japan. The leaders of the three great powers USSR, USA and Great Britain, agreed that in two or three months after Germany has surrendered and the war in Europe was terminated, the USSR should enter into war against Japan on the side of the Allies on condition that:

1. The status quo in Outer Mongolia (the Mongolian People's Republic) should be preserved.

2. The former rights of Russia violated by the treacherous attack of Japan in 1904 should be restored, viz.:

(a) The southern part of Sakhalin as well as the islands adjacent to it should be returned to the Soviet Union;

10 Communiqué Issued at the End of the Conference, Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Malta/d500. (Accessed: 15 January 2025). Protocol of Proceedings, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Malta/d501. (Accessed: 15 January 2025).

11 Curzon Line, demarcation line between Poland and Soviet Russia that was proposed during the Russo-Polish War of 1919–20 as a possible armistice line and became (with a few alterations) the Soviet-Polish border after World War II, https://www.britannica.com/event/Curzon-Line, (Accessed: 20 January 2025).

12 Communiqué Issued at the End of the Conference, Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Malta/d500. (Accessed: 15 January 2025). Protocol of Proceedings, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Malta/d501. (Accessed: 15 January 2025).

(b) The commercial port of Dairen should be internationalized, the pre-eminent interests of the Soviet Union in this port being safeguarded, and the lease of Port Arthur as a naval base of the U.S.S.R. restored;

(c) The Chinese-Eastern Railroad and the South Manchurian Railroad, which provide an outlet to Dairen, should be jointly operated by the establishment of a joint Soviet-Chinese company, it being understood that the pre-eminent interests of the Soviet Union should be safeguarded and that China should retain sovereignty in Manchuria;

3. The Kurile Islands should be handed over to the Soviet Union.

The heads of the three great powers had agreed that these claims of the Soviet Union should be unquestionably fulfilled after Japan has been defeated.[13]

Conclusion

Although the conference was aimed at establishing a new international order and world peace, in the years that followed, the agreements of Yalta were not fully respected. Instead of world peace, the world entered a new conflict - the Cold War. The Yalta Conference and the decisions made created the conditions for the existence of a so-called "controlled conflict" such as the Cold War. Some of the decisions made at the Yalta Conference are no longer in force.

The boundaries of the spheres of influence established at the Yalta Conference existed until the early 1990s. The Soviet Union, one of the actors at the Yalta Conference, no longer exists. The system of the Soviet bloc of Eastern European countries collapsed. Some of the countries in that region, such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, no longer exist. Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Economical Alliance of the Eastern European countries) and the Warsaw Pact (Military Alliance of the Eastern European countries), no longer exist. After the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the Warsaw Pact, the "vacuum" created in the area of Central and Eastern Europe was filled with the creation and expansion of the European Union and the NATO alliance. A large part of the countries in the Central and Eastern European region are now part of the Euro-Atlantic integrations NATO and the EU. Even 80 years after the Yalta Conference, the area of Central and Eastern Europe still is a "conflict zone" and unconsolidated area in terms of territories and state borders.

The Berlin Wall the symbol of the Cold War fell on 9 November 1989. It was a dramatic end of the Cold War between the West and the Soviet Union. "The tsunami wave effect" created by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of Communism is still shaking the region of Central and Eastern Europe. The fall of the Berlin Wall sent shock waves around the world. It was, quite literally, a world-changing event.[14] This monumental

13 The conference also discussed other issues and subjects. See more: Communiqué Issued at the End of the Conference, Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Malta/d500. (Accessed: 15 January 2025). Protocol of Proceedings, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Malta/d501. (Accessed: 15 January 2025).

14 Engel, J. A. (2009) The Fall of the Berlin Wall: The Revolutionary Legacy of 1989. New York: Oxford University Press.

event, where in one night "incident"[15] can change the world.[16] If any single event or series of events could be taken to signify the end of the Cold War, it probably was the wave of peaceful revolutions in Eastern Europe and the fall of the Berlin Wall.[17] The fall of the Berlin Wall was one of the greatest events of the 20th century, equivalent to 1789, 1914, 1939, 1947, a "geopolitical earthquake" that led to a fundamental change in the structure of the international system in terms of its effects on the international order and international relations in the world. The Malta summit held in December 1989 between U.S. President George Bush and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev symbolically marked the end of the Cold War. It was the most important meeting since World War II and the Yalta Conference. Hence the slogan from "Yalta to Malta".

From the agreements reached in Yalta, the United Nations was established. This new international institution, established with the primary purpose of protecting international peace and security, still exists today. The United Nations in recent years, despite all the weaknesses and challenges during the Cold War and after its end in the early 1990s, had become a significant factor in international affairs. The organization and its system of bodies and institutions are not only concerned with the realization of its primary goal; it has worked and is working on many other fields and issues. This new international experiment created at the Yalta conference still exists today.

Poland exists within the borders agreed upon at the Yalta Conference. What was agreed upon regarding the Polish question was only achieved in the late 1980s: „a strong, free, independent and democratic Poland". After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, Poland became a member of NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004.

Germany was occupied and divided into occupation zones. In the years after World War II, Germany went through difficult processes such as the Nuremberg Trials, denazification, demilitarization, democratization, decentralization, border changes and territorial consolidation, transfer of the German population from the area of Central and Eastern Europe, national and social cohesion, economic stabilization, and payment of war reparations etc. In 1949, two states, Federal Republic of Germany or West Germany and the German Democratic Republic or East Germany, were formed. The Bonn–Paris conventions in 1955 put an end to the Allied occupation of West Germany. The two German states developed under different systems, the western one in West Germany and the eastern one in East Germany. West Germany was one of the founders of the European Community for Coal and Steel (1951), the predecessor of today's European Union. West Germany became a member of NATO in 1955. The Treaty on Relations between the Soviet Union and East Germany, signed on 20 September 1955, put an end to the Soviet

15 Sarotte, M. E. (2014) The collapse: the accidental opening of the Berlin Wall. New York: Basic Books.

16 Farhat–Holzman, L. (2015) Mary Elise Sarotte, The Collapse: The Accidental Opening of the Berlin Wall, Basic Books, 2014. Comparative Civilizations Review: Vol. 76: No. 76, Article 22, Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr/vol76/iss76/22. (Accessed: 15 May 2025).

17 Savranskaya, S. 'The Logic of 1989: The Soviet Peaceful Withdrawal from Eastern Europe', p. 1-47, Savranskaya, S., Blanton, T., Zubok, V. (2010) Masterpieces of History the Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989, https://books.openedition.org/ceup/2759. (Accessed: 16 May 2025).

occupation of East Germany. East Germany became a member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in 1950 and the Warsaw Pact member in 1955. The Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic were admitted to membership in the United Nations in 1973. This situation with two German states existed until the beginning 1990s.

A key part of the end of the Cold War in Europe and the fall of the Berlin Wall was the fast unification of Germany. The two states were united in 1990 into one Federal Republic of Germany according to the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany (the Two Plus Four Agreement), signed on 12 September 1990.[18] Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic on the establishment of German unity (Unification Treaty) was signed on 31 August 1990.[19] It was a very significant event for Germany and for Germans from both countries.[20] Germany's eastern borders and neighbourhood relations with Poland were regulated by the German–Polish Border Treaty of signed on 14 November 1990 and Treaty of Good Neighborship and Friendly Cooperation, signed on 17 June 1991.[21]

After reunification, Germany became an active member and participant in international affairs. Germany is one of the main member states of the EU and NATO. Germany has steadily expanded and strengthened its engagement in the UN. In the past years, 37 UN organizations with over 1000 staff members are based in Germany in Bonn, Berlin, Munich, Hamburg and other cities. The composition of the Security Council in particular no longer reflects the geopolitical realities of the 21st century. That is why Germany, along with its G4 partners Brazil, India and Japan, supports the Security Council reform. Germany contributes 6.11% of the UN budget (2024) making it the fourth-largest contributor after the US (22%), China (15.25%) and Japan (8.03%). Germany is the second-largest donor of humanitarian assistance (2024: 2.2 billion US dollars).[22] Germany is a funder and member of important international forums and associations such as the G7 and G20. Although Germany lost World War II, was occupied and divided into two states, it managed to unite and become a great power again.

Japan was defeated in World War II. After World War II, on the political level, Japan would gradually normalize relations with countries and territories in the region through the signing of a series of multilateral and bilateral agreements and declarations

18 Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany, September 12, 1990, https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%201696/volume-1696-I-29226-English.pdf . (Accessed: 12 February 2025).

19 Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic on the establishment of German unity (Unification Treaty), 31 August 1990 https://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_unification_treaty_between_the_frg_and_the_gdr_berlin_31_august_1990-en-2c391661-db4e-42e5-84f7-bd86108c0b9c.html. (Accessed: 19 May 2025).

20 Dennis, M., Kolinsky, E. (2004) 'United and Divided: Germany since 1990'. An Introduction. New York – Oxford: Berghahn Books. p. 1-16.

21 Treaty concerning the demarcation of the established and existing Polish-German state frontier, November 14, 1990 and Treaty of Good Neighborship and Friendly Cooperation, June 17, 1991, https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%201708/v1708.pdf. (Accessed: 12 February 2025).

22 Germany in the United Nations, https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/sr-mitgliedschaft-391348. (Accessed: 19 May 2025).

with the USA, the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, South Korea, Taiwan and India.

Japan remained under American occupation until 1952, when full sovereignty was restored, except for certain areas where the American military is still present. The Treaty of Peace (Treaty of San Francisco) with Japan[23] signed on 8 September 1951, by 49 nations, re-established peaceful relations between Japan and the Allied Powers by ending the legal state of war, military occupation and providing for redress for hostile actions up to and including World War II.

The Security Treaty between the US and Japan was signed on 8 September 1951, by representatives of the USA and Japan, in conjunction with the Treaty of San Francisco that ended World War II in Asia. The treaty establishes a condition for ending the occupation of Japan and restoring Japan's sovereignty as a nation.[24]

As agreed at the Yalta Conference, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan on 8 August 1945. The Soviet Union made a significant contribution to Japan's defeat. The Soviet Union seized the territories agreed upon at Yalta Conference. On 19 October 1956, Japan and the Soviet Union signed a Joint Declaration providing for the end of the state of war and for the restoration of diplomatic relations between both countries.[25] They also agreed to continue negotiations for a peace treaty. Today, the Kurile Islands, these territories are integral part of the Russian Federation and are the subject of dispute. A final agreement between Russia and Japan on this issue has not yet been reached.

Treaty of Peace between the Republic of China (Taiwan) and Japan was signed on 28 April 1952. The Joint Communique between Governments of Japan and the People's Republic of China was signed on 29 September 1972.[26] The communique established and normalized diplomatic relations between Japan and the People's Republic of China, resulted in the severing of official relations between Japan and the Republic of China. The Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and the People's Republic of China was concluded on 12 August 1978.[27] The Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) was signed on June 22, 1965 and provided the base for diplomatic relations between Japan and South Korea. The Treaty of Peace between Japan and India was signed on 9 June 1952, restoring relations between the two nations.

After its defeat in World War II, Japan consolidated and stabilized into one of the most developed countries in the world. Japan joined the UN in 1956. Japan is the third-largest contributor of the UN budget with 8.03% (2024). Japan is also one of the

23 The Treaty of San Francisco, https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20136/volume-136-I-1832-English.pdf (Accessed: 10 March 2025).

24 The Security Treaty between the United States and Japan, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/japan001.asp. (Accessed: 11 March 2025).

25 Joint Declaration of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics and Japan, signed at Moscow, on 19 October 1956, https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20263/v263.pdf. (Accessed: 7 March 2025).

26 Joint Communique of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China, https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/joint72.html. (Accessed: 21 January 2025).

27 Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship, https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/zy/wjls/3604_665547/202405/t20240531_11367537.html; Japan and China Treaty of peace and friendship, https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%201225/volume-1225-I-19784-English.pdf. (Accessed: 25 January 2025).

largest donors of humanitarian aid worldwide.[28] Japan is one of the biggest supporters of implementing reforms at the UN. Japan is a funder and member of important international forums and associations such as the G7 and G20.

Although not directly mentioned in the final decisions of the Yalta Conference, as an issue in determining the spheres of interest in the Far East, one of the consequences is the ongoing conflict and division of Korea, which has existed for 80 years and is one of the "hottest spots" in the world of potential conflict.

For the first time since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 or before that the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, after major geopolitical changes, wars and crises, there is a "state of absence" of agreement among "the major big players" on the new structure and characteristics of the "post-bloc" international system after early 1990s. Perhaps, this is one of the main reasons for the state of "chaos" and "disorder" in global system and international relations - "absence of agreement" i.e. "on who owns what on the world map".

In light of current events in Europe and more broadly on the international political scene, we often hear the word Yalta, i.e. "New Yalta", "New Yalta moment", "Second Yalta", "Yalta 2" etc. The "echo of Yalta", is still present in the discourse of the media, journalists, politics, science, scholars etc. In world political and diplomatic history. "Yalta" will remain synonymous with the division of the world into spheres of interest and spheres of influence of the great powers.

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28 Japan's Efforts at the United Nations, UN regular budget scale of assessment of top contributors (%), https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2022/en_html/chapter3/c030105.html; Largest donors of humanitarian aid worldwide in 2023 (in million U.S. dollars), by country, https://www.statista.com/statistics/275597/largers-donor-countries-of-aid-worldwide/. (Accessed: 1 March 2025).

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THE INFLUENCE OF POPULAR CULTURE ON SHAPING SECURITY POLICY IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN THE POST-CONFLICT PERIOD (1995-2006)

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Abstract: *This paper will research the influence of popular culture on the development of security policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the post-conflict period from 1995 to 2006. While popular culture is not a direct instrument of policy-making, it plays a significant role in shaping social narratives, identities, and perceptions of security. Drawing on a constructivist approach in security studies, the paper analyzes how popular culture have reflected and reinforced dominant narratives of victimhood, heroism, and ethnic division. These narratives have, in turn, influenced political discourse, public opinion, and even the implementation of security reforms. By examining the interaction between popular culture and security policy, this paper highlights the need to consider cultural dimensions in post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding processes*.

Key words: *popular culture, security policy, security, constructivism, post-conflict reconstruction*

Introduction

As a result of social changes in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, increasing political, ethnic, and religious tensions, as well as the independence referendum and subsequent international recognition, Bosnia and Herzegovina entered a period of bloody conflict in 1992, these hostilities came to an end with the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Dayton in 1995 (Šušnja 2024:1). To ensure compliance with the agreement’s provisions, the international community maintained its engagement through NATO-led operations IFOR and SFOR, which lasted until 2004. During this period, work began on drafting some of the country’s most important strategic documents, including the Security

Policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This document defined the country's strategic goals, the structure and functioning of foreign, internal, and defence policy, as well as other key security components (Šušnja 2024:1).

At the same time, the post-war period witnessed a flourishing of popular culture that served not only as a medium of expression, but also as a powerful tool for the construction of social narratives. Film, literature, and media became platforms through which collective identities were negotiated, historical memory was shaped, and political messages were conveyed. Popular culture significantly contributed to shaping the public and political discourse surrounding security in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thorough the paper, we will present a theoretical framework that incorporates constructivism in security studies, the role of popular culture itself, and the conceptualization of security policy. This theoretical framework will be used as the foundation for analyzing and illustrating how popular culture influenced the development of security policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the post-war period (1995-2006).

Based on this foundation, the main part of the paper will be structured into the following key sections:

- Theoretical framework (constructivism in security studies, popular culture, and security policy)
- Popular culture in the post-war period (1995-2006)
- Security policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2006)
- How the nexus between popular culture and security policy shaped Bosnia and Herzegovina's Security Policy (2006)
- Conclusion

Theoretical framework

Trauma and memory may be used in cinema and popular media to proclaim victimhood, unresolved nostalgia, nationalism, or fake national pride, but they can also move to personal witnessing and reconciliation (Borjan 2021:174)

Through this chapter, we will elaborate on the theoretical underpinnings relevant to our analysis, focusing on the concepts of *security policy, constructivism, and popular culture.* These frameworks provide essential analytical tools for understanding how societal narratives, identities, and perceptions influence the formulation of security policy. Examining these dimensions is particularly significant in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the post-conflict period (1995-2006), as the interplay between collective memory, media, and political discourse played a crucial role in shaping the national security agenda and public sentiment. We will begin by defining the theoretical framework of security policy, followed by an exploration of constructivism, and finally, we will define the concept of popular culture. The Security Policy is a comprehensive framework of measures and activities in the political, economic, social, security, defence, and other areas, adopted in accordance with scientific, professional, operational, and practical analysis of the sources of threats, its implementation is carried out and directed through legitimate subsystems within the state, which through clearly defined functions and while respecting

the principles of constitutionality and legality, conduct their activities in accordance with the democratic values of society - all with the aim of protecting the external and internal security of society (Masleša 2007:38).

The Security Policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, is a document that defines a long-term and coherent strategy, providing a framework and guidelines for building the system, structure, and all mechanisms necessary for the effective functioning of the security sector. The Security Policy is developed by the executive authority of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has the capacity to coordinate the use of intelligence, military, economic, diplomatic, technological, informational, and other resources in order to achieve security objectives. In addition to fundamental values, which are specifically emphasized due to their importance for the overall security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the document also assesses the security environment, risks, and threats, and defines the principles, interests, and goals that Bosnia and Herzegovina seeks to achieve in the field of security (Security policy of BiH 2006:1).

The Security Policy, based on the identified challenges faced by the state, defines security objectives and, through the application of all elements of power of Bosnia and Herzegovina, aims to achieve peace, security, and prosperity for all its citizens (Security policy of BiH 2006:1).

Constructivism is an important tool for identifying state security. It is a construct with many changing formulations by actors with varying intentions, rather than fixed and consistent conditions (Saxby 2021:1).

Constructivism considers social constructs, such as culture, historicity and geography more significant than the Realist framework[1]. Constructivist academic Nicholas Onuf (1989:43) developed insight into the individual's part in global action and Alexander Wendt (1992:395) presented original concepts regarding anarchy. These considerations brought innovative ideas, not only concerning change and agency, but how conditions for change occur. Constructivism presents the concept that the world does not consist of concrete conventions or static institutions, but ideas which are created by society's shared history and culture, amongst other experiences (Saxby 2021:1).

Constructivists explore the idea that security issues are, in effect, a construct of social conditions and represent different things in different contexts. Constructivists suggest that change is always possible, even if it at times difficult. Comparably, the objectivist approach of realism to security studies reasons that military force, enabled by state actors, is a necessary response to a security threat. The threat is considered to be an existential danger to the sovereign state which must be addressed by force (Walt 1992:212). Constructivism, however considers such scenarios differently, in that a threat is only considered as such once it has been declared so, it is the reification of political declarations which "legitimise extraordinary measures" (Buzan, Weaver & de Wilde 1998:26).

In the research paper "*Toward a Definition of Popular Culture"* by Holt N. Parker, several definitions of popular culture are presented, highlighting its fluidity, mass appeal, and cultural significance (Parker, 2011):

1 Realism, states in competition.

- As Tony Bennett wrote in an early and influential article: "The concept of popular culture is virtually useless, a melting pot of confused and contradictory meanings capable of misdirecting inquiry up any number of theoretical blind alleys"[2].
- Strinati's own "working definition" of popular culture, which he takes from Dick Hebdige: "A set of generally available artefacts: films, records, clothes, TV programmes, modes of transport".
- Bennett and Storey's first definition: "Popular culture is simply culture which is widely favoured or well-liked by many people".

In this paper, we will examine popular culture through the lens of Strinati's "working definition", derived from Dick Hebdige. This conceptualization enables us to explore how widely accessible cultural products, particularly films, contribute to the construction of security narratives and influence public perception.

Popular culture plays a significant role in shaping how societies perceive security threats and respond to them. Through films, television series, music, video games, and social media, popular culture helps define what is considered a threat, how security risks are understood, and which policies or measures are seen as legitimate or necessary, especially in the sensitive context of post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For this reason, we have chosen constructivism as the main theoretical framework of this study, constructivism emphasizes the socially constructed nature of reality, focusing on how narratives, identities, and perceptions are formed through social interaction. This perspective is particularly useful for understanding how threats are not simply objective realities, but are often shaped and even created through discourse, culture, and shared meaning.

Example: The Cinematography of National Security (Dodds, 2009:146)

Due to the fact that the United States has experienced relatively few wars on its own soil, Hollywood has produced a large number of films categorized under the "cinematography of national security". These films creatively depict the wide array of threats faced by the U.S., ranging from Soviet and other communist forces, Nazis, terrorists, aliens, and natural disasters, to uncontrollable machines. Given the global popularity of Hollywood productions, both within and beyond the U.S., it is clear that these films significantly contribute to the American vision of its role and importance in the world. For many non-Americans, Hollywood films are often the first point of contact with a nation of over 300 million people. This example illustrates how film, as a product of popular culture, can shape perceptions of security and identity, reinforcing particular narratives and constructing both internal and external threats. It further supports our use of constructivism as a theoretical framework, emphasizing the social construction of threats through cultural representation.

2 Tony Bennett, "Popular Culture: A Teaching Object," *Screen Education* 34 (1980), 18.

Popular culture in the post-war period (1995-2006)

In the aftermath of the 1992-1995 war, Bosnia and Herzegovina entered a complex post-conflict transition marked by efforts to rebuild not only political and institutional structures, but also social and cultural identity. Between 1995 and 2006, popular culture emerged as a powerful medium through which collective memory, national identity, and perceptions of security were reconstructed. Music, television, film, and emerging digital platforms served as key tools in narrating the recent past, shaping views on internal and external threats, and reflecting anxieties or aspirations related to national unity, division, and global positioning.

Several cultural products from this period illustrate the deep interconnection between popular culture and security discourse. For instance, war-themed films such as *Gori vatra* (2003)[3] explored the absurdities of post-war life and international presence. Music genres like turbo-folk often reflected nationalist sentiment, while satirical and underground music scenes challenged dominant narratives. Even public memorialization events broadcast and consumed through mass media, served as cultural artifacts shaping the public understanding of "security," "enemy," and "us versus them".

From a constructivist perspective, these cultural expressions are not merely reflections of social reality but active participants in its construction. They shape the public's perception of threats, reinforce or challenge official narratives, and influence what kind of security policy is considered necessary or legitimate. Thus, popular culture in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina must be seen not as peripheral, but as central to the discursive construction of security during this critical decade. The influence of popular culture on the shaping of security policy is a complex and often underrecognized, yet profoundly significant phenomenon.

This influence may manifest both directly and indirectly, as popular culture contributes to the formation of public opinion, constructs images of potential enemies, and generates emotionally charged narratives of heroism and patriotism. These narratives help legitimize particular security agendas and reinforce dominant political ideologies. Far from being a passive mirror of society, popular culture actively participates in the creation of security discourse. By influencing how societies understand and respond to danger, it lays the groundwork for political decisions that impact national security strategies, international relations, and the framing of social norms. In the chapter *How the nexus between popular culture and security policy shaped Bosnia and Herzegovina's Security Policy,* we will examine specific films and other forms of popular culture that contributed to shaping the security narrative in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Security policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2006)

The security policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of the following parts: a) introduction, b) principles of security policy, c) security challenges, d) elements of security policy, e) goals of security policy, f) implementation of security policy and conclusion. In this chapter, we provided a summary of the key elements from the 2006 Security Policy of

3 A Bosnian and Herzegovinian film by director Pjer Žalica.

Bosnia and Herzegovina. This summary lays the groundwork for examining how popular culture intersects with the formation of security policy. A comprehensive and well-structured document is crucial for gaining deeper insight into this connection.

The country's security policy was formally structured around several key principles: the rule of law, indivisibility of security, comprehensiveness in protecting vital values, peacefulness, transparency, and openness to change. These principles aimed to stabilize a fragmented society and integrate it into regional and global frameworks.

The key security challenges which Bosnia and Herzegovina is facing, as identified in official security policy document, include:

- Global threats like terrorism and organized crime;
- Regional instability due to unresolved post-conflict tensions;
- Internal issues such as political extremism, economic underdevelopment, and institutional inefficiency.

These realities were filtered through the lens of popular culture, which often dramatized or polarized these risks. Popular media rarely depicted security cooperation or integration efforts positively, contributing to scepticism toward reform and international partnerships.

Regarding the elements, we will list and shortly elaborate them: a) foreign policy, key goals include peace, security, and democratic development, the focus is on EU integration and cooperation within the Stabilization and Association Process, b) internal policy, include priorities to Euro-Atlantic integration, strengthening constitutional order, rule of law, and fighting crime and terrorism, c) defence policy, based on democratic and civilian control of the armed forces, transparency, and modernization, aims for NATO interoperability through the Partnership for Peace, d) social policy, focuses on social security, healthcare, and support for vulnerable groups (refugees, displaced persons, Roma), e) financial policy, economic stability underpins national security, BiH aims to create a unified economic space, develop the private sector, and harmonize with EU standards, f) democratization and human rights, human rights protection is embedded in the Constitution through international standards, BiH works to improve rights to freedom, security, and equality, ensuring institutional independence and democratic oversight of the security sector, g) environmental protection**,** refers to the tasks related to the protection of water resources, air, land, and plant materials.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's security policy is based on constitutional values, aiming to strengthen democracy, rule of law, economic development, and social welfare to ensure long-term stability. Key priorities include:

- Building effective security institutions
- Participating in regional and global security frameworks
- Developing a Schengen-based border security model to combat illegal migration and cross-border crime
- Enhancing international cooperation and intelligence-based risk analysis

Regional stability and good relations with neighbours are essential. EU and NATO integration remain strategic goals, with full implementation of the Dayton Agreement and necessary reforms. The ultimate aim is a self-sustaining peace and stable society, enabling the withdrawal of international forces.

In accordance with the constitutional structure of the state, the implementation of the Security Policy or its individual components falls under the jurisdiction of legislative and executive authorities. The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopts the Security Policy to provide strategic guidelines in foreign affairs and defence matters and ensures that the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina is timely informed about strategic security and defence issues. The Parliamentary Assembly of BiH, entity parliaments, and cantonal assemblies represent the institutional and political levels for shaping and implementing the Security Policy, or its individual components (in the legislative domain), in accordance with their respective authorities.

The Security Policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a general and conceptual document in the field of security. Its structure and solutions are compatible with corresponding documents in parliamentary democracies. This document provides a framework within which all legal and other normative solutions, as well as strategic and doctrinal documents governing specific areas of security policy, can and should be aligned. It includes key decisions that affect the external and internal security of the state and society. The policy is based on an established national approach to security, it offers guidelines for military doctrine, and respects international and regional regulations to which the country has committed.

How the nexus between popular culture and security policy shaped Bosnia and Herzegovina's Security Policy (2006)

The security policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) during the post-war period was shaped by numerous internal and external factors, with popular culture playing a significant role in shaping public perception of these policies. Through media, films, books, and other forms of popular culture, citizens gained insight into security challenges, post-war recovery, and the international pressures BiH was facing.

We will observe this through the following examples:

Post-War Stabilization and the Development of Security Institutions: Influence of popular culture

Following the Dayton Peace Agreement, BiH entered a phase of building new institutions and reducing tensions between ethnic groups. Security policy during this period focused on:

- Strengthening state institutions, particularly the Ministry of Security and the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA).
- Stabilization and prevention of new conflicts through reforms in the justice sector, internal affairs, and intelligence services.

During this time, popular culture played a key role in shaping perceptions of secu-

rity, both domestically and internationally. Through films such as *No Man's Land* (2001)[4] and *Grbavica* (2006), the experiences of ordinary citizens during and after the war were portrayed. These films not only reflected reality, but also provided opportunities to understand deep post-war trauma and the challenges faced by security institutions. In this context, we will briefly analyze *Grbavica* to explore how it addresses these issues. Jasmila Žbanić's feature film Esma's Secret (Grbavica, 2006) "address women's reactions to violence and horror, how the war affects their private and public relations, and how local and global communities can deal with past atrocities and the post-war scenario" (Pascalis in Ćosić, Mahmutović 2024:324). This film revolves around the everyday lives of women and men deeply scarred by war. Their experiences are set in Grbavica, a Sarajevo neighbourhood where the main character lives and where many outbursts of violence occurred during the siege, specifically, it was the site of one of the Serb rape camps, whose existence has often been denied, or concealed, in public discourse about the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Pascalis in Ćosić, Mahmutović, 2024:324).

According to Pascalis, what is at stake in the film is the evanescent difference between "before" – dominated by horror, and violence against the helpless – and "after" – pervaded by weak relationships, scarred by the legacies of war, where anything can trigger traumatic memories, such a trajectory from one situation to the other is neither linear nor fixed, but always renegotiated by each character, from one sequence to the next, also the main dialectic is the one between past and future; with the past haunting the present and producing a horrific continuity in gendered violence, even if with different declinations (Pascalis in Ćosić, Mahmutović 2024:324).

Through the narrative of *Grbavica*, Žbanić presents how unprosecuted war crimes, such as systematic rape, continue to affect the lives of ordinary people even in peacetime Bosnia and Herzegovina. This implies the necessity of an efficient judiciary, reformed security structures, and strengthened institutions dedicated to human rights protection, all of which are essential elements of security policy. In other words, popular culture, through film addresses what formal politics often overlooks: the everyday consequences of insecurity and injustice that continue to shape the social order.

International Pressures and Integration into NATO and the EU: Influence of popular culture

During the 2000s, BiH faced significant international pressure to align with NATO and EU standards. The country's security policy was gradually adapted to meet these demands, including strengthening institutions, reforming the security sector, and combating organized crime.

Popular culture often reflected public ambivalence toward external factors and their influence. Films and series dealing with the Balkan wars, such as *The Hunting Party* (2007)[5], frequently portrayed Western powers as either positive actors in post-war recovery or as unwanted foreign interveners. Such representations influenced public opinion

4 Film of the Bosnian director Danis Tanović, won an Oscar in 2002.

5 American film, directed by Richard Shepard.

in BiH, shaping attitudes toward NATO, the EU, and international missions. Media andfilms often depicted NATO and EU missions as key to regional stabilization. In this sense, popular culture contributed to legitimizing international engagement, aligning with BiH's security policies aimed at EU and NATO membership. On the other hand, films like The Hunting Party (2007) comment on international intervention and BiH relationship with structures like NATO and the EU. Through a satirical and critical depiction of the hunt for war criminals, this film reflects the citizens ambivalent view of the international community, as both rescuers and actors with their own interests. These portrayals contribute to shaping public discourse on the role and legitimacy of international security structures. While Bosnia and Herzegovina's official policy aimed toward NATO and EU integration, popular culture often expressed scepticism, which influenced the pace and manner in which reforms were implemented.

Conclusion

The post-conflict period in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995-2006) was marked by complex efforts to rebuild not only the country's political and security institutions, but also its social fabric and collective identity. Within this context, popular culture emerged as a powerful and often underappreciated actor in shaping public discourse around security. Although not a formal instrument of policy-making, films, media, and other cultural expressions played a significant role in articulating the emotional, psychological, and social dimensions of post-war recovery.

Through works such as *Grbavica* and *No Man's Land*, popular culture reflected the ongoing trauma of war and the shortcomings of state institutions, while simultaneously contributing to public understanding of justice, security, and the role of international actors. These cultural narratives helped frame the experiences of ordinary citizens and gave voice to silenced or marginalized perspectives, particularly around issues such as gendered violence and war crimes. Additionally, cultural products like *The Hunting Party* offered critical perspectives on international intervention, shaping public opinion on NATO and EU involvement in BiH. The ambivalent representation of Western powers in popular media influenced how security reforms and integration processes were perceived by the public, revealing the gap between official policy goals and societal sentiment.

In conclusion, the influence of popular culture on security policy in BiH demonstrates that cultural narratives must be considered an essential part of post-conflict reconstruction. They not only reflect public consciousness, but also actively shape it, impacting how security is understood, demanded, and enacted in transitional societies. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that Bosnia and Herzegovina's security policy has not been redefined since 2006, despite significant changes in the domestic and international security environment. This highlights the urgent need for a comprehensive revision and modernization of the country's security framework.

Future research should therefore focus not only on modelling and updating BiH's security policy in accordance with current threats and geopolitical realities, but also on examining the evolving influence of popular culture from 2006 to the present day (2025).

Such studies would provide valuable insights into how cultural narratives continue to shape perceptions of security, identity, and international relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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THE COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE PROCESS OF STABILIZATION IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

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Abstract: *The role of the European Union (EU) in building security within the union, but also outside the entire territory of Europe, is of crucial importance for the process of stabilization and reconciliation between the countries of the Western Balkans. Even though the initial role of the EU is the economic cooperation between the Member Countries and the economic development of the Union, its security role cannot be disregarded. In fact, in order to guarantee an economic welfare, it is necessary to guarantee the security of the member countries and their populations. Therefore, the security is becoming one of the fundamental values of the Union and is considered as the touchstone upon which the Union is based. Through its security system, i.e. through its crisis management, the European Union is obliged to act wherever a crisis appears, to neutralize it, to act preventively and even to foil its occurrence and escalation, which means the EU should promote the concept of early warning. Specifically, the territory of the Western Balkans, where nationalism, unresolved issues with neighbouring countries, corruption and organized crime are still active, crises occurrence and escalation are more than possible. The EU has, so far, taken a number of actions for early warning and intervention in crises and by doing this, has opened the door to the attainment of the process of reconciliation in the Western Balkans.*

Key words: *European Union, security, stabilization, reconciliation, Western Balkans.*

Introduction

The idea of integration on the European soil had been present for many years, even centuries, before the actual integration and unification of Europe after the Second World War. Through the course of history, we encounter a number of projects and efforts for European integration and by the end of the Second World War due to the current state of post-war, broken-down Europe the culmination was seen, by establishing the famous "Declaration of Robert Schumann".

European unification was started by the countries in Western Europe, to gradually expand afterwards, and encompass 28 European countries today, with a tendency for full unity, i.e. to include the countries of the so-called Western Balkans. However, despite the desire for admission to these countries in its ranks, the countries of the given region must meet a series of conditions and criteria for membership, and in particular to successfully implement the process of mutual reconciliation, which is a result of the historical and current developments in the region.

Hence the question arises as to how the countries of the Western Balkans would manage to overcome their differences in order to meet the criteria for full-fledged EU membership on the one hand, and how the EU would assist in the stabilization and reconciliation process on the other. In this regard, it is assumed that the European Union, through its crisis management, which is a part of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), plays an important role as a mediator and facilitator in the process of stabilization and reconciliation in the Western Balkans and in fulfilling the conditions set for these countries for attaining their full-fledged integration into the European family.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to present the role of the EU in the stabilization and reconciliation process in the Western Balkans through its crisis management missions undertaken as part of its crisis management.

Creation of the European Union

The European Union was created on the European soil due to the current situations after the Second World War and the relations between European states in the process of the post-war reconstruction. The idea of European integration began in 1951 with the signing of the European Coal and Steel Community Treaty, but culminated in 2007 with the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon. The European unification is primarily driven by the idea of economic cooperation and integration of the European countries, to expand the cooperation throughout the years depending on the situation in Europe in the field of politics, culture, security and defence, to promote the idea of full integration and cooperation in all fields of the countries of the European continent.

The Treaty of Maastricht, signed in 1992 (effective in 1993), established three pillars as an integral part of the Union. The first pillar was the European Community, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was created as a second pillar, and the third pillar is related to police and judicial cooperation in criminal proceedings, also called the Justice and Home Affairs pillar. The Treaty of Lisbon abandoned this unusual form of the European Union, abolishing the three pillars and establishing the EU as a single entity (Gjorgjievski, 2010).

In terms of security and defence it is important to note that along with the Union, up until the Treaty of Maastricht, the so called Western European Union (WEU) functioned, which was responsible for guaranteeing the security of the European continent and defence in case of attack, which afterwards integrated into the EU. This means that the EU in this way and with the creation of the second pillar appears as a guarantor of European and international security, peace and stability with the formation of its system of collective

security, i.e. with its crisis management. In the end, the EU enlargement policy has made a clear contribution to the reinforcement of its international status, and to the establishment of a real security community (Ferreira da Cruz, 2021).

Common Security and Defence Policy

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) replaces the former European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and was introduced by the Lisbon Treaty as an integral part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

Namely, EU Treaty paid great attention to the collective foreign and security policy, because it was one of the three foundations, i.e. pillars of the Union. At the same time, the following were determined as objectives of the CFSP: safeguarding the common values, fundamental interests and independence of the European Union in all forms, strengthening the security of the Union and its members in all forms, preserving peace and strengthen international security, promoting international cooperation, developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law and respecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms (Бендевски, 2001).

Actually, European Political Cooperation (EPC), which by the Treaty of Maastricht was renamed the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), describes the central area of activity of foreign and security policy of the EU (Europe from A to Z, 2009). The essential elements of CFSP ensue from the EU and the aim of the Member countries of the EU is to define a mutual direction in "all areas" of foreign and security policy, including collective defence and to implement that direction by using differentiated instruments. The main legal instruments for achieving goals appear to be its mutual action and position, and the Treaty of Amsterdam coming into effect has made yet another tool available, and it stands as a mutual strategy.

Having set the aim in this way, it has a task to provide military crisis management in terms of Petersberg tasks on one hand, and civilian crisis management especially in the area of rule of law and respect for human rights, on the other. Therefore, the European Council in Cologne, which was held in 1999, decided that the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action backed by military forces that one could use at any time to respond to potential international crises independent of NATO operations. In this regard, in Helsinki, in 1999, the so called, Helsinki Headline Goal for 2003 was set up, whereas in Feira in 2000 the European Union developed the civilian aspects of crisis management**.**

The Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force in December 2009, is the cornerstone of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). CSDP, is an important part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and it presents the area of the EU policy relating to defence and military aspects. CSDP enables the Union to take a leading role in peace-keeping operations, conflict prevention and in the strengthening of the international security. It is an integral part of EU's comprehensive approach towards crisis management, drawing on civilian and military assets. The scale and complexity of the inter-linked security threats and challenges that the EU is facing are beyond the capacity of a single member country. That is why member countries decided to work closer together on an EU level to build a

strong Common Security and Defence Policy (Cvetkovski, 2022).

The "Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy" laid the foundations for the further development of the CSDP. In that sense, towards the end of 2016, a comprehensive package of measures in the field of security and defence was defined (European External Action Service, 2016). This package consists of three main pillars: new political goals for Europeans to take more responsibility for their security and defence; new financial tools that will help member countries develop defence capabilities ("European Defence Action Plan") and a set of concrete actions as a follow-up to the EU-NATO Joint Declaration in which the areas of cooperation are identified (Bendiek, 2016).

In 2022, The European Union and its member countries formally approved a Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. The Strategic Compass is an ambitious action plan that aims to strengthen EU's security and defence policy by 2030. The Compass respects all aspects of security and defence policy and is structured around four pillars: act, secure, invest and partner (Bargués, 2022).

Given that the EU is currently facing new threats and challenges, a series of actions are needed to counter and overcome them. In that sense, to counter them, protect its citizens, and enhance its strategic autonomy to become a stronger global partner, the EU needs to define what kind of security and defence actor it wants to be. In short, the European Union has to be in a position to look after its own security interests and carry its share of responsibility as a global security provider (Joint White Paper for European Defence Readiness 2030, 2025).

The situation in the Balkans-creation of the Western Balkans

The Balkans, as a part of the geopolitical and geocultural European entity, has experienced profound human and cultural stresses and dynamics throughout its history. Filled with numerous divisions and conflicts, torn asunder by ethnic, confessional, ideological geostrategic interests have coined the infamously connoted term "Balkanization" (Ружин, 1996).

In terms of European integration, several countries in South East Europe and the Balkans are already full members: Greece, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Croatia. There are countries that remain from the so-called Western Balkans and are still far from integration. What is characteristic for this area are the unresolved inter-state relations, as well as intra-state problems. Nationalism, ethnic and religious intolerance, disrespect for human rights, lack of the rule of law, organized crime and corruption, are all still present. These conditions must be overcome so that the Western Balkan countries could fully integrate into the European Union.

So, the reconciliation in the Western Balkans remains an ongoing and deeply complex challenge, shaped by the unresolved legacies of conflict and entrenched ethnic and political divisions. Historical grievances, compounded by insufficient transitional justice mechanisms and limited acknowledgment of past atrocities, continue to hinder progress. Political leaders often exploit nationalist narratives to deepen divides, thus obstructing efforts to build trust and cohesion (Mildner, Bories & Fry, 2024).

In that sense, regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations are essential for progress on the countries' respective European paths. But regional cooperation, good neighbourly relations and reconciliation cannot be imposed from outside. Hence, the leaders of the region must take full responsibility and lead by example, avoiding and condemning any statements or actions that would fuel interethnic tensions and actively counter nationalist narratives (a credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans, 2018).

On the other hand, concrete EU guidelines will improve the integration of the EU enlargement process with security and defence policies. The EU should also encourage candidate countries from the Western Balkans to align with EU defence policy priorities and processes, in order to contribute to a geopolitically stronger Europe.

Activities of the EU in the process of stabilization and reconciliation in the Western Balkans

Given the situation in the Balkans, particularly the relationship between the Western Balkan countries, being in no danger of internal conflicts and security threats is impossible. Nevertheless, the idea of EU integration makes countries adjust to one another and maintain the process of reconciliation as a motive and requirement for European unification. On the other hand, the European Union wants these countries to stay in their nests, but, certainly, under certain circumstances and by meeting the given criteria. The countries wishing to join the EU have diverse security and foreign policy needs and challenges. In each case the EU builds bilateral relations on different types of association agreements (Lippert, 2024).

Therefore, it is taking a series of actions to strengthen the cooperation in the Western Balkans. This is being done through its crisis management whose primary role is preventive and certainly through the implementation of missions (military and civilian) to restore and guarantee peace and stability in the region. In fact, linking EU enlargement to defence policies—through closer cooperation with candidate countries and expanded defence integration—offers a path to greater security and autonomy (Gressel & Popescu, 2025).

Each state in the Western Balkans, has a different degree of process integration. But what is clear is that states must primarily be reconciled with each other in order to progress further, and then must work to meet the criteria for full-fledged membership.

On the EU summit held in Helsinki in December 1999, the Western Balkans was defined as a neighbour of the European Union. It was emphasized that the region, above all, should stabilize in order to move on to the next phase of association, whereby the length of stabilization period is unknown. Furthermore, it was emphasised that apart from the Copenhagen criteria, the countries ought to recognize each other's boundaries, resolve all minority issues, and finally create a regional organization for economic cooperation (Ивановски, Ангелески, 2005). Hence, we must mention the contribution of the European Union, primarily through the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association of the Western Balkans, but also through its crisis management with regard to conflict prevention and crisis management.

The process of stabilization and association, launched at the Balkan summit in Zagreb in November 2000, should encourage practical cooperation, primarily in the areas of infrastructure and trade, the return of refugees and inter-ethnic reconciliation between the Western Balkans. When it comes to the EU membership, towards what they aspire, for SAA countries, in addition to the membership criteria of Copenhagen, obligations resulting from the Stabilisation and Association Agreement also apply. This includes full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia, and constructive regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations development. Regional cooperation, however, is contained in the SAA as a central requirement. EU seeks balance between the regional approach and the positive conditionality policy, which separately for each country rewards the good behaviour and the political reform efforts. Establishing the process of stabilisation and association like this provides a framework for each state to individually pave their way to full-fledged EU membership.

Crisis Management of the EU gets its powers with the establishment of the second pillar of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). But the crisis in the former Yugoslavia raised the importance of building capacity for action and prevention, rather than reaction. With the agreement from Amsterdam in 1999, priority was given to the development of civilian and military capacities for crisis management and enforcement of the Petersberg tasks and the prevention of conflicts. This laid the foundations of the EU crisis management by introducing institutional innovations (Дончев, 2007).

Coronation of the institutional mechanisms for conflict prevention and management decision happened at a summit in Nice for the establishment of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Concurrent with the Treaty of Nice another mechanism of CFSP was also established that should have assisted in easier coordination and strategic management with the CFSP over the world, and that is the Political and Security Committee. Furthermore, the Committee for Civilian Aspects the Crisis management was also established in 2000, which has mainly an advisory role for the political and security committee on civil dimension of CFSP.

These Civilian Missions promote stability and security and build resilience in fragile environments. The missions carry out a broad range of activities including monitoring, border security, supporting the reforms of the police, criminal and justice systems, with a strong focus on human rights and the rule of law. Today, the Civilian CSDP missions are one of EU's principal operational crisis management tools (Civilian Operations Headquarters, 2025).

From the above stated we can conclude that the EU invests when it comes to institution building and forming a network interwoven in not only civilian, but also in military elements when talking about conflict prevention. But this does not mean that the EU is ready and should work alone in this globalized world as it is the case today. Collaboration with organizations like the UN or the OSCE is crucial in crisis management nowadays.

In the function of conflict prevention and crisis management, the EU has already implemented, or is still in the course of carrying out a number of missions. A lot of these

missions are related to the Western Balkans, including:

- Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Military Mission of the European Union "ALTHEA";
- Mission "Concordia" was conducted in the R.M. for the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement;
- Mission Proxima;
- Mission of the European Union Rule of Law "EULEX" in Kosovo.

The purpose of these missions is the realization of the process of reconciliation in the Western Balkans and their integration into the EU, on one hand, and the prevention regarding any possible occurrence of conflicts and crises that would violate the security of the EU and Europe in general, on the other.

When it comes to the Republic of North Macedonia, the European Union has taken two missions to preserve the safety and to return the peace. The first mission was the mission "Concordia" which was conducted in the Republic of North Macedonia in order to implement the Ohrid Framework Agreement, at the request of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, which was supposed to stop combat actions in the Republic of Macedonia. The aim of the mission "Concordia" consisted of giving a proper contribution to building a stable security environment and enabling conditions for implementation of the Framework Agreement, as well as respect for the rule of law.

The second mission was mission "Proxima", which started the day when the mandate of "Concordia" expired, on 15 December 2003. The need for presence of the police mission was imposed as a result of the need to undertake enhanced efforts to combat the organised crime. Mission "Proxima" had three features, including: counselling, mentoring and controlling, and its main goal was to bring the Macedonian police closer to the international standards of policing.

Especially important is the fact that North Macedonia came first from all other countries from the Western Balkans in the process of stabilization and association and even set ahead a goal, that by 2010 it will become an EU member. But the unresolved name issue with Greece, the problems with Bulgaria over constitutional amendments to include the Bulgarian minority in the Constitution and the misunderstandings between the government and the opposition hampered the process of entry into the European family.

So, in that way, the EU was instrumental in the conclusion of the Prespa agreement, through which Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia agreed on the new name 'North Macedonia' for the latter. This agreement is an important step, as it resolves longstanding bilateral issues and will facilitate contacts and exchanges between the two countries (Perchoc, P., Lilyanova, V., 2019).

In late 2024, EU and North Macedonian authorities signed a new political framework for dialogue and cooperation on security and defence issues. This partnership establishes a platform for enhanced dialogue and cooperation on security and defence issues, reflecting the determination of both sides to work together to address common security challenges in an increasingly complex global environment.

Hence, according to the Commission Staff Working Document: North Macedonia 2024 Report, regarding the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), the country continued to actively participate and contribute substantially to EU military crisis management operations, notably EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Armed Forces of North Macedonia also participate as part of the EU Battle Group HELBROC 2023. North Macedonia contributes to regional cooperation in military medicine through the Balkan Medical Task Force (Commission Staff Working Document: North Macedonia 2024 Report, 2024).

Conclusion

European unification began primarily for economic reasons, because during the war, Europe suffered huge material damages. Furthermore, political reasons were the second foundation for the integration, because after the war, the bloc division made by the USSR and the U.S. was felt, that crossed in the foreground as a military-political and economic forces. On this basis, it seemed that Europe was united primarily due to economic and political cooperation, but over the years the practice has shown that in order to develop common European values and to guarantee them, integration is needed in other areas, including security and defence.

Therefore, the restructuring of the European Union, the joint cooperation in security and defence has begun, which aims to ensure peace security and stability within the framework of the Union, and beyond in the international community, and to develop capabilities to defend against possible attack of aggression.

From all this we can conclude that the European Union through its security system plays a major role in the process of reconciliation in the Western Balkans. Its crisis management task is to prevent and neutralize any potential crises that may occur on the territory of the Western Balkans, i.e. to act from early warning to early action, and to facilitate the path towards European unification. That means that unambiguous commitment to the European perspective of the Western Balkans is the key to stability and development in the region, and one of the main priorities is the completion of the process of reconciliation in the Western Balkans, as well as meeting the criteria for EU membership.

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Scientific article
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APPROACHES TO THE CIVIL WAR IN SYRIA 2011-2018 - REALIST AND CONSTRUCTIVIST PARADIGM –

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Abstract: *Man's unchecked desire for power, or to retain it, shapes his path even when he enters the political realm and assumes leadership over the people. When state leaders resist the demands of their citizens for greater political rights and democratic reforms, it often leads to conflict, sometimes escalating to genocidal proportions. The war in Syria serves as evidence not only of the failure to attain freedom, but also of how the Syrian landscape became a battleground for various actors, with the conflict becoming increasingly internationalized. This article delves on the hypothesis that the war in Syria was a direct result of citizens' demands for freedom, which ultimately plunged the country into chaos and a humanitarian crisis. The article examines the Syrian civil war through two theoretical frameworks of International Relations: realism and constructivism. The qualitative research method was employed, along with secondary sources, to support our analysis.*

Keywords: *Arab Spring, Freedom, Security, Balance of power, State identity*

Introduction

The anti-government protests that spread across several Middle Eastern nations were driven by a collective desire to overthrow autocratic and corrupt regimes, and to establish democratic principles grounded in popular sovereignty. The rallying cry of these uprisings was succinctly captured in the slogan, "*The people want the fall of the regime*!" In Syria, the demands for political reform encompassed good governance, economic development, the rule of law, free elections, and the protection of fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of thought and speech. The Syrian scene thus became a central subject of scholarly inquiry, spanning disciplines such as political science, regional studies, and security studies. This research is framed within two prominent theories of International Relations, which offer distinct lenses through which the Syrian war can be understood.

Specifically, this article focuses on the period from 2011 to 2018, a crucial phase marked by significant political and military developments. This time frame was

chosen because it was precisely during this period that the war intensified and escalated. Not forgetting the use of chemical weapons as was the case in August 2013 (again in April 2018). It was precisely during 2014 that the infamous terrorist organization ISIS emerged, with which the international community had to face, and which was impossible to eliminate without military intervention. Within this period (i.e. 2015), we also have the Russian military intervention, which came to the aid of the regime and practically kept Assad's power afloat in the following period. The development of fighting over such a long period of time inevitably involved regional actors, such as the Turkish military intervention (2016 namely 2018), which saw its intervention under the lens of the war against terrorism. This period also marks the intensification of discussions on the Syrian issue at the UN Security Council, through which this UN body adopted a total of 16 resolutions.

The Syrian civil war, often described as "the greatest tragedy of the century" (Antonio Guterres, 2013), erupted in response to the violent suppression of protests and social unrest, set against the backdrop of the broader *Arab Spring*. This regional uprising, inspired by ideals of democracy, freedom of speech, and political representation, spread across the Middle East through a process of social diffusion and interaction. From the perspective of International Relations theory, the Syrian civil war provides a compelling case for examining the tension between realism and constructivism. While realism emphasizes *material forces*, the constructivist approach challenges this by focusing the global order and relations among actors as social structure, concentrated on *ideas*, *norms, identity,* and its role in the shaping of political action.

Realistic explanation on the civil war

In the context of International Relations, realism is tradition that emphasizes the state's pursuit of power and national interest. (Donnelly 2005: 29). Within realist thought, politics is essentially the exercise of power, which can be understood as the exertion of influence over other actors or as something that states inherently possess. (Heywood, 2011:87).

Realism not only underscores the importance of national sovereignty in global politics, but also explains why states place particular value on territorial sovereignty in the realm of International Relations. This is known as the *state-centric* view, in which the absence of a central authority in the international system (*anarchy*) leads states to reject any higher power beyond their own authority. (Dunne, Schmidt, 2011: 87). Both domestic and international politics, from this perspective, are essentially struggles for power. (Morgenthau, 1948:17). As a doctrine in International Relations, realism has traditionally focused on the power dynamics between states. However, the quest to achieve and maintain power, and to establish order and justice within states, can often be more violent than conflicts between states themselves. (Waltz, 1979: 103).

It is important to note that in 2016, there were 49 active conflicts worldwide, of which only two were between different states (*India-Pakistan and Eritrea-Ethiopia*), while all the others were internal conflicts within states (SIPRI, 2017: 2). Another factor that complicates conflicts is the emergence of "*internationalized civil wars*," which occur

when external states intervene in an armed conflict between a country's government and opposition groups, supporting one or both sides. (Themnér 2016: 9). In 1991, only 4% of conflicts were considered internationalized according to this definition, while by 2015, this figure had risen to 40% (Einsiedel, Bosetti, Cockayne, Salih, Wan 2017: 5). In civil wars, states become vulnerable to foreign influences or interventions (Bound 2013: 10). When the sovereign authority of the state weakens, domestic or civil wars, according to realists, arise for the same reasons that wars break out between states—competition for power and control. (Dunne, Schmidt, 2011: 88). The loss of legitimate authority erodes the distinction between domestic order and international chaos. In this context, as the central government loses legitimacy, the people seek power in an attempt to restore security. (Dunne, Schmidt, 2011: 88). They often align with groups that share common values or ideologies, leading to the fragmentation of the state along ethnic, religious, or political lines.

Governments, in turn, are prone to framing opposition groups as "criminal elements," "foreign agents," or "terrorists," while opposition groups portray the government as undemocratic, authoritarian, and particularly biased against certain regions, ethnicities, or religions (Regehr, 2015). The Syrian civil war stands as a clear example of this dynamic, with numerous opposition groups not only fighting the central government but also competing against each other. The involvement of regional and global actors further internationalized the civil war, making it more complex and undermining any potential for lasting peace.

State & non-state actors in Syrian battleground

Since the onset of the uprising, both regional and global actors have closely monitored developments in Syria. For many, both state and non-state actors, Syria has become an arena of strategic competition. For Russia, a key supporter of the Assad regime, Syria has been a major priority in its foreign policy in recent years. Russia's focus has been on re-establishing Assad's military and political power, as any threat to Damascus is seen as an indirect threat to Russia and its broader interests. (Söderlund, 2017: 31). From the Russian perspective, Syria is a critical part of the broader struggle against the post-Cold War security system. Under President Putin, Russia aims to establish a new security framework that limits Western institutions and US power in the 21st century, while reducing the American role in key regional security agreements and the global system more generally. (Covington 2015: 2). From the early months, Russia moved quickly to support the Syrian regime, providing military advisors and arms supplies. Russia also acted as Syria's advocate in the UN Security Council, utilizing the veto to block any resolutions that could pave the way for military intervention against the regime. (Schmidt, 2019).

Realist theorists contend that international organizations, such as the UN, are not independent actors but rather tools of powerful states, used to enhance their international prestige. Realists argue that international organizations, like international agreements, are instruments of state interests and are unlikely to pursue autonomous policies. (Collins, White, 2011: 93).

The veto power in the Security Council symbolizes a compromise between national and global interests, ensuring that no global decision contradicts the national interests of any of the five permanent members. In this sense, the veto serves as a reconciling tool to align UN actions with the common interests of the Security Council's permanent members, revealing the realities of power within the international political system (Thakur , 2006: 307). The Syrian government benefited from the support of a significant global actor, both diplomatically and militarily. Russia's direct military intervention in September 2015, at the request of President Bashar al-Assad, marked the return of Russian military presence beyond the borders of the former Soviet Union, positioning Russia as a key player in the Middle East.

Through this intervention, Russia not only stabilized Assad's position and secured its military bases in Syria but also demonstrated to the region, the world, and its own citizens that Russia remains a formidable global power. (D. Hooker 2016: 227). Syria is considered the only country in the Middle East where Russia exerts direct influence, with its military bases in Tartus and Latakia providing a significant strategic presence in the Mediterranean. From a realist perspective, Russia's actions in Syria, as well as throughout the Middle East, can be understood through the lens of the *balance of power*, aiming to counterbalance US influence in the region. For Russia, balancing Washington's influence is the only viable strategy to avoid being sidelined in the region.

In analyzing the US's approach to the Syrian civil war, realist theorist John Mearsheimer emphasizes the central tenets of realism: national interest and security, as well as the impact that these could imply for the United States. He argues that not all Middle Eastern countries are of strategic importance to the US, and Syria, in particular, does not pose a direct threat to US homeland security or its military presence in the Persian Gulf. (Mearsheimer, 2014: 13-14) However, the US and Saudi Arabia share a common interest in limiting Syria's alignment with Iran, viewing the conflict as part of a broader regional balance of power. (Martini, York, Young, 2013: 2) Over time, with the emergence of non-state actors, the Syrian civil war has evolved in another trajectory. The primary focus has shifted to combating terrorist organizations, particularly ISIS, while the question of removing Assad from power has become a secondary issue.

The division of the Syrian territory along ethnic and ideological lines made room for different non-state actors, such as *People's Protection Units (YPG), Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)* and *Democratic Union Party (PYD)*, which in Türkiye's eyes represent an extension of the terrorist organization PKK in projecting a corridor in northern Syria, a move that poses a serious threat to Türkiye's security. Türkiye's military operations in Syria aimed at removing ISIS as far as possible from the border as well as preventing YPG/PKK from taking control of the east-west line in northern Syria (Yeşiltaş, Seren, Özçelik , 2017: 8)

Realist theory posits that states are rational, unitary actors driven by self-interest and the pursuit of self-preservation, continuously striving to maximize their security. This perspective, rooted in a state-centric view of terrorism, emphasizes the importance of counter-terrorism efforts for ensuring state survival (Kürkçü. 9). In this context, Türkiye's

actions against terrorist organizations within Syria, from a realist standpoint, can be interpreted as efforts to maximize national security and protect its interests. Undoubtedly, realism is a valuable theory for explaining the outcomes of international policies, wars, and the actions of state actors, grounded in the assumption that states operate in the international arena based on their interests and the balance of power. However, realism is not the sole theory capable of explaining the global phenomena and challenges faced by the international community today.

Toward a new paradigm: constructivism

As discussed earlier, the realist paradigm primarily focuses on material factors when analyzing relations among states and their actions on the global stage. The end of the Cold War sparked a reconfiguration of debates within the theoretical discourse of International Relations, paving the way for the emergence of constructivism, a new perspective that has significantly contributed to the field of international political thought. The constructivist paradigm emerged in opposition to the neorealist and neoliberal schools, which adhered to a materialist approach to world politics. Although International Relations scholars often view realism and constructivism as incompatible, Samuel Barkin highlights the commonalities between the two theories (Barkin, 2010). While the constructivist paradigm is deeply rooted in intellectual developments within sociology, it also offers valuable insights into various aspects of global political developments.

According to constructivists, the social and political world, including the realm of International Relations, is not a physical entity or material object existing outside human consciousness. For them, the international system is not like the solar system. Instead, the international system is seen as a product of inter-subjective consciousness, made up of ideas rather than material forces, and, and as such, it is shaped by specific individuals at particular times and places. (Jackson, Sørensen , 2007: 162)

Nicholas Onuf, the first theorist to introduce the term *constructivism* into International Relations, asserts that the world is a joint construction (Onuf, 2013), where anarchy in the international system is not a given but something that states actively create (Wendt, 1999, 70). The development of international policy is similarly constructed, not predetermined, as identities and interests are formed and rely upon intersubjective practices. (Zehfus, 2002: 12)

The constructivist perception vis-à-vis *anarchy* is based on the argument that the latter is an imagined situation constructed by actors, while state interests and identities are not fixed and are subject of change and are created during the process of interaction and interplay. Constructivists argue that the practice of sovereignty has evolved over time, and the power and identity of current states have undergone similar transformations (Hurd, 2008: 300). On the other hand, Martha Finnemore, in defining state identities and interests, focuses on the role of social international norms and their influence on how states define their identities and interests (Finnemore, 1996). The constructivist political thought emphasizes that political actions and state behaviors are perceived as outcomes of specific social contexts. (Kiçmari 2013: 115).

Therefore, according to constructivists, relations between states and global developments are not predetermined; rather, they are a construction, the result of ongoing process of interaction between individuals, states, non-state actors and social norms.

Demands for freedom - prelude to the Syrian war

The outbreak of protests and social uprising that swept through different countries of the Arab world also reached Syria. Much like other countries in the region, the Syrians demanded the downfall of the existing regime. This comprehensive uprising came to be known in the media and literature as the Arab Spring, and as such it would not have been possible without social interaction. In particular, the media and social networks played a crucial role in the actions of the civic uprising, especially in mobilizing the youth. Social interactions of young people in political socialization and in influencing people's consciousness became a cornerstone in mobilizing masses with the demand of changing repressive and autocratic regimes. As a consequence, people's interaction brought about an unwavering willingness to reconstruct their socio-political identity (Badre, 2014). The constructivist paradigm suggests that states are driven by, or, in other words, draw policies based on their identity, which evolves in response to certain social contexts.

In the Syrian case, the broad masses, aimed at a structural political change and the establishment of a new state identity through the idea for individual political rights, human rights and liberties. Wendt asserts that such structural changes occur when actors redefine who they are, namely their identities, and what they want, namely their goals. (Wendt, 1999: 336).

The ambitions of the protestors, however, were brutally suppressed by the regime, which considers Ba'athism (Ba'ath is the dominant party in Syria and rules the country since the 1960s) as an integral part of the Syrian state identity. During a Ba'ath Party conference, held in April 2017, Bashar al-Assad, among other things, underlined Syria's state identity. According to him, what is happening in Syria is: "...a continuation of the (historical) war between secular forces represented by the Ba'ath Party, and Political Islam…" (Al-Alou, 2017)

The regime also constructed itself with the identity of legitimacy as well – thus, as a legitimate power – against that of the others who fight the regime, while from the perspective of government the war in Syria should be seen as a war of the state against terrorists. (Şahin, 2012: 20).

The role of actors in constructivist thought

The advocates of the constructivist thought read the involvement of foreign regional and global actors in the Syrian scenario in the context of identities and norms that are currently applied at the level of international policy.

According to the constructivists, social interactions, behavior and history among actors establish the identity (Katzenstein, 1996) of a given state, while according to the Russian scholar Andrei Tsygankov, "identity is a product of the discursive competition among different groups … by relying on the different actions of the Other". According to

the perspective of Russia, Europe, and the West in general, played the figurative role of the Other in the debates about national identity. (Tsygankov. 2016: 17-18). Considering this conclusion, the interaction of Russian national identity and its relations with the West are crucial in understanding how Russia's foreign policy is shaped. (Postma, 2015: 33). Constructivists do not consider Russia's stance on the civil war in Syria a result of material (economic or military) interests, but a result of the Russian concerns about the Western post-Cold War doctrine, namely the doctrine of international intervention against regimes deemed undesirable (as seen in the cases of Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya) (Alsaadi, 2017: 87).

Since the protagonists of the constructivist political thought consider that the foreign policy of a given country is determined mainly by the identity that is shaped during a particular historical circumstance, and that ideological identities of states can be perceived as an important factor in relations among them, then, according to constructivists, such a view - when it comes to Saudi Arabia–Iran antagonism - is reflected in the Syrian scenario as well! (Majin, 2017: 75). Constructivists would read Türkiye's stance vis-à-vis Syria from the perspective of a perpetuate changing state's identity and its transformation toward a state based on democracy, freedom, rule of law and equality for all its citizens (Kalın, 2017).

The Syrian civil war, like other wars of similar magnitude, is highly complex and cannot be fully explained by any single theoretical approach, especially in a region where different regional and global interests clash. However, amidst such tragedies, the most urgent priority is to end hostilities and work toward establishing peace.

Conclusion

The popular revolt that swept Syria was primarily driven by the people's demand for freedom, political rights, and removal of the dictatorial regime. For the people of this region, freedom of expression and the ability to choose their leaders became paramount. Through these protests, the populations in these countries sought to construct a new state identity by their respective states: one that is based on the liberal-democratic principles that respect the dignity of citizens and protect their rights. In the case of Syria, however, these protests and demands escalated to such tragic proportions that ultimately, they triggered a civil war, drawing in a multitude of domestic and international actors.

The objective of this paper was to examine the developments in Syria, as well as the positions of regional and global actors, within the framework of International Relations, utilizing both the realist and constructivist schools of thought. Based on the findings, we can draw the following conclusions:

-The war in Syria demonstrated that realpolitik is applicable not only in interstate conflicts but also in civil war.

-In the name of national interest and non-interference in domestic affairs, states often violate the principles of freedom and human rights, as evidenced by the use of the veto power mechanism in the UN Security Council.

-The protracted nature of a conflict increases the likelihood of internationalization and the presence of different actors whose interests significantly differ from those of the local population.

- Interaction and cooperation between various actors play a critical role in the formation of identities, which, in turn, shape ideas, norms and expectations that guide international and domestic behavior.

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INTEGRATING COMPUTER VISION WITH YOLOV8 ALGORITHM FOR PID: A STATE-OF-THE-ART ANALYSIS

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Abstract: *This research paper investigates the integration of the YOLOv8 algorithm with Proportional-Integral-Derivative (PID) control for real-time object detection and tracking. It explores improvements in the accuracy, efficiency, and real-time performance of the proposed YOLOv8-PID system, especially in scenarios requiring the differentiation of weapons and distinction between military and civilian personnel. Key performance factors are analyzed, and the system's potential for establishing new standards in computer vision, security, and autonomous systems is evaluated.*

Keywords: *YOLOv8, PID Control, Real-Time Object Detection, Surveillance, Military Applications*

Introduction

The marriage of computer vision and real-time control systems has led to many innovations in various fields, but most notably, in the defence and security industries, where the ability to detect objects (such as threats) in real time and track them with accuracy is of the utmost importance. In these kind of fields, reliable detection systems need to recognize an object for what it is, differentiate between other objects, and react almost immediately. With the progression of detection algorithms, specifically the YOLO (You Only Look Once) series, real-time detection with high precision, which has a great effect on surveillance, self-navigation, and intelligent robotics, is possible.

Object detection algorithms are great for stationary applications but many of

them fail to perform in a mobile or dynamically changing environment, where it is imperative that focus be maintained on a moving object. This paper explores the use of YOLOv8 combined with PID control as an approach, with the goal of developing a system that does not only recognize objects with high accuracy, but also stabilizes tracking to account for real-time drifts and environmental changes. The idea is to improve the ability to detect weapons while distinguishing between civilians and military in changing situations, which could have large security implications, for example, autonomous drone surveillance. Objectives of this scientific paper are to:

- Evaluate how effective the detection systems are, how well they detect small objects, and how fast they process.
- Explore the use of YOLOv8 with PID control, to make tracking more stable and detection more accurate under adverse conditions.
- Compare and contrast with current models, advantages and disadvantages.

The convergence of computer vision and real-time control has yielded significant innovations in defence and security. Reliable detection systems must quickly identify and differentiate objects under dynamic conditions. Earlier versions of detection algorithms often failed in mobile environments. The enhanced YOLOv8-PID system proposed in this paper addresses these challenges by coupling YOLOv8's real-time accuracy with PID-based stabilization.
This study aims to:

- Evaluate detection precision, especially for small, fast-moving objects.
- Implement and analyze PID control for object tracking stability.
- Compare the proposed approach to existing models in dynamic scenarios.

Literature Review

- Advances in Object Detection and YOLOv8 Innovations

Object detection algorithms have come a long way, especially with the YOLO (You Only Look Once) series which strikes a nice balance between processing at high speeds and detecting objects in real time [1], [2], [3], [4], [5]. YOLOv8, introduced in early 2023, represents the latest in this series and has brought several advancements that make it particularly suitable for applications requiring speed and accuracy in diverse environments [6], [7], [8]. This section examines YOLOv8's contributions and compares it with improvements from three recent papers, identifying gaps that our proposed YOLOv8-PID system aims to fill [9], [10], [11], [12].

- Key Features of YOLOv8

YOLOv8 also has many architectural breakthroughs, including the anchor-free detection design and the C2f (Cross-Stage Partial Fusion) backbone module [13], [14]. These enhancements contribute to faster recognition times, reduced latency, and improved detection accuracy for smaller or partially obscured objects, which

are essential in real time military and surveillance applications. By removing anchor boxes, YOLOv8 simplifies the detection head architecture and increases processing efficiency, particularly in environments with rapidly changing scenes. [15], [16], [17], [18], [19].

Analysis of Existing Research on YOLOv8 and Control Integration

The authors in the paper [1] discuss the use of Context Attention Block (CAB) to improve YOLOv8's ability to detect small objects without compromising the model complexity. That would solve the problem that many object detection system have, where they tend to miss smaller objects because of the lower resolution of the feature extraction.

By contrast, our YOLOv8-PID system builds upon the work of authors in the paper [1] (not only does it benefit from the intrinsic improvements to small object detection that YOLOv8 offers, but it also introduces a Proportional-Integral-Derivative (PID) control to steady the tracker). The PID control makes sure that the system can keep a lock on a moving object, which is very important when in a dynamic environment like drone-based surveillance or defence where detection stability becomes a must [2], [3], [4], [5], [20], [21], [22]. Author's [1] CAB-based system is merely a detection enhancement system and does not include any control mechanisms like our system does, thus allowing our system to react dynamically in a stable detection environment when the objects are moving erratically.

The authors in the other paper [2], looked at YOLOv8's ability to detect moving objects and how motion-specific modifications could be made to the existing network to better suit dynamic environments. They have better detection over spatiotemporal domains because they use some preprocessing, like changing the colour values and the frame size, which makes it easier to extract features from moving objects. This allows for more precise tracking in traffic monitoring and security surveillance.

Our YOLOv8-PID system is like authors [2] in that it focuses on real-time and dynamic tracking. However, our system builds upon this by incorporating PID control, which provides continuous adjustment to maintain the position of the object within the frame [6], [7], [8], [23], [24], [25]. By using the PID control feedback, our system can lock onto an object and maintain the tracking in real time, it immediately responds to changes in position and can compensate for quick movements or environmental disturbances [9], [10], [26], [27]. Author's [2] model does have better motion detection, but our system takes it a step further by providing feedback control, which ensures that the tracking is both stable and precise, this is especially important in real-time applications such as military surveillance and autonomous navigation.

The other paper [3] gives a great background on the design of YOLOv8 and how it compares to older versions and what improvements in terms of processing speed and accuracy and usability have been made. This paper [3] presents several important improvements in YOLOv8, including the C2f (Cross-Stage Partial Fusion) backbone

and the transition to an anchor-free detection head. It shows how YOLOv8 can be used in so many different things, from robots to surveillance to self-driving cars, because of its simple design and its ability to run on a variety of hardware.
However, while authors [3] introduce the flexibility and extensibility of YOLOv8, they do not really get into control system integration like PID for increased stability in something like a tracking system. This is what our YOLOv8-PID system strives to fill with an integrated approach of real-time control combined with detection [28], [29]. This combination enables real time feedback which in turn keeps the position of the tracked object very stable, and it is imperative that the tracking is smooth in applications that involve moving platforms (drones etc., there is no control integration in YOLOv8, as seen in paper [3]). That implies a gap which is what our work does "close the loop" by providing PID feedback to control dynamic situations much better [30], [31].

Comparative Analysis of Detection and Control Systems

Although great strides have been made in these studies, there is no current work that integrates YOLOv8's ability to detect with real-time control mechanisms such as PID to develop a robust, high-precision detection and tracking system. Our proposed system represents a novel contribution by providing:

- Improved Stability: Author's paper [1] YOLOv8-CAB model is good for small object detection, but it is not stable enough for mobile. Our system, on the other hand, uses PID to keep continuous lock even if the object is moving very fast or in an erratic manner.
- Enhanced Real-Time Performance: Author's paper [2] dynamic object detection is a step up for YOLOv8's motion sensitivity but does not guarantee positional stability in real time. With PID control our system will not only sense movement but stabilize it so that it will be a smooth and responsive tracking experience.
- Comprehensive Control Integration: While Author's paper [3] focuses on the versatility of YOLOv8, their review does not address how YOLOv8 can be adapted for applications needing control mechanisms. One of the things that makes YOLOv8 so unique is that our PID integration allows it to be compatible in situations that require constant real-time changes, which is a huge step in the research world.

PID Controller Integration

To ensure stable object tracking in dynamic environments, a Proportional-Integral-Derivative (PID) controller was integrated with the YOLOv8 detection output. The system uses a full PID loop where the proportional term adjusts immediate error, the integral term corrects drift over time, and the derivative term anticipates rapid changes in movement. The controller dynamically adjusts bounding box alignment, keeping

detected objects centred in the frame.
Initial testing was performed on synthetic drone footage to observe stabilization response. Results demonstrated that with PID feedback, the tracking remained consistent even during sudden object movements, validating the controller's ability to enhance YOLOv8 performance in real-world scenarios such as surveillance and autonomous navigation.

Other Systems for Object Detection and Control

There are many other object detection systems outside of the YOLO series that have some cool benefits, yet they lack in the area of control:

- RCNN (Regions with Convolutional Neural Networks) and Faster R-CNN: These two-stage models excel at detecting static objects, but they are too slow to track dynamic objects in real time. Although Faster R-CNN is faster than RCNN, they do not include real-time feedback control, which makes them almost useless in environments that need to be constantly tuned [10], [11], [12], [13], [14], [15].
- SSD (Single Shot MultiBox Detector): SSD is a one-stage detector and is recognized for its efficiency in object detection. But it cannot really trace small fast-moving objects, and it does not perform very well when the objects overlap each other or they have very complex backgrounds [16], [17], [18], [19], [20].
- RetinaNet: RetinaNet may have better accuracy due to focal loss, but it is still so computationally expensive that it is not real-time, and it never will be, at least not enough to be used on a mobile platform for real-time control integration for stable tracking [21], [22], [23], [24], [25], [26].

YOLOv8 with PID is different from these models because it combines YOLOv8's speed and precision with PID feedback, allowing for continual, stable tracking that can respond to changes in the environment [27], [28]. This combining of sensing and actuation provides a previously unknown edge in areas such as self-guided defence systems and UAV surveillance. PID control has been a staple in control theory for years, the manipulation of proportional, integral, and derivative terms to maintain stability and adapt to changing conditions in real time [29], [30]. With object detection, PID control could enhance the tracking precision, so that when there is a sudden movement or a shift in the position of the object, the system could compensate. YOLOv8 with PID is nice in environments where the system needs to stay reactive and stable, for example, drone-mounted surveillance [30], [31]. Now, using YOLOv8's detection abilities with PID control's feedback stability rails over many of the hurdles. YOLOv8 is fast and very accurate and can therefore do real time detection and PID control takes care of environmental changes and can keep a lock on a moving object. This combination of abilities is very important in defence, because if one misidentifies or fails to detect, the consequences are very serious [1], [2], [3], [4].

Results and Analysis of Systems

Table no. 1 below presents a comparison of our YOLOv8-PID integration with other leading detection models. The table compares processing time, success rate, ability to detect really small objects, and the possibility of real time use.

Table no. 1 Comparative Analysis of YOLOv8-PID with other Object Detection Models

Model	Processing Speed (FPS)	Detection Accuracy (mAP)	Small Object Detection	Real-Time Capability	Use Cases
YOLOv8-PID	45	96%	Excellent	Yes	Defence, Security
YOLOv7	40	94%	Good	Yes	Autonomous Vehicles
SSD	20	85%	Moderate	Yes	Robotics, Agriculture
RetinaNet	25	92%	High	Limited	Medical Imaging
Faster R-CNN	10	90%	Moderate	No	Static Analysis

Detailed Comparison of Results

- Processing Speed

YOLOv8-PID runs at 45 FPS which is better than most. This makes it particularly ideal for high-risk real time tracking drone surveillance. PID control allows for continuous accurate detection since it makes real time adjustments to the system and therefore avoids loss of frames in rapid action.

- Detection Accuracy

YOLOv8-PID is 96% mAP accurate, and it is very accurate especially when it comes to differentiating smaller objects, like guns. YOLOv8's feature extraction methods like the C2f backbone extract more fine grain details about the objects than SSD or RetinaNet. The other advantage is that the anchor-free design helps in detecting small objects better because the bounding box prediction can be more precise.

- Small Object Detection

YOLOv8's new architecture has shown significant strides in small object detection, maintaining a very high accuracy rate when detecting objects such as handguns or knives. This ability makes the system priceless during defence applications where small object detection accuracy is of the utmost importance.

- Real-Time Capability

The YOLOv8-PID system is designed for real-time applications. YOLOv8 is very fast, PID is very stable, so when the two are combined, the system can quickly accommodate changes in object movement and/or atmospheric conditions and still not lose it. That is a significant benefit over two-stage detectors like Faster R-CNN, which although very accurate, cannot really run in real time because they are so slow.

Revolutionizing Object Detection with YOLOv8-PID

These are the reasons that the YOLOv8-PID system is better performing compared to other integrated systems:

- High Detection Speed and Accuracy: YOLOv8's architecture is optimized and utilizes PID control, so it is very fast and accurate at detecting, and it surpasses other similar models.
- Enhanced Stability: PID feedback eliminates jitter and keeps a solid lock on moving objects, which SSD and Faster R-CNN do not have.
- Scalability in Dynamic Environments: With PID adaptation, YOLOv8 is much more capable of adapting to real world environmental shifts than traditional object detectors and is very applicable to military/surveillance.

Discussions about the Advantages and Limitations of the System

- Advantages of YOLOv8-PID Integration

The integration would be very stable and flexible, especially in security, high risk stuff. YOLOv8's flexibility to run on different hardware platforms, along with PID's consistent performance over a variety of environments, allows for reliable detection in changing field conditions.

- Limitations of YOLOv8-PID Integration

While the YOLOv8-PID system is a strong system, it requires fine tuning of PID parameters, and this might not be adaptable to very extreme lighting or environmental conditions. Also, the real time performance of the model might degrade in the case of many small overlapping objects, in which case more sophisticated multi-object tracking methodologies would be required.

Future Work

These are the steps for further enhancement of the system:

1. Dynamic PID Tuning: Investigate AI-driven adaptive PID tuning for further real-time stability.
2. Multi-Object Tracking: Expand the model to allow for PID-controlled tracking

of more multiple objects at once.

3. Enhanced Low-Light Detection: Better recognition in low-visibility situations, something that always seems to plague night vision.
4. Multiple Detection Scenarios: Expand the model to allow for PID-controlled tracking of multiple objects at different scenarios and situations.

While the proposed YOLOv8-PID system shows promise for real-time surveillance, its deployment in sensitive environments raises ethical concerns. These include the risk of misuse, potential privacy violations, and accountability in case of false detections. Ensuring human oversight, compliance with legal standards, and transparency in decision-making processes is critical when applying AI-based detection systems in defence or civilian monitoring scenarios.

Conclusion

This study introduced the YOLOv8-PID system, a new combination of YOLOv8 and PID control, aimed at improving real-time stability, accuracy, and responsiveness in dynamic detection settings. By merging the high-speed, precise detection capabilities of YOLOv8 with the feedback control of PID, our system effectively tackles the challenges of tracking fast-moving objects in changing conditions, making it especially beneficial for drone surveillance and security tasks. When compared to other leading detection models, YOLOv8-PID showed superior performance in processing speed, accuracy, and tracking stability. Unlike other models that may excel in either speed or accuracy, our system consistently maintains a stable lock on moving targets, providing a well-rounded solution for dynamic applications.

Combining YOLOv8 with PID control marks a significant step forward in real-time object detection and tracking. The YOLOv8-PID system not only fulfils the need for fast and precise detection, but also brings stability and adaptability to changing environments, thus establishing a new benchmark for mobile and high-stakes applications in defence and security. By tackling the shortcomings of existing detection systems and presenting a fresh approach that incorporates feedback control, this research lays the groundwork for future progress in intelligent surveillance, autonomous navigation, and dynamic target tracking. As detection and control technologies advance, the concepts illustrated in this study can inform the creation of more responsive, adaptable, and efficient real-time object tracking systems.

The integration of YOLOv8 with PID control enhances real-time object detection by introducing tracking stability without compromising speed or accuracy. This hybrid system is especially suited for defence, security, and autonomous operations, where reliable detection in unpredictable environments is critical. With further refinement and ethical deployment, this approach offers a new standard for intelligent surveillance platforms.

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ARCTIC AND POLAR GEOPOLITICS

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Abstract: *Since the beginning of the modern era of exploration, exploitation, and permanent settlement, governments and commercial actors from outside the region have shaped Arctic geopolitics. One of the primary drivers of geopolitical shifts in the Arctic is the abundance of untapped natural resources beneath its icy waters. As the ice cover diminishes, previously inaccessible oil, gas, and mineral reserves are becoming targets for exploration and exploitation.*

In addition to economic considerations, the militarization of the Arctic is on the rise. Nations with Arctic territories are bolstering their military presence, underscoring the region's strategic importance. The Arctic can no longer be considered in isolation from what is emerging in other regions, and the tensions between Russia and China on the one hand, and the West on the other, have already had an impact on what is happening in the Arctic region: Resource exploitation and transiting the Northern Sea Route are the highest priority for Russia and China; the issue of nuclear waste in the Arctic Ocean and ashore is threatening and a global concern; sovereign rights of Canada and Russia inside territorial waters are disputed; and Greenland and Svalbard deserve greater attention.

Key words*: geopolitics, Arctic, resources, interests*

Introduction

Since the beginning of the modern era of exploration, exploitation, and permanent settlement, governments and commercial actors from outside the region have shaped Arctic geopolitics. Initial quests for territory and resources led to claims of sovereignty, and by the end of the 19th century, most of the land north of the Arctic Circle had been claimed and controlled by seven of today's Arctic states: the United States, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Russia. The eighth, Iceland, became fully independent of Denmark only in 1944. Early in the 20th century, Norway's claim to sovereignty over the archipelago then called Spitsbergen, which had been subject to Dutch, British, Swedish, Norwegian, American, and Russian exploitation over the preceding centuries, was internationally established under Norwegian sovereignty by the 1920 Spitzbergen (Svalbard) Treaty. This effectively completed the interstate system in the Arctic and ended all territorial disputes over its larger land

features, though more minor disputes lasted until recently and some maritime boundary disputes persist. A century later, despite world wars and renewed conflicts between Russia and the West, each of the existing Arctic countries remains firmly in control of its territory. Five of them – the US, Canada, Denmark (by way of Greenland), Norway, and Russia – have large exclusive economic zones (EEZs) in the Arctic Ocean. (Morrison and Bennet, 2024: 1-18)

The Arctic region seems to be always in a state of constant and rapid transformation that affects the entire Earth. The first significant transformation, from the military tensions of the Cold War to geopolitical stability based on cross-border cooperation, would not have been possible without growing concern among indigenous peoples, non-governmental organisations and scientists over the state of the region's environment. This led to the establishment of cooperative structures on environmental protection among the Arctic states and caused a shift in their security premises. (Heininen, 2024:1-29)

The diminishing ice cover has sparked heightened interest in the vast natural resources concealed beneath the Arctic seabed, including oil, gas, and minerals. As the region becomes more accessible, states are vying for territorial claims and resource exploitation rights, leading to potential conflicts over sovereignty and resource ownership. (Theodora, 2020:1-7)

Figure 1: The Arctic region

The significance of the Arctic

Until recently, the Arctic was not considered a very promising field for economic activities and especially for endeavors of maritime transport. The Arctic Ocean was kept virtually isolated by very harsh environmental conditions associated with thick multiyear ice and strong winds; polar darkness during winter should also be considered among other discouraging factors for shipping operations in this region. As the ice coverage within the Arctic maintains a downward trend, extraordinary opportunities to capitalize on its plethora of untapped resources are clearly looming. The extraction of various types of minerals and vast quantities of energy resources (oil and gas) is standing out; touristic and fishing activities could also benefit from an Arctic with less ice. More importantly, the promise for shorter voyages from Asia towards Europe and/or the Americas (and vice-versa) is already influencing the future planning of various shipping companies. For those entities looking to reap the benefits of these 'Arctic Passages', the fact that navigation along the Northern Sea Route (NSR) and/or the Northwest Passage (NWP) is now more and more feasible, is deemed as a predominant factor. But, it is also necessary to emphasize that the influence of ice and ice-pacts upon transiting ships will remain a point of concern; icebreakers' operations/escorts will continue to be a requirement for safety reasons. (Drewniak et al., 2018:1-17)

The significance of an Arctic rendered increasingly accessible by the melting of ice as a result of rising global temperatures should not be underestimated. As the region opens to increased human activity such as traffic from commercial shipping, tourism, and oil and gas exploration, soot emitted by maritime vessels and operations will land on the ice.

The technology required to recover Arctic resources year-round is not readily available, and will not become so in the short term. Transport difficulties add to the problems to be overcome. Natural gas requires pipelines or expensive and complex liquefaction infrastructure.

Technology is a key barrier to Arctic access in other ways. Icebreakers, many nuclear powered, are necessary for presence and power projection in the region year-round.

Hydrocarbon prices and concerns about energy security are key drivers in accelerating interest in the Arctic, since high energy prices will generate new technological developments that are diicult to justify with prices even at current levels. New technology, especially that which allows drilling in deep water, also potentially opens vast areas of the Arctic to oil and gas exploration. New technology that can withstand ice lows will be of special benefit to Russia, since most of the waters along the Northern Sea Route are relatively shallow with huge sedimentary basins extending up to 200 or 300 miles ofshore. (Ebinger and Zambetakis, 2009: 1215–1232)

The Arctic is significant for the Earth's survival and sustenance in four ways.

- First, the impact of the Arctic ice and this region on the global climate system remains significant despite the fact that the region makes up only around 3 percent of the whole planet.
- Second, the region incorporates almost twenty of the longest rivers of the world.

- Third, around one third of the world's coastline is composed of Arctic's marine domain.
- Finally, one fourth of the world's continental shelf is comprised of the Arctic Ocean.

The Arctic is an environmental linchpin with a critical role in global environmental issues. It is, however, unclear whether the post–cold war stability and broad international cooperation will continue. One way to support this fruitful process is to recognize indigenous peoples, their livelihoods and agendas, particularly where they deal with the environment. Northern indigenous peoples have not yet been explicit about their interpretation of geopolitics and have not spelled out an agenda for it. They have, however, actively participated in, and to some extent even led, Arctic governance. In other words their perspective on geopolitics is thus far implicit. The question remains whether they will define their geopolitics explicitly and formally. (Heininen, 2011:102)

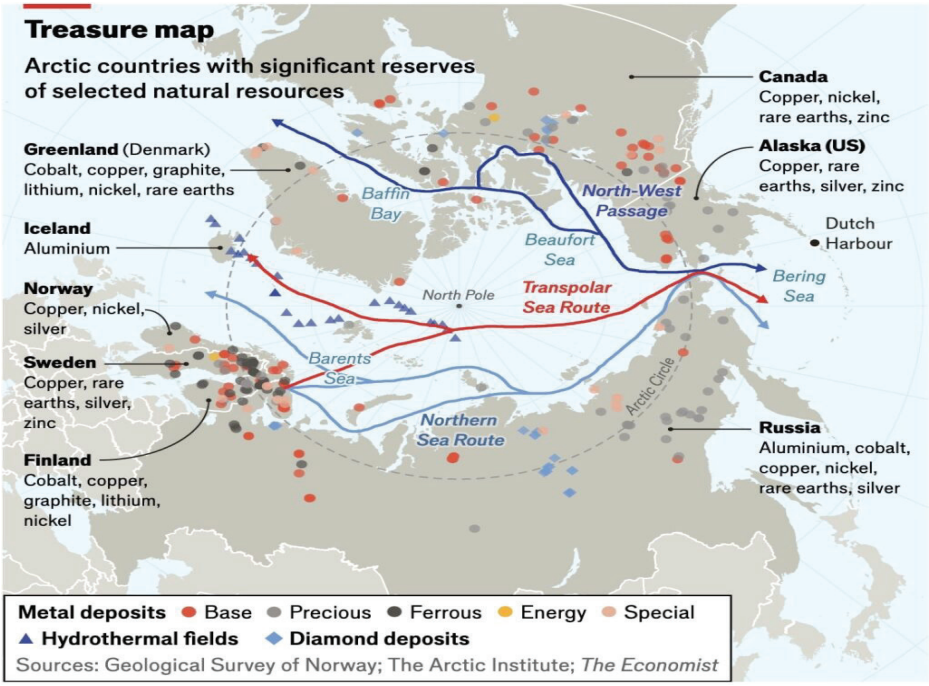

Figure 2: Treasure map

Geopolitical and geoeconomical importance of the Arctic

The Arctic is an 'exceptional region,' whose geographical position and environmental composition make it a pivotal territory in the field of geopolitics. As a result,

polar geopolitics is defined as the series of political, economic, and military processes activated by states in order to pin down claims of sovereignty that will grant the state accessibility, property, and authority rights on the region. In fact, the impact of the effects of climate change on the geography of the North has opened great opportunities of economic and social development, since the melting of the ice pack has allowed humans to reach natural resources present in the region.

According to Polar geopolitics, even though the effects of climate change are dangerous for the survival of the ecosystem and the planetary balance as a whole, they are also potential occasions to improve the regional productivity, being hydrocarbons and oil deposits more reachable and so fostering the "scramble for access to the resources that […] become available." (Covino, 2018:82-83)

On the other hand, critical geopolitics recognizes several factors, and that there are several actors, which influence Arctic geopolitics. One of the new factors is an 'actor' per se, i.e. the fact that there are other actors as a/the 'state', people(s) and civil societies, and Indigenous peoples without their own state. (Heininen, 2018:171-186)

The strategic importance of the Arctic has increased. Five countries are littoral states to the Arctic Ocean: Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Norway, Russia and the United States. A total of eight countries, including Finland, Iceland and Sweden, form the arctic council, the forum dealing with all Arctic issues with the exception of security and defense. The important perspectives are climate change, resource exploitation, military build-up and exercises, and the Arctic as a habitat. Military power projection is already a serious issue and needs more awareness. The Arctic can no longer be considered in isolation from what is emerging in other regions, and the tensions between Russia and China on the one hand, and the West on the other, have already had an impact on what is happening in the Arctic region: Resource exploitation and transiting the Northern Sea Route are the highest priority for Russia and China; the issue of nuclear waste in the Arctic Ocean and ashore is threatening and a global concern; sovereign rights of Canada and Russia inside territorial waters are disputed; and Greenland and Svalbard deserve greater attention. (Feldt, 2022:42-53)

As long as the Arctic remained one of the most inaccessible places on the planet, scientific theories about its geopolitical and economic significance were perceived as pure abstraction. Firstly, the Arctic is a depository with truly unlimited natural resources, both in volume and in the content of mineral products. Secondly, the Northern sea route linking the Western and Eastern hemisphere and passing through the ports of the Russian Arctic, favors the development of international economic ties, develops integration of Russia into the world economy, enhancing the competitiveness of the Russian Federation. Thirdly, the successful and systematic development of natural resources in the territory of Russian Arctic provides the possibility of implementing a systematic and comprehensive sustainable economic development. Fourthly, the development of the Arctic spaces and its natural resources is one of the main determinants of the world economy transition to a new technological way. On the one hand, the development the Arctic encourages the development of new technologies that is a driving force of scientific and technological

progress. In addition, the transition to the sixth technological way is impossible without the resources of the Arctic Zone. Fifthly, the Arctic acts as a zone of strategic interests of the economic security of the Russian Federation. According to some scientists' opinions, natural resources will remain the basis for economic development of states. Sixthly, the Arctic acts as a zone of strategic interests of the military-political security of Russia. Because of its enormous wealth and geographic location, the Arctic can act as a possible cause of third world war. Seventhly, the Arctic is an object of international influence of the developed states of the planet and the application point of their political, military, economic force, influence and authority. (Samarina et al., 2020:1-7)

One of the primary drivers of geopolitical shifts in the Arctic is the abundance of untapped natural resources beneath its icy waters. As the ice cover diminishes, previously inaccessible oil, gas, and mineral reserves are becoming targets for exploration and exploitation. This has set the stage for territorial disputes, resource-driven competition, and complex negotiations over sovereignty, as nations seek to secure their economic interests in the region. The changing climate is also redrawing maritime maps, unveiling new shipping routes that were once impassable due to ice. The Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage are emerging as viable alternatives for global trade, offering shorter and potentially more cost-effective connections between major markets. This shift in transportation patterns raises questions about the strategic and economic interests of Arctic and non-Arctic states alike, as well as the potential for cooperation or competition in exploiting these newly accessible routes.

The Arctic RSC is fragmenting into three distinct security sub-regions. The primary catalyst for this change in Arctic security politics is human-caused climate change, most specifically the warming of the Arctic Ocean that has increased maritime navigability and opened new opportunities to profit from non-renewable resource extraction. The most geopolitically significant of these climate impacts is the increasing navigability and accessibility of historically ice-covered Arctic waters. When the Arctic Ocean was frozen for most of the year, states had little incentive to quarrel over disagreements such as maritime boundary disputes. Arctic boundaries had little effect on their core national interests, and states were unwilling to risk the global strategic balance or their diplomatic relations over trivial Arctic issues. (Greaves, 2019:1-12)

In addition to economic considerations, the militarization of the Arctic is on the rise. Nations with Arctic territories are bolstering their military presence, underscoring the region's strategic importance. The prospect of new trade routes, access to resources, and the potential for conflict escalation are influencing defense policies, contributing to a reevaluation of global military strategies, and challenging established norms of Arctic demilitarization. (Theodora, 2020:1-7)

The Arctic, which used to be the ultimate periphery, is slowly but surely turning into a center—a center of economic activity and investment, a shipping hub, a transit point between areas of strategic interest, and a military chokepoint. The Arctic connects Russia's oil and gas industries to Asian markets; China's manufactured goods to European markets; and Russia's Northern Fleet to the Atlantic sea lanes and, further south, the Mediterranean.

This is not a projection but the current situation, and these trends will only become more pronounced over time, as the NSR becomes more routinely navigable; communications and maritime awareness improve; and, eventually, a brand-new Transpolar Route opens. Canada and other Arctic states face the key challenge of balancing their sovereign interests against the ever-growing interest of non-Arctic nations. (Pezard, 2018:1-8)

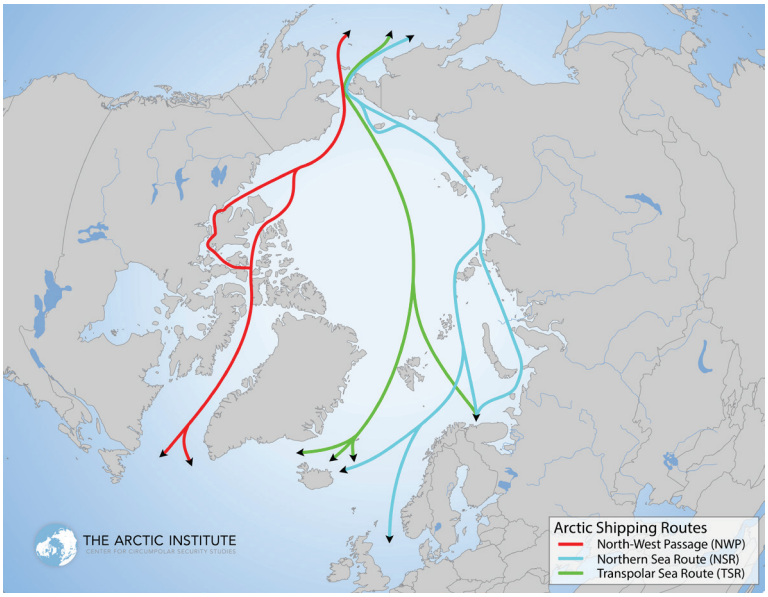

Figure 3: Arctic shipping routes

The Arctic and national security

The Arctic's importance to national security and defence policies also varies considerably across the region. The dividing line appears to lie between the European Arctic and its North American counterpart, falling together with variations in climatic conditions. Whereas the north Norwegian and the north-west Russian coastlines are ice-free during winter, the ice—although in decline—is an ever-constant factor in the Alaskan, Canadian and Greenlandic Arctic.

The potential for conflict in the Arctic should not be overstated, but neither should it be ignored. The region still stands as a theatre for potential clashes with Russia. Yet this has little to do with symbolic quarrels over the North Pole, and everything to do with the relationship between Russia and the other Arctic states—both regionally and globally. (Østhagen, 2017:239-249)

Several challenges arise from geopolitical shifts in the Arctic, with climate change as the undisputed catalyst for the region's mutating security scenario. In fact, the growing human activity resulting from Arctic thawing will present increasingly demanding tests to human and societal security (we refer to issues related to connectivity across borders) as

well as to economic and environmental security (e.g., the increased relevance of the region as a part of shipping routes). The changing character of Arctic politics, induced by the high North's new geopolitical pivot role and by the subsequent increase in the number of actors and stakeholders involved in the region, will thus, possibly, result in the end of what some observers have defined the 'Arctic exceptionalism'. Tensions developed elsewhere are certainly spilling over to this former cooperation and multilateralism sanctuary. (Cotta, 2024: 41-65)

There are some paradoxical dynamics — explaining the mix of cooperation and tension, if not conflict that are best understood through the threefold distinction presented here: international competition (why the United States is increasingly focusing on China in an Arctic context), regional interaction (why Arctic states still meet to sign new agreements hailing the cooperative spirit of the North) and bilateral relations (why some Arctic states, and not others, invest heavily in their Northern defence posture). What these nuances imply is that simplistic descriptions of Arctic geopolitics or a new Cold War in the Arctic today must be taken with a grain of salt. Political dynamics in the North are far too complex for these reductive descriptions. Recognizing this complexity should therefore encourage further studies of security politics in a region that has become an international focal point of examination and discussion. (Østhagen, 2020:2-11).

Since the Arctic is a region rich in energy and natural resources, its physical and political control will influence power politics and national security of each bordering state, shaping economic strategies and foreign policies. (Covino, 2018:39)

In sum, geographically based conflicts—geopolitics—where Arctic or non- Arctic states claim a limited number of out-of-bounds offshore resources, many of which look likely to remain unexplored for the next couple of decades at least, are neither economically nor politically viable. The resource-based argument for an outright conflict in the Arctic is not sustainable. Academics and experts who have examined the possibility of conflict in the region have by and large found each other in recent years: a direct conflict over the Arctic in itself is very unlikely. (Østhagen, 2019:7)

Concerns and opportunities about the Arctic

First are the impacts of climate change and geoeconomic and geopolitical shifts. Increasing accessibility due to shrinking ice and higher global prices for commodities like iron and other minerals are causing Arctic resources and transportation routes to be assessed differently, raising both the rewards and stakes of possible Arctic geopolitical competition. Growing awareness of the dramatic shrinkage of sea ice gave rise to wild or at least premature fantasies about the prospects of new sea routes, as well as rekindling dreams among even more sober commercial and governmental interests. (Morrison and Bennet, 2024: 1-18). Several factors contribute to increased concern about the Arctic – the shrinking ice cap with new shipping routes and easier access to resources; technological advances in the extraction of resources from deep sea and under extreme weather conditions; legal developments that allow for an extension of sovereign rights into the polar basin (Østerud and Hønneland, 2014:156-176).

Several factors contribute to increased concern about the Arctic – the shrinking ice cap with new shipping routes and easier access to resources; technological advances in the extraction of resources from deep sea and under extreme weather conditions; legal developments that allow for an extension of sovereign rights into the polar basin. These developments have increased the economic and geopolitical stakes in the region. Generally political tension is low in the Arctic, since all parties comply with the UNCLOS. (Østerud and Hønneland, 2014:156-176). The five Arctic coastal states – Denmark, Norway, Russia, U.S. and Canada – declared that questions of jurisdiction and territorial claims should be solved by negotiations within the existing international legal framework. There should be no free 'race towards the North Pole'.

The opportunities to develop the Arctic are an incentive for both Arctic and non-Arctic nations to pursue easier access, extract mineral and petrochemical resources, pursue fish proteins (at present, outside of the Central Arctic Ocean), conduct maritime transport, advance tourism, and project sovereign influence through nationally flagged vessels. Transportation networks across the Arctic are principally limited to air and seasonal marine conveyance. Economic development remains limited due to the area's remoteness, lack of infrastructure, the high cost of extant modes of travel, and the difficulty of establishing new roads, ports, and facilities. Reductions in sea ice have reduced the access barrier to maritime operations, and as a result, activity is increasing in the Bering, Chukchi, and Beaufort Sea regions. Of course, the same is true of the overall pan-Arctic, which includes the Northern Sea Route (NSR) along Russia's northern shore and the Northwest Passage across northern Canada. (Kee, 2022: 17-28)

More specifically, the presence of hydrocarbons and potentially oil has made many states internationally to redress their national and international interests in the region, influencing the definition of military, economic and foreign policies. (Covino, 2018:35)

In fact, it is estimated that the Arctic could have the greatest undiscovered reserves of hydrocarbons on Earth. Additionally, the region also has large deposits of metals including copper, nickel, gold, lead, platinum, tungsten, and uranium etc., and exploitation of oil in Alaska also demonstrates rich reserves the region holds. Strategically, the circumpolar North is important because of its location between the US and Russia. The northern route provides the shorter distance for a ballistic missile or any military aircraft to travel from US to Russia or vice versa. Moreover, the US and Russia operate their military complexes, naval bases, and nuclear weapon test sites in the region, thus retaining their military presence. (Ashraf, 2024:139-160)

Russian Federation, the United States of America and the Arctic

There has been much debate for decades among the world's countries over who owns the Arctic. Today, the Arctic is regarded as one of the indicators of the balance of power in the world, which motivates us to look at how develop events in this area between Russian Federation and The United States, as the world's major powers, which still retain their status as leading foreign policy opponents in contemporary international relations. (Kulyasova and Isaeva, 2023:73-76)

Russia possesses the lion's share of Arctic oil and gas resources and its production accounts for 95 per cent of total Arctic petroleum production. Moreover, 90 per cent of Russia's total oil production comes from the Arctic. For Russia, Arctic oil and gas holds the key to both the national economy and regional development in parts of Russia's north. It is also a tool of geopolitics, in which the control of gas pipelines and prices figure into the relationships between Russian and former Soviet republics as well as between Russia and the EU. (Nilsson and Christensen, 2019:89-90)

Firstly, the growing tensions in the world in general and in the Arctic in particular, which include increasing military conflicts (such as the current Russian-Ukrainian conflict), the intensification and possible expansion of military and political blocs (Sweden and Finland's desire to join NATO) and the unresolved issue of legal ownership of the Arctic, which leads to problems in regulating the economic, military and scientific activities of the various countries on the continent Secondly, the worsening of global warming brings the Arctic to a completely different, higher level of importance. The Arctic region is not only affected by climate issues, but also affects the Earth's climate itself. (Kulyasova and Isaeva, 2023:73-76)

All the climatic changes cannot but affect the interest of the world powers in the Arctic region, which is primarily due to the economic benefits behind the gradually melting permafrost. Today, mineral extraction is the main reason why the world's powers are becoming increasingly involved in the Arctic race. According to research by the United States Geological Survey, 30% of the world's undiscovered gas reserves and 13% of the world's unexplored oil reserves are hidden under less than 500 meters of water in the Arctic region.

For Russia and the US, such trends offer potentially very beneficial opportunities to develop their own economies. For example, it is strategically important for Russia to promote its Northern Sea Route, which runs along the border of the country. According to many scientists, the Northern Sea Route will gradually become ice-free over the coming decades, opening it to ships from other countries. It has long been proven that the NSR takes much shorter distance and time than its counterparts, the transit arteries through the Suez and Panama canals. At the same time, the US does not benefit from the Northern Sea Route becoming a popular transport route in the future, as it would increase Russia's influence in the world. Another important advantage of developing the Arctic for Russia and the U.S. is the military. Ensuring security and protecting sovereignty is one of the most basic national interests for any state, which can also be defended in the Arctic area by placing military infrastructure and defense industries there. Moreover, freeing the waters of the Arctic Ocean from ice and turning it into a working world transport artery opens the possibility of navigating more and more vessels in the Arctic zone, which greatly increases the military-intelligence potential of the two countries. Incidentally, the US is currently increasing its military presence in the Barents Sea with destroyers and building a modern polar fleet, while Russia is actively building military bases in the Arctic, including bases on the Franz Josef Land archipelago and in the Novosibirsk islands Thus, contemporary Russian and US policy in the Arctic implies a high level of confrontation and competition.

Each country seeks to gain the most in the region, focusing mainly on increasing the level of military presence and developing mining infrastructure. In addition, there is an increasing amount of disagreement on the fields of international organizations, above all the arctic council, which only complicates the process of finding and reaching agreements. Moreover, speaking of the Arctic as a source of natural resources, the countries will also face some pretty tangible obstacles here. Despite the fact that the ice in the region is melting faster and faster, the countries have almost no technology to carry out mining activities in the permafrost. This suggests that the development of the Arctic zone will require not only financial resources, but also the development of technological industries. And oil and gas production here will also be hindered by the global climate agenda, according to which countries around the world will have to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions in the coming years. This means that the role of fossil fuels in the future can diminish. (Kulyasova and Isaeva, 2023:73-76)

The Arctic states, including the US and Russia as nuclear powers, have sought to avoid direct military engagement anywhere because the escalatory impacts could be devastating. This could change in the longer term, but for now and the foreseeable future, the Arctic is, and is likely to remain, a region of geopolitical tensions that rise and fall in association with the global geopolitical system, but with a low probability of outright military conflict – including in the North Pacific, where the US and Russia have a maritime border. That said, Arctic tensions at their current levels, even if capped below kinetic conflict, have national security implications for all countries.

Conclusion

The signicance of an Arctic rendered increasingly accessible by the melting of ice as a result of rising global temperatures should not be underestimated. As the region opens to increased human activity such as traic from commercial shipping, tourism, and oil and gas exploration, soot emitted by maritime vessels and operations will land on the ice. The accelerating melting of the Arctic ice cap is ushering in a new era with profound geopolitical implications. As climate change transforms the region, the Arctic becomes increasingly accessible, opening up new opportunities and challenges for nations around the globe.

The Arctic, which used to be the ultimate periphery, is slowly but surely turning into a center—a center of economic activity and investment, a shipping hub, a transit point between areas of strategic interest, and a military chokepoint. The Arctic connects Russia's oil and gas industries to Asian markets; China's manufactured goods to European markets; and Russia's Northern Fleet to the Atlantic sea lanes and, further south, the Mediterranean. As the region becomes more accessible, states are vying for territorial claims and resource exploitation rights, leading to potential conflicts over sovereignty and resource ownership.

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THE COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION THROUGH THE LENS OF EUFOR ALTHEA

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Abstract: *The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is one of the European Union's (EU) newest policies, ensuring the Union's operational capacity. Through the CSDP, the EU enhances its military capabilities and fosters cooperation among its member states, with the aim of preventing conflicts and managing crises. The most extensive and longest-running EU peace mission is the military operation EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), established in 2004. Its goal is to monitor the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and support stability in BiH. The operation is of critical importance for European peace and stability, as BiH borders EU member states, and any instability along those borders presents a security risk for the EU. EUFOR Althea is the only EU peace mission in which the Republic of North Macedonia participates at this moment.*

This paper analyzes the functioning of the CSDP through the EUFOR Althea operation, assessing its goals and achievements, while, at the same time, examining its successes, weaknesses, and lessons learned. It also explores how the Republic of North Macedonia's (before 2019, the Republic of Macedonia) participation in EUFOR Althea is regulated and what contributions it has made to the operation. Finally, it examines whether the CSDP has the capacity to successfully address the security threats posed by the new, volatile global environment.

Keywords: *EUFOR Althea, European Union, Common Security and Defence Policy, peace missions, military operations.*

Introduction

The greatest threats to peace and stability in Europe after the end of the Cold War have been the armed conflicts resulting from the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of the key factors in the creation of the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The Kosovo crisis in 1998 and NATO's military intervention in the Republic of Serbia were crucial in establishing the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), while the Russo-Ukrainian war accelerated the development of the resources and capabilities of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Following the initiative to create the ESDP at the French-British Summit in Saint-Malo in December 1998, in June 1999, in Cologne, the European Council adopted the decision to establish the ESDP. The Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force in 2009, renamed the ESDP to the CSDP, incorporating the mutual defence clause, the solidarity clause, and the possibility of permanent structured cooperation for interested member states. According to Article 42 of the Treaty on the European Union "the CSDP is an integral part of the CFSP and ensures the Union's operational capacity, relying on civilian and military resources".

Since the beginning of the 21st century, CSDP progress has been remarkably rapid, from developing concepts and establishing military-political structures within existing European institutions to creating specific instruments for conducting complex and significant military operations and civilian missions. Depending on the situation, these operations are often combined into civil-military missions.

The most extensive and longest-lasting EU peace mission is the EUFOR Althea military operation in BiH, conducted with NATO's resources and capacities under the Berlin Plus agreements. Launched on 2 December 2004, its objective is to contribute to maintaining security and stability in BiH and ensure continued adherence to the Dayton Peace Agreement. The operation is of exceptional importance for European peace and stability, as BiH shares borders with EU member states, and any instability along these borders poses a security risk for the EU. The Republic of Macedonia has been an active contributor to EUFOR Althea since 2006.

The European Union's military operations, including EUFOR Althea, are established based on a combination of decisions by the EU Council, an invitation from the host country, or a resolution from the United Nations Security Council (UN). Since the launch of CSDP operational activities in 2003, the EU has launched more than 40 peace missions for crisis management. Currently, the EU conducts 8 military operations and 15 civilian missions, involving 3,000 military personnel and 1,000 civilian staff. Most EU peace missions are conducted in Africa and Asia, with fewer in Europe, where missions are now also being conducted within EU territory as of 2022 (Bilquin, 2024). In its early years, CSDP operations were primarily focused on the Balkans, which, due to its geographical proximity and the persistent latent potential for crisis, remains a focal point for the EU. A testament to this is the long-standing and still active peace missions in the Balkans: the EUFOR Althea military operation in BiH and the EULEX civilian mission in Kosovo. This research focuses on the EUFOR Althea military operation as the largest and longest-

running CSDP peace mission and the only one in which the Republic of North Macedonia is participating at this moment. Additionally, the Republic of North Macedonia contributed to the EUTM CAR peace mission in the Central African Republic with two staff officers from 2020 until February 2023.

Methodological Framework

This research is based on the fundamental hypothesis that, despite the long-term presence of EUFOR Althea on the ground and the absence of any official indication of its imminent end, the operation has nonetheless achieved certain successes, particularly in maintaining a safe and secure environment, promoting human rights and gender equality, and strengthening the capacities of the armed forces of BiH. Additionally, the participation of third countries in EUFOR Althea, including the Republic of North Macedonia, contributes to the more effective implementation of the operation's mandate.

The aim of this research is to determine the following: How does the CSDP function? Does the CSDP have the capacity to effectively respond to the security threats posed by today's turbulent global landscape? Has the EUFOR Althea operation achieved its objectives and tasks, considering its key goals and overall mandate? How is the operation conducted on the ground? To what extent does the operation help prevent violent conflict? How is the Republic of North Macedonia's participation in EUFOR Althea regulated, and what is its contribution to the operation?

This research employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Content analysis is applied to primary and secondary sources to gain insights into the planning, establishment, financing, functioning, and potential termination of EU peace missions, with a specific focus on EUFOR Althea as a case study. The analysis also evaluates the achieved results and weaknesses of EUFOR Althea, as well as the regulatory framework governing the Republic of North Macedonia's participation in the operation. The analysis is based on available data and information regarding the EUFOR Althea military operation.

Through the comparative method, this research examines the similarities and differences in the rights, obligations, and roles of EU member states and third countries in conducting CSDP military operations and civilian missions. Additionally, it compares the structure and size of forces in EUFOR Althea at its inception and in the present day, enabling the identification of qualitative improvements through the analysis of quantitative data.

Planning and Establishing the EUFOR Althea Military Operation

EUFOR Althea is the third and largest, longest-lasting EU military operation. The operation is conducted with the support of NATO's resources and capacities under the Berlin Plus agreements. The decision to establish EUFOR Althea followed NATO's decision to conclude the Stabilization Force (SFOR) mission. In December 2002, during the European Council meeting in Copenhagen, the EU officially expressed its interest in replacing SFOR

in BiH. However, it was not until 19 months later, on 12 July 2004, that the EU Council adopted the Joint Action for an EU military operation in BiH. The operational concept was approved on 13 September, and the mission was deployed on 2 December 2004. The operation was established based on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1551 of 9 July 2004, and Resolution 1575 of 2 November 2004. Under Resolution 1575, which authorized the deployment of EU military forces in BiH, the EU deployed troops under the EUFOR Althea operation with the same personnel strength as SFOR - approximately 7,000 soldiers. On 1 November 2024, the UN Security Council determined that the situation in the former Yugoslavia region continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. Consequently, with Resolution 2757, it extended EUFOR Althea's mandate until 2 November 2025.

According to Overhaus, the lengthy planning process for EUFOR Althea was primarily due to political tensions and institutional relations between the EU and NATO (Asseburg & Kempin, 2009: 19). Specifically, the United States opposed the EU taking over the SFOR mandate because Washington doubted Europe's capabilities and was sceptical about the idea of the EU as an autonomous security actor. On the European side, France strongly supported the idea of taking over the stabilization operation in BiH, aiming to prove that the EU had the capacity to act independently. Another significant issue stemmed from disagreements over the exact meaning of using NATO's resources and capacities by the EU, particularly in terms of capacity planning (Malešič & Juvan, 2015: 853). The use of NATO's collective resources and capacities for EU-led operations is regulated by the Berlin Plus agreements (2003), which allows NATO to support EU-led missions where NATO as a whole is not directly involved. The first EU operation under the Berlin Plus framework was Operation Concordia in the Republic of Macedonia, which lasted from 31 March to 15 December 2003, a year before the launch of EUFOR Althea.

The common costs of the EUFOR Althea military operation are financed through the Athena mechanism, while all other expenses are covered by the participating states, including third states.

According to Pedro Sorano, EUFOR Althea is a stabilization operation that aligns with the classic concept of peacekeeping between warring parties after peace has been established. In such operations, EU forces can simultaneously manage demobilization and disarmament activities, while also incorporating a civilian component (Savković, 2010: 41-42).

Objectives and Tasks of EUFOR Althea

Considering that by 2004 the security situation in BiH had relatively stabilized compared to the period immediately following the Dayton Peace Agreement, the primary focus of EUFOR Althea shifted from conflict resolution to ensuring long-term security and stabilization (Knauer, 2011: 8). Thus, the main goal of EUFOR Althea is to contribute to maintaining security and stability in BiH and to ensure the continued implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. In this context, the operation has the following key tasks:

- Supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina's efforts to maintain peace and security;
- Providing assistance to the EU's comprehensive strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Supporting the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina by building capacities, training personnel, and conducting reforms in the defence system.

The EUFOR Althea operation also supports the national authorities through monitoring, advising, and mentoring, focusing on tasks such as military and civilian control over the movement of weapons, ammunition, and explosive materials, as well as weapons management and the storage of ammunition. Additionally, the operation provides support to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, including assisting in the detention of individuals accused of war crimes.

The mandate of the operation is divided into two components: executive and non-executive. The executive mandate is given by the UN Security Council, and the operation is based on the EU Council's Joint Action, which includes both executive and non-executive aspects (EUFOR Operation Althea, 2024). The executive mandate enables EUFOR Althea to assist BiH authorities in maintaining a safe and secure environment. The non-executive mandate focuses on capacity building and training for the Armed Forces of BiH, with the goal of transforming BiH from a "security consumer" into a "security provider".

The EU's approach to BiH is multifaceted, concentrating on defence and security, development, and diplomacy. In this context, the EUFOR Althea military operation supports institutional reforms at the state level and helps BiH make economic progress. The operation fosters the conditions necessary for achieving the long-term political goal of a stable, sustainable, peaceful, and multi-ethnic BiH, while also supporting its efforts and progress toward EU integration.

Structure of Forces in EUFOR Althea

The Command and Control (C2) structure of EUFOR Althea is organized through the Operation Commander, who is based at NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), and the EU Force Command (EUFOR), located at the Butmir base in Sarajevo. An additional component of the Command and Control (C2) system is the EU section at NATO's Operation Headquarters in Naples. The Operation Commander works in close cooperation with the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU Military Committee, and the EU Military Staff. The EU Political and Security Committee (PSC), under the authority of the EU Council, provides political control and strategic direction to the operation, while the Military Committee monitors the proper execution of the military operation.

The force structure of EUFOR Althea includes the Multinational Manoeuvre Battalion, the Integrated Police Unit, and the Liaison and Observation Teams (LOTs). At the time of deployment in December 2004, the military operation consisted of approximately 7,000 troops, deployed across three areas in BiH:

1. Multinational Military Group (North), with around 1,300 personnel, stationed in Tuzla;
2. Multinational Military Group (Northwest), with approximately 1,000 personnel, stationed in Banja Luka;
3. Multinational Military Group (Southeast), with about 1,400 personnel, stationed in Mostar.

Additionally, around 2,000 soldiers were deployed to various locations in BiH in the LOTs, and the Integrated Police Unit, numbering around 500 personnel, was stationed at the Butmir base in Sarajevo alongside the EUFOR Althea command.

Based on assessments and analyses of the situation in BiH, the number of deployed forces has been reduced several times since 2004. In 2007, the number of troops was decreased to approximately 2,500 personnel (Knauer, 2011: 14), which also led to changes in the composition and structure of the forces. As a result, the three multinational military groups were disbanded and replaced by a single Multinational Manoeuvre Battalion. This battalion, consisting of troops from Austria, Hungary, and Turkey, was stationed at the Butmir base in Sarajevo, along with the Integrated Police Unit. The LOTs remained in BiH and were supplemented with four regional coordination centers in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Banja Luka, and Zenica.

In 2012, the military structure of EUFOR Althea was further restructured, reducing the force size to around 600 personnel. The main focus of the operation shifted toward capacity building and training the Armed Forces of BiH, with the option of deploying reserve forces on short notice if necessary.

As of early 2021, EUFOR Althea personnel were deployed in the following bases:

- A multinational manoeuvre battalion stationed at Camp Butmir in Sarajevo, composed of troops from Austria, Hungary, and Turkey;
- 19 LOTs located in various cities across Bosnia and Herzegovina to connect EUFOR with local communities and authorities.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the operation was reinforced with an additional 500 peacekeepers, bringing the total number of peacekeepers to about 1,100 as of February 2023.

The number of participating states in the operation has changed over time. In 2004, at the time of deployment, 22 EU member states and 11 third countries participated (Council of the European Union, 2005). Since 2006, the Republic of Macedonia has also contributed to the military operation in BiH. In 2014, the number of participating states was reduced to 22, with 17 EU member states and 5 third countries (European External Action Service [EEAS], 2015). By 2016, 20 countries participated in the operation, including 15 EU member states and 5 third countries. On 18 December 2020, the United Kingdom ended its 16-year participation in EUFOR Althea. In 2025, the operation will see its largest number of participating countries, totalling 24, including 18 EU member states and 6 third countries (EUFOR Operation Althea, 2025).

Legal basis for the inclusion of the Republic of North Macedonia in the EUFOR Althea military operation

The first step toward opening the possibility for the Republic of Macedonia to participate in the EU peace missions was the signing of the Security Procedures Agreement for the exchange of classified information in 2005 (European Union [EU], 2005). In 2006, the Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Macedonia for Macedonia's participation in the EUFOR Althea operation was signed in Brussels (EU, 2006), based on which the Republic of Macedonia sent its first peacekeepers to the operation.

In 2012, the EU and the Republic of Macedonia signed an Agreement to establish a framework for the Republic of Macedonia's participation in EU-led crisis management operations (EU, 2012). The Agreement outlines the general conditions for participation in peace missions, but it does not mandate participation in every mission or operation. By signing the Agreement, the Republic of Macedonia expressed its readiness to contribute to global security through participation in peace missions and operations. According to the Agreement, the Republic of Macedonia has the same rights and obligations in the management of the operation on a daily basis as the EU member states participating in the mission/operation. However, there is some confusion arising from the fact that the contribution of the Republic of Macedonia, as well as that of all third countries in the CSDP operations, must not conflict with the Union's decision-making autonomy. At the same time, third countries have the same rights and obligations as the EU member states in managing the operation daily and in financing military operations in accordance with the Athena mechanism. We can conclude that the participation of third countries in the CSDP operations requires a certain level of acceptance of Union's practices, but also a certain degree of subordination. In practice, relations with third countries are complicated due to the EU's planning and decision-making process, as they are typically involved in the planning of peace missions at a late stage, if at all. Third countries do not participate in the development of CONOPS (Concept of Operations), OPLAN (Operational Plan), or in force generation conferences.

On 19 November 2024, the Republic of North Macedonia signed a Partnership for Security and Defence with the European Union (EEAS, 2024), further deepening its cooperation with the EU in defence and security policy. This partnership will enable a joint approach to addressing modern security challenges, such as hybrid threats, cybersecurity, and the fight against terrorism. It will also enhance cooperation in integrated border management and participation in EU missions and operations.

The contribution of the Republic of North Macedonia to the military operation EUFOR Althea

The Republic of Macedonia's contribution to EUFOR Althea began in July 2006 with the deployment of a helicopter detachment consisting of two Mi-8 and Mi-17 helicopters and a crew of 21 personnel. EUFOR Althea marked the first international mission for the Macedonian Air Force, known as Bucephalus. The detachment was under the operational control of the commander of the operation forces based in Sarajevo, while the location and logistics were managed by the multinational forces for the southeast sector, initially based at the airport in Mostar and later at the Butmir base in Sarajevo. During all rotations until July 2008, the Macedonian helicopter detachment conducted operational missions in both day and night conditions, which included transporting passengers, soldiers, and material resources, as well as conducting reconnaissance and VIP transport. The overall engagement of the helicopter detachment was highly appreciated by the EUFOR Command. Unfortunately, on 12 January 2008, a tragic helicopter accident near Katlanovo claimed the lives of 11 members of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia, who were returning from a successfully completed mission in BiH.

In November 2006, the Republic of Macedonia deployed a medical team of 10 personnel for ROLE 1 medical assistance at the Butmir camp. In June 2007, the country further contributed by sending a military legal advisor. By 2007, the Republic of Macedonia's contribution to EUFOR Althea consisted of two transport helicopters and a total of 32 personnel (Штит, 2012).

Based on analyses and assessments, in 2008, the Republic of Macedonia decided to withdraw one helicopter from the operation so as to maintain the necessary level of operational capability for future contributions. However, the country deployed a non-commissioned officer for preventive medicine, bringing the total contribution to one transport helicopter and 24 personnel. In July 2008, the Republic of Macedonia concluded its helicopter contribution to EUFOR Althea and continued its involvement with a medical team of 10 personnel for ROLE 1 assistance, one assistant legal advisor in the EUFOR Althea Command, and one non-commissioned officer for preventive medicine, also in the EUFOR Althea Command.

Following the restructuring and reduction of the operation's forces, the position of non-commissioned officer for preventive medicine was abolished in January 2012. The

Republic of Macedonia continued its participation in the operation in 2012, 2013, and 2014 with a total of 11 personnel, consisting of 10 medical team members and 1 military lawyer (assistant legal advisor in the EUFOR Command). The Republic of Macedonia's contribution with the medical team ended on 31 May 2015, and on 23 June 2015, the last rotation of the assistant legal advisor also concluded. In May 2015, the Republic of Macedonia decided to extend its participation in Operation Althea with two new staff positions. Since December 2018, the Republic of Macedonia has contributed one person as a deputy liaison officer with institutions responsible for law enforcement in the EUFOR command. In May 2022, the Republic of North Macedonia increased its contribution by deploying an infantry platoon of 32 personnel, integrated into the infantry company at Camp Butmir in Sarajevo. As of January 2025, the Republic of North Macedonia participates in EUFOR Althea with a total of 33 personnel, including 32 infantry platoon members and one staff officer, a liaison officer with institutions responsible for law enforcement within the EUFOR command. From 2006 to date, a total of 510 personnel from the Republic of Macedonia/the Republic of North Macedonia have been deployed in EUFOR Althea in various rotations and capacities, including an aviation helicopter detachment from 2006 to 2008, medical teams providing healthcare for EUFOR Althea personnel at Camp Butmir from 2006 to 2015, staff officers, an infantry platoon, and legal advisors (Ministry of Defence n.d.).

Achievements, weaknesses and lessons learned from EUFOR Althea

One of the key challenges to the success of EUFOR Althea lies in building trust among the population of BiH in the EU and its forces, given the still-strong memories of the Union's failed attempts to resolve conflicts in Yugoslavia. Therefore, from the very beginning of the operation, EUFOR Althea sought to gain credibility among the people of BiH, mainly through the use of a high operational pace and intensive activities, aimed at making the forces present and visible on the ground and among the population.

The main challenges in the first years of the operation stemmed from the partial overlap of the EUFOR Althea mandate with that of the European Union's Police Mission (EUPM) in BiH. This overlap partially concerned the fight against organized crime, as well as the difficulty in coordinating EUPM's capacity-building activities with EUFOR Althea's efforts to support BiH institutions in the fight against crime. These issues were resolved in 2006 when the EU Political and Security Committee aligned the mandates of the two missions. EUPM was given a leading role in the fight against crime, and EUFOR Althea forces regularly seized large quantities of weapons, participated in demining operations, and pursued criminal groups operating in violation of the provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement (Malešič & Juvan, 2015: 855). This experience highlights that when planning multiple missions in the same territory, the mandates of these missions must be clearly and precisely defined and demarcated.

According to Knauer (2011: 17), from a strategic and operational perspective, the operation has achieved significant success. However, he highlights the lengthy process of arresting war criminals as its greatest shortcoming. The effectiveness of the operation lies in maintaining a safe and secure environment, promoting human rights, and improving the capacities of the BiH Armed Forces, which are trained for both humanitarian services and conventional military roles (Pulko et al., 2016).

It is evident that EUFOR Althea is moving further away from its initially overly broad mandate and is gradually transitioning into an assistance and training operation, which represents a qualitative step forward and raises questions about the necessity of the current scope of the operation. However, current political tensions in BiH, particularly regarding the potential secessionist tendencies of Republika Srpska, present a new challenge for EUFOR Althea. On one hand, the operation's mandate is not intended to resolve a political crisis in BiH, while on the other hand, the operation has limited capabilities to prevent the possible escalation of current problems. Following the restructuring of the operation's military forces, the primary focus shifted to capacity building and training the BiH Armed Forces. However, reliance on reserve forces from outside BiH in the event of a crisis could result in delays in responding to potential security threats. Therefore, the effectiveness of EUFOR Althea depends on the EU's political will and NATO's support. While one of the operation's greatest past weaknesses was the lack of an exit strategy (Hood, 2018: 9), the current question is what direction the operation should take and whether its mandate should be expanded with new powers.

Conclusions

The EU's failure to resolve the bloody wars in BiH and Kosovo without the intervention of NATO and the U.S. was a key factor in the creation of the Common Security and Defence Policy, which was formally introduced in the EU's founding treaties through the Lisbon Treaty. The CSDP is the EU's primary instrument for conducting peace missions. Its largest and longest-running military peace operation, EUFOR Althea, focuses on peacebuilding and post-conflict stabilization in BiH. EUFOR Althea inherited a relatively stable situation, as most conflicts and military operations had already ended with the support of NATO's SFOR mission.

As a result of EUFOR Althea's relative success in maintaining a safe and secure environment, promoting human rights and gender equality, and strengthening the capacities of the BiH Armed Forces, the number of peacekeepers in the operation steadily decreased from 2004 to 2023. This led to a restructuring of the forces, reducing them from three multinational military groups to a single multinational manoeuvre battalion. The LOTs (Liaison and Observation Teams) play a crucial role in building trust among the citizens of BiH, successfully connecting EUFOR Althea forces with local communities and authorities. The people of BiH have accepted the operation as essential for maintaining security, but a negative consequence has been the political system's dependency on EUFOR Althea. Since 2006, the Republic of Macedonia has continuously participated in the operation,

demonstrating its commitment to contributing to security beyond its borders. One of the persistent challenges EUFOR Althea has faced throughout its mandate is the lack of meritocracy in BiH's political system and the widespread presence of corruption.

It is evident that, despite the achievements, the operation still lacks an exit strategy that would outline a clear path to its conclusion. On the contrary, new global security challenges have led to an increase in the number of peacekeepers, and a potential escalation of current political tensions in BiH - particularly regarding possible secessionist tendencies in Republika Srpska - could result in an expanded mandate for the operation, further delaying the development of an exit strategy.

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THE RUSSO-UKRAINIAN WAR: INSIGHTS AND LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE OF MODERN WARFARE

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Abstract: *This study emphasizes the conclusions and lessons learned from the current Russo-Ukrainian War. It describes the critical aspects of modern warfare, focusing on the evolution of military tactics, the importance of combined arms operations, and the role of advanced technologies in achieving battlefield supremacy. Even though the war encompassed all domains of fighting (land, air, sea, space, and cyber), this study underlines the trends and changing character of conducting land operations at the tactical level. By analyzing these aspects, this research aims to provide a clearer understanding of the future path of warfare and its implications for military strategists and planners in a 21st-century war.*

Keywords: *Russo-Ukrainian war, large-scale combat operations, combined arms, reconnaissance-strike complex, battlefield transparency, precision-guided artillery*.

Introduction

The current Russo-Ukrainian War is past its third-year mark. Designed and planned as a short and rapid campaign intended to achieve its pre-determined objectives swiftly, it was publicly named “*Special Military Operation” (SMO)*. The early expectations were that the Russians would quickly defeat the Ukrainian forces, achieve vast territorial gains, overthrow the government, and establish a better political position in the following negotiations on Ukraine’s future. However, three years into the conflict, the nature of the warfare had already evolved into a protracted, large-scale combat operation (LSCO), which currently includes corps and divisions utilized to achieve military objectives on both sides. As defined by General Valery Zaluzhnyi, the former Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief, the war turned into “positional warfare”, characterized by relatively static frontlines and consistent combat which produces

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minor movements and territorial shifts. Such combat aims to create forward progress through small and steady advances or create conditions to restore operational maneuver on the battlefield (Kagan et al. 2024, 19).

Preserving combat power over great operational distances over a prolonged operational timeline is the main challenge while conducting LSCO. Massing the combat power at critical locations, ample sustainment over prolonged periods on extended lines of communications, and the ability to secure the supply lines, command posts, and critical logistical facilities in the rear are the main factors that discriminate whether an LSCO is effective. Since the beginning of the invasion, Russian forces have struggled to extend their operational depth, maintain operational tempo, and avoid culmination. Despite early limited progress, their attack was hindered very quickly.

Combined arms fight is substantial

The traditional mix of infantry, armor, and artillery units augmented with electronic warfare, air defense artillery, and engineers is still the primary tool to accomplish tactical missions on the modern battlefield, which defeat enemy forces or seize, occupy, and defend terrain. Combined arms operations apply all the enablers together to achieve an effect greater than if each enabler was used separately. The experiences from the war in Ukraine showed that massing the effects of the friendly force's combat power is paramount in land operations to attain tactical and operational gains.

The Ukrainian counteroffensive in June 2023 confirmed the deficiencies of attacking multiple axes to seize several objectives. The operational plan to use the Orikhiv-Tokmak-Melitopol axis as the main axis of advance with the main purpose of breaching the Russian defense line and using an exploitation force to separate Russian troops at the closest bottleneck to Crimea was rational. The plan envisaged three brigades to support the fixing operation against Russians in the east, three armored brigades to breach the Russian defensive line, with another three mechanized brigades echeloning through to defeat Russian forces near Tokmak, and additional three brigades to act as an exploitation force (Watling, Danylyuk, and Reynolds 2023, 16). In the end, operational planners lacked sufficient maneuver units to concentrate friendly combat power and successfully conduct the exploitation since most of the force was disrupted long before the Russian forward edge of the battle area (FEBA) and committed prematurely in a piecemeal fashion. Additionally, such a complex operation required establishing proper coordination measures for the participating units to facilitate the execution. Yet, due to poor deconfliction, the main effort force failed to properly pass through the pre-established defensive line, leading to several incidents and disruption of own forces from friendly obstacles, long before the actual attack. This disruption led to a time lag of about three hours between the initial artillery preparation and the attack (Watling, Danylyuk, and Reynolds 2023, 19).

Executing successful breaching is an inevitability in modern LSCO, and a sufficient number of breaching assets is crucial when operation planners choose a course of action against well-defended and fortified enemy positions. Maneuver and combat support elements are important for supporting the breach while providing suppressive direct or

indirect fires to create obscuration for the element conducting obstacle reduction or the assault force passing through the lanes to continue the attack. In these circumstances, the attacker's breaching assets will always represent high pay-off targets for the defender.

While conducting the assault during the counteroffensive in 2023, Ukrainian forces faced the *Surovikin line*, a well-entrenched defensive position augmented with anti-tank and anti-personnel obstacles and minefields covered with well-planned engagement areas by Russian direct and indirect fire systems. Surovikin line entailed three defense lines comprising a disruption belt and forward defense line, a main defense line, and a reserve defense line spanning 30km in depth (Watling, Danylyuk, and Reynolds 2023, 16). The Russian defensive setup used the classic elastic defense technique modified for mechanized warfare over the past hundred years. It utilized a relatively small number of defenders at the front lines to reduce the initial number of casualties. As attackers advanced, these defenders would pull back, drawing them into pre-prepared minefields and trench lines, which canalized their movement and attrited them into pre-defined engagement areas/ kill zones. When the attackers are sufficiently attrited, defenders commit their reserve to counterattack and push attacking forces back (Kagan and al. 2024,27).

Ukrainian breaching assets were the primary targets for Russian indirect fires and long-range anti-tank weapons. A substantial number of these assets were destroyed before reaching the first defensive line or shortly after. Narrow breaching lanes slowed down the advance, creating congestion with follow-on vehicles and resulting in additional Ukrainian armor being damaged in the minefields with rather unconventional depth. The concentration of disabled vehicles was a good target for Russian artillery, ATGM, and kamikaze drones. Russian forces also studied the characteristics of the Ukrainian breaching assets (especially the US M58 Mine Clearing Line Charge (MICLIC) and prepared the minefields with width and depth out of the norms described in their doctrine (from 120 to 500 meters). Another adaptation was the density of the minefields and stacking mines one atop another to defeat mine-clearing vehicles equipped with dozer blades or mine plows (Koh 2024, 20).

Mobility is the principal capability of combined arms units, crucial not only when negotiating man-made obstacles but more importantly, when crossing large water obstacles. Gap crossing is a complex and risky operation for a maneuvering force to complete. The concentration of equipment and low speed when crossing the water obstacle present good targets of opportunity for enemy long-range indirect fires or attacks from the air.

One of the most prominent instances of conducting gap crossing occurred in May 2022 when Russian troops attempted to cross the Siverskyi Donetsk River. At the beginning of the operation, the gap in Russian intelligence regarding the location and strength of Ukrainian forces led to the failure to establish bridgeheads near the villages of Shypylivka and the vicinity of Serebryanka. The third attempt near the settlement of Bilohorovka was almost successful, as Russian troops managed to secure the far bank of the river and construct a pontoon bridge across it. However, the Ukrainian forces successfully located the crossing site via drones via the sound of the boats used to establish the pontoon bridge. Even though Russians tried to conceal the movement with smoke screens at the crossing point, Ukrainian artillery and aviation destroyed the pontoon bridge and pre-established

bridgehead, resulting in more than 400 casualties and the loss of around 80 vehicles (Koh 2024, 14,15).

Another important aspect of the combined arms fight that is difficult to accomplish is the vertical maneuver. Again, battlefield transparency, effective anti-access/area denial (A2\AD) systems, and long-range targeting hinder the employment of airborne and air assault troops. Helicopters are good targets for man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS) while approaching designated landing zones. Additionally, airborne and air assault troops lack the necessary protection and firepower to conduct sustained operations unless previously supported and task-organized by higher command with additional enablers.

In conclusion, the experience from the current conflict demonstrates that offensive operations are more complex and difficult to execute than defensive operations. Countermobility dominates the current conflict because remote mine-laying systems, such as UMZ-K and ISDM Zemledeliye, can create scattered minefields in just minutes. Breaching and gap-crossing operations are complex and require detailed intelligence, surprise through deception to create a tactical dilemma for the enemy of own decisive operation at the actual crossing site, extensive artillery preparation of the crossing site, and a detailed pre-planned traffic plan to avoid equipment buildup and congestion at the crossing site.

Unmanned aircraft systems

The current Russo-Ukrainian war has revolutionized not only the employment of traditional military unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), but also the employment of numerous cheap, commercially produced, and easy-to-assemble drones. They demonstrated their versatility by executing different missions in addition to traditional accurate intelligence and real-time situational awareness for the battlefield commanders, including target acquisition (TA), adjustment of indirect fires, and post-strike battle damage assessment (BDA) for indirect fire systems. UAS promoted battlefield transparency, meaning forces can be located and targeted easily. General DePuy once noted, “What can be seen, can be hit. What can be hit can be killed. Employing UAS assumes that everything can be seen, therefore, everything can be hit, and everything can be killed (Henkin 2022, 19). At the beginning of the war, both sides mostly relied on larger UAS models, such as the Orion and Bayraktar TB2. The Bayraktar model was very effective at the opening of the conflict when Russians still had not integrated their air defense assets into a unified air defense network. Another aspect when dealing with UAS was the late employment of EW systems as soft kill effectors to jam or spoof their communication links. Complemented with traditional kinetic hard kill effectors, it resulted in high attrition rates for UAS on both sides.

The quest for a game-changing asset with low acquisition and operational costs, which concurrently affords a lower cost-to-target ratio by capitalizing on the cost asymmetry against their targets, has led to heavy use of inexpensive small First Person View (FPV) drones and loitering ammunition on both sides. They were modified and equipped with explosives, hand grenades, anti-tank grenades, and mortar rounds serving in direct attack

roles against enemy personnel and more expensive equipment. Small UAS and drones fly at extremely low altitudes with slow speeds and have small radar and thermal signatures, which restrict their detection and defeat by enemy counterfire.

Loitering ammunition is another revolutionized concept representing the bridge between precision-guided and autonomous weapon systems. Once in the air, the missile seeks a potential target and, when found, smashes into it, hence the "kamikaze" nickname. The flight is either controlled by a human operator or is pre-programmed. Russians mostly relied on the domestically produced Lancet model and Iranian Shahed-136 (or Geran-2 if produced in Russia). On the other hand, Ukrainians relied on the Switchblade series of loitering ammunition manufactured in the United States and Israeli Harpy and Harop models, all provided by donations. They also employed long-range kamikaze drones such as Bober and UJ-22, which were produced domestically (Subramaniam 2024,7). This ammunition is hard to detect and intercept because of the small radar cross-section and absence of active communication links with their control stations. It can be launched from various platforms, including man-portable systems, combat vehicles, artillery, rotary and fixed-wing aircraft, and even other drones. Because of their precision and enhanced discrimination capabilities, loitering ammunition was used to destroy high-value and well-protected targets. Finally, these weapons are cheaper and have a lower cost-to-target ratio than anti-tank guided missiles or cruise missiles. For example, the Switchblade model costs $6000 per unit and is much cheaper than the Javelin missile, which costs $176,000, or the Hellfire missile, which costs $150,000. Additionally, the loitering ammunition can be reused if no feasible target is found, or they can autonomously return to the launch position for reuse, thus saving money (Ibrahim 2022).

This rapid proliferation of small UAS and drones emphasized the demand for a counter-system to deal effectively with this threat. Counter-UAS systems tend to have a short kill chain while detecting, tracking, identifying, and defeating the potential target. The cost-to-target ratio is important when determining which effector to employ, whether kinetic (such as missiles, projectiles, and nets) or non-kinetic (such as lasers, microwaves, or radio frequency). Electronic warfare (EW) offers the best cost-to-effect ratio for defeating UAS (Shu 2023, 10). Russian forces started to complement their air defense capabilities with Borisoglebsk-2 and Krasukha-4 jamming systems, which proved very effective against UAS at distances up to 4 km. The Russians also claimed to have effectively employed Zadyra and Peresvet laser-based counter-UAS systems (Al-Garni 2022, 11,12). Battlefield experiences show that the Russian Armed Forces currently employ approximately one major EW system per 10 km of frontage, usually positioned around 7 km from the frontline, contributing to approximately 10,000 Ukrainian UAS losses per month (Watling and Reynolds 2023, 18).

Artillery is the king on the battlefield

Artillery is fundamental to the Russian way of war because it is a primary tool that affects the enemy in deep and close fights (Cranny-Evans 2023). Russian artillery operates on the old principle of mass, with high volume and intensity of fire to inflict effects on

the enemy (AWG 2016, 23). The tendency to rely on standard artillery rounds instead of precision-guided munitions (PGMs) derives from the rationale that saturating an area with artillery is more effective in suppressing enemy infantry, as it will cover the whole area when one does not know exactly where the enemy is (Henkin 2022,23). Hence, the current war demonstrates a high consumption of artillery rounds and elevated casualty rates due to artillery fire. According to the European Commission, the current daily expenditure is estimated at around 40000 to 50000 shells by the Russians and 5000 to 6000 shells by the Ukrainians (Jash 2024, 22). Estimates demonstrate that artillery inflicted about 90% of all casualties in the current war (Mertens, de Heer, van Hooft, and Bekkers 2023, 4).

The precise long-range fire marked a step forward in targeting enemy reserves, logistical nodes, command posts, and critical infrastructure deep into the enemy rear. The M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) equipped with Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) rockets and Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) missile complemented Ukrainian indirect fire capabilities to engage targets far beyond the range of conventional artillery. Although precise ammunition was effective at the beginning of the conflict, its effectiveness rapidly declined later due to Russian countermeasures, particularly EW countermeasures. By employing EW activities, the Russian military redirected entire GMLRS salvos and even calibrated their air defense (AD) systems to shoot them down. For example, the M982 Excalibur guided ammunition had approximately 70% hit probability at the beginning of the conflict. In contrast, before counteroffensive began in August 2023, the effectiveness dropped to a 6% hit probability, a rate lower than non-precision munitions (Watling, Danylyuk, Reynolds 2023, 24). However, this enabler is limited in quantity and very time-consuming to produce (Kamaras 2023, 14). It is also very expensive and requires up-to-date intelligence on important enemy targets, as no army has enough precision ammunition to engage point enemy targets or conduct continual artillery salvos.

Enhanced UAS integration with indirect fire systems into reconnaissance-strike complexes (RSC) was the most important breakthrough from the war. RSC is an integrated intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting fire system in which the time between target identification and engagement is extremely short. It severely reduced the targeting cycle and enabled the first kill since on a modern battlefield, the side that is found first is usually killed (Halem 2023,5). RSC is the combination of pervasive tactical reconnaissance, primarily by drone; drone-corrected precision artillery fire; precision munitions delivered by fixed- and/or rotary-wing aircraft; drone-launched precision munitions; and large numbers of first-person view (FPV) loitering munitions (Kagan and al. 2024, 40). It transforms conventional artillery into a precise, long-range weapon capable of covering a wider area.

Effective detection of the enemy's indirect fire assets proved crucial in prevailing the counter-battery fire. Both sides heavily relied on radars and UAS to detect and pinpoint enemy artillery locations. Both sides have perfected the "shoot and scoot" technique, where the artillery system changes its position after firing a few rounds (Kagan and al. 2024, 40). Therefore, the mobility of the artillery system is paramount for survival on the modern

battlefield. These tactics prevent mass artillery fire, reduce the artillery system's rate of fire, and limit the number of targets it can engage.

Anti-tank weapons

The battleground in Ukraine favors the use of anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) due to its mostly flat or gently hilly terrain. Excluding urban areas, ATGMs can be employed at the limits of their maximum range. Ukrainian ATGMs' effectiveness resulted from the shortage of infantry soldiers to protect Russian armor units. Besides destroying stationary armored vehicles and tanks, hovering helicopters, bunkers, and fortified installations, ATGMs were also very effective in conducting armor ambushes. Typically, head and tail vehicles were neutralized by sophisticated ATGMs with higher kill probability, such as the Javelin, Stugna-P, or NLAW. Once the column was halted, it became easier to destroy the vehicles between the stopped front and rear vehicle using cheaper ATGMs, including RPGs, Carl Gustaf M4, AT4, or Panzerfaust 3 (Cranny-Evans 2022). Quite often, ambush kill zones were supplemented with additional artillery and sniper fire. However, not every ATGM hit resulted in tank destruction. Most of the hits caused mobility kills, targets that were stopped and thrown out of combat, which later required extensive repairs to be brought back in the fight.

Open-source intelligence

The war demonstrated that not only soldiers but also civilians and civilian commercial systems can act as sensors and provide valuable intelligence. The local civilian population used their smartphones to capture photos or videos of Russian or Ukrainian units and equipment, which were shared on social media platforms. These photos not only revealed the organization and approximate number of main battle systems employed but also provided geo-location information that easily pinpointed their coordinates for precise indirect fire. A well-known case included a Ukrainian civilian who posted a video on TikTok showing the movement of Ukrainian military equipment outside the Retroville shopping mall in Kyiv. This information assisted Russians in identifying the target via drones and successfully destroying it. Another case is a television report on the repair of captured Russian equipment that was filmed inside a building in a Kyiv tank factory. The shape of the windows and a few other minor details were enough for members of a pro-Russian Telegram group to pinpoint the exact location of the building and post the details online. A few days later, the Russians struck the building with a precision-guided munition, destroying the workshop and killing several workers. In one final case, a Russian television crew filmed a 2S4 Tyulpan self-propelled heavy mortar system firing on Ukrainian positions. Within 24 hours, it was destroyed by Ukrainian forces, who then thanked "Russian propagandists" for revealing the location of the mortar (Henkin 2022, 22).

The commercial Starlink satellite internet provided by SpaceX was also used by the Ukrainian military for communication via encrypted chats on mobile networks, guiding attack and reconnaissance drones, or providing video feeds to their artillery units

for indirect fire adjustments. This capability was considered exclusive to a divisional headquarters before (Kamaras 2023, 6).

Tanks are not obsolete

The modern battlefield is congested with sensors, making it more transparent. This transparency shortens the survivability of enemy major weapon systems, including tanks. Cheap loitering ammunition and relatively inexpensive anti-tank guided missiles have proven fatal for tanks; however, tanks did not lose their importance in closing with and destroying the enemy as both sides heavily relied on them while conducting offensive or defensive operations. Tanks are not obsolete, and their combination of protection, mobility, and firepower is still essential for maneuver and offensive operations (Henkil 2022, 9).

The current Russo-Ukrainian war is not characterized by massive tank battles but by sporadic tank-on-tank engagements, usually within 1000 meters, most often on urban terrain. Tanks were mostly used in fire support roles, providing direct fire for ground troops and committing as mobile reserves to assist a counterattack. Tank's main advantage is its advanced optics, which provides the ability to conduct long-range direct fire. Ukrainian forces even promoted a revolutionized concept of tank employment- except in direct-fire roles, many of their tanks were used in indirect-fire roles as classical artillery tubes (Mertens, de Heer, van Hooft, and Bekkers 2023, 4). On the other hand, Russians conducted tank raids whenever they detected Ukrainian troops' rotation (Dhanoa 2024, 18).

The main reason for the high fatality rate among tanks is the lack of anticipated countermeasures, which led to high losses. Firstly, a Russian Battalion Tactical Group (BTG) lacked enough infantry to protect the tanks and suppress enemy anti-armor teams in a combined fight. The Russian Army reduced the number of personnel in motorized rifle battalions on BMP Infantry Fighting Vehicles (IFV) from 460 to 345, and many of the battalions at the beginning of the invasion were at two-thirds or three-quarters strength (Lee 2022). Secondly, at the initial phase of the war, most of the tanks lacked additional protection against ATGMs, loitering ammunition, and kamikaze drones, such as additional reactive armor, sandbags, armor cages, or anti-drone warning sensors. As a result, Russian tanks have undergone modifications by using special anti-thermal materials to reduce the effectiveness of ATGMs by decreasing their ability to detect the tank's heat signature (Dhanoa 2024,18).

Command posts are vulnerable

A transparent battlefield causes severe vulnerability for a unit's combat post (CP). CPs are high-value targets, and any signal detected by the enemy can be lethal since the mass employment of sensors, EW, UAS, and satellite imagery on a modern battlefield complemented with long-range precision artillery assets severely shortens the targeting cycle. Therefore, good radio discipline regarding communication windows and utilization of brevity codes, strict noise discipline, and good camouflage and concealment are paramount.

Survivability is extremely important for a future CP. To survive on a modern battlefield, a CP should be armored, mobile, masked, and dispersed (Antal 2023, 75). Armor provides protection from enemy fire, and an armored vehicle equipped with command-and-control equipment is always a better choice than a command tent. Staying in one position for an extended period creates a window of opportunity for the enemy to successfully target the CP. Future CPs should have shorter assemble/disassemble times and be in constant movement while allowing distributed collaboration and synchronization through all warfighting functions (Crombe and Nagl 2023, 5). Masking enhances survivability by deceiving enemy sensors through camouflage and the reduction of heat, noise, and electronic signatures. Combined with decoys, it can create false signals and hinder identification by the enemy. In the end, dispersion enables a *distributed mission command*, avoids establishing large CPs, and concentrates the unit's key personnel in one location. Instead, traditional CP elements are divided into small teams (also called "functional nodes") dispersed into multiple locations but still able to communicate with each other. Each node is ready to assume command if one is disrupted (Antal 2023, 77).

Decoys to deceive

The current Russo-Ukrainian war provides valuable apprehension of the importance of survivability in a modern transparent battlefield. Passive measures, including camouflage, concealment, and the use of decoys, can significantly reduce the risk of detection by enemy sensors and help preserve friendly combat power. Inexpensive decoys deplete enemy capabilities and waste its limited resources. They replicate not just the visual appearance of the actual weapon systems but also their thermal, radar, acoustic, and electronic signatures, making them indistinguishable from the real objects under high-tech reconnaissance (Bonsegna 2024). Ukrainians used decoys to mimic high-payoff targets such as howitzers, multiple launcher rocket systems (MLRS), tanks, aircraft, or air defense systems. These inexpensive decoys were engaged by more expensive and sophisticated Russian systems, such as artillery-guided shells or loitering ammunition. The extensive use of decoys created confusion about the total number of weapon systems destroyed. By mid-2022, Russia claimed the destruction of 44 HIMARS, despite only 16 having been delivered to Ukraine at the time (Bonsegna 2024).

During the initial phase of the Battle of Kharkiv, the Ukrainians used mannequins procured from local stores in trenches to imitate defensive positions. It confused the Russians, who used their artillery to engage a non-existent enemy while revealing their artillery positions for enemy counterfire. In another situation, local civilians near Kherson used decoy checkpoints to slow down the Russian advance toward Mykolaiv. Russians also relied on decoys to deceive Ukrainians. They purposely allowed Ukrainians to find their decoys and, after a couple of days, replaced those decoys with real tanks and ambushed unsuspecting Ukrainian forces. They also used decoy trenches in the Zaporizhzhia area to lure Ukrainian forces into attacking trenches filled with dummies and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which were detonated once Ukrainian troops began to clear them (Rivero 2024).

In addition to their operational effects, decoys have psychological effects, causing confusion and uncertainty and disrupting the enemy's decision-making. The difficulty in determining the actual position and strength of the enemy also leads to doubt regarding one's intelligence capabilities. Furthermore, the significant waste of valuable resources on decoys can result in frustration and demoralization among the enemy (Bonsegna 2024).

Special force employment

The employment of special operations forces (SOF) and their contribution to the overall operations during the war is still under the veil of secrecy. Open-source information is very scarce, but there is no doubt that both sides have used their SOF to execute the most prominent core SOF missions, including direct actions, special reconnaissance, unconventional warfare, and counterinsurgency, to achieve operational or strategic gains while supporting large-scale combat operations.

The SOF proved especially useful in the initial phase of the war. In the south, the Russian SOF (including Federal Security Service (FSB), the Main Intelligence Agency (GRU), and the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) were very successful in preventing the destruction of bridges and dams over the Dnipro River which enabled the 100 km thrust of follow-on conventional forces from Crimea to the city of Kherson and Mykolaiv. On the other hand, the northern axis of the advance of Russian troops toward Kyiv and their inability to reach the capital demonstrated that effective counter-SOF action is still a critical task (Searle, Marsh, and Petit 2023, 5).

The Ukrainian SOF effectively prepared resistance forces from the local population to conduct small-unit guerilla warfare long before the beginning of the actual aggression. Unconventional warfare in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine currently relies on three components: *the guerilla* or *partisan elements* which conduct attacks and sabotages against Russian troops, *the underground* acting as a valuable intelligence source providing information on Russian military and local officials' locations, supply routes, and logistic nodes, and *auxiliaries* which do not carry weapons but assist with information, money, distribute propaganda material, recruit new members, manage safe houses etc. These forces, supported by regular Ukrainian SOF and conventional elements, remained behind Russian frontline troops and attacked and harassed their extended lines of supply, second-echelon forces, and command posts by conducting ambushes, deep raids, and sabotages. Furthermore, the local resistance conducted assassinations and intimidations of local Russian officials and supporters and spread anti-occupation propaganda among the population (Searle, Marsh, and Petit 2023, 9). According to the Ukrainian authorities, the Ukrainian SOF contributed to the killing of 13 Russian generals, as well as other Russian high officials in the occupied regions (Dieanu 2022, 227). The successful resistance operations resulted in counterinsurgency activities by Russian special and conventional forces in conjunction with the local police units. Some measures included using brutal force against resistance members or influence activities assisted by local collaborators against the population to undermine the resistance movement through enforcement, persuasion, or intimidation.

It is not a solemn platitude that quality overwhelms quantity in the SOF community. SOF operators are specially selected and trained soldiers capable of conducting the most complex missions. However, experiences from the current war have shown that both sides, lacking well-trained troops, misused their SOF in conventional missions- often as assault or static defense force- resulting in heavy losses. These losses are slow to substitute because a proficient SOF operator needs more training than a proficient conventional soldier. Additional misuse of SOF which had a severe impact on their overall performance included too frequent structural changes in organizations and transferring SOF units under conventional force commanders, lack of understanding of their mission by conventional commanders and staffs, and lack of joint training between SOF and conventional units (Gardner, Davis, Liflyandchick, and Jones 2024,4).

Logistics

LSCO entails high resource consumption and casualty rates. The main purpose of the logistics is to follow the supporting unit to prevent its culmination while extending the operational reach. In LSCO involving two near-peer adversaries, *the last tactical mile* (or the point where strategic distribution ends and tactical distribution begins, usually close to the edge of the battle) will be nonexistent due to the transparent battlefield and the ability to easily monitor and target ground lines of supply. Instead of a just-in-time strategy, which relies on uninterrupted supply by vendors or manufacturers, the just-in-case strategy is more appropriate in a near-peer war. This strategy relies on redundancy and resilience, as warfighting units will need to carry all the supplies they require on their own (Mertens, de Heer, van Hooft and Bekkers 2023, 8,9). Since the expenditure of all types of ammunition in an LSCO fight is higher than anticipated, stockpiles of weaponry, ammunition, and equipment must remain high in peacetime.

The current conflict also emphasizes the importance of maintenance to sustain the desired degree of combat readiness. Poor maintenance will degrade even the most modern equipment. Experiences from the war show that most of the tanks and IFVs were lost due to deficient repair and maintenance capabilities (Kamaras 2023, 12). Most of the damaged equipment was left in the field to be towed to the repair facility later (Henkin 2022, 26).

LSCO generates high casualty rates, making the planning for appropriate medical treatment and the replacement flow of personnel paramount. US Army medical theater planners estimate 3600 casualties per day (either killed, wounded, with a disease, or non-battle injuries), and human resource planners should anticipate replacing 25% of the total casualties, equating to about 800 per day (HQDA 2019, 4-4). High casualty rates emphasize the importance of the Golden Hour rule, meaning that an injured soldier needs very swift medical attention to enhance his chances of survival. However, LSCO against near-peer adversaries degrades the ability to sustain the Golden Hour standard because of the extended lines of communication/supplies, high operational tempo, and limited medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) and casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) resources. A study that analyzed the wounds of dead Russian soldiers in the first month of the war concluded that many soldiers died of wounds that could have been treated had the Russians deployed their medical units instead of keeping them far behind the front lines (Henkin 2022, 26).

Man-Portable Air-Defence Systems (MANPADS) have proven effective

Man-Portable Air-Defence Systems **(**MANPADS) have proven to be an effective tool in denying air superiority to both sides, particularly while conducting close air support (CAS) missions. Sophisticated air defence systems are vulnerable to enemy suppression, whereas shoulder-launched systems are difficult to detect, highly mobile when supporting maneuver units, and lack complex missile navigation systems. They are extremely effective against slow, low-flying targets such as helicopters and attack/CAS aircraft. Massive MANPADS engagement by Ukrainian forces resulted in 170 Russian helicopters being lost in the first year of the conflict (Shu 2023, 4).

Conclusion

The current Russo-Ukrainian war confirms the platitude that all wars revolve around destroying the enemy and capturing terrain. The combined arms operations incorporating the integrated employment of different combat branches have not lost their significance and act as primary means for accomplishing designated missions. They demonstrated that maneuver and firepower are crucial while conducting offensive or defensive operations. When supported with effective logistics in an LSCO fight, it masses the effects of a unit's combat power, thus increasing its operational reach while avoiding culmination. Since most operations in this war revolved around an extended, well-defended static frontline, successful breaching operations depended on necessary quantities of breaching assets for redundancy and a high volume of artillery fire to support them. Both sides relied on massive and sustained artillery fire to wreak havoc on the enemy. Hence, the current war is characterized by a great expenditure of artillery rounds and elevated casualty rates caused by artillery fire. Precise, long-range guided artillery increased the effective depth for indirect fires. However, this enabler- expensive to manufacture and limited in quantity- requires up-to-date intelligence to be effectively employed against significant enemy targets.

The modern battlefield is transparent, with a vast number of military or commercial sensors providing instantaneous information that eliminates safe areas and shortens the targeting cycle. To survive, one must rely on passive measures to reduce the risk of enemy detection and preserve combat power. Stationary units are vulnerable; to increase their survivability, all units must be protected, dispersed, and highly mobile. The heavy employment of UAS has enhanced battlefield transparency and shortened the kill chain. The war also emphasized the rise and heavy employment of inexpensive small UAS and loitering ammunition on both sides since they afford a lower cost-to-target ratio and capitalize on the cost asymmetry against their targets. UAS were integrated with indirect fire assets in an RSC, transforming the conventional artillery into a precise, long-range weapon. Complemented by attack UAS and loitering ammunition, they blurred the boundaries between deep, close, rear, and support areas, confirming that nowadays, everything can be seen and hit. Finally, both sides, seeking to control the narratives of the conflict, have flooded the information space with videos and stories that glorify their success while downplaying the opponent's actions.

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